

SESSION TITLE

ART-BASED MAPPING

**ACTIVITY IN A SENTENCE:**

Art-based mapping is a participatory evaluation method during which learners express their thoughts, opinions and emotions, by making a creative map of their experiences – in a safe environment, led by the learner – , while engaging in a conversation with the educator.

DISCIPLINES INVOLVED IN ACTIVITIES:

It can be integrated into any discipline

RECOMMENDED AGES:

6+

It can also be performed with younger ages, however, the experience will be more meaningful for older learners, in terms of self-awareness and self-expression of their experiences and thoughts, as well as regarding the development of a trust relationship with the educator.

LEARNING ENVIRONMENT (CONTEXT SETTING):

It can be integrated into any learning environment, however it is fundamental to take place in a quiet and familiar environment, where the learner feels safe and comfortable.

LEARNING OUTCOMES:

Learners will:

- Gain insight into their perceptions, experiences and emotions, which promotes self awareness, self-confidence and wellbeing. These are crucial for learners' learning processes and overall academic progress.
- Become equipped with the tools and mechanisms to express these, in particular, through the development of art-based skills.

Educators will:

- Get acquainted with research practices, which allows them to get insight into learners' stories, perceptions and experiences and to strengthen their relationship with them.
- Receive insights into how they can tailor and improve the education for the learner.

Importantly, this participatory evaluation method also leads to more equality between the researcher (the educator) and the participant (the learner), by empowering the learner with the tools to express themselves and steering the creation of their own maps. It also fosters equity by creating opportunities for participants with language difficulties.

This is an evaluation method where learners take centre stage, by giving them the agency to decide what to share and how to share, while, at the same time, equipping them with the tools to gain access to and give

voice to their perceptions, experiences and emotions. In addition, it is a participatory tool that promotes the collaboration between researchers, educators and learners. On one hand, it allows educators to take the role of the researcher, thus promoting their sense of ownership and sparking their interest in research, while providing them with the tools and skills to become more aware about the thoughts and emotions of their learners and to directly improve their education in a tailored way. On the other hand, it fosters equality between the researcher (in this case, the educator) and the participant (the learner) and strengthens a trust relationship between them.

RECOMMENDED EXPERTISE:

Basic training in creating art-based mappings with learners and analysing them is recommended. In the Content for Learners section we make available a set of guidelines and other relevant documents (e.g. examples of Conversation and Process Reports) created by the researchers from the Centre of Expertise in Global and Inclusive Learning at *The Hague University of Applied Sciences* and by previous tutors, that were created in the context of the project *Studenten voor Educatie* project from the *Open Science Hub – The Netherlands*.

SDG LINKS:

- **Goal 4:** Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all
- **Goal 5:** Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls
- **Goal 17:** Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalise the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development

TIME IT TAKES TO COMPLETE:

30 – 60 minutes, depending on the age of the learner.

This is the estimated time for a group of up to 3 participants.

- for younger learners (5/6 year olds), we recommend a 30 minutes session
- for older learners (7+), a session can take up to 60 minutes

MATERIALS / RESOURCES NEEDED:

- Paper
- Markers / colored pencils / crayons
- Magazines, newspapers, scrap paper (in case participants want to cut out pictures, make collages)
- Scissors
- Glue

CONTENT FOR LEARNERS:

In the *art-based mapping folder*, learners will find guidelines on how to implement this participatory evaluation method and other relevant documents, such as examples of Conversation and Process Reports developed by previous tutors.

TIPS FOR SCALING FOR DIFFERENT AUDIENCES:

The activity is already written in a way that can be applied to different kinds of audiences.

Activity

Introduction:

The art-based mapping evaluation method was implemented in the context of the Studenten voor Educatie project from the Open Science Hub – The Netherlands as one of the research instruments of the Monitoring and Evaluation Program developed by the Centre of Expertise in Global and Inclusive Learning at The Hague University of Applied Science.

The Studenten voor Educatie project aimed at supporting primary schools in overcoming current and unfolding challenges engendered and/or exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic with long-lasting effects, such as: 1) many pupils are increasingly falling behind in their academic, creative and emotional development, and 2) the workload for teachers, concomitantly, increases sharply. For that, *leraren voor Educatie* consisted of a professional program targeted at university learners, that ran parallel to their studies, where learners (tutors) were matched to primary schools based on their assets and on the school's needs.

Considering this context, the Monitoring and Evaluation Program was aimed at testing the overarching objectives of the project, and simultaneously making sure that it would be implemented in the classroom in an organic, playful, non-disruptive and non-time consuming way. Through this, we also hoped to strengthen the trust relationship between the tutor and the primary learner, amongst primary learners as well as between tutors.

As such, tutors were trained and guided to become co-researchers and to create the art-based mappings with the primary learners as part of their tutoring activities, thus not entailing extra work-time for primary learners, teachers nor tutors. The role of the university learners was vital since they were closer in age than (most) teachers and, through their close guidance, could offer trust and recognition to the primary learners, thus further enhancing the boost in confidence. Each exercise was conducted by two tutors (where possible) with a group of up to three participants. Also, since we wanted to understand the impact of the project throughout time, we performed an initial baseline that was followed by several assessment timepoints throughout the school year.

Below you can see some of the maps created by primary schools in the context of the Studenten voor Educatie project.



Figure 5.24: Art-based maps created as part of the Studenten voor Educatie project. Credit: ULEI.

