



# **THE COMMON PROBLEM PROJECT**

**PROBLEM BASED LEARNING**

# A COLLABORATION IN INNOVATIVE TEACHING PRACTICES



SUNY  
Cortland

SUNY  
ONEONTA

Plattsburgh  
STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK

 OSWEGO  
STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK

# Common Problem Leadership Team



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**Funded by:**



**2015: Teagle Foundation \$25K Planning Grant**



**2016: SUNY Investment & Performance Fund \$250K**



**2017: National Science Foundation \$293K. Grant # 1712227**

**The Common Problem Pedagogy has a simple design:**

**Faculty from different disciplines work together with a community partner on a problem of common interest.**

**Faculty coordinate their relevant classes so that students can work as cross-disciplinary teams to analyze the problem and propose solutions**

# Common Problem Project

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**Engagement with  
community partners on a  
problem that is relevant to  
the community**



# Common Problem Project

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**Pairings of classes for  
interdisciplinary  
collaboration**

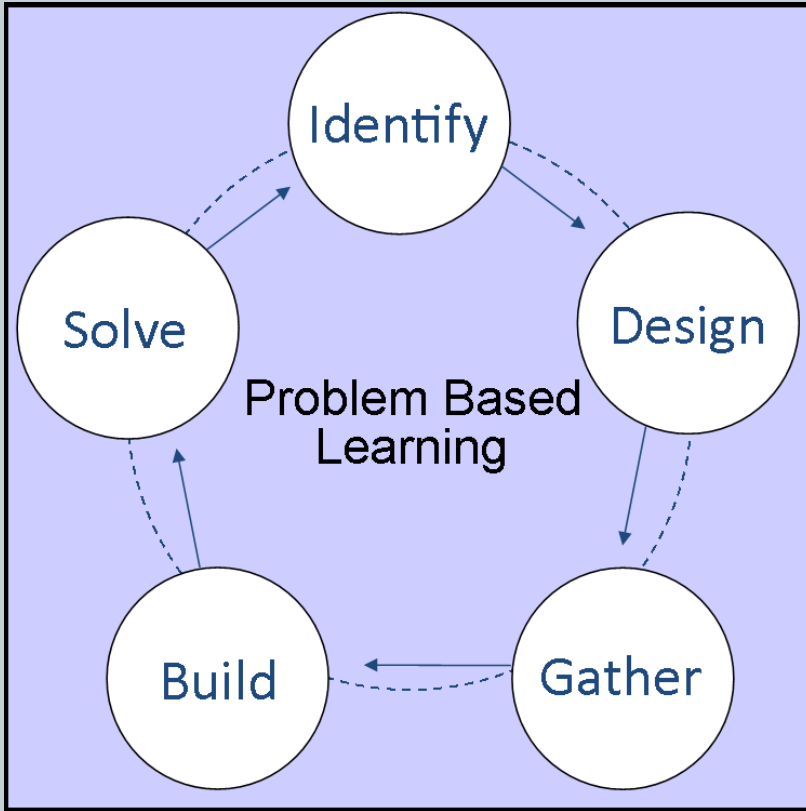




## **Two Learning Outcomes are emphasized:**

- **Identify scope of ill-structured problem, determine its causes, and construct and assess possible solutions.**
- **Incorporate insights of other disciplines in constructing meaningful solutions to problems.**





## **Problem Based learning is**

- **Student centered**
- **Challenging for both students and instructors**
- **Focused on ill-structured problems**
- **Less concerned about a product than the process**



## OSWEGO'S SMART NEIGHBORS PROJECT

**The SMART NEIGHBOR project is focusing on the problem of getting neighbors in the community to buy local.**

**To date, the partnership involves over 23 local businesses, the Oswego Chamber of Commerce, 15 faculty and nearly 400 students in more than 20 courses.**

# **OSWEGO'S SMART NEIGHBORS PROJECT**

**“As students, this project helps us step out of our comfort zones. We forget that a huge part of why we’re here is networking and getting out into the community. This project gives us the confidence to do that.” —student Emily Shaben**

## **Courses involved:**

- **Creative writing**
- **Film-making**
- **Art**
- **Marketing**  
**Sculpture**



## **PLATTSBURGH'S FILM AND SUSTAINABILITY PROJECT**



**Dr. Curt Gervich and Dr. Mike Devine**

**Working with community members to produce films on local sustainability issues**

**Courses involved:**

- **English**
- **Environmental Sciences**

## PLATTSBURGH'S FILM AND SUSTAINABILITY PROJECT



**Nathan Winans**  
co-director of  
*Power*

**“I learned how hidden poverty can be”**

**The student film *Power*, about homelessness, was shown in the 2017 Lake Champlain International Film Festival, and considered for the Lake Placid Film Festival.**

***A Day in the Life* explores the hidden economic links between student waste and the impoverished who recycle it.**

## ONEONTA'S ENVIRONMENT AND SCHOOL COMPOSTING PROJECT



**Working with the local school district on issues related to atmospheric changes and the impact on school composting programs.**

### **Courses involved:**

- **Literature**
- **Astronomy**



## **CORTLAND'S MIGRATION IN THE CORTLAND COMMUNITY**



**Students in the Migrations group  
during one of their collaborative  
meeting sessions**

**The project considered ways to better  
integrate refugees into the community. How  
best to meet the needs of the new migrants  
and to address concerns and misconceptions  
by local residents about the refugees .**

**Courses involved:**

- **Childhood Education**
- **History**
- **Political Science**



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