Mapping Cultural Boundaries
in Schools and Communities
Redefining Spaces through Organizing

Gerald K. Wood and Christine K. Lemley

Abstract
For this study, the authors look specifically at cultural maps that the youth created in Student Involvement Day (SID), a program committed to youth empowerment. In these maps, youth identified spaces in their schools and communities that are open and inclusive of their cultures or spaces where their cultures are excluded. Drawing on critical geographies of/in education and Freirian notions of praxis, this paper considers the nature of school spaces through school curriculum and offers ways to render these contested spaces more democratic. Using these cultural maps, students work to individually identify spaces that allow them to engage meaningfully and collectively build key alliances and organize for more equitable and inclusive spaces in their schools and communities.

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Arizona is under attack. Children of color and communities of color are the targets of the assaults. That may sound extreme or exaggerated, but for those of us in Arizona who believe in equity and justice for all Arizonans, there is no doubt we are under siege. In opposition to these assaults, tens of thousands of documented and undocumented folks alike have protested, boycotted, petitioned, marched, and walked out around the state and the nation. (Fernández, 2010/11, p. 49).

Arizona has mounted an attack on immigrant communities. Through Senate Bill 1070 (SB 1070), Arizona’s Law Enforcement and Safe Neighborhood Act, and other anti-immigration legislation, this attack has more firmly entrenched historical, cultural, political, and economic divisions among various communities by criminalizing undocumented individuals. In conjunction with other anti-immigrant legislation, the stated policy of SB 1070 is “attrition through enforcement” (Senate Bill 1070, p. 2). The 2010 legislation addressed by the United States (U.S.) Supreme Court upholding the provision commonly known as Show Me Your Papers (or Section 2b), cements the divisions between Latinos/Latinas and law enforcement and escalates a long history of distrust between these two groups. In addition, on January 1, 2011, House Bill 2281 (HB 2281) A.R.S. §15–112, went into effect, banning ethnic studies. Challenging this idea regarding social movements and collective power, the language of HB 2281 focuses on how “public school pupils should be taught to treat and value each other as

Gerald K. Wood focuses on community and youth organizing. He draws on critical geography and place-based education to underscore the complex realities impacting immigrant youth. Christine K. Lemley grounds her scholarship in the ideal of culturally relevant pedagogy to engage and empower historically marginalized teachers and students. Most recently, her work focuses on social justice and equity issues through critical community engagement. They are both faculty at Northern Arizona University.
individuals and not be taught to resent or hate other races or classes of people” (p. 1). In January 2012, while students were in class, these decisions led to the removal of classroom books such as Paulo Freire's Pedagogy of the Oppressed, Rodolfo Acuna’s Occupied America: A History of Chicanos, and Sandra Cisneros’s A House on Mango Street, among others. Tucson Unified School District (TUSD) claimed this was not a ban, because the books were still made available in the library. The banned books highlight the impact of attempting to teach about oppression and liberation and the dehumanizing attempts to eliminate problem-posing education (Freire, 1970/2000).

In defining ethnic studies, we consider the importance of a culturally relevant pedagogy (CRP) (Ladson-Billings, 2009) in educating students and focus on the need for a complex engagement with ethnicity, race, racism, and power in the United States as well as the emphasis on “social transformation” and “socially engaged critique” (http://www.ethnicstudies.ucr.edu/about/scholarlyandintellectualproject.html).

As youth of color grapple with ways to make school more relevant and more inclusive, how could all immigrant youth respond to this legislation?

Through Student Involvement Day (SID), a weekend program started in 2009 and committed to youth empowerment, we, along with other facilitators (teacher education students and community members), introduced youth in spring of 2011 to the ethnic studies ban and the context of the Mexican–American Studies program in Tucson. Leticia, one of the youth in SID, stated, “We need to go to Tucson to do something.” While SID youth did go to Tucson High School to participate in the Praxis Youth Conference and the Unity Day at that time, we discussed other ways to act in solidarity with students and teachers in Tucson.” In response to Leticia’s comment, one of us authors asked, “Do you have ethnic studies programs here in your schools?” This led to a semester-long focus on how to promote ethnic studies in our local schools and a summer-long Freedom Summer camp, which brought youth into contact with Tucson High School students and activists working with United Non-Discriminatory Individuals Demanding Our Studies (U.N.I.D.O.S.).

