

Research on the Application of Mind Map to Improve Teaching reading at College

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ABSTRACT

The paper aims to apply a new English reading teaching way at college based on mind map. The paper first analyses the present situation of English reading teaching at college. Then it introduces the definition and the kinds of mind map. Thirdly, it tries to use mind maps on teaching reading in college English. By using mind up, learners can have a clearer idea of the structure, better understand the writers' purpose and finally have their own thinking after reading.

KEYWORDS

Mind map; Teaching reading

1 Background Information

College English teaching has been through a lot of reforms and development, such as reducing teaching hours, changing teaching materials and improving teaching skills. However, as one of the important part-- reading, there are still a lot to be improved. For example, how do college teachers improve teaching reading effectively due to the time reduction; how do lecturers involve students to read and understand in class, etc. Reading English is important to college students because it helps them to know more about the world, to get latest information worldwide and to better know who they are. It cultivates students critical thinking as well. However, the traditional way of language teaching which mainly focuses on vocabulary, grammar and translation makes the classes boring and the students hard to be involved. The traditional model that the lecturer talks for hours and all the students listen passively does not fit for the new era. In order to improve teaching efficiency and increase students interests in learning reading, mind map is a good way to achieve these goals.

2 The Introduction of Mind Map

According to Tony Buzan (2005), mind map is a visual graphic tool that provides a universal key to unlock the potential of the brain. It frees your mind to wander the infinite expanses of your brain. It controls the full range of cortical skills – word, image, number, logic, rhythm, colour and spatial awareness—into a single, uniquely powerful manner. It develops learning and clear thinking. People can visualize their thinking by drawing mind maps. The basic steps of making a mind map are: firstly, draw one central word or a few words which is about the theme or the topic in the middle of a piece of paper or a mind map software. Secondly, use lines to connect some relevant parts that you can think of to the topic. These parts are like the chapters of a book. Thirdly, add the second level of thoughts that are related to the topics and the the third and fourth level... In addition, you can add colours and images to make it fun or easy to remember. There are 8 kinds of mind map: circle map,

bubble map, double-bubble map, tree map, brace map, flow map, multi-flow map, and bridge map. Using different kinds of mind maps can also be used in different text types and different situations, such as using flow map in narration and exposition, using double bubble map in comparison and contrast.

3 Application of Using Mind Map in College English Reading Teaching

The writer tries to apply mind map to teaching reading the text: Living Off the Grid: How a Family of City-Dwellers Discovered the Simple Life in Unit 1 of New Progressive College English Integrated Course 1.

(1) Pre-reading

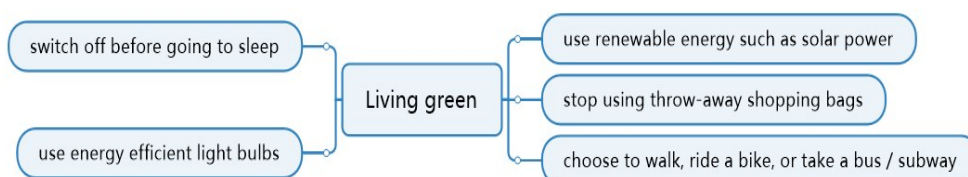
Instead of teaching vocabulary, the writer involves the learners by asking several questions which are related to the topic: Living Green. Students will come up with environmental protection. Then the writer shows the mind map and lists some possible answers on the mind map.

Questions are asked: What does the unit title-- living green mean?

How do you do to protect our environment?

What do you do to save water or electricity?

Make them into groups and discuss with group members.



(2) While-reading

Instead of analysing grammar and explaining the text sentence by sentence, the following questions are asked to raise the students' awareness of the writers' writing purpose.

Questions are asked:

Why did the whole family want to move from a big city to a small city?

Where had they lived?

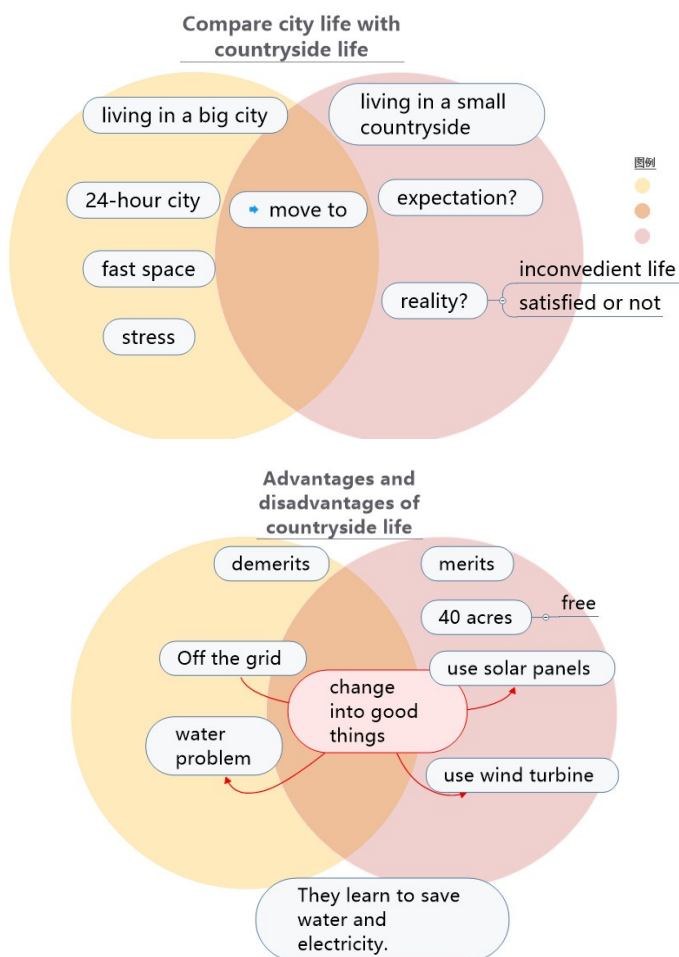
Where did they want to move?

After moving into the small country, what problems have they met and how did they solve them?

Did they miss the city life or settle down in the small city?

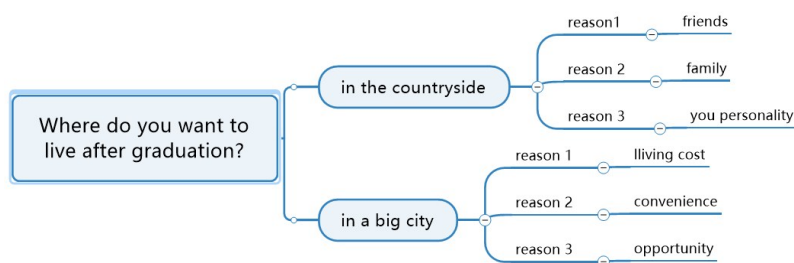
(3) After-reading

After understanding the text-type (narration), the structure and the main idea of the text, learners should retell the text in groups by using the mind map as a scaffolding. Finally, I will make the mind maps disappear and ask them to stand up and retell it again. This step is very important because the mind maps should be in their mind.



(4) Assignment

Students should create their own mind maps. Design your own mind map about where to live after graduation and show your reasons in your mind map.



4 Conclusion

Mind map is a useful visual tool to help teachers lead the class, to involve the students, so that they can catch up with teachers. It also helps learners grasp the general meaning of a text quickly

and cultivate their logical thinking. The final goal is to help learners to be independent readers so that they can understand and appreciate the texts and enjoy reading themselves.

References

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