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FOOD LANDSCAPES: A CASE STUDY OF A COOKING AND ART-FOCUSED PROGRAM FOR TEENS LIVING IN A FOOD DESERT

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**FOOD LANDSCAPES:
A CASE STUDY OF A COOKING AND ART- FOCUSED
PROGRAM FOR TEENS LIVING IN A FOOD DESERT**

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of
Art Education at Virginia Commonwealth University

by

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Abstract

FOOD LANDSCAPES: A CASE STUDY OF A COOKING AND ART FOCUSED PROGRAM FOR TEENS LIVING IN A FOOD DESERT

By Jessica Norris, BFA

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Art Education at Virginia Commonwealth University.

Virginia Commonwealth University, 2014.

Major Director: Dr. Melanie Buffington, Associate Professor, Art Education

This study constructs themes and propositions about the experiences of youth participants in the fall 2013 Food Landscapes program at the Neighborhood Resource Center in Richmond, Virginia. During the program, youth participated in cooking-based volunteerism with adults with disabilities and created short videos about their experiences. In this study, I analyzed pre- and post-program participant interviews, twice-weekly program observations, and facilitator reflections to understand how Food Landscapes affected youths' conception of community engagement and communication strategies. This case study offers insight into how youth experience after-school programming of this design. Based on my findings, youth develop and rely upon a sense of togetherness in out-of-school programs. Togetherness as a bridge to commitment strengthens participation. Individually, youth need to form personal connections to and/or empathy with the content areas of the program in order to derive meaning, critically reflect, and problem solve. Furthermore, the youth articulated their perceptions of the community and the program by developing, organizing, and voicing their ideas of cooking/food,

volunteering, and art making. By sharing research about the experiences of youth in after-school programming, organizations and educators can better construct, facilitate, and sustain youth participation and engagement.

Chapter 1: Introduction

For the past three years, I have worked as an after-school arts program leader for a community center on the east side of Richmond, Virginia called the Neighborhood Resource Center (NRC). The community center serves both the adult and youth populations of a socio-economically challenged neighborhood, Greater Fulton. NRC youth, ages 12 to 18, participate in a civic engagement program that was recently named the Youth Philanthropy Organization of the Year by the Association of Fundraising Professionals. The group acts as a force of change in the community following their mission, “Empowering our community by empowering ourselves.”

Approximately five to eight youth participate in the program at a given point. Participants work in the NRC’s commercial kitchen to create and serve food for the NRC’s pre-school and after-school meal programs and community events. NRC youth are also extensively involved in community arts projects and workshops, using their artwork to identify and address needs in the Greater Fulton community.

Background to the Problem

In the past, art and cooking projects at NRC have been separate, taking place on different days of the week with different program leaders. However, the youth participants expressed a desire to combine these features into one program. They also desired to build relationships as a group and with the Greater Fulton community.

Furthermore, according to the USDA (2013), the Greater Fulton neighborhood is a food desert. Urban food deserts are defined as low-income neighborhoods with little to no access to fresh, healthy, affordable foods due to a dearth of grocery stores and

restaurants within a one-mile radius. A Food Policy Task Force was created in 2012 under the Mayor's Anti-Poverty Commission, which identified poverty, single-parent households, and lack of transportation as three major contributors to the food desert crisis in Greater Fulton. Food deserts result in food insecurity, meaning people are not sure where their food will come from (Food Deserts in Virginia, 2014; Food Policy Task Force [FPTF], 2013). Thus, the NRC identified the need for a youth program related to both food acquisition and cooking.

This case study was based on the *Food Landscapes* program, which utilized art making and cooking to open dialogue about food equity and healthy living. For this project, NRC youth learned healthy food preparation techniques in a commercial kitchen and cooked with adults with developmental and other disabilities at Transitions Day Support Services. Furthermore, the youth filmed their experiences. The youth also discussed food and community as the teens worked to independently create short videos about their experiences in the program.

Perspective/ Theoretical Framework

A constructivist perspective encourages the development of ideas through the interpretation of multiple viewpoints and is dependent upon the researcher's experiential understanding of a research setting and its participants (Creswell, 2000; Stake, 1995). In particular, qualitative case studies fall into the constructivist paradigm (Stake, 1995). To examine these processes in depth, it is important in case studies to offer thick description that relays the perceptions and values of the research participants (Jaeger, 1997). Therefore, as a qualitative researcher, I adopted a constructivist paradigm in the design of my project.

Socially engaged art practice (SEA) is an ideology that exemplifies process-based, community-oriented art making (Helguera, 2011). It distinctly parallels social constructivist theory and has implications in educational and relational aesthetics as the art product includes the process of social and/or community engagement and co-creation of works (Thompson, 2012). Community engaged co-creation is necessarily formed of multiple viewpoints, making a constructivist interpretation particularly relevant. Furthermore, SEA practices parallel Paulo Freire's thoughts on educational reform through context-specific pedagogy and the collective construction of knowledge in community-based art making (Freire, 1970). Freire advocated that educational practices adapt to the cultural and social environment of the school and surrounding community in order to engage students in both abstract reflection (thesis) and active participation (praxis) (Freire, 1970). Similarly, the goal of many SEA projects, and the *Food Landscapes* program, is active youth participation in the community through art making (Kester, 2004).

Statement of the Problem/ Research Questions

This is an intrinsic case study focused on youth in an afterschool program that included cooking, art-related activities, and volunteering with adults with disabilities.

The research questions were

-What were the experiences of participants in the Fall 2013 Food Landscapes program?

-What did the integration of art-related activities contribute to the program topics of community, cooking and nutrition, and working with adults with disabilities?

Purpose of the Study

Reflecting the mission of the NRC, the goal of the program was for teen participants to develop community awareness and communication skills in order to investigate, understand, and act upon forces in their lives. Community engagement was defined as the development of an ongoing relationship with a community that benefits the community (Whaley & Weaver, 2010). Communication was defined as the meaningful exchange of information between two or more people (Kester, 2004). The purpose of the study was to understand NRC youth experiences in an art-based program involving cooking, food awareness, and videography. Designed as an opportunity for youth at the NRC to document their cooking and volunteerism, the youth derived meaning through artistic practice by creating short videos about their experiences in the program while learning about the role of art in food and community.

Review of the Literature

The literature review highlights five different fields of research related to this project: food deserts, inclusion practices for persons with disabilities, teen volunteerism, socially engaged art practices, and videography in teen programming. This is a multifaceted program that engages various groups of people within a community and touches on multiple topics within a diverse range of disciplines. This study will make connections between research in social work and socially engaged art education practices.

Food Deserts

Food deserts are described as a nation-wide phenomenon of low-income neighborhoods with little to no access to fresh healthy, affordable foods (Food Policy Task Force, 2013). The movement toward greater food equity and community health

emerged in the mid-1980s as a series of emergency food relief operations in areas affected by a downturn in the economic climate. These emergency operations, as well as further programming, research, and advocacy for food equity, became known as the food justice movement. Recently, the USDA has appropriated the language and priorities of grassroots food justice movements, officially defining food deserts and investing in research and programming to address the phenomenon (Freudenberg, McDonough & Tsui, 2011).

According to Feeding America, a national non-profit dedicated to eradicating hunger, 19.9% of the total population of Richmond lives with food insecurity compared to national and state averages of 16.6 and 11.8 respectively (Feeding America, 2010). In 2013 the East End of Richmond was designated among the largest metropolitan food deserts on the East Coast by the USDA's food desert locator and the Food Policy Task Force, a division of the Mayor's Campaign for a Healthy Richmond (Food Policy Task Force, 2013). The East End of Richmond, including the neighborhood of Greater Fulton, has the greatest disparity in healthy food options of areas in Richmond due to elevated poverty rates of 43 to 69 percent (Food Policy Task Force, 2013). Additionally, Richmond is home to a large percentage of the state's population with intellectual and physical disabilities, which increases a person's likelihood of food insecurity (Food Policy Task Force, 2013). Because of these facts, the *Food Landscapes* curriculum was designed to engage participants in discussion about food acquisition and food rights issues (see Appendix VI).

Community Inclusion and Adults with Disabilities

The *Food Landscapes* program was based on a community inclusion model for adults with disabilities. Research shows that community inclusion, specifically activities that foster a feeling of connectedness to others, leads to higher states of health and well-being in individuals with intellectual disabilities (Cummins & Lau, 2003; Rowe & Kahn, 1998). Cummins and Lau (2003) also found that community connectedness and social inclusion are promoted through *meaningful* and *prolonged* engagement between persons with intellectual disabilities and those without. One-to-one relationships with individuals outside of family and staff and utilization of local community environments are cited as integral to the well-being of persons with intellectual disabilities (Bray & Gates, 2003).

Youth Volunteerism

Research shows that young people who engage in service with adults with disabilities exhibit a heightened sense of empathy and awareness of disability issues. Students express more respect for the uniqueness of individuals and an increased perspective on coping with differing levels of ability after volunteering with people with disabilities (Greene, 1998).

One theory of youth volunteerism concentrates on the advocacy and development of “youth voice.” Youth voice is defined as the *active and engaged* ways that youth represent themselves to society (Dallago, Cristini, Perkins, Nation, & Santinello, 2009). Youth voice and the social identities of teenagers are developed through engagement in civic and volunteer activities, allowing teens to explore and take responsibility for their communities (Flanagan, 2004).

Motivation is another area of research in teen volunteerism and community engagement. The term implies that teens need to not only participate but also become actively engaged in volunteer activities. Attitude and self-esteem play a major role in a teen's level of enthusiasm and commitment to service. Studies of the motivational factors of teen volunteers seek to create deeper understanding of why teens volunteer and their level of engagement when helping another person or their community (Briggs, Landry, & Wood, 2007).

Arts-based Community Programs for Youth

Moreover, arts-based volunteer endeavors and community activism encourage teens to reflect on and vocalize their opinions (Guetzkow, 2002). Another understanding of youth volunteerism emphasizes the significance of using *real-life* local events in community-based art interventions by advocating for the synthesis of service and artistic practices as a means of providing experiential educational experiences (Adejumo, 2010). Krensky and Steffen (2008) also support this idea, stating the mutual benefits of the arts and service in communities. In particular, visual arts practices in communities allow for comprehension, communication, and the creation of meaning. Arts-based community endeavors allow youth to interact with and understand their communities through reciprocal learning practices and creative visual response (Cho, 2006).

Out-of-school youth arts programs are often assessed by measures that gauge success in school. However, assessments that measure youth development and community development outcomes create a more realistic depiction of the affects of community-based arts programs. In return, these outcomes have been shown to impact a student's success in school; meaning, the greater a student's civic awareness and

engagement, the more likely they are to find success in a school setting (Stevenson, Limon, & Reclosado, 2013).

Socially Engaged Art

Socially engaged art practices (SEA) explore the sociology of art and its making (Helguera, 2011). Theorists in the fields also explore the phenomena of social situations and how individuals and communities understand social engagement as an aesthetic experience (Bishop, 2012). Socially engaged art in the United States is rooted in theories of performance and pedagogy as well as feminist education and art making (Helguera, 2011). The formative influence of artists and educators such as Alan Kaprow, Charles Garoian, and Suzanne Lacy firmly places literature and criticism on SEA practices in the fields of art and education (Helguera, 2011). Contemporary questions about the SEA practices address relational and social aesthetics as well as art criticism and community activism. Research on SEA primarily focuses on its application in the art world and higher education settings (Bishop, 2012).

This is particularly relevant to education and social work as these fields interpret the “aesthetic dimensions” of individuals and society (Gray & Webb, 2008). Gray and Webb (2008) posit that social work is both “artistic attunement” and an artwork in itself “in the service of the politics of liberation” (pp. 183-184). Interestingly, socially engaged art practice parallels this concept in that the experience of making and the object created are artforms that comment on and sometimes directly influence societal functions (Bishop, 2012). Art educators working in SEA bridge the worlds of social work and community art by articulating and promoting creative and perceptive experiences through art making and social engagement as “cultural workers” (Helguera, 2011; Freire, 1985).

Video and Digital media in Teen Programming

Programs that feature digital media practices, in particular projects that focus on social justice and community activism, are becoming more common (Goldman, Booker & McDermott, 2008). Educators, community organizers, and artists are realizing the potential for digital technology to encourage “critical literacy” in that it teaches multiple methods for communicating ideas and encourages inquiry and reflection (Goldman, Booker & McDermott, 2008). Digital media and videography may be used in teen programs because of their potential to tell and spread the story of a community. They represent new ways of getting a message across to a potentially vast audience.

Furthermore, digital production is a highly active process, calling for the synchronized integration of making and participating (Goldman, Booker & McDermott, 2008). Photovoice projects, which involve community members (primarily youth) in photography-based community research, have been shown to increase self-efficacy, empowerment, community attachment, community awareness, and intended civic engagement in marginalized teen populations (Pritzker, LaChapelle, & Tatum, 2012).

Gaps in the Literature

The goal of the literature review is to represent and make connections between the many different avenues of research related to this project and to identify gaps in and among the topics that the Food Landscapes program addresses. In conducting the review of the literature, I found that research on afterschool programs are now focusing on arts-based community engagement for adolescents and teens (Afterschool Alliance, 2011). However, specific gaps in the literature pertain to youth involved in cooking projects with adults with disabilities, as well as *youth-generated* socially engaged arts programs. This

project contributes to the body of research on arts-based afterschool programs for teens that focus on community engagement through cooking and volunteerism. Further, it will address particular issues surrounding food deserts in communities and community engagement through service with individuals with disabilities.

Methodology

Background of the Study

The *Food Landscapes* program at the NRC served as the basis for this intrinsic case study. When a particular program is the object of study, it is an intrinsic case study and produces non-generalizable information (Stake, 1995). In other words, intrinsic case studies measure a particular phenomenon by using qualitative data gathering and analysis techniques (Erickson 1985; Stake, 1995). In case studies, researchers seek modulated descriptions from multiple sources and points of view and create an account of the specific case (Weiss, 1998). This was an intrinsic case study because it studied a singular program in order to understand multiple experiences of the participants using multiple sources of data.

Within case study research it is common to rely on pre-existing theoretical propositions to guide data collection and analysis (Yin, 2003). However, this study used a grounded theory approach to analyze and report the data, with the goal of forming a hypothetical proposition about the experiences of youth in the program (Glaser & Strauss, 1967).

Design of the Study

Participants and location. NRC youth participating in this study are members of a teen civic and art engagement program at the Neighborhood Resource Center in Greater

Fulton, Richmond, Virginia. Program participants ranged in age from 12-14 years. Ten NRC youth enrolled in the program and six took part in the research study. All were of African American descent. Seven members of the group were female and three members were male. Participants and their families were residents of the Greater Fulton neighborhood in the eastern part of Richmond, Virginia. During the program, the NRC youth worked with adults with disabilities from Transitions Day Support Center. There were multiple interactions between the youth and their adult partners including two cooking experiences at the support center. However, the research project only obtained permission to collect data on the youth participants. Furthermore, because of HIPAA regulations we were not informed of the specific conditions of the Transitions participants; in general, the center supports individuals with both mild and severe physical and intellectual disabilities. The majority of the project took place at the Neighborhood Resource Center (NRC), a community center located on the East End of Richmond, Virginia that serves the Greater Fulton community.

Facilitators and researchers. Many different people helped coordinate, facilitate, and conduct research during the fall 2013 *Food Landscapes* project. The NRC cooking instructor, Mica Whitney and the NRC social work interns Hillary Callahan and Melissa Assalone acted as program assistants. I was the project coordinator and acted as the lead program facilitator, managing and teaching the youth. I also acted as a liaison between the NRC, Transitions, and VCU. Furthermore, I handled the pre- and post-program interviews and wrote the facilitator reflections. I collected and analyzed the data from the observations, reflections, and interviews and brought my findings to our research team. Dr. Melanie Buffington from the Art Education Department and Dr. Elizabeth Cramer

from the School of Social Work led the team and were assisted by social work graduate students Kateanne Agnelli and Tanetta Watson. The research team was responsible for overseeing the research and the running of the program and conducted program observations.

Program overview. The following is a short synopsis of the fall curriculum (see Appendix VI for full curriculum). Each week, the youth participated in different activities focusing on healthy cooking, working with people with disabilities, community engagement, art and videography. Throughout the twelve week program the youth learned to cook three different recipes in the NRC kitchen and a week after each cooking lesson traveled to Transitions to teach their partners the same recipe. During the NRC cooking activities the group talked about healthy eating and food access as well as methods for teaching the recipe to and communicating with individuals with disabilities. To prepare the youth for these experiences, Cameron Carter from the School of Social Work led a disability awareness workshop and a food desert awareness workshop. On Tuesdays, during the first half of the program, we discussed how to convey their experiences through video, talking in depth about the role of artists in communities, and socially engaged art practices, and relationships between food and art. The Virginia Museum of Fine Arts (VMFA) is a community partner on the Food Landscapes project; they were interested in promoting an inclusive, accessible space for individuals with intellectual and physical disabilities. In November, the youth went on three field trips to the VMFA that were designed to offer the NRC youth and their Transitions partners opportunities to socialize and explore food-related art works outside of the Fulton community. During the last weeks of the program, the youth worked on their videos and

prepared for a final community exhibition.

Data Collection

Through the case study, I sought to understand what participants experienced during the *Food Landscapes* program. According to Weiss (1998), fieldwork is the basis of qualitative research, meaning extensive and in-depth observations, reflections, and interviews are key to understanding program occurrences. Therefore, data in the form of pre- and post-program interviews and twice-weekly program observations and facilitator reflections were collected. This study measured the effects of the program on NRC youth participants but not Transitions adults. Before collecting any data, IRB (#HM15313) approval, parental consent and youth assent were obtained (see Appendix I).

Abedin (2010) suggests that art education researchers use open-ended interview questions because of the complex learning processes involved in art making. Therefore, interviews, conducted with youth at the beginning and end of each semester, were structured and included both open and closed ended questions. The interviews were recorded using a digital recording application on my iPhone and transcribed on a password-protected laptop.

Members of the research team collected observational data in the form of a checklist and field notes. Different sections on the checklist represented different types of data including “program procedures” (attendance, time activities started, equipment available), “participant engagement” (if and how participants are communicating and contributing to the program), and “service learning at Transitions Day Support Center” (how NRC youth interact with each other and their partners at Transitions). However,

most of the data I analyzed came from observation field notes. I primarily used the checklist as an activity and attendance record.

After every class I wrote a two-page facilitator reflection. The commentary included specifications about program procedures and quotes from participants and facilitators. The reflection process served to record the events of the day from the perspective of the lead teacher. I was able to capture what happened before, after, and during the program as well as personal correspondences with the participants and the community partners. The process allowed me to progressively review and record initial concepts about the program.

Data Analysis

Grounded theory is built from three elements: concepts, categories, and propositions (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). First, the interviews and observations were coded for analysis. The coding process moved from lower to higher, or more abstract, levels of understanding (Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003). Open coding occurred at the initial stage of data analysis and was an organizational technique (Richards, 2009). I used open coding to organize the data and formulate the types of codes, or concepts, used throughout the analysis.

Although case study relies on the systematic documentation and organization of specific, concrete details (Erickson, 1985), the objective of this case study was not to simply record details of events but to offer insight and understanding into what was happening. Therefore, during the coding process, I engaged in a constant, reflective process of collection, organization, analysis, and theory building (Yin, 2009). This process was recorded through the facilitator reflections.

Coding the data allowed for specific patterns to emerge (Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003). This was essential for identifying *what was happening* and *what was important* (Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003). In this case: how do participants in the *Food Landscapes* project experience the program? The second stage in the coding process, axial coding, was the organization of concepts into property-based categories. Categories represented a broader, more abstract ordering of the data (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) and led to conclusions within each data type.

Lastly, I triangulated the data to corroborate information from the observations, reflections, and interviews. Triangulation increased validity and created a joint construction of events (Weiss, 1998). The agreement of different data collection methods illuminated the findings. After I created a cohesive and detailed picture of what happened during the program I was able to form *propositions* that indicated generalized, conceptual relationships between what participants experienced in the program and how they were affected or not affected by those experiences (Pandit, 1996). This approach made particular sense in an intrinsic case study because the goal of the research was to discover emerging phenomena in a completely unique situation.

Findings

This study gave insight into the effects of the *Food Landscapes* program on the NRC youth. I was interested in understanding how youth experience community-based afterschool programming in general and, more specifically, what role socially engaged art making and digital media played in this setting. I found that arts-related activities helped to connect and strengthen the topics covered in the program and allowed the youth to engage in higher-level meaning making by developing personal connections to the topics.

Furthermore, in following a socially-engaged art process and exhibiting the program to the community youth engagement increased.

This intrinsic case study brought to light the thoughts and actions of youth as they engaged directly with the community. Whereas many of the participants had trouble connecting to the group and engaging with the program at the beginning of the fall, the many and diverse lessons on communication, tolerance, and engagement helped them to build relationships and understanding. Through specific experiences, the participants began to perceive communication and community engagement in a different way than before the program. This finding was uniquely expressed by each participant, yet I was able to conclude that, overall, the group exhibited a more sensitive and nuanced approach to communication.

