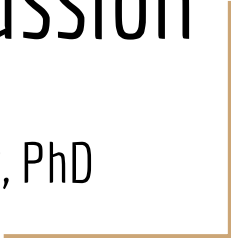


Teaching critical
thinking through
mindfulness, core
values, & discussion



Sharon Doetsch-Kidder, PhD

Goals

We can use mindfulness, reflection on core values, and conversation to help students:

- find the mental space that allows for creativity and insight
 - understand social and disciplinary issues from a broader perspective
 - take a critical view of scholarly conversations
 - gain confidence in their ideas
 - connect their values and experiences with course topics
 - develop more complex thinking and creative approaches to problems
-

What does it mean to
think critically and
creatively?

What does it mean to think critically and creatively?

How do you know if your thoughts are critical or creative?

Critical thinking means

- Asking questions
- Seeking all the information
- Investigating emotional responses
- Considering alternative ways of thinking or doing things

Before making judgments

How can we learn to think critically and creatively?

Mindfulness

Becoming aware of our thoughts and habits

Investigation

Gathering information

Reflection

Contemplating ideas, observations, and feelings

Conversation

Listening to others' thoughts and feelings and expressing our thoughts and feelings

Meditation or Mindfulness

Benefits of mindfulness

Health

Improves physical health:

reduces pain and high blood pressure

Improves mental health: used to address substance abuse, stress, anxiety, and depression; and to improve sleep

Helps people cope with difficult emotions without becoming overwhelmed or shutting down

Emotional & Social

Feeling in control

Making meaningful relationships

Accepting experience without denying the facts

Managing difficult feelings

Being more calm, resilient, compassionate, and empathetic

Intellectual

Sustained attention

Memory

Concentration

Critical thinking

Meditation

How can we learn to think critically and creatively?

Mindfulness

Becoming aware of our thoughts and habits

Investigation

Gathering information

Reflection

Contemplating ideas, observations, and feelings

Conversation

Listening to others' thoughts and feelings and expressing our thoughts and feelings

Reflect: Personal core values

1. What do we mean by “core values”?
2. List 5-10 core values that are important to you.



Some personal core values

Authenticity

Achievement

Adventure

Authority

Autonomy

Balance

Beauty

Boldness

Compassion

Challenge

Citizenship

Community

Competency

Contribution

Courage

Creativity

Curiosity

Determination

Fairness

Faith

Fame

Family

Financial health

Freedom

Friendships

Fun

Generosity

Growth

Happiness

Honesty

Humor

Influence

Integrity

Justice

Kindness

Knowledge

Leadership

Learning

Love

Loyalty

Meaningful work

Openness

Optimism

Peace

Pleasure

Poise

Relationships

Recognition

Reputation

Respect

Responsibility

Security

Self-Respect

Service

Spiritual health

Stability

Success

Status

Trustworthiness

Well-being

Wisdom

Pairs: Discuss Core Values

1. Share some of your values with your group.
2. Each person choose one value, and explain why it is important to you.
3. Discuss which values relate most to your goals as students/professionals.
4. What are some instances when core values may come into conflict in your daily personal or professional life?



Reflect: Disciplinary values

1. What are the core values of your discipline/field?
2. What are some competing, neglected, or emerging values in your field?
3. How might it be helpful to think and talk about core values in your class?



Some social core values

Sustainability

Social Justice

Economic development

Freedom

Equality

Opportunity

Collaboration/teamwork

Cooperation

Learning/Knowledge

Beauty

Innovation

Peace

Competition

Accuracy

Efficiency

Health/Wellness

Productivity

Human rights/Human dignity

Autonomy

Financial health

Reason

Security

Diversity/Difference

Community

Personal development

Evidence

Expression

Achievement

Effectiveness

Authenticity

Tradition

Happiness

Profit

Utility

Inclusion

Respect

Predictability

Leadership

Privacy

How can we learn to think critically and creatively?

Mindfulness

Foundation

Through meditation, we develop the capacity for focus and creating the mental space for insight and creativity, and we grow the confidence needed to take risks.

Reflection

Core values

Reflecting on core values and how they come into conflict in different situations helps us think in more complicated ways about problems and solutions.

Conversation

Diverse perspectives

Mindfulness training encourages us to notice emotions arising, and reflecting on core values helps us think about what is important to us and to others, which enriches discussions.

Using Core Values for Critical Thinking

How could you incorporate reflection on and discussion of core values into your course?

Analyzing texts:

What are the text's core values?

Thinking about social problems:

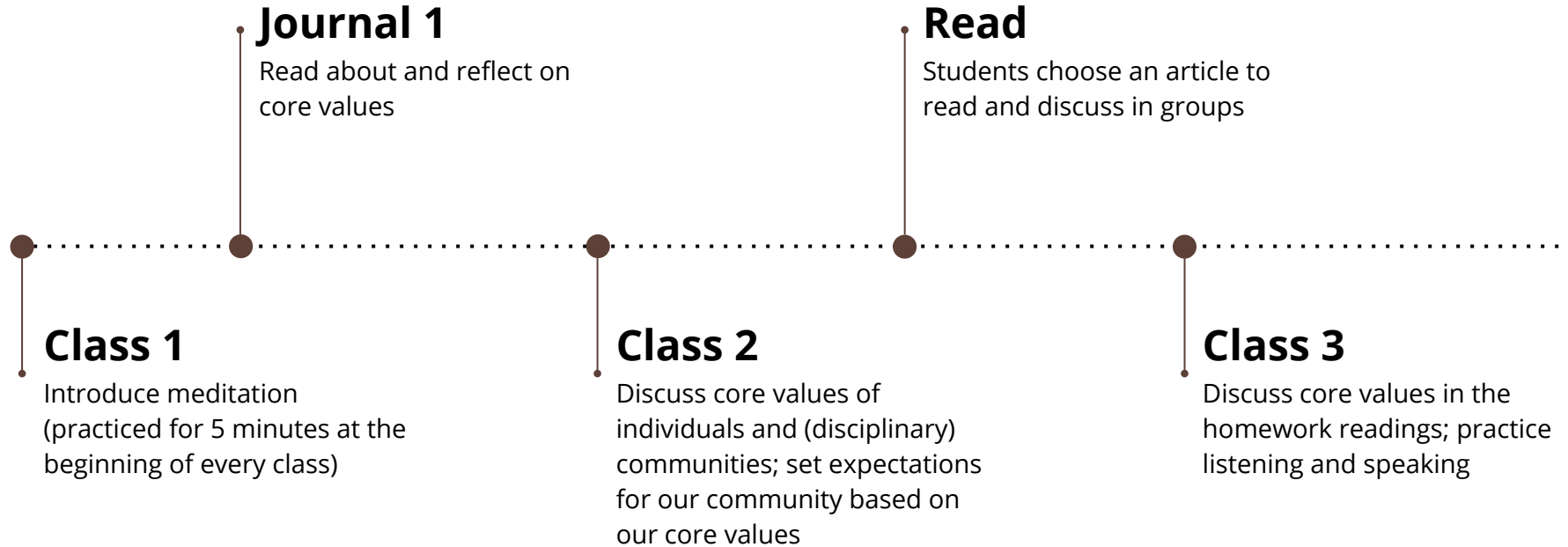
What core values are at stake?

Evaluating proposals/solutions:

Which core values are addressed by this proposal? Which are not?

What core values should we consider in evaluating solutions to these issues?

Leading with mindfulness and values



Sharon Doetsch-Kidder, PhD
English (CHSS) & INTO Mason
George Mason University
sdoetsch@gmu.edu