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# KNOWING THEIR VALUES: A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY EXAMINING UNDERGRADUATE LEADERSHIP STUDENTS' VALUES CLARIFICATION

By

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This dissertation is dedicated to my husband, Tom. Always.

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

# LIST OF TABLES

# LIST OF FIGURES

## ABSTRACT

This qualitative research study examined how junior-level undergraduate students clarify their values in the environment of a leadership course. Previous research indicated the concept of values clarification is a dynamic process in which people come to understand what they individually view as important in their lives by placing a name or label to what one values (i.e., honesty, love, success, etc.). This process commonly occurs during the traditional college years and is a critical component of the undergraduate experience. A college student clarifying their values is an important first step in the overall values development process. To encourage development, educators must first understand this process. However, there remains an important gap in the current literature regarding how students clarify their values in college, specifically in the context of leadership coursework. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to understand the essence of the students' experience in their values clarification. Utilizing a phenomenological method involving interviews, thematic coding, phenomenological reduction, imaginative variation, and data saturation; primary themes were formed explaining the experience of how students identify their values in college: through role models, peer relationships, campus engagement and leadership courses. Data for the study were collected over a semester-long period in the spring of 2012 from junior-level students who were currently enrolled in or had successfully completed a course in an undergraduate Leadership Certificate at a large, Research I institution in the southeastern United States. Findings from this research helped to explain the experience of how junior-level students clarify their values in their collegiate experience and inform the practice of character education and leadership curriculum development in colleges and universities.

# CHAPTER ONE

## STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

*"To educate a person in mind and not in morals is to educate a menace to society"*
–Theodore Roosevelt (as cited in Berkowitz & Simmons, 2003, p. 133; Lickona, 1993, p. 6).

Martin Luther King, Jr. (1947) wrote the purpose of "education is to teach one to think intensively and to think critically... Intelligence plus character – that is the goal of true education" (p.1). Many liberal arts colleges in the United States were founded on the virtues of character and responsibility (Hersh & Schneider, 2005). Swaner (2005) asserted the primary cognitive task of a college education is engagement with the material (leading to development of complex moral judgments and understanding of self) rather than simply subject expertise. "Character education is as old as education itself. Through history, education has had two great goals: to help people become smart and to help them become good" (Lickona, 1993, p. 6). The original purpose of higher education was to educate men to be leaders and positively contribute to society (Arum & Roksa, 2011). For example, Harvard College's charter of 1650, stated:

> The College encourages students to respect ideas and their free expression, and to rejoice in discovery and in critical thought; to pursue excellence in a spirit of productive cooperation; and to assume responsibility for the consequences of personal actions... Harvard expects that the scholarship and collegiality it fosters in its students will lead them in their later lives to advance knowledge, to promote understanding, and to serve society. (Lewis, 1997, p.1)

This commitment to missions of service continues in colleges and universities today. In an examination of over 300 mission statements, Morphew and Hartley (2006) found a cognizant effort to the "inculcation of civic values in students" prevalent in contemporary mission statements (p. 462). Today many colleges and universities address values, character, leadership,

ethics, and/or social justice in their mission statements (Dalton & Crosby, 2011; Davis, Ruhe, Lee, & Rajadhyaksha, 2007; Hersh & Schneider, 2005; Kreber & Mhina, 2007; Meacham, & Gaff, 2006; Thompson, 2006). Responding to the goal and challenge embedded within these mission statements, college professionals encourage the values clarification, personal integrity, and character development of our students.

## Background of the Problem

In recent years, critics bemoan the downfall of the American values system. In news broadcasts, there are reports of lying, cheating, stealing, and a general lack of ethics (ABC Primetime, 2011). While many presume these issues occur only in the business world, colleges and universities are not immune to the problem. The sexual abuse scandal at the Pennsylvania State University raised questions about the ethics of our current educational leaders, including football coaches, university presidents, among others (Marino, 2011). With this lack of principled role models, the growth of ethical leaders should be encouraged in the United States. "A lack of moral leadership is apparent not only in the university, but in the government, the media, and elsewhere" (Thompson, 1991, p. 3).

In the past few decades, there has been a call to educate students on character. In the early 1990s, Lickona cited three major reasons character education came into the forefront of education: the decline of the family; troubling trends in youth character; and a recovery of shared, objectively important ethical values (1993). For these reasons, coalitions were created to advocate for character education in our schools. In 1992, the Josephson Institute of Ethics "called together more than 30 educational leaders representing state school boards, teachers' unions, universities, ethics centers, youth organizations, and religious groups. This diverse assemblage drafted the Aspen Declaration on Character Education, setting forth eight principles

of character education" (Lickona, 1993, p. 7). In March of 1993, the national Character Education Partnership was created with the goal of bringing character development to the forefront of the nation's educational itinerary (Lickona, 1993; Mulkey, 1997).

