

The Mindset Toolkit

Seven tricks and strategies used by high performing students in GCSE, A level and undergraduate study

About me

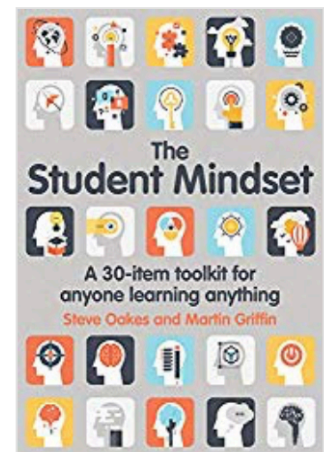
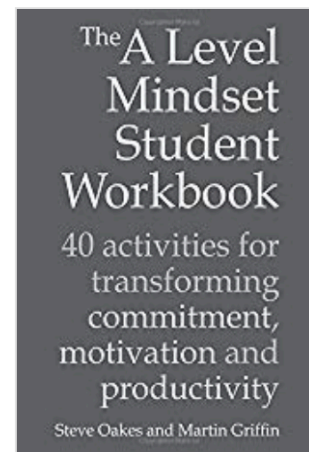
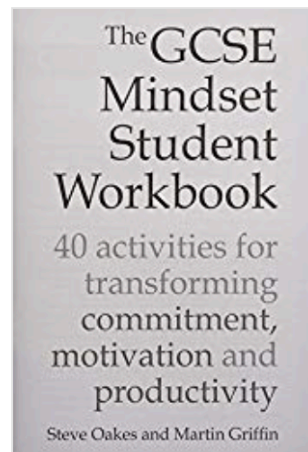
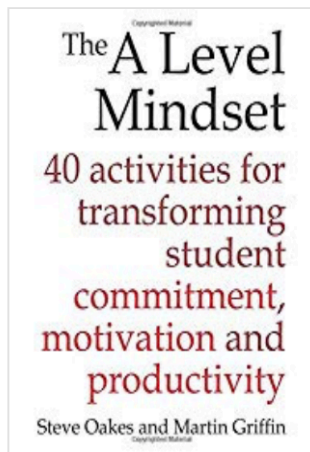
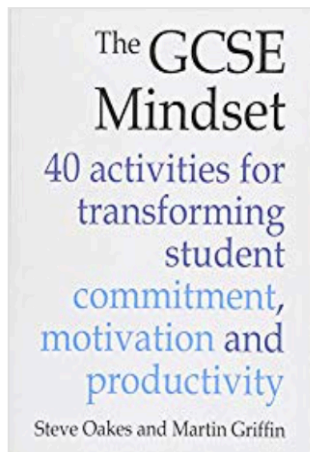
Steve Oakes

