

PHENOMENOM-BASED LEARNING



You are probably familiar with project-based learning, problem-based learning, and inquiry learning. But have you heard of phenomenon-based learning? It can be traced to the Finnish school system, which mandated its use in 2016, and defined it as “a learner-centered, multidisciplinary instructional approach that is based on student inquiry and problem solving. No specific subject is taught, nor is there any preset learning objective. Instead, learners investigate and solve their own questions by applying what subjects are relevant to the problem” (Valamis, 2022).

The key difference from other types of inquiry is that phenomenon-based learning has a global context and utilizes an interdisciplinary approach. An important outcome is the preparation of learners to solve problems in real life. In Finland, students are required to participate in at least one phenomenon-based learning module per year.

An example might be to understand and solve a question related to the phenomenon of space junk, which would require knowledge from different subjects such as science, geography, mathematics, and history.

This type of learning supports the learning model that was discussed in an earlier blog post—moving from surface learning to deep learning to transfer of learning.

One source (Valamis, 2022) outlines the process as follows:

1. Have learners choose a “phenomena” from the real world; the topic should have a global context and be related to real life issues or events.
2. Develop an inquiry question around this topic that begins with either a “how,” “why,” or “what if?”
3. Identify and teach the basic concepts that pertain to the learner’s chosen question; what skills or knowledge will they need to solve the problem?
4. Ensure that there is an open structure of time for learners to engage in the necessary research and problem solving.
5. Facilitate the process by setting up a framework that will help guide students through the process and develop their own way of solving the problem.

Reference

Phenomenon-based learning. (2022, February 17). Valamis. <https://www.valamis.com/hub/phenomenon-based-learning#:~:text=The%20goal%20of%20phenomenon%2Dbased,skills%20required%20to%20solve%20them.>