Enquiry-Based Learning

Enquiry Based Learning (EBL) is a teaching and learning strategy used to support the Professional Development of Midwifery module. During this module the EBL process will enable you to reflect upon care or issues from practice and consider these in relation to theory that you have either already learnt about in university or need to learn about to develop your understanding of practice based triggers. EBL therefore strengthens the link between practice and theory as midwifery practice itself therefore becomes the trigger for your learning. Two separate enquiries support this year 1 module. Each enquiry stems from its own trigger.

Throughout the module you will work individually, in small groups and in learning sets. You will be supported by midwifery tutors, who will act as facilitators for your learning. When in your learning sets tutors will facilitate discussion around the triggers you have been given and support you to understand the research and information that you and your set has located. Your tutor will also help you to understand the practice that you see or read about and to consider the different issues, policies, customs, events and perspectives that impact upon it.

EBL gives you a good opportunity to retain subject content because you get to discuss your thoughts and theories with others. However, as with any learning opportunity, the amount you learn is directly related to your own level of engagement. Attendance is to be approached in the same way as other modules within the programme. Attendance at all sessions, whether they are tutor or student-led, is expected because your input will directly affect yours and your peers learning.

The EBL process is complemented by fixed resource sessions which may be led by a midwifery tutor, librarian, clinician or service user. These will comprise of whole group sessions and smaller group study skills sessions, workshops and other active learning sessions.

From each enquiry, you will produce an output (see page 7). The form that this will take will be up to you and your learning set, although tutor guidance will be offered.
You will then develop these outputs to present during the scheduled final feedback sessions within the module.

**A Modified EBL Model**

As indicated on Blackboard a detailed module plan will be given to you at the launch of the module.

**The EBL process in more detail**

**The Trigger Session**

The process of EBL starts with a trigger introduced by the tutor. The triggers for this module will be available on Blackboard following their launch. During a trigger session your group will discuss the trigger and decide what it means, how it makes you feel, what you think is happening. As the discussion progresses, the group must start to think about any issues or areas of interest that arise from the trigger. You then need to decide what areas you will investigate to inform your understanding and what resources you are going to use. As you progress through the midwifery programme you will increasingly utilise a depth and breadth of information to allow you to make informed decisions about your practice. Similarly within this module you should aim to think broadly about the theory you have discussed within the trigger and consider what information you need to produce an output. At this point, you should also agree the format of your output from the enquiry.
Following the trigger launch your group will be divided into smaller learning sets. Smaller sets will enable detailed exploration of and discussion around trigger content. Learning sets will be allocated by the facilitator. Each set will consist of approximately 9 students. Learning Sets will remain fixed for the duration of the module.

**Within your sets you will need to organise some practical aspects related to EBL.**

- You must agree learning set member responsibilities
- You must allocate a scribe, time keeper and team leader (the scribe should post session notes on the agreed format for dissemination). These roles will rotate with each enquiry
- You must arrange how to contact each other and the facilitator between sessions and agree a format for dissemination of resources
- You need to agree which forms of evidence are acceptable to the set (textbooks, research articles, websites etc)
- You need to set a time frame for research (how many hours to allocate to research)
- The set leaders must ensure every team member contributes and keeps the set focused on the enquiry
- The facilitator is available to suggest resources, help the learning set see learning opportunities, agree time frames and facilitate development of set rules. As EBL is student-led the facilitator will not state actual content or participate in organisation of the set

Your facilitator will support you to organise the Trigger Session through the use of a modified version of the Maastricht ‘seven steps’ of EBL (Schmidt 1983).

1. Explore the trigger
2. Clarify terms (to ensure all students understand the trigger)
3. Analyse the trigger in broad terms (group brainstorm)
4. What are the main issues arising? Identify main themes and concepts.
5. Focus in – what do you already know? What do you need to know? (You may wish to refer to the learning outcomes of the module and key issues)
6. Prioritise questions and areas to be investigated
7. Plan your learning (in your sets). Which areas can you investigate through your own enquiries? How will you discuss your findings? Arrange discussion groups, small group tutorials and other methods of sharing resources and information. Plan your team activities for self-directed study prior to the next session
Gathering Information (Resource Locating Sessions)
You are expected to make use of LearnZone, the library and online resources during these sessions to gather information. On the first day of the module you will be given a fixed study skills session relating to resource locating and also a session focussing on the use of evidence in midwifery practice. At no point should a student ever feel unsupported in their learning or unsure about what is expected of them during the process of the enquiry. You may use resource locating sessions to work together as a group or, possibly, with tutors to discuss evidence already located. This must be negotiated. You should try to think critically about the information you select to bring to tutorial sessions. This process is therefore a key opportunity for all students to develop their lifelong learning skills.

Fixed Resource Sessions
In addition to individual or group resource locating sessions fixed resource sessions are provided throughout each enquiry (detail is provided within your module plan which will be disseminated on day 1 of the module). Fixed resource sessions may take the form of whole group sessions or they may be offered as active learning workshops or seminars. Fixed resource sessions complement the enquiries, they are not aimed at offering answers. You will draw your knowledge and develop your understanding in relation to each enquiry from a variety of sources. Developing skills related to collating, interpreting and evaluating evidence from a range of sources is key to your undergraduate development and life-long learning journey. Thus the process of EBL serves to enhance the development of core skills in relation to evidence based midwifery practice.

Directed Study Days
In addition to the resource locating sessions that afford you time during the university day to locate and consider resources you will also be provided with directed study days. On these days you will be expected to undertake study to support the development of the enquiries and extend your understanding in readiness for forthcoming small group tutorials and feedback sessions.
Small Group Tutorials
Each set will be allocated a thirty minute tutorial with a tutor, at least once during an enquiry (again these will be indicated on your Module Plan). These sessions are a valuable opportunity to discuss findings and clarify interpretations of the information you have found. You must be prepared to share your learning and your sources of evidence with your set during the small group tutorials. You may find that other students have also found the same information as you, others may be able to add to or even challenge your findings. The set will then decide whether what you have found is significant and warrants further investigation or whether you have gone as far as necessary on this issue.

The tutor facilitates the session and will discuss your perceptions about the resources you bring. Your facilitator may challenge what you say but, equally, will be happy to be challenged by you. During this session the tutor may prompt you to consider questions about your findings or thoughts if an important point is being overlooked. At the end of the session, you need group agreement and a clear plan about the next stage to ensure that the enquiry progresses.

Drawing the enquiry to a close is an integral aspect of EBL. You will know that you are ready to close the enquiry when:

- There are few new aspects of the question/problem being discovered through enquiry
- You find you are increasingly able to show a relationship between what and how the environment or context influences what transpires in practice
- You are feeling more confident about answering the question or discussing practice issues raised in the trigger

Final Feedback Session - Presenting findings
This is the point at which the learning sets have to disseminate their final findings to each other. You must ensure that you do this effectively because the understanding of the class as a whole will be greatly enhanced or hindered by the content and
delivery method chosen for the final presentation. You might like to consider using the following formats to present your output:

- Group discussion
- Storyboards/Storytelling
- Using PowerPoint/Prezi
- Using the glassboards to communicate links between concepts
- Role play
- Using a symbol or picture to get discussion going
- Concept maps or posters
- A quiz
- A board game

You must ensure that the preparation of the final presentation does not preclude research and developing your understanding of the concepts. Often, presenting findings informally and then discussing the concepts is sufficient for the presentation of your findings.

References:

Schmidt HG (1983) Problem-based learning; rationale and description. Medical Education 17 pp 11–16