

ENGLISCH

Zeitschrift für Englischlehrerinnen und Englischlehrer

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Für den Tageslichtprojektor:

Zu unserer Folienbeilage

Friederike Klippel
Mind Map: School

Nearly twenty years ago TONY BUZAN published a slim book entitled *Use Your Head* (London: BBC 1974), in which he argued that we generally do not use our brain to its full capacity. We would be able to learn better and faster, he claimed, if we were trained in certain strategies. In particular he suggested how one could increase one's reading speed, improve one's memory and adopt a non-linear approach to note taking and summarizing.

BUZAN's views are supported by recent research into learning styles, which has strengthened the position of those who would like to see cognitive ways of learning being supplemented by emotive ones. Whole-person learning is considered to be more satisfying as well as more effective. The more we learn about the workings of the two hemispheres of the brain, the more obvious it becomes that school learning still favours the cognitive domain. In order to redress the balance to a certain extent it is necessary to develop tasks which involve the learners as individuals, as cognitive *and* affective learners.

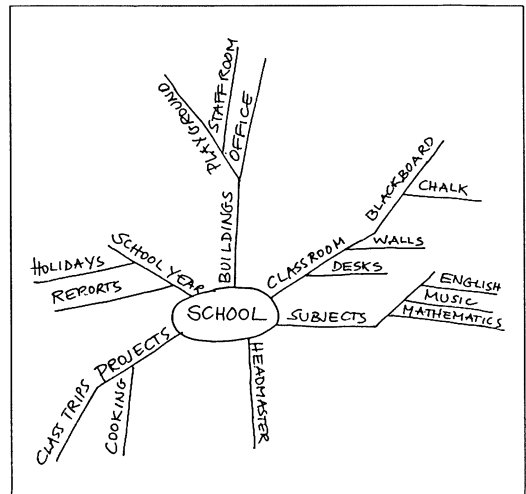
BUZAN suggests a technique he calls "brain patterns" for note-taking and structuring one's thoughts. Today this technique is known as mind-mapping. Mind maps are based on the fact that the brain stores information in an "interlinked and integrated manner" (BUZAN 1974, 88). So, rather than working down from a concept or an idea and noting down aspects in the form of lists, we should start from the centre and work outwards in various directions. In this way a kind of network or map of the topic in question will emerge. Connected ideas will thus be visually linked by lines and we will be able to recall the various aspects much better.

Mind maps are the products of individual minds. Therefore there is no "correct" version for everybody. If several people are asked to draw a mind map for the idea of recycling for example, they are likely to stress different elements. Even if a text is con-

verted into a mind map, people will integrate their individual interpretation into their maps. Their maps will probably share a number of characteristics but also differ in certain ways.

These examples show two possible uses for mind-mapping in the English class: structuring a topic for discussion and textual work. There is a third area where mind maps prove useful: vocabulary. Starting from one lexical item in the centre, a whole network of related and connected words can be created. A lexical mind map will tap the pupils' knowledge most effectively, because it allows them to remember words in various collocations and associations.

To make the mind map easy to read and to understand, pupils should aim to write down only individual words (nouns, or nouns and adjectives) using block capitals. These words may be circled, and the circles connected with each other where a connection exists. Alternatively, the nouns may be written on to lines fanning out from the central idea. Example:



The transparency shows the nucleus of a mind map for the topic "school". It can be used in the three ways mentioned above: to revise vocabulary connected with school, to structure the pupils' thoughts on school, perhaps as preparation for a class discussion or a letter, and as framework for the analysis of the texts provided on the worksheet, or any other text on school for that matter. These three procedures, however, should not be tried all at once with the same class. Whereas collecting words referring to school life can be attempted from the second year of learning English onwards, structuring the topic "school" is a task for an 8th or 9th class. In any case, the mind map has to be continued by individual pupils or the whole class.

The school that I'd like

I don't think I would get on very well in my ideal school because I am too used to being told what to do.

