

# Activities and Resources for Building Skills in Teaching Peace Psychology

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## Problem-Based Learning: Overview

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### A course to teach peace psychology with the method of Problem Based Learning (PBL):

- Student Manual: <http://www.peacepsych.org/resources/Dec2013/Course%20Manual%20Mahr-1.pdf>
- Tutor Manual: <http://www.peacepsych.org/resources/Dec2013/Tutor%20Instructions%20Mahr.pdf>

### PBL: Benefits and challenges?

#### **Benefits: Enhance content knowledge and learn 21st century skills**

- Clear and effective communication
- Careful listening
- Teamwork
- Creative and critical thinking
- Ability to ask pointed questions
- Critical evaluation of other points of view
- Active engagement with a subject matter

#### **Challenges:**

- Restrictions due to specific setting (small groups, time)
- Active facilitation needed to nurture shy students and manage dominant students
- Reliance upon the active engagement of students (reading and participation during class)

### Teaching Peace Psychology with PBL: 11 problems to solve

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|---|---|
| 1. Peace psychology in context                          | 6. Social injustice: The impact of structural and cultural violence |
| 2. Human aggression and violence: Nature or nurture?    | 7. Prosocial behavior, altruism and empathy                         |
| 3. Peace psychology and intimate partner violence       | 8. Conflict resolution and culture                                  |
| 4. The strain of being "different"                      | 9. Reconciliation   |
| 5. Transforming normal people into perpetrators of evil | 10. How to build structures of peace?                               |
|   | 11. Building cultures of peace and nonviolence                      |

### Example of PBL: *Peace Psychology and Intimate Partner Violence* (3<sup>rd</sup> problem)

Roles in PBL: Tutor, note-taker, discussion leader

#### The 7 steps of PBL

##### **Pre-discussion (about 1 hour): Steps 1-5**

1. **Presentation of the problem:** Students read a short text in the Course Manual:

Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) is a prevalent social problem that exists in different forms. Peace psychologists do not only try to analyse the individual but also the societal dimension of IPV. The following two cases can shed some light on the underlying dynamics of this problem.

##### Case 1: Lisa

"I believe that you stay with your partner for better or for worse. I didn't know what 'worse' was when I made that promise, but I promised. I believe my husband loves me, and I'm starting to believe he could kill me. I'm not sure how long I should stay and how 'bad' is 'too bad.' I know I don't believe I should be hit. But I do believe if my relationship is a mess, I should stay to make it better."

##### Case 2: Sandy and Linda

"Sandy and Linda had been best friends for 3 years before they became lovers. No friends, classmates, or coworkers knew about their relationship, and they had certainly kept it hidden from family members who were deeply religious. When the violence started, it was verbal and was precipitated by Sandy's jealousy. They pulled closer together.

Their love for each other grew, as did their dependency, isolation and fear- fear not only of physical violence and abandonment, but also of exposure. Sandy often threatened to tell Linda's family about their relationship.

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#### Case 2 (cont.)

They risked calling a battered women's hotline after Sandy broke Linda's eardrum. Linda made the calls and eventually found a counselor who would see them. They were eager for help. Neither of them talked about Sandy's threats to kill herself if Linda tried to stand up for herself or talked about leaving. To everyone in their lives (except their therapist), they continued to play at being straight friends.

The physical violence virtually disappeared, but the threats and verbal abuse continued. Sandy's fear of losing Linda, who was quite literally everything to her, became even greater as she began to look at what she was doing to her partner. Their hope of being able to live together had been rekindled, and their need to look good for the therapist, who was the only intrusion into their isolation, also increased.

One night, after a particularly violent verbal phone argument, Sandy made good to her threat; she took her own life. Linda was the one person privy to Sandy's plan. She carried it out in every detail. Linda found the music that Sandy had in her tape deck that she had always said would accompany her suicide. She found a note and a scrawled will.

She saw the writing drift off and the ink from a wavering line to the bottom of the page. She saw her Lover's blood on the bed. And, apart from the therapist, she had never been able to share her grief with anyone. In fact, one of her friends from the church said to her, 'I hope you're not going to tell me that you and Sandy had anything more than a friendship. I would never be able to speak to you again.'

**2. Establishment of a problem statement:** Students define the problem in a question.

Possible problem statement: What is Intimate Partner Violence and what are its underlying causes?

**3. Brainstorming:** Students share their opinions, experiences and previous knowledge related to the problem statement.

**4. Clustering:** The ideas and questions that came up during the discussion and were written down on the board by the note-taker are clustered into common topics.

**5. Formulate 'learning goals':** Students come up with 7-10 questions that came up during the discussion and through reading the short text in the Student Manual.

Possible learning goals for Problem 3:

1. What is IPV?
2. How do peace psychologists analyze IPV?
3. What are different forms of IPV?
4. What are the causes of IPV?
5. Are there different causes for different types of IPV?
6. How can the different types of IPV be solved or prevented?

**6. Self-Study:** Students go home to read the required readings and to answer the learning goals they came up with in class individually.

Required readings for Problem 3:

Abrahams, N. (2001). Intimate violence. In Christie, D. J., Wagner, R. V., Winter, D. D. (Eds.), *Peace, conflict, and violence: Peace psychology for the 21st century* (pp. 19-27). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

Duke, A. & Davidson, M. M. (2009). Same-sex intimate partner violence: Lesbian, gay, and bisexual affirmative outreach and advocacy. *Journal of Aggression, Maltreatment and Trauma*, 18(8), pp. 795-816.

Hoff, H. B. (2012). US National Survey: More men than women victims of intimate partner violence. *Journal of Aggression, Conflict and Peace Research*, 4(3), pp.155-163.

**7. Post-discussion (about 1 hour):** (next class period) Students share and discuss their answers to the learning goals.

→ Then another cycle of PBL starts with a pre-discussion on the next case in the Course Manual.

→ A complete cycle of PBL lasts for 2 hours (1 hour pre-discussion and 1 hour post-discussion).

→ Sessions usually begin with a post-discussion and end with a pre-discussion except for the very first session of a course (which begins with a pre-discussion).