

## **Combining Problem Based Learning and Activism in a Feminist Classroom**

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This article explores my experience of incorporating a multi-stage Problem-Based Learning (PBL) project in an undergraduate women's studies course. PBL is a pedagogical approach that uses real open-ended problems of the social world as a basis for students to collectively consider and address. Incorporating an activist element as a final stage serves to connect classroom learning to the world students inhabit, provide them with a chance to direct their own learning, and motivate them with tools to address inequality, thus inspiring their own activism. PBL shares important characteristics with feminist pedagogy and I argue that this pedagogical approach allows instructors to integrate the benefits of community engagement and feminist pedagogy to increase student learning and commitment to action. I adopt a reflexive approach to examine student responses and my own from this project. I note four themes from students that include attention to the collaborative process and collective ownership, being empowered to act, focusing on solutions for the community, and a greater knowledge of the problem and connection to the women's studies discipline. Finally, I offer a few considerations for instructors interested in incorporating problem based learning with an activist component in a future course. *[Article copies available for a fee from The Transformative Studies Institute. E-mail address: [journal@transformativestudies.org](mailto:journal@transformativestudies.org) Website: <http://www.transformativestudies.org> ©2015 by The Transformative Studies Institute. All rights reserved.]*

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