The benefits of mind map on learning reading of English majored sophomores at a university in Mekong Delta

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Abstract: *How to learn Reading successful is a very interesting topic for most of English learners, and using mind maps is one the most effective ways to support Reading skill. The thesis is going to find out the benefits of using mind maps on learning Reading of English-majored sophomores at a University in Mekong Delta. The results show that English-majored sophomores have a positive attitude toward using mind maps. Besides, mind maps have many benefits on learning Reading.*

Keywords: *Learning reading; using mind maps; English majored sophomores*

1. Introduction

How to study English well is a great concern for learners, teachers and researchers. For instance, learners need to be good at four basic skills-Reading, Writing, Listening and Speaking. Actually, like other skills, students have to face with some difficulties on learning reading such as vocabulary limitation, confusing about recognizing the main ideas of reading text, lacking of background knowledge, etc. Using mind map is considered one of the best ways to help students improve the above problems. As a result, the thesis was conducted with the hope that helps students surmount difficulties in reading by using mind maps.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Definition of reading

Reading skill is the most important among four basic skills in English learning. A good reader can get benefits such as improving English learning, finding a good job, etc. For these reasons, many researchers who want to study this skill suggested many definitions of reading.

Urquhart (1998) define reading is "the process of receiving and interpreting information encoded in language from via the medium of print". Therefore, reading can help students understand the meaning of the text and is very necessary for foreign language learners.

In addition, "Reading is the process of constructing meaning from written texts. It is a complex skill requiring the coordination of a number of interrelated sources of information". In reality, understanding a reading is very complex, learners have to combine many sources of information. On the other hand, "Reading is the most useful for students to develop the understanding of a text, and it is very important since the learners get immediate feedback about the text" (Hill, 1992).

2.2. The Important of Reading

Reading is a process that helps us get much information. The more learners read, the more information learners have. Ibsen (1990) states that since students will be reading fast and much, they will be able to absorb new vocabulary, idioms, and grammatical structure will more or less unconsciously become part of their linguistic competency.

Besides, reading can help people discover new things. It is known that books, magazines and even the internet are sources to read and to explore new world. In addition, now is the age of information technology, so reading is a good way to get the information.

In general, reading skill plays an important role in learning a foreign language. It supports for other skills such as writing, listening and speaking. If learners want to speak English learners, learners need to be good at reading in particular and other skills in general.

2.3. Mind map

2.3.1. A historical overview of mind map

Mind map is a form of visual thinking done by writing one's ideas down in the form of pictures or other graphical representation in order to get as clear as possible a picture of the subject in question.

These concepts are, along with mind maps, used for centuries now. It is evidently present in brainstorming, note taking, problem solving, memory, learning and visual thinking techniques

used by psychologists, educators, engineers and other professions that need intensive thinking before conclusion prevails.

This form of creative thinking has been present for a very long time. The first traces of mind mapping go as far back as the 3rd century BC. A philosopher, Porphyry of Tyros is the first person to use mind map to form his ideas and thus making learning easier for the others. Historians found later that Leonardo used mind map as well, mostly for note taking. He is sometimes considered as the historical person who popularized mind map the most.

Although historians found various traces of mind map throughout history after Leonardo, they were relatively insignificant until the beginning 1950s or 1960s. Network semantics was developed late 1950s, just a basic theory in order to understand the demonstrations of how human beings develop learning. This concept was furthered by Quillian and Dr. Collins in the 1960s. Dr. Collins was considered as the father of modern mind map because of his extensive commitment to publish researches about his creativity, graphical thinking and learning. Ross and Alan during the decades of 1960s were the ones who shaped the future of mind mapping. They both used a kind of network where all the concepts and ideas were related by links, links that would show them how a certain object is related with another. This is how mind map became used mostly in learning, sharing concepts, and other various collaborative techniques.

However, it was not known until the late 1960s that a British psychologist, Buzan (2000), made its use very popular. He even created a set of rules to be used when mind mapping. Nowadays, mind map is used everywhere, in college or high-school, mind map is used as it gives a broader approach on the subject. Though some are still done on paper, most mind maps nowadays are made directly via a computer using mind map software, which simplifies things enormously, cutting the time you need to redraw things after you have made some amendments and rearrangements. The software simply generates the links according to your input

and places them around seamlessly.

The computer-aided mind map is available not only as a stand-alone application; there are also web/cloud-based mind map tools. There are even mind map programs on latest smart phones so that you can start brainstorming anywhere, anytime.

2.3.2. The concept of mind map

Mind map is defined as "a sketchily visual representation of thoughts which may lead to a train of related ideas. It is based on radiant thinking, a concept which describes how the human brain processes ideas and information, whereby different ideas are associated to each other through relationship hooks" (Buzan, 2000).

