

# Problem-Based Learning and Civic Engagement—Shifting the Focus of Learning in Public Policy Education

Chris McInerney, *University of Limerick*

Maura Adshead, *University of Limerick*

**ABSTRACT** This article describes the development of an innovative teaching method to help political science students deepen their comprehension of public policy through engaging with real world scenarios. It describes the development of a constructivist learning environment (CLE) (Jonassen, 1999) for students in a postgraduate public policy module, fashioned by integrating a problem-based learning (PBL) approach with civic engagement processes. The article concludes by examining the potential of this approach as a teaching method and reflecting on student and staff feedback as well as on benefits described by partner organizations and the broader public.

Teaching politics and, more especially, teaching public policy to students in a way that is engaging, interesting, informative, and capable of building a range of competencies among students presents an ongoing challenge. This article describes an initial experiment at integrating a problem-based learning (PBL) approach to teaching with an active, university supported, civic engagement approach to public policy that produced a richer, deeper learning experience for a group of 13 postgraduate students from different countries including China, Ireland, Latvia, Nigeria, and the United States. The article first addresses some of the conceptual underpinnings to the exercise by describing our motivations to adopt this hybrid approach to teaching politics and explaining the conceptual model that informed our approach. Then, the article sets out the context within which the approach was tested by describing the learning context, the policy context, and the specific problem context. In the penultimate section the key outcomes that have emerged from the exercise for students, for teaching, for external, policy actors, and some that emerged for the broader public are addressed. Finally, the article draws some conclusions on the value of the exercise and on its potential and describes how it has given rise to plans to undertake a more systematic and challenging PBL laboratory.

Chris McInerney is a lecturer in the department of politics and public administration at the University of Limerick. He is author of *Challenging Times*, *Challenging Administration: The Role of Public Administration in Promoting Social Justice* (in press). He can be reached at [chris.g.mcinerney@ul.ie](mailto:chris.g.mcinerney@ul.ie).

Maura Adshead is a senior lecturer in the department of politics and public administration at the University of Limerick. She is co-author (with Jonathon Tonge) of *Government and Politics in Ireland: Unity and Diversity on a Two-Polity Island, 2009* and co-editor (with Peadar Kirby and Michelle Millar) of *Contesting the State: Lessons from the Irish Case* (2008). She can be reached at [maura.adshead@ul.ie](mailto:maura.adshead@ul.ie).

## ESTABLISHING A CONCEPTUAL RATIONALE

In this section, we consider what it is that we might want students of politics and public policy to learn and how we might use a PBL approach to engage them more actively.

The difference between “politics” and “political science,” what the relationship between the two might be, and the pedagogic consequences for our answers to these questions, is something that most political scientists intuitively know but rarely articulate, either to themselves or to their students. Typically, the study of politics is presented as a means by which to understand a variety of political processes and systems and behaviors, as well as the values and attitudes that underpin them. Notwithstanding the cliché that politics is about power (Lukes 1974) or who gets what, where, when, and why (Lasswell 1936), it has been suggested that

In many respects, “politics is the junction subject of the social sciences, born out of history and philosophy, but drawing on the insights of economics and sociology, and to a lesser extent, the study of law, psychology and geography” (Burnham et al. 2008, 9).

But if this is the case—aside from a detailed understanding of particular political process(es)—what more are students of politics expected to learn? When pressed for an answer, a cursory glance at most politics program outlines suggests that “critical thinking” (as a means of explaining political phenomena) is a key learning outcome. Political science is the augmentation of this basic attribute with a range of theoretical assumptions and methodological approaches most commonly used within the discipline. To date, this question has received only limited attention, although much of the more recent literature on civic engagement and service learning has begun to address the issue indirectly

(Battistoni, 2000; Harris 2010; Wahlke 1991). In consideration of this, Gorham (2005) advances the concept of political learning with reference to cultivating political thinking. Political thinking may have diverse dimensions in terms of student learning, but these may include developing an interest in politics (Albanese and Mitchell 1993; Bennett 1997; Mann 1999); learning what public and private interests are (Gorham 2005); learning how to participate and deliberate in the political world (Gutmann 1987); learning how to listen politically (Bickford 1996); and, finally, learning to judge the political world as intelligent performers (Steinberger 1993) and thoughtful spectators (Arendt 1982; Kant 2000). Stimulating this type of political thinking in the classroom is far from easy.

