

## Preparing the Pre-Discussion

The pre-discussion is a fundamental, yet often underestimated element of PBL. The rationale of this stage is that you not only learn how to answer questions, but how to ask the right kind of questions, i.e. to develop a sound research approach.

Academic thinking relies on 3 crucial ingredients:

1. It starts from a **“puzzle” or “problem”** (i.e. something we do not understand);
2. It does not reinvent the wheel but relates to **existing knowledge** on which basis we form assumptions;
3. It follows a **deliberate plan** on how to research the puzzle.

Those 3 ingredients are also part of the pre-discussion (i.e. the first five steps) in PBL and should be tackled each time in order to train academic thinking.

In order to help you to get used to this, you will have to prepare each of the pre-discussions in this course. After you have read the assignment text, follow the steps below.

1. What is this assignment about?

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What catches your attention? What puzzles you? What do you find worthwhile to investigate more about?

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Your suggested problem statement reads as follows:

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2. What existing knowledge can you relate to this assignment? What have you heard/read/learnt about that seems relevant for this assignment? (Brainstorm 1)

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What assumptions would you make about the problem statement based on your existing knowledge? (Brainstorm 2)

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3. Based on your problem statement and your brainstorm, how would you suggest to prepare for our post-discussion?

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Which learning objectives would you propose?

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**Make sure to bring a *printed* copy to the meetings.**