If we want to educate innovative engineers, we need to rethink the tools we are using in our engineering classrooms.

The current paradigm in engineering education promotes linear, convergent thinking focused on gaining technical knowledge. Although convergent thinking is important, divergent thinking is critical to considering the context in which engineering problems are situated and to generating innovative approaches to address those problems. Mindfulness fosters divergent thinking and can be cultivated through practice. This talk presents research linking mindfulness to three engineering outcomes: divergent thinking in an idea generation task, divergent thinking in an engineering problem scoping task, and one's confidence in his/her ability to be innovative.