

## How to do a Mind Map

There are several ways people limit their own creativity. Several of these may be: staying in linear, analytic mode; not wanting to be silly, feeling overwhelmed, telling themselves they are not creative, and comparing themselves to others. One of the ways to facilitate creative thought and move away from self-limiting thinking is **Mind Mapping** (or concept mapping). This involves writing down a central idea and thinking up new and related ideas which radiate out from the center. By focusing on key ideas written down in your own words, and then looking for branches out and connections between the ideas, you are mapping knowledge differently and allowing connections that help you understand challenges in very different ways.

### Put main idea in the center

Make the center a clear and strong visual image that depicts the general theme of the map. With the main idea or topic in the middle of the page this gives the maximum space for other ideas to radiate out from the center.

### Write down key ideas

Use just key words, or wherever possible images. Use color to depict themes, associations and to make things stand out. Anything that stands out on the page will stand out in your mind. Print rather than write in script; it is more readable and memorable. Lower case is more visually distinctive (and better remembered) than upper case. Think three-dimensionally.

### Look for relationships

Use lines, colors, arrows, branches or some other way of showing connections between the ideas generated on your mind map. These relationships may be important in your understanding new information or in creating new ways to approach a challenge. By personalizing the map with your own symbols and designs you will be constructing visual and meaningful relationships between ideas which will assist in your recall and understanding.

### Draw quickly on unlined paper without pausing, judging or editing

The idea of mind mapping is to think creatively and in a non-linear manner. Put ideas down as they occur, wherever they fit. Don't judge or hold back. There will be plenty of time for modifying the information later on but at this stage it is important to get every possibility into the mind map. Sometimes it is one of those obscure possibilities that may become the key to your knowledge of a topic. Don't get stuck in one area. If you dry up in one area go to another branch.

### Leave lots of space

Some of the most useful mind maps are those which are added to over a period of time. After the initial drawing of the mind map you may wish to highlight things, add information or add questions. Break boundaries. If you run out of space, don't start a new sheet; paste more paper onto the map (Break the 8½ x11 mentality).

Adapted from: Buzan, T. (1991). *The mind map book*. New York: Penguin

