



MANAGING STUDY STRESS

ACADEMIC SKILLS
WEBINAR PROGRAM

ACAP Australian
College of
Applied
Professions

WEBINAR GOALS

During this webinar you will learn how to:

1. Explore various tips to manage study stress
2. Learn & practice some basic mindfulness



IMPORTANT!

Disclaimer



- Academic skills advisors are not experts in managing study stress.
- Much of the advice stems from our own research on what may help with managing study stress and our own experience of mindfulness practice.
- The following tips are possibly helpful tools that may work for you.
- Remember that your GP should be your first point of contact if you are concerned about your mental health.

STRESSED ABOUT YOUR STUDIES?

Have you experienced one or more of the following symptoms during your studies?

1. Having difficulty concentrating
2. Mental fog & mental fatigue
3. Frustration with studies
4. Anxiety about studies



MANAGING STUDY STRESS TIPS- SLEEP

Get some sleep

1. While awake, potentially neurotoxic waste products accumulate in the central nervous system. Sleep helps to remove these waste products (Xie et al., 2013).
2. Sleep deprivation can negatively affect the amygdala associated with emotional regulation and memory (Yu et al., 2007).
3. More than 2 nights of sleep recovery is needed to fully restore working memory (Chai, 2020).



Are you getting enough sleep each night?

MANAGING STUDY STRESS TIPS- TAKE A BREAK

Turn off your devices

1. Having the TV on in the background can affect your ability to recall information (Armstrong, 1993; Armstrong & Chung, 2000).
2. Mobile phones can interrupt Academic performance (End, 2010).
3. Mobile phone use can interrupt sleep patterns thus leading to sleep deprivation and stress (Višnjić et al., 2018).



How often do you look at your mobile phone screen per day?

- | | |
|----------------|----------|
| 1. not often | 3. often |
| 2. a few times | 4. a lot |

MANAGING STUDY STRESS TIPS- EXERCISE

Get physical

1. A combination of aerobics, strength and stretching exercises improves cognitive function and enhances memory (Nouchi et al., 2014).
2. A single session of aerobic physical exercise can improve cognitive performance (Olivo, 2021).
3. Working memory improves after exercise (Blomstrand & Engvall, 2020).



Do you have an exercise routine?

MANAGING STUDY STRESS TIPS- NATURE

Green spaces

1. Walking in green spaces lowers frustration, heightens directed attention, mental arousal or calmness, and can result in a meditative state (Aspinall et al., 2015).
2. Students who regularly participate in active interactions with natural environments experience an enhanced quality of life, improved mood, and a reduced sense of stress (Holt et al., 2019).
3. Having plants in work and living space leads to healthier cognitive functioning (Nieuwenhuis, 2014).



Do you get out into nature much?

How many plants do you have in your study space?

MANAGING STUDY STRESS TIPS-

FOOD

Feed your brain

1. Nutrients influence cognitive function (Gómez-Pinilla, 2008).
2. Lack of omega-3 fatty acids can result in impaired cognitive functions (Agrawal & Gomez-Pinilla, 2012)
3. The gut-brain link may affect emotions, decision making, motivation and cognitive abilities (Mayer, 2015).
4. Changing one's diet can improve physical health, benefit mood, behaviour and cognitive function at a fundamental level (Gow, 2021).



Does any food you consume make you feel tired?

MANAGING STUDY STRESS TIPS- PLANNING

Planning tasks

1. Worrying can affect working memory (Hayes et al., 2008).
2. Following a specific plan can facilitate in achieving one's goals as well as freeing up cognition functions (Masicampo & Baumeister, 2011).
3. Effective time management can reduce academic stress and better academic performance (Nayak, 2019)



Have you planned out your trimester of study yet?

MANAGING STUDY STRESS TIPS- PLANNING

Planning tips

1. Use the trimester planner on the [Academic Skills website](#) to plan out your trimester studies.
2. [Book in with](#) an Academic Skills Advisor to help with time management
3. Use the [Pomodoro technique](#) (Ruensuk, 2016).
4. Use online planners such as [Padlet](#) or [Todoist](#)

