

Community As Curriculum

Graduate School of Library and Information Science



Youth Community Informatics

University of Illinois
at Urbana/Champaign



Community As Curriculum

Youth Community Informatics Curriculum

Integrating Inquiry and Social Action with Technology

Developed by the Youth Community Informatics project <http://illinois.edu>

We would like to give special thanks to the youth and youth leaders who contributed to the development of these activities and have implemented them in their communities.

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Youth Community Informatics Curriculum

What is the Youth Community Informatics?

Learning does not only occur in the highly-structured realm of schools but everywhere in the more diffuse realms of life in neighborhoods and on the streets. These settings include after-school programs, Boys and Girls clubs, libraries, museums, and community centers, to name a few. Youth Community Informatics (YCI) attends to these informal settings in the community and provides spaces in which youth have fun, learn about new technologies, and experience their community through actual engagement.

Within the process of YCI, youth find the com-

munity issues, investigate them, and create various kinds of products with use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT). It leads youth to become active creators and sustainers of their own community who can participate in community building and problem solving.

The implementation of the YCI curriculum is generating new meaning-making practices in several informal settings in the community. These innovative practices are providing spaces in which youth have fun and learn about technologies, their community, their own histories, and problem solving.

What is Youth Community Informatics?

Youth Community Informatics (YCI) engages under-served youth as leaders in using cutting-edge technologies to address local community issues.

Our work is based on an assumption that the field of Library and Information Science stands to be enriched by the perspectives and experiences that these youth bring.

What do we do?

Learning activities are supported by inquiry units that engage youth in topics such as community asset mapping and community journalism. The technologies used to support these activities include GIS/GPS geospatial tools, video, podcasts and the Internet.

Reaching out to rural, urban, and suburban communities, YCI is meeting the land-grant mission of the University of Illinois. We are committed to working within and with these communities to enhance future career opportunities for under-served youth.

Who are our partners?

YCI brings teens, youth, teachers, youth leaders, librarians, and academics together in communities across Illinois. We build on the assets of both the university and the community to foster youth and community development.

Connect with us!

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II. Introduction to the YCI curriculum

The Youth Community Informatics (YCI) curriculum aims at the development of both youth and the community. Youth development is not separate from community development; youth development has a reciprocal relationship with community development. By participating in their community, youth can have hands-on knowledge, build a strong sense of where they live, its living history, and the joys and concerns that go into living in this place and time. In addition, the community benefits from this participation by cultivating the next generation that is well-informed and actively participating in the community.

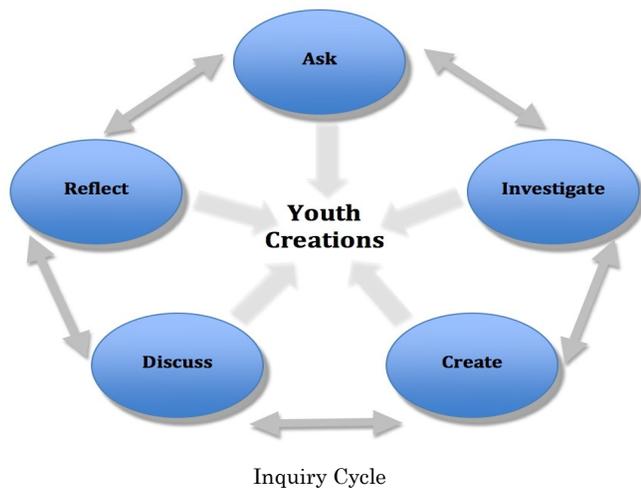
In terms of purposes, the YCI curriculum cherishes not only cognitive but also attitudinal development of youth. Belonging, mastery, independence, and generosity are the ultimate goals of YCI. YCI aims to build community, offer mastery of ICT skills, youth empowerment, and enhanced understanding of the library and information science field.

The YCI curriculum follows the inquiry-based and experience-based learning model (Chip & Bishop, 2002). Yet, the YCI curriculum, employs community informatics practices for youth learning and engagement in community.

How this curriculum works

The YCI curriculum consists of several learning modules. The first set of modules, entitled, "Youth as Social Inquirer", are inquiries into the community. Students choose a topic of interest and using the appropriate modules, they do research into their chosen community issue. After learning about a certain component of the community (such as poverty), students then use the "Youth as Social Activist" modules to help them construct and create a solution to the problem they studied. As this is a flexible curriculum. There may be times when one might go directly to the "Youth as Social Activist" curriculum.

III. Activity Guidelines: Inquiry-Based Learning



Learning Begins with the Curiosity of the Learners

The inquiry cycle is the axis of the YCI curriculum. Inquiry rarely proceeds in a simple, linear fashion. The five dimensions in the process—ask, investigate, create, discuss, reflect—overlap, and not every category or step is present in any given inquiry. Each step can be embedded in any of the others, and so on. In fact, the very nature of inquiry is that these steps are mutually reinforcing and interrelated. Thus, reflection on solving a problem may lead to reformulating the problem or posing new questions. Similarly, action in the world is closely tied to dialogue with others.

ASK reminds us that inquiry develops from a question or problem arising out of experience. Meaningful questions are inspired by genuine curiosity about real-world experiences and challenges.

Viewed in process terms, one can say that a question or a problem comes into focus, and the learner begins to define or describe what it is, for example:

"What does poverty look like within our community?"

"How might racism be viewed by different people?"

"Are there locations in my community in which more crime occurs than others?"

"How might I communicate my new knowledge with others in my community?"

But it is important to caution that inquiry does not always start with a well-articulated question.

In fact, questions themselves arise from reflection and action in the world, including dialogue with others.

Investigate relates to the varieties of experiences possible and the many ways in which we become part of an indeterminate situation. It suggests that opportunities for learning require diverse, authentic, and challenging materials and problems. Because experience includes interactions with others, there is also a moral dimension to inquiry. Similarly, physical, emotional, aesthetic, and practical dimensions are inherent in inquiry, and are not merely enhancements or add-ons.

Through investigation, we turn curiosity into action. Learners gather information, study, craft an experiment, observe, or interview. The learner may recast the question, refine a line of query, or plunge down a new path that the original ques-

tion did not, or could not, anticipate. The information-gathering stage becomes a self-motivated process that is owned by the engaged learner.

CREATE inquiry means active, engaged, hands-on learning. Inquiry thus implies active creation of meaning, which includes new forms of collaborating and new roles for collaborators. As information begins to coalesce, the learner makes connections. The ability at this stage to synthesize meaning is the creative spark that forms new knowledge. The learner now undertakes the creative task of shaping significant new thoughts, ideas, and theories extending his or her prior experience and knowledge.

DISCUSS highlights an implicit part of John Dewey's definition. Although inquiry has a personal aspect, it is also part of our participation in social arrangements and community. The discuss aspect of the inquiry cycle involves listening to others and articulating one's own understandings. Through discussion (or dialogue), construction of knowledge becomes a social enterprise. Learners share their ideas and ask others about their own experiences. Shared knowledge is a community-building process, and the meaning of their investigation begins to take on greater relevance in the context of the learner's society. Learners compare notes, share experiences, and discuss conclusions, through multiple media, including online social networks.

REFLECT means expressing experience, and thereby being able to move from new concepts into action. Reflection may also mean recognizing further questions, leading to continuing inquiry. Reflection is taking the time to look back at initial questions, the research path, and the conclusions made. The learner steps back, takes inventory, makes observations, and makes new decisions. Has a solution been found? Do new questions come into light? What might those questions be? And so it begins again—this is the circle of inquiry.

** Each unit of this YCI curriculum is framed within the inquiry cycle and provided with a brief description and specific questions that youth leaders may use at each dimension. For the “Youth as Social Inquiry” lessons, suggestions for where students may find information for their inquiries are provided in purple boxes. For the “Youth as Social Activists” section, examples are also offered to help youth leaders to implement their ideas for addressing a social issue within their community. Where available, these examples are provided in the blue boxes on the activism pages.*

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Youth as Social Inquirer

Exploring the issue of poverty within the community

Brief Description

You will learn how to do research around the issue of poverty within your own community. From research such as local archive searches, Internet searches, and interviews, you will discuss the issue of poverty and possible solutions.

The goals listed should be adapted to the specific resources of the institution and the specific group of youth.

After doing your inquiry, you will then work to implement a plan based on your inquiry. (Refer to “Youth as Social Activist” activities.)

Goals of Activities

- Enable you to learn how to do research using primary sources
- Empower you to think critically of yourself within the context of your local history and local social reality
- Think about a project that helps to address the issue of poverty in your community

Inquiry Cycle

♣ Ask:

- In what ways can you see poverty within your community?

- What information do you need to gather in order to find out about poverty within your community?
- Where can you find information about poverty within your community?
- How does poverty effect families in your community?
- What organizations exist within your community whose mission it is to address the issue of poverty?
- Who might serve as resources for you as you do this investigation on poverty?

♣ **Investigate:** You will explore answers to your questions. You will want to look to primary sources such as interviews with people whose mission it is to work to end poverty such as a homeless shelter director, someone who works at a food bank or shelter, city members, church leaders, etc... You may take a look at census information, city statistics, commerce commission, etc.

♣ **Create:** Once you have completed this inquiry, you will think about a project to help address some of the issues brought forth through the asking and investigation portions of the cycle. See “Youth as Social Activist” activities for ideas and the process.

Resources:

US Census Bureau

- www.census.gov

United Way

- www.unitedway.org

Chamber of Commerce

- www.uschamber.com

Handbook on Poverty Statistics

- unstats.un.org/unsd/methods/poverty/default.htm

The Heritage Foundation—Understanding Poverty in America

- www.heritage.org/research/welfare/bg1713.cfm

♣ Discuss:

- What did you learn about your community?
- What other important information did you gain from your research and from your interview(s)?
- Is there anything you can do in relation to this topic for further research or action?
- What did you learn about people from completing this inquiry?
- What is the value of your inquiry?
- How can you get others to become interested in this topic?
- What else might you learn and teach others about?
- How does your participation in work like this change how others view you, your community, and your history?
- What is the importance of archiving local history?

♣ Reflect:

- How does learning about this topic impact you?
- How does sharing your knowledge about this topic impact your community?
- How does your participating in work like this involve you in a democracy?
- How could learning about this topic affect others like you?
- What is the value that comes from learning about poverty in your community?

