



SEMANTIC MAPPING

DESCRIPTION

“Semantics” refers to the concepts or ideas conveyed by words, and semantic mapping is a process through which students visually depict the ways ideas are connected. Semantic mapping can be used for a text or a unit of study. Through semantic mapping, students are able to represent the relationships among words and concepts, and in doing so they are able to reinforce the associations and categories that structure meaning. This activity helps students to organize, learn, remember, and extend their learning.

LEARNING STRATEGIES Connecting, Determining Importance, Inferring

LESSON PLAN STAGE Investigation, Synthesis

SKILLS Listening Comprehension

PREPARATION

- Identify the text or topic that you would like students to semantically map.
- Create or locate several models of semantic maps about related (not identical) topics and texts.

ACTIVITY STEPS

TEACHING TIPS

- | ACTIVITY STEPS | TEACHING TIPS |
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| 1 Teacher displays several models of semantic maps about familiar texts or topics. The class discusses the ways the ideas are connected, and how these connections are visually represented. | If students do not have a lot of experience with this activity yet, you should consider modeling the process of creating a semantic map while thinking aloud. |
| 2 Students create a list of terms or ideas related to the target text or topic. Students write each term on a separate index card. | Consider providing students with a list of all or some of the terms you want them to use. |



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3 In groups or individually, students consider the relationships among the terms, and organize the cards to represent the relationships among the words.

Students may benefit from instruction in the types of relationships words or ideas may have with one another, such as:

- opposites
- synonyms
- concept-example
- cause-effect
- category-category member
- sequence (first, second...)
- part-whole
- entity-attribute

4 Once students are satisfied with their representation of relationships, they copy their semantic maps onto blank paper, drawing a circle around each term, placing them on the paper in relation to one another, and connecting them by lines as appropriate.

Students should be encouraged to create a key that allows outsiders to review and understand the codes used on their maps.

- Students should be able to see several examples of semantic maps so that they understand the ways in which ideas can be visually represented.
- They may also choose to distinguish between more and less important ideas by text size, or use a system of color-coding.

5 In pairs or small groups, students take turns presenting their semantic maps, and provide feedback to one another.

Some students will benefit from guidance for giving and receiving feedback. Modeling, role-playing, and sentence stems can help many students make these conversations effective.

6 Students reflect on their learning in groups or individually, either in conversation or writing.

Students respond to questions including:

- Why is this called “mapping”? How is it different from other types of mapping?
- How does this mapping relate to the memories you are creating in your brain?
- How does semantic mapping affect your learning process?
- How might semantic mapping work if you were studying for a test?
- In what other context might this strategy be useful?

ADAPTATION FOR THE MATH CLASSROOM

Semantic Maps can be used to generate a set of related math ideas (using words, images, and symbols) and show how they are connected. With prompting or modeling, it can help students distinguish related yet different ideas (such as expression, equation, inequality, solution and substitution) in a flexible format.