

Values Clarification: A Strategy for Nurturing Values

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ABSTRACT

The word value is derived from the Latin word "Valerie". This means "to be strong and vigorous". The word "values" was used by a German Philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche in 1880. Nietzsche used this word in plural form to 'denote beliefs and attitudes what were personal and subjective'.

John Dewey in 1948 said "The value means primarily to prize, to esteem, to appraise and to estimate. It means the act of cherishing something, holding it dear and also the act of passing judgement upon the nature and amounts of values as compared with something else."

There are different types of values like personal values, social values, moral values, cultural values etc. The values mentioned in the list compiled by NCERT and given in Appendix III of "Documents on Social, Moral and Spiritual Values in Education" (1979) include cooperation, compassion, courtesy etc. There are different viewpoints on whether values should be taught as a separate subject or incorporated in the formal and informal teaching itself. Some believe that values are caught as well as taught while some say that values are caught not taught. Thus there are different strategies to inculcate values in students. These strategies include Role Playing, Case Study Strategy, Values Clarification etc.

Values Clarification approach was promoted by L.S. Raths, M.F. Harmin and S.B. Simon. It is an innovative strategy in which individuals are motivated to reflect upon the different values and accept only those values that they actually feel are relevant for them. Every person needs to introspect and clarify the values that they cherish personally without blindly following the values told by others to be important.

Keywords: values, values clarification, freedom to introspect, nurturing of values

The word value is derived from the Latin word "Valerie". This means "to be strong and vigorous". The word "values" was used by a German Philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche in 1880. Nietzsche used this word in plural form to 'denote beliefs and attitudes what were personal and subjective'.

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Kane in 1962 said "Values are the ideals, beliefs or norms which a society or the large majority of a society's members hold."

The values are considered to be very significant for all of us. They help us to lead a happy and peaceful life. There are different types of values like:

1. Personal values
2. Social values
3. Moral values
4. Cultural Values
5. Traditional values

6. Modern values
7. Spiritual values
8. Religious values

The values mentioned in the list compiled by NCERT and given in Appendix III of "Documents on Social, Moral and Spiritual Values in Education" (1979) include the following

1. Cooperation
2. Compassion
3. Courtesy
4. Duty
5. Justice
6. Patriotism
7. Tolerance
8. Social Service
9. Courage
10. Curiosity
11. Discipline
12. Equality
13. Integrity
14. National unity
15. Sincerity

According to National Curriculum for Primary and Secondary Education (1985), the crisis of values our society is passing through "demands more explicit and deliberate educational efforts towards value development". The first term of reference for the National Commission on Teachers (1983) was "to lay down clear objectives for the teaching profession with reference to the search for excellence, breadth of vision and cultivation of values".

The National Educational Policy (NPE), 1986 declares "The growing concern over the erosion of essential values and an increasing cynicism in society has brought to focus the need for readjustments in the curriculum in order to make education a forceful tool for the cultivation of social and moral values. In our culturally plural society, education should foster universal and eternal values, oriented towards the unity and integration of our people. Such value education should help eliminate obscurantism, religious fanaticism,

violence, superstition and fatalism. Apart from this combative role, value education has a profound positive content, based on our heritage, national and universal goals and perceptions. It should lay primary emphasis on this aspect."

According to Dr. Y.N. Sridhar "The phrase 'Value Education' as used in the area of school education refers to the study of development of essential values in pupils and the practices suggested for the promotion of the same. In its full range of meaning, value education includes developing the appropriate sensibilities _ moral, cultural, spiritual and the ability to make proper value judgment and internalize them in one's life. It is an education for 'becoming' and involves the total personality of the individual. Value education is essentially 'Man Making' and 'Character Building'."

There are different viewpoints on whether values should be taught as a separate subject or incorporated in the formal and informal teaching itself. Some believe that values are caught as well as taught while some say that values are caught not taught. Thus there are different strategies to inculcate values in students. These strategies include Role Playing, Case Study Strategy, Values Clarification etc.

The Mosby's Medical Dictionary, 8th edition. © 2009, Elsevier states that values clarification is a:

'method whereby a person can discover his or her own values by assessing, exploring, and determining what those personal values are and how they affect personal decision making'.

