



SHARED VALUES,
DIVERSE EXPRESSIONS:
ASSESSING STUDENT
APPROPRIATION OF
INSTITUTIONAL
MISSION

Michelle Blohm, Ph.D.

A Little Bit About Me

- Director of Institutional Effectiveness
- Educational background in Philosophy (M.A.) and Theology (Ph.D.)
- Work in Assessment, Accreditation, and Compliance in a variety of roles since Fall 2011.
- Specialize in institutional mission assessment and the philosophical foundations of assessment.

A Little Bit About My Institution

- Rural Roman Catholic University in Pennsylvania
- ~2,500 Students
- Largest disciplinary school is the School of Health Sciences and Education.

Important Notes

- While my examples here relate to Catholic universities, all principles described here are also applicable to other institution types such as public, for-profit, and non-Catholic, non-profit institutions.
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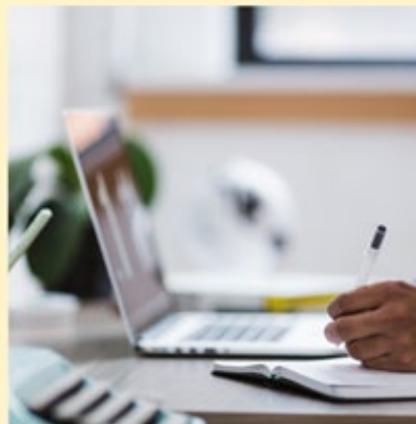
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Agenda / Learning Outcomes

- 1. Identify missional values and their significance at your higher education institution or organization**
- 2. Apply the logic of “real symbol” to identify ways that these values could be or already are operationalized.**
- 3. Apply Bloom’s Taxonomy to identify learning/achievement outcomes for students or other relevant stakeholders.**
- 4. Evaluate the relevance of “divergent thinking” and openness to diverse interpretations in value appropriation measurement.**

Missional Values are ...

- Principles or standards of behavior explicitly prioritized and expressed by a higher education institution regarding certain characteristics or behaviors as having significance to that institution and its impact on the world;
- Reflections of the diversity among institutions and of their consequent diversity in resource allocation;
- Embedded intentionally in institutional expressions such as branding, statements of mission and values, core curricula, employee and student behavior expectations, etc.;
- Used to attract students and other stakeholders and to “tell the story” of the institution and its identity;
- Employed in identifying the character of institutional alums, particularly in terms of the emphasis of their education.



OPERATIONALIZING
VALUES:
A MATTER OF UNITY
IN DIVERSITY



Operationalizing Values:

“Totalization”

“**Totalization**” is a concept developed by philosopher Emmanuel Levinas that describes the tendency of concepts to dehumanize the human person by subsuming the human person’s unrepeatable uniqueness under a conceptual umbrella, i.e., **EVERY CONCEPT STEREOTYPES!**

(e.g., my own concept of “justice” cannot encompass all of what “justice” is; the same goes for value concepts as expounded by academic institutions. This means that assessing values requires room for diverse interpretations.)

Operationalizing Values: “Real” vs. “Nominal” Symbols

REAL SYMBOLS

A “**real symbol**” brings persons into community. It brings about/effects/makes real institutional relationships. Real symbols are flexible by creating respect around diverse interpretations and brings life to the institutional community. Real symbols **resist** totalization.

NOMINAL SYMBOLS

A “**nominal symbol**” is a symbol “in name only.” This type of symbol does not create true and lasting relationships because it is rigid and/or lacks connection to the life of the community. Nominal symbols **tend towards** totalization.

Operationalizing Values Example: “Social Justice”

EXAMPLE OF REAL SYMBOL

Social Justice is institutionally defined (e.g., “right relationships among community members”); intentionally embedded in student, faculty, and staff experiences; supported by leadership; and allowed to take on diverse but congruent interpretations.

EXAMPLE OF NOMINAL SYMBOL

“Social justice” is too narrowly defined such that it excludes populations that it should include; lacks support of institutional resources; is manifested only in expressions by leadership; and restricted in interpretation to one committee or entity.

