CURBING LATINO YOUTH GRAFFITI INVOLVEMENT

WITH ANIME FANART

A project submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements

For the degree of Master of Science in Counseling,

Marriage and Family Therapy

By

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May 2013
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DEDICATION

A mi madre y padre, Rebeca y Jesus Sarellano, por todo el apoyo que me han brindado toda mi vida. Los quiero con todo mi corazón.

To my loving partner Amy who put up with the addition of three more years to my educational endeavors, and stayed by my side through my ongoing procrastination with a knowing look, I love you and thank you for putting up with me.

To Dalena Hunter who provided me with contraband articles when I could not procure them through the school’s collections.

To my committee members who also put up with my procrastination, but never stopped believing that I would get it done in time.

Dr. Luis Rubalcava, I thank you for agreeing to be the committee chair for a slacker like me.

J. Patrick Geary, Thank you for agreeing to join my committee even though I approached you so late.

Teresa Madden, Your ready agreement to be a member of my committee from the moment I approached you with the half formed idea and your constant encouragement helped me through those all-nighters.

The CSUN MOSAIC program for hiring me during my undergraduate years, and from whence the seeds for the program proposed here were first planted.

To my 2010 MFT/School counseling joint cohort who joined me in the journey to a master’s degree. I’m sorry to you all for exasperating you with my laid back attitude, but you are all dear to me, and I look forward to a long friendship into the future with you all.
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ABSTRACT

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The purpose of this graduate project is to create a program to work with at-risk, male Latinos, 12-17 years old, with low socioeconomic status, who have been arrested for tagging, living within the Los Angeles City limits in California. The program aims to give these young men the opportunity to practice their art while creating decals for personal electronic devices that they will then sell at artist alleys of local anime conventions. Moneys made from the sales will be redistributed to the program participants based on their participation in order to give them a chance to see that they can have a viable career option with the art they already create, as well as learning that they can make a living doing something they like to do.
Chapter 1
Introduction

The street artist Banksy recently received international coverage and attention for an art style that to some is still nothing more than a public blight, and with this attention graffiti art has begun the slow march toward legitimacy (Favell, 2010). But while Banksy’s art is shown in museums, the street artist is unable to show his face in public for fear of being arrested and deported from the many metropolitan areas where he practices his craft. When Banksy’s work is on the private walls of a museum, it is considered art, but when appearing on public walls it is considered a nuisance. According to the U.S. Department of Justice, “graffiti generates the perception of blight and heightens fear of gang activity... the appearance of graffiti is often perceived by residents and passers-by as a sign that a downward spiral has begun” (Graffitihurts.org p. 2). The fact that tagging and graffiti can be found on just about any public wall in the greater Los Angeles area leads one to wonder how many aspiring young artists in the low income areas of Los Angeles end up with misdemeanor vandalism charges for attempting to emulate what they see as an everyday form of expression and rebellion in their neighborhoods.

Purpose

The purpose of this graduate project is to create a program for working with male Latinos, 12-17 years old, with low socioeconomic status, living within the Los Angeles City limits. These are young men who are often victims of low expectations, marginalized by the adults around them and who have no aspirations for the future and whose only form of self expression is the graffiti they put on the wall. This self expression too often leads to a criminal record and puts them at risk of being labeled a criminal. The continued arrests raise the stakes and often lead to felony charges that land them in jail,
potentially starting them on a cycle of prison and crime. Furthermore, the purpose of this program is to give at-risk youth a chance to see that they can have a viable career option with the art they already create, as well as learning that they can make a living doing something they like to do.

**Statement of the Need**

Many at-risk youth who do graffiti have an artistic talent and if given an appropriate outlet, could shine or thrive as a legitimate artist. If given an acceptable format to practice their skills, one that would also allow the young graffiti artists to learn how to market their work, they would be more likely to gain the confidence to face the life ahead of them. The at-risk, graffiti artists will gain a significant sense of accomplishment from seeing their project go from conception to production, and finally to sale and profit. This sense of accomplishment will also boost their self-efficacy and self-esteem in addition to offering a new paradigm for thinking of art as a viable employment avenue and not just a route into corrections facilities.

This master’s project is an intervention for at-risk students, particularly those who have been arrested for tagging, who have an aptitude for art, but often have no acceptable outlet for their creativity. This program gives at-risk students the opportunity to express themselves through their art, and potentially make a profit. This intervention will help instill in the youth an idea counter to the message they often receive about their art. While mainstream society might be telling them that their version of art is unacceptable, and will only get them into trouble, participating in this project will help them to understand that there is potential to use their art as a career choice.
Another topic that has begun to develop a large youth following in America is anime. Anime is “any animation made in Japan. In Japan the word simply means ‘animation.’ While anime is sometimes erroneously referred to as a ‘genre,’ it is in reality an art form that includes all the genres found in cinema or literature, from heroic epics and romances to science fiction and comedy” (Poitras, 2001, p. 7).

In order to gather with other like-minded fans of anime, conventions have sprung up throughout the United States. These conventions have proliferated to the point that one can look on the AnimeCons.com website and be hard pressed to find a weekend without a convention occurring somewhere in the United States. Anime conventions are similar to professional conferences. There are panels where a participant can learn about new things in the fandom, there are “Meet and Greets” with notable people, and places where people can meet others who share a common interest. Also at these conventions there is often a separate space where enterprising artists can purchase a space for a booth in order to sell their work.

These Anime conventions may be a perfect place to showcase some artwork from youth in the program. During the course of the proposed program the youth will create decals for various electronic devices with each youth drafting at least three decals that he thinks will be worth selling at a convention in the Artists Alley. When enough decals are created a booth space will be purchased at such a convention, and the artwork that the students have created will be sold. The artists will then be invited to the given event with the understanding that they work at the booth, pushing for sales, and making commissions on decals sold on site. They will have a set time to work at the booth, after which they are free to enjoy the rest of the event if they so desire. Any money made, after
recouping the price of the booth, and the admissions fees, will go the respective artists for the works that they sell. In addition to working at their booth, many of the youths will be given an opportunity to develop and give a presentation at the convention regarding graffiti as an art form. This will result in an increase in entrepreneurial skills, as well as enhanced self-esteem and a voice where they can share their views with others.