Values Clarification approach was promoted by L.S. Raths, M.F. Harmin and S.B. Simon. It is an innovative strategy in which individuals are motivated to reflect upon the different values and accept only those values that they actually feel are relevant for them. Every person needs to introspect. Raths *et al.* said "There is an assumption in our value theory and teaching strategies that grow from it that humans can arrive at values by an intelligent process of choosing, prizing and behaving. At least we assume that humans can arrive at something via that process, and with some support in the literature, we prefer to call that something values". It is very significant for all of us to understand

what we value. In values clarification strategy, a person 'clarifies' his values in order to keep only those values that are useful and to discard those values that give no direction to their lives. When we know what values we cherish, we will set targets in our life and plan the direction of our life keeping these core views in our mind. In values clarification strategy, it is believed that every individual should have the freedom to choose the values he would nurture within himself without blindly following the values that are considered relevant by others. The concept of values clarification techniques are based upon the philosophy of John Dewey who was a strong supporter of experienced-based education. In this approach, it is believed that there is nothing like universally correct values and that people should be given the freedom to choose and practice the values that they cherish personally. Thus values clarification encourages one to think critically.

Values Inculcation approach can thus be used to inculcate values in students. The students are motivated to clarify their values without any comment, interference or pressures of the teacher. The teacher does not indoctrinate the students but gives an opportunity to them to self reflect and to analyze the opinion of others to arrive at the values that they feel they should nurture for a happy life. All the responses given by the students are given equal importance and no response is said to be right or wrong. This approach emphasizes the need to clarify the values that we consider to be meaningful for us. It helps us to be reflective and critical thinkers.

In the *Values Clarification: A Handbook of Practical Strategies for Teachers and Students* seven sub-processes have been described for values clarification.

"Prizing and Cherishing."

In the first step, it is essential that individuals should introspect and become aware of the values that they consider worthy of giving importance to. This can be started with an ice breaking session in which children may be engaged in different types of activities so that they become familiar with each other and are willing to share their views. Then

some moral dilemmas may be presented before them and then asked to describe their views on the issues.

"Publicly Affirming."

In this stage, different strategies like completing incomplete sentences or answering controversial questions are used so that children clarify their thoughts and views.

"Choosing From Alternatives."

In this step many different types of information is presented before the children who now need to critically analyze every information and choose wisely from the flood of information given to them. They explore various alternatives before arriving at any conclusion.

"Choosing After Consideration of Consequences."

The children in this step reflect upon their own thinking and the views given by others and finally select what they feel is right without being forced to accept what others feel is correct.

"Choosing Freely."

It is essential that whatever the children choose should be based only upon what they feel and think and not under any kind of pressure from elders or their peers.

"Acting."

After choosing what they consider relevant for themselves, the students are motivated to demonstrate their beliefs. This can be done through different types of activities.

"Acting With a Pattern, Consistency and Repetition."

Students are motivated to behave in a way to reflect the values that they 'choose' to 'cherish'. This is the final step in which they act with a definite pattern, consistency and willingly repeat what they cherish.

In values clarification approach the students are not taught values that they should value. Instead they

are encouraged to clarify and compare their own values with others and uphold the values that they find to be meaningful and useful. In class a teacher can start this approach with ice-breaking sessions using very simple issues and then moving on to more thought provoking issues. For this approach, a teacher can tell a story and then ask the students to present their views. Different survival games can be used. Moral dilemmas can be presented before the children in which they have to select between two wrong choices. Issues like stealing, euthanasia, suicide, lying etc can be discussed in class while ensuring that the teacher does not impose her views on morality on the students. The students are free to express their views. The teacher does not make any comment on what the students say and does not state any students' views as being right or wrong. He/she also ensures that no students make fun of any other students comments and also that few students do not overshadow the other students. But the students may be asked to clarify why they gave some values more significance than others and also why they accepted some values and rejected others. The teachers act as facilitators who provide suitable conditions and situations in which children themselves become aware of the values which they consider to be valid and worth being followed.

For the success of values clarification approach, it is essential that the environment provided to the children should be such that they freely and without any fear express their views on different issues presented before them. They should also be made aware of the need to be patient listeners as well. Each individual has the freedom to speak but also has to listen carefully to what is said by others without being biased and self centred. There should be positive and thought provoking interaction between the teacher and students as well as among the students in the class. Nobody should be allowed to dominate the discussion in a way so that the others fear to speak or become so influenced by others that they just accept the views of others out of compulsion or with the desire to stay away from arguments. Here the role of the teacher becomes very significant and crucial. He/she has to maintain decorum and also has to ensure that each student

does not hesitate to express his/her views and also listens to what is said by others without any biasness. No student should be allowed to dominate and no student should be left aloof in the discussion for values clarification. The teacher should not give any lecture on morality. The students must be given the opportunity to critically analyze, clarify and then develop a set of values that they consider worthy of being followed.

Thus we see that values clarification is a good strategy for the inculcation of values. This can be used by teachers effectively for making the students clarify the values that they cherish.

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