Youth as Social Inquirer

Exploring issues of racism within the community

Brief Description

You will learn how to do research around the issue of racism within their own community. From research such as local archive searches, Internet searches, and interviews, you will discuss the issue of racism and possible solutions.

The goals listed should be adapted to the specific resources of the institution and the specific group of youth.

After completing this inquiry, you will then work to implement an action plan based on your inquiry.

Goals of Activities

- Enable you to learn how to do research using primary sources
- Empower you to think critically about yourself within the context of this issue as well as your local history
- Conceptualize a project that may address the issue of racism in your community

Inquiry Cycle

♣ Ask:

- What is race?
- What is racism?
- Has racism changed since the Civil Rights Move-

ment?

- Why is there racism?
- In what ways have you experienced racism?
- In what ways can you see racism within your community?
- What information do you need to gather in order to find out about racism within our community?
- Where can you find information about racism within our community?
- Where might you be able to observe racism within your community?
- How might racism look differently in different contexts?
- What organizations exist within your community whose mission it is to address the issue of racism?
- Who might serve as resources for you as you do this investigation on racism?

♣ **Investigate:** You will explore answers to your questions. You may take a look at primary source data such as census information, city statistics, school state test scores, newspaper archives of statistics, etc. If you have an independent media center in your community, you may want to go there to talk to people about racism. You may want to interview people whose mission it is to work to end racism such as someone who

Resources:

Youth Noise: Facts about Racism

- www.youthnoise.com/page.php?page_id=2694

African Americans and the Criminal Injustice System

- www.prisonactivist.org/archive/factsheets/racism.pdf

Defining Race, Racism, and Racial Discrimination

- academic.udayton.edu/race/01race/race08.htm

News Media Fact Sheet

- www.ywca.org/atf/cf/%7B3B450FA5-108B.../Fact_Sheet.doc

Statistics of Racism:

- www.struggle4reparations.com/starkey/rep_sta.html

works at an organization such as the NAACP, city council members, church leaders, etc. You may also interview people who have experienced racism, but be cautioned to do this with adult supervision, so that if you ask questions that are particularly difficult, the adult can help you navigate the discussion.

♣ **Create:** Using the “Youth as Social Activist” curriculum, you will think about designing a project to help address some of the issues brought forth through the asking and investigation portions of the inquiry cycle. Your project may be to inform the public of this issue; to teach people about this issue; to take action on this issue through a protest, etc. See “Youth as Social Activist” activities for ideas and the process.

♣ **Discuss:**

- What did you learn about your community?
- What other important information did you gain from your research and from your interview?
- Is there anything you can do in relation to this topic for further research or action?
- What did you learn about people from completing this project?
- What is the value of your knowledge?
- How can you get others to want to learn more about this topic?
- What else might you learn about and teach others about?

♣ **Reflect:**

- How does your learning about this topic impact you?
- How could sharing your knowledge about this topic impact your community?
- How does participating in work like this involve you in a democracy?
- How does participating in work like this change how others view your community and history?
- What is the importance of archiving local history?

Youth as Social Inquirer

Exploring issues of violence within the community

Brief Description

From this inquiry you will learn how to do research around the issue of violence within your own community. From research such as local archive searches, Internet searches, and interviews, you will discuss the issue of violence in the community and possible solutions.

The goals listed should be adapted to the specific resources of the institution and the specific group of youth.

After completing this inquiry, you will then work to implement an action plan based on your inquiry.

Goals of Activities

- Enable you to learn how to do research using primary sources
- Empower you to think critically of yourself within the context of this issue and your local history
- Conceptualize a project that helps to address the issue of violence in your community

Inquiry Cycle

♣ Ask:

- What is violence?
- What are some examples of violence?
- Who is impacted by violence?
- How does violence in the media affect people?
- In what ways can you see violence within your community?
- What violence, if any, have you experienced?

- What information do you need to gather in order to find out about violence within your community?
- Where can you find information about violence within your community?
- Where might you be able to observe violence within your community?
- How might violence look differently in different contexts?
- What organizations exist within your community whose mission it is to address the issue of violence?
- Who might serve as resources for you as you do this investigation on violence?
- What is the relationship between poverty and violence in your community?
- Are there any locations within your community that are more violent than others?
- What is the relationship between the police and the community?
- Which violent acts in the community get reported upon and which do not?

♣ **Investigate:** You will explore answers to your questions. You may take a look at primary source information such as census information, city statistics, commerce commission, police statistics, newspaper archives, etc. You may want to interview people whose mission it is to work to end violence such as a someone who works at an organization such as the NAACP, city

Resources:

Statistics on Violence

- www.thepeacealliance.org/files/outreach_material/stats_violence.pdf

Violence in Schools

- youthviolence.edschool.virginia.edu/violence-in-schools/national-statistics.html

Chamber of Commerce

- www.uschamber.com

Crime Reports

- www.crimereports.com

council members, police men and women, etc. You may also want to consider interviewing people who have experienced violence, but this should be done with close adult supervision.

♣ **Create:** You will design a project to help address some of the issues brought forth through the asking and investigation portions of the cycle. Your project may be to inform the public of this issue; to teach people about this issue; to take action on this issue through a protest, etc. See “Youth as Social Activist” activities for ideas and the process.

♣ **Discuss:**

- What did you learn about your community?
- What other important information did you gain from your research and from your interviews?
- Is there anything you can do in relation to this topic for further research or action?
- What did you learn about people and your community from completing this project?
- What is the value of your new knowledge?
- How can you get others to become interested in this topic?
- What else might you learn and teach others about?

♣ **Reflect:**

- How does your learning about this topic impact you?
- How could sharing your knowledge about this topic impact your community?
- How does participating in work like this involve you in a democracy?
- How does participating in work like this change how others view you, your community, and your history?
- What is the importance of archiving local history?

Youth as Social Inquirer

Exploring issues of crime within the community

Brief Description

Through this inquiry, you will learn how to do research around the issue of crime within your own community. From research such as local archive searches, Internet searches, and interviews, you will discuss the issue of crime in the community as well as possible solutions.

The goals listed should be adapted to the specific resources of the institution and the specific group of youth.

After completing this inquiry, you will then work to implement an action plan based on your inquiry.

Goals of Activities

- Enable you to learn how to do research using primary sources
- Empower you to think critically of yourself within the context of this issue and your local history
- Think about creating a project that helps to address the issue of crime in your community

Inquiry Cycle

♠ Ask:

- What constitutes a crime?

- What crimes have you experienced within your community?
- What types of crimes occur within your community?
- How frequently do different crimes occur?
- How does crime in your community affect you and your family?
- What information do you need to gather in order to find out about crime within your community?
- Where can you find information about crime within our community?
- Where might you be able to observe crime within your community?
- How might crime look differently in different contexts?
- What organizations exist within your community whose mission it is to address the issue of crime?
- Who might serve as resources for you as you do this investigation on crime?
- What is the relationship between poverty and crime in your community?
- Are there any locations within our community that have more crime than others? If so, why might this be?

Resources:

FBI Uniform Crime Reports

- www.fbi.gov/ucr/ucr.htm

Bureau of Justice Statistics

- bjs.ojp.usdoj.gov/

United Way

- www.unitedway.org

Chamber of Commerce

- www.uschamber.com

Crime Reports

- www.crimereports.com

Economic and Social Effects of Crime on the Community

- law.jrank.org/pages/12120/Economic-Social-Effects-Crime-Community-efforts-avoid-crime-costs.html

♣ **Investigate:** You will explore answers to your questions. You may take a look at primary source information such as census information, city statistics, commerce commission, police statistics, newspaper archives, etc. You may want to interview people whose mission it is to work to end crime such as a journalist, a prosecutor, someone who works at an organization such as the NAACP, city council members, church leaders, police men and women, etc. You may also be interested in interviewing people who have been victims of crime. This should be done with careful adult supervision.

♣ **Create:** You will design a project to help address some of the issues brought forth through the asking and investigation portions of the cycle. Your project may be to inform the public of this issue; to teach people about this issue; to take action on this issue through a protest, etc. See “Youth as Social Activist” activities for ideas and the process.

♣ **Discuss:**

- What did you learn about your community?
- What other important information did you gain from your research and from your interviews?
- Is there anything you can do in relation to this topic for further research or action?
- What did you learn about people from completing this project?
- What is the potential value of your inquiry?
- How can you get others to become interested in this issue?
- What else might you learn and teach others about?

♣ **Reflect:**

- How does learning about this topic impact you?
- How can sharing your knowledge about this topic impact you and your community?
- How does participating in work like this involve you in a democracy?
- How does participating in work like this change how others view you, your community, and your history?

Youth as Social Inquirer

Exploring issues of racial segregation within the community

Brief Description

Through this inquiry, you will learn how to do research around the issue of racial segregation within your own community. From research such as a local archive search, Internet searches, and interviews, you will discuss the issue of racial segregation in the community and will also discuss possible solutions.

The goals listed should be adapted to the specific resources of the institution and the specific group of youth.

After completing this inquiry, you will then work to implement an action plan based on your inquiry.

Goals of Activities

- Enable you to learn how to do research using primary sources
- Empower you to think critically of yourself within the context of your community, this issue, and local history
- Empower you to think critically about the role you play in further entrenching, or working towards and end of racial segregation
- Think about a project that will help to address the issue of racial segregation in your community

Inquiry Cycle

▲ Ask:

- What is segregation?
- When did racial segregation begin in your community?
- Why does racial segregation happen?
- What was the Brown v. Board of Education decision? How are the Brown v. Board 1 and 2 decisions different?
- How do members of your community perpetuate racial segregation?
- Are the schools in your community racially segregated?
- Are the churches or places of worship in your community racially segregated? Why might this be?
- Who may be a proponent of racial segregation and why?
- Who benefits from racial segregation?
- What races have been segregated?
- Is there a situation in which racial segregation could work?
- How can you gather information about the history of racial segregation within your community?
- What is the difference between defacto and de jure segregation?

