



# Using enquiry based learning as a means to build communities

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Seven undergraduate interns from six faculties within the University of Glasgow, were employed for a month during the summer vacation in 2006 (Phase 1) to explore enquiry based learning (EBL), using the principles of EBL (Fig. 1). The group visited the Centre for Excellence in Enquiry Based Learning (CEEBL) in Manchester, met with staff and student interns there, and participated in EBL sessions developed by the Centre (Kahn & O'Rourke, 2005). In the following academic year (Phase 2), the interns worked with a member of academic staff within their discipline to identify areas suitable for EBL developments within a course they were attending as students (Fig. 1). The students worked alongside staff members as legitimate participants (Lave & Wenger, 2006) in the community of academic educators, and were welcomed into the wider community when they presented their work at conference. Their experience of working together promoted a sense of community amongst the peer group, where they built up a working relationship built on trust, learning from one another (Beckett & Hager, 2002), and applying their experience of EBL into other areas of their study (Fig. 2).

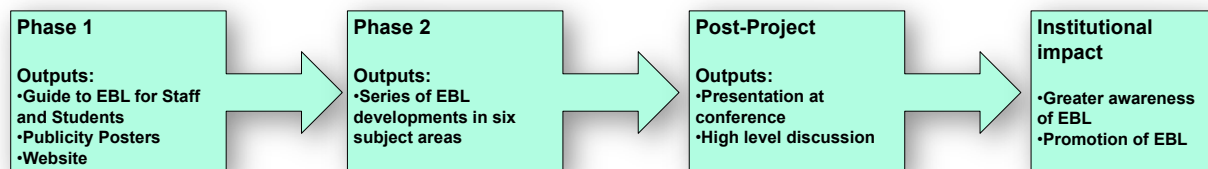


Fig. 1 Outputs of the EBL Project (Pritchard et al, 2008)

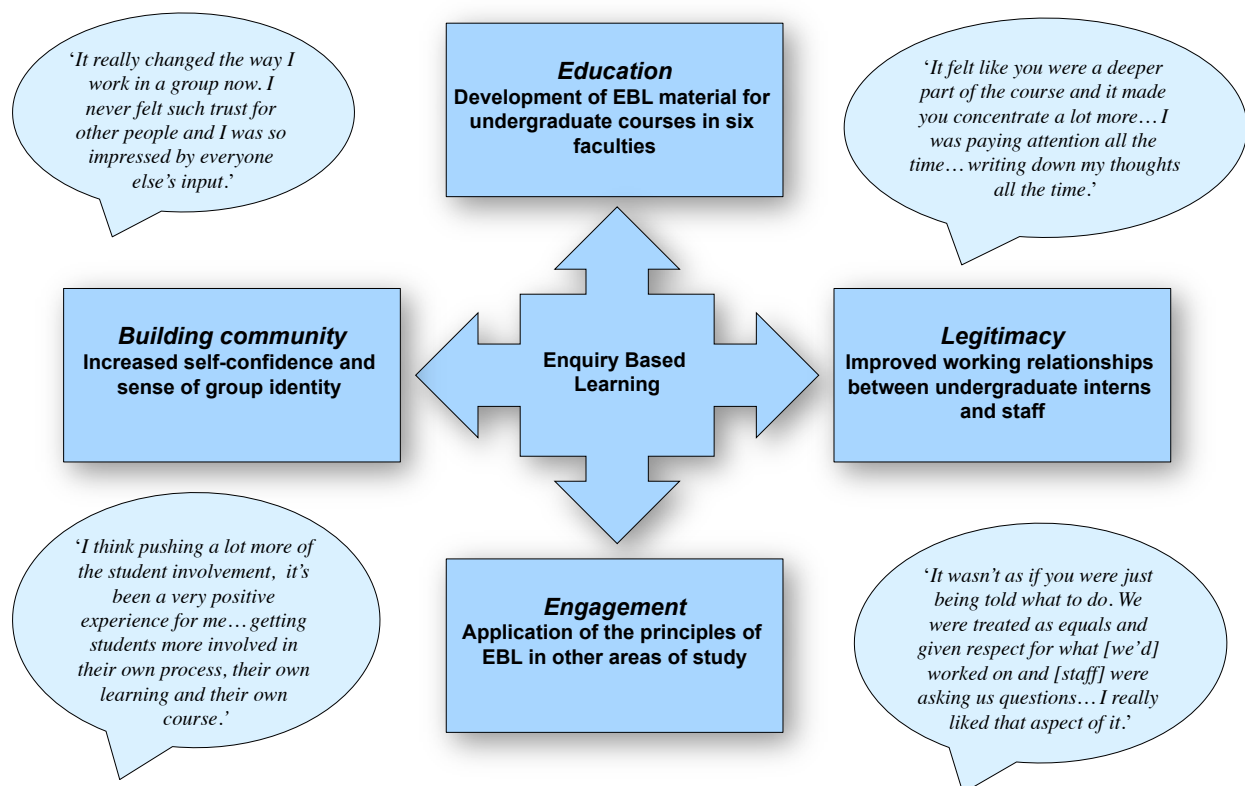


Fig. 2 Perceived impact of the EBL Project

There are tangible benefits for engaging in both EBL and educational developments. The interns reported applying the principles of EBL to other areas of their study. It brought them an appreciation of the complexities of course design and the importance of intended learning outcomes. The staff involved benefitted from a fresh pair of eyes that were able to identify areas of a course which could be improved, which in turn improved the learning experience for the other students on the course.

#### References

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