In addition, the program may be implemented at the schools at which the youth attend and the school may offer extra-curricular class credit for their involvement. This is especially likely to occur if the school sees that the student has made a significant effort. Another possibility is including such art and involvement in this activity as part of an art program or course in school, thus giving both the art form and the artists legitimacy.

**Definition of Terms**

The following is a list of terms defined for the purposes of this project:

Anime – Japanese Animation – “an art form that includes all the genres found in cinema or literature, from heroic epics and romances to science fiction and comedy” (Poitras, 2001, p. 7) generally made in Japan.

Anime Convention – Multi day events that feature activities and events centered on anime “for fans to gather, talk, buy merchandise and videos, party, gets silly, and have lots of fun” (Poitras, 2001, p.79)


Graffiti – “Obscenities or gang names scrawled on walls or other flat surfaces, which most people consider vandalism. It is also a distinctive art form” (Uschan, 2010, p. 9).
Tag – “Term graffiti artist use for the elaborate signatures they place on walls and other public areas” (Uschan, 2010, p.9).

In order to better understand the concept of using art intervention to help at-risk youth, it is necessary to discuss the concept, along with issues regarding at-risk adolescents, interventions and the possibility of using anime as a medium, which will be discussed in the following chapter.
Chapter 2

Literature Review

Before any discussion regarding potential interventions, it is necessary to reflect on the work that others have done to help build the foundation for the work that is planned, and better understand the issues regarding the development of graffiti art and anime that can be utilized by youth to better themselves and create a door of opportunity. This chapter will first define the population toward which this work will target. Then the focus will change to what makes a person “at-risk,” why males are more susceptible to such risk, why Latinos are more susceptible to those risks, and how that risk affects them. I will then follow that up by an examination of art, graffiti, and anime, what each is, how they are all related, how the targeted group relates to each, and how art can be a protective factor for the targeted group. Lastly we will discuss work done by others that utilize art as a deterrent or an intervention and their effectiveness in attaining the goals they set out to achieve.

Population

In the interest of clarifying the target audience of this project, it is important to define the term “Latino.” While it can identify a large population of people, for purposes of this project, Latino’s are those whose ethnic heritage includes countries from Mexico, Central America, South America, and some Caribbean countries who reside within the boundaries of the city of Los Angeles. According to the 2010 census ("Los Angeles (city) QuickFacts from the US Census Bureau", n.d.), the population of the city of Los Angeles was 3,792,621, of that total, 48.5 percent self identified on the census as having a Latino origin. In addition, of the entire population for the city of Los Angeles, 23.1% were
reported to be under the age of 18. The intervention proposed in this program is designed for the young men of that target population.

When looking at the Los Angels Unified School District (LAUSD) attendee data ("Ed-Data Website", n.d.) for the same time frame we see that their total enrollment throughout the entire area the district covers of the city of Los Angeles is 667,251. Of that, 73.4% or 489,617 students are identified as Hispanic/Latino and 51% of that, or 250,043 students in LAUSD, are male Latinos. Also of note is that of the total enrollment at LAUSD 74.3% or 496,060 students in the district were on the Free and Reduced Lunch program for the 2010-11 time frames. This figure is important to note because the free and reduced lunch program is part of the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs that allows students in school with “incomes at or below eligible levels... ...who receive Food Stamps, California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids (CalWORKs), Kinship Guardianship Assistance Payments (KinGAP) or Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR) benefits are automatically eligible for free meals” (Los Angeles Unified School District, 2012, p. 1). Thus, if we are also to target such members of the student body who attend the LAUSD it would be prudent to seek to provide help to the more economically disadvantaged in the area by providing them the benefits of the program being put forth.

Another issue to clarify is the age range of Latino’s intended to be the target of this intervention. The age range being targeted is between 12 and 19, which is very important from a developmental standpoint. As Erikson (1950) posited, this age range includes the time in which a person is engaging in two important developmental stages of psychosocial development. In the earlier stage (5-12 years old) a person is engaging in
the struggle between Industry and Inferiority. In this stage a person begins to learn if what they can bring forth into the world is worthwhile. If these at-risk youth are told that what they have an interest in and what they can create has no value in the world by the authorities in their life, the youth then internalize the lesson that they have no value in the world as what they can create in it has no value (p. 258-261). In the later stage (13-19 years old) a person is engaging in the discovering who they are based on what they have learned in the prior stages about their interaction with the world and the people with whom they surround themselves and interact. Those artistic youth who find themselves rounded up by officers of the law and placed in jails and holding cells with others who have broken the law, will in this crucial juncture, begin to identify with those they find themselves surrounded by. Those same youth will begin to take on the dress and manner of those they continue to be placed with, further marking them in society’s eyes as deviants, and unwanted, an identity they will start to believe about themselves, further opening them up to the risks that can lead to further incarceration (p. 261-263).

Risk

What causes young people to be considered “at-risk”? The Interagency Working Group on Youth Programs (IWGYP, 2011) considers risk factors “conditions that increase the likelihood that youth will get into trouble or expose themselves to danger” (p. 2) At face value it appears that such activities could be easy enough to avoid. If one does not do things that will get him/her in trouble then he or she would not be at risk. According to the IWGYP, in relation to peers and community, the risk factors, that often relate to young male Latinos include:

Peer-related at risk behaviors:

- Association with delinquent and/or aggressive peers
Gang involvement/membership
Peer alcohol, tobacco and/or other drug use
Peer rejection

Community-related at risk issues:

- Availability of alcohol and other drugs
- Availability of firearms
- Community crime/high crime neighborhood
- Community instability
- Economic deprivation; poverty, residence in disadvantaged area
- Community instability
- Feeling unsafe in the neighborhood
- Low community attachment
- Neighborhood youth in trouble
- Social and physical disorder; disorganized neighborhood (p. 5)

In addition the IWGYP asserts that “the greater the intensity or number of risk factors, the greater the likelihood that youth will engage in delinquent or other risky behaviors” (2011, p. 3). Thus it becomes more surprising when a teenager is able to succeed after growing up in that kind of environment.