Resources:

African American History Timeline

- www.infoplease.com/spot/bhmtimeline.html

Racial Segregation Statistics

- www.censusscope.org/segregation.html

A Century of Racial Segregation 1849-1950

- www.loc.gov/exhibits/brown/brown-segregation.html

The Perpetuation of Residential Racial Segregation in America

- www.law.fsu.edu/journals/landuse/Vol141/seit.htm

Facts about civil rights movement

- www.britannica.com/facts/5/58251/civil-rights-movement-as-discussed-in-racial-segregation

Key excerpts from the majority opinion of the court Brown v. Board 1954

- www.landmarkcases.org/brown/opinion1.html

♣ **Investigate:** For this investigation, you will explore answers to your questions. You may take a look at primary source information such as census information, city statistics, commerce commission statistics, police statistics, newspaper archives, etc. You may want to interview people whose mission it is learn about segregation such as a teacher, journalist, someone who works at an organization such as the NAACP, city council members, church leaders, police men and women, etc. You may also be interested in interviewing someone who went to a segregated school, and or someone who went through schooling as the schools were being desegregated.

♣ **Create:** You will design a project to help address some of the issues brought forth through the asking and investigation portions of the cycle. Your project may be to inform the public of this issue; to teach people about this issue; to take action on this issue through a protest, etc. See “Youth as Social Activist” activities for ideas and the process.

♣ **Discuss:**

- What did you learn about your community?
- What other important information did you gain from your research and from your interviews?
- Is there anything you can do in relation to this topic for further research or action?
- What did you learn about people from completing this project?
- What is the potential value of your inquiry?
- How can you get others to become interested in this issue?
- What else might you learn and teach others about?

♣ **Reflect:**

- How does learning about this topic impact you?
- How can sharing your knowledge about this topic impact your community?
- How does participating in work like this involve you in a democracy?
- How does participating in work like this change how others view you, your community, and your history?

Youth as Social Inquirer

Exploring issues of unemployment within the community

Brief Description

Through this inquiry, you will learn how to do research around the issue of unemployment within their own community. From research such as local archive searches, Internet searches, and interviews, you will discuss the issue of unemployment and youth unemployment as well as possible solutions.

The goals listed should be adapted to the specific resources of the institution and the specific group of youth.

After completing this inquiry, you will then work to implement an action plan based on your inquiry.

Goals of Activities

- Enable you to learn how to do research using primary sources
- Empower you to think critically of yourself within the context of local employment opportunities
- Think about a project that helps to address the issue of unemployment in your community

Inquiry Cycle

♣ Ask:

- What is the difference between a job and a career?
- What types of jobs and careers are available for people with different levels of education (i.e.: HS diploma, Associates Degree, Bachelors Degree, Masters Degree, Doctoral Degree)?
- What are the salary variations based on your level of education?
- What does it mean to be unemployed?
- What are the unemployment rates for the nation, state, and community?
- What is the unemployment rate for the nation, state, and community by race?
- Why might there be a difference in the unemployment rates among different races of people?
- How does the community perpetuate unemployment differences among different races of people?
- Compare and contrast rural/ small urban unemployment by race to urban unemployment rates.
- What is minimum wage?
- What are the limitations of surviving on minimum wage?
- Who might serve as resources for us as we do this investigation?

Resources:

Bureau of Labor Statistics

- www.bls.gov/CPS/

U.S. Unemployment Rates by Race

- verifiable.com/app#/charts/1361

Career Overview, career and job search resources

- www.careeroverview.com/salary-benefits.html

Salary List of Millions of Jobs—Real starting and average salary

- www.salarylist.com

What do Employers Really Want?

- www.quintcareers.com/jobs_skills_values.html

Career Survey

- www.okcareertech.org/okcareerclusters/CCSpeakersKit/Handouts/CareerClusterSurvey.pdf

- What careers are currently the most sought after by employers?
- What do employers really want (top skills and values employers seek from job seekers)?
- What are the salaries of teachers, lawyers, factory workers, nurses, retail sales associates, and cooks?
- What are the salaries of job opportunities for the career you see in your future?

♣ **Investigate:** You will explore answers to your questions. You may take a look at primary source information such as census information, city statistics, commerce commission statistics, employment statistics, newspaper employment ads with job qualifications and salary range information, job and career training opportunities within your community etc. You may look at the jobs and careers of your family, friends and community members. You may want to complete a career survey yourself to see which careers meet your goals and interests. You may want to interview people whose job or career is similar to your own interest. You may also seek opportunities within the community to work along side community partners in careers inline with your own future career interests. You may also be interested in interviewing people in specific careers as a way of learning the ways in which people have worked to obtain specific careers. You may also be interested in learning about careers which are inline with areas in which you excel academically.

♣ **Create:** You will design a project to help address some of the issues of unemployment in your community brought forth through the asking and investigation portions of the cycle. Your project may involve informing your peers about issues encompassing present and future employment opportunities; to take action on this issue through peer career and/or education counseling. You may also consider producing a career and education conference in your own community, etc.

♣ **Discuss:**

- What did you learn about employment opportunities in your community compared to other communities?
- What other important information did you gain about employment opportunities from your research and interviews?
- Is there anything you can do in relation to unemployment in your community for further research or action?
- What did you learn about people and employment from completing this project?
- What is the potential value of this information to your community and peers?
- How can you get others to become interested in the issue of unemployment in your community?
- What else might you learn about and teach others in relation to issues of unemployment?
- What did you learn about the importance of education in relation to career opportunities and employment.
- What did you learn about the difference between your employment opportunities and the employment opportunities of your parents and/or grandparents?
- What particular skills are currently in high demand within your community?
- What do you need to do in terms of your schooling now to prepare yourself for your future career so that you won't have to worry about being unemployed?
- What can you do to prepare yourself for your future?

♣ **Reflect:**

- How does learning about particular unemployment issues impact you, your family, and your community?
- How can sharing knowledge about employment issues impact your community?
- How does participating in work like this involve you in a democracy?
- How does participating in work like this change how others view you, youth, and youth contributions within your community?
- What kinds of positive and negative feedback have you encountered from within the community while involved in this process?

Youth as Social Inquirer

Exploring issues of drugs and alcohol within the community

Brief Description

Through this inquiry, you will learn how to do research around the issue of drug and alcohol abuse within your own community. From research such as local archive searches, Internet searches, and interviews, you will discuss the issue of drug and alcohol abuse and possible solutions.

The goals listed should be adapted to the specific resources of the institution and the specific group of youth.

After completing this inquiry, you will then work to implement an action plan based on your inquiry.

Goals of Activities

- Enable you to learn how to do research using primary sources
- Empower you to think critically within the context of drug and alcohol abuse issues within your own community
- Think about a project that helps to address the issue of drug and alcohol abuse in your community

Inquiry Cycle

▲ Ask:

- What is the difference between drug and alcohol use vs. abuse?
- What types counseling centers are available in your community for individuals dealing with drug and alcohol addiction?
- What type of addiction issues are prominent in your community?
- What kind of effect is drug and alcohol abuse having in your community?
- What are the drug and alcohol statistics by race?
- What are the issues pertaining to drug and alcohol related arrests in your community and nationwide?
- How do drugs and alcohol reach particular communities where they are NOT manufactured?
- What kinds of drugs are most popular today?
- What is the country of origin for specific drugs i.e. cocaine, heroine, LSD etc.) and how do they reach the United States?
- What are the statistics pertaining to youth drug and alcohol abuse?
- What are the most popular drugs and alcohol choices among youth today?

Resources:

Alcohol and Youth Facts

- www.marininstitute.org/Youth/alcohol_youth.htm

Above The Influence

- www.abovetheinfluence.com/facts/drugs-alcohol.aspx

Straight Facts about Alcohol and Drugs

- www.athealth.com/Consumer/disorders/substanceabuse.html

DRUGSTORY.ORG

- www.drugstory.org/drug_stats/crime_statistics.asp

History of Alcohol and Drinking around the World

- www2.potsdam.edu/hansondj/controversies/1114796842.html

Some Events in the History of Drugs

- www.druglibrary.org/schaffer/History/histsum.html

♣ **Investigate:** You will explore answers to your questions. You may take a look at primary source information such as juvenile justice statistics related to drug and alcohol offenses within your community and nation-wide. You may interview drug and alcohol rehabilitation counselors in the community. You may want to speak with recovering addicts and learn their stories, struggles, and triumphs. You may want to incorporate your own experiences with addicted family members. You may also be interested in learning the many chemicals involved in the manufacturing of particular drugs i.e. methamphetamine, crack cocaine, heroine, LSD etc. and the impact of these chemicals on the human body. You may also be interested in learning about peer programs designed to deter youth drug and alcohol use.

♣ **Create:** You will design a project to help address some of the issues of alcohol and drug abuse in your community brought forth through the asking and investigation portions of the inquiry cycle. Your project may involve informing your peers about issues that surround drug and alcohol abuse in your community; to take action on this issue through peer career and/or drug and alcohol information sessions within your school and community. You may want to create a public service announcement aimed at your peers involving the consequences of youth drug and alcohol abuse. You may also participate in creating a brochure for your peers to promote the facts about drug and alcohol abuse. See the “Youth as Activist” portion of this curriculum for more project ideas and methods.

♣ **Discuss:**

- What did you learn about drug and alcohol abuse in your community?
- What other important information did you gain about drug and alcohol abuse from your research and interviews?
- Is there anything you can do in relation to drug and alcohol abuse in your community for further research or action?
- What did you learn about people, drugs and alcohol from completing this project?
- What is the potential value of this information to your community and peers?
- How can you get others to become interested in the issue of drug and alcohol abuse in your community?
- What else might you learn and teach others in relation to issues of drug and alcohol abuse?
- What did you learn about the importance of education in relation to drug and alcohol use.
- What did you learn about the difference between particular drugs and sentencing for drug related

- infractions?

♣ **Reflect:**

- How does learning about drug and alcohol use and abuse issues impact you, your family, and community?
- How can sharing knowledge about drug and alcohol related issues impact your community?
- How does participating in work like this involve you in a democracy?
- How does participating in work like this change how others view you, youth, and youth contributions within your community?
- What kinds of positive and negative feedback have you encountered from within the community while involved in this learning process?

Youth as Social Inquirer

Exploring issues of youth drop outs within the community

Brief Description

You will learn how to do research around the issue of school drop outs and drop out rates and impacts within your own community. From research such as local archive searches, Internet searches, and interviews, you will discuss the issue of high school drop outs and possible solutions.

The goals listed should be adapted to the specific resources of the institution and the specific group of youth.

After completing this inquiry, you will then work to implement an action plan based on your inquiry.