In this essay, we describe and reflect on our efforts to promote ethnic studies in our local schools and communities. In order to start the conversation and have youth individually and collectively determine spaces where cultural identities important to them were included, we facilitated a cultural mapping activity (see Figure 1). From this mapping activity, the youth drew maps and identified spaces in their schools and communities that included or excluded their cultural identities. Using these cultural maps, participants worked to individually identify spaces that allowed them to practice their cultural identities, engage meaningfully, collectively build key alliances, and organize for more equitable and inclusive spaces in their schools and communities.

The purpose of the larger project was to explain how facilitators involved with the youth program empowered youth to tell their stories and advocate for themselves and others in less advantaged positions. Facilitators wanted to provide youth with the language, tools, and skills to advocate for equitable change for themselves and others and to illustrate how people have historically and contemporarily raised questions, protested, and demanded equity, so that youth could see they had agency and an ability to form alliances with other youth and adults to advocate equitable change. This essay documents one semester of the SID program (spring 2011), which included three eight-hour meetings spread out over the course of the semester. In this paper, we (a) provide the context of SID, (b) use cultural maps as a community organizing tool, and (c) explain how lessons learned during the cultural map activity led to transformational change.

**Context: SID**

The original idea for SID emphasized teacher education students bringing their own interests and abilities to help shape the SID curriculum; this included teaching sign language, welding, counseling, and art to area middle school students. During the first SID, one of the activities focused on the theme of peace and unity. Each group of elementary through high school students developed a presentation using sign language and posters to interpret the meaning of this theme. One of the groups focused on the impact that Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) had had on their families and communities in Flagstaff in November 2008. Mariana, one of the middle school students, expressed fear and broke into tears as she pointed to a news article that included her stepfather as one of the people who had been deported. In striving to create the conditions for SID participants to connect their experiences to a collective response to these lived experiences, Wood (coauthor) stated in an e-mail to the SID Student Organizing Committee:

> For example, in thinking about peace and unity, one of the things that came out organically was the idea of ICE and protests. Peace and unity do not just happen but arise from encounters with injustice.
> How could the students engage with this idea of making peace through moviemaking or through mobilizing the community to host a vigil to address the raids? (Wood, personal communication, January 26, 2009)

Important to note is that the majority of youth in the program often expressed being bored in school and were actively disengaged. In developing SID, we (authors and other facilitators) purposely worked to construct a dynamic space of contestation and empowerment to legitimize and act on the concerns of youth. Through SID, youth have the opportunity to grapple with local issues and get involved in community organizing. In creating opportunities to engage in discussions around ethnic studies and culture, we set the goal of SID to purposively facilitate conversations that emphasized the intersection of education and politics. In these spaces, facilitators identified themes based on local concerns that impacted families in Northern Arizona (e.g., homelessness, sustainability, ethnic studies, immigration, law enforcement). Participants and facilitators developed a language of possibility to envision and reimagine schools as sites where knowledge is cocreated in and by the intersections of place, space, and identity.

Participants in this program ranged from seven to 18 years of age and were from six different elementary and secondary schools in Northern Arizona. Although the program was open to all students, SID was advertised by word of mouth so the majority...
of students were Latino/a or Native American; however, we have had students from all ethnic backgrounds involved in the program. Many of the youth had experienced schools as sites of disengagement, had family members deported as a result of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) raids, or had interactions with the police that ran counter to dominant narratives of police helping and supporting communities. Understanding the contexts of youth in the program, we developed cultural mapping as a tool to understand the experiences of youth in their schools and communities as well as promote socially engaged critique and empowerment to lead to social transformation.

Using Cultural Mapping as a Community Organizing Tool

In discussing ethnic studies and before the cultural mapping activity, we shared the story “The Hunter and the Lion” to bring up the topic of whose stories are often told and whose stories are
According to Merrifield (2000), space is often seen in static terms mapping, we highlighted the relationship between power and space. We wanted the students to consider the story of their cultural identities and where and with whom they could talk openly about their cultural identities.

Through SID, we modeled critical pedagogy by connecting students’ experiences to understanding how power and politics shape social inquities. In developing a framework for critical pedagogy, Freire (1970) underscored the role of problem-posing education in the work of consciousness raising. Through historical engagements such as the Chicano/a walkouts, we worked to recognize the historical continuities of struggles by Latino/a and Native American youth. By recognizing that human beings and the world are intertwined, Freire provided a language of possibility to show how spaces are active sites of ideological struggle and production.

