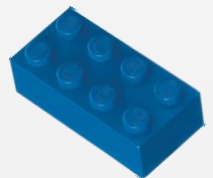# Teaching social marketing using an innovative constructivist approach

Bardus, M. PhD & Suggs, L.S., PhD

BeCHANGE Research Group

Institute for Public Communication
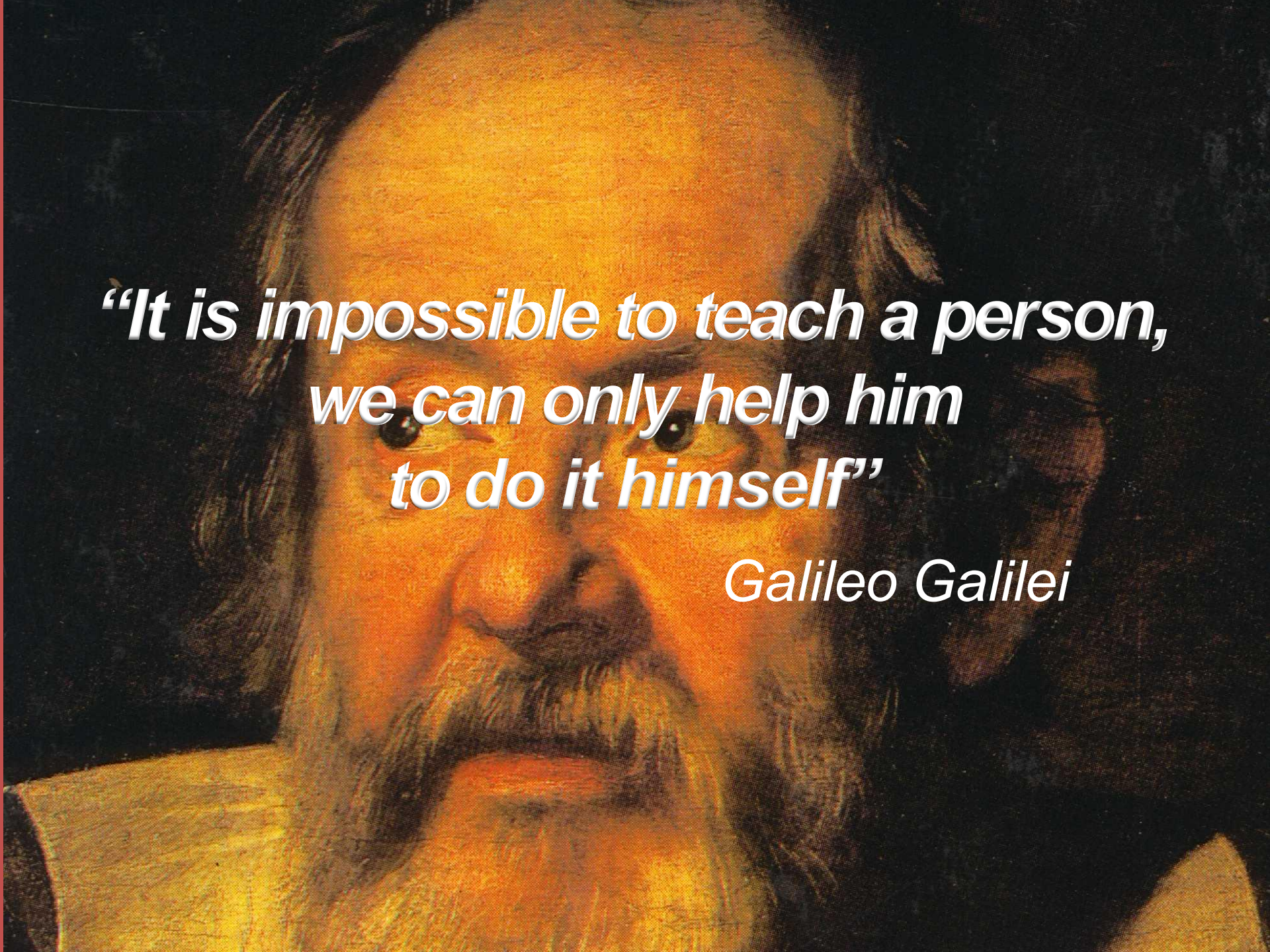
# Outline

- Background

- Methods

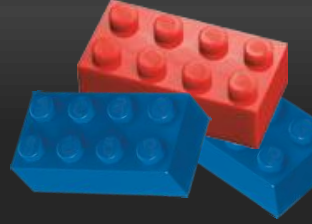- Preliminary results

- Conclusions

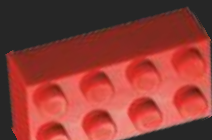"It is impossible to teach a person, we can only help him to do it himself"