There is a demand from both the general public and our students to educate ethical leaders. In his text on Leadership, Northouse (2010) discussed the "high demand for moral leadership in our society today. Beginning with the Nixon administration in the 1970s and continuing through George W. Bush's administration in the last decade, people have been insisting on higher levels of moral responsibility from their leaders" (p. 393). Therefore, it is the responsibility of our colleges and universities to educate leaders to live moral lives.

*Academically Adrift* garnered much attention in the academic and popular media (Gorski, 2011; NPR Staff, 2011; Vedder, 2011). In this text, the authors concluded that students come to college with a set of predetermined values that compete with the academic nature of college life (Arum & Roksa, 2011). Students are more interested in socialization than attaining academic knowledge in college. With this set of predetermined values embedded in their students, educators face a challenge in teaching morality and integrity in college. The authors posit that faculty members have given up their historical duty to educate students about morality (Arum & Roksa, 2011; Attewell, 2011). With the recent focus on higher education's lack of progress and concurrent lack of education regarding morality, educators must understand how to guide students to lead lives of integrity, and to continue the legacy of citizenship education.

The recent downturn in the economy provides another reason to focus on educating students on their character development. "Hard times force reflection on essential things—things that matter most when compelling conditions force one to make hard choices about the real worth of things" (Dalton & Crosby, 2011, p. 3). As students struggle to determine what matters

most in their lives, they must understand what they value. Through their collegiate experiences, students anticipate learning how to identify (and live by) their core values. "The growing interest of college students in seeking meaning rather than money may be an important factor in creating greater attention to core values and commitments in higher education" (Dalton & Crosby, 2011, p. 2). In essence, students expect to learn about values while in college.

"Today, the cultivation of moral values and ethical behaviors in undergraduate education has become a persistent and widespread activity in almost all types of higher education institutions" (Dalton & Crosby, 2011, p. 1). The Association of American Colleges and Universities launched the Core Commitments program that focuses on the personal and social responsibility learning outcomes that every college student should attain (Dey & Associates, 2010). The Core Commitments encourage colleges and universities to again focus on educating students for moral and ethical outcomes. With this call from national organizations, educators' focus should continue to be on the character of students.

Additionally, results from the National Study on Student Engagement (NSSE) suggest institutions "foster more direct connections between students' academic experiences and their beliefs, values, and commitments. It is in their inner lives that students construct a great deal of the meaning and purpose that shapes and influences their academic experiences and achievements" (Dalton & Crosby, p. 2). In 2007, the NSSE purported the undergraduate experience:

> Deepens learning and brings one's values and beliefs into awareness... As a result, students better understand themselves in relation to others and the larger world, and acquire the intellectual tools and ethical grounding to act with confidence for the betterment of the human condition (National Survey for Student Engagement, 2007, p. 8).

However, in 2011, the NSSE reported, "only about one-third of students felt their assigned readings challenged their reading abilities or their values and beliefs" (p. 17). With these divergent arguments from the same organization just years apart, the need for further research is evident. Therefore, this research study can assist educators to better understand the intentionality of values clarification education through the college experience.

College is not the only place where people have not fully clarified their values. There are working professionals who have not sufficiently clarified their values. For example, in social work, "the discussion of values, 'value-talk,' often takes place in unsatisfactory ways that assume what is discussed is self evident, known, and fixed and therefore beyond question" (Gilbert, 2009, p.1). However, the college environment provides an opportunity to learn what one values. Northouse (2010) postulates that virtues and moral abilities can be developed and learned through experience, rather than simply from innate acquisition. Individuals learn morals from those around them, including family members and community members. Colleges and universities are these communities where we can teach people how to clarify their values. "Moral education, certainly in higher education, goes beyond the moral instruction in childhood. It teaches, not morality, but how to be a responsible, reflective moral agent" (Kaplan, 1991, p. 21-2). Thus, it is the responsibility for college educators to teach our students what it means to understand what they value.

## Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine the values clarification process of junior-level undergraduate college students who are enrolled in leadership classes. Student development theories purport that throughout college, students go through significant changes, including moral and identity development (Chickering & Reisser, 1993; Erikson, 1968; Gilligan, 1982;

Kohlberg, 1973; Perry, 1970, 1999). Both the environment of college and the individual students' maturation, which occurs during college, affect growth and identity development. Erikson (1968) defines identity as a sense of congruent or continuous self. One aspect of students' growth and identity development is the refinement of their sense of values (Chickering & Reisser, 1993). Through interviews, this study explored how the process of values clarification is influenced, specifically in the environment of leadership coursework.

