

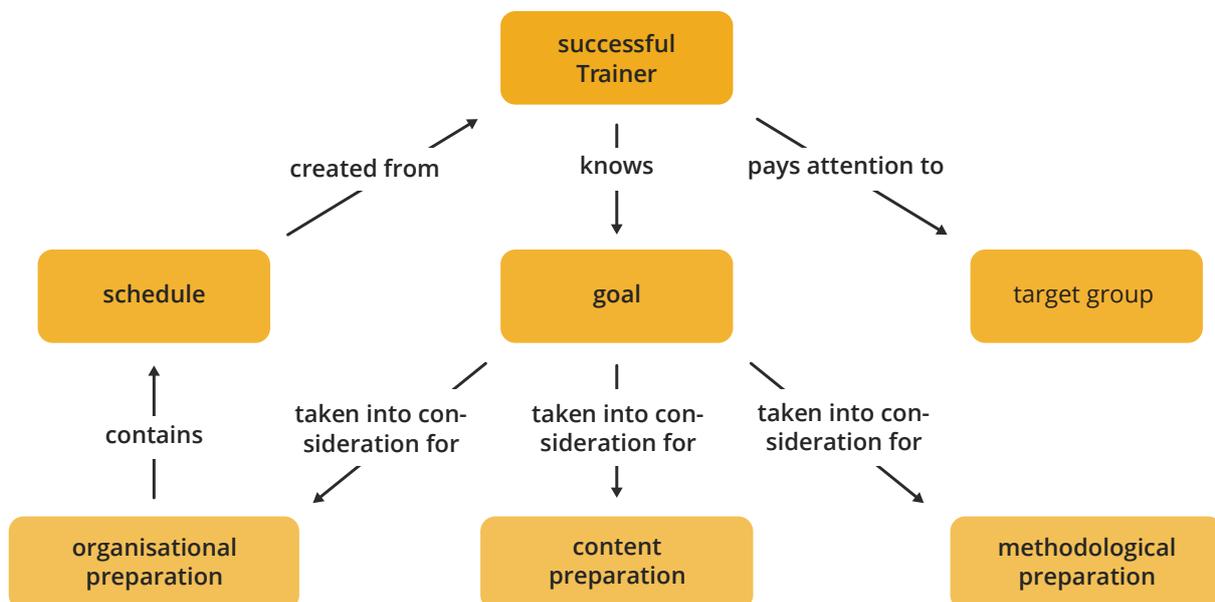


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Clip 11 How to create a Concept Map

If you want a really interactive method to present information, then concept maps offer a fresh solution. They are the ideal choice for structuring information at the beginning of a learning process. You can use them to describe the overall context or represent complex relationships. Concept maps are a graphic network of concepts presented in the form of circles with relationships represented by arrows between the concepts. They have a structured hierarchy and can be read from top to bottom. Initial concepts are arranged at the top with more specific concepts below. Concept maps can also represent cross connections or “cross-links”. Finding and identifying these cross-links promotes creative thinking to gain new knowledge. Here is a concept map addressing the focus question:

“What makes a successful trainer?”



“Successful trainer” has been selected as the initial concept. If you follow the hierarchy of the concept map further down you’ll see that a successful trainer needs to know the goal (an additional concept). “Know” here is therefore the relationship between the concepts “trainer” and “goal”, and the two concepts are connected logically with an arrow. By labelling the connections we learn more about the relationships.

Let’s look further: The goal should also be taken into consideration for the preparation of the organization, content and methodology of the training.



Now let's go one level further along the concept map: We learn that the organization preparation should include a schedule. The cross-link shows us that this schedule should be drawn up by the trainer.

You can see how easy it is to read a concept map and how helpful the structured hierarchy is. You can clearly create cohesive understanding.

What you can achieve with a concept map? A concept map can:

- help structure knowledge and illustrate complex ideas
- bring implicit expertise to the surface
- promote creative thinking
- evaluate existing knowledge and integrate it with new knowledge
- promote collective learning within a group
- In addition, concept maps allow us to check for understanding or diagnose misunderstandings.

To begin, formulate a focus question. This question should clearly outline the problem that the concept map needs to address. A clearly defined focus question makes it possible to create a meaningful concept map later.

1. Formulate a focus question.
2. Identify keywords for the issue from the specific field. 15 to 25 keywords are usually sufficient. Lead the group in a brainstorming activity. Or, even better: have each trainee write down all the keywords first on their own, and then discuss the terms in a group.
3. Now write down the keywords you've collected, using one card for each term. Then rank the keywords in order from general to more specific.
4. Create a preliminary concept map using Post-It notes or software such as <http://cmap.ihmc.us>.
5. Find and identify cross-links.

But be careful, too much content can make your concept maps confusing.

Disclaimer

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