Maastricht University

Supporting Learner Engagement through Problem-Based Learning: Institutional and Instructional Implications

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The Game

Start

- Traditional learners
  - 18-25 years
  - No/limited professional experience
  - Full time students
- Traditional curriculum
  - F2F courses
  - PBL learning approach
- Low use of technologies
  - Blackboard as content management

The Goal

- "Create an online *or* blended learning environment for "full time *or* part-time students"
- Stay true to learning philosophy
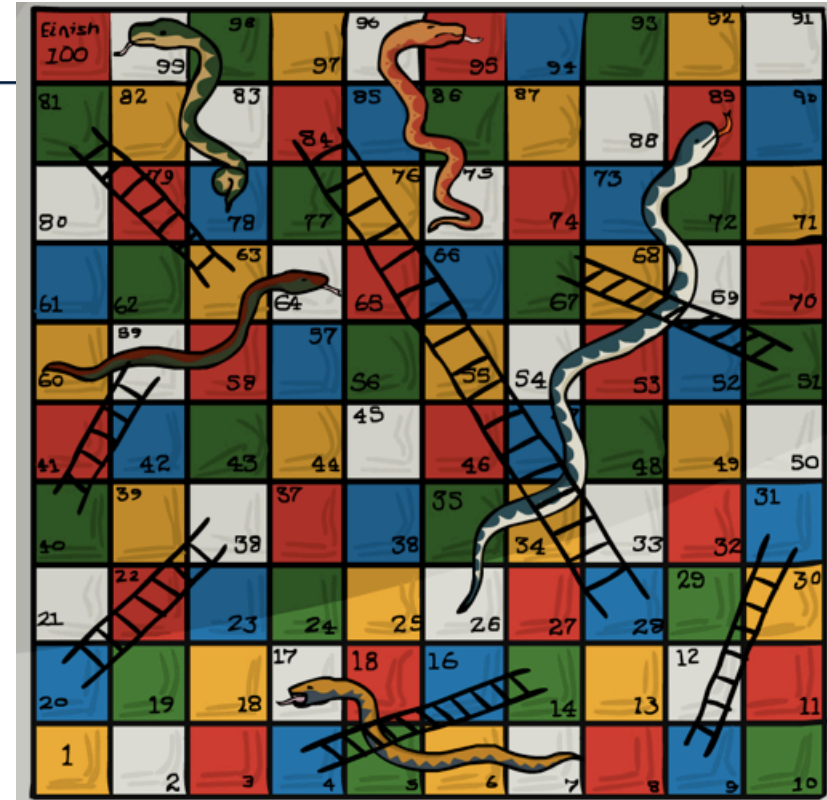
Rules of the Game

- collaboration between all schools of the university
- 3 years
- Bottom-up management
- No guidelines, targets etc.

RULES

Any number of people can play, either as individuals or in teams.

Shuffle deck. Players each pick one card. The highest card goes first.

Reshuffle. Place in center of table.

Round #1—Starting with first player and moving clockwise, with person to the right asking the questions, each player answers from "BT" category, until all cards in that category have been played. Reshuffle.

Round #2—Each player answers a question from the "G" category until all the cards have been played.

Continue until all five categories have been played.

Each correct answer is worth one point.

Player with the most points wins.

Outcome

- 34 hybrid/blended/online courses were offered
- 809 learners took part from 21 countries
- Participants satisfaction: 72.5 %
- Teacher inspiration guide to build online/blended courses
- Uncovered gaps:
  - Technological infrastructure
  - Policy changes

3 Examples

Online PBL Course

Blended PBL Course

Hybrid PBL Course

	Case 1: A hybrid course	Case 2: A blended course	Case 3: Online PBL
Instructional Implications for fostering learner engagement			
Understanding your learner	increasing interest and attention through varying methods	geographical flexibility; availability of tools; combining learning with other demands	geographical flexibility; different preferences for how to collaborate
Role as facilitator	guiding the meaningful use of the tool	structure group discussions	passive support on demand for group; provider of collaborative tools
Intentional course design	no connection between pedagogy and tool choice	tool use created learning experience not possible otherwise	enabling collaboration online in a full PBL setting
Change management implications for implementing hybrid, blended and online PBL courses			
Focus on Collaboration	limited collaboration with (external) course designers and technical experts	enthusiastic team designing content, format and tool use with support from central project team	one change agent manages to create an informal network strong enough to support his course development

Failures &
their reasons

- Part-time PhD support courses for law professionals
  - Lack of participants & teacher time
- Interactive lectures (SMS2Vote)
  - Multiple choice questions not tied to course goals
- Blended MBA
  - Lack of interests from the teachers

Institutional Implications

- Embrace risk and accept failure
- Bottom-up project members should be self-selected
- Entrepreneurial spirit at all levels (board to project members)
- Collaboration between faculties and hierarchy

Concluding remarks

- Yes, bottom-up may be slower, but
  - ✓ less resistance to change
  - ✓ Diverse experiences
  - ✓ Collaboration between different schools

Questions?

More information about

Supporting Learner Engagement through Problem-Based Learning: Institutional and Instructional Implications

Via e-mail: k.bohlecarbonell@maastrichtuniversity.nl

- Publications:
  - "Unleashing the creative potential of faculty to create blended learning" in *Internet and Higher Education*
  - "Problem-based learning in hybrid, blended and online courses: Instructional and change management implications for supporting learning engagement" in *Increasing student engagement and retention in e-Learning environments: Web 2.0 and Blended learning technologies*