



A **Mind Map** is an engaging tool designed to guide one's thinking by creating connections, categories, and pathways within the focus of thought. It helps one visualize and understand the connections between different ideas, forming a "big picture" concept. It is commonly used in presentations, critical thinking, brainstorming, decision making and projects. Research shows that the use of mind maps increases critical thinking and memory skills, particularly for students who are visual learners.

This process requires some pre-teaching work. ***Presenting the core concept with a story, video, book, demonstration, experiment, etc. allows learners to form a knowledge base connected to the concept.*** With varied experiences and knowledge, learners often have some basis of understanding of the concept. Mind mapping offers the learner the opportunity to make visual connections and add structure to what is being learned.

Mind maps are often created in two stages - *brainstorming* and *mind mapping*. The brainstorm stage is a "free thinking" stage where all ideas are valued. Further investigation will reveal misleading thinking or information.

Steps:

1. Begin with a core concept - usually represented by an image or single word in the center of the page.
2. Add Main Branches representing a word or phrase which is directly connected to the core concept.
3. Add Sub Branches giving further details and ideas to the core concept.
4. Continue to add details as time allows and make note of questions that can lead to further investigation.

The mind map process can be used to introduce new ideas, summarize a lesson or unit of study, or prepare for a project or for a final evaluation. The Mind Map process is fun; enjoy!

Additional Resources:

<http://www.mindmapping.com/>