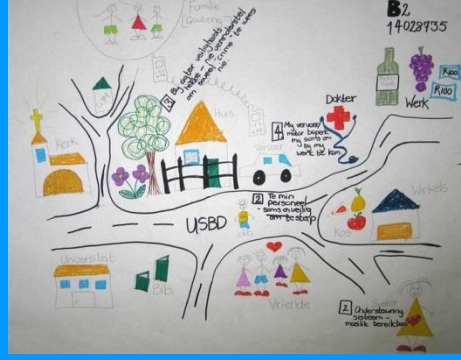
Using Participatory Learning Action Techniques including Mood Lines

Vivienne Bozalek
University of the Western Cape, South Africa
vbozalek@uwc.ac.za



PARTICIPATORY LEARNING AND ACTION TECHNIQUES and MOOD LINES

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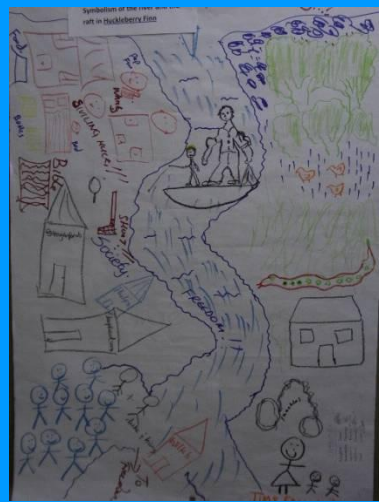


Focus of this presentation

- This presentation is about how to use Participatory Learning and Action (PLA) techniques – with an emphasis on moodlines as one specific technology
- The presentation uses the context of higher education as an example of a field where such techniques can be used to add value to assessments and improve planning and practices

Different Views of Higher Education

Table 1.1 Broad and narrow conceptions of the role of higher education

	Product	Task	Research	Knowledge society
Narrow conceptions of HE	The specialised and knowledgeable individual equipped to play an economic role in society	Production of a skilled workforce to attain economic goals	"Cutting edge" research to gain sectoral or national competitive advantage	Higher education as an exportable commodity; a contributor towards economic goals
Broad conceptions of HE	The reflective and adaptive team player equipped to respond creatively to all forms of change	Contributor to the lifelong development of "responsible global citizens"	International collaboration in research and information sharing	Higher education's "role of service" to society; multiple partnerships to facilitate knowledge distribution

(AUT/DEA 1999; cited in DEA 2003)

Taylor & Fransman (2004:6)

The usefulness of PLA for higher education (HE)

- Participatory parity- inclusive
- Good reflective tool – alternate ways of expressing
- Often leads to new insights
- Provides stimulus for discussion
- Non-threatening “playful” techniques
- Promotes social learning
- Includes emotional aspects
- Opportunities to challenge and deepen knowledge

Ways in which we have found PLA useful in higher education

- Dealing with difference
- Promoting collaboration between students and the institution/faculty/department
- Learning techniques to use in own disciplines
- Modelling democratic and respectful forms of practice
- Active form of learning >participation

Limitations of PLA techniques

- Drawings are only a springboard for discussion and analysis
- Drawings and discussions reflect subjective experiences
- Can be unsettling/discomforting – needs management
- How useful it is depends on skills of facilitator
- Time consuming to plan and implement
- Resistance from some participants

Examples of how PLA techniques have been used in HE

- Research techniques for social work students at UWC
- Factors affecting student learning at UWC
- Community, Self and Identity module for students across the universities
- Women's Health and Well-Being collaborative course
- Masters in Child and Family Studies course
- Professional development course on teaching and learning at UWC

Some common techniques which could be used in HE

What students said about PLA techniques

The drawing exercises let us ‘play’, and took the ‘seriousness’ and nervousness out of the situation we were placed in…Helped us in working together as a team in the way that we were no longer worried about expressing our feelings even though they sometimes were conflicting.

As soon as you start drawing one thing you immediately think of all the other things that link up with your initial idea. After the drawings had been made, I was suprised to see the things that were in front of me on my paper.

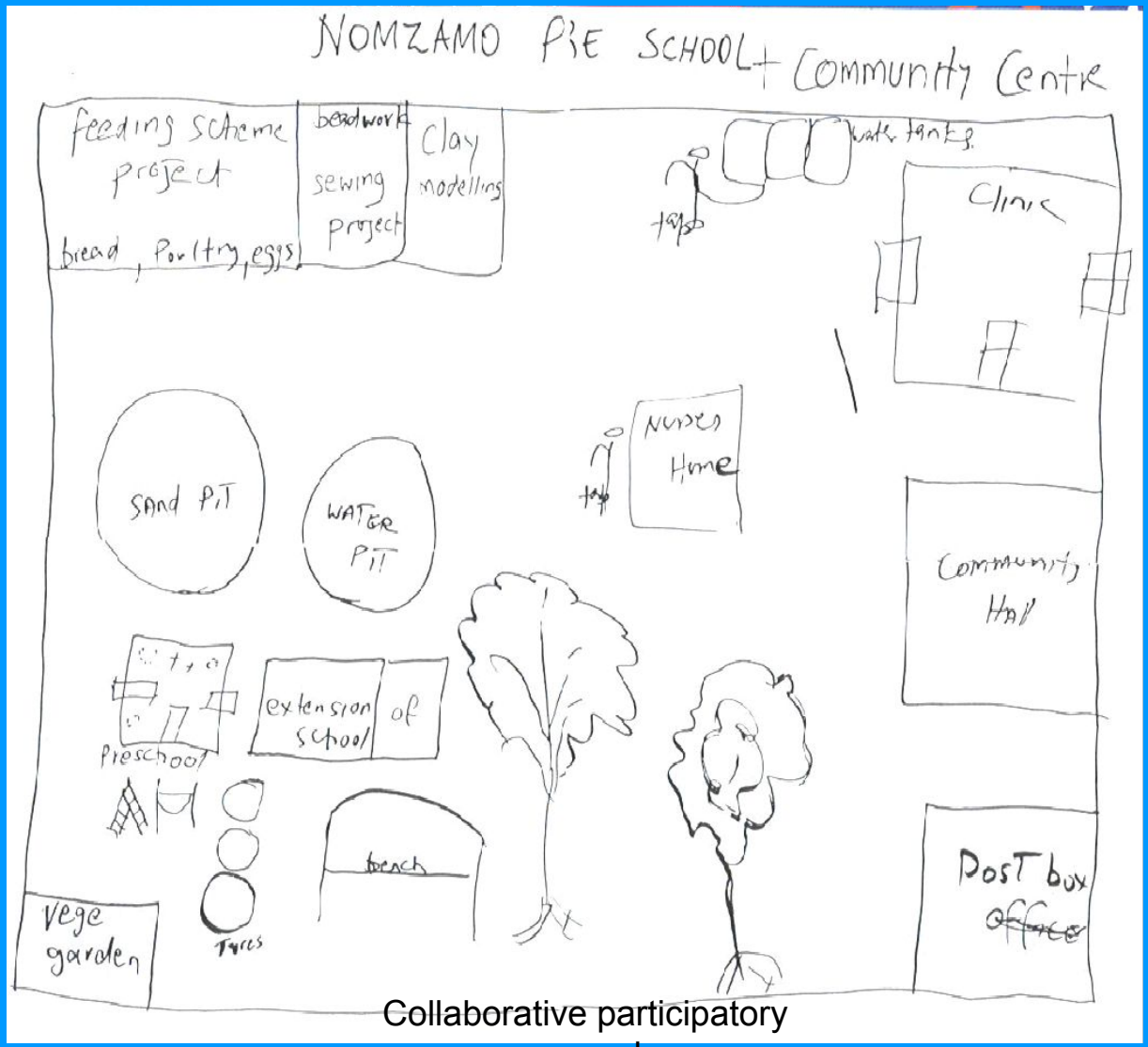
Learnings: Knowledge of Self

Through mapping my own community and the available (and blatant scarcity of) resources, I got the opportunity to reflect on my community not only in terms of resources, but also communal ethos (including prevailing prejudices, attitudes towards gender, and even racism), 'Coloured' culture (as I've always had immense difficulty defining to others what it means to be a 'Coloured' person, or defining myself as for example a 'Coloured male'

