Valuing in Decision Making

ALVERNO COLLEGE ESTABLISHED 1887

Valuing in Decision Making

Valuing in decision making begins with identifying our core values and the emotions they evoke, and the complex relationships, experiences and beliefs that shape our worldview and give meaning to our lives. While individuals and groups often share values that shape their decision making and sense of identity, each person holds unique personal values. Valuing in decision making helps students to understand the moral dimensions of their decisions and accept responsibility for any consequences in all facets of their life.

Facts about valuing in decision making:

• Valuing in decision making is the examination and interpretation of relationships, cultures and belief systems. It engages artistic, humanistic and cultural perspectives through active listening, conversation and personal introspection.

• Students develop moral sensitivity by using frameworks to explore diverse cultural and social perspectives in relationship to their own values, with an appreciation and empathetic understanding of other perspectives.

• Students develop moral and ethical reasoning while analyzing and responding to personal and social issues with integrity.

Misconceptions about valuing in decision making:

• *Valuing in decision making is solely based on monetary considerations.* While financial considerations often play a significant role, there are other factors that can be equally important.

• *Valuing in decision making is an objective and universally agreed upon process.* Different individuals or groups may assign different values to the same options based on their unique perspectives, preferences and priorities.

• *Valuing in decision making is a precise and predictable process.* Valuing in decision making can be complex, uncertain and involve trade-offs, requiring judgement, estimation and consideration of uncertain future outcomes.

• *Valuing in decision making is a one-time activity that happens in the beginning of the decision-making process.* In reality, valuing in decision making is an ongoing process that evolves and changes as new information becomes available and priorities and preferences may be reassessed.

Valuing in decision making in action at Alverno and in the community:

• In a beginning Humanities course, students articulate their personal spirituality by identifying their core values, the relationships and experiences that shape them, and how these values inform their worldview, identity and choices.

• Ethical leadership: Leaders who value personal, moral and professional growth demonstrate ethical leadership. They make decisions that consider the well-being of their team members, adhere to ethical standards, and foster a culture of integrity and accountability. They prioritize the growth and development of their employees and act as role models for ethical behavior.

Effective Citizenship

ALVERNO COLLEGE
ESTABLISHED 1887

Effective Citizenship

Students will make informed choices and develop strategies for collaborative involvement in community issues. At Alverno, students begin the pursuit of effective citizenship by identifying significant community issues and assesses their ability to act on them. As they progress, students will be able to identify, describe and assessing issues that affect communities as well as how to develop their own action plans.

Facts about effective citizenship:

- Effective citizenship assesses efficacy in many contexts including political, organizational and business settings.
- Effective citizenship opens access to the school for the community, and for the school to engage with the community — "We are part of something larger."
- Effective citizenship stays current to engage an ever-changing environment.
- People can be effective citizens on a smaller scale and still make a big impact.

Misconceptions about effective citizenship:

- *Effective citizenship is about voting.* While voting is part of effective citizenship, it also includes volunteering, advocacy and everyday decisions in our personal and professional lives.
- *If you're not a citizen, this ability doesn't apply to you.* All of us are citizens of the larger community.
- *It's about politics.* It's less about politics and more about contributing positively to local, national and global communities. It's about a deeper understanding. We don't focus on band-aids for problems, we focus on what is causing the issues and what can be done about it.

Effective citizenship in action at Alverno College and in the community:

- The Effective Citizenship department invited the Alverno community into the Milwaukee County Transit System's MCTS NEXT public input process. Through the writing of simple, brief notes to decision-makers, students, faculty and staff discovered the power of effective citizenship when MCTS responded by creating a bus route tailor-made to connect Alverno to the heart of Milwaukee's south side via Miller Park Way and Greenfield Avenue.
- PARK(ing) Day 2021: In an annual event observed every September around the world, PARK(ing) Day transforms a parking space into a mini-park. The goal is to playfully stretch the imagination by envisioning how we, as an institution, choose to allocate space. Students, faculty and staff shared transportation stories and were prompted to consider the financial, health and environmental costs and benefits of different transportation choices, at the personal level and the institutional level.
- Effective citizenship doesn't exist in a vacuum. As such, building cross-disciplinary relationships is an important part of the department's work. One specific collaboration involved working with the ACTS Committee to identify plant species on campus in order to register the rain garden as a Monarch Waystation. In addition, the Effective Citizenship department has collaborated with student service departments on the development and execution of a campus action plan to increase student voting rates and help students form habits of active and engaged citizenship.

Social Interaction

ALVERNO COLLEGE
ESTABLISHED 1887

Social Interaction

Social interaction is a fundamental part of our lives and serves many purposes including building relationships, deepening understanding, developing others, managing conflicts and reaching decisions. It requires willingness to engage, use of analytic frameworks and self-awareness to evaluate and intentionally deploy behaviors.

At Alverno, a student begins the pursuit of social interaction by learning interpersonal and task-oriented group interactions, taking what was learned about self-awareness to engage with others in increasingly effective exchanges across a range of situations, finally learning to function effectively with diverse stakeholders in professional roles.

Facts about social interaction:

• It's something we can use in all aspects of our lives, personal and professionally.

