



How to make a better place. **Materials & delivery.**

Time frame

Timing is important so that all students have enough time to present their work. Keeping a strict control on time for both the first activity and for each student's presentation is critical to allow for feedback at the end of the session.

The mental mapping exercise will take 20-30 minutes. Allow a week for groups to prepare materials for the site analysis and presentation. Final presentation should take no longer than another 10 minutes per group.

Lesson notes

For this session you need:

- a room suitable for projection
- an overhead projector (OHP)
- acetates for the OHP
- coloured pens suitable for OHP acetates.

For the mental mapping exercise you will also need an A4 plan or map of the site on acetate (do not show to students before they do the exercise).

For the presentation on site analysis you will also need a computer with projector if students present using PowerPoint or similar software.

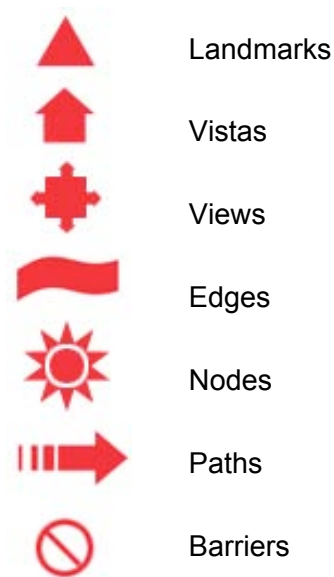
1. Mental mapping exercise

This exercise is a chance for students to see from their own experience how they use the built environment and what cues they use to navigate around it.

Arrange the students into their small groups of about five. Before they start it is useful to introduce them to a set of symbols to represent characteristics of the built environment. Sharing these symbols will help students to compare their plans and will help you in explaining the exercise to them.



These elements should include:



Ask the students to quickly draw a map of the site from memory on acetate, using the elements and symbols outlined above. They should draw the map as if they were making a rapid description of the area to a stranger. They should cover all the main features, showing buildings, streets, and areas of uses. They should label items where needed. Encourage them to add other elements they remember from the urban design discussion and to create symbols for them.

Display the acetates one by one on the OHP and ask the students to talk the class through the three or so most important features they found. Encourage discussion of what makes the elements work.

Ask students why they are memorable and what they are used for. For example, landmarks - is it because they are taller than surrounding elements, smaller or a different colour, do they perform a different function, are they more detailed or ornate, or more simple? Do they include water, or make a sound? Do they use them to give directions or to arrange to meet their friends?

Gradually overlay all the acetates on the OHP and identify the elements common to the groups or to several of them.

Encourage discussion of how these elements work, and establish any consensus among students on how these key elements operate and how they use them.

Record this information on acetate, and then overlay it with the plan of the site to compare their mental image of the city with the reality.

Encourage discussion about the perceptions other user groups might have of the same place. For example, what things would an old person notice and why, or someone in a wheelchair or pushing a pram or if walking a dog or if they were driving or riding a bicycle?

Encourage discussion on how this could inform what designers should consider when designing new places. For example, steps form a barrier to many users, but probably not the student group. Some skateboarders seek steps out to perform tricks. Longer routes around large buildings and groups of



buildings create fewer choices for pedestrians, which may create problems for older people or those with impaired mobility.

2. Site analysis & presentation

On the walkabout the students conducted a site survey, which is simply an inventory of what is there. This session involves creating a site analysis, to demonstrate their understanding of what the observations mean. In addition to an analysis of what they observed, they also offer recommendations for the site's redevelopment. Using the *Walkabout Analysis Checklist*, students should analyse their findings using an appropriate method such as SWOT or bi-polar analysis chosen by the group. For every point they list they should also outline the 'so what' factor: should a feature be kept or changed, what are the implications of what was observed? From this analysis the students should come up with a list of recommendations for the development of a plan for the site.

The time allocated to students to assemble materials for their presentations could either be assigned as homework or allocated during class hours. Based on the students' ability, the amount of time needed to develop their presentations may vary.

Tell students the order and format of presentations and the time allowed for each group (10 minutes to present followed by five minutes for discussion). A summing up can take place after all groups have presented.

Outline the things you will look for in their presentations and ask their peers to make notes on things they think each group does well and which they will try to include in subsequent presentations.

Key things to look for in these presentations might include:

- good organization by the group
- engaging the audience by looking at and speaking to them
- use of OHP and visuals
- interesting content which sets out a clear question or purpose and answers it.

Giving a small prize for the most interesting, most informative and most creative group is a good idea, as is giving a prize to each group for a specific strength.

Ask the groups to take responsibility for their presentations, including organizing the room, allocating a group member to watch the time limit etc.

Encourage positive discussion at the end of each presentation for a few minutes.

Ask the 'audience' to think of questions about the qualities mentioned during each presentation.

Encourage discussion and summing up at the end of the workshop including:

- areas of difference between the presentations
- areas of similarity
- key lessons learned in giving presentations and in terms of understanding the urban design qualities
- how these will inform the next lesson *Making a better place*.



Organising the classroom

The students will work in their groups for both parts of the lesson so arrange the tables and chairs to form small circular groups at the start of the class. For the presentation everyone should face towards the overhead projector image and the group presenting.