

Concept Maps: Graphic Organizers for Flat Patternmaking

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Innovative Strategy

In the current flat patternmaking course, students learn patternmaking concepts from the lecture, textbook, instructor-led demonstrations, and self-practice. The innovative strategy was to introduce students to the use of concept maps to organize relevant patternmaking material. Graphic organizers, such as concept maps, familiarize students with new material and its relationships (Marzano, Norford, Paynter, Pickering, & Gaddy, 2001). According to Huit (2003), a major organizational method known as *chunking*, grouping information into units, assists in the process of getting information into short-term memory and then later into long-term memory. By utilizing concept maps, students can *chunk* or group the patternmaking concepts, which helps them to remember the material.

Purpose

Joseph-Armstrong (2010) provides relevant patternmaking information in her textbook with descriptions and illustrations; however, there are no tables, figures, or charts that compile the information in an easily accessible form to demonstrate how the concepts are connected. Concept maps were incorporated in the flat patternmaking course to provide students with a method of organization the patternmaking information.

Implementation

The instructor developed concept maps as organizational tools for the following content areas: flat patternmaking principles, dart equivalents (Figure 1), one-dart series (Figure 2), two-dart series, and stylelines for bodices. The concept maps were developed in Microsoft Word and utilized illustrations from Joseph-Armstrong (2010) for students to identify. A line was designated below each illustration for students to fill in the appropriate information.

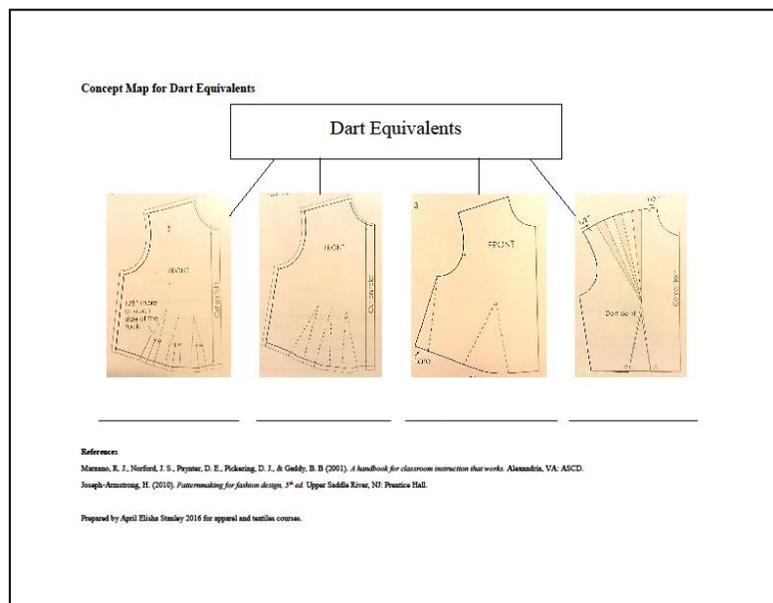


Figure 1 Dart Equivalents Concept Map

The concept maps were used over two consecutive class periods after the lectures. The instructor gave verbal instructions for completing the concept maps. Students were introduced to the concept maps as a partnered in-class exercise. Students were given these handouts to discuss and fill out with their partner. After completion of the handouts, the instructor led a discussion for the activity to address students' questions and misconceptions of the concepts.

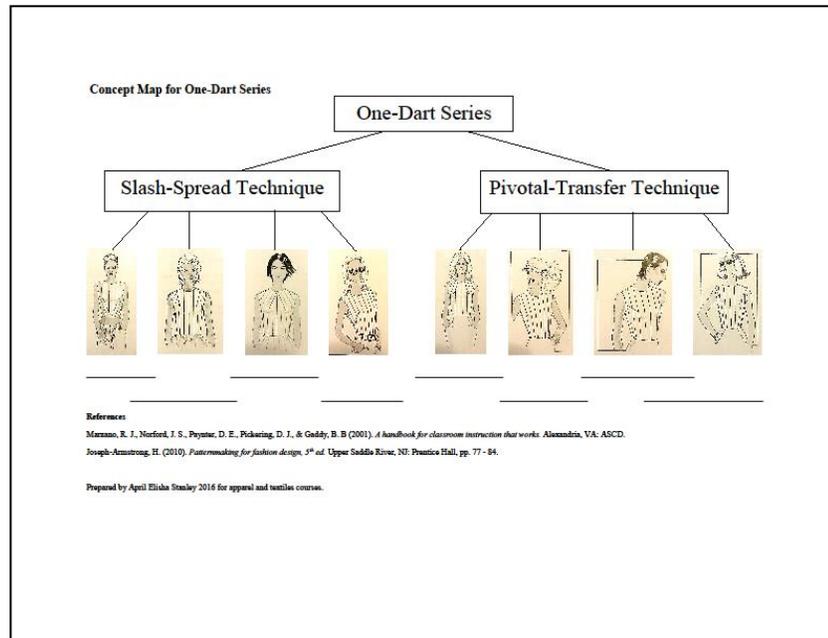


Figure 2 One Dart Series Concept Map

Description of Effectiveness and Future Plans

The effectiveness of the concept maps was observed by the instructor in the class. During the discussion after the activity, students expressed that they liked working in pairs because it allowed them to discuss the patternmaking concepts with another person. Students also stated that the concept maps helped them to think about the subject matter learned in the patternmaking class. The students were advised to keep the concept map handouts for future reference. In the future, patternmaking students should be taught how to make their own concept maps. This would likely assist students in their critical thinking skills and further improve their comprehension of patternmaking concepts.

References

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