**Chapter 1: Understanding Ourselves and Others: Clarifying Values and Language**

**Overview of Concepts**

Chapter 1 explores individual values in terms of our cultural context. We can be expected to share certain dominant cultural values, but we first must understand how individuals learn values in families and communities and how those values affect individual behaviors. This chapter provides definitions for a number of important terms and concepts such as *race, ethnicity, nationality*, and *minority group*. It is essential to have shared meanings of terms and concepts to understand how individual human differences can thrive and how our differences may suffer from the influence of people and groups.

**Personal Clarification Exercise: Explanation**

[TEXT] – My Values: What I Believe Activity

*Instructor note:* Begin a reading of this text with participants who first understand their own personal values before examining, and perhaps passing judgment, on the values of others. This exercise will help participants to clarify their values and to focus on the purpose of the chapter.

Starting a course with activities such as this, when participants may not know one another, can be an advantage; encourage small groups to be open with one another in discussion of the ten items. Final responses of individuals need not be disclosed; however, it is likely that most people will volunteer their selections and criteria.

*Directions:* All directions for this exercise appear in the text; follow them to establish the basics for this exercise.

As follow-up, select particular items from the list of ten; any two or three items may serve to illustrate the value of participant priorities. Alternatively, small groups may wish to present their views regarding particular items.

*Suggestion*: If chapters are assigned in order, students will be approaching this activity with little knowledge of each other; always be aware of the progress of group discussions. Be alert to highly verbal groups or classes that become bogged down in minutiae of a single item; keep momentum and progress in such discussion situations.

**Intergroup Exercise: Explanation**

[TEXT] – A Mutual Support Dilemma Activity

*Instructor note:* This exercise is highly engaging; it also serves as an icebreaker within groups. Group members will likely wish to read the case study silently to themselves, which is preferable; urge members to begin assigned group discussion as soon as everyone has finished reading; cue the class to begin if any groups aren’t readily engaged. Discussion is best managed with minimal oversight.

Provide discussion time; then direct groups to move to the questions for discussion. Instructors: notice that women may take stances different from more traditional men; urge participation by men less strident in their responses, and calm or divert those who tend to dominate discussion. The goal is to develop positions based upon representative group values; aim that process and product to be instructive to those involved.

Before adjourning, take time for students to write journal entries synthesizing their personal positions as a result of the exercise, as a replacement for further debate about a desired result.

*Suggestion*: Train class members to work in groups; students may not have learned such skills from other classes or other situations. (Tell Discussion leaders to ensure that one or several outspoken members do not dominate groups and that each person is recording discussion exchanges in his or her own note-taking journal.)

**Supplemental Student Activities**

The activities below are highly recommended; they are provided as additional student-centered tasks designed to contribute to greater understanding of concepts, terms, and situations. The more learner-centered activities that can be provided, the better able individuals will be to enhance with facts and history their own values and behaviors.

**Summary Exercises**

Summary exercises are intended to provide: (1) Focus review and (2) Term and concept review as described in Part Five of the Instructor Manual Preface.

*Suggestion*: Encourage participants to always complete summarizing exercises in class. Whether in pairs, adjacent seat partners, or pre-or self-selected teams of two or three, participants will prepare themselves for active involvement when summary exercises are conducted for each assigned chapter.

**Personal Clarification Activity**

Activity: Survey of Personal Attitudes and Values

*Instructor note:* In this activity, groups of five participants discuss implications of each alternative before recording their personal responses. A second phase to the activity might have group members share and explain their responses within their groups.

Several outcomes occur within this survey exercise: (a) understanding one’s own attitudes and values; (b) hearing opinions of other individuals; and (c) being required to discuss each item aloud. Instructors must be prepared to offer explanation to any group observed to be confused about the nature of the question they are asked to discuss. Follow-up with the whole group is critically important; as with other exercises, take the time to get maximum learner discussion.

*Directions:*  The survey below will provide a thumbnail sketch of personal attitudes and values. Complete all five items as the basis for some personal insight and for a discussion of what personal attitudes and/or values are reflected. Compare responses with others in the class. How does a tally of the results reflect your personal attitudes and values? Those of your group? The class? Larger societies?