Real Symbols are...

Characterized by...

- clearly-stated, contextualized, flexible, and well-reflected upon institutional articulation of the value symbol (e.g., in a mission statement);
- diverse and well-reflected upon interpretations of the value symbol by subunits and stakeholders;
- attitudes of creativity, openness, and generosity towards diverse interpretations of the real symbol.

Nominal Symbols are...

Potentially Characterized by...

- Expected assimilation to a single clearly-stated but inflexible institutional definition of values (i.e., an ideological value) or a statement of values that is overly vague and poorly-reflected upon such that “anything goes” (i.e., an uncommitted value);
- Attitudes promoting unity at the expense of diversity (i.e., conformity to unity) or diversity at the expense of unity (i.e., commitment to no particular value)
- The profession of one value and the expression of a contradictory value (i.e., institutional hypocrisy).



GIVE AN EXAMPLE OF ONE OR
MORE VALUES FROM YOUR
INSTITUTION OR ORGANIZATION.



ASSESSING
VALUE
SYMBOLS WITH
BLOOM'S
TAXONOMY

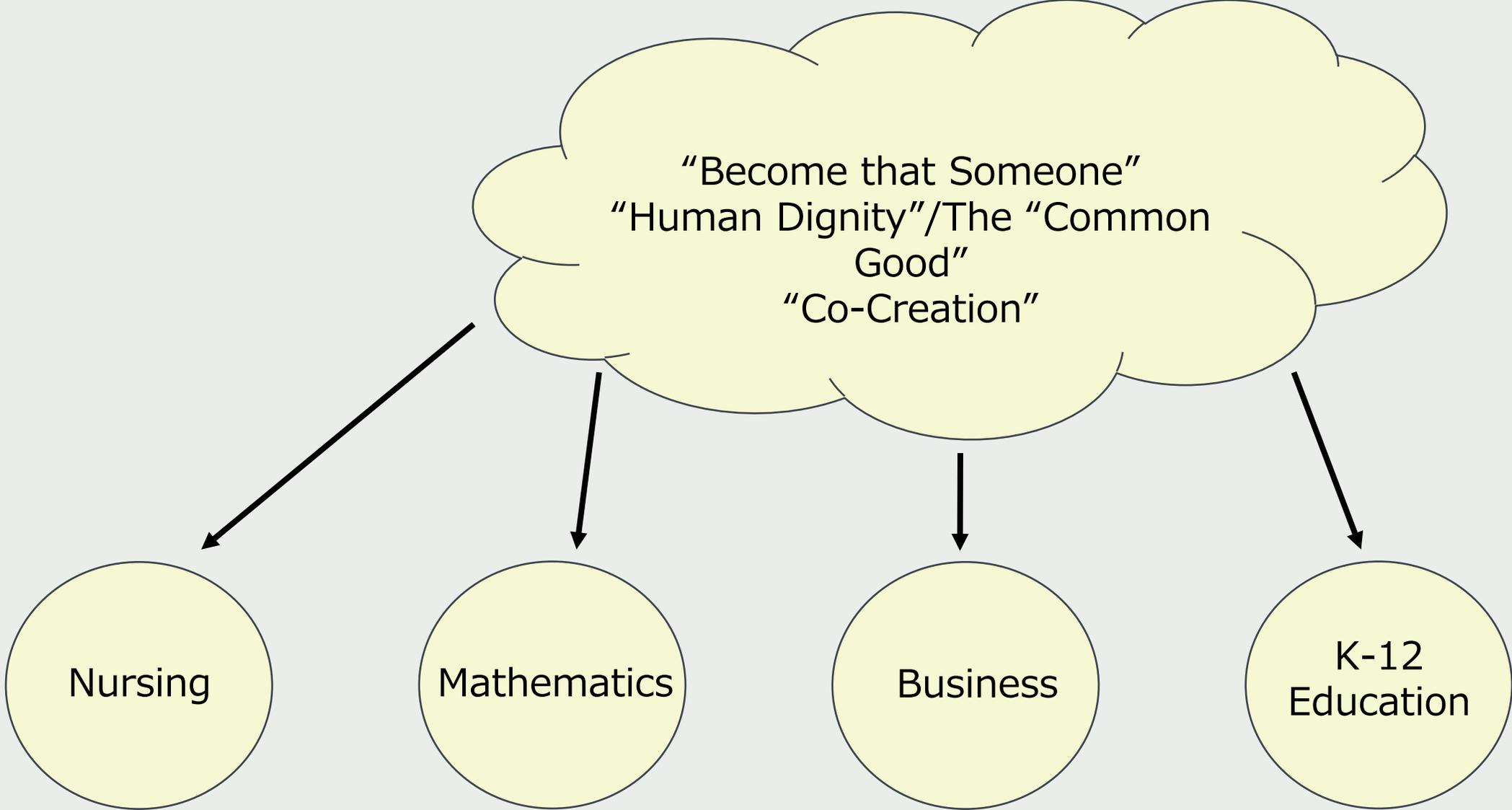
Saint Francis University (Example Only)