Visioning

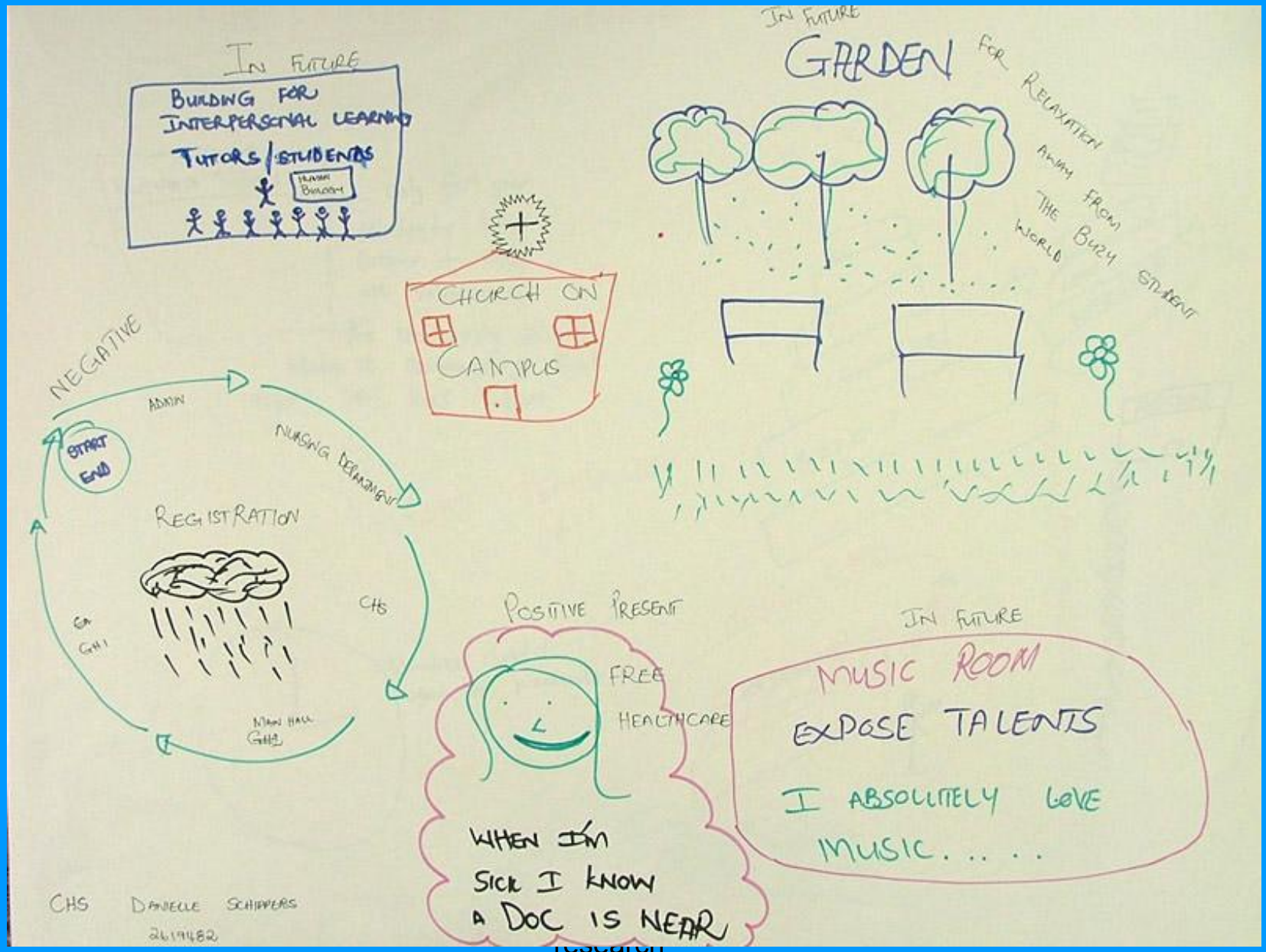
- People come up with their vision for how things might be and it can widen their thinking as well as indicating the things that are important to them. This could be drawn, modelled, acted or sung. It serves as a starting point for discussion of what actions could be taken.

Vision of ideal preschool



Human Rights for all are the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world
CEMETERY
SPORTS FIELD
clean river
JOBS
MARKET
SWIMMING
Pool
FAITH
SAFE PARK
Safe HOUSING
A HAPPY FAMILY & STRONG COMMUNITIES
Mother
Father
care
COMPUTER CENTRE
EDUCATION
Junior & High
Refuse Truck
Toilets
Shopping Centre
Mobile Home Affairs
ADULT BASIC EDUCATION
Culture Centre
LIBRARY
Books & Toys
CHILD FRIENDLY
Police
SAFE HOUSES
DROP IN CENTRE
P. OFFICE
ATM
VEG GARDEN

This shows what students identified as being ideal for helping them to learn at university

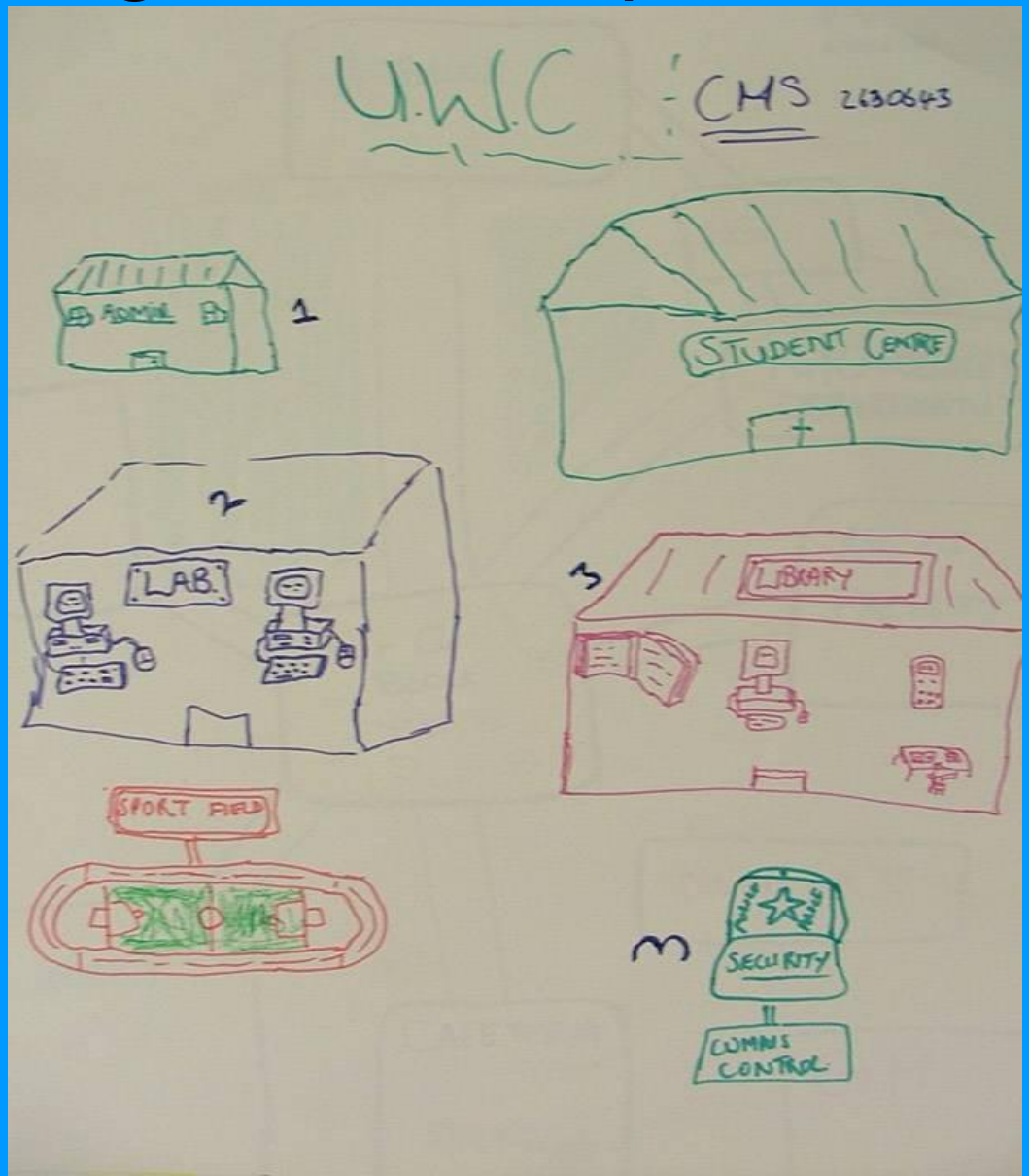


research

Mapping

- Mapping can include mapping of social, demographic, health and service issues, opportunities or resources
- Can be drawn on the ground or on paper, models can be made, natural resources used
- Provides a starting point for discussion or for prioritising issues for change

