Concept Definition Mapping

Concept definition mapping is a strategy for teaching students the meaning of key concepts. Concept definition maps are graphic organizers that help students understand the essential attributes, qualities, or characteristics of a word's meaning. Students must describe what the concept is, make comparisons, tell that it is like, and cite examples of it.

This strategy provides a structure for students to organize their understanding after they have completed an activity and/or read about a concept. It gives students an opportunity to explain their understanding and elaborate by citing examples from their own experiences.

How to use it:

1. Display an example of a concept definition map.

2. Discuss the questions that a definition should answer:
    *   What is it? What broader category does it fit into?
    *   What can it be compared with/contrasted to?
    *   What is it like? What are its essential characteristics? What qualities make it different from other things in the same category?
    *   What are some examples of it?

3. Model how to use the map.

4. Provide students with time to practice.

5. Instruct students to use the information from their maps to write a definition in their own words.

6. As students read and study the unit/concept, encourage them to refine their maps and reflect on their learning.