Value Symbol: “Become that Someone”

(i.e., Self-Actualization as a child of God and thereby as a Co-Creator with God)

	Create (Seniors)	Create an innovative product showcasing the values of “human dignity,” the “common good,” and “co-creation” to demonstrate how you will “Become that Someone” in your field of study. (Learning Location: Program of study capstone experience such as internship, thesis, business plan, professional development plan, grant proposal, etc.)
	Evaluate (Juniors)	1) Evaluate processes in your field for their attunement to “human dignity” and the “common good.”; 2) Evaluate your role within your field for ways that you can be an agent of change (i.e., co-creator) in your field to promote human dignity and the common good. (Learning Location: Junior level course or project in the student’s program of study relating to process thinking.)
	Analyze (Juniors)	1) Analyze ethical and legal expectations in your field of study for their alignment with respect for human dignity and the common good. (Learning Location: Junior level course or project in the student’s program of study relating to ethical and/or legal expectations); 2) Critique a piece of research in your field in light of the values of human dignity and the common good. (Learning Location: Junior-level research project).
	Apply (Sophomores)	Identify ways that the concepts of “human dignity,” the “common good,” and “co-creation” apply to your field of study. (Learning Location: Sophomore level course in the student’s program of study.)
	Understand (Freshmen/ Sophomores)	Identify the meanings of significant concepts related to the “Become that Someone” language in the Catholic and Franciscan intellectual traditions including “human dignity,” “common good,” and “co-creation.” (Learning Location: Core Curriculum course FTAE 105: Introduction to Franciscan Theology).
	Remember (Prospective Students)	Recall the “Become that Someone” language. (Learning Location: Institutional Media and Advertising).

