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Resource 2: Concept mapping

Resource 2
Concept mapping

Concept mapping is used across all age groups and phases of education. However, it can take some time to teach students how to construct a concept map. A variety of methods have been suggested to teach individuals how to construct a concept map, but all rely on practising with simple examples first. The following steps:

1. Identify the concepts or key terms. Focus on a few key ones. This can be done by the teacher and given to students on small pieces of card. Alternatively, concepts can be brought out through a brainstorm with students. Concepts might also be represented by pictures.

2. Sort through the concepts. You can create a hierarchical map by having the more abstract and inclusive at the top of the map, but this is not necessary, particularly when introducing concept mapping to students. Put aside any terms you don't understand.

3. With the remaining concepts, place them on a sheet of paper in such a way that concepts you see as linked are close together.

4. When you are satisfied with the arrangement, stick them down or write the concepts on the sheet surround by a box to denote that it is a concept.

5. Now identify pairs of concepts that you see as linked in some way. Draw a line between the two terms. Decide on the linking phrase or word and the direction it should be read. For example:

    ┌─────────┐   is the solid form of   ┌─────────┐
    │   ICE   │ ────────────────────────> │ WATER │
    └─────────┘   └─────────┘
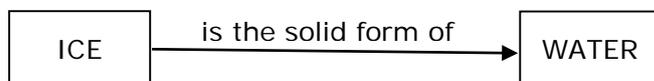
    Remember that in a concept map only pairs of concepts are link – each is a separate, independent link.

6. Do this for as many pairs of terms as you can.