## Nature of the Study

### Environment

Scholars contend environment has an effect on college student development (Astin, 1977; Chickering & Reisser, 1991; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991; among others). "Several conditions found (or not found) in the college environment can have a major impact on students' growth and development" (Evans, Forney, Guido, Patton, & Renn, 2010, p. 30). As students approach college age, their cognitive development is interwoven with their social development, and therefore, college-aged students apply cognitive processes to interpersonal interactions (Chickering & Reisser, 1991; Hurtado, 2001). Complex thinkers develop cognitive processes in the context of diverse interactions (Hurtado, 2001; Perry, 1999).

In order to create environments ripe for development, educators must foster a setting conducive to this learning (Evans et al., 2010). Diverse students and cooperative learning characterize these environments (Hurtado, 2001). "Cooperative learning has demonstrated value in enhancing the academic achievement of students… active learning pedagogies increase interaction in the classroom" (Hurtado, 2001, p. 189-190) because students "learn more than when they are passive recipients of instruction" (Cross, 1987, p. 4).

In addition, Astin and antonio (2000) found the experiences that students engaged in during college contributed to their character development. The authors stated that certain experiences were significant in character development, including "exposure to interdisciplinary courses…and participation in leadership education or training…. Leadership training programs and participation in student clubs also influenced character development … leadership education positively affects self-awareness, clarification and development of values, and caring about social issues" (Astin & antonio, 2000, p. 6). The authors charged colleges to enhance character development by offering intentional programming (such as volunteer work or service learning) and leadership education. They continued, "Campuses can also enhance character development through curricular offerings such as … interdisciplinary courses, which provide students with opportunities to discover new truths, become analytical, and integrate disparate aspects of knowledge. Such courses aid in self- awareness…" (Astin & antonio, 2000, p. 7).

The Leadership Certificate provides an environment designed to foster student development. The Certificate is based on a seamless learning model, in which students engage in learning both inside of and outside of the classroom environment, created on a foundation of community building, education and reflection (Guthrie & Bovio, 2014). The Certificate is an interdisciplinary certificate and students of many different majors interact during one course. The student population enrolled in the Certificate is diverse (in regard to gender, age, background, major of study, year in school, etc.). While enrolled in the Certificate, students engage in multiple collaborative projects and are encouraged to engage in dialogue during class time. Through the courses, students interact with faculty on an individual basis, which increases success (Evans et al., 2010). Additionally, the focus on leadership tools helps to create an environment where growth and development are encouraged.

**Conceptual Framework**

A conceptual framework provides the reader with a visualization of the rhetoric and language behind the key concepts in the study while simultaneously assisting the writer in modeling relationships and reducing data into models (Leshem & Trafford, 2007). Conceptual frameworks fulfill "an integrating function between theories that offer explanations of the issues under investigation. Conceptual frameworks also provide a scaffold within which strategies for the research design can be determined, and fieldwork can be undertaken" (Leshem & Trafford, 2007, p. 99).

Through the conceptual framework of this study, the reader sees each of the following areas: the environment of the Leadership Certificate, the general student identity development, and values clarification (or the interaction). These are interconnected and working in concert. In the graphic depiction below, the student's clarification of values occurs in the intersection of the environment of the Leadership Certificate and the development of student identity. Students are given tools in the Leadership Certificate to better understand their own development.

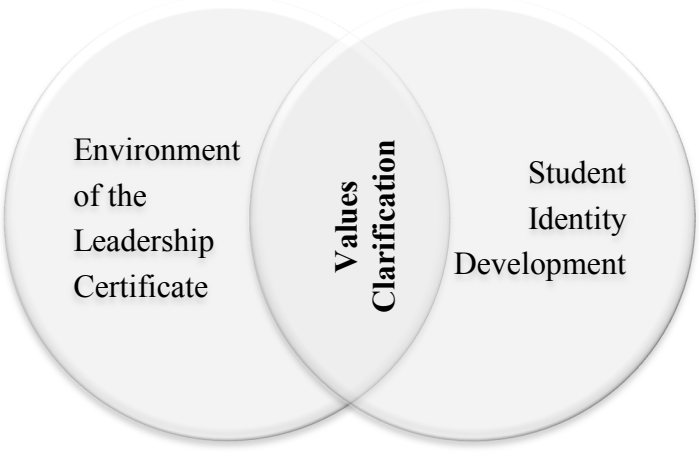


*Figure 1.* Conceptual Framework

## Research Design

This study was a qualitative phenomenological study of how college students clarify their values. This study was conducted at a large Doctoral/Research University-Extensive university in the southeastern United States of America with an approximate enrollment of 40,000 students. For this study, I conducted two individual interviews with 15 junior-level students who were enrolled in or had successfully completed a leadership class. Students enrolled in leadership courses were selected because these courses provide them with a working idea of the concept of values. Through their coursework, they have been in an environment where they are encouraged to make meaning of their experiences, and reflect on themselves.