Galileo Galilei

# Social Marketing at USI

# Social Marketing at USI - Lugano

Master's level course taught by Prof. L. Suzanne Suggs (and myself as TA) since 2008

200+ Master's students from all over the world

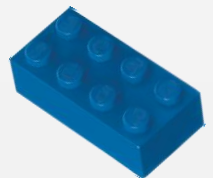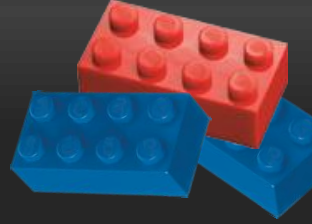| Year | # of students |
|------|---------------|
| 2008 | 14 |
| 2009 | 29 |
| 2010 | 51 |
| 2011 | 78 |
| 2012 | 52 |

# Teaching social marketing so far…

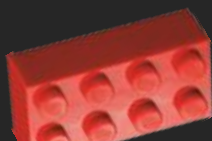**Traditional (and most frequently adopted) pedagogical approach:**

1. Mostly lecture-based
2. Use of **case studies** (especially in business courses)
3. Outcome: **social marketing plan** (public health + business courses)

(Kelly, 2009)

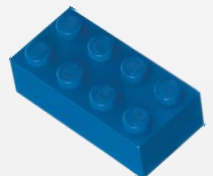# We decided to change

# Why change?

Improve **quality** and **learning experience** for students

Stimulate problem solving skills

Bring learning closer to **real-life problems**

Create real-life impact

Innovate ourselves

# What is PBL?

PBL can be thought of as a combination of **cognitive** (see Piaget) and **social constructivist** (see Vygotsky) theories. (EdutechWiki; 2012)

First applied in **medical schools** starting from the 60s: Faculty of Health Sciences of McMaster University, Canada; School of Medicine of Case Western Reserve University, United States (Neville, 2009).

# Case studies approach

"Case studies incorporate ideas of **experimental learning** by providing student-centred education and providing opportunities that will motivate students through **active involvement**. Case studies also provide an avenue for using problem solving skills and promote decision making in a non-threatening environment." (Popil, 2011: 205)
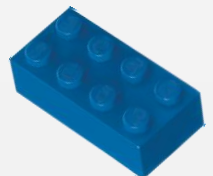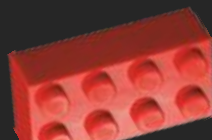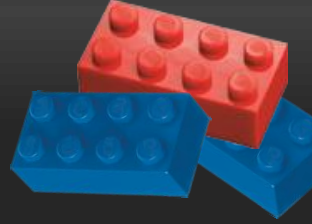
# Problem-based learning

"Learners need to be **stimulated** to restructure information they already know within a **realistic context**, to gain new knowledge, and to then elaborate on the new information they have learned, for example by **teaching it to peers** or by **discussing the material in a group** setting." (Kilroy, 2004: 411)
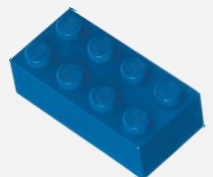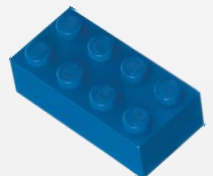
# SMKTG 2012 - Core features

Deal with **real-life social issues**

**Short lectures** on specific topics + discussion

**Case studies** from our Reseach Group projects (FAN, IA2SD, book examples)

**Problem-based class activities** and **assignments**
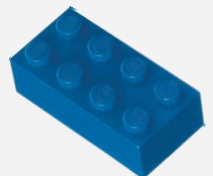
Learning Management System (Moodle)

# Additionally…
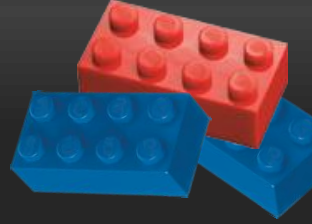
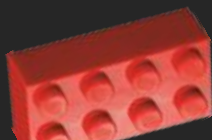The best student projects will participate in

**Project funding**

The programme funds projects at Swiss universities in the following areas:

A) Teaching and learning for sustainable development
up to CHF 250'000 per project

B) Student projects and student project incubators for sustainable development
up to CHF 25'000 / 250'000 per project

C) Research for sustainable development
up to CHF 200'000 per project

# Examples of Class Activities and Assignments

# Class activity #2 - Situation Analysis

*From the list of social issues identified in A1 students, in groups will conduct a situation analysis. Define/describe:*

*A) Internal factors (e.g., resources, management support, issue priority, internal publics, alliances, partnerships, past performance)*

- *What are the potential organizational strengths?*
- *What are the potential organizational weaknesses?*

*B) External factors (e.g., cultural, demographic, economic, technological, political, external publics => competitors/stakeholders)*