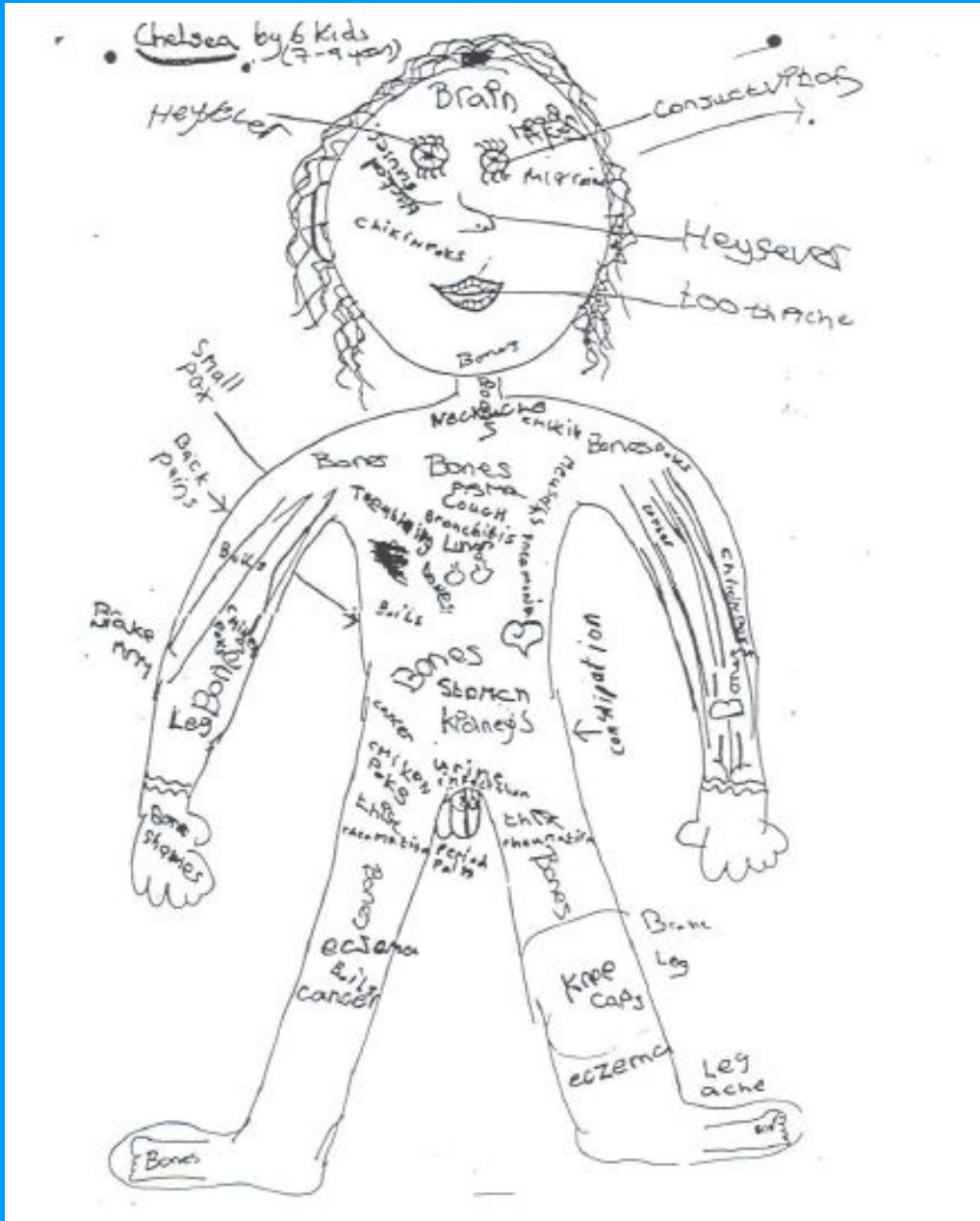
Things found helpful for learning



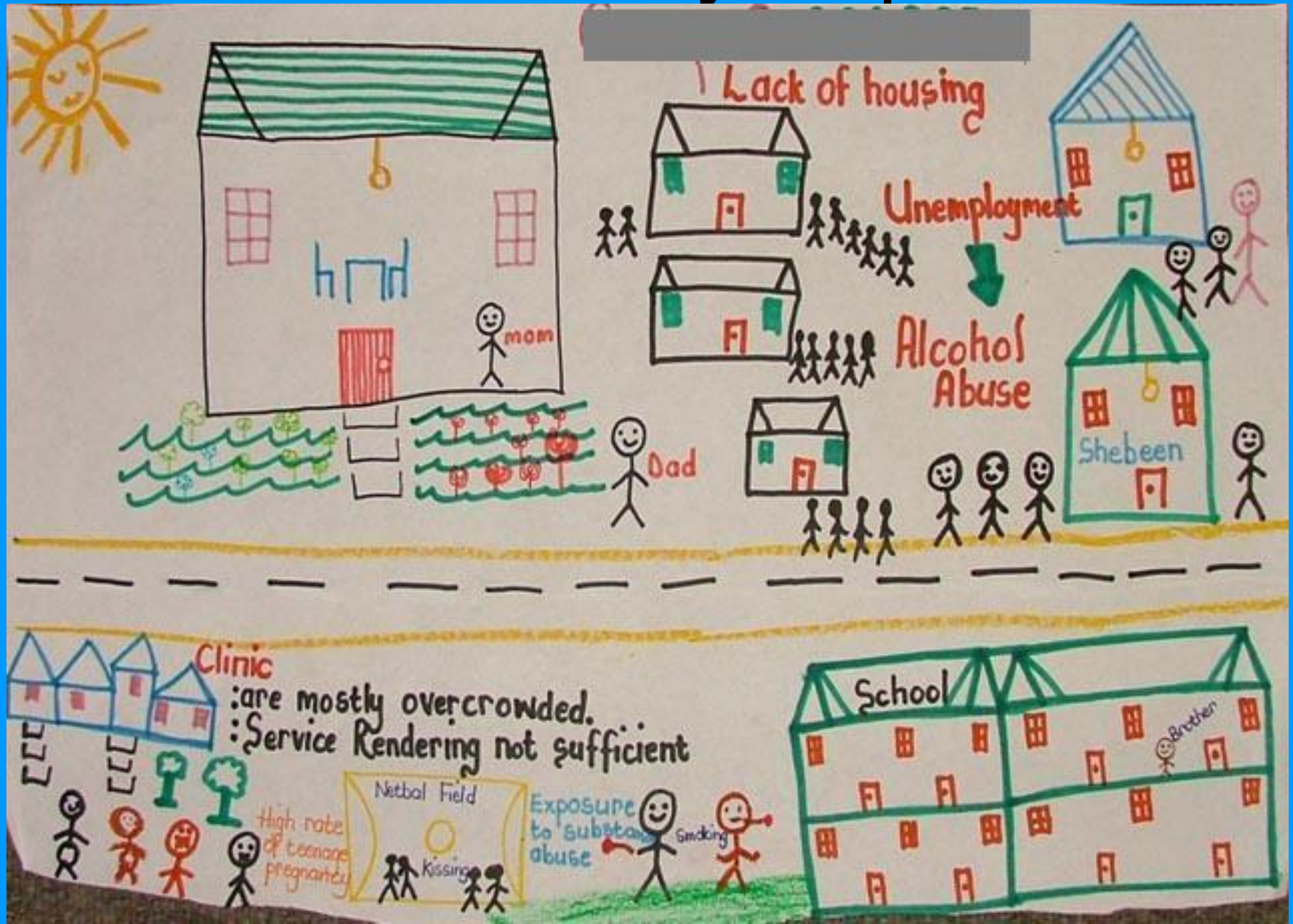
School of Nursing
2
5
Biomedical Sciences
People
Residences
1
University
Lib
computer Lab
6
Trees
Sport fie
Community Health Sciences
2542952.