Articulating Values in Diverse Disciplines

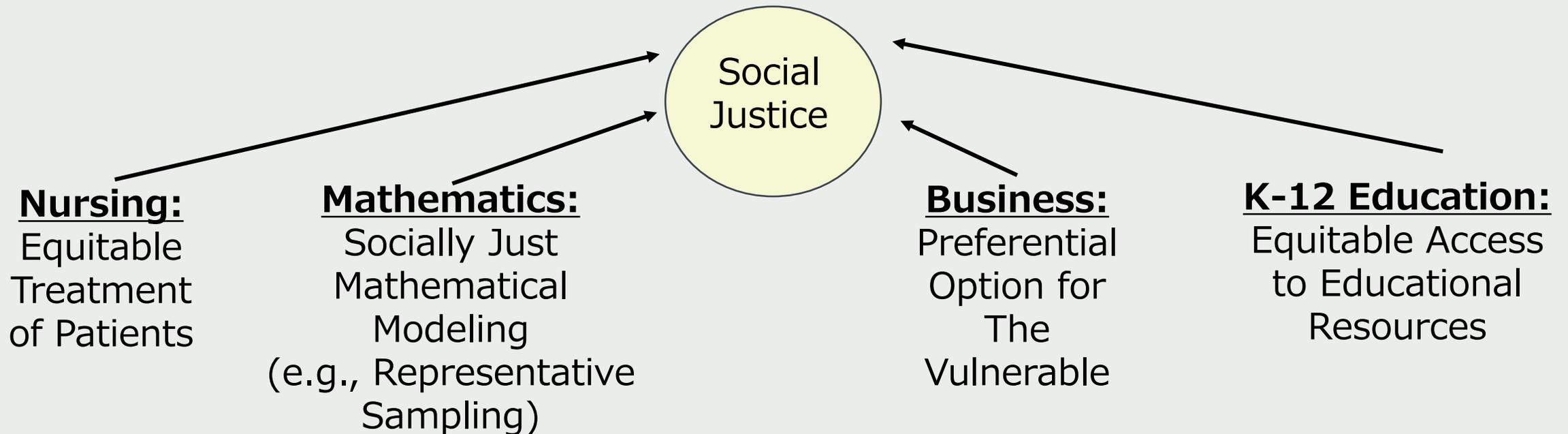


Assessing Diverse Outcomes Through Alignment

Alignment in academic assessment means aggregating evidence based on conceptual unities. Sub-goals are conceptually more specific than broader goals.

For example, in Mathematics, subskills in the discipline of Statistics include descriptive statistical measures, confidence intervals, measuring and interpreting power, etc. All are conceptually unified through the concept of statistics. Assessing these more specific skills helps us to assess statistical ability.

When assessing value-centric outcomes what gets aligned is the value itself, which is specified through specific expressions of the value in context. Thus, assessing students on more specified expressions of the value enables assessment of the value.



Evaluate
(Juniors)

- 1) Evaluate processes in your field for their attunement to “human dignity” and the “common good.”;
- 2) Evaluate your role within your field for ways that you can be an agent of change (i.e., co-creator) in your field to promote human dignity and the common good. (Learning Location: Junior level course or project in the student’s program of study relating to process thinking.)

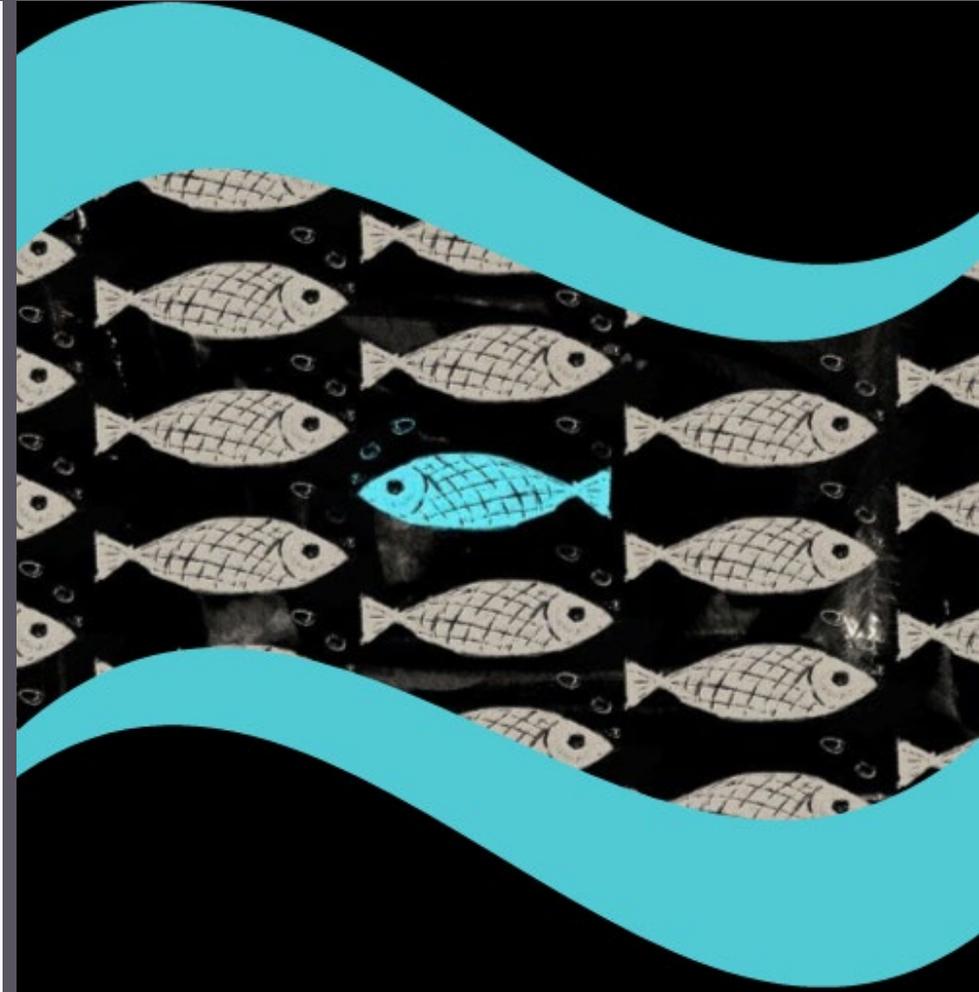
Learning Outcome (Nursing Program):