ACAP Australian College of Applied Psychology

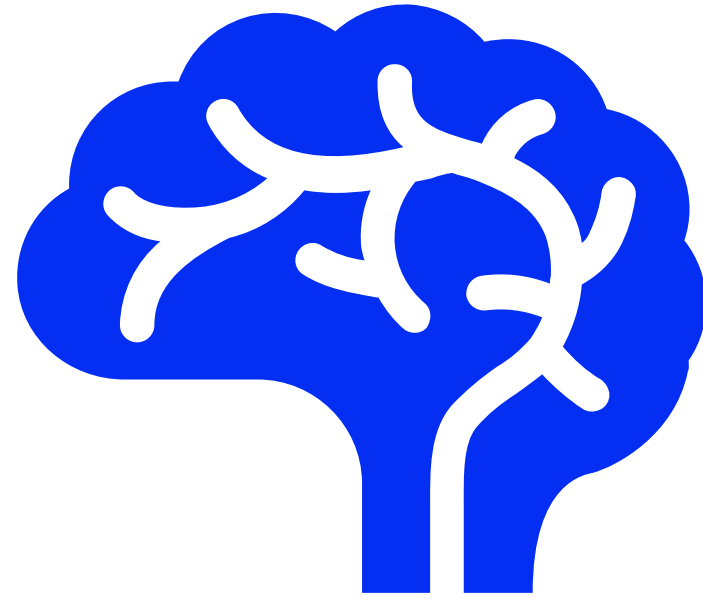
Student Planner Trimester 2 2021

WEEK	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
1	31 May	1 June	2 June	3 June	4 June	5 June	6 June
2	7 June ★	8 June Class reading 8:30 am - 11:30 Class 12 pm - 3pm	9 June	10 June 8153 SLS 10 am Appointment Start draft	11 June 8153 Upload to Smartthinking 6pm	12 June	13 June 8153 A1 due 1500 words
3	14 June Start research 8143 Assessment 1 Part A: 500 words ★	15 June Class reading 8:30 am - 11:30 Class 12 pm - 3pm	16 June Class reading 9 - 11:30 am Class reading 12:30-2:45 Class 3 - 9pm	17 June Start Draft 8143 Assessment 1 Part A: Political party ideology in action 500 words	18 June CENSUS DATE	19 June	20 June
4 Academic Integrity Week	21 June Start 8153 Assessment 1 Unpack and plan	22 June Class reading 8:30 am - 11:30 Class 12 pm - 3pm	23 June Class reading 9 - 11:30 am Class reading 12:30-2:45 Class 3 - 9pm	24 June Start 8153 Assessment 1 Research	25 June Upload to smartthinking 8143	26 June	27 June 8143 Assessment 1 Part A: Political party ideology in action 500 words
5	28 June Start 8153 draft Book SLS planning appointment	29 June Class reading 8:30 am - 11:30 Class 12 pm - 3pm	30 June Class reading 9 - 11:30 am Class reading 12:30-2:45 Class 3 - 9pm	1 July Keep writing 8153 draft	2 July 8153 Case Study Group Presentation Meet with group via ZOOM	3 July Keep writing 8153 draft	4 July Start 8143 Assessment 1 Part B: Report: Ideology in action 3000 words
6	5 July 8153 Case Study Group Presentation Meet with group via ZOOM 8143 Assessment 1 Part B: Report: Ideology in action 3000 words SLS Appointment	6 July Class reading 8:30 am - 11:30 Class 12 pm - 3pm	7 July Class reading 9 - 11:30 am Class reading 12:30-2:45 Class 3 - 9pm 8153 Case Study Group Presentation due in class	8 July Upload 8153 to Turnitin Upload 8153 to Smartthinking	9 July	10 July	11 July Submit 8153 Assessment 1 Case study 2000 words 8153 Case Study Group Presentation submit written part

MANAGING STUDY STRESS TIPS- NAVIGATING MENTAL FOG

Cognitive Load Theory (CLT)

1. Working short-term memory has limited capacity storing new information (Sweller et al., 1998)
2. Learners have an unlimited long-term memory to hold cognitive schemas (van Merriënboer & Ayres, 2005).



How is your memory? Do you learn new concepts easily?

MANAGING STUDY STRESS TIPS- NAVIGATING MENTAL FOG

Cognitive Load Theory (CLT)

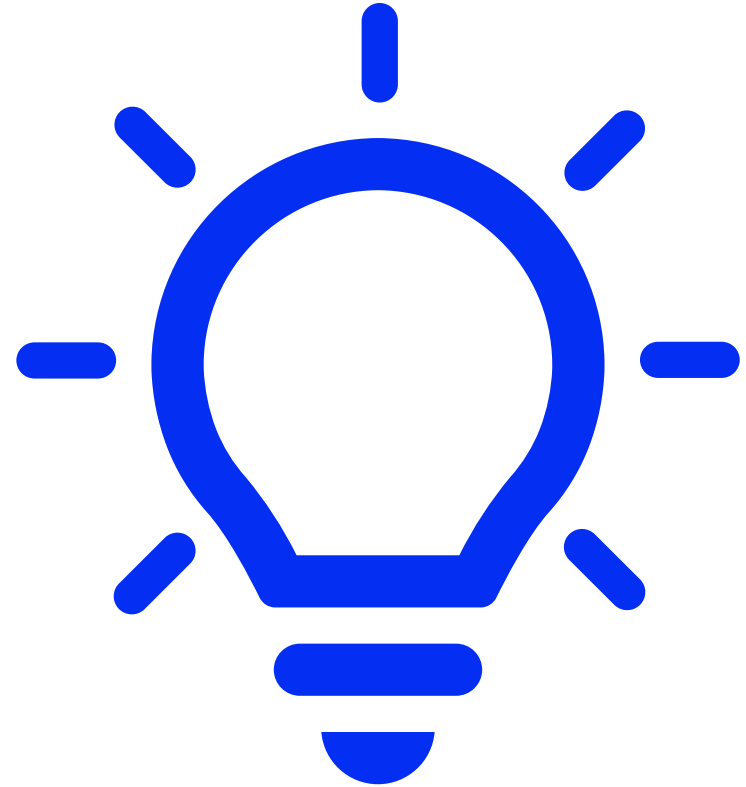
- When the mind divides large pieces of information into smaller units (chunks) that are easier to retain in short-term working memory (APA, n.d.).
- Chunking further bypasses this limited short term memory capacity by associating with chunked information making use of the unlimited long-term memory (Thalman, 2019).