Body maps – used to map illnesses such as HIV/AIDS emotions etc

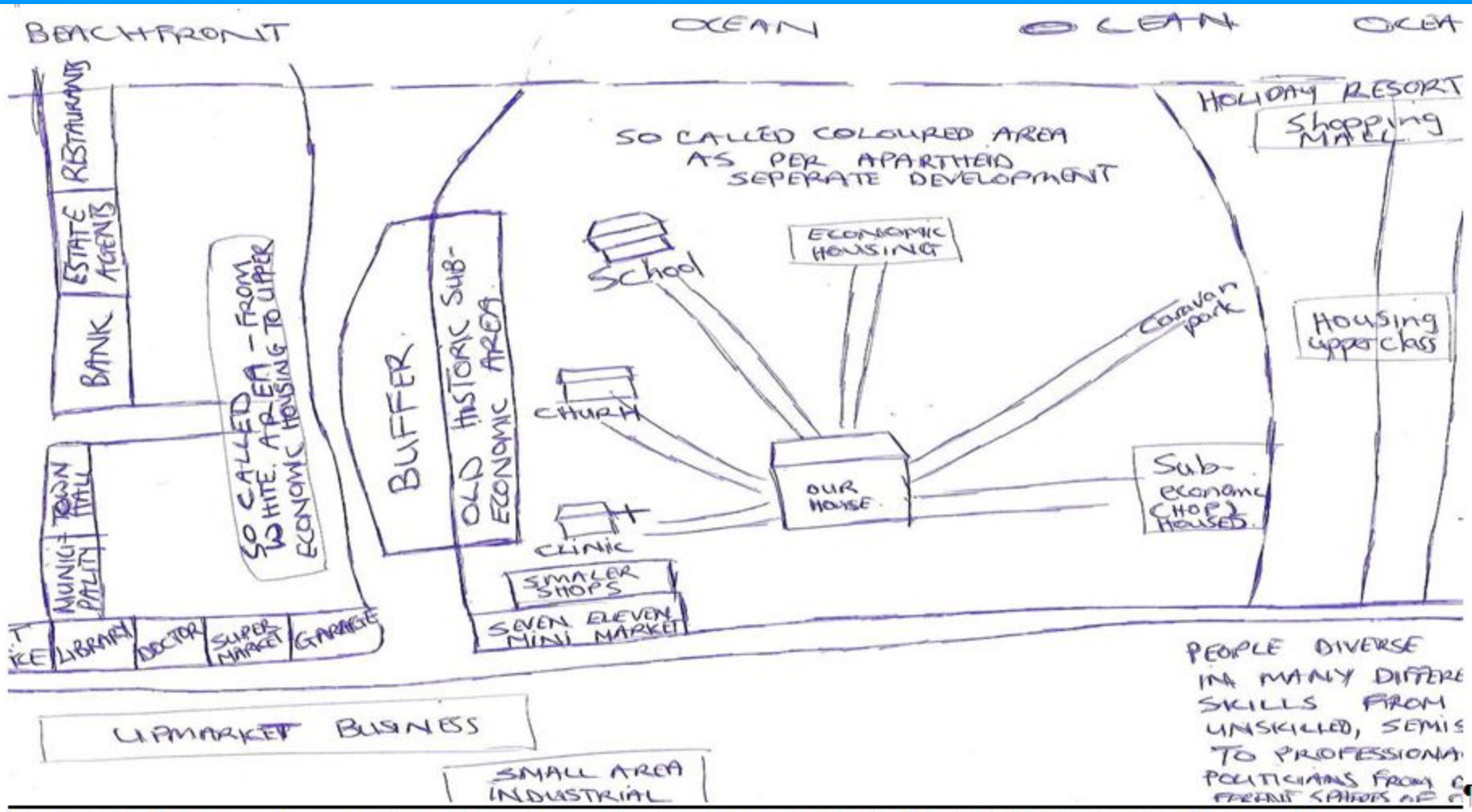
Body map - Example from Cornwall (1999)_ Illnesses and Where They are in the Body



Community Maps

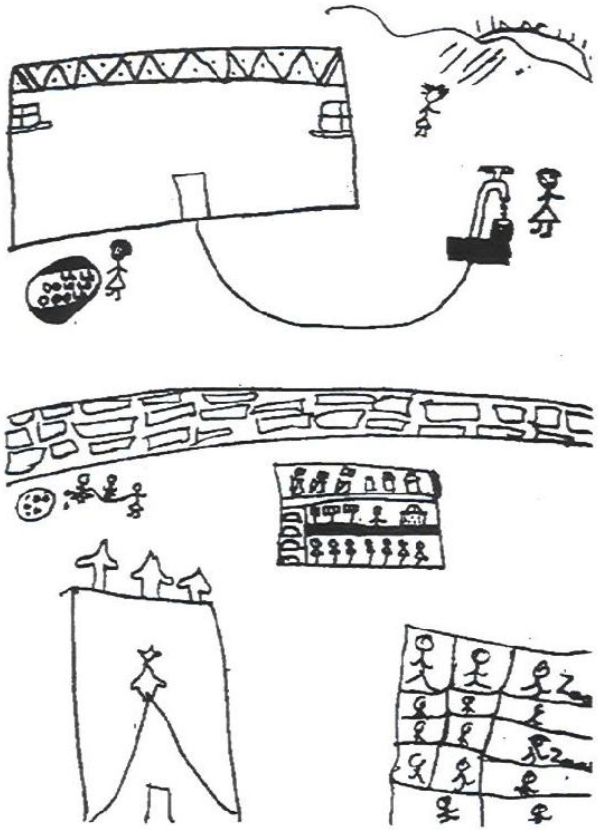


Map used in Masters in Child and Family Course



Annexure 2: Resources, places, services and people mapping important to the family, March 2008. Based on the PLA mapping tools.

research



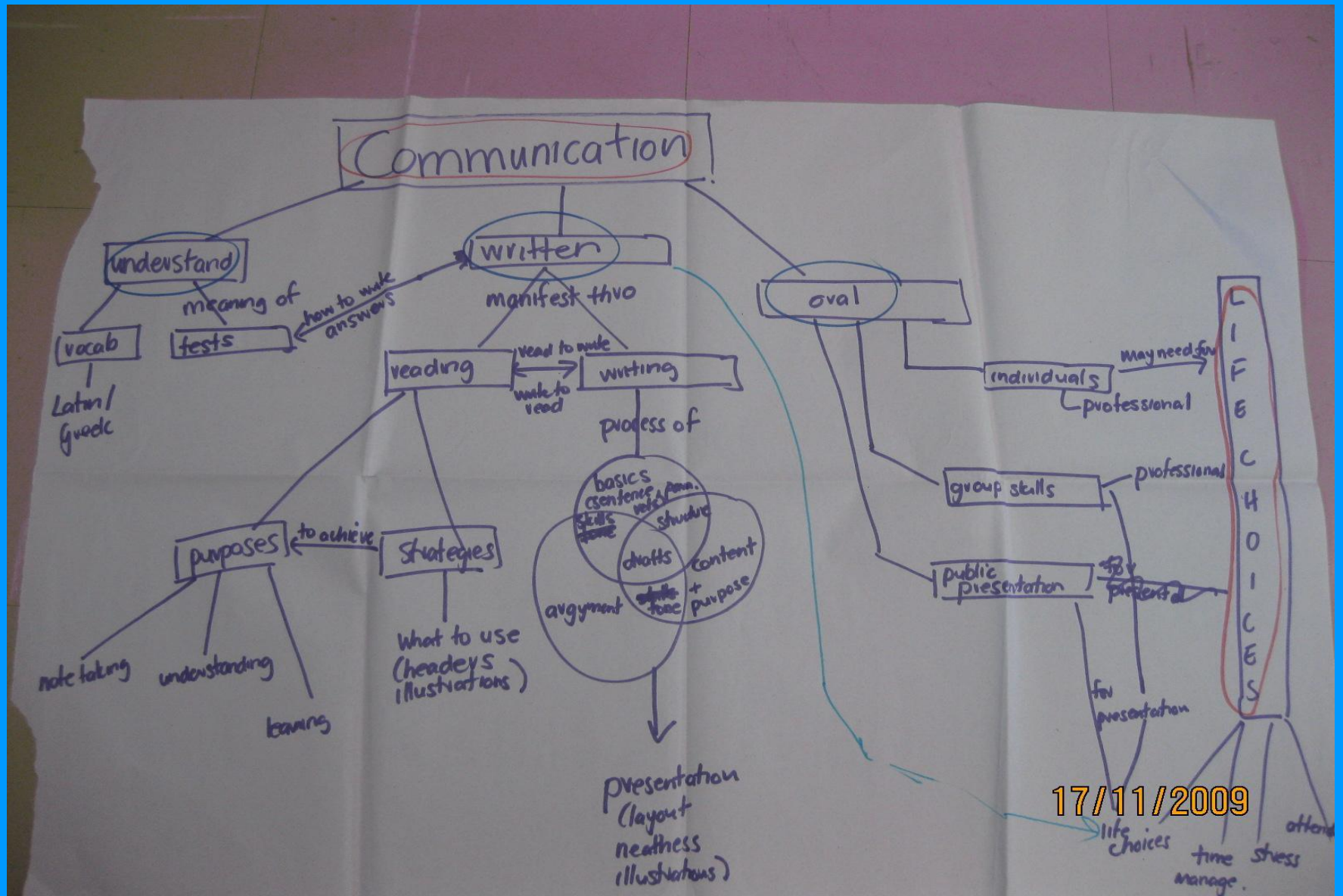
On the upper left, M shows her sister washing dishes in a large plastic basin outside the house. M is waiting for the sun to dry her hair, she has just dyed it. A girl from Canaansland fetches water from the communal tap. The pavement along Burghersdorp street on the western side of Canaansland is central in M's drawing. M, her sister and a friend skip on the pavement; the circle of stones to the left of the girls shows that a game of *diketo* was played prior to this. Just below the pavement is a new shop that M likes. It is behind a school, across Burghersdorp Street and, as yet, not well patronised. M's family buys groceries there. Of the church, M says: "I don't like it because it's for Indians only; they don't want a black person there. I went there and I was expelled." She visits the cinema shown near the church; her mother gives her money for this.

