About this activity:

A concept map is a representation of a system that sacrifices accuracy for comprehensibility. It is a tool for sensemaking.

Before Starting This Activity:

Required: Participants must have a collection of terms, themes, or a transcript from a contextual interview. The data can be in a narrative form or a random collection of words and phrases.

Preparation: None

Activity Details:

Is an individual and/or group activity

Takes 5-6+ hours

Materials required:

· 8.5 x 11 Paper
· Sharpie Markers
· Post-It Notes

1 Create a matrix showing the relations of terms. Identify the main elements that make up the system; lean on your contextual research to understand the words that matter most to users.

2 Create empty matrix, plotting the words against themselves.

3 Identify relationships; these are qualitative and require interpretation.

4 Identify the main branches of the map. Use frequency of connections, as well as common sense. Create the backbone or structure of the map so that it makes a cohesive sentence. Fill in the rest of the structure.
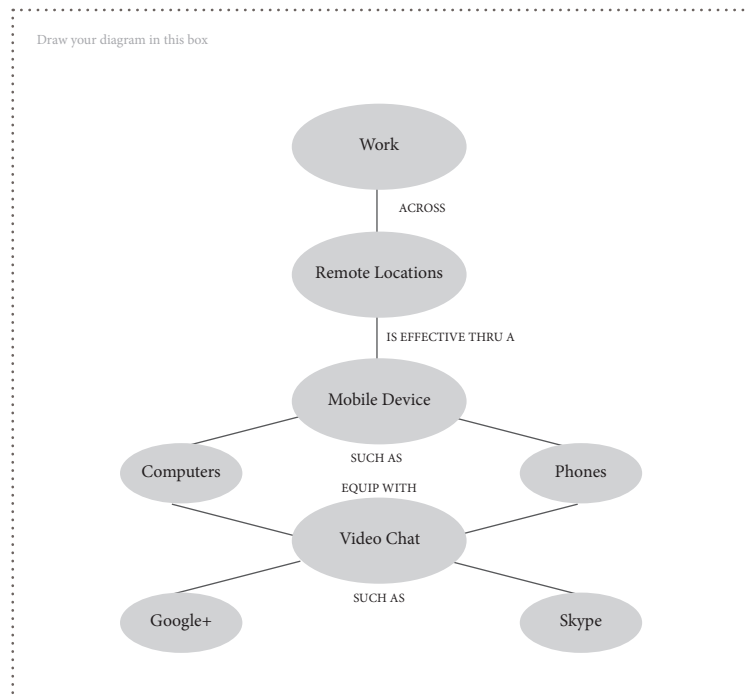
5 Draw out the frame in a bubble diagram. Label each bubble using the most common terms from the matrix. Connect the nodes using lines. Think of the nodes as nouns in a sentence.

6 Relate the nodes using verbs and other parts of a sentence (verbs, adverbs, prepositions). Your goal is to create a visual/verbal narrative structure.

Draw your diagram in this box

A Concept Map:

- Visualizes both the forest and the trees
- Rarely has a "beginning" and "end"
- Helps people find their way
- Provides direction and instruction
- Forces selectivity, abstraction, prioritization and hierarchy
- Is visual (a tool for perception)
- Is semantic (a tool for cognition)
- Represents the user's mental model of a how a system might work
- Can also represent the designer's manifest model of how a system might appear

Think

Structure your diagram, list your terms,
draw relations.

Make

Visualize your map of ideas in a bubble diagram
or other type of process model.

Draw your diagram in this box