Teacher – GCSE and A Level, 20 years

Head of Department, Head of Year

Assistant Director of Sixth Form

Associate Lecturer MMU, Researcher, Author, Education Trainer



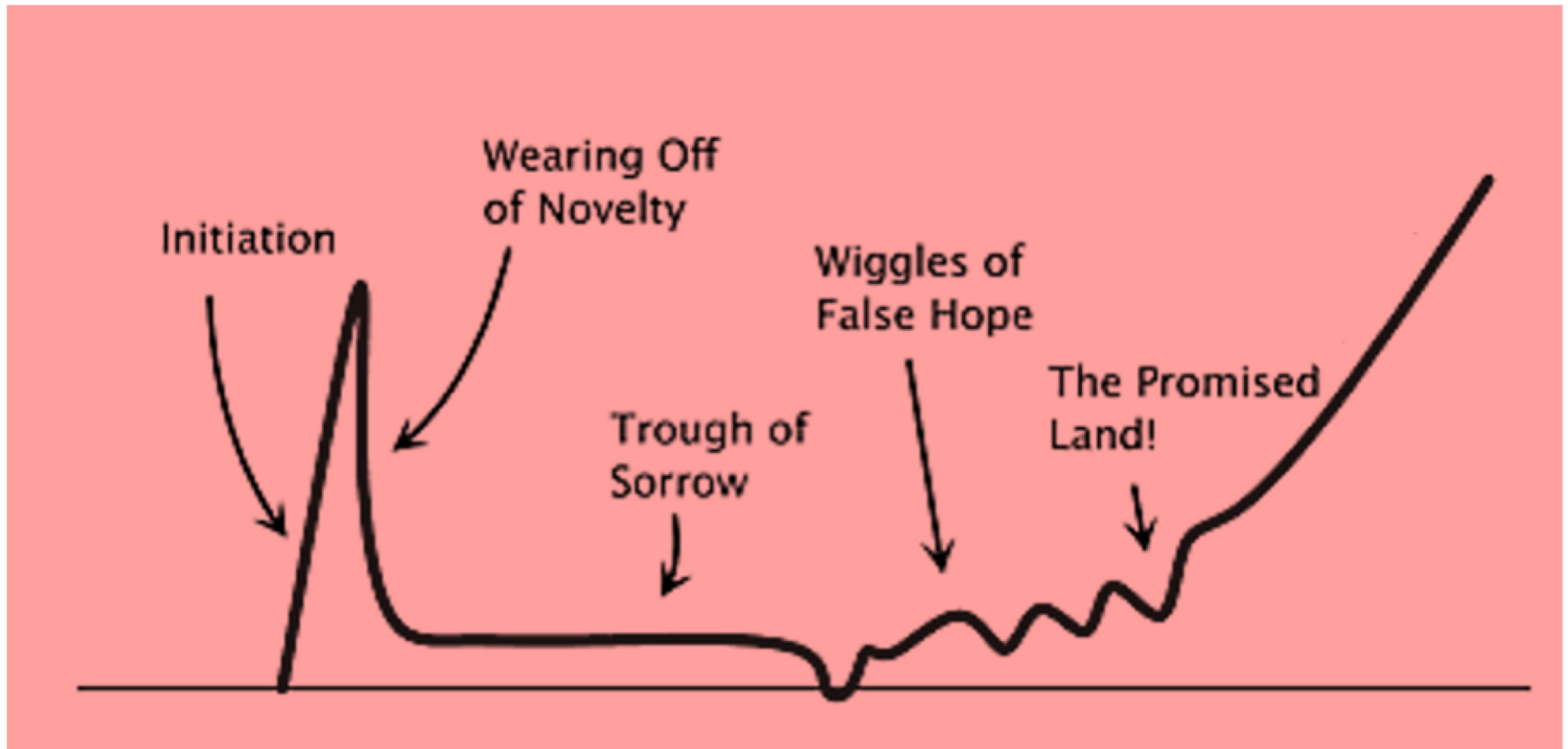
The family



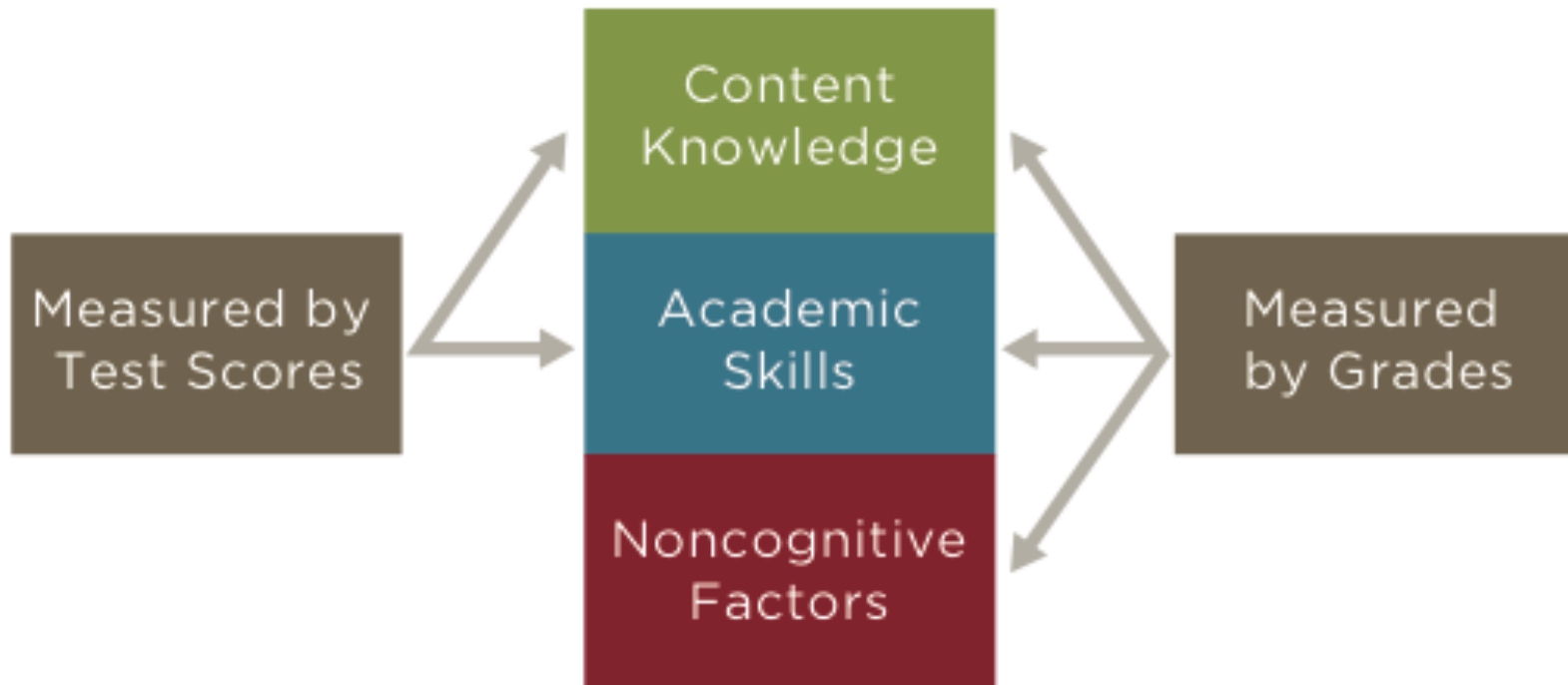
Aims of the Session

- To share a **menu** of seven activities associated with high performance
- To explore each one, experiment with each one and decide which might help us improve
- To make some manageable changes to the way we work

The Process (Graham)



Factors Measured by Test Scores versus Grades



What are the characteristics of high-performing students?

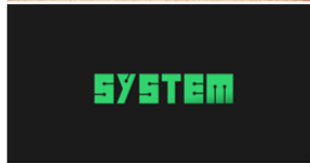




Vision: How well do you know what you want to achieve?



Effort: How many hours of independent work do you do?



Systems: How do you organise your learning and organise your time?



Practice: What kind of work do you do to practise your skills?



Attitude: How do you respond to setbacks?

The Magnificent Seven

1. Write down the grades you want
2. Share your goals with others, visualise success, record your progress, reward yourself for trying
3. Work in 'indistractable spaces' & create routines
4. Use high utility revision techniques
5. Complete verbal recaps when reading
6. Closed-book notetaking
7. Test yourself

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DOES THE NATURE OF GOAL-SETTING AFFECT OUTCOMES?

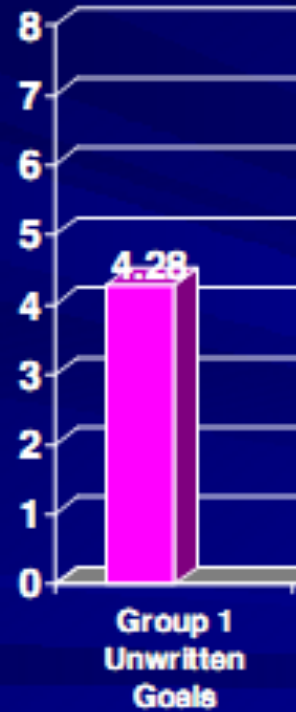
150 participants took part...

