Integration of Problem-Based Learning & Web-Based Multimedia to Enhance Soil Management Course

R. Strivelli¹, M. Krzic¹,², C. Crowley², S. Dyanatkar², A. Bomke¹, S. Simard³, and S. Grand¹

¹Faculty of Land and Food Systems, University of British Columbia (UBC), Vancouver, BC, Canada
²Centre for Teaching, Learning and Technology, UBC, Vancouver, BC, Canada
³Faculty of Forestry, UBC, Vancouver, BC, Canada

Background
Declining enrollment in post-secondary soil science programs in North America and other parts of the world are due to:
- Increasing urbanization,
- Lack of visibility of soil science in high school education,
- Traditional and often dated soil science curriculum.

To address this trend, universities are re-organizing soil science curriculum and implementing innovative educational approaches and web-based teaching resources.

The objective of this project was to develop a dynamic, web-based teaching tool to illustrate impacts of 3 land-uses on soil quality.

Land-Use Impacts (LUI) Tool
The LUI Tool (http://soilweb.landfood.ubc.ca/luitool/) was designed for an upper-level undergraduate and graduate level Sustainable Soil Management course at UBC.

The LUI Tool combines:
- A face-to-face problem-based learning (PBL) case study with
- Web-based multimedia

During the course, each student works on three, 4-week-long PBL case studies. Each case is focused on either soil chemistry, physics, or biology. The LUI tool is part of the soil chemistry section.

How Is It Used?

Week 1: Students are introduced to the case and relevant soil science principles through a lecture

Week 2-3: Students work in groups to meet specific learning outcomes, review soil data, and prepare for a group presentation

Week 4: Each group gives a 20-minute oral presentation to the class outlining the key concepts

Week 5: Each student prepares a written report demonstrating individual learning

- The media-rich LUI tool provides students with multiple approaches to achieve learning outcomes, when it is combined with face-to-face teaching.
- Student feedback showed that the LUI tool appealed to students and met their learning outcomes.

Reference: