

ComS 222 Instructional Communication Term Project Proposal

- a. Name of student conducting the project: Energetic G. Student
- b. Working title of the project: Empowering Ethnic Studies Learners in Higher Education: Instilling Academic Ownership Through Alternative History
- c. Rationale of the project: I intend to create a web-based teaching module using LOCUS for a course I would like to teach focusing on Chicanos in 20th Century U.S. History. Chicanos lag behind other ethnic groups in higher education yet this subpopulation of the United States continues to grow at a fast pace. The U. S. Census Bureau estimates the larger Hispanic population will encompass 24 percent of the overall population of the United States by the year 2050. Chicanos make up the majority of the Hispanic population. Many Chicano students attend schools which lack resources which could effectively guide them through the college admissions process. They often lack sufficient mentors and role models upon whom to call for information about getting into college so as to continue their education beyond high school. For example, many students are unaware of the importance of enrolling in higher level and AP courses while in high school in order to enhance their knowledge base and grade point averages and thus, boost their chances of successfully gaining admission to four-year colleges and universities. Chicanos are overwhelming over represented in two-year community colleges but often do not advance beyond those institutions nor do they proportionally enter four-year institutions straight from high school. Of course, there are those who fail to continue their education beyond high school and still others who fail to graduate from high school altogether. Students who make it through the recruiting and admission processes say they often feel alienated, unwelcome, isolated and overwhelmed upon their arrival on U.S. university and college campuses. Current U.S. Census Bureau statistics indicate that persons of Mexican origin in the United States (Chicanos) holding a four-year college education represent a mere 7.46 percent of the overall population. This figure is more than three times lower than the overall population's percentage of 24.40 percent.

Conventional methods of teaching, utilizing what Freire coined and critiqued as the "banking model" of education have hampered the efforts of under-represented ethnic

groups to increase their success of post-secondary educational attainment.

Exploration of different methods of teaching and styles of learning could prove effective in raising the educational persistence of Chicano students. By giving students access to web-based course material, engaging them in small group activities, and utilizing discussion to further enhance the creation of knowledge, I aim to introduce the concept of "ownership" regarding their own educational experiences.

d. Specific goals of the project: (1) To impart a sense of personal accomplishment, contribution, responsibility and, ultimately, ownership of one's education. (2) To empower students as agents and advocates of their own educational experiences.

e. A detailed plan of activities you will complete to finish the project include a timeline and assignments of responsibilities: Using LOCUS, I will create a web space where students will have access to electronic material such as links to note-worthy historical and educational sites. I will also post suggested readings and videos from which students can choose for a writing assignment and brief oral presentation assignment to share their acquisition of knowledge regarding U. S. Chicano history gained through the project. I will be researching, gathering and posting material to LOCUS and creating a writing prompt(s) for students to begin their writing assignments.

College freshmen and sophomores will be given access to a web-based course module and will create their own mini-courses by posting electronic resources and/or print material to LOCUS. Students will engage in small group activities to come to consensus about their postings. They will then be asked to state and defend their choices of postings to the web page in a brief oral presentation. Lastly, a discussion activity will be used to further enhance and encourage the creation of knowledge.

Pre- and post-surveys will be used as an indication of the effect of the project in terms of student goals. The surveys will ask students pertinent questions about their knowledge of the subject matter and will measure before-and-after results. Students will be asked to summarize what they took away from the lesson in relation to their own pursuit of higher education, using the post-survey. The post-survey will also include questions to measure both the cognitive and affective domains regarding completion of the project. The project attempts to address the method of education identified by Paulo Freire's critique of the so-called "banking model" and the

"student as repository" problem in education.

f. Description of the final product that will emerge from your work. A web space which includes internet links, print and video resources and, ultimately, students' article and web postings to be shared with other students. It is hoped that students will come away with not only an understanding of the rich history of the Chicano subpopulation but, also a clear and definite sense of ownership in their own education and the creation of new and meaningful knowledge. This exercise is meant to establish the value of different (1) teaching methods, (2) learning styles, (3) histories, and (4) knowledge and to establish the student as agent and advocate of her/his own education.