Community mapping

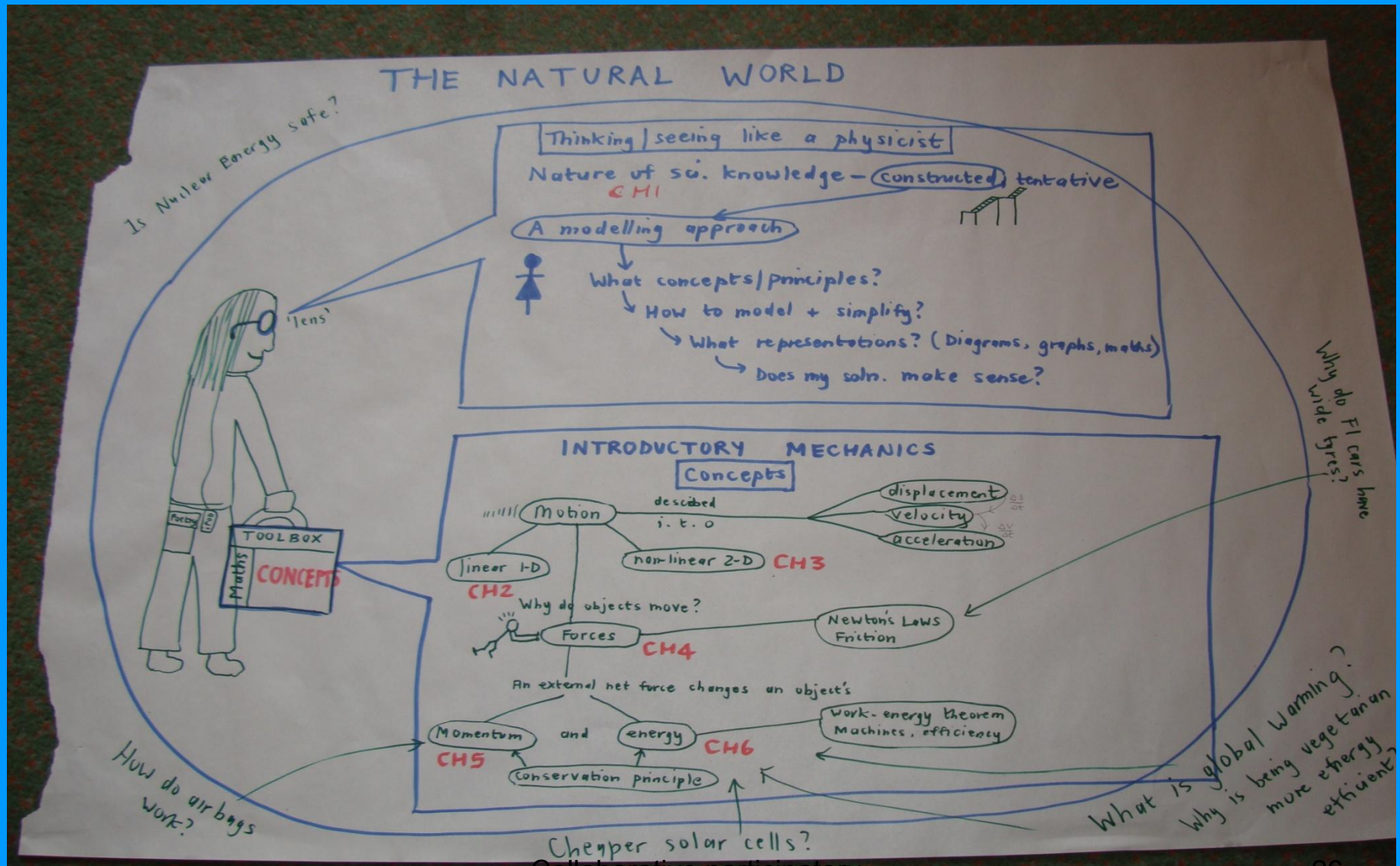
This includes mapping of social, demographic, health and service issues, opportunities or resources. These can be drawn on the ground or on paper, models can be made, natural resources used and provide a starting point for discussion or for prioritising issues for change. Example Swart Kruger (2000)

