

Written anonymous responses to the Declaration of Values.  
CCE 160 Cultivating Conversations, Early Childhood Education Program, Winter 2005  
The seven values were briefly explained to participants in this first class session.

*What is your experience of these seven values?*

1. These values declarations are essential to the human spirit, the core of what makes you — you. When you mentioned the first one, Belonging, that's exactly what community in classrooms should be. The circle of warmth grows in welcome. The other fruits of the spirit, Well-being, Reciprocity, etc., will naturally follow suit.
2. These essential values are easier to recognize and employ when you get to experience them on a constant basis. Reading this sheet of values would mean absolutely nothing to me if I did not have my class experiences through this program as an example. It is hard to live this way alone. You have to be surrounded by people who also believe in it. It was impossible for me to do this at my old job and that's part of why I left it. It I didn't feel right to be working with people that did not agree with an open and belonging ideal for the classroom. It affects you and what you are trying to do.
3. I believe that this class is going to expand my mind and heart and soul, to open things up that need to be opened and felt. Here I am with another opportunity to share what I am learning with a whole new set of children and people. All I as is that I be up to the challenge! You know that I am up to it, because classes like these show me the way!
4. I can't say I see these values at this time. Maybe after a few classes I will be able to relate to these values. In some classes I have taken before I could see some of these values being fulfilled.
5. During the past classes I have been feeling very belonging to the group. I felt that my voice was counted. Working all day and coming here tired at night didn't matter to me, because I felt very relaxed, healthy to be sharing my opinion. That makes me think in the same way when others speak. I have been hearing about joy in these classes before and it is my hope to have fun and joy this quarter, too. My feeling of being capable is to feel confident in myself. I trust myself and others to be capable as well to achieve our goals.
6. Today in your class I think about how I can improve myself, use these ideas and this opportunity to learn more about these values, and practice with my class. I want to build good relationships with other people and learn from them.
7. I would appreciate an opportunity to engage in and participate in this movement of powerful, empowering restructuring of education as a whole. May this movement occur in all areas with an unstoppable, loving flow.
8. I think all those things are important for everyone, even people who are supposed to be "grown ups". I think we learn better if we have these things. I feel that these are present in the Early Childhood Education department here, or at least I feel comfortable that they do for me. I feel that I have all these here at NSCC than at other places I have studied.
9. I agree that these values are important in any learning environment. Children need to be in a warm and inviting setting in order for them to have a positive learning experience. I believe that school is not just about knowing the basics like math, reading, etc. Learners should be engaged in the world around them and learn about life and how to interact with the world. It sounds like these values reflect that belief.

10. I feel joy in relation to persons, living things, and ideas that encourage growth in an ethical ideal.
11. I think these values are essential for learning and for the future of the world. As a paraeducator at an elementary school, I have witnessed first hand how dysfunctional a classroom environment can be when any of those values are missing. Joy, reciprocity, and trust are missing from a 1<sup>st</sup> Grade classroom I assist in, and the result is students who are disengaged, apathetic, and unruly. Their teacher seems to dislike children and teaching, and the children know it.
12. I am amazed and inspired by this listing of values. Food for thought — hearty fare. My experiences in this class: Belonging—seeing friends from past classes and the welcome and encouragement from you, sense of belonging high; Well-being—the only way to be; Reciprocity—I felt my additions to the conversation/class topics was welcomed and thought about—felt very tired so harder for me to do that for you, sorry; Participation—felt invited to participate and very interested in others; Joy—the joy practically emanated from you; Wholeness—amazing concept—I feel myself opening to it; Trust—yes!
13. I think that these values are essential to the learning of all people (young and old). A lot of times angry people seem to overlook the uniqueness that comes from being an individual yourself and the individuality of others we plan to teach or attempt to help in any way. Wholeness is very valuable to me. I need to make sure I practice this each and every day, so that I don't forget how much others are really capable of as a whole. If I feel I belong and make others feel the same, it will increase participation and work towards the Well-being of all.
14. This particular class is a lot larger than any other class I have taken. I definitely felt that all of these values were present in the smaller classes I have taken, but it will be interesting to see if they can be maintained in a class with 30 people.
15. All of these values are important. I particularly like the inclusion of Joy. When we have fun, we learn. Joy allows us to take risks. As does trust. I think it takes a lot of time for students in these classes to trust. We are talking every class about personal values, philosophies and attitudes. There are bound to be clashes. I think it is difficult to create a sense of Belonging because of this. I have heard a few, not many, people express that their views may not "belong" in class. There is a particular philosophy towards kids and teaching that is actively pushed and not all agree completely with it. For the most part though, I have witnessed lots of Joy, Participation, and Well-being. There is an obvious effort to incorporate these values in every class whether or not this is effective every time.
16. You promote these values by setting up the tables a certain way, giving us time to talk to others at the table and listen to others around the room. I feel comfortable here and look forward to it. Because of these values my life is changing in a way (a good way) that nothing else has done. Just from a few hours a week, I can change for the better in a way that isn't so hard or impossible.
17. I think that the value of belonging is very important. If you feel uncomfortable in your environment, you may not open your self up to learning. Instead of expressing your own ideas, you probably will be more inclined to listen to others. I also think that a person's well-being is important. If you run yourself down and are tired all the time, you may not experience as much as if you took your time and slowed down. Joy is awesome! I can't bring myself to do things that I don't enjoy, unless it is a necessity. I try to enjoy everything I do.
18. I was surprised at the presentation of these values. I have had the privilege of being a student in the early childhood program here at NSCC. I have come to believe that the values listed