To achieve a higher level of student competency as critical, political thinkers, Gorham (2005:346) suggests that political thinking is most likely to occur “where the classroom experience itself is integrated into service-learning as a public space.” This approach to teaching politics reflects Stoker’s (2006) exhortation that we should stop talking about politics and instead create more opportunities to practice it. This naturally led to an exploration of how students might engage with real-life policy problems in our locale. And, in exploring the pedagogical foundations of how such an exercise might work for students of politics, we turned to the literature on “problem-based learning” (PBL). Because there is relatively little documented use of PBL in teaching politics, however, we turned to other sources, particularly research in its application in the medical sphere (Albanese and Mitchell 1993; Newble and Clarke 1986). This literature suggests that in formal examinations

essence of this approach to PBL involves “a problem, question or project as the focus of the environment accompanied by different ‘interpretative/intellectual’ support systems” (Jonassen 1999, 9). Pedagogically, this approach proposes that when students are centrally involved in working out “what the problem is,” they will have a deeper understanding of the issue and be more motivated to work toward its resolution. In this context, the problem chosen drives the learning rather than providing an example of concepts or theories taught in class. To be effective problems “should not be over circumscribed” and instead should be “ill defined or ill structured so that aspects of the problem are emergent and definable by the learners” (Jonassen 1999, 219). The characteristics of an ill-stated problem include unstated goals and constraints; potential for multiple solutions or no solutions at all; multiple criteria for evaluating solutions; uncertainty about which concepts, rules, and principles are necessary for the solution or how they are organized; an absence of any general rules or principles for describing or predicting the outcomes of most cases; and a necessity for learners to make judgements about the problem, defend their judgements, and express personal opinions or beliefs. In short, our chosen PBL-approach comprised three integrated components:

- the learning context
- the public policy context
- the problem representation/resolution context

Each of these is described in the next section.

*This literature suggests that in formal examinations students with PBL experience may not present the same volume or surface level of knowledge as traditionally taught students, however, these students show marked improvements in their depth of knowledge and, crucially, their capacity to apply it, which results in a higher level of functioning versus declarative knowledge (Biggs 1999).*

students with PBL experience may not present the same volume or surface level of knowledge as traditionally taught students, however, these students show marked improvements in their depth of knowledge and, crucially, their capacity to apply it, which results in a higher level of functioning versus declarative knowledge (Biggs 1999). From this the proposition develops that those who have functioning knowledge are better equipped to enter the labor market with demonstrated, as opposed to assumed, competencies.

### **What is Problem Based Learning?**

In exploring PBL it becomes quickly apparent that there is no single model of PBL although several core principles mark its distinctive approach. Drawing on the foundational work of Barrows (1996) these core principles include structuring knowledge and knowledge management processes for use in professional settings—including *the political realm*; developing reasoning and heuristic capacities—a *central element in any public policy context*; encouraging capacity for self and group-based learning; and stimulating a desire for learning as opposed to being taught. To operationalize these core principles we adopted one particular model of PBL, namely a constructivist learning environment (CLE). The

### **OPERATIONALIZING PBL FOR POLITICS**

Here we describe how we constructed the learning environment for this module, its policy context, and the problem representation within which our PBL exercise was located.

#### **The Learning Context**

The learning environment for this exercise was provided by combining the more familiar university classroom setting with an off-campus learning platform, made possible by our involvement in a citizen participation initiative in a nearby town. The town’s elected council asked our department to support the initiative.<sup>1</sup>

The PBL exercise was a core element of a postgraduate module on public policy and program management involving students from a variety of different countries thus adding the additional challenge of designing a less-ethnocentric approach to the module delivery. This module primarily sought to enhance student understandings of public policy-making processes, the role of different actors, and the potential for planning processes to include as well as exclude. The module also sought to equip students with functional skills in both policy analysis and planning. The formal module elements took place during four months,

but several students remained active on a voluntary basis in the exercise for a number of months longer than their formal registration required. Although participants were required to function as part of a group and were graded accordingly, they were also examined on one, individually submitted essay, designed to stimulate their own critical analysis of the issues explored and also to avoid the danger of “free riding.” As is the norm in PBL exercises, a few initial readings were provided—in this case, on democratic participation and civic engagement. However, students were encouraged to direct their own choice of supporting literature.