In recognizing the long tradition of education centered around social justice and community engagement, we drew on Dewey’s (1916) discussion of participatory democracy to explicitly develop tools to identify problems confronting youth and develop opportunities for deliberation, strategizing, and action. Dewey (1916) argued democracy must be learned and exercised in the context of homes and schools, among other institutions, in order to develop practices and habits conducive to participation in a democratic society (Campbell, 1998). In advocating for participatory forms of democracy, Dewey believed individuals could collectively articulate and solve problems facing communities (Benson, Harkavy, and Puckett, 2007). More specifically, in addressing Dewey’s limitations of how to bring about participatory democracy, Benson, Harkavy, and Puckett (2007) emphasized the role of “community-engaged, civic universit[ies]” (p. 94). SID provided one venue for developing individuals through participation in community life.

Cultural mapping was one of many activities used in SID. As educators, we framed this tool within culturally relevant pedagogy (CRP) (Ladson-Billings, 2009). CRP includes three tenets: (a) academic achievement, (b) cultural competence, and (c) sociopolitical consciousness. Through academic achievement, teachers encourage all students to experience success in their content area, especially literacy, numeracy and technology. Cultural competence uses the students’ culture as a vehicle for learning to promote awareness of students’ own cultures as well as fluency in at least one additional culture. Students develop sociopolitical consciousness, through which they challenge individual as well as institutional iniquities that exist, especially in terms of race and ethnicity, class, sexual orientation, gender and sex, and disability. The cultural mapping activity seen through CRP, its content (what we facilitated), and its pedagogy (how/why we facilitated this activity), underscored the main objectives of SID: to empower youth to advocate for self and others in less advantaged positions.

By linking CRP and participatory democracy to cultural mapping, we highlighted the relationship between power and space. According to Merrifield (2000), space is often seen in static terms rather than as a site of ongoing and competing ideologies. In other words, space appears to be rendered homogeneous and transparent without identifying how contested relationships become silenced. Drawing on CRP and the discussion on space, we suggested cultural mapping provides us with a tool to understand how spaces are actively produced, read, and contested (Lefebvre, 1992).

For this section, we focus on three maps to illustrate how cultural maps could be used as a tool to identify issues in schools and communities. Here is an introduction to the three youth whose maps we present and discuss in this paper:

- Trina was a fifth grader at a local elementary school. She is Hopi and Diné (Navajo) and has been actively involved in activities in her school and community.
- Keith was a sixth grader at a local middle school. He is Latino and has been actively involved with SID since it began its focus on youth organizing.
- Tonya was a senior at the local high school. She is Dominican American and has been active in her school and community.

**Cultural Maps**

Recognizing that spaces are contested and actively constructed through interactions, we authors asked students to create maps that demonstrated where they went during a weekday. After mapping the spaces they visited, participants used a traffic-light model to highlight spaces where their culture identities were included (green), where their cultural identities were sometimes included (yellow), or where their cultural identities were excluded (red). In addition, students created a key with symbols to indicate which cultural identities they affiliated with in each place (e.g., history, “people that look like me,” curriculum, clothing, art, language, values/beliefs, religion, food, and music); these codes were intended to provide a wide range of ways of thinking about the spaces. The youth indicated which identities were salient in each space that they drew, and then they shaded each space with the appropriate color according to how certain cultural identities were always, sometimes, or never included.

**Cultural Maps**

**Trina’s Map: The Musical Note**

Trina, a Hopi and Diné (Navajo) fifth grader attending elementary school, drew a map in the shape of a musical note (see Figure 3). She used the following color code: blue (culture more than included), green (culture included), yellow (culture okay), red (culture excluded). While the directions focused on green, yellow, and red, Trina expanded this to include the color blue. She introduced her map with the following passage:

*This is a map of where I believe I’m allowed to show my culture or not. Like, right here I have my home. And I have blue stars in [it] because I believe it’s more than allowed for me to show my culture. And I have my footsteps to show where I go throughout the day.*

Home was a more than inclusive space for Trina. The only other space she coded blue on her map was the Murdoch Center, where most of the SID meetings were held. The Murdoch Center sits on
the original site of the Dunbar School, an all-Black school during legalized segregation. During our meetings, we discussed the building’s history as a place that encourages discussions around cultural identities, specifically cultural history.

Two other times she talked about blue in school, but she did not code that part of her map with blue. The first time she referenced Native American Day, and the second time she talked about recess. The following excerpts provide her explanations for both of these blue spaces.

I know on Native American Day they ask . . . more about our culture versus a time when we’re talking about social studies, even though it includes our culture. Cultural Week we have a Native American Day, Hispanic Day, European Day, and stuff like that . . . so only on those days we talk about my culture . . . . Like, right now, we’re just barely learning about people coming from England. At recess, I feel that it’s blue because all of my friends are the same nationality. So, I feel that it’s blue during that time.

