

The Ohio State University

Project Planning and Knowledge Management with MindMeister

SUCCESS STORY



THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF NURSING

REGION
US

STUDENTS
60,000+

ORGANIZATION TYPE:
University,
Higher Education

WEBSITE
nursing.osu.edu

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Michael Ackerman DNS, RN, FAAN

Director, Master of Healthcare Innovation Program
and Professor of Clinical Nursing

The Ohio State University, home to the Wexner Medical Center, has long been a hub for learners looking to make their mark in a variety of clinical fields. The Ohio State University College of Nursing's Master of Healthcare Innovation and clinical nursing programs form an integral part of this infrastructure, with dozens of students involved in each cohort.

Like many in education, from primary schools to renowned research institutions, The Ohio State University College of Nursing uses MindMeister as a digital learning aid. 40 master's students, 12 certificate students and 10 students from outside the program are currently active users of the software, alongside a variety of faculty members.

However, The Ohio State University College of Nursing's implementation of MindMeister differs slightly from more "traditional" educational use cases. Rather than a classroom aid or presentation software, they have successfully established mind maps as a project planning tool and knowledge base, with multiple applications throughout academic project workflows. The university's Michael Ackerman explains how MindMeister has helped add value to student projects.

- ✓ Use of MindMeister as a project planning and documentation tool
- ✓ Initial brainstorming sessions formalized into presentations and project plans
- ✓ Integration with MeisterTask planned for next year.

From the Ground Up

Particularly for Ohio State's Master of Healthcare Innovation Program, which is a multidisciplinary, fully-online course, finding collaborative online solutions to remote learning is high priority. Although Ackerman's approach to mind mapping in his programs could be described as unconventional, it is a perfect example of MindMeister's boundless flexibility and capacity for collaboration in educational environments. He explains:

"We use MindMeister for a variety of courses and the projects within them. It's not a question of presentation; our primary application for MindMeister is as a project documentation tool. It forms the basis of the project workflow "funnel," allowing us to collate knowledge as we progress, jumping to and from different types of software as we do."

The process for project work at Ohio State is as follows:

1. Students use MindMeister to brainstorm ideas for courses with various projects, or for single-course with a capstone project at the end. The mind mapping technique provides the widest possible base for ideas, which can be refined individually or collaboratively over time. Particularly important are topic connections and the demonstration of relationships between ideas at this stage.
2. The mind map is transported to Adobe Spark, where an initial, generally internal presentation is created using a slimmed-down version of the course's most relevant points. However, the presentation may be shown to external stakeholders at this stage.
3. The presentation is further refined using the Pecha Kucha method (400 seconds total, 20 slides, 20 seconds/slide).
4. The students return to MindMeister, using the initial mind map as a layer document. This can be repurposed as a knowledge base or a ready-made platform for future project work.

According to Ackerman, using mind mapping as part of a funnel approach makes perfect sense:

"Mind mapping is a method that is increasingly common in education. Most students have at least some grasp of the technique, while others have great experience even before the program begins. This makes it a logical starting point for project work. It's a powerful method that saves us the effort of "reinventing the wheel." MindMeister itself is a pretty straightforward tool, so we can focus on our course aims rather than clunky software."

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Choosing MindMeister

Although Ackerman's class at Ohio State is now into its second year of using MindMeister, the tool wasn't actually the first one they turned to. With the rising popularity of whiteboarding apps and fierce competition among mind mapping software developers, there is extensive choice when it comes to tool selection. Ackerman explains:

"Initially, we tried Mindjet, but we didn't have the best experience with the tool because there is no workable collaborative functionality. This is the real strength of MindMeister. Unlimited numbers of people can work simultaneously on one mind map, which results in a noticeable increase of quality in the ideas that are generated."

So, are the benefits enough to convince the professor that MindMeister is the one-stop solution for all of the program's educational needs?

"In a word...no. I think we'd benefit from a whiteboarding function and a slightly smoother integration with Microsoft 365. However, we're very happy with the service MindMeister provides, and word is spreading amongst the faculty too. Our IT department has already purchased a number of Edu Pro licenses for other staff members, so I'm interested to see how their methods with the tool differ from mine."

Future Expansion

In addition to the broadened use of MindMeister throughout the College of Nursing, there is plenty of scope for collaboration with other products in the Meister Suite. Ackerman is already looking to increase the efficiency of project work by signing his classes up to MindMeister's sister task management tool, MeisterTask, for the next year.

"We're excited about the potential for improved workflows within projects, helped by the integrations between the two tools," says Ackerman, "but I can't tell you for sure until we see it in action. Ask me again next year!"

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