

Mind Mapping for Goal Setting and Creative Projects

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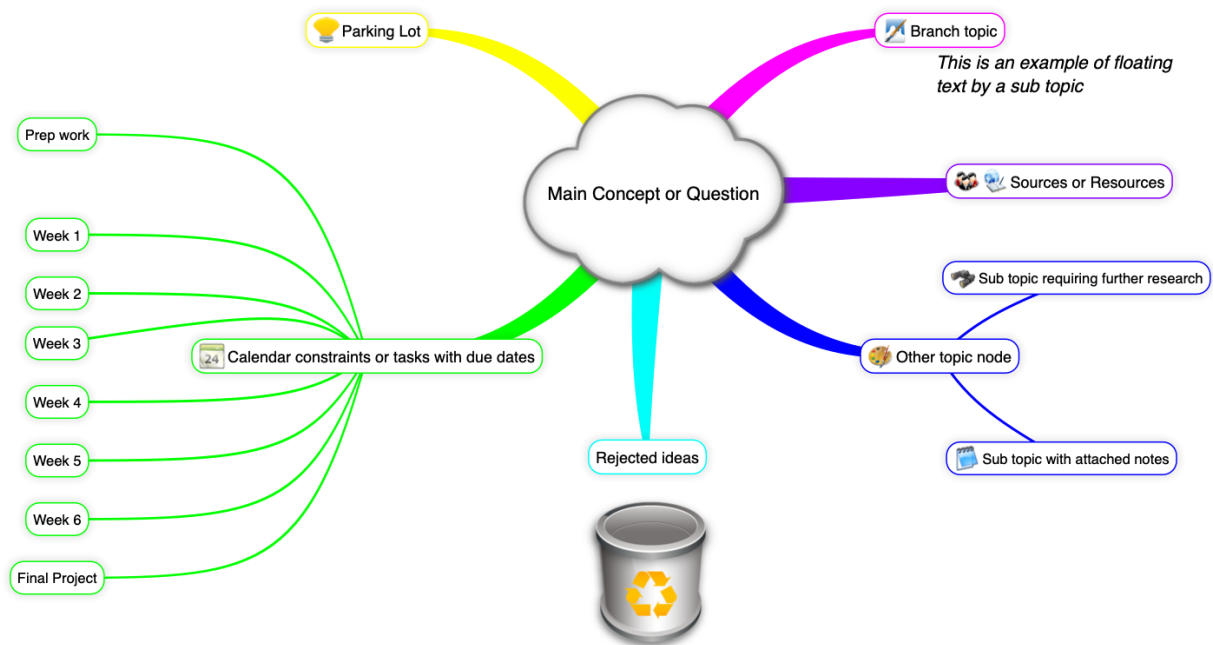
What is a Mind Map?

To some extent, it is what you want it to be as there are few hard rules about creating them or what they can be used for. They can be:

- Notes doodled around a simple sketch in a class,
- Post-Its on a refrigerator door with strings connecting them, or
- Formal diagram created with programs designed for making and sharing Mind Map

They are great for capturing and organizing your thoughts, especially if you are challenged by rampant ideas that jump around in your head like me. I use them for project plans, goal setting, exhibition planning, and brain storming sessions.

Mind Maps were popularized as a visual diagramming technique by Tony Buzan, who was inspired by similar techniques from Leonardo da Vinci, Albert Einstein, and Joseph D. Novak .



Mind Maps typically use a node-branch layout, and often include colors, pictures, side notes, and additional arrows that show relationships among ideas. They summarize the information in a way that is similar to an outline, but uses the grouping and layout to make it easier to see and understand relationships among the elements.