Furthermore, understanding of the relationship between social engagement and art making emerged through the data analysis. The youth gained insight into communication and community engagement through the cooking related activities and their work with Transitions, but the art making components of the program, the videography in particular, allowed them to explore, substantiate, and express their perceptions.

Suggestions for Future Research

This study led to subsequent questions about arts-based community programs for adolescents and teenagers. The *Food Landscapes* program could become an ongoing project. Perhaps the next iteration of the project aims toward older participants and/or asks the participants to take direct action in their community through art-based community practices. Follow-up studies could include an action-research project to assess ongoing programming or a survey of nationwide arts-based community programs

that address food desert phenomena or community inclusion of individuals with disabilities.

Conclusion

This study provided the NRC, and the wider community of afterschool arts program professionals, insight into the effects of arts-based, community-engaged intervention on the lives of youth participants. Through an intrinsic case study, details about experiences within the *Food Landscapes* program were brought to light. Studies such as this are important tools that offer information on how creative projects impact the lives of youth and further develop our knowledge base.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

The goal of this literature review is to represent research related to different content areas in the *Food Landscapes* project. The project was a partnership between the School of Social Work and the Art Education department at VCU and explores scholarship related to both fields as well as background information about the Greater Fulton community. The program was developed to engage youth at the Neighborhood Resource Center (NRC) in a dialogue about community activism, particularly food justice through cooking and volunteerism within a socially engaged art framework.

The first half of the literature review introduces socially engaged art practices (SEA) and its relationship to social work, art education, and after-school youth programming. The second half of the literature review addresses literature related to the content in the *Food Landscapes* curriculum including food deserts (definition and implications), inclusion practices for persons with disabilities, youth volunteerism, and teen-created video and digital media projects.

Socially Engaged Art Making

Theories of socially engaged art (SEA) played a significant role in the development of the *Food Landscapes* program. Generally, SEA projects include groups of people in creative dialogue and art making about issues within communities. Digital media often plays a role in SEA projects, allowing artists and communities to record interactions and exhibit and/or disseminate them to a larger audience (Helguera, 2011).

Although contexts are broad in content, socially engaged artworks usually advocates a deep, widespread and sustainable approach to community art, requiring

relational experiences with groups of people (Thompson, 2012). Many practitioners strive to develop balanced, reciprocal, and valid relationships with communities. Artists become researchers, educators and facilitators within community-produced projects in an effort to create artworks that understand communities (Bishop, 2012).

Pablo Helguera, known for his socially engaged artworks and criticism of the field, defines SEA as the social-relational aesthetics of communities (Helguera, 2011). This definition of SEA is conceptual in nature and encompasses all processes that form an “engaged” act of art making. Engagement is key as it relies on reciprocal, connected experiences with others. It is the cultivation and documentation of these experiences that distinguishes SEA from traditional community arts practices (Bishop, 2012). In this way, SEA stems from both community arts practices and conceptual art making, the artwork can be the actual material product of the project, the documentation of the actions and experiences of the artist and the community during a project or even those actions and experiences *themselves* in the absence of any artifact or documentation (Kester, 2004).

History and Development of SEA

Socially engaged art is rooted in conceptual and performance art in that it deviates from the object-based traditions of the modernist era (Kester, 2004). The Dada movement and the ensuing works of the avant-garde and post-modern eras generated a new interest in art as process versus product and encouraged social dissonance and dissidence through experimentation, performance, and experience (Kester, 2004). Earlier experimentation by conceptual artists interested in the reflective relationship between society and art formed the fabric of SEA practice and social-relational aesthetics (Naidus, 2004).

Artists with roots in SEA practice often make work with the goal of social justice. For example, Houston's Third Ward is home to Rick Lowe's ongoing housing program *Project Row House* which, developed in the 1990's, infuses the practices of artists/educators Joseph Beuys and Dr. John Biggers (Leerkamp, Gauna, & Carpenter, 2014). The social fabric of Project Row House is the product of years of community-engaged research and art making, community-designed, enduring architecture, and activism (Naidus, 2004). In 2011 artists, chefs, nutritionists and gardeners explored the community's relationship with food in the 34th annual Project Row House artists in residence program (Projectrowhouse.org).

Food and community play a significant role in SEA practice. In 2012 the Smart Museum of Art at the University of Chicago hosted *Feast: Radical Hospitality in Contemporary Art*. The show represented over fifty years of participatory, socially-engaged, and collaborative artworks that negotiate the sharing of food and drink. Works like *Potluck: Chicago*, by the collaborative non-profit arts group motiroti, used potluck as a metaphor for shared meals in which participants explored difference, disparity, inequity, and togetherness (Smith, 2013).

Other projects, such as Steve Kurtz's hacker collective Critical Art Ensemble, investigate politically charged cultural phenomena. Kurtz and the collective promote public awareness and protest through the tactical use of digital media film, photography, text art, book art, and performance (Naidus, 2004). In 2013 the Critical Art Ensemble planned block parties in areas of high unemployment. Called the *Keep Hope Alive Block Party*, the goal of the piece was to highlight the indulgence of wealth by promoting

public acts of both pleasure and sustenance including eating, drinking, and gambling (Critical Art Ensemble, 2013).

SEA and Art Education

Art making and community building share a common ancestry in pedagogy. Paulo Freire brought reform to the educational system in the mid-20th century in part through his redefinition of the teacher as a *cultural worker* (1985). Freire proposed that teachers, as cultural workers, introduce and promote dialogue and critical reflection (and action) about social issues by cultivating the imaginations of students through aesthetic experiences. Freire described the need for teachers to act as gateways for students to access, reflect upon, and act upon the outside world (Freire, 1970).

SEA facilitators often work as arts educators within community-produced projects (Bishop, 2012). However, to ensure sustainable and healthy relationships with communities, certain protocols have emerged for facilitating socially engaged art projects. William Cleveland (2011) mapped four different objectives for socially engaged art practice. These include: build and improve (social and environmental design), educate and inform (pedagogy and social activism), inspire and motivate (creativity and culture), nurture and heal (conciliatory and therapeutic). These objectives inform the development and assessment of community-based, out-of-school arts education practices. The most effective SEA projects implement and overlap more than one of the four objectives. Cleveland stressed the importance of artists maintaining balance and structure and, like Freire (1970), of creating open and democratic relationships with community members and organizations.

Youth and SEA Practice: Research and Community Programming

Janet Batsleer (2011) studied a socially engaged art program in Manchester, UK called *The Blue Room*. *The Blue Room* was a youth voice project that implemented art-based pedagogic strategies to encourage participants to speak about their life circumstances. Batsleer (2011) found that codes of communication (i.e. symbols and metaphors), intrinsic to the creative process, were able to effectively capture the complexity of young people's lives and voices.

This is particularly important as youth are active participants in what is termed the "Third Culture" or global cultures dominated by mass media symbols (Nieysto, 2000, p.2). Because teens are members of both local and global cultures through lived and virtual experiences, their work tends to be representative of a cross-cultural understanding of self and community, giving dimension to their relational experience with a community (Niesyto, 2000). In this way, teen populations are distinctly wired to contribute to and gain knowledge from socially engaged art practices. They are in the process of understanding and creating relationships with other individuals and larger communities and at the same time are keyed into current visual and pop culture happenings (Naidus, 2004). SEA practice allows them to actively participate in and contribute to these happenings.

Though SEA is the overarching philosophy of the *Food Landscapes* project, the content relates to several other areas. The following sections of this literature review describe the phenomenon of food deserts and their local impact on the Greater Fulton community, inclusion practices for individuals with intellectual and physical disabilities,

and current theory on youth volunteerism. The chapter concludes with a summary of current youth video projects that address food deserts.

Community-based Youth Programming and Volunteerism

This section provides an overview of current practices and program models for youth programming. The *Food Landscapes* program seeks to promote youth empowerment and community awareness through localized community volunteer efforts. Three major themes in the research are: (a) the development of youth voice through volunteerism, (b) the significance of participant-centered volunteerism, and (c) understanding of the motivations of youth in community engaged programs.

Youth Voice

“Youth voice” is defined representation of youth identities and opinions in a community (Mueller, Wunrow, & Einspruch, 2000, p.38). Voice refers to multi-modal, expressive representations including, but not limited to, writing, art making, and verbal communication (Dallago et al., 2009). Research shows that youth who have an opportunity to express their opinions and influence decision-making are more likely to feel empowered and have greater self-worth. Furthermore, participation in community engaged activities, guided by principles of “youth voice” and democratic youth programming practices, allows young people to develop social skills, leadership abilities, and a sense of civic engagement. By giving youth an opportunity to socialize in a safe place, programs that promote “youth voice” through volunteer opportunities allow teens to be bold, take risks, and air viewpoints without engaging in dangerous behaviors (Flanagan, 2004). For example, past teen programming at the NRC encouraged youth to

become familiar voices in the community by attending and speaking at civic association meetings.

Youth Participation

Youth participation is another facet of teen volunteerism and community involvement. Whereas youth voice strategies encourage self-representation, youth participation is more about group opinions and actions. Through youth participation young people organize themselves to choose, plan, advocate, and work with interests in their community. The goal of youth participation is to effect change in a community through youth empowerment and work. The main goal of youth participation as a process of program development is to make communities healthier, more valuable places for young people. Research has shown that young people who participate in volunteer programs that employ a youth participation model gain leadership skills, personal confidence, and civic competency (Checkoway & Gutiérrez 2006).

Youth participation is a core value of the program model known as *youth development* (Perkins, 2009, p.108). The youth development program model offers substantial adult guidance while encouraging participatory, youth-led volunteer efforts. This practice combines theories of youth voice and participation as a comprehensive means of empowering youth to serve their communities and voice their opinions (Perkins, 2009). Art education programs that incorporate youth development strategies have been shown to develop a teen's sense of value and belonging to a group, elements of ethical behavior including peaceful conflict management, and the ability to access social systems available to them (Hirzy, 2011).

Volunteer Motivation

Studies often focus on motivational elements in youth volunteerism or how to incentivize youth to volunteer. Briggs, Landry, and Wood (2007) studied the quality of helping behaviors exhibited by teens during volunteer opportunities. The goal of their study was to create a deeper understanding of why teens volunteer and their level of engagement when helping others. The participants were asked about their reasons for getting involved in the project, their feelings toward the issue addressed by the fundraiser (hunger), as well as situational information about their lives and their understanding of the non-profit organization. The study found that teens who exhibited a higher level of altruism during the project were those who fully embraced the “task at hand” (fasting to raise money for hunger in this case) (Briggs, Landry, & Wood, 2007).

Also, Willems and Walk (2013) studied the relationship between youth motivation (to volunteer) and task preference and found a strong connection between motivated volunteerism and activities that develop interpersonal relationships and leadership skills.

In conducting the review of the literature, I found many afterschool programs are now focusing on socially engaged art projects for teens (Afterschool Alliance, 2011). These programs access and develop different facets of healthy teen development. Effective programming has been shown to heighten self-efficacy, creativity and critical problem solving, civic awareness and responsibility, communication skills, and social-emotional growth. However, because youth programs vary dramatically in content and structure effective outcomes are measured case by case with little generalizability. Large-scale longitudinal studies offer the most support for best practices in arts-based

community programs. However, assessment of new, young, or particularly unique programs is essential for understanding circumstantial nuances and widening the scope of the field.

Video and Digital Media in Teen Programming

Youth programs that feature digital media and videography are becoming popular, especially programs that focus on social activism and social justice (Gee, 2009). Goldman, Booker, and McDermott (2008) found that youth participation in programming and community engagement was heightened through digital literacy and videography. Strack, Magill and McDonagh (2004) employed a mixed-method pre- and post-survey as part of the evaluation of a digital media program in Southeast Baltimore. The study found that young people became more civically-minded and engaged in their communities after producing documentaries of the oral history of their neighborhood and its elderly constituents (Strack et al., 2004).

Youth-created Food Justice Documentaries

Projects across the country are incorporating video and digital media in food desert awareness campaigns. The next section briefly outlines several recent youth developed projects that use digital media and video to address food justice issues. The National 4-H Council is an advocacy and fundraising group that targets youth development programs. In 2013, 4-H adopted a focus on health and food awareness in teen populations. The *Teen's Take on Health* video challenge was a nation-wide call for video responses to current health crises. The challenge promoted the use of social and digital media to generate interest in and support of health topics in teen communities. The winning submission detailed food desert epidemic in the mid-west. An evaluation of

the campaign found four key themes about community health that matter to teens: obesity; sleep, stress, and mental health; health care access and cost; personal, family, community, and public policy action; bold ideas for change (National 4-H Council, 2013).

In 2013 the Naked Juice Company partnered with Wholesome Wave, a non profit food access advocacy group, to help improve food security across the United States (Naked Juice Company, 2013). As part of the campaign, teenagers in South L.A. drew attention to issues of food insecurity through documentary style online videos. The campaign featured three different “episodes” created by teens and uploaded to social media and the Wholesome Wave website. The participants conducted street interviews with community members about their experiences living in a food desert.

Platform Breathe is a New York City based initiative that creates PSAs about social issues in NYC communities, and disseminates them through social media and television. For the *End Food Deserts Now* ad campaign Platform Breathe collaborated with local youth to create a video about healthy food choices (Platform Breathe, 2012).

Food Deserts

Cooking and community relationships with food are important components of the *Food Landscapes* program. This piece was incorporated to address the food desert phenomenon occurring in Greater Fulton where the program is located. This section addresses the definition of food deserts, the factors that contribute to them, research and educational programs, and implications specific to the Greater Fulton community.

Definition

The term food desert defines low-income neighborhoods with little to no access to fresh, healthy, affordable foods (Food Policy Task Force, 2013). This language was

incorporated in recent years into USDA policy and programming. The adoption of food desert terminology and greater focus on populations experiencing food deserts was due in large part to the efforts of the food justice movement. Emerging in the late 1980s, the food justice movement began as a series of grassroots emergency food distribution operations in economically devastated areas (Freudenberg, McDonough & Tsui, 2011).

Contributing Factors

Food deserts are, by definition, areas affected by economic disparity. Often, this disparity has roots in community disenfranchisement and racist government practices and policies (Hilmers, Hilmers & Dave, 2012). Such practices have included urban renewal, reapportioning and industrialization of historically African-American neighborhoods, and cutting off communities from economic, cultural, and familial resources. These developments disconnected communities from the local economy, breaking down local economic structures and stability and scaring off investors such as supermarkets (Hilmers, Hilmers & Dave, 2012). Furthermore, the industrialization of agricultural practice directly contributed to the loss of local food options by geographically distancing community members from food sources (Hilmers, Hilmers & Dave, 2012). Because of these circumstances, healthy food may not be readily available to communities that have little input in what happens to local economic structures (Hilmers, Hilmers & Dave, 2012).

Research and Educational Programs

Since its inception in the 1980s, the food justice movement has shifted focus, concentrating on health and nutrition education for adults and young people. One example of this shift comes from the New York City Food Movement (NYCfm). NYCfm

surveyed low-income urban neighborhoods to determine the leading impacts of food insecurity. Through the survey they found that food insecurity was directly related to obesity and diabetes in community populations. This was due in part to the lack of fresh food options available to residents in these neighborhoods. Without access to healthy foods, most people had no choice but to consume whatever was available and affordable, in this case fast food and snack foods. As a result of the NYCfm study, public education institutions upgraded the quality of the foods served to students to include more fresh food options (Freudenberg, McDonough & Tsui, 2011).

A study conducted in post-Katrina New Orleans examined the effect of the establishment of a local Community-Supported Agricultural markets (CSAs) on the ability of residents to access fresh, healthy foods (Yuki, 2013). Through a survey, the researcher found that less than 4% of the CSA's members came from the surrounding neighborhood. Although residents had "access" to the store they did not have the means to purchase the higher priced, locally sourced food items. Yuki's study showed that food access is defined not only by proximity to fresh food sources but also by affordability.

Since 2003, the People's Grocery in Oakland, CA has provided access to healthy food, education, and economic opportunities for area residents through four different community driven markets in Oakland (Haletky, Taylor, Weidner, & Gerbing, 2006). The People's Grocery also supports three different educational initiatives focusing on health, food security and social justice, and economic development. The organization understands the fast growing food justice movement and works to accommodate the economic, biological, sociological, and artistic nature of food and food justice projects (Haletky, Taylor, Weidner, & Gerbing, 2006).

One such incarnation of the food justice movement is the growing emphasis on school lunch reform and nutrition education in the public school system. Chef and educator Alice Waters started the Edible Schoolyard in 1997 in Berkeley, CA in response to a local principle's desire to feed his students and teach them about fresh, healthy foods. Since then the Edible Schoolyard project has grown into a national curriculum initiative with the goal of developing and sharing lessons for K-12 classrooms (Edible Schoolyard, 2013).

Although the food justice movement has roots in large urban cities, primarily in New York and California, in the past ten years activism and programming has spread throughout the United States. First Lady Michelle Obama's nationwide *Let's Move* initiative promotes nutrition and exercise programming in public schools and nonprofits through funding opportunities (Let's Move, 2013). In Richmond, Tricycle Gardens and Shalom Farms are two organizations that bring fresh produce to food deserts within the region while also developing and implementing gardening and cooking programming for local youth (FPTF, 2013).

Implications for Greater Fulton

Greater Fulton and surrounding neighborhoods, constituting Richmond's "East End" make up one of Virginia's large metropolitan food deserts (Food Policy Task Force, 2013). The Food Policy Task Force identified a lack of viable public transportation as a major contributor to food deserts in the East End. According to Feeding America, a national non-profit dedicated to eradicating hunger, 19.9% of the total population of

Richmond lives with food insecurity compared to national and state averages of 16.6 and 11.8 respectively (Feeding America, 2010).

To combat this phenomenon, Richmond's Food Policy Task Force (Food Policy Task Force), established the *Get Fresh East End* project where neighborhood corner stores are outfitted with refrigerators and stocked with low-cost, seasonal, local produce. As of June 2013, two corner stores in Greater Fulton are participating; however, access to fresh foods is only one facet of the problem. The Food Policy Task Force report also states the need for the development of youth programming addressing food security in Richmond neighborhoods; however, the report does not offer recommendations for youth programming outside of citing youth campaigns in other states that emphasize apprenticeship and leadership training in food desert and nutrition awareness. Additionally, Richmond is home to a large percentage of the state's population with intellectual and physical disabilities, which increases a person's likelihood of food insecurity (Food Policy Task Force, 2013).

Community Inclusion of People with Disabilities

Contemporary research on disability awareness and community involvement advocates for the practice of *community inclusion* (Howe, 2011). Community inclusion, as opposed to community *exposure*, is defined as the opportunity to live in a community and be valued and appreciated for unique personal traits and abilities. The practice is meant to establish individuals with disabilities as equals with people who do not have disabilities (Schalock, 1997). Furthermore, adults with intellectual and physical disabilities need prolonged and engaged encounters with fellow community members in

order to benefit from an inclusive experience. This means that person-to-person, one-to-one contact is the preferred method of interaction (Schalock, 1997).

Through inclusive experiences, persons with disabilities gain a sense of belonging by building relationships with others (Bray & Gates, 2003). Van de Ven, Post, de Witte, and van den Heuvel (2005) conducted a study to assess community inclusion practices. The study found five key elements of successful integration: (1) functioning ordinarily without receiving special attention, (2) mixing with others that are not disabled, (3) taking part in society, (4) trying to realize one's potential and (5) directing one's own life (Van de Ven et al, 2005).

Participation is a key element of community inclusion and is specifically defined as *active* and *engaged* social situations (Hammel Magasi, Heinemann, Whiteneck, Bogner, & Rodriguez, 2008). One qualitative study found that participation is paramount to social connection; however, there is no standard for participatory experiences. Individuals with disabilities prefer to choose the ways in which they include themselves in society rather than submitting to societal norms for social behavior and engagement (Hammel et al., 2008).

It is important to note that social inclusion practices are still emerging. A 2013 study critically reflected on the speedy adoption of community inclusion practices in adult social care policy. The study found that individuals with disabilities desired more of a sense of *belonging* than *inclusiveness*. In other words, adults were looking for more meaningful, long-term relationships and acceptance as individuals rather than opportunities to participate in a community (Powers, 2013).

Gaps in the Literature

The *Food Landscapes* program represents areas of literature concerning socially engaged art, out-of-school youth programming, teen-produced digital media and video, food deserts, and community inclusion of adults with disabilities. Each of these areas has its own body of research. It is the intersection and overlap of these areas that differentiates the *Food Landscapes* project. Therefore, specific gaps in the literature pertain to youth involved in cooking projects with adults with disabilities and how socially engaged artmaking is used as a pedagogical tool; as a means for participants to organize, develop, and share their experience of the program.

Chapter 3: Methodology

This chapter includes a brief introduction of the purpose of the study as well as a description of the methodology. A detailed description of the participants and location of the study is also included. Furthermore, this chapter explains the design of the study including the data collection and analysis process and the limitations of the study.

Background to the Study

This case study is based on the fall 2013 iteration of the *Food Landscapes* program at the Neighborhood Resource Center. During the program, youth ages 12-14 worked with adults with disabilities to cook healthy recipes and learn about food through food-related artworks. The youth also created short videos about their experiences in the program. The research questions were:

--What were the experiences of participants in the Fall 2013 Food Landscapes program?