Goals of Activities

- Enable you to learn how to do research using primary sources
- Empower you to think critically about the issue of high school drop-out within your own community
- Think about a project that will help to address the issue of students dropping out of high school in your community

Inquiry Cycle

♣ Ask:

- What are the reasons students drop out of high

school?

- What do high school drop outs do once they leave school?
- At what grade level do students typically drop out of school?
- What kind of effect are high school drop outs having on their community?
- What are the drop-out statistics in your community by race?
- What are the issues pertaining to high school drop-out related arrests in your community as well as nation-wide?
- What is the connection between poverty and high school drop-out rates?
- What is the connection between gender and drop-out rates?
- What are the benefits of obtaining a high school education?
- What are the career or job opportunities for high school drop-outs?
- What are some ways school districts can lower drop-out rates?
- Who might serve as resources for this investigation?

Resources:

School Dropout Prevention Program

- www.dropoutprevention.org/resource/family_student/reasons.htm

15 Effective Strategies for Dropout Prevention

- www.schargel.com/2007/12/17/15-effective-strategies-for-dropout-prevention/

Americas Promise Alliance - Dropout Prevention

- www.americaspromise.org/Our-Work/Dropout-Prevention.aspx

Dropout Prevention

- www.solutionsforamerica.org/healthyfam/dropout_prevention.html

NY Times Article

- <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/10/09/education/09dropout.html>

- What is the connection between race and high school drop-outs?
- What is the connection between high school drop-outs and drug and alcohol abuse?
- What are some ways of lowering drop-out rates in your community and nation-wide?
- What is the connection between high school drop-outs and the penal system.

♣ **Investigate:** You will explore answers to your questions. You may take a look at primary source information such as high school drop-out statistics related to your community and nation-wide. You may interview high school drop-outs, teachers, administrators and school counselors. You may want to speak with adult drop-outs and learn their stories, struggles and triumphs. You may want to incorporate your own experiences with family drop-outs. You may also be interested in investigating statistics on high school drop-outs and drug and alcohol addiction. You can investigate the connection between literacy and dropping out of school. You may also be interested in learning about peer programs designed to deter high school drop-outs.

♣ **Create:** You will design a project to help address some of the issues of high school drop-outs in your community brought forth through the asking and investigation portions of the cycle. Your project may involve informing your peers about issues that surround peer drop-outs in your community; to take action on this issue through peer information sessions and peer intervention plans within their school and community. You may want to create a public service announcement aimed at your peers involving the consequences of dropping out of high school. You may develop an intervention posse of peers with aims to rescue drop-outs and encourage them return to school or assist them in obtaining their GED. You may also participate in creating a brochure for distribution to your peers to promote the facts and education on dropping out of school and the effects of high school drop-outs on their family, friends, and the community. Your project may be to inform the public of this issue; to teach people about this issue; to take action on this issue through a protest, etc. See “Youth as Social Activist” activities for ideas and the process.

♣ **Discuss:**

- What did you learn about high school drop-outs in your community?
- What other important information did you learn about high school drop-outs from your research and from your interviews?
- Is there anything you can do in relation to high school students dropping out of school in your community for further research or action?
- What did you learn about people who drop out of school from completing this project?
- What is the potential value of this information to your community and your peers?
- How can you get others to become interested in the issue of high school drop-outs in your communities?
- What did you learn about the importance of education?

♣ **Reflect:**

- How does your learning about issues related to high school drop-outs impact you, your family, and your community?
- How can sharing your knowledge about the importance of educational attainment within your community help make your community a better place to be?
- How does your participating in work like this involve you in a democracy?
- How does your participating in work like this change how others view you, youth, and youth contributions within your community?
- What kinds of positive and negative feedback have you encountered from within the community while involved in this research process?

Youth as Social Activist

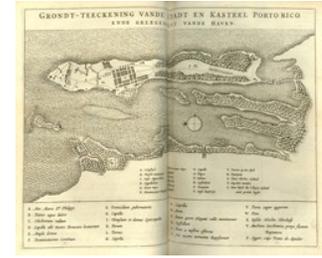
Youth as Curator: Designing a public exhibit to teach and empower others to take action on a social issue

Brief Description

As a curator, you will explore how the creation of a public exhibit can be a way to impact change around the issue of your social inquiry. You will learn how to do research using primary sources and artifacts such as books, maps, artwork, music, etc. to create a physical display. It is your job to find historical objects within the community to help tell the story of the social justice issue you investigated. For instance, when investigating the issue of racial segregation, the community archive may have a map showing historical delineations of races within the community, which may be used to help communicate the history of the community in order to help people think about this within today's context.

We often see these displays in museums, libraries, and sometimes in the lobbies of businesses such as banks. As part of this inquiry, you need to identify which organizations within the community currently host or archive these historical objects. Within this inquiry, you may partner with this organization to discuss a design for this exhibit.

For this project to be successful, a willing collaboration between a participating cultural institution (museum, library, or historical society) and a class of students or youth group (after school program, etc.) must be established. The goals should be adapted to



An old map of Puerto Rico. From the Newberry Museum.

the specific resources of the institution and your group.

You can then be introduced to the participating cultural institution. This may include behind-the-scenes tours, introductions to staff, and or guided tours of existing exhibits. As a curator, you will then work to research and select the final objects that will be put on display. You should help create the thematic organization, work to draft the exhibit copy, and design the exhibit layout. Parameters and limitations for the exhibition should be clearly defined between the teacher (or leader) and the participating cultural institution.

Goals of Activities

- Enable you to learn how to do research using primary sources, while gaining first-hand experience with museum and library studies
- Empower you to think critically of yourself within the context of history
- Create an exhibit in a public space showcasing your work and research that will empower others to action on your issue of interest

Inquiry Cycle

♣ Ask:

- How do historical materials reflect your identity and enable you to better understand your history?

Inquiry Action: The Newberry Library Project in Paseo Boricua, Chicago IL

THE NEWBERRY LIBRARY

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Spotlight Exhibit Series

500 Años de Historia Puertorriqueña a través de los Ojos de Otros

500 Years of Puerto Rican History through the Eyes of Others

June 5 - July 12, 2008

Curators

Maria Castro	Christine Medina	Maria Ramos
Warren Elnore	Alfred Medina	Ahmed Reallo
Sarah Figueroa	Cristian Mander	Manuel Roman
Vincent Figueroa	Ariel Ramos	Nicole Williams

La exhibición fue organizada, planeada y producida en cooperación con Saúl Méndez y Héctor Viquez, ambos maestros de la Escuela Superior Dr. Pedro Albizu Campos y John Viquez, asistente graduado de la Escuela Graduada de Bibliotecología y Gestión de la Información de la Universidad de Illinois en Urbana-Champaign.

The exhibit was organized, planned, and produced in cooperation with Saúl Méndez and Héctor Viquez, both teachers at the Dr. Pedro Albizu Campos High School, and John Viquez, a graduate assistant in the Communication Information Institute of the

During the Spring, 2008 semester, a project was initiated in collaboration between Dr. Pedro Albizu Campos High School (PACHS) and the Newberry Library. This collaboration culminated in an exhibition of materials at the library relating to the culture and history of Puerto Rico.

The project was incorporated into the PACHS Puerto Rican history and culture class, and aimed to teach students primary research skills while empowering them to serve as curators of an exhibition of Puerto Rican materials at a prominent cultural institution in the city of Chicago.

Ask:

- What books are available at the library about Puerto Rico and Puerto Rican history?
- What maps of Puerto Rico are available at the li-

- What organizations exist that have information on my topic of interest?
- Where might my story best be told?
- What resources (maps, object, etc.) are available that will help me tell others about my topic of interest?

♣ **Investigate:** You should investigate possible locations for your exhibit. You should think critically about how you might most powerfully present your findings in a way that inspires others to take action on this issue. After investigating your issue of choice (see “Youth as Social Inquirer” inquiries), you should locate objects that can be used to tell the story of your research and findings. You can think about ways to tell your story, or the story of your findings that is powerful and will move others to action. You may do this by viewing similar exhibits and analyzing them. What makes these exhibits interesting? How do they tell a story? Do they move people to do something? If so, how?

♣ **Create:** You will collaborate with your cultural insti-

tution where your exhibit will be located to select exhibit themes, create and finalize an object list, and write object descriptions. You should gather objects for your exhibit and put them with your descriptions in a way that is visually interesting, and will therefore, grab the attention of others.

♣ **Discuss:** You may engage in a discussion about the nature of history and the role of primary sources. You can discuss what primary sources are, how primary sources tell stories, how we know history, and how history determines the present. You may also want to discuss what makes exhibits powerful, and whether the exhibit you created was powerful and why.

♣ **Reflect:** You may create individual object lists of at least ten items that could serve to represent them to a person wanting to learn about your life one hundred years from now. Additionally, you should ask family, friends, or teachers to select three of these objects, to see how they are viewed by those close to you. In other words, how do the objects you chose, tell a story about you? What story do they tell about you and your life?

brary?

- What other resources on Puerto Rico and Puerto Rican history are available at the library?
- What is included in an exhibition?
- What is the purpose of an exhibition?

Investigate:

Students were brought to the library where they searched the archives, shelves, and stacks for materials relating to Puerto Rico and Puerto Rican history. They worked with a librarian to located resources. Students then assessed and discussed the materials.

Ask:

From this discussion, several new questions were raised.

- What is a public exhibit?
- Who writes history?
- How is history documented and inherited, and what ultimately are the consequences?
- How do exhibitions provide for an opportunity to address these questions?

Discuss:

Students and leaders discussed how the exhibition should be organized.

Create:

Students became familiar with the library’s on-line catalog and began to research their own specific items of interest. The students wrote about their objects of interest in both English and Spanish. They put their

exhibit together and it was shown at the Newberry Library in June of that year.

Discuss:

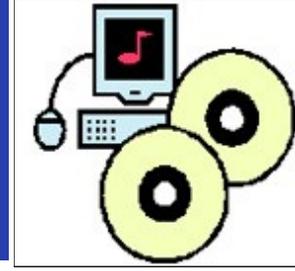
- What did you learn about our own history by doing this project?
- What did you learn by telling the story of our own history?
- What did you learn about libraries through this project?
- What did you learn about creating an actual exhibit?