### The Policy Context

The policy context for our PBL exercise was provided by a national policy framework, the National Spatial Strategy (NSS), and a subsequent decision to operationalize the policy at a local level. The NSS is an Irish government policy produced in 2002 to “achieve a better balance of social, economic, physical development and population growth between regions” (Government of Ireland 2002). In our nearby town, a decision was made to undertake a significant civic engagement exercise with residents and users of the town—a community-visioning exercise—to underpin the development of a new socioeconomic plan for the town and its hinterland. This innovative step provided our department with a valuable opportunity to involve students directly in a public policy-making process. At the same time, we posed a puzzle to students, inviting them to unravel at least some of the many complexities raised by

perspective. In relation to the role of different actors in the policy process, the picture raises issues about who is responsible for creating this problem and who might be responsible for resolving it. And finally, in relation to the potential for planning processes to be inclusive or exclusive, the picture allows for a discussion about whether one side should “go ahead” and ignore the other, or whether both sides need to shift their orientation, and if so, how might they do this? By presenting these questions in an abstract metaphorical image, this ill-defined trigger provides students with a discursive context in which they can raise key issues to determine what they see as “the problem” or “problems” associated with both the practical and theoretical dimensions to the policy processes under study.

The problem representation was further elaborated by allocating students to specific group identities: public officials, activist community workers, and elected public representatives engaging in a participatory planning process for the first time. Using the literatures on civic engagement, deliberative democracy, and institutionalist approaches to public administration and policy styles, students explored, interpreted, and resolved the specific problem depicted by the trigger by using alternative conceptual frameworks from the identity groups’ perspectives. Inevitably, in the early stages of PBL, students express frustration with the abstract nature of the problem posed, but when reassured that these frustrations are part of the process, students were less anxious about confronting their uncertainty and began to engage positively with “doing something different” in one of their classes.

*Inevitably, in the early stages of PBL, students express frustration with the abstract nature of the problem posed, but when reassured that these frustrations are part of the process, students were less anxious about confronting their uncertainty and began to engage positively with “doing something different” in one of their classes.*

public participation in policy making. Within this context, students were exposed to a variety of different, and sometimes tense, relationships involving elected representatives, officials, and civil society organizations. Meanwhile, in the classroom, we explored the details of the NSS and associated policy issues and conceptual concerns.

### The Problem Context—Presenting and Interpreting the Problem

Within PBL approaches problem representation is best achieved via the presentation of an ill-defined “trigger” that enables students to define or construct their own representation of the problem (Biggs 1999). The most significant learning lies in this process of problem interpretation. In this case, the problem was presented in the form of a single, adjusted photograph of a bridge construction project where the two separately constructed ends of the bridge fail to meet in the middle. This is accompanied by a problem title, “Public Participation in Public Policy—Making Ends Meet!” The picture can be interpreted as a metaphor for the core themes explored in the module. For example, in relation to the question “how do we understand public policy making processes?” the picture may invoke ideas about whether participants in the construction project shared a common vision or the same

### Problem Exploration Spaces

A key element of a PBL approach is the creation of problem exploration or manipulation spaces, that is, spaces where students can explore and interpret the problem. In other words, after students began to decipher what “the problem” or “problems” is, or are, from the perspective of their allocated group identities (as public officials, residents, public representatives, and so on) they are given alternative contexts (or problems exploration spaces) to further explore these issues. In this case, we helped students observe and become involved in three alternative participatory interactions:

First, *structured, invited public interactions* were designed as general, town-hall style meetings for the public to discuss their vision and ambition for the town’s future development. Students were involved in the design and operation of these sessions and were encouraged to be mindful of the logistics of organizing public meetings, most especially their location, timing, and how a hospitable environment for public interaction can greatly benefit participation.

Second, *targeted interactions* were designed more specifically to access the perspectives of different policy stakeholders. These interactions included meetings with elected decision makers to expose students to the political elements of the process and to the perspectives of elected representatives, with public officials to

---

introduce students to the executive mindset, and with young people, which is a group often marginalized from decision-making activity.

Third, *public space interactions* were designed to ensure that students recognized that many citizens do not attend public meetings. Using a modified form of participatory appraisal, students engaged (with staff supervision) with local people in their own environment, for example, in shopping malls and cafes. Inevitably these interactions were more time-limited but provided valuable opportunities to solicit the views and opinions of those who would never normally attend more formalized events.