1. What is the most important measure of success in life?

1. Being the best person possible
2. Maintaining a work/life balance
3. Faith in God
4. Work
5. Family and friends

2. Which of the following is closer to your point of view?

1. I would sacrifice family time for exciting opportunities and higher pay at my job
2. I would sacrifice exciting opportunities and higher pay at my job for more time with my family

3. When you are at home with your family, how do you spend your free time? *Note: Express your answers in terms of percents, as in Watching television = 20%. Your total should be 100%.*

1. \_\_\_\_\_% Being with my family
2. \_\_\_\_\_% Hanging out with my friends
3. \_\_\_\_\_% Playing sports/exercising
4. \_\_\_\_\_% Watching television
5. \_\_\_\_\_% Attending sports events
6. \_\_\_\_\_% Working around the house
7. 100 % = Total
8. How do you feel about discussing your personal problems with others?
9. Comfortable
10. Uncomfortable
11. OK when it is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
12. Not comfortable when it is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
13. How many hours a week are you prepared to work in order to be successful?
14. 40 hours
15. More than 40 hours
16. More than 40 hours plus weekends

*Adapted from: “Stress and the Superdad” Michele Drecklin, Time, August 23, 2004*

**Community Involvement: Action Research**

*Instructor note*:If a student finds global issues interesting, it may be a sign that making friends with a student from the international community could be helpful in clarifying differences in personal values. In this project, suggest that the researcher follow this chapter’s personal attitudes survey and the values clarification activities. Contact your campus international education office to establish this kind of experience.

Activity: How do values of foreign students at your campus or facility differ from your values? Locate your campus international education and/or student support or human resources office; arrange to be a term-long conversation partner to a recently enrolled foreign student. As you work regularly with that person, discuss the differences and similarities in personal values learned as children. Keep a journal log of your conversations, with sections bulleting those likenesses and dissimilarities.

**Community Involvement: Service Learning**

*Instructor note*: Values are demonstrated through behavior shaped by individual attitudes. We assume in this scenario that attitudes have led to behaviors unacceptable to the community; being able to compare one’s attitudes with those of someone incarcerated for his/her behavior could have lifelong impact. This project can be meaningful to the mature student who possesses proficient skill at interpersonal communication. Be cautioned that the altruistic student, of any age, should be counseled to pursue other projects.

Activity: What personal values result in culturally unacceptable behaviors? Visit a city or county jail; arrange to contribute to the operation of the facility and/or to be of regular, reliable service to incarcerated individuals. Focus your efforts on meeting the mission of the agency and on adding to your understanding of how the values of inmates have displayed unacceptable behaviors. When is a choice a bad choice made by otherwise good people? In what ways have the offending behaviors reflected specific values that are different from your own? Maintain required agency logs and your personal reflections following each visit.

**Enrichment Activities**

Activity:Choose Your Community

*Directions*: The three alternative situations below serve to suggest that perhaps it is possible to have too much of a good thing. Our ultimate reasons also provide us – and others – with an idea of where our values lie. Given the choices presented below, in which community would you prefer to live? Respond to each of the following options and be prepared to explain your combination of choices. Can you or your team suggest a fourth pair of choices?

1. Annual salaries in your community:

1. You earn $50,000; the average earned salary is $25,000 Or:
2. You earn $100,000; the average earned salary is $200,000

2. Educations in your community:

1. You have a B.A.; most people have high school diplomas Or:
2. You have a Masters Degree; most people have their doctorates

3. Intelligence of persons in your community:

1. Your IQ is 110; others have lower IQs. (Average = 90) Or:
2. Your IQ is 130; others have higher IQs. (Average = 150)

4. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_:

1. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Or:
2. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

*Based on a study cited in Barry Schwartz: The Paradox of Choice: Why More is Less*

*Suggestion*: Conclude any activity with group discussion and self-reporting procedures. Assume the role of secretary for the class; take notes and use categorization to group remarks and conclusions. A good secretary generates participant interaction and will illustrate that class conversation is key to meaningful learning.

Activity**:** A Question of Values

*Directions*: Respond to each of the situations posed below; first consider your own values base. Then, in teams of three, discuss each item and share your initial personal values response. Select several items for further discussion and possible explanation to the class.

