



EXPERIENCE GATHERER

Map and reflect on your own experiences in a playful and creative way.

 **Participants**
Individual

 **Design skill**
Develop empathy

 **Prior design experience**
None

 **Duration**
70 minutes

 **Design step**
Exploring the problem

Description

Participants individually do creative assignments in an environment related to the design assignment. In a follow-up session, they discuss the results of their assignments in groups. This allows them to compare their own experiences with the experiences of their peers.

Each participant takes some experience assignments home, for example, in a small booklet, and carries out the assignments independently over the course of a few days. The various assignments make use of a variety of skills, such as drawing, craft or writing. For example, the participants draw their favourite playground or they keep a record of what they eat in



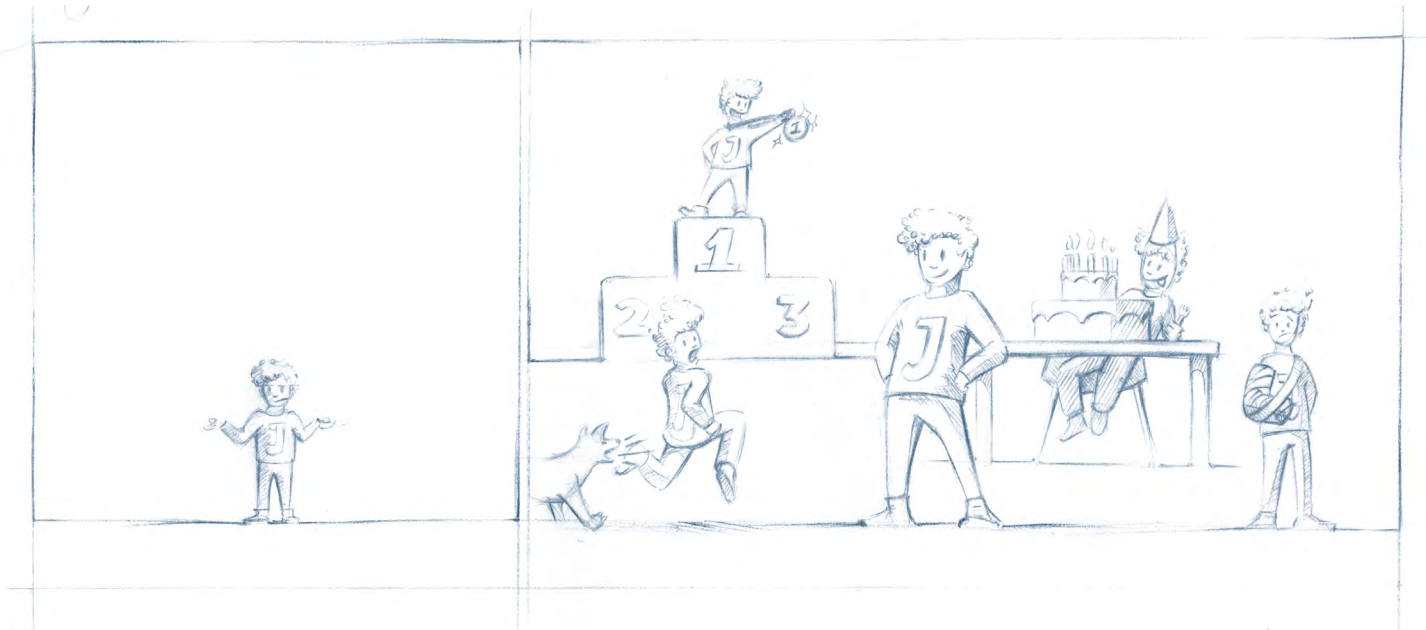
a day. Other types of assignments include taking photos, making a vlog or writing a diary. In the session, they discuss their results in groups and look for similarities and differences between other participants experiences.

Effect

Through the Experience gatherer, participants become aware of their own experiences and the experiences of others. Talking about these experiences ensures individuals engagement and reflection. It also stimulates the feeling of empathy for the target group. A benefit of this is that participants start getting ideas for solving the design problem.

