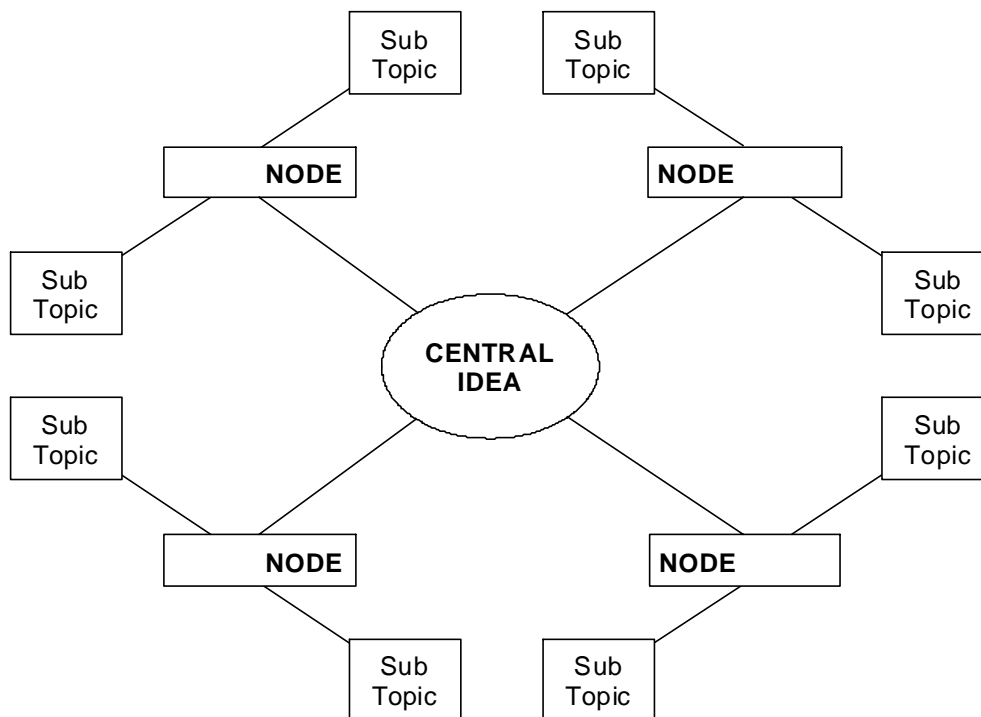# PA Teacher's Guide

Mind Mapping

Mind mapping is a visual-kinesthetic method for organizing information and generating ideas. We have all used mind maps of one kind or another at some point in our lives. Every time we brainstorm or jot down our ideas and begin sketching lines, arrows, and symbols between them we are mind mapping. Creating mind maps helps put together information you already know about a subject in a way that reveals relationships with new information.

Mind maps consist of a central idea, "nodes" or "satellites" and connecting lines, or "stems". A node represents key terms such as concepts, issues, problems, people, or organizations related to the central idea. Lines between nodes show which concepts are related. Putting a label on the connecting line can identify how or in what way the concepts are related. Here is what a simple map looks like:

Mind mapping employs the full range of thinking skills – word, image, number, logic, rhythm, color and spatial awareness. They can also be effective mnemonic tools. Memory is naturally associative, not linear. Any one idea has hundreds or even thousands of links to other ideas. Remembering the shape and structure of a mind map can provide the cues necessary to remember the information within it. By working the way the brain works, mind mapping provides a way to record and reinforce these associations by engaging more of the brain in the process of assimilating and connecting facts than

conventional outlining.

Mind mapping can be used at every stage of the PA process to:

- encourage discovery and creativity
- generate and organize ideas (brainstorming)
- visualize the relative importance of each idea
- see all your basic information on one page
- visualize complex relationships among ideas
- clearly define the central problems of an issue
- visualize relationships between stakeholders
- identify contradictions, paradoxes, and gaps in research, providing a foundation for further questioning
- aid learning by explicitly connecting new and old knowledge
- organize projects

Getting The Most from Mind Mapping

A good mind map abandons the list structure of conventional note taking and shows the "shape" of the subject, the relative importance of information and ideas, and the way that information relates to other information. Typically mind maps are more compact than conventional notes providing a larger picture. This helps associations to be made easily. Information that is acquired after the main mind map has been drawn can be easily integrated with minimal disruption by expanding to new connected maps. In this way maps can be "nested" within one another endlessly.