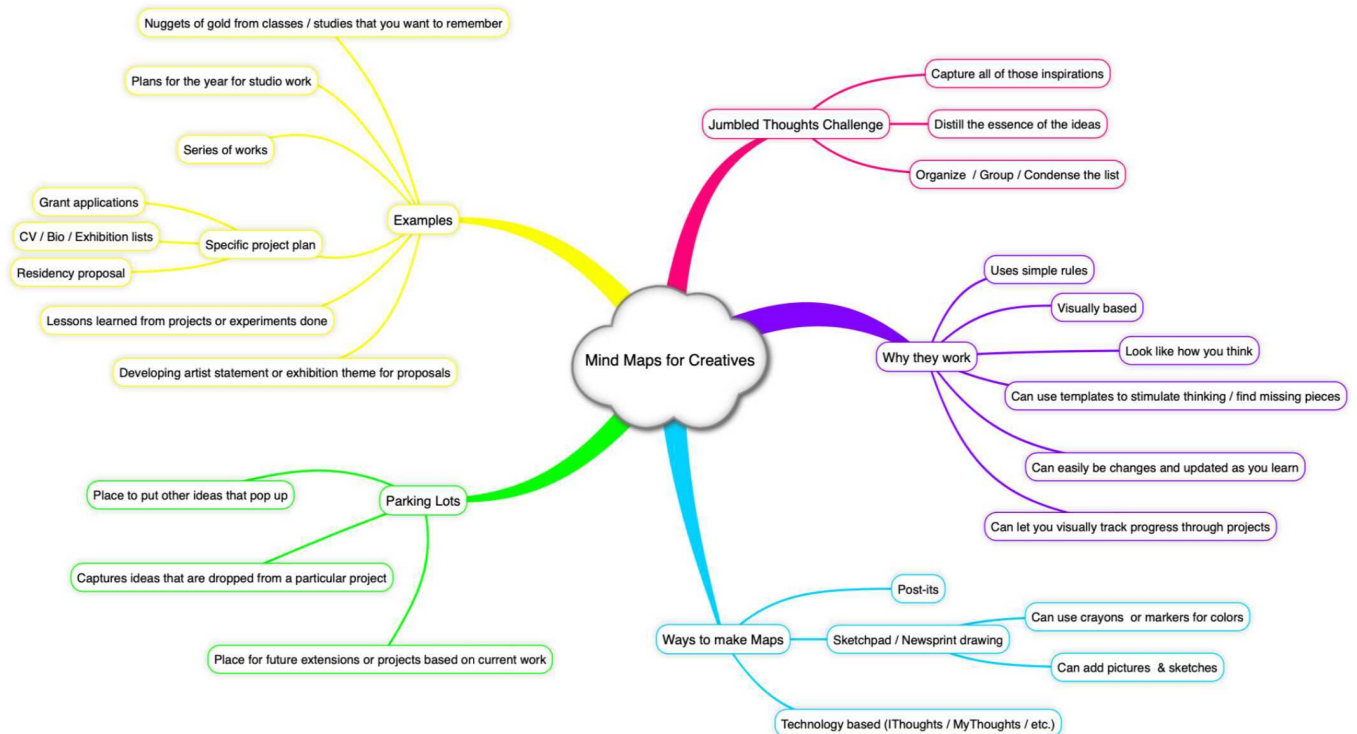
For me, they create a picture of how things are linked in my head that I can easily and quickly refer to.

What kinds of Maps might you make?

You might use maps to:

- distill key concepts and ideas from courses or teachers that you want to remember
- plan out a series of works for the quarter or year
- plan out an exhibition
- develop documents for grant applications, your website, or a residency proposal
- keep track of what you learned from experiments or a series done to explore a new technique
- capture ideas from a brainstorming session with fellow studio mates or collaborators about a project or future vision

As an example, I created the map below when working out what would be helpful to share with my fellow Enso Circle residents about Mind Maps. You can see the branch for examples that became the initial list of uses that I described above. If you struggle with writing, this is a great way to get a leg up on what you want to say and what order you might put things in!



Try it:

- 1) To make a map that lays out your goals for your Enso Circle project, you would start with the project description or title as your main concept. That goes in the big bubble or Post It in the center.

If you aren't sure how to start, ask yourself "*What do I want to accomplish?*"

- 2) Add a first ring of topics of the things you want to consider in your plan. This could be things like:
 - big ideas
 - what you want to get from the project
 - timelines or constraints
 - supplies or resources you need
 - supplies, methods, or works you already have that will be used
 - who you might talk to or work with to answer questions or bounce ideas off of
 - why this project is important to you
 - what things you would see that tell you that you are succeeding
 - problems or issues that could get in the way

- 3) Break down the topics into their components and add those as branches off of the main topics.

** If you find yourself struggling here, you can make lists of the ideas that are floating around in your head. Don't worry about organizing them- just get them down on paper or on Post It notes.

When you can't think of anything more, start going through the list and seeing where they would fit under your topics. Sometimes you will find that you want to change your first ring of topics to group things better or to add or subtract things that don't end up being as important as you thought. That's perfect!

- 4) There may be connections between the subtopics that are in different parts of the diagram. You can add arrows to show that, or make callout notes about how things are dependent on each other. You can add pictures or doodles to remind you what you were thinking about if that helps.
- 5) Now, step away for a day or so. Close the notebook, go do some creative work, go for a walk. Only then come back and take another look to see what jumps out at you. Rearrange, add, subtract, or start over completely.

Try walking through it with someone else and see where you find yourself stumbling or feeling like you repeated yourself.

One of my favorite quotes about creating design diagrams states:

"Always plan to throw the first one away."