

## ARGUMENTATIVE PAPER OUTLINE

### UHLB2122 SECTION: 36

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**You are doing a phrase/topic outline. Only write out what it says. Be sure to include the internal citations for the information from your sources. If you have no internal citations the outline will be treated as plagiarized and you will receive a zero with no revision option.**

### **TOPIC:**

**Problem Based Learning as a more effective method than Traditional Instruction Approaches at producing students who are more employable.**

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### **I. Introduction**

- a) Hook - Attention Getter (write this out) – could be a startling statistic/fact, an anecdote, quote, rhetorical question
- b) Background information
- c) Thesis statement (Write this out)

Soft skills such as communication, problem-solving, critical thinking, time management, and creativity, are skills or abilities that enable an individual to perform well in the real-world working environment (Workable, n.d.). Individuals with great soft skills are highly sought after by employers around the world. However, did you know that approximately 3 in every 4 employers claim that they find it very difficult to find graduates who possess such relevant soft skills? (SHRM, 2019). According to a survey done by Cengage in 2018, between 65 to 74 percent of employers are looking for soft skills such as listening, critical thinking, interpersonal, and communication skills, among other skills, in potential candidates (Cengage, 2019). In the same survey, it was stated that approximately 73 percent of the employers claimed that they have a difficult time finding qualified candidates who possessed these soft skills. Additionally, roughly 34 percent of the employers even claimed that students have not been properly prepared for jobs by their respective schools. These staggering statistics tell us that there is something significantly wrong with our education system these days, whereby it has failed to instill soft skills that are highly in demand in today's workplace, into the students. Hence, it is painstakingly clear that the traditional approach of teaching and learning is no

longer suitable for today's standards. Thus, it is unavoidable for us to ask the question, is there an alternative approach for today's students to learn all the necessary soft skills demanded by the employers? This brings us to explore other teaching or learning methods. One of the most promising teaching approaches that will be able to instill all of the relevant soft skills into the students is Problem-Based Learning (PBL). PBL is a teaching approach where students are given complex real-world problems as a source of motivation for them to explore and research all the necessary concepts, principles, and methods required to solve the problems (Duch et al., 2001). Students who are taught using PBL will possess abilities such as thinking critically to solve real-world problems, identify and utilize appropriate learning resources, cooperate with other individuals in groups, communicate effectively with others, and also learn continuously, all of which are skills that are highly sought after by today's employers. PBL differs from traditional learning methods in which students are only given reading materials and lectures to learn about concepts that might not even be useful in a real-world scenario. Hence, in this article, we will prove that PBL is more effective than traditional instruction approaches at producing graduates who are more employable, because it produces students who possess soft skills that are highly sought after by employers.

## **II. Developing Your Argument (3 – 4 paragraphs)**

a) **Make a claim 1:** PBL is more effective in the development of critical thinking skills than traditional instruction approaches. Hence, students are able to master one more soft skill in demand, which will boost their employability.

1. **Evidence 1a:** PBL provides a successful learning climate that is helpful for the development of critical thinking by stimulating the students' interest, encouraging their participation in meaningful conversations, exposing them to the thoughts and perspectives of others, and cultivating a trusting and supportive environment (EL-Shaer & Gaber, 2014).

2. **Evidence 1b:** Students who experienced PBL showed more prominent improvement in critical thinking abilities and motivation to learn, which is made possible by allowing them to have the opportunity to impart their insights with other individuals (EL-Shaer & Gaber, 2014).

3. **Evidence 1c:** The use of PBL gives a positive effect on the critical thinking skills of students. PBL improves the critical thinking skills of students (Aswan et.al, 2018).

b) **Make a claim 2:** PBL is an approach model that will enhance the communication skills of the students' during their learning process, which in turn will lead to them possessing another soft skill in demand, and thus improving their employability.

1. **Evidence 2a:** According to a study done by Beagon and Niall (2015), the students who underwent PBL improved their communication skills along with other skills such as team

working skills, research skills, self-learning skills, etc. by approximately 60 percent. This shows that PBL is undoubtedly a very effective method in improving the students' communication skills, and thus improving their employability.

2. **Evidence 2b:** Students who participate in problem-based learning are generally motivated by it and demonstrate good communication skills among themselves (Awang & Zawawi, 2015).

3. **Evidence 2c:** PBL provides many opportunities for students to work together in small groups (Duch et al., 2001), which in turn will force them to acquire communication skills throughout the learning process in order to communicate effectively with their group members to solve the problems.

c) **Make a claim 3:** PBL will be able to allow the students to attain exceptional cooperation or team working skills, which is yet another valuable soft skill that is in demand by the employers. Besides, students will be able to attain other soft skills such as listening skills and communication skills whilst strengthening their team working skills. Thus, students will definitely be more employable after gaining cooperation skills along with other soft skills that are instilled into them by PBL.

1. **Evidence 3a:** Results from this study shows that PBL is used to directly integrate problem solving skills, communication skills, and also critical thinking, while integrating team working skills indirectly due to the fact that PBL students are trained to work in groups. (Idrus & Ridhuan, 2018).

