

USING CONCEPT MAPPING TO HELP STUDENTS SITUATE THEIR DESIGN PRACTICE

**GUY BARTON, UNIVERSITY OF THE
ARTS, LONDON**



‘MAPPING YOUR PRACTICE’ WORKSHOPS AT CENTRAL SAINT MARTINS

TWO COURSES:

- MA Material Futures
- MA Narrative Environments

Diverse language backgrounds: Dutch, English, Greek, Hindi, Italian, Mandarin, Russian

31 students

TARGET LEARNING OUTCOMES

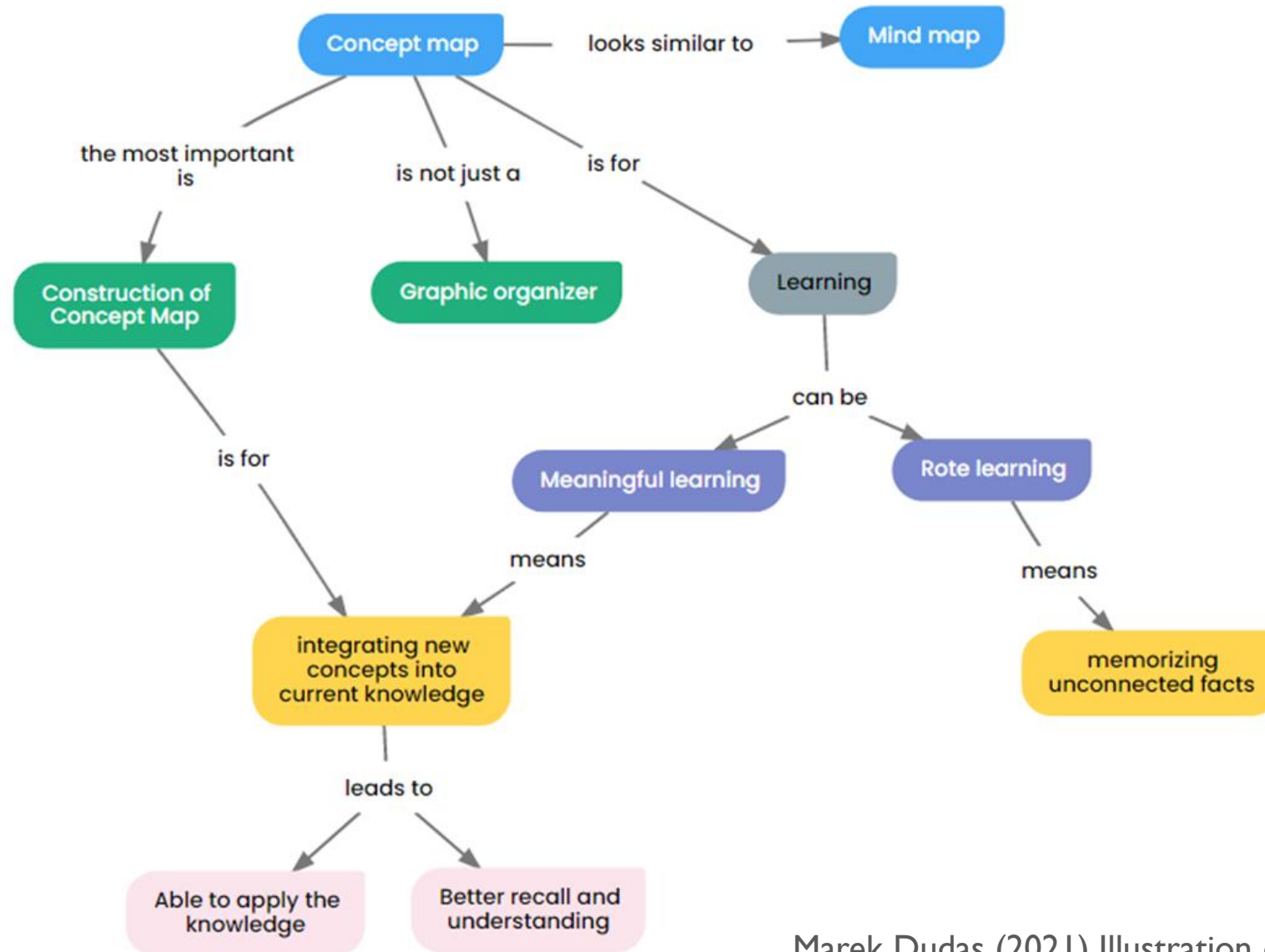
- Understanding and engagement with key contextual, theoretical and critical discourses, industries and institutions at the forefront of the subject debate.
- Ability to locate yourself within the discipline and profession, evaluating personal and professional strengths and weaknesses.

