



# 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 *JPBL*. Thank you for taking time to give this manuscript a thorough, careful review.

Description of the Problem/Literature Review	4	3	2	1
Does the manuscript clearly state and explain the problem or issue that is addressed by the research?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Does the cited literature support the need for the completed research?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do the authors indicate how the current work adds to the previous research?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are appropriate references cited?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

*Comments: I think that introduction needs to be reordered. See notes within the paper. The problem and purpose come too late in the paper. This should be evident within the first 2 paragraphs. In your literature on cooperative learning, you need to include work by Slavin as well as Johnson and Johnson. They have done extensive research in this area.*

Methodology	4	3	2	1
Is the methodology well developed, clearly articulated, and appropriate for the problem described?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

*Comments: In the overview, you mention "teachers who participated in a PBL unit on the accessibility of Brownsville, ..." Did they develop the unit? Was it one that the researchers created?*

*The "setting and participants" section begins with an overview of how the PBL activity was implement. I would not call that the context necessarily but more of a procedure.*

*I think you needed to detail how the PBL was carried out and could expand on this. What do you mean by "accessible?" You need to explain this concept to the readers. (They may not be familiar with special education terms/ issues.) Did the students use computers at all for the PBL? I thought I remembered reading something about computers. Explain all of the components of this activity including what type of presentation the students were asked to make.*

*The setting is the school, the classroom and the community. Give us some more information about these.*

*It would also help the readers to provide more information about the students and the teachers. For example, how old were the students. What would be characteristic of students with these disabilities? (Noting this would give the readers an opportunity to see how the PBL activities impacted them when you discuss the results later.) How many years have the teachers been teaching in special education? What are their prior experiences with PBL? If they are novices, was training or instruction provided? Where the students diverse in ways other than disability and age? Some of this you could summarize and put into a table.*

*I need more information about the interviews. What types of questions did you ask them? How long were the interviews?*

*You mention taking "field notes" and said on page 8 that one of the researchers engaged in "participant observation." Describe the participant observation and the types of field notes that were taken. How many times were the teachers/students observed?*

*The data analysis is not clear. Did you use a constant comparative approach? How many codes were developed and what do you mean they weren't all " valid for both students and teacher?" Did you develop two sets of codes, one for each group of participants?*

*More information is needed to answer research question #3. I'm not clear on what procedures were modified.*

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### 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: In the discussion section you could strengthen your arguments by talking more about the impact of engagement on learning. After all, at the beginning of your manuscript you discuss the implications of NCLB and IDEA. I really think that this is an important finding as it relates to this population of students.*

### 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: For the most part the style and clarity is fine. There are some edits that the author needs to make. The introduction and literature review need to be reworded a bit.*

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

**General overview comments:**

**This is an interesting study and appears to fill a gap in the PBL literature as well as special education. With some revisions, it could be a nice piece for the journal.**

**The introductory section could be rewritten in order to better identify the problem and purpose of the study. To me, the problem and purpose have been couched in the literature review. This isn't the appropriate place. I quickly made some suggestions about the order in my notes on the actual manuscript.**

**The literature review is missing some references to key researchers in cooperative learning.**

**The methodology needs to be fleshed out. Procedures for the PBL could be explained better. I think other special education teachers will want to know this. (Note this relates also to answering question 3 below).**

**Research question 3 (modified approaches) should also be fleshed out. I can't tell exactly how they modified the PBL process/procedures.**

**Recommendation:**

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