2. **Evidence 3b:** A similar study done by Othman et al. (2017) shows that PBL is an effective method to improve the students' employability. In this study, it is shown that the employability of students increases up to 56% if they possess great team working skills. Since PBL is a proven method to improve the team working skills of students (Idrus & Ridhuan, 2018), we can infer that PBL is undoubtedly a very effective method in increasing the employability of students.

3. **Evidence 3c:** According to a study done by Beagon and Niall (2015), students' perceptions on the improvement of their skills and abilities such as team working skills, researching skills, self-learning skills, and communication skills, improved by approximately 60% upon completing their first PBL session. This shows that PBL is able to directly improve the students' team working skills, as well as other valuable soft skills by a huge margin, which will subsequently lead to an improvement in their employability.

### III. Refuting Opponents' Arguments ( 3 – 4 paragraphs)

a) **Opposing view 1:** The mean GPA for students in LBL group is slightly higher than that of students in PBL group (Zaidi et.al, 2017).

**Refutation 1.** Although the mean GPA of the LBL group might be slightly higher, this does not guarantee that the students possess the required soft skills for the job market. This is because the examination might not evaluate the problem-solving and critical thinking skills of students, but only evaluate the preparedness and level of knowledge acquisition of students. On the other hand, PBL is able to significantly improve the soft skills that are highly sought after by the job market as mentioned by Carriger (2016).

b) **Opposing view 2:** PBL could indirectly result in poorer development of social skills among students as Zaidi et.al (2017) mentioned that less opportunities are available for students who follow PBL to participate in extracurricular activities that can help to develop their social skills compared with LBL. This is because the PBL method requires students to spend more time on doing preparation for upcoming classes unlike the LBL class that only requires them to receive knowledge passively from the instructors and also self-research to solve problems triggered during the class.

**Refutation 1:** It is certainly true that PBL requires students to spend more time on their studies than compared to traditional instruction approaches. However, the PBL learning process is always conducted in the form of small group discussions, and every student in a group is encouraged to communicate and cooperate with his/her group members and instructors to solve the given problems. This will definitely enhance the students' communication skills, which will subsequently lead to improving their social skills as well. Besides that, the PBL graduate nurses in the study done by Applin et.al (2011) stated that the formation of small discussion groups in PBL can enable students to enhance their critical thinking skills through dialogue, debate and application of research skills to tackle the nursing issues. Through the dialogues and debates done throughout the learning process, it is certain that the communication and social skills of the students will be improved significantly.

c) **Opposing view 3:** Students in LBL group shows better performance in lower order thinking skills (LOTS) such as knowledge, comprehension and application compared to students in PBL group (Alcázar & Fitzgerald, 2005)

**Refutation 1:** Although students in the LBL group have higher performance in LOTS, Alcázar and Fitzgerald (2005) states that students in the PBL group show better results in HOTS such as analysis-synthesis and evaluation. According to Pogrow (2005), HOTS are more valuable than LOTS as HOTS is very closely related to critical thinking skills, which

is a highly sought after soft skill by the employers, and students with great HOTS and subsequently better critical thinking skills, will have a better mindset to face and solve the issue and difficulties that might appear not only in the academic level but also in the working environment. Yee et.al (2011) believes that students with HOTS have the ability to learn from their mistakes and improve their work quality by lowering their errors, all of which are skills that are highly valued by employers. In short, even though students taught by traditional instruction approaches might perform better in LOTS, it does not guarantee that they will possess the necessary soft skills to be more employable. On the other hand, PBL is able to instill students with better HOTS, which subsequently results in improving the students' critical thinking skills as well, which then leads to the improvement in employability of the students.

#### **IV. Conclusion**

- a) Restate the importance of your issue
- b) Paint a picture of the world depicting what would happen if your argument is (or is not) implemented

In this article, we have discussed why we claim that PBL is a more effective method than traditional instruction approaches in producing students who are more employable. This topic of discussion is of great importance as several studies have found that the majority of today's employers agree that it has become very difficult to find graduates who possess the necessary soft skills such as communication skills, critical thinking skills, team working skills, as well as various other soft skills. Hence, we claimed that PBL should be implemented in place of the traditional instruction approaches as it can instill all the necessary soft skills which are sought after by the employers, into the students, as demonstrated in many studies. If PBL is not implemented in place of the traditional instruction approaches, and the traditional instruction approaches are continued to be used to educate our youth, then the rate of unemployment in our country will definitely be on the rise in the coming years. This is because there will be lesser and lesser graduates who are well trained with the soft skills that are demanded by the employers, resulting in a spike in unemployment. Not just that, the workforce of the country will be significantly affected as there will be lesser and lesser manpower in every industry, as a result of the lack of employment. This will lead to further implications to the economy as many companies start to fail in providing their services due to the lack of capable employees. In short, PBL is more effective than traditional instruction approaches in producing more employable students. Hence, we propose that PBL should replace the traditional instruction approaches so that the future generations will be well equipped with the necessary soft skills to be more employable, as failure to do so will bring upon significant consequences to the economy of our country.

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[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/328328898\\_Implementation\\_of\\_PBL\\_to\\_enhance\\_the\\_soft\\_skills\\_of\\_engineering\\_students](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/328328898_Implementation_of_PBL_to_enhance_the_soft_skills_of_engineering_students)

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