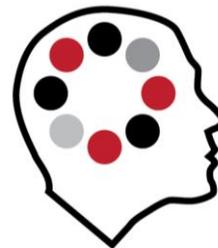


Habits of Mind: Theory and Goals Sheet



IT'S POSSIBLE
AT BAKERSFIELD COLLEGE
A Habits of Mind Initiative

Theory:

It is not an absence of obstacles that determines success, but a refusal to submit to them. On a basic level, Habits of Mind derives from the premise that students each have at least one special gift, a purpose, some part of them intended to improve their lives, as well as the lives of those around them. It also operates with the tacit wisdom that many of our students face numerous threats to their present and future, entailing a combination of personal struggles and lack of academic preparedness. Habits of Mind recognizes that only a student has the power to change his or her circumstances. Our driving principle is that, through this initiative, we can equip our students with knowledge of the habits that will empower them to overcome the challenges they face—not only making them aware of the attributes that lead to success, but giving them the opportunity to practice them repeatedly campus wide and in class so that they become habits. After all, what determines success is not circumstance, but habit.

Implementing the Habits of Mind Program at Bakersfield College allows us to take the best practices we already employ, share them with each other, and use a campus-wide emphasis that will help create a pervasive culture of possibility and success. Perhaps most dear to the particular values of faculty, Habits of Mind emphasizes a love of learning, a pursuit of knowledge for its own sake, and an ability to gain personal understanding of subject matter that students can relate to existing and future knowledge. It creates an atmosphere that leads to both the motivation and behaviors that promote learning.

Habits of Mind empowers students; it helps them realize that their efforts and habits are the greatest determinants of success. We want to optimize students' opportunities to practice successful habits in the classroom, as well as around campus. Of course, we do this now, but if we are all emphasizing the same skills at the same time with the same language, it promotes a culture of excellence and possibility.

For example, a week or two before an exam, give students a few minutes to write down their study strategies for the exam. Ask them to share these. After returning the exams, ask students to reflect on their actual practices. Did they fulfill their strategic goals? Did their effort equal improvement? Ask them to take a minute or two to consider how they intend to adjust their behavior before the next exam in order to improve their outcome. Notice, this places the possibility for success in their locus of control. It illustrates that they are not helpless; they are in control of their outcome.

A second example could involve a staff member in the bookstore or cafeteria asking students if they have formed study groups. A third example might entail staff in Admissions and Records suggesting students see their professors and counselors before dropping a course, explaining the importance of persistence.

Eighty percent of our students are the first in their families to attend college, and more than sixty percent of our students require some remediation in at least one subject. This provides a rich environment for each of us to change lives. Inculcating our students with habits that lead to success will serve them and our community whether they graduate from BC or take these skills to the workplace. This initiative creates an awareness that what students do matters; what they do creates the outcome they obtain. Habits of Mind will show students that through positive habits they can succeed against the academic or social challenges they face.

Background:

The Habits of Mind Initiative at Bakersfield College is an adaptation of Arthur Costa's and Bena Kallicks's *Habits of Mind Across the Curriculum: Practical and Creative Strategies for Teachers*. We relied on institutional data, the Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE), national research on first-generation students, and collaboration with Bakersfield College's Student Government Association (SGA), as well as faculty anecdotes in order to arrive at our goals and mechanisms of delivery. Faculty, staff, and the SGA worked together to adopt eight habits most reflective of the needs of our student body. SGA created the acronym POSSIBLE in order to convey the eight habits: persist, organize, strive for excellence, stay involved, innovate, be focused, learn for life, and emphasize integrity.

Goals:

1. Make students aware of the attributes necessary for success
2. Give students opportunities to practice these until they become habits, providing an exemplary model of student success by developing and implementing best practices
3. Develop mechanisms for delivery
4. Establish professional development for faculty and staff in order to provide them with training and resources to embed Habits of Mind in their work at Bakersfield College, providing relevant, timely professional growth opportunities to enhance the effectiveness of our employees and institution
5. Collaborate with Perception, Institutional Score Card, and CCSSE in order to use data strands to evaluate effectiveness of Habits of Mind and its tools

Current work and plans for the future:

We have developed, and continue to develop, a variety of tools for delivering these habits to students, as well as tools for the students to practice these habits individually. Some of them include the following:

- marketing
- t-shirts;
- student and professor testimonials
- Habits of Mind app and website
- inspirational quotes
- buttons
- opening day speakers
- Habits of Mind speaker series
- high school and community impact
- working lunches that emphasize tools for teaching each habit
- weekly, time-management schedules;
- semester calendars
- Google population calendars for important campus-wide events
- g-task calendars
- GPA calculators
- UCLA's assignment calculator
- study group sign-up sheets
- bookmarks linking to the website and app
- many other tools

Given the opportunity to internalize these habits, our students will improve the world around us.