

# Application of Mind Map in English Teaching for Countryside Primary School Students

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**Abstract:** Mind map was a note-taking method proposed by Tony Buzan(1994). And later it is developed into eight modes of thinking maps by David Hyerle(2009), which has been widely used in English teaching. As a knowledge visualization learning tool, mind map could help students construct knowledge framework, sort out knowledge structure, expand thinking and enhance memory. This article will take the grade three class of Shijiao Qixing Primary School in Shijiao Country, Qingyuan City as a sample. The Shijiao Qixing Primary School is a village primary school which most of the students are left-behind children and there are about 30 teachers with an age of 40. Neither the teachers nor the students have experienced the mind mapping teaching method. The article will explore the application of mind mapping in a countryside primary school based on relevant theoretical knowledge and classroom practice.

**Keywords:** Mind Map; Countryside Primary School; English Teaching

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## 1. Introduction of Mind map

### 1.1 The definition of Mind map

Mind Map is based on early research showing left-brain and right-brain dominance for linear and holistic operations, respectively (David Hyerle, 2011:94). Tony Buzan (1994:59) stated that mind map is the external expression of Radiant Thinking. It is a method of storing, organizing and prioritizing information (usually on paper) by using key words and key images, each of which will trigger specific memories and encourage new thoughts and ideas (Tony Buzan, 2006:8).

### 1.2 Eight types of thinking maps

The thinking map contains eight basic types: circle map, bubble map, double bubble map, tree map, flow map, bridge map, brace map and multi-flow map (David Hyerle, 2009: 178). And every type has its own function. The first one is the circle map. This map helps the students to generate relevant information about topic which is represented in the center of the circle. This kind of map is usually used for brainstorming and deepening the content. The second one is the bubble map. The bubble map is used for describing things using adjectives. It helps the students to develop their ability to identify qualities and use descriptive words. The third one is the double bubble map. This map is designed to compare as well as contrast two different things. Students can use this kind of map when they want to examine similar and different qualities. The fourth one is the tree map. This kind of map helps the students to do both inductive and deductive classification. It can be used to classify things and ideas. Students will learn to create general concept or main ideas at the top of the tree and the specific details of supporting ideas in the branches below. The fifth one is the brace map. This kind is designed to analyze the physical objects. It is used to show the component parts of a physical whole. This map encourages the students understanding on how to determine physical boundaries. The sixth one is the flow map. This type of map is used to show order, sequences, cycles, timeline, actions, steps, stages, and directions. The seventh one is the multi-flow map. This kind of map is used to show the relationship between the causes and the effects. The center on the table is an important event. On the left side of the event is the causes, while on the right side is the effects. The eighth one is the bridge map. This kind of map is used for creating and interpreting analogies.

