



Unlocking Creative Writing: How Mind Mapping Boosts Descriptive Text Skills in Thai Students

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Abstract. This study focuses on unlocking creative writing potential: how mind mapping boosts descriptive writing skills in Thai students, driven by the researcher's desire to understand how mind mapping enhances Thai students' descriptive writing. Participants in this study were secondary schools in Satun, Thailand, consisting of 30 participants. This study applied a mixed-methods approach, gathering qualitative data through direct observation and quantitative data through questionnaires focused on students' perspectives regarding their experiences with mind mapping, descriptive text skills, and overall impact. The data were processed using a Likert scale and analyzed through descriptive statistics. The results revealed that the boys' class showed better skills in descriptive text related to categorizing shapes, types, and characteristics in mind mapping, whereas the girls' class displayed a better level of creativity in their mind mapping approach when compared to the boys' class. Based on the data results, from the 2 classes, the majority of respondents expressed agreement regarding the study. Many respondents stated an increase in motivation and a positive influence on their descriptive text skills as a result of implementing mind mapping. The findings indicate that mind mapping significantly influences students' engagement, creativity, and enthusiasm in understanding the content of the text and learning descriptive text that was previously unfamiliar to them.

Keywords: Creative writing, Descriptive text, Mind Mapping

1. INTRODUCTION

There are several essential components of English that learners have to understand: speaking, reading, listening, and writing. "Despite their differences, the skills are closely interrelated." Those who can speak well must also be good listeners, and vice versa. Those who are good at reading may be good at writing, and vice versa. Students will be able to speak effectively in English once they master these skills [1]. One of the main topics to be examined in this field is writing. Several aspects of life necessitate writing skills as a fundamental essential; for example, the importance of writing is in the educational context [2]. Writing is a mandatory subject for all students at educational institutions [3].

The implications of writing's nature, which has led to pedagogies emphasizing students' abilities to generate ideas, organize them coherently, employ discourse markers and grammar rules for cohesive writing, revise texts for clarity, edit for grammatical accuracy, and produce an attractive end result [4], [5]. Writing requires consistent dedication and effort to reach a level of ability that allows for the clear exposition of thoughts and ideas in a logical order [6]. Writing is an interesting process that requires a lot of divergent thinking rather than focusing on one particular idea [7]. Writing allows students to express their thoughts and emotions, but writing is more than just putting ideas on paper; it is also about converting those ideas into creative writing that will attract the interest of anyone who reads it [8]-[10].

Creative writing is based on an individual's personal thoughts and perceptions, but also encompasses both fictional and non-fictional elements of literature [11]. Creative writing is a fundamental form of writing that significantly enhances students' critical thinking skills [12], [13]. In writing, creativity is related to specific components of a written work that one could define as creative. For instance, one uses sensory details and the techniques a writer uses to attract a reader [14]. Creative writing teaching motivates students to utilize their creativity and imagination in their writing activities. This can enhance the components of students' writing. Furthermore, observation, internal motivation, creativity, and description are important components in cultivating creative writing for academic purposes [15], [16]. Creative writing serves as a vital instrument for cultivating students' imagination and creativity. It facilitates the expression of diverse viewpoints, enhances problem-solving abilities, and develops motivation and confidence in their writing

potential. The study of creative writing is thoroughly investigated and recognized as a beneficial attempt that cultivates students' understanding of values and their environment [17].

Writing has become increasingly important for EFL learners in recent decades because writing is considered as a challenging skill to acquire since the writer may occasionally be uncertain about what to express or how to begin. Students find writing challenging since it does not come easily and requires conscious effort and practice [18]. Nevertheless, students struggle with writing in English due to the need to use a variety of unfamiliar cognitive and linguistic methods [19]. There are many alternative methods available for solving these problems. However, The choice of this method must be specific to the subject matter and the students' circumstances, as an inappropriate strategy may yield suboptimal outcomes [19]-[22]. The implementation of various methods of teaching will create an engaging educational environment, avoiding boredom for students [23].

One way to overcome this problem is using mind mapping. As stated by Buzan in [24], mind map is an innovative thinking tool that uses a diagram to organize knowledge hierarchically to assist learners in processing material, creating new ideas, improving their study habits, and increasing their creative thinking power. It can also assist students in brainstorming and organizing ideas to be delivered. Mind mapping is important in this study because it requires creativity to improve descriptive skills. Descriptive skills for the writer refer to the capacity to elucidate a subject through structured paragraphs. Furthermore, readers of descriptive texts possess the capacity for sensory analysis, encompassing the senses of sound, touch, taste, and smell, which enables them to vividly visualize the tangible aspects and profound emotions conveyed through the text.