Reflect:

- How might exhibits and processes such as these be used to inform the public about history and the creation of history?
- How might projects such as these be expanded to involve more students in the future?
- How might telling history in this way empower youth?

Youth as Social Activist

Youth as Social Networker: Creating protest songs and wikis



Brief Description

As a social networker you will explore the use of Internet technologies to teach and inspire others about the social justice issue into which you inquired. A Wiki Page is a collaborative webpage that allows readers to also take on the roles of writer, editor, monitor, etc. It is also a platform to voice your opinion. Wikipedia is an example of a collection of wiki pages.

With this activity, you will research a protest song that speaks to the issue explored in your social inquiry. You will use the wiki page to engage others in a discussion about how protest songs educate and inspire social action. You will explore the democratic and collaborative space of wikis.

“War” is a protest song. A protest song is a way to express an ethical or social injustice someone sees in the world, like racism or sexism. It is a platform to voice your opinion. Some protest songs include, “What’s Going On?” by Marvin Gaye, “Another Bag of Bones” by Kevin Devine, and “Diamonds From Sierra Leone” by Kanye West.

“That until there is no longer first class / And second class citizens of any nation / Until the color of a man’s skin / Is of no more significance than the color of his eyes / Me say war” sang Bob Marley in the song, “War.”

YCI Summer Institute: Learning about a social issue through Protest Songs

Background:

A group of students gathered at the YCI summer institute to learn about their community. As a part of the institute, students learned about the power of protest songs. They then learned about wikis and how to use them to communicate information and spark social change.

Ask:

The students did an inquiry into their community on an issue of importance to them. After doing this inquiry, they asked the following questions.

- What is a protest song?
- What are some examples of protest songs we know?
- How do artists communicate about their issue through their words and music?
- How can a wiki be used to begin a dialogue with others on the issue of my concern?
- How do I create a wiki?

Investigate:

After researching their issue of interest, students found protest songs (with the help of the leaders) that related to their issue. The students then worked in groups and discussed their song and how it communicated a message about their topic. The students also discussed how they might use a wiki to tell others about this song and its

Goals of Activities

- Enable you to learn about how messages are communicated through music
- Empower you to think critically about the music you listen to
- To use social networking tools such as a wiki to share information and to engage and inspire conversation with others about social change
- To explore the potential of the Internet to communicate with people in different locations around the world, thus overcoming the constraints of society to share experiences with those they are not presently able to do so with

Inquiry Cycle

♣ Ask:

- What are examples of protest songs that have addressed the social issue of your own inquiry?
- How does the artist communicate his or her own feelings about an issue both through lyrics and the music itself?
- Are there wikis that already discuss the social justice topic of my interest?

♣ **Investigate:** You may want to visit the following website for an excellent review of protest songs throughout history: <http://www.pbs.org/independentlens/strangefruit/protest.html> You will listen to protest songs and discuss the lyrics. In small groups (2-4), chose a song and discuss how it relates to your social justice topic. Discuss how this song expresses the opinion of the artist both through the lyrics and through the music itself. Explore how the research you conducted in the social inquiry connects to what you learned about protest songs.

♣ **Create:** Create a wiki page and present your research findings along with your opinions: using the protest song as an anchor for discussion.

♣ **Discuss:** Share your wiki page with others. Discuss the information you discovered and your opinions and interpretations of the information and of the song.

♣ **Reflect:** Think how technology offers a democratic space to express thoughts and findings. Explore the creative expression of music. Consider:

- Which information resources were useful?
- Which information discovered was credible? How do you know?

- Did the topic(s) discussed in the protest song relate to your community?
- Do other ethical and social issues arise in the community?
- What kind of action can be taken now? (i.e. Community Journalism, writing songs)

Share:

Students created a wiki about their protest song to share with others.

Discuss:

Students discussed the process of creating a wiki. They talked about what they learned about protest songs, wikis, and communicating via the Internet.

Reflect:

Students talked about the power of the Internet. They also discussed how they might get others interested in visiting and contributing to their wiki. Finally, they discussed how getting involved in a project like this allowed them participation in a democracy.

Youth as Social Activist

Youth as Journalist: Creating a newspaper article

Brief Description

As a journalist, you will explore how community papers can serve communities— disenfranchised communities in particular, in a multitude of ways. Applying best journalistic practices and concepts within a community setting allows citizens to describe the problems they face, question the obstacles that stand in their way, and potentially determine solutions for what may lay ahead. By becoming a citizen journalist you will not only question your surroundings, but also use the tools of journalism to identify solutions and address issues rarely seen or heard. This activity gives educators and leaders the ability to teach you about the foundations of democracy and how you can play an active role within that democracy.

By setting out to conduct community journalism in a given locale it is essential to get a feeling for the resources of a given community. These resources may come in the form of economic assets, or in the case of investigatory work, which is at the core of journalism, informational resources or centers.

Using the “youth as social inquirer” as a starting off point to research topics such as poverty, crime, race, etc., creates a strong foundation for determining what the you intend to accomplish with your written or vis-

ual work. Once a topic has been selected, it is essential to go about determining whom to interview, how to conduct an interview, and how to supplement the interview with trips to other information centers.

In the case of poverty for instance, trips to local food shelters, soup kitchens, employment offices, etc., can all be “information centers” that supplement a project.

Writing or creating visual reports will allow you to practice expressing yourself, but also to apply your knowledge in thoughtful and creative ways. Using technologies such as video cameras and Global Positioning Systems to aid in your story-telling techniques will heighten your awareness about the potential use of new technologies and how they play a role within our information society.

Goals of Activities

- Allow you the ability to express yourself either through the written word, a visual medium, or the convergence of both
- Empower you with the tools to potentially solve the issues at hand
- Create a creative outlet and academic exer-

Inquiry Action: “Community journalism,” Paseo Boricua, Chicago, IL.

The screenshot shows the homepage of the website 'La Voz del Paseo Boricua'. The main navigation bar includes 'HOME', 'ABOUT', 'DOCUMENTING CHICAGO'S', and a search bar. Below the navigation is a banner for 'LA VOZ del PASEO BORICUA' with the tagline 'Advocating for the Preservation of Our "Poderacio de Patria"'. A secondary navigation bar lists categories: 'Campaigns', 'Culture', 'Featured', 'General', 'La Red', 'La Voz Archives', 'La Voz Briefs', 'Media', 'Solidarity', and 'Youth'. The main content area features an article titled 'B.A.C.C.A Youth Reflection: New Soul in this Strange World' by Adam Perez, dated June 25, 2008. The article text begins with 'You walk in. You see students towering above you by about a foot—some that look old enough to be your teacher. There are no more single-file lines walking down the halls. You no longer have to go to the office or the bathroom with a partner. What is this strange world, and how will you ever survive?'. Below the article is a 'POPULAR' section with several featured items, including 'Student Curators Create Monumental Exhibit on Puerto Rican History at New Library' and 'Ambiente del Paseo Launches "Mis Color, Mis Poder" Campaign'.

The article written by youth was published at the local newspaper, *La Voz del Paseo Boricua*. <http://lavoz-prcc.org/2008/06/bacca-youth-reflection-new-soul-in-this-strange-world/>

A journalism class in an afterschool program was offered through the Barrio Arts, Culture, and Communication Academy (BACCA), organized by the Puerto Rican Cultural Center in the Humboldt Park area of Chicago. The class was held at 1112 North California in Chicago, in the computer workroom of a local, bilingual newspaper called *La Voz del Paseo Boricua*, which published the articles the students wrote for the BACCA journalism class.

Five teenagers regularly participated in this class for parts of the semester. These youth were all personally invited to participate in the BACCA program by one or another of the program’s organizers, who are charismatic young adults who are active in community leadership. All of the students used phrases such as “I was kind of pushed into this” to describe how they got involved in the BACCA program this year; still, when they attended journalism class they

cise that guides and teaches you about the most basic concept of higher learning - research

Inquiry Cycle

♣ **Ask:** After doing an inquiry into the community (see “Youth as Social Inquirer” activities), you will explore how journalism can allow you the ability to effectively research and propose hypotheses on the basis of your research. Possible questions include:

- What would you like to see improved?
- What have you learned about the community that others need to know about or may be curious about?
- How might using journalism help others to learn about this topic?
- Are there some problems in your community that are more pressing than others?
- Are there stories that need to be told within our community? If so, what are they?

♣ **Investigate:** You will determine what questions to ask, whom to ask and where to follow up once your questions have been answered. You will read articles from a variety of sources (both on-line and in print), analyzing them for what makes them powerful stories.

You will analyze what types of information are found in journalistic pieces.

♣ **Create:** You may write or produce a journalistic piece as a culmination of your work as citizen journalists. Remember to think about the components of a journalistic piece—who, what, where, when and why, as well as some suggestions for what others can do to become involved in this issue. This piece of journalism can be presented to the community in the form of a newspaper or paper. Your work may be submitted to local newspapers, or independent media centers. Your work may also be put up on the web in a wiki or blog, for example.

♣ **Discuss:** You will use the work that you produce as a conversation piece that allows for open dialogue within communities to take shape from within the community instead of from an outsider perspective.

♣ **Reflect:** You can use the pieces created to engage community members and those outside of the community in open dialogue that in turn speaks to the very core of democracy at work. You should discuss the nature of democracy and how your creation aided you in participating within this democracy.

commented that they were learning valuable skills and having fun.

A basic curriculum for the journalism class was provided by a previous teacher, and another curriculum outline was provided by the local newspaper editors. Additional professional insight was provided by a former professional journalist and a graduate student of University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. He also taught a class session in interviewing techniques and article topic brainstorming. Most of the students were very hazy on the idea of writing an organized argument or article, so the leaders emphasized writing as an argument as we worked on their articles.

Mostly, a journalism class involves a lot of hands-on writing, so that is primarily what we did during class time. We discussed interview techniques, and the participants practiced interviewing people and taking good notes. We taught them how to evaluate the validity and usefulness of information and how to cite their sources appropriately for newspaper journalism. We focused a great deal on developing a sense of community identity, and developing within the students a dedication to responsible community activism.

The students’ written pieces were translated into Spanish (by other staff) and published monthly in the local newspaper, which is titled *La Voz del Paseo Boricua* and is published by the Puerto Rican Cultural Center (one such article can be accessed online in English at <http://lavo-prcc.org/2008/06/bacca-youth-reflection-new-soul-in-this-strange-world/>).

