

Mindful Learning Towards Learner Autonomy

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UECA PD Fest

Leadership, Engagement and Diversity
in an Academic Context

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Overview

- Definition
- Benefits
- Studies
- Thoughts
- The BRAIN and the MIND
- Implementation
- Activities

MIND FUL ness?

What is your definition?



What is MIND FUL ness?

- Being in the moment
- Living in the NOW
- Being more awake and aware in every moment
- Paying attention to each moment
- Being fully engaged in what's happening around you and WITHIN you

MIND FUL ness...

Mindful students

Mindful teachers

Mindful schools

Mindful workplace

What are the benefits of Mindful Learning?

Improves

- health & wellbeing
- Personal abilities
- Learning & memory
- Cognitive & Academic performance

Improves health and wellbeing

- Decreases stress, anxiety and depression
- Better regulation of emotional reactions
- Increases positive psychological state
- Decreases burnout
- Increases immunity to external viruses

Improves personal abilities

- Increases creativity
- Improves skills for interpersonal relationships and communication
- Improves empathy
- Becoming more compassionate

Mindful Learning

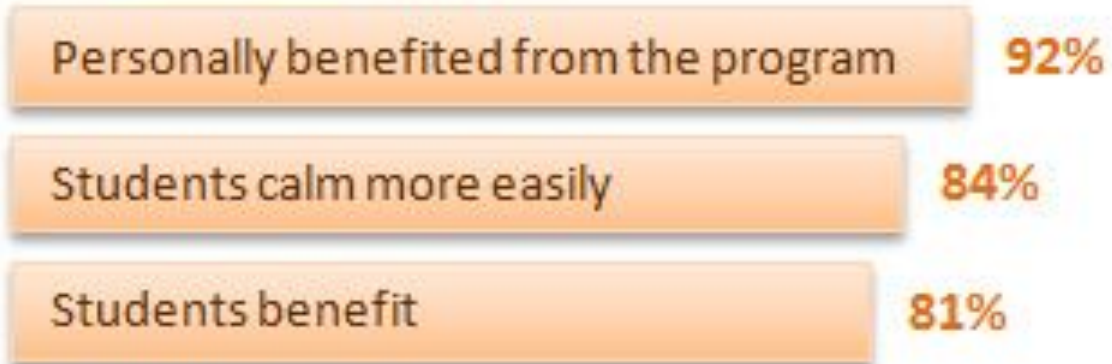


Mindful learning... a strategy?

- According to one study
- 74% of students reported that they enjoyed and benefited from mindfulness training (Hubbert & Johnson, 2010).

Research

What teachers report:



What students report:



The pedagogical role of Mindfulness

... Teaching ...

- “designed to quiet and shift the habitual chatter of the mind
- helps to develop a capacity
- for deepened awareness, concentration, and insight.”

Hart (2004)

Improves LEARNING

- Learning
- Memory processing
- Emotion regulation
- Self referential processing
- Perspective taking

