Academic Outreach & Innovation

Concept Mapping

Overview

Concept Mapping is a strategy for organizing and representing information. A concept map includes concepts, arrows, and linking words describing the relationship between connecting concepts on the arrows. The construction of concept maps encourages the learner to engage in self-questioning, reflection, and summarization. Deep processing is demonstrated by deciding which concepts to include and how to spatially distribute the links and nodes (i.e., connections and relationships between conceptual ideas).

Concept maps are ideal for: interrelated concepts, understanding complex processes, and big-picture summary.

Concept Mapping meets the following WSU Learning Goals: critical and creative thinking, scientific literacy, information literacy, and depth, breadth, and integration of learning.

Group size: 1-2 | **Active Time**: 20 mins | **Prep. Time**: Low

Active time is an estimate and may vary depending on your class.

Implementation

Suggested Tech Tools: Blackboard Discussion Board, VoiceThread, Google Drawings

Instructor:
Give students the criteria and subject for the concept map. Provide students with an example of a completed or mostly complete concept map.

Students:
1. Create a concept map with concepts, arrows, and linking words.
    - Linking words should appear along the connecting arrows and describe the relationship between connecting concepts.
2. Be prepared to submit your concept map and share with the class.

Variations & Tips:

- For **face-to-face** and **video conference (VC)** courses, have students create the concept map on paper, then share with the class using a document camera.
- In **online** courses, after students upload as an assignment, have them share and provide feedback via Blackboard Discussion Board or VoiceThread.
- In **large-enrollment** courses, provide small groups with a template and specific concepts to focus on. As a large group, work to connect all the concepts.
- Use prompting questions like: What factors shape the occurrence of X? or How is X formed?
- Concept maps can also be used as brainstorming lists or learning journals. Encourage students to revisit the concept map and edit to reflect understanding.
- Concept maps you create can be made into assessments for students.

You may also be interested in:

Drawing for Understanding
Defining Features Matrix

Resources:

The Theory Underlying Concept Maps and How to Construct and Use Them
2006: Learning with Concept and Knowledge Maps: A Meta-Analysis
2017: Studying and Constructing Concept Maps: A Meta-analysis

Let's explore the possibilities together!
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