MANAGING STUDY STRESS TIPS- NAVIGATING MENTAL FOG

Chunking Tips

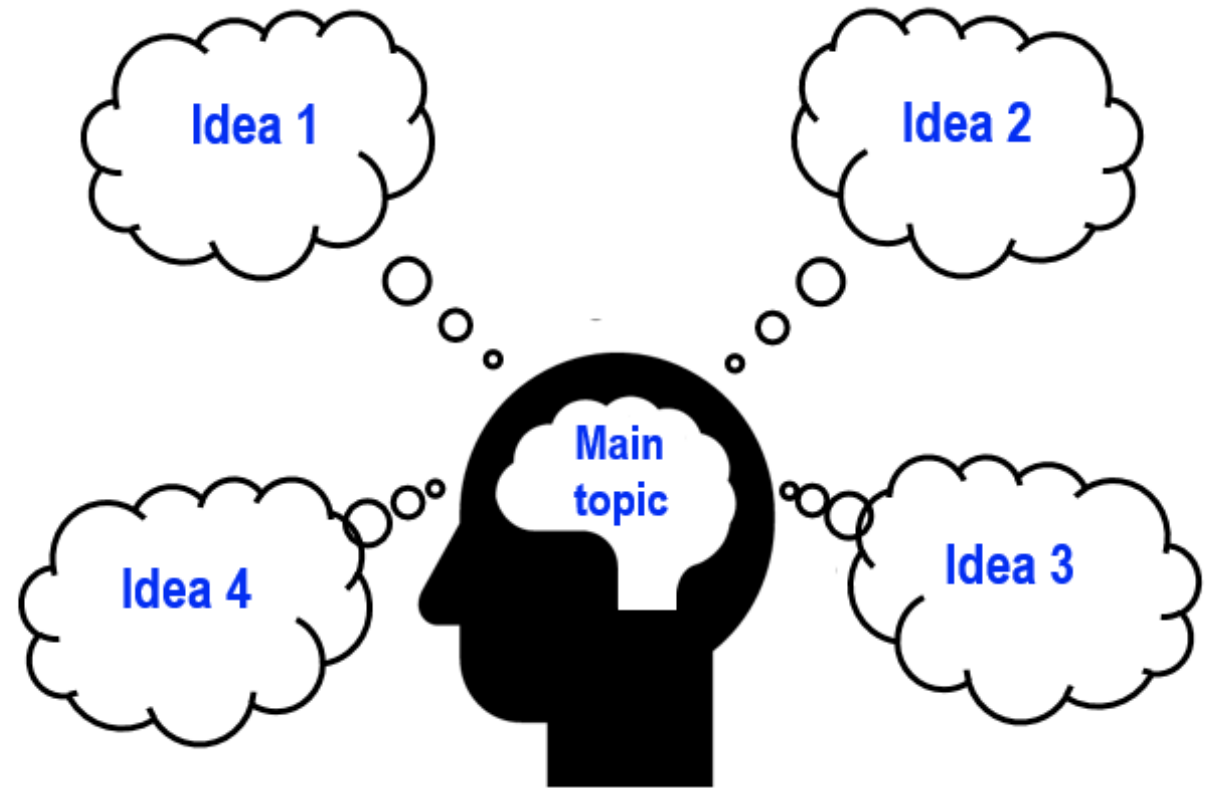
1. Break up larger amounts of information into smaller manageable units.
2. Identify similarities and patterns
3. Make associations to build on previously learned knowledge



MANAGING STUDY STRESS TIPS- NAVIGATING MENTAL FOG

Chunking Tip 1

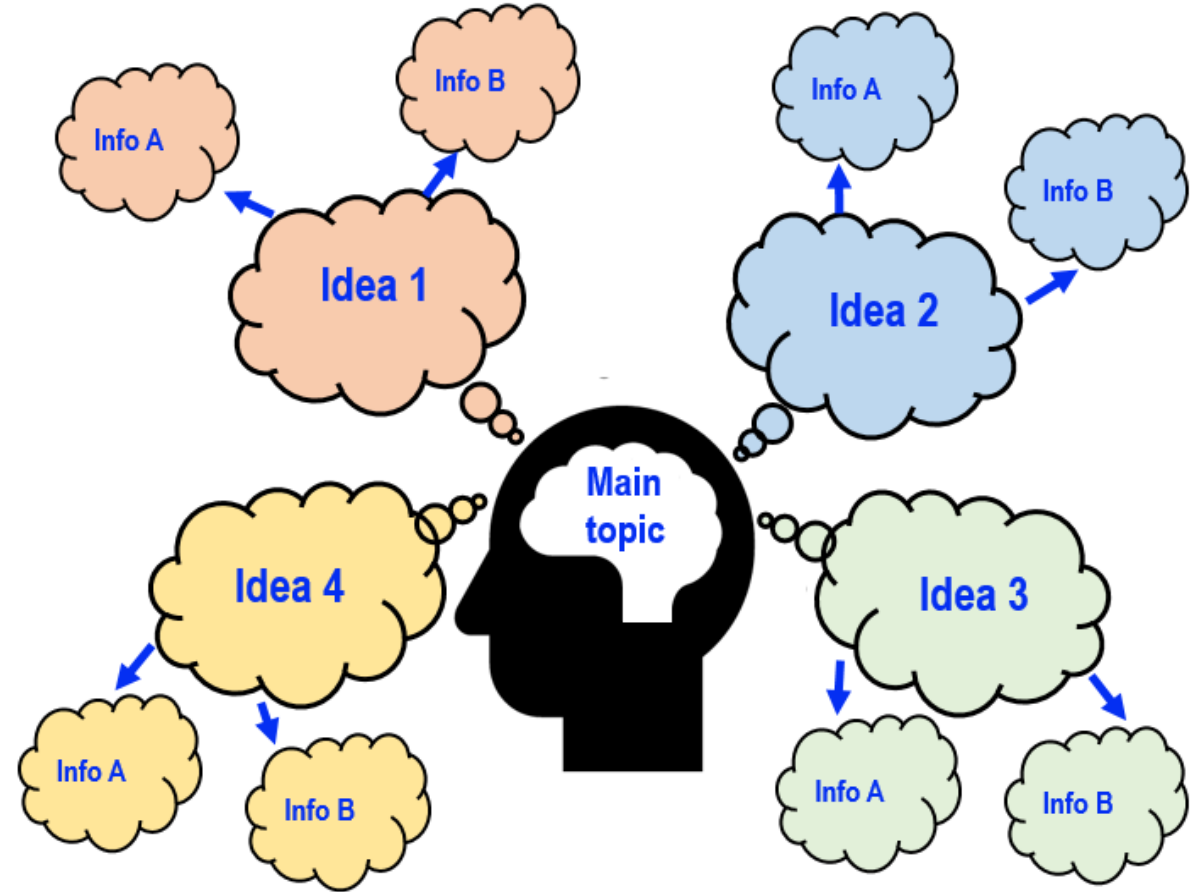
- Group information into manageable units/ideas.
- Break up large texts of information into separate ideas presented in the text.