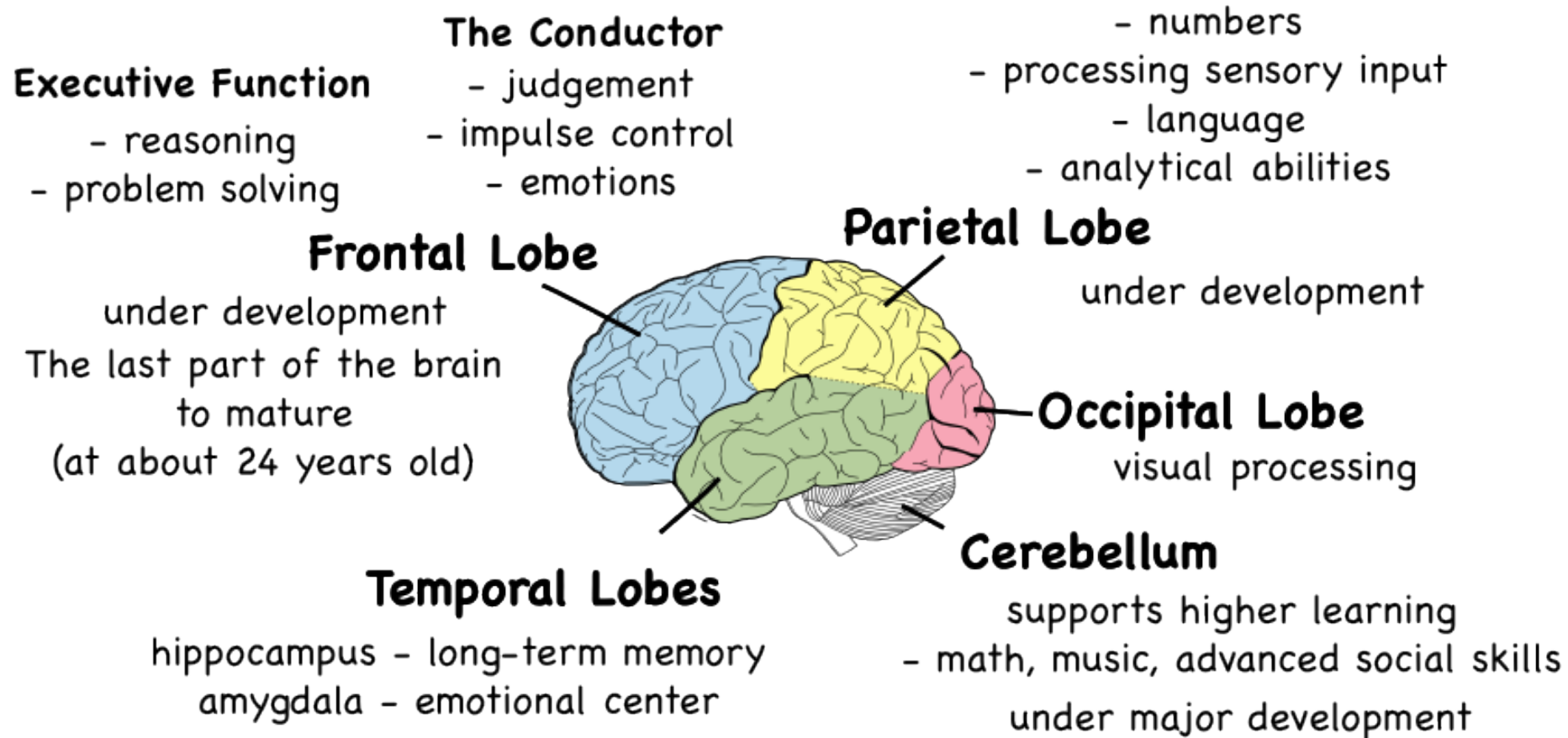
(Holzel et al, 2011)

Improvements in Cognitive and Academic performance

- Improves ability to maintain preparedness and attention
- Improves short term memory
- Improves processing speed
- Improves ability to process information quickly and accurately
- Improves concentration, focus

Perkins & Salomon (1989)

