



Action Tool 1: Exploring the Meaning of Habits of Mind with Teachers

PURPOSE OF THIS TOOL

A good starting point when introducing Habits of Mind into a school is to first introduce the habits to teachers and staff. The experience will be more powerful for students if teachers develop a deep understanding and appreciation of the habits themselves before they present them to students. They may have numerous initial questions: What do these habits mean? How will they work with my age group or in my subject? How can I put the model into practice? Rather than answering the questions, begin with the Y-Chart activity in this tool.

The resources in this action tool will enable participants to

- Identify the 16 Habits of Mind.
- Explore several Habits of Mind for personal meaning.
- Define each Habit of Mind and identify appropriate uses.
- Prepare to model the 16 Habits of Mind to students.
- Prepare to recognize the habits in students.

HOW TO USE THIS TOOL

This tool presents a series of resources that can be used to introduce and reinforce for teachers the meaning of the 16 Habits of Mind. The following is the suggested sequence for exploring these habits, as well as a list of resources included to support this process:

- Summary of 16 Habits of Mind handout (Introductory Activity)
- Y-Chart worksheet (Introductory Activity)
- Defining Habits of Mind worksheet (Core Activity)
- Discussion (Reflection Activity)
- Describing 16 Habits of Mind (Extension Activity)

The activities and tasks included in this tool should take about 60 minutes to complete. You will need the following materials:

- Summary of 16 Habits of Mind (Appendix B)
- Describing 16 Habits of Mind (Appendix A)

TIPS AND VARIATIONS

1. Introductory Activity

- Distribute the list of the 16 Habits of Mind. Read the names of the habits but do not discuss them yet.
- Have teachers form small groups. Assign the Habits of Mind to each group such that every group has at least one habit to consider, and all of the habits are covered. For instance, if you have four groups, each group will have four habits to consider.
- Give each group one copy of the Y-Chart worksheet (page XX) for each Habit of Mind they are considering; for example, if each group has four habits, they will need four copies of the worksheet. (Alternatively, teachers could write information for each of their Habits of Mind on one sheet.)
- Ask the groups to use the chart to unpack the meaning of their assigned Habits of Mind. For example, for the first habit, Persistence, they might ask themselves questions such as

What does it look like when someone in class persists? What facial expressions might I see? What body language? What does persistence look like outside the classroom? On the baseball field? In a chess tournament? At the airport? At the beach?

What does it feel like when I persist? Is there just one feeling or emotion, or several? Do my feelings change as I apply persistence? Does everyone experience the same feelings when they persist?

What does it sound like when someone persists? What words might I hear? Other noises? How might I talk to myself? What advice might I offer a friend who needs to persist? How might the sounds change from the classroom to the football field?

- When teachers have finished, have each team discuss their Y-charts with the whole group. It can be very interesting to see the breadth of ideas teachers will produce.

2. Core Activity

- Give teachers a copy of the Defining Habits of Mind worksheet.
- Ask them to work individually to complete it, defining each habit in their own words (column 1) and listing two or three ideal times to use each (column 2) as well as two or three occasions when the habit would not be useful (column 3).

3. Reflection Activity

- Lead a group discussion about the value of Habits of Mind.
- Explain that teachers will really begin to see the benefits as they watch students apply the habits in learning situations.

4. Extension Activity

- Distribute the article “Describing 16 Habits of Mind,” found in Appendix A.
- Encourage teachers to take the materials they have received with them to study as they prepare to introduce the Habits of Mind to their students.
- Suggest that teachers review Costa and Kallick’s *Learning and Leading with Habits of Mind* (2008, ASCD), if they have not already done so.

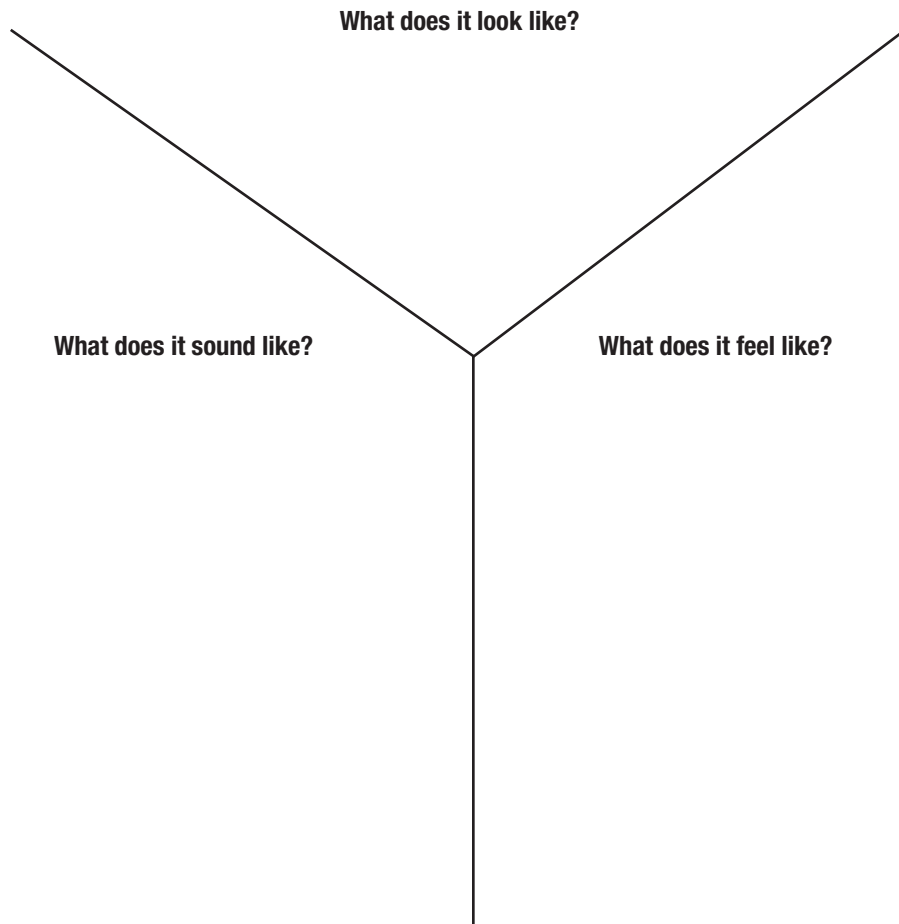
Y-Chart

Name _____ Class _____ Date _____

Y-Chart

You can use this chart to explore your thoughts about the Habits of Mind.

Topic:



Defining Habits of Mind

Name _____ Class _____ Date _____

Defining Habits of Mind

Habit of Mind	My Definition	Good Times to Use	Bad Times to Use
Persisting			
Managing Impulsivity			
Listening with Understanding and Empathy			
Thinking Flexibly			
Thinking About Thinking (Metacognition)			
Striving for Accuracy and Precision			
Questioning and Posing Problems			
Applying Past Knowledge to New Situations			

Defining Habits of Mind

Name _____ Class _____ Date _____

Defining Habits of Mind, *continued*

Habit of Mind	My Definition	Good Times to Use	Bad Times to Use
Thinking and Communicating with Clarity and Precision			
Gathering Data Through All Senses			
Creating, Imagining, and Innovating			
Responding with Wonderment and Awe			
Taking Responsible Risks			
Finding Humor			
Thinking Interdependently			
Learning Continuously			