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Mind Maps Allow Our Students to Paint a Picture!

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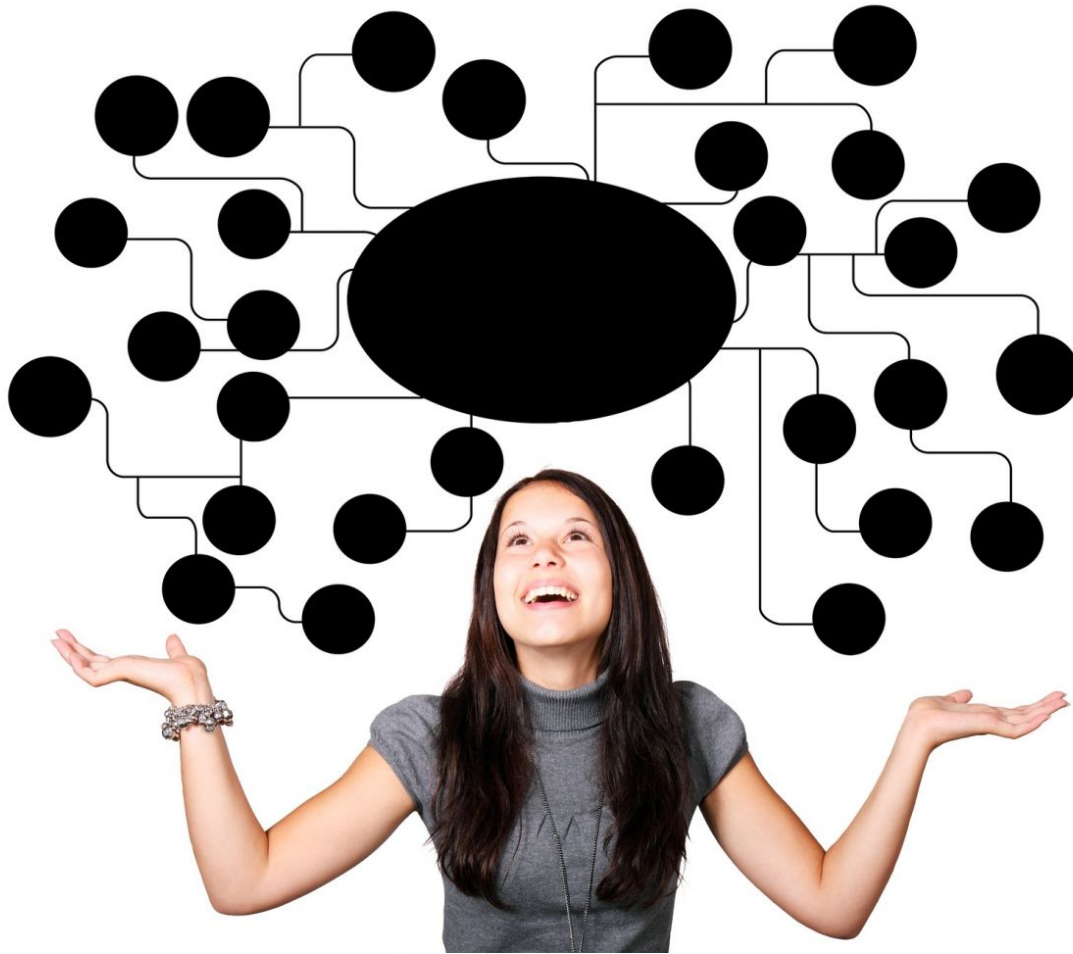


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Mind Maps Allow Our Students to Paint a Picture!

January 31, 2018 | By Barbara Carder
Educational Technology
Instructional Design
Teaching Effectiveness

When Fred Barnard said that “a picture is worth a thousand words” back in 1927, odds are that he wasn’t thinking about mind maps in higher education, but his idiom was true then and it remains true today.

In our classrooms today, one way we can visually display information and *paint a picture* is by using mind maps (also called concept maps). If you are new to mind mapping, visit <http://www.mindmapping.com/> for an explanation of this tool and to review many examples provided there.

In a nutshell, mind maps are an easy way to brainstorm thoughts about a topic. You can write thoughts as they come to you and then organize those thoughts into a mind map. So, you are literally mapping out your thoughts and ideas.