Map used in Higher Educators course

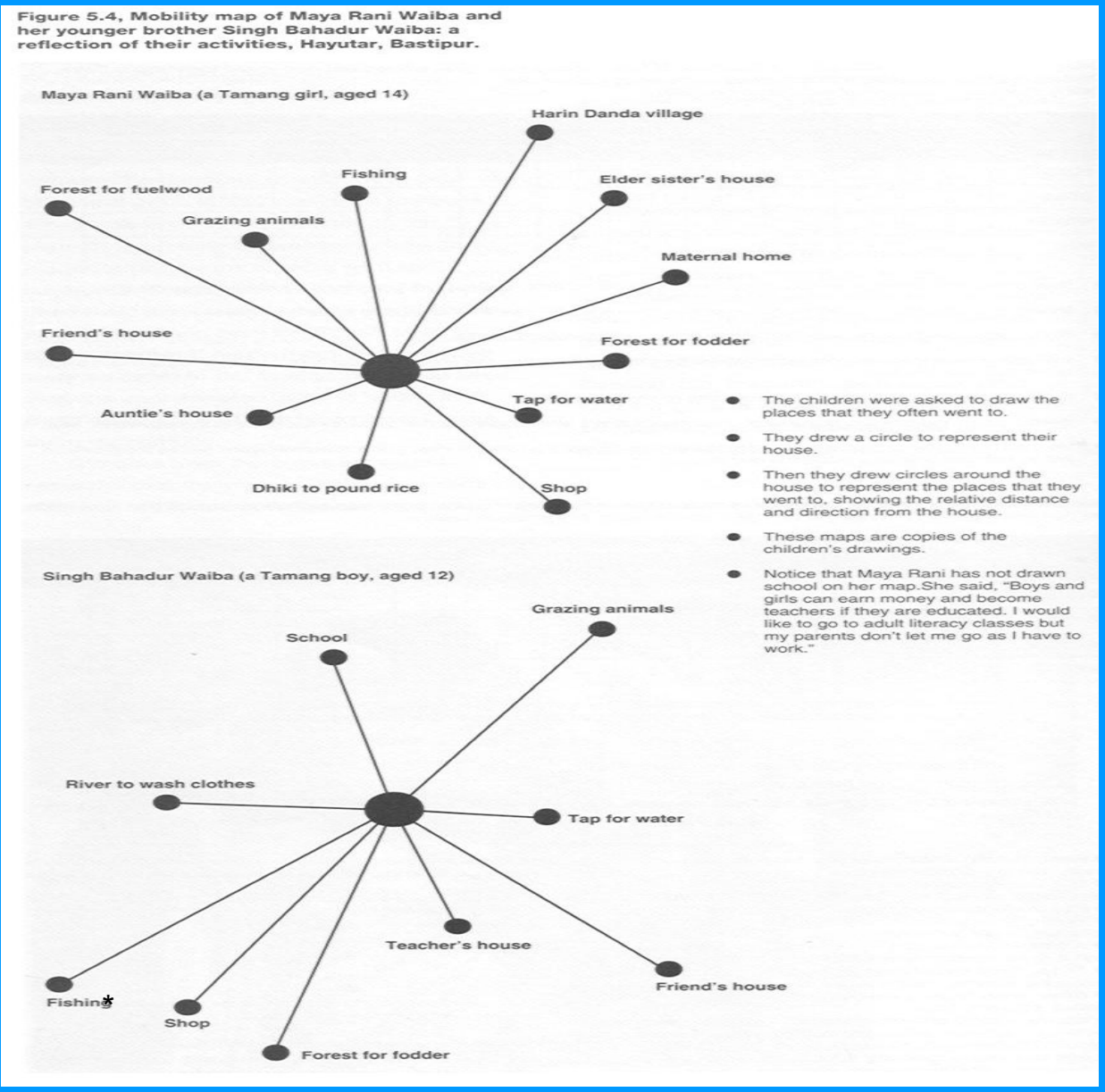
Concept maps



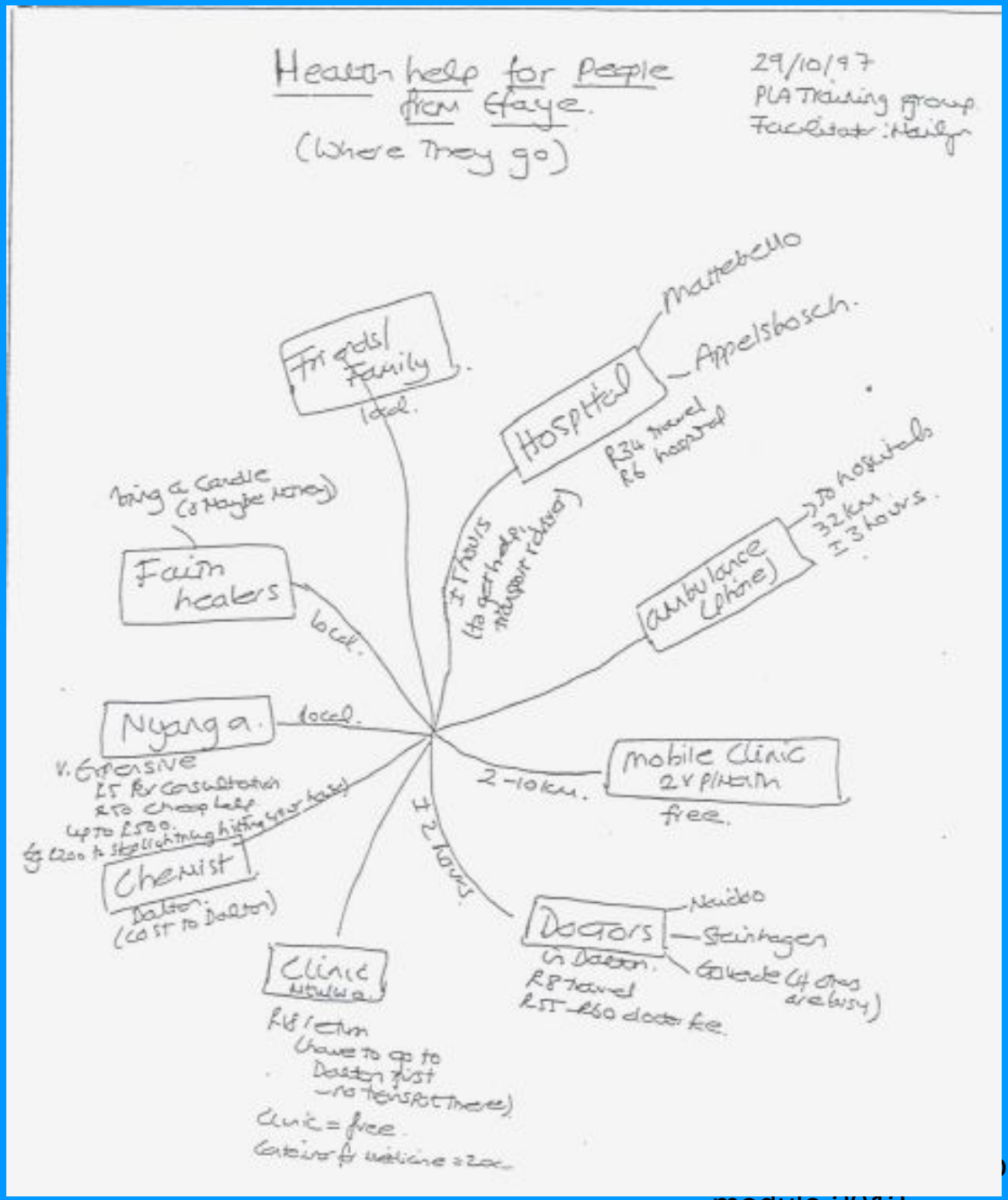
Concept maps (Science)



Mobility maps



- A map showing the difference between girls' and boys' mobility in an Indian village