Some major successes included the fact that the students completed several solidly written articles that were meaningful within the community and demonstrated that the students were undergoing a kind of coming of age with relation to their roles as active members of their community. They met deadlines and worked cooperatively to achieve goals. They also demonstrated a growing media and text literacy as they researched, wrote, and revised their articles, and became much more comfortable using Macintosh computers (several students had never used a Mac before). All of the students enthusiastically discussed their situation as young minorities in a challenged neighborhood, and all were eager to take on the challenge of writing for their community.

Youth as Social Activist

Youth as Videographer:: Creating a documentary

Brief Description

As a videographer, you will create a video piece that powerfully tells the story about an issue in the community. Documentaries tell a story through different lenses of experience collected through interviews. These stories are interwoven with music and other visual images to tell about an issue of interest.

Goals of Activities

- Reflect on the causes of your particular issue learned about in the community from your inquiry into the community
- Provide a voice for people in the community to talk about how violence affects them
- Build awareness of violence in the community
- Find solutions to addressing the causes of violence in the community

Inquiry Cycle

♣ **Ask:** After doing an inquiry into the community, you will explore how journalism can allow you to effectively research and communicate findings through the voices of the people in your community.

Possible questions include:

- How might creating a documentary help others to learn about this topic?
- Who has information about this topic?
- Who will your audience be for your documentary?
- Who will you need to interview?
- What questions will you ask?
- Do you need to get permission to record the interviews?
- identify 2-3 goals that you want to achieve by making this movie
- What stories do you want to communicate?

♣ **Investigate:** Preparing to Interview

Before you go out and start talking to people, you need to learn a bit about being a journalist and prepare in advance.

- Pair up and decide which people to interview. Each group should write up questions to ask based on

the themes that the whole group discussed.

- Practice interviewing each other, being sure to follow up with any questions that may contain stories. For instance, let's say you ask the question, "Have you ever experienced racism?" And the response is, "Yes." Don't just stop there. Ask follow-up questions that will get to the "story". For instance, you can ask, "Can you tell me the story of when you had this experience?" or, "Can you tell me how that made you feel?"

Activity: Interviewing

Using the questions previously prepared as a guide, choose a spot to interview each community member.

- Use a video camera, Flip video, or cell phone camera to record the interview.
- If using something other than a video camera, be aware of your distance from the person you are interviewing and of any background noise, as the quality of your interview will be impacted by these factors.
- Allow for some flexibility as the interview progresses. Encourage the story to go where it will.
- Ask questions that come to mind as you talk to with the interviewee. Be curious.
- One person should make field notes during the interview, logging an outline of the conversation. You'll use this later for quicker review of the video. After the interview, you can also record extra footage (b-roll) of the surrounding area and significant things that the person spoke about.

♣ **Create:**

Activity 1: Writing & Storyboarding

After you've decided on the goals for your video, you will practice a technique called storyboarding. A

Tools and Devices: pencil, paper, video camera (flip video, standard digital video camera, still camera with video technology, or cell phone), computer with an internet access, video editing software, microphone, and tripod (optional)

storyboard is like a visual outline for a video. It is similar to a story map.

Sometimes one does storyboarding before a project ever begins as a part of writing a script. Other times, storyboarding and scripting happen after a writer sees what people have to say, and tell the story based on the themes they talk about. This is more like what you're doing with this project. While working on any movie project, one may storyboard and script several times. Think of it as a way to outline your ideas visually.

Activity 2: Editing You will need practice importing and editing your footage. Depending on the program used, instructions should be on-line. With time to play and practice, you should have no problem mastering this topic.

Activity 3: Reviewing & Logging Footage

Reviewing and cataloging your footage is a very important step in creating a documentary. As you watch the shots, you should make notes on what people said, where it matched your themes and issues, and even trim or create smaller clips to use later in editing. Depending on what software we're using to edit the video, some of this notation capability may be available in the program. You can also make notes by keeping the original footage intact, and making notes where "good takes" were in the timeline of each clip. It's important to stay focused and organized, looking for footage that helps communicate what you intended.

◆ Discuss: Ongoing Project Review and Storyboarding Practice

The process of creating a documentary video doesn't always happen in a particular order. You might have a plan as you begin shooting interviews, but often the plan changes based on what is discovered. A team producing a documentary will usually have regular meetings to discuss the status of the project, issues that might require a change in direction for shooting, or brainstorming and group storyboarding sessions to begin working with the content as it is gathered.

In this activity, using some footage that small groups have already gathered, the project team should have a discussion about the highlights of the footage and begin to create a storyboard of how it fits within the overall project. Those who shot the footage should present the clips and lead the discussion about them. It may also be useful to discuss the footage as a whole group, then break into small groups for quick storyboarding, then have each group present their storyboard. The entire project team can then discuss the strengths of each different storyboard.

Activity: Editing Practice Using the storyboards that small groups created in the previous activity, small groups (or individual editors) should begin to edit video telling that story (or another that emerges as they edit). When groups are finished, they will present the video to the rest of the groups with a brief explanation or introduction. During editing, groups or individual editors should write down thoughts on shots that might be nice to use but are unavailable. For instance, if a person being interviewed is talking about a particular building, place, person, event, etc. the project team may need to investigate whether photographs exist, if video can be obtained, or how the subject might be otherwise illustrated in the video. All this information should be discussed when the editor/group presents back to the project team. Using the work that they produce as a conversation piece that allows for open dialogue within communities to take shape from within the community instead of from an outsider perspective.

◆ Reflect: Discuss how the videos created can be used to engage community members in open dialogue about their issue.

YCI Graduate Student Run-Program in coordination with BeComeUnity, and Rantoul Township High School.

Background: Over the course of ten months, youth in Rantoul, Illinois were engaged in a series of discussions around the issue of poverty in their community. This was a very free-flowing discussion, with the direction of the conversation and action being guided by the participating high school students.

Ask:

It took just a few questions to have the room embroiled in turmoil.

- How do you define rich and poor?

- Do you think race and poverty are related?

Accusations were bandied about. Girls turned on boys. Boys turned on girls.

Quickly the question had turned into what are the defining characteristics of being rich or poor, and soon the students were trying to determine how to tell the stories of class relations in Rantoul. In a city where the poverty rate has affected approximately 40 to 50 percent of the high school's student population, these 10 students, Rantoul community members, were debating whether or not there was a story to be told.

- How can you create a video that would tell of those stories and help the community at the same time?

It seemed as if discussion turned to question, and question turned to discussion, the inquiry cycle had become the inquiry treadmill. Students were debating where to find information.

- Is it on the Internet?
- How about the local government?

Then one student, thought she could tell her story through video diary. Another decided to interview relatives. Soon, they wanted to ask their local government.

- Just what was wrong with our community?
- Where are the jobs?
- What about the unemployment rate?
- What did it mean to live below the poverty rate?
- What exactly was the poverty rate?

Investigate:

They learned of the census bureau data statistics. They scoured local newspaper stories. They began slowly tell the story of their community. They asked local officials. They questioned teachers. They asked business leaders. They even turned to themselves.

Create:

In a span of 10 weeks, students were filming their days, their relatives, their local leaders, and they were asking questions. They were creating a narrative of their community based on a question. True, they would not finish. But, they would begin a story.

Through a program that began in coordination with the Rantoul Township High School and the Youth Community Informatics (YCI) program, students chosen by one student who had forgone skipping school his freshman year to rectify his grades the following year, this group of students, under the moniker *Youth Democracy*, were holding a town hall. It was a small sample of a community, but it was a microcosm of ideas and curiosity that helped create a video about unemployment. Interested in just how to document what they saw day in and day out, students turned to themselves, learned from each other and then began asking questions.

In a minute and half video, created through a combination of interviews, community photographs and student shot video, students learned how to edit, transform and translate their video stories, and their community's story onto the screen. They learned computer literacy. They learned the value of research. But, more importantly they learned the value of discussion and query.

The process has not been a simple one. Tackling issues such as class, race and poverty, can be quite challenging.

Discuss / Reflect:

- What do we do if students lose interest?
- How can we get more students interested in participating in this project with us?
- What do we do if we lose hope or when we get depressed about all of this?
- What are we trying to do here and why?
- How can we get this information out to the masses?

Youth as Social Activist

Youth as Mapper: Creating a map with geospatial technologies

Brief Description

As a community mapper, you will use technology to create a map showing the location of different resources in your community. These resources relate to the social justice topic you are investigating. If you are investigating unemployment, for instance, you might choose to create a map of potential employers in your community. Other examples of resources may include the location of hospitals, schools, teen recreation sites, historical buildings, tourist sites, etc. You can also map information describing households in your community.

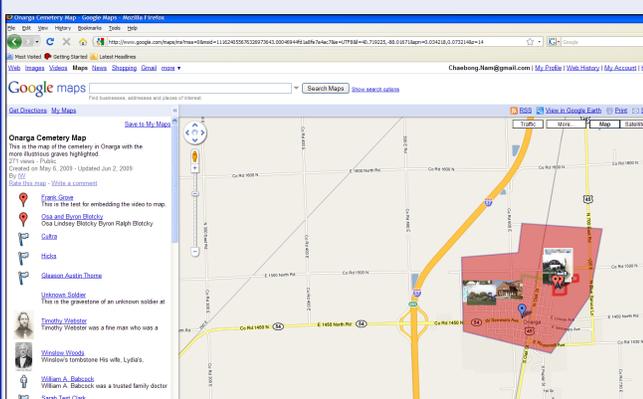
The U.S. Census Bureau collects information about households, including data on family income, age of household members, race of household members, level of education, etc. This information is available to the public for free at the U.S. Census Bureau website. Or maybe you want to look at historical maps of your community and compare them to current maps? How has your community changed over time? What similarities or differences do you see in the number or location of residences versus businesses? What similarities or differences do you see in the racial demographic of the community? Are households of different races segregated in different parts of town or are they integrated? These and many more questions can be examined with data that is shared in the form of a visual map, creat-

ing a powerful way for you to raise awareness and influence the actions of others on the topic of your social justice inquiry.

Geospatial technologies are available to help you create and share your map. GPS units (geospatial positioning systems) use satellite information to mark geographic locations by latitude and longitude. If you are mapping buildings, you can easily use addresses to map their location. But sometimes the information you are mapping doesn't have an address, such as the location of stop signs, community gardens, playgrounds, etc.