-What did the integration of art-related activities contribute to the program topics of community, cooking and nutrition, and working with adults with disabilities?

Research Design

Yin describes case study research as an in-depth, empirical inquiry that investigates real-life phenomena (2003). “Exploration” is a term commonly used as an analogy for case study, implying the search for *how* and *why* (Yin, 2003). Studying the *Food Landscapes* program in an exploratory manner meant understanding the case in its complexity and as completely as possible. I relied on multiple sources of information in

order to build evidence to support many (potential) variables of interest (Yin, 2003). In this scenario, the phenomena and the context of the event were not necessarily extricable. Therefore, it was necessary to relate data points through a process of triangulation, referring to the convergence of multiple data points through cross analysis (Grandy, 2010).

Participants and Location of the Research

The study was located at the Neighborhood Resource Center (NRC) of Greater Greater Fulton in the East End of Richmond, VA. Established in 2005, the NRC is a multi-use community facility that serves the needs of residents in the Greater Fulton neighborhood. Resources and services for adults offered at the NRC include the *NRCWorks* program which offers financial and employment counseling, SNAP benefit registration, financial literacy, and GED courses. A computer lab and laptops are available to NRC members as well as a small library and recording studio. Services for children include a sliding scale Montessori preschool and afterschool programming which includes a meal, tutoring and homework assistance, and arts and cultural programming run by community volunteers. Other on-site resources include a learning garden and commercial kitchen. The NRC also functions as a community meetinghouse and is the site of several neighborhood events throughout the year.

The *Food Landscapes* program was offered at the NRC on Monday and Tuesday evenings from 3:30-6:30 pm for youth ages 12-14. Ten youth were involved in this program, six of whom were part of the study, with ages ranging from 12 to 14 years. All youth who participated in the program were of African American heritage. The Greater Fulton neighborhood, where the participants reside and the NRC is located, is a socio-

economically challenged area (Food Policy Task Force, 2013; Mayor's Anti Poverty Commission, 2012).

Five participants resided inside the city line and attended Martin Luther King Middle School and Franklin Military Academy (both schools are about a ten minute drive or thirty minute bus ride from the NRC). One participant resided in Henrico and attended John Rolfe Middle School (a fifteen minute drive from the NRC). Participants relied on school buses, the public bus system, and NRC staff for transportation to and from the center. County residents did not have public or school transportation to the NRC available to them and walked or biked to the center if NRC staff were not available to drive them. Because of these circumstances, along with other extracurricular and familial commitments, student attendance and commitment to the program was variable. Facilitation of this program required a great amount of coordination and dedication on the part of NRC staff and volunteers and youth participants and their families.

Data Collection

For this study, data were collected through pre- and post-program interviews, weekly program observations, and facilitator reflections. Before participants started the program, parental consent and youth assent forms were read and signed and a consent conversation took place between parents/guardians and myself. The pre-program interview process took place a week before the official start of the *Food Landscapes* program.

Interviews

The interview method for this study was structured but included both open and closed ended questions (see Appendix II,III). This approach was used to allow for direct,

as well as engaged, conversational responses in order to encourage a rapport with the interviewee while giving them the opportunity to expand upon their answers (Seidman, 2012). If I wanted more information about a specific question I asked the participant to give me an example to clarify their statement. If a participant did not feel comfortable answering an interview question they simply asked to move on to the next question.

The interviews took between 5-10 minutes and were recorded using a digital recording application on an iPhone. They were then transcribed onto a password-protected computer, and then the sound files were immediately deleted from the phone. Six participants were available for the pre-program interview. One participant was interviewed by one of our research assistants who did not have access to an iPhone to record the responses. This participant's responses were typed out and were noticeably shorter than the audio transcriptions. However, only three post-program interviews were conducted to form three matched sets (see Appendix II).

Observations

Program personnel completed observations at each session using a checklist with room for open-ended comments (see Appendix IV). The checklist incorporated items related to program functions including staff and participant attendance and facility and equipment availability, as well as more subjective observational information such as levels of participant engagement and communication. The checklist was intended to give a clear record of what happened on each particular day of programming. Open comments were recorded on the checklist, which described the specific actions and statements of participants.

Facilitator Reflections

As the program's lead facilitator I wrote weekly reflections. The reflections were informal and included a synopsis of what occurred during each class, who was present for the class and how long they were there, anecdotes and quotes from the youth, and personal thoughts about the progress of particular students and how the program as a whole was functioning. During analysis, I used my reflections alongside the observations to create a descriptive account of what happened each day.

Data Analysis

Within case study research it is common to rely on pre-existing theoretical propositions to guide data analysis (Yin, 2003). However, this study employs a grounded theory approach to analyze and report the data. In grounded theory research, theory is developed through analysis of the data, rather than used to build the design of the research (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). This study implemented grounded theory to report real-life phenomena from multiple raw data sources to build conclusions about the experiences of the participants in the program and possible links between experiences and changes in the youth (Pandit, 1996).

Grounded theory builds hypotheses about a case by finding, grouping and organizing data into *concepts* and then more broadly into *categories* (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Analysis moves from simple, concrete statements to more and more abstract levels of interpretation. For this case study, the data analysis process focused on both group findings and participant portraits. My goal was to understand the youths' individual experiences of the program, what they participated in and how it affected them, and determine if there were similarities among the experiences of the youth. During the

final phase of the data analysis I found similarities between and among the youth and described why there were trends for certain experiences and outcomes.

Memos

Glaser (1978) suggested that researchers keep separate “memos,” or notes, during the coding process in order to keep track of different ideas for concepts and categories. I wrote down possible descriptions for developing themes and created visual maps to help keep track of the concepts and categories and how they were related and inter-related. My memo writing process was holistic and took place throughout the data analysis.

Open Coding

Open coding is the first level of data analysis and refers to the development of concepts and categories that allow the researcher to name ideas about emerging connections and themes in the data (Khandkar, 2009). My first goal during open coding was to organize the data to create brief descriptions of the fall program from information in the observation and reflections. I indicated what activities, discussions, or lessons happened each day, which participants were in attendance, and if there were any significant events particular to that class. By creating a snapshot of what happened each class and charting the attendance of the participants I was able to see *what* participants experienced during the program (see Appendix V).

Concepts. The next step was to understand *how* the participants experienced the program. During open coding and after organizing my information, I developed concepts from the data. *Concepts* are the most basic unit of analysis and are used as indicators of trends in the data (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), for example, tracking the attendance record of a participant. I labeled particular trends in each data set and then later made

comparisons between the labels, grouping them according to similarities and differences. For the pre- and post- interviews, the audio transcriptions were broken down by question and examined for similarities and differences. I read the open-ended commentary from the observation checklists and my weekly facilitator reflections several times, searching for repeating topics of importance. I transcribed the topics from each data set, evidenced as quotes, by hand and organized them in a table. Similarities and differences among topics in the interviews, observations, and reflections were distinguished as concepts and color-coded by hand.

Categories represent a higher level of analysis and are, essentially, groupings of concepts under a more abstract heading (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). I formed categories by listing each concept and drawing lines to make connections between the conceptual similarities. These groupings are further corroborated through a selective coding process of triangulation. In this case, data from the quantitative section of the observation checklist, which refers to program functions, is used to supplement ideas about phenomena. For instance, this is when I made connections between a youth's attendance record and what she or he experienced in the program.

Axial Coding

When I felt the coding process had reached a point of saturation, I began the axial coding phase. Axial coding describes a second level of data analysis in grounded theory and is used to make connections between categories (Strauss & Corbin, 1994). This process determines relationships between and within categories in order to identify central characteristics or phenomena (Wicks, 2010). Finally, a descriptive narrative about

the phenomena and the “story” of its conceptualization was created (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p.108).

Limitations of the Research

Like all studies, there were limitations to this case study. The number of variables represented by each of the study participants, including program attendance, age, and background, in conjunction with the multiple methods and perspectives of the collected data had an impact on the data analysis. The study was also limited by its size, having only six research participants total, most of whom had intermittent attendance in the program. The youth ranged from ages twelve to fourteen and exhibited social limitations as they interacted with each other, the facilitators, and their Transitions partners. Furthermore, I conducted the research while facilitating the program and have a measure of familiarity with most of the participants due to my years of work with the NRC. This level of intimacy was helpful in creating rapport with the participants but may have also led to assumptions during the research process.

Chapter 4: Findings

Introduction

The Food Landscapes program was documented through pre- and post- program interviews with participants, program observations, and my weekly facilitator reflections. The goal was to understand how participants experienced the program.

Participation in the research was anonymous; no names are used in the findings. Participants are referred to as P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, and P6. Five participants were able to record pre-program interviews (P1-P5) yet only three of these participants were available for the post-program interview (P2, P4, P5). P6 was not available during the pre and post program interviews because of transportation issues but a significant amount of data was collected on the participant through the observations and reflections.

The interviews included open-ended questions to investigate the youths' perceptions of community, volunteerism, food and nutrition, and disability. Observations of the program took place each week on Mondays and Tuesdays and were conducted by research assistants filling out forms designed to generate a well-formed, multi-perspective picture of what happened over the course of the project. Both the facilitator reflections and observation forms offered open-ended commentary on the events of the day, making record of personal communications among participants and between participants and facilitators. Reflections and observations also provided contextual information about the day's events such as changes to the schedule or equipment malfunctions.

The observations and reflections complemented the pre and post-interview measures by offering auxiliary information on participants over the course of the program. For instance, P6

attended the most number of classes, including two workshops, every field trip, and the final community event, but was not available for either the pre- or post-program interview. P1 was also not available for the post interview but there is data collected on the participant through the observations and reflections up to the final event. The data captured in the observations and reflections expound upon and elucidate the statements the participants made in the interviews, making them particularly significant resources.

Structure of the Findings

This chapter presents how individual participants and the group as a whole experienced the Food Landscapes program. Since the interviews asked the participants specific questions about their perceptions and experiences before and after the program I analyzed them separately from the reflections and observations. The interview findings focus on *community* (definition of and engagement with), *disability* awareness, and *food access* (food security, nutrition, and cooking). The observations and reflections describe findings related to the themes of *togetherness*, *personal connection and meaning-making*, and *articulation*. To support findings in each category perspectives on both the group and individual participants are presented, offering an aggregate narrative of the multiple variables and measures in the study. The chapter concludes by proposing a relationship between the interview and observation/reflection findings.

Pre-Program Interviews: Community

This section describes participants' concepts of community and disability before they started the program and explores three initial descriptions of community: togetherness, family, and social responsibility.

Togetherness

The pre-program interview asked participants to define and describe their interactions with their community. Several descriptions surfaced from the initial interview process; however

all five participants interviewed spoke about community as a sense of togetherness (see Appendix II). *Togetherness* was indicated by phrases such as “coming together,” “working together,” and “get together” as well as examples of community gatherings such as festivals and block parties (see Appendix II). Three of the participants noted the important contribution of space, and specifically *safe* space, for community members to come together (See Appendix II). Interestingly, these descriptions refer to the *act* of coming together as a group but do not denote a specific group of people. Instead, they speak to the phenomenon of community— how community happens.

Family

Three participants also described community in terms of familial relationships (see Appendix II). For our participants, and frequently in established African American communities, non-relatives such as neighbors and fellow church members are described as part of the family (Brown, Cohon, & Wheeler, 2002). For the participants in this case study, family and community were intrinsically connected. For example, P2 described community elders as, “my people, my family, my godmom, my grandpeople” and P5 described community as “friends and family and people I don’t know” (see Appendix II). Furthermore, when asked how she is connected with her community P4 responded, “family...the people in my family” (see Appendix II). Therefore, the people the participants described as family could also be considered community members and their definitions of community could also be a description of family. The idea of extended or augmented family supports the finding that community is an active phenomenon versus a distinct area or group of people (Brown, Cohon, & Wheeler, 2002). The participants defined family to include people with whom they share a sense of belonging or

togetherness with and then described community as “friends and family and other people;” therefore, establishing a relationship between family and togetherness and community.

Social Responsibility

When asked how they address the needs and strengths of their communities, participants responded by describing different actions that promote the welfare of the community. Some spoke about canned food drives, clothing drives, and picking up litter. All of the participants talked about ending violence in the community with responses such as “no more fighting” and “no more killing just because someone owes you something” (see Appendix II). Both P3 and P5 wanted to make signs to stop people from cursing and using foul language. P4 stated that one should “obey all laws even if you don’t agree with them.” P3 said simply that she “likes doing things to help better the community” and P2 said he would “do whatever I can to help it [the community] physically.”

I found that these statements construct a specific interpretation of social responsibility as *actions*. Participants talked about *making* signs of protest, *stopping* violence and vulgarity, and *helping* others by *doing* community service. Their understanding of community was directly related to acts of social service and responsibility. In other words, they conceptualized community as service or efforts toward positive change rather than an entity in itself. This is significant as, once again, the participants described community as an active phenomenon rather than an area or group of people. Social *responsibility* describes the desired bond between an individual and the community.

Post-program Interviews: Community

The following describes findings about community from the post-program interviews. The objective of this section is to show nuanced changes in participants' understanding of community. Only P2, P4, and P5 were available for post program interviews.

Social Responsibility

After analyzing the post-program interviews, I found the participants' idea of social responsibility made a slight but important change. Whereas before the program, participants described social responsibility as activities or duties (i.e. feeding the homeless, picking up trash, respecting elders), after the program students described social responsibility as qualities of communication. This change was found when the participants were asked to identify strengths in their community and their contribution to those strengths (see Appendix III). For instance, P2 asserted "communication" as the number one strength of his community and spoke about the importance of "talking gently and politely" (see Appendix III). When asked the same question during the pre-program interview, P2 did not have an answer. P4 was asked the same questions and responded similarly. She stated that she connected with her community members by "showing encouragement" through "kindness and sometimes sympathy" (see Appendix III). In these ways, socially responsible community engagement was described not only by specific actions but the careful and compassionate quality or communication of those actions. The responses of the participants change from statements of togetherness to statements reflecting what happens when people come together and how those interactions are affected by qualities of communication.

Pre-Program Interviews: Disability Awareness

The participants were asked about prior experiences with people with disabilities and their feelings about volunteering at Transitions. Out of the five youth interviewed, four talked

about relatives with a disability. P1 and P3 referred to caring for close elderly relatives. According to her interview, P3 had the most experience working with people with disabilities, stating, “We had to get him [P3’s elderly relative] out of the wheelchair. Get him outside. Make sure he do his exercises and stuff like that.” When asked about his experience, P1 said, “Not bad; it's like talking to a regular person.”

When asked how they felt about volunteering at Transitions most of the participants were comfortable with the idea. P1, P2, P3, and P5 said they “felt good” or “grateful” about volunteering because they wanted to “help people.” P1 said, “people with disabilities don’t really get to do a lot of things.” P5 was also “nervous” as working with adults with disabilities was a new experience. These statements represent differences in their experiences and feelings but, overall, the participants exhibited positive outlooks about working with Transitions.

However, P4 had an adverse reaction to the question and exhibited fear about working at Transitions and misconceptions about people with disabilities. For example, when asked how she felt about volunteering she said, “As long as I get to wear gloves I’m okay. Because I’m scared of getting something wrong with me.” She also talked about a family member “having it [a disability]” and about being scared of a girl at school with a disability. Unstructured or unsupervised experiences with people with disabilities can often be confusing or traumatic for children, leading to false impressions and anxiety (Livneh, 2012), and it is possible P4 had had such experiences earlier in life.

Post-Program Interviews: Disability Awareness

P2, P4, and P5 each responded differently to questions about working with people with disabilities at Transitions Day Support Center. P2 said he thought “it was a good experience” and that he liked “working in a kitchen with nice people” (see Appendix III). P5 said the

experience with Transitions was “easy and hard” (see Appendix III). She was only available to cook with Transitions once and worked with a partner who was able to independently accomplish most tasks. She said her partner was “...able to do some of it but not all of it” (see Appendix III). P4 talked about the experience as “scary” and “really terrifying” because she didn’t know how the Transitions partners would react if something “were to go wrong” (see Appendix III). This response is similar to her statements in the pre-program interview. Though the program did not alleviate P4’s anxiety about working with people with disabilities, during the post-program interview she paused after talking about her fear of working with Transitions and said, “but I had fun, I had fun” (see Appendix III). Her comments still expressed anxiety about working with people with disabilities but she was able to verbalize the experience in a new, more positive light.

Interestingly, during the interview, when asked how she engages with her community members P4 said, “by showing encouragement to everyone and if they can’t do it [a task] then I’ll help them...helping them step-by-step” (see Appendix III). Showing encouragement, asking before helping, and helping step-by-step were all strategies taught during lessons about working with people with disabilities. P4 was not explicitly referring to people with disabilities in her interview; she was talking about working with community members in general. P4 transferred knowledge of disability awareness to socially responsible activity, thereby exhibiting a more sensitive and nuanced approach to communication and social responsibility.

Food

P2, P4, and P5 gave short replies when asked about their experiences learning about food in the community. P2 said “some foods are good and some foods are not,” P4 said “it was okay!” and P5 said, “Easy.” P5 elaborated saying, “you shouldn’t eat junk food all the time.” P2 and

P5 said they enjoyed cooking (see Appendix III). Their replies did not discuss food access in the community or the relationship between learning to cook, teaching others to cook, and eating healthy. This emphasized the need for more in depth exploration of relationship between food and community during the spring cohort.

Observations and Reflections

The next section discusses findings from the twice-weekly program observations and my personal reflections. Information from these sources illuminated and supported the pre- and post-program interview findings and provided additional information on participants who did not participate in a post-program interview. The major findings represented in this section are: *togetherness, personal association, meaning making, and articulation*. Subcategories, pertaining to each theme, discuss inclusivity and belonging, group dynamics and interpersonal relationships, cooking and food access, and art making. The observations and reflections recorded during Food Landscapes indicated that a sense of *togetherness* as a reoccurring element stimulated vital learning and experience during the program.

Togetherness: developing inclusive attitudes toward adults with disabilities. The idea of togetherness was presented throughout the program and was manifested through interactions within the group of youth and with Transitions. The youth participated in a disability awareness workshop and lessons and volunteered with adults with disabilities. The youth gained experience working with individuals with disabilities and practiced a sense of *togetherness*, of community, with their partners. By the conclusion of the program, they exhibited more empathetic and inclusive attitudes toward adults with disabilities than expressed during the post program interviews and initial interactions with Transitions.

Wu (1998) described togetherness as the *practice* of being close to another person or persons and insisted that *togetherness* is a fluctuating symbiosis among individuals that is in need of continual exercise and nurture. This was particularly apparent in the case of P4 who was the only participant to exhibit fear of working with adults with disabilities during the pre-program interviews (see Appendix II). My reflection from the first cooking experience depicted her feelings toward her Transitions partner:

P4 was the most nervous about working with her partner. She told me before we started that she was ‘scared’. She took almost every opportunity to leave her partner. This was interesting because after the previous experience with Transitions (ball of yarn intro activity) P4 asked a couple of the Transitions folks for hugs. It wasn’t until the end of the [cooking] class when the pairs went off to record reflections together that the two connected a little more and P4 relaxed.

(see Appendix IV, 9/30/2013)

During one interaction P4 “asked for hugs” from Transitions participants but by the next interaction one week later she struggled to interact with her partner. As stated in the post-program interview analysis, P4 talked about the experience as “scary” and “really terrifying” but also said, “but I had fun, I had fun” (see Appendix III). For P4, the idea of interacting *together*, as a group and one on one, with Transitions induced feelings of anxiety and fear.

However, after multiple interactions, she became more familiar and less fearful of the adults at Transitions than at the beginning of the program. The program did not fully alleviate her anxiety, but it gave her an opportunity to confront her feelings and experience the reality of working with adults with disabilities. The program was a *practice* in togetherness, inclusivity,

and empathy. As an effect she was able to verbalize the experience as not only “scary” but also “fun.”

During the second cooking experience, an observer noted most of the participants were, “working near [their partners]—with little communication,” but P1 asked to work specifically with his partner from the last activity. He exhibited familiarity with and understanding of his partner:

P1 seemed at ease with his partner. He didn’t hesitate when his partner grabbed hold of his arm and led him to the table and helped him perform the tasks. At the end of the class the Transitions director commented on P1’s ‘easy-goingness’ and attentiveness to [his partner].

(see Appendix IV, 9/30/2013)

The “easy-goingness” and “attentiveness” reflect P1’s bonding with his partner. He practiced togetherness by socializing with his partner and accounting for his emotional and practical needs.

P1 continued this approach with his partner throughout the program. During a video workday an observer noted, “He (P1) has written about his partner and what makes him a “great guy.” P1’s story described his partner’s personality and what it was like to work *together* as “partners in crime in cooking.” He also referred to his partner as a “regular guy” (see Appendix IV, 12/13/13) thereby *including* him in predominant culture. P1 *practiced* togetherness by creating a video story about his relationship with his partner, focusing on the things they had in common.

