

Partitioning Algorithms: Basic Concept

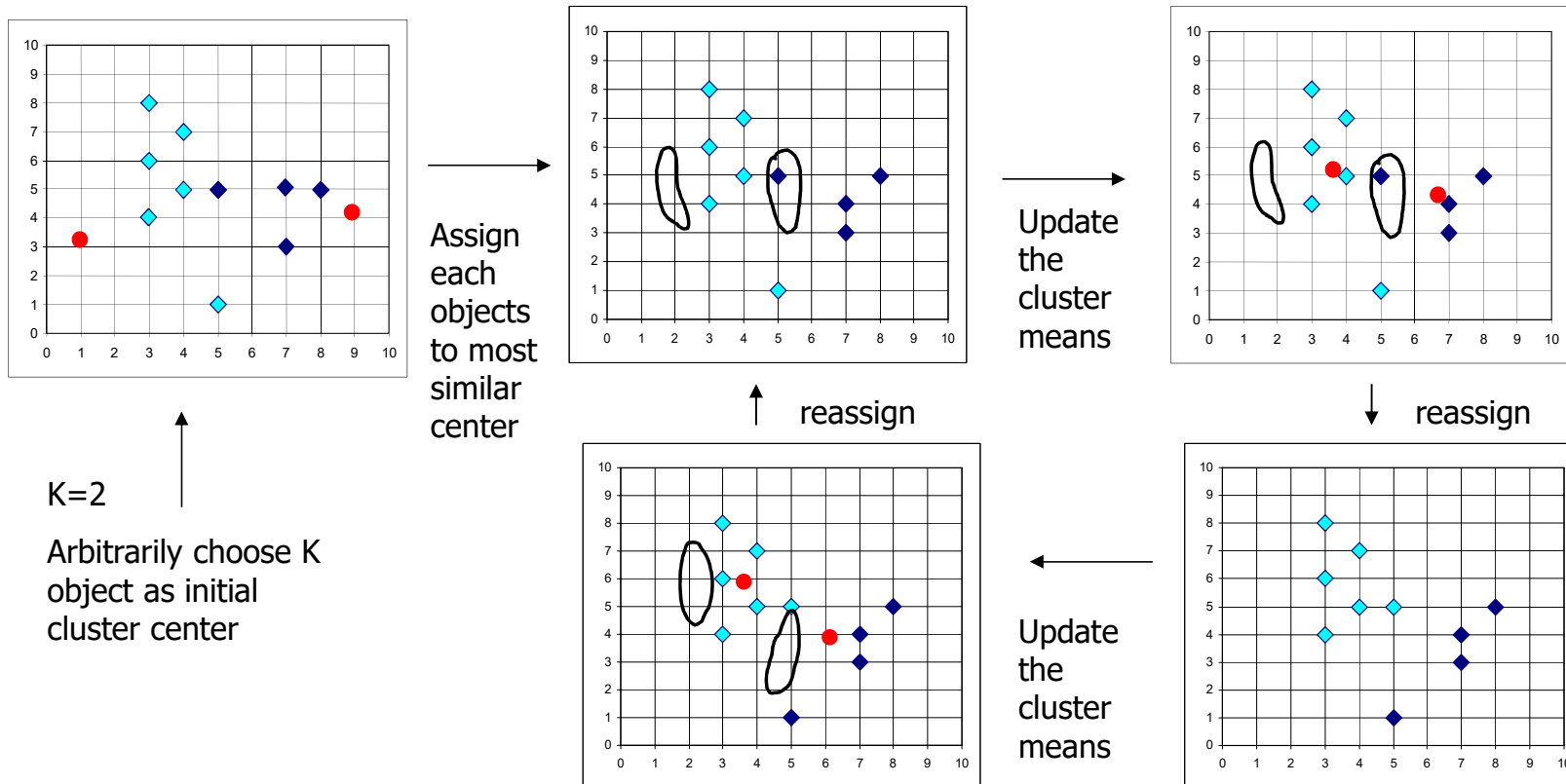
- Partitioning method: Construct a partition of a database D of n objects into a set of k clusters, s.t., min sum of squared distance
- Given a k , find a partition of k clusters that optimizes the chosen partitioning criterion
 - Global optimal: exhaustively enumerate all partitions
 - Heuristic methods: *k-means* and *k-medoids* algorithms
 - *k-means* (MacQueen'67): Each cluster is represented by the center of the cluster
 - *k-medoids* or PAM (Partition around medoids) (Kaufman & Rousseeuw'87): Each cluster is represented by one of the objects in the cluster

The *K-Means* Clustering Method

- Given k , the *k-means* algorithm is implemented in four steps:
 - Partition objects into k nonempty subsets
 - Compute seed points as the centroids of the clusters of the current partition (the centroid is the center, i.e., *mean point*, of the cluster)
 - Assign each object to the cluster with the nearest seed point
 - Go back to Step 2, stop when no more new assignment

The *K-Means* Clustering Method

- Example



Comments on the *K-Means* Method

- Strength: *Relatively efficient*: $O(tkn)$, where n is # objects, k is # clusters, and t is # iterations. Normally, $k, t \ll n$.
 - Comparing: PAM: $O(k(n-k)^2)$, CLARA: $O(ks^2 + k(n-k))$
- Comment: Often terminates at a *local optimum*. The *global optimum* may be found using techniques such as: *deterministic annealing* and *genetic algorithms*
- Weakness
 - Applicable only when *mean* is defined, then what about categorical data?
 - Need to specify k , the *number* of clusters, in advance
 - Unable to handle noisy data and *outliers*
 - Not suitable to discover clusters with *non-convex shapes*

Variations of the *K-Means* Method

- A few variants of the *k-means* which differ in
 - Selection of the initial *k* means
 - Dissimilarity calculations
 - Strategies to calculate cluster means
- Handling categorical data: *k-modes* (Huang'98)
 - Replacing means of clusters with modes
 - Using new dissimilarity measures to deal with categorical objects
 - Using a frequency-based method to update modes of clusters
 - A mixture of categorical and numerical data: *k-prototype* method

What Is the Problem of the K-Means Method?

- The k-means algorithm is sensitive to outliers !
 - Since an object with an extremely large value may substantially distort the distribution of the data.
- K-Medoids: Instead of taking the **mean** value of the object in a cluster as a reference point, **medoids** can be used, which is the **most centrally located** object in a cluster.

