



Concept Maps for Collaborating, Designing, and Teaching

Megan Fitzgibbons and April Colosimo, May 9, 2011

Pen and paper exercise

Choose an area of interest to your professional work (5 min):

Please select **one** of these possible uses of concept mapping and answer the question in the space below.

Collaborating on projects:

You may be leading or collaborating on a project. What is the goal of the project and what are the tasks involved?

Designing a workshop or a readers' advisory tool:

Think about a workshop or readers' advisory tool that you would like to (re)design. What is the focus of the workshop/tool?

Teaching a complex subject or process:

Think about a particular subject or process you will be teaching. How would you describe the main ideas in a few sentences?

Create a concept map related to your professional work (15 min):

1. Circle the main concepts/ideas from the above description.
2. Write each concept on a separate sticky note.
3. Think about a way to arrange these concepts: are some related to others? Is there a sequence? Is there a visual representation that would capture the relationship between these concepts/ideas?
4. Arrange the sticky notes in a visual representation that captures the relationships between the concepts. It helps to label the connections!

Exchange feedback (10 min):

Pair with another participant and exchange feedback about your concept maps (see below for suggested ways to critique a concept map).

Integrate feedback (5 min):

Briefly revise your concept map, integrating the feedback received.

Suggested Ways to Critique a Concept Map

Ask the following questions:

1. Are any concepts stated verbally that are not included in the map?
2. What is the specific relationship between/among each of the concepts?
3. Is it easily apparent which concepts are central/important?
4. Is it easily apparent which concepts are peripheral/less important?
5. Have any relationships been overlooked?
6. What would happen if concept "x" were moved?

Note: There are also free software options out there, such as CmapTools, (cmap.ihmc.us/conceptmap.html), for presenting and collaborating on concept maps.

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Adapted from: wikisites.mcgill.ca/cdi/index.php/Mapping_course_content