Evaluate patient care practices using at least four examples of social determinants of health to describe strengths and weaknesses of current standards of patient care.
(VALUE SYMBOL = Social Justice as Equitable Care)

Learning Outcome (Business Program):

Evaluate corporate union contract negotiation concessions in light of their impacts on vulnerable stakeholder populations.
(VALUE SYMBOL = Social Justice as “Preferential Option”)

WHY MEASURE "CREATE":
THE SIGNIFICANCE OF
DIVERGENT THINKING



Measuring “Create”

- Though “create” is the pinnacle level of assessment on Bloom’s taxonomy, it is one of the most enigmatic to assess.
- “Creativity” is a process of combining knowledge sets from diverse domains in new and valuable ways.
- Because what counts as new and valuable is different for different people and in different cultures, “creativity” is both subjectively and culturally situated.

Divergent vs. Convergent Thinking

(Both are necessary, but in values assessment divergent thinking is often rejected and/or shunned.)

CONVERGENT (UNITY-ORIENTED)

Thinking categorized as being convergent tends to be linear and systematic such that it tends toward narrowing a diverse array of ideas into a single solution. Its aim is to achieve the “best possible” answer.

DIVERGENT (DIVERSITY-ORIENTED)

Thinking categorized as being “open-ended” and “web-like” and focusing on connections among ideas such that it tends towards generating a diverse array of ideas. Its aim is to be more flexible by using content in new ways and using barriers as opportunities.

Creativity Rubric

COMMUNITY CATEGORIES

Self Actualization

Communal Self Actualization

Other-Individual Orientation

Other-Community Orientation

PROFICIENCY CATEGORIES

4 = "with distinction"

3 = "clearly present"

2 = "inconsistently or vaguely"

1 = "not represented in product"

0 = "not present"

Creativity Rubric

TYPE OF THINKING CATEGORIES

Convergent Thinking–
Poses traditional value in a
non-permuted way

Divergent Thinking –
poses traditional value in
new way

TYPE OF ENACTMENT CATEGORIES

Value in Words–
What we say about a value

Value in Action–
How we instantiate a value

Thank you!

Questions? Concerns? Joys?
Sorrows? Raging Debate?

Rubric Assessing "Create" (EXAMPLE)

Notes:

1. "Meaning of the value" refers to the set of meanings that the value takes on in the life of the academic institution.
2. Because human work is context-driven, it is not expected that every project will fall above 0 in every category.
3. When scoring, one can score BOTH the total point score AND the score per thinking type (convergent vs. divergent). Score each type of thinking as 1/2 of the category's points (e.g., for a 4, convergent thinking is 2 and divergent thinking is 2).

PART 1: The product is new. (Dimension of Diversity).

