How PBL pedagogical at the university leads to creative learning in working life
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The purpose of this paper is to apply viewpoints from primarily experiential and social learning theory to argue for a positive relationship between pedagogy based on problem-based learning (PBL) (Barge 2010) at the university and participants opportunities to engage in creative learning processes in their working lives. In addition, we give a concrete example of PBL pedagogy in a master program for continuing education at the university level.

It is a recognized challenge to create transfer of knowledge acquired in an educational context to the use of this knowledge in working life. Based on scholastic learning theory and practice learning theory (Fox 1997), we will describe two different contexts for learning in adult life: education and work. Research in transfer focuses on the problems associated with the transfer of knowledge between these two different contexts (Keller et al 2011). In an educational context it is crucial to organize learning processes not only for achieving academic goals, but also for the purpose of adding value to the participant in his (future) working life. This is in line with recently changes in political discourse that education should not only be of high quality, they must also be relevant to society.

A master program for continuing education at the university teaching typically includes theories, methods and models within different themes, and the approach is typically multi theoretical and concepts and ideas are often discussable. This means, that the knowledge students are taught typically are not as easily transferable to practical problems as e.g. mono theoretical approaches and evidence based models. It requires dialogue, reflection and practical experiments to convert theory and method to knowledge that creates value in practice. This process of transfer can be understood as a creative process. Creative in the sense, that if the process completes, then education helps the person understand his work in a new way, and enables him to initiate and participate in development-oriented learning processes at work. The creative part is to translate knowledge from one context to create development in another. We therefore understand creativity as something that occurs ‘on the edge’ of the persons professionalism and not as an independent inspiration where the person must think ‘out of the box’ (Tanggaard & Stadil 2012).

In the presentation we will argue that problem based learning (PBL) as an educational model is a pedagogy that supports creative processes, understood as the ability to put academic knowledge into play in a practice situation with the aim of developing it. There are three elements of PBL to support this:

1. Problem based
2. Project organized
3. Cooperation

The three elements will be discussed from the viewpoint of experiential learning theory (Kolb 1984, Illeris 2007) and social learning theory (Lave and Wenger 1991, Wenger 1998) and they will be related to the specific design of PBL pedagogy in one of our master programs.