

# Composite Design Memo

Friday, June 11, 2021 2:39 PM

- What is a values affirmation intervention, and what does it aim to address?

A values affirmation intervention allows students to reflect on their own values and how those values impact the way they live. It aims to remind students of their own worth. By providing the student with the time to focus on their own values and reaffirm them, it helps to lessen the impact of stereotypes or identity threat.

- Why might you want to implement the values affirmation intervention in your course? What do you hope to achieve?

I believe values play an important part in engineering. And if such a simple intervention can positively affect everyone, we should do it. I want to help everyone be the best they can be.

- ◆ Why did you decide to incorporate values affirmation intervention into your class? How is it useful to you as an instructor? How is it useful to students?

I used it because if it could make the difference for just one student then it was time well spent. I believe the students benefit from taking a moment to reflect on what is important to them. I introduced the assignment using the following announcement:

In the Discussion and In-class Learning Activities module you will find a survey "Values Affirmation." This is a special 10-minute writing exercise. This is designed to give you additional practice in both critical thinking and writing, which are essential parts of any career. Just by taking part you will get full credit.

I also believe that by bringing this into the course it helps the student to better engage with the course - making it more personal to them.

- ◆ How does the values affirmation task fit into your class? How long does it take for students to complete?

I made the exercise part of the Discussion and In-class Learning Activities portion of their grade which is intended to promote engagement with the material during class. I introduced the assignment via email and didn't spend time talking about it in class. I was uncertain as to whether I should dedicate time in class to this or not (does talking about it undo what it is trying to accomplish). Next time I want to set aside the beginning of a class period and have them work on it then.

- ◆ How should points in the course be assigned for students' work on the values affirmation assignment(s)?

Students are receiving the same amount of points just for completing the survey. I weighted the survey so that it was comparable to other in-class activities.

Section 03 participation: 107/130

Section 02 participation: 153/170

Section 01 participation: 239/280

Because I don't want non-participation to negatively impact students, I'm going to excuse the

assignment for those that didn't complete (as opposed to giving them a zero).

◆ **What pitfalls should be avoided?**

Carefully plan out when each intervention will take place. I lost sight of this and missed the window of opportunity for the second pass.

◆ **How do we explain to students about the purpose of the activity (if at all)?**

I don't necessarily want to talk about reducing stereotype threat, but I would like to present it in a way that they understand it has value. That by reflecting on what is important to them, it helps in subconscious ways.

◆ **What, in your view, is the most important thing to know about implementing this type of intervention? (e.g. if you were telling a colleague about it who had never implemented it before)**

That it is simple to do - nothing to lose and so much to gain!

◆ **Has implementing this intervention made you think about other potential areas in which you'd like to improve equity and outcomes in your classes? If so, please describe.**

I live to improve equity and outcomes in my classes. As a result, I'm frequently trying to take on too much and need to slow myself down. This summer I am focusing on improving student engagement during class time.