Project Oriented Learning as teaching methodology in the teaching of science and technology

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The new Education Act stated that outcomes based education (OBE) have to be introduced, not only in schools, but also on tertiary level. Technikon Northern Gauteng embarked on Project Oriented Learning (POL) as a teaching methodology for OBE.

Project Oriented Learning is a teaching methodology where a group of learners, independently, works on a real life problem or question. The problem is analysed, and according to the specifications given in the task or assignment, the group works to an outcome.

POL simultaneously supports important objectives of higher education:
- Acquisition of knowledge, which is retained and usable
- Self-directed learning
- Learning to analyse and solve problems

Working in groups (tutorial groups) occupies a central role in POL. The difference between a tutorial group and a class or lecture is that a tutorial also offers a platform for learners to exchange knowledge and ideas. To be able to exchange knowledge, communication has to take place within the group. Learners are expected to ask questions, give opinions or explain issues in a group. An important part of acquiring skills and knowledge is the ability to ask questions. A tutorial offers you the possibility not only to ask questions yourself, but it also gives you the opportunity to learn from questions posed by others. The support offered in a small group makes the tutorial an excellent learning context for the academic development of under-prepared students. Furthermore the small group context offers a safe environment for practicing language skills, which is a significant benefit for students who are not studying in their first language.