College Composition/English IV
Deep Map Assignment

Deep-mapping is a kinesthetic thinking strategy that helps students dig deeper into the many ways—geographically, emotionally, psychologically, spiritually—we are affected by a place. Jason McIntosh, a UN-L doctoral student, describes deep maps as "drawings of psychological locations (both literal and abstract) created by writers to represent their relationship to place" (131). In his University of Nebraska—Lincoln sophomore writing course, Robert Brooke (2007) describes deep maps in the following:

> A deep map is a map of the place where you are now, showing what makes up that place, indicating the forces that have led you to be the kind of person you are in that place, representing the tensions which create the energy of that place (positive and negative). A deep map represents understanding of location, not just description. A deep map represents celebration and critique of where you locate yourself. (141-142)

Dr. Brooke also states that "deep maps aren't road maps like state highway maps," but are drawings of psychological locations that make us ponder our *considered space*, or the spaces we inhabit, and our *civic participation*, or who we are as citizens. Dr. Brooke cites Robert Thayer, who believes we all have three "life questions," that is, "Who am I?" "Where am I?" and "What am I supposed to do?" Thayer states that these questions cannot be considered separately.

> The question 'Where are we?' has a deep, sustaining ring to it. It is a simple question with a deceptively complex answer. To some readers, we are where our address is--our street, city, county, state, and nation. To a few others, we are in some division of territory, on earth, perhaps marked by a particular topography and climate. Many others might find the question absurd: How are we to answer? We are at many locations at different times. Planners, landscaper architects, geographers and others occupied with mapping, planning, or designing places are supposedly more aware of 'where they are' than most—yet how deeply do any of us really know where we are? (2)

For our deep maps, I want you to draw and analyze a version of your mental maps. For geographers, the mental map is a way of describing how the spaces we inhabit are cognitively ordered through our experiences of those places. Please draw any landmarks, buildings, streets, alleys, fields, trees, etc. The deep map is going to be your artifact about your place.

When we have drawn our deep maps, I want you to analyze what you have drawn by writing a one to two page "legend" for your map, considering some of these questions:

- What images and/or locations are most prominent on your map? What is the centermost "thing" on your map?

- What is at the edges of your map? Why?

- Is the place you currently inhabit concentrated in one part of your city? Does it extend beyond the city limits?

- What people or groups of people do you associate with different locations on your map?

- What places do you walk, ride, or drive by regularly but never enter (outdoor and indoor places)?

- What plants and animals inhabit your map?

- Who does not inhabit your map? What is not on your map?

- List three places you would like to know more about so that you include them on your map.

- What would you title your map?

- How would you describe the place in which you live to others?

- What do you most like about your map? Dislike?

We will share out our maps and legends in small groups in the next class session.