	4	3	2	1	0	Score Type	Score
SELF ACTUALIZATION: The product adds something new to one's personal context.	CONVERGENT THINKING: The student accurately identifies the meaning of the value (value in words) and with distinction demonstrates (action) in the project that the student has applied the value to their own personal context.	CONVERGENT THINKING: The student accurately identifies the meaning of the value (value in words) and clearly demonstrates (action) in the project that the student has applied the value to their own personal context.	CONVERGENT THINKING: The student accurately identifies the meaning of the value (value in words) and inconsistently or vaguely demonstrates (action) in the project that the student has applied the value to their own personal context.	CONVERGENT THINKING: The student accurately identifies the meaning of the value (value in words) but does not clearly demonstrate (action) in the project that the student has applied the value to their own personal context.	NOT PRESENT: Student does not accurately identify either the institutional value and also does not identify a unique interpretation of that value with respect to their personal context.	CONVERGENT THINKING	
	DIVERGENT THINKING: The student accurately identifies a unique interpretation of the meaning of the value (value in words) and with distinction demonstrates (action) how their appropriation of the value is unique to them.	DIVERGENT THINKING: The student accurately identifies a unique interpretation of the meaning of the value (value in words) and clearly demonstrates (action) how their appropriation of the value is unique to them.	DIVERGENT THINKING: The student accurately identifies a unique interpretation of the meaning of the value (value in words) and inconsistently or vaguely demonstrates (action) how their appropriation of the value is unique to them.	DIVERGENT THINKING: The student accurately identifies a unique interpretation of the meaning of the value (value in words) but does not clearly demonstrate (action) how their appropriation of the value is unique to them.		DIVERGENT THINKING	
COMMUNAL SELF ACTUALIZATION: The product adds something new to a community context to which one belongs.	CONVERGENT THINKING: The student accurately identifies the meaning of the value (value in words) and with distinction demonstrates (action) in the project that the student has applied the value to one or more community contexts in which they participate.	CONVERGENT THINKING: The student accurately identifies the meaning of the value (value in words) and clearly demonstrates (action) in the project that the student has applied the value to one or more community contexts in which they participate.	CONVERGENT THINKING: The student accurately identifies the meaning of the value (value in words) and inconsistently or vaguely demonstrates (action) in the project that the student has applied the value to one or more community contexts in which they participate.	CONVERGENT THINKING: The student accurately identifies the meaning of the value (value in words) but does not demonstrate (action) in the project that the student has applied the value to one or more community contexts in which they participate.	NOT PRESENT: Student does not accurately identify either the institutional value and also does not identify a unique interpretation of that value with respect to one or more community contexts in which they participate.	CONVERGENT THINKING	
	DIVERGENT THINKING: The student accurately identifies a unique interpretation of the meaning of the value (value in words) and with distinction demonstrates (action) how their appropriation of the value within their community is unique to that community.	DIVERGENT THINKING: The student accurately identifies a unique interpretation of the meaning of the value (value in words) and clearly demonstrates (action) how their appropriation of the value within their community is unique to that community.	DIVERGENT THINKING: The student accurately identifies a unique interpretation of the meaning of the value (value in words) and inconsistently or vaguely demonstrates (action) how their appropriation of the value within their community is unique to that community.	DIVERGENT THINKING: The student accurately identifies a unique interpretation of the meaning of the value (value in words) but does not demonstrate (action) how their appropriation of the value within their community is unique to that community.		DIVERGENT THINKING	
OTHER-INDIVIDUAL ORIENTATION: The product adds something new to the context(s) of other persons outside of one's own communities.	CONVERGENT THINKING: The student accurately identifies one or more meaning(s) of the value (value in words) in a way that aligns with the values of another person outside of their own participatory communities and with distinction demonstrates (action) in the project that the student has applied the value to the context of individuals from another community.	CONVERGENT THINKING: The student accurately identifies one or more meaning(s) of the value (value in words) in a way that aligns with the values of another person outside of their own participatory communities and clearly demonstrates (action) in the project that the student has applied the value to the context of individuals from another community.	CONVERGENT THINKING: The student accurately identifies one or more meaning(s) of the value (value in words) in a way that aligns with the values of another person outside of their own participatory communities and inconsistently or vaguely demonstrates (action) in the project that the student has applied the value to the context of individuals from another community.	CONVERGENT THINKING: The student accurately identifies one or more meaning(s) of the value (value in words) in a way that aligns with the values of another person outside of their own participatory communities but does not demonstrate (action) in the project that the student has applied the value to the context of individuals from another community.	NOT PRESENT: Student does not accurately identify either the institutional value and also does not identify a unique interpretation of that value in such a way that the value aligns with with another individual's context outside of the student's own community contexts.	CONVERGENT THINKING	
	DIVERGENT THINKING: The student accurately identifies a unique interpretation of the meaning of the value (value in words) in a way that aligns with the values of another person outside of their own participatory communities and with distinction demonstrates (action) in the project that the student has applied the value to the context of individuals from another community.	DIVERGENT THINKING: The student accurately identifies a unique interpretation of the meaning of the value (value in words) in a way that aligns with the values of another person outside of their own participatory communities and clearly demonstrates (action) in the project that the student has applied the value to the context of individuals from another community.	DIVERGENT THINKING: The student accurately identifies a unique interpretation of the meaning of the value (value in words) in a way that aligns with the values of another person outside of their own participatory communities and inconsistently or vaguely demonstrates (action) in the project that the student has applied the value to the context of individuals from another community.	DIVERGENT THINKING: The student accurately identifies a unique interpretation of the meaning of the value (value in words) in a way that aligns with the values of another person outside of their own participatory communities but does not demonstrate (action) in the project that the student has applied the value to the context of individuals from another community.		DIVERGENT THINKING	

