

# Mapping the Habits of Mind

Use GPS concepts to get your students where they need to go.

CALCULATING  
ROUTE

I am driving in a new territory. I have a GPS (global positioning system). The first question it asks is my destination. The map of my route then appears. Next, would I like voice guidance? And finally, it recalculates when I am off course and tells me when I have reached my destination. Imagine if we provided a GPS for our students. Let's walk through the steps.

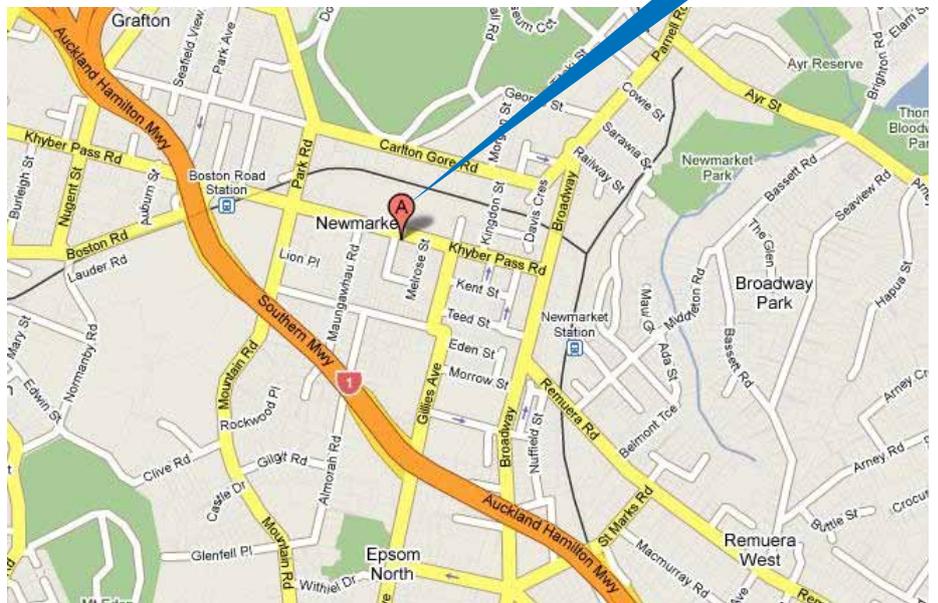
## Naming the Destination

When we introduce the Habits of Mind in our individual classrooms, we need to consider the sequence in which we introduce them. We might begin by thinking about where we would like our students to be by the end of the year. We might say that, for this developmental level, the most important habits that we would like to focus on might be listening with understanding and empathy and communicating with clarity and precision. Although we plan to introduce all of the habits to the class, these will be the ones that we focus on. We might say, by the end of this school year I would like students to:

### Be aware of all 16 habits

- See the benefit of listening with understanding and empathy and apply their best listening skills during group work
- Speak in complete sentences and use descriptive words to express themselves
- Value listening and speaking and see the benefit to the extent that they are using these habits without many reminders

Now that we have named the destination, how will we get there?



## Mapping the Route

Curriculum mapping (Heidi Hayes Jacobs, Mapping the Big Picture, ASCD) offers a way to map a route with precision. The maps are based on a calendar year and are organized by the month. In order to benchmark progress along the way, the road signs are usually essential questions, content, skills. The milestones are the assessments. And, as with the GPS, the map is responsive to the driver's judgment. Teachers adjust and refine their maps as they interact with their students. So, for example, "introduction to listening with understanding and empathy" might seem to be well placed at the beginning of the year. However, the teacher assesses the students' response and feels that they need another lesson to help them to become more aware of what it means to be a good listener before developing a lesson on how to become more skillful as a listener. At this point, the teacher can "recalculate the route." On the other hand, students have had experience with communicating with clarity. The awareness session is reconstituted so that it is focusing

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on becoming more skillful. As the year progresses, alongside the content of the units of study that the teacher has mapped, the habits serve as a driver for more thoughtful work. As the teacher continuously monitors and assesses the students' use of the habits, she recalculates the route and, if necessary, makes a legal U turn.

As with a long trip, the drivers may change. Imagine if the driver of curriculum might change from the teacher to the student.

WHEN POSSIBLE  
MAKE LEGAL  
U TURN

Suppose that the student has found an intriguing new direction to get to the same destination. Suppose that, as the student becomes more skillful at questioning and posing problems, the journey is extended. Suppose that the teacher, on the basis of new current events, finds that she must think more flexibly about the best route to take. Each of these suppositions is addressed through a revision of the original map. Curriculum mapping distinguishes between the projected map (that which describes the route to the destination before the trip) and a diary map (a documentation of the actual trip that has been taken).

### Voice Guidance

In this analogy, the question of voice guidance is an interesting one. Multiple voices need to be heard to be certain that the route is on track. One important and clear voice is the teacher's. Teachers need to make certain that they are modelling the habits, providing rich experiences so that the habits can be practised, provide feedback about how students are progressing, and monitoring and adjusting classroom practices based on their observations. Another equally significant voice is the student's. If the habits are to become internalised, so well practised that they are used without many

reminders, then students need to become self-assessing. They are participants in the journey and can keep track of their progress. In many classrooms, students maintain a map as well as the teacher. They respond to the essential questions right in the map; they are able to assess and observe their own progress; they can reflect alongside the data entries for the habits regarding how the habits have or have not affected their learning. Finally, in order

to get more feedback about the route being taken, students provide feedback to one another. They do shared assessments in which they observe the habits they have been applying to their learning. They problem solve in terms of what might have worked better. They become a group voice in the classroom.

Although the voice guidance is enormously helpful, the external voice shifts to an inner voice in which you no longer need guidance to know where you are going. Your inner compass directs your actions and responses. As a result, you can more readily observe the environment, perhaps even stopping with wonderment and awe as you see the sun setting in the distance. So it is with students who are using their well-developed habits of mind to serve as an inner compass to direct their learning. They have, in fact, become so confident about the route that they are taking that they can observe the external environment more closely. They may even find a shortcut to their work as they apply past knowledge to new situations. Perhaps they are more alert to gathering data through all senses. In other words, they have achieved such independence that they are able to create, innovate, and become more imaginative in their journey of learning.



YOU HAVE  
ARRIVED

### You have arrived

It is really affirming when the GPS voice system finally recognises that you have arrived at your destination. Similarly, students thrive on recognition of their accomplishments. If they have been partners in your road map and they know what your destination was, they can celebrate their successes and set goals for next year. They can even provide some guidance for next year's teacher. In addition, the curriculum map can go on to next year's teacher so that there is continuity from year to year.

### Global Position System

Now notice, the GPS is not merely interested in the narrowly defined destination. It sees the destination in the context of the globe — the broader context. Curriculum mapping requires the same. When mapping you move from the individual classroom to the building to the entire system and, with a sophisticated software system, you can be connected to other teachers who are mapping all over the globe. The value of this is that teachers are able to share their practices, make certain that they are providing the richest opportunities for student learning and that they are practising their own habits — thinking flexibly, creating, imagining, innovating, and remaining open to continuous learning. The hope is that they will be building a more thoughtful world for their students. 