In general, descriptive text is a subject that is frequently examined in the English subject curriculum in Indonesia. Descriptive texts are English texts that describe and display the attributes of various objects, places, or beings in a generic manner, without necessitating extensive or lengthy research [25]. Descriptive text is a type of writing that explains what a person or object is like. Its purpose is to describe and reveal a certain person, place, or thing. Descriptive text has a structure consisting of the following: title, identification, and description. However, the researcher attempted to provide EFL students in a Thai school who were less familiar with the subject matter with an enhanced understanding. This study showed that EFL students acquired general information about material not studied in their country, stimulating their curiosity regarding descriptive text, its purpose, structure, and significance in their studies. Consequently, the researcher provided the EFL students with a paper that includes descriptive text and subsequently set time for them to understand its meaning and reorganize it using the mind mapping technique. Mind mapping is a visual approach of connecting a new concept during the learning process to prior ones, helping integration and elaboration through the use of lines, colors, images, symbols, or keywords [16]. Additionally, the creative process of mind mapping can enhance students' ability to remember the material they have read.

Previous research on media in English Language Teaching (ELT) has been conducted by various scholars. The efficacy of comics in improving students' speaking abilities [16], [26], alongside fostering imagination [27], visualization, and a constructive perspective [28], [29], enhances vocabulary acquisition. Such media encourage creativity in both speaking and writing in English [30]. The integration of technology facilitates innovative asynchronous learning. The primary impact of utilizing media for creative writing is observed in first-year students' assessments [31], [32]. This research concentrates on enhancing creative writing with mind mapping. However, because writing is difficult for Thai 8th graders to learn, mind mapping attempts to help overcome writer's block and encourage creativity by visually outlining crucial points and supporting facts. The researcher discovered that today's students enjoy decorative items and add aesthetics to their writing by using stickers, colored pencils, and other visual aids. By accommodating the interests of current students, creative writing through mind mapping techniques offers insights that are both instructive and visually engaging [33]. This research has the potential to enhance students' creative abilities and enhance their writing proficiency.

The technique of implementing mind mapping is an effective way to enhance writing skills and stimulate creative thinking. Furthermore, utilizing the mind mapping technique enhances students' memory retention and increases their learning potential. This technique is an interesting method for note-taking that aids in information retention and promotes student creativity during mind mapping activities [34]. Tony Buzan argued that the mind-mapping technique can assist students in retaining subject matter, enhancing concentration, organizing information and ideas, fostering creativity, employing imagination, comprehending content, taking notes, exercising control, maintaining composure, and sustaining interest in studying materials. A concept map is a graphic instrument used in the organization of conceptual concepts in writing. It entails developing a graphical representation of concepts and their relationships, which enables writers to better brainstorm, outline, and structure their ideas. Utilizing concept maps enables writers to

easily identify the relationships among various concepts, define essential points, and cultivate a clear and logical progression in their work [35].

Despite that fact, the study was done at a secondary school in Satun, Thailand. This study focuses on unlocking creative writing potential: how mind mapping boosts descriptive text skills in Thai students because the researcher wanted to find out how mind mapping improves Thai students' creative writing in descriptive skills that are unfamiliar to Thai students. However, the aim of this research is to help students uncover their creative potential, think critically, and improve their memory.

2. METHOD

Research Design

This study employed a mixed-methods approach to examine the effect of mind mapping on enhancing creative descriptive writing skills among Suksa Muslim school students. In this approach, a researcher integrates quantitative and qualitative methods to deliver a comprehensive understanding of the topic being examined. The National Institutes of Health states that mixed methods effectively integrate or combine accurate quantitative and qualitative research approaches to leverage the strengths of both [36]. As mentioned by Gert Biesta in [37] Mixed-methods research involves the integration of qualitative and quantitative methodologies, aiming to produce a more precise and comprehensive knowledge of social phenomena than any approach could achieve independently.

This approach is appropriate since it builds on the strengths of both qualitative and quantitative data thereby enabling a more complete knowledge of the study issue [38]. This extensive approach aims to present a complete analysis of how mind mapping might assist Thai students in enhancing their writing abilities and discovering their creative potential. Because of this, the mixed method not only increases the validity of the results but also broadens our comprehension of the dynamics that take place during the learning process.

