

Community Research Service Learning
VPA 317S
Spring 2001 Semester

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ASSIGNMENT 4: Community Mapping

Working in teams, identify three different public sites in your assigned community where youth (13-18 years old) gather. Sites should include places where there is some aspect of popular culture displayed in the form of visual material, (i.e. murals, posters, storefront arrangements, landscape arrangements, window displays, public sculpture, landscape architecture, etc.) Take Polaroid photos of the site and visual material, being careful not to take photos of any youth without their permission.

Make Group Notes on the following Observations:

The Youth:

- The number, ethnicity, and gender of the youth observed.
- The activities being done at the site.
- Possible “readings” of the relationships of the youths to one another and their emotional states.
- Reactions of passersby to the youth.

The Site:

- The location of the site (address and description).
- All other public places or institutions in the nearby area.
- The state of the buildings and landscape in the area.

Popular Culture / Visual Material:

- What are the visual aspects of popular culture in the immediate area?
- What are the potential “readings” of this visual material? Use assignment #3 as a guide for evaluating the possible meaning(s) of the material.
- What, if any, is the relationship between the youth and the visual material you see?
- Is this material relevant or irrelevant to the youth? In what ways? Is it “selling” something to neighborhood youth? What?

Make individual entries in your journals regarding your own observations:

- How you feel about the site.
- How you feel at the site.
- How you feel watching the youth.
- Any assumptions you have about the meaning of the activities or the way in which the youth relate at the site.