• There are different approaches or frameworks for interacting in different contexts.

• It's relevant because we're all interacting to build the world we live in while respecting others' boundaries.

• Social interaction should be intrinsically and intentionally inclusive of all voices and perspectives and modes of interaction.

Misconceptions about social interaction:

• *It's only about reaching a decision.* It's also about building relationships and deepening understanding.

• *It's only about leading and/or "getting along."*

• *It's about socializing.*

• *It's the same as communication.* While communication is a key component of social interaction, it's so much more than that.

Social interaction in action at Alverno and in the community:

• The difference between communication and social interaction: communication is a specific part of social interaction that involves the intentional exchange of information, whereas social interaction encompasses a broader range of behaviors and actions that occur when individuals or groups engage with one another. Communication is a means to facilitate social interaction, as it allows individuals to express themselves and convey meaning, thereby contributing to the overall interaction.

• An example of social interaction is a group of friends having a conversation and sharing their experiences. In this scenario, the friends are engaging in a social interaction by exchanging verbal communication, listening to each other, and responding with their own thoughts and opinions. They may also use non-verbal cues such as facial expressions, gestures and body language to convey their emotions and enhance the communication. The social interaction involves a dynamic interplay between the participants, fostering a sense of connection, mutual understanding and building relationships.

Problem Solving

ALVERNO
COLLEGE
ESTABLISHED 1887

Problem Solving

Problem solving means defining problems and integrating resources to reach a decision, make recommendations or implement action plans.

At Alverno, a student begins the pursuit of problem solving by learning to articulate and use processes to solve a problem. As the student progresses, they build upon their independence by implementing and evaluating disciplinary problem solving, ultimately learning to use problem solving strategies in a wide variety of professional situations.

Facts about problem solving:

- A general approach to problem solving usually includes these steps: define the problem, identify constraints and assumptions, create a plan, implement the plan, and evaluate.
- The problem solving process is rarely linear. Evaluation and revision are often essential to the process.
- Effective problem solving involving communities should attempt to include all stakeholders.
- Good problem solving involves all 8 Abilities.

Misconceptions about problem solving:

- *There is only one right way to solve a problem, or just one solution.* Problem solving involves looking at the situation though different lenses and paying attention to the ramifications for different stakeholders.
- *Problems should be solved on the first attempt.* Problem solving is a process.
- *Solutions need to be perfect before they are used.*
- *Solutions should make everyone happy.* Balancing the needs of everyone while finding a solution involves compromise.

Problem solving in action at Alverno and in the community:

- In a science class, students develop a hypothesis and design a plan to test it.
- In nursing courses, students use the nursing process to assess their patients and develop a plan of care and then reevaluate the patient's plan.
- In a business class, students develop a business plan with constraints, like a fix budget.
- In an art class, students select appropriate media and techniques to communicate an idea.
- In an education course, students develop lesson plans that address diverse student needs.

Developing a Global Perspective

ALVERNO COLLEGE
ESTABLISHED 1887

Developing a Global Perspective

Students will have the ability to draw upon a rich understanding of the world's diversity and interconnection in order to develop and articulate informed perspectives on issues with global dimensions. They'll also be able to engage with the multilayered political, biological and cultural systems that shape issues of complex global systems.

Facts about developing a global perspective:

- Developing a global perspective teaches us to use information and the tools of analysis to unpack the complexity of issues, as well as the people and systems that impact and interact with those issues.

- It's about understanding and embracing complexity, diversity of experience and opinion, and interconnections.

- Developing a global perspective is creative and offers a wide range of learning and interaction possibilities (including role play and simulation) allowing students to empathize with the experiences and opinions of others. It also naturally fits with audience analysis and mediation.

- Developing a global perspective is a practical ability for any professional career because it helps students develop empathy based on information. Learning to analyze information in order to understand stakeholders, their goals and their actions creates an environment where people with widely diverse backgrounds and perspectives may work together.

Misconceptions about developing a global perspective:

- *Developing a global perspective is cultural appreciation.* (Although it often provokes it.)

- *It promotes a specific set of opinions on issues.* Students learn to navigate the world by making informed judgments and refining their own ideas using views and values from diverse contexts.

- *Developing a global perspective is only about other countries and cultures.* America itself is packed with subcultures and global issues such as poverty, access to education, and mental health.

Developing a global perspective in action at Alverno and in the community:

- Students learn facts about another country or culture, apply that information to deepen their understanding of a global issue and weigh how and why actions have or have not been taken on that issue.

- A deep exploration of foundational beliefs leads to deep self-awareness, and comparing our own foundations, perspectives and preferred actions on issues with those of others leads to the ultimate form of collaborative creativity — world and worldview conversations that begin from shared stakes, rather than from opposing viewpoints.

Communication

ALVERNO COLLEGE
ESTABLISHED 1887

Communication

At Alverno, students learn to read, write, speak, listen, quantitatively analyze and incorporate information technology across the disciplines. They make meaning by connecting people, ideas and information. Communication as an ability is taught and assessed through an integration of multiple communication modes within a variety of disciplinary and professional contexts. Faculty teach students to approach all modes of communication as processes as they develop their receptive and expressive abilities to communicate clearly and interpret ideas critically for varied audiences and purposes.

