

Noticing and mapping more-than-human entanglements

Summary

In this teaching activity, students will gain an increased awareness of the more-than-human actors surrounding us in everyday life. They will begin with an individual “art of noticing” exercise to observe and notice your surroundings. Thereafter, they will form groups and develop entanglement maps that capture their joint experiences. Lastly, all groups will present the findings by placing the maps on the “Wall of Engtanglements” and reflect on how these new insights gained might influence the design process.

Learning outcomes

- Notice and describe entanglements with the more-than-human world.
- Map and visualise more-than-human entanglements.
- Reflect on how insights gained about more-than-human entanglements will influence the design process.

Outline/Content

- Noticing more-than-human entanglements
- Mapping more-than-human entanglements
- Exhibiting more-than-human entanglements

Key readings

Haraway, Donna (2016). *Staying with the trouble: Making kin in the chthulucene*. Duke University Press.

Metcalfe, Daniel (2024). Stepping out of the classroom and into the worlds of other species. In Poikolainen Rosén, Anton; Salovaara, Antti; Botero, Andrea; Juul Søndergaard, Marie Louise (Eds.) *More-Than-Human-Design in Practice*. Routledge.

Tsing, Anna L. (2015). *The Mushroom at the End of the World: On the Possibility of Life in Capitalist Ruins*. Princeton University Press.



“More-than-human design aims to widen the scope of action through the creative development of methods for noticing, knowing and making the more-than-human world.”

“What can we see, hear, smell, feel and taste? What might be beyond our senses?”

A more-than-human-design lexicon (Poikolainen et al., 2025, p. xxviii)



“More-than-human design aims to **Exercise:** noticing, knowing and making the more-than-human world.”

“What can we see, hear, smell, feel and taste? What might be beyond our senses?”

Art of noticing

About paying close attention to the world around us, especially the interactions between humans and the nonhuman world (Tsing, 2015).

By “noticing” Tsing encourages us to observe the small, often overlooked details of our environment and the complex relationships within it.

Individual exercise: Entanglement mapping

- Select one of the exercises (see worksheet 1):

Drinking water

Observing a tree/plant/flower

Drinking a coffee

Observing the air

Tasting a fruit/nut

The exercises are developed by Berre Su Demir, Koç University, and Clara Maria Antunes Venâncio, Faculty of Fine Arts, University of Porto and Institute of Social Sciences, University of Lisbon.

Individual exercise: Entanglement mapping

- Run the exercise for 20 min (see instructions on worksheet 1)
- Take notes, sketch your findings/experiences
- Meet back in the classroom for group work

Group exercise: Create an Entanglement map

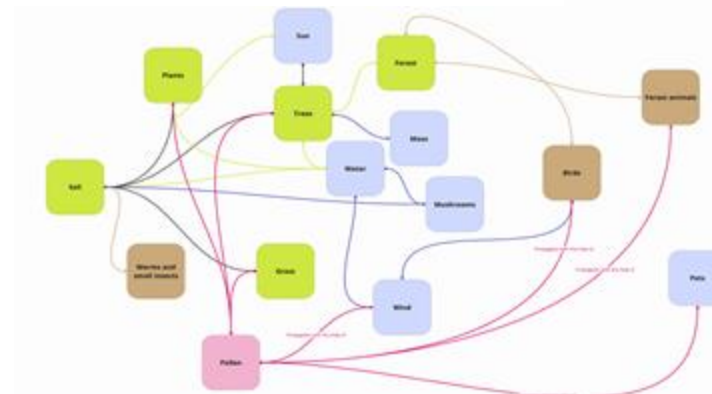
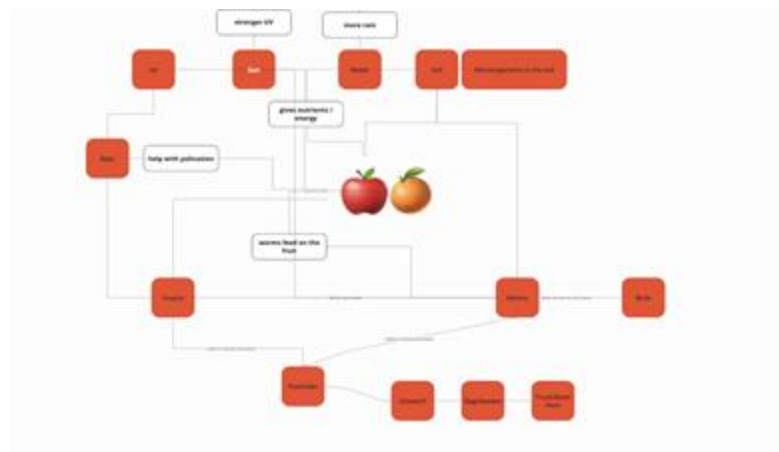
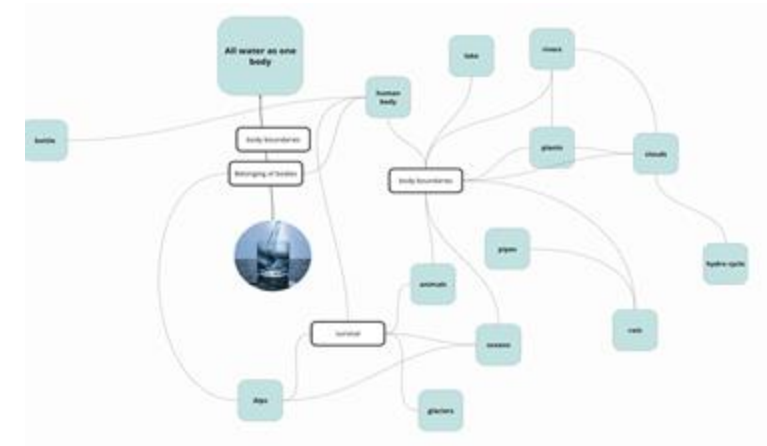
- Create groups based on the exercise that you selected:
 - Drinking water
 - Observing a tree/plant/flower
 - Drinking a coffee
 - Observing the air
 - Tasting a fruit/nut
- Use worksheet 2 and follow the instructions (6 pages/group)