In these cases, GPS units can help you mark the location in a way that others can easily find. Geographic Information Systems (GIS) software is another tool available to help you create and share your map. GoogleMaps is an example of GIS software that allows you to map resources in your community and quickly share this map with others through the Internet. GIS software will let you add detailed information describing each data point on your map, including photos, video, internet address/url, text description, etc. For more information on using geo-

Inquiry Action I: Community Mapping, Ford Iroquois, IL



Google map created by youth

Background:

A group of students of Iroquois West Middle School did a community atlas project in 2008. They created

nearly a dozen maps about different facets of their community: roads, schools, and railroads, among others.

In 2009, they decided to continue mapping to build on the project of the previous year. They were given three options to select one for this mapping project: historic buildings, fire hydrants and cemeteries. The students chose to map a cemetery. The project began with a talk from the president of Onarga historic society.

Ask:

The talk by the president of the historic society sparked the students. The following are some of the questions the students began to ask:

- Who are some of the people the president mentioned?
- Who are other people who made an interesting contribution to our community?
- Where can we find more information about them?

spatial technologies for your project, please see the activities in the Nuts and Bolts Section of this curriculum.

Inquiry Cycle

♣ Ask:

- What data from your social inquiry do you want to communicate with others through a map?
- What are the assets or resources in your community related to your social justice topic?

♣ Investigate:

- What kinds of maps already exist that communicate information about your community?
- What information is missing from these maps that you would like to add?
- Who do you want to share your map with?
- Will you share your map through the Internet or save it as an image to include in a Powerpoint presentation, exhibit, newsletter or other format?

♣ Create:

- The first step of creating your map is to collect your data. Depending on which software you are using to create the map, you may need this information to be in a specific format, such as an excel spreadsheet. In other cases you may just need a list of addresses with whatever additional information you want to include about the resource as

each location.

- The second step is to add your data to the map, using GIS software such as GoogleMaps. You will need to think about a title for your map and create a legend that describes any symbols or colors used to mark different kinds of resources or data about your community.
- The third step is to share your map with others. You will need to decide whether you are using the Internet or another format to reach your audience. Gather the information you want to include in your Zine. This may include photos, newspaper clippings, original artwork, text, statistics and anything else you can think of.

♣ Discuss:

- Talk with others to find out what your map communicates.
- How was it useful?
- What questions did it spark?
- Is there additional information that would make the map more effective in communicating the findings from your social justice inquiry?

♣ Reflect:

- What kinds of maps are eZines effective at communicating?
- What kinds of data are difficult to communicate with maps?

Investigate:

Students decided to spend some time in the library to research about the people they identified through their questions. Once the library research was over, they continued their investigation in the field (i.e., the cemetery) where they carried out their research with GPS and cameras.

The original idea was just to mark the locations of the gravestones of the people they identified during the library research. Through their investigation, they began to see different things in the cemetery. For example, they saw different size, shape and orientation of the stones. Through their investigation, they became more curious about the meanings of these differences.

Youth Voice

"When we went to the cemetery, we saw a lot of different tombstones. William Porter Pierson's tombstone is a woman pointing up. Gish's gravestone is a tree trunk. W. A. Rankin has a very big block as a tombstone. Even 3 or 4 tombstones are above ground."
- Avery

This led them to the whole new area called, 'cemetery symbolism'. With further investigation, the students came to understand that different symbols on gravestones have different social meaning. For example, engravings such as broken chains symbolize a life cut short. We realized that careful study of cemeteries can provide a fairly good idea about the past: who the most powerful and well respected persons were, number of family members etc.

Create:

- After both the library and field investigations, students regularly met in the school lab to integrate GPS coordinates, pictures, videos, and narratives.
- Following are some of the information products the students created:
- Podcast about the individuals that interested them
- Blog entries
- Google map with narrative, picture, and videos attached to the location of each gravestone

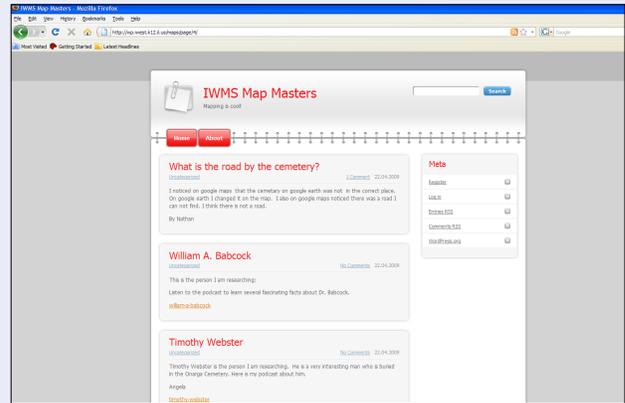
Discuss

Most of the technological tools--Google map for mapping, Wordpress for blogging, Audacity for voice recording--used were new for the students. Hence, the process of the creation involved investigation for each

of them. These were collaborative investigations and students learned from each other. The discussions were more on 'how to do' than on the bigger questions they asked at the beginning of the project. This is understandable as the task in front them at this stage of the project was to be able to use different tools and create something from the information they gathered. They had to do this within a limited time.

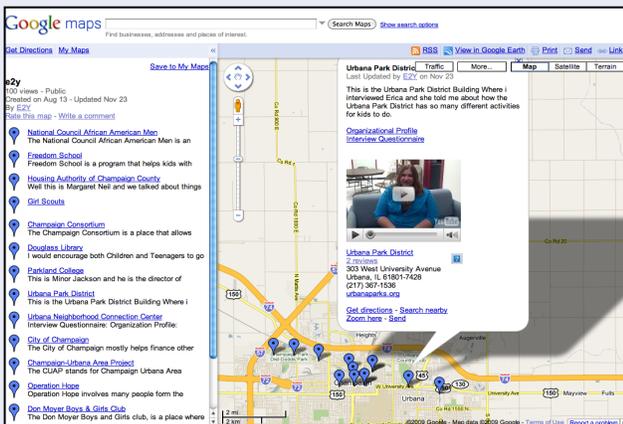
Reflect

Students realize that they learnt many things, both about the history of their community and the technologies. Their experience was that more time needs to be allocated for the lab sessions, especially if the project makes use of multiple tools. They suggested that more time to learn each of the technologies and how to integrate might be fun.



Blogging by youth

Inquiry Action II: “Engaging and Empowering Youth (E2Y) Project” Community Asset Mapping Project, Champaign, IL



Google Map created by youth

E2Y (Engaging and Empowering Youth) is a youth community asset mapping project done in collaboration with community organizations and the University of Illinois. Five African American youth interviewed business owners, neighbors, community leaders and others to identify the assets in their own neighborhoods including job opportunities, summer activities, teen-friendly spaces, and informal and formal networks of support for youth. They shared their data with other teens and the adults who worked with the teens to create an asset map through Google Maps.

This project initially aimed at helping the participating youths’ leadership and technology skills as

well as self-esteem. Along with such individual positive development, this project aimed to assist African American youth build a collective voice working towards the health and wellness of their communities.

Ask:

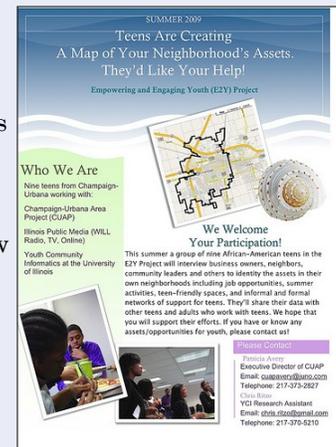
- What assets and resources are available to youth in our community?
- How can we share this information with other people?

Investigate:

Youth Training. In bi-weekly training sessions from March through June youth learned the skills needed in field-work. They learned how to conduct interviews, use a video recorder and a tripod, to find a right camera angle, use a GPS device.

Canvassing. Adult partners created a list of community organizations to be interviewed by the youth. Youth also partnered with adults to canvass the community, looking for assets.

Interviews. Youth interviewed community members, and used the GPS devices, along with Google Maps to create an interactive Google map of the community. When one clicks on a location on the map, one



Flyer used in canvassing



Youth in interview

will find interview videos, an organization profile, interview questions, and a short description of the agency or location.

Discuss and Reflect:

Youth shared their experiences from participating in the E2Y project and reflected on the impact that this mapping project would have on their community and other teens. They also discussed other topics such as a poverty, journalism, democracy, careers, technologies, etc.

Public Presentation. Youth presented their Google map in public and shared their experiences with other community members.

The map is hosted on the YCI webpage: yci.illinois.edu/yci/?page_id=63 as well as one of our partner's sites at www.will.illinois.edu.

Youth Voice

Canvassing was the most difficult part, but we got to better know about our community." - Michelle-

"We learned how to upload video on YouTube, Google, Flickr, learned about programs for teens I did not know about, learned where streets are when we were canvassing, oh, we also learned (using) Movie Maker." -Casey-

"We learned about hard work, social skills and type better. (I) stayed (in this program) because interested in being involved with others, and money, ha ha" (Teens are provided with a stipend in accordance with their participation)." -Ian-

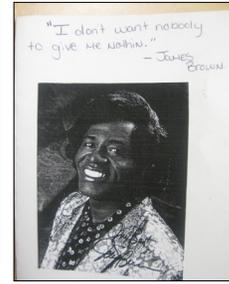
[When talking about canvassing] "I learned how to be more respectful to people even if they are rude to you, I just said "thanks, have a nice day" and stepped back, even though they said "we don't want to do this" and were rude to you. I was not rude and....also learn not be shy... ha ha." - Rae-

"It's really difficult to do Google Map at the beginning, like making a link, upload files, and making marks...I didn't quite understand well what I was doing... but later we found out that that's really cool and has very useful stuffs. I really like the map now." - Michelle, Casey, Rae -

“

Youth as Social Activist

Youth as Author : Creating a Zine



Brief Description

As an author, you will use technology to create a multimedia publication called a Zine (or eZine, electronic Zine) to communicate findings and perspectives of your topic of social inquiry. Zines are self-created, self-published magazines that can take a variety of formats. A Zine can be created with a word processing or publication software. It can also be created the old-fashioned way with paper, pens, markers, glue, scissors, etc., and then uploaded to a computer with a scanner or digital camera to make it viewable on the internet. The foundation of a Zine is self-expression. They are different from newspapers because they showcase information and opinions in more creative, artistic, and experimental ways. The creators have complete control over the content and how it is presented, and so, nothing is filtered or censored. This usually makes the perspectives in a Zine more candid and outspoken.