1. As a college freshman you are given the choice of befriending the most attractive person, the smartest person, or the most gifted athlete in your class. Which would you choose?
2. Assume that you have a job you really enjoy but it only pays enough to have a modest middle-class lifestyle. You are offered a job that would be much less enjoyable but will pay you twice what you are making now. How will you decide whether to accept this job offer?
3. You are arguing with a close friend on the phone when she gets angry and hangs up. Assume that she was the one at fault in the quarrel, but she makes no attempt to contact you. How long would you wait to get in touch with her?
4. Your job is all right and you are making a decent living but you have just been offered a far better job in a city far away. This will mean moving away from your
5. best friend and you know that if you take the job it will mean slowly drifting away from this friend as the years pass. Will you still take the job?
6. Where would you place your best friend or significant other on a scale from one-to-ten where one is hardship, struggle, and extraordinary accomplishment and ten is comfort, peace of mind, and ordinary accomplishments? Why?
7. If you could wake up tomorrow morning having gained one ability or quality, what would it be? Why would you choose that particular ability or quality?
8. If you could choose between having one intimate soul mate and no other close friends, or no such soul mate but many good friends and acquaintances, which might you choose?
9. Which would you choose: (A) To have a wonderful new experience that you would remember for the rest of your life or (B) Be given something you’ve always wanted to own. What would each be? Which would you ultimately choose?
10. If you had had a younger brother or sister who idolized you and tried to copy everything you did, would you have behaved differently? Explain.
11. On a busy street, a well-dressed stranger approaches you and explains that he has lost his wallet and asks you for a dollar to catch a bus so he can go home. What would you do? How would the appearance of that stranger affect your decision?

Activity:Expert Advisor Selection

*Directions:* A group of fifteen experts, considered miracle workers by those who have used their services, has agreed to provide these services for the members of this group. Their extraordinary skills are guaranteed to be 100 percent effective. It is up to you to decide which three of these people can best provide you with what you want. The experts and their qualifications are listed below.

Part One: In groups of three or five, review the qualifications of each expert advisor *[See Part 5 below: “Cast of Characters”]*

Part Two: Discuss with group members each of the fifteen experts. As needed, ask clarifying questions, such as “Could this person . . . ?” or “Do you believe that she could also . . . ?”

Part Three: Select those whom you think could be of value to you personally. Narrow your selection to the three who are most likely to help you achieve your goals.

Part Four: Explain to your group why you selected the three expert advisors that you did. You need not apologize for your selections, since the needs upon which you based your selection will not be the same as the needs of others in your group. Ask any questions you have about the rationale others used to select their expert advisors.

Part Five: Cast of Expert Characters

1. Dr. Dorian Grey – A noted plastic surgeon, he can make you look exactly as you want to look by means of a new painless technique. (He also uses hormones to alter body structure and size.) Your ideal physical appearance can be a reality.
2. Susan Surenuff – A job placement expert. The job of your choice, in the location of your choice, will be yours.
3. Jedediah Methuselah – Guarantees long life (to the age of 200) with your aging process slowed down proportionately. For example, at the age of 60 you will look and feel like 20.
4. Dr. Masters Johnson – Expert in the area of sexual attraction and compatibility, she guarantees that you will be the perfect male or female who will contribute to a successful marriage.
5. Dr. Yin Yang – An organic expert, she will provide you with perfect health and protection from physical injury throughout your life.
6. Dr. Knot Not Ginott – An expert in dealing with peers, he guarantees that you will never have any problems with your peers again. They will accept your values and your behavior.
7. Cultipower – An expert on authority, she will make sure that authorities never again bother you. Her services will make you immune from all control that you consider unfair by the administration, the police, and the government.
8. “Pop” Larity – He guarantees that you will have the friends you want now and in the future. You will find it easy to approach those you like and they will find you easily approachable.
9. Dr. Sandy Smart – She will develop your common sense and intelligence to a level in excess of 150 I.Q. It will remain at this level through your entire lifetime.
10. Rocky Fellah – Wealth will be yours, with guaranteed schemes for earning millions within weeks.
11. Dwight D. Degawl – This world famed leader will train you quickly. You will be listened to, looked up to, and respected by those around you.
12. Dr. Otto Carengy – You will be well liked by all and will never be lonely. A life filled with love will be yours.
13. Dr. Claire Voyant – All of your questions about the future will be answered, continually, through the training of this soothsayer.
14. Dr. Hinnah Self – Guarantees that you will have self-knowledge, self-liking, self-respect, and self-confidence. True self-assurance will be yours.
15. Prof. Val U. Clear – With her help, you will always know what you want, and you will be completely clear on all the muddy issues of these confused days.

*Suggestion*: For an out of class activity, encourage students to share this list with a family member or a friend. Since the activity concerns not only an individual’s values but his or her priorities, it is a relatively risk-free way of ascertaining how other people are perceiving that individual. In addition, they can also ask their family member or friend to make their three choices and try to guess what experts the other person chose. The result could be entertaining, even amusing, and certainly a “reality check” on how they view others who are close to them and how those others view them.