Facts about communication:

- Engaging audiences is central to expressive communication abilities (speaking and writing in all forms) and quantitative literacy (presenting data effectively).
- Quantitative literacy is about understanding that data tell a story — it is receptive and expressive. What is this data telling us? How do we best tell our story?
- Faculty tailor criteria for communication abilities to the instructional context and the discipline or professional area in ways that are culturally responsive and inclusive of learning differences.

Misconceptions about communication:

- *Communication is just about reading, speaking and writing.* It extends beyond traditional ideas of literacy to include quantitative literacy, listening and information technology literacy.
- *The communication ability is only addressed at the undergraduate level.* It is also incorporated into graduate courses and program outcomes.
- *Effective communication is just a matter of correct grammar.* Communicating effectively means integrating reading, writing, speaking and listening, as well as information technology, numeracy and growing attention to neurodiversity to meet the demands of increasingly challenging communication scenarios.

Communication in action at Alverno and in the community:

- Students in communication seminars present research by creating multimedia webpages.
- Students practice listening and speaking by presenting and responding to each other using the Flipgrid video app.
- Advanced research methods projects include a paper, presentation and poster session.
- Nursing students teach and share information in health fairs, both virtually and in person.

Analysis

ALVERNO COLLEGE
ESTABLISHED 1887

Analysis

Analysis is the active process of examining, searching, comparing, dissecting and synthesizing, all in the pursuit of understanding and creating knowledgeable judgment. Analysis uses data, experience, reason and expertise to form conclusions.

Facts about analysis:

- Analysis is the ability to interpret and explain situations or phenomena. Using a general theory or concept that is already understood, the student can tell why a specific situation is occurring, relate it to other situations or predict what might happen next.
- In developing an understanding of anything as a whole, a student must learn to observe the individual parts and their relationships to one another.
- The student who has developed an analytic disposition looks for more than initial observations and inferences; she tries to identify her own and others' underlying assumptions and perspectives.
- Analysis integrates well with the other abilities. For example, you use analysis to implement problem solving strategies while keeping in mind other assumptions and perspectives to allow for a more balanced approach or judgement.

Misconceptions about analysis:

- *Analysis is not creative.* Competent analysis involves many complex, interlocking skills. The critical thinker can apply rigor and discipline to move systematically to a conclusion, but she also can employ flexibility and creativity to find new approaches to problems.
- *Analysis is always linear.* There is no universal procedure or series of steps in a sequence to analyze information or data. Analysis depends on observations, personal perspectives, inferences and the nature of the content being studied.
- *There is only one right way to analyze.* There are multiple pathways a student can take based on the types of information or data and the student's life experiences or strengths.
- *Analysis always deals with quantitative data.* We use analysis across all types of information and content. We can analyze a piece of art, music, student reading data, the plot structure of a movie or the moral of a novel.

Analysis in action at Alverno and in the community:

- In education: Analyze behavioral data to identify and explain potential causes or results for a behavior exhibited by a student.
- In music: Analyze and explain how chords relate to each other in a harmonic progression in a musical composition.
- In business: Analyze how ethics in decision making influences individual and team performance.
- In science: Analyze the colors of test solutions to determine the structural similarity of two different compounds.

Aesthetic Engagement

ALVERNO COLLEGE
ESTABLISHED 1887

Aesthetic Engagement

Aesthetic engagement allows students to not only appreciate beauty in the world but to also make informed artistic and interpretive choices both within and outside of the arts. At Alverno, students develop an openness to the arts. They learn to refine their artistic and interpretive choices by integrating their own preferences with art theory, culture and social awareness. Ultimately, they are challenged to create their own works, interpretive strategies and theories to see how they integrate with other disciplinary concepts and society.

Facts about aesthetic engagement:

- Aesthetic engagement is about creating, appreciating, experiencing and responding to art.
- The process is just as valuable as the product/performance.
- Aesthetic engagement comes in many forms and modalities.
- Our ability to interact with and participate in the arts is directly related to who we are and the culture that surrounds us.
- Aesthetic engagement in more than opinion or judgement.
- There are principles and established criteria based on the actual responses people have to artistic elements.
- Performance in any profession can be seen as an art.

Misconceptions about aesthetic engagement:

- *Aesthetic engagement doesn't matter in our everyday lives.* Students cultivate critical skills like creativity, innovation, collaboration, resiliency, empathy, work ethic and risk taking, all transferable to various career paths.
- *Aesthetic engagement is all about the final product.* Students discover and develop their own expressive voice, unique style and creative process.
- *Art and performance magically happen.* It takes time, process and work.
- *You can't make a living doing art.* Students develop transferable skills which will serve them well in any field.

Aesthetic engagement in action at Alverno and in the community:

- Aesthetic engagement gives students the ability to view multiple perspectives, find beauty in their surroundings and problem solve creatively.
- Art can be a way to record what you have seen; it can force you to look carefully at your environment, assessing the layers of complexities or the effort put into creation, whether it's music, painting, baking, a field of flowers, etc.