

Lesson Idea #1: Tongva Perspective on Mapping

Objective:

- 1) Explore mapping and the idea that different groups have approached mapping in different ways. Maps tell us a story and can tell us what is important to the mapmaker.
- 2) Explore what Tongva maps tell us about what is important to Tongva mapmakers and the Tongva people.
- 3) Explore how other cultures experience, perceive their worlds/landscape and what their relationships with other humans and the whole of nature/natural environment shapes their “footprint” on the land.

Materials Needed:

Markers

Paper

Picture Books

Resources to use:

Mapping Indigenous LA: mila.ss.ucla.edu, teaching Resource

Tongva Perspectives map <https://arcg.is/mLH1r>

Map of Tongva superimposed worlds.

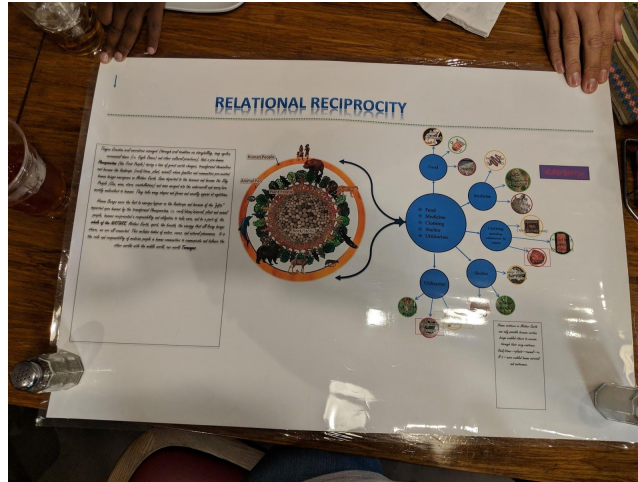
[Library of congress maps](#)

[Leventhal Map Collection and Indigenous Mapping](#)

Introductory Background Information

There are multitudes of approaches to mapping beyond the Western cartesian map. Sandpainting and mindmapping are examples. There are different ways of mapping and looking at our own relationships with other beings and elements around us, all as a way to understand ourselves and our positionality. One example is the difference between the Western approach to mapping historic tribal territories versus an Indigenous method. The Western approach uses solid boundary lines, based on inaccurate linguistic data. This is not how Native people thought about their boundaries. This exercise instead considers an approach that accounts for nature as our first teacher. Just like an abalone shell, whose distinct colors fluidly blend and intermingle, tribal boundaries were not harsh lines as depicted in a Western mapping style.

Relational mapping activity example: Create a map which illustrates what plants, tools, elements, etc are used for food, shelter, clothing, medicine, and utilitarian purposes in your community. Create nodes and networks to show your relationship and reciprocity with the things you need to live.



This lesson should follow a basic geography lesson. Consult the mila.ss.ucla.edu website and click on the Tongva Perspectives map.

Cartesian map-- provide examples of the different ways that people have mapped the world i.e. maps based on the bible or maps from Asia.

Have the students think about space and the area around them.

See [Library of congress maps](#) and [Norman B. Leventhal Mapping Center](#) for examples, note how California was once an island.

Exercises

- 1) Think about yourself in the classroom space.
- 2) The students can do a thought exercise where they map out their classroom from their place specific seat and from their own perspective. Instructions might include:
 - a) Draw a map of the classroom with yourself at the center.
 - b) Include the things that you think are important in the classroom.
 - c) Do it the way that it makes sense to you. It does not have to be perfect.
 - d) Tell them they have 10 to 15 minutes to complete their task.
- 3) The students then can pair up to make observations about each other's maps.
 - a) On your own, look at your partner's map. What did he/she place in their map? What do you think is important to your partner? Why do you think that?
 - b) Have a conversation as a pair. Each partner explains his/her map.
 - c) Now compare--Did you include the same things in your map? Did your drawings look the same? Why do you think the maps were similar or why were the maps different?
- 4) Prior to whole group discussion, the teacher identifies three maps that are significantly different from each other.
- 5) Whole group discussion. Project each one and have students make observations. Students can discuss whether maps were more similar or different. How were things

drawn on the map? What was included in the maps? What was important to the mapmaker? How do we know?

- 6) Discussion--why do we make maps?
- 7) Next is a small presentation on how different people approach mapping. A teacher might project as an example----
- 8) Next teacher projects the map found----- . Teacher indicates that you are going to look at a Tongva map. It's called the Dolphin Circle Map. What observations might you make about this map? What relationships do you see? What is important to this mapmaker
- 9) The teacher could play the following language [video about Tongva land and language](#).
- 10) Teachers should project another Tongva map (See Mapping Indigenous LA) and have a similar discussion.

Assessment

In pairs students write a response to this prompt:

Based on these maps, what is important to the Tongva as revealed on these map?