Trina’s explanation that “we’re just barely learning about people coming from England” made us wonder how the teacher talked about meeting indigenous people when the Pilgrims came from England, thereby integrating Trina’s culture. Trina articulated through these two passages some of the cultural identities we had provided for students to use as they created their maps. Even though Trina did not draw the identities, she alluded to the following in these blue spaces: values/beliefs, clothing/regalia, traditions, history, and “people that look like me.” All of these characteristics valued and validated her identity. Because recess usually happened daily, this painted a tableau of that free time as an inclusive space.

Problematic to this tableau, however, was that Culture Week took place one week out of the year, and Native American Day was only one day out of the year. So, school time, the majority of the day, offered few inclusive spaces for Trina and perhaps other Native American students to express their cultural identities.

Keith’s Map: The Jigsaw Puzzle
Keith, a Latino sixth-grade student, drew his map in the form of a puzzle, with all classes—sixth, seventh, and eighth grades—interlocking (see Figure 4). He described the reason why he chose to use puzzle pieces in the following passage:

I thought life is made out of many puzzle pieces. Put them together, and it makes a beautiful picture. So piece by piece by piece, you’re getting to yourself. And then when you finally graduate from college, it’s your last piece. And then you create this beautiful picture.
When he described green spaces, Keith illustrated that language, culture, history, food, traditions, “people that look me,” or values/beliefs were present in these spaces. He described prompts, problem-posing education that allowed him to include his own cultural epistemologies (ways of knowing) and ontologies (ways of being), as engaging ways to complete assignments.

And the description of Keith’s lunch experience seemed pivotal. Keith stated,

“For lunch, it’s the same thing. I can speak my languages. Lots of people look like me.”

This was the first time in Keith’s narrative that he mentioned culture. He is Latino and mentioned that many students look like him. He identified this as an inclusive space in which he felt his culture, language, ethnicity, traditions, and history were welcomed and accepted.

He described red spaces in this way: “Science, we don’t talk about history. We just do experiments, and we work on our journals. But science is nothing about our culture.” Keith marked other classes red because those teachers taught the content “straight on,” without any cultural components. This “straight on” description alluded to banking education (Freire, 1970), where knowledge is given and received with limited to no inquiry involved and no connection to contemporary or historical culture.

Tonya’s Map: A Walk-Through School
Tonya, a Dominican American high school senior, drew her map and included all classrooms in the building (see Figure 5). The following passage shows how she introduced her map:

“This is my map. I have my house over here. I’m Dominican. My mom’s family is Dominican, from the Dominican Republic. But I’ve spent most of my life here. And right now, I just live with my dad who is like Anglo European descent. At home I put as a green space because I feel comfortable there—my culture and who I am, etc.

Tonya’s house was primarily an uncontested space; however, she did note several times the fact that no one shared her ethnic Dominican identity at home. This appeared to be something she had thought about, realizing that her mother was really the only close relative who shared that cultural identity with her.

Tonya described additional green spaces, keyed on her map as “lots of cultural representation” in the following passage:

“I go to school and have my first class with my favorite teacher, Miss Walken. I will change this to a green square. So, even though there are 10—or a lot of people—[who] don’t look like me, she’s a really great teacher. And she’s an English teacher, . . . and she shows her students books from all kinds of different cultures. . . . She has a lot of really great books. Like I read a lot of cool Chicano literature in her class.

Tonya interjected in the middle of this passage that “some English teachers have you only read books from European authors or American authors,” which underscored this particular space as being culturally inclusive because this teacher did include more than European and American authors.

Tonya at first colored this class yellow. Then, through narration, she realized that she wanted to color it green. She had originally colored it yellow because neither the teacher nor the students looked like her, so this class space, like home, was...
contested for that reason. However, she reflected on the content and pedagogy of the course, noted those important factors, and decided it should be colored green.

Another green space was Tonya’s Spanish class and teacher. She described that teacher in the following passage:

Another one of these places, the green classroom, is Don Luciano, who is a Spanish teacher who is really cool. And me and my friends spend a lot of time hanging out in there. And it’s cool because he’s... well, he’s from Nogales, and he’s just a really nice guy. He speaks Spanish, and he’s really open to whatever. And he has a lot of really good book recommendations from, like, actually all over the world.

