Connecting the dots: Concept maps for aligning information literacy instruction and course outcomes

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Problem and Purpose
The following premises led to the development of this project:
- Faculty and librarians alike recognize that students often lack research skills.
- Students seek for information on a task-oriented level.
- Isolated, ad hoc design of information literacy tools is not effective.
- There is often a disconnect between librarians and instructors perceptions of what library-related instruction can and should be.

Why Concept Maps?
Concept maps are graphical representations of relationships among concepts. Research supports the efficacy of knowledge visualization for learning and creating new knowledge.

Sample Concept Maps
Based on analysis of syllabi and course assignments in Political Science, concept mapping software is used to connect learning outcomes to librarians’ teaching tools. Professors’ expectations for student achievement are used to operationalize the library and information literacy skills required to meet these outcomes.

Selected Literature


Selected the Software
There are many concept mapping and mind mapping tools available. CmapTools was selected for its powerful linking capabilities, flexibility for collaboration, and well-documented methodology.

Outcomes
Still under development, this project promises to:
- Improve library instruction for student learning via alignment with course content.
- Enable collaboration between professors and librarians by providing a mechanism and common tool (topic, language, space).
- Raise awareness of possible application of information literacy instruction.
- Organize and facilitate sharing of information literacy learning objects.

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In this project, concept maps are employed to:
- Identify learning objectives in course syllabi.
- Connect meaningful units of information.
- Create framework for collaboration.

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For more information, see: http://cmap.ihmc.us/conceptmap.html

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