

TITLE OF PAPER: Exploring the impact of Problem Based Learning on Problem Solving Skills  
and Independent Learning on fourth form CSEC IT students at a rural southern government  
school

NAME: Carla Toney-Lewis

INSTITUTION: University of the West Indies, School of Education

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TUTOR: Dr. Vimala J. Kamalodeen

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### Abstract

Problem solving is a skill that is a requirement of many careers today. This is not an innate skill but one that must be developed and fostered. The purpose of this study was to determine if Problem-Based Learning (PBL) would be an effective tool to help fourth form Information Technology students improve their problem-solving skills. It was also used to determine if it would help students develop good study habits and work ethic thus promoting more independent learning among students.

PBL was used to teach the problem-solving component of the Information Technology syllabus. Using teacher-made resources, text books, class notes, online searches and collaboration with their peers, students were able to produce solutions to given problems. Quantitative data was collected through pre and post test scores and a weighted questionnaire. Qualitative data was collected using student journals.

The results of the study determined that Problem-Based Learning is an effective tool to help improve problem-solving skills. It also helped students to become more independent learners. These results are an indication that students respond when challenged. It also shows that this type of active learning should be encouraged in the classroom as it improves student engagement while promoting higher order thinking skills.