Dear Colleagues,

This is to continue (from last spring) our Short Form posts to share ideas for teaching and collaboration.

Rogers et al. (2013) describe three habits of mind that are central to participative planning and decision-making in complex circumstances - such as the establishment of our new curriculum.

These habits of mind or patterns of intellectual behavior that lead to productive actions include:

1. Openness in behavior
2. Situational awareness in behavior
3. Respect for the restraint/action paradox

Attached is a PDF document that outlines each of these habits of mind in bullet point format and includes a reference for the article.

Cheers,

Sean

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Habits of Mind.pdf
49K
Habits of mind that promote patterns of openness in behavior

• Hold your strong opinions lightly and encourage others to do the same.
• Be prepared to identify and accept the intervention of surprise, serendipity, and epiphany.
• Encounter every person with equal respect, listen for their specific needs, knowledge, and ways of knowing.
• Be open to both/and options.
• Do not reject ambiguity or paradox. They are to be expected and their acceptance as legitimate can often avoid dispute.
• Cultivate, honor, and affirm the legitimacy of multiple perspectives and outcomes. Be ready to chart your way through them to learn about multiple legitimate outcomes: there are many ways of skinning the cat.
• Accept everyone as co-learners, not experts or competitors.
• Encourage cooperation and consensus: the best way to get what you need is to help others get what they need.

Habits of mind that promote patterns of situational awareness in behavior

• Discern when a change is sufficient to require renegotiation or review.
• Consider the importance of relationships and interactions between entities and not just the entities themselves.
• Become conscious of and accept change agents and processes.
• Be time and place specific: without it you cannot properly identify the appropriate context or define problems and solutions.
• Be aware of contingencies, scale, and history: they all play a role in mapping the present and future.
• Surface the collective principles and values that will bound decision situations and help keep decision making consistent from one context to the next.
• Use these principles to guide decision making, rather than relying on facts and numbers, which will change with context.
• Reflect often: formally, informally, individually, and collectively.

Habits of mind that promote patterns of a healthy respect for the restraint/action paradox

Decisiveness/willingness to act under tension

• Encourage courage. Do not be afraid of intelligent mistakes.
• Avoid paralysis from the paranoia of omission, and/or fear of simplicity.
• Have the courage to seize the just-do-it moment.
• Accept that there is no one right place to start or end. Do so when it is sensible and useful.
• Have courage to take action from which you can learn. Even mistakes lead to learning.
• Cultivate an awareness of the natural inclination to avoid discomfort and have the courage to push beyond it.

Restraint under tension

• Discern when to trust the facilitation process and stand back quietly, giving the group dynamic space and allowing emergence.
• Avoid premature convergence – avoid being too quick to make judgments and choices. Keep options on the table long past their apparent usefulness. Many will find context later in the process.
• Avoid overconfidence about being ready to take action in a data-driven “predict and act” mode.
• Know when to rest. Open and participatory engagement exposes vulnerabilities, requires humility, and takes energy.
• Getting ahead of the game leaves participants unsettled and opens opportunities for dissent. Provide participants ample time for healing and replenishment.