MANAGING STUDY STRESS TIPS- NAVIGATING MENTAL FOG

Chunking Tip 2

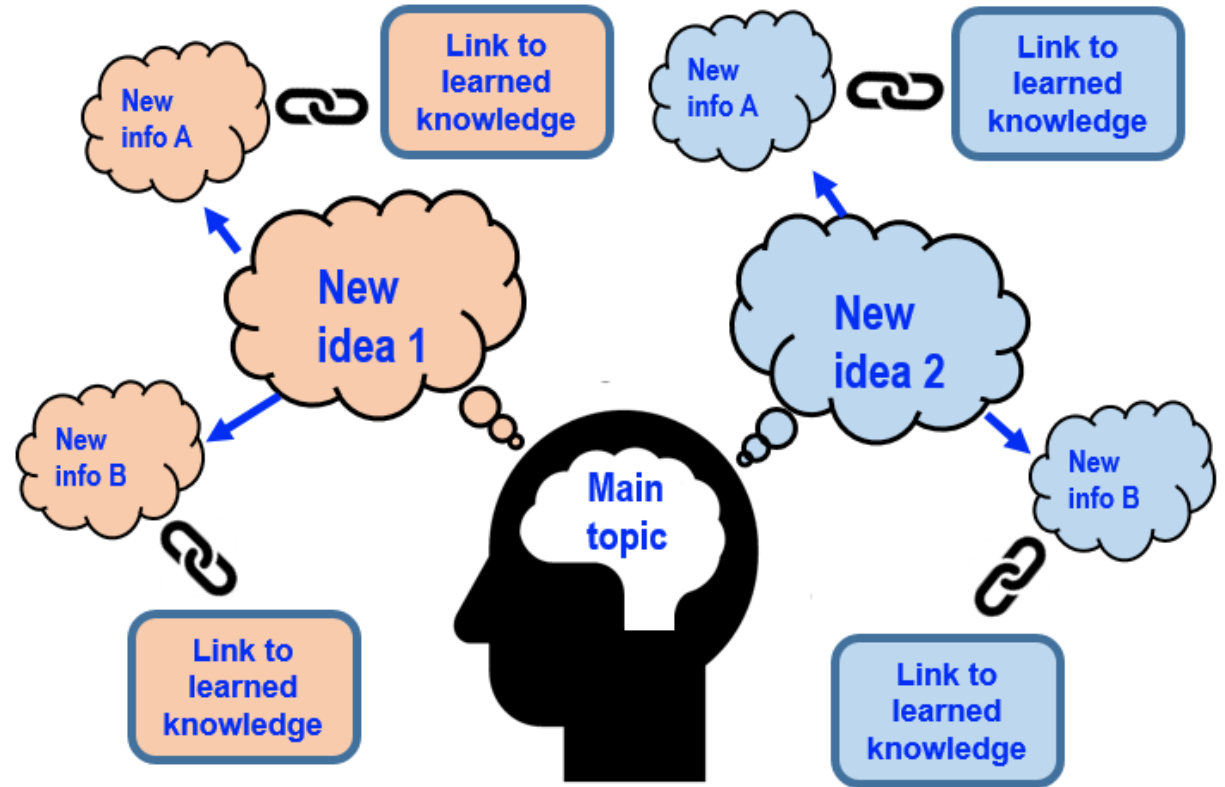
- Identify similarities and patterns
- Look for connections
- Chunk them together



