★ 2.7 Community Resource Mapping

Objectives

Students will

- develop and practice research skills such as observing, surveying, interviewing, and reading for information.

- organize and analyze data and writing for informational and persuasive purposes.

- acquire information useful in the planning of Civic Leadership Projects.

- learn about the history of their community.

- take on roles as public-minded critical thinkers and activists on behalf of their communities.

Materials

- pens and pencils
- journals
- chart paper
- markers
- reference books and the Internet

Time

- 4 - 5 hours

Procedure

Collect Information

- Guide students in brainstorming a list of community resources. Then brainstorm a list of resources the community should have, but doesn't. Record students' ideas on chart paper. For example, a resource that a community might have could be "grocery stores," and a resource that a community might not have could be "family-friendly restaurants."

- Post students' lists around the room to use during small group work.

- Divide the class into small groups of two or three and assign each group a specific category found in both lists. Encourage the groups to pay attention to the community resource list as they analyze what the community lacks.

- Lead students in discussing possible ways of collecting information about these community features. Encourage students to devise survey instruments or interview questions they can ask other students, relatives, and neighbors that are specific to the category. You may also ask more general questions like the ones listed below.

- *What are the most significant strengths of your community?*
- *What is fun to do in the community?*
- *Where do people go to be social? What's it like there?*
- *Who are you proud of in your community?*
- *How has your community successfully resolved conflict in the past?*
- *What types of conflict persist, and why/how do they persist?*

- *How far and how long do you have to travel to get from your home to city hall or the public library or a park?*
- *How safe do you feel in various parts of your community?*
- *What challenges do you see facing the community?*
- *What changes have you seen in the community?*
- *What are your interests and areas of expertise, and what outlets do you have for pursuing those activities?*

Research and Write Reports

- If possible, bring students on a tour of the community in order to conduct focused observations on one or more aspects of their category.

- Tell students that in addition to brainstorming these categories as a group and discussing them with each other and with community members, they can conduct research using reference books and the Internet. Ask questions to prompt students' research, such as the ones listed below.

> - *Has anyone written a history of the community or the area?*
> - *Have urban archeologists, sociologists, or historians conducted research in the area?*
> - *What public records are available that indicate when buildings were built, transferred from one owner to another, or torn down?*
>
> - *Has anyone tried to increase particular resources or address the absence of particular resources?*

- Support students in conducting this research.

- Assign each group to write a report on its methods for collecting data. Explain that every group should also be prepared to defend these methods and recognize their limitations.

Make Presentations

- Assign each group to present its findings visually using maps, slide shows, charts, videos, and illustrations. In addition, have them make a brief oral presentation to the entire group using these visuals.

- The presentations should address questions such as the ones listed below.

> - *What are the most common opportunities and challenges identified by local residents?*
> - *How can your findings be used to influence broader policies affecting the community?*
> - *What resources does the community already possess to educate and inspire the younger generation?*
>
> - *What resources are available to address residents' basic needs for food and shelter?*
> - *What resources are available to address residents' quality of life?*

✓ Assess

- Assess the students' data collection on an ongoing basis to ensure they have a rich and robust set of data they can mine later on. Ask questions or offer suggestions if the methods require adjustment.

- Assess the students' written reports based on:
    - high standards of quality in style, usage, and organization.
    - comprehensiveness and scope of research.
    - ability to raise interesting questions.
    - creativity and insight in attempting to answer those questions.

- Assess students' analysis and presentation of their findings. Either make notes on students' performance or distribute and fill out rubrics emphasizing:
    - clarity of arguments and presentation.
    - ability to make connections to class discussions.
    - effectiveness of the visual components.
    - overall effectiveness in contributing new ideas and analysis about the community.