In the classroom, subsequent discussions invited comparisons between the outcomes of less-structured public space interactions and more structured, invited interaction spaces. A fourth social-media based interaction process was also attempted but neither Facebook nor Twitter generated any significant public response. Perhaps the use of social-media tools needs to be more intensively researched prior to the module or perhaps particular students should be tasked to approach the problem from a social-media perspective.

## OUTCOMES

A variety of outcomes have been generated from the exercise, not just for learning and teaching, but also in terms of partner and broader public outcomes.

### Learning Outcomes

Bearing in mind earlier discussions on the limited “hard” evidence base that can be presented in favor of using PBL, the exploration of a hybrid PBL/civic engagement project produced many worthwhile learning outcomes for students. These learning outcomes were

*“Overall I have gained a greater understanding of how a political forum, or any group of people trying to achieve a goal, works. I would recommend this type of real life immersion for all students.”*

captured through a structured external evaluation of the module via an externally facilitated focus group and from student diaries maintained throughout the process. Student responses to this teaching style and to the more generalized learning outcomes for students of politics identified in this article follow.

**The PBL Approach.** The PBL experience was completely new to all the students involved in this module. Moreover, while some students had some experience with community activities, for most students, any kind of civic engagement exercise was also new. As a result, the introduction of this PBL/civic engagement project as a new way of working and learning confronted students’ well-established and sometimes entrenched learning patterns. As one student described it, “I was a little lost at the beginning, because this is totally a new type of learning. I met difficulty during self-learning.” Clearly, PBL requires a higher degree of self-directed learning and analysis from students, not least in dealing with an “ill structured” problem. The facilitators of the student focus group concluded that

Students found that the abstract nature of the problem-based learning was difficult to deal with. In particular, they found that the met-

aphor of the bridge was very challenging and difficult to get their heads around. However, the PBL process enabled crystallization of the concepts as the time went on and more engagement with the problem was possible.

Thus, while students initially found the abstract nature of the problem challenging, eventually they successfully interpreted and resolved it. From this, students are encouraged to recognize that excess haste in interpreting public policy issues runs the risk of producing poorly thought out policies.

PBL, while focused on engaging with applied practice issues, must also have a significant academic content. The focus group identified a student preference for practical over theoretical content, suggesting a desire for “more doing” and less analysis. Although students were happy to have completed the required readings they indicated a desire to devote more class time preparing for the civic engagement interventions. In the words of one student . . . “I took more out of the experience and will keep it for longer than the actual reading of the theory—I would have liked this more practical approach in other modules.”

**Developing an Interest in Politics.** One of the objectives of undertaking programs in politics and public policy is to encourage students to develop an interest in politics and to enable them to recognize that politics goes beyond that which provides the material for newspaper headlines (Bennett 1997; Mann 1999). Student feedback suggests that the exercise succeeded in going beyond the textbook and into the real world of public policy. One student commented that the process “turned public policy into 3D for me . . . I now have a better idea of the process and how groups fit into it.” Another felt that the process “enabled me to get a much better understanding of the real problems and challenges associated with

public policy.” These comments are echoed by other students in the group, one of whom suggested that “it is an interesting way to learn as you get more practical experience instead of just reading set texts and taking the authors theories and conclusions for granted; you actually get to see the theory coming into play and see it in real life.” For another student the opportunity to see the workings of the public sector close at hand proved to be very beneficial and fueled her own interest in a career in the public sector. In addition, it enabled her to see how an institutionalist approach could help in the development of a deeper analysis of public policy: “It also made it clear that running governmental organizations is not as simple as following procedures and making decisions. These organizations are run by people who have their own values and that means that every one’s values come into play and may pose challenges to any task you are undertaking.” Beyond the world of work, several students also said that they would be more likely to become involved in participatory citizenship process as a result of engaging in the PBL-facilitated module. Finally, the objective of enabling students to more effectively understand and engage with policy processes and the role of the public in influencing policy was achieved, with one comment typifying the



general view: "Overall I have gained a greater understanding of how a political forum, or any group of people trying to achieve a goal, works. I would recommend this type of real life immersion for all students."