Likewise, in their study of 4432 youth throughout 37 middle schools from four communities which they claimed had "a high percentage of minority students and students living in single parent homes", Henry, Tolan, Gorman-Smith, and Schoeny. (2012) set out to examine "risk and direct protective factors for youth violence" (p. 568). When they processed their data they found a multitude of risk factors including alcohol
and/or drug use, individual delinquency, attention problems, poor study skills, negative attitudes toward school, and delinquent behavior of peers (p. 571). Whereas they only really stated two items from the factors they accounted for to be protective factors. They found academic achievement and good study skills to be protective factors stating "The direct protective effects of high academic achievement are significant, substantial, and consistent across ethnic groups" (p. 574), going so far as to suggest "improving study skills among middle-school youth may be an important strategy for reducing later risk for violence" (p. 574). Of particular interest to the topic of this program was their finding that "Risk from nonviolent delinquency, delinquency of peers, and alcohol/drug use appears to vary by race/ethnicity" (p. 571). Adding that "alcohol and drug use appear to pose a greater than average risk for Latino/Hispanic youth" (p. 571), some of the very factors specified by the IWGYP, but Henry, et al. found a factor that is a bigger risk for the population intended to be the target of this program.

Another study chose to take a rather binary approach to racial breakdown by excluding Hispanics from the study because of prior research that found the inclusion of Hispanics with whites raises the results of risks for whites in Black/White racial comparisons, but Hispanic/Others comparisons skew the results lower because Whites are included in with the "Others" category (Like 2011 p 435), Like chose to keep her study clearly binary by actively attempting to exclude other ethnic origins. The risks that Like chose were racial segregation and economic inequality as factors that affected disadvantage among blacks much more than it did whites for violent victimization (p. 435), actually finding that the inequalities worked as protective factors for whites (p. 436). Included in that segregation and income inequality comes the issue that many
minorities can only live in areas that are more disadvantaged which raises their risk of experiencing violence or being victimized (p. 438). In addition, that same income inequality makes it difficult for those minorities to leave such neighborhoods, further exposing them to the risks. Taking that, with what Like references from another study, Like states that Asians are the least likely to experience racial segregation from Whites, stating that Hispanics experience that segregation as “lying between that of Asians and Blacks” (p. 436) we can try to extrapolate the results of her work to say that while Hispanics do not experience the same level of economic inequality or racial segregation as blacks, they can still experience similar risks from those racial inequalities depending perhaps on where that particular Hispanic person would fall in the White/Black divide. Thus, with this study we find two more risk factors that the population targeted for this program encounter.

Another researcher used data from a longitudinal study of youth by the Bureau of Labor Statistics of 12-14 year olds that included “delinquency levels, arrests, and other legal and social indicators” (Tapia 2011 p 370) via self report or parent report and assessments of the areas the participants live in by the interviewers. Tapia’s initial belief that gang membership and racial minority status would increase the risk that the youth would experience arrests and that led him to three hypotheses. The first hypothesis was that the youth who said they were in gangs would be arrested more than those who said they were not. The second hypothesis was that racial minority status would also increase the chance that the youth will be arrested when compared to the white youth who participated in the study. And the third hypothesis Tapia suggests is to wonder if there even is interaction between gang membership and race (p. 370-371).
In order to test his ideas Tapia looked for the number of delinquent acts the study participants claim to have participated in during the past year and subjecting them to data analyses that check for “between group differences by gang membership status (subject to change) and racial minority status, a constant” (p. 377) These acts ranged from minor delinquencies such as drug use and vandalism to serious delinquencies such as assault, property crime, or drug sales (p. 371-373). What he found was that his first hypothesis was supported (p. 377) which Tapia suspected would result as such. Regarding Tapia’s second hypothesis he found that “The significant effect for Hispanics is suppressed until criminal history enters,” (p. 378) at which point his theory is supported for Hispanic youth. As for the third hypothesis he did find that there is interaction between gang membership and race stating “gang membership status increases the expected number of arrests for Black youth by 62 percent” (p. 382) and “45 percent for Hispanic youth” (p. 382) even seeing the results of one of the analyses as 68% larger than the result for whites in gangs.

Another aspect to consider is the involvement in delinquency by the at-risk youth this program seeks to help. Powell, Perreira, Mullan Harris (2009) while also quoting prior work stated that delinquency starts around 11 years of age and generally drops at age 18 on the belief that during adolescence a person experiences some adult responsibilities without the full freedom that comes with being an adult (p. 477). While some factors could mitigate the time frame in which an adolescent would indulge in delinquent behavior, other factors could lengthen the time frame in which a person is involved in delinquent behavior into early adulthood (p. 478). What Powell, Perreira and Mullan Harris expected was to discover if the factors of race, gender and immigrant
generation lengthen or shorten the time frame of involvement in delinquent behavior during adolescence (p. 478). What they found was that second generation black and white respondents engage in delinquent behaviors earlier and to a higher degree than Asian and Hispanic respondents who engage in the behaviors into early adulthood (p.492). They also found that while Asians and Hispanics of all generations engage in higher delinquency earlier in adolescence than Blacks and Whites, the differences disappears as the person gets older (p. 492) leading them to state “the second-generation children of immigrants engaged in more delinquent behavior than children of U.S.-born parents at the onset of adolescence” (p. 497). The results led Powell, Perreira and Mullan Harris to suggest emphasizing prevention and intervention to curb delinquent behavior earlier in adolescence with special attention to second generation children that touches on the cultural differences between their home environment and their social environment (p. 497).

In addition to the risk factors that youth encounter, it is important to consider their own perceptions of what their future holds, as well as to what extent they think education will help them in achieving their goals. When asking urban youth what they thought school would be able to do for them, Jackson, Kacanksi, Rusk and Beck (2006) indicated that “a higher level of beliefs in the limitations of education (school and work barrier beliefs) was significantly associated with lower educational and career aspirations“ (p. 11). As Brown and Rodriguez (2009) discovered, often what students are encountering are “classrooms where instruction appeared to be meaningless, not challenging, or insulting” (p. 12). Is it then any wonder that the students are disengaged? However, Ali, McWirt and Chronister (2005) note that although peers and siblings can often be risk
factors, “building and accessing support from similar age role models, such as siblings and peers, to strengthen self-efficacy beliefs may be of particular value for youth from lower SES backgrounds” (p. 16). In regards to the outlook these students have in regards to their schooling Jackson et al. (2006) indicate that, “these beliefs may reduce their aspirations, undermine their effort and persistence in educational and career development, and further constrain their future achievement” (p. 11). In addition to these factors, it is important to also consider financial pressures facing urban Latino youth. Howard et al. (2010) assert that “the need for further education (and the related expenditure of resources) as the foremost obstacle to pursuing future career options” (p. 11). For many of these youth the need to contribute to the families finances add an extra burden on them, which leads these youth to put off thoughts of their own futures.