Part 1

The first step is to define the objectives and the research question of your project. What would you like to understand by using the art-based mapping evaluation method? In the case of *Studenten voor Educatie*, we wanted to evaluate the impact of this tailored tutoring program on the educational opportunities of primary learners, namely on skill development and academic progress, self-confidence, well-being and motivation. Then, based on these objectives and on the defined research question, we designed our research plan.

- What are the objectives and research questions of your project?
- And what will be your research plan?

Part 2

The next step is then the creation of the actual maps by the learners.

Please find below some guidelines that will help you prepare the activity.

2.1 Preparation

1. Think of a few open-ended questions related to your project objectives and research questions to kick-off the conversation. In the case of the *leraren voor Educatie* project, some of these questions were:
 - We have been doing activity X over the last few weeks, what do you think of it?
 - Could you describe activity X to me?
 - Could you describe what you are learning during activity X?
 - What do you think of the place where we do activity X?
 - What do you like to do / find interesting?
 - How do you think activity X is going?
 - What do you think about doing activity X in a group / alone?
 - What would you like to change about activity X?
2. Find a space where participants feel safe and comfortable.
3. Gather all the supplies and make sure they are ready to use.
4. Prepare consent forms. Bear in mind that in the case of minors, you will need to ask for the consent of their guardians prior to the session.

2.2 During the activity

1. Start by asking the participant's consent (this only applies to non-minor children, in the case of minors, you will need the guardian's consent – please see above), and if there are any questions/concerns. Also, ensure that participants are aware that they can stop the exercise at any time.

2. Give participants a piece of paper and a variety of writing tools, e.g. markers, colored pencils, crayons, as well as newspapers, magazines, scrap paper, scissors, in case they want to cut out a picture, make collages, etc.
3. Once you feel that the participants are ready to start, choose your first question and kindly ask them to express themselves (by drawing, using words, cutting out pictures). Throughout the mapping exercise, keep in mind the following golden tips:
 - Your role during this exercise is to listen and to facilitate the mapping but without biasing the participant in any particular way. It is the learner that will lead the conversation about the mapping.
 - Ask open-ended questions and keep your theme in mind, but don't explicitly tell your theme and objectives; don't steer too much;
 - It is important that you also share something, so that it becomes a dialogue and the conversation flows organically. However, never forget that the participant is the one leading the conversation;
 - Map along with the participant, if you want to. This can promote the dialogue between the educator and the learner and, at the same time, it will allow you to take notes during the mapping exercise in an informal way;
 - Make clear that mapping is not just about drawing. Participants can also use words, cut out pictures, etc.
4. Now that the mapping exercise is running, please pay attention to the following elements, which will provide valuable information in order to help you asking follow-up questions and facilitating the mapping process:
 - What is drawn, pasted, written and/or what is left out
 - How: shape / size / colours, composition and interrelationships
 - Symbols
 - Details
 - What has not been recorded / written down
 - Other elements that you find relevant
5. Throughout the mapping, please make a record of the conversation, for example, by:
 - Recording the audio – in this case, do not forget to include this in the consent forms.
 - Or by taking written notes, e.g. specific phrases, comments about something that was drawn. Please try to keep as close as possible from the original sentences. If you decide to map along with the participant, you can use your map to take notes as well.

Part 3

After having finalised the mapping exercise, it's time to analyse the data.

At the end of the exercise, you will have two products: a Map and a Conversation Report (produced from the audio record and/or written notes).

Based on these products, you will then write a Process Report, which will include first impressions, responses and answers to your research questions.

Below we provide an example of an art-based map and a brief Process Report (from the report *Studenten voor Educatie – Evaluation Report, 2021*⁶, which can be found in the Art-based mapping folder – please see Content for Learners).

3.1 Example



Figure 5.25: Art-based mapping example drawing. Credit: ULEI.

This drawing made with black felt-tip pen shows how the student experienced the support of the student tutor. The learner chose black to make the drawing look like a manga drawing. The Conversation and Process Report clarify the drawing. We see a full drawing containing bounded planes/circles, figures and letters. The student begins by drawing the letters Kring [‘Kring’ is the circle the class makes in the morning to start the day together and to go through the planning of the day or through a central topic for the class], next to it in a non-bounded space next to it, in an undefined area, a top view of a group of six pupils (her tribal group).

Then, below that, a figure with a tear and ‘10 hours later’ written. This refers to the length of a school day and the emotions of the pupil. School takes a long time and creates sad feelings. The student draws the second circle clockwise, you see the letters L.K.P. [which refers to Learning Opportunities Profiel, a programme developed for primary school where large groups of pupils have fewer development opportunities], which

6. *Studenten voor Educatie – Evaluation Report, 2021*: <https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1hJnFQZGqjt3PkwlwxG5tT8UuOIU6i5wO?usp=sharing>

is a reference to school. Furthermore, in this plane you see two figures and a ball. The student says that this refers to a moment during gym class when another student had thrown a ball against her head. As she recounted this, the student drew a cross through the scene because it hurt her to remember it. In the other circles drawn, the student shows school subjects such as maths, language, reading, writing, automation. The circles vary in size, which indicates the heaviness of importance to the student, and the individual drawings also depict different emotions. There are also circles that show the relationship with other children. Sometimes sadness or negative feelings dominate. What is striking is that the student draws herself especially happy when she is alone or with her best friend or when she is working 1-on-1 with the student tutor or teacher for a while, even if this is in the classroom.

The student noted during the mapping that the tutor and herself have not read together yet this year. When questioned by the tutor "What do you most enjoy doing together"?, the student answered, "Reading in the hallway.". This is reflected in the drawing, in the middle. The student ends the conversation by saying she would like the tutor to be there all week.