Keep in mind that mind maps are your own property. Once you understand how to assemble the basic structure you can develop your own coding and conventions to take things further. The following suggestions, however, will help to enhance the impact of your mind maps:

- Use key words, or wherever possible images and symbols.
- Start from the center with a clear and strong visual image that depicts the general theme of the map and work outwards.
- Create sub-centers for sub-themes.
- Put key words on lines. This reinforces the structure of connections.
- Print rather than write in script. It makes them more readable and memorable. Lower case is more visually distinctive (and better remembered) than upper case.
- 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).
- Use arrows, icons or other visual aids to show links between different elements.
- Don't get stuck in one area. If you dry up in one area go to another branch.

- Put ideas down as they occur, wherever they fit. Don't judge or hold back.
- Think three-dimensionally. "Nest" maps whenever possible.
- Break boundaries. If you run out of space, don't start a new sheet; paste more paper onto the map. (Break the 8x11 mentality.)
- Be creative. Creativity aids memory.
- Get involved and have fun.

Constructing a Mind map

You will need:

- a pencil (you'll be erasing!) and a blank piece of paper (the bigger the better!) and markers/crayons; or
- a blackboard and (**colored**) chalk; or
- magazines, "post-it" notes, construction paper, scissors, tape, and a large open wall space

Steps:

1) Begin by writing the main idea in the center of a piece of paper or on the board and circle it.
2) Brainstorm and write related ideas on branches that radiate from the central idea, creating further nodes to branch from. Continue working outward freely adding other key words and images. Draw quickly without pausing, judging or editing (you can always erase!). The idea of mapping is to think creatively and in a non-linear manner. There will be plenty of time for modifying and rearranging the information later but at this stage it is important to get every possibility into the mind map. Sometimes it is one of these obscure possibilities that may become the key to your knowledge of a topic.
3) Once you are done brainstorming look for relationships between items. Use lines, colors, arrows, branches or some other way of showing connections between the ideas generated on your mind map. By personalizing the map with your own symbols and designs you will be constructing visual and meaningful relationships between ideas that will assist in recall and understanding. Label each line to identify the nature of the relationship between the terms.
4) Continue re-mapping throughout the project as new information is acquired.

Alternatively:
Writing each idea on a separate sheet of paper, post-it note, or 3x5 card will allow you to more easily adapt maps as you go along. Place the ideas on a large wall space and use string or ribbon to connect them. Students can then draw or cut out images and quotes that illustrate the concepts and tape them to the wall. This is a great way to visualize large projects

There are also several mind mapping programs available from the web that allow you to attach links to research materials such as documents, images, and web links. Because of

their flexibility they are an excellent tool for mapping and organizing every facet of a PA project. Here are just a few:

[Freemind](http://freemind.sourceforge.net/wiki/index.php/Main_Page) http://freemind.sourceforge.net/wiki/index.php/Main_Page

-This program is free, open source, and downloadable.
[Inspiration Software](http://www.inspiration.com/home.cfm) http://www.inspiration.com/home.cfm

[Concept Draw Mind Map](#)

http://www.conceptdraw.com/en/products/mindmap/main.php

[Nova Mind](http://www.nova-mind.com/Mainnovamind.html) http://www.nova-mind.com/Mainnovamind.html

[Mind Mapper](http://www.mindmapperusa.com/) http://www.mindmapperusa.com/

[Smart Draw](http://www.smartdraw.com/specials/mindmapping.asp?id=13054) http://www.smartdraw.com/specials/mindmapping.asp?id=13054

Power Mapping

In PA mind maps are used to map out the relationships of power between stakeholders: people, communities, and organizations, who have a vested interest in or are impacted by an issue or problem. Making these connections between power, influence, and responsibility is an essential element of PA.