Now that we have learned what others have to say about the risk factors associated with being a male minority from less affluent neighborhoods as well as learning just what some of those risks are, we turn our attention to the more expressive form of art and its benefits.

Art

In addition to focusing on the environmental affects on young male Latinos in urban areas, it is important to address what art is, and what shapes it can take, including a focus on new forms, such as graffiti and anime, that can influence these youth. In order to start talking about art, it would be a good idea to start where Janson and Janson (1992) start and ask: What is art? They say, “Art is an aesthetic object. It is meant to be looked at and appreciated for its intrinsic value” (p. 9) and draw distinctions between artisans and artists by saying “Whereas the artisan attempts only what is known to be possible, the artist is always driven to attempt the impossible, or at least the improbable, or
unimaginable” (p.11-12). While they agree that a work of art needs to be unique, they argue that no piece of art is truly unique and all art is linked to the past and the future (p. 13).

Uschan (2010) also picked up on the idea that art is linked to the past by starting his book talking about cave painting (p. 10) as some of the first instances of graffiti modern man created to communicate his existence, a belief he also attributes to the young mostly Black and Hispanic youth that first began practicing what is now commonly know as graffiti (p. 11). Another example of Uschan establishing the links is how he builds the links from the earliest cave paintings to the inclusion of written language into the gang culture usurpation into the stylistic form it is now known for. While graffiti is often associated with gang membership, as Uschan quotes, for some of the more famous graffiti artists who have gone on to become successful, graffiti was the vehicle through which to avoid gang involvement and become goal oriented (p. 97).

So what can the graffiti created by someone in the age range targeted by this program tell us? Peters (1990) sought to attempt to decode what some of the work created by male students in a southern California high school for delinquents would say about that student’s social class (p. 3). To do so he provided a folder to each of the students that only the owner was allowed to use, with use of a folder by another expressly forbidden (p. 3). The students were allowed to decorate the folder as they so wished and the content of the folders images were what was analyzed (p. 3). The content was then separated into three themes thus: “the ‘love’ category consisted of the symbols and phrases concerned with the boys’ friendships and romantic relationships with girls. The ‘belonging’ category included graffiti that appeared to assert one's identity, membership, affiliation, or status in
a given group, gang, community, or ethnic subculture. The 'extremism’ graffiti included symbols, pictures, and words that appeared to take certain standard values or norms to the extreme, often for the obvious purpose of offensiveness or shock value” (p. 3). Peters then hypothesized that student who come from the lower class would create more work that involved belonging and that middle class student would create more extremist work (p. 3). While his hypothesis was proven correct after analysis, Peters still warns that people working with school age youth should shy away from thinking that all lower class students are only worried about fitting in, and that middle class students are seeking to “offend their elders” (p. 6). He goes on to suggest interventions for counselors working with student based on their social status as well as what kind of behavior to expect from students of different social classes. While the study specifically mentions counselors, one would be hard pressed to believe that the suggestions mentioned in this study would not work for anyone who works with high school age youth.

Graffiti as an art form has become so prevalent, and spread throughout the world, that an entire episode of a Japanese animated show (anime) *Samurai Champloo* was dedicated to one of the main characters expressing his self through the medium of graffiti.

Anime is also a form of art that Napier (2005) regards as “important for its growing global popularity but it is also a cultural form whose themes and modes reach across arbitrary aesthetic boundaries to strike significant artistic and psychological cords” (p. 14). Yet when talking about it in relation to American animation styles and themes she reports that anime is more oriented toward adult themes with story lines that are more complex that any animated fare in America (p. 17) going so far as to say “While it is also
true that anime contains more upbeat fare with at least marginal ‘happy endings,’ even these are often more complex and less obviously one note than the equivalent American sitcom” (p. 33). Poitras (2001) agrees with Napier recalling his first encounter with anime he says, ”it was very different from any American animation I had ever seen, and much more like European cinema” (p. 21). Both Napier and Poitras claim that it is those differences from American animation that drive many adults (and teenagers) to enjoy Anime more than American animations.

Now that we have discussed how certain types of graffiti can also be forms of art, as well as the art in the form of anime, and how its subject matter makes it a draw for teenagers in America, we can turn our attention to intervention work that has been tested to include graffiti in improving outcomes for their participants.

**Other art intervention work**

With a better understanding regarding issues young Latino males from the city must face, and insights regarding what constitutes art, it is important to focus on research and activities others have done in relation to the possible benefits that can arise from interventions similar to the project being described in the current study and what those works sought to achieve. Unfortunately, even though anime has been shown in America since the early 1960’s there is very little academic work including its involvement in intervention work and as such the program proposed in this paper is heading into uncharted territory in using anime to curb at-risk youths’ behaviors that put the at risk. On the other hand, Creedon (2010) indicates that, “the arts can be especially important in inner-city neighborhoods plagued by violence and where the resulting stress can be particularly damaging to children” (p. 1). Using art can help these youth work through
their anxiety and anger while providing them a more socially acceptable outlet for their emotions than those experienced in their surroundings (2010).

One study that is of particular import to the subject of this paper is the work by Miller and Rowe (2008) in which they evaluate art intervention programs in order to discover what practices lead to more effective programs. They chose to investigate a program like the one being put forth in this paper that seeks to “serve as a crime prevention program for youths who have not been involved with the police, and as a diversion program for youths who have been arrested. The latter have the option of attending the Prodigy program in lieu of going to court” (p. 53) much like the population intended to be the target of this program. What Miller and Rowe discovered is that there is a dearth of information on involvement in a visual art program as intervention and as such they expanded their work to test “generally effective principles to follow when one is implementing social service programming” (p. 53). When they were able to start analyzing best practices, they found that two important components of effective programs were, the type of relationship built between participants and the facilitators, with greater results when participants were mentored by fellow participants with more experience (p. 59), and that incentives and rewards for the participants are integral factors that lead to successful programs (p. 60).

According to Franco (2010), some schools are using the very term graffiti for history lessons in order to pique students’ interest in the subject, by couching the lesson in a term and activity that enhances relevance by relating to the activity of writing on walls. While the program uses the term, the activity is safe by not actually defacing any of the walls, and while the name may interest some students, as soon as the lesson starts
those same students may lose interest in the lesson while feeling lied to about the work being done in class that day (2010).