Group 1 were simply asked to **think about their goals** (what they wanted to accomplish over the next 4 weeks) and reflect on its challenges

Group 2 were asked to **write (type into the online survey) their goals** and then to reflect on the challenges they faced in writing

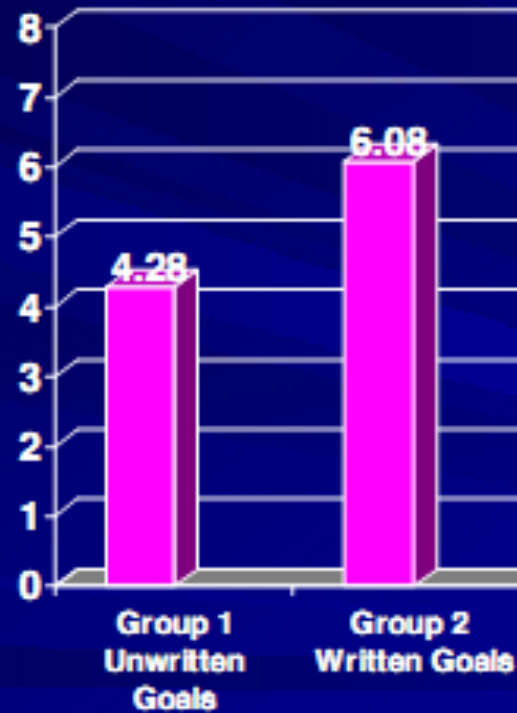
Results:

Mean Goal Achievement



Results:

Mean Goal Achievement



What grades do you want this summer?



Low

“I’ve never really thought about it.”

“Whatever. My mum says everything happens for a reason.”

“I’ll be happy if I just pass them.”

“I’d like some good grades.”

“I really want good grades. Especially in Maths.”

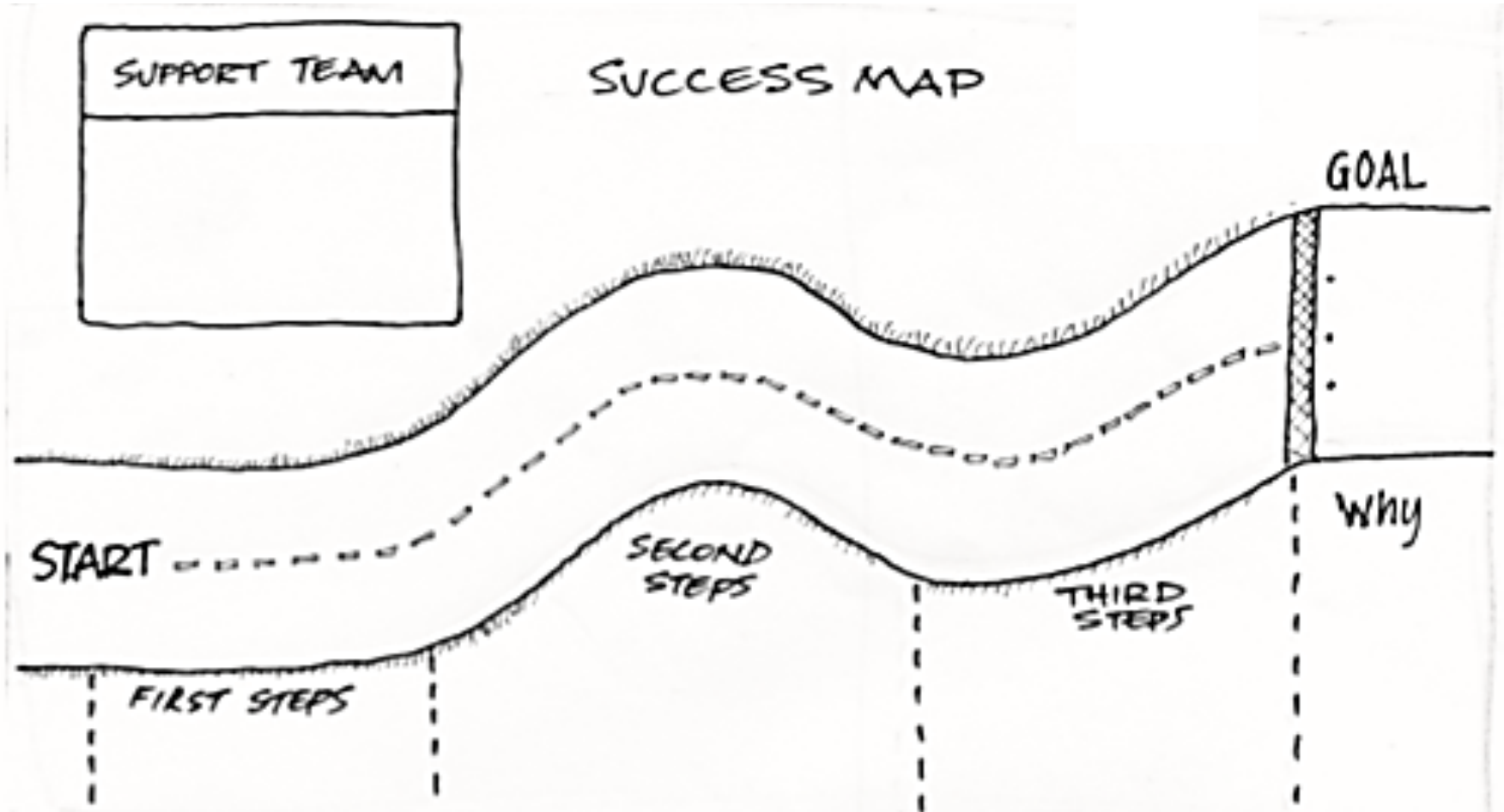
“I need a 7 in English. The others just need to be good.”

“Three 8s, three 7s, 4 6s. Roughly.”

“OK. English, 8. Maths, 7. French, 7....”