Power mapping can narrow and clarify a complex and broad issue into something more concrete and workable. Identifying stakeholders can expand a narrow school or community issue by helping your students to consider others who might have an interest or investment in your topic. Power mapping gives your team a deeper understanding of the problem by providing a visual representation how stakeholders are connected and identifying all the people they will have to work with to accomplish the project goal. Remember, your maps will evolve and change as you talk to new people, acquire new information, and implement your plan.
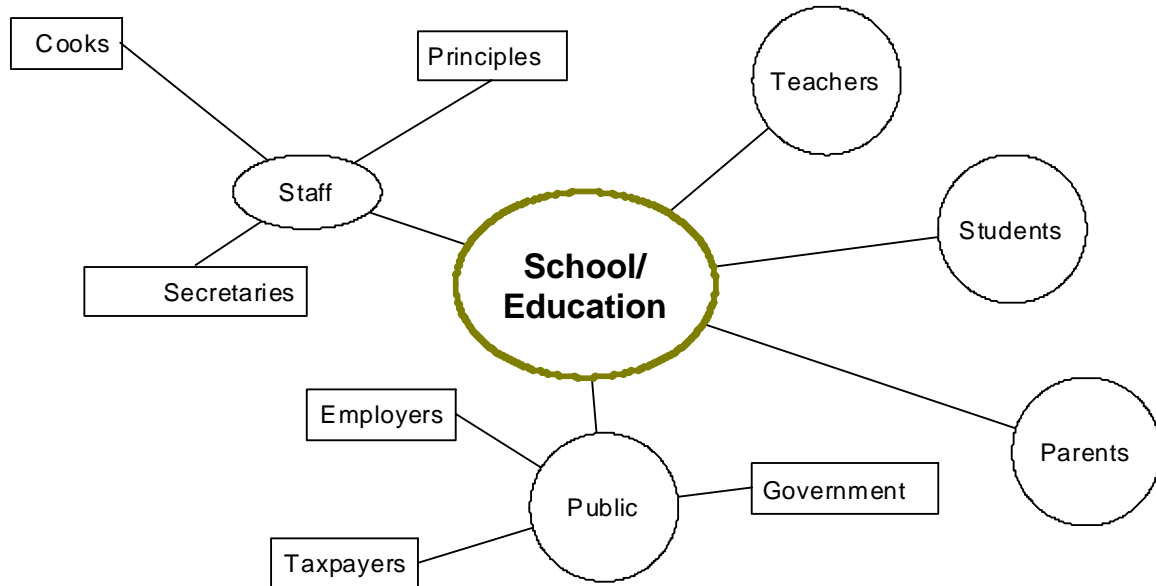
As you map, keep these things in mind:

- *Interests* – What are the interests of the proposed stakeholders?
- *Power* – What power do the stakeholders have and what power is needed to accomplish our goals?
- *Rules* – What is the protocol for engaging with various stakeholders?

How to map

Pre-mapping – Put your problem, issue or project goal in the middle of the paper and being to brainstorm all of the people and organizations that may have a stake or power in

relation to your topic (alternatively you can use the Mind Map Starter
www.publicachievement.org/TeacherGuide/Activities/MindMapStarter.pdf
 Write the names of people and organizations in spokes stemming from the issue. For
example:

```
  Cooks
           Principles              Teachers

        Staff
                    School/                Students
  Secretaries       Education

     Employers
                                          Parents
                 Public    Government
  Taxpayers
```

Research – Create assignments for team members from the spokes to research the
interests and power of stakeholders identified in your pre-map. Role-play by yourselves
first to prepare them to go into public. What questions do they need answered? With
whom do they need to speak or be in relationship?

Re-mapping **–** After reporting back to the large group the information gathered during the
research phase, revise your map accordingly. Update your map as your group learns and
work towards its goal.

Action Plan – Work with your group to determine next steps that will evolve into an
action plan. Put names and dates down on the map to hold the group accountable to
accomplishing its goals. Celebrate when tasks are achieved in order to keep the
momentum strong.

Continue mapping – Research, re-mapping and revising the action plan are all part of a
complete power mapping process.