Brain & Executive Functions

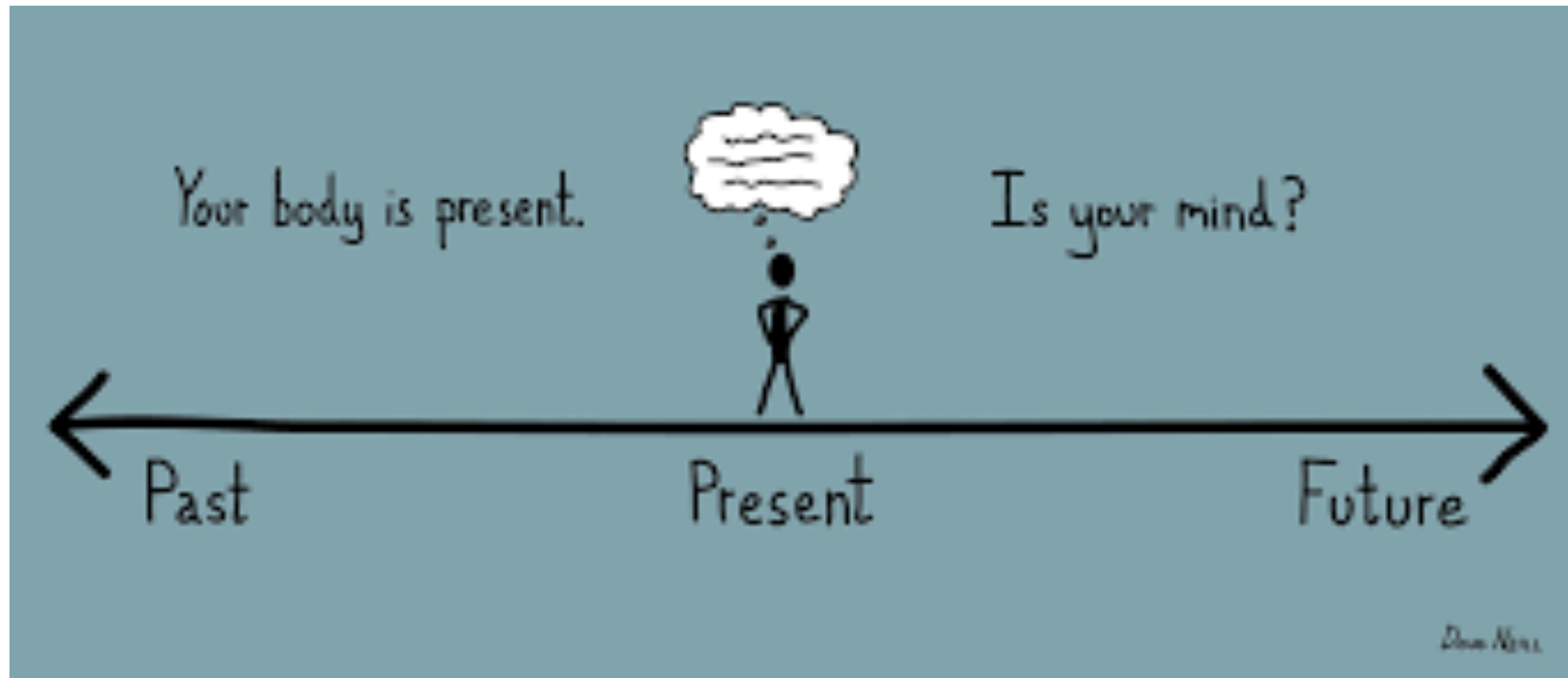


Mindful Learning to Learner Autonomy

- Learner engagement
- Learners are given opportunities to engage ... and become active contributors to their language learning.
- Learning is thus seen as a process in which learners are cognitively involved in seeking answers, making generalisations and testing the hypotheses that they have generated.

(James and Garrett, 1991)

Thoughts



Thoughts

Mental activity or process that takes place in our minds

Each person has nearly

- 70 thousand thoughts per day
- 2100 thoughts per hour
- 35-48 thoughts per minute

Source: (LONI) Laboratory of Neuro Imaging Institute for Neuroimaging and Informatics, Keck School of Medicine of USC

Thoughts and Language

- What and how we say things is a direct result of our thought processes (which are based on our norms, values and beliefs)
- We describe, narrate and judge all that is happening around us
- The way we speak is a very accurate reflection of how we think

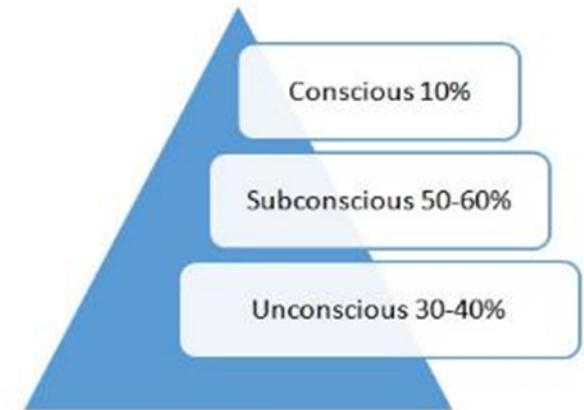
Subconscious

- How we speak is mostly a subconscious act
- Habits, routine, previous experiences & thoughts
- It is easier to be lazy with our words



Conscious

- Speaking consciously
- Saying what you mean
- Requires an enormous amount of attention



The Brain

- It's function is to think
- And there is no way to stop this



The **Brain** and the **MIND**

- The brain is comprised of **100 billion neurons** (nerve cells) ★
- arranged in a circuit with around
- **100 trillion connections**



Piano

For instance:

when people start playing the piano,
new connections are formed in their brain.

And if they experience playing piano a number of times

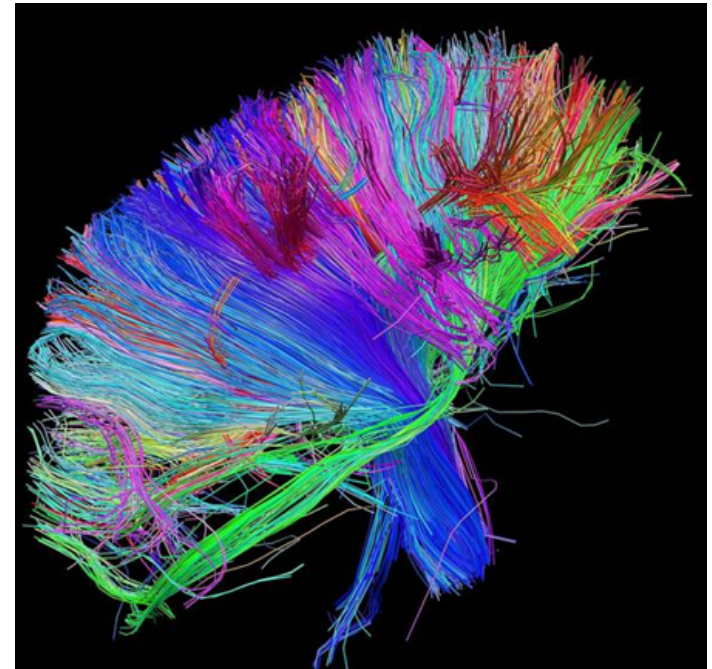
– that is, practise playing –

the connections will get stronger and stronger.



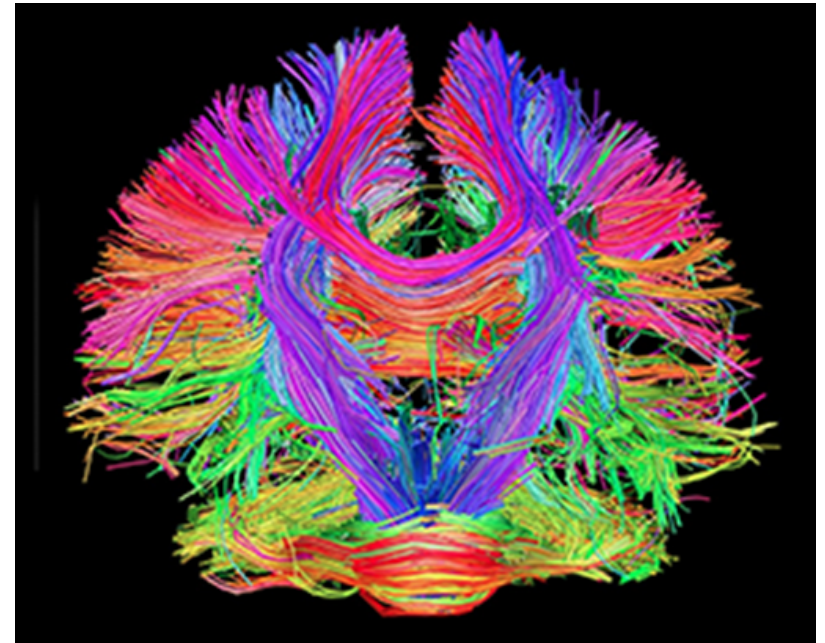
Connections

- When we experience something for the first time,
- the dendrites of neurons **form connections** with the dendrites of other neurons,
- and **a new neural pathway is formed.**



Neuroplasticity

- As new connections are formed, the brain starts growing to accommodate the new learning.
- This is known as ‘neuroplasticity’



Practicing Mindfulness changes our brain

Eventually ...

Practicing mindfulness changes our brain

“Mindfulness practice leads to increases in regional brain gray matter density.

Hölzel, Britta K. et al. (2011). Psychiatry Research: Neuroimaging , Volume 191 , Issue 1 , 36 – 43.”

How?

- Via engaging in SENSES



Let's do it

- Mindful breathing
- Mindful sitting
- Mindful communication
- Mindful relaxation
- Mindful concentration
- Mindful walking, stretching
- Mindful **teaching**

Our students...



Application of Mindful Learning & Teaching

- Listening
- Reading
- Writing
- Speaking

- Feedback & Reflection
- **E X A M S**

1. Counting the sounds (Listening)

Instructions: Go for a walk and mentally count or list all the different sounds that you hear.

- It's essential to turn off your electronics or leave them at home.
- No Talking, although you can certainly smile ☺ and say hi to anyone you happen to pass.

Ex: Footsteps

Wind, sound of the leaves

Birds chirping

2. Rainbow walk (writing)

Take a walk:

- Look for something red, orange, yellow, green, blue, and purple.

Some suggestions for individual practice:

1. Bring a camera and take a photo of at least one image with each color;
2. Bring a sketchbook, this will help you really focus on what you're looking at
3. Write in your journal about the things you noticed and how they made you feel.

3. Mindful Reading Activities

- Reading aloud and in different configurations can highlight different aspects of a text.
- Alternating readers by line, sentence, or paragraph provides varied voices and different emphases.
- Specific strategies such as echoing frequently used or significant words influences students' attention
- Highlighting key words, nouns, phrases

4. Useful Mindfulness Exercises

- Grasp your hand
- Mental Focus on an object
- Musical stimuli exercise
- Undivided attention
- Full sensory awareness exercise

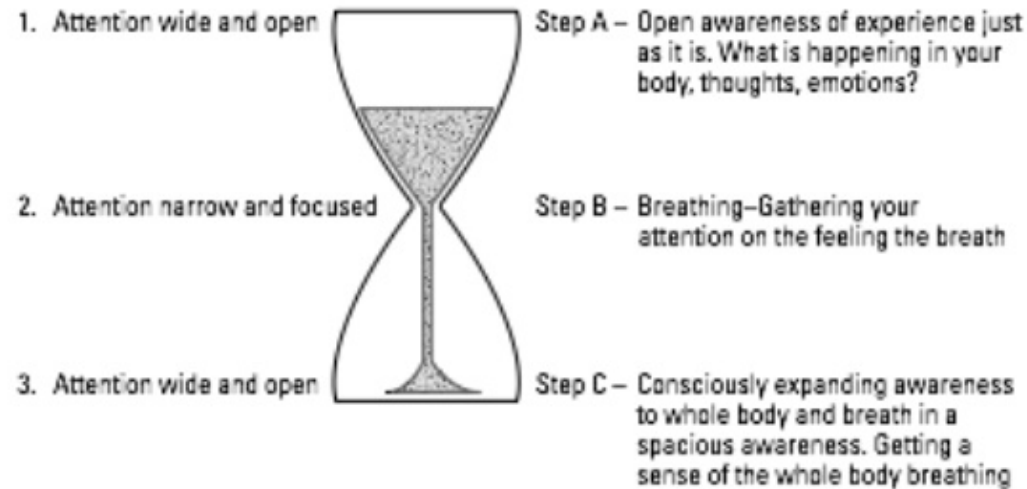
Practice time!

Sit back and RELAX...



3 min breathing exercise

Three minute breathing space exercise



Activity 1

Look around you.... What do you see?

Close your eyes...

Activity 2

- Take one deep breath
and relax
- What are you thinking right now?
- <https://youtu.be/WWrK6aRVZf4>

Activity 3

- What do you hear?
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8kQZHYbZkLs>



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Thank you

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Sample lesson plans for mindful teachers

- <http://www.mindfulteachers.org/p/free-resources-and-lesson-plans.html>

Mindfulness activities for adults

[Mindfulness Exercises, Techniques & Activities For Adults \(+ PDF's\)](#)

- Self compassion pause
- Self-Inquiry Meditation
- Five senses Exercise
- Mini-Mindfulness Exercise
- Mindful walking down the street technique
- Three minute breathing space

Ref: Positive Psychology

<https://positivepsychologyprogram.com/mindfulness-exercises-techniques-activities/>

Sample Mindfulness Practice video

Observe your thoughts to stay focused

- <http://www.abc.net.au/radio/programs/mindfully/observe-your-thoughts-to-stay-focused/8227800>

abc.net.au

Background music

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ez9jwY6kBLE>
- Chi Mai – Ennio Morricone
- <https://youtu.be/rRbyZ3eD-9M>
- Le vent, le Cri – Ennio Morricone