- are the values this program strives to practice in the classroom, as well as when I have met with the instructors. I have a sense of belonging. My participation has been encouraged. I have certainly experienced some joy. I have a sense of trust in the instructors. As a result of these values being in place, this learning environment is not intimidating. I feel confident and free to learn.
19. These points seem to wrap up quite nicely, ideals... These are all in accord with my own values system when I strive to do right by others in everything I do. These values are the reasons why I chose to change careers, to learn how to better the way I am trying to achieve things, to become these things more wholly and honestly, and then to hopefully share them with others. I want to feel wonderful and fulfilled, and I want to be able to model wonder and fulfillment so that others might feel those things themselves. The courses I've taken so far in the ECE program, I feel, are totally helping me to move in this direction. I have more faith in myself as a student, which I feel is also helping to make me a more useful teacher.
  20. Well, I can tell you I don't use the declaration on a daily basis, but I use them personally when I need to! It's sad that this generation coming up now doesn't have these values instilled in them! They are not present in the environment I see with my own eyes. It's not too good an outlook for the future, because all it does is go on in a circle, generation after generation. It is not a bright future for my community!
  21. These ideas are great. I definitely see these values in your teaching. When I got out of high school and went to a college where these values were lacking, I wasn't very interested in learning there. But coming back to college and having classes that embody the ideals has renewed my love of learning. I don't know much about the other teachers at this school, because all I have taken is ECE classes. But if you can get these thoughts out to everyone else, I know I will have an easier time.
  22. I feel that there is Joy in the class. The Declaration of Values sheet shows how many layers we share as a class. I think this holistic picture is a big part of why I am so excited about this class. Maybe the Declaration of Values expresses some of the handles/access points you have offered us. One sheet doesn't specifically mention Relevance/Meaning, but that Relevance/Meaning is where I find the Joy. I guess Relevance/Meaning is "covered" under the Wholeness category. All the other five values seem like pieces of group dynamics. I think that Trust was created when Tom was happy to see everyone and open and interested in their questions. I did notice that today wasn't a big day for discussion, so it's not a measure of Participation. We had small group discussions, which is my favorite way to start. It will be neat to see how people's ways of expressing themselves come up!
  23. Belonging is something I find difficult to be in a lot of situations, but I feel like I belong in this class. Well-being is something I expect to gain from this class. I like the last sentence in that description, "to repair our world." Reciprocity definitely happens in this class; I like that because I learn well from this type of environment. Participation happens here because of the reciprocity. I often forget to be joyful. I expect to be reminded of it here, and learn to be more joyful. Wholeness is something I would like to gain from this class. Trust I'd also like to gain.
  24. I was a teacher early on in my life, and I never realized how these values are important, how they affect a learner's life and his or her learning experiences until I came to this program. I have always felt these values were there in all the classes you taught, and I enjoyed every class because they possessed these values. These values help the learner not only to belong, enjoy, appreciate, and learn more effectively but also they help the learner to be more confident and communicate more effectively with the teacher and the fellow participants.

25. One of my first responses upon thinking about the Declaration of Values as lived in this class was that this setting is not as conducive to the expression of Belonging or Joy as other settings. It seems that these values are all about what it means to live in a community, how we treat other community members, how we shape the community so that it fully supports and nurtures all members. This kind of community seems possible in a full day childcare setting, less so here. On second thought, though, I think I was projecting my presuppositions into this setting. That a community college classroom is not a setting for the kind of community this Declaration envisions is a prejudgment I have made, not an objective fact. I come here expecting to be a solitary learner, imbibing knowledge — participating, yes, but only under the constraints of the "student" role and expect to leave the same way. I don't know how to break out of this mindset. It is something I will continue to think over and work on over the quarter, and, probably, the rest of my life.
26. Belonging: we all need to feel a belonging to something or someone. All these values are very essential to being an emotionally healthy, productive, constructive member of society. I agree that when children or adults lack any of these values, or somehow the development of these values is thwarted, they will not become all they can be, and society will suffer, in general, because of it. When one person loses out on true development, we all lose a little, too.