LESSON 6

APPLYING OUR CODE

"If you are facing the right direction, all you need to do is keep walking."

—Buddhist proverb

APPLYING OUR CODE

Prework for students: Ask students to read "So We Have a Code, So What?"

OBJECTIVE

By the end of this lesson, students will know what the values they have identified will mean in terms of the service-learning project they have selected. This code will provide behavioral guidelines, and a basis for reflection, for all project activities.

OPENING

"Now that we have developed our list of ethical values, how can we make it useful? What does it mean, for example, to be a person who demonstrates each of these values? More specifically, how ought we to model these values as we embark on our service-learning projects?"

STRATEGIES

- Begin with a general discussion of the homework assignment and the key questions. Explain that the focus of today's lesson will be to describe how each of the values on our list should be modeled in our service-learning work.
- Follow instructions for the Carousel of Values activity. Tell students they can use their homework worksheets during the activity.
- When the activity has been completed, post the operationalized list prominently in the classroom as a reminder of the students' agreed-to ethical code of behavior. If possible, type it up and distribute for inclusion in the students' notebooks. Refer to the list regularly during periods of reflection.
- As service-learning projects unfold, consider using the Values Reflection worksheet included in Lesson 12.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- Is it enough simply to identify a list of ethical values? Why or why not?
- How may a code of ethics help to bring the members of a group together?
- How can an operationalized code help us in our service-learning work?

CLOSURE AND TRANSITION

"An operationalized code of ethics is one way for us to agree on how we will conduct our

service-learning projects. It provides both broad and specific guidelines for our behavior. In the next lesson, we will try to predict some of the challenges we are going to face as we move forward on our projects."

Homework Assignment

Ask students to review the reading from Lesson 1: "Three Stories: Real-Life Challenges in the Field."

Lesson Assessment: Revisions for Next Time _____

So We Have a Code, So What?

In class, we followed a process of thinking and collaborating that led us to agree that there are some ethical values we all can accept. But now that we have this list, how can we use it in our everyday world? More specifically, how can we use it as we embark on our service-learning projects?

Example

In Orono, Maine, a class of ninth graders was involved in a series of research projects involving the nearby Penobscot River and its watershed. They planned to present their findings—through games and activities—to 40 first and second graders.

In preparation for their session with the first and second graders, the students decided to check in with the ethical values list they had agreed on earlier (responsibility, respect, tolerance, fairness, honesty, and caring). They posed the question: How will we model each of these values when we are working with the first and second graders? Working first in small groups, and then as a group of the whole, the students generated the following list of behaviors:

Honesty

- If a child asks a question, answer correctly
- Be honest to the teacher
- If you don't know an answer, say so

Caring

- Talk at eye level
- Explain nicely—be polite
- Don't scare them

Fairness

- Cooperation
- Working together equally
- Give a fair amount of time to speak

Tolerance

- Be polite and patient
- Acceptance

RESPONSIBILITY

- Have patience
- Be organized
- Be prepared
- Plan ahead

RESPECT

- Use appropriate language
- No hats or gum
- If you don't have something nice to say, don't say it
- Set a good example

Turn now to the list your class developed.

▶ *Write the values on the agreed-to list here:*

_____ _____

_____ _____

_____ _____

_____ _____

▶ *Transfer each word on the above list to the work space below. For each word, write down a few examples of what you imagine it will mean "to be" that value when you are working on* your *service learning project. Consider whom you will be working with, what the location will be like, and what you will actually be doing when you define each of the values. But first, complete the following:*

- *Whom* will I be working with? _____
- *Where* will I be working? _____
- *What* will I be doing? _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

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—*Buddhist proverb*

▶ *Use the space below to draft your operationalized code of ethics.*

WORD	MEANING
1 _____	_____
	_____
2 _____	_____
	_____
3 _____	_____
	_____
4 _____	_____
	_____
5 _____	_____
	_____
6 _____	_____
	_____
7 _____	_____
	_____
8 _____	_____
	_____

Carousel of Values

Purpose

- To identify behaviors appropriate to demonstrating each of the values selected by students within the context of their service-learning projects

Preparation and Materials

Using the list of eight (or fewer) values, write the words or phrases on separate sheets of flip-chart paper. Use bold lettering that will show up clearly when the chart paper is posted. Provide fine-point markers to list examples under each heading on the flip chart. You will need as many markers as you have sheets of paper. Emphasize that each group's recorder will need to be able to print or write legibly.

Process

Ask: How might we use the list of values we have created to guide our actions in the field? Here is one strategy for operationalizing the shared values list, particularly if all (or many) class members are engaged in the same project. (Where students have very different projects, you may want to take a more individualized approach.)

