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



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

What could it be?

 Presenting "facts" as "probabilities" leads to more divergent, creative thinking:



This <u>could be</u> 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

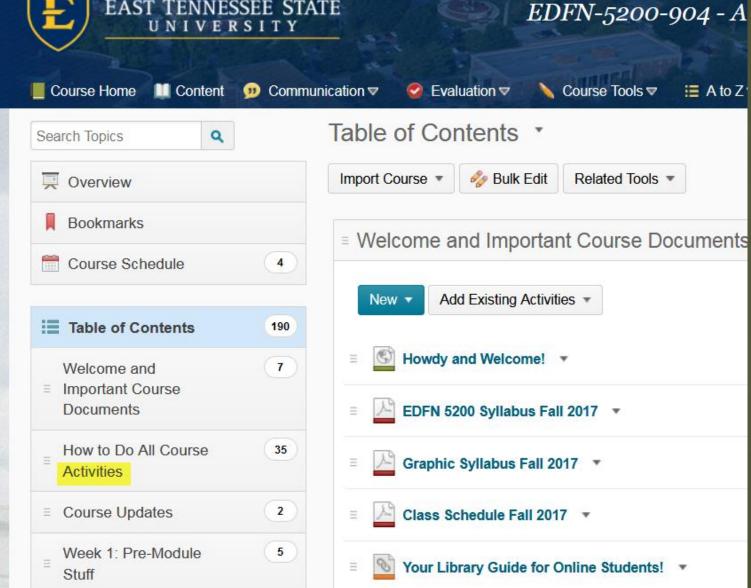
MINDFUL THINKING

- Deeper attention
- Attention to context & perspective

Learning can be engaging!

• "Work" vs. "Play"





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*



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

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