

CAPACITIES (worksheet)

WHAT IT CAN DO

This worksheet exists to help you (1) name a capacity, (2) describe why it matters to you, and (3) describe the contradictions that it might bring up for you in the process of learning as a member of a group (in a class or self-organized learning setting) and in the process of making a project.

Read through each set of capacities: Contemplative Practice, Studio Habits of Mind, and Embodiment in Social Context, and select one capacity from each, describing why it matters to you. Of the three capacities you describe, select the one that is most important to focus on for your next project.

HOW IT WORKS

Read through each set of capacities: Contemplative Practice, Studio Habits of Mind, and Embodiment in Social Context, and select one capacity from each, describing why it matters to you. Of the three capacities you described, select the one that is most important to focus on for your next project.

You might be interested in exploring capacities that are associated with Contemplative Practice.

In the next project that you make, which capacity from Contemplative Practice might you like to focus on?

I am interested in developing _____ capacity

The Center for a Contemplative Mind in Society developed a toolkit called Creating Contemplative Community in Higher Education with the following capacities, listed below. Perhaps you would like to focus on developing one or more of the following capacities in the process of making your next project within spaces of learning.¹

How will you embody this capacity in spaces of learning, and in your next project? Describe what actions and practices you will take. For example, having concern for your peers (the capacity of compassion), and noticing when you are distracted (the capacity of focused attention) within your spaces of learning.

Contemplative Practice

Focused Attention: I am able to practice lucid and attentive awareness, noticing distraction and returning to focused attention.

¹ Daniel P. Barbezat and Mirabai Bush, *Contemplative Practices in Higher Education: Powerful Methods to Transform Teaching and Learning* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2014). Adapted in dialog with Maia Duerr and Carrie Bergman of The Center for Contemplative Mind in Society.

What contradictions will you have to navigate in order to develop this capacity? For example, navigating your desire to be compassionate with the pressure to be “productive” and having healthy boundaries. For example, balancing information overload with your desire to have focused attention in your spaces of learning.	Calmness: I am able to practice grounding, centeredness, a sense of ease of being, and equanimity. Patience: I am able to remain present amid delays or repetitions. I am aware of my own feelings of annoyance or frustration, noticing them without acting upon them. Wisdom: I am able to practice understanding, perspective-taking, and clarity of thought. Compassion: I am able to practice sensitivity and care with myself and with others, sensing interdependence and connection to all of life.
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You might be interested in exploring capacities that are associated with Studio Habits of Mind.	Studio Habits of Mind is a framework that was developed from 2001 to 2013
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In the next project that you make, which capacity from Studio Habits of Mind might you like to focus on? I am interested in developing _____ capacity	by the researchers and educators Lois Hetland, Ellen Winner, Shirley Veenema, Kimberly Sheridan, Diane Jacquith, and Jill Hogan at Harvard to describe the benefits of art education.²
How will you embody this capacity in spaces of learning, and in your next project? Describe what actions and practices you will take. For example, being open to learning from your mistakes (the capacity of stretch and explore), and find ways to stick with activities to see them through (the capacity of engage and persist) within your spaces of learning. What contradictions will you have to navigate in order to develop this capacity?	Studio Habits of Mind Develop craft and skills: The materials and tools I use are chosen intentionally and applied with care. I skillfully incorporate new techniques as well as make connections to my previously made artwork/experiences. Engage and persist: I challenge myself to embrace my artmaking problems and to develop a distinct focus within my work. Envision: I imagine and practice many ideas/processes before and during my artmaking. Express: I am reliably able to create works that convey an idea, a feeling, or a personal meaning. I spend a lot of time identifying the sources that form my beliefs, and I assess whether my sources are credible. I see myself in a state of continuous

²"Educators know surprisingly little about how the arts are taught, what students learn, and the types of decisions teachers make in designing and carrying out instruction. The Studio Thinking Project is a multi-year investigation designed to answer these questions," Ellen Winner, Lois Hetland, Shirley Veenema, and Kimberly Sheridan, *Studio Thinking 2: The Real Benefits of Visual Arts Education* (New York, NY: Teachers College Press, 2013). See also Harvard Project Zero, "How Do Artists Use The Studio Habits of Mind?" Artcore, 2015, <http://www.artcorelearning.org/studio-habits-of-mind>.