- Arrange the class into small groups, one group per value on the list.
- Distribute the previously prepared flip-chart papers, one paper per group.
- Explain that each group is to use a prescribed amount of time to list as many examples of their value as possible. Ask: How, in the context of my project, do people who are [honest, responsible, etc.] behave? What sets them apart from people who are not [honest, responsible, etc.]? Students should refer to the worksheets they have completed prior to class. Encourage groups to discuss each example before writing it down, so as to arrive at examples that are specific and easy to understand. Explain that once the time is up, their list of examples will be passed to another group to be read, analyzed, and expanded.
- Give clear signals for when to start, and time the activity, allowing for more time to complete the first few lists and less time for the last few rounds. After an appropriate interval, stop the groups and rotate the papers. Time the groups again, as they work through the same process of listing examples. Circulate and coach the groups, noting any particular student needs that might be more effectively addressed at another time. Make sure groups are discussing and honing their examples before recording them on the sheet, so that each example is specific and clear.
- Once all groups have worked on all sheets, post the sheets. Invite students to vote on the most effective examples for each value. (**Optional:** Provide colored dot stickers for students to apply next to their choices.)

- Take one of the following two approaches:
    - Consolidate the lists into one operationalized code and post it in a prominent place. Encourage all students to initial the code as a sign of agreement. Refer to the code regularly during the reflection process, *or*
    - Ask each student to draw from the posted sheets and to draft, for themselves, an operationalized code that will provide guidelines for action during their service-learning experience. Request that they sign the code.

Personal Values for the 21st Century

The following list expands upon five core values identified in the videotape *Personal Ethics and the Future of the World.*

1) Respect for self

- Being self-disciplined enough to accomplish what we want to do and know we ought to do
- Resisting peer pressure, especially when it would coax us into activities damaging to ourselves or to others
- Developing habits of study and reflection that allow constant self-discovery
- Cherishing our own individuality and defending it actively from self-abuse by drugs, sex, or violence
- Learning to trust our own intuitions, insights, and decision-making skills rather than relying blindly on others

2) Respect for truth

- Being honest in every aspect of our lives, even when no one is looking
- Searching for and respecting reality, rather than yielding to self-deception, illusion, or counterfeits
- Honoring promises, and being so trustworthy that others can rely on us to do right even when we haven't made any specific promise
- Reporting as true only what we can verify, rather than gossiping about others or fudging data about the world around us
- Observing clear distinctions between fact and opinion, both in our own minds and in communications from others

3) Respect for community

- Treating others as we want them to treat us, despite differences in gender, race, creed, or political persuasion

- Being fair, even when we could gain personal advantage through partiality
- Obeying the law as far as conscience permits, even when it deprives us of something we want, while recognizing that if civil disobedience seems appropriate, it may bring penalties that must be faced
- Not stealing or defacing others' property, whether things or ideas, and whether owned by individuals or by larger, faceless entities
- Being accountable for our actions, even in situations in which there is no legal requirement for disclosure
- Acknowledging the rights of others to hold, develop, and express ideas very different from our own

4) Respect for the environment

- Understanding and appreciating the natural context in which every human action occurs
- Consciously striving to use only our fair share of the world's resources, so that others around the globe can have their share
- Protecting individual plants and animals from pointless destruction and entire species from extinction, even when we can see no immediate reason to do so

5) Respect for the future

- Working to be sure that our individual actions, if universalized and done by everyone else, would contribute to a better future
- Resisting waste and depletion—of natural resources, human lives, and creative ideas—and building instead a sustainable world of things, institutions, and concepts that can perpetuate itself
- Greeting the future with enthusiasm and expectancy, and working to improve it
- Acknowledging that the future will be determined by our individual actions within a global context, and taking responsibility for the consequences of those actions

The above list, developed by the staff at the Institute for Global Ethics, draws some items from a list developed by Professor Reo M. Christenson, Miami University (Ohio).

Subject Adaptation Suggestions

History and Social Studies

- Using the core values the group has already identified, create a code of election ethics for an upcoming student government contest. What does it mean to be an honest candidate for office? A responsible, respectful, fair, or compassionate candidate? Ask all candidates running for office to agree to the code by signing it. Set up a separate, nonpartisan, objective committee to monitor the behavior of candidates and their supporters during the election. Report on the process and draw conclusions for future elections.

Language Arts

- Ask each student to create his or her own *personal* code of ethics, as a statement to live by at school and at home. Provide feedback to their initial drafts, then have them carefully format, sign, and date their final versions. Be sure to have them include these codes in their notebooks.

Math and Science

- Create a scenario—for example, have students imagine they are scientists engaged in experimenting with different ways to cure cancer through genetic research. The lab is privately owned and is located in an isolated part of the country. The research is very secretive to prevent competitors from learning what you have discovered. Ask students to craft a code of ethics for researchers working on the project.

Visual Arts

- Often codes of ethics are designed to be prominently displayed as a reminder to all members of a school/organization/company of the importance of ethical behavior during the conduct of one's day-to-day work. Organize a contest to design a plaque upon which the class code could be imprinted.