Frances, 15

Above all, education should be exciting. No educated person can claim boredom amidst so much knowledge. School life should be crammed with interest - the buildings too. Yet nothing is more depressing than the average buff-coloured classroom! Revolution must break out, the classroom must be invaded by novel colour schemes and different architectural styles, taken over by paintings and sculptures. No two should look the same. The pupils should have more freedom in the planning and execution of form room decoration and gardening. Excitement should be injected into school, so that one is completely surrounded by and part of it.

Anna, 18

Schools should be made better and made into a place all children like to go to and a place where you go because you want to go. Subjects should be made more exciting instead of sitting in a desk reading or half-listening to a teacher going on and on about a particular thing. I should like to be doing things, finding what I can do and what I can't do, not just talking about, e.g. a dairy farm but talking to the people who work there and trying to milk a cow by yourself.

Angela, 12

My idea of a school I'd like would have understanding teachers (who are few and far between at present) who would try to understand the pupils' difficulties and not look upon the pupils as illiterate sub-humans. The pupils would also be treated as individuals and not as a flock of sheep all with the same purpose in life. ... The teachers would work in unison and not think that the maths teacher was stood from the P.E. teacher or too proud to mix with the laboratory assistants.

The pupils would be of all nationalities and creeds: boys and girls, Jews and Moslems. This would help them in their life to have no colour prejudice and to know that one nationality or creed is no better than another.

The school (and beyond) would be a one-class society: nobody rich, nobody poor...

Boy, 13

I feel there is nothing like a teacher's enthusiasm for his subject to make learning a pleasure, and I am sure that a computer cannot show enthusiasm.

Jeremy, 13

I like changing from one lesson to another although they may not be connected in any way. I think this keeps the mind alert.

Elizabeth, 15

I feel that the lessons link up with each other and the mind can be changed in the same frame of thinking instead of being broken up by a bell.

Danny, 15

In my view, the sooner we all get out of the study classroom, the better it will be for everybody. Life is much more interesting if you can go out and see something. Instead of just sitting in a desk and being loaded with information about it.

Lynne, 15

I would use computers in my ideal school as I feel that this would cancel out any teachers' errors and this would mean that no child's education would be impeded by a teacher who is slow or not experienced.

Beverley, 14

It's all very odd. We have a hand-drawn language laboratory, which is a film-projector - a film which shows cartoon characters talking to perform brain-surgery in, while our laboratories are falling to pieces - minus dotboards or minus toilet paper or minus all these things.

Ethan, 14

I would like to learn an unusual language, such as Arabic or Chinese, because it is not often a child of my age can do this. It would be very useful and interesting.

Clare, 14

The teachers would be very young so that they would understand you more.

Jane, 14

The teachers would not be over forty-five years old or under and old fashioned and very young teachers usually have difficulty in enforcing discipline and keeping order.

Margaret, 14

No one would leave until eighteen. This is because I don't believe school children learn enough about people and the world.

Ruth, 13

Vocabulary revision

The class is divided into pairs. Each pair but one receives a paper copy of the transparency; one pair is given the transparency and a water-soluble pen. The pupils are asked to extend the mind map by adding words connected with school. They should write these words in the place they think suitable, connecting them to those words given in the centre. After a few minutes, the transparency completed by the two pupils is shown on the overhead projector. The others may add further words from their maps or query the inclusion of some words.

Preparation for a letter

The pupils are asked to imagine having to write a long letter telling someone in Australia or India about school life. The mind map should help the class to think of the various aspects. With the help of the teacher the mind map is completed on the overhead projector. Information and ideas belonging to-

gether may be indicated by different colours. The letter can then be written in such a way that each group or pair of pupils is responsible for one of the sub-issues like subjects, school environment or use of time.

The school that I'd like

Many years ago the British Sunday paper *The Observer* invited secondary schoolchildren to describe the school that they would like. The extracts on the worksheet (page 89) are taken from the selection of these entries edited by EDWARD BLISHEN (Penguin 1969). They touch on many points that pupils, even more than twenty years later, feel strongly about. Using a paper copy of the mind map as a pattern to be filled in, the pupils add opinions and ideas from the texts in appropriate places on the map. The results are compared and discussed. Finally, the class draws a mind map – on a very big sheet of paper if possible – for the school that they would like.