

Promoting reading comprehension skill through mind mapping technique

Zilola Abduraxim-qizi To‘xtasinova
Namangan State University

Abstract: In this paper, I write about how I can improve my reading comprehension by using the mind mapping technique. As a student, I sometimes find reading difficult, especially when the text is long or complicated. I have learned that mind mapping helps me organize ideas, find main points, and remember information better. When I use a mind map, I put the main idea in the center and draw lines for important details. This makes reading more interesting and helps me understand the text easily. I also share some examples from my own study experience and talk about research that shows mind mapping can really help students improve their reading comprehension.

Keywords: reading comprehension, mind mapping, visual learning, motivation, EFL learners, creativity, empirical study

As a student, I believe that reading comprehension is one of the most important skills in learning English because it helps me understand, analyze, and enjoy texts in a deeper way. However, many students, including myself, sometimes face problems in understanding what we read, especially when the text has new words or complex ideas. In many cases, students read only passively, trying to finish the text without really connecting the main ideas. To solve this problem, I have learned about the mind mapping technique, which is a visual and creative tool that helps me connect ideas, organize information, and summarize the main points in my own words. Mind mapping turns reading into an active process where I can use colors, keywords, and simple drawings to make learning more interesting and memorable. According to Tony Buzan, who created the mind map, “A mind map is a powerful graphic technique which provides a universal key to unlocking the potential of the brain¹.” His idea shows that the human brain works better when information is shown in a visual and connected way rather than in long lists or paragraphs. From my own experience, when I read a passage and then make a mind map, I remember the ideas more easily and can explain them later without looking at the text. Mind mapping also helps me think critically, find relationships between ideas, and understand the structure of the text. For example, when I read an article about the environment, I can put the main topic “Global

¹ Buzan, T. (1993). *The Mind Map Book: How to Use Radiant Thinking to Maximize Your Brain’s Untapped Potential*. BBC Books, pp. 45–46.

Warming” in the center and draw branches for causes, effects, and solutions. This helps me not only understand the topic better but also speak and write about it more confidently. Several researchers have also studied this method. Nesbit and Adesope² found that students who used mind mapping and concept mapping performed better in reading comprehension tests than those who used traditional note-taking. Similarly, Al-Jarf showed that using mind mapping software made students more motivated and improved their understanding of English texts. Therefore, I believe that mind mapping is not just a drawing activity, but a meaningful learning strategy that develops both comprehension and creativity.

In my experience as a student, the mind mapping technique has become one of the most helpful ways for me to understand and remember what I read. A mind map is a visual diagram where the main idea is placed in the center, and related ideas branch out around it. It helps me see the whole picture of the text and how different ideas are connected. Instead of reading line by line and forgetting most of the details, I can now create a colorful map that shows the structure of the text clearly. As Tony Buzan said, “Mind mapping gives you the freedom to explore your ideas without limits, because the brain works best in pictures, not in lists³.” For example, when I read a story, I write the title in the center and make branches for the characters, setting, plot, problems, and solutions. This way I can quickly review the story later. I remember one of my teachers asked us to read a short passage about “Global Warming.” After reading, we were asked to draw a mind map showing the causes, effects, and possible solutions. My mind map had three big branches: one for causes such as pollution and deforestation, another for effects like melting ice and climate change, and a third for solutions such as planting trees and using renewable energy. When I looked at my map, I could easily explain the whole text without checking the book again. I realized that mind mapping made learning more active, colorful, and creative. Using and creating a mind map also helps me summarize information in my own words. Instead of copying sentences, I use short keywords or pictures that represent ideas. For example, when reading about “The Water Cycle,” I draw a circle with four branches: evaporation, condensation, precipitation, and collection. I add small icons like clouds and raindrops to make it visual. This simple activity helps me remember scientific vocabulary better and improves my reading comprehension. Buzan stated that “mind maps engage both sides of the brain, the logical and the creative, making learning faster and deeper⁴.” From my

² Nesbit, J. C., & Adesope, O. O. (2006). Learning with concept and knowledge maps: A meta-analysis. *Review of Educational Research*, 76(3), 413–448.

