

# Enabling Inquiry Based Learning (IBL)



Commenced: 2005

## What is it?

The project aims to promote the use of Inquiry Based Learning in the social studies programme. Previous work involved a small-scale attempt to introduce an element of IBL into a Social Science Study Skills module that was run in the first year of the programme, with students from across the programme studying on a range of degrees. This was evaluated by a variety of means and found to be an innovation that met with broad support from tutors and students, although there were also several problems that needed to be tackled.

We have adopted an IBL approach rather than a Problem Based (PBL) approach since the latter normally assumes there is an answer to the problem whereas in the social sciences the answer to a problem is very likely to be another set of questions. Thus we see understanding the process of inquiry and acquiring the relevant skills of that process as being central to becoming a social scientist.

## What is involved?

The Social Science degree programme is in the process of being re-validated and this has given us the opportunity to rethink both the structure of the first year programme and its content. It is hoped to incorporate an element of IBL in the new programme, for example in the Social Science Foundations module.

## Why is the project important to the CETL and the University?

The project is important because it is part of a range of initiatives aimed at enhancing the first year experience of our students.

In particular it aims to promote learner autonomy over both the content and the process of the learning experience. It also involves a changed role for staff involved in the module, since they have to take on a more facilitative role rather than the traditional teacher expert who transmits a set curriculum.

## What do you hope the project will achieve?

It is hoped that the project will provide a platform for the development of other inquiry based approaches in the programme. It is hoped that as a result of this experience in the first year of the programme students performance will improve, especially in those modules where there is a large amount of learner autonomy.

## What impact do you hope the project will have?

The initial impact of the project will be relatively small in its first year as it will affect 150-200 students on one part of one module.

## Future Developments

Over the life of the CETL it is hoped to expand the IBL approach to other modules and courses within the division.

## Links

The HEFCE funded ALAC project has obvious overlaps with the CPLA CETL as we are concerned with producing a pedagogical framework for the teaching of citizenship not just the production of resources.

ALAC Project

<http://alac.escalate.ac.uk/index.cfm>

## Contact details

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