Concept Mapping Exercise

This exercise is intended to help you brainstorm about your research topic. Concept maps document related and sub-topics, can improve the scope of your research, and generate search terms. Please bring the resulting concept map to class with you on Monday, Oct 31.

In the center of a sheet of paper, write down the most important word or short phrase that relates to the subject idea you want to research. Draw a circle around this main idea.

Take a minute or two and think about what you put down on the paper. Thinking freely without any expectation of the result, write or mark any and all related words, concepts, or symbols outside the circle. Write anything you can think of that is even remotely related to the topic idea. For each of your four subtopics, think of three to four subdivisions that fall under the subtopics.

Here are some suggested methods of concept mapping, but use whatever technique works best for you:

- Now draw squares around single ideas and circles around groups of ideas.
- Use lines to connect these items to main idea and to groups of related ideas.
- Use arrows to interconnect ideas or to form subgroups of ideas.
- Leave lots of white space so your concept map has room to grow and develop.
- Don’t worry about being exact or perfect – don’t analyze the work.

Here’s an example:

![Concept Map Example](image-url)

Exercise from Burkhardt & MacDonald *Teaching Information Literacy. 2nd ed.*