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# Developing Habits of Mind for Academic Success

Ellen Quish

*CUNY La Guardia Community College*

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## **Abstract**

The low-stakes assignment *Habits of Mind for Academic Success* was designed to support First Year Seminar for Liberal Arts: Social Science and Humanities students in developing habits of mind essential for success in college. Using Costa and Kallick's 16 Habits of Mind (HOMs) as reference, the assignment is staged and starts by prompting students to assess their current use of Habits of Mind and to identify what HOMs would be of value to them as college students. Upon completion of the individual assessment, students are introduced to examples of Habits of Mind in action through a video created for the Advanced Study of Learning course at Kennesaw State University. This next step also includes a collaborative exchange between students that culminates in a roleplay that requires the application of what has been learned. Finally, students write a reflective essay that describes their plans for using Habits of Mind in college. Students complete Steps 1 and 2 in class, which take approximately 90 minutes and can be done in the same class or during two consecutive class sessions. Students complete Step 3 outside of class. The assignment complements the overall course objectives by helping students who are new to college identify and develop strategies for academic success. It is worth 10 percent of the final grade.

## ***Habits of Mind for Academic Success***

### **Step 1: Reflecting on Habits of Mind** (30 min)

In preparation for writing *Reflection #2*, review the *Habits of Mind* (HOM) Summary Outline and answer the following questions in your notebook:

1. Which HOM do you use most often?
2. Which would you like to strengthen?
3. Which HOM do you think will be most valuable to you as a college student? Why?
4. List one concrete example for how you could use each HOM as a student.

### **Step 2: Developing Habits of Mind for Academic Success** (60 min)

- A. View 16 Habits of Mind: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KbKZNKyGhRA> (5 min)
- B. Small Group Discussion: (15 min) Using their notes from Step 1, students discuss the following questions:
1. Which HOM do you use most often?
  2. Which would you like to strengthen?
  3. Which HOM do you think will be most valuable to you as a college student? Why?
  4. What is one concrete example of this HOM?
- C. Sharing Strategies for Academic Success: (40 min)
1. Work with your group to prepare a roleplay for the situation described below. (10 min)  
*You've just met a student at LaGuardia who is struggling in her first semester at LaGuardia. To help her hang in, you tell her about the Habits of Mind and how they can help her. Offer her a brief explanation of HOM and recommend one that you think could be especially helpful to her in college. Be sure to give her a concrete example of the HOM.*
  2. Take turns presenting roleplays. (20 min)
  3. Students share takeaways. (10 min)

### **Step 3: Applying Habits of Mind for Academic Success**

Write a one-page reflective essay *Habits of Mind for Academic Success* in which you share your plans for using Habits of Mind (HOM) to support your academic success in college. Please use the questions below to guide your reflection, which you will post to your ePortfolio.

1. Of the sixteen Habits of Mind, which do you use most often as a college student? Give an example of when you use it, and why.
2. Identify a Habit of Mind that you don't currently use, that could be helpful to you in college. Why do you think it could be useful? How do you think it could be of value to you in your major?
3. What steps will you take to incorporate this HOM into your approach to learning while at LaGuardia? Provide a concrete example of what this will look like.

# H a b i t s o f M i n d



**1. Persisting**  
Stick to it! Persevering in task through to completion; remaining focused. Looking for ways to reach your goal when stuck. Not giving up.



**2. Managing impulsivity**  
Take your Time! Thinking before acting; remaining calm, thoughtful and deliberative.



**3. Listening with understanding and empathy**  
Understand Others! Devoting mental energy to another person's thoughts and ideas. Make an effort to perceive another's point of view and emotions.



**4. Thinking flexibly**  
Look at it Another Way! Being able to change perspectives, generate alternatives, consider options.



**5. Thinking about your thinking (Metacognition)**  
Know your knowing! Being aware of your own thoughts, strategies, feelings and actions and their effects on others.



**6. Striving for accuracy**  
Check it again! Always doing your best. Setting high standards. Checking and finding ways to improve constantly.



**7. Questioning and problem posing**  
How do you know? Having a questioning attitude; knowing what data are needed and developing questioning strategies to produce those data. Finding problems to solve.



**8. Applying past knowledge to new situations**  
Use what you Learn! Accessing prior knowledge; transferring knowledge beyond the situation in which it was learned.



**9. Thinking and communicating with clarity and precision**  
Be clear! Striving for accurate communication in both written and oral form; avoiding over generalizations, distortions, deletions and exaggerations.



**10. Gather data through all senses:**  
Use your natural pathways! Pay attention to the world around you Gather data through all the senses; taste, touch, smell, hearing and sight.



**11. Creating, imagining, and innovating**  
Try a different way! Generating new and novel ideas, fluency, originality



**12. Responding with wonderment and awe**  
Have fun figuring it out! Finding the world awesome, mysterious and being intrigued with phenomena and beauty.



**13. Taking responsible risks**  
Venture out! Being adventuresome; living on the edge of one's competence. Try new things constantly.



**14. Finding humor**  
Laugh a little! Finding the whimsical, incongruous and unexpected. Being able to laugh at oneself.



**15. Thinking interdependently**  
Work together! Being able to work in and learn from others in reciprocal situations. Team work.



**16. Remaining open to continuous learning**  
I have so much more to learn! Having humility and pride when admitting we don't know; resisting complacency.