

EBL

AT



**UNIVERSITY OF
PLYMOUTH**
Faculty of Medicine and
Dentistry

You will hear the term “EBL” used a lot when you start at Peninsula Dental School and throughout your course

What does EBL mean?

EBL stands for **Enquiry-based learning** and is a modern educational philosophy followed at Peninsula Dental School. It involves student-centred learning which occurs in small groups, your **EBL group**, and is facilitated by a facilitator, **your EBL facilitator**.

It is fun, active and engaging and relies on plenty of self-directed learning. This means you take responsibility for your own learning, so you can study when you want to and at a pace and style that suits you. But you also work together with the rest of your EBL group members, sharing knowledge and resources, so everyone works collaboratively to help each other. It is very different from sitting in a lecture theatre and being talked at, as questioning, enquiring, interacting and problem solving are encouraged.

Who is in your EBL group?

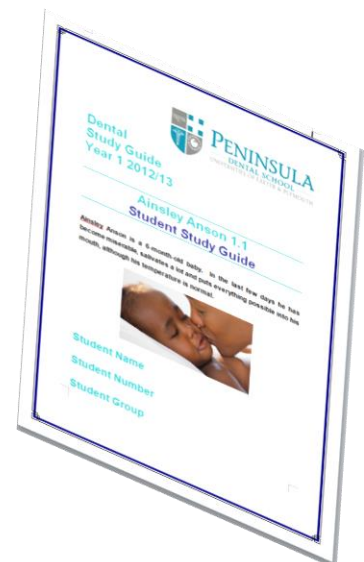
Dental students and therapy and hygiene students will be integrated in EBL groups during Year 1. You are randomly assigned to an EBL group, which are numbered from 1 to 10.

You will **change** EBL groups in Year 2 and dental students will **change** EBL groups again in Year 5.

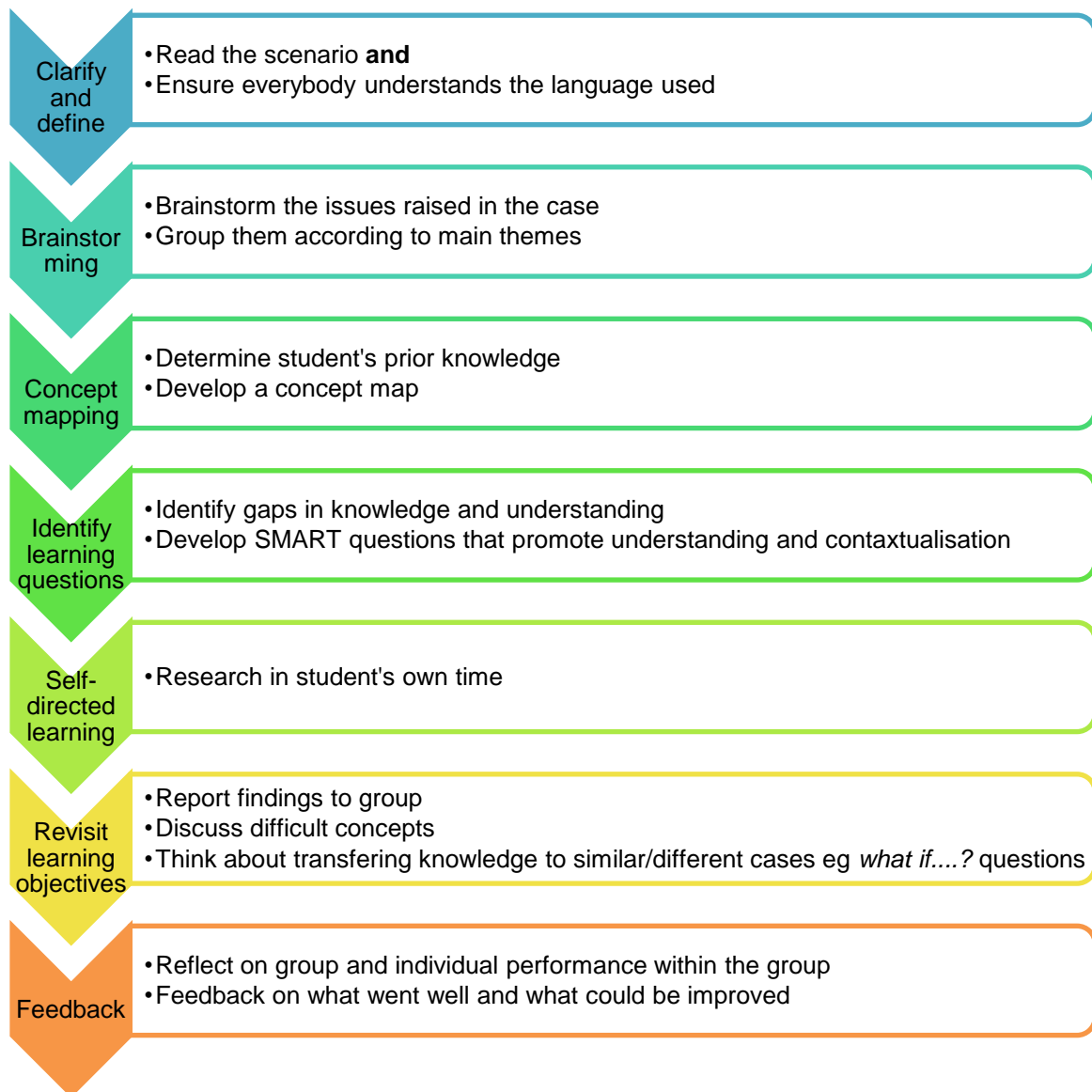
There will be approximately 8 students in each EBL group.

