

Purpose: to introduce families and teachers to the libraries which are available for the students in their own neighborhoods. This activity is designed specifically for the collaborative group to experience a community library from the perspective of a student who is still in the process of acquiring English. This activity could easily be adapted for other target groups of students; for example, a teacher who lives in an upper middle class community and who teaches students from lower socio-economic communities, is encouraged to visit libraries in the neighborhood of the students where s/he teaches.

Introduction to the Activity

The leader begins by preparing a map of the community. This can be done on an overhead transparency, the chalkboard, large paper, a handout, etc.

However, the point is to begin with the something very concrete, a map, so the participants can visualize as the activity is introduced. During the introduction, the lead person marks the libraries, the various communities, and the public transportation routes. During the week, the families and teachers are asked to visit the libraries with the following instructions.

- Find the library in the neighborhood of the students in your school.
- Use public transportation to go to this library.
- Before entering the library, sit outside alone for 10 – 15 minutes. Takes notes to capture your experiences with public transportation. In your field notes, write anything which captures your 5 senses as you sit in front of the library.

•Before entering the library, visualize yourself as a 10-year-old who has recently moved to this country from Mexico. You are an avid reader and want to find a good book for the weekend. Spanish is your dominant language; you are still very uncomfortable using any of your emerging oral English.

- Enter the library alone.
- Do not use English while in the library.
- Map the inside of the library; locate the books in your language.
- Sit at a table near these books.
- Describe the library in one paragraph from this vantage point.
- Describe the quality and quantity of books in your language.
- Check out two books.

Reflection in the following family/teacher program evening:

The leaders graphs the range of findings into the following categories:

- The availability of the books (quality and quantity)
- The availability of transportation to the libraries
- Personal interactions within the library

Follow-up Action

•The best part of this activity: What do you as a group and as an individual decide to do with what you have learned? You tell us.

Figure 5.1: Library Mapping

Wink J. & Wink D. (2004, pg. 77). *Teaching Passionately – What’s Love Got to Do with It?* Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon.

Retrieved from: www.joanwink.com/charts/librarymapping.pdf