

# Can the development of medical students' professional identities be made more explicit in the curriculum through PBL?

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## Background and Rationale for Study

- Attaining a professional identity is one of the most consequential aspects of medical education<sup>1,2</sup>
- Early educational opportunities are vital<sup>2</sup>
- Conflict with the hidden curriculum acts as a hindrance<sup>4,5</sup>
- Teaching professionalism is recommended by the GMC in the UG curriculum but what is the best teaching method?<sup>6,7</sup>
- Formal Curriculum teaching – lectures, interactive courses and part of communication skills in clinical years
- Standalone lectures are inadequate<sup>7</sup>

**Aim:** Evaluating the use of PBL as a potential teaching and learning innovation for developing professional identities as an explicit part of the formal curriculum by integrating prompts to highlight relevant teaching and learning points

## Methods



### Examples of prompts:

#### PBL 3 - Birth Asphyxia

- Thinking about your future role as a doctor, what things do you think you should keep in mind when breaking bad news to a patient?

#### PBL 5 - A death in infancy

- This PBL is about the death of a child. Is this the same or different to the death of an adult?

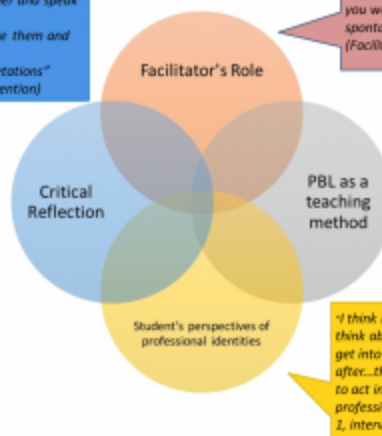
## Take home messages

- Use of prompts and questioning by facilitator is applicable in many teaching settings
- Learning from peers and role modelling is important in the formation of professional identities
- Reflective practice is vital and should be incorporated in collaborative learning in the formal curriculum

## Results and Discussion

"It was interesting because we haven't had that opportunity to... in a more professional way, come together and speak about clinical experiences...share them and have...different people's...interpretations" (Student 2, intervention)

"I've found that, with all the professional prompts, they haven't come up, as you were saying... spontaneously." (Facilitator 3)



"I think in a weird sense you think about it more before you get into medical school than after...they kind of expect you to act in that... medically professionally way" (Student 1, intervention)

- Facilitator is important for the effectiveness of prompts and nature of discussion
- Small group discussion is a positive learning experience yet often underemphasised
- Reflection in peer discussions is valued by students more than current written reflection
- Role modelling as learning experience is vital
- Students have to find a balance between the formal and hidden curriculum, often focusing on biomedical content at the expense of wider social issues

## Recommendations

- Training for all PBL facilitators and expansion into further cohorts and modules
- Use of these prompts in PBL for clinical students
- Include reflection and collaborative learning in other parts of the curriculum

### References

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