

# Learning, Habits of Mind & Inquiry

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The Habits of Mind are the behaviours associated with effective learning. When faced with a new challenge or a problem to solve they are the ways of behaving intelligently to help you learn effectively.

The Habits of Mind are essential learning dispositions which will sustain the learner throughout the 21<sup>st</sup> century and beyond. They are long range, enduring skills that empower us to cope with the rapidly changing world we live in. *(By the year 2016, the amounts of information in the world will double every 72 hours. Ian Jukes).*

*To enable learners to see the moral, ethical, spiritual decisions of the future, our students need to be equipped with powerful thinking skills and know how to behave and discuss with intelligence.*

*The Habits of Mind are more than tools for use in the classroom. They are guiding principles for life-long learning, developing such things as relationships, effective communication, flexible thinking, self reflection and resilience. These guiding principles are essential for a successful future.*

*Habits of Mind are relevant to students of all ages (including adults) and in all subjects. Habits of the Mind will extend beyond the learning area to create a whole school learning culture.*

*There is no particular sequence to the Habits, however, an important factor in developing the Habits of Mind is to explore the meaning of each one. Understanding the terminology, labels and definitions, and developing specific literacy around the language of the Habits of Mind is an important first step in understanding them and seeing the value they offer.*

*Students report that merely being made aware of what the Habits of Mind are helps to improve their thinking. The language alone seems to act as a cognitive anchor or trigger, allowing students to monitor and describe their own thinking.*

*Wyndham Vale Catholic Primary School has the 'Habits of Mind' as the framework for all learning. The 16 dispositions form the essential learning behaviours with which students will explore the concepts and essential learning standards of the curriculum within the inquiry based, integrated curriculum model.*

*Habits of Mind will be introduced and developed using a cumulative approach according to the 6 stages of development:*

- *Exploring Meanings*
- *Expanding Capacities*
- *Increasing Alertness*
- *Extending Values*
- *Building Commitment*
- *Internalisation*

*The thinking process is an integral part of all learning and activity therefore is embedded in staff and parent activities & learning as well as student learning processes.*

## Habits of Mind Dispositions

Persisting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Stick to it!</li><li>• Persevering in a task through to completion, remaining focused</li></ul>
Managing Impulsivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Take your time!</li><li>• Check before acting; remain calm, thoughtful and deliberate</li></ul>
Listening with Understanding & Empathy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Understand others!</li><li>• Devoting mental energy to another person's thoughts and ideas in order to perceive his/her point of view</li></ul>
Thinking Flexibly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Think, rethink, think and rethink...!</li><li>• Being able to change perspectives, generate alternatives, consider options</li></ul>
Metacognition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Think about your thinking, know your knowing!</li><li>• Being aware on one's own thoughts, strategies, feelings and actions and their effects on others</li></ul>
Striving for Accuracy & Precision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Check it again!</li><li>• A desire for accurateness, fidelity and craftsmanship</li></ul>
Questioning & Problem Solving	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• How do you know?</li><li>• Having a questioning attitude; knowing what data are needed and developing questioning strategies to produce this data. Finding problems to solve</li></ul>
Applying Past Knowledge to New Situations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Use what you learn!</li><li>• Accessing prior knowledge. Transferring knowledge beyond the situation in which it was learned</li></ul>
Thinking & Communicating with Clarity & Precision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Be clear!</li><li>• Striving for accurate communication in both written and oral form; avoiding over generalisations, distortions and deletions</li></ul>
Gathering Data Through all the Senses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Use your natural pathway!</li><li>• Gathering data through sensory pathways - gustatory, olfactory (smell), tactile, kinesthetic, auditory and visual</li></ul>
Creating, Imagining & Innovating	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Try a different way!</li><li>• Generating new and novel ideas, fluency and originality. Think outside the box before getting in.</li></ul>
Responding with Wonderment & Awe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The pleasure of figuring it out!</li><li>• Finding the world awesome, mysterious and being intrigued with phenomena and beauty. Finding the extraordinary in the ordinary</li></ul>
Taking Responsible Risks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Venture out!</li><li>• Moving outside your comfort zone and being adventuresome. Taking educated, well considered risks</li></ul>
Finding Humour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Laugh with others and at yourself!</li><li>• Finding the whimsical, incongruous and unexpected. Not taking oneself too seriously</li></ul>
Thinking Interdependently	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Work together!</li><li>• Being able to work in, and learn from others in, reciprocal situations</li></ul>
Remaining Open to Continuous Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Learn from experiences!</li><li>• Having humility and pride when admitting we don't know. Resisting complacency</li></ul>

## Our Lady of the Southern Cross Catholic Primary School

The Habits of Mind challenge students to take ownership of their learning behaviours, to continually to strive for accuracy, flexible thinking, effective problem solving and creative processes. Embedding the Habits in day to day learning stimulates students to tackle “big idea problems” using the Habits as a process and relying on the scaffolding of the thinking to support their endeavours as a learner.

