

# Solve a Complex Issue with The BRIDGE

Wilson, M.; Gibson, F.; Bond, C.; Anderson, C.; Marrison, D.; Marrison, E.; White, K.; and Woods, A.

## INTRODUCTION

Complex issues in work, school, or life can significantly impact productivity, performance, and goal attainment. The BRIDGE's innovative storyboarding strategy involves several interconnected components and shows how minor changes to one component impact others.

## AIM

The BRIDGE was designed to solve complex issues with a systems approach. It is used when

- 1) there are many components to an issue that are interrelated, and minor changes to one component could cause major consequences to others;
- 2) you want a creative solution that has not been done before; and
- 3) you have a short time period to resolve the issue. The BRIDGE creatively incorporates adaptations of several organization analysis tools designed by business scholars arranged in a logical flow: Covey's Circle of Control/Influence, Lewin's Force Field Analysis, SWOT, and Kotter's Change Model.



## Snowden's Complexity Theory Cynefin Decision-Making Model



Cynefin Framework by David Snowden

## METHODS

The BRIDGE model supports the research of Welsh scholar David Snowden and his Cynefin Decision Making Framework. Different situations require different responses to successfully navigate them. Snowden's framework interprets complexity theory with 4 domains of decision making, giving leaders a reference for determining the best approach to solve their current dilemma. Two domains in which the answers are already known, with definite cause-and effect relationships, are "obvious" and "complicated." In the other two domains, "complex" and "chaotic," the answers are unknown.

Decisions in the "complex" domain require experimentation and creativity to come up with a new approach. The leader may not even know the right answers to ask. The final solution is only apparent once you have discovered it and many times is made up of several interrelated components – or a system.

## RESULTS

The BRIDGE has solved complex issues with a variety of groups:

- 1) a non-profit start-up created a structure, policies and procedures to run their new organization;
- 2) a 4-H group identified a new training program;
- 3) a fire chief crafted a plan for requesting funding for new equipment;
- 4) a training department developed a plan for management approval to implement a new initiative;
- 5) an FFA chapter developed several service learning projects for their school and community and at the same time learned valuable critical-thinking skills
- 6) a trucking company created a strategic plan to lead the company into a new phase of services.

## CONCLUSIONS

The BRIDGE was designed to fuel idea generation of the current state of a problem, issue, or concern and stimulate creativity for designing the future state. The comprehensive curriculum materials provide detailed instructions to the facilitator for every step of The BRIDGE process.

The outcome to the team of following the process is a detailed action plan to implement the one-of-a-kind solution they designed. The outcomes and impacts will vary greatly depending on the team's issue, concern, or problem.

Extension educators in any program can utilize this process with their constituents.

## "Design" SWOT Analysis

	INTERNAL	EXTERNAL
POSITIVE	<b>STRENGTHS</b> <b>What is needed to capitalize on these?</b>	<b>OPPORTUNITIES</b> <b>What is needed to seize these?</b>
NEGATIVE	<b>WEAKNESSES</b> <b>What is needed to address these?</b>	<b>THREATS</b> <b>What is needed to diminish these?</b>

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