Problem-Based Learning: Experience It Yourself

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What Is PBL?

“The principal idea behind PBL is that the starting point for learning should be a problem, a query, or a puzzle that the learner wishes to solve.”

Violent Crime Up For Second Year

By Dan Eggen
Washington Post Staff Writer
Saturday, June 2, 2007; A01

The number of violent crimes in the United States rose for a second straight year in 2006, marking the first sustained increase in homicides, robberies and other serious offenses since the early 1990s, according to an FBI report to be released Monday.

The FBI's Uniform Crime Report will show an increase of about 1.3 percent in violent offenses last year, including a 6 percent rise in robberies and a slight rise in homicides, according to law enforcement officials, who described key findings in advance of the report's release. That follows an increase of 2.3 percent in 2005, which was the first significant increase in violent crime in 15 years.

Much of the increase was concentrated in medium-size cities, including the District of Columbia, officials said. Criminologists and law enforcement officials offer varying theories for the upswing, including an increase in the

1. What do you think are possible reasons for the recent increase in violent crime in the U.S.?
2. How does the crime profile and reasons compare in Jamaica?
1. How does crime affect an urban community?
2. Who are the relevant stakeholders in finding a solution to increasing crime?
What is the role of a university in reducing crime in its region?
Preparing to Engage

As part of an initiative to engage the local community, the new president is preparing to launch a new program on sustainability. He sees the university as an agent of change in the world and seeks to challenge all students to incorporate social justice into their ethos. He wishes to put his ideas into practice promptly through a service learning partnership with the community.
Preparing to Engage

Social justice is an important element of developing a sustainable society.

The president recognizes that the development of a community-based project to reduce crime would be an excellent service-learning project for his students.
Who Cares?

Identify at least six stakeholder groups who have a significant interest in solving the problem of crime. [Example, mayor/government of the city.]

After we identify the six groups to consider, each person in your group should select a different stakeholder and wait for instructions.

After break, please return to the table representing your selected role.
Elements of a university-based project to reduce crime in its region

What do you need to know to begin designing a crime-reduction program that engages students in its implementation?

From your stakeholder perspective, what are the important elements that a crime-reduction program would include?
“...once you have learned to ask questions – relevant and appropriate and substantial questions – you have learned how to learn and no one can keep you from learning whatever you want or need to know.”

Neil Postman & Charles Weingartner in *Teaching as a Subversive Activity*, 1969
Characteristics of Good Learning Issues

Presented in the form of a **question** or **series of questions**.

**Focused** so that it seeks specific information.

Constructed so that it asks an **answerable** question.

Pursues information that is **relevant** to the problem.

Goes beyond superficial knowledge to probe **conceptual** issues.

Often set in a **context** that provides direction. **Why** is the question important?
Elements of a university-based project to reduce crime in its region

What do you need to know to begin designing a crime-reduction program that engages students in its implementation?

From your stakeholder perspective, what are the important elements that a crime-reduction program would include?
Review your earlier work in light of this campus development.
Back in home groups, design a university-based service learning project that will work to reduce crime in your region.

What essential elements will it include?
What role will the students play?
How will you know if it works?

Be prepared to make a brief report to the other participants.