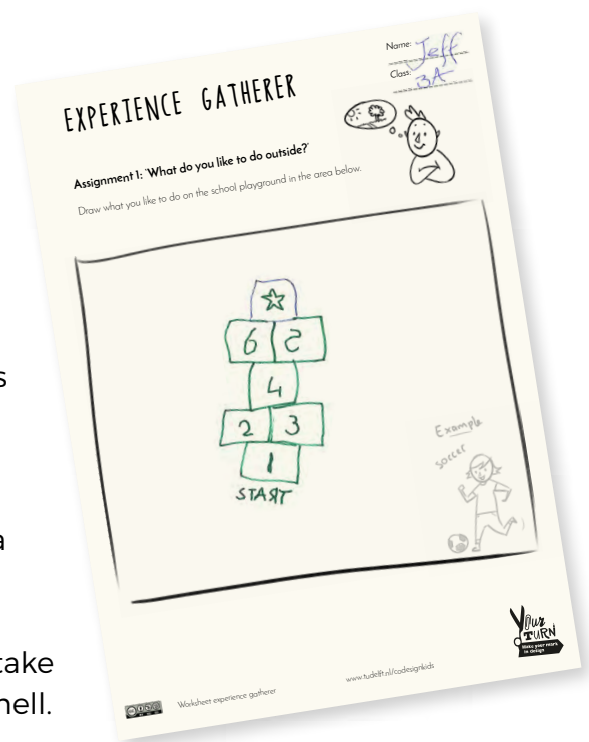
Without the Experience gatherer

With the Experience gatherer



Example

Year 6 students are coming up with an outdoor lessons for year 3 pupils. The design assignment is commissioned by a national foundation that advocates playing and teaching outside. Mrs. Adams gives her students a booklet with two drawing assignments and an interview assignment to take home. Straight after school, Kim runs to the school garden, it is her favourite area of the playground, and she makes a drawing of it. Back in the classroom she tells her group that the school garden is her favourite place because she likes to take care of the plants. She likes the herbs smell.



She is happy to hear that Yunia also likes to play there. Yunia counts the yellow flowers every day and her friend counts the red ones. The loser has to fill up the watering can. Kim does not like competitions, but the conversation with Yunia gives her the idea of a competition involving calculations about the flowers, for the outdoor lesson of group four.

Step by step

- 1 Think of several different assignments to do with the design theme where participants can recall and express their own experiences. Inquire about past experiences rather than future wishes.
- 2 Explain to the group that the assignments are meant to discover what the subject of the design assignment means for themselves and for other people. Tell them that these experiences will help them to understand other people and help them to come up with ideas.



- 3 Have them carry out the assignments at home and bring them to the session.
- 4 Have them discuss the assignments in their group one by one. Appoint one participant to lead the discussion. The discussion leader ensures that every participant has an opportunity to tell the group about their own experiences from each assignment.
- 5 Then have the participants cluster their experiences thematically, identifying similarities and differences.
- 6 If the participants have also collected experiences from a different target group, allow them to add these insights to their own conclusions.

Tips

- ▶ Make sure that the assignments look nice and are not associated with school work. Think of an attractive frontpage and a playful layout for the exercises.
- ▶ Add assignments where the participants have to speak to a trusted person from their own environment such as a parent, grandmother or neighbour and ask them about their experiences. Think about people from the target group of the design project in particular.
- ▶ The assignments can be broader than the design theme. This provides new contexts and gives more inspiration.
- ▶ Participants could also make a vlog as part of the exercises. Look at the tool 'Location vlog' for more tips.

You should try another nice tool!



Materials

- ▶ Booklet with experience assignments. The worksheet gives a very simple example of a drawing exercise for a young and slightly older child, and an extra assignment for older children to compare the drawings. Many other options are possible (timelines, diaries, rating lists, photo assignments, etc.)
- ▶ Materials for the assignments such as coloured pencils, pen, paper, a mobile phone for photos, videos and audio recordings

References

Gielen, M. (2013). Mapping children's experiences: Adapting Contextmapping tools to child participants. Nordes, 1(5).

Sleeswijk Visser, F., Stappers, P. J., Van der Lugt, R. & Sanders, E. B-N (2005). Contextmapping: Experiences from practice. CoDesign, 1:2, 119-149, DOI: 10.1080/15710880500135987

Van Mechelen, M. (2016). Designing technologies for and with children: A toolkit to prepare and conduct co-design activities and analyze the outcomes. KU Leuven. Available via <https://soc.kuleuven.be/mintlab/blog/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/CoDesign-Toolkit-Van-Mechelen-2016-highRes-II.pdf>



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EXPERIENCE GATHERER

Name:

Class:

Assignment 1: 'What's your experience with?'

Draw and write your own experiences concerning [the subject on the dots] in the area below.

