

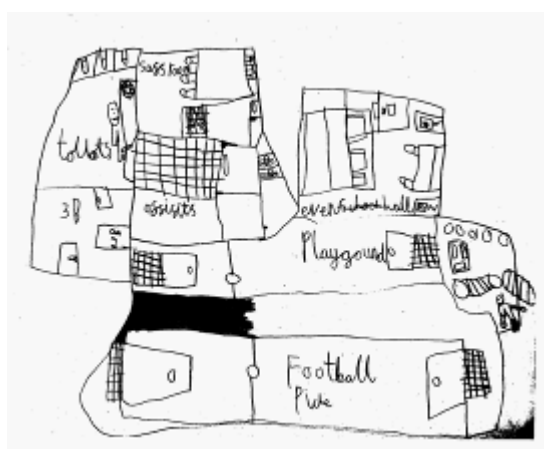
## Key stage 2: The role of teaching in learning mapping skills

**The research task:** to investigate the differences in children's mapping abilities and if the mapping abilities could be improved through direct teaching over a short period.

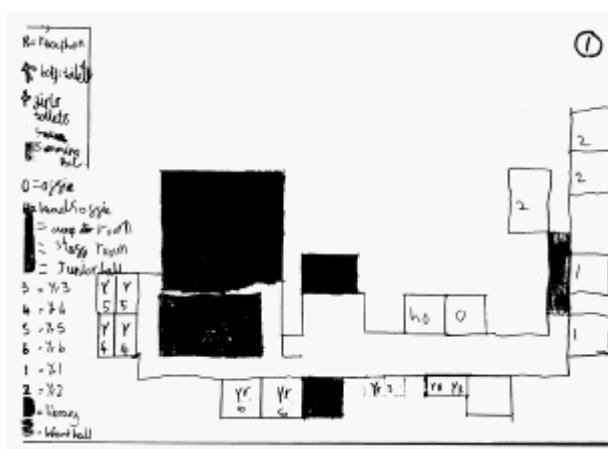
**The context:** a sample group of mixed ability children taught over six 1-hour long sessions. The focus could have been to draw an understandable map for planning new features in the school grounds; or with older children (e.g. year 4 and above) to develop a map to show relevant features of a village or small town or in conjunction with enquiry in the local area. This group had not had previous teaching involving maps or mapping skills, though the pre-test showed a familiarity with maps.

**The methodology:** The pre-test instruction 'Draw me a plan of the school to help a new child' was accompanied with a structured interview, which guided future teaching emphasis.

Note: the same child's work is shown in both Map 1 and Map 2.



Map 1. Year 3 child's pre-test map



Map 2. Year 2 child's post-test map

The middle four sessions involved discussion upon map content, use of symbols, pictures and words, ideas of scale, direction, layout, key and location. Children's misconceptions about scale and keys were addressed. Real maps and plans were used alongside activities in plan drawing, orientating and drawing a map of an imaginary island.

The post-test, i.e. after discussion on map use, map content and symbols, was again accompanied with a structured interview.

**The analysis** was undertaken with a small group of children of mixed ability.

The skills demonstrated were: perspective, key, symbols, pictures, words, colour, scale and direction (see Graphs 1 and 2 below). The key differentiated between using, beginning to use and not using a skill. The premise is that early maps use pictures and words whereas the later ones included symbols.

