

## CLUSTERING

Clustering is a method for the writing person to get a quick overview to a certain topic or question/problem. A word formation is the result that can activate creativity and lead to new ideas.

### Why do you use a Cluster?

Clustering is a non-linear, graphic brainstorming technique. All thoughts are allowed and none will be censored. During the process you create associations and a lot of different connections. Usually you can see where the writer has the most knowledge or is most interested in because there will be the most associations. A cluster looks a lot like a mind map, but it is not used for structuring your work, but for a free and creative collection of ideas.

### What do you use a cluster for?

- collecting ideas on a topic
- think more about possible sub topics
- see focus points that you want to emphasise
- limit the topic
- get closer to a research question
- create a bullet point list for research of literature
- preliminary work for a first structure

### Instructions

- Set a time frame: 7 –10 minutes (set a clock)
- Note a single term in the middle of the paper (cluster-core). This could also be the topic of your work or a research question.
- Leading away from this core, you write down other terms or phrases spontaneously. They will be encircled and connected to the core via lines.
- You can add new terms or phrases to the ones you wrote down before. If you have other ideas concerning the core, you start a new line leading away from the core.
- It is important to work quickly (only then will the inner censor be silenced). All thoughts are allowed! The hand which is writing should always be moving. If you are lacking ideas at some point, you can just circle one term until you have new ideas.
- If you have several topics to choose from, you can always create more than one cluster to see where you have the most ideas and inspiration.

### What else can you use a Cluster for?

- Have a look at the cluster: Which aspects are connected to the topic? Which aspects are you interested in? Where do you know the most?

### Which aspects would you like to follow up on?

- If necessary, create another cluster for a certain aspect (follow-up-cluster with the aspect as its core)
- If you choose your research question as the core you can start creating a first structure.
- Start your literature research for certain aspects.

Sources:

Girgensohn, Katrin, and Sennewald, Nadja. Schreiben Lehren, Schreiben lernen: eine Einführung. Darmstadt: WBG, 2012.

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Concept: Writing Centre of TU Dresden, 2016.

Further information on our support services, writing advice, workshops, writing marathon, etc. on our website: [www.tu-dresden.de/deinstudienerfolg/szd](http://www.tu-dresden.de/deinstudienerfolg/szd)