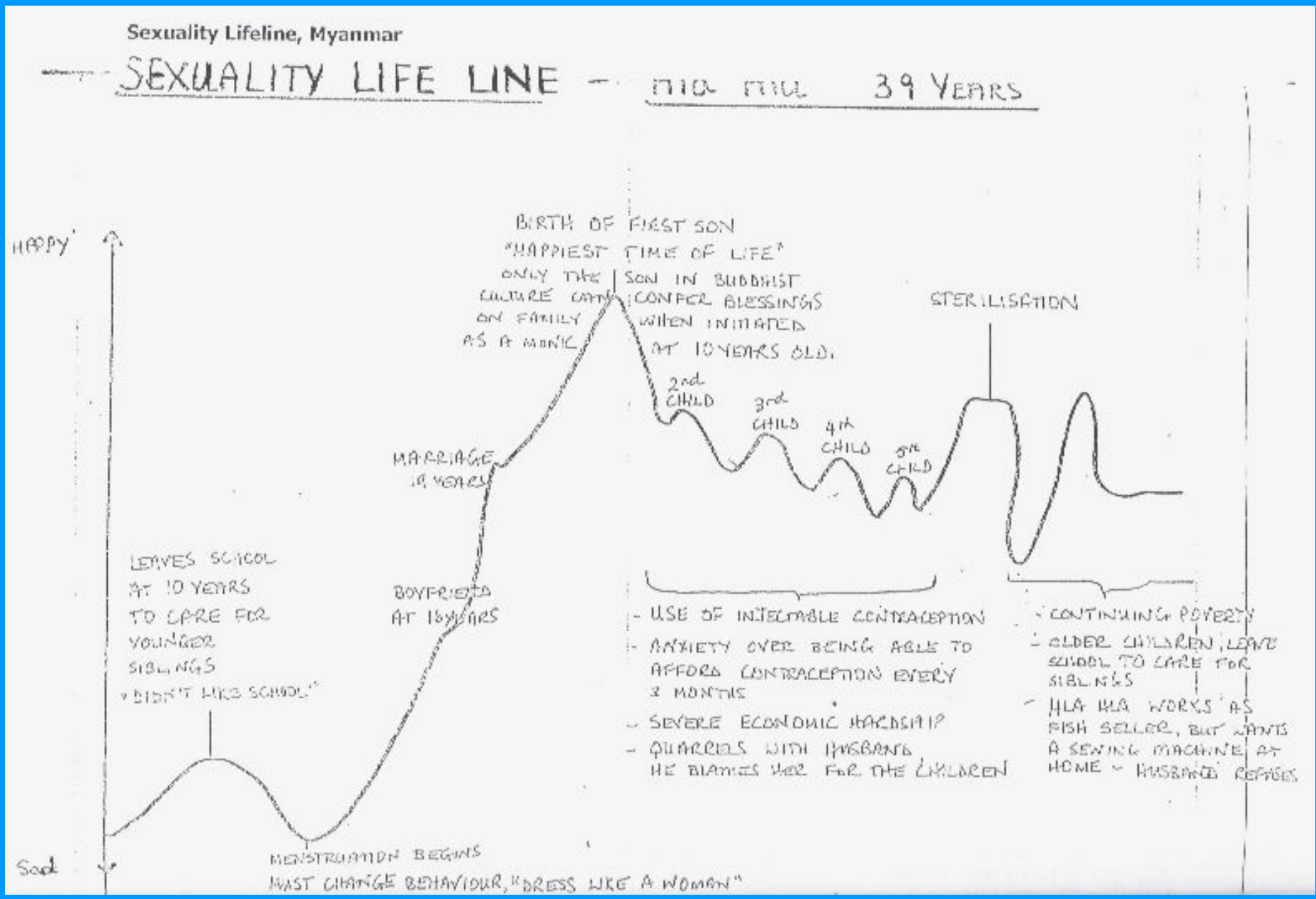


Mobility map showing distance and preferred health service providers

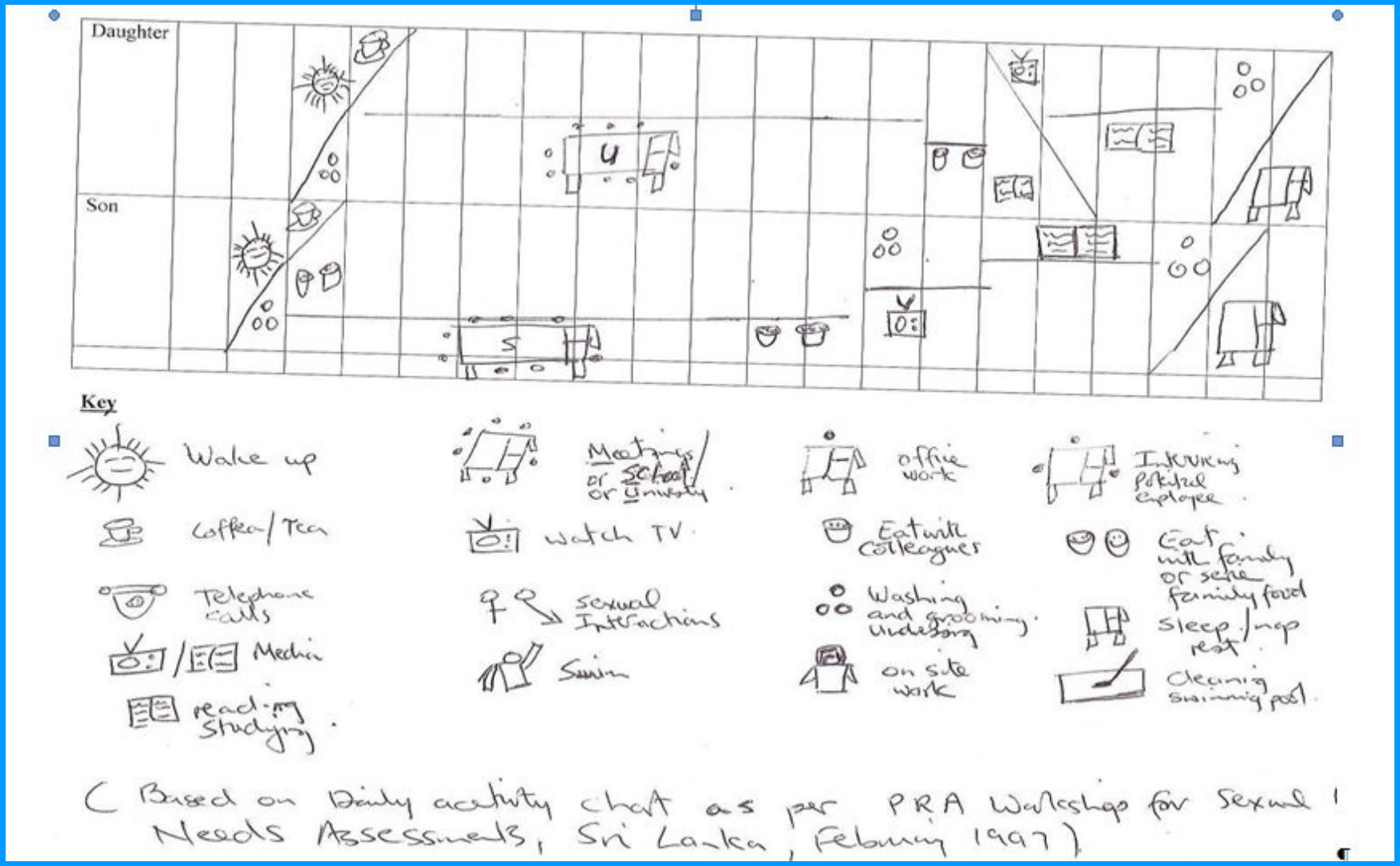
Mood or Life Lines

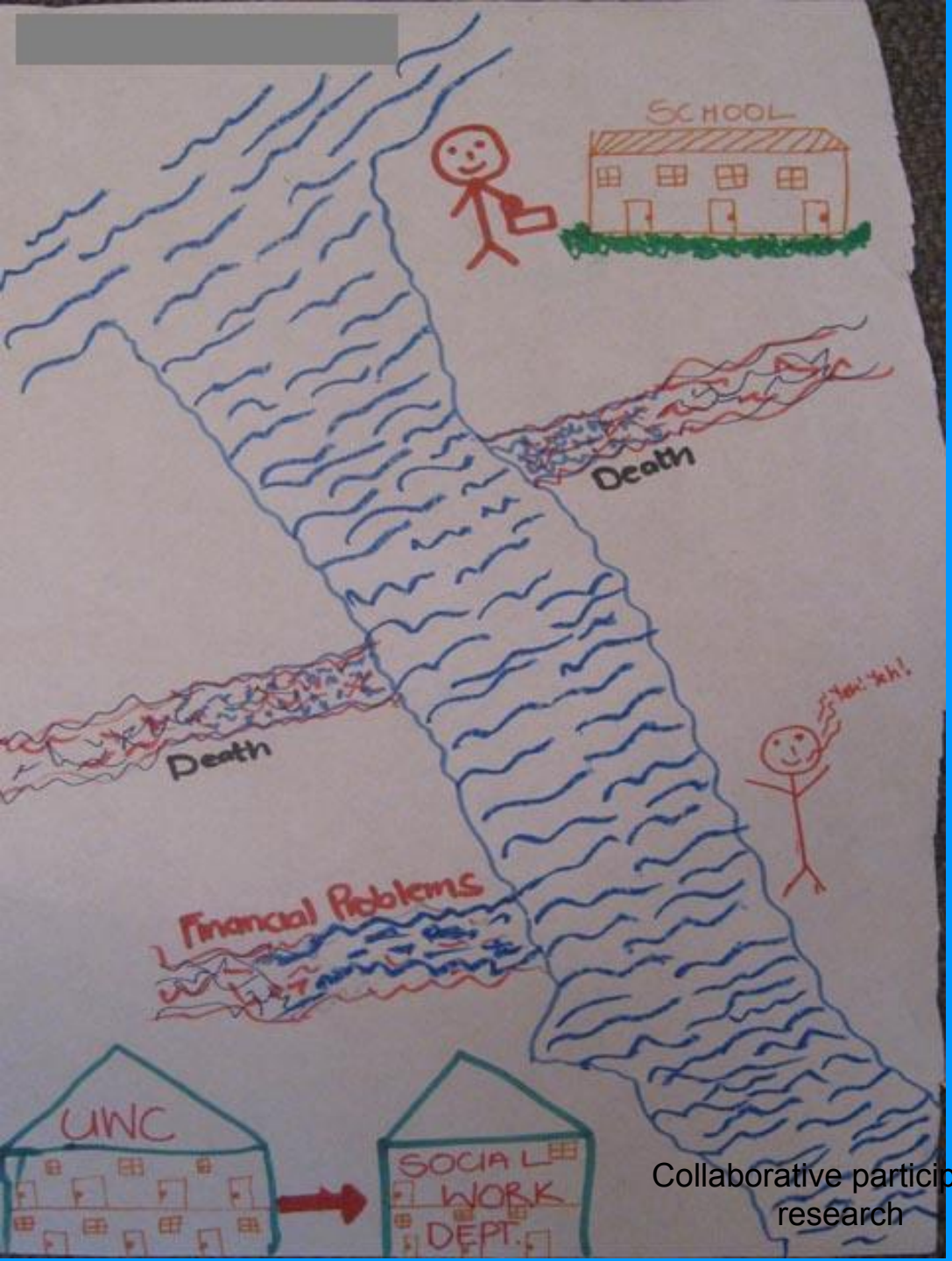
- Can be done individually or as a group
- People can track how they felt about particular events in their lives or even ae programme over time.
- Need to be used sensitively.

Sexuality Lifeline, Myanmar



How family members spend time (Masters in Child & Family studies research exercise) This timeline shows how a daughter and son spent their day differently





- A lifeline drawn by a student depicting the highs and lows of their life and the important events which influenced them

Group C: 2328950
M.I.S
Early Childhood (0-14 yrs)
Positive Influences
Primary School
Education
Teachers
Friends
Support
Love
Culture
Nuclear + Extended Family
Negative Influences (15-17)
NSFAS (Financial Aid)
(17-21yrs)
High School
Social Work
Nursing
Physio-Therapy
Dentistry
English
Afrikaans
Xhosa
Zulu
CAM
OT
EMS
Science
Physics
Anthropology
Social Science
Library Science
UWC
Peer Pressure
Denial
Financial Problems

