

THE ROLE OF MIND MAPPING IN THE ENGLISH LITERATURE SYLLABUS

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Abstract

In India English occupies a unique position and has been taught at tertiary level for decades. The learners of English Literature find it difficult to outline the historical, racial, and cultural aspects of English Literature. Especially learners from rural set up are not able to retrieve the author's name and their work with the historical background. If the learner's practice to integrate and interconnect the concept in their cognitive structure they could recall the whole content of the work. It is easier to remember visuals like pictures, photographs, or drawings than words and sentences. Mind mapping encapsulates a visual orientation of the given information to the learners. Since, the human brain thinks and remembers diagrammatic representations, Mind mapping is a brain-friendly technique to learn the literary history in a concise and memorable format. Mind maps enable the learners to associate the ideas stored in their cognitive domain. The paper 'History of English Literature' can be effectively taught using the Mind mapping technique for English Literature major learners. This paper focuses on how the Mind mapping technique acts as an effective tool in facilitating the tertiary level learners to retrieve the content of 'History of English Literature' in a graded methodology.

Keywords: Mind mapping, Cognitive Structure, History of English Literature.

Introduction:

The teaching of English Literature at tertiary level in ESL/EFL context is a challenging task for the teachers, as it is always a course viewed with great concern for its variety of genres, styles, and reflection of life. English Literature at tertiary level is a most opted course as it demands to develop communication skill and critical thinking of the learners. So it becomes necessary on the part of the teacher to use the required teaching aids/tools to comprehend the literary texts. The comprehension of literary texts and genres involves the cognitive function of mind such as the ability to identify, understand, recall and interpret information. Mind mapping is a teaching and learning technique profoundly associated with the functions of mind where thought, recall, planning, and creativity are involved. A mind map is a diagrammatic representation that encourages the learners to think and organize the information by locating the most important theme at the center of the diagram and relate it with other significant ideas. When literature is taught using Mind mapping technique, it

enables the learners to understand and associate the genres and literary events in chronological order. Mind mapping is a powerful graphic technique which provides a universal key to unlock the potential of the brain (Tony Buzan, 2002). In this respect, this paper aims to explore how mind mapping technique acts an effective tool in facilitating the tertiary level learners to recap and summarize the content of 'History of English Literature' in a nutshell.

Need for Mind map in Literature classroom:

Of all the papers in the literature syllabus, the students confront on 'History of English Literature' paper with great difficulty, as they need to assimilate the historical content of the authors chronologically and associate their works with their respective periods/ages. The alarming fact is, in most of the Arts and Science Colleges learners of English Literature fail and reappear in the paper 'History of English Literature' compared to other papers in the curriculum. The reference book on 'History of English Literature' comprises chronological order of political events, literary author's biography and the emergence of various genres. When 'History of English Literature' paper is taught to the students of English Literature, the usual Lecture method would not serve the purpose, as the students would feel a kind of boredom when the historical facts are simply told as chronological information. So the teacher is expected to use some innovative technique to make them associate the historical information with their literary works. Here, Mind mapping serves as a vital medium enabling the learner to get involved and comprehend the content of 'History of English Literature'. History shows different trends or models which prove how a variety of choices and options have been followed (Howatt, 1984). So the facilitator should not confine themselves by paraphrasing the prescribed text.

Mind map enhances listening skill:

In the lecture classes, the learners' attention on the subject depends on the facilitator, content, and use of visual cues in the classroom. When the facilitator supplements the visual support in explaining the text of History of English Literature, the listening span of the students would automatically increase. Most of the researchers have opined that Mind mapping has been a resourceful technique in summarising the content. So it becomes a kind of remedy for the History of an English Literature paper to present the facts in an interesting manner. Mind mapping also saves time, as the teacher can explain a literary period with a diagrammatic representation and the students also acquire it with ease.

Theoretical framework:

Its visual flexibility and brain friendliness that is creative and easy to use have achieved immense popularity in teaching and learning across the curriculum. The mind map shows the overall structure of a subject and the relative importance of individual parts of it. It helps learners to associate ideas, think creatively and make connections between them (Tony

Buzan, 2010). Alamsyah (2009) explained that visual design of the Mind map enables the learners to make the relationship between ideas and encourage them to group the ideas together in a comprehensible manner (cited in Riswanto & Pebri Prandica Putra). Mind mapping can be used to represent any summative facts/information. Mind map does not need any artistic skill to draw the diagram. The learners can draw the map like a radiant tree with many branches. It needs a landscape paper, color pens and the ability to think and relate the clues. Human brain envisages and conceives images with interesting colors. Gillian Burn (2004) claims that color encourages greater creativity and enhance memory as much as 50%. Steps to draw a Mind map:

The initiating step in drawing a Mind map is to start with the central theme/topic at the center of the landscape paper. The subtopics can radiate from the central topic like branches in the tree. Colour pens can be used to draw the lines and to show the difference between the main topics and subtopics. This diagrammatic representation enables the learner to store and recall the content easily. For example, the age of Shakespeare and the works of Shakespeare can be drawn each in a single Mind map. In 'History of English Literature', each age comprises of vast historical events and literary movements. The learner is perturbed on seeing the bulky content due to the fact that he/she has to read and make notes regarding the paper on 'History of English Literature'. Mind map erases this fear and makes the learner sum up the content easily. This mapping would help the learners to refer to and recall in an effective way during the examination. The learner is able to frame the text in a one-page summary, making a summative compilation of notes he/she has taken or read from a text.

Mind map activates human brain:

The human brain is divided into two hemispheres, called the left and right hemispheres. Larkin & Simon (1987), claims that each hemisphere provides a different set of functions; and the left side is used for rational and logical thinking whereas the right half is used for creative thinking. It is believed that the Lecture method induces only left side brain of the learners. It just stores the information and recalls it later without any change. When Mind map is practiced by the learners, their left and right sides of the brain are activated and the learner is able to reproduce the content in an effective manner by applying the power of visualization and association and by improving memory and creative thinking.

Conclusion:

Mind mapping is a creative and logical means of note-taking skill that literally 'maps out' learners ideas. When this Mind mapping technique is adopted in the English Literature classroom, there is more possibility of motivating the passive listeners to the interaction mode of active listening. Most of the listeners find it difficult to remember the chronological order of historical movements and literary works in their mind. This can be resolved by Mind map, which associates and organizes the wide content into keywords in a colorful visual diagram. Mind map persuades the human brain to think both analytically and artistically. This effective

functioning of the brain incorporates the cognitive function like retention, comprehension, and analysis of the content.

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