High

The Road Map





Write Down The Grades You Want This Summer
Plan your route



Richard Wiseman
Professor,
University of
Hertfordshire

	When aiming for certain grades in my summer exams I will...	Yes	No
1	Make a step-by-step plan for what to do		
2	Motivate myself by focussing on a role model I admire		
3	Tell other people about my goals		
4	Visualise the bad things that will happen if I fail to achieve the grades I want		
5	Visualise the good things that will happen if I achieve the grades I want		
6	Try to suppress or ignore unhelpful temptations or thoughts		
7	Reward myself each time I work hard and make progress towards my grades		
8	Rely on my willpower		
9	Record the progress I'm making on a chart or in a journal		
10	Fantasise about how wonderful it will be if I get the grades I want		

2

Share Your Goal With Others, Visualise Success,
Record Your Progress, Reward Yourself for Trying

‘The Wiseman Techniques’

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40 activities for
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IT'S ALL ABOUT THE EFFORT

The A Level Mindset

40 activities for transforming student commitment, motivation and productivity

Steve Oakes and Martin Griffin

The GCSE Mindset

40 activities for transforming student commitment, motivation and productivity

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The report says: "The major finding arising from the present study is that none of the school level variables used in our analysis contributes to the explanation of pupils' aspirations for higher education.

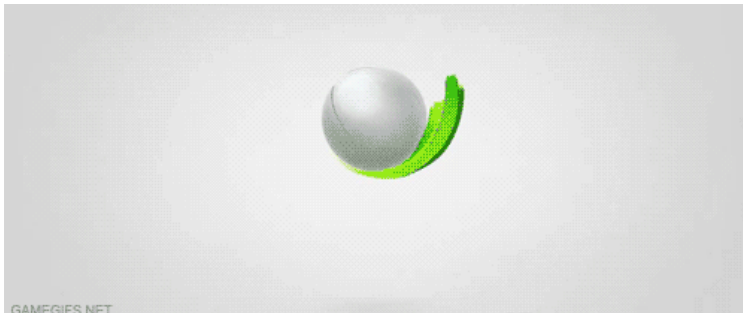
"In other words, pupils who have similar individual characteristics but attend different schools will likely hold similar aspirations for higher education.

"An important finding arising from the present study is that parents can influence their child's aspirations by expressing their expectations regarding the child's educational path and by providing the basic conditions for completing homework and learning (ie a desk to work on).

"From an equal-opportunity standpoint, it is encouraging that parental employment and educational status did not predict pupils' aspirations."



High Effort Spaces



Becoming Indistractable

External triggers	Internal triggers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Phone alerts for text messages, updates, likes, new videos... • The behaviour of those around you – people coming to chat, ask questions • TV in the background • Radio stations, music... <p>Others?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hunger • Thirst • Loneliness • Boredom • Insecurity • Negative self-talk (“What’s the point? Why do I even have to do it? This task is stupid!”) <p>Others?</p>
A possible solution:	A possible solution:
Use ‘indistractable spaces’	Use ‘indistractable routines’

The Ten Minute Rule



Light Sprint:

25 on, 25 off, 25 on.