What do you do in each EBL session?

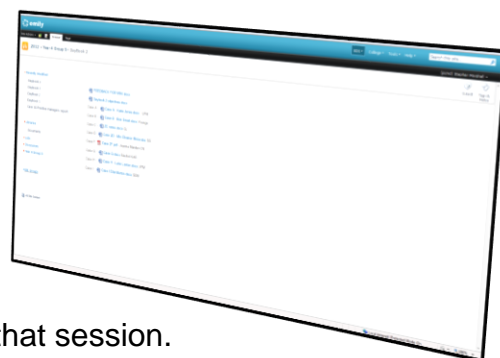
In Year 1, you will have **EBL sessions** on Monday afternoons and Friday mornings. These sessions are mandatory and last 1.5 hours. Each **EBL case** lasts for 2 weeks, and so there are 4 EBL sessions per case. In the first session of each **EBL case** you are presented with a scenario from which you identify learning objectives that you will need to address and find the answers to, so that you can report back with the information in the other EBL sessions. The final EBL session in an EBL case is used for checking you have understood all you need to and for group and individual feedback.



This process follows the Maastricht problem-based learning 7 steps, and is explained below:



There is plenty of time for you to undertake your self-directed learning, and you will be able to share resources with your other EBL group members on your **EBL group DLE DISCUSSION FORUM**, which is like a notice board, only seen by your group members and your EBL facilitator, on the school's IT managed learning environment (you will have training on how to use this).



When you report your findings to your EBL group, you are only allowed to bring one A4 sheet of notes for all the learning objectives of that session.

There are several reasons for this. Your EBL facilitator will be looking for deep understanding of the issues, rather than rote learning, and by verbalising your thoughts, rather than reading from your notes this is demonstrated. These A4 sheets

also serve as great revision tools. You can bring your notes and textbooks to the EBL sessions, but they should be for reference only.

You are not allowed to use an iPad or similar device instead of the A4 sheet.

All students have to cover all the learning objectives and discussion and debate is encouraged rather than presentations. All students have to contribute in the EBL sessions, and ground rules are set at the beginning of the year to cover interrupting or dominant students taking over too much.

What are some tips for getting the best from EBL?

