

Activity: Course Theme Mind Mapping

Purpose

Mind mapping is a technique used across academic and professional spheres. It is a highly effective tool for creative, organic, stream-of-consciousness thinking in a way that is traceable and physical. Generally, mind mapping begins with a concept, topic, or question to be explored. Students then build connections to other ideas, concepts, questions, etc., as they come to them. The goal of such an exercise is exploration and brainstorming.

In the Classroom: Set-up

This activity may be completed in student- or teacher-generated groups of around four individuals. Each group is provided a large writing surface with the name of one of the three reading selections for Module 1 written on it. Students may choose to use markers or pens of various colors to organize and process their thinking.

What To Do

As a small group, students will 'map' their collective thinking. Their map will begin with reflecting on the general prompt below--but students should also feel comfortable following their own tangents as they arise. Maps can include statements, questions, concepts or phrases, quotations from the work(s), images or symbols, and so on. Students may map with arrows to connect ideas or choose some form of organic color coding. However, students do not need to overthink the organization; this is not a presentation poster. Aesthetics are not part of the process and concerns about 'look' will take the focus away from the content.

General Prompt: What does it mean to be a 'worker' in America? How has the conception changed over this country's history? How is our belief about 'work' tied into the concept of 'self,' self-worth, and success?

Post-map Discussion

Toward the end of the activity, the small group will collaborate to write a more logically cohesive and selective summary of their thinking, focusing on important or novel areas of their group exploration of the topic. Groups will then share these summaries with the class. After all groups have reported, a summative class discussion will occur.

Post-map Reflection

After all groups have shared their findings, students will individually reflect on the overall overlaps in the themes and concepts presented across all three texts. Students return to the general prompt with evidence from the discussion and the texts, highlighting areas of agreement and disagreement. Students will also reflect explicitly on how workers in the field of their career-technical pathway define self-worth and success in the workplace.

Mapping activities in small groups may factor into the grading criteria as part of a participation grade. However, all class activities will be reflected in the post-map reflection submitted to the assignment post in Canvas. Teachers will determine the grading criteria, this can be participation-based, or teachers may choose to grade the reflection on formal writing technique, grammar, organization, and logic.