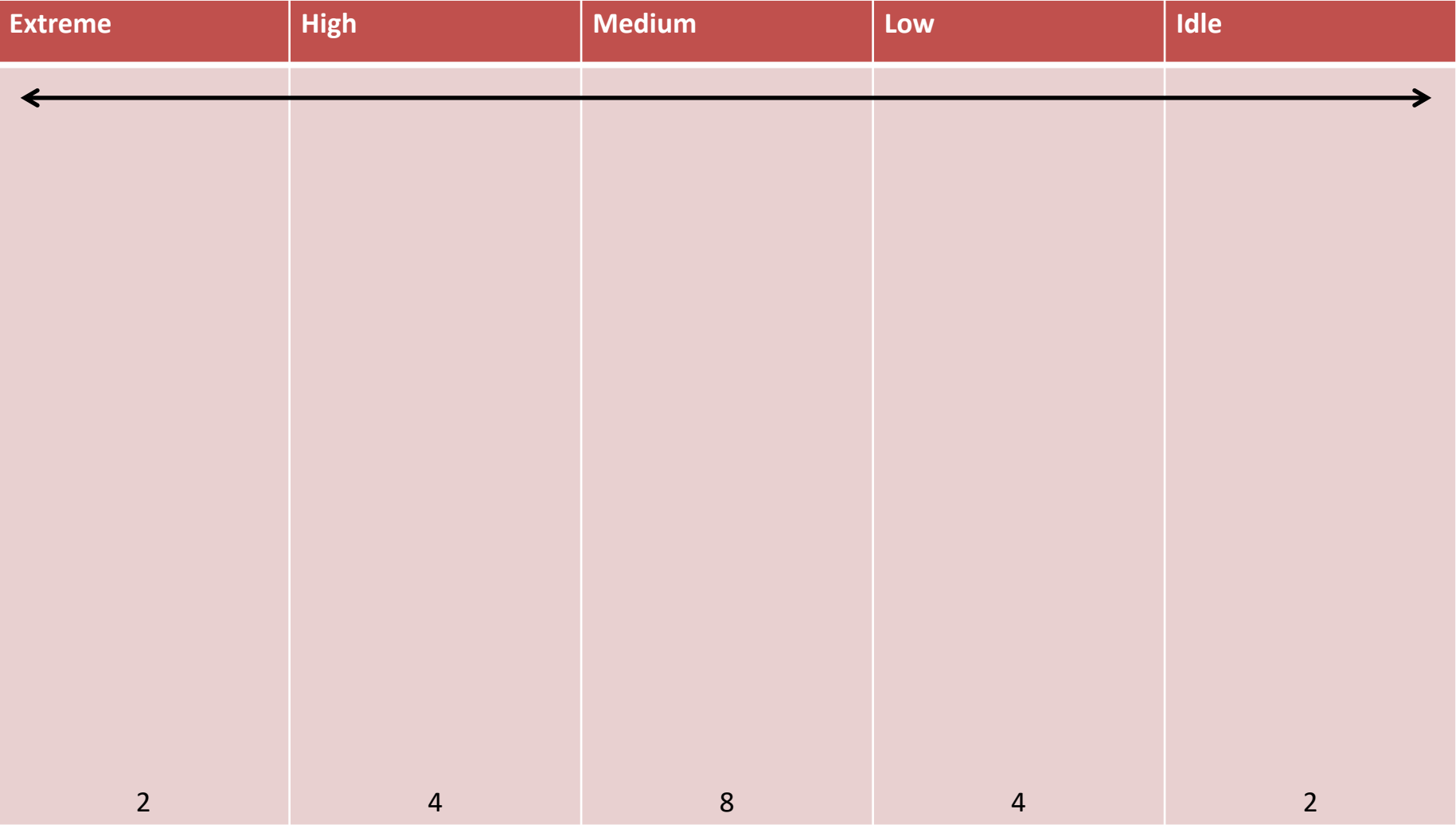
Total time = 1 hr 15 mins

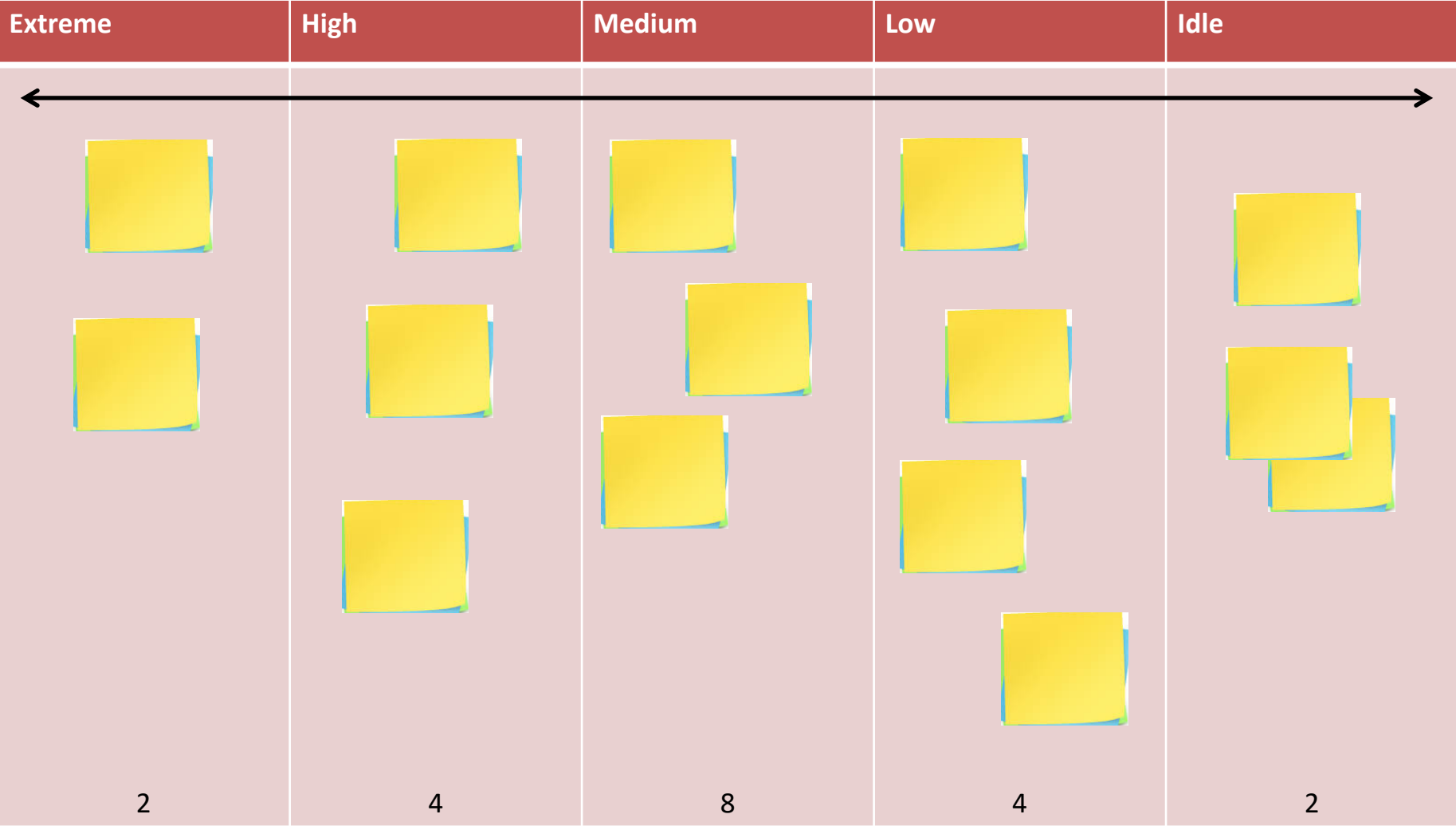
Serious Sprint:

