



An Innovative Approach to Learning: Students in Geneva Introduced to Online Mind Mapping

“The fact that MindMeister has web, iOS and Android apps was key in making the choice.”

Richard Allaway, High School Teacher

At a Glance...

- ★ Improved test scores
- ★ Verified student participation
- ★ Improved critical thinking

Website

www.ecolint.ch

The International School of Geneva, a member of the G20 schools, has been listed as one of the best international schools in the world. Based in Geneva, Switzerland, it's the oldest operating international school worldwide. It currently has 4,000 students enrolled across 3 campuses and has introduced MindMeister as its online mind mapping and collaboration tool.

Richard Allaway, a humanities teacher and ICT coordinator at the school says, “We’re currently on a journey to introduce new technologies to the school”. By next year all students in the Campus des Nations Secondary School will be required to bring their own device to school. To support teachers and students with this, they’re “building a digital toolbox”. To do this they turned to MindMeister as a mind mapping solution that can be used across all devices and browsers.

How did they do it?

Richard, along with Mark Grace, the ICT Director, was instrumental in implementing MindMeister at the school. They are both very enthusiastic about mind mapping in the classroom and for the construction of resources and developments of ideas for teachers. They believe it will improve the students’ learning experience at the school greatly.

As they were already using Google Apps at the school with over 4,000 accounts, the two teachers were able to integrate student and staff accounts seamlessly with MindMeister. Mr. Allaway initially added MindMeister to the school’s Google Apps account and then contacted MindMeister during the free trial period. MindMeister provided enough licenses to enable them to pilot the product and introduce it to the students through a number of teachers who were “friendly to the cause”.

Introducing a new tool

To encourage teacher uptake and allow for an easier integration, Richard led the example for showcasing mind mapping to the other teachers. The majority of the teachers in the school were already familiar with the concept of mind mapping, but the concept of digital mind mapping and its collaboration possibilities is relatively new.

How they did it

- ★ Introduced a cloud based mind mapping solution which can be used on all devices and platforms
- ★ Showcase examples to other teachers
- ★ Monitor students' progress and uptake

The school follows the International Baccalaureate Middle Years Program, meaning students between 11 and 16 follow the philosophy of “more approach and inquiry rather than content driven learning”, meaning it’s really important for students to interact with teachers and their peers, asking questions and getting answers.

With this in mind Richard would start a project with the students, for example an investigation of diseases and the impact certain diseases have on a population. Each student would get 10 minutes to create their own mind map and think of all the questions for about everything needed to be known about the disease. After this they shared the mind map with him and started addressing the questions, focusing the answers more upon the inquiry question.

The End Result

By having Richard and a few other teachers use mind mapping in their classrooms allows Mr. Grace to help other teachers incorporate mind mapping into their learning curriculum. When introducing new technologies to a school it can be difficult to get everyone to commit, so it was especially important for Richard and Mark to lead by example and get the students asking other teachers to allow them to use MindMeister.