**BRIDGE – Project Report**

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1. My target class for BRIDGE this past year was COM 391 (Communication Criticism). There are no pre-requisites for this course. It is an elective, however it is on the menu of choices for Communication Studies Majors and Political Communication Minors. The demographics of this course usually entails upper classmen; usually 15 – 18 students. This semester 22 students enrolled.

2. During BRIDGE I addressed designing the class overall, since this was my first time teaching the course. I started out focusing on syllabus creation, content and assignment design (which was a major area of focus during BRIDGE). I wanted to approach the class in a way that would interest students as far as understanding the significance and utility of rhetorical criticism.

3. The first few weeks of coming to the BRIDGE meetings I did re-think the design of the course. My objectives went from very broad ideas to very specific ones. My objectives were as follows (in no specific order):

* Have students write a final paper (A rhetorical analysis of popular culture artifact)
* Provide students with an understanding of “rhetorical criticism” and the meaning of “rhetoric”
* Teach students to “do” rhetorical criticism

4. I used scaffolding as far as assignment design was concerned. I broke down the final paper into 4 installments over the course of the semester. Each installment was essentially a section of their final paper:

Installment #1 – Introduction

Installment #2 – Literature Review

Installment #3 – Methods Section

Installment #4 – Analysis/ Findings

Throughout the course of the semester I used “mini” assignments to get the students to critique popular culture artifacts, by finding their own artifacts and doing short presentations on covert ideologies.

5. In the last BRIDGE meeting I provided several samples of student work – which was installment #3 of their paper. I believe this is evidence of student performance and the effectiveness of the assignments I designed in leading students to developing an academic paper. There were a handful of students that did not meet my expectations; however, the majority of the class either met or exceeded expectations.

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| 6. There was a reading by E.D. Hirsch | ["You Can Always Look It Up"...or Can You? |

*American Educator*, v24 n1 p4-9 Spr 2000] that guided me in the direction of pursuing small projects in depth as opposed to covering a lot of material surface level. I believe this was the main factor in my class being successful this semester. I ended up teaching 5-6 methods as opposed to 8-9. It made a big difference.

7. I’ve learned that designing assignments in an environment such as BRIDGE is imperative to creating material that is effective in the classroom. If it were not for BRIDGE I would not have spent nearly as much time preparing and thinking about the course in the way in which I did. I appreciated the feedback from the meetings and it was very useful.

8. Moving forward I am definitely a fan of “less is more” and I will find other ways to implement having students do work in installments. This approach gives students more feedback and I can intervene much earlier if there are problems in the development of final papers.