



The Interdisciplinary Journal of Problem-based Learning

Rubric for Research MS

(1/10/06 version)

Manuscript number: 06-201

Reviewer:

Notes to reviewers: You are requested to make notes on the manuscript itself, especially to point out how the paper can be improved. Please mark the rubric according to the following rating scale:

4 = Strongly agree; 3 = Agree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree

In addition, we ask you to give us your recommendation at the bottom of this page as to the suitability of this manuscript for publication in the *IJPBL*. Thank you for taking time to give this manuscript a thorough, careful review.

| Description of the Problem/Literature Review | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
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|---|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Does the manuscript clearly state and explain the problem or issue that is addressed by the research? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
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| Does the cited literature support the need for the completed research? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
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| Do the authors indicate how the current work adds to the previous research? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
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| Are appropriate references cited? | Yes | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | No | <input type="checkbox"/> |
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Comments: Very readable literature review and results on timely and important instructional topic. The summaries on p. 15 with bulleted information; should be in complete sentences and avoiding bulleted phrases. Abstract State who participants are to clarify

Lit Review

**Replacing the school name with descriptors, such as middle grades school with X number teachers and Y number students in higher SES urban neighborhood.*

**definition of special needs – but no operational definition – how did they decide who fit the def – everybody receiving those services? Based on review by someone?*

**Lit Review - Missing source for definition of PBL – or rationale for defining since other definitions exist*

**The literature review begins with a legal and ethical rationale for investigation followed by a very clear, concise rationale based on PBL research and effects on special needs and that the gap in the literature is to identify ways to increase academic achievement; the author(s) assert PBL may be the answer to increasing their achievement.*

***There is a disconnect between the literature review establishing a gap in effects of PBL on achievement in spec ed and the research questions asking about teacher-students valuing PBL, collaboration in PBL, and how teachers modify PBL approach. Is there any achievement data to at least demonstrate the learners did not progress. To align lit review to research questions one of two revisions possible – change lit review to fit questions OR, if possible, add achievement data to report. The method does refer to using student presentation “to help illustrate what the student learned” – but does not say how.*

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| Is the methodology well developed, clearly articulated, and appropriate for the problem described? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| If quantitative data are reported, was an appropriate statistical analysis done? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| If qualitative data are reported, were the methods used to collect and analyze the data clearly described? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Are the results of the analyses reported accurately and fully? | Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> | No | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Could teachers from other disciplines replicate the study without extensive additional explanation? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |

*Comments: * How or where did the teachers obtain the PBL unit and what was there impetus for using it. ... this would seem crucial given the third research question, yet little addresses this; the results summary does not include anything it.*

** – explain what a “maximum variation sample” is to reader and WHY it is appropriate in this case. Was variation based on school classifications?*

**Sequence in manuscript (incorrectly?) implies observations were made prior to submitting to human subjects.*

p. 9 instruments and data....

**Unclear in the opening description - with WHOM were the interviews conducted – teachers? Students? both? One at a time, in private-students were alone with researcher?*

***More detail on the methods — for example, why interview in week 7, 10 when the PBL activity lasted 24 weeks? (This seems to contradict limitations which said the interviews were discussed 1.5 months AFTER the unit) Why not interview at the end of the process?*

***Were the interviews structured? How were questions selected?*

***How many and what did codes represent for data coding procedure.*

**How was the student presentation used in triangulation? Were the presentations coded too and codes compared to interview notes? This process alludes to qualitative analyses and that means thick description and accurately reported detailed procedures. The details of methods/procedures seem a little thin. Results Could much of the results be explained by the nature of the PBL unit in this study . Are the results of the study a testimony to the effects of working on problems primarily about other people’s problems, in this case, accessibility – which is about PHYSICAL barriers to people with physical disabilities – which was others’ problems not most of these students’ problem?*

Instead of using teacher names in results, use position, e.g., LD/ED teacher, MiCD teacher or MoCD, MD/SCF teacher, etc. so that reader can instantly determine this important factor while reading results. Names are not useful and only confuse the issue.

Interpretation

- Are the conclusions drawn by the author supported by the data analysis?
- Do the conclusions address the original problem?
- Do the authors propose practical implications for PBL practice based on their findings? Yes No
- Does the manuscript address the applicability of the problem and results to PBL pedagogy? Yes No

Comments: The data indicates that the activity allowed and enabled interaction among the at-risk students and others in the school not so classified. Discuss further the implications for using PBL to foster interaction with other students and its relationship to inclusion.

Given the data, authors should reflect upon the possibility that spec ed students who collaboratively solve problems addressing others' needs/problems gives rise to their own compassionate, positive feelings towards fellow collaborators and, in the case, the community members who had accessibility problems.

Style

- Has the manuscript been carefully edited for spelling and grammar? Yes No
- Is the manuscript written in the active voice, intellectually engaging, and professionally appropriate? Yes No
- Are the references cited in the manuscript and listed in the reference section based on the current style manual of the American Psychological Association (APA)? Yes No

Clarity

- Is the manuscript easy to read and understand, especially by instructors from disciplines other than the author's? Yes No

Abstract

- Does the manuscript include an abstract of approximately 125 words that the reader can quickly scan to determine the content? Yes No

Appropriateness

- Is the content of the manuscript appropriate for the IJPBL? Yes No
- To your knowledge, have substantial portions of this manuscript been published previously? Yes No

Comments:

Please provide additional comments or suggestions on this sheet or a separate page as needed.

[Empty rectangular box for providing additional comments or suggestions]

Recommendation:

- Acceptable with minor revisions* *Acceptable with major revisions* *Not acceptable*