River of life

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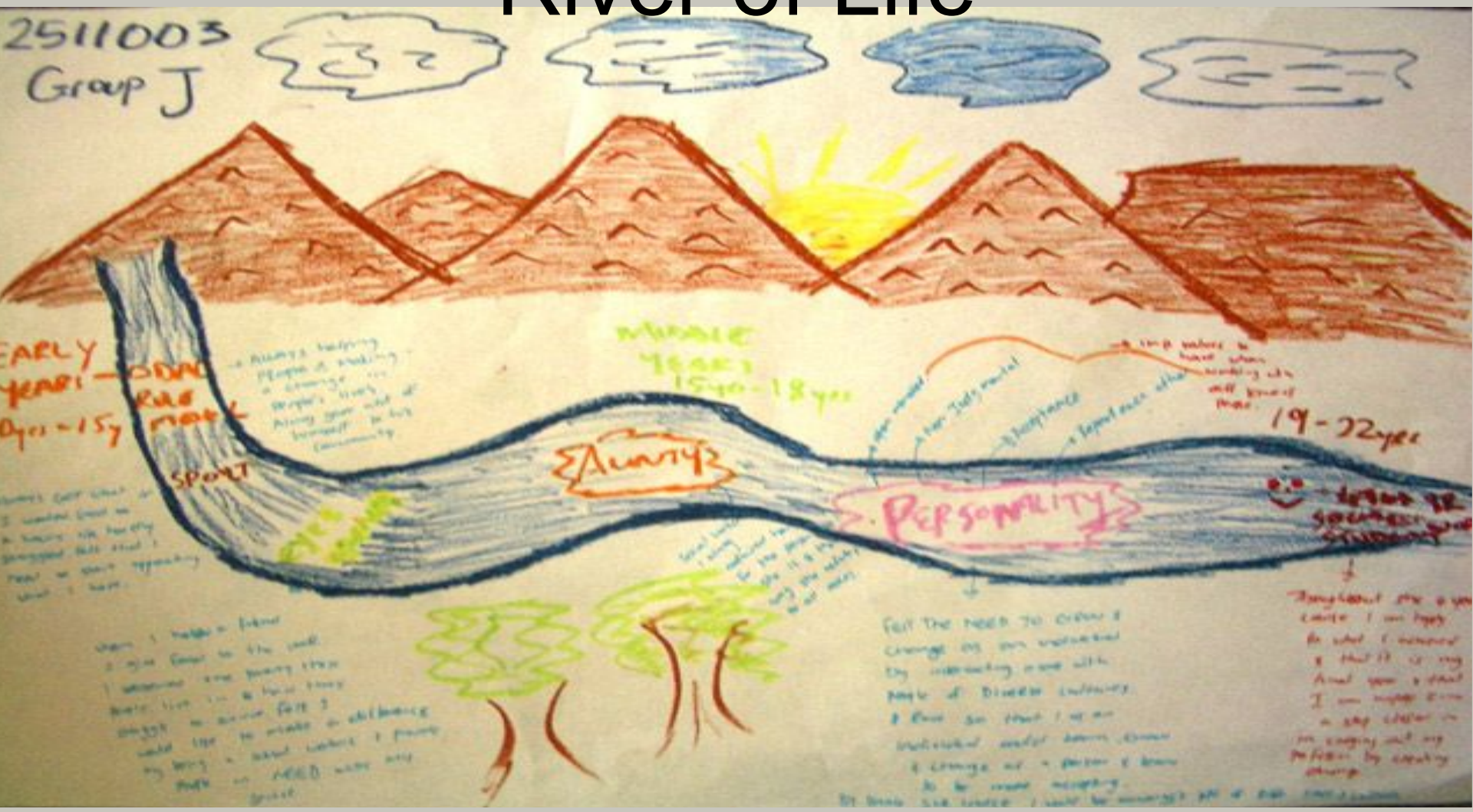
River of Life



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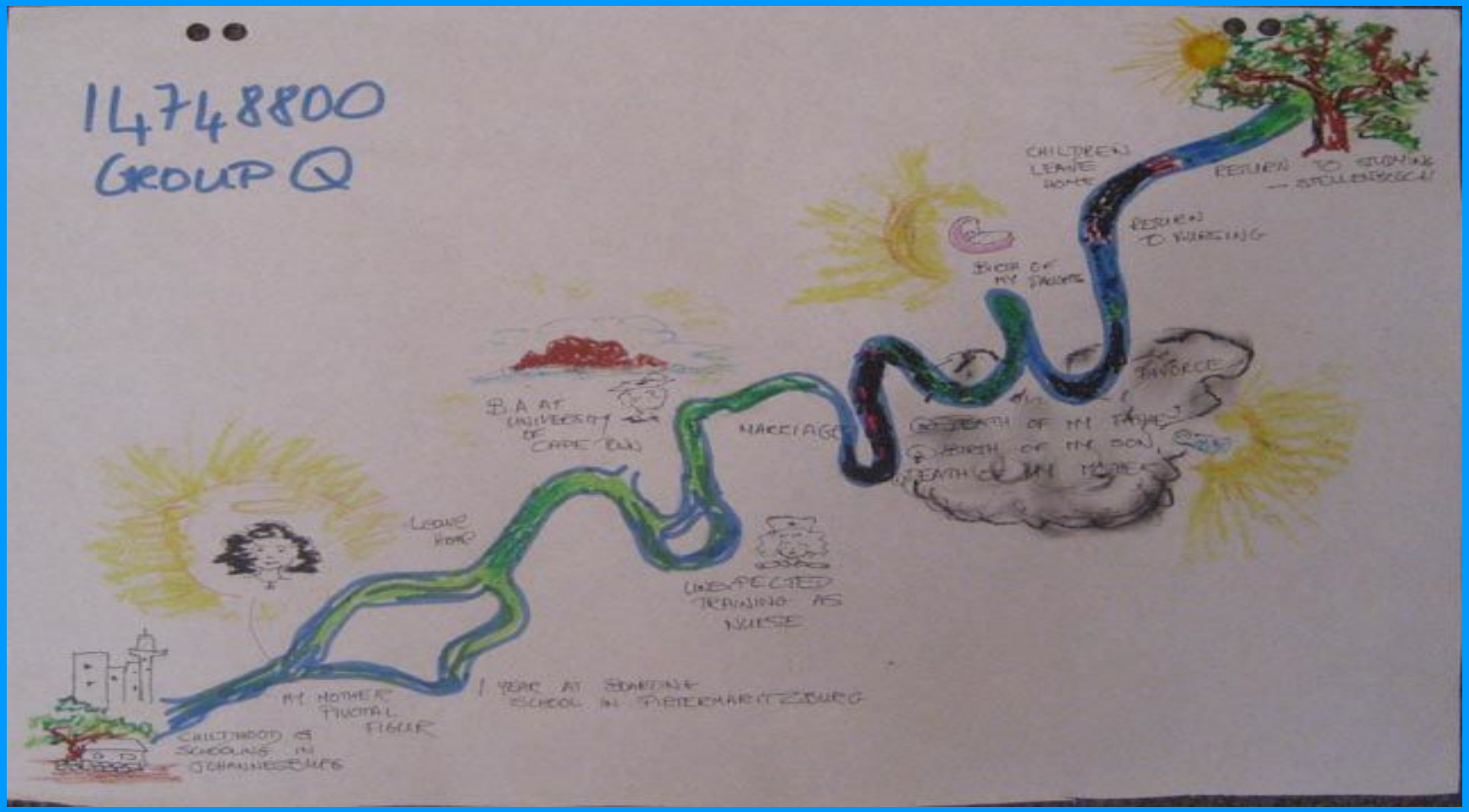
Another river of life



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English tutorial UWC – Huck Finn's river of life

Conclusion

- PLA effective tool in terms of students' and higher educators' knowledge of positioning and resources
- Students have found it useful as methodology themselves
- Enabled safer kind of sharing
- Richer understanding of power relations – privilege and deprivation
- Participatory parity
- Respect for abilities as learners and co-creators of knowledge
- Question world and place in it
- Critical and compassionate worldview
- Skills and willingness for transformation in contemporary SA
- Enhances inquiry based learning approaches

USEFUL RESOURCE

- http://www.ids.ac.uk/ids/particip/

References

Chambers, Robert (2006) 'Notes for Participants in PRA-PLA Familiarisation Workshops in 2006'.Institute of Development Studies, University of Sussex http://www.ids.ac.uk/ids/particip/

Cornwall, A. (1999) Introduction to PRA Visualisation Methods. In The Participation Group (1999) *Introduction to PRA and Health: A reader*. Institute of Development Studies, University of Sussex, Brighton.

Hodge, D.R. (2005) 'Spiritual life maps: A client-centered pictorial instrument for spiritual assessment, planning and intervention', Social Work, vol 50(1) pp 77-87.

Taylor, Peter & Fransman, Jude (2004) 'Learning and Teaching Participation: The Role of Higher Learning Institutions as Agents of Development and Social Change' IDS Working Paper 219. Brighton: Institute for Social Development, University of Sussex.

Self-evaluation

- As an individual exercise draw a mood line of the module you are currently teaching or have just completed at UWC indicating the highs and lows of this experience for you.
- Share with one other person.

Matrix ranking – a way to find out about priorities and develop action points

- In your group brainstorm what you see as barriers to student learning at UWC
- Group them into themes
- Draw a matrix and write themes along the left hand side (no more than 6)
- Each group member votes using their counters – explaining their view
- Come to a final decision about what you think are most important
- How could this information be used?

Visioning Exercise

What are the sort of things that would make a satisfactory learning experience at university? Draw or represent the things that you would find conducive to learning at university.

Mapping exercise

- As a group draw a map of the resources that are available for teaching and learning at UWC
- Using your tokens to vote, choose the three things which you would most like to change regarding these resources to improve teaching and learning at the institution