

PREFACE

Today's rapidly changing world implies that the life span of knowledge and skills is getting shorter. Rising consumer expectations and intensified competition are forcing companies to equip their employees with new weapons to fight in the marketplace — creativity, curiosity, change management and life-long learning.

Despite these changes in the business environment, traditional education institutions are still doing the same things over and over again while expecting different results to meet the continual advances and changes in their fields and expectations of the public. The authors propose Authentic Problem-Based Learning, *aPBL*, to equip learners to be creative, curious, change-ready and life-long learners so that they are able to manage any situation, recurring or new, competently, confidently and independently. *aPBL* promotes real world learning by having learners acquire and apply their knowledge and skills using authentic problems as the context. They have to problem solve, conduct self-directed learning and work in teams to make their own connection, creation and organization for future application to similar problems. This deviates from the didactic, lecture-tutorial, teacher-centered approach where the focus is on transmission of knowledge from teachers to learners.

This book traces the evolution of *aPBL* by citing the early work of Harry Shoemaker and the development of Problem-Based Learning (PBL) as a foundational curriculum approach by McMaster University's medical faculty in Canada. It recognizes the intended and un-intended "pollution" of PBL as a revolutionary new education approach. It addresses the misconception, myths and simplification of PBL by showing how *aPBL* features authentic and more advanced PBL, built on years of experience with PBL since its onset. The contents of the book cover the nuts and bolts of *aPBL* such as "what", "why", "who", "when", and "how".

The chapters are written based on the real account of the aspiration, research, conceptualization, experimentation, review and education experiences of the authors with the aim of enhancing teaching and learning for teachers and learners in North America and Asia. Both authors were bestowed international and national awards for innovating education based on *aPBL*. The first author has been involved in PBL development and research since its onset over thirty years ago and has written many books and papers on the adoption of PBL in medical education in North America,

Europe and Japan. He worked over the years with many teachers in high schools, colleges, universities and professional schools. The second author was the first to pilot PBL in Singapore and her work was funded and endorsed by the Prime Minister's Office (Singapore) as creating the most value-added innovation in the public sector. She is involved in applying, developing and promoting PBL in other professional areas in Asia over a number of years and has written a number of papers and books on PBL. Both authors have adopted *aPBL* as a better descriptor of the more advanced, authentic PBL that they have been involved with, as it is necessary to avoid confusing it with the other models of PBL.

This book is written for teachers, educators, and trainers in any setting, at any education level and teaching any subject, profession, craft or skill in which competency is the key expected outcome. The generic writing approach allows readers to translate *aPBL* into their own education/training areas.