Tonya defined this space as inclusive and comfortable. The inclusivity of spaces for Tonya relied heavily on teachers who promoted books from outside a European American perspective. From the way in which she talked about this classroom, it was possible to imagine that Tonya and her friends went there during class time and perhaps at other times too.

One final green space for Tonya was the library that she described as “a lot of people I know and like hanging out there. And it has a smiley face for ‘people that look like me,’” so it was an inclusive space because it felt comfortable and was the one space that included people who shared her cultural ethnic identity.

Tonya described yellow spaces, keyed as “some cultural representation,” in the next excerpt:

And then I go to my regular English class with Mr. Cantor. And I put that as yellow because you can tell he has an awareness of different cultures and the idea of inviting different books to read from all kinds of different places. But we still only read like European books. So that’s all right. That’s just sorta how it is as I go through my day. Most teachers are sorta in that model of the English teacher who know[s] about other cultures but really only teach[es] a traditional American curriculum.

The yellow spaces were primarily designated as “some cultural representation” because Tonya knew “the teachers [in these classes] know about other cultures but really only teach a traditional American curriculum.” These classroom spaces were not inclusive of her cultural identity.

In identifying red spaces, Tonya referenced watching the movie *Walkout* during SID and highlighted the lack of representation of other cultures in her government class:

I have one class—it’s one of the few red spaces—with Mr. H. and my government class. It’s kinda like the movie we just saw [Walkout] when they’re in history class and they’re reading history. And it doesn’t say anything about that there were thousands of Mexican American soldiers in the Civil War, for example. It’s kinda like this class. He
glosses over those things and focuses on European colonies and stuff. Instead of the real story. So that's how it is.

In raising the question of “the real story,” she connected her experiences in this class to the conversations around ethnic studies and “The Hunter and the Lion,” SID discussion, whose story is told, and whose story is untold.

**Using Cultural Mapping Activity to Identify Other Tools**

When the facilitators first engaged youth around these conversations, several of the middle school students identified all their teachers as “racists” since the majority of these teachers were White or did not appear to have cultural connections with the youth. We wanted to encourage them to grapple with these notions and identify how they could promote change and identify some teachers and community members as potential allies.

During this mapping activity and the follow-up conversations, we hoped youth would find concrete ways to promote having their cultural identities included in the school and in the curriculum. As the interviews demonstrated (see Figure 2), students went back and recoded spaces as they talked through why a space might be coded a particular color; this is most clearly demonstrated in Tonya’s interview; she originally focused more on people who looked like her and changed the colors of classrooms based on the texts used by the teacher. The cultural mapping activity encouraged dialogue around shared experiences across school sites. These conversations were important so that students knew they were not alone; other students were having similar experiences, so they could talk about this. Through conversation, students developed more sophisticated conceptions of shared cultural spaces, and their lived experience of these spaces was altered.

In order to initiate this work in schools, we encouraged youth to talk to their peers, their parents, and their teachers. In conversations with youth, we envisioned starting with the school youth attended to start developing more positive relationships and identifying allies. This required getting youth to invite their peers to SID to build a larger power base. When parents and school staff came to SID, we invited them to participate in activities and discussions. After identifying the level of comfort of each of the youth and understanding the kind of changes they envisioned for themselves, we developed strategies together. For example, some youth with disabilities expressed their concern around bullying. For some Latino/a youth, they focused on peers’ derogatory language, such as “wetbacks” or in playing games about climbing over the wall, which alluded to undocumented youth. Some of the girls expressed concerns about the heteronormativity of the prom rules that stated only boy-girl couples could buy tickets. For youth who wanted to promote ethnic studies, we asked whether youth needed university students or faculty to accompany them into the school to talk to teachers. The following actions describe “tools” the youth used to increase inclusion of their cultural identities in multiple spaces.

Role-Play: We provided an opportunity to role-play discussions in which the youth pretended they were talking to teachers or principals about ethnic studies and why this conversation was needed to bring our ideas past discussion to action. As the “teacher” or “principal,” we challenged the youth to consider how to respond to comments such as, “We don’t have time to teach those things,” or, “Could you create an after-school club and find someone from the community to lead it?” This empowered them to determine what they would need (another peer, a teacher, one of the facilitators, questions written out, information illustrating the effectiveness of ethnic studies from reputed sources) to be able to confidently engage these discussions.

Identify Allies: Discussions about the cultural maps led the students to identify potential allies by highlighting green and yellow spaces and teachers and community members within those spaces who might be ready to listen and act. Color coding spaces through various different issues allowed students to reframe and develop a more nuanced understanding of how to interpret and/or push teachers and community members to make the spaces greener. By providing a more complex framing of ways in which teachers, peers, and community members could be allies, we encouraged youth to access support systems within the school and community.

