



Podcast on Mind Maps



Shalom & Hi everyone -welcome to the UnitEd-Herzog Podcast!

We assume you have familiarity with educational ideas such as Collaborative learning, Jigsaw method, Self-directed learning, and Active learning. Sometimes these these methods and techniques seem a little bit vague

UnitEd-Herzog has prepared a series of short and focused podcasts on a number educational approaches. The podcasts are workshops for building lesson plans based on diverse, inviting, and engaging learning practices that encourage students to take an active and meaningful part in their learning. We've also prepared accompanying materials for you and your students that help improve their learning using these practices..

These practices may be adapted to any content and any age group.

So go ahead, take the material you've planned to teach, find a quiet place, put on your headphones, and join us!



Sometimes it feels like we have a mess in our head. We are trying to learn or understand some topic or concept, and we cannot fully organize the insights and learning process. The thoughts and images come to our mind and we have difficulty describing them, conceptualizing them and writing them down. Unlike writing, mind maps are a tool that enable us and the students to connect and organize ideas and concepts in a visual way, using text, symbols and images. Mind maps make it possible to assimilate the learning and thinking processes in a more profound way.

Mind maps can help us summarize a lesson or topic, make group thinking processes smoother, problem solving, decision-making or reviewing a topic or an assessment.

When we look at mind maps we see something that ranges between a drawing and an infographic. We see a topic that is written in the center of the map, usually in large letters, and then branches out from it. Each branch has a title of one or two words, which will sometimes be accompanied by a drawing that illustrates the topic. Each branch that comes out of the main topic will usually have another level of sub-branches. You can use different colors to draw different branches, so that they are given a different character and emphasis. Sometimes in mind maps we look beyond the main two levels of branches, but you can draw as many as you need. You can see examples of mind maps on the website or simply search the internet for them. I suggest looking at examples to get an idea of how things are laid out, but your personal expression is the best imagination.



Mind maps are a tool that is important to experiment with. They enable branching, thinking and the use of visual elements, such as different colors and drawings. If you do not feel comfortable drawing, you don't have to, but I do suggest that you experiment with drawing, even if it is not perfect, mainly for the sake of experience.

Please stay with us. In the next unit I will let you experiment with mind maps and will give you some ideas on how to use mind maps as a tool. Let's get going.



Are you here? Great. I suggest you sit in a place where you are comfortable to work, maybe put on headphones and prepare a tool for documenting the structure of the lesson: it can be a notebook, a sheet of paper, or a computer.

For this project you will also need some white sheets of paper, preferably a size A3, but a regular printer page can also work. Also, you should have different colored markers. I will explain each step and give you time to work while listening to pleasant music. If you feel you need more time, stop the recording, finish your work, and get back to us.



In the next section I will explain how to create a mind map for your next lesson. Sometimes I will be talking and explaining what to do and sometimes I will just let you work with quiet music in the background.

In the first stage, I suggest that you experiment with making a mind map yourself. Take a blank white sheet of paper and some markers. In the center of the page, write the topic of the lesson you are going to teach, and circle the topic or add a picture that symbolizes it. Now think about the components of the subject you want to teach – these can be sub-topics, questions deriving from the main topic or maybe experiences that you want the students to encounter. Draw lines, almost like the branches of a tree coming out of the main theme and write the sub-themes, questions or experiences on them. I suggest you use different colors and even include drawings for the sections you wrote. Don't worry if you don't know how to draw, the goal is your experience.

Take a minute to write



Now that you have written the sub-topics or activities, I suggest you write another level; another step that develops your sub-topics even further. This might include questions that the students raise, possible experiences or issues for in-depth studying. You may want to list the sources of information that will be included in the field. There are no rules; this stage is to help your logic and thinking.

Take 2 minutes to write the additional level and, if you need to, stop and come back to us.



Have you finished?

Great. This was your first experience of mind maps. This method can also be used to look at your lessons in a different way, to understand them for you or your students. Now let's review some ideas for using mind maps in lessons.

You can use mind maps to summarize a lesson. Teach students the technique of mind maps and allow them to use them to summarize the lesson – during or at the end. As an idea for an exercise, at the end of the lesson ask everyone to summarize the lesson using a mind map. Then ask the students to divide into pairs and share their mind maps and how they perceived the lesson. The differences can help the students see different angles of the lesson and you as teachers get a broader picture of how the students internalized the topics that you taught.

You can use mind maps for group work. Divide the students into study or research groups and ask them to summarize the topic using a mind map instead of a written product. It is important to encourage the students to make several drafts before reaching the final product and, of course, that all group members agree on the product and way of presenting the information. At the end of the lesson, or lessons, ask each group to present the topic using the mind maps and explain them in detail.

Similarly, you can also ask the students to hang up their mind maps on the wall, look at other thinking maps, whether done in groups or individually. Each student gets two different colors of sticky notes; in one color they write things they understood or learned from the mind map, and in the other color they write questions they thought of when looking at the mind maps. This also encourages the creator of the mind map to have a clear message to the target audience and the students to be involved and curious in the learning process.

You can use the points brought up on the students' sticky notes as a component of the assessment process and as a dimension of peer evaluation.



Mind maps can be used as an assessment too, either individually or in groups. Mind maps can be a tool for students to present their learning. As a start I suggest giving the students a framework: Write the main idea in the center of the map. Take out 3 to 5 branches and from each branch take 2-4 more branches. This limitation allows students to focus and not get too carried away. Use different visual images, like pictures or icons, or different colors to promote different ideas. Present the mind map to the class.

I suggest you use the compass for evaluating the mind map that we created. Also, I suggest that you show the indicator to the students when giving them the assignment, so that they know what they should focus on. This will help you evaluate the work the students have done.



As you can see, there are many ideas for using mind maps as a tool in the classroom. I suggest you choose one of the ideas and build a lesson plan around it. Also, let the students experiment with “low stakes” mind maps, before doing a learning task with them, i.e. let them experiment with creating a mind map on something that interests them, issues that concern them, etc., and only after they have tried to use it as a learning tool at least once or twice.



We hope you found this podcast to be helpful.
Don't forget to also visit the UnitEd and Herzog College websites.
There you will find additional materials about the practice and other useful resources for future lessons, inspiration, and enrichment.
Good luck!

You can also listen to the podcast here:

