

Concept Map Collaboration

➤ Assignment Overview:

This exercise allows students to spend time formally engaged in brainstorming the broad research topic. Generating and identifying a variety of specific topic ideas from the broader subject pushes students to focus on a single idea or to combine several ideas to create a more interesting topic.

Students will select a general topic or a group of students could be given a general topic to examine.

In the center of a large piece of paper, students will write their topic word or phrase.

They will then write any and all words or phrases they can think of that relate to the central word or phrase.

Using boxes, lines, and arrows, students will connect or group ideas that go together, relate to each other, or are subgroups.

Students/groups will then trade topics and try to examine the topic from another perspective adding depth to the topic.

Students will then receive the original topic and review the added concepts and select the groups or combinations that have the most appeal for further research.

For this exercise, students may use a variety of marking tools. Pencils with good erasers, colored pencils, felt markers, or crayons work well. Some students have used Post-it notes to jot down initial ideas and then moved the notes around to develop their maps. Each student will need a large size sheet of newsprint paper. There are also computerized software packages that allow concept mapping (<http://bubbl.us>).

Students are generally open-minded and willing to stretch their minds during the concept-mapping process. After the process, students should have a target topic, a small number of subtopics, and an interest in pursuing an area of inquiry.

➤ Purpose and Learning Outcomes:

1. Encourages students to think critically about a topic from a variety of viewpoints.
2. Encourages students to evaluate the relationships that exist within a broad topic and its subtopics.
2. Allows students to practice identifying key concepts or phrases prior to creating search strategies for a given topic.

➤ ACRL Information Literacy Standards incorporated in this assignment:

Standard 1 - The ability to determine the nature and extent of the information needed.

Standard 2 –The ability to access information effectively and efficiently.