In the first meeting with the students, I asked the students to complete a Values Clarification activity (Simon, Howe, & Kirschenbaum, 1978) to provoke their thinking in regard to their values. After this activity, students were asked questions about values (See Appendix G for interview questions). In the second interview, I explored their experiences clarifying their values. After the interviews reached a saturation point, (a point where the interviewees no longer provide new information (Ryan and Bernard, 2004)), I began data analysis using thematic coding and other phenomenological procedures.

## Summary of Constructs

The identification of definitions of key terms throughout the study is essential in a research project (Galvan, 2006). The reader should be able to fully operationalize the definitions of the researcher. The following constructs are the foundational definitions for the key concepts in the study.

**Junior-level students.** For the purpose of this study, junior-level students were classified in two ways. A junior-level student was a student who had completed between 60 and 89 credit

hours (as classified officially by the university). A student was also be classified as a junior if they were enrolled in their third consecutive year of full-time undergraduate enrollment.

This study only investigated traditionally aged junior students, defining traditionally aged as between the ages of 18-22. Junior-level students were selected because they are a group of students who are not often studied. In addition, other studies (e.g. the National Survey on Student Engagement) have encouraged the use of juniors as they are most familiar with their institution based on their experiences, and unlike seniors, juniors remain engaged in the institution because they are not ready to graduate and leave the institution (National Survey on Student Engagement, 2015). By examining these issues, the current study adds to the body of knowledge on junior-level students and their experiences in character development.

**Leadership classes.** In this study, leadership classes/courses are defined as follows: A course approved by the Leadership Certificate which directly applies the concepts of leadership as a discipline. These classes were preapproved to serve as a course to earn credit toward the Leadership Certificate at the time of the study. A list of all leadership classes that qualified for this study is included in Appendix C. This term will be used for all leadership classes in the study.

**Values.** The term values has varying definitions. Schwartz and Bilsky (1987) conducted a literature review and found five features common to values definitions. Values are "(a) concepts or beliefs, (b) about desirable end states or behaviors, (c) that transcend specific situations, (d) guide selection or evaluation of behavior and events, and (e) are ordered by relative importance" (Schwartz & Bilsky, 1987, p. 551). Schwartz (1994) later defines values as

> A value is a (1) belief (2) pertaining to desirable end states or modes of conduct, that (3) transcends specific situations, (4) guides selection or evaluation of behavior, people, and

events, and (5) is ordered by importance relative to other values to form a system of value priorities (p. 20).

The Ethics Resource Center defines values as, "core beliefs that guide and motivate attitudes and actions" (2009, p.1).

For the purposes of this study, values are defined as follows: Values are a set of chosen, strongly held beliefs that form your philosophy and are expressed through feelings, behaviors, and decisions. Values serve as general guides to behavior and choices. One's chosen values emphasize the standards one tries to endorse and maintain throughout one's life.

**Values clarification.** There are many different definitions of values clarification in the literature (Attarian, 1996; Boone, 2003; Hall, 1973; Kirschenbaum, 1976; Kirschenbaum, Harmin, Howe, & Simon, 1977; Mosconi & Emmett, 2003; Purpel, 1991; Simon & deSherbinin, 1975; Simon et al., 1978; Uustal, 1978). From these, I synthesized a definition of values clarification. Values clarification is an on-going process of the development of defining what one values (what one believes to be most important and what one cares for most), and how one acts on those values in daily life. Values clarification is the process of defining one's values. By clarifying our values, it helps to guide us in our daily activities and helps to align what we say with what we do. After someone has clarified his or her values, he or she should be able to quickly name the values he or she holds most dear.

**Research Question**

The methods used to teach students to clarify their values, both inside and outside of the classroom, have intrigued me throughout my experience working with college students. To investigate this experience, the following questions were considered:

1. To what extent do students clarify their values in college?

2. What is the essence of the experience of values clarification through college?
3. If students do clarify their values in college, by what process does that happen?
4. Do students clarify their values through a leadership course?
5. What most influenced the students' values clarification process?