25 on, 5 off, 25 on, 5 off, 25 on, 5 off

Total time = 1 hr 30 mins



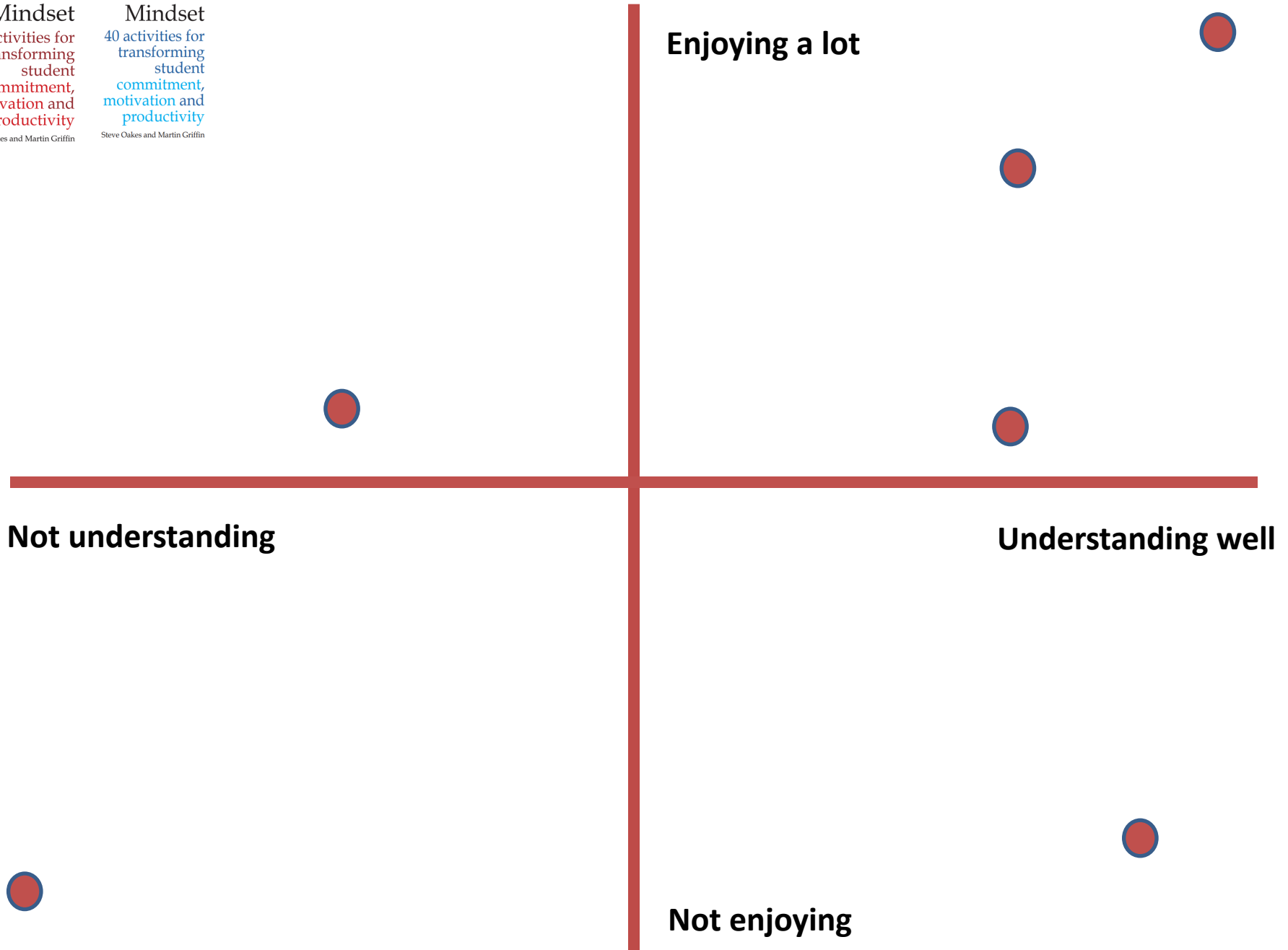




Three Types of Attention (Alcott)

Proactive attention	Active attention	Inactive attention
“fully focused, fired up, feeling fresh”	“plugged in, ticking along nicely”	“flagging” “fried” “foggy”

	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat	Sun
8-10am							
10-12							
1-3pm							
3-5pm							
6-8pm							
8-10pm							



Mission and Medal

	Before school (early morning – 7–8.30am)	During school (morning and early afternoon – 9am–3pm)	After school (twilight – 4–5.30pm)	Evening (7–9.30pm)
Monday				
Mission:				
Medal:				
Tuesday				
Mission:				
Medal:				
Wednesday				
Mission:				
BONUS medal:				

