

Reflection #2

Question: What aspect(s) of “land as pedagogy” do you see reflected in your work in CODES/in your life?

Land as pedagogy within CODES:

From what I've learned about Alton, it is a relatively old town with a long, rich history. Unlike myself and the rest of my research team, our mentees are the ones growing and learning from this land. Everyday they get to see the good and bad the land of Alton has to offer them. It is on that land that we received our titles as their mentors. Similar to how Kansas City is reflected through me as a mentor, Alton is reflected through these teens as mentors. I think our differences in backgrounds allow for the creation of curiosity and conversation. It is because of the difference in land that we grew up learning from that our mentor-mentee relationship worked.

Land as pedagogy within my life:

My parents buried the pit of a peach in our front yard years ago and now it has blossomed into a beautiful, big tree. This tree is different however because the pit it grew out of was not bought from a store in Kansas City, nor produced anywhere in the United States. The pit of this peach came all the way from Guanajuato, Mexico after my family and I had taken a road trip there. As someone with roots in both America and Mexico, I somehow feel the same as this peach tree. While I was born in the U.S. and have always lived here, my life has always been immensely filled with the culture, traditions, language, and history that sprouts from Mexico. What I've learned from this peach tree is that even though the soil it grew from may seem foreign to it, it is still connected to its place of origin through the land that links them together. My aunts and uncles born in Mexico are my reminder that land grows and it's okay for it to change. The Mexican dishes my parents prepare and the traditions we celebrate here are testaments to the spread of our culture's impact. The peach tree in front of my house is a promise to the world and to myself that I have the ability to also grow into something spectacular. All this is made possible by the life shared with us through the land we learn from everyday.