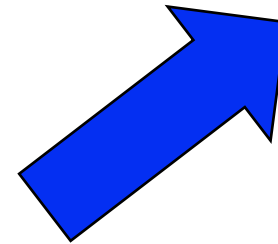
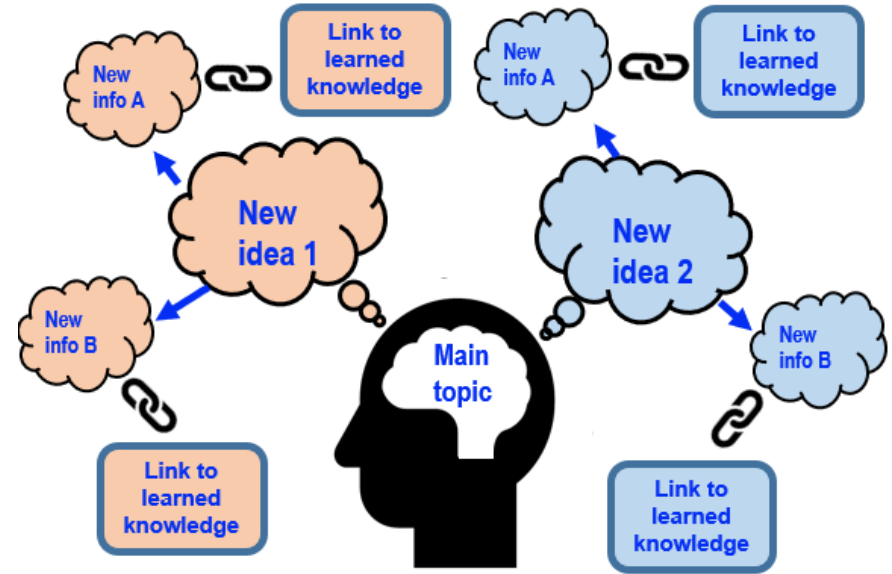
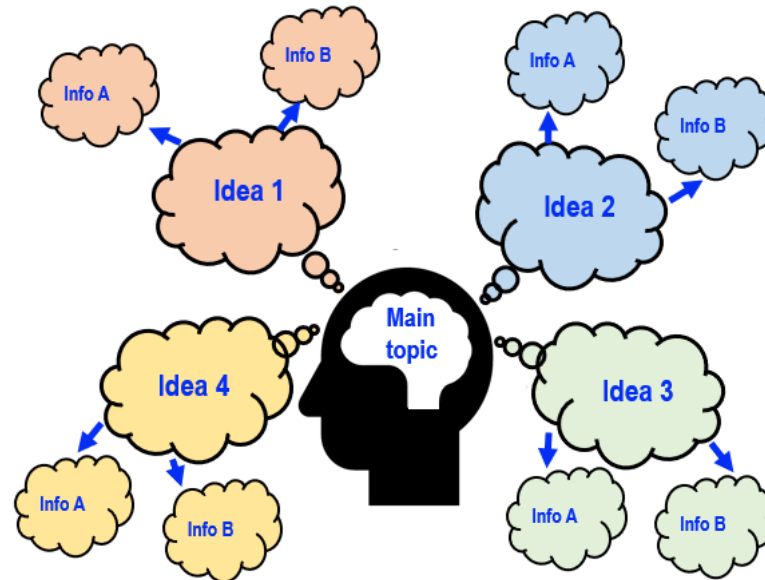
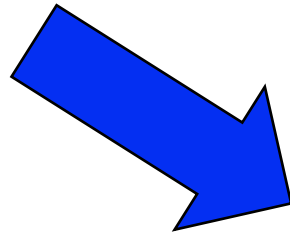
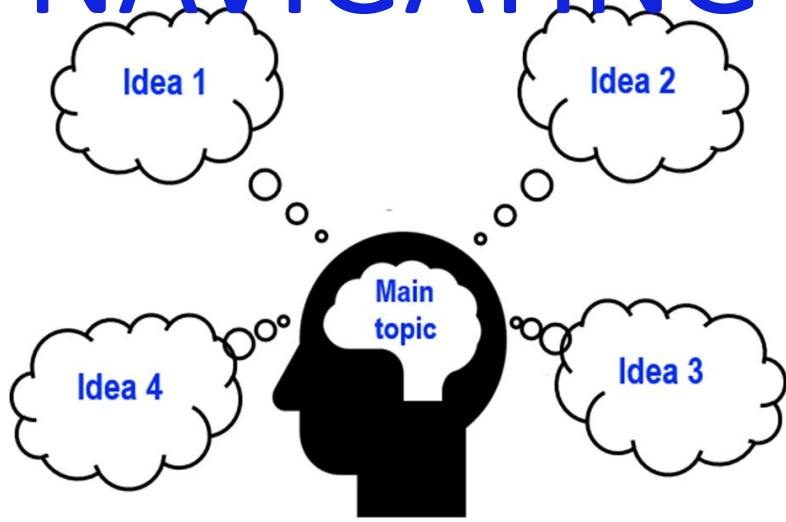
MANAGING STUDY STRESS TIPS- NAVIGATING MENTAL FOG

Chunking Tip 3

- Make associations to previous learning / knowledge
- Link the new information to already learned information.



MANAGING STUDY STRESS TIPS- NAVIGATING MENTAL FOG



MANAGING STUDY STRESS TIPS- MINDFULNESS

1. Mindfulness helps to decrease stress levels in students (Uysal & Çalışkan, 2022).
2. It can decrease negative emotions, reduced amygdala activity, and increase activity in brain regions associated with attention (Goldin & Gross, 2010).
3. Mindfulness can reduce the activity of the default mode network, a brain network linked to self-referential thinking and mind-wandering (Garrison et al., 2015).

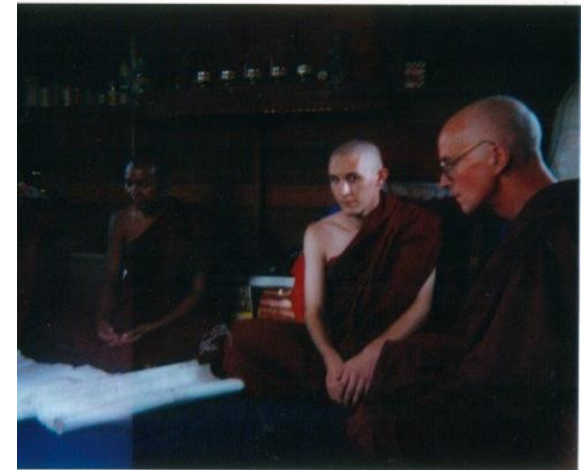
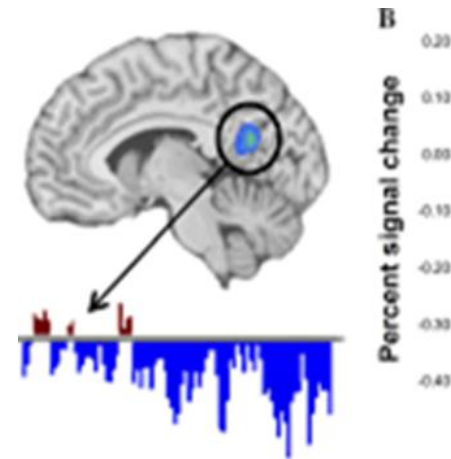


Do you have any experience of mindfulness?