P5 and P6 also created videos that emphasized the practice of *togetherness* with Transitions. In my reflection I discuss P5’s video:

P5 organized her video around images of the youth cooking in the NRC kitchen and with the Transitions adults. Against the images she inserted statements that described what was happening and what it meant. Like “we cook together to learn about food” (see Appendix IV, 12/13/13)

P6 spoke more generally about working with Transitions “to help them cook and do other activities” and “coming together” to “talk about food and where it comes from” (see Appendix IV, 12/13/13) P1, P5, and P6 used the video platform as a way to explore volunteering with adults with disabilities and cooking as a means of *togetherness*.

During the final show the youth, as a group, exhibited a heightened sense of togetherness with their Transitions partners than during any other time in the program:

When their partners arrived to the NRC, without prompting, P1, P4, and P6 made sure that they were included and felt at ease at the space. P6 invited one of the Transitions participants to watch as the youth practiced the step performance, remembering that she liked dancing and singing. (from 12/13/13 reflection, see Appendix IV)

They *included* and *invited* their partners to participate in the activities without prompting from the adult facilitators. The youth wanted their partners to “feel at ease” in the space by participating in the event as part of one group (see Appendix IV, 12/13/13). P6 also spoke to the audience about the “importance of working with people with disabilities...because they don’t always get *included*” (see Appendix IV, 12/13/13). The show was also the fifth and final meeting of the two groups, supporting the finding that inclusion relies on a sense of *togetherness*, which results from multiple, prolonged interactions among participants.

Practicing Togetherness: cooking and eating as a group. I found that the cooking activities, in the NRC kitchen and at Transitions, created a sense of *togetherness*, which promoted positive interactions among youth participants and facilitators. Observations of the cooking activities noted that participants were particularly engaged with the task at hand and at ease with each other when they were cooking and later eating together what they had cooked. The following excerpt from my reflections shows the relationship between a cooking activity and *togetherness*:

After cooking we sat down for a meal together. Melanie and I prompted the youth to talk about their experiences in the program thus far. I think the relaxed activity [eating together] brought the group closer together and eased some tensions among the youth. (from 10/15/13 reflection, see Appendix IV).

During the cooking activities observers noted youth participants chatting with each other while they prepped food and sharing ideas for different recipes and where to buy different types of fruits and vegetables. The participants' videos also described "coming together as a group" during cooking activities. For P5, cooking at the NRC and with Transitions became a metaphor for community and togetherness. For example, in her video she used the phrases, "*coming together* to talk about the *food and where it comes from*" (see Appendix IV, 12/13/13).

Practicing Togetherness: Peer interactions and group dynamics. The youth *practiced togetherness* as they interacted as a group and in pairs. They transferred knowledge, shared experiences, modeled behavior, and became close with one another during the course of the program. On November 11th an observer commented, "The discussion about interacting with disabilities was very helpful and inspiring. Youth got an opportunity to share personal stories and

help normalize interactions with people with disabilities.” The following discussion was recorded in my reflection:

P4 stated that she was scared to go on the trip (to the VMFA) in case one of the people from Transitions “started acting crazy” and we couldn’t control the situation. P3 quickly responded. She told the group about her [family member] who has an intellectual disability. She said that she needs a lot of help with everyday activities but that she’s is still a “regular person and a blessing to have as a friend”. She spoke directly to P4 and P4 listened attentively.....P3 also spoke of her responsibility to remind her family member that “she is loved” and “all people deserve to be loved and not made fun of for something they can’t help.” P4 listened to her peer but responded quietly that she didn’t think she could help but react to people who are so different from her... (see Appendix IV, 11/10/12)

Through the program youth practiced togetherness as a means of strengthening positive group dynamics. For example the group discussed *kinder* and more *patient* ways of addressing their peers and teachers. In particular, facilitators spoke about using “I statements,” taking deep breaths before responding, and listening as much as speaking and vice versa (see Appendix IV, 9/25/13). The youth also co-created rules for the group:

I wanted to set up new expectations (rules) consequences with the kids before class and reiterate the importance of talking out our issues with each other instead of lashing out (incident in Monday's class). I discussed my process for co-writing expectations and consequences with the youth and asked the MSW's (Hillary and Melissa) to take the lead during the activity. We walked over to the government rd. space. The kids sat around the table with Hillary and Melissa and outlined a

new set of rules (attached) (see Appendix IV, 9/25/13).

These communication tactics were reinforced when conflict arose between participants and, over time, helped to alleviate tensions within the group. For example, P4 and P6 bickered constantly at the beginning of the program. They were given the choice between not working together and leaving the program, or working together, treating each other kindly, and continuing. By the end of the program they had bonded, writing and performing the step dance about tolerating differences and coming together. Positive interactions among the participants in the group were formed over time. The youth needed to practice togetherness through multiple shared new experiences in order to strengthen group dynamics. Sharing new experiences was more successful after facilitators taught the youth different ways to communicate and established the importance of choosing words wisely and maintaining the group as a space for thoughtfulness and kind interactions. This finding has implication for art education as it provides a framework for negotiating new experiences in the classroom and creating a space for reflective communication.

Personal Connection and Meaning-Making

The theme of *togetherness* speaks to the bonds generated among the youth and with their Transitions partners. Topics we discussed during the program included their experiences working with adults with disabilities, the relevance of nutrition and food access to their daily lives, and explored art and art making as a means of creating personal connections to food, culture, and community. Personal connection to the content areas stimulated meaning making and commitment to the program. Likewise, the youths' lack of personal connection to the subject of food access, helped me to understand their perceptions of hunger and nutrition.

Personal connection/meaning-making: Food access. Group discussion revealed that the youth did not associate food access issues with circumstances in their personal lives. Instead, most participants related to the issue by empathizing with other community members whom they perceived as food insecure or “hungry.” For example, P1, P2, and P3, discussed how they acquire food in the neighborhood:

They were able to form a consensus that it is difficult and time consuming to get groceries from the neighborhood. Then, I asked them to think of ways of in which they could address this issue as young people. [One participant] suggested bringing food baskets to people with limited mobility (see Appendix IV, 9/18/13)

The next week, the class held a similar discussion, P3 and P6 also talked about ways to help “others” in need who are going hungry and described participating in church efforts to feed the hungry (see Appendix IV, 9/18/13). The participants understood the difficulty of accessing food in the neighborhood but because they were eating on a regular basis they did not perceive the issue as a problem in their own lives. For these participants nutrition and hunger were distinct problems with very different connotations: *hunger occurs when you do not have any food; therefore other people are going hungry not me.*

However, one participant exhibited a different reaction to the group discussion about food access. P1’s comments revealed his personal connection to food insecurity¹. He spoke briefly about his family’s struggle to obtain food and made comments that reflected his attempts to access food from alternative sources (i.e. the NRC garden and donated food items). From my reflection after the discussion:

¹ A facilitator spoke privately with P1 and the NRC’s onsite social worker addressed the needs of his family.

P1 brought up the fact that the NRC gives away boxes full of produce at the entrance to the center everyday. P1 contested (and became a little upset) that people don't have access to that food all day or on the weekends. He also brought up the fact that the (NRC) garden has tons of vegetables ready to harvest and not being used but that it is always locked. He was angry that hungry people don't have access to the NRC's garden. He exhibited agitation and possibly embarrassment, not looking at his peers and avoiding eye contact with me (see Appendix IV, 9/18/13).

Although all of the participants lived within the same food desert, their personal experiences acquiring food differed which changed the meaning and relevance of food access and nutrition topics in the program. During the food desert workshop P2, P5, and P6 exhibited knowledge of the nutritional difference between processed and fresh foods and discussed the prevalence of unhealthy foods in the corner stores and the lack of fresh food options (see Appendix IV, 10/4/13). This is important because the USDA defines food insecurity as a lack of *nutritious* food choices and defines hunger by not only lack of food but inability to afford *balanced* meals (Coleman-Jensen & Nord, 2013). During the food desert workshop P2, P5, and P6 exhibited knowledge of the nutritional difference between processed and fresh foods and discussed the prevalence of unhealthy foods in the corner stores and the lack of fresh food options (see Appendix IV, 10/4/13). Therefore, *hunger* needed to be clearly defined according to the USDA definition for the youth to understand the meaning of food access in their lives.

Personal connections/ meaning-making: art related activities. I found that art related activities helped the youth to make personal connection to and draw meaning from the program. For example, whereas the food desert awareness workshop helped the students to understand

their physical relationship to food, the food/art lessons allowed them to explore conceptual and emotional relationships with food. Since one goal of the program was to interest and educate youth about food access and nutrition in their community, making meaningful personal connections to food proved to be important.

Participants viewed Vik Munez's *Sugar Children*, a series of portraits of the children of sugar cane field workers rendered in sugar crystals. When asked about the meaning of the work, P6 said in a questioning manner that the sugar represented "sweetness...like childhood or children?" In my reflection I described P4's response:

P4 commented that her portrait wouldn't be made with sugar. She said her childhood was "more bitter than sweet". I asked her what she would use to create a portrait of herself and she said "salt." (see Appendix IV, 11/5/13)

This shows P4's understanding of the potential metaphorical weight of foods while creating a personal connection to the topic.

The participants also created self-portraits out of food items. P4 constructed a piece about protecting her loved ones by using almond silvers to create a "wall" around strawberry slices representing her sisters. P6 used strawberries for the mouth of a self-portrait, explaining his desire to "speak more sweetly" (see Appendix IV, 11/5/13). The portraits and the youths' statements not only reflect a personal connection to food but also exhibit higher- level understanding of the topic through the use of metaphor (Forceville, 2008).

The field trips to the VMFA further established the youths' personal relationship to art. At the museum, P2, P4, and P6 discussed artworks with their peers and chaperones. P4 expressed a close personal connection to her piece, a Mary Cassatt painting of a mother and child. From my reflection:

She became immediately enamored of the piece after seeing it in the VMFA's online collection. She was drawn to the warm connection between mother and child and spoke about her relationship with her mother (who she said she greatly admires). (see Appendix IV, 11/8/13)

The Cassatt painting held symbolic meaning for P4 based on her personal experiences. She used the painting to refer to her relationship with her mother.

P6 chose a piece in the modern wing of the gallery. It was a large abstract painting, entitled *Lemons*. The following is from my reflection:

I asked him (P1) some questions in return to get him thinking about the artist's conception of the work and why an artist would choose to represent lemons in an abstract work. He pointed out that lemons are bittersweet and that maybe the artist was trying to talk about bittersweet things in life like "love or revenge" (see Appendix IV, 11/8/13).

An observation from the field trip noted, "...the youth showed an ability to *articulate why* they liked different art pieces...[and] also made *connections* to their current life—[they were] able to point out what reminds them of food or eating." Through the VMFA field trips, they communicated effectively with a group about the meaning of an artwork and made personal connections to food and art through food related artworks.

Articulation (Organization, development, and communication of ideas)

Through visual exploration and showcasing their work the youth *articulated* their experience of togetherness and personal meaning making in the program. As stated above, observers noted the youth "making personal connections to their current life" during the trip to the VMFA through the youth "articulating why" they were drawn to certain pieces. Furthermore,

the youth made videos, wrote, performed, and choreographed a step dance, and showcased their work for the community. During these activities the youth articulated their experiences by developing, organizing, and voicing their ideas through the video making process and the final community event.

Organization and Idea Development: youth created videos. The process of making the digital videos helped the youth to *organize* and *develop* their stories. This also allowed the participants to tell a particular story of the program in their own voice. In different ways, the videos represent understandings of the participants' experiences in the Food Landscapes program. Through the video making process, the youth watched footage of past events in the program and then spliced and rearranged that footage to tell their particular story. In this way, the video making process allowed the youth to review what happened during the program, reflect about their experience, and then create a new understanding of what happened from the accumulated documentation.

Although the participants participated in two lessons about framing and shooting footage with the digital video recorder, the facilitators were responsible for shooting much of the footage. We realized that most of the weekly activities required the youths' full attention and they were not able to both record scenes and participate in programming at the same time. However, activities such as storyboarding, sequencing, and editing allowed the students to frame and expand their ideas. For instance, the youth summarized the project by developing storyboards and narratives for their videos. One observer noted, "(P6) was able to sum up the program extremely well in his introductory sentence." The youth used the storyboards as a reference as they sequenced footage and recorded voiceovers in iMovie. An observer noticed this process

and commented, "...when doing voiceovers they speak about ingredients and explain purpose of Food Landscapes." In my reflection I discuss P5's video:

[P5] organized her video around images of the youth cooking in the NRC kitchen ad with the Transitions adults. Against the images she inserted statements that described what was happening and what it meant. Like "we cook together to learn about food" (see Appendix IV, 12/13/13)

Furthermore each video represented the personal experiences of the participants in their own voice. For example, P6 was a particularly vocal and expressive participant and his personality was present in his video. He developed his particular voice and worked to engage viewers with phrases like, "Don't you love salsa?... You might think I mean the dance salsa but I mean the FOOD salsa!" (see Appendix IV, 12/13/13). P4 developed a personal account of the food/art activity. She voiced the meaning of her piece by accompanying images of her work with statements like, "my piece is called the 'mysterious flower' because like me it has some parts that are mean, happy, and sad" (see Appendix IV, 12/13/13). P1 created a video vignette of his relationship with his Transitions partner. In a reflection I wrote:

[P1] has about 90 seconds of video edited. He is focusing on his relationship with [his partner]. He's also written a little bit of voiceover about who [his partner] is and what makes him a great guy. [P1] will record the voiceover next week (see Appendix IV, 10/22/13).

The video platform allowed P1 to organize, develop, and voice his feelings about and interactions with his Transitions partner.

Articulation: final exhibition. The planning of the final show allowed the youth to further organize and develop their ideas about and experiences in the program. The show itself

was an opportunity to showcase their work and voice while engaging with members of the community. The following is from my reflection after the event:

Each participant played their movie and joined the audience in a Q&A about the film and the program. [P4] showed first, recounting how she won the food art competition. [P1] showed his video and talked briefly about “liking working at Transitions.” [P6] spoke the longest and went into detail about accepting people who are different and working together to make healthy food. All three of the participants who showed videos and spoke used the time to thank their teachers and the NRC. [P6] spoke directly about his transportation difficulties and his mother endorsed his claims from the audience. (see Appendix IV, 12/13/13)

The final part of the show was the step performance by the youth. The call out for the step was collaboratively written by the youth in preparation for the show:

THIS STEP IS KNOWN FOR THE FOODLANDSCAPES STEPPERS
WHO CAME UP WITH THIS STEP TO SHOW HOW
MAKING FOOD AND WORKING TOGETHER
CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE

ITS NOTHING WRONG WORKING WITH PEOPLE WHO HAVE DISABILITIES
WE WANT PEOPLE TO KNOW US AS GOOD PEOPLE AND THAT US KIDS CAN
MAKE A BIG DIFFERENCE

HOME-MADE FOOD
HEALTHY FOR YOU
WORK TOGETHER
SHOW LOVE

(see Appendix IV, 12/13/13)

The composition of the step, each line detailing a different component of the program, is evidence of the youth organizing and understanding their experiences. The step was a way for

the youth to dynamically declare their importance to the community both in words and through dance. The final event was not just about showcasing the work of the youth. It was about allowing the youth an opportunity to self-represent to the community by articulating their experiences, opinions, and importance through performance and exhibition.

Conclusion

Before participating in the Food Landscapes program, the youth conceived of community as a sense of togetherness and described community through acts of social responsibility. They had a range of experiences with and emotions toward working with adults with disabilities. However, after the program youth approached social responsibility and togetherness as *qualities of communication*. They showed greater comfort interacting with and including people with disabilities than before the program. The youth also transferred learning between different aspects of the program. For example, youth approached social responsibility with confidence and sensitivity, which were skills honed while volunteering with Transitions and developing group dynamics.

Through *togetherness, personal connection and meaning making, and organization and articulation*, the youth not only connected with each other, their Transitions partners, and the community, but also developed an understanding of and empathy toward the needs of others; articulating these skills for the community through video and performance. The Food Landscapes program required participants to engage in prosocial behaviors through volunteerism and discussion of community issues. However, it also encouraged participants to make personal, meaningful connections with their actions in the program. In her post-interview P3 speaks extensively about helping others in the community by teaching through encouragement, kindness, and sympathy (see Appendix III). The combination of action and reflection contributed to the

youths' re-conception of community and social responsibility as personally meaningful interaction with other people and the qualities of those communications, rather than just organized acts of service through school or church.

Art education played two distinct roles in this program. The most obvious was the video making process where the youth collaged pieces of footage together to create short videos about their time in the program. They learned specific editing techniques and added aesthetic dimension by utilizing filters, transitions, voiceovers, music, and text. Other lessons and experiences outside of the video process also exhibited strong ties to art making. For example, they utilized ingredients and/or techniques in the kitchen to make healthy food taste and look good and learned ways to communicate to create understanding and bonding with people different than themselves. In both circumstances, the youth used art-related measures to approach and solve problems or used the fabric of the program to create personal stories and revelations. The final exhibition allowed the youth to share their voice with the community. By the end of the program, the youth were sensitive to the power and quality of their voices in the community.

Art education has the potential to expand beyond object-focused projects and influence other means of thinking and making if educators promote awareness and investigation of the aesthetic qualities of the everyday and frame problem solving as an artistic dilemma. In this way, art education was an essential element of the program. From the beginning, the program was framed as an art project and through the weekly video reflections and group discussions each topic of the program was approached as material for art making and/or creative reflection. By the end of the program the youth constructed their own interpretation of cooking, healthy eating, and working with adults with disabilities and created a performance embodying their perceptions.

The discussions about art making and the relationship to the community were essential in building their understandings. Further research into arts-based, socially engaged programming could provide supporting evidence of the ability of aesthetic awareness and artistic reasoning on understanding and engagement in after school settings.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

Introduction

Through this intrinsic case study, themes emerged that document the experiences of youth participants in the fall 2013 Food Landscapes program at the Neighborhood Resource Center in Richmond, Virginia. During the program youth participated in cooking-based volunteerism with adults with disabilities and created short videos about their experiences along with other art related activities. I analyzed pre- and post-program participant interviews, twice-weekly program observations, and facilitator reflections in order to understand how Food Landscapes affected youths' conception of community engagement and communication strategies.

I found youth perceptions of community, communication, and working with people with disabilities changed while participating in the Food Landscapes program, as did their understanding of food and nutrition. Participants were found to have varied relationships with food and food security, with some relating more personal experiences with hunger and food insecurity than others. After participating in multiple inclusive activities with Transitions Day Support Center the group in general grew to be more comfortable and familiar with individuals with disabilities while a few youth showed empathy and understanding. This was evinced by such occurrences as the youth socializing with and including their Transitions partners without direction from facilitators at the community event, P1's video portrait of his Transitions "partner in crime in cooking," and P6's statement during the community event about, "working with people with disabilities...because they don't always get *included*." Additionally, I found

the art-related activities led to greater personal connections with food and community while the video making allowed the participants to organize, visualize, and share their impressions of the program.

Significance of this study

The study generated findings that are relevant to the design and practice of community-engaged afterschool arts programming for teens. The results contribute to research in the areas of food justice, cooking and nutrition, inclusion activities for adults with disabilities, videography, and art-based programming. While specifically addressing food matters and community-engagement for youth living in Greater Fulton the results of the study and framework of the program provide information that may be relevant for educators and program coordinators in areas where food security and nutrition issues are significant issues.

For example, my research highlights the importance of making personal connections between the content area(s) of programs and the lives of participants. The youth were most engaged when they were able to directly relate to, contribute to, and shape the program. This is particularly relevant for the field of art education as the study found that personal connections to the content areas were developed in part through art – related activities.

The video making allowed the youth to independently develop and organize their understandings of the program. The food art lessons and trips to the VMFA helped them to understand and explore the metaphorical and allegorical meaning of food. The final event gave the youth the opportunity to own the program by acting as its ambassadors to the community audience. The youth also decided to include a step dance performance

during the event as an artful means of conveying the message of the program to the community. Either through metaphor, independent work, or creative response all of these methods gave the youth opportunities to make meaningful personal connections between their lives and the issues explored in the program. This is important for research on youth developed programming as it gives insight into multiple ways for youth to connect with and personally invest in community engaged afterschool programming.

Changes to the Spring Curriculum

Because not all aspects of the program were successful, there were changes made to the curriculum and structure of the program for its spring implementation. The study yielded information that was used to modify the spring Food Landscapes curriculum.

Recommendations for changes include:

- Increasing the recruitment age to 14+
- Providing participants with a more formal introduction to the program including an activities calendar and overview of the relationship between the content areas
- Restructuring of the volunteer activities with Transitions to include additional, more program specific training and workshops
- Earlier lessons on food deserts and food justice topics with explicit definitions of each and further explanation of local implications
- Introduction to socially engaged art practice and social aesthetics as paradigm for art making activities
- Purchasing new laptop computers and software

The following details each of these changes and explains how I arrived at the recommendations from the case study.

The spring cohort will consist solely of high school-age participants. During the program we encouraged interactions between the NRC youth and Transitions participants; however, the age difference, sometimes twenty years or more, made it difficult for our youth to approach and engage their adult partners. Middle school-aged participants have not necessarily developed the maturity and confidence level to teach and socialize with adults with disabilities (Cantin and Boivin, 2004).