**Learning What Public and Private Interests Are.** Another politics and public policy learning outcome is to encourage students to distinguish between public and private interests (Gorham 2005). In this regard students learned to recognize this distinction, both within their own behavior and in the approach of other participants. One student suggested that he found the process to be "less-selfish" because sharing learning and outcomes was required. However, in observing the attitude of other key actors, one student offered a robust criticism of the role of public officials, suggesting that "Whereas being a public official, it was more about making it easier for the public officials and not better for the general public. Also the superior attitude demonstrated by the public officials over the public was something not in line with my values." In a similar vein, it was suggested that there is a "lot of cynicism within politics ... politicians were very aware of their status," suggesting that the student had observed how the potential for some politicians to be self serving and status conscious can have a direct impact on their capacity as policy actors.

The learning that students recorded suggests that positives outcomes in this direction have been achieved. For one student, the exercise demonstrated that listening to the public in policy making can be of value: "I was amazed by the responses we got from some people in Ennis and it proved that the public do have valuable contributions to make towards policy making." Reflecting the same conclusion but from a different perspective, another student questioned a central tenet of elitist variants of democratic thought on the primacy of the wisdom of the elected representatives. ... "I certainly feel the adage that elected representatives are more qualified to make decisions about their jurisdiction than lay people is a fallacy in this day and age with such an educated population and information so readily available. The quality of discussion and ideas about how to improve Ennis for 2020 were equal from both elected representatives and the public. In fact, often the public came up with better ideas."

Overall, students have had an opportunity to recognize and name different perspectives and competencies within the policy-making sphere. PBL offered access to a plurality of perspectives that is not always possible in the classroom. Arguably, the PBL/civic engagement process enabled students to drill more deeply into these perspectives and to uncover issues that some students

*At a personal level, many students recognized their role as political actors and observers in two ways: first, in how they manage their own communication: "I had to improve my communication and listening skills particularly as I was working in a team with different perspectives," and second, in how they react to and deal with challenging situations, particularly issues around identity and recognition of status.*

**Learning How to Participate and Deliberate in the Political World.** It was expected that there would be important learning for students about how participation and deliberation can happen in the political world (Gutmann 1987). Some of the immediate learning reported highlighted students' recognition that the management and facilitation of participation and deliberation can be accomplished in an effective and efficient way, without incurring high financial costs. One student commented "The world cafe sessions were an excellent and efficient way, both time and moneywise, to involve the public in deliberations." Another student used her experience to contest cost-based arguments against participation discovered in the literature. ... "In the articles I read elected reps were hesitant to involve the public due to the expected costs temporally and financially and this is an excellent solution to this problem." However, while valuing the learning from this process not all students were convinced that participation or deliberation would actually influence policy outcomes. Finally, for students, the practice of working in groups to address the ill-structured problem required that they develop their own capacity to participate and deliberate. One student commented that as a result of the process "Everyone gets involved, even during time off, there is more enthusiasm and team spirit in group work."

**Learning How to Listen Politically and Judge the Political World.** An intrinsic part of participating and deliberation is the issue of learning how to listen politically (Bickford 1996) and how to judge the political world as intelligent performers (Steinberger 1993) and thoughtful spectators (Arendt 1982; Kant 2000).

found surprising, particularly in their interactions with the elected representatives. At a personal level, many students recognized their role as political actors and observers in two ways: first, in how they manage their own communication: "I had to improve my communication and listening skills particularly as I was working in a team with different perspectives," and second, in how they react to and deal with challenging situations, particularly issues around identity and recognition of status.

### Teaching Outcomes

From a teaching perspective important lessons also emerged. Clearly, one of the constraints on the PBL process was that none of the participants had previously experienced any form of PBL. To date, our students' educational experience was largely formed within a "teaching paradigm," taking lectures and classes in their traditional formats: the PBL process required that they move toward a learning paradigm in which there is greater emphasis on what students are learning rather than what the teacher is teaching. Perhaps the implication is that the effectiveness of PBL can be optimized if it is introduced early in the undergraduate experience in combination with more traditional modes of teaching and learning.

This process worked with a relatively small group of graduate students and begs the question as to whether it is possible to replicate with larger, undergraduate classes: we think that it is. In our experience, the critical elements in this process are the problem conceptualization and associated planning and the

---

cultivation of local links to support it. After these elements are in place, the biggest constraint is staff time to facilitate students' exploration of the issues. With larger classes, the necessary time investment would increase substantially.

