

Situation 1: Counting on the tutor

During the tutorial students are not reacting to each other. They are addressing their questions to the tutor all the time, instead of solving the problem together.

Situation 2: A few hardworking students

During the tutorials only four hardworking students are participating in an active way. The rest of the group is rather passive. The tutor does not want the rest of the group taking advantage of those four students. However, at the same time the tutor appreciates the efforts of the four students and does not want to kill their contribution to the discussion.

Situation 3: Laptop or tablet

Students bring their laptops or tablets to the tutorial. During the group discussion students are looking at their laptops or tablets. They are looking at their preparation. They also write things down on their laptops or tablets.

Situation 4: Incomplete

During the post-discussion phase of the tutorial all students are in active discussion. It is clear to the tutor that students have not understood the subject matter very well. While the group process and the discussion are going very well, the essential elements of the subject matter do not seem to come out.

Situation 5: No preparation

During the tutorial it becomes apparent that most students have done little or no self-study.

Situation 6: Prior knowledge

Students complain that they have no prior knowledge of the subject matter. The group agrees that a brainstorm during the pre-discussion phase is therefore difficult, of no use, and a waste of time. The group prefers to spend more time on the post-discussion because there is so much to report on.

Situation 7: Time

A tutorial consists of a post-discussion phase and a pre-discussion phase. This course also demands a presentation from the students. In addition to this, the course book is full of tasks, all of which are meant to be dealt in the tutorial, which is very time consuming. As a result the meaningful pre-discussion phase is not dealt with sufficiently. This undermines the whole system of PBL.

Situation 8: No interaction

When learning goals are discussed students report the information they have found. They report unconnected data and no questions are asked. However students are active, there is no interaction between group members.

Situation 9: The quiet group member

The group discusses what they have learned about the learning goals. One student has a lot of notes in front of him or her, but is very quiet and does not offer any information. When the student discussion leader or the tutor is addressing this student, he or she is not really responding.

Situation 10: Reading out loud

When the learning goals are discussed one of the students reads out from notes, copies, laptop, or tablet.

Situation 11: The role of the tutor

During the first tutorial it becomes clear that the students have a strong opinion about the role of the tutor. A good tutor is a tutor who provides information and talks a lot.

Situation 12: Tutor, please explain

The discussion of the learning goals is unfinished. Questions remain unanswered. The group fails to synthesize information and the problems remain unresolved. They are running out of time and ask the tutor to explain.

Situation 13: Unprepared again

Once again a particular student has not done any self-study. He or she never comes prepared to group sessions.

Situation 14: Student discussion leader

The student discussion leader is doing an absolutely awful job. The other students of the group do not say anything about it.

Situation 15: The parasite

A student has done little self-study and writes down what the others are discussing. He or she asks the others for details, to repeat something, or where they have found the information.

Situation 16: No response

The tutor intervenes and asks a question to the group. As the students do not react, the tutor rephrases the question. However, still there is no response from the group.