

DESCRIPTION & INTENTIONS:

A wandering map is a variation of a mind map that encourages students to explore their lives on paper, placing everything into a single space to uncover themes and threads that have been present throughout their lives. It can reveal their natural strengths and mindsets.

DIRECTIONS:

You'll need a piece of paper, or an application that allows for you to add to freely (like a power point slide, whiteboard in Zoom, Canva, etc.)

- 1) Think about all the interests, skills, and significant things you've engaged with or experienced. You can go as far back as you'd like. Examples include:
 - a. *Favorite memories*
 - b. *Heroes or mentors*
 - c. *Past jobs / internships / programs / extra curriculars / volunteer*
 - d. *Classes you enjoy*
 - e. *Hobbies / how you like to spend your free time*
 - f. *Interests*
 - g. *What brings you joy*
 - h. *What's challenging for you / what comes easily to you*
 - i. *Awards / honors*
 - j. *What you value / what your priorities are*
 - k. *Places you've lived / traveled / want to go*
- 2) Start writing them down. Don't worry about spelling or how it's organized.
- 3) Take a step back and look at your map. Consider the following questions:
 - a. *Do you have any experiences that seem to fit into certain categories or have common elements?*
 - b. *Can you find connections between the categories or elements?*
 - c. *Is there a pattern to the things you've engaged in or interests you have? What did you learn or what skills did you obtain?*
- 4) Spend time identifying common themes (patterns or categories) and competencies (combination of knowledge, skills, and personal attributes) that are common links between different experiences and write them down. Then draw lines connecting the different experiences between common themes and competencies.
 - a. **Example of themes:** *tools, family, locations, rewarding, skills/knowledge, learning, roles, types of people, types of experience*
 - b. **Example of competencies:** *analytical, artistic/creative, communication, technical/computer, counseling/serving, creative thinking, detail oriented, interpersonal, research/investigation, analytical, leadership/management, teamwork, negotiating, mathematical/financial/data, organizational, presentation/performing*

REFLECTION:

- How do these themes or categories align with your values, interests, and personality? How might they align with your major or career interests?
- Which themes or categories energize you the most?
- What 2 or 3 items are you most proud of? What skills or behaviors were needed to account for them? Can you think of ways to connect those skills to work?
- If you can't see any themes, what would happen if a miracle occurred and the themes suddenly appeared? What do you think they would be?

NEXT STEPS:

- 1) Identify how these themes or skills may connect to a career. What do you still need to learn?
- 2) How can you continue developing or gaining experiences related to these themes or competencies?
- 3) If you knew you couldn't fail, which themes or competencies would you continue to work towards?
- 4) How can you use this new insight in your career decision-making process?
- 5) How can you use this reflection to communicate about yourself in a cover letter, personal statement, or interview?

EXAMPLE OF A COMPLETED WANDERING MAP:

TENNESSEE CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY CAREER & PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT CENTER | Wandering Map

Themes
Destigmatize
Advocating

Skills
Leadership
Interpersonal
Organization
Creativity
Communication

Where
Relationships
Academic settings

Reflection:

1. How do these themes or categories align with your values, interests, and personality? How might they align with your major or career interests?
2. Which themes or categories energize you the most?
3. What 2 or 3 items are you most proud of? What skills or behaviors were needed to accomplish them? Can you think of ways to connect those skills to work?
4. If you can't see any themes, what would happen if a miracle occurred and the themes suddenly appeared? What do you think they would be?

Next Steps:

1. Identify how these themes or skills may connect to a career. What do you still need to learn?
2. How can you continue developing or gaining experiences related to these themes or competencies?
3. If you knew you couldn't fail, which themes or competencies would you continue to work towards?
4. How can you use this new insight in your career decision-making process?
5. How can you use this reflection to communicate about yourself in a cover letter, personal statement, or interview?

