

Concept Mapping

This method is about understanding patterns of connection through holistic thinking. Nature consists of webs and networks of relationships. In these maps, relationships are shown as nodes with linkages.

A coherent set of nodes and relationships constitute a network, or a web, where the whole is more than the sum of the parts. Mapping this out reveals a pattern we can use to understand better; 1. what we are looking at, 2. what is going on, 3. how one thing will affect another.

If nodes are combined through strong links, the web has strength - it is stronger together as a whole than a single node or the sum of the nodes. Concept Mapping is a thinking Technique that helps us understand specific topics we are interested in.

1. Define and describe your topic or question with a headline

2. Brainstorm

- * Ask yourself what concepts are relevant to the topic that you need to take into account and understand
- * Label small sticky notes A, B, C, etc.
- * Write your ideas down in 3-5 words on the sticky notes
- * Place the notes along one side of a large sheet of paper or white board as they are written

3. Finding Relationships

- * Look at the notes, is there a pair of concepts that seem strongly related to one another? Move them to the large paper adjoining each other, but not touching
- * With a pencil or white board marker (so you can erase) draw a connecting line between them
- * One by one, bring the other concepts onto the page and see how they relate
- * Use the flexibility of the sticky notes and the ability to re-draw lines to work on finding a pattern that you feel really helps your understanding

4. Review / Share

- * Try giving a presentation to yourself or a colleague of your map and note what insights you have gained