Inquiry Cycle

♣ Ask:

- What information from your social inquiry do you want to communicate in your eZine?
- How will you communicate the information (images, charts, graphs, poetry, articles, etc.)?

♣ Investigate:

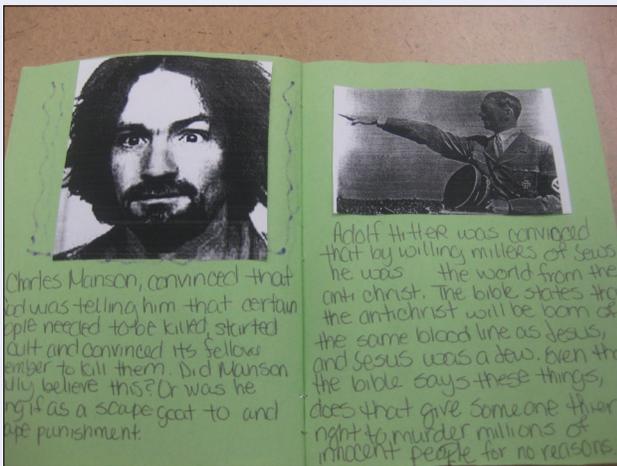
Search the internet for examples of eZines. You might want to search for a specific topic, such as “poverty

eZine”. Or you might want to just look for “youth ezines”. Look at these examples to think about the features you want to include in your own Zine.

♣ Create:

- Gather the information you want to include in your Zine. This may include photos, newspaper clippings, original artwork, text, statistics and anything else you can think of.
- Decide whether you are going to create the Zine on the computer, using a word processing or publishing software, or whether you are going to do a paper copy with pens, glue, etc. You may decide to start with a paper version and later scan this into the computer.
- Experiment with different layouts and decide how you want to arrange the information. Once you have the general layout, input or add your information.
- Decide whether you want to distribute the Zine in paper format, which means making hard copies and delivering to people in person, or as an eZine through the Internet.

Inquiry Action: “Music as the Message” YCI 2009 Summer Forum, Champaign, IL



Zine created by Youth at YCI 2009 Summer Forum

In the summer of 2009, "Music as the Message" was the theme for YCI's 2009 Summer Forum. Youth learned how to research issues, identify their own community issues, and use music as the universal language that channels the collective action of their curiosities.

Using media---print, audio, and visual means--- youth researched, recreated, and realized the effect of music and its message on the political, social, economic, and personal arenas of life.

Creating an eZine was one the ways, youth chose to present their data and share their opinions on the research they conducted. During the forum, two groups chose this format. One group focused on how politics and religion interact by researching Bright Eyes' "When the President Talks to God." While another group chose to focus on socio-economic issues in relation to education as dis-

♣ **Discuss:**

- Who were you able to reach with your Zine?
- What feedback or reactions did you get from people who read your Zine?

♣ **Reflect:**

- What kinds of information are eZines effective at communicating?
- What kinds of data are difficult to communicate with eZines?
- How are eZines an effective way of influencing others to take social action?

cussed in James Browns' "I Don't Want Nobody to Give Me Nothing."

Ask

- What topics/issues are discussed in the song? Why are these topics/issues important to the songwriter?
- Are these topics/issues significant to you? Why?

Investigate

- Research the topics/issues in the song using numerous resources relevant to the topics/issues. (Compile a list of resources)

Create

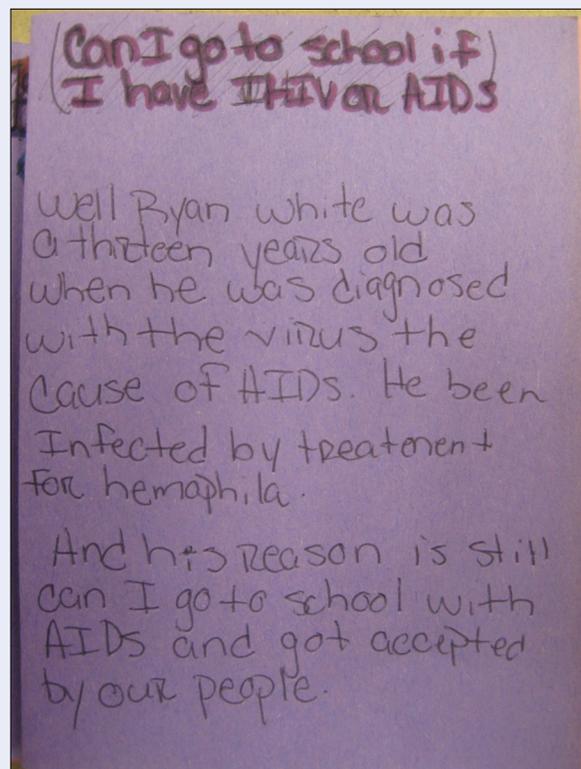
- Using the data gathered from research, present finding in an eZine. Photocopy graphs from books, express opinions, etc. Focus on communicating not only the research, the facts, but opinions, thoughts on the topics/issues as well.

Discuss

- What information was found and why you chose the song?

Reflect

- Discuss how artists can communicate their feelings and opinions through both the words of a song as well as the music itself.



Zine created by Youth at YCI 2009 Summer Forum

Youth as Social Activist

Youth as Community Planner: Using community data in policy debates

Brief Description

As a community planner, you will use technology to collect and share information about your community to inform local policy decisions. Community planners help envision the future growth of a community and the implications for changes in the physical, environmental and social environment. Community planning decisions often relate to “land use” plans and policies. That is, decisions about how the land of a community will be used; for more residential homes, businesses, schools, social services or for parks?

Community planners collect a wide range of data that may include population data (e.g. race, age, gender, education level, income, etc.), economic data (e.g. property value, business profitability), transportation data (e.g. the number and location of major roads, public transportation options such as buses), crime data, employment data, and other information needed to consider the future needs of a community. Geospatial technologies, such as GIS and GPS, are often used by community planners to create a visual map of where different kinds of resources exist within the community and to project future scenarios of growth.

An important part of community planning is to weigh the pros and cons, or benefits and risks, of different

changes to the community. For instance, if you are investigating the social justice topic of unemployment, you would want to consider the pros and cons of different strategies for creating more jobs in a community. What are the pros and cons of small versus big businesses? What are the pros and cons of privately owned versus chain or franchised businesses? Where should new businesses be built and what are the pros and cons of different locations? As a community planner, you have the opportunity to influence which information is considered in these policy debates and to make sure that the voices of community members are heard within these discussions.

Inquiry Cycle

♣ Ask:

- What community policies or plans are being considered that could impact the social justice topic of your inquiry?
- What are the future scenarios you hope to influence for your community?
- What data related to your social justice topic do you want to communicate with others to influence these policy debates?

Inquiry Action: Paseo Boricua’s Participatory Democracy (PD) Group Campaign “Humboldt Park NO SEVENDE/NOT FOR SALE!” Chicago, IL



Paseo Boricua’s Participatory Democracy Group web page:
www.prec-chgo.org/pdemocracy

In the Fall of 2009, members of Paseo Boricua's Participatory Democracy Group met every Saturday for

ten consecutive weeks students from DePaul University and the University of Illinois at Chicago to create a multilayered map of assets of the Humboldt Park neighborhood of Chicago.

The project began under the urgency of preventing further displacement of the community's long-term residents through gentrification. The goal was to prevent this historically working-class community with a culturally and politically unique history from becoming a community where developers seek quick profits, redraw community boundaries, and deny the community's history.

Ask:

- What are the community’s unique historical moments?
- What makes Humboldt park unique?

- In what form do you want to share your data? What are the pros and cons of sharing information as a written report, a video, a map or other format?

♣ Investigate:

- How are decisions made about future change or growth in your community?
- Who are the different stakeholders or groups that influence decisions about your community?
- What information is missing from discussions about your community's plans that you can help provide?

♣ Create:

Once you have decided what data you want to share (create a map, video, written report or other format) to communicate that information to others. Make a plan for how you will share that information (in person, on the web, through flyers, etc.).

Identify potential partners (individuals or organizations) that can help you join these discussions. Partici-

pate in planning discussions and use your data to raise awareness about the pros and cons of different future scenarios being considered for your community.

♣ Discuss:

- What questions were raised by the information you shared?
- What are the obstacles to realizing your vision for your community?
- What data or perspectives conflict with the data and perspective you bring to the discussion?

♣ Reflect:

- What are effective strategies for using information to influence community planning and policy?

- What are the types of assets that can be found in our community?
- Where can these assets be found?
- Do assets need to be places, or can they include people, community groups, etc.?
- What will help us to understand the cycle of poverty and violence in Humboldt Park?
- What is an asset map?
- How can an asset map be used to shape policy?

Investigate:

Project participants conducted primary research by interviewing long-term residents about their struggle for political freedom and preservation of their cultural identity. This struggle led by countless activists clashed with the status quo at the time, and is visible through the numerous police crackdowns, FBI surveillance, institutional racism by the city in its budget cuts for social services, inadequate housing, and school conditions in Humboldt Park; thus, creating a cycle of poverty and violence. Students discussed assets of the community with community members and local activists.

Create:

Students used their research to create a multi-layered asset map of Humboldt Park.

- Project participants identified geographical boundaries that made sense for the timeline of the project (ten weeks) while incorporating areas that have special meaning to long-term residents.
- Project participants identified assets within the designated boundaries. Assets include community

murals, sites of protest and riots, long-term residents' oral histories, community businesses, cultural and education institutions, and social services.

- Project participants collected the assets' geospatial data (location, attributes, and media).
- Project participants created video of interviews with asset representatives.
- Project participants created a framework for the next phase of the Humboldt Park Asset Map; to create a tool for community residents, businesses, leaders, and activists.

Discuss:

- How does a community aid development without displacing its residents and deny its history?
- How can we hold local representatives accountable to the needs of local residents?
- How can we encourage residents to be active in political participation?
- What volunteer work can we do to be politically active?
- How can we use our map to make a difference in our community and to impact public policy?

Reflect:

- What are effective strategies for reaching out to long-term residents and new residents alike while continuing to preserve cultural and political markers?