

Theory Mapping: Conceptual and Operational Definitions

Prerequisite Knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Problems, objectives, hypotheses, and variables in studies ● Introduction to study frameworks
Learner Setting	Classroom
Strategy Type	Small group
Time	Faculty prep: 45 minutes Delivery with students: 30 minutes Evaluation: 15 minutes
Learning Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● To distinguish and critique conceptual and operational definitions ● To identify connections between nursing theory and research
Materials/ Resources	Map templates (see below) Mapping pieces (see below) Envelopes Glue sticks Completed student example (see below)
Strategy Overview	After a brief instructor-generated example regarding the differences and connection between conceptual and operational definitions, students work in small groups to sort and place conceptual and operational definitions onto a map of a theory of pain. The instructor circulates the room to provide guidance and facilitates a discussion of the groups' answers when the task is complete.
Steps	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Demonstrate difference and relationship between conceptual and operational definitions using a simple example, or one from a published study. 2. Distribute one map template, one envelope of color-coded mapping pieces, and one glue stick to each group 3. Instruct students that their task is to sort the mapping pieces and glue the conceptual and operational definitions for each box in its

	<p>appropriate place. Each color corresponds to one row (or column); the students must determine where the correct colors go.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Circulate through room to assist student groups as needed. 5. Facilitate group discussion of answers. 6. Note: Students like to take photos of the completed map so all can have a copy of the work.
Evaluation	<p>Low stakes – Instructor feedback during class activity and/or credit for active participation</p>

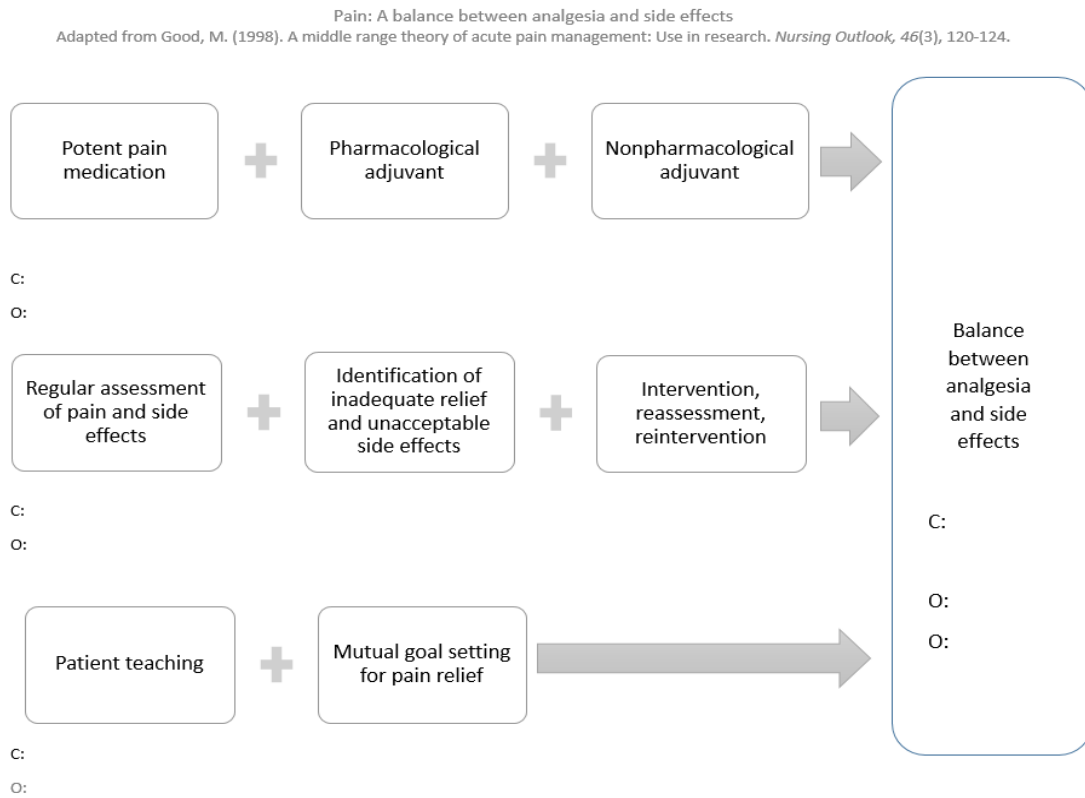
Theory Mapping: Instructor generated example

Conceptual Definition	Operational Definition
The abstract or theoretical meaning of the concept being studied	The operations that researchers must perform to collect and measure the required information

	Conceptual Definition	Operational Definition
Weight	The gravitational pull on an object's mass	An object's weight in pounds, to the nearest whole pound
Anxiety	A feeling of unease	Hamilton Anxiety Rating Scale Palmar Sweat Index

Theory Mapping: Map template

Students glue conceptual definitions for each box beside (C) and operational definitions beside (O).



Theory Mapping: Mapping pieces

Opioid analgesic or local anesthetic given systemically or by epidural for acute pain	Drug, dose, frequency, route, and method of administration
Analgesic given as a supplement	Drug dose, frequency, route, and method of administration
Complementary nursing therapies: relaxation, music, imagery, massage, or cold for pain relief	Technique, dose, frequency, and mastery of use
Report of pain and side effects every 2-4 hours	Pain rating scale & patient report or nurse observation of side effects of opioids
Pain/side effect intensity greater than mutual goal	Number and intensity of side effects that are unacceptable to patient/nurse
Immediate intervention for pain and side effects; reassessment when peak effect is expected, and reintervention if pain and side effects are still unacceptable	Nurse documentation
Patient instruction, encouraging attitudes, expectations, and action in reporting pain, obtaining medication, preventing pain during activity, and using complimentary therapies	Documentation of nurse instruction, or patient use of audio/videotape
Mutually agreed upon, safe, realistic goals for relief	Nurse discussions with patient daily, including documentation
Patient satisfaction with relief of pain and relief or absence of side effects	Pain intensity on a visual analog scale
	Opioid Side Effects Scale

Theory Mapping: Completed student example

