

Inquiry-Based Education in Mathematics: Models, Methods, & Effectiveness for Higher Education

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Why IBL?

One minute version of why IBL

- Our system needs an upgrade.
- Unintended negative outcomes via traditional methods.
- Research suggests IBL outcomes are better.

“Things my students claim that I taught them masterfully, they don’t know.” – Dylan Retsek

If we really want students to be independent, inquisitive, persistent, then we need to provide them with the means to acquire these skills.

My IBL origins

- When I started teaching, I mimicked the experiences I had as a student (i.e., I lectured).
- By most metrics, I was a successful teacher (e.g., high evaluations, several awards). Why change?
- Inspired by a Project NExT Workshop run by Carol Schumacher (Kenyon College), I decided to give IBL a try.
- For 3 consecutive semesters, I taught an intro to proof course at Plymouth State University.
- 1st two iterations taught via lecture-based approach.
- 3rd time taught using IBL with emphasis on collaboration.
- When I taught an abstract algebra course containing students from both styles, anecdotal evidence suggested students taught via IBL were stronger proof-writers & more independent as learners.
- I was sold from that moment on.

Some Data

- 2010: 3.7 million students in secondary school.
- 2010: 52% of those go to University.
- 2013: 38% of the UK population had a degree.
- 2010: 16,000 people started a PhD.



Conclusion?

Education is a self-populating institution!

You are peculiar!

We need to renormalize.

What is happening in STEM education?

- There exists a growing body of evidence suggesting students are dissatisfied with learning experiences in STEM.
- Math Education Research suggests that college students have difficulty with:
 - Solving non-routine problems,
 - Packing/Unpacking mathematical statements,
 - Proof.

Schoenfeld 1988, Muis 2004, Selden and Selden 1995/1999/2003, Dreyfus 2001, Sowder and Harel 2003, Weber 2001/2003, Weber and Alcock 2004, Tall 1994

Talking About Leaving

- About half of STEM majors switch to non-STEM.
- Top 4 reasons for switching are teaching related.
- Good ones leave, too.
- Loss of interest.
- Curriculum overload.
- Students dissatisfied with teaching of STEM classes and less so with non-STEM.
- Weed-out culture.



WRONG PIC

The Good News

Evidence from the math ed literature suggests that active, learner-centered instruction leads to improved conceptual understanding, problem solving, proof writing, retention, habits of mind, and attitudes about math.

Boaler 1998, Kwon et al. 2005, Rassmussen et al. 2006, Smith 2006, Chappell 2006, Larsen et al. 2011/2013/2014, etc.

The Colorado Study

blah

The Twin Pillars

1. Deep engagement in rich mathematics,
2. Opportunities to collaborate.

Laursen et al. 2013

“Our study indicates that the benefits of active learning experiences may be lasting and significant for some student groups, with no harm done to others. Importantly, covering less material in inquiry-based sections had no negative effect on students later performance in the major.”

Kogan, M., Laursen, S. L. (2013). Assessing long-term effects of inquiry-based learning: A case study from college mathematics. *Innovative Higher Education*, 39(3).

Laursen et al. 2014

“blah blah.”

reference???

Force Concept Inventory

blah