Findings from the fall will influence the spring disability awareness workshop and volunteer experiences. This study found that familiarity between the youth and Transitions adults increased with each interaction, which helped relationship-building. Therefore, the spring program will include additional volunteer activities with Transitions adults, preparatory training in methods for communicating with non-verbal individuals, and a more comprehensive understanding of inclusion to encompass the concept of belonging. Belonging, not directly addressed during the fall, places emphasis on activities that not only *include* individuals in the community but generate a sense of acceptance and fellowship (Powers, 2013).

Because fall participants did not identify nutrition as a concern in connection with food deserts and hunger, the spring curriculum will openly address the issue of nutrition, defining *hunger* as a lack of food *and/or a lack of nutrition*. The USDA's *MyPlate* diagram will be used to explain how each recipe the youth create fits national nutrition standards. The spring program will also incorporate a visit to local convenience stores to purchase food items in order for the youth to experience the restrictions of buying and preparing healthy, affordable food in the area.

During the fall I found that creative reflection and discussion prompted the youth to further engage with the project by facilitating meaningful personal connections between food and community. However, we did not specifically teach concepts of socially engaged art. Instead, social engagement through art making occurred organically during the fall program as evidenced by the step dance performance:

WE CAME UP WITH THIS STEP
TO SHOW YOU
HOW MAKING FOOD
AND WORKING TOGETHER
CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Therefore, the spring cohort will focus on the relationships between art, cooking, and volunteering through socially engaged artworks. Lessons will discuss the socially engaged art projects, including the work of Kate Daughdrill, Detroit SOUP, the National Bitter Melon Project, and Theaster Gates, to show how contemporary artists are working with communities to stimulate creative dialogue and action about food justice.

In the fall, students used food items to make metaphorical, personal connections (food art lessons); however, in the spring I would like to explore the unique aesthetic dynamics of cooking, food presentation, and togetherness. We will discuss *why* cooking is an art form, the relationship between healthy foods and “beautiful” foods, and the artistic dimensions of community relationships. Once again we will explore the work of Vik Muniz and the Chicago-based restaurant Alinea and the youth will participate in a food art competition and community video showcase. A goal of the spring program is to expand youth perceptions of what art is and the role of artists in society.

There were significant technological difficulties during the fall program. The laptops were of different makes and operating systems and did not always function properly due to age and wear. Four new MacBook Air laptops were purchased for the spring. With the new computers, I will be able to teach videography lessons with iMovie to the entire group. In the interest of time, the spring participants will focus on a component of documentary practice, choosing to create a how-to video, an interview, or a digital storybook, meaning documentary style photographs about a specific topic accompanied with narrative.

Suggestions for Future Research

This program would benefit from further research through three different methods: action research, survey, and art-based research. An action research methodology would allow for continued pedagogical experimentation and could help to construct a strong yet flexible curriculum through ongoing data collection, assessment, and adaptation of the program (Stringer, 2004). I am interested in implementing different themes using the same socially engaged framework as a program model. Participants could research and address different issues in the community and create socially engaged artworks based on community-engaged volunteer experiences. Action research would draw further attention to the effects of a socially engaged art-based framework for afterschool teen programming.

A survey would procure additional information about similar programs across the United States, allowing for cross-sectional analysis of cooking and art-based afterschool programs for teens living in food deserts. A survey could answer questions about how

other cooking and nutrition programs teach youth about food desert phenomena and their methods for responding to the issue.

The program is ripe with visual content and could itself be the basis for more in depth studio work as a means of collecting, analyzing, and presenting the data. Arts-based research is a relatively new methodology that focuses on action-oriented social research through art making (Finley, 2008). My study could incorporate documentary photography as a means of visually documenting, assessing, and exhibiting youth involvement in community programming in Fulton. Ongoing or additional research practices could illuminate further evidence of the link between art education practices and community engagement, awareness, and problem solving. Such research supports practice that investigates how young people view, interpret, and react to their surroundings.

Conclusion

In the forward to *A Platter of Figs and Other Recipes* by chef David Tanis, chef and educator Alice Waters said, “creating a meal means creating your own reality” (2008, p.ix). I believe this statement reflects not only the practical dimensions of cooking but also the aesthetic experience of eating well. If we give young people the choice to create their own meal, we are giving them the opportunity to take charge of their health and make personal connections to the state of food in their community. Additionally, giving them autonomy over meal creation gives them control over their range of sensory/sensual aesthetic experiences with food – encountering and valuing new sights, smells, and tastes in order to expand their perception of reality. Waters also says that good chefs “... reconcile imagination with practicality” (2008, p. ix). This is particularly meaningful in

an area where healthy food is a limited resource. In this way food access also requires imaginative problem solving in the community and in the kitchen. The visual exploration of cooking and food makes them aware of how forces in their community limit their capacity for healthy whole meals. The Food Landscapes program offered the youth a scaffold on which to form a critical stance toward food security in their community.

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Appendix I



Office of Research Subjects Protection
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DATE: August 14, 2013

TO: Melanie L. Buffington, PhD
 Art Education
 Box 843084

FROM: Elizabeth Ripley, MD, MS
 Vice Chairperson, VCU IRB Panel B
 Box 980568

RE: VCU IRB #: HM15313
Title: Food Landscapes: A Nutrition and Arts Focused Service-Learning Project for Youth at the Neighborhood Research Center

On August 13, 2013, the following research study was approved by expedited review according to 45 CFR 46.110 Categories 5, 6, and 7. This research involves children and is approved under 45 CFR 46. 404; this approval has been extended to include children in court-appointed or state custody. The approval reflects the revisions received in the Office of Research Subjects Protection on August 6, 2013, and August 13, 2013. This approval includes the following items reviewed by this Panel:

RESEARCH APPLICATION/PROPOSAL: None

PROTOCOL (Research Plan): Food Landscapes: A Nutrition and Arts Focused Service-Learning Project for Youth at the Neighborhood Research Center, received 8/6/13, version date 8/4/13

- VCU IRB Study Personnel Roster, received 6/3/13, version date 5/3/13
- Pre/Post Questionnaire, received 8/13/13, version date 8/10/13
- Pre-Interview Questions, received 6/3/13, version date 5/14/13
- Observation Checklist, received 6/3/13, version date 5/14/13

CONSENT/ASSENT (attached):

- Research Subject Information and Consent Form: Adult, received 8/13/13, version date 8/10/13, 4 pages
- Research Subject Information and Consent Form: Parent Permission and Child Assent, received 8/13/13, version date 8/10/13, 4 pages

ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTS (attached):

- Flyer: The Food Landscape Project, received 8/6/13, version date 8/5/13

This approval expires on July 31, 2014. Federal Regulations/VCU Policy and Procedures require continuing review prior to continuation of approval past that date. Continuing Review report forms will be mailed to you prior to the scheduled review.

(Continued...)

The Primary Reviewer assigned to your research study is Jessica Turfboer, MS. If you have any questions, please contact Ms. Turfboer at jturfboer@gmail.com; or you may contact Jennifer Rice, IRB Coordinator, VCU Office of Research Subjects Protection, at irbpanelb@vcu.edu and 828-3992.

Conditions of Approval:

In order to comply with federal regulations, industry standards, and the terms of this approval, the investigator must (*as applicable*):

1. Conduct the research as described in and required by the Protocol.
2. Obtain informed consent from all subjects without coercion or undue influence, and provide the potential subject sufficient opportunity to consider whether or not to participate (unless Waiver of Consent is specifically approved or research is exempt).
3. Document informed consent using only the most recently dated consent form bearing the VCU IRB "APPROVED" stamp (unless Waiver of Consent is specifically approved).
4. Provide non-English speaking patients with a translation of the approved Consent Form in the research participant's first language. The Panel must approve the translated version.
5. Obtain prior approval from VCU IRB before implementing any changes whatsoever in the approved protocol or consent form, unless such changes are necessary to protect the safety of human research participants (e.g., permanent/temporary change of PI, addition of performance/collaborative sites, request to include newly incarcerated participants or participants that are wards of the state, addition/deletion of participant groups, etc.). Any departure from these approved documents must be reported to the VCU IRB immediately as an Unanticipated Problem (see #7).
6. Monitor all problems (anticipated and unanticipated) associated with risk to research participants or others.
7. Report Unanticipated Problems (UPs), including protocol deviations, following the VCU IRB requirements and timelines detailed in [VCU IRB WPP VIII-7](#):
8. Obtain prior approval from the VCU IRB before use of any advertisement or other material for recruitment of research participants.
9. Promptly report and/or respond to all inquiries by the VCU IRB concerning the conduct of the approved research when so requested.
10. All protocols that administer acute medical treatment to human research participants must have an emergency preparedness plan. Please refer to VCU guidance on <http://www.research.vcu.edu/irb/guidance.htm>.
11. The VCU IRBs operate under the regulatory authorities as described within:
 - a) U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Title 45 CFR 46, Subparts A, B, C, and D (for all research, regardless of source of funding) and related guidance documents.
 - b) U.S. Food and Drug Administration Chapter I of Title 21 CFR 50 and 56 (for FDA regulated research only) and related guidance documents.
 - c) Commonwealth of Virginia Code of Virginia 32.1 Chapter 5.1 Human Research (for all research).

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Appendix II

(Pre) Interview Questions: Food Landscapes Project at the Neighborhood Resource Center

P1

1. What is your community or communities?

My community is quiet; The Quiet Community

2. Describe the ways in which you are connected to or engaged with your community.

I don't do too much in my community, but I do know a lot of people.

3. What are some of the strengths of your community?

The community is strong

4. What are some of the needs of your community?

A place where little kids and big kids can go, with a trampoline built into the ground

A place closer that kids can go to stay out of trouble and keep kids active

5. How can you, as a young person, address the strengths and needs of your community?

I don't know.

6. Do you have a voice, the ability to communicate with the people around you? (If yes)

How do you communicate with the people around you? (If no) Why do you think this is?

No; I'm very shy

7. Have you had any experiences with people with disabilities? Family, friends, neighbors, classmates?

My grandmother

8. If so, can you describe that experience?

Not bad; it's like I'm talking to a regular person

9. How do you feel about working with young people with disabilities during this project?

I think it will be fun because people with disabilities don't really get to do a lot of things.

10. How did you hear about the Food Landscapes project?

NRC staff told me it had some space

11. Why are you participating in the Food Landscapes project?

There were spaces left; it seems fun and I get to learn how to cook.

12. Have you participated in programming at the NRC in the past? If so, what program(s) were you enrolled in?

Cooking/food class; class in the recording studio

P2

1. What is your community or communities?

What is my community?

mm hm

Full of people?

Full of people. Okay. Anything Else

nice people

2. Describe the ways in which you are connected to or engaged with your community.

thats a hard one..(pause)

I guess, like, you like come together to do like, like, the runs and stuff

mmmhmm

like, 5k and stuff.

The run to the river? (NRC annual fundraiser)

Yea

3. What are some of the strengths of your community?

ummm, (pause) we have our problems and

I couldn't quite hear you and I don't think the phone heard you. Can you say that again?

Well, we have our problems (trails off)

Can we move on to the next question?

4. What are some of the needs of your community?

the needs?

Yea what does it need?

People to watch over it. Next question

5. How can you, as a young person, address the strengths and needs of your community?

Do whatever I can to help it physically.

Is there another question?

In that question? Just, what can you do to help your community

Pick up trash and stuff

6. Do you have a voice, the ability to communicate with the people around you? (If yes)

How do you communicate with the people around you? (If no) Why do you think this is?

yea

Yea (strong)

Okay, so how?

Kinda, talk. (laughs) Speak up. When people do something wrong tell them when they do it and correct them.

7. Have you had any experiences with people with disabilities? Family, friends, neighbors, classmates?

No

8. If so, can you describe that experience?

(no stated experience with people with disabilities)

9. How do you feel about working with young people with disabilities during this project?

I feel the need to help people

Does it make you feel nervous, excited, you just don't know yet

I don't think I know yet

10. How did you hear about the Food Landscapes project?

Ms. Jess

11. Why are you participating in the Food Landscapes project?

To help people. Because I want to try new things and get to go on field trips and experience things like experience as in see it, feel it, touch it I guess

P3

1. What is your community or communities?

Uhh, What kind of people would I see...Older people, young children, little babies, do you mean what kind of area?

Whatever you think

Okay, I'm just trying to understand you. the most part of it probably the projects or something maybe the projects?

And probably like a few urban areas

2. Describe the ways in which you are connected to or engaged with your community.

I enjoy going to like some of the little festivities and stuff they have up here. Like National Night Out. I like doing things that's going to help better the community.

3.What do think is strong about it? What makes you proud?

That we are able to have things, most of the time. And we are able to get along without a lot of confusion and fights and arguments and all that stuff happening

Anything else

nope, that's it for right now

4. What do you think the needs of your community are?

More afterschool programs. Umm, better playgrounds. Umm, better equipment in the schools. And, more..more like umm more ways of getting everyone out and together. Not just on holidays and stuff like that.

Get together with a few other adults and a few other people in the community and let them know how I feel about everything and at least make an effort to change some of the things I feel is wrong

5. Do you think you have a voice in the community?

YES, yes

Can you give me an example? How do you communicate with the people around you?

Well, just like, I don't know a specific way. I just know that if something's on my mind I'm just gonna speak it

6. Have you had any experiences with people with disabilities? Family, friends, neighbors, classmates?

Yes, yes

7. Can you describe your experience?

My great-grandpa had both his legs amputated. And every evening my uncle and me and whoever else is with him would get him in and out of bed, I'd get him lunch, get his clothes on. Stuff like that.

Anything else? grandpa?

He had a stroke but he's better now. We had to get him in and out of the wheelchair. Get him outside. Make sure to do his exercises and stuff like that. And, a while ago while he was working for my church he used to go to...i forgot...it's like an elderly place people. We used to make like grocery bags for them and give them to them.

Like a nursing home?

Uh huh yea

And you did that through your church?

mm hm

You have quite a bit of experience. Anything else?

Nope, that's it

8. How do you feel about working with adults with disabilities during this project?

I feel good about it. I don't mind helping people like that because doing that is like an investment in me. So, I don't mind helping people.

9.How did you hear about the food landscapes project?

P3: you (laughs)

P4

1. What is your community? What do you think your community is?

Like, what do I say about it? If it's nice?

Like who's in it

Everyone?

Everybody?

Everybody in the whole entire world?

No! (laughs)

So tell me who

Ummm, people

Which people?

Isn't it people in the United States

That's definitely one of your communities

umm, Virginia

Anything Else

Richmond...Lynchburg....

Are you from Lynchburg too

My family, my mom

Umm, isn't charlottesville in VA?

Yes, what's your connection to Charlottesville?

Nothing, I just went there a few times

That's it that's all I know

2.Alright, so describe the ways in which you are connected to your community

family...the people in my family

like if the united states is your community, what's your connection to the united states

umm

k, what else

ummm, some

that's it

I got a dog...but...umm that's it

Is your dog part of your community or connects you to you community?

yea

how?

I love my dog love my dog

3. What are some of the strengths of your community?

working together
okay
ummm...not littering and stuff
taking care of the air?? not polluting it
Everyone obeying the law (most people)

4. What are some of the needs of your community?

Not fighting and not shooting and killing people for what...no clue at all. To show more respect.

5. How can you, as a young person, address the strengths and needs of your community?

Make signs like 'stop fighting' and things like that

Anything else?

no cursing, no killing people even if someone owes you something or something like that

and this is what your signs would say?

mmhmm. my signs

dont say anything negative to people

Anything else

not really...to obey all of the laws even if you dont like them

if you would have did all those things our whole community would have been much better!

Did I say stop cursing already?

mmm hmm

6. Do you think you have a voice?

yes

How so?

I'd dress up like a business woman. I like dressing like a business woman. It looks like I can make a difference.

Anything else about your voice?

I would write speeches and stuff like at a church or like have people come to the block.

And if anyone doesn't like it they can just go back into the house of something (laughs)

Anything else?

I'd make like business cards

What would they say?

My name, my number, and... we'd have like little meetings..so I'd probably put my outfits

Because I like those outfits! Those heels...I feel like I'm tall and mature and I can do something with my life

We could make t-shirts! I love making things. I want to do hair. I want to be a business woman. I want to do everything!

I'm finished (talks a little more about the business woman outfits)

7. Have you had any experiences with people with disabilities?

I'm not sure....if my cousin has it. Cuz she's. they say she talks to herself like she has other personalities. They says she does but I don't see it. She'll walk around...if she hears music she'll dance to it. That's _____ stepsister. Her dad is just like her.

Do you hang out with her (cousin)?

She left yesterday

She moved?

She went with her mom...I don't really know

8. What are your experiences like with people with disabilities?

I'd probably get scared. Because they could do anything.

Like you don't know what to expect?

Yea, I don't what to expect

Have you had that experience before?

Not me, but other people

Like this girl I know, I don't what's wrong with her. But she like drools. And she walks around..her hands...she's scary

How do you know her?

She goes to Thompson (elementary school)

She scares me a lot

She was in my art class

and me and another girl...she chased us and I ran outside the classroom

and I told my teacher I was not going back in there

9. How do you feel about working with adults with disabilities during this project?

As, long as I get to wear gloves I'm okay.

Because everyone have germs but some people with disabiltilies drool and they touch stuff a lot

Because I'm scared of getting something wrong with me.

I'm not saying it's their fault. I'm just scared of getting what they have.

10. How did you hear about the program?

Ms. Jess

11. Why'd you decide to join?

Because I want to try new things and get to go on field trips and experience things like experience as in see it, feel it, touch it I guess

12. Have you enrolled in programming at the NRC in the past?

Cooking, junior artists(yes, but not regularly),, youth meeting (yes, but not regularly), gardening, farm stand, dance. I've been coming here for...I started like a few months after they (NRC) started (6 years ago)

P5

1. What is your community or communities?

the people around me ?

who's around you?

friends and family and people I don't know

2. Describe the ways in which you are connected to your community

I do a fundraiser with my school and we like do a can drive whatever

Ok a can drive

And we do shoes and stuff

Another drive for shoes?

Yea

Where's all that stuff go?

To all the homeless people but to a building first

3.What are some of the strengths of your community like when you are in your community, the people, around you, what are you proud of?

Helping them

You helping them?

Yea and learning from them

What sort of things do you learn from them

Different things

Tell me

Ummm, ummm different things

4. What are some of the needs of your community?

When they argue we can like tell them to stop

Okay

Ummm,

What else do you think needs help or you would change if it were up to you?

silence) nothing they're good

5. How can you, as a young person, address the strengths and needs of your community?

Mmm, (giggles) ummm, maybe like talk to them?

6. Do you think that you have a voice in your community? Do people listen to you

Yea, but not everybody, just some people

Not everybody has a voice or not everybody listens?

Not everybody listens

Mmm k, so how do you have a voice. How do you communicate? What are some ways

Mmm, (giggles) ummm, maybe like talk to them?

7. Have you had any experiences with people with disabilities? Friends, family, neighbors?

Nuh uh

8. How do you feel about working with adults with disabilities during this program?

Nervous (giggles)

Anything else

Grateful

Grateful. Okay

What makes you nervous about it

Because I've never worked with them before

Okay, cool. And , what makes you grateful

Because I get to work with them (giggles)

9. How did you hear about the program?

Ms. Jess

10. Why did you decide to participate

So I can help the people (the people at transitions)

11. Have you participated in programs at the NRC in the past?

I did junior artists

Cooking, girl scouts. But it was the older girl scouts

And I did this (recording studio) with mr. kyle

Ok

And I did farm stand, and gardening. And I think that's all

Did you ever do youth meeting with ms. Blue

Oh! Yea

K

Appendix III

(Post) Interview Questions: Food Landscapes Project at the Neighborhood Resource Center

P2

1. Can you tell me some of the ways you are connected to your community? That you are a part of your community? If you do feel that way.

P2 I see a lot of people around

JRN: you see a lot of people?

JRN: Can you give me an example? What do you mean by ‘I see a lot of people’

P2 If I see someone like coming across me I say like ‘hi’

2. Can you tell me what some of the strengths of your community are?

P2 Communication (said with decisiveness)

JRN: Can you give me an example?

P2 You know like at the basketball court you talk to your friends or your neighbors like invite you over for dinner

3. Can you tell me what some of the needs of your community are? Like what does your community needs...what would you give to it if you could give it something?

P2 (shakes head ‘no’)

4. What can you as a young do to address the strengths and needs of your community?

P2 I could talk with some people in my community. Like have a meeting.

JRN: so if you had a meeting what would you talk about?

P2 neighborhood watch or umm some stuff that’s happening in the community

5. Do you think that you have a voice? that people listen to you in the community?

P2 um yup

JRN: how do you talk to people? How do you communicate? How do you use your voice?

P2 gently and politely

6. What was your experience like working with Transitions

P2 I think it was a good experience

JRN: why was it good

P2 it was good to work in a kitchen and work with nice people

JRN: anything else?

P2 nope

7. What was your experience like learning about food in your community?

P2 umm you said food?

JRN: mm hmm

P2 that some foods are good and some foods are not

JRN: can you give me an example

P2 like potato chips would be like bad and salad is good

JRN: what makes food bad?

P2 like fats and calories

P4

1. Can you describe the ways that you are connected to your community?

P4 Ummm, the ways that I am connected to my community is like I show encouragement to everyone. Like, if they can't do it then I'll help them.

JRN: can you give me an example?