Using another approach, the Art Therapy Connection Program, as developed by Sutherland, Waldman and Collins (2010), is an approach which is similar to that being presented in the current project and gives the participants a more natural realistic experience of what they experience in their everyday lives. The program intends for it’s work to “encourage group identity, group cohesion, and cooperation,” with the programs primary goals being “encourage the development of social interest (caring for self and others) in order to foster respectful, supportive, and positive relationships among students, therapists, school staff, and parents” (2010, p. 4[72]). Through their work Sutherland et al indicate that after participating in the program “students begin to move from feeling discouraged to feeling encouraged, they become more open, actively creative, and receptive to learning” (p. 3). Participants in the program begin to show a marked change in their very outlook. The students are more involved in school, and begin to take a more active role within the group, which leads to an improvement in school work and the development of healthier ways to cope with everyday life stressors. The different activities provided by the program are also encouraging. In this program “students are encouraged to express their emotions on a wall covered in paper in each of the art therapy rooms. In this safe environment, students have used the Anger and Frustration Wall (or, simply, The Wall) to express publicly and anonymously all the things that are troubling them at the moment. Students are required to follow four basic rules when drawing on The Wall, especially because The Wall is not entirely private: (a) do not sign your name or write anyone else’s name, (b) no swear or cuss words, (c) be
respectful of other students’ work, and (d) no gang signs or symbols” (2010, p. 3). This approach to the need to express their emotions on public space is more like the experience youth have out in the real world. And just like in the real world, the rule of being respectful of others’ work also translates to the experience outside of school, as any defacing of another’s markings will be construed as an insult and can escalate to dangerous proportions. The program provides many interesting propositions for therapeutic approaches using artistic projects that can be focused on and used in the guidelines developed for the current project

Schwartz and Pace (2008) had another approach to the art project whose emphasis was academically oriented as well, but appeared more natural to the participants. These researchers used the foundation of Bandura’s vicarious learning theory by having their program take place on a college campus. This opportunity gave the students “an opportunity to go outside their everyday world and be exposed to the cultural literacy through the arts” as seen at the college’s art center (p. 3). After showing the students an exhibit at the college campus, Schwartz and Pace encouraged the participating students to emulate the work they saw using their own experiences and thoughts to create their own artistic works. Doing this project allowed the participants to learn that “arts provide a means to contribute their ideas in a positive and powerful way” (p. 5). In addition to being able to see that their personal work can be seen as a positive, the students felt that the value of their work the program “engendered greater feelings of self-esteem and pride in the students” (2008, p. 5). According to Creedon (2011), in addition to helping students feel that their ideas are valued and boosting the self-esteem of students, art “can help children reduce and manage their stress” (p. 1)
In addition, Liu and Rutledge (1996) show that such intense involvement in artistic project results in their “interest and involvement in the projects were reflected in the increase of their on-task behavior and the amount of time spent working on the project” “real world implication of the task and its usefulness to the future became important motivational sources” “showed a significant growth in their value of intrinsic goals” ”such an environment offered a promising opportunity for students to exercise and develop their higher order thinking skills” (p. 24)

Brewer decides that the intent of his work was to give graffiti writers an opportunity to feel as if they were involved in the decision making process to affect change on a city’s graffiti policy (p. 188). To start his study he broke down what he calls Hip Hop Graffiti (HHG) into two classes, “Elite writers” or those who “constitute the smaller but higher status class, concentrate on the painting of pieces and view themselves above all as artists” and “taggers” who as a “lower status class, focus their writing efforts on the production of tags and throw-ups” (p. 188). Brewer chose to focus on those he called “writers” for his study explaining how they make connections with other such writers throughout their city and the world, describing how these connections can lead to mentor/mentee situations between the different writers to exchange skills and knowledge (p. 188). Brewer chose to question writer participants mainly from the west coast of America if they were “aware of the various strategies to fight illegal HHG, and do writers have alternative strategies in mind?” and do the writers from three different cities agree on how they evaluate those strategies (p. 189). After making a list of 16 different strategies that the writers have experienced as graffiti deterrents, Brewer had his participants rank them on perceived effectiveness, personal preference and cost of
implementing (p. 191). What he found was that most of the participants claimed they would participate in legal alternatives to practice graffiti if it made them famous or let them connect with other writers they look up to (p. 194), though the respondents do admit that even if there were places to legally practice their craft there would be some who would still practice it where it was not allowed (p. 194). One response Brewer received regarding the effectiveness of legal programs required they be “comprehensive and community wide, adequately and continually funded, open to all writers, and work as much as possible within the framework of writers' values and social organization” (p. 194). From such a response we can take a few guidelines for the effectiveness of the proposed program such as the importance of taking into account the values and social organization of the program’s participants.

Craw, Leland, Bussel, Munday, and Walsh (2006) begin their work by readily admitting that there is artistic skill involved in the creation of some graffiti. What they were looking for was to see if there would be any benefit to covering graffiti and replacing it with a mural (p. 427). In order to test this idea, they chose a wall in an alley between two shopping streets (p. 427) that they repainted and left for two weeks to see how much new graffiti it would attract as a blank space (p. 428). After two weeks they repainted the whole wall and after separating it into thirds, Craw, et al. covered the third that had attracted the most graffiti in the prior two weeks with a mural (p. 428). After another two weeks they saw that the mural section did get less graffiti than the other sections of the wall, even though it was the section of wall furthest from the entrances of the alley (p. 431). When they followed up with the wall three months after the mural had been put up, they found that even though there had been some new graffiti done on the
section with the mural, it was still not equivalent to the amount of graffiti that had appeared on that same section when it was blank when accounting for the time the had transgressed (p. 431) leading them to the conclusion that “Although murals do not necessarily extinguish or prevent graffiti from occurring, there is evidence that they can help to discourage graffiti attacks” (432).

In a study from the Netherlands, Smeijsters, Kil, Kurstjens, Welten, and Willemars (2011) were looking for ways in which art therapy could be used as interventions for young offenders and what could be done to improve on the art interventions already in use by their juvenile court system (p. 41). They chose to focus on what they believed were four core problems they thought were related to risk factors. Those four core problems were Self Image, Emotions, Interaction, and Cognitions (p. 44-45) and through the study Smeijsters, et al. were able to learn which art intervention modalities work best for which core problem as well as suggestions of interventions using each art modality. Of particular interest for this program is that Smeijsters, et al, actually name graffiti as an art therapy treatment to assist with the core problem of self image (p. 47), which is also a skill this program seeks to instill in its participants.

