XMind

Tool Description

A mind map is a graphic representation of a text or reasoning, which allows to highlight the main theme we are dealing with, the concepts related to it (using images and possibly written text) and the relations, causal or of association, between the various concepts (using lines and arrows). The map aims to represent a certain reality with a great use of graphic material and minimizing the textual material.

XMind is a software that allows you to create and view digital mind maps with any device. It works with Windows, Mac and Linux and, through Evernote; you can access your maps from mobile devices.

The xMind interface is intuitive and allows you to create mind maps in hierarchical-associative form, using an editor in which different themes are available. The free version of xMind has full functionality, certainly suitable for the use of our children and teens.

What is the challenge the tool can solve?

Maps are an indispensable tool for students with SLD because:

- **concepts are presented graphically**, using images and colors, then through the non-verbal visual channel, which is the one preferred by students with SLD. This facilitates memorization and understanding, because it allows them to learn through a style of visual learning, which is more congenial to them;
- **favour associations between concepts** and this facilitates the learning of the student with SLD that tends to memorize on the basis of associations and simultaneous connections and not through linear learning;
- **reduce the text to its essentiality**, highlighting the most important concepts and therefore are useful for students with difficulties in understanding the written text;
- **organize the information to be remembered**, thus becoming an excellent compensatory tool not only during the study phase, but also during written and oral questions, compensating for the difficulties of structuring the speech and sequential organization
- **highlight the technical and specific terms of a given topic**, thus dealing with dysnomia (difficulty to remember words) often present in students with SLD;

- **stimulate the organization of the text**, the identification of the relationship between new concepts and old knowledge and the asking of questions: all this leads to a better and deeper understanding of the subject;
- **allow the customization of the study path**, because they are created by the students according to his/her learning style.

What are the benefits for Dys persons?

Mind Mapping helps with student with learning difficulties as it makes use of images, colour, shape, size and symbols to map out information in a way that is easier to comprehend. Many DYS students can become distracted when trying to get ideas down on the page. However, when you draw a Mind Map you are constantly seeing what you have already done, whilst working on a new idea. This decreases the possibility of losing your train of thought as you are automatically reviewing the rest of your Map.

Using Mind Maps can also help with by breaking down large pieces of information into easy-to-read bite-sized chunks. Rather than difficult, dense text, Mind Mapping allows learners to break down complex problems into simple, visual objects that anyone can use.

Another huge benefit of using Mind Maps to help all students with learning disorders is that they provide structure to your thoughts. When planning an essay, the ideas in the Mind Map can be transferred into a linear form that creates the structure, paragraphs and images for your essay easily.

Example of use in daily life

Using the various software for creating maps, you can create multimedia maps, which allow you to link to the various concepts also, for example, Internet collages, videos, audio recordings, links to other maps: they are very useful for children with SLD because they enrich learning by using multiple sensory channels.

There are some tutorials on how to use Xmind on YouTube. This video in English show gradually how to use it.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9cke2J4btyY