

Grassroots Community Tours

Community Based Research / Ethnography Tips



Goals:

1. Engage the community by learning about it (positionality informs your work/approach)
2. Build a research organization plan (for both teachers and students)
3. Gather resources and research (content and framing) for the community tour

Questions to inform the work:

On research

1. What is your understanding/definition of research?
2. What is the purpose of engaging in research?

On CGCT's approach

3. What research skills and knowledge do students bring to the classroom?
4. How would you describe the community? What are its strengths? Areas for improvement?
5. What is the perception of this community from the general population?
6. How would community members describe their community?
7. Strengths based (vs. deficit) approach--respecting, honoring, and validating community knowledge and perspectives. Supporting students and communities in naming/framing their reality.
8. Tapping into community "funds of knowledge" and cultural capital

Developing a plan

- Identify individuals and spaces of significance to the community at-large and to students' lives
- Brainstorm ideas for engaging the research
- How will you collect information (e.g. pictures, take notes, collect documents, gather relevant music, record interviews)?
- Strategies/framing of questions/work (what do students want to know about significant individuals and spaces in their community?)
- Organization of data – we recommend the portfolio approach with specific data collectors identified
- Data analysis--interpreting and making meaning of the data
- Future directions of the work - what questions do students still have?
- What did we learn about our community that we didn't know before? Does this change the way we see ourselves and our community?
- How does this information connect to and help us understand other social issues of the community and the larger world? (For teachers--how can this information be used to inform future lesson plans and projects?)

Resources:

- www.city-data.com
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Organization

- Decide where the information will be kept.
- How might this information be used for future projects?
- Decide on student roles.

Note: Also see the Community Ethnography project guide from the UTEP program.