Besides, mind map as a prewriting technique or strategy goes by a variety of names: "clustering", "bubbling", and "clumping". They refer to the same concept. It was developed in the early 1970s by Buzan as a tool to help people take notes more effectively (Joyce, 1986). Moreover, Buzan (2000) defines mind map as an expression of Radiant Thinking and is therefore a natural function of the human mind.

In addition, Joyce (1986, p.3) describes mind map as a technique for developing a more creative and innovative approach to thinking. On the other hand, in the present study, mind map is a way of linking key concepts using images, lines and links. A central concept is linked via lines to other concepts which in turn are linked which other associated ideas.
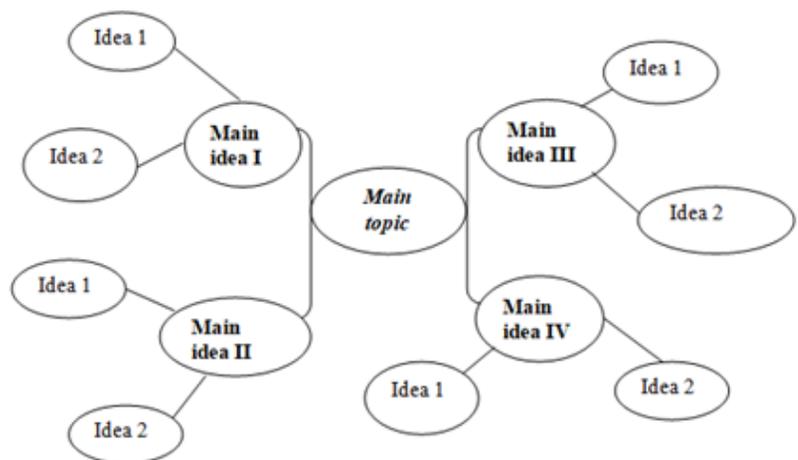
2.3.3. How to make a mind map

Figure 2.1: A Typical Example of Mind Map

Generally, mind map starts with a central idea or main topic, which other sub-ideas are branches, and from the other sub-sub-ideas and so on. Mind map

are usually drawn by hand or through manipulation of computer software and may range from a general design to a very complex structure. Basically, mind map are drawn with a central topic or concept in the center of the map. The central topic links the sub-ideas by many branches. These branches may a line, a curve or an arrow. Particularly, the following example is the illustration of mind map.

2.4. The benefits of mind maps in learning reading

There have been many strategies to improve reading skills such as scanning and skimming, getting meaning from context or summarizing, etc. Actually, learners can get several benefits when they use mind map on learning reading. First, mind map can help us recognizing reading structures. It can be used to review and recall materials. A mind map shows the relationship of the topics, main ideas, and supporting details. The main topic is placed in the center of the map, and the most general parts of the reading can appear in big circles connected to the central topic.

Next, the main idea for each paragraph can appear in smaller circle connected to these general parts. Then, supporting details are connected to the main ideas. Especially, learners can use colors to help organize the material.

Another benefit of mind map is summarizing. First, mind map helps learners figure out the topic, the main ideas, and the supporting details. Learners can make a mind map showing the relationship between one point to another. Then, learners create a short summary from the items in the map.

Besides, Buzan (2000) claims that the mind map is a vastly superior note-taking method because it does not lead to the alleged "semi-hypnotic trance" state induced by the other note forms. As learners listen to a lecture or read a book they can very quickly create notes using a mind map. Learners can use large branches for chapters or key points, with detail added from them. The whole content of the book can be summarized on one page and it is remarkable how learners can recall the information later with only the map as a guide.

In fact, when learners read a text, there are many main ideas and supporting details; this can make them confused in distinguishing main ideas and supporting details. Therefore, using mind map to take notes is a good way to arrange the ideas in a text.

Moreover, mind map is the ultimate thinking tool - a creative and effective means of thinking that literally 'maps out' your brain. Mind map is an ideal tool to use as a tool for memory improvement, not only it is extremely simple but it can have an immediate impact on memory, creativity and learners' ability to concentrate. Actually, mind map have a reasonable and logical organization, so it helps learners memorize the information in reading text effectively. In addition, the ideas on mind map are arranged by learners to help them remember the positions and purposes of the maps longer.

In addition, learners can use mind map to study other subjects such as writing or listening. It will support them in linking the ideas. On the other hand, according to Buzan (2000), mind map is also used for brainstorming, solving problem and planning

To sum up, using mind map can offer learners many advantages in learning reading in particular and in language learning in general. The researcher hopes that learners can take advantages of using mind map in their learning reading as well as other basic skills.

3. Conclusion

The results show that almost all the participants had a positive attitude toward reading skill, used to study mind maps in classroom with their teachers' instructions, which helped them recognize the benefits of mind maps such as making the learners understand and remember the text effectively, feel easy to understand the content of the text by using mind maps on learning reading and organize ideas in the text being realized thanks to mind maps easily, and the importance of using mind maps on learning reading. However, the study discovered that the participants' reading ability is restricted because vocabulary limitation is a main factor that affects on reading ability of students.

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