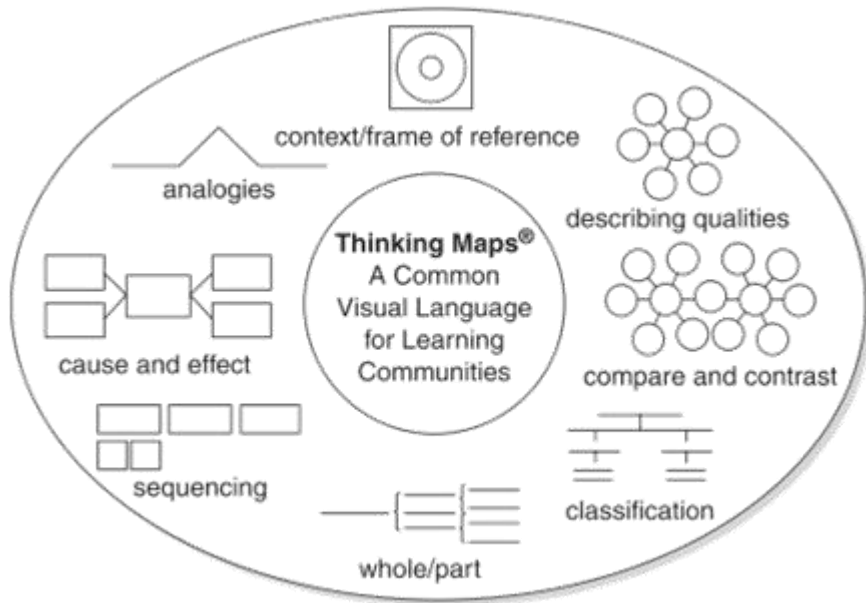


Figure 1.2, Overview of Thinking Map  
(Taken from David Hyerle, 2009:165)

## 2. Application of mind map in countryside primary school

This study has taken the grade three students of Shijiao Qixing Primary School in Shijiao Country, Qingyuan City as an example. The primary school, located in a rural area, has 40 students in Grade 4. Almost all of them are left-behind children who do not have learned anything about the mind map. This lesson is about the grade three students in the countryside primary school's English lesson *Unit 3 Look at me*, which takes body parts as the theme.

In the part of leading in, after the daily greetings, students are required to do some actions while playing the video *Head shoulders knees and toes*. And then the teacher helps students perceive the new words which they are going to learn by using the visual and auditory senses.

In the presentation part, teacher shows the face of Zoom on the PPT (See Figure 2.1) and guide the students to point out its features. After displaying the new words one by one with a flash card, the teacher shows all the words in the form of a bubble map (See Figure 2.2). In the classroom, by asking different questions, the teacher stimulates students' learning interest, confirms their answers, and corrects their mistakes, as well as guides the students to use the structure they have learned. At the same time, students have just started to contact with single and plural, which could be beneficial to make the expression of vocabulary and grammar more concrete.

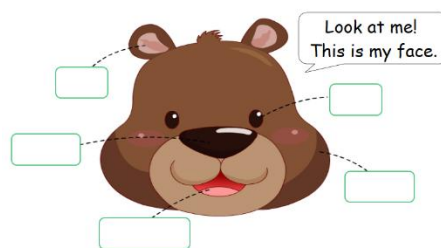


Figure 2.1

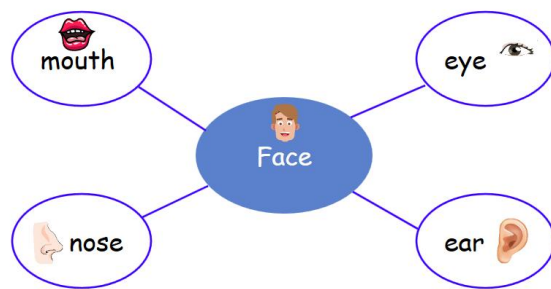


Figure 2.2

By using the form of mind map, teaching could be presented more clearly and concretely. The multi-flow map helps students clarify the source of sentence structure. Following it's a bridge map to classify and compare single and plural. These two types of thinking maps can help students form a graphic pattern and deepen their memory.

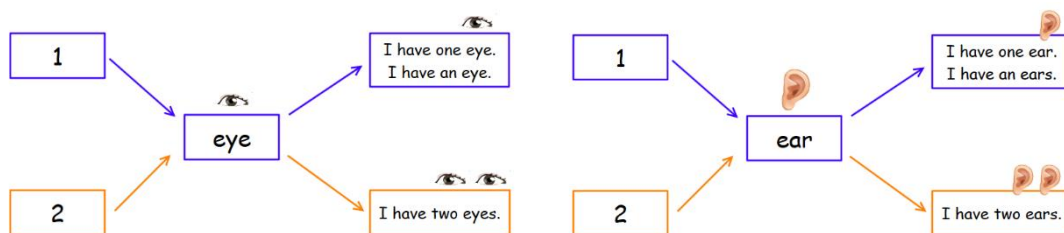


Figure 2.3 & 2.4 The Multi-Flow Map



Figure 2.5 The Bridge Map

In the practice part, the teacher shows up the bubble map (Figure 2.2), and leads the students to read the words twice, and then divides the class into four groups and play two games in a competitive format. For example, the missing game, which the teacher covers one of the words and then asks students to speak out the answer.

