Action Tool 2: Expanding Capacities with Teachers

PURPOSE OF THIS TOOL

This tool builds on the concepts developed in the previous tool. Teachers should now be familiar with all 16 Habits of Mind and have a working understanding of what they mean. This tool helps teachers gain more in-depth knowledge and understanding of the habits so that they will be better prepared to foster them among their students. The resources in this action tool will enable participants to

• Discuss with colleagues their experiences in applying the Habits of Mind so far.
• Define each Habit of Mind in as many ways as possible.
• Use analogies to gain perspective on each Habit of Mind.
• Describe how they can integrate each Habit of Mind into the classroom.
• Contribute to and build on the ideas of colleagues.

HOW TO USE THIS TOOL

This tool presents a series of resources that can be used to extend and refine teachers’ understanding of the 16 Habits of Mind. The following is the suggested sequence for exploring these habits:

• How’s It Going? (Introductory Discussion)
• Word Splash, Y-Chart, and Classroom Integration group activity (Core Activity)
• Final Review group activity and discussion (Synthesizing Activity)
• Results folders (Follow-Up)

The activities and tasks included in this tool should take two hours, best divided into two close-proximity days to complete. Note that you will need to complete some advance preparation as well as some follow-up action. You will need the following materials:

• Large roll of butcher paper or a couple of self-stick wall charts
• Package of markers
• A bell, whistle, or other noisemaker (optional)
• Folders (one per teacher)
• Clock or watch
TIPS AND VARIATIONS

1. Advance Preparation
   - Set up stations around the room, one for each Habit of Mind. At each station, hang three poster-size pieces of butcher paper specific to one habit. (See the following pages as examples for the habit Persisting.) Have extra butcher paper on hand in case additional space is needed for recording ideas. Place a number of markers at each station.
   - On the board, write three sample charts such as those shown on the following pages for the habit Persisting. These samples will serve as guides for the teachers.

2. Introductory Discussion
   - Stimulate discussion about experiences teachers have had with the Habits of Mind so far by asking questions such as the following:
     - How have you used the Habits of Mind in the classroom?
     - What have you learned?
     - What problems have you encountered?
     - What questions do you have?
   - Spend some time sharing your ideas and having other teachers do so as well.

3. Core Activity
   - Tell teachers that to further help them think about and share ideas related to the Habits of Mind, you have created stations around the room, each with three charts: a Word Splash, a Y-Chart, and a chart titled Classroom Integration. Direct the teachers’ attention to the examples on the board as you explain each type of chart.
   - Explain that word splashes are brainstorming activities. Teachers should think of as many ways as they can to rephrase the name of the Habit of Mind. Tell them that by the time all ideas are recorded, everyone should have a thorough definition of the habit.
   - Remind teachers of their previous experience with Y-charts. Say that this chart will allow them to draw analogies to express what they think, feel, and hear regarding each habit.
   - Explain that the Classroom Integration chart serves as a tool for teachers to share their ideas about how they use or could use the Habits of Mind in the classroom, as well as times to avoid using the habits.
• Instruct teachers to get up and go to any station. Allow five minutes for teachers to add their ideas to each chart at that station, and then blow a whistle, ring a bell, or call “time” and instruct teachers to move to the next station.
• At about halfway through this activity, allow teachers to take a break. Ideally, they would return to the activity fresh the next day.

4. Synthesizing Activity
• When everyone has been through the 16 stations, allow them time to mingle around the room and look at everyone’s comments.
• Lead a group discussion about the experience.

5. Follow-Up
• Tell teachers you will type up their collection of ideas. At a later time, give each teacher a folder with all the group’s ideas and encourage them to apply the ideas in the days, weeks, and years to come.
• Have teachers add the handouts and materials they received in Action Tool 1 to the folders, so they will have a Habits of Mind resource available at all times.
Word Splash for Persisting

Persisting means ...
Y-Chart for Persisting

What does it look like?

What does it sound like?

What does it feel like?
Classroom Integration for Persisting

1. It is important to use this Habit of Mind when …

2. This Habit of Mind is not useful when …

3. I could introduce this Habit of Mind by …
Word Splash for Persisting

The following is an example of what you are asking teachers to record on the appropriate posters at each station. These answers are simplified. Teachers should feel free to share any ideas they have.

Persisting means . . .

. . . to keep going.
. . . not giving up.
. . . sticking with it.
. . . staying on task.
. . . repeating.
. . . practicing.
. . . trying again.
. . . trying a different way.
Y-Chart for Persisting

Name ______________________ Class _____________________ Date ________

Y-Chart for Persisting

The following is an example of what you are asking teachers to record on the appropriate posters at each station. These answers are simplified. Teachers should feel free to share any ideas they have.

What does it look like?
- gritted teeth
- a determined stare
- quiet concentration

What does it sound like?
- new ideas
- sighs
- encouraging words

What does it feel like?
- direction
- fortitude
- a challenge
- a heavy brick!
Classroom Integration for Persisting

The following is an example of what you are asking teachers to record on the appropriate posters at each station. These answers are simplified. Teachers should feel free to share any ideas they have.

1. It is important to use this Habit of Mind when . . .
   . . . students are struggling with new information.
   . . . students are nervous about something.
   . . . I'm pushing students to try something new.

2. This Habit of Mind is not useful when . . .
   . . . students need to brainstorm.
   . . . I want students to relax and let things happen.
   . . . persisting could cause mental, emotional, or physical harm.

3. I could introduce this Habit of Mind by . . .
   . . . giving students a task that takes several weeks to complete.
   . . . giving students a tough group assignment they could figure out together.
   . . . sharing a personal experience about persistence.