

TAWK IT: Talk and Write Knowledge in Text



1. Background
2. Experience with TAWK IT
3. Discussion

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Background

Problem in the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences

What the tutors say:

- **'Poor writing'**:
related to their ability to
 - prepare, read
 - integrate reading in writing
 - present, support and sustain an argument
- **Plagiarism**
- **Engagement** and **Motivation** issues

What students say & the Teaching Observations:

- The purpose of **seminars unclear** / **experience varies**
- **Mixed levels of engagement** and participation by students
- **Limited guidance** on and practice with writing, and reading to write
- **Assessment criteria opaque**
- **Limited opportunities for formative feedback** / feedback not always helpful or clear
- **Mixed levels of engagement** by tutors at a human level

[A first year HSS] student reported that on only one out of her eight first year modules did the seminar tutor succeed in facilitating active participation. For this highly motivated student, there was clearly a major mismatch between her expectations and actual experience:

“...that is probably the worst thing about this year, where my biggest ... disappointments come from is the seminars, where you expect that is the main thing of university”.

(Extract from ‘Student Expectations’, ERS Project Report, 2017)

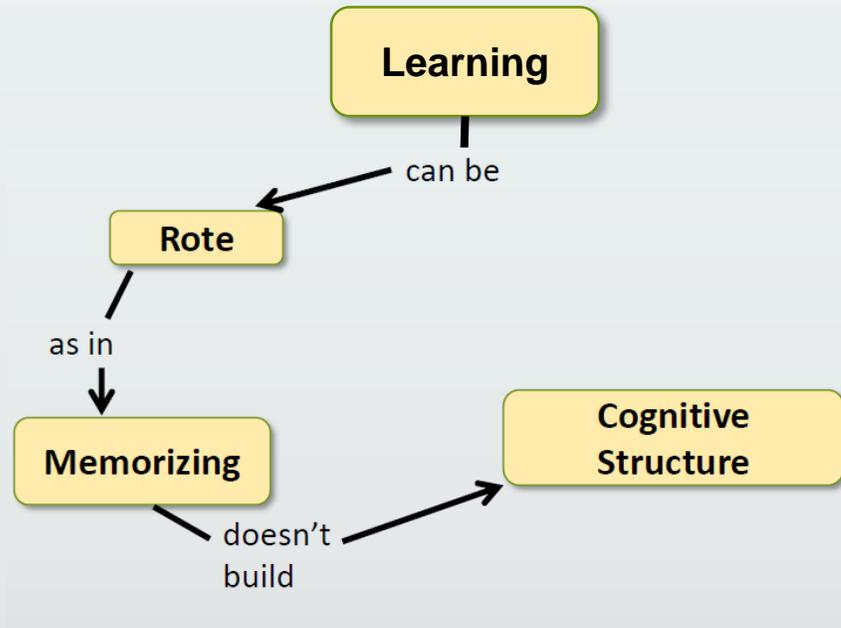
“... many large classes are taught with a minimum of student engagement ... often because faculty members and graduate teaching assistants assume that only passive approaches are feasible when numbers grow.... At best, faculty use a whole-class discussion model for trying to involve students and then lament the fact that only a few students ... respond.”

(Millis, 2010:3)

TAWK IT – the approach and the project

The TAWK IT approach brings together existing teaching methods and theory:

