Thinking Habits of Mind, Heart and Imagination
for the 21st Century

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Learning to think wisely and well in the 21st century requires the development of new thinking habits, which match the emerging realities and challenges of the new century. Capella University has identified ten thinking habits as essential for knowledge professionals today and tomorrow. The set of ten *Thinking Habits of Mind, Heart and Imagination* was developed as an integral part of the learning in Capella University's new Bachelor of Science degree program and professional certificate programs in information technology. These thinking habits apply broadly to knowledge professionals, whatever their fields or levels of education.

The *Thinking Habits of Mind, Heart and Imagination* for the 21st century and the assessment criteria to guide the development of knowledge professionals are shown in the following table.

THINKING HABITS	ASSESSMENT CRITERIA
TH1: Complementary Thinking The habit of thinking that weaves multiple perspectives into an integrated fabric of understanding.	*Polar-Opposite Complementarity* – Professional identifies relevant opportunities for meaning through complementary polar-opposites. *Multi-Perspective Complementarity* – Professional identifies relevant opportunities for meaning through non-polar multiple perspectives. *Complementary Meaning Making* – Professional competently uses complementarities to make significant new meaning and discovery.
TH2: Connected Seeing The habit of seeing reality as a whole system, which is a seamlessly connected, interactive and dynamic web-of-life.	*Seeing Relationships* – Professional sees relationships and wholeness most relevant to understanding the system ecology being addressed. *Seeing Significance* – Professional explains and uses relationships and wholeness in the system ecology to make significant meaning. *Seeing Across Disciplines* – Professional sees relevant relationships and wholeness across knowledge domains to make significant meaning.
TH3: Collaborative Teamwork The habit of collaborating in teamwork to accomplish common purpose, by integrating personal initiative and group cooperation.	*Creativity in Collaboration* – Professional actively searches for and creatively invents collaborative approaches to the challenge. *Collaborative Dialogue* – Professional communicates in a teamwork style in written-email-spoken communications of trust and mutuality. *Collaborative Responsibility* – Professional exercises responsibility to take initiative, cooperate and fulfill personal-group commitments.

TH4: Constructing Meaning The habit of constructing meaning by acquiring and synthesizing diverse sources of knowledge to enrich understanding.	*Acquiring Explicit Knowledge* – Professional actively acquires relevant explicit knowledge by collection and analysis of explicit information. *Accessing Tacit Knowledge* – Professional actively accesses relevant tacit knowledge by personal interview, experience and introspection. *Synthesis of Whole Knowledge* – Professional creatively synthesizes whole knowledge, combining explicit and tacit knowledge of self and others.
TH5: Conceptual Clarity The habit of clear conceptual thinking from first principles to make sense of and to distinguish among the known, the unknown and the unknowable.	*Clarity of Concept* – Professional expresses relevant concepts clearly in writing and in concept maps, including related concepts and implications. *Clarity of Rationale* – Professional expresses the rationale for concepts by reasoning from first principles, incorporating relevant experiences. *Clarity of Wholeness* – Professional strives for wholeness in conceptual thinking by balancing reason of the mind, with heart and imagination.
TH6: Communicating Effectively The habit of communicating in a teamwork style to collaboratively create new understandings, new possibilities and new realities.	*Language Awareness* – Professional recognizes and uses the influence of both descriptive and metaphorical language on perception, thought and action. *Languaging Leadership* – Professional exercises languaging leadership, in generative word choice, metaphor, image and other languaging. *Hypermedia Languaging* – Professional uses the unique power and quality of hypermedia to enhance and transform professional communications.
TH7: Courageous Action The habit of courageously taking action and making meaning in the face of ambiguous experience and uncertainty.	*Ambiguity Awareness* – Professional recognizes the relevance, occurrence and significance of ambiguity inherent in personal and professional situations. *Enactment of Reality* – Professional invents meaning out of the ambiguous to create reality, by sensemaking, actiontaking and theoryauthoring. *Courage of Commitment* – Professional evidences courage and emotional resilience to make commitments, take action and accept responsibility.
TH8: Caring Empathy The habit of caring for, identifying with, and honoring others, as well as understanding how others see the world.	*Self-Other Unity* – Professional evidences understanding and capacity to regard the polar-opposites of *self-other* as a complementary unity. *Stakeholder Perspectives* – Professional recognizes the dignity and legitimacy of all stakeholders and can see and feel in their worldviews. *Intellectual and Emotional Maturity* – Professional integrates the mind, heart and imagination to inform empathy and ethics in relationships and actions.

TH9: Conversational Reflection The habit of reflecting on the experience of professional practice through learning conversations.	*Believing* – Professional is <u>first</u> *'open to believing'*, to learn from believing in encounters with new ideas, experiences, developments and challenges. *Doubting* – Professional is <u>second</u> *'open to doubting'*, to learn from doubting in new encounters, only after having learned as much as possible from believing. *Re-Storying by Languaging* – Professional uses languaging for reflection on new learning and prior experience to write a new story of meaning.
TH10: Continuous Learning The habit of seeing every experience as an opportunity for continuous lifetime learning.	*Learning in Failure* – Professional is able to learn from failure by seeing *failure with courage,* as the gift of an unexpected learning experience. *Learning in Success* – Professional is able to learn from success, by seeing *success with humility*, as the gift of an unexpected learning experience. *Intentional Learning* – Professional is intentional in learning, by planning formal and informal learning for personal and professional development.

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