

Word Webs

Method	Word Webs
Introduction	
<p>Word Webs is a method which can be used before, during or after a class and either individually or in small groups. Essentially the idea is to take a word, concept or issue and to make a word map of all the words related or connected to it and then to group or sort the different batches of selected words.</p> <p>There are two general ways in which to apply this method, either in class using simple post-its on a wall and asking students to work in groups to work together on analysing a word, issue or concept or to use an online mind-mapping tool in which case the method can be used in remote and online settings, both synchronously or asynchronously. Groups can either tackle the same word, concept or issue and then compare results afterwards, or they can take ones that are different but complementary.</p> <p>Although this is a relatively simple method, it can be very enlightening and, particularly if used in a small group setting, can help students in a very significant way in terms of situating what it is they are studying.</p>	
Aim	To help students broaden their understanding of a concept or issue; to extend their vocabulary in the case of language learning; to support group understanding of a specific field of study
Target group	Word Webs are particularly suitable and useful in language teaching. They can also be used when getting across complex terms and concepts in for example engineering or philosophy. In terms of level, they can be used at all levels of learning..
Intended learning outcomes	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better understanding of a specific word, concept or issue. • Enhanced ability to situate a specific word, concept or issue 	
Description	
<p>As mentioned in the introduction, this method can be applied in different settings, most often in either a class or online setting. So the different steps you take will obviously depend on whether you are working online and asynchronously with your students or in a face-to-face setting.</p> <p>If being used in class, we suggest applying the method as follows.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Start by setting up groups aiming to have a max of 4 students per group • Agree the procedure and timing, • Allow students to develop their mind map with the rest of their group. • Ask the group leader to summarise results for full class. • As the facilitator you need to supervise and guide groups as and where necessary. 	

Preparation	Depending on the setting, preparation to use this method is quite limited. If using software then you need to be fully familiar with its operation, how content can be saved and retrieved for example
Required resources and equipment	Any freely available mind-mapping software can be used to support this technique, MindMeister or bubbl are good examples of such software.
Success factors	The relevance and pertinence of the word, concept or issue is a success factor in this technique
Advantages	This a very simple method to apply which requires little preparation and can have a significant value in terms of helping students better understand a word, concept or topic.
Disadvantages	Groups such as the ones suggested for a class setting can be dominated by one or more students, ensuring that everyone's opinion or input is included can be a challenge, one way to overcome this is to ensure the role of spokesperson is regularly rotated away from those students who usually offer themselves in such roles.
Additional information	<p>This short video gives a simple explanation of how you can use word webs in your teaching practice.</p> <p>On this site you can see how word webs can be used to enhance students' ability to hear, appreciate and understand different perspectives through new vocabulary.</p>