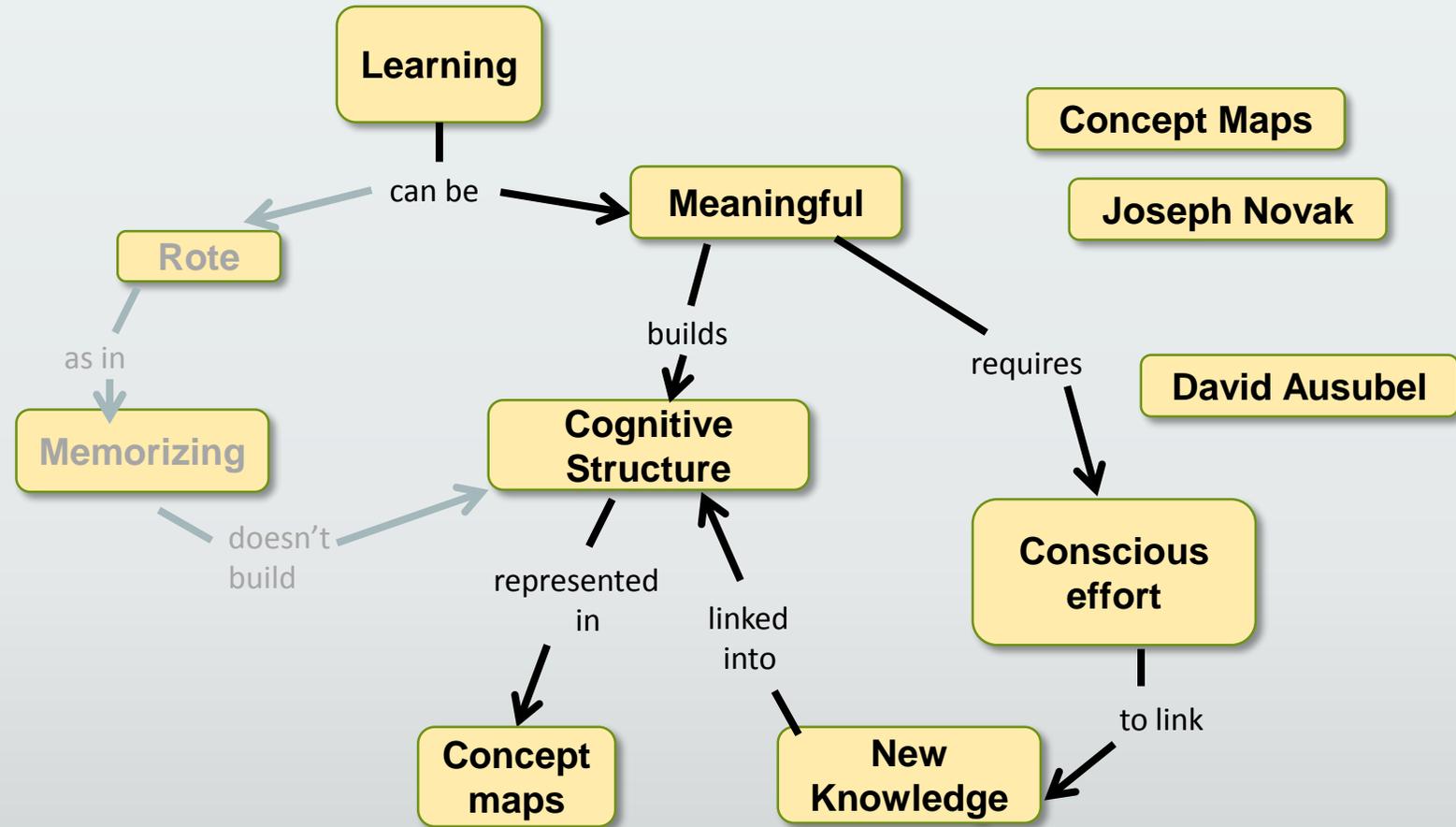
- co-operative, jigsaw learning
- concept maps
- theory on motivation
- enquiry based learning