By playing games and combining with the structure (I have ...) learned in the previous unit, the teacher requires students to perceive the new sentences first, and then give each group a worksheet, as figure2.6 shown below. This is a flow map to guide students how to show and tell. The teacher guides the students to fill the blank above, and then leads them to read twice from the beginning to the end, after that, asking them to practice in the groups. The flow map could clearly show the sequence and direction, which divides the required content into three parts: beginning, middle and the end.



Figure 2.6

In the production part, the teacher asks each group students to show and speak out their own group worksheet content.  
 In the summary part, with the help of a mind map, the teacher shows the words and structure as below (Figure 2.7):

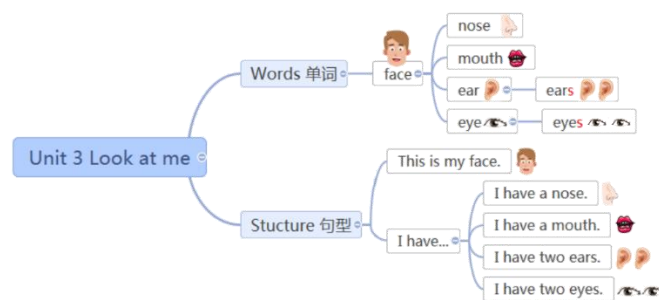


Figure 2.7

### 3. Advantages and disadvantages of mind map

Tony Buzan (1994:60) said: “Mind maps may be enhanced and enriched with color, pictures, and dimension to add interest, beauty and individuality. These in turn aid creativity, memory and specifically the recall of information.” There are many merits for the teacher to apply the mind map in English teaching. First, for the countryside primary school students, vivid pictures can deepen their memory and make it easier to remember knowledge points.

Secondly, through mind map, students can clarify the structure of the article and understand the text. In the process of drawing a mind map, they are also practicing their ability of analogy and summary. Finally, the radioactive structure of the mind map also allows them to expand their thinking, play and create. As Tony Buzan (1994:59) said: “The Mind Map can be applied to every aspect of life where improved learning and clearer thinking will enhance human performance.” Therefore, it's an effective English learning tool.

Although most of researchers and students agree that mind map is beneficial, students still encounter some difficulties in the process of drawing mind maps. First, drawing is somewhat difficult for them. Teachers often present mind maps in the form of PPT, but some pictures are difficult for them to imitate, which is very time-consuming. In addition, for students who are not good at drawing, the use of shapes and colors can be confusing. Drawing mind maps is to integrate art into English learning. Students who are not good at drawing need to make their drawings more concise. The teacher can print out the frame of the mind map, and give it to them to imitate, then teach them to draw non-colored stick figures, and then slowly transition to colored pictures.

The second problem is that they lack the ability to generalize knowledge and grasp the key words. The countryside primary school students' logical ability is not strong, which requires the teacher to extract the knowledge points in advance and lead the students to draw the mind map step by step.

When utilizing mind maps in English teaching, teachers should present various mind map frameworks and then teach students how to put knowledge points into the frameworks. The teacher should give more encouragement to the countryside students, as well as help them analyze, discuss and solve the problems.

### 4. Conclusion

Tony Buzan (1994:232) stated that Mind Map makes lessons and presentations more spontaneous, creative and enjoyable, both for the teacher and the students. With the help of mind map, English words and sentences are no longer isolated individual and mechanical memory, which could help establish connections between old and new knowledge, between categories or between superiors and subordinates. For countryside primary school English teaching, mind map is a new attempt, which makes English lessons become more vivid and interesting, and help to improve the teaching quality.

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