Life Skills Development/Module One/Unit 1: Values Education

Introduction and Rationale

Education is a process of initiating the learner to a good life. In order to live this 'good' life, the learner has to acquire, through this education knowledge, skills, attitudes, values and other behaviour patterns. This unit will therfeore address values and the importance of values in one's life. It will incorporate values clarification strategies in one's decision making processes. This will help the learners to become responsible citizens who will use their values to guide their attitudes and behaviour.

Objectives

After completing this section, you should be able to:

1. define values
2. demonstrate an acknowledgement and acceptance of the realities of diversity(ethicity,culture, sexual-orientation, spirituality/religion)
3. identify and prioritize one's own values
4. develop an understanding of how values influence decision making and behaviour
5. recognize the need to live together in atmosphere of peace and contributing to sustainable development

Definitions

- Values
- Core values
- Values inculcation: aims for pupils to adopt a pre-determined set of values
- Values analysis: pupils investigate and assess evidence which may support value judgements
- Values clarification: helps pupils become aware of their own values in relation to those of others
- Action learning: focuses on students having a reasoned base for whatever actions they might take in relation to specific social and environmental issues

(after Butt 2002; Lambert & Balderstone 2000)

Getting to know our values

What are values?

Values have many meanings:

- Values are your personal measure of worth shaped by your beliefs, ideas and principles that are important to you.They shape your priorities and guide you in deciding what is right and wrong
- Values reflect our attitudes and what we believe about everything.
- People's values differ and people and we should all learn to tolerate each others' values.

Examples:

- A person who values family will care about his/her partner, children and home life.
- love for my family is a value I am willing to work hard for and maybe even sacrifice to achieve it.
- That value reflects the fact that I believe love for family is more important than anything else in my life. This should be reflected in my decisions and actions. If not it is not what the person values.
- A person who values being healthy will exercise, eat the right foods,live positively and avoid alcohol and tobacco.

Classification of Values

Values can be grouped into the following groups:

1. Instrumental values
2. Moral values
3. Intrinsic values
4. Aesthetic values

Instrumental values are those dealing with the means of achieving economic gain, like *money* and *status*.

Moral values are those dealing with the notions of right and wrong.

Intrinsic values are those which are desired for their own sake, like *happiness*, *truth* and *peace*

Aesthetic values are those that refer to our standards of judgement of what is *beautiful* and *ugly*.

Importance of values

- Clarifying values is an integral part of personal growth.
- Knowing what's most important to us provides a blueprint and direction in our lives.
- Values Clarification is a key area in our self-knowledge because we develop a greater awareness of our core values.
- Knowing our core values or what is most important to us is extremely relevant to creating goals, setting priorities, and managing our time.
- You will have solid ideas about where you will commit blocks of our energy and time. Less important areas can be set aside or dropped from our schedules.
- When we have to make choices between activities, we'll have our core values to guide us.
- When we clarify our values, we also have the opportunity to strengthen our value system and integrity and to integrate ourselves into wholeness withinternational expectations.

Exploring Personal Values

Our life is guided by the values we act upon. Many of us have never taken the time to truly explore and identify our values. Behind our choices and actions are the values that take us into living fully, while other values diminish the quality of our life. You have an opportunity to base your life on the values that are consistent with how you want to live your life. Having fun or taking risks may run counter to being healthy. In order to be healthier, it is important to live out of the values that are consistent with your purpose.

Value Clarification

Values change over time in response to changing life experiences. Recognizing these changes and understanding how they affect one's actions and behaviors is the goal of the values clarification process. Values clarification will not tell you what your values should be, it simply provides the means to discover what your values are.

Activity
Number 1

Let's begin with a small sampling of values. You can add more values and make notations if you like.

1. Circle any value or representation of values you feel strongly about using the table below. Select one that you have circled and write a paragraph on why this particular value is so important to you. What does this mean in your life? Is this a value you hold important and act on? Why or why not?

Honesty	Trustworthiness	Friendship	Relaxation
Recognition	Independence	Wealth	Health
Knowledge	Family	Fun	Risk
Marriage	Control	Tolerance	Peace
Safety	Fame	Nature	Caution
Responsibility	Generosity	Timeliness	Cooperation
Respect	Beauty	Recycling	Preservation
Unity	Caring	Creativity	Closeness
Adventure	Uniqueness	Conformity	Money
Loyalty	Work Ethic	Talent	Religion
Love	Companionship	Solitude	Humility
Growth	Justice	Freedom	Fixing things
Music	Harmony	Objectivity	Flexibility
Politics	Life	Challenge	Change
Animals	children	Students	Happiness
Reading	Writing	Freedom	Computing

- From the table above, identify the twelve (12) Universal Core Values.
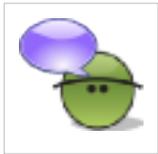
Feedback: Peace, love, unity, simplicity, cooperation, tolerance, happiness, responsibility, freedom, honesty, humility, respect

Prioritizing Your Values

Now that you have identified your core values, you understand what is important to you. You can use then refer to your values list whenever you have to make a difficult or important decision. Read some of the questions from the list below.

