

Interdisciplinary Journal of Problem-based Learning
3-year Strategic Plan (January 2010 – December 2013)

Editor: Peg Ertmer, Professor, Educational Technology
Publisher: Purdue Press, Charles Watkinson, Director
Editorial Assistant, Chris Mong, Graduate Student, Educational Technology

Background

For over 40 years, researchers have lacked an outlet for sharing their findings with other educators and scholars who were interested in problem-based learning (PBL) as a pedagogical method. In the past, when educational journals published problem-based learning research, they did so with a single focus on the use of PBL in the specific discipline they represented. *The Interdisciplinary Journal of Problem-based Learning (IJPBL)* remedies this problem by offering a forum for all PBL research across disciplines. This scholarly journal publishes relevant information about problem based learning pedagogy and is the first, and only, journal of its kind. Furthermore, it is not “owned” by a professional organization, but by Purdue Press, which helps to assure that it will continue to serve a variety of audiences, across disciplines.

IJPBL was launched in 2006 as a joint venture between Purdue Libraries and the College of Education. Originally co-edited by Professor Peggy Ertmer, College of Education, and Alexius Macklin, assistant professor in the Libraries, Dr. Ertmer assumed full editorship in Fall 2008. The journal is an online, peer-reviewed publication, offered to the educational community as an open-access journal. The entire submission and review process is completed online using an electronic editorial system, managed by Digital Commons and subscribed to by Purdue Press. Since its inception, we’ve received over 200 submissions. To date, Purdue Press has provided the resources needed to publish and market the journal. Dr. Ertmer donates her time; the libraries provided a .25 graduate assistant until May 2009, at which time the COE began to provide this support.

IJPBL currently has five advisory and six editorial board members, all of whom are well-known PBL scholars and researchers. Chris Mong, a graduate student in Educational Technology, serves as the editorial assistant. Our current list of reviewers includes 71 scholars from institutions around the world including the United States, Canada, Australia, South Korea, England, the Netherlands, and Singapore, among others. Subscribers to the table of contents alerting service include readers from Turkey, Peru, Brazil, Sweden, Denmark, Australia, Great Britain, South Africa, New Zealand, Japan, Mexico, Singapore, and Finland. Their e-mail addresses reveal that, while many are at academic institutions, readers also include teachers, public education officials, vendors of educational services, publishers, as well as individual members of the public.

To date, we have published 20 high quality pieces addressing issues related to implementing PBL in a variety of educational contexts. Our journal has been open access nearly all of that time and, as a result, we’ve had over 45,000 full-text downloads to date, with over 22,000 so far this year. Average acceptance rates are between 10 - 20%.

Vision

The *Interdisciplinary Journal of Problem-based Learning* (IJPBL) will be a global outlet for PBL scholarship, representing excellence in discovery and promoting transformative educational pedagogy. IJPBL will provide access to the most current research and practice related to PBL pedagogy, thus enhancing efforts of both PBL scholars and practitioners.

Mission

The mission of IJPBL is to

- Publish rigorous research, representing a variety of disciplines, related to problem-based learning
- Engage key and emerging scholars in significant discussion of key issues facing PBL researchers and practitioners
- Provide up-to-date information to scholars and practitioners who are new to PBL research and pedagogy, enabling them to address current gaps in the literature and/or to transform current learning environments and practices

IJPBL Goals, Strategies, and Metrics

Goal: Establish IJPBL as a pre-eminent journal dedicated to PBL scholarship

Strategy: Increase credibility of IJPBL

Possible action steps:

- Secure listing in key citation indices (Ebsco Host; SSCI; etc.)
- Solicit manuscripts from key scholars doing PBL research
- Recruit key scholars for advisory and editorial board positions
- Maintain quality blind review process
- Establish and maintain acceptance rate < 15%

Metrics

- Publication of three consecutive volumes of the journal (necessary to achieve indexing in citation indices)
- List of key journals in which citations occur (determined through analysis of Google Scholar citations)
- Increase in number of manuscripts submitted by key scholars, including those from PBL “hotbeds” in Europe and Asia (e.g., Republic Polytechnic, Singapore; Erasmus University, Netherlands)
- Securement of 2 new key scholars/year to serve on editorial and advisory boards
- Yearly acceptance rate

Strategy: Increase visibility of IJPBL

Possible action steps:

- Implement marketing strategies designed to reach PBL scholars in multiple disciplines (conference presence; distribution of information [call for manuscripts, announcement of new issues, etc. to faculty]; advertisements/calls in relevant journals, newsletters, etc.)
- Publish topical issues related to PBL research and practice in specific disciplines (engineering education, pharmacy, educational psychology, etc.) or contexts (STEM, rural education, etc.)
- Enhance web presence including those sponsored by Purdue Press, the College of Education, and a dedicated website (www.ijpbl.org), maintained by IJPBL

Metrics

- Number of submissions/year
- Number of full-text downloads
- Number of disciplines represented in each volume
- Number of conferences in which IJPBL is marketed (exhibits, panel presentations, distributed brochures)/year

Goal: Establish Purdue, particularly the COE, as a key player in PBL scholarship and practice

Strategy: Create and strengthen ties with PBL scholars across colleges/schools at Purdue

Possible action steps:

- Engage colleagues in conversations about PBL pedagogy and research through established forums (Conversations on Teaching, CIE workshops, brown-bag seminar series, etc.)
- Solicit manuscripts from Purdue faculty engaged in PBL research
- Recruit Purdue scholars doing PBL research to participate on IJPBL board and/or as reviewers
- Participate on cross-disciplinary grants related to transformative pedagogy, including PBL

Metrics

- Number of attendees at PBL-based forums
- Annual survey of COE faculty efforts related to PBL
- Number of Purdue departments and colleges represented by authors of submitted manuscripts
- List of reviewers and/or board members representing multiple colleges at Purdue

- Collaborations with faculty from the College of Engineering and/or College of Science on NSF, DOE, and IES grants that include a PBL component

Strategy: Establish links between IJPBL, Purdue's COE, and national and international PBL initiatives

Possible action steps:

- Participate in national and international efforts (PBL-focused conferences; PBL consultancies; advisory boards on multi-institutional grants)
- Create an International Section in IJPBL - Publish articles and/or special issue related to international PBL scholarship
- Host workshops, webinars, online discussions related to PBL pedagogy

Metrics

- Number of national and international events with a Purdue/IJPBL presence
- Invitations to participate in national and international efforts
- Articles/issues related to PBL scholarship and/or initiatives at Purdue
- Workshops, webinars, etc. hosted by Purdue with IJPBL presence