

PERSONAL GEOGRAPHY

An artistic approach to activate students' hearts and minds for the protection of water.



Personal Geography

- *“A map has no vocabulary, no lexicon of precise meanings. It communicates in lines, hues, tones, coded symbols, and empty spaces, much like music [...] A map provides no answers. It only suggests where to look: Discover this, re-examine that, put one thing in relation to another, orient yourself, begin here ... Sometimes a map speaks in terms of physical geography, but just as often it muses on the jagged terrain of the heart, the distant vistas of memory, or the fantastic landscapes of dreams.”*

Miles Harvey, The Island of Lost Maps

Personal Geography

Human beings learn the most when their hearts and minds are activated at the same time.

Personal Geography is an artistic expression of one's self, thoughts, feelings, dreams, fears, opinions, etc.

It is a map into one's mind and emotions and can express a journey or a moment in time.

It is thus, the perfect tool to activate students at both levels.



Personal Geography

Personal Geography can help students to identify what is valuable in their lives through an artistic expression while promoting **self-reflection** and understanding the **added value** of every learning experience.

It allows students to get in touch with their emotions, think about themselves for a moment and reflect about who they are and where they want to go.



Personal Geography

By using personal geography, students are invited to create connections between new and older knowledge as well as between new knowledge and themselves through memories and experiences.

Thus, their ability to recall knowledge is strengthened and knowledge retention is increased.



Personal Geography guidelines: Water in my life

1. In a notebook of your choice (paper notebook, digital notebook, digital canvas, or other), write down a list of places in which **water** has been important to you.

Don't overthink this process, let it flow, just like water...

Tips for educators: create a comfortable environment, with relaxing music and no pressure on the students. Allow them time to think and make sure they know that there are no wrong answers in this process.



Personal Geography guidelines: Water in my life



2. Associate memories and emotions to each of the things you added to your list. Add any keywords that come to your mind.

Remember how you felt and write it down, with no judgement.

... You can organize your ideas in a mindmap

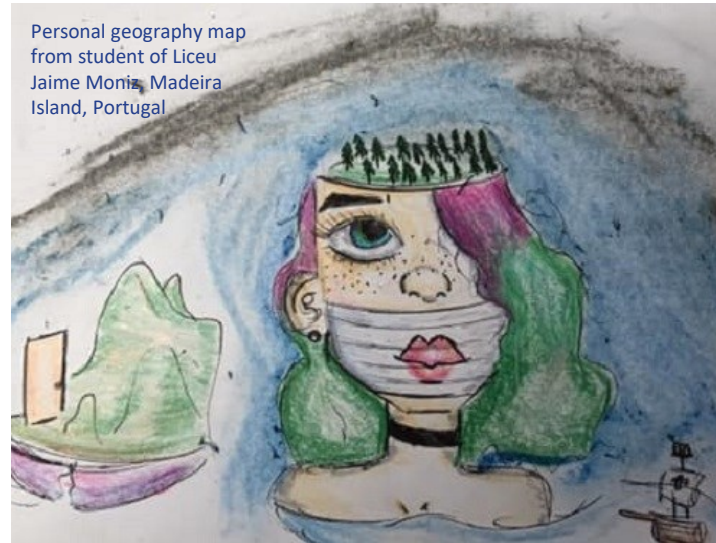
Personal Geography guidelines: Water in my life

3. Now reflect on all the memories you have identified and represent them in an artistic way using them as inspiration. You can make a drawing, a painting or any other type of art. Select the way that best helps you express yourself.

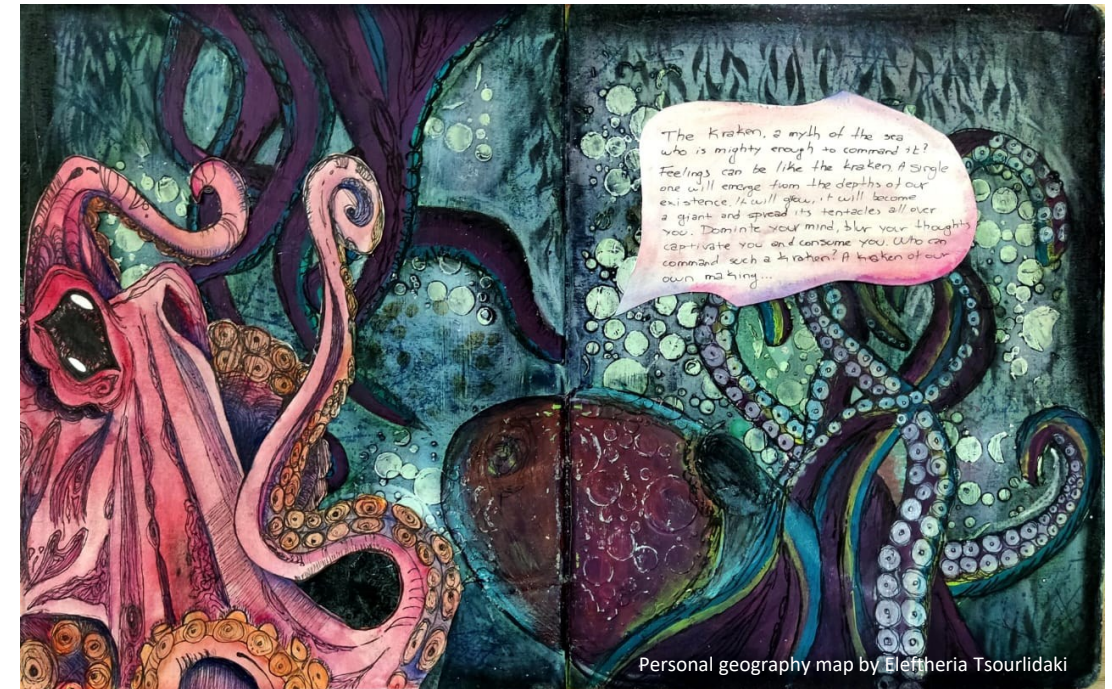
It is not important that you create something meaningful to others. It can be something abstract that only you understand. What matters is that you express yourself to yourself. Just remember that what is important is to remember that this process relates to the importance of water in your life.

Tips for educators: Make sure that students have several materials at their disposal: watercolors, acrylics, pens and pencils, scissors, stenciles, spray colors, etc. The more diversity, the better.

Personal Geography examples:



Personal geography map
from the book: Personal
Geographies: Explorations
in Mixed-Media
Mapmaking



Personal Geography: wrapping up the exercise



After students have finished their personal geography drawings, they will have their minds and hearts in place for the discussion about what are the main topics that they would like to address in relation to water in their community.

There are many ways to end this exercise:

Option 1: There is no need for any additional steps

Option 2: Students can present their creations to the class and share how and why water is important.

Option 3: Ask them to now identify possible ways in which water is threatened and to add new elements to their creations, portraying these threats. This will allow students to feel more close and more personal about water issues.

<https://otters-eu.aua.am/>

ENJOY AND HAVE FUN



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