

Habits of Mind Reference Page

Arthur Costa, Bena Kallick, Robert Ennis and others have identified attitudes, dispositions, and habits of mind that are shared by good thinkers and successful individuals across disciplines; see below for a partial list.* By developing these same “intelligent behaviors” in our classrooms, we can help our students become better, more critical thinkers who have the capacity to excel in all content areas.

- Persevering through challenges
- Thinking about thinking (metacognition)
- Listening to others with understanding and empathy
- Gathering data using all senses
- Managing impulsivity; thinking things through and developing plans
- Applying past knowledge to new situations
- Thinking interdependently
- Creating, imagining, and innovating
- Striving for accuracy
- Being curious, passionate, and excited about learning
- Thinking and communicating with clarity and precision
- Generating, asking, and investigating thoughtful questions
- Evaluating the quality of ideas and information; being skeptical
- Seeking out reasons, explanations, and evidence (asking “why”)
- Caring that beliefs are true and that positions/decisions are supported by evidence
- Looking for alternatives and exploring possibilities (thinking flexibly)
- Keeping an open mind; considering viewpoints other than one’s own
- Being sensitive to other people’s feelings, level of knowledge, and degree of sophistication
- Reading closely and critically

Note: Mathematics teachers (as well as teachers in other disciplines) may want to supplement this list with the eight habits of mind that are outlined in the Common Core Standards for Mathematical Practice:

- Making sense of problems and persevering in solving them
- Reasoning abstractly and quantitatively
- Constructing viable arguments and critiquing the reasoning of others
- Modeling with mathematics
- Using appropriate tools strategically
- Attending to precision
- Looking for and making use of structure
- Looking for and expressing regularity in repeated reasoning

*Costa, A. L., & Kallick, B. (Eds.). (2008). *Learning and Leading with Habits of Mind: 16 Essential Characteristics for Success*. Alexandria, VA: ASCD; Ennis, R. (1987). A Taxonomy of Critical Thinking Dispositions and Abilities. In J. B. Baron & R. J. Sternberg (Eds.), *Teaching Thinking Skills: Theory and Practice*. New York: W. H. Freeman.