- *What are the potential external opportunities?*
- *What are the potential external threats?*

*C) Review of past or similar efforts*
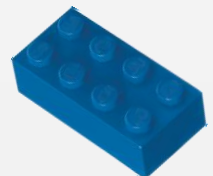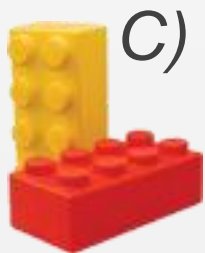
# Class activity #4
# Positioning & Creative brief

*Students in groups of 5-6 develop a positioning statement and work on a creative brief of selected issues:* **CONSUMERISM** *and* **OVERFISHING**

# Creative brief (1) - Outcome

**1) Target Audience(s): Who do you want to reach with your communication?**

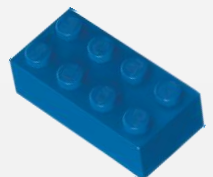- G1 (consumerism): spend a lot of money, most of their salaries in shopping (25-35 years)
- G2 (consumerism): USI students
- G3 (consumerism): young people < 20
- G4 (overfishing): Portuguese consumers adults (age 18+)

**2) Objective(s): What do you want your target audiences to do, think, or feel?**

- G1: Shop less, save money, plan ahead; think responsibly and precociously; feel independent.
- G2: reduce consumption of water bottles replaced by used water bottles
- G3: Spend less, to think: it is better for future; feel independent
- G4: feel good about buying from resp. fisheries

# Creative brief (2) - Outcome

**3) Obstacles: What beliefs, cultural practices, pressure, misinformation, etc. stand between your audience and the desired objective?**

- G1: media, market, peer pressure; beliefs: if one can earn the money, one has the right to spend it; the better I am dressed, the better person I am or appear to be

- G2: laziness, not easily accessible and overpriced; not a trend; hassle; if you want to drink water with gas; media pressure

- G3: peers' pressure, advertisement, society pressure to buy, easy credits, easy accessibility (e.g. click-and-buy)

- G4: price misconceptions, accessibility, financial affordabilty

**4) Key Promise: What's in it for the audience?**

- G1: to save money for the future and save space in the wardrobe.

- G2: save money, be eco-friendly, no need to return the bottles to recycle

- G3: financial stability, better option for the future (e.g. access to mortgages)

- G4: To be able to eat fish now and in the future at an affordable price through maintained sustainability of fishing areas.
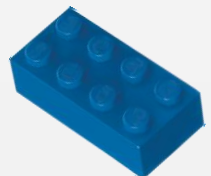
# Creative brief (3) - Outcome

**5) Support Statements / Reasons Why: These are the reasons the Key Promise is true.**

- G1: for future reasons, education, family, precaution (econ. Breakdown)
- G2: you can save money and hassle to buy and carry the bottle from the grocery; it is cool and trendy to be eco-friendly
- G3: keep opportunities open
- G4: Extinction is bad. Luxury goods are high priced.

**6) Tone: What feeling or personality should your communication have?**

- G1: fear, guilt = provide solution
- G2: optimistic; motivating
- G3: young, fresh, accent on the freedom, independence, transparency
- G4: Humorous and thought provoking, catchy.

**7) Media: What channel(s) or form will the communications take?**

- G1: TV, billboards on the streets where people go to shop, radio
- G2: social media, print ads, newsletters (email, USI Flash, etc.), stands, branded water bottle (USI one =augmented prod.), posters in restrooms; reuse your water bottles in canteen for discount (soda drinks).
- G3: social media, celebrities as role models, posters where young people hang out
- G4: convention and digital media; tv ads, web; viral video, game applications (free)
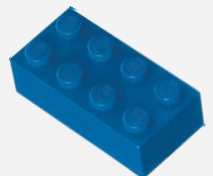
# Class activity #5: Theory Refresher

