



LOCAL COMMUNITY FIELD SURVEY

- ✓ Students visit a local community to gather information (as a class).
- ✓ The goal is to collect information about a specific community (or communities) and how the inhabitants see their own community.
- ✓ This exercise has a potential to help students identify skills and attitudes helpful to enter and understand a new culture.
- ✓ Teacher explains to the class that they will be going to a community to collect some information which they will later have to report back to the rest of the class.
- ✓ Teacher shows the class a list of categories they are to investigate, and each student chooses one category. Possible categories are: Education, Recreation, Health services, Social services, Economic enterprises, Government, Transportation. Pairs of students seem to be a good choice for each category. If the class has a mixture of cultures, teacher should encourage students to work with a partner from a different culture than their own.
- ✓ Teacher helps students prepare a list of questions to ask as they investigate the categories. Students should come up with their own questionnaires, but teacher's help will be indispensable for instance to encourage them to include not only questions that are factual, but also questions that would reveal local attitudes and opinions about the community.

- ✓ Teacher sets a time limit for the survey to be conducted (depending on the logistics of the course) and assigns a specific class on the syllabus for discussion.
- ✓ Students should be ready to report on their category for about 5 minutes. They should bring all materials collected (notes, brochures, bulletins, pamphlets, etc.) to class. A transcript is an important part of this assignment, too.
- ✓ After the surveys are done, students give their presentations on the findings.
- ✓ Teacher sets a time limit on presentations to help students be concise.
- ✓ A group (or a pair) needs to divide the presentation roles equally among its members. They should not choose one spokesperson.
- ✓ Final discussion led by the teacher. The following questions might be considered:
 - How did you get the information you were looking for?
 - What helped you get the information and what did not help you very much?
(The two questions above help students identify *how* they gathered information in a new situation.)
 - How did you feel about collecting the information? (This question gives the students an opportunity to talk about what it felt like to meet new people and ask for information and help.)
 - When you first arrived in the U.S. (or travelled to a foreign land) did you use any of these tactics in trying to understand what was happening around you and what you were supposed to do? (This

question isn't meant to be a "yes-no question". Students should think about their responses.)