

Academic Skills Self-Assessment: Developing a Thinking Disposition

What habits distinguish 'good thinkers'? In an article by Perkins, Jay and Tishman (1992) seven key 'intellectual tendencies' were characterised as 'thinking dispositions'. Read them below and see if you can identify ways in which developing these dispositions could enhance your academic and professional work.

	Examples
<p>1. <i>The disposition to be broad and adventurous</i></p> <p>The tendency to be open-minded, to explore alternative views; alertness to narrow thinking; the ability to generate multiple options.</p>	
<p>2. <i>The disposition toward sustained intellectual curiosity</i></p> <p>The tendency to wonder, to probe, to find problems; a zest for inquiry; alertness for anomalies; the ability to observe closely and formulate questions.</p>	
<p>3. <i>The disposition to clarify and seek understanding</i></p> <p>A desire to understand clearly, to seek connections and explanations; an alertness to unclarity and need for focus; an ability to build conceptualizations.</p>	
<p>4. <i>The disposition to be playful and strategic</i></p> <p>The drive to set goals, to make and execute plans, to envision outcomes; alertness to lack of direction; the ability to formulate goals and plans.</p>	
<p>5. <i>The disposition to be intellectually careful</i></p> <p>The urge for precision, organization, thoroughness; alertness to possible error or inaccuracy; the ability to process information precisely.</p>	
<p>6. <i>The disposition to seek and evaluate reasons</i></p> <p>The tendency to question the given, to demand justification; an alertness to the need for evidence; the ability to weigh and assess reasons.</p>	
<p>7. <i>The disposition to be metacognitive</i></p> <p>The tendency to be aware of and monitor the flow of one's own thinking; alertness to complex thinking situations; the ability to exercise control of mental processes and to be reflective.</p>	

Perkins, Jay and Tishman (1992). *Teaching Thinking Dispositions*. Harvard University. Available online at: <http://learnweb.harvard.edu/ALPS/thinking/docs/article2.html>