“We both really realised that there is this huge gap in how the students are able to understand and articulate process.

How do you communicate design as a process from the research phase all the way through to the development and presentation phase? The communication is not only at the end of that whole process, but it's actually happening throughout.”

Stephanie Sherman and Xavier Llarch Font – Course Leaders, MA Narrative Environments





Marek Dudas (2021) Illustration of a concept map

KINCHIN AND GRAVETT (2020:10)

“Concept Maps should be seen as gateways into future learning rather than representations of prior learning. This requires researchers and map-producers to consider how the maps are opening up new avenues of learning.”

Kinchin, I. M., & Gravett, K. (2020). Concept mapping in the age of Deleuze: Fresh perspectives and new challenges. *Education sciences*, 10(3), 82.



PROCESS PLAN FOR THE WORKSHOP

1

Share
research
topics

2

Identify
categories,
form groups

3

Map
connections
in groups

4

Build a
research map

5

Develop an
explanatory
narrative

TARGET LANGUAGE

Language of categorisation: forming superordinates from basic data

Explaining ideas and asking questions

Language of negotiation and problem solving

Expressing logical relations (is connected to, is part of, leads to etc)

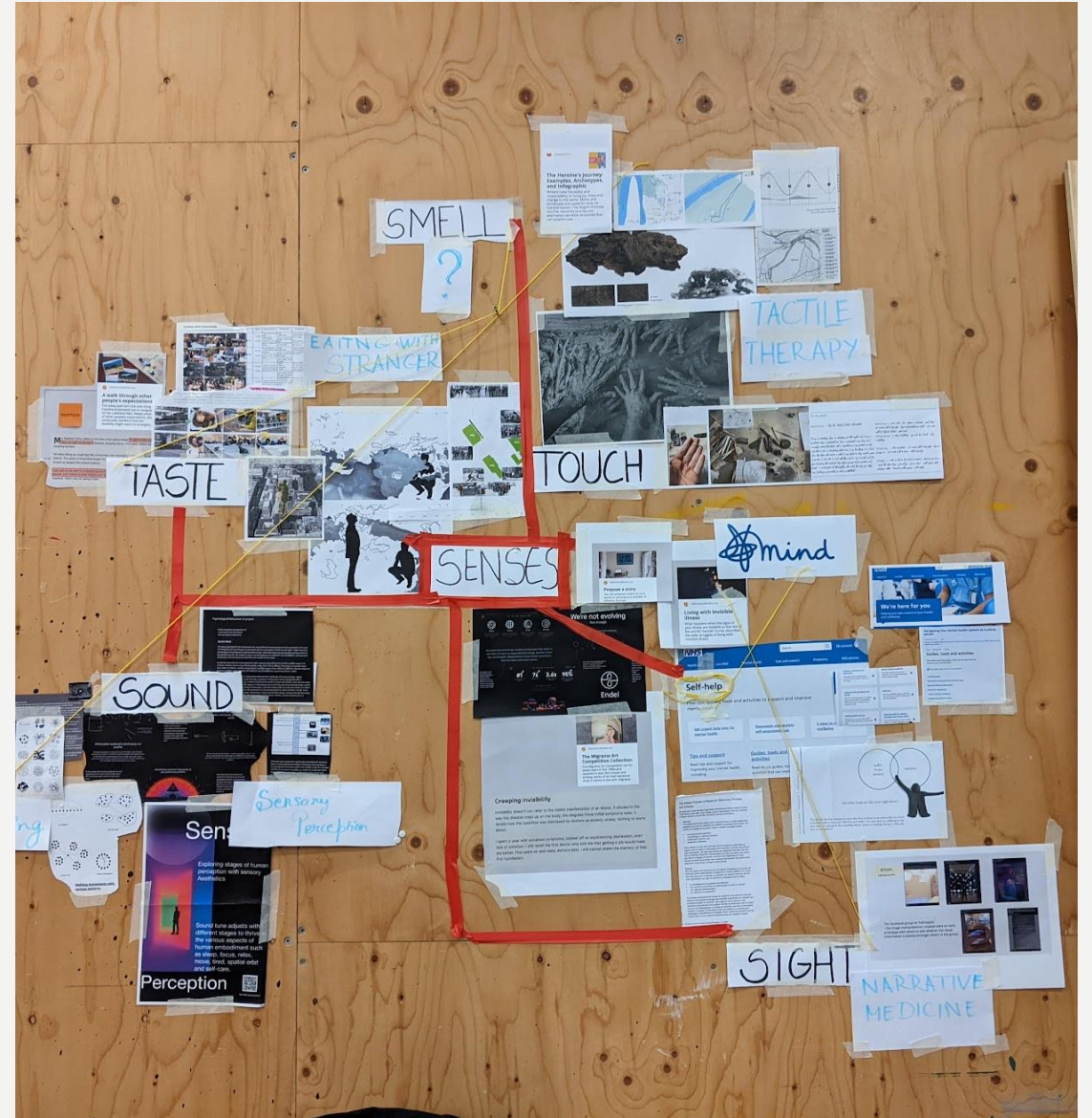
Mini-presentation (describing, summarising, theorising, reflecting)

“I found the workshop to be very intellectually stimulating and basically fun. It allowed me to look at my research in a new light with the help of other students and connect ideas and synthesis in ways that just wouldn’t be possible on my own or even in my own regular tutorial groups.

We collaborated with students from other tutorials groups and another course and to find common ground on disparate themes and concepts. This then led to brainstorming and discussion in a very democratic manner.”

MA Narrative Environments YR2 Student