1. Firstly, try not to panic about EBL. It is a very different way of learning compared to school learning, and can be daunting at first. If you are really struggling, speak to your EBL facilitator, Academic Tutor or Year Lead.
2. Work with your EBL group rather than on your own. This gives you a feel to the depth and breadth of the learning needed.
3. Recognise there is no syllabus per se. You need to trust your EBL facilitator to ensure you cover all the learning objectives for each case to a sufficient depth. All the EBL groups will have different learning objectives, but this is OK, as all the essential ones will be covered, but the EBL facilitators will not want to limit your learning in any way.
4. Use the other learning activities, such as plenaries and Life Sciences, as a scaffold on which to base the depth of your learning.
5. Keep on top of the workload in each EBL case and use the weekend in between each case to consolidate your learning for that case. This is an intense course and a huge amount of work is covered each year, but especially in the first year to get you ready to treat patients in February/March.
6. Use EBL to discover what is the best way of learning for you. Everyone works in a different way, and one of the joys of EBL is that because there is much self-directed learning, you can discover what works for you.
7. Respect different viewpoints from other members in your EBL group and learn to work alongside them. EBL is a professional learning setting, rather than a social gathering, and learning tolerance for others will help you when treating patients.
8. If you are quiet and shy and find talking in EBL difficult, know that EBL sessions are safe places, where there is no ridiculing and all students are encouraged to join in.

9. The curriculum at Peninsula is a spirally based curriculum. This means that you will revisit the same topics again in successive years. So you do not need to cover everything about a topic in the first year. This is a hard concept to grasp as you don't know the depth required in each year and often this doesn't make sense until the end of the course. Your EBL facilitator will help you with this, as will the depth covered in the plenaries.
10. Enjoy EBL. It is an active, fun way to learn. You will not be bored !!

What other activities do you do in your EBL group?

All the other learning activities will be done in your EBL group, although for Life Sciences, SDLE and workshops for example, there will be more than one EBL group present.

Is EBL assessed?

At the end of each EBL case, at your one-to-one feedback session with your EBL facilitator, they will give you a formative grade of either "satisfactory", "borderline" or "unsatisfactory". The marking criteria for these are:

Satisfactory: Facilitator considers that the student has met all learning objectives and has reflected appropriately on the learning process.

Borderline: Facilitator considers that the student has met learning objectives but is not contributing adequately in self-directed or group learning. Alternatively, the student is contributing but does not reflect appropriately on the learning process. Borderline means something needs to change during the next EBL case.

Unsatisfactory: Facilitator considers that the student has not met the learning objectives.

There is also a grade of "unable to assess" and the criteria for this is:

Unable to assess Facilitator considers that the student's attendance has been below a level on which s/he is able to base an assessment.

A "borderline" or "unsatisfactory" grade triggers the offer of a study skills meeting with your academic tutor

Past Students

A Few words of wisdom from those that have been there...

1. Use the DLE discussion forum – You will discover finding good reference material takes time. Sharing your references on the DLE discussion forum with your group will save time for everybody and increase the breadth of your learning.
2. Be organised – You will find that you get out of EBL what you put into it. The sessions are much more enjoyable if you have prepared your work and are able to discuss with your group what you have found. Being unprepared for a session often leads to embarrassment, trust us we have been there.
3. Be patient with your group – In many areas of dentistry there are multiple solutions to a problem, which can lead to differences of opinion. It is important to be respectful and professional in all your sessions.
4. Reading List - Get a copy of the reading list, don't rush out and buy them all. You'll find multiple copies in the Library and LSRC. You may want your own personal copy of some books and you will start to understand which ones these are during the first few months. Some books on the list aren't used until later years.

Reference Books are very personal but some of our stand out favourites have been:

- Netter's Head and Neck Anatomy
- Ten Cate's Oral Histology
- Oxford Handbook of Clinical Dentistry
- Essential Human Disease for Dentists
- Medical Problems in Dentistry

For texts on other topics such as pharmacology, dental materials and restorative/paediatric/orthodontics/endodontics we advise you try a few and use texts which suit your individual learning style.

In later years a student subscription to dental update/British Dental Journal can be useful if you like to read the old fashioned way. (The Universities subscription allows electronic access to all articles for both).

Good luck with your future studies, if we can do it so can you!