



# States of Mind as Educator Dispositions

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<p><b>States of Mind</b></p>	<p>In brain terms, a state is composed of a cluster of neural firing patterns that embed within them certain behaviors, a feeling tone, and access to particular memories. A state of mind makes the brain work more efficiently, tying together relevant (and sometimes widely separate) functions with a “neural glue” that links them in the moment. If you play tennis, for example, each time you put on your shorts and shoes, pick up your racket and head for the court, your brain is actively creating a “tennis-playing state of mind.” In this state you are primed to access your motor skills, your competitive strategies, and even your memories of prior games.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">❖ <i>Mindsight: The New Science of Personal Transformation</i> Daniel J. Siegel, M.D. (2010), pp. 198-199)</p>
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<p><b>Consciousness</b></p>	<p><b>Knowing what and how I’m thinking about my work in this moment, and being willing to be aware of my actions and their effects.</b></p>
	<p>Educators exercising consciousness monitor their own values, intentions, thoughts, and behaviors, and their effects on others and the environment. They are aware of their own and others’ progress toward goals. They have well defined value systems that they can articulate. They generate, hold, and apply internal criteria for decisions they make. They practice mental rehearsal and the editing of mental pictures in the process of seeking improved strategies.</p> <p>Consciousness means knowing what and how we are thinking about our work in the moment, and being willing to be aware of our actions and their effects on others and on the environment. Consciousness is the central clearinghouse in which varied events processed by different senses can be represented and compared, and therefore holds particular catalytic properties for the other states of mind. It is the state of mind prerequisite to self-control and self-direction. Consciousness means that we are metacognitively aware that certain events are occurring, and we are able to direct their course.</p> <p>The mark of a person who is highly conscious is the ability to focus attention at will, to be oblivious to distractions, to concentrate for as long as it takes to achieve a goal. Effective thinking requires the resource of consciousness.</p>

<b>Craftsmanship</b>	<b>Knowing that I can continually perfect my craft, and being willing to work toward excellence and pursue ongoing learning.</b>
	<p>Educators of high craftsmanship seek perfection and pride themselves in their artistry. They seek precision and mastery. They seek refinement and specificity in communications. They generate and hold clear visions and goals. They strive for exactness of critical thought processes. They use precise language in describing their work. They make thorough and rational decisions about actions to be taken. They test and revise, continually honing strategies to reach goals. They persist in service of their craft.</p> <p>Craftsmanship is about striving for mastery, grace, and economy of energy to produce exceptional results. It means knowing that we can continually perfect our craft, and being willing to work persistently to attain our own high standards, and pursue ongoing learning.</p>
<b>Efficacy</b>	<b>Knowing that I have the capacity to make a difference through my work, and being willing to take the responsibility to do so.</b>
	<p>Efficacious educators have an internal locus of control. They produce new knowledge. They engage in causal thinking. They search for and pose challenges to meet and problems to solve. They are optimistic and resourceful. They are self-actualizing and self-modifying. They are able to operationalize concepts and translate them into deliberate actions. They establish feedback loops and continue to learn how to learn. Efficacy is a particularly catalytic state of mind because one's sense of efficacy is a determining factor in the resolution of complex problems.</p> <p>One value of efficacy and its by-product, self-confidence, is that it helps us follow through on counter-intuitive hunches. The more efficacious we feel, the more flexibly we can engage in creative and critical work. Developing effective thinking, therefore, requires becoming increasingly self-referencing, self-evaluating, self-initiating, and self-modifying.</p>
<b>Flexibility</b>	<b>Knowing that I have and can develop options to consider about my work, and being willing to acknowledge and demonstrate respect and empathy for diverse perspectives.</b>
	<p>Flexible thinkers are empathic. They are able to see through the diverse perspectives of others. They are open and comfortable with ambiguity. They create and seek novel approaches and have a well-developed sense of humor. They envision a range of alternative consequences. They have</p>

<p><b>Flexibility</b> (continued)</p>	<p>the capacity to change their minds as they receive additional data. They pursue multiple and simultaneous outcomes, draw upon a repertoire of problem solving strategies and can practice flexibility of style, knowing when it is appropriate to be broad and global in their thinking and when a situation requires detailed precision.</p> <p>Flexible thinkers think through cause-and-effect. This understanding of means-ends relationships allows them to work within rule-bound structures, finding ways to use the rules to help rather than hinder their work. They understand not only the immediate reactions but are also able to perceive the larger purposes that such constraints serve. Because the most flexible person tends to be the one with the most control, developing effective thinking requires the continual expansion of repertoire. Thus, flexibility of mind is essential for working with school diversity, capacitating an individual to recognize the wholeness and distinctness of other people's ways of experiencing and constructing meaning.</p>
<p><b>Interdependence</b></p>	<p><b>Knowing that we will benefit from our participation in, contribution to, and receipt of professional relationships, and being willing to create and change relationships to benefit our work.</b></p>
	<p>Interdependent educators possess a sense of community: “<i>we-ness</i>” as much as “<i>me-ness</i>”. Interdependent educators envision the expanding capacities of the group and its members, and value and draw upon the resources of others.</p> <p>Interdependent people are altruistic. They value consensus, being able to hold their own ideas and actions in abeyance in order to contribute their energies and resources to the achievement of group goals. They contribute themselves to common good, seek collegiality, and draw on the resources of others. They regard conflict as valuable, trusting their abilities to manage differences among group members in productive ways. They continue to learn based on feedback from others and from their consciousness of their own actions and effects on others. They seek collaborative engagement knowing that “all of us” is more efficient than any one of us.</p> <p>Interdependence means knowing that we will benefit from participating in, contributing to, and receiving feedback from professional relationships and being willing to create and change relationships to benefit our work. The Increasing importance of collaborative initiatives in schools makes this state of mind more essential than ever.</p> <p>Just as interdependent persons contribute to a common good, they also draw on the resources of others. Interdependence facilitates systems thinking in which many variables are continually interacting.</p> <p>Interdependent thinkers realize their potential to influence the direction of communities of which they are part, be affecting key variables whose effects reverberate through interaction with others.</p>