USING MIND MAPING TECHNIQUES TO IMPROVE ESSAY WRITING SKILLS

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Abstract. *Essay writing is one of the most challenging tasks for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners. Many students experience difficulties in generating ideas, organizing information, and maintaining logical coherence throughout their essays. Mind mapping has emerged as an effective pre-writing technique that helps learners visually organize their thoughts and develop structured written texts. This study examines the role of mind mapping in improving essay writing skills among EFL students. Mind maps allow learners to connect ideas, identify relationships between concepts, and plan their essays before writing. By using keywords, images, and branches, students can generate and organize ideas more efficiently. The study reviews previous research on mind mapping and its impact on writing performance. Findings indicate that students who use mind maps during the planning stage demonstrate better essay organization, richer content, improved coherence, and greater writing confidence. Furthermore, mind mapping encourages creativity and critical thinking by enabling learners to explore multiple perspectives on a topic. The technique also reduces writing anxiety because students have a clear visual plan before beginning the writing process. The article concludes that mind mapping is a valuable instructional strategy that can significantly enhance essay writing skills in EFL contexts.*

Keywords: *mind mapping, essay writing, EFL learners, writing skills, pre-writing strategies, creativity, critical thinking, academic writing.*

INTRODUCTION. Writing is a fundamental skill in language learning and academic success. Among different forms of writing, essay writing is particularly important because it requires students to express ideas clearly, organize information logically, and support arguments with relevant evidence. However, many EFL learners find essay writing difficult due to problems with idea generation, organization, and coherence. One technique that has gained attention in writing instruction is mind mapping. Developed by Buzan (2006), mind mapping is a visual strategy that helps learners organize ideas around a central topic. Through branches, keywords, and connections, students can create a clear structure before beginning the writing process. Mind mapping is widely used as a pre-writing activity because it encourages brainstorming and helps learners arrange ideas systematically. This study aims to examine the effectiveness of mind mapping techniques in improving essay writing skills among EFL learners.

Mind mapping is based on the idea that visual organization can improve learning and information processing. According to Buzan (2006), mind maps reflect the natural way the brain generates and connects ideas. By presenting information visually, learners can better understand relationships between concepts. Research has shown that pre-writing activities play a significant role in writing development. Hyland (2003) argues that planning is essential for producing effective written texts. Students who spend time organizing ideas before writing generally produce more coherent and well-structured essays. Al-Jarf (2009) found that mind mapping

significantly improved students' writing performance by helping them organize information and expand their ideas. Similarly, Yunus and Chien (2016) reported that learners who used mind maps demonstrated better paragraph development and essay organization. In addition, mind mapping promotes creativity because students are encouraged to generate multiple ideas and connections. It also supports critical thinking by helping learners analyze relationships between concepts before writing.

This study adopts a qualitative research approach based on the review of previous studies concerning mind mapping and writing instruction. Various books, academic articles, and research reports were analyzed to identify the effects of mind mapping on essay writing skills. The reviewed literature focused on EFL learners who used mind mapping as a pre-writing strategy in classroom settings. Particular attention was given to improvements in idea generation, organization, coherence, and overall writing quality.

The analysis revealed several positive effects of mind mapping on essay writing. First, mind mapping improves idea generation. Students are able to brainstorm more effectively and produce a greater number of relevant ideas before writing. This helps them avoid writer's block and increases writing fluency. Second, mind mapping enhances organization. The visual structure enables learners to arrange ideas logically and create a clear essay outline. As a result, essays become more coherent and easier to follow. Third, students demonstrate improved creativity. Mind maps encourage learners to explore different perspectives and connections, leading to richer and more original content. Another important finding is the reduction of writing anxiety. Many students feel more confident when they have a clear plan for their essays. The visual representation of ideas provides guidance throughout the writing process. Furthermore, mind mapping promotes active learning and critical thinking. Learners evaluate relationships among ideas and determine how information should be presented in their essays. Despite these benefits, teachers should provide proper instruction on creating effective mind maps. Without guidance, students may focus on drawing diagrams rather than organizing ideas meaningfully.

CONCLUSION. Mind mapping is an effective strategy for improving essay writing skills among EFL learners. It assists students in generating ideas, organizing information, enhancing coherence, and developing creativity. The findings suggest that learners who use mind maps during the planning stage produce better-structured essays and demonstrate greater confidence in writing. Therefore, educators should incorporate mind mapping activities into writing instruction to support students' academic development. Future studies may investigate the effectiveness of digital mind-mapping tools and compare their impact with traditional paper-based techniques in writing classrooms.

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