How to Build a Concept Map

Concept maps are typically hierarchical, with the subordinate concepts stemming from the main concept or idea. This type of graphic organizer however, always allows change and new concepts to be added. The Rubber Sheet Analogy states that concept positions on a map can continuously change, while always maintaining the same relationship with the other ideas on the map.

1. Start with a main idea, topic, or issue to focus on.

A helpful way to determine the context of your concept map is to choose a focus question—something that needs to be solved or a conclusion that needs to be reached. Once a topic or question is decided on, that will help with the hierarchical structure of the concept map.
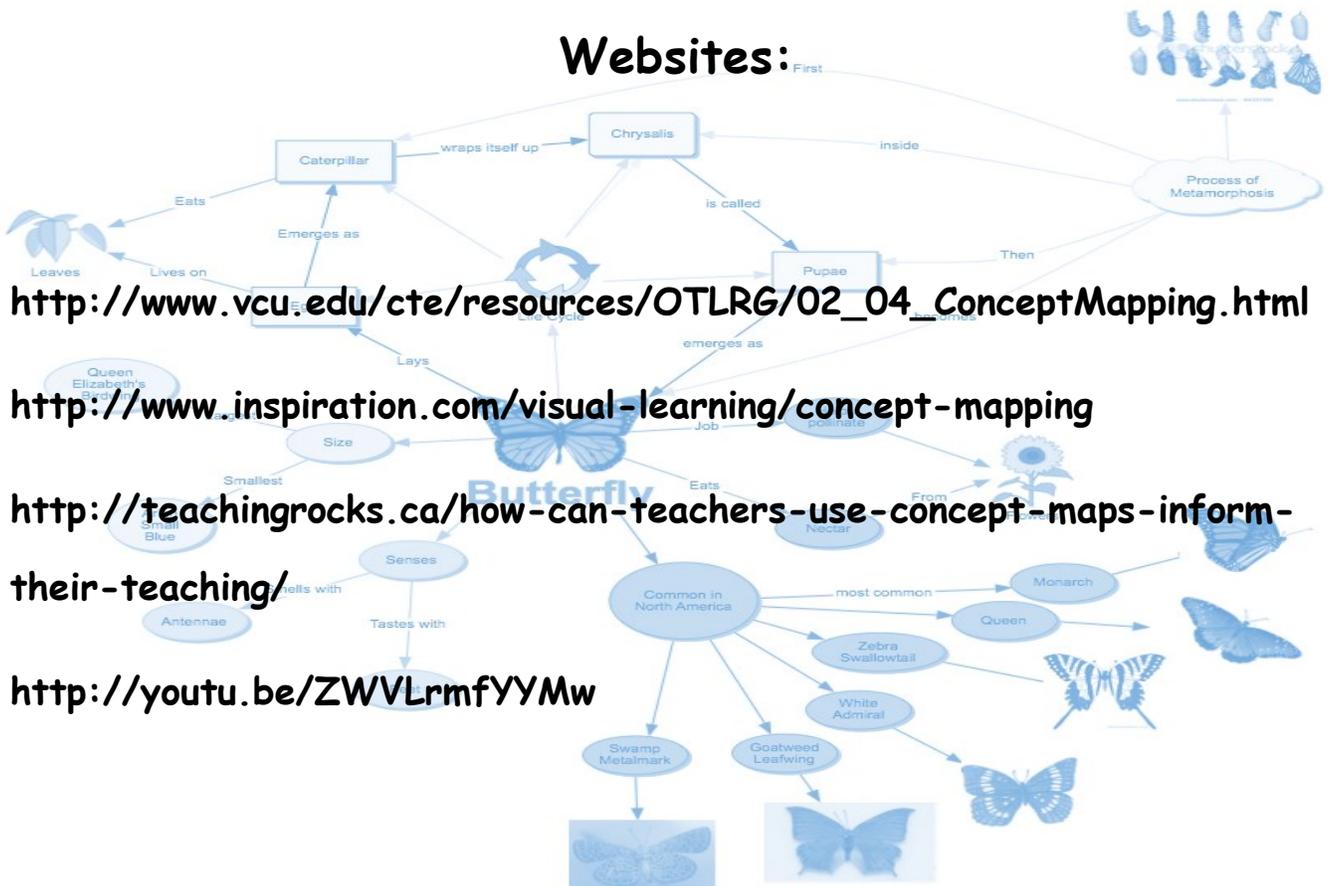
2. Then determine the key concepts

Find the key concepts that connect and relate to your main idea and rank them; most general, inclusive concepts come first, then link to smaller, more specific concepts.

