

Mindmaps for Conceptual Understanding: A Preliminary Report

By

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Mindmaps – and their counterpart conceptual maps – have been advocated for many years to improve understanding of material. The mind map, as distinct from concept maps, was developed by T. Buzan [Buzan] in the late 1960's. Technology along with recent work in brain research and learning theory has cast a new light on mindmaps for education and allow the development of new uses and techniques. The purposes of this article are to present the theoretical bases for constructing mindmaps and follow with a suggestion for a non-standard uses. The paper includes a sample mindmap for a mathematical topic, constructed with software.

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Basic Principles of Mindmap Construction

Mindmaps have as their goal the identification of major concepts relating to a topic and then the physical presentation of these topics in a way that reveals the relationships between them and enhances long-term memory and understanding. A brief outline of the steps in constructing a mindmap includes:

1. Locate central topic in center of mindmap; radially place first level major concepts around central topic. Map should be constructed so that you start reading first level topics starting at the equivalent of “one o'clock” on the page.
2. Brainstorm a list of relevant topics/concepts/related ideas – possibly on a separate piece of paper.