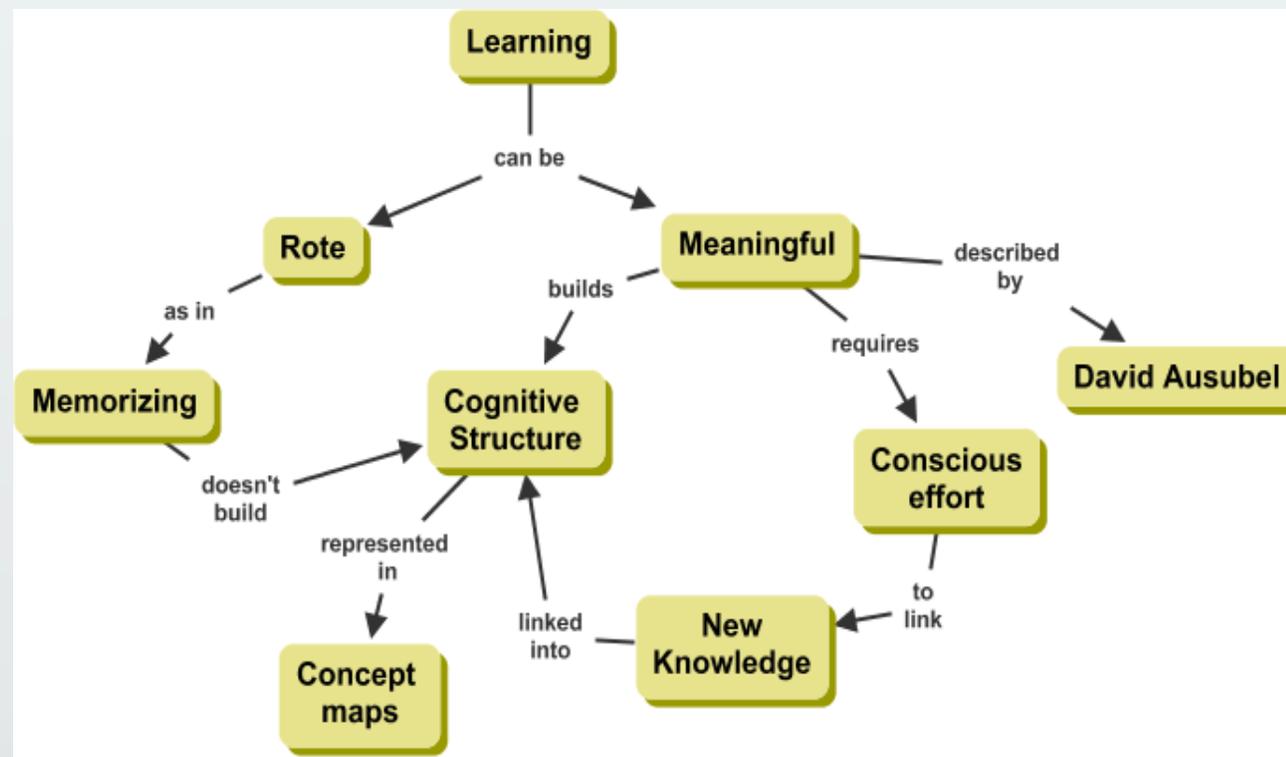
Concept Maps

Joseph Novak

David Ausubel



(From Cañas and Novak's concept map representation of 'Key concepts and propositions regarding learning' – see next slide)



Key concepts and propositions regarding learning

(Cañas & Novak 2009, citing Ausubel 1963, 1968, 2000; Novak & Gowin, 1984; Bransford, Brown, & Cocking, 1999)

See also:

Hay and Kinchin (no date)

Kandiko, Hay and Weller (2011)

Procedure

1. Read the text given to you (on your own)
2. Explain to group members the main points in your own words
3. Briefly discuss
4. Fill in the gaps on the partially completed concept map
5. Write a paragraph or two, explaining the ideas contained in the concept map
Include in-text references (but not full-text references at the end)
6. Present your concept map to the other groups

Literature perspectives

Embedded Academic Literacy Development

General Educational theory, including:

Constructivism (Ausubel, 1963) and **Social Constructionism** (Quay 2003)

- supporting transition from 'vicarious' to active participation in a community of practice
(Northedge, 2003, drawing on Lave and Wenger, 1991)

Assessment and Feedback (Gibbs and Simpson, 2005; Boud, Cohen and Sampson, 1999; Boud and Molloy, 2013)

Constructive Alignment of Teaching, Learning and Assessment (Biggs, 1996)

Literature perspectives

Perspectives on Engagement and Alienation (Mann, 2001; Yosso, 2005)

As a response, Mann suggests that we provide:

**solidarity; hospitality; safety; redistributed power;
inspiration for critical engagement**

Motivation theory (Ryan and Deci, 2000)

Analysis

- 'deficit' view of students' abilities
- students expected to pick up the discourse (+ processes) on their own
- issues re. alignment of teaching, learning and assessment
- more interaction needed
- more engagement at a human level (relatedness, belonging)

TAWK IT: Benefits

TAWK IT has provided opportunities and focus for:

- Conversations with staff and students
- Teaching observations
- Trialling of a teaching and learning innovation
- Visualisation of learning
- De-construction and re-construction of text
- Critical engagement
- Inclusive participation
- Can be used with any subject discipline
- Further dialogue

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