

LIVABLE LIVES INITIATIVE

Literacy and Social Development among Latino Youth in St. Louis

Abstract: The proposed project will focus on youth's access to and use of new media technologies, inclusive of computers and mobile devices, at home, in school, in neighborhoods, and in surrounding communities. Specifically, it will examine how poor, working class and immigrant Latino youth in St. Louis navigate their social spaces toward literacy and social development. As in other new settlement communities in the U.S., Mexican and Latina/o youth—both immigrant and U.S. born—seldom capitalize on their social and cultural capital to obtain information, access available resources, or make demands for acquiring basic needs that could potentially make a difference in their lives. How can we use literacy with an emphasis on new media technologies to support these youths in their life course? How can an understanding of their social spaces (home, school, after school programs, and neighborhood centers, among others) with new media technologies help us to develop interventions or enhance existing approaches? Joint efforts between education and social work along with community partnerships can offer a unique mode of inquiry to answer such questions.

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