Population

The population of this research consisted of secondary school students from two classes. The classes are organized based on gender, reflecting the institution's Islamic principles. Each class consisted of 30 students, with a composition of 3/4 (male) and 4/4 (female) classes. From this population, the research sample was selected as many as 15 students from 2 classes with different genders using certain criteria. The sample selection criteria included the students' willingness to actively participate in the study, as evidenced by their willingness to take the test and complete the questionnaire provided. None of the participants in this study had prior knowledge of descriptive texts, as this material has not been included in the curriculum in their country. Consequently, a brief explanation of the content and purpose of the study will be provided to the participants. This was implemented to guarantee that the students comprehended their role in the study and engaged voluntarily with full understanding.

Instrument

The instrument is obtained by observation and distribution of questionnaires to respondents. Observations were conducted directly, with researchers participating in the observation to see how well students grasped the topic and their ability to use mind mapping strategies in learning. Observations were conducted in 2 different classes and lasted for almost a month to maximize research results. Furthermore, Questionnaire. The researcher utilized a questionnaire to collect qualitative data and a Likert scale to process the results. The questionnaire is particularly efficient because the researcher only gives paper to respondents and the questions may be answered instantly by simply checklist the options. This questionnaire consists of 14 questions, with the highest point being 5 = Strongly agree, 4 = Agree, 3 = Neutral, 2 = Disagree, and 1 = Strongly disagree. This instrument was given as a form of assessment based on students' views to open up writing creativity through mind mapping to improve descriptive text skills.

Data Analysis

The researcher used 2 techniques in analyzing the data, namely quantitative and qualitative. The use of mixed methods allowed the researcher to attempt to provide a thorough study of how mind mapping can help Thai students discover their creative potential and strengthen their writing skills.

Quantitative research emphasizes quantification in data collection and analysis. So this method concentrates on statistical and mathematical measurements of the data acquired [39]. In this research, the

data was collected by a questionnaire, and then the existing statistical data was processed using calculation techniques. Statistical analysis will be performed using the questionnaire data collected to determine the level of comprehension based on students' perspectives or opinions. The quantitative data acquired using the questionnaire instrument is then statistically analyzed to assess changes in significant improvement in students' descriptive writing skills following the implementation of the mind mapping technique. Quantitative data is processed using Likert scales and will be examined using descriptive statistics. To measure gains in students' writing quality, descriptive analysis will be used to examine the outcomes of mind mapping tests.

Qualitative research is a method for examining and comprehending the significance of what happens to the topic under investigation. The goal of qualitative research is to understand the reasons, perspectives, and motivations causing the research [40]. In this study, data gathered through direct observation will be analyzed in order to determine the perfection of research that is not only achieved through questionnaires. This extensive qualitative study, conducted through a combination of surveys, observations, and research, attempts to provide a thorough examination of how mind mapping might enhance Thai students' writing skills and unlock their creative potential.

3. FINDINGS

Quantitative Findings

Based on the findings in the tables below, the means are interpreted using a 5-point Likert scale to acquire reliable ratings. According to the terms, 1.00 - 1.80 means Strongly Disagree, 1.81 - 2.60 means Disagree, 2.61 - 3.40 means Neutral, 3.41 - 4.20 means Agree, and 4.21 - 5.00 means Strongly Agree.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics on The Mind Mapping Experience

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
I find mind mapping to be an effective tool for organizing my thoughts before writing	30	3	5	3,70	,702
Using mind mapping helps me generate more ideas for my descriptive writing	30	2	5	3,67	,802
I feel more confident in my writing skills after using mind mapping	30	2	5	3,40	,855
Mind Mapping makes the writing process more enjoyable for me	30	1	5	3,27	1,015
I believe that mind -mapping has improved my overall writing ability	30	1	5	3,33	,994
Valid N (listwise)	30				

Table 1 presents inquiries regarding the experience of mind mapping. The first statement indicates a mean of 3.70, suggesting that respondents largely Agree that mind mapping is an effective tool for organizing thoughts before writing. The second statement indicates a mean value of 3.67, suggesting that respondents generally Agree that mind mapping helps them generate more ideas for descriptive writing. The average of the third statement is 3.40, indicating that the respondents are Neutral regarding the impact of mind mapping on their confidence in writing skills. The fourth statement indicates a mean value of 3.27, suggesting that respondents largely selected Neutral regarding whether mind mapping makes the writing process more enjoyable. The fifth statement indicates a mean value of 3.33, suggesting that respondents predominantly selected Neutral in relation to the impact of mind mapping on their overall writing ability.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics on The Descriptive Writing Skills