The website [mindmapping.com](http://www.mindmapping.com) lists the following five essential characteristics of mind mapping:

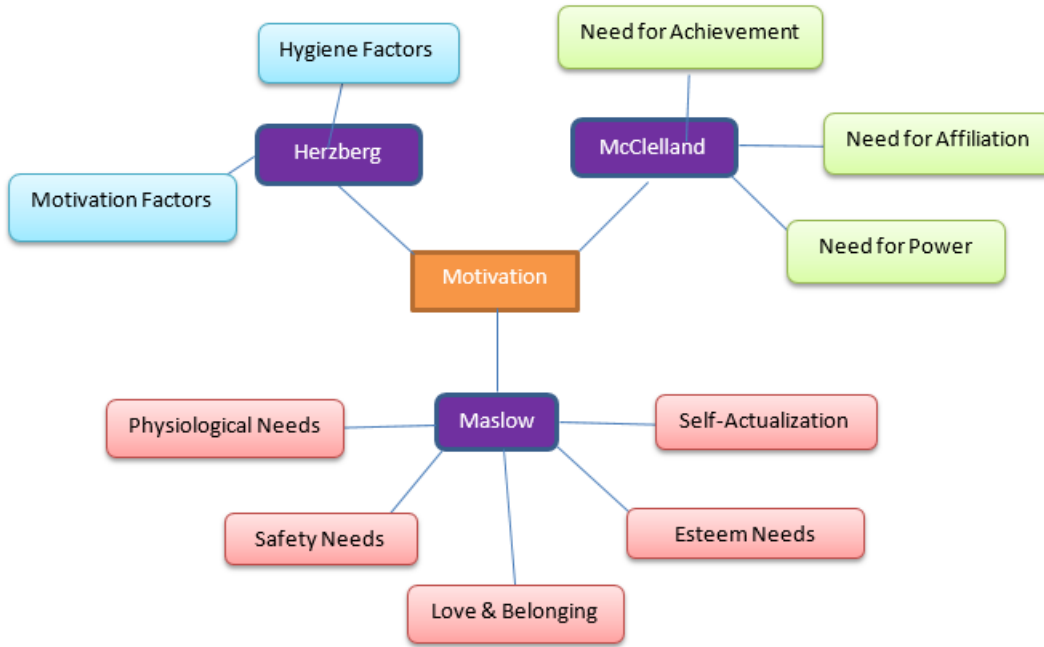
1. The main idea, subject or focus is crystallized in a central image
2. The main themes radiate from the central image as ‘branches’
3. The branches comprise a key image or key word drawn or printed on its associated line
4. Topics of lesser importance are represented as ‘twigs’ of the relevant branch
5. The branches form a connected nodal structure

Think of the innovative ways you can use this to help your students visualize concepts and organize their notes and ideas:

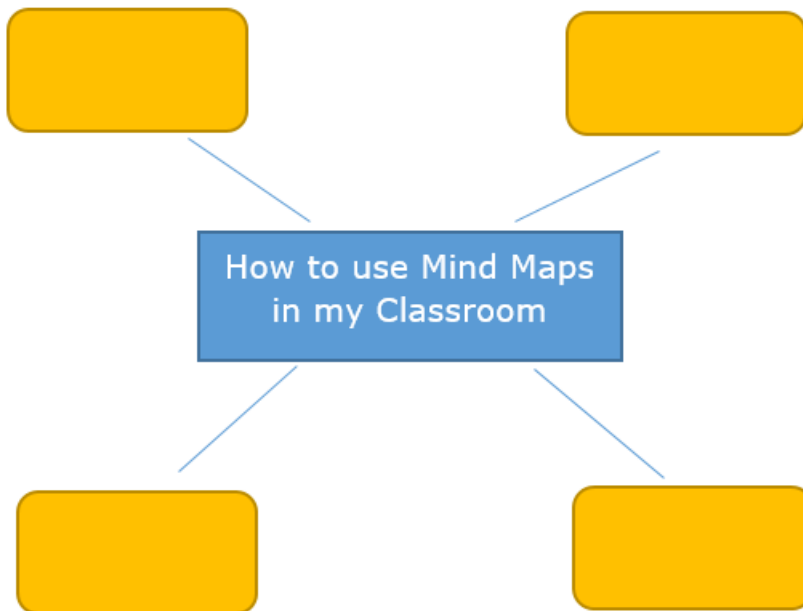
- Ask your students to work with a partner to brainstorm and create a mind map showing their previous knowledge of a topic and then share with the class.
- Replace an outline assignment with a mind map assignment.
- Incorporate a mind map into a research project by making a mind map one of the milestones students complete as part of their research.

Here is an example of a mind map one of my students created as part of a paper on theories of motivation. The student started with the central theme of motivation in the center, then branched out to the three theories, and finally added key words to show components of each theory, providing a visual map for reference throughout the course.

Motivation Mind Map



Now, put your pen to paper and create a mind map about ways you can use this tool in your classroom. Begin with the topic *Mind Maps* in the center, branch out to ways to use this tool, and add key words to show more detail about those ways to use mind maps.



References

Mind Mapping. (2018). Retrieved from <http://www.mindmapping.com/>

About the Author

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Barbara Carder holds a Master of Science in Marketing & Communication and a Bachelor of Science in Applied Communication, both from Franklin University.