

Key components of phenomenon-based teaching and learning (Compiled by Linda Koivula & Erika Löfström)

Problem-solving & exploring

Phenomenon-based learning is a way of learning to understand and explain a broader phenomenon, not answering a simple question. Before one can solve a problem, one must identify it, and in today's World, this is a challenge as many problems are big and fuzzy in nature, e.g. global warming with all its side effects.

Wider perspective

A wider and holistic way to understand the world and real phenomena. E.g. global warming could not be solved with one kind of knowledge but different thinking, perspectives and competencies are needed. This is usually more than one person can master. Knowledge from different disciplines is appropriate and important, when working on a phenomenon. Work with several subjects is useful and even necessary in phenomenon-based teaching/learning.

Real world context

The aim is to constantly deepen the interest and willingness to learn more about real world phenomena in real world context. The connection to the real world makes learning relevant and meaningful.

Collaborative learning

Participants construct their understanding together. Everyone can bring something to the mutual learning process. The focus in learning is not to focus on what people cannot do, but instead building on their strengths. The learning process engages learners through a sense of community and interaction. Such experiences are useful in workplaces and in society.

Cyclic process

New skills and knowledge are built on previous knowledge. The new insights become a part of a meaningful knowledge structure when they are connected to something that already is known or makes sense to the learner. It is important to evaluate the success of the process itself, not just the solution to the problem. Phenomenon based learning inevitably causes edge emotions and frustration, it's important to give time to discuss and reflect and to go back to previous questions. Learning is not all the time linear progression from start to goal, but the process in itself is a worthwhile journey.

Reference: Lonka, K. (2018). *Phenomenal learning from Finland*. Edita.

Other readings: Symeonidis, V., & Schwarz, J. F. (2016).

Phenomenon-based teaching and learning through the pedagogical lenses of phenomenology: The recent curriculum reform in Finland. *Forum Oświatowe*, 28(2), 31–47.