

Mindful Learning

Not another brick in the wall.

What is mindfulness?

- Paying attention in a particular way:
 - On purpose,
 - In the present moment, and
 - Non-judgmentally

- Jon Kabat-Zinn



Another Definition

- A flexible state of mind, in which we are
 - Actively engaged in the present,
 - Noticing new things, and
 - Sensitive to context



(Langer, 2000)



Maintaining Focus (the right way)

Good (mindful) attention requires

- Observing for distinctions
- Varying perspectives

The background of the slide features a light gray gradient with numerous thin, vertical green lines of varying lengths and positions, creating a textured, grass-like effect. A solid green horizontal bar spans the width of the slide, positioned in the lower third. The title text is centered within this bar.

Avoiding Premature Cognitive Commitment

Lesson Learned:

Beware what gets presented as “facts” -
Often, they are a matter of CONTEXT

America was
discovered in
1492!



Um...yeah...
so, about
that...



“Premature cognitive commitment”

= Mindless Thought

- Meaning is **frozen**:
 - Individual commits to using info in a **predetermined way**
 - No alternate **perspectives**
 - No alternate **uses**

Langer, Hatem, Joss, & Howell (1989)

What could it be?

- Presenting “facts” as “probabilities” leads to more divergent, creative thinking:



This could be a dog's chew toy.

The art of “conditional language”

... it *could* be the difference between mindless and mindful learning!





Effortful vs Effortless Learning

Is it OK for learning to be fun?

Our default is often effortless thinking

Kahneman (2011)

SYSTEM 1

- Easy, automatic
- Quick judgments on familiar patterns

SYSTEM 2

- Requires intense focus
- Operates methodically

Langer (1989, 1993)

MINDLESS THINKING

- Accepting without thought or analysis

MINDFUL THINKING

- Deeper attention
- Attention to context & perspective

Learning can be engaging!

- “Work” vs. “Play”



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Learning can be engaging!

- “Work” vs. “Play”
- Making distinctions

“Making Distinctions”

- Being attentive to variability
- Finding differences between similar items
- Finding similarities between different items
- Taking a novel perspective
- Considering alternative contexts
- Creating new categories

Learning can be engaging!

- “Work” vs. “Play”
- Making distinctions
- Relating information to the self*

This wasn't interesting until I got to start talking about myself.



someecards
user card

*Symons & Johnson (1997)

All right - stop, collaborate, and listen!

Maintaining
Focus

Vary
perspectives

Find
novelties

Conditional
Learning

Use
conditional
language

Effortless, yet
Mindful,
Learning

Change the
attitude
("play")

Make
distinctions

Relate to
students

Sources

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