MINDFULNESS

Nick's experience

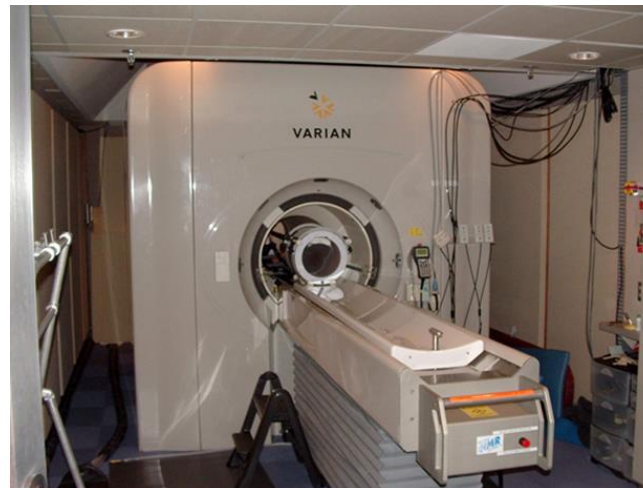
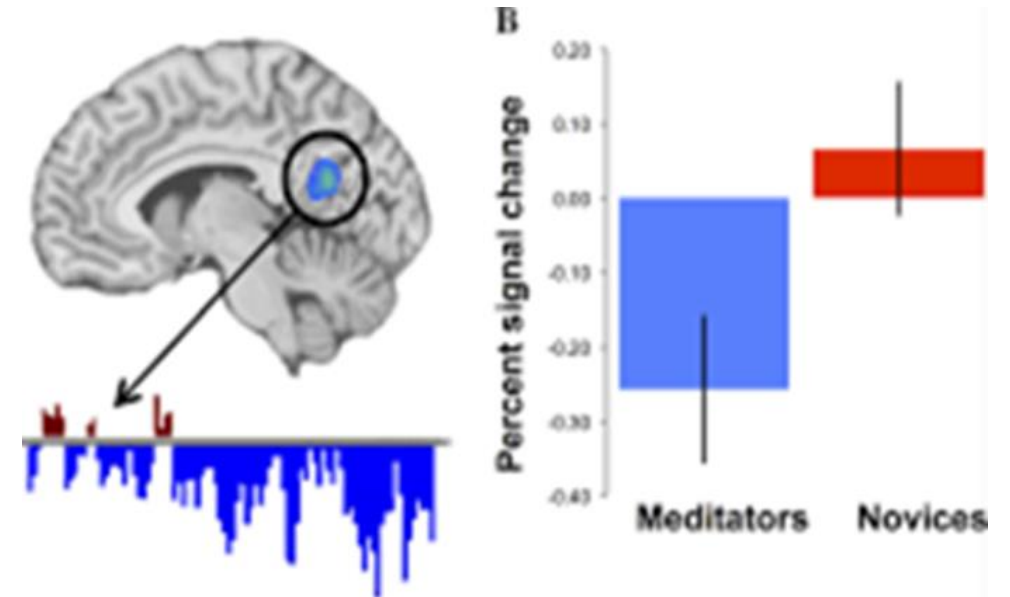
1. Practiced varied meditative & mindfulness techniques over past 20 + years (scanning, noting, mental absorption)
2. 150+ days of intense retreats in Australia, India & Myanmar.
3. Participated in research at Yale University on default mode network & mindfulness.



MINDFULNESS

Research on Default Mode Network (DMN) & mindfulness

1. Brain network associated with self-referential thoughts & mind wandering (Andrews-Hanna et al, 2014)
2. Experienced Mindfulness practitioners show decreased activity in DMN (Brewer et al., 2011).



MINDFULNESS

What is it?

1. Paying attention to...
2. Observing...
3. Looking at...
4. Being curious about...

this moment

Curiosity is important for an effective mindfulness practice (Kashdan et al., 2011).

MINDFULNESS

How do we experience this moment?

1. Paying attention to...
2. Observing...
3. Looking at...
4. Being curious about...

mind & body

Awareness of the physical body leads to better detection of mind wandering tendencies and enhanced cognitive abilities (Kerr et al., 2013).

MINDFULNESS

How do we experience the mind & body?

With the senses:

1. Body/skin: touch - physical sensations
2. Nose: smells
3. Eyes: seeing
4. Tongue: tasting
5. Ears-hearing
6. Mind - thoughts & images



MINDFULNESS

Let's practice!

- Let's observe one sense at a time.
- In the future after becoming familiar with each sense, you can do a choice-less practice.



MINDFULNESS

Body/skin: touch - physical sensations

- How are you experiencing **touch** at the moment?
- What can you feel on your **skin**?
- Can you feel the **touch** of your clothes on your **skin** or the **temperature** of the room?
- Be curious about **touch**.



MINDFULNESS

Body/skin: touch - physical sensations

- Observation of the **touch** of **incoming** and **outgoing breath**.
- Focus on the **touch** of the **breath** at the entrance of the **nostrils** or on the upper **lip**.
- Does the temperature of the incoming breath differ to the out going breath?
- Be curious about your breathing.



MINDFULNESS

Body/skin: touch - physical sensations

- Scanning body parts inside and on the surface.
- From feet to head & from head to feet,
- Move as fast or as slow as your mind allows.
- If there are blind spots, stay a moment, then move on.



**This is mindfulness
of this moment.**



MINDFULNESS

Nose: Smells

- How are you experiencing **smell** in this moment?
- What can you **smell** at this moment?
- How is the experience of **smell**?
- Is the experience of **smell** locatable?
- Be curious about **smell**.



**This is mindfulness
of this moment.**



MINDFULNESS

Eyes: seeing

- How are you experiencing **seeing** at the moment?
- What can you **see** with your **eyes**?
- What can you **see** with your **eyes** closed?
- Movement? Colours?
- Be curious about what you **see**.

Brief 10 minute mindfulness practice can improve attention abilities in novice meditators (Norris, 2018).



**This is mindfulness
of this moment.**



MINDFULNESS

Tongue: tasting

- How are you experiencing **taste** at the moment?
- What can you **taste** with your **tongue**?
- Is the experience of taste locatable?
- Be curious about what you **taste**.

Mindfulness based interventions can help avoid unhealthy eating habits (Hsu & Forestell, 2021).