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For example, navigating your desire to learn from your mistakes with a desire to seem “smart” or “the best.” For example, honoring your frustration or fear of vulnerability alongside your desire to stick with an activity.

transformation, seeking to identify the root causes and historical conditions that form my beliefs and knowledge.³

Observe/Research:

I spend an extensive amount of time observing my subject matter, artmaking processes, and/or the environment around me that I may have otherwise missed.

Reflect / Skillful Listening and Communicating:

I am reliably able to think and talk with others about an aspect of my work or working process, and learning to judge one’s own work and working process and the work of others. I can listen actively, with curiosity, and can communicate my thoughts and feelings.⁴

Stretch and explore:

I take risks in my artmaking and learn from my mistakes.

Understand (Art) Community:

I am reliably able to interact as an artist with other artists (i.e., in classrooms, in local art organizations, and across the art field) and within the broader society. Art is in parentheses here as it can easily be switched with other

³ The statement, “I spend a lot of time identifying the sources that form my beliefs, and assess whether my sources are credible. I see myself in a state of continuous transformation, seeking to identify the root causes and historical conditions that form my beliefs and knowledge,” was added by the authors and is not included in “Studio Habits of Mind.”

⁴ The statement, “I can listen actively, with curiosity, and can communicate my thoughts and feelings” was added by the authors and is not included in “Studio Habits of Mind.”

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	disciplines, like science or history.
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You might be interested in exploring capacities that are associated with Embodiment in Social Context. In the next project that you make, which capacity from Embodiment in Social Context might you like to focus on? I am interested in developing _____ capacity	Embodiment in Social Context means being reliably able to generate desired actions that are aligned with your values—even under pressure. Embodiment in Social Context draws upon the work of Generative Somatics, founded by Staci Haines in 2000 (originally as GenerationFive).⁵
How will you embody this capacity in spaces of learning, and in your next project? Describe what actions and practices you will take. For example, balancing what you say in class with the way you feel in class (the capacity of self-awareness/embodiment), or practicing self-care and community care (the capacity of connection) both inside and outside of your spaces of learning.	Embodiment in Social Context Self-Awareness/Embodiment: I consistently recognize how my thoughts, feelings, and actions are connected to one another. I recognize that embodiment is crucial to ensure that I have access to all the capacities I need. I practice agility and can interrupt my own habits. Connection: I am reliably able to form and sustain trusting, authentic relationships and to compel others to a shared vision. I am a supportive presence amid difficulty. I am able to give and receive grounded, useful feedback.

⁵ Adapted from Generative Somatics with the permission of Alta Starr and Staci Haines. Generative Somatics, Somatic Transformation and Social Justice, "Courses," <http://www.generative-somatics.org/content/courses>.

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What contradictions will you have to navigate in order to develop this capacity?

For example, navigating the challenges you face in balancing self-care (the capacity of connection) with both external and self-imposed pressures to be hyper-productive.

Coordination / Collective

Action: I am reliably able to take powerful, life-affirming actions rooted in shared values and vision in teams, partnerships, and alliances. I remain responsive to evolving conditions.

Conflict as Generative: I am reliably able to effectively engage and transform interpersonal and organizational breakdown. I ask for and offer accountability and repair, in a way that generates more dignity and trust for everyone involved.

Reflection	Write down your three selected capacities from each set, below:
Which of these capacities, Contemplative Practice, Studio Habits of Mind, or Embodiment in Social Context, feels urgent to you, and why? How will you embed and prioritize this capacity into your project?	<i>Contemplative Practice capacity:</i> <i>Studio Habits of Mind capacity:</i> <i>Embodiment in Social Context capacity:</i>

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