Bringing Mindfulness Practice into the Classroom as an Instructor

JUSTIN PRITCHARD
T2C Career Coach, CAPS: Your U of A Career Centre
Past-President, U of A's Mindfulness Meditation Student Group
Sessional Instructor, Department of Art and Design, U of A
Presentation

Outline

What is mindfulness?
How is it done?
Why should we do it?
How can it help me as an instructor?
How can I incorporate it into the classroom?
What are some resources?
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Mindlessness

» Autopilot disrupts present-moment awareness
» Research: A wandering mind is an...
» Connection between attention and happiness
Mindlessness

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A Cluttered and Noisy Mind

Research indicates that people spend about 47% percent of their waking hours thinking about something other than what they’re doing, and this mind-wandering and mind clutter typically makes them unhappy (Killingsworth & Gilbert, 2010).

# Attention Span Statistics

## Attention Span Statistics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attention Span Statistics</th>
<th>Data</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The average attention span in 2015</td>
<td>8.25 s</td>
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<tr>
<td>The average attention span in 2000</td>
<td>12 s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The average attention span of a gold fish</td>
<td>9 s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent of teens who forget major details of close friends and relatives</td>
<td>25 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent of people who forget their own birthdays from time to time</td>
<td>7 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average number of times per hour an office worker checks their email inbox</td>
<td>30</td>
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<tr>
<td>Average length watched of a single internet video</td>
<td>2.7 m</td>
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## Internet Browsing Statistics (Taken from 58,573 page views)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Internet Browsing Statistics</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Percent of page views that last less than 4 seconds</td>
<td>17 %</td>
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<tr>
<td>Percent of page views that lasted more than 10 minutes</td>
<td>4 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent of words read on web pages with 111 words or less</td>
<td>49 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent of words read on an average (593 words) web page</td>
<td>28 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Users spend only 4.4 seconds more for each additional 100 words</td>
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</table>

Mindlessness

» Autopilot disrupts present-moment awareness
» Research: A wandering mind is an...
» Connection between attention and happiness
So, mindfulness is a practice that helps us bring our attention back to the present moment.
What is Mindfulness?

- Open and non-judgemental awareness of the present moment
- Skill and attention towards an immediate experience
- Stems from ancient philosophy
- MBSR founded by John Kabat-Zinn
- Mainstream and popularized because of research
What is Mindfulness?

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Secular Approach
Jon Kabat-Zinn

Traditional Approach
Thích Nhat Hanh
What is Mindfulness?

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How is it Done? (Part One)

» By noticing! Notice body, breath and sound
» Like “pause moments” to rest in awareness
» Research terms: focused attention or open-monitoring
» Cultivates a curious, relaxed, compassionate attitude
Let's try this together...
How is it Done? (Part One)

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Not About Emptying Your Mind
Mindfulness practice is not about clearing or emptying your mind but instead, it’s the act of noticing and paying attention to an experience or situation without excessive labelling.
CONCEPT: Mindfulness in Schools, Richard Burnett
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6mlk6xD_xAQ
“The intuitive mind is a sacred gift and the rational mind is a faithful servant. We have created a society that honours the servant and has forgotten the gift”

— Albert Einstein
There’s nothing wrong with thinking...
It’s about balancing the brain
How is it Done? (Part Two)

- **Formal practice** (e.g. daily sitting meditation)
- **Informal practice** (e.g. walking, gazing, drawing, listening, smelling, touching, eating, etc.)
“That’s cool but I don’t have time to practice mindfulness...”
Why Should We Do It?

Experimental research, conducted over 25 years, reveals the benefits of mindfulness, are vast and often profound. Mindfulness results in a/an:

» increase in competence;  
» increase in memory,  
» increase in positive affect;  
» increase in creativity;  
» decrease in accidents;  
» increase in health & longevity;  
» decrease in stress;  
just to name a few benefits.

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Quiet the mind...

Mmm, chocolate donuts.

QUIET THE MIND!
How Can We Incorporate It?

As instructors, mindfulness can be incorporated by:

» Taking mindful breaths before and after teaching
» Practicing single-tasking on the job
» Watching the mind when listening (where is your attention?)
» Shifting clients’ attention by varying stimuli (mindful learning)
» Practicing before problem-solving task
Pausing spontaneously to breathe and rest helps create space to cue attention.

“Sometimes, one or more mindful breaths provide the mental energy and space for your mind to find a solution.”
“I take lots of breaks throughout the day. That’s what my phone is for.”
“Reading websites taxes many of the same mental processes that we use when we’re working”

A Science-Backed Guide to Taking Truly Restful Breaks

We know, this sounds made up. But stick with us, because not just any kind of break will do.

By Christian Jarrett 
Illustration by Giacomo Bagnara
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» Practicing before problem-solving task
How do I try and vary stimuli in the classroom?
Incorporate blank slides or large images as pause moments within the class.
Shift attention through variation in instructional approaches (e.g. inclusion of experiential learning)
And, visually, shift the focus amongst slides (while still maintaining a ‘visual system’ throughout)
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How Can We Incorporate It?

Connect it to the student learning
(e.g. a value within the material)
Curiosity
Beginner’s Mind
How Can We Incorporate It?

Be creative!

How can you balance sensing and thinking?
How can you incorporate “pause moments”? 
Isn't this a little radical?

Isn't this sort of “different”?
Yes...
and no...
A Few Mindfulness Resources

» Headspace App
  www.headspace.com

» Mindfulness Bell App (Mynah app)

» Insight Timer: Guided Meditations App

» UCLA Mindful Awareness Research Center

» McGill University
  www.mcgill.ca/mindfulness
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Free Guided Meditations

For an introduction to mindfulness meditation that you can practice on your own, turn on your speakers and click on the "Play" button. Podcasts are also available on iTunes. Download iTunes »

For a more in-depth class experience, take the 8-week Online Classes»

Note: We are experiencing technical issues with the iTunes page. Please use the "Play" button in the meantime. Thank you.

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<th>ENGLISH:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Breathing Meditation</td>
<td>5 mins</td>
<td>Play</td>
<td>iTunes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Breath, Sound, Body Meditation</td>
<td>12 mins</td>
<td>Play</td>
<td>iTunes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Complete Meditation</td>
<td>19 mins</td>
<td>Play</td>
<td>iTunes</td>
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<td>Instructions</td>
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<tr>
<td>Meditation for Working</td>
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<td>with Difficulties</td>
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<tr>
<td>Loving Kindness</td>
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<td>iTunes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meditation</td>
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Welcome to Mindfulness@McGill.

Although mindfulness has existed for centuries, the last decade has seen a surge in interest about mindfulness across various domains, ranging from spirituality to neuroscience. This page is intended to serve as a central hub for all things related to mindfulness on campus (activities, research, and other resources) for those interested in learning more.

10 minutes for change

When was the last time you settled into the present? Andy Puddicombe explains how setting aside 10 minutes for mindfulness can make a difference in your life. Watch the video.
Audio for Relaxation & Meditation

- Awareness Body Scan
  8:05 minutes
  MP3 format: 7.42MB
- Breathing Meditation
  5:20 minutes
  MP3 format: 4.62MB
- Compassionate Relaxation
  6:46 minutes
- A Moment to Reflect
  5:30 minutes
  MP3 format: 4.75MB
- Loving Kindness
  14:44 minutes
  MP3 format: 13.5MB
- Mountain, Wind & Sky
  10:06 minutes
- Guided Imagery for Writing an Exam
  14:22 minutes
  MP3 format: 13.1MB
- Breaking the Anxiety Cycle
  13:31 minutes
  MP3 format: 12.3MB
- Wheel of Awareness
  14:22 minutes
  MP3 format: 13.1MB
Mindfulness on Campus

U of A's Mindfulness Meditation Student Group
Join the MMSG Facebook group for details

U of A's Mindfulness Community of Practice
Contact the group organizer: Professor Billy Strean

Mindfulness Meditation Classes
Mind Body Programming, Sport & Recreation Services

Student Counselling and Clinical Services
Free drop-in workshops
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Counselling & Clinical Services

Free Drop-In Workshops

Our drop-in workshops are casual, one-time events that give you a chance to learn about a mental health topic while interacting with a psychologist (or intern) and your peers. Workshops focus on common psychological concerns like depression, anxiety, relationship break-ups, cross-cultural adjustment, grief, disordered eating, sleeping problems and others. Our workshops will help you understand a particular mental health issue and teach you some real-world strategies to deal with it.

See upcoming workshops below by reading their descriptions and viewing the calendar. All U of A students, staff and faculty are welcome to attend.

- Goals and Aspirations
- Making Motivation
- Yoga for Mental Hygiene - Dedication to Meditation
- Yoga For Peace of Mind - Mindfulness, Meditation & Motion
Creating Connections: Mindfulness at the University of Alberta

The Wellness Project 2015

Billy Strean, Ph.D.
Professor, Faculty of Physical Education and Recreation

Justin Pritchard, M.Des.
Past-President, Mindfulness Meditation Student Group

Melanie Lewis, M.D.  M.Ed.
Associate Dean, Learner Advocacy and Wellness Office

1. ACADeMIC COURSES
2. OTHER MINDFULNESS ENTHUSIAStS
3. EXTRACURRICULAR CLASSES/ PROGRAMS
4. GROUP INVOLvEMENT
5. ADDITIONAL SERVICES
6. HEALTH + WELLNESS INITIATIVES
7. SELECTED ON-CAMPUS EVENTS

Academic Courses

The U of A offers academic courses from different disciplines that incorporate mindfulness into the classroom through course content and instruction. Below are examples of U of A faculty who have incorporated mindfulness into their courses:

Department of Human Ecology
Kathryn Chandler, Practicum Coordinator, teaches a practicum course that is based on “communities of practice” and “reflective practice”. These concepts are supported by mindfulness practices and other contemplative pedagogies.

Department of Philosophy
Department of Interdisciplinary Studies (Religious Studies)
Neil Dalal, Assistant Professor, teaches students about the theory of meditation practices as a number of courses. He incorporates regular guided meditations as a bridge between practice and theory.

Faculty of Physical Education and Recreation
Billy Strean, Professor, teaches courses that incorporate mindfulness at the beginning of class sessions, which he calls “starters”. He also makes links to how mindfulness can support other learning outcomes, such as playfulness.

Department of Politics
Department of Psychiatry
Catherine Phillips, Assistant Clinical Professor, offers an elective in Mindfulness in Medicine/Psychiatry for psychiatry residents and medical students. Course concepts relate to Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction.

Department of Secondary Education
Claire Keppel, Associate Professor, has taught courses with content related to mindfulness, wisdom, contemplative pedagogy, compassion, and happy mind practices in the Department of Secondary Education.
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1. ACAD E M A T I C  C O U R S E S
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7. S E L E C T E D  O N - C A M P U S  E V E N T S

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(MBSR).

Department of Secondary Education
Claudia Eppert, Associate Professor, has taught courses with content
related to mindfulness, wisdom, contemplative pedagogy, compassion,
and inquiry-oriented curriculum in the Department of Secondary Education.
Justin Pritchard
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Thank you!