**This is mindfulness
of this moment.**



MINDFULNESS

Ears: hearing

- How are you experiencing **hearing** at the moment?
- What can you **hear** with your **ears**?
- You can you **hear** my voice. What other things can you **hear** in this very moment?
- Be curious about what you are **hearing**.

Mindfulness of one's body can develop listening skills (Schaefer, 2018) and a heightened ability to maintain attention on sounds (Diaz, 2015).



**This is mindfulness
of this moment.**



MINDFULNESS

Mind: thoughts / images

- How are you experiencing **thoughts / images** at the moment?
- Pay attention to the next **thought** or **mental image** you have.
- Wait for it to appear.
- Be curious about what you **thoughts & images**.

Mindfulness of thoughts can reduce negative self-referential thoughts, beliefs and worry (Gkika & Wells, 2015).



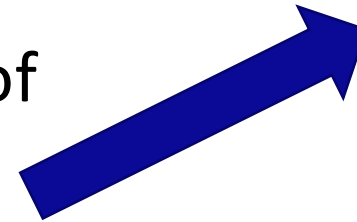
**This is mindfulness
of this moment.**



MINDFULNESS

What about distractions?

- Any distraction will be one or more of the 6 aspects of experience, so include the distractions as just more to be mindful of.
- Use awareness of the incoming and outgoing breath as an anchor.



Mindfulness improves memory and reduces mind wandering tendencies (Mrazek et al., 2013; Giannandrea, 2019).

MINDFULNESS

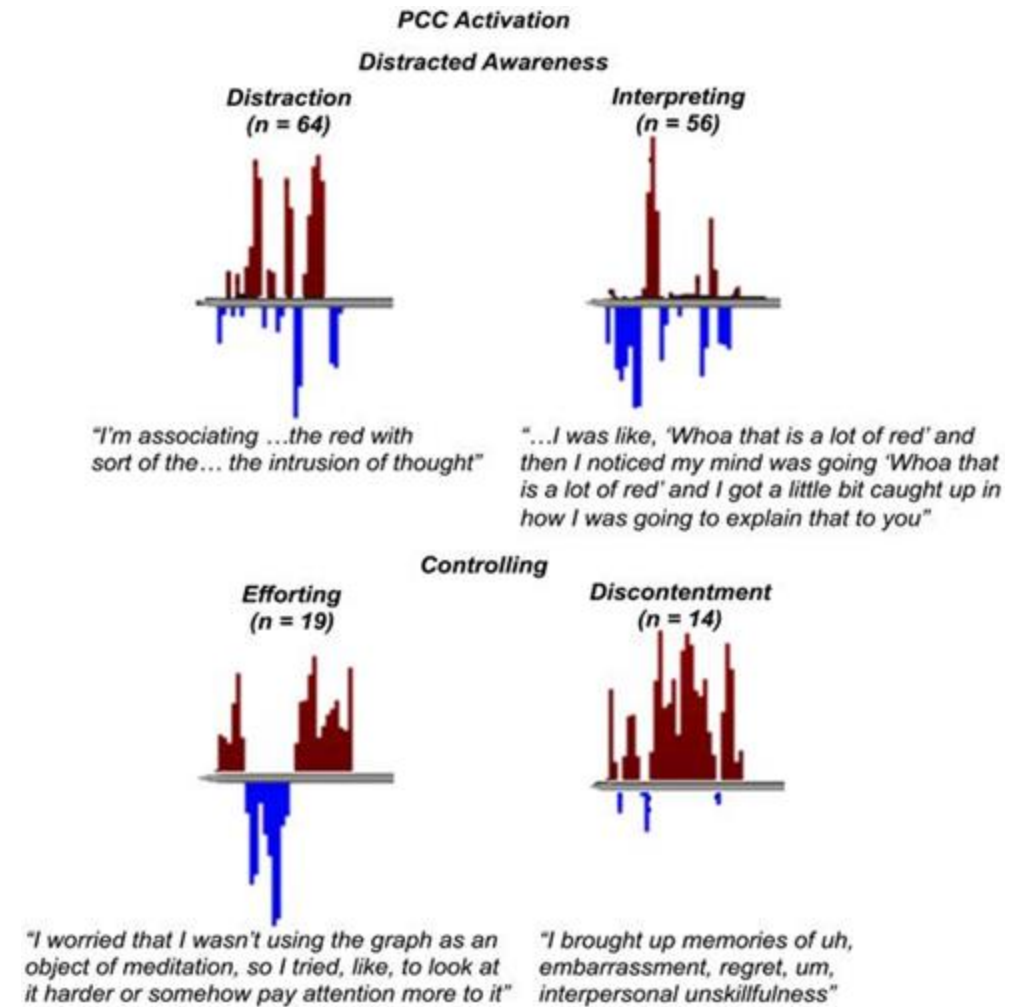
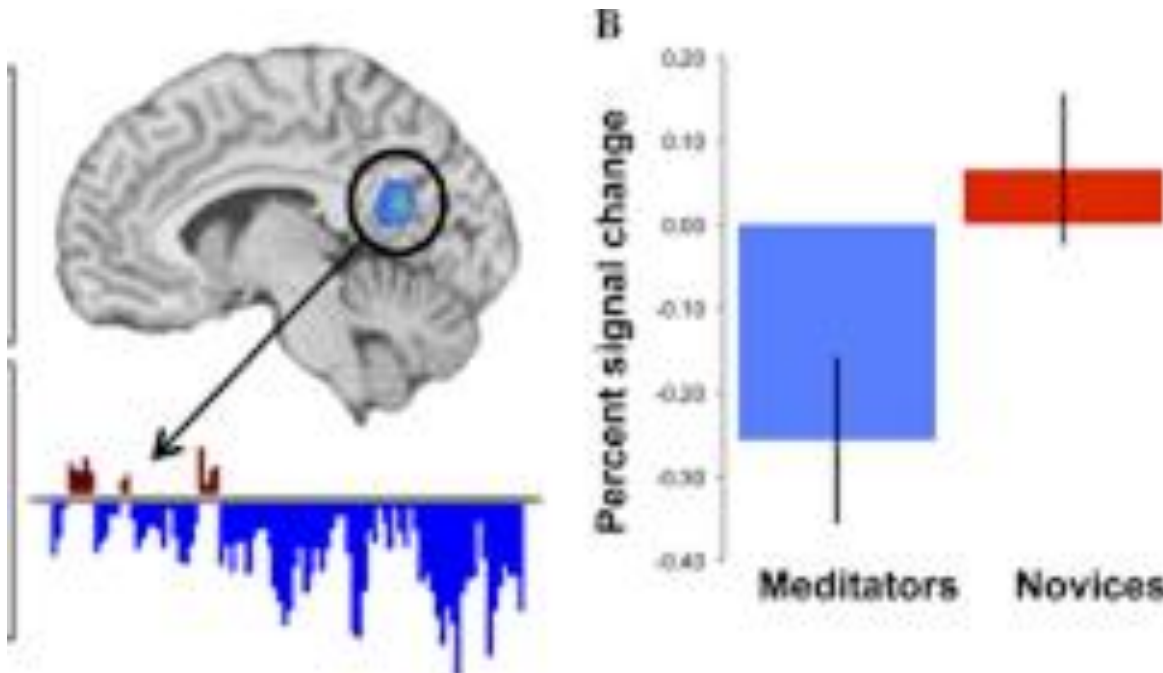
Extra tip-mental labels