P4 like, if they if have something wrong. If they can't do what I do I'll help them to make sure they get it somewhat but not all the way (not help them all the way). Like helping them step by step and trying and like building up what they can do.

JRN: awesome

2. Can you tell me what some of the strengths of your community are? What makes your community strong?

P4 Kindness sometimes. Sympathy.

JRN: anything else?

P4 mmmm. That's it

3. Can you tell me what some of the needs of your community are?

P4 another park

JRN: alright

P4 some more afterschool programs, buildings, buses...

JRN: like this space?

P4 mmhmm and we could name it something

P4 what else do we need (to herself). More plants to make food and others for flowers

JRN: Move on?

P4 mm hmm

4. So those are the strengths and needs of your community. What can you as a young person do about that?

P4 I can start yard sales, make posters, make steps (dance) to raise money I guess. Do cooking, like type of cooking classes.

JRN: Anything else?

P4 and like I want to start my own afterschool. I want grown people to help but it not the same when grown ups help you I want to help other children. I want to be a teacher so...move on to the next question

5. Do you think you have a voice in your community. Do you think people listen to you

P4 yea (affirmative)

JRN: Okay, so how do you communicate with the people around you?

P4 I talk to them. And send posters, make posters. And ask them for like money for donations for like breast cancer and lupus and stuff like that.

6.What was your experience like working with the Transitions participants

P4 I was scared (pause) and like I don't know anybody like that so it was like really terrifying. I didn't know what they was going to do. And, like if I say something wrong they are going to act a certain way or something. So scared.

JRN: anything else

Mia: I had fun, I had fun

7. What was your experience like learning about the role of food in your community and life?

P4 what was that?

JRN: What was your experience like learning about the food in your life and food in your community.

P4 it was okay (upbeat)

JRN: anything else? Do you think you learned anything?

P4ummmmm, well I learned a lot.

JRN: You learned a lot you said? What did you learn about then

P4 like how to make different types of food. Or like what to do.

JRN: Anything else

P4Nope

JRN:Good job

P4Thank you!

P5

1. Can you describe the ways in which you are connected to your community?

P5 I do different things in the community

JRN: Can you give me an example

P5 Umm like at the Powhatan there's a day where we go out and clean stuff like the ground and I'm involved in the NRC

JRN: Okay, anything else?

P5 nope

2. Can you tell me what some of the strengths of your community are? What makes your community strong?

P5 Helping people (?)

JRN: Okay, can you give me an example

P5 People are respectful to elders, helping elders

JRN:Anything else?

P5 Nah

3. JRN:What are some of the needs of your community?

P5 Umm, I don't know.

JRN: Like if you could give your community anything what would you give it?

P5 A homeless house

JRN:Anything else?

P5Umm, mm mm

4. Okay, so how can you as a young person address those strengths and needs. What can you do as a young person for your community?

P5Mmm, I don't know (giggles)

JRN: It's okay. Do you think you can do anything about it?

P5I can but I don't know how

JRN:You can but you don't know how?

P5Yea

5. Okay, do you think that you have a voice in your community? Do you think that people listen to you?

P5Umm, sometimes

6. So, what was your experience like working with Transitions?

P5Easy and hard

JRN:Easy and hard? Can you give me an example of easy and an example of hard

P5Easy because I was working with A-----, she know how to do some of it but not all of it. That was the hard part. Trying to explain how to work the (food) processor. And that's all

7. Um, so what was your experience like learning about food and food in your community.

P5Easy

JRN:It was easy? Did you learn anything?

P5Like?

JRN:Learn anything about food?

P5Umm, I don't remember.... Well, we learned about food when we did that thing downstairs (Cameron's workshop). We learned whether food was healthy or not. We drew those pictures

JRN:What did learn about food from the workshop?

P5 That you shouldn't eat junk food all the time (giggles)

JRN:Anything else? All done?

P5Yep

END

Appendix IV

Compiled Reflections

Monday, September 16: Disability Awareness Workshop

Cameron held her disabilities awareness workshop. At 4:30 we met in the NRC computer lab. There were two NRC participants present, the VMFA educators (Celeste and Courtney), Cameron, Tanetta, Liz, and Melanie. A third NRC participant (P6) -----ned the group around 4:45. I was managing the NRCers and was not present for the first 15 min. of the workshop. Originally we were to meet in the main space at the NRC, but our program coordinator was wary of rain and reserved the main space in case the younger NRC youth needed to come inside. Cameron spoke to the group about their experiences working with people with disabilities. She also defined and described "person first" language as the most accepted way to speak about people with disabilities. Some of the adult participants offered personal anecdotes about experiences they've had with people with disabilities but the NRC youth were a little hesitant to contribute. P6 and P2 remarked on their recent experience with the Transitions adults. Both P2 and P6 spoke about better understanding difference and feeling more comfortable and accomodating around people with disabilities. Toward the end of the discussion, Cameron played a game with the group. She gave each of the NRC youth and one adult limitations (such as "blindness", non-verbal, limited mobility). Ms. Mica acted as the "able-bodied" member of the group. Cameron then asked the group to work together to build a structure out of straws. Ms. Mica fell into a leadership role. This was probably due to her role as a teacher at the NRC and her "able-bodiness". She decided the formation and execution of the structure and delegated tasks verbally. ----- was sightless and

responded to/relied on Mica's instruction. P2 had his thumb taped down but quickly (and proudly) adapted to his limitation by finding different ways of holding the straws and tape. P6 had the use of one limb (his less dominant appendage). He relied more so on P2 (sitting next to him). The other adult in the demo/game (Courtney) was speechless. She sat back to a degree and watched the work progress. During closure, Cameron asked the group how their experience was during the building of the straw fort. P6 and ----- pointed out their reliance on their peers and the verbal direction of Mica. P2 pointed out his ability to hold the straws differently. However, it wasn't until Courtney spoke up during closure that the group realized they hadn't included her in the construction and design process. The workshop ended close to 6:30 and the NRC youth did not have time to record reflections on the bloggie cams.

Tuesday, September 17th: Video lesson and disability awareness discussion

Tuesday I met with Hillary and Melissa, the NRC interns assigned to our project. They hadn't heard anything about the program so I went over the topic and logistics and offered for them to observe and contribute to the lesson planning. Both are interested in the micro/clinical aspects of the field. A new member joined our group on Tuesday, J'don. Kate arrived at 4:30 and interviewed P1 while we gathered for class to start (paperwork was sent home). P1 was part of a previous research project with VCU students at Elkhart and was familiar with the consent and interview process. He seems really interested in technology. -----'s mother informed us that the family is moving in two weeks to Chesterfield and she will be withdrawing from the program. P5 and P4 were present for tutoring and supper but left before 5:00 "because they got bored". This happens frequently with the teens at the NRC, they

don't want to be around the little kids but for so long plain and simple. A community member has given me access to his unused building on Williamsburg Rd. It's sometimes used as an extra office for the NRC staff and is newly renovated with electricity and internet but no furniture. My plan is to send a permission slip home on Monday so we can walk over to the building on Tuesdays with our laptops and bloggies for some space and quiet...a place of our own. P6, -----, -----, P2, and P1 attended class. Kate, Hillary and Melissa observed in the back of the computer lab. Mica offered back up. The lesson began with a quick recap of events for ----- and J'Don. P6 and ----- were very verbal and offered their personal experiences and new insight and learning. P2 reminded the group to "talk about the person first". They talked as a group about how to describe and "be polite" to people with disabilities. I introduced the concept of interview in doc. filmmaking. The kids tied the two teen docs in...one was "more of a journal or diary" "the other talked to people who knew about the topic "(P6). I asked P6 what that practice is called and after a few synonyms he remembered our topic..Interview! We listened to part of Ira Glass's interview/story on the This American Life episode "Special Ed". The episode highlights the story of the "This is your news" team...an MTV street interview crew made up of people with disabilities. After the clip we broke into a team of two and a group of three and practiced the basic functions of the boggie (on/off, replay, delete, volume, man menu, zoom). Then I gave the teams the prompt "What is your favorite meal". We discussed and wrote on the board different interview techniques (closed/open questions, background and noise. getting your interviewee comfortable, asking leading questions...). Then, the youth wen off in their teams to film 30 sec. interviews using the prompt. Mica went with -----, P1 and P2 and I stayed with P6 and ----- ---. We regrouped and did a short, informal crit....listing pros and cons on the board. For our

final interview task we split up again with our new perspectives and info and filmed 1-2 min long reflections. All of the kids were excited to use the bloggies and seemed to be able to figure them out with ease...even exploring some of the more technical functions (camera direction, white balance..). However, they were disappointed that we aren't going back to Transitions until the Monday after next..they liked the new experience and getting out of the NRC building. Next tuesday we are uploading and editing using Pixorial and going over safe social media practices (short vid).

Monday, September 23rd: First cooking lesson at NRC

Mica met with me at 3:0 to discuss her lesson. She found a recipe for pesto and wanted to harvest from the garden but did not have a lesson plan. I worked with her until 3:45 to sketch out a plan for the two hours of programming. Then I called ----- and ----- to see if they were available to come to the NRC. -----'s phone was disconnected and ----- was working an extra shift at her job. I picked up P6 and returned to the NRC around 4:15. P6 and P1 had homework until 4:30. At 4:30 I asked our group to meet at the couches. P6, P1, and P2 sat down but P4 and P5 were still in the computer lab. I asked the girls to -----n us and they refused, wanting to stay on the computers for longer. When I told them that computer time was over they decided they wanted to leave the NRC and headed for the door. I caught them at the door and convinced them to -----n the program. At around 4:45/4:50 we were able to round all of the teens and bring them into the kitchen. I handed out two cameras and split the group into two (the three boys and the two girls). P5 and P4 were already one foot out the door so I thought that allowing them to be partners would keep things rolling and smooth any ruffled feathers. Conversely, P5 and P4 kept to themselves and refused to -----n the group

during the gardening activity. In retrospect, it might have been a better idea to mix the kids up so they would be less likely to distract themselves or goof off. I gave the kids a quick, surface review of our filming objectives before we left the kitchen to harvest from the garden. We went over these objectives on Tuesday but P5 and P4 weren't present. This is one of the hardest parts about after school programming...you tend to see different faces each class and need to constantly review prior material and catch kids up...it's hard to keep all of the youth on the same page. I felt our talk with the cameras in the kitchen was rushed and unfocused and made no impact.. Also, because of the fans, it's too loud in the kitchen to do much teaching...it should be more of a work space and any sort of discussion needs to take place somewhere else (library couches? outside? recording studio?--lab not available on Mondays). The kids were distracted in the garden and didn't take in too much information. They were confused who to listen to (Mica or Kyle) and what exactly they were doing (should have gone over ingredients/recipe and then harvested). I'm not responsible for teaching on Mondays and try to take a step back. However, when we entered the kitchen it became clear that there was no plan for youth involvement in the cooking process. P4, P5, and P1 took this opportunity to leave the kitchen and hang out in the main space of the NRC. I brought them back a few times..P5 wanted to go home again but I convinced her to stay through the cooking lesson. Once ingredients were going into the food processor (wasn't unpacked and wasn't out and hadn't been operated) the kids gathered around and were more focused (more of a cooking demonstration). The kids did not have specific tasks. Clean up was easy but only because most of the NRC youth know the procedure from past cooking classes. They're were some safety risks that were not addressed...caution with the food processor blade, caution around an open flame, horseplay in the kitchen. While the pasta for

our pesto was cooking, I tried to get them to think about the recipe (ingredients and two instructions written on white board) in terms of teaching their partners at Transitions--->breaking down steps and making accommodations. They (only P2 and P6 were present for the workshop) remembered some of the basic do's and don'ts from cameron's workshop and were excited to work with transitions (P4, P5, P2, and P6) again but we didn't really get beyond that. I had to get their attention several times and ask them not to speak over me (especially in the loud kitchen)..Mica spoke up and reminded the class to be respectful. At this point P6 and P4 had words...the tiff began to escalate and I asked P4 to leave until she was calm (she came back after about 3-5 min--somewhat calmer). The pasta ready, we ate our pesto together. Although the kids abhorred the smell and taste of the basil by itself (it was a bit bitter because it flowered last week) they ate the pesto and everyone except P4 seemed to enjoy it. Mica washed the plates from our snack and I went to the couches for closure and reflections with the kids. They split into groups again. The boys went into the recording studio and the girls went outside (and then came back inside b/c of street traffic noise and finished in the computer lab.

They are going to need a lot of directions next Monday when we are at transitions. For this first experience I'm playing with the idea of writing out step by step lesson plans and scripts with different roles for the NRC youth to play as they group teach. Our second cooking experience they can take the reins.

Tuesday, September 24th: Video work and discussion about rules and positive group dynamics

This was our first day in our new private location down the street from the NRC. All five youth from Monday's class came to the NRC without calls home (I always pick up P6...he

lives the farthest and his mother's car is dead). ----- came but had a project to do for school and stayed in the computer lab. P5, P4, and P2 forgot to get permission slips signed but ran home and came back with signed slips before class started. P4 and P5 had computer time but did not complain when it was time to sign off and start class. I think these were signs that they were all super excited to have their own space to go to..to get out of the NRC.

The MSW interns from the NRC are concentrating on direct practice and need experience working with the youth on "life skills". It was originally planned that they would assist Mica... as the cooking portion of the curriculum has more life skills applications... but they aren't available on Mondays. I wanted to set up new expectations (rules) consequences with the kids before class and reiterate the importance of talking out our issues with each other instead of lashing out (incident in Monday's class). I discussed my process for co-writing expectations and consequences with the youth and asked the MSW's (Hillary and Melissa) to take the lead during the activity.

We walked over to the government rd. space. The kids sat around the table with Hillary and Melissa and outlined a new set of rules (attached). We also talked about kinder and wiser ways of addressing each other and respecting each other's words ("I statements", taking deep breaths before responding, listening as much as speaking and vice versa). This part of the class took up about 15 min. Then I had the kids, one by one and in relative privacy, (with Hillary and Melissa acting as interviewers) redo their reflections from Monday. I asked them to speak as if they were writing a diary or journal entry for Monday (this helped them to open up a little...give more of their perspective instead of drafted replies). This took about 15 minutes. At 5:45 we regrouped to watch and discuss "Wasteland" (a documentary about Vik Muniz's participatory art project in Brazil). The building has internet but it stopped

functioning when the movie came on. Hillary let us use her phone as a hot spot but troubleshooting internet woes cut into our viewing time. I had originally intended for the kids do a worksheet during the movie and discuss afterwards but I ended up pausing the movie at different points and asking them questions and offering clarification along the way. This seemed to work quite well actually and kept them focused while they were watching ("active viewing"). I asked them about Vik's interaction with his portrait subjects turned co-artists. They were quick to point out that the artist had to get to know his subjects very well before he made art with and about them. This was the point I wanted to drive home ...so a positive for the day.

We have a few more minutes of the movie to watch next class and I'm going to connect Vik's story of community art/activism with ours. We'll also talk about the narrative of the documentary and introduce different types of storyboards and timelines. All of the video clips thus far are uploaded to a cloud server. Next class the kids will look through the clips and upload footage to the video editing system. Time permitting they'll to put them into sequence and trim down extra footage. This class was much smoother than Monday despite internet woes and some horseplay.

I noticed that the kids are listening to each other more. P6 still wants to be the center of attention and loves telling stories but he caught himself a few times and quieted down when he was speaking over P1 and P5. P1 spoke up quite a few times during the video discussion. And they were raptly attentive during the artmaking scenes in the doc (when Vik is creating the portraits out of landfill materials with his assistants).

Monday, September 30th: First Cooking lesson at Transitions

Monday was the first trip to Transitions to cook and film. We started programming at 3:30 to accommodate Denise's schedule. I picked P1, P5, and P4 up from MLK at 2:40 and drove to [school] to pick up P6. (This was the only way the kids could arrive on time). P6, however, took the bus home. I tried to track him down before we went to Transitions but there was no time left. I gathered the cooking supplies before leaving the NRC and made task cards for the NRC youth and their partners during the cooking process (Mica arrived late and was unable to contribute). Mica, Melanie, Tanetta, and Margo were present and walked the NRC youth to Transitions. Mica and Tanetta helped to facilitate the cooking process and guide our youth as they worked with the Transitions adults. Melanie observed and facilitated as needed. Margo observed. Melanie walked back to the NRC about 15 min into programming to pick up the cameras and a strainer.

The NRC youth were partnered with an adult participant from Transitions (4 for 4 since P6 didn't make it). I decided to partner up the NRC youth since we had equal numbers (I thought it would make for more personal interactions with the adults). We had originally planned on group teaching around one table. I think this was a good call but I wish I had thought more about how to partner our youth more strategically with the transitions folks...it was a little awkward. The task cards worked fairly well. I thought the room was set up differently (one big table) and I didn't expect to use the kitchen as a prep space. This just meant loss of time move tables and supplies around. Next time, we'll know the set up a little better. P1's partner was Ch----- who is relatively non-verbal and needs a great deal of assistance understanding directions, communicating, and moving around. P1 seemed completely (and I have to say suprisingly) at ease with Ch-----. He didn't hesitate when Ch---- - grabbed hold of his arm and led Ch----- to the table and helped him perform the tasks they

were assigned. At the end of the class, Denise commented on P1's "easy going-ness" and attentiveness. P2 was paired with R----- (I kept calling him Ray! Don't know where that came from). I think P2 and R----- have similar personalities (the cool, quiet, funny guys). It made for a good pairing. P2 was a little nervous at first and didn't seem to know how to instruct R-----. I showed R----- how to pull the basil leaves from the stem (with P2 watching and listening). P2 jumped in after the demo and later showed R----- how to take pictures and video with the Bloggies. P5 asked to be paired with A----. A---- is the most able appearing adult in the program. This was probably P5's motive. However, because A---- needs less help with directions and activities there was less interaction between the two. A---- wanted to do her own thing and P5 did as well (and goofed off a bit). At one point, D---- pulled P5 aside and asked her to keep her composure and talked to her about giggling and how it is perceived by the transitions folks (who have been giggled at their whole lives). P5 was giggling out of nervousness and silliness but it was a good for her to understand how it was perceived by the people around her and for her to become more attentive to their feelings. P4 was the most nervous about working with her partner. She told me before we started that she was "scared". I told her that Mica, Tanetta, and I as well as the Transitions staff were there to help her work with and understand her partner (and vice versa). Her partner, Sh-----, has downs syndrome and, like Ch-----, needs a great deal of assistance communicating and understanding the activity. Sh---- also looks and sounds different. P4 was resistant to working with her and took almost every opportunity to leave her partner. It wasn't until the end of the class when the pairs went off to record reflections together that the two connected a little more and P4 relaxed. (P4 was also in a bad mood since school ended because of some sort of altercation with a classmate..this might have contributed to her distress and attitude at transitions).

The after eating and cleaning up together the nrc youth went with their transitions partners to record their reflections. P4 was surprised that Sh---- had a smart phone and used it with ease to take pictures. This realization broke down her wall quite a bit and she showed Sh----how to use the bloggic and Sh---- recorded P4's reflection. This activity worked really smoothly. The transitions folks talked about what they would like to cook next class and we came up with shrimp gumbo! A---- loves to cook and is from new orleans so I'm thinking of asking denise if she would like to help us out with our recipe and cook at the NRC (someone's suggestion?...Mica or Melanie). P6 was dropped off at transitions a little before we left. He ate some pesto and walked with us back to the NRC.

Programming ended at 5:00 and the youth were given the choice of staying and hanging out in the computer lab or going home. There was a confrontation between P4 and P6 about an hour later. They almost came to blows. I had to step in between them and separate them. After they cooled off S---- M---- and I spoke to them separately about safety at the NRC and some communication/anger management techniques. P4 wasn't able to calm down and respond and lashed out at P6 a second time. She was asked to go home and (along with P5) did not return today for programming. I talked to grandma but no luck.

Tuesday, October 1st: Video Workday

We had a small class today which might have been for the better because Mr. Otto's building was not available and we had to work in the main space. P1 had a presentation to work on (he was upset he couldn't attend and might work on his storyboard on weds) and P4 and P5 did not come. P2 and P6 worked on storyboarding and editing down clips in the video library. --- ----- had some homework but joined us for the last half hour. P2, P6, and ----- came up with introductory scenes for their movies using a storyboarding worksheet and selected some clips

to go along. I've decided to use the worksheets when the kids are filming during cooking class as a guide for when they are filming...they have specific shots they want to film for the first few scenes and have drawn them out. They are really excited about making the movies. P6 worked really hard on sketching and writing his intro..it's really quite poignant..I want to try and help him incorporate his sketches into the movie. He wants to do a lot of narrative voiceover (of course..he's quite the actor). P2 and ----- ended up working together...----- used clips from ReelWorks in NYC to outline the narrative flow and chose some clips from our library. P2 created a title page and sketched out some narrative voiceover and shots for a second scene. They seem to understand the idea of "telling a story" but each in their own way.

Monday, October 7th: Food Desert Awareness Workshop

Cameron hosted her first food desert awareness workshop. We walked over to Williamsburg and government and arrived around 5:10. P5, P6, and P2 were present. P4 did not come (P5 said she was sick) and P1 had homework (he's in an accelerated program at school... this will probably be a trend). At the beginning of the class I asked the kids to work with Cameron to outline the activities for the day and sketch out what they would like to video record during the class. This aim of this activity was to get the group to focus and understand the tasks of the day..as well as to limit the use of the cameras (which was only partly successful). During the first activity Cameron asked the group to draw four images (two healthy foods and two unhealthy foods). This activity was geared to assess the prior knowledge of the youth and determine what they understood as "healthy" and "unhealthy". The drawings turned into a discussion about what foods are and where they come from...Michael Pollan's food rules. The group possessed basic knowledge of the nutritional components of food (fats, salt, sugar,

protein etc..) as well as an understanding of the difference (pros and cons) between farmed and manufactured foods (produce vs. food products). Cameron's next activity involved the joint creation of a map of Fulton landmarks representing places to buy food. This activity was meant to inform the group of the scope (area) of the community's food needs and help them to realize the realitively few stores that provide for those needs. I'm not sure this fact was absorbed by the group. I think this is because parents/guardians provide food at home. Whether or not it was easy to obtain is not necessarily on a young person's radar. Furthermore, we are asking the youth to question their parents food choices much more so than their food choices when we talk about what to buy, how, and where....something they may feel little or no control over or don't want to think about at all because it means not trusting the choices of your caretaker. I think we are right in educating the kids about food rights and nutrition but should regard this education as foundational...as a well from which to draw from in adulthood. It's important not to pressure children to reject what is comfortable and known especially when these things are rare in their lives. It is equally important to prepare them exceptionally for a life on their own, when they have the ability to truly make independent choices. In this case, educating families and adults in the communities is more effective at bringing about deep and ethical change. Our job is to get kids to question their snack choices, enjoy and learn to prepare easy, healthy foods, and retain the knowledge of this program as they mature and become more independent.

Tuesday, October 8th: Video workday

We walked over to our space at 5:00. P4, P6, P2, and P5 were present. P1 once again had homework. Mica did not attend but Nicole from Cristina's research class volunteered to help out. We brought three laptops and three cameras. P2 and P6 worked on separate projects and

P5 and P4 worked together. I showed them clips of movie trailers and asked them to point out the "hooks". ("What caught your attention? How? Were there still images? Music? Voiceover? Text? Do you want to see this movie..are you anticipating what's going to happen?") They were pretty responsive at first but P4 and P5 soon began to bicker. I asked P4 to move and give P5's chair more room. P4 decided she wanted to go home entirely. We broke into groups with computers and storyboard sheets and P4 stayed longer to help P5 create her title clip. P4 asked to go home again and we walked back to the NRC and talked along the way. Hillary and Kate stayed with the other three students and worked with them to draw, film, and take pictures for their intros. The most difficult part of facilitating the project is definitely the technology. There are too many bumps in the road and I've had to familiarize myself with a relatively new medium and new software. I'm working on simplifying the process and have a meeting on Friday with a video guy to help me streamline the clip to library to editing website process. P2 has really taken to the video component. He is taking footage with his smart phone and using the Pixorial app to edit when he's at home!! So cool...and easy..just one gadget. P6 might end up creating more of an animated clip with music and voiceover. P5 was into the text editing and combining still images from our video library. The kids were working really hard the last half hour of class..it was hard to stop them and head back to the NRC.

Monday, October 14th: cooking at NRC

The NRC was originally scheduled to be closed on this date (for Columbus Day) but the afterschool decided last week to stay open. I didn't have a lesson planned for Monday so I decided to take the time to teach the kids knife skills and establish safety protocol in the

kitchen. We made a simple meal of pancakes and fruit salad (I made the batter before hand for time's sake). After cooking we sat down for a meal together. Melanie and I prompted the youth to talk about their experiences in the program thus far. I think the relaxed activity brought the group closer together and eased some tensions among the youth. The kitchen lesson went well. I set up stations ahead of time and demonstrated proper knife usage. They were on task and excited to participate. It was a relaxed environment overall and safe. After the meal I had the youth illustrate the afternoon's activities while I pulled them out one by one to tape reflections. P4's reflection was the most surprising. She has been disconnected with the program and the group the last two weeks and left early last week. However, in her reflection she described Monday's activities as "fun" and "tasted good". P1 and P4 grilled pancakes on the flat top together and got into "designing" the pancakes by spooning the batter into different shapes! Love the connection. They both talked about designing food in their reflections. We had two youth visitors to the program that day, ----- and ----- . They have been regular NRC participants in the past but only come occasionally now. They wanted to --- -----n us and I thought it would be a good idea to at least get more older youth interested and knowledgeable about the program.

Tuesday, October 15th: video workday

Tuesday was a quiet day. Maybe because of the break (?) P1, P6, and (now) ----- had homework up until 6p. It's NRC policy that youth finish their homework before going to programming. I think this makes sense for the younger kids but the older kids have hours of homework and arrive to the NRC later in the afternoon. I'm going to speak to Jenny about making an exception for our kids at least on Mon/Tues. P5 and P4 had a day with their

counselor and weren't present. I worked one-one with P2. He's stoked to be making video and made headway on about a min. of footage. He's also recording his own beats and importing them into the video.

Monday, October 21st: cooking at the NRC (salsa)

Monday went really well (much like last week). We made chips and salsa with all fresh ingredients. Four new teens have -----ned the program: P3, -----, -----, and -----.

They've joined at a good time as the second cooking session and transitions visit are this week and next week. I think they can garner good information/experience from the program at this point, even without attending Cameron's workshops. We can talk about whether or not to assess the new students. Kate and I talked and she thinks it's a good idea to at least collect post-test and out going interview data. P2 and P4 were not present on Monday. P2 stayed at school for some sort of event and P4 is "on punishment" according to P5. I also spoke to Jenny about the older youth foregoing the "homework first" rule and joining programming at the start even if they haven't completed all assignments. We've decided to go on a case by case basis. If students need to use the computer, have a large project, or are struggling in a particular subject matter..that work comes first. Otherwise, assignments can be completed at home after 6:30 (we've talked to parents and they are okay with the policy change). Mica was prepared on Monday and arrived at the NRC at 3p to set up the kitchen. She gathered students at 4:25 and went through all of the health and safety procedures and why they are important (hand washing, no loose clothing or jewelry, no horseplay, knife safety etc...). The youth absolutely love working in the kitchen. ----- is exceptional at chopping and slicing and P3 has a great desire to learn more techniques. The recipe was simple and affordable enough for the students to recreate at home as a snack and voiced their willingness to do

so. They thought it was tasty and loved the idea of baking their own tortilla chips and creating different flavors. After cooking and snacking I had the youth complete an task analysis assignment. It was a little difficult to get across at first but I brought example outlines and a worksheet for them to fill in. Once I explained the concept using the outline they understood completely. I told them that task analysis will help them feel more comfortable with their transitions partners and will help them to understand how much help their partners actually need. I took them aside one by one to record reflections. I also sat down with the new students and went over what Transitions is, what we are doing there, and a few concepts and rules for working with people with disabilities (person-first language, sensitivity and patience, why inclusion is important).

Tuesday, October 22nd: Video workday

We had five students on Tuesday (P1, P6, -----, P3, and -----). P5 and P4 had counselor appointments and P2 was out with his mother. P3, -----, and ----- are working on a video together. They are focusing on the idea of "hunger". P3 has written a complete rap song (with chorus) about hunger in the community and standing up for those in need. She is going to record the song with ----- (who does beats) with Kyle in the recording studio and use it in the video. ----- and ----- are focusing on created the video to go along with the audio. --- ----- put together a title sequence and ----- shot additional footage in the kitchen. P1 has about 90 seconds of video edited. He is focusing on his relationship with Ch-----. He's also written a little bit of voiceover about who Ch----- is and what makes him a great guy. P1 will record the voiceover next week. He is also going to lay down a track with Kyle, time permitting. P6 is working one on one with Melissa to film a sort of stop-motion animation. She films while he draws sequence after sequence, later they will import and

spped up the clips. His themes are working together and healthy eating. P6 has recorded a song to lay over the "animation". P6 has been having a hard time at the NRC lately. He is pushing some boundaries and working with some anger management issues. Melissa stepped in yesterday after he snapped at Mica. Melissa has said that she is uncomfortable with direct practice and has trouble working on one one with the kids. So, it was great to see her take initiative, control the situation effectively, and work with one student for an extended period of time. Melissa is excited to work with Tanetta on the evaluation report. Hillary will be -----ning us next Monday and Tuesday. She has worked with people with autism before and should be an asset at transitions. I'm not sure how frequently we will see the newcomers but so far they have participated each week (for the past three weeks). I think it is important to include new youth in order to strengthen the program and spread the word about teen activities at the NRC.

Monday October 28th: 2nd Cooking Experience with Transitions

Monday was our second cooking experience with transitions. We have a few new youth in the group: P3 joined us for salsa making along with P1, P2, P5, P6, Cl-----and J---. I picked P1, P3, P5, and Cl---- up from school. I asked Mica to set everything up at Transitions ahead of time Savannah also joined us today (she has agreed to be the new cooking instructor for next year) to observe and get to know Transitions/the kids a little bit. Melanie and Hillary were also present and Hillary filmed quite a bit. I missed the first half of the cooking experience because I was trying to pick P6 up from school. He went home on the bus accidentally and I tried to meet him at home but was afraid of missing any more of the program. So I went ahead to transitions and his mother dropped him off a few minutes after I returned. When I arrived

everyone was almost ready to eat. It looked like the Transitions folks were enjoying dicing up the onions and peppers. We had a few different chopping devices available. P3 was helping Sha----- combine ingredients in a bowl. Two long tables were pushed together and we cleared the cooking mess to make room for eating. The transitions folks seem pretty accustomed to clean up tasks and it's really our kids who look to them to see what to do. Everyone tried the salsa and it was a hit! I think the chips were helpful. I also brought queso for everyone to try with the salsa (it's sort of like mozzarella). We ate all of the salsa and chips together. Sha---- grandmother came to pick her up and was surprised to see her granddaughter eating a new food (as she is usually very picky). There was extra time leftover so we all went into the large rec room for a drawing activity. Mica had the idea of creating a recipe book with from what we've made together---co illustrated by transitions and the nrc. I paired up our youth with a transitions partner in an attempt to break up the youth (who were starting to goof around together) and get them to draw with their partners. It only sort of worked. The transitions folks seemed much more interested in doing there own thing and the nrc youth were distracted by the rec rooms games. Ch--- and Re----spent a lot of time on their drawings and Re---- detailed his experience chopping up a green pepper. Cl---- was partnered with Sh----- ...this was the most successful b/c they were at their own table, further away from the rest of them group. They worked on a drawing together. When it was time to go the nrc youth didn't want to leave, they were having a good time playing with transitions games.

Tuesday, October 29th: Video Workday

P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, and P6 were present for class today. We walked down the street to Carl's building. I gave them a short lesson on creating text clips for the intros to their videos and how to record voiceover. P3 was most interested in working on her song about hunger. P4 and

P6 had been aggravating each other at the NRC before programming and when we were walking over to the carls building. It came to head during my lesson. And P4 decided she wanted to leave and go home. We needed more pencils and paper from the NRC so I asked her join me on the way back so we could talk. Hillary and Kate and Mica stayed behind to help the kids with their videos one-one. P4 responded positively to the one-one time when we were walking and decided to stay for the rest of the program and help P5 with her video text. When I got back to carl's building it was a little chaotic. Mica was struggling with the PC program and the boys were trying to disrupt P3 while she was trying to record her song. I got everyone to settle down a bit and P5 and P4 worked for a long time on the text. P5 was into the text editing and combining still images from our video library . The kids were working really hard the last half hour...it was hard to stop them and head back to the NRC. P2 had a new phone and attempted to download the video making app to record at home.

Monday, November 4th: VMFA prep

Monday was a small class. P2 and P6 were in attendance. There was a meeting in the computer lab so we treked to our space on Government Rd. However the owner left me with the wrong key to the front door so we made our way back to the NRC to figure out another meeting place (I've since resolved the key issue). Melanie led a lesson for P6 and P2 describing the museum atmosphere, how it functions (elicits artworks), and how to behave in a museum setting. Melanie explained the role of the NRC youth as art guides during the museum visit with Transitions. She described two different ways of leading a discussion about an art piece (lecture vs. critical inquiry). Both P2 and P6 were engaged in the lesson and participated in the discussion about how to open conversation about artworks. P2 and P6

chose art works from a list compiled by the VMFA, Melanie and `myself. They came up with questions for the group about the pieces (which all, in some way, relate to food/eating). We talked about how to get the group to respond to the piece and the questions and to make sure Transitions folks had a say in the discussion. The youth came up with different types of questions for different types of viewers. Both P6 and P2 came up with 5+ questions to help guide them through their part of the tour.

Tuesday, November 5th: prep for VMFA/ Food art competition

P4 and ----- joined P2 and P6 for class on Tuesday. I gave the girls a similar lesson on museums and how to guide a group through an art talk. This took about 20 minutes and I allowed P6 and P2 to play basketball while I caught the girls up. P4 was particularly respondent and became enamored with a Mary Cassat painting. P4 came up with about ten questions for the group about the piece. Both ----- and P4 enjoyed describing the works of art. P2 and P6 joined us toward the end of the lesson and P2 helped ----- choose a piece and formulate questions. P2 seemed to enjoy teaching ----- what he had learned from Melanie on Monday. At around 5:45 I gave a twenty min. lesson on contemporary artists who use food stuffs as an art material or, in some way, talk about food through their work. I showed them several artists who sculpt and photograph food products and a few painters who use food as their subject matter. I also showed them images from the avant garde restaurant Alinea in NYC. The restaurant exemplifies culinary experiences as an art form and creates edible food sculptures. They are known for a performative dessert option that takes ten minutes to enact and uses the patron's table as a design surface (we watched a video of the dessert). They were enthralled by the idea of using food in art making. I showed them a potrait of a young girl by Vik Muniz that is drawn in sugar crystals. I told them that the artist

was implying the "sweetness" of childhood. P4 commented that her portrait wouldn't be made with sugar. She said her childhood was "more bitter than sweet". I asked her what she would use to create a portrait of herself and she said "salt". From 6:05 to the end of programming we were in the kitchen. I set up stations for the youth to create their own food art pieces in a sort of iron chef style battle. They each had equal portions of strawberries, pretzels, mixed nuts, cranberries, peanut butter, and toothpicks. They had ten minutes to prep their pieces. At around 6:15 NRC staff came in to "judge" the works. The criteria included: creativity(did they transform the materials?), composition(how does it look on the plate), presentation (the youth came up with statements about their pieces), and taste. I think the activity was really successful and I will do it again in the spring. They were absolutely silent while they made their creations and each student came up with fairly eloquent ways of describing their techniques and why/how they used each food. P4's piece was well composed...the strawberries representing her sisters around the edge of the plate with almond silvers in each slice to represent hardship. P6 made a self portrait. He used strawberries for the mouth so that he would remember to "speak sweetly". P2 made a map of an island ("P2 Island") complete with peninsulas and buried treasure. ----- smashed her strawberries to symbolize "growing up". Mica documented the youth working and took pictures of the pieces. Whereas Cameron's workshop helped the student's understand their physical relationship to food, this activity allowed students to perceive and create conceptual/emotional connections with food....it helped to drive home personal connections to food and how food occupies our headspace. (also, we ate everything we made as snack so no food was wasted)

Friday: November 8, 1st VMFA trip with NRC youth

P4, P2, and P6 were present for the trip. During the previous week's activities they chose an artwork from the VMFA collection and practiced leading a group discussion about the piece. The VMFA, Melanie, and myself compiled a list of artworks which in some way related to food or eating. Most of the pieces are housed in the 19th-20th century American galleries. These works are primarily still lifes of everyday scenes. They came up with leading questions for the group as well as specific facts about the artwork and artist.

P2 chose an elaborately detailed early American still life which featured a bouquet of flowers surrounded by a decadent array of foods and drink. P2 was interested the piece because of its grandeur and detail.

P6 chose a painting in the Modern wing of the VMFA. The piece, by Sol Dewitt, is an abstract painting of forms resembling lemons. P6 was the only student to choose an abstract work from a more contemporary time period.

P4 chose a Mary Cassat painting of a mother and child picking fruit from a tree. She became immediately enamored with the piece after seeing it in the VMFA's online collection. She was drawn to the warm connection between mother and child and spoke about her relationship with her mother (whom she said she greatly admires).

The day of the trip we left the NRC at 4:00 and arrived at the museum at 4:35. Liz, Tanetta, Hillary, and Courtney (VMFA educator) met Sarah Mccaig and I in the lobby.

During the first part of the field trip, I led the group on a mini tour of two artworks: a ceremonial drinking vessel in the Ancient American collection and a ceramic teapot in the 21st century collection. I wanted to exhibit the connections between food, culture, and art making over time...and how some forms, symbols, concepts, and techniques have persisted for thousands of years.

The second half of the trip took place in the American gallery and I asked the students to try and locate their pieces (which they had only viewed on line previously). Once they found their artworks I asked them to sit and write additional questions about the pieces for group discussion. They were all excited to see the works in person and were impressed with how different (and larger) they seemed in the museum context. I had each student enact a mock discussion with one of their peers and recorded the discussion on the bloggies. P6 and I discussed his piece in the modern gallery since it is on the other side of the museum. P6's questions were pretty surface and didn't dig at the meaning of the piece. I asked him some questions in return to get him thinking about the artist's conception of the work and why an artist would choose to represent lemons in an abstract work. He pointed out that lemons are bittersweet and that maybe the artist was trying to talk about bittersweet things in life like "love or revenge".

To conclude the visit Courtney led us to a kiosk in the marble room.. The kiosk demonstrates what happens to materials when they are handled over time...such as embroidered cloth, oil paintings, marble pieces, and wood. She spoke to the students about the importance of not touching the artworks in order to preserve them.

Monday, November 11: prep for VMFA with Transitions, disability awareness discussion

The Monday before our field trip with Transitions, we had a group discussion about working with people with disabilities and what are responsibilities are as guides for our transistions partners. (We were able to use Carl's building for class on Monday.) -----, P4, P3, P6, and P2 were present for class. P1 has supposedly moved to Southside with his family so we'll see

if he continues to show up for class or not...he hasn't been here for the last three classes. I began the discussion as a preparation for the Friday field trip but it evolved into a really interesting interaction between P4 and P3. P4 stated that she was scared to go on the trip in case one of the people from transitions "started acting crazy" and we couldn't control the situation. P3 quickly responded. She told the group about her cousin who has an intellectual disability. She said that she needs a lot of help with everyday life activities but that she is "still a regular person and a blessing to have as a friend". She spoke directly to P4 and P4 listened attentively. She told the group that her cousin goes to Henrico High school and get made fun of on a regular basis. She said that it her job to remind her cousin that she is loved and that "all people deserved to be loved and not to be made fun of for something they can't help". P4 took in all of this information but quietly responded to P3 that she didn't think she could help but react to people "who are so different".

Tuesday, November 12: food access discussion

I learned from P2's mother that he is enrolled in an afterschool program at his school that it mandatory. He gets home at 5:30 but is usually too exhausted to come to the NRC as well. So, P2 probably won't be joining us for the rest of the semester. However, he made a video with her brother Jerry at home (I haven't had a chance to view it yet because the disk Jerry brought it in on was corrupted...so we'll see!). We went to a dance workshop over the weekend (P4, -----, Jazmine, Mica and myself) which featured choreography and music based on food justice topics. The dance troop was performing at Centerstage on Tuesday at 7:30p and they gave us free tickets. So, we re-arranged our lesson on Tues. to get ready for the trip. P4, P6, -----, Joy, and P1 were present for class. (Two new NRC middle schoolers were here today so I let them sit in on the first half of class to see what the program is like and

connect with the other older participants at the NRC). The first half of class we led a review discussion on the food justice movement and the definition of a food desert. I let Melissa introduce the discussion and show the kids a short clip of Jamie Oliver's food network show which addresses similar topics. Next, we went over the definition of a food desert and I asked the kids how they (or members of their family) get to the grocery store and back and which grocery store they use. They were able to form a consensus that it is difficult and time consuming to get groceries from their neighborhood. Then, I asked them to think of ways in which they could address this issue as young people. They were stumped at first but Jaszmine (P4's cousin and P5 and -----'s sister who joins us every so often) suggested bringing food baskets to people with limited mobility. I took this opportunity to talk about the cornerstore initiative and how it does just that in a lot of ways. The group recalled the new produce section of the Quik Mart a block away. P1 remarked that there are less people dealing drugs outside of the Quik Mart now that there is healthy food---I don't know if this is necessarily the case or if one thing led to another but it was an interesting comment. P1 was very interested in thinking of ways to solve food access issues. Someone brought up the fact that the NRC gives away boxes full of produce at the entrance to the center everyday. P1 contested (and became a little upset) that people don't have access to that food all day or on the weekends. He also brought up the fact that the garden has tons of vegetables ready to harvest and not being used but that it is always locked. There was some resentment in his voice. P1 has experienced homelessness with his family in the past few months and I wonder if they've gone hungry at times and searched for food around the neighborhood. He was adamant that hungry people have access to the NRC's garden where the food is just outside reach. He suggested creating a garden for the neighborhood where people can grow and

harvest food anytime. He also commented that some people are made fun of by NRC when they come to get food. He said that he heard Ms. Shannon making fun of one man (who suffers from sort of mental illness and is often intoxicated) after he came in and asked for food donations. Adults only come in during the day before school ends so I'm not sure where P1 heard this...his father comes in during the day so he must have relayed what he saw and heard. P1 said things like this make people feel uncomfortable obtaining the NRC's resources (again I don't know if he was indirectly speaking about himself and his family).

The group needed to eat dinner before the field trip so we ended class at 5:45 and sat down to eat (mica made spaghetti with meat sauce, salad, and baked apples). After eating and cleaning the group departed for the performance. P6 was not allowed to go because of behavioral issues from last class.

Friday, November 15th: VMFA trip #2

On Thursday afternoon Denise emailed me to say that her group would not be going on the trip because she was short staffed. We decided to go with just our group so as not to let down the kids.

This trip was similar to the last. P1 and ----- also -----ned us. ----- previously chose an abstract piece in the American collection from the 1940's. They gave tours to each other and the group of facilitators (Melanie, Liz, Sarah Orr, Hillary). -----, P4, P2, and P6 were very comfortable leading discussion.

Monday, November 18th: video workday

P1, P6, P4, and ----- were present for class.

We walked over to Carl's building but the keys wouldn't work (the lock had been jimmied and Carl has since fixed it). So, we walked back to the NRC and class took place in

the cramped recording studio. I gave the students a short demonstration of how to access and download copyright free music from freemusicarchive.org. We briefly discussed the why it is important to use this website (and others like it) as a source for music and the legalities of using other people's work in video.

At this point P6 became restless and disrupted the class by talking over my discussion. After a few interventions it became obvious that he was not ready to participate and was only going to become progressively disruptive and hostile (this is a reoccurring situation). I asked him to leave the recording studio and calm down in the couch area until I was finished with the lesson and we could talk. He wouldn't leave so Mica accompanied him outside and she attempted to speak with him. He wasn't able to calm down and was asked to sit class out

(P6 has noted anger management issues and I've since created a behavioral plan for him—he receives piano time after programming for a certain number of positive behavioral points. Disruptive behavior and abusive language toward peers and staff results in negative points which lead to couch time, being sent home early, a “break” from programming – progressively. It's been effective so far).

The preschool teachers kindly let us use their room for one or two students to work quietly. P1 usually works in there...it's not that comfortable for a big guy like him (the chairs and desks are teeny) but he enjoys the solitude. P4 and ----- stayed to work in the recording studio with Melanie. We had quite a few computer issues. Some of P4's images were on the computer P1 was working on (I thought he had dropped out of programming so P4 started using his laptop). I had to transfer the files which took a lot of time. -----'s was originally working with P3 and Joy but neither of them were there to help her with the video. ----- was editing the footage that Joy shot and P3 created the storyboard and wanted to do the

voiceover. Basically, ----- needed to start over. She was confused about the story she was creating and the point of the project in general. P4 spent most of the rest of class recovering her images (the computers are so so slow). P1 made progress but had to leave class about 20 min early. With the chunk of time taken out of the class walking over to Carl's and back and computer and space issues...this wasn't our most productive session.

Tuesday, November 19th: Field trip to see Contra Tiempo perform at Centerstage

On Saturday the youth were invited to attend a dance/poetry workshop about food justice at Art 180. The workshop was put on by Contra Tiempo- a modern dance troupe from LA. P4, P5, and Cl----attended. It was great. The girls learned how to salsa and step and memorized a spoken word piece about food justice. It was a great opportunity for them to see the greater context of the food access issue. After the workshop they gave us tickets to their performance Tuesday night at centerstage. The performance started at eight so Mica and I decided to cancel the video lesson for Tuesday in order for the kids to make dinner, eat, and finish their homework before the show. P1, P4, P5, and Cl---- went to the show (as well as P1's sister). P6 was supposed to go but lost the privilege due to behavior problems last week. I stayed at the NRC with him and I recorded him singing and playing piano---he wrote a song about tomatoes and salsa to the tune of Rhianna. The group that went to the show had the best time! They were invited on stage and met the dancers after for photos, autographs, and free t-shirts. It really made them feel special.

Monday, November 25th: Video Workday—review of food access issues

Today I showed P1, P3, and P6 clips from different food justice docs and PSA's around the country. I showed them a news clip about Wendel Pierce's (actor from the Wire!) work in New Orleans. He is working to create a local grocery chain that supplies food desert affected

areas in Katrina devastated areas. This opened a discussion about food deserts similar to the week prior. I wanted them to realize their videos as ways to disseminate information about our food desert problem. We also talked about the final event and how the kids would like to organize and participate in it. Noel wants to rap. P3 and P6 are friendly and they were sitting together on the couch in the recording studio. Together they talked about efforts in the community, primarily through church, that help those who are going hungry who are homeless. We also talked about the lack of adequate transportation in the city. They mentioned that their church (es?) picks them up in a van every weekend for services and activities. P1 spoke again about the problems accessing food in Fulton for those who are hungry. This time however he talked about his family's personal struggle with food acquisition. We split up to work on the videos a little bit.

Tuesday, November 26th: Discussion of My Plate and nutrition

As Thursday is Thanksgiving, the NRC had a Thanksgiving celebration for the kids. P1, P2, P3, and P6 came to class and ate Thanksgiving dinner with everyone. P3 and P6 have become close friends and P6 always makes sure P3 comes to class (as much as he can). The celebration cut into class time so we only had about 45 min to give a short nutrition lesson. Mica led the lesson and used the myplate diagram to categorize the NRC's thanksgiving meal and the different foods the youth eat at their own thanksgiving meals. We also discussed measurement and sodium content. I demonstrated for the youth how much salt is healthy to consume in a day and how much salt is contained in processed and packaged food items. We talked about why too much salt is bad for the body. At this point, P6 mentioned the death of his father from a stroke. He told the group that his father had high blood pressure caused by a genetic predisposition and high sodium intake. He remarked that for his own health he

needed to be aware his salt consumption. However, P6 later asked me if he could snack on the salt left over from the demonstration. His behavior could be attributed to a number of circumstances, and I can really only guess at what was going through his head. P6 often had problems with self-control and exhibited some self-destructive behaviors such as pounding his head when angry with himself. However, it is also relevant that processed foods contain sodium and sodium can be highly addictive. Although P6 lived closer to the larger grocery store he often brought processed, packaged snacks to class such as chips and frozen pizza. He sometimes bragged to the group that his mother buys him all his favorite foods. The comfort associated with these foods and the affect on the participant plays a role in his experience of the program and his reaction to the nutrition information.

Monday, December 2nd: prep for show and video workday

We went to Carl's building to work on the video's. It's working really well b/c the kids can separate into different rooms and work quietly. We're going with the one-one model as there are always enough facilitators to sit with the kids and guide them through the video process. Kevan has really taken to the iMovie software. He is the only one working on my computer b/c his attendance is the most consistent. I showed him how to import, edit, and add sound/text and now he's working mostly independently---and studiously. He said he needs "absolute quiet". He even stayed back after class to keep working. He asked me why we aren't all working with iMovie and that it would be so much easier if we did.

Tuesday, December 3rd: Video workday

At Carl's space again. I worked with P4 upstairs for a while and helped P6 finalize his video. Melanie worked one-one with P1 downstairs. He lost his storyboard and narrative (I need to keep track of these items---folders and cabinet in office for next year) so he is doing a lot of

backtracking. This is good because his video is pretty inconsistent---in the beginning he is talking about his relationship with ch----- but by the end he is making comments about cooking and the program overall---no transitions. We are really struggling with the windows application. It's impossible to edit the transitions without everything else getting jumbled in the process.. the sequencing is unclear to say the least and it is very hard to pick up and move clips around (you can't move a clip and it's layers/filters/sound at the same time. Melanie and I worked with P1 to recreate his narrative---he describes his relationship with his partner as "partners in crime". I asked him to explain their relationship further so the audience knows how they are partners in crime and he added "in cooking". He is also pretty attached to a whiz khalifa image and quote that he wants to insert at the end of the video so I let him keep it in if he worked in a voiceover that explained how cooking relates to whiz khalifa. P5 is upstairs. She hasn't been to class in a few weeks and is just now putting her video together. P6 finished his up halfway through class so the rest of the time she worked on my computer putting her video together. Just like with P6, P2 is having a great time using iMovie...she started out using a pc but decided to redo her video using the mac. I gave her a few quick lessons and she took it from there. When she struggled I had P6 help her troubleshoot---this worked well and helped them both to understand the application more intrinsically. The other youth are working on a step dance/ anthem for the final show. Mica is working with them but I haven't seen what they've put together yet.

Week of the final show, December 11th-13th

All of this week the kids have been prepping for the final show. They are working with mica to create a step dance and call out for the show about the program. Most of them are done with their videos...P5 was the last to finish because she hasn't been coming as regularly...she has a new counselor who takes her after school most days...she organized her video around images of the youth cooking in the NRC kitchen and with the Transitions adults. Against the images she inserted statements that described what was happening and what it meant. Like "we cook together to learn about food"

We cooked most of the day and the kids joined in around 330..we had a lot of helpers including siblings. When their partners arrived to the NRC, without prompting, P1, P4, and P6 made sure that they were included and felt at ease at the space. P6 invited one of the Transitions participants to watch as the youth practiced the step performance, remembering that she liked dancing and singing without prompting from the adult facilitators. The kids talked about wanting to let everyone "feel at ease" at the NRC. P6 also spoke to the audience during the question and answer about the "importance of working with people with disabilities...because they don't always get *included*". P6's video engaged viewers with phrases like, "Don't you love salsa?... You might think I mean the dance salsa but I mean the FOOD salsa!". P4 talked about the food art competition... "my piece is called the 'mysterious flower' because like me it has some parts that are mean, happy, and sad".

Each participant played their movie and joined the audience in a Q&A about the film and the program. P4 showed first, recounting how she won the food art competition. P1 showed his video..."partners in crime in cooking." He calls-----a "regular guy" . P1 talked briefly about "liking working at Transitions". P6 spoke the longest and went into detail about accepting people who are different and working together to make healthy food. All

three of the participants who showed videos and spoke used the time to thank their teachers and the NRC. P6 spoke directly about his transportation difficulties and his mother endorsed his claims from the audience. (see for full)

THIS STEP IS KNOWN FOR THE FOODLANDSCAPES STEPPERS

WHO CAME UP WITH THIS STEP TO SHOW HOW

MAKING FOOD AND WORKING TOGETHER

CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE

ITS NOTHING WRONG WITH WORKING WITH PEOPLE WHO HAVE DISABILITIES

WE WANT PEOPLE TO KNOW US AS GOOD PEOPLE AND THAT US KIDS CAN
MAKE A BIG DIFFERENCE
HOME-MADE FOOD
HEALTHY FOR YOU
WORK TOGETHER
SHOW LOVE

Appendix V

Black Boxes: present
Whites Boxes: absent
Pink: art making activities
Light Pink: video workday
Blue: cooking/food access
Yellow: Transitions/disability
awareness

P1
Disability
awareness:5/7
Art related :2/5
Video:8/11
Cooking/food acces:6/7

P2
Disability
awareness:5/7
Art related :4/5
Video:5/11
Cooking/food acces:4/7

P3
Disability
awareness:2/7
Art related :0/5
Video:1/11
Cooking/food acces:3/7

P4
Disability
awareness:3/7
Art related :3/5
Video:8/11
Cooking/food acces:3/7

P5
Disability
awareness:2/7
Art related :1/5
Video:5/11
Cooking/food acces:5/7

P6
Disability
awareness:6/7
Art related :5/5
Video:10/11
Cooking/food acces:6/7

	9/9	9/10	9/16	9/17	9/23	9/24	9/31	10/1	10/7	10/8	10/14	10/15	10/21	10/22	10/28	10/29	11/4	11/5	11/8	11/11	11/12	11/15	11/18	11/19	11/22	11/25	11/26	12/2	12/3	12/9	12/10	12/13
P1	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
P2	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
P3	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
P4	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
P5	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
P6	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

Appendix VI: Curriculum

Overview

This unit will explore the relationship between food and communities through documentary filmmaking and service learning with adults with disabilities. Students will understand the production, editing, and dissemination components of filmmaking while discussing journalism and documentary art as social activism. In particular, students will be asked to address issues related to food equity and health concerns in the community. They will disseminate their knowledge to community members with disabilities through cooking instruction and discussion. They will also learn and discover ways of uncovering and highlighting this issue through innovative and creative film production techniques.

Students will be introduced to the practice of participatory documentary filmmaking as a means of disseminating information through open source online resources and basic media technology. Students will reflect on the accessible and egalitarian nature of participatory filmmaking through social media.

Rationale

The Big Idea of “Story” is essential for student understanding of documentary filmmaking and community activism. This project asks teens to delve into complicated, deep-rooted socio-economic issues in the community. In order to understand the context and relevance of these issues, students will document their own lived experiences, or stories, and those of their community members. Doing so will uncover and shed light on the very personal effects these issues have on the community.

Key Concepts

1. Documentary filmmaking is a way for individuals and communities to communicate their lived experiences, or stories, to a larger audience.
2. Documentary filmmaking can be a powerful tool for social justice and reform.
3. The Fulton Neighborhood and much of East End Richmond city has been designated as a food desert, or an area with restricted access to healthy food options.
4. Students will work together to create a “participatory documentary” that details the story of Fulton as a food desert.

Essential Questions

1. Why are documentary films often used as tools for social activism?
2. How can we use documentary film making to bring awareness and change to economic and health concerns within the Fulton community?
3. How is “participatory documentary” defined and what makes this style important for community activism and social reform?

Target student group/teaching context

This unit is directed toward teen after school programming (ages 12-18). This unit/program was created specifically for youth living in areas where access to healthy food is restricted and a program addressing nutrition and food acquisition is necessary. Since the target student group is teens, some may have prior experience shooting and editing digital film or at least be familiar with basic digital recording device and computer functions.

Anticipated # of days for this unit and length of class period

11 weeks, 23 sessions, 2 hour program sessions: 44 hours total (and 12th week Exhibition and Community Event)

LESSONS THAT COMPRISE THE UNIT (abbreviated)

Objectives

- Students will be introduced to the Food Landscapes project.
- Students will meet with Denise Brown at Transitions and observe Transitions environment
- Students will work with cooking instructor (Savannah Harwood) to plan three cooking experiences

Weekly Lessons

Week 1:

Week of January 6th Pretest/pre-interviews
Savannah's "reality check" questions

Week 2:

January 13th, Monday, 5:00 @ apartment: Program Introduction: "Why are we here?"
(Meet at apartment)

- Co-create rules and allowances for teen programming and space
- Hand out program calendar
- Introduce topics associated with project
- Watch four video shorts (food deserts in NYC, New Orleans, Missouri, and LA)
 - Four questions during video for discussion
- Round table discussion

January 14th, Tuesday, 5:00 @ apartment:

- Camera work and reflection talk
- What does it mean to reflect (What was it like vs. what happened)? How do artists reflect? Why is important to be reflective?
- Writing reflection activity and share: Talk about a time when someone stood up for you or you stood up for another person.
-
- What is an interview? Why do filmmakers, journalists, etc use interview? What can we learn from interviewing community members? What are some techniques for conducting successful interviews

- Mock interview activity
- Closure: review and critique interviews

Week 3:

January 20th, Monday: MLK Holiday

NRC Closed

January 21st, Tuesday, meet at 4:30 @ apartment: Shopping Excursion (Food Awareness Workshop)→ “a place at the table”

- Meet at apartment
- -definition of “meal”
- -send to different stores
- -decide on monetary amount
- -Family Dollar, quickie mart, store next apartment
- Group into pairs
- Task: with a budget of ____ create a healthy meal with options from cornerstore (30 min)
- Re-gather at apartment
- 5:30-6:00 Discuss food choices (justification)
- how does your purchase fulfill “my plate” requirements? How much sodium total? (fill in My Plate poster), Do you recognize all of the ingredients in your purchases? Which ingredients if any fit into the My Plate diagram?
- 6:00-6:15 How would you get to the store and back (which store)?
- Easy or hard? Cheap or expensive? Healthy or unhealthy?
- Overall do you think choices are abundant, average, or scarce for affordable, easy to access, healthy and fresh food
- Introduce “food desert” terminology, history, and concepts—wider picture of phenomenon across the country and the globe
- Closure/video reflection: How is this community affected and what can we do to help solve this problem

Week 4:

January 27th, Monday, 4:30 @ NRC: First cooking activity (tuna fish salad)

- Introduction to kitchen rituals (tie hair back, wash hands, no loose clothing, etc..)
- -Jerry and Javon: Kitchen tour
- -Savannah: Mis-en-place, knife demo
- Prep work/knife practice at cutting board stations
- Light clean up
- Eating together (discuss kitchen time)
- Finish dishes
- Video reflections: have you ever taught anything to anyone? What was it, what was it like? If you could teach a lesson on anything what would it be→what do you think people need to know more about?

January 28th, Tuesday, 3:00 @ apartment: Meet and Greet at Transitions (Disability Awareness Workshop)

- Meet at apartment and walk over to Transitions

- Transitions tour and web game (getting to know you)
- Back to apartment at 4:30
- Person first discussion...Role play activity
- Cooking at Transitions: Task analysis and tool adaptations for Akia, Chuckie, Shavon, and Renardo
- Closure

Week 5:

February 3rd, Monday, 3:00 @ apartment: [Cooking at Transitions](#)

- Cooking activity led by Savannah with NRC youth acting as helpers for Transitions participants
- Drawing with Transitions after clean up
- Back to apartment at 4:30→ discuss how teens will take the lead during the next cooking experience at Transitions

February 5, Tuesday, 5:00 @ apartment: Video Intro

- What is participatory documentary? Is this what were going to do?
- Video clips from Food Desert awareness project and videos by teen documentary filmmaker
- Closure discussion: why were these films created?

Week 6

February 10th, Monday, 4:30 @ NRC: Cooking Lesson #2

February 11th, Tuesday, 5:00 @ apartment: Prep for Transitions

- Assign roles and partners during cooking activity
- Task analysis worksheet
- Video reflection: What was it like cooking at the NRC for the second time? What do you think it will be like to teach on Monday?

Week 7

February 17th, meet 3:00 @ apartment : [2nd Transitions Experience](#)

- NRC youth take lead with facilitators assisting

February 18th, Tuesday, meet 5:00 @ apartment: Video Lesson #2

- Storyboarding: creating a narrative through voiceover, video clips and still images
- Watch short video by NYC teens
- Outline the narrative (beginning middle end of the story) together
- Storyboard worksheet: What story do you want to tell: neighborhood or community dynamics/working with people with disabilities/acceptance/volunteering/food justice and healthy living
- Create an outline for your story and begin to think of visually depicting scenes
- Closure: share storyboards

Week 8

Field Trip (Monday Prep (5:00-6:30 @ apartment), Tuesday trip (3:15-4:45 @ VMFA),

[Thursday, February 27th VMFA field trip with Transitions \(4:30-6:00 @ VMFA\)](#)

Week 9

March 3rd, Monday: 3rd Cooking lesson at NRC

March 4th, Tuesday: Prep for Transitions (divide up roles, task analysis),

- Shooting: long shots vs short shots, creating a narrative through images. Clips from popular movie trailers: What draws your attention and makes you want to watch more?
- Continue working on fleshing out storyboards
- Closure: share storyboards with group for feedback. Does your story make sense to an audience?

Week 10:

March 10th, Monday, 3:30 @ apartment: 3rd Transitions Experience

March 11th, Tuesday (5:00@ apartment): Video Lesson and Worktime

- Intro and Scene 1
- How to upload video to iphoto and imovie, organize footage: delete clips, trim, and categorize by date and scene info
- Closure: share intro for feedback: Does the intro get the audiences attention? Do they know what they are about to watch?

Week 11:

March 17th, Monday: “Iron Chef”: Food Art Competition (with Transitions as NRC guests?)

March 18th, Tuesday: Video workday

- Work on Scene 2
- Closure: in process crit

Week 12:

March 24th, Monday: Video workday

- Scene 3
- Closure: questions as group about video progress and trouble shooting

March 25th, Tuesday: Video workday

- Wrap up and final edits
- Group viewing of videos

Event Week: Plan For Event on Friday, April 4th
Post Interviews and Tests 4/7-4/11

Potential Extra Exhibits

Jeffrey Condon <http://visarts.org/exhibitions/upcoming/>

Sonya Clark: <http://www.1708gallery.org/exhibitions/exhibition-detail.php?id=64>

VMFA (late April):

http://www.vmfa.state.va.us/Exhibitions/Upcoming/Posing_Beauty_in_African_American_Culture.aspx

Vita

Jessica Ravee Norris was born on February 15, 1987 in Richmond, Virginia, and is an American citizen. She graduated from Henrico High School in 2005 and received her Bachelor of Fine Arts in Painting and Printmaking in 2009 from Virginia Commonwealth University. She subsequently taught art in the community for the next three years with a strong focus on youth developed, social activism and art making. Jessica has experience with grant writing, program design and evaluation, as well as project management and program facilitation.