Youth Community Inquiry: New Media for Community and Personal Growth, Edited by Bertram C. Bruce, Ann Peterson Bishop, & Nama R. Budhathoki

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Review I

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This is a rich and complex book, about the process and outcomes of a rich and complex study—the Youth Community Inquiry or Informatics (YCI) project sponsored by the Graduate School of Library and Information Science (GSLIS) at the University of Illinois. Through this initiative, graduate faculty, 4-H Extension staff and community clubs, and many other collaborating youth organizations in the United States (and in some other locations as well), explored how youth could use community inquiry to develop capacity for future work in information fields. This book highlights cases that represent this work.

In this text, community inquiry is a key term meaning, "inquiry conducted of, for, and by communities, as living social organisms". Such inquiry "support[s] collaborative activity" "creates knowledge connected to people's values, history, and lived experiences" and, "is a learning process that bring theory and action together in experimental and critical manner" (Bruce, 2014, p. 1). The philosophy of community inquiry is reflected in Bruce's notion of the inquiry cycle: Ask, Investigate, Create, Discuss, and Reflect (Bruce, 2014, p. 10). This notion was used as the organizational structure for community inquiry units youth planned and undertook with new digital technologies (Diaz, 2014). These inquiry units were implemented with the help of "Citizen Professional Toolkits" that included a computing platform and video and audio recording equipment (Wolske, Johnson, & Adams, 2014).

As befits a volume attending to the concerns of 21st century learning, this book demonstrates the ways education spans organizational boundaries and tests traditional roles in the process of developing new knowledge. As Jorin-Abbellan describes it in speaking to the issues of evaluating such complicated and interwoven work, "We live in an interconnected world

where the deepest learning can happen anytime and anywhere." (Jorin-Abellan, 2014, p. 135).

The case examples profiled here demonstrate the way youth used community inquiry approaches with new media to meet three ends: (1) community inquiry supported youth to learn about the world in a connected way (four articles); (2) these techniques supported youth to learn to act responsibly in the world (three articles); and (3) youth used community informatics to transform the world (three articles). The final four pieces in the edited volume are related to evaluation concerns.

While the cases presented speak to youth and communities of all types, there is specific emphasis on participants and communities to which the benefits of democracy may not have been equally extended in past times (Slates & Bishop, 2014). Building on critical perspectives of progressive education as embodied in the work of John Dewey, Jane Addams, Miles Horton, and others, the cases in this volume challenge the reader to recognize the capacities of individuals and neighborhoods that have been previously overlooked, if not simply disregarded.Throughout the book, readers are alerted to issues and concerns that arise as partnerships among diverse organizations struggle with issues of inclusion. By problematizing these issues, the authors help us to see more deeply into the challenges and value of this kind of community work.

Here is a taster of some of the projects you will encounter within the pages of this engaging and compelling text. In rural Illinois, join students who are using GIS/GPS technology to map historical sites and cemetery locations in their community as they learn about the context of local change in relationship to national currents of change (Bennett & Fisher, 2014; Budhathoki, Bruce, Murphy, & Rahn, 2014). You can also listen in on the work of youth mappers who worked to chart the local assets of North Champaign, an overlooked neighborhood of Champaign-Urbana, a prosperous university community in Illinois (Nam, 2014). In Chicago's Puerto Rican Paseo Boricua neighborhood (Berry & Cavallaro, 2014) and the Haitian community of Rogers Park (Jean-Charles, 2014), follow youth who developed a critical narrative voice that allowed them to speak back to the community with new digital narratives. Developing social and cultural knowledge and new media skills through journalistic approaches were at the heart of William Patterson's Youth Media Workshop activities for African American youth (Patterson & Rakha, 2014). The TaPping In

program led by youth activist Sally Carter introduced students to new ideas and community places through the use of photography (Carter, Rakha, & Nam, 2014). As I said, this is only a taster; there is much more to be found in this intriguing book of cases.

    Youth Community Inquiry is a broad cross-over text, that is, it is one with appeal to a variety of academic and practitioner audiences. Certainly it will be of interest for researchers and teachers in the arenas of Information Science, Education (various fields), Media Studies, and Sociology, to name a few. Highly readable, it will also be a text to appeal to undergraduate and graduate students in these fields. It will definitely have appeal to practitioners in schools or community youth work, as well as policy makers and those who work in the development field. Personally, I am looking forward to assigning the text and discussing it with students in one of my own upcoming classes.

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