Home is where the heart is

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The Meaningful Maps Research Project

Pilot Phase

- more than 500 maps from across GB
- focus on KS2 children, range 7 – 11, median 9 years
- extensive resources for research

www.meaningfulmaps.org

Map courtesy www.digimapforschools.Edina.ac.uk
How does the research relate to SDG 4.7?

**Goal 4.7 aims for all learners to acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development**

I drew my house because it is very special to me, because there are lots of memories.

I decided to show these places because they mean something to me, I grew up here.

....I love my local area.

what we do not love we will not save.’ (McFarlane 2017)

Early childhood experiences matter in later pro – environmental behaviours (Catling et al 2010).
Children respond to places by exploring, knowing, feeling and doing.

**HEADS**  
Cognitive

**HEARTS**  
Affective

**HANDS**  
Agency

Mental Maps: psychological processes that register, code, store, then call to mind and decode, information on our everyday spatial environment.  
(Downs & Stea 2005) Importance of lived experience and identity  
(Vujakovic 2016a, 2016b, Vujakovic et al 2018)

Significant, first hand experiences and affective perception of places influences memory (Catling et al 2010); feelings of belonging, emotional responses & sense of place  
(Relph 2010, 2015; Ross 2007)

Children as effective environmental change agents and stewards in the protection of nature and co-constructors of futures.  
What did children draw?

Children drew mostly built features, roads most of all and then houses: own and friends / relatives and neighbours
Few children drew natural features

Echoes findings from Owens (2004)
A Critical Model of Environmental Literacy
After Stables, (1998)

A Theoretical Framing

- **Functional / Core knowledge**: facts, location, place names, vocabulary
- **Empathic knowledge**: Moving from personal views, values & meanings to appreciate those of others.

**Critical Thinking and agency**
Boundaries, Wayfaring, Liminal & Third Spaces

• Wayfaring as a notion of paths or lines of motion along which we are continually travelling (Ingold 2011)

• Place as refuge for, and from, the emotions – nurturing ‘Third Space’ skills (the new core competency, Pradhan 2016)

• Places as liminal and malleable encounters, transitions and hotspots (Salvatore, S. & Venuleo 2017) environments in a state of ‘becoming’ (Mickelsson et al 2018)

• Children create ‘places’ through meaning-making (Tuan 1977).
I decided to do where I live to school because I know them places the most and I thought of all the shops I remember near my house and school. I think that there are so many shops that it makes the places special and I think that the factory makes the places special ..
I decided to draw these places because these are the places that I walk my dogs and I know the area really well.

Where I learnt to ride a bike
Emotional feelings and Empathic Knowledge

My map is about Manchester Rd Park and it is special to me because it was my dog Buddy’s favourite place and it is also where he died. I go there most days.

I hurt my foot here.
I decided to draw these places because I live in front of them and I go on my scooter with next door everyday and we either go down to the park and explore or chase the ice cream truck and have ice cream and get a bit lost. I think it’s special because you get to have a bit of an adventure!

The road I live on is on a slope and really busy so we can’t play on it..

Because first, if something happened, I would run straight home

My Dad’s shop means the world to me
Implications for Practice in support of SDG 4.7

*Children love and value their home space, they conjure ‘place’ through meaning imbued with emotions and intrinsic values.*

- Authentic place dialogue and settings
- Power and potential of the emotions
- Time to make and share personal meanings, to value difference
- Critical enquiry with real agency – an authentic curriculum (Sobel 2008)

*an in-between dialogical space somewhere between formal schooling and home that negotiates broader, cross cultural and creative interactions and allows low stakes exploration with emerging ideas.* (Wasam-Elham 2010)
Bibliography


Tuan, Yi-Fu (1977) *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press


Vujakovic, P. (2016b) You are Here *Primary Geography* Sheffield: Geographical Association pp. 8-9


Using Messy Maps [https://www.geography.org.uk/download/anderson2.doc](https://www.geography.org.uk/download/anderson2.doc)