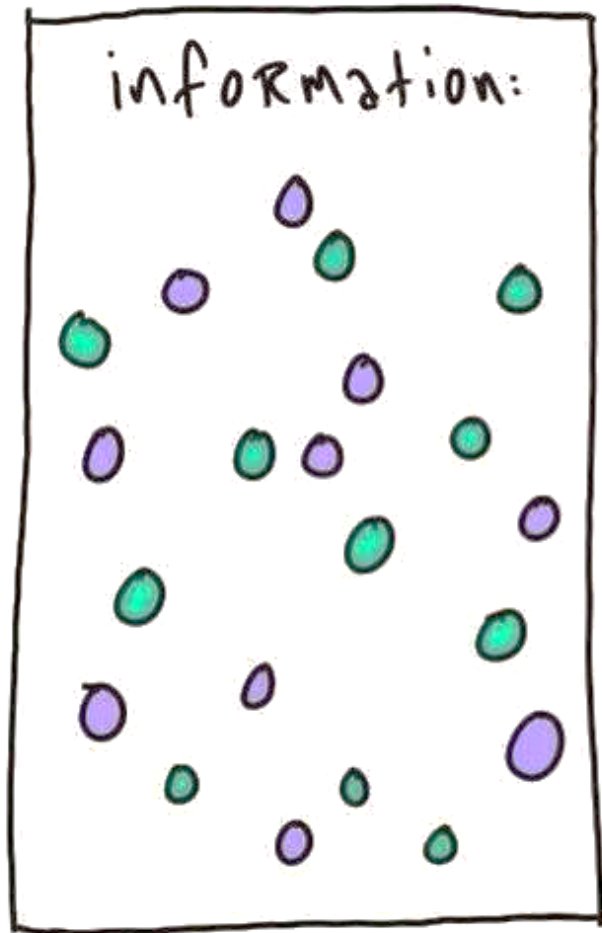


Create Indistractable Spaces
&
Routines

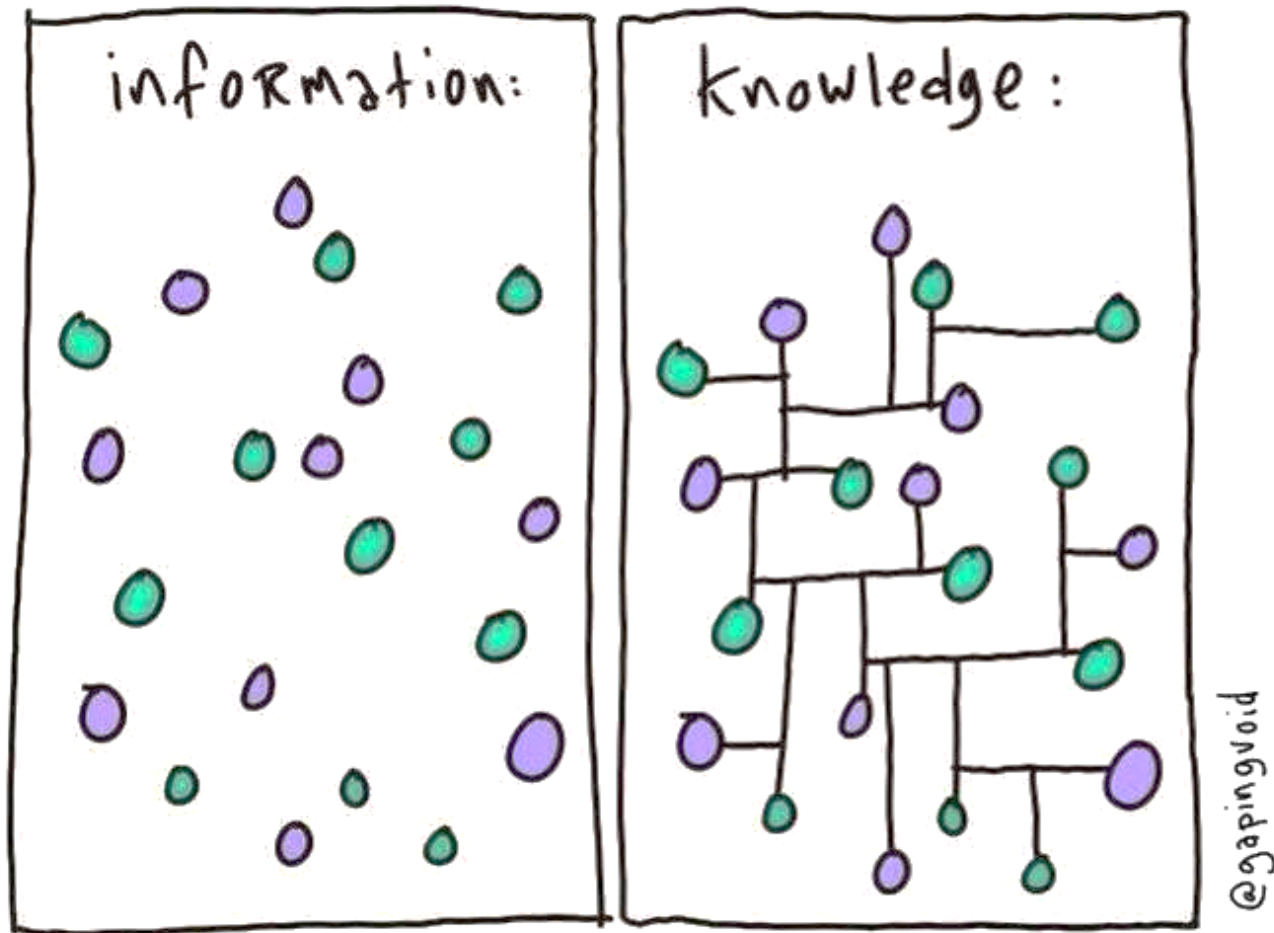


PRACTICE

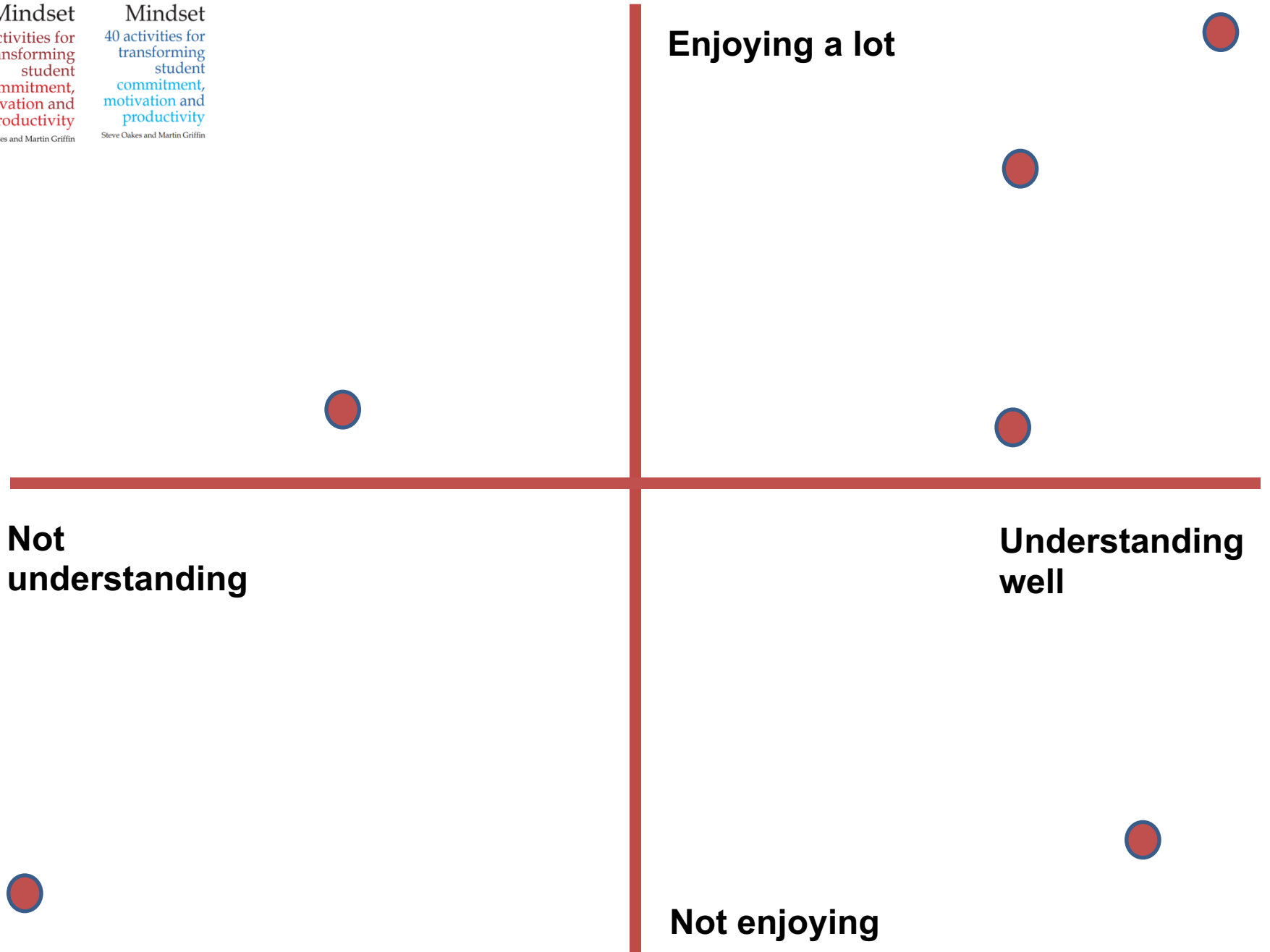
Rehearse, Perform, Repeat



Collecting and Shaping



Collecting and Shaping ➡ Using; doing; performing





John Dunlosky

Professor, Kent State University

“Each minute spent highlighting and re-reading notes is 60 seconds not spent doing something more effective”

- A** Creating phrases, songs or lists to recall information
- B** Spacing practice out – revisiting topics every few weeks
- C** Writing summaries of information
- D** Teaching someone else the topic
- E** Writing out explanations of complex ideas
- F** Re-reading notes
- G** Moving from topic to topic while revising – snacking rather than bingeing
- H** Reading whilst highlighting key terms
- I** Practice tests (Retrieval practice)
- J** Turning information into images

I Practice tests (Retrieval practice)

B Spacing practice out – revisiting topics every few weeks

D Teaching someone else the topic

High Utility

E Writing out explanations of complex ideas

G Moving from topic to topic while revising – snacking rather than bingeing

C Writing summaries of information

H Reading whilst highlighting key terms

Moderate Utility

A Creating phrases, songs or lists to recall information

J Turning information into images

F Re-reading notes

Low Utility



1.	Practice tests (Retrieval practice) (HIGH)
2.	Spacing practice out – revisiting topics every few weeks (HIGH)
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7.	Reading whilst highlighting key terms (MED)
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9.	Turning information into images (LOW)
10.	Re-reading notes (LOW)



Use High Utility Revision Techniques



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Combine reading, highlighting and notetaking
with high utility techniques!



Verbal Recaps

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Cal Newport
Associate Professor,
Georgetown
University

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Verbal Recaps

1. Close the book.
2. Calm your mind for a second and think – *what did I just read?*
3. Now talk aloud, summarising in your own words and in complete sentences, exactly what you've just been reading.

Choose one of these starters to get you going if it helps:

- “The writer has just been explaining that...”
- “This section explores...”
- “The important idea here is that...”
- “This page outlines the importance of...”
- “The writer’s argument here is that...”
- “I’ve been reading about how...”
- “I’ve learnt that...”



Closed-book Notetaking

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Closed-book Notetaking: a retrieval practice study technique in five steps

First, you'll need to choose something you want to learn. You'll need a section of textbook – not too long – or a study guide or some notes you've already made. Once you've chosen what you're aiming to learn, here's what to do:

1. Read the section of textbook/information *without taking notes*. Just highlight key ideas – really connect and concentrate as you read and highlight.