**Maintaining Light Touch Facilitation.** As was reported earlier, initially the students found the abstract nature of the "ill structured" problem difficult to comprehend. In the face of such difficulty, there is an inevitable temptation to jump in to relieve student frustration and to over facilitate the process. However, as is evidenced by the learning outcomes reported, giving students the time to interpret the problem is crucial as there is as much learning in this foundational interpretative process as there is in the later search for solutions. This requires that the instructor have confidence in the PBL process and, in some instances, must resist student entreaties to have the problem clarified for them.

In the evaluation of this exercise, students indicated that, given a choice, they would opt for PBL over other traditional teaching methods. Still, we are not convinced that this should signal the demise of more traditional forms of teaching: clearly there is a value in providing a mix of teaching styles and approaches, of

outputs were delivered, requiring considerable additional staff time. Equally, as a consequence of this project, the potential now exists to synergize staff research agendas, partner outcomes, and the PBL process to minimize demands on time but optimize outcomes for all.

### Public Outcomes

Finally, in terms of outcomes we were mindful that the broader public, who were invited to participate in the visioning process, also needed to see some results and outcomes. Clearly, outcomes in the form of action on the issues raised in the visioning exercise cannot be produced in a short time. However, much of the literature on public participation in public policy points to the high level of frustration that often exists when the public participate in exercises, such as described in this article, but later hears little about it. Therefore, this project was mindful of the need to produce short-term visible outcomes for participants in the form of feedback on the items and issues raised. This outcome is now being delivered by another set of students from a postgraduate course in technical communications and e-learning via their devel-

*In the evaluation of this exercise, students indicated that, given a choice, they would opt for PBL over other traditional teaching methods. Still, we are not convinced that this should signal the demise of more traditional forms of teaching: clearly there is a value in providing a mix of teaching styles and approaches, of which PBL is only one.*

which PBL is only one. Such a mix ensures that a balance between functioning and declarative knowledge can be achieved. We note, however, that traditional, lecture/tutorial based methods can be tailored to support and feed into PBL processes or can be accomplished with a significant element of enquiry-based learning to provide a bridge between the new and the old forms of teaching and learning.

Finally, from a teaching perspective, PBL requires that significant attention is paid to group-based working and processes. Simply forming students into groups does not ensure that these groups will function. It is essential to devote adequate time to raising awareness among participants about group work and its possible benefits and pitfalls. Equally, finding means to prevent free loading in groups is a constant challenge. In this exercise a portion of the overall assessment was allocated to peer assessment, although students typically did not engage with this process in a critical fashion, largely negating its value.

### Partner Outcomes

Given that this process included both PBL and a civic engagement element, it was necessary to be mindful of the outcome needs of partners in the process, particularly the local authority. In this real-life political scenario, the sometimes different outcomes needs of the elected and executive members of the authority had to be considered. For the elected representatives involved, a credible process and tangible outputs were produced. For the executive, actionable and tangible outputs were necessary. In this case, the timing of the module delivery—within a single semester—did not guarantee that students were available to produce these outputs, and instead, departmental staff had to ensure that the partner

development of an e-newsletter, an e-comic (targeting younger people), a website carrying all reports produced, and an e-learning package to help other people to engage with the process on an ongoing basis (see [www.ennis2020.ie](http://www.ennis2020.ie)).

### CONCLUSIONS AND NEXT STEPS

Our experience trialing a PBL approach allied to student engagement in a public policy process has produced worthwhile results and leads us to an initial conclusion that PBL certainly does "hold its own" in comparison to traditional teaching "lecture style." It does so not only in terms of conceptual knowledge acquisition but also in its capacity to produce an increase in self-directed learning, improved problem solving, information gathering, and self-evaluation techniques. Certainly in this exercise, the overall nature of classroom interactions and increased student connectedness, engagement, motivation, and pro-learning attitudes were noted as potential consequences of the PBL approach. From a more grounded politics perspective, significant and plausible pedagogic arguments exist for engaging students with PBL and civic engagement, which enable politics faculty and students to "do something socially useful" in a way that can be integrated into the curriculum and regular teaching. However, to generalize from a single case is wrong. A further consequence of this exercise, therefore, has been to develop a more rigorously evaluated, cross-departmental process for PBL approaches to teaching politics. This "Politics PBL Laboratory" will take place during 18 months, involving a wider range of politics teachers, to evaluate a variety of PBL and more traditional approaches to politics teaching. From this lab, a further and more significant contribution to enhancing the teaching of politics through PBL approaches will be generated. ■

NOTE

1. For more details on this initiative see [www.ennis2020.ie](http://www.ennis2020.ie).

REFERENCES

Albanese, M. A., and S. Mitchell. 1993. "Problem-Based Learning: A Review of Literature on its Outcomes and Implementation Issues." *Academic Medicine: Journal of the Association of American Medical Colleges* 68 (1): 52–81.