“These sessions of ‘mapping your research,’ have been a hands-on approach, a cohesive learning of making others make sense of your resources. Our two sessions so far have been informative and dynamic, the second session in particular allowed us to find ways of mapping digital resources. It was interesting to find connections with the work of others and be able to envisage where your project fits within a larger sphere of seemingly related initiatives. Amongst a group of ‘sensory,’ research mapping, it was interesting to see that every member of our team was a fellow classmate, we just hadn’t made those connections within our project spheres and the workshop allowed us to skim the surface of this possibly larger pool of exchanges.”

MA Narrative Environments YR2 Student



“The mapping your practice workshop helped me visualise how to map with other people in mind. Usually, I map with no real thought on who will be looking at it, which is not expressing my train of thought well.

I realised that the research process can be it's own side of the project and is actually something I should be proud of and put effort into styling to allow others to understand. I think in return it will probably help me reflect on my process too.

While working with other people on it as well helped formulate conversations around our chosen topics and think about it differently to how I have been so far.”

MA Material Futures YR 2 Student



CONCLUSIONS:

- The workshops could easily be a whole day, rather than 2 hours
- There is more work to be done on developing language around how the elements connect
- The quality of the maps is not as important as the narrative they prompt
- Collaboration across courses brings research out of silos and builds connections between students
- Identifying the intersection of knowledges prompted new insights
- The 'academic purposes' in EAP is much wider than supporting the production of assessment texts



THANK YOU

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