### Initial Assessment of Mapping Skills

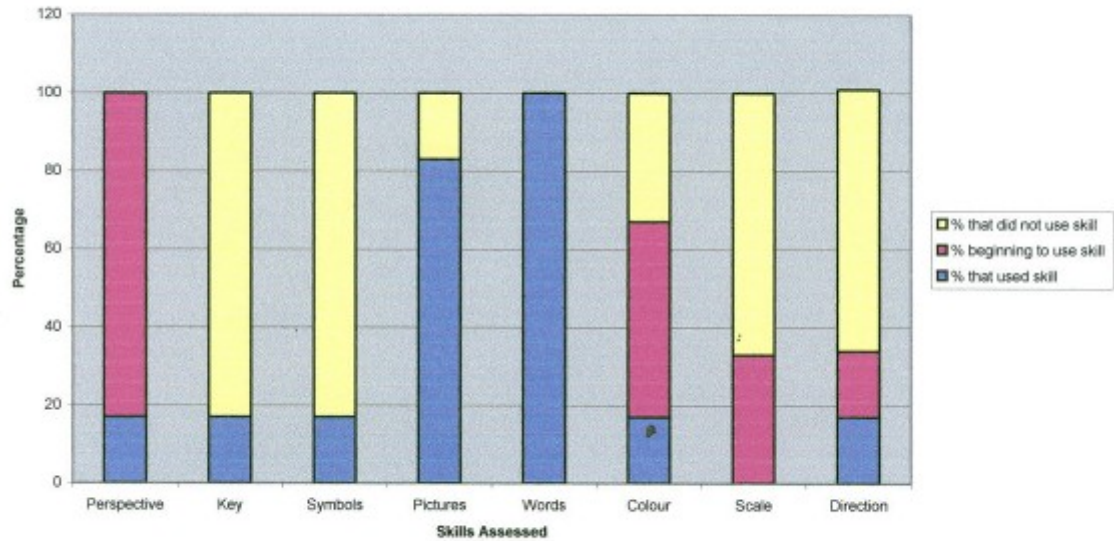


Chart 2 : Graph showing initial results of mapping skills

### Final assessment of Mapping Skills

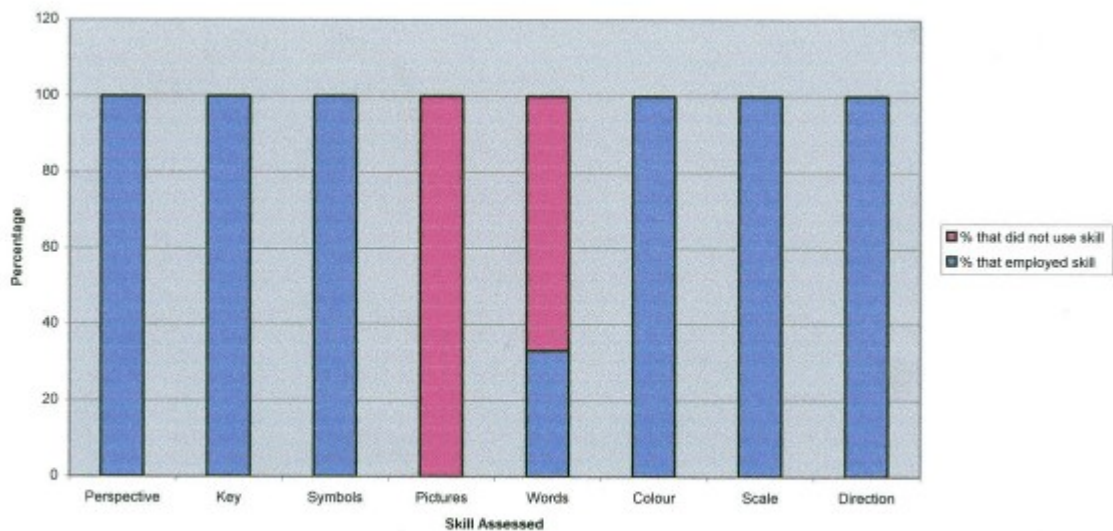


Chart 3: Graph showing final results of mapping skills

Though improvement could be shown, the analysis alongside the results of the structured interviews showed significant areas for development in subsequent lessons.

*Acknowledgement: Dawn Jones (2002) Unpublished undergraduate dissertation, University of Greenwich.*

Further research work:

1. Investigations of the links between levels of ability in literacy, numeracy and graphicacy.
2. A replication of a study similar to that of Catling (1998 'Children as map makers' which appears in Scoffham, S. (ed) *Primary Sources: Research findings in primary geography*, pp. 10-11, Geographical Association), but with children of different year groups.
3. The use of video, tape and digital camera to record the children's process of learning and developing understanding