Step 1 (15 min):

- List all actors identified and others associations, connections, reflections etc.

Step 2 (15 min):

- Connect the actors
- Define the relations



Mini-exhibition: Wall of Entanglements

- Place the documentation (worksheet 2) on the exhibition wall
- All groups present their entanglement maps
- What new insights were gained?
- How might these insights influence the design processes?

“We have lost a lot of nature in the past three hundred years – in both senses of the word lost. We have lost nature in the sense that much of nature has been destroyed... But we have also lost nature in another sense. We have misplaced it. We have hidden nature from ourselves.”

Marris, Emma (2011). *Rambunctious Garden : Saving Nature in a Post-wild World*. Bloomsbury.

Increasing our interaction with nature

- There is a strong correlation between interaction with nature, the attachment people feel towards nature, and their motivation to preserve and protect it (Shuttler et al., 2018).
- Interaction with nature is on a decline globally, and as a result, we are less aware and mindful of more-than-humans (Soga & Gaston, 2016).
- More-than-humans can be found all around us if we learn to notice (the art of noticing) and pay attention to our surroundings.
- In doing so, we develop a sensitivity towards more-than-human perspectives in the context of design, hoping that this will find its way into our future work (Metcalfe, 2024).

Next steps

We do not need to step into a forest to experience nature and the more-than-human world. Just by stepping out of the classroom and running this exercise, we create opportunities for ourselves to notice more than– humans, which helps us to relate to and appreciate the presence of nature around us.

– How can methods such as noticing and mapping more-than human entanglements influence our approach to design in the long run?

References

Haraway, Donna (2016). *Staying with the trouble: Making kin in the chthulucene*. Duke University Press.

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Marris, Emma (2011). *Rambunctious Garden : Saving Nature in a Post-wild World*. Bloomsbury.

Poikolainen , Anton (2025). A more-than-human-design lexicon. In Poikolainen Rosén, Anton; Salovaara, Antti; Botero, Andrea; Juul Søndergaard, Marie Louise (Eds.) *More-Than-Human-Design in Practice*. Routledge.

Schuttler, Stephanie G; Sorensen, Amanda E.; Jordan, Rebecca C.; Cooper, Caren; Schwartz, Assaf (2018). Bridging the nature gap: can citizen science reverse the extinction of experience? *Front Ecol Environ*, 16(7), 1540–9295.
<https://doi.org/10.1002/fee.1826>

Soga, Masashi; Gaston, Kevin J. (2016). Extinction of experience: the loss of human–nature interactions. *Front Ecol Environ*, 14(2): 94–101.

Tsing, Anna L. (2015). *The Mushroom at the End of the World: On the Possibility of Life in Capitalist Ruins*. Princeton University Press.

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