

## Producing Dedicated, Bright Young Scholars



Art Costa, co-founder of the Institute for Habits of Mind, has boiled down learning into 16 traits that human beings display when they behave intelligently. In his book, *Habits of Mind: A Developmental Series*, Costa refers to these traits as the characteristics of intelligent people's behaviors when they are confronted with problems, the resolutions to which are not immediately apparent.

Sound familiar? This is the world to which we are sending our children, teens and students. Society was never able to survive just on teaching isolated facts and figures to students, and in today and tomorrow's Cyber-age, it is impossible to raise capable citizens by just teaching facts and figures. Instead, we need to teach students how to resolve issues that do not have simple answers. This is why we, at the Hebrew Academy, teach our students how to incorporate the Habits of Mind in their daily work and interactions.

We integrate much of this critical thinking and learning in all grades, just by virtue of

building strong faculty and curriculum. Sixth grade, however, is our major focal point for reviewing, instituting and practicing the Habits of Mind in a transparent manner. We feel the students at this grade are ripe for taking in this information and really using it to their advantage. They are no longer as literal in their thinking as they were in their elementary years, yet they are not tainted and turned off to learning yet.

The sixteen habits are not in hierarchical order; instead, they are intermingled and often used by those people who intellectually address problems and learning. In a nutshell, the habits are:

- **Persisting** - Success seems to be connected with action. Successful people keep moving. They make mistakes, but they never quit. Conrad Hilton
- **Managing Impulsivity** - Goal-directed, self-imposed delay of gratification is perhaps the essence of emotional self-regulation: the ability to deny impulse in the service of a goal, whether it be building a business, solving an algebraic equation, or pursuing the Stanley Cup. Daniel Goleman
- **Listening with Understanding and Empathy** - Listening is the beginning of understanding.

*...Wisdom is the reward for a lifetime of listening. Let the wise listen and add to their learning and let the discerning get guidance. Proverbs 1:5*

- **Thinking Flexibly** - Of all forms of mental activity, the most difficult to induce even in the minds of the young, who may be presumed not to have lost their flexibility, is the art of handling the same bundle of data as before, but placing them in a new system of relations with one another by giving them a different framework, all of which virtually means putting on a different kind of thinking-cap for the moment. It is easy to teach anybody a new fact...but it needs light from heaven above to enable a teacher to break the old framework in which the student is accustomed to seeing. Arthur Koestler
- **Thinking About Thinking (Metacognition)** - When the mind is thinking it is talking to itself. Plato
- **Striving for Accuracy** - A man who has committed a mistake and doesn't correct it is committing another mistake. Confucius
- **Questioning and Posing Problems** - The formulation of a problem is often more essential than its solution, which

may be merely a matter of mathematical or experimental skill. ...To raise new questions, new possibilities, to regard old problems from a new angle, requires creative imagination and marks real advances. Albert Einstein

- **Applying Past Knowledge to New Situations** - I've never made a mistake. I've only learned from experience. Thomas A. Edison
- **Thinking and Communicating with Clarity and Precision** - I do not so easily think in words. ...After being hard at work having arrived at results that are perfectly clear...I have to translate my thoughts in a language that does not run evenly with them. Francis Galton, geneticist
- **Gathering Data Through All Senses** - Observe perpetually. Henry James
- **Creating, Imagining, Innovating** - The future is not some place we are going to but one we are creating. The paths are not to be found, but made, and the activity of making them changes both the maker and the destination. John Schaar, political scientist
- **Responding with Wonderment and Awe** - The most beautiful experience in the world is the experience of

the mysterious. Albert Einstein

- **Taking Responsible Risks** - There has been a calculated risk in every stage of American development—the pioneers who were not afraid of the wilderness, businessmen who were not afraid of failure, dreamers who were not afraid of action. Brooks Atkinson
- **Finding Humor** - You can increase your brain power three to fivefold simply by laughing and having fun before working on a problem. Doug Hall
- **Thinking Interdependently** - Take care of each other. Share your energies with the group. No one must feel alone, cut off, for that is when you do not make it. Willie Unsoeld, mountain climber
- **Remaining Open to Continuous Learning** - The greater our knowledge increases the more our ignorance unfolds. John F. Kennedy

When studied and implemented, Art Costa's thoughts help give us all a roadmap to thinking, learning, teaching and parenting. In the meantime, we are starting with one small population of students and teachers and building upon their experiences.

## New Athletic Director & PE Instructor

Coach Scott Durzo has jumped right into his position as the new Athletic Director & PE Instructor and made great strides in building a program that is fun and educational. Students enthusiastically run out to enjoy cardiovascular and team enrichment activities through their PE classes as well as Enrichment Acad-

emy - our after school program.

Coach Durzo still runs an after school and summer sports camp in Seal Beach, a bonus for The Hebrew Academy because he has access to many community resources and people.

Our goal is to share our campus with outside groups,

such as AYSO and HBYB. As a Jewish school, we also would like to organize after school and Sunday athletic leagues. Coach Durzo would love to talk with any interested groups - come take a tour and talk to our extraordinary community ombudsman.

*Holly Tripp*

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