In class game Quiz: "**Who wants to be a Social Marketeer?**"
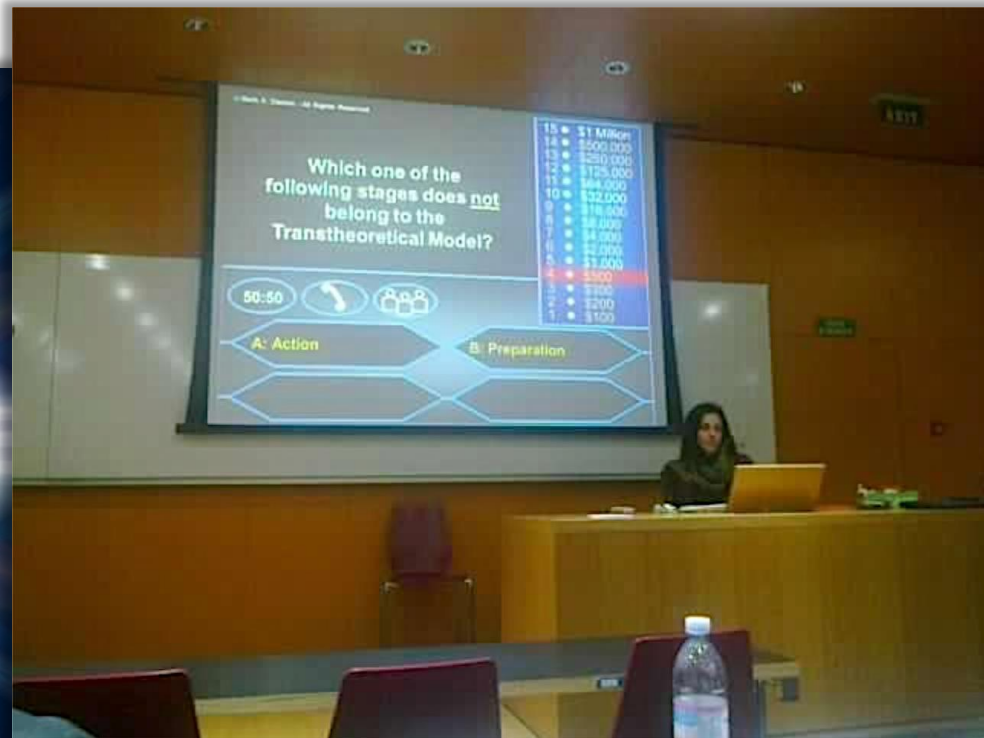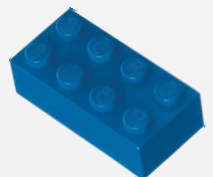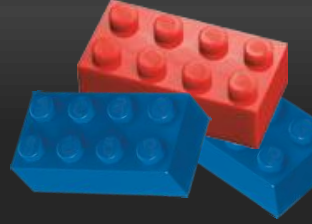
# Class activity #5 - Outcomes

**In class involvement was high**

**All class supported** the student-participant ("friend's call" - 50/50 - )
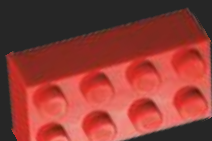
A4 Assignment: avg. class grade = **9.3/10**

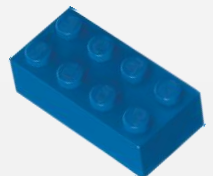# Preliminary results

# Preliminary results

High **involvement** and class **engagement**.

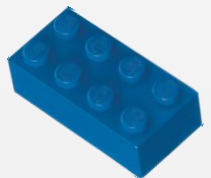**Higher level of discussions** and critical reflection of issues and principles.
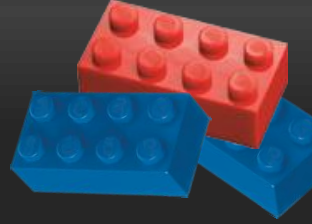
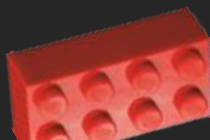Improved **quality** of assignments.

Higher **average grades**.

# Challenges

# Change is hard for everyone
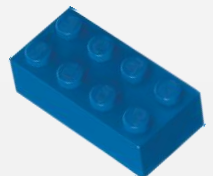
# Conclusions & Implications
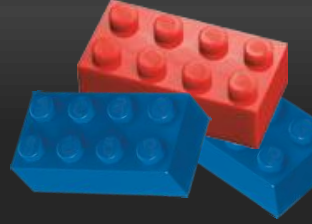
# Conclusions & Implications

PBL and case study approach show promising results in terms of class **engagement**, student **performance**, and **quality** in learning outcomes.
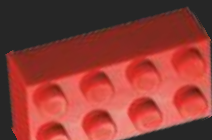
This alternative way of teaching offers the possibility to address issues and offer solutions to real-life problems, increasing the impact of the class.
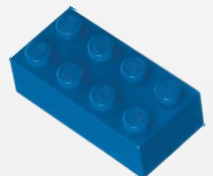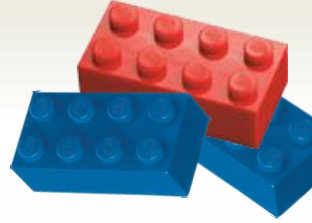
# Finally, a question to you all

# Sharing experiences

**Why don't we create a bank of ancillary teaching resources? => Kelly, 2009**

ESMA task group Knowledge Sharing (TG3)?

New task group?

# THANK YOU!
## Obrigado! Gracias!
## Danke! Merci! Grazie!
## Kiitos! Tak! Dank je wel!
## Takk! Tänan! Toda!

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