Now that we have seen what others have to say about the population targeted by this program, we are more aware of what risks are especially relevant to teenaged Latino males as well as what in these young men’s lives open them up to those risks. We also discussed how graffiti and anime can be classified as art and why they are such a draw for young people. Then we discussed prior studies in which others have utilized art as therapy, and graffiti as the draw for teenagers to improve behaviors from slipping grades to reasons for incarceration. So now that we know best practices and how an art
intervention program can be beneficial for at-risk teenaged Latino males, in the following chapter I will propose the outline of the program as well as the requirement for staff and equipment that will facilitate the running of the program.
Chapter 3

Introduction

As the research indicates, there is ample need for protective factors for teenaged Latino males from Los Angeles. Henry, et al. (2012) specified three risk factors that affect most youth, but they spoke of the particular risk that alcohol and drugs pose for Latino youth (p. 571). This master’s project is an intervention for at-risk students, particularly those who have been arrested for tagging, who have an aptitude for art but often have no acceptable outlet for their creativity. The purpose of this program is to give at-risk youth a chance to see that they can have a viable career option with the art they already create, as well as learning that they can make a living doing something they enjoy.

In this chapter, I will discuss the intended audience for this intervention. I will also discuss who will run and provide the intervention, and what makes them qualified to do so. In addition, I will present the space and equipment needed for successful implementation of the intervention. Lastly, an outline of the timeframe for the intervention as well as extra activities the participants can enjoy while participating in the program will be presented in order to get a sense of the time commitment necessary for this intervention.

Intended audience

As was stated in the literature review, delinquency tends to be more common for teenaged minority males in urban areas that are made up primarily of low income minority populations work such at the one by Powell, Perreira and Mullan Harris (2010) which opened our eyes to the group of second generation children of immigrants who
have a higher likelihood of engaging in delinquency. In addition, the literature also states the population most commonly arrested for graffiti tends to be teenage males ages 11-21 in those same low-income urban areas. Furthermore, the younger a person starts offending and entering into legal trouble, the more likely they are to make a career of it. A program such as the one proposed in this project can interrupt that path into career offending and allow the at-risk youth to discover other talents and career choices open to them.

With that in mind, the projected population for this intervention are Latino males, aged 13 to 18, who have been arrested for graffiti, and who have been sentenced community service as part of their probation. In order to work with this population, a relationship will be established between this program’s support staff and the probation department of the local juvenile justice system. The agreement would require the juvenile justice system to allow a juvenile to participate in the program as part of their probation or community service hours requirement with an understanding that the program participant will not reoffend.

Before I start outlining the program, in the interest of simplifying to lower the variables that would require excessive shoulds and woulds in this chapter, let us assume that partnership agreements have been made with local middle and high school counselors as well as with the local juvenile justice systems in order to receive program participants from both, as well as space to work in from one of the schools. This agreement would have the juvenile justice system offering involvement in the program as an alternative to youth in their system, who has been arrested for vandalism, specifically tagging, as their community service option. The agreement with school counselors would
allow the counselors to offer involvement in the program as an art elective opportunity during after school hours for students in need of elective credits.

**Personnel and qualifications**

The staffing requirements for successful implementation of a program such as the one suggested in this paper do not require a large workforce. At bare minimum a supervisor, and one facilitator can start the program with further facilitators being added as program participation increases with past program graduates being capable of facilitating.

People to be considered for staff positions would need to be versed in the use of the necessary tools or competent enough to learn their use. They should understand the vernacular of people involved in the street/graffiti lifestyle and, depending on the makeup of the community, may need to be bilingual as well. Ultimately for inclusion as staff a person does not need any specialized training. While teacher training may be beneficial, if the person being considered for a staff position is personable, has experience working intimately with youth, enjoys being around teenaged youth and considers himself an artist who may or may not specialize in a similar medium they would be a welcome addition into the staff roster.

**Location and Equipment**

The space requirements for successful implementation of the program being proposed are two fold because of the various stages of the program. For the initial production stage of the program, meeting space would depend on the resources of the space in which the program is being run. If the location has ample resources, the program
will benefit from having its own space. However, in the initial stage as long as the participants have tables, chairs, and art supplies to work with the program can be started.

Later in this stage of the program, when a product is ready to be reproduced, then some indoor space would be required. An indoor space, such as an office or spare room, would be beneficial as such machines as a computer, sticker maker, and a cutting machine all require electricity to run. Office space or a spare room at a participating school would be an ideal place in which program participants can make use of computers to finalize their product, start making copies of the finished product, and cut them to the desired shape.

In the selling stage of the program is when the space requirement changes. This space requirement is dependent on the event in which the product sale is happening. Once again, a table and chairs are the bare minimum required for implementation. That said, permission to do business at a particular anime convention’s artist alley will need to be received after which the convention will specify which stall the program can use to sell its products. After the stall is procured, the program participants will have to come to consensus as to the layout and decoration of the stall for the sale of the product created in the previous stage of the program. To push the sale of the participants' created products at the stall, wire grid panels and clips will be used to create a display of the finished products. In addition, more of the products will be displayed in clear plastic sleeves held in a three ring binder that will be categorized by electronic device and by participant. A cash box, which will be controlled by a facilitator to store the money from the product sales and from which to produce change for the purchases, will also be required for this section of the program. In addition, art supplies will be necessary during this stage for the
creation of commission works by the participants. For the commission work, the sticker maker will also have to be present at the stall as well as the electronic cutting machine to cut the stickers to the required specifications of a particular electronic device.

Outline of the project

The outline for this project can be broken down into four major sections that will be further detailed next. To delineate the breakdown of this section, the first section of the program is what we will call the “Intake/Introduction” section. Following that section will be the “Product brainstorming/creation” section. Next is the “Event/Sale” section of the program. After that is the last section which is the “Wrap-up/debriefing” section.

Intake

During the Intake section of the program, the participant, received from the schools or juvenile justice system, is introduced to the staff and other participants. They are further told of the rules and expectations while involved in the program, and the consequences for non-compliance of the rules. The four stages are explained to the new participant, and the tools and equipment explained for their proper use and the regulations of their use.