- Should I smoke Marijuana or drink alcohol because my friends are drinking and smoking?
- Is it OK to have sex with a few close partners?
- What if I decided to have a sexual relationship - should I protect myself from HIV AIDS and other STDs?
- Is it "cool" to say "no" to sex?
- Is sex OK if you are getting something for it: money, cell phone, or clothes?
- Is happiness and health important?

These are difficult questions with no straightforward answers. When faced with such decisions, you need to refer to your list of values, prioritize them and then make a decision. *The prioritization of values* allows you to make decisions which would lead to fulfillment of goals without sacrificing your core values.

Remember that although this decision may be the correct one for you at this point in life, you might decide differently when faced with the same situation later in life.}}

Activity
Number 2 Examine the list you of values you selected in Activity 1 and arrange them in order of importance.

Values for a Sustainable Future

In a world of limited resources, conflicting values, and competing individuals and groups, we all need to learn to live together in an atmosphere of peace, respecting ourselves and others and contributing to sustainable development.Values also very much depend on the religion.The values and athics of the religion can help human beings learn to co-operate with each other and the rest of nature for the mutual well-being of all. A sustainable future depends upon people living according to values and principles of sustainability, including:

• Social Equity and Peace:
• Appropriate Development
• Conservation
• Democracy
• Practice of religion with in the community

In the previous activities you have had the chance to explore your personal values. You will now be required to examine other people's values as well as your own. You will be using logical thinking skills to analyse different viewpoints about an issue. There are four steps in values analysis:

• Analysing the issue
• Assessing consequences for the different stakeholders (provide a list of stakeholder groups)
• Analysing perspectives of all stakeholders
• Making a decision

Activity

Choose a major development having some controversial aspect relating to your country/region

Suggested examples of development:

• A textile industry on the coast of an island state
• A major tourism development on previous farmland
• Construction of a road in a forest area

Individually answer the following questions.

What are the potential benefits of the proposed development? Identify some of the groups of people interested in, or affected by, the development?

In a class setting you may want to do the following:

• Divide the class into groups of major stakeholders
• Analyse opinions of the different stakeholders
• Summarise the viewpoints of each stakeholder
• Finally you have to present the idea to the cabinet of Ministers for approval. As person who has a have a firm committed to the values of sustainability: peace and equity, appropriate development, democracy and conservation.
• Write the text of your decision stating the advantages and disadvantages of the options you are considering and the key reasons for your decision.

Summary

When I have values:

- I know what is important to me
- I am able to set my priorities right
- I am honest
- I am systematic when doing things
- I decide before I act
- I am responsible
- I have respect for other people
- I am accountable for my actions
- I have respect for life
- I have commitment in whatever I do
- I show kindness
- I have self control
- Values only have value when they are acted upon.

You have had the chance to explore your personal values and to examine other people's values in relation to sustainable living by analysing a controversial development through a case study.

Decision making

5 STEP MODEL OF THE DECISION MAKING PROCESS

1st step: Defining the problem Precise definition of a problem is a major step toward its solution. There are also some potential dangers in identifying and defining a problem, such as (e.g) the event which attracts attention may not be the problem, but the symptom of the problem. Such as: A friend not speaking to you is a symptom of a problem, his/her not speaking to you is not the real problem but only the symptom of the problem. The reason for their not speaking is the problem.

2nd Step: Identify the alternative course of action. Once the problem has been already defined the next step is to identify the alternation choices of action on strategies leading to a solution. During the stage of defining the problem various courses of action usually become obvious. The ideal approach at this stage I for the decision-maker to seek to identify as many potential solutions as possible solutions, and finally the feasible solutions are left.

3rd Step: Evaluating feasible solutions This stage of the process entails calculating the consequences of the feasible solutions in terms of advantages and disadvantages.

4th Step: Choosing a solution: At this stage the decision-maker will choose the strategy which comes closest to the attainment of goals and will be based on criteria such as maximum advantages and minimum disadvantages. It is at this time that the decision-maker may become acutely aware of the loneliness of decision making. Decisions are made by the person concerned.

5th Step: Checking the results Once the decision has been made and implemented the final stage in the process is obtaining feedback on the results. The objective is to discover:-

(i) If the selected solution has achieved the specified objectives and closed the gap between the actual

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    and the desired performance.
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(iii) If the selected solution failed, completely or partly to achieve the objectives, what were the reasons? This analysis will provide useful information to correct the situation.

(iv) How well or badly the decision-maker has performed.

3. APPLYING DECISION MAKING SKILLS A key aspect of maturity is the ability to do things for oneself to make plans and 'go for them', showing self-determination and persistence, rather than needing to be pushed to do things by teachers and parents. .

Activity 1 Look at the range of decision we make. Individually, or in small groups, pupils write a list of the decisions they make in a day (for example, yesterday). Then draw a line under this list and add any big decisions they made in the last three or four years or decision they think may have to make in the next few years. Discuss the difference and the relationship between everyday decisions and important ones. Are they reached in similar or different way?

Focus on the process of making decisions outlined above. Pupils could test out these steps making an imaginary decision, for example, how to spend a gift of 100 dollars.

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References

[1] http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Life

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