The teacher’s role as model, facilitator, supporter and co-learner builds the students capacity to operate as an independent and interdependent learner.



The Habits of Mind thinking processes will link to all curriculum areas as identified by the National Curriculum and the Victorian Essential Learning Standards:

### National Curriculum

- Religious Education
- The Arts
- English
- Health & PE
- LOTE
- Mathematics
- Science
- SOSE
- Technology

### Victorian Essential Learning Standards

Physical, Personal and Social Learning:

Health & PE, Interpersonal Development,  
Personal Learning & Civics & Citizenship

Discipline Based Learning:

The Arts, English, Humanities (Economics,  
Geography, History), LOTE, Mathematics,  
Religious Education, Science

Interdisciplinary Learning:

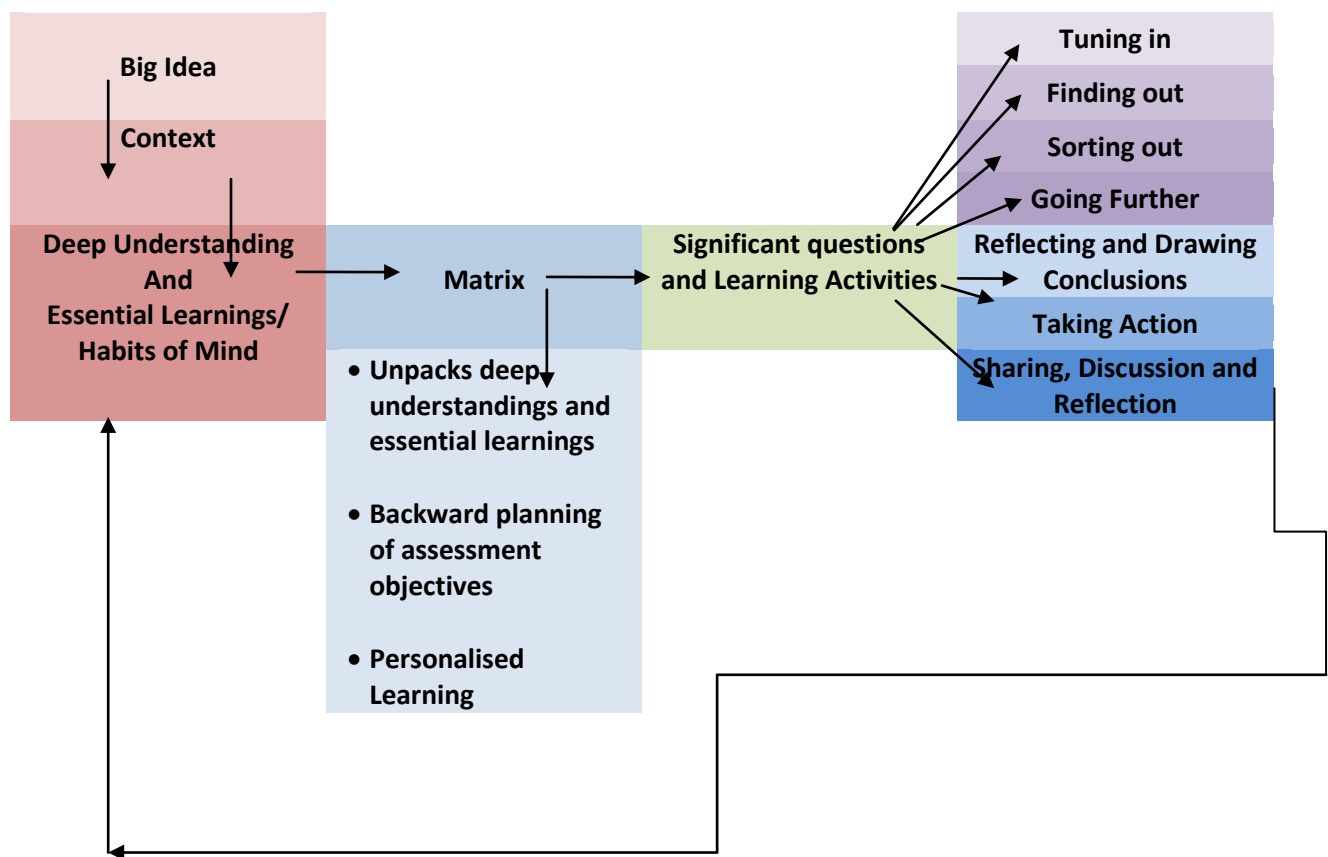
Communication, Design Creativity & Technology,  
Information & Communication Technology  
(ICT), Thinking

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The Habits of Mind provide a framework for setting learning goals, establishing individual learning pathways, participating in an authentic inquiry process and reflecting on and assessing learning. The Habits develop learners who are critical users of information and who incorporate their prior knowledge into new learning and inquiry where appropriate.

