

Concept Mapping

Resources: <http://cmap.ihmc.us/> a free download of CmapTools
<http://sourceforge.net/projects/freemind/> a free download of FreeMind
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Concept_map

What are **concept maps**?

... graphical tools for organizing and representing knowledge using concepts connected by linking words/phrases that specify the relationship between the two concepts

What is a **concept**?

... a perceived regularity in events or objects, or records of events or objects designated by a label

What is a **label**?

... most often a word that symbolizes what the concept is about

What is a **proposition**?

... statement about some object or event that is made up of two or more concepts connected using linking words/phrases to form a meaningful statement

Why are Cmaps valuable?

- Help us move from rote learning (memorization) to meaningful learning (adding new knowledge to our existing knowledge)
- Are more like how our brain works
- Act as a template or scaffold for organizing our knowledge
- Engage our brain in a more effective way
- Shows our level of understanding

Steps in constructing good concept maps

1. Construct a **Focus Question** - a question that clearly specifies the problem or issue the concept map should have to resolve
2. Identify the **key concepts** to apply to the question (try for 10 - 20)
3. **Rank concepts** in order from most general to most specific (this is your **parking lot**)
4. Construct a **preliminary concept map** (scratch paper, post-its, Cmaps)
5. Create **cross-links** between concepts (these are the key to show that you understand the relationship between the concepts)
6. Keep returning to Cmap to **refine it** as your understanding grows

Concept maps are not easy because they move us from rote learning (memorization) to evaluation and synthesis of knowledge, higher levels of performance.

You will get better at them!