2. Now close the book/put the notes away. If you want, try a verbal recap at this point!
3. Now write notes on the section you've just covered without looking at the information! It will feel hard. You might get frustrated. You won't be able to remember everything. No problem; leave lots of space to add forgotten information. Scatter the notes around the page with subheadings and leave lots of white paper.
4. When you're done, open the book or turn over the notes. Re-read once, then close the book again. Now note-take for a second time but...
5. ...add the stuff you missed or forgot in another colour, filling the white space you left first time around.

And that's it. This approach will be more effective than reading the material four times. You might even finish more quickly than you would have doing four re-reads.

Of course, it will feel harder than just re-reading. It's not as comfortable, and you might feel exhausted by the end. But you'll perform better in tests and exams if you make this part of your weekly study!

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Test Your Future Self

What Should Your Test Look Like?

Mostly that's up to you, but we'd make the following suggestions:

1. Use the question, "If my future self recalled this material perfectly, what would they know?" and make a list of the things to include in your test.
2. Start with easy questions and move on to harder ones. Leave the toughest questions until last. These can be the questions that might build on all the others.
3. Consider asking definition questions early, using the words "What" or "when" to start your questions. Get the basics sorted.
4. Think about moving towards harder question-words as you go along. "How" or "Why" will require your future self to do some explaining, so leave those until the end.
5. Consider finishing with a tricky question which replicates something a real exam might ask you.
6. Make a note of what kind of test-score would make you happy with your future self. It doesn't have to be 10/10 – maybe you'll be pleased if you score 7 or above.

And that's it – ten minutes' work that means the next time you revisit this topic, you can begin with a ready-made test to check what you remember.

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Learning Content...

Reading short sections and completing verbal recaps

Closing the book/notes and completing a closed-book notetaking challenge

Checking your book/notes, then closing them and doing a second cycle of closed-book notetaking

Setting yourself a test for next time

Spacing out your revisits

In conclusion...

1. Write down the grades you want
2. Share your goals with others, visualise success, record your progress, reward yourself for trying
3. Work in 'indistractable spaces'
4. Use high utility revision techniques
5. Complete verbal recaps when reading
6. Try closed-book notetaking
7. Test yourself

Questions

For those that are more visual and work well with diagrams rather than words, what ways can they revise?

Any tips for revising with more practical subjects?

When would you start with these techniques?

Coping under the stress of exams? Any practical tips?

Any questions?
[@vespamindset](#)