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
I'm able to create more vivid descriptions in my writing after using mind-mapping	30	2	5	3,60	,855
Mind mapping helps me to better understand the structure of descriptive texts	30	2	5	3,70	,837
I can express my ideas more clearly in descriptive writing when I use mind mapping	30	2	5	3,63	,928
My ability to use sensory details in my writing has improved with mind mapping	30	2	5	3,50	,900
I receive more positive feedback on my descriptive writing since I started using mind mapping	30	1	5	3,37	,964
Valid N (listwise)	30				

Following this, Table 2 presents inquiries regarding descriptive writing abilities. The first statement garnered a mean score of 3.60, indicating that respondents agree that the use of mind mapping helps them create more vivid descriptions in their writing. The second statement, with a mean value of 3.70, indicates that respondents tend to agree that mind mapping helps them better understand the structure of descriptive text. The third statement, which has a mean score of 3.63, indicates that respondents agree that mind mapping helps them express ideas more clearly in descriptive writing. The fourth statement, which has a mean value of 3.50, indicates that respondents generally agree that the use of mind mapping improves their ability to use sensory details in writing. The fifth statement indicates that the mean is 3.37, reflecting an opinion that is neutral. This value approaches the upper limit of the neutral category, indicating a tendency towards agreement, though it does not yet reach a level sufficient for definitive classification. Respondents tended to be neutral about whether they received more positive feedback on their descriptive writing since using mind mapping.

Table 3. Descriptive Statistics on the Overall Impact

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
I plan to continue using mind-mapping for my writing assignments in the future.	30	1	5	3,40	1,163
I believe that mind mapping is a valuable technique for improving creative writing in general.	30	1	5	3,37	,890
After using a mind map, I feel more motivated to write creatively.	30	2	5	3,60	,855
Overall, Mind-mapping has positively influenced my approach to creative writing.	30	1	5	3,53	,973
Valid N (listwise)	30				

The third table in the first statement, showing a mean value of 3.40, means that respondents tend to be neutral towards this statement. Nonetheless, this value is at the end of the neutral category, indicating a near agreement tendency. The mean value in the second statement is 3.37, indicating that respondents are neutral regarding the perception of mind mapping as a valuable technique to improve their creative writing. The third statement garnered a mean value of 3.60, indicating that respondents agree that mind mapping increased their motivation to engage in creative writing. The last statement, which has a mean value of 3.53,

indicates that respondents generally agree that mind mapping has a positive influence on their approach to creative writing.

Qualitative Findings

Qualitative data gathered through direct observation: The following table outlines the stages involved in making observations in order to finalize the research results.

Tabel 4. Stage of Observation		
Stage	Role	
	Researcher	Student
Theory	Introduce Descriptive Text	Interpret Descriptive Text
	Explain Mind Mapping	Ask about mind mapping
Assignment	Describe students as an illustration	Answer questions together
	Provide text for mind map	Create mind map from the text
Feedback	Involved in research	Active participation
	Provide feedback on assignment	Receive feedback from the researcher

The illustration of the observation phases indicates that the first phase starts with theory. Theory provides an essential comprehension of the next step in learning implementation. The researcher provided a basic explanation of descriptive text and the mind mapping method, which the students attentively listened to and interpreted. The researcher recognized that descriptive text is mostly unfamiliar to the students; therefore, they struggled to comprehend the material, as this text type is not part of their national curriculum. Additionally, the researcher presented an overview of mind mapping, a method with which some students were also inexperienced. Consequently, the researcher facilitated a question-and-answer session to enhance understanding. Students exhibited enthusiasm for learning previously unknown concepts and expressed a preference for the mind mapping method, which allows them to express ideas into writing.

The subsequent phase involves the Assignment. To provide further understanding, the researcher appointed one student to present himself in front and then the other students described the shape, appearance, and character of the student simultaneously. Furthermore, to assess students' comprehension, descriptive text was provided, and students were tasked with converting it into mind mapping. The findings at this stage indicated that students meticulously engaged with the text's content initially before they started to organize their minds around it. Occasionally, students engage in repeated reading followed by the creation of mind maps on their individual papers.