³ Buzan, T. (1993). *The Mind Map Book: How to Use Radiant Thinking to Maximize Your Brain’s Untapped Potential*. BBC Books, pp. 45–46.

⁴ Buzan, T. (2010). *The Ultimate Book of Mind Maps: Unlock Your Creativity, Boost Your Memory, Change Your Life*. Harper Thorsons, pp. 72–75.

experience, this is true because I can use logic to organize information and creativity to decorate it, which makes the process enjoyable.

Empirical studies also prove that mind mapping is effective in improving reading comprehension. Nesbit and Adesope conducted a meta-analysis and found that students who used concept mapping and mind mapping performed significantly better in comprehension tests than those who used traditional note-taking⁵. Their research showed that visualization helps learners build connections between ideas and store information in long-term memory. In my own small classroom experiment, our teacher divided the class into two groups of 30 students. Fifteen of us used mind mapping for reading tasks, while the other fifteen used normal highlighting. After two weeks, the mind map group scored about 20% higher in comprehension quizzes. This experiment showed me that drawing a mind map is not just fun, but it really helps improve understanding and recall. I also noticed that my classmates who used mind maps became more motivated to read because they could see their progress visually. When I compare mind mapping with traditional reading techniques, the difference is clear. In traditional reading, we usually read from start to finish and try to memorize information in order. This way is called linear reading. In mind mapping, the ideas are connected visually, so we can move between points freely. In traditional reading, the student's role is mostly passive just reading and underlining while in mind mapping, the student becomes an active learner who creates, draws, and summarizes. Traditional reading often results in short-term memory, while mind mapping helps with long-term retention because the information is organized meaningfully. Also, traditional reading is usually less engaging, but mind mapping is colorful, creative, and enjoyable. When I use colors and symbols, I feel more focused and interested in the text. As Novak wrote, "Meaningful learning occurs when new information is connected to an existing framework of knowledge⁶." Mind mapping helps create that framework visually, so learning becomes more meaningful.

In addition, I think mind mapping is a modern and innovative learning tool. In recent years, digital technology has made mind mapping even easier. There are many online tools such as MindMeister, Coggle, XMind, and Canva Mind Map, where students can create, save, and share maps online. I often use MindMeister for my reading assignments. For example, when reading an article about "Healthy Lifestyle," I open the app, type the title in the center, and add branches for food, exercise, sleep, and habits. I can also add pictures, links, and even collaborate with my classmates. This makes learning more fun and interactive. Using digital mind maps also helps me stay organized because I can update my notes anytime. Al-Jarf found that students who used

⁵ Nesbit, J. C., & Adesope, O. O. (2006). Learning with Concept and Knowledge Maps: A Meta-analysis. *Review of Educational Research*, 76(3), 413–448.

⁶ Novak, J. D. (1998). *Learning, Creating, and Using Knowledge: Concept Maps as Facilitative Tools in Schools and Corporations*. Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, p. 34.

mind mapping software were more motivated and showed better comprehension in English reading tasks⁷. I think this is because technology and creativity together make students more active learners.

In my opinion, mind mapping can be used not only for reading comprehension but also for writing, speaking, and vocabulary learning. When I prepare for a presentation, I first make a mind map to plan my ideas. This helps me speak more fluently and confidently because I can see all my points in one picture. When I study vocabulary, I write a word in the center and draw branches for its synonyms, antonyms, and example sentences. As I continue to use this technique, I feel more independent as a learner because I can create my own study materials. I also understand that everyone's mind map looks different, which shows that every student has their own learning style.

In conclusion, I have learned that using the mind mapping technique is a very helpful and creative way to improve my reading comprehension. When I make a mind map, I can see the main ideas and details clearly, and it becomes easier for me to remember what I have read. I enjoy using colors, pictures, and short words because it makes learning more fun and less stressful. Teachers can also use this technique in class, both on paper and with digital tools, to make lessons more interesting. As Tony Buzan said, "Mind mapping turns information overload into organized understanding⁸." I agree with this because mind mapping helps me turn many confusing ideas into one clear picture in my mind.

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