OTHER-COMMUNITY ORIENTATION: The product adds something new to community contexts outside of one's own.	<p>CONVERGENT THINKING: The student accurately identifies one or more meanings of the value (value in words) in a way that aligns with the values of another community outside of the student's own and with distinction demonstrates (action) in the project that the student has applied the value to one or more communities outside of their own.</p>	<p>CONVERGENT THINKING: The student accurately identifies one or more meanings of the value (value in words) in a way that aligns with the values of another community outside of the student's own and clearly demonstrates (action) in the project that the student has applied the value to one or more communities outside of their own.</p>	<p>CONVERGENT THINKING: The student accurately identifies one or more meanings of the value (value in words) in a way that aligns with the values of another community outside of the student's own and inconsistently or vaguely demonstrates (action) in the project that the student has applied the value to one or more communities outside of their own.</p>	<p>CONVERGENT THINKING: The student accurately identifies one or more meanings of the value (value in words) in a way that aligns with the values of another community outside of the student's own but does not demonstrate (action) in the project that the student has applied the value to one or more communities outside of their own.</p>	<p>NOT PRESENT: Student does not accurately identify either the institutional value and also does not identify a unique interpretation of that value in such a way that the value aligns with a community context outside of the student's own.</p>	CONVERGENT THINKING	
	<p>DIVERGENT THINKING: The student accurately identifies a unique interpretation of the meaning of the value (value in words) in a way that aligns with the values of another community context outside of the student's own context and with distinction demonstrates (action) in the project that the student has applied the value to one or more communities outside of their own.</p>	<p>DIVERGENT THINKING: The student accurately identifies a unique interpretation of the meaning of the value (value in words) in a way that aligns with the values of another community context outside of the student's own context and clearly demonstrates (action) in the project that the student has applied the value to one or more communities outside of their own.</p>	<p>DIVERGENT THINKING: The student accurately identifies a unique interpretation of the meaning of the value (value in words) in a way that aligns with the values of another community context outside of the student's own context and inconsistently or vaguely demonstrates (action) in the project that the student has applied the value to one or more communities outside of their own.</p>	<p>DIVERGENT THINKING: The student accurately identifies a unique interpretation of the meaning of the value (value in words) in a way that aligns with the values of another community context outside of the student's own context but does not demonstrate (action) in the project that the student has applied the value to one or more communities outside of their own.</p>		DIVERGENT THINKING	
	Total PART 1 Convergent Score		Total PART 1 Divergent Score			Total PART 1 Score	

Part 2: The product is valuable. (Dimension of Unity).

