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Abstract

In problem-based learning, scenarios relating to real life are used as a point of departure for the learning process. Even though the importance of suitable cases of scenarios in bringing about a fruitful learning process is emphasised in the literature, few studies focus on how they actually function in the learning process. This study focuses on how the scenarios used in a ten-week introductory course of a new four-year undergraduate programme in environmental science functioned in terms of the structure and content of the questions they evoked. Data were gathered through diary notes from nine groups of students, comprising 5-8 students per group. The data were subjected to a qualitative analysis aimed at describing the structure and content of the questions generated by the groups. Five different kinds of questions were identified and labelled; encyclopaedic, meaning-oriented, relational, value-oriented and solution-oriented. All scenarios generated questions pertaining to all five categories in all groups, but the emphasis varied. The results are discussed in relation to the design of scenarios, and in relation to students' approaches to learning. (HRK / Abstract

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