



Introduction:

We use “mental maps” every day to guide ourselves through space, whether we are running around campus, planning our weekly errands, or showing friends or family around our hometown. These mental maps develop based on our experiences and perceptions of a particular place, so they may not appear as “complete” or “objective” as those maps we might find on a campus map, in a travel guide, or on Google Maps—nor should they! Most importantly, however, the mental map of a single city, campus, or other space will look different for every person who inhabits or traverses that space.

In this activity, you will gather in small groups to draw, share, and compare your own mental maps of a shared space in order to better understand how other people experience the same space differently. Through the discussion of your maps, you are not only positioned to increase self-awareness of your own trajectories through that space, but you have the opportunity to become aware of (and hopefully empathetic to) the experiences of others.

Participant Instructions:

1. On the sheet of paper provided, map both your *experience* and *perceptions* of campus and the surrounding area. *Tip: If you are having trouble getting started, begin with mapping where you have been and what you have done over the past few days!*
2. Once you are instructed to wrap up drawing, present your map to the other members of your group, explaining what you have mapped and why you believe those things are part of your mental map of campus. Plan to speak to your group for about one minute each.
3. After all group members have presented, analyze your mental maps collectively as a group through discussion of the following questions:
 - When analyzing your group's mental maps as a whole, what patterns do you see? What *types* of places did your group members tend to map and why?
 - In what ways are your maps of the same space similar? In what ways are they different? *Identify together at least three of the most significant similarities and three of the most significant differences.* (Note: you may notice these through clusters of your mappings or through outliers on your maps!)
 - What do you think explains the similarities and differences across your group's mental maps? How do one or more of your identities influence how you use or perceive campus spaces? What have members of the group learned about campus or others' experiences of it through their mental maps?
 - In what ways do you expect your mental maps of campus will develop or change in the weeks and months ahead? What factors or experiences do you expect will influence their development?