

Mind Map and Flash Talk (19%)

Students will develop one of the ideas or topics explored in earlier journal entries (or come up with a new one) through a mind map and communicate their ideas and feedback with peers.

The goal of the mid-semester assessment is to prepare for writing the final proposal. Students are asked to (1) commit to an idea that can be explored through the remaining journal entries, (2) begin a concrete literature review that can be the basis for the proposal, and (3) get feedback from the TA, instructor, and classmates that can be integrated into the proposal at the end of term.

We are looking for a concrete research direction (research question and hypotheses), clear connections between relevant background concepts (literature review), and a sketch of a potential approach (methodology). You are encouraged to develop your ideas beyond what is given in this document. The more detail and organisation in the mind map now, the easier it will be to write a strong proposal later.

Disclaimer: If you use AI for anything related to this assignment – you must provide an appendix disclosing this that provides any prompts and explanation of what you had it do. We must be able to see which ideas were your own. You are expected to have read all materials you include and reference, and you are responsible for the accuracy of all information.

Mind Map (14%)

The 14% of your final grade is comprised of three parts: the mind map itself (10%), peer feedback (2%), and up to a page of reflection (2%). The mind map and the reflection should be uploaded together and will be shared with your classmates in the peer feedback process. Everything must be referenced appropriately across materials. You may lose marks for minor errors to acknowledge previous work.¹

Visual Organization of Project Direction (10%)

Students will create a mind map which is visually organized around a single topic. If you have been exploring multiple areas in your research journal, this is where you will narrow down to one and try to explore it in greater detail. You are not committed to the research question, hypothesis, background literature, and methodology you identify for the mind map.

You may choose any format you want (e.g., virtual poster, website, or Prezi) but a basic list or word document will not get full marks for creativity (see rubric at the end of this document for guidance).

Text and information should be brief. If you feel like you need a lot of text in one place, consider if it is possible to break this up into individual nodes and linked to more than one concept.

¹ More major omissions will be treated more seriously and may be considered academic dishonesty. This includes where AI was used too heavily or if the work is not sufficiently your own. Failure to appropriately disclose AI use will result in harsher penalties.

Papers counting toward the minimum number outlined in the rubric (given at end of this document) should be peer-reviewed papers in appropriate venues for the respective field.

Reflection (2%)

In addition to the visual mind map, you will include a short write-up (maximum 1 page) sketching out some potential next steps and discussing the potential significance of your work (i.e., what gap does it fill)?

Peer Feedback (2%)

You will be assigned mind maps from two of your fellow students.² For each classmate, you will provide the following:

1. One question that you have for them (something that you would ask them about the project).
2. Two distinct strengths of their project idea.
3. Three thoughtful suggestions that you have for their proposal.

You will be evaluated on whether your feedback is considerate and clear. The focus should be on the content and ideas, not the visual presentation.

Flash Talk (5%)

Flash talks should be brief (3-4 minutes). Give the class an elevator pitch for your proposed research. There will be time for a single question after. The challenge is to *concisely* introduce why you might do this research (draw from written paragraph), propose a specific research question/hypothesis, and tell us what the methodology might involve. The audience should walk away with an idea of what your proposal might be about and why it matters.

You should create a few slides to share while you talk to highlight main points. Slides can (and often should) not contain too much text. If you need inspiration, you can look up tips related to slides for the 3 Minute Thesis competition. Think about how you might pitch a project to a potential supervisor for COGS 402.

Anything directly referencing or drawn from background literature needs a citation, including screen caps of graphs or figures from other work.

² It is possible that this functionality on Canvas may not work as required. I will provide further information if necessary.

Mind Map: Rubric

	0.5	1	1.5	2
Research Question/ Hypothesis (2 points)	<p>Vague or no research question(s).</p> <p>No hypothesis (or guiding direction).</p> <p>Project direction is unclear.</p>	<p>Research question(s) vague – if multiple questions, they may only be loosely linked.</p> <p>Vague or no hypothesis (or guiding direction).</p> <p>Project has some direction but needs work before proposal.</p>	<p>Adequate research question(s) – connections are apparent.</p> <p>Appropriate hypothesis (or guiding direction).</p> <p>Defines a clear direction for a project.</p>	<p>Strong and clear research question(s) – connections are apparent.</p> <p>Clear hypothesis (or guiding direction).</p> <p>Defines a clear direction for a project.</p>

	1	2	3	4
Background Literature (4 points)	<p>Relevance of background literature is unclear.</p> <p>No themes, categories, or connections are made.</p> <p>Included papers are only broadly relevant.</p>	<p>Background literature organised into broad or simple themes.</p> <p>Connections between different papers and ideas is weak or absent.</p> <p>At least 4 papers are included with 1-2 sentences describing the paper and a clear indication of its relevance for your project.</p> <p>Relevance of the literature is clear but may be a little broad.</p>	<p>Background literature organised into clear themes.</p> <p>Connections drawn between different papers and ideas are present.</p> <p>At least 5 papers are included with 1-2 sentences describing the paper and a clear indication of its relevance for your project.</p> <p>Relevance of the literature is clear and specific.</p>	<p>Background literature organised into clear themes.</p> <p>Connections drawn between different papers and ideas are present, thoughtful, and provide evidence of synthesis across different areas.</p> <p>At least 6 papers are included with 1-2 sentences describing the paper and a clear indication of its relevance for your project.</p> <p>Relevance of the literature is clear and specific.</p>

	0.25	0.5	0.75	1
Methodology (1 point)	No or inadequate discussion of methodology.	Methodology does not seem to match proposed project or too vague to connect back to the experimental question.	A possible methodology is described with appropriate details about how the research question might be asked. (Methodology may less practical.)	A possible methodology is worked out in good detail with discussion of approach, how the research question could be answered, participants and design (if relevant), and any additional information.

	0.25	0.5	0.75	1
Bibliography (1 points)	A complete reference list is given for everything cited in-text (mind map and paragraph).	A complete reference list is given for everything cited in-text (mind map and paragraph). A few additional sources are identified that are unrelated or only weakly relevant.	A complete reference list is given for everything cited in-text (mind map and paragraph). Additional sources for the project are given in a supplementary bibliography with some indication of how they fit into the mind map. Sources are adequate in quality and specificity.	A complete reference list is given for everything cited in-text (mind map and paragraph). Additional sources for the project are given in a supplementary bibliography with labels identifying which mind map topic or concept they relate to. Sources are good quality and specific.

	0.25	0.5	0.75	1
Mind Map – Creativity (1 point)	Mind map does not integrate a visual component.	Mind map integrates some visual component, but this is limited (e.g., colours and boxes added to a list).	Mind map shows good visual organisation and format is appropriate for the assessment.	Mind map shows visual organisation that is appropriate for the assessment and reflects creativity.

	0.25	0.5	0.75	1
Mind Map – Organisation (1 point)	No or inadequate organisation of topics.	Topics are only broadly connected, and structure does not reflect any deeper connection between concepts or any project-specific organisation.	Topics are connected in a reasonable manner and show some organisation (i.e., links or categorisation) specific to the project.	Topics are well-connected and show thoughtful organisation (i.e., links or categorisation) specific to the project.