## Abstract

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# Challenging the role of the university teacher – in a PBL context

Aalborg University is based on principles of Problem Based Learning (PBL). PBL is based on social and practice oriented approaches to learning and the theacher’s role is to supervise and guide the group’s project work. Nevertheless it often happens in practice that the project work is supplemented with teaching sessions in the form of lectures which build on traditional scholastic approaches to learning. This means that the teaching often is not problem-oriented in its form, but rather based on topics or disciplines. Consequently, there is still a need to challenge the understanding of the connection between teaching and learning, and the role of the university teacher in a PBL context. In a radical experiment we created a teaching scenario in which the teachers were almost invisible. Their role was to plan, structure and orchestrate a learning process for the students in which the students became highly motivated and active learners. The concept ‘responsibility for own learning’, which in a traditional HE context might result in the individual student having to cope on his/her own with understanding and learning, was here a part of a social learning approach, where students learned together and from each other in a highly structured process. The paper will describe the experiment and examine the teachers’ role, the demands on the teachers and on the didactical planning. It will describe the learning goals of the experiment and document the learning outcome, and thus challenge the concept of the university teacher as a knowledge ‘bank’ to be drawn on and the concept of quality of teaching as solely a question of number of confrontation hours (face-to-face hours) with the teacher. The experiment also indicates the contours of a new teacher role in HE characterized by being directive on process rather than on content and thus being in accordance with the PBL principles governing the project work. The research methodology is ethnographically oriented and data consist of the documentation of the planning and implementation process, observations of the students’ processes and the resulting output / products.