3. Finish by connecting concepts--creating linking phrases and words

Once the basic links between the concepts are created, add cross-links, which connect concepts in different areas of the map, to further illustrate the relationships and strengthen student's understanding and knowledge on the topic.
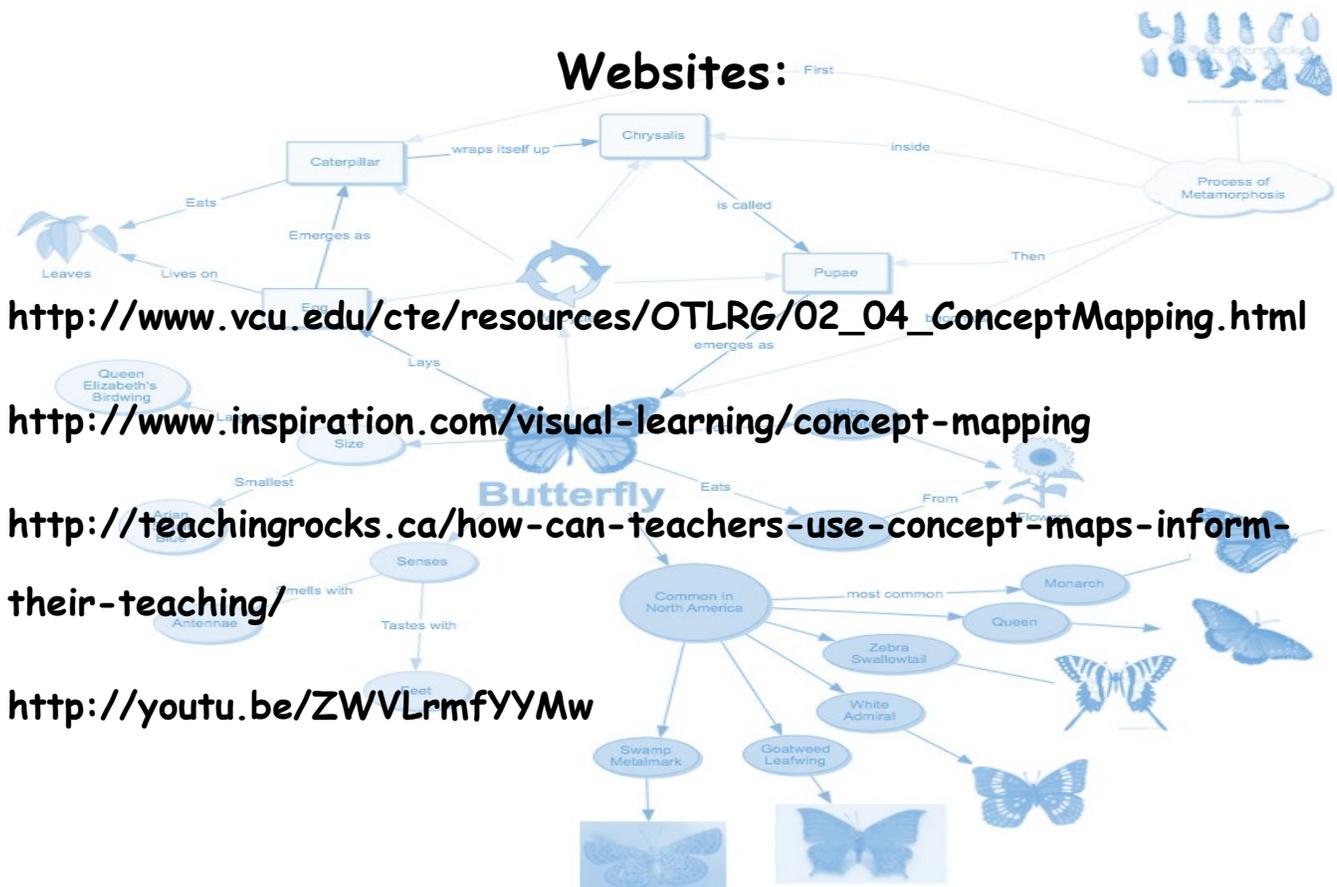
Websites:

http://www.vcu.edu/cte/resources/OTLRG/02_04_ConceptMapping.html

http://www.inspiration.com/visual-learning/concept-mapping

http://teachingrocks.ca/how-can-teachers-use-concept-maps-inform-their-teaching/

http://youtu.be/ZWVLrmfYYMw