



# PBL Training course

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# The role of a PBL tutor

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- **Facilitate** learning and discussion during PBL sessions.



# Functions in the PBL discussion group

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- Ensure students follow the basic '7-jump structure
  - **Do not encourage short cuts**



# 7 jump structure

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1. Defining terms and identifying the problem
2. Selecting Triggers/Cues/Key words
3. Brainstorming and tentative hypotheses
4. Building a study agenda based on objectives
5. Private study
6. Discussing what has been learned
7. Solution and knowledge gained



# Functions in the PBL discussion group

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- Do not encourage **presentations** by students as a general rule
- **Encourage group activity:**
  - Is someone too dominant?
  - Is someone not contributing?



## Functions in the PBL discussion group

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- Encourage re-reading the case in the final PBL session
- Resist giving mini-lectures/tutorials – The students like it but it isn't PBL!
- Do not give tutor notes to students!



# Functions in the PBL discussion group

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- Familiarisation with the tutor notes



# Typical Tutor Concerns

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- I am a **biochemist** and I don't know anything about medicine!
- More confident if you familiarise yourself with the material in the **case and tutor notes**
- Remember: **Experts** can lead students into **too much** detail.





# Typical Tutor Concerns

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How can I be an effective tutor if the students know more than me?

- Source of insecurity for a PBL tutor who is used to being a **didactic teacher**.
- In PBL knowledge transference is not the name of the game – **tutors facilitate learning**



# The PBL cycle

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## ■ **Session 1**

- Appoint chair/scribe
- Identify significant components (cues) of case
- Generate explanations/hypotheses
- Assemble study agenda based on objectives.



# Session 1

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- **Where do things go wrong?**
  - **Poor chair** cannot manage discussion time
  - **Poor scribe** may not generate adequate material to carry forward to later sessions
  - **Students do not participate**
  - Group fails to identify **all** appropriate objectives
  - Study agenda is badly structured



# Session 1

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## What can the tutor do to solve problems?

- **Poor chair cannot manage discussion time**
  - gentle intervention in group session, e.g. suggest lot more cues to discuss etc.,
  - talk to chair **privately**



# Session 1

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- **Poor scribe may not generate adequate material to carry forward to later sessions**
  - gentle intervention in group session, e.g. offer a sheet + pens
  - talk to scribe **privately**
  - if the group leaves useful material behind pick it up yourself
  - talk to group **publicly** about their responsibility to the learning process



# Session 1

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- **Group fails to identify all appropriate areas**
  - if cues identified in your tutor books are ignored **ask why?**
  - approach should be oblique: do not ask **direct** questions but ask **leading** questions.



# Session 1

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- **Study agenda is badly structured**
  - we want to see questions posed relating to the case and the explanations they have developed.



# Session 2

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## Occurs after a period of self study

- Exchange of information
- Test of understanding
- Avoid mini-presentations



# Session 2



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- **Where do things go wrong?**
  - Chair fails to manage time effectively
  - Students do not share information
  - Students read from notes/pages of text book
  - Students do not participate at all, look bored, do not listen/engage in the process



# Session 2

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**What can the tutor do to solve problems?**

- **Students do not share information**
  - **General comment to group**
- **Students read from notes/pages of text book**
  - Usually indicates not enough work done or defective study skills



# Session 2

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- **Students do not participate at all, look bored, do not listen/engage in the process**
  - **Public** and **private** comments, plus personal tutor sessions.



# Session 2

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- **No review (summary) of the case**
  - Opportunity for tutor to assess depth of knowledge acquired and essential time to point out where further work is needed.
  - Intervene or have last 5 minutes of session to review case.



# Useful tutor questions

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## Session 1

- **What** is the key information?
- **What** might be the causes/reasons?
- **What** questions do you have?
- **What** terminology/concepts are unfamiliar?
- **Can you explain** your reasoning?
- **Why** is that? How come?
- **Why** did you come to that conclusion?
- **Do you all agree with what was just said?**



# Useful tutor questions (continued)

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- If what you suggest is true, then how would you explain.....
- For this situation, have you ever considered or thought about.....
- Do you feel you need to look up that point?
- You seem unsure. Where could we find the information that would help you clarify this?
- Are there other ways to examine this problem?

# Useful tutor questions (continued)



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## Sessions 2

- What are the major / minor / hidden / questionable assumptions being made?
- Why did you study this? Why was this work done? Why in this context?
- How is this related to other information? Are there inconsistencies? How can they be reconciled?



# Useful tutor questions (continued)

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- **Session 2**

What are some concrete examples?

- So what?
- What can we do now that we couldn't do before?
- Where does the new information lead?





# Useful tutor questions (continued)

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## Sessions - All

- What do you need to know more about in order to address this issue/solve this problem?
- What are the normal levels?
- Why is this significant?
- What does it mean if it's up by this amount?



# Thank you

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- El-Said Abdel-Hady