

THE BENEFITS OF LEARNING ENGLISH WITH MIND MAPS

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Abstract

This paper analyzes the feasibility of using the Mind Map in teaching and learning English theoretically. Prior to any trials or other empirical research, this initial study adopts the qualitative methodology, mainly analyzing the features of the Mind Map and the scientific basis for using the Mind Map in teaching and learning English vocabulary. The goal of this paper is to encourage English foreign language teachers and students to incorporate the Mind Map into their educational process as an effective technique for teaching and learning English vocabulary.

Keywords: Mind map, diagram, learning English, foreign language teaching.

Introduction

English vocabulary constitutes a challenge for English foreign language teaching and learning. Most students spend a lot of time studying English vocabulary, but the result is often frustrating and unsatisfactory when so many students learn vocabulary by rote memorization, which is boring and dampens students' enthusiasm for learning. Therefore, it is desirable to find an effective tool to help students learn English vocabulary. The Mind Map is a thinking tool that, based on divergent thinking, builds up a structure of knowledge for each target word by associating it with other related words or concepts.

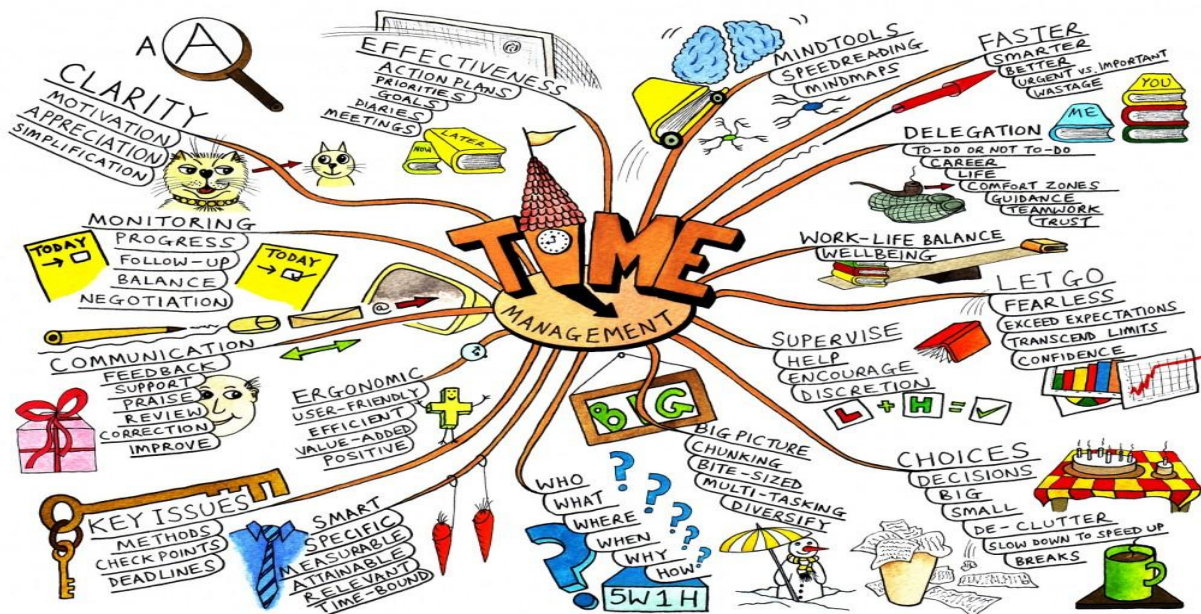
Research results

A mind map is a **diagram** that uses keywords, colors, images and other graphical elements to represent information. When you create a mind map, all of its content is **visualized on one single page**. Mind maps also use **colors** and different font sizes to **highlight** ideas and make the whole map more **memorable**. The map's subject is always located right at the **center** of this page. All related subtopics and keywords are arranged around the center in a radiant, two-dimensional structure and connected to it via lines.

Mind maps improve memory and learning by helping you transition from *collecting* dots to *connecting* dots. By embedding individual pieces of information in a larger context and showing their relationships with other pieces, mind maps help you **assign meaning** to them while you learn, and connect them to your **network of existing knowledge**. This process helps students to truly internalize and memorize new information long-term [4; 5].

There is a whole range of properties that make mind maps superior to traditional note taking techniques:

- **Mental triggers:** The colors and images used in mind maps are easier for students' brain to remember than mere text.
- **Filtering of key information:** Mind maps help separate key concepts from fluff.
- **Scaffolding of knowledge:** Mind maps provide space for both breadth and depth, the big picture and its details.
- **Analysis and synthesis:** Mind maps let teacher break down information into parts and combine them into a new whole.
- **Flexibility:** Digital maps let teacher move and rearrange pieces of information freely.



Mind maps – and especially digital ones – provide a much more practical approach for dealing with large quantities of vocabulary, as teacher can easily create themed collections and add new words to them wherever they thematically fit.

Digital and online mind mapping software such as Mind Meister also enables teacher to store more detailed information about words in the form of **notes** and **links** – without cluttering up the map itself. This is a great way to add sample sentences, definitions, synonyms, pronunciation tips, mnemonics or audio recordings of a word [4; 5].

Mind maps are a great format to collect all grammar rules in a central place. The biggest advantage of such grammar maps is the **clear overview** and **structure** they offer. Using grammar mind maps, you will be able to view all rules, exceptions and examples related to a specific topic at a glance. And just like we saw in the vocabulary mind maps above, you'll be able to **add links** to the branches in your map, connecting them to other, related mind maps you've created. This way, you can create a big network of mind maps that will help you to learn a lot of useful information.

Conclusion

Mind Map should play an important role in teaching practices. The main function of a Mind Map is that it can help create interconnectedness among isolated units or items. In this way, it can help learners organize and manage knowledge learned. By connecting the old knowledge and the new, the Mind Map helps students achieve a deeper understanding of their knowledge. During this process, a new and extensive system of knowledge is built up. Therefore, in teaching practice, teachers can use the Mind Map to transfer and help students create knowledge, facilitating communication between teachers and students. Based on this, the Mind Map can be considered as a teaching strategy used to present teaching content and courseware and construct a knowledge network, which can help enhance the effectiveness of teaching.

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