

Values Clarification

SUMMARY

In this episode of *Change Starts Here: Research Conversations*, cognitive neuroscientist Dr. Eve Miller, Ph.D, and former educators Dr. Jennifer Chevalier, Ed.D, and Kim Yaris, M.Ed. explore how clarifying values can impact students' ability to set and follow through with goals—important executive functions that can affect students' academic achievement.

DEFINITION

Values clarification refers to the reflective process of identifying one's personal beliefs and priorities. This essential skill not only enables students to set meaningful goals but also guides them in making decisions about how best to achieve them. By engaging in values clarification, students are empowered with a strong sense of purpose, which directly impacts their drive and motivation to succeed in reaching their aspirations.

TRY THIS!

Peter, Park, & Seligman's *Meaning of Life Theory* (2005) asserts that coherence, purpose, and significance contribute to a person's sense of meaning. Here are some ways these research-backed dimensions can be applied in your school:

1. Coherence: Making sense of experience, self, and the world

Create activities and lessons that help students connect the strengths or skills they are developing to envision a thriving future life, emphasizing how different elements of what they are learning align with these strengths and skills.

2. Purpose: The act of pursuing or achieving goals

Teach students how to match their goals with their values, fostering long-term motivation to drive short-term actions.

3. Significance: A sense of importance; feeling as though one's existence matters to others

Integrate lessons about important interpersonal concepts like bullying, kindness, compassion, and belongingness, showing students how they can make a difference in the larger world by contributing to a more inclusive and appreciative school environment.

RESOURCES TO LEARN MORE

- [Purpose for Students | Greater Good In Education](#)
This provides teachers with an overview of the research-based importance of building a students' sense of purpose and offers best practices to help them build that sense of purpose at school.
- [Helping Students Find Their Way to Meaning: Meaning and Purpose in Education | SpringerLink](#)
This link takes you to an open access book on positive psychology in education. Chapter 22 in this free book has a beautiful chapter on meaning and purpose that we highly recommend.