After reflecting on each of the aforementioned questions, the primary research question for this study was developed: **Do students clarify their values in college, and if so, how?** To answer to this question, I examined the experiences of junior-level students involved in leadership classes, asking them to reflect on if and how they clarify their values through college.

**Sample**

The sample was chosen with a purposeful sample methodology (Seidman, 2006). Purposeful sampling involves one specific group that is rich in information relevant to the study. The in-depth awareness of the experience permits the investigator to learn a great deal about a specific, targeted group (Patton, 2002). The sample included junior students who were enrolled in or who had successfully completed at least one leadership class. The junior-level students were chosen because of their developmental levels through their college experience, and their maturity to answer the questions of their values.

Identity development occurs in college and during late adolescence. Erikson (1968) asserted there are tasks to be mastered to develop. "These tasks for the college student mainly involve the reevaluation of beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors in the light of what one has been in the past and of what one hopes to become in the future, or as Erikson puts it, of settling on an identity" (Constantinople, 1969, p. 357). College experiences challenge students to reevaluate themselves and allow a freedom to continue that evaluation (Constantinople, 1969; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991). In a study examining changes in development, Constantinople (1969) found

"consistent increases in the successful resolution of identity, both from freshman year to senior year across subjects and from one year to the next within subjects" (p. 367). Therefore, since juniors have had opportunities for growth and development in college, they serve as a strong sample to study.

**Methodology**

Data was collected through face-to-face interviews and the completion of a Values Clarification activity. Additionally, participants provided demographic information via e-mail. These semi-structured interviews were conducted in a phenomenological approach (Seidman, 2006) that allowed for the participants to share their stories with the interviewer.

**Assumptions**

The following are the assumptions made throughout this study. One main assumption was that participants were representative of the general population of students. Through the interviews and Values Clarification (Simon et al., 1978) activity, it was assumed that participants were accurate and truthful. Additionally, it was assumed that students understood the questions asked and the concepts the researcher was attempting to understand. It was assumed that the students answered the questions in regard to their experiences in their leadership classes as asked, not their college experience as a whole.

**Limitations**

The following limitations were placed on this study. The study only investigated how college students who are enrolled at a large, Doctoral/Research University-Extensive university in the southeastern United States of America clarify values. Traditionally aged junior-level students who were enrolled in the leadership classes at the aforementioned university were the only participants.

## Delimitations

While there are limitations and assumptions made, there are also delimitations to this study. The following are the delimitations placed on the study. Only values clarification as defined for this study was explored. While it is understood that the values clarification process is a complex concept, it was measured solely by the definition used for the current study. Students were only contacted at two separate (yet relatively close) data points; and while at those points, I asked participants about their perceptions and their own clarity of values. A long-term multi-year analysis of student's values clarification was not conducted.

## Significance of the Study

The educational significance of this study is to advance the existing body of knowledge in the field of student development and character education. Through this study, scholars have a stronger idea as to how students' values are sharpened through their experiences in college. By choosing students who already have a working knowledge of values clarification from their leadership coursework, this research suggests ways to improve the curriculum for Leadership Studies programs, specifically surrounding values clarification. This study assists leadership educators in teaching values; as, "it is the responsibility of the leader to help followers assess their own values and needs in order to raise them to a higher level of functioning" (Northouse, 2010, p. 384). The study identifies how educators can and do influence values clarification throughout college. "It is important to reiterate that education has perforce at least implicit moral dimensions, and, in that sense, there has always been and always will be 'moral education'" (Purpel, 1991, p. 309). Therefore, it is the responsibility of educators to understand and continue to evaluate how values are being taught inside and outside of the classroom.

This study adds to the body of knowledge. Through a thorough literature review, I noticed that many of the studies on values clarification were conducted during the 1960s and 1970s. This current study helps bring values clarification into the present literature. As budgets tighten and accountability is increased, it is essential for educators to have current literature supporting the importance of values education in the classroom.

Additionally, the literature review highlighted that junior-level students are often under-studied. There is an emphasis on first-year and graduating students, but often not for junior-level students. This lack of research calls for a study directed specifically to this group of students. These students have developed while in college, but still have time to continue to develop during their college careers. Thus, they are an important subset to examine.

This research study helps to advocate for a return to values education in the college classroom. As previously mentioned, colleges and universities were founded on the principle of educating citizens. Many institutions of higher education have a moral dimension in their mission statements today. However, in this time of tight budgets, some colleges are creeping away from their missions of educating citizens in favor of more profitable programs. Rank order is important for colleges and universities. Mission creep is "about changing status, or, more specifically, changing rank order" (Henderson, 2009, p. 186). By discovering how students clarify their values in college, it helps to emphasize the continuing importance of