The final phase involves delivering feedback. The findings of the assignment of the student sheets demonstrate that some students understand and are less familiar with the researcher's instructions such that some paper sheets are intriguing and some are less interesting. In class 4/4, composed entirely of girl students, mind mapping is approached with a variety of creative ways. Girl students often show a preference for aesthetic elements, actively engaging in coloring, adding lines, and including stickers. However, the mind mapping structure designed doesn't correspond well with the provided text. Whereas in class 3/4, students consisting of boys are still lacking in terms of creativity; they tend to use a simple model. Nonetheless, the elements of the mind map correspond with the text. Here is one example of a student paper based on 2 different classes:



Figure 1. Student’s paper from 4/4 class

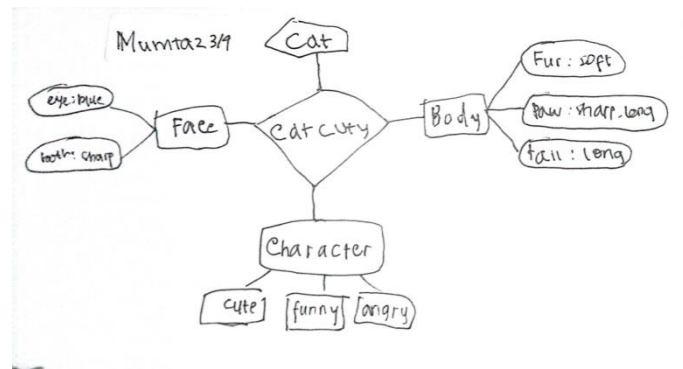


Figure 2. Student's paper from 4/4 class

4. DISCUSSION

This investigation seeks to examine the potential of mind mapping techniques to enhance the descriptive skills of Thai students while also assessing their influence on their creativity during the learning experience. Mind mapping facilitates the visual organization of information, thereby helping students to identify the connections between concepts [41], [42]. Mind mapping is an effective way to generate new ideas and recall memories [43]. Mind mapping is a learning model that has the potential to increase the motivation and engagement of students in the learning process [44], [45].

This study was conducted on Thai secondary students, who have distinct cultural and educational backgrounds compared to the researcher's country. Consequently, this difference provides new insights into how to apply descriptive text learning that they hadn't known before. However, the quantitative findings above revealed a beneficial influence for students who applied mind mapping; there was a significant boost in their ability to describe texts. Furthermore, students argued that mind mapping can improve learning outcomes. Students reported feeling happier and more motivated after implementing this method, which created a joyful environment. This finding aligns with research conducted by [46]. The results of this study indicated that the use of mind mapping resulted in improved post-test scores and favorable feedback from students. In the context of English as a second language, this study supports the claim that mind mapping is effective in enhancing descriptive writing skills.

Mind maps are visual representations of the ideas, words, and other concepts associated with the core, linked by branches [47]. Mind mapping uses the way students' brains work to think graphically, making it easier for them to link ideas. Furthermore, the results of the qualitative findings above suggest that students from class 4/4, which includes girls, create creative mind mapping. The girls in the class enjoy decorating, drawing lines, and coloring. In contrast, Class 3/4, which is dominated by boys, likes simple things. Nevertheless, the utilization of colors, images, lines, and symbols in mind mapping enhances students' visual memory, thereby increasing their ability to recall and organize their thoughts. This is consistent with findings from [48], which indicate that vivid mind maps with words, symbols, and drawings excite the right hemisphere through three-dimensionality. It controls imagination, dreams, associations, space, rhythm, colors, sizes, and the whole picture. This method claims that the use of colorful diagrams to take notes increases the cooperation of both hemispheres of the brain.

The application of the mind mapping method provided favorable outcomes for descriptive texts and also facilitated the exploration of creativity in writing. Nonetheless, every student possesses a unique approach to learning and different abilities for processing information. As in grades 3/4 and 4/4, some students may enjoy using the mind mapping method, while others are more accustomed to using simpler methods.

5. CONCLUSION

The findings from the quantitative study utilizing questionnaires indicate that respondents hold a favorable perspective on the application of mind mapping. While certain statements included neutral options, a number of respondents reported increased motivation and a positive impact on their text descriptive skills due to the implementation of mind mapping. Subsequently, the data is gathered qualitatively through observation. The findings indicated that the boys' class demonstrated in descriptive text related to categorizing shapes, types, and characteristics in mind mapping when compared to the girls' class. The girls' class shows a higher level of creativity in the mind mapping approach compared to the

boys' class. It can be concluded that mind mapping has an impact on students' engagement, creativity, and enthusiasm in comprehending the content of the text and learning descriptive text that was previously unfamiliar to them.

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