



Using overlays

Overlays are a great way of collating information on different aspects of your site. They can be used individually or combined to see how different aspects of the spaces interact.

This activity looks at creating physical overlays using tracing paper placed over a map of your site, to identify different areas and visualise ideas.

This activity works well indoors as a classroom session, but learners could go outside and explore their site to help remind them where different features and areas are.

Teaching time

30 minutes - 1 hour

Learning outcomes

- Notice and record how a space is used by people and nature
- Applying reasoning to interpret patterns, correlations and relationships in data sets
- Take multiple factors into account when forming an opinion and making a decision
- Understand the importance of collaboration, teamwork and planning to implement successful nature-based interventions

Step by step

To prepare, decide on the theme of each overlay. Here are some ideas:

- Spaces or features used before school, or at lunch time/break time
- Places to sit outside
- Places to learn outside / outdoor classroom area
- Shady areas
- Planters or existing planted areas
- Areas with shelter from the weather (rain/wind/sun)
- Wet or dry areas
- 'Grey' spaces with no green
- Routes or pathways used to get from A to B
- Essential access points

Working in small groups, ask each group of learners to focus on a different theme for their overlay. The overlay works by placing a sheet of tracing paper over your map – you can use masking tape to secure it in place. Make sure each group writes in the corner of their tracing paper which theme they are looking at.

Tips for creating your overlays

- Mark or draw something on your overlay that matches a key feature on your map – this will help you correctly orientate your map afterwards in case it gets moved!

Green Skills



Suitable for

Key Stage 2
Key Stage 3
Key Stage 4

Location

Indoors

Season

Spring
Summer
Autum
Winter

What you'll need

Aerial maps of your site, one per group (these can be printed out from online)

Large sheets or rolls of tracing paper
Pencils
Coloured pens
Masking tape
Optional: stickers

Key vocabulary

Critically analyse
Record
Map
Scale
Decision making

Support and extension opportunities

You can use overlays at lots of different stages in your Nature Park journey. You can use them at the start when you are exploring and collecting information on your site, you can use them to plan your changes, trying out different layouts, to work out where features might go or developing design ideas.



Step by step (continued)

- Use different colours to indicate different features or different people's views. Here are some suggestions:
 - Use a traffic light system for showing condition of different features – a seat in good condition would be shown in green, in need of replacement in red, and something in between in amber.
 - Use different colours to distinguish between the activity or opinions of different year groups, or between staff and learners.
 - Use different colours for different times of year, eg. to show shaded areas in the summer and the winter.
- You can use any symbols you like to indicate the different features but you do need to know what those symbols mean! Learners can create their own symbols but make sure they also draw a key on each overlay.

After each group has created their overlays, ask groups to place their overlays over each other to see how different aspects interact. A good way of seeing how this works for up to four overlays is to tape them each along a different edge, then you can lay them over your map one at a time, or all together. Are there crossovers between the different overlays? What can we discover by combining our overlays?



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