

Make Learning Stick  
Digital Intro @ Wesleyan University

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Concept Mapping

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Adapted from a LucidChart.com tutorial.

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**Source** [http://edutechwiki.unige.ch/en/Concept\\_maps](http://edutechwiki.unige.ch/en/Concept_maps)  
<https://www.lucidchart.com/pages/concept-map>

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**Files** [https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1jw76-rGh\\_6xpKAeswNWh5R49G\\_PLdYKB?usp=sharing](https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1jw76-rGh_6xpKAeswNWh5R49G_PLdYKB?usp=sharing)

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# Concept Mapping

## Background

A concept map is a visual way to organize your thoughts and make connections between ideas. They improve our ability to understand and remember concepts, because our brains process visuals faster than plain text. A concept map is made of three very basic elements: shapes, arrows, and text. The shapes represent concepts or ideas. Arrows represent relationships between ideas and text provides detail.

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## Instructions

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Select a concept, theory, problem, or set of principles that you would like to map. The entire concept map, as we build it out, is going to relate to this choice. But sometimes what we have chosen can still be a bit too broad. This would make our concept map really big, but potentially not that useful. A focused question therefore helps specify the problem or issue the concept map is supposed to resolve.

You will start by creating a list off to the side. Some people call this a parking lot, and it usually consists of around 15-25 key concepts. Use your main concept and focus question as a guide and start listing out any related knowledge. It's good practice to describe each concept as briefly as possible. Try to keep each key concept to one or two words. Otherwise you may end up with a very text-heavy concept map that has less visual impact.

Next, add the ideas you have generated to the concept map and organize them. You'll want to arrange your concepts in a hierarchical format. The map is going to start with your main topic at the top and then get more and more specific as you move down.

You can continue to pull out all your concepts and place them in an approximate order or connect your ideas as you go. To show relationships between concepts, we draw an arrow between them. Typically, you are going to want to define the relationship by adding text. Not every relationship has to move downward. You can also create cross-links between concepts in different domains of the concept map. Cross-links are a great way of visualizing how different concepts throughout your map relate to one another. You can also refine your map by looking for areas of improvement. Revising your concept map is an important part of the process.

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