Brainstorming

The brainstorming/creation section is in itself made up of two parts. The two parts are “before event selection” and “after event selection”. In the before event selection, each participant is introduced to the templates and encouraged to create as many of the templates as they can. When the participants feel they have a good selection of decal designs created for as many templates as they like, an event is selected where they will
display and sell their creations. This is when we enter the “after event selection” part of this section.

During the second half of this section, the participants come to consensus regarding which participants’ work will be included for sale at the program’s stall. The participants will also have to come to a decision regarding how much of each product to make to take along for sale and start working on producing that many of each product. During this step the participants will be encouraged to write a short biography of who they are, what the program’s goals are, and what they wish to accomplish by being involved in the program for display at the stall. In addition the program participants will have to create a schedule for all those who wish to participate in working at the event to promote sales and to create commission items at the event. At this stage, those not wanting to participate in the promotion/selling at the event will be encouraged to create a 25-50 minute presentation for the event where they talk about the program and its goals, as well as talk about how graffiti art is a legitimate art form.

Event

The Event/Sale stage of the program is when the actual sale of product and presentation is done. The participants will be required to assist in the set up of the stall at the beginning of the event and of the break down of the stall at the end. At this point, participant compliance of the schedules and social interaction is evaluated. Inter and intrapersonal strengths can be identified based on the participants’ interactions with their peers in a stressful situation as well as with the potential customers at the event. During the event it will also fall on the participants to stay appraised of stock levels and how much money is being taken in, even though the cash box will be directly overseen by one
of the facilitators. The participants involved in the presentation will also be evaluated for how well prepared they were to present and how well they perform in front of an audience.

Debrief

The “wrap-up/debriefing” stage of the program happens at the next program meeting after the event, preferably after the participants have had some time to relax after the event. During this stage participants will be encouraged to provide feedback about the event and each other’s participation in the event. The final sales numbers for the event will be shared along with what items sold best and then compared to the participant’s predictions before the event. The accounting will be explained and each participant will receive a share based on what the individual sold. At this point the participants are given a choice to continue with the program for another round of production and sales for another event right away with their current stock, or to regroup for a couple months and attempt to make other products that they think might sell better at another event. The option for another round will depend on whether the participant is involved in the program as part of their probation or as a community service hours requirement and if the latter, how many hours are still required in their sentence.

After the event’s debriefing, the participants will be encouraged to reflect on the skills and lessons they have learned from their participation in the program. They will be encouraged to reflect on what they have learned about themselves and their craft, and whether they think it has opened new career options for them. After the reflection they will write an essay about their reflections and what options the participants think are open to them now that they have gone through the program. At the end, a culmination can be
held for the participants for successful completion of the program where their essays will be read aloud to the participants' family members, and legal team who wish to be present for the event. At the culmination, the participants will be given a typed copy of their essay along with an art portfolio folder with the participant’s contribution to the program’s sales making up the first sleeves in the portfolio.

Now that we have provided an outline of program intended in this paper, we will turn our attention to describing how the program will be implemented in greater detail and suggestions for implementing it in the local Los Angeles city area.
Chapter 4

Format

With the scholastic calendar ranging from August to the following June there are three anime conventions that occur during that time frame that have a minimum of three months between them which will allow the participants time to be involved in the program and create products for sale. Those three events are Pacific Media Expo held in November, Anime Los Angeles, which happens in January, and Anime Expo which is held in July. The timing of the first even in November gives enough time to receive the first wave of participants from school counselors near the beginning of the academic year. The second event occurs in a time that is the middle of the academic calendar and as such can provide credit for the school provided participants to receive academic credit for the previous semester. The final event is just after the end of the academic school year, but credit can be applied as a summer session credit for the school participants. The ongoing nature of the three events also allows for the involvement of juvenile justice participants into the program with some slight delays in their ability to join the program, but with the overlap of the November and January events, juvenile justice participants can be involved in two waves of the program to make use of the best practices Miller and Rowe (2008) mentioned for the participants to be experienced mentors to the new academic participants joining for the January event. The program will be a three hour meeting held weekly in the classroom of a local partnership school for three to four months leading up to participation in the artist alley of one of those anime conventions.
Recruitment

As mentioned in the previous chapter, we will continue to assume that the recruitment of 6-10 participants per wave will be the result of partnership agreements with local schools and the juvenile justice system. From the schools, counselors offer students in need of elective credits the opportunity to participate in the program as an art elective during the student’s after school hours. From the juvenile justice system, juvenile offenders arrested for tagging will be offered involvement in the program as a way to complete their community service hours sentences. As the partnership agreements would require proof of attendance for successful completion of requirements, strict attendance records will be kept with the participants sign in time being marked by staff at the participant’s arrival and their sign out time also marked by staff when the participant leaves. This attendance record will be furnished to the parole officer of participants from the juvenile justice system so the officer may be aware of the level of involvement of the participant to measure whether the community service hours are being completed or if the participant needs to be given a harsher sentence. The records will also be provided to the counselors of participants involved in the program for school credit so the counselor can evaluate if the student has been involved enough in the program to warrant art elective credits.

Intake

The first session of each wave will begin with a round of introductions by the staff members and participants. The staff members will encourage the participants to share their name, age, hobbies, and lead them in a general ice-breaker so the participants
can get to know each other. The staff members will then give the participants an explanation of the program’s goals and format as well as the planned schedule for meetings. Next, with staff facilitation, the participants are invited to create behavioral standards to which they will be held as well as the consequences for violating the standards they create. The standards will be recorded and written on a large poster board that will be signed by the participants as their agreement to uphold the standards they created for display at future meetings. After the standards are finalized, the staff will lead the participants in a discussion of the participants’ experiences with art, views on art and graffiti as art, and expectations from involvement in the program. After the discussion an anime video of a popular series will be shown to end the meeting. Because even anime series aimed at young children often have objectionable content for American sensibilities, as the participants are being signed out, they will be provided with information packets and permission slips for the parents to provide informed consent for the participants to be allowed to watch the videos intended to be shown throughout their involvement in the program.

**Brainstorming/Creation**

The first half hour of all meetings will be time in which the participants can catch up on each others’ accomplishments or set backs from the previous week. The next hour can consist of the staff members leading the participants in a discussion, having a guest speaker, or watching anime.