Arendt, Hannah. 1982. *Lectures on Kant's Political Philosophy*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Barrett, T., and S. Moore. 2011. *New Approaches to Problem Based Learning*. New York: Routledge.

Barrows, H. S. 1996. "Problem-Based Learning in Medicine and Beyond: A Brief Overview." In *Bringing Problem-Based Learning to Higher Education: Theory and Practice*, eds. L. Wilkerson and H. Gilselaers. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Battistoni, Richard M. 1997. "Service Learning and Democratic Citizenship." *Theory into Practice* 36: 150–56.

Battistoni, Richard M. 2000. "Service Learning in Political Science: An Introduction." *PS: Political Science and Politics* 33 (3): 614–16.

Belland, B. R., K. D. Glazewski, and P. A. Ertmer. 2009. "Inclusion and Problem-Based Learning: Roles of Students in a Mixed-Ability Group." *Research in Middle Level Education* 32 (9).

Bennett, Stephen E. 1997. "Why Young Americans Hate Politics, and What We Should Do about It." *PS: Political Science and Politics* 30: 47–52.

Bickford, Susan. 1996. *The Dissonance of Democracy: Listening, Conflict, and Citizenship*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

Biggs, J. 1999. *Teaching for Quality Learning at University*. Society for Research into Higher Education and Open University Press. Buckingham.

Burnham, P., K. Gilland, W. Grant, and Z. Layton-Henery. 2008. *Research Methods in Politics*. Basingstoke: Palgrave.

Dewey, John. 1963. *Liberalism and Social Action*, New York: Capricorn Books.

Gorham, Eric. 2005. "Service Learning and Political Knowledge." *Journal of Political Science Education* 1: 345–65.

Government of Ireland. 2002. *National Spatial Strategy: People, Places, Potential*. Dublin: Stationery Office.

Government of Ireland. 2011. *National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030*. Dublin: Department of Education and Skills.

Gutmann, Amy. 1987. *Democratic Education*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Harris, Clodagh. 2010. "Active Democratic Citizenship and Service-Learning in the Postgraduate Classroom." *Journal of Political Science Education* 6: 227–43.

Jonassen, D. 1999. "Designing Constructivist Learning Environments." In *Instructional Design Theories and Models—A New Paradigm of Instruction Theory*, ed. C. M. Reigeluth. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Kant, Immanuel. 2000. *The Critique of Judgment*, trans. J. H. Bernard. Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books.

Lasswell, Harold. 1936. *Politics: Who Gets What, When, How?* New York: McGraw Hill.

Lukes, S. 1974. *Power: A Radical View*. London: Macmillan.

Mann, Sheilah. 1999. "What the Survey of American College Freshmen Tells Us about Their Interest in Politics and Political Science." *PS: Political Science and Politics* 32: 263–68.

Newble, D. I., and R. M. Clarke. 1986. "The Approaches to Learning of Students in a Traditional and in an Innovative Problem-Based Medical School." *Medical Education* 2 (4): 267–73.

Ní Shé, É. 2011. *Ireland's Contradictory Welfare Reality, Globalisation and a Diversity of Migration Experiences*. Unpublished doctoral thesis. University of Limerick.

Ní Shé, É., M. Adshead, and T. Lodge. 2009. *Getting to Know You—A Local Study of the Needs of Migrants, Refugees and Asylum Seekers in Co. Clare*. Dublin: HSE.

Pollard, A., and M. Newman. 2010. "Educational Research: A Foundation for Teacher Professionalism?" In *The Routledge Education Studies Textbook*, eds. J. Arthur and I. Davies, 261–69. Abingdon: Routledge.

Steinberger, Peter J. 1993. *The Concept of Political Judgement*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Stoker, Gerry. 2006. *Why Politics Matters*. Abingdon: Palgrave Macmillan.

Wahlke, John. 1991. "Liberal Learning and the Political Science Major: A Report to the Profession." *PS: Political Science and Politics* 24: 48–60.