The students develop an awareness of their own strengths as learners and the areas where they need development. As they investigate a problem or research a topic their voice becomes evident in the product of their learning – they see this learning as linked to real life situations and having relevance beyond the school walls. Students are developing the thinking skills and inquiry processes that will make them Life-Long Learners.

### Inquiry Planning Process



The planning process draws on the big concept ideas and places them in a realistic context for the students. From this point teacher's (student voice is added as they develop the capacity to plan for their learning) identify the deep understandings, essential learnings and Habits of the Mind dispositions that fit with the learning.

A matrix or rubric is developed to identify the different levels within the learning context. At this point significant questions are raised to focus the inquiry. The inquiry then follows the Melbourne University model with considerable planning input from the students.

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The ‘backward’ process comes into play as the learner seeks further understanding – “Education is learning what you didn’t know you didn’t know” George Boss. Hence the need to revisit the deep understandings, essential learnings and Habits of the Mind.

Below is an example of an inquiry matrix.

Name: Technology Self-Evaluation, Goal Setting and Reflection Matrix				
Deep Understanding Innovation and inventions can have positive and negative impacts on our lives and our environment (Kn.). Through multiple perspectives we can develop options and critically reflect to solve problems (HoM/KC). We have a responsibility to use technology to explore an issue and take action in our community.				
Novice	Apprentice	Practitioner	Expert	SIGNIFICANT QUESTIONS
KNOWLEDGE OUTCOMES – NATURE OF TECHNOLOGY				Tuning In: 1. What is technology? 2. What are innovations and inventions? Finding Out: 3. Why do people innovate and invent (needs and wants)? 4. How have innovations and inventions impacted on our environment? Sorting Out: 5. How do people innovate and invent? 6. What makes a successful invention (reflection & evaluation)? 7. How do we think flexibly? Going Further: 8. How might innovations & inventions change and affect the future? Drawing Conclusions: 9. What issues are there in our community that could be solved using technology? Taking Action: 10. How can we use technology to actively contribute to a community project? Reflecting: 11. How can we evaluate the effectiveness of our project goal?
I can <i>name</i> some innovations and inventions that have an impact on my life.  I can <i>describe</i> how these innovations and inventions have been helpful.	I can <i>discuss</i> and <i>classify</i> the impacts of innovations and inventions in my life & on the environment.  I can <i>explain</i> the need / want that resulted in <i>different</i> inventions.	I can <i>explain</i> how innovations and inventions impact on our society and <i>justify</i> the impact.  I can <i>infer</i> the consequences of innovations and inventions for the future	I can <i>evaluate</i> innovation and inventions and the <i>impacts</i> on our environment  I can <i>analyse</i> this information to make <i>predictions</i> for the future.	
TECHNOLOGICAL OUTCOMES & HABIT OF MIND: THINKING FLEXIBLY– KEY COMPETENCY: THINKING				
I can generate ideas to solve a problem.	I can generate relevant ideas and as my thinking changes I modify my design.	I can reflect on existing ideas and refine these to develop new and innovative ideas.  I can critically analyse (compare & contrast) my idea from a range of perspectives.	Multiple perspectives challenge me to be open to changing ideas/modify  I can critically evaluate (rank/judge) from a range of perspectives the effectiveness of my design.  My intellectual curiosity contributes to a climate which challenges others to think flexibly.	
TAKING ACTION				
With encouragement and support from others, I've contributed to a community project.	I have contributed to a community project.	I followed through the design process and actively contributed to a community project.	I initiated and sustained a project to solve a community issue.	
Assessment looks for changes in children's participation using three lenses: 1. <b>Personal lens:</b> would look for evidence of change in the child's skill level of understanding. 2. <b>Interpersonal lens:</b> would look for evidence of change in the way children interact with others, their new skills to collaborate, engage in dialogue with others etc. 3. <b>Cultural lens:</b> would look for evidence of change in the cultural rituals of the classroom, new ways children use resources or new values developing in the classroom.				
Evaluation: (How did each of my goals support my learning? Write a summative comment about your understanding using the 6 facets of understanding as a guide). Note: Reflective comments in relation to goals and learning experiences could be recorded in a journal along with 'Thinking Maps' that show shifts in understanding.				