In the next hour of the first couple of sessions, the participants will be introduced to the templates for the most commonly used electronic devices so that they may become accustomed to the size restrictions of their preferred medium and engage in an artistic
endeavor with the intent of starting to think of what end products they would like to make for sale at the end of the program. In the next four to five sessions, the participants use this time practice and think of what they would like their finished product to look like. At the sixth or seventh session the participants will be encouraged to make a decision whether they will participate in the anime convention or wait for the next one and continue brainstorming ideas. If the decision to participate in the upcoming event is taken, during the artistic time, the clients will be lead in discussion to create consensus on which participants work will be included for sale, and how many of each product to make for sale. Following consensus, this time can be dedicated in the following five to six weeks replicating the amount decided on and writing short autobiographies of the participants and the program for display at the sales booth. During this time, in the two sessions before the event, the participants can begin to create a schedule of participation to decide who will assist in attempting to make sales at the booth, and who will be available to create custom decals at the booth by commission. Those not wishing to participate in helping with sales at the booth will be encouraged by the staff to create a 25-50 minute presentation for the event where they talk about the program and its goals, as well as talk about how graffiti art is a legitimate art form. After the schedule is decided on, the participants will also have to come to consensus as to the set up and design of the booth space to display all the work they choose to take to the event. In the last session before the event, this time can be take for the staff to work with the participants to learn appropriate cash handling skills to help them in providing appropriate change as well as teach them a marketable skill that can assist the clients in future employment.
Lastly, at the end of the artistic hour, another half hour will be dedicated to the participants engaging in putting away the supplies used, and cleaning of the workspace. During the last three to four sessions leading up to the event, the events of the prior hour can be cut short in order to provide the participants more time to work on scheduling, or stall design, or whatever the participants think they need to take more time on.

**Event**

With the purchase of booth space at an anime convention usually come two to three badges which allow entrance into the event and often note the holder is there to sell at the artist alley. Often the badges may be picked up a day prior to the event and a staff member can receive them to provide to the first scheduled participants who will be helping with the booth. The first scheduled participants are also expected to help with the set up of the booth and the last scheduled are to help with booth clean up. Participants will be encouraged by the program staff member present to encourage sales by talking about the program to passers-by. Participants who chose to pass on helping at the booth with the events permission will present their presentation on graffiti art and the program for other convention attendees. The participants who chose to make commission pieces will be encouraged to start making pieces to encourage passers-by to stop and see the process of creating the decals and perhaps ask for a custom piece or buy a pre-made piece.

**Debrief**

A week after the event, another session is scheduled where the staff will lead the participants in discussion about the event. The participants will be encouraged to provide constructive feedback for each other regarding their involvement at the booth or
presentation. Following that, the final sales numbers will be shared with the participants along with the sales statistics of what items were popular, and which were not. After explaining the accounting and recouping the cost of the booth, if there is a profit, based on percentage of items sold each participant will receive a share of the sales equivalent to the number of their art pieces that sold. At this point the school-based participants will be provided with their attendance sheets to take to their counselor for art class credit. The parole officers of the Juvenile justice participants will be consulted to ascertain how much of their sentence they have served. If more time is required by the participants, they are encouraged to continue with the program for the next wave of school based participants so that they may serve as more experienced mentors for the new participants.

For those Juvenile Justice participants who have completed their sentence, they will be encouraged to reflect on what they have learned about themselves and their craft, and whether they think it has opened new career options for them. After the reflection they will write an essay about what they thought and what options the participants think are open to them now that they have gone through the program. For those Juvenile Justice participants who have completed their hours requirements, there will be a culminating event where the participants who have completed their requirement will be allowed to invite their family and any others they wish to invite to hear the participants reflection and witness the participant receive a portfolio folder with the participant’s contributions making up the first sleeves of an art portfolio.

Now that we have discussed in detail the workings of the proposed program, we can turn our attention to discussing potential variation to the program that will keep the
essence of the program as it has been described in this chapter, but that will allow it to be implemented in other environments with much the same results.
Chapter 5

While the present project focused on a particular population, art form and other significant variables, below is a critical discussion of how to modify, change, and or expand the nature of present program.

One such factor is the criterion of Latino Male 13 to 18 years old with a juvenile record for tagging. This criterion was used to narrow the focus of the project to a specific population but inclusion in to the program does not hinge solely on the fact the participant be male, Latino, or even that the teenager be arrested for tagging. The program can be just as effective for female Latinas who also have tagging on their juvenile records, or any youth who is interested in using art as a form of self expression, or even just to identify a talent that a youth did not know they had. Just as participants were assumed to be provided from school counselors, partnerships with local nonprofits can be made so that when the nonprofit has participants who have an interest in graffiti and anime, the program can be suggested to them.

The art interested in also does not have to be graffiti or anime, or even both. If the participant has a particular art style he/she is interested in, effort can be made to have that style represented in the decals the participants create. As the variable on what items sell depends on aesthetic value, the participant still gains a lesson in creation and market forces, but they have also gained the knowledge that they saw a project through from conception to finished product and they will still have something to show for it.

Another factor that can be changed to include any remotely urbanized area regards the fact that the event section of the program does not have to happen exclusively at the artist alleys of anime conventions. Many comic/science fiction/video game
conventions will also have areas for enterprising artists to peddle their wares. Craft fairs, farmers markets and art walks also provide opportunities for participants in the program to perform the event stage of the program and where participants can also learn of other artistic endeavors that may pique their interest. All of the variants on the event section of the program can include the opportunity to make partnerships with the entities that run the particular events to adopt the program as a local charity case and provide space for the program to do their sales free of charge.

Another variant on the program can have its participants drawn from currently incarcerated youths in juvenile jails. The program can be run as stated in chapter four with the difference being that the participants are not available to assist in the event sale portion of the program, in which case the task of promotion and sale of the finished products will fall on the staff members. Further change required for this variant is that the profits that would otherwise go directly to the participants would instead be added to their balance sheets with the juvenile justice system.

If appropriate funding could be procured, field trips can be planned for the participants to augment the participant’s exposure to other art styles and expose them to more cultural events. The trips can be planned to art museums/shows to expose the participants to a more varied array of artists and mediums. One such trip can be to the beach at Venice, California where there is an array of walls in which graffiti artist are allowed to practice their craft ("Venice Public Art Walls - Home", n.d., p. 1). On this trip the program participants can have the opportunity to create a piece for a section of wall.
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