THE EFFECTIVENESS OF MIND MAPPING TECHNIQUES IN ENHANCING READING COMPREHENSION AND IDEA ORGANIZATION FOR 7th -GRADE LEARNERS

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Abstract: This article explores the effectiveness of mind mapping as a strategy for improving reading comprehension and idea organization among 7th-grade students. It discusses the limitations of traditional reading instruction methods and emphasizes the importance of helping learners identify main ideas, supporting details, and relationships between concepts. Grounded in cognitive learning theory, mind mapping is presented as a visually engaging technique that enhances understanding, memory retention, and active participation. The article describes how students who create mind maps during reading lessons demonstrate improved comprehension, summarization, logical organization, and academic writing skills. In addition to supporting reading development, mind mapping is shown to be an effective tool for note-taking, essay planning, exam preparation, presentations, and problem-solving. Although initial guidance from teachers is necessary, consistent practice leads to greater independence and confidence among learners. Overall, the study concludes that mind mapping is a highly beneficial instructional approach that fosters critical thinking, motivation, and long-term academic success.

Key Words: reading comprehension, mind mapping, visual learning, cognitive learning theory, 7th-grade students, idea organization, active learning, memory retention, academic writing.

Introduction

Reading comprehension plays a vital role in students' academic progress, as it influences how well they understand and learn across all subjects. For 7th graders, the ability to grasp the main ideas of a text, identify supporting details, and recognize relationships among concepts is especially important. Unfortunately, many students face challenges in these areas. Traditional approaches to reading instruction often rely heavily on answering comprehension questions, which do not always help learners analyze or organize information effectively. As a result, students might understand individual sentences but fail to connect them into a coherent whole. In contrast, mind mapping offers an alternative, visually engaging method that supports comprehension. This approach allows students to represent information graphically using diagrams with branches linking main ideas to their supporting details. By encouraging students to visualize information, mind mapping fosters active participation, stronger memory,

and clearer organization of thoughts. Rooted in cognitive learning theory, this technique highlights how visual organization aids understanding and long-term retention. Learners process information more effectively when they can see connections rather than reading text in a purely linear format. To test the effectiveness of mind mapping, a study was conducted with 7th-grade learners during reading lessons. Students in the experimental group created mind maps after reading selected texts. They placed the central theme in the middle, added subtopics around it, and extended supporting details from each branch. Results indicated that these students showed notable improvement in comprehension, summarization, and logical organization of ideas. The visual layout helped them perceive the overall structure of the text and recognize how key ideas fit together. However, successful use of mind mapping requires guidance. Some students initially find it difficult to translate written information into visual form. Teachers can ease this process through step-by-step demonstrations and consistent practice. While making mind maps can take extra time at first, familiarity leads to efficiency over time. In the long run, the benefits outweigh the initial challenges.

Mind maps also serve as an excellent note-taking tool. Many students often struggle with remembering vast amounts of information presented in class. Instead of producing lengthy or disorganized notes, mind mapping encourages the use of concise keywords and connections between ideas, creating an organized visual summary in one place. Tools such as Ayoa provide digital options for creating mind maps efficiently— either through simple, quick layouts called Speed Maps or more creative Organic Maps. These methods streamline the process of recording and reviewing lessons, replacing piles of paper notes with a single, clearly structured resource. Moreover, mind mapping supports academic writing and essay planning. The radial design of a mind map enables students to break down their essays into smaller, manageable sections—introduction, body, and conclusion—while maintaining a clear sense of overall structure. As they expand each branch, learners can generate ideas more freely, stay focused on the main topic, and reduce the risk of going off-track. Ayoa even allows mind maps to be exported as PDFs or text files, simplifying the process of turning notes into a finished essay draft. Preparing for exams is another area where mind mapping proves valuable. Many students dislike revisiting piles of disorganized notes before a test, but by summarizing key points visually, they can better review and retain essential content. Additionally, mind mapping enhances problem-solving by enabling students to explore different possibilities, evaluate options, and select the best solution systematically. This skill is not only useful in school but also highly valued in higher education and professional settings. Presentations can also become more engaging and less stressful through mind mapping. Instead of reading word-for-word from written notes, students can use their maps as visual prompts. This method helps them maintain

natural eye contact, speak confidently, and organize their speech effectively. Including short keywords, images, and numbers in a presentation map allows students to recall important information quickly and deliver their message more smoothly. Moreover, mind mapping encourages students to think critically and organize their thoughts in a meaningful way. It allows them to break down complex texts into smaller, understandable parts. This process not only enhances comprehension but also improves their ability to express ideas clearly. Another important advantage of mind mapping is that it supports visual learning, which is especially beneficial for middle school learners. Visual elements such as colors, branches, and keywords make learning more interesting and memorable. This increases students' motivation and makes the reading process more enjoyable.

Conclusion. In conclusion, the use of mind mapping can be considered a highly effective approach for improving reading comprehension and idea organization among 7th-grade learners. This technique allows students to transform written information into a visual format, which makes it easier for them to understand, analyze, and remember the content. By focusing on key ideas and their connections, learners develop a clearer understanding of texts and become more confident in their ability to interpret information. Mind mapping also promotes active participation in the learning process. Instead of simply reading and trying to memorize information, students interact with the text by selecting important points and organizing them visually. This process strengthens their thinking skills and helps them become more independent learners. As students practice mind mapping regularly, they learn how to manage information more effectively and express their ideas in a structured way. Another important outcome is the positive effect on students' motivation and engagement. The creative and visual nature of mind mapping makes reading activities more interesting and less stressful. Students are more willing to participate and explore texts when they use colors, symbols, and diagrams. This creates a more supportive and productive learning environment in the classroom.

Overall, mind mapping not only improves students' reading comprehension but also helps them develop essential academic skills such as critical thinking, organization, and memory. For this reason, it is recommended that teachers include mind mapping as a regular instructional strategy. Its consistent use can contribute to better academic performance and help students become more effective and confident learners in the long term.

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