	4	3	2	1	0	Score Type	Score
SELF ACTUALIZATION: The product adds value to one's own personal life.	<p>CONVERGENT THINKING: The student identifies the relationship of the value (value in words) to their personal context, and that personal value appreciation characterizes their project with distinction.</p>	<p>CONVERGENT THINKING: The student identifies the relationship of the value (value in words) to their personal context, and that personal value appreciation clearly characterizes their project.</p>	<p>CONVERGENT THINKING: The student identifies the relationship of the value (value in words) to their personal context, and that personal value appreciation inconsistently or vaguely characterizes their project.</p>	<p>CONVERGENT THINKING: The student identifies the relationship of the value (value in words) to their personal context, but that personal value appreciation does not characterize their project.</p>	<p>NOT PRESENT: Student does not identify the relationship of the value or of a unique interpretation of the value to their personal context.</p>	CONVERGENT THINKING	
	<p>DIVERGENT THINKING: The student identifies the relationship of a unique interpretation of the meaning of the value (value in words), and that personal value appreciation characterizes their project with distinction.</p>	<p>DIVERGENT THINKING: The student identifies the relationship of a unique interpretation of the meaning of the value (value in words), and that personal value appreciation clearly characterizes their project.</p>	<p>DIVERGENT THINKING: The student identifies the relationship of a unique interpretation of the meaning of the value (value in words), and that personal value appreciation inconsistently or vaguely characterizes their project.</p>	<p>DIVERGENT THINKING: The student identifies the relationship of a unique interpretation of the meaning of the value (value in words), and that personal value appreciation does not characterize their project.</p>		DIVERGENT THINKING	
COMMUNAL SELF ACTUALIZATION: The product adds value to one's own communities.	<p>CONVERGENT THINKING: The student identifies the relationship of the value (value in words) to one or more of their own community contexts, and that value appreciation characterizes (action) their project with distinction.</p>	<p>CONVERGENT THINKING: The student identifies the relationship of the value (value in words) to one or more of their own community contexts, and that value appreciation clearly characterizes (action) their project.</p>	<p>CONVERGENT THINKING: The student identifies the relationship of the value (value in words) to one or more of their own community contexts, and that value appreciation inconsistently or vaguely characterizes (action) their project.</p>	<p>CONVERGENT THINKING: The student identifies the relationship of the value (value in words) to one or more of their own community contexts, but that value appreciation does not characterize (action) their project.</p>	<p>NOT PRESENT: Student does not identify the relationship of the value or of a unique interpretation of the value to one or more of their own community contexts.</p>	CONVERGENT THINKING	
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<p>OTHER-INDIVIDUAL ORIENTATION: The product adds value to individuals outside of one's communities.</p>	<p>CONVERGENT THINKING: The student identifies the relationship of one or more meaning(s) of the value (value in words) in a way that aligns with the values of another person outside of their own participatory communities, and that value appreciation (action) characterizes their project with distinction.</p>	<p>CONVERGENT THINKING: The student identifies the relationship of one or more meaning(s) of the value (value in words) in a way that aligns with the values of another person outside of their own participatory communities, and that value appreciation clearly characterizes (action) their project.</p>	<p>CONVERGENT THINKING: The student identifies the relationship of one or more meaning(s) of the value (value in words) in a way that aligns with the values of another person outside of their own participatory communities, and that value appreciation inconsistently or vaguely characterizes (action) their project.</p>	<p>CONVERGENT THINKING: The student identifies the relationship of one or more meaning(s) of the value (value in words) in a way that aligns with the values of another person outside of their own participatory communities, but that value appreciation does not characterize (action) their project.</p>	<p>NOT PRESENT: Student does not identify the relationship of the value or of a unique interpretation of the value to one or more individuals in community contexts outside of their own.</p>	CONVERGENT THINKING	
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	Total PART 2 Convergent Score			Total PART 2 Divergent Score		Total PART 2 Score	
	Total Rubric Convergent Score			Total Rubric Divergent Score		(Convergent and Divergent)	