By identifying the larger structures that underlie the construction of these similar spaces, we drew attention to the underlying

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**Figure 2. Cultural Mapping Interview Questions.**

1. Tell us about yourself.
2. Tell us about your cultural map.
3. Describe the green spaces.
4. Describe the yellow spaces.
5. Describe the red spaces.
6. How could you make yellow spaces greener?
7. How could you make red spaces yellower or greener?
8. What allies exist for you to talk about your cultural map in your school? In your community?
9. What pledge did you make regarding your cultural map to complete before the next SID meeting?
10. What more would you like to share about the cultural mapping project?
ideologies that linked these particular places as well as the ways in which these spaces worked to silence contested relationships. For example, we posed questions like: Was a focus on what was taught (e.g., English, social studies, math, science, etc.) used to rationalize the inclusion or exclusion of particular texts? What types of activities are your teachers involved in outside of school? Are there other peers or adults in the school who have discussed Senate Bill 1070 (Arizona law that allows law enforcement to ask individuals about their immigration status) or the San Francisco Peaks (the use of reclaimed water to make artificial snow at a ski resort against the expressed beliefs of thirteen tribes that see the peaks as sacred)?

Educate Each Other and Ourselves: We asked youth to discuss these topics with their families and supported youth who wanted to develop presentations for their peers in SID. One of the middle schoolers brought in hip-hop lyrics to lead a discussion on the definition of success. One young man wanted to understand the toxins in reclaimed water being used to make snow for the ski resort. Two middle schoolers were interested in learning about the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, and so they researched this with the support of university students. We encouraged youth to read newspaper articles, listen to the radio and conversations, and attend events that addressed issues pertaining to their cultural identities to remain apprised of issues impacting them, their families, and their communities.

Take action: Through SID, we encouraged youth to translate the knowledge gained from discussions and activities into actions. To ensure the conversations would not just stay at SID, we encouraged youth to think of ways they wanted to follow up on the discussions, role plays, and cultural mapping. The youth reflected on what would be possible to address in between meeting times, and they pledged what actions they could take in between sessions that could promote healthier spaces that respected their cultural identities. This involved having youth talk about anti-immigration bills in their classrooms when they were given open-ended assignments or make connections between their own lived experiences and what they were learning in class (e.g., the Holocaust or civil rights).

To take action, youth participated in a variety of venues. Youth attended a Children’s March in Phoenix, Arizona, to protest some of the anti-immigrant legislation. To prepare, they read and discussed the implications of the bills and learned songs such as “This Little Light of Mine.” Several of the students had the opportunity to be interviewed by various media outlets. When one of the journalists asked why children were out of school (even though it was spring break), two of the middle schoolers talked about how deportations and anti-immigrant legislation do not let them concentrate in school because they worry about coming home and not finding their parents. A group of youth also attended the Praxis Youth Conference in Tucson, Arizona; this provided them with opportunities to present their cultural maps, learn that they were not alone with their concerns, connect with other youth across the state, and become more informed about the ethnic studies struggle.

Conclusion
Cultural mapping provides opportunities to raise consciousness about, develop more sophisticated conceptions of, and alter the lived experiences of individuals’ cultural identities. In mapping spaces and identifying how individuals have different experiences based on their positionalities, we begin to render the notion that spaces are not transparent and can be contested. Furthermore, by exploring the ways in which youth, who are differently positioned, also experience similar kinds of oppression, we develop particular ways of creating a shared language around how schools and communities can become more inclusive.

In conclusion, youth can and should engage in conversations and action around inclusive and exclusive spaces and the role that these ideological forces play in mediating their experiences. Through these conversations and actions, which are organically connected to the ways in which youth come to understand their experiences, youth can envision education as closely connected to their lives and to their ongoing shaping of their identities as culturally positioned, politically engaged citizens, ready to promote equitable change and increased cultural inclusion.

References

Note
1. The Praxis Youth Conference was started and organized by college students at Prescott College to create a forum for youth organizers across the state. While it was originally scheduled to be held in Prescott, Arizona, it was moved to Tucson High School in Tucson, Arizona, in an attempt to act in solidarity with youth organizing efforts against HB 2281, particularly the United Non-Discriminatory Individuals Demanding Our Studies (UNI.D.O.S.). Tucson High School students have organized Unity Day for years even before HB 2281, so this provided a strategic opportunity to unify efforts.