- Putting negative feelings into words can regulate and reduce the stress associated with them (Torre & Lieberman, 2018).
- Mentally labelling one's experience, specifically emotional feelings can interrupt the amygdala and reduce the stress associated with a negative feeling (Lieberman et al., 2007).



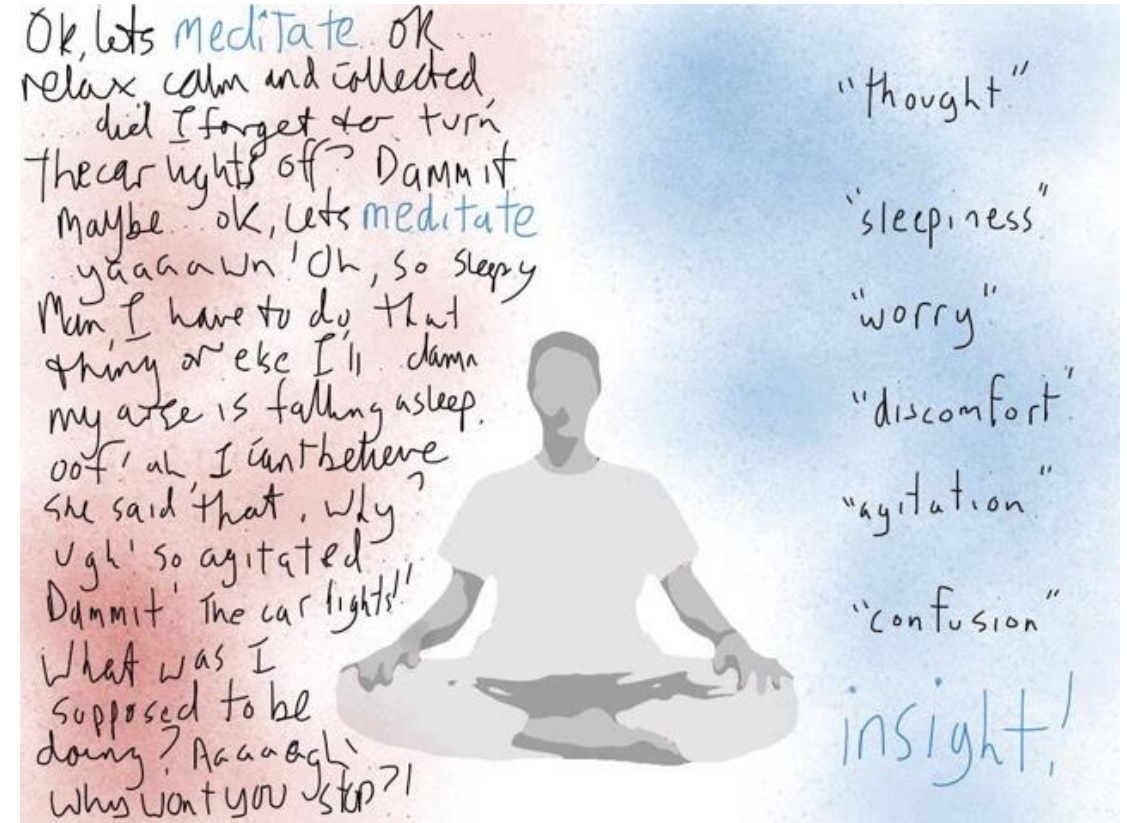
MINDFULNESS

Research on default mode network (DMN) & mindfulness



FURTHER RESOURCES

- What is mindfulness?:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yhtxSgr06il>
- Neuroscience of mindfulness:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vo_VANW35b0
- Get out of your own way TED talk:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jE1j5Om7g0U>
- Hack your default mode network:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FAcTlrA2Qhk>
- Mindfulness during the pandemic:
<https://www.tenpercent.com/coronavirussanityguide>
- Achieving Study/Life Balance webinar:
<https://sls.navitas-professional.edu.au/achieving-studylife-balance>
- Managing online study webinar: <https://sls.navitas-professional.edu.au/managing-online-study>



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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Q/A Discussion forum Direct message In the class space Email educator 	LearningHub@acap.edu.au	Email: studentcentral@acap.edu.au Phone: 1800 061 199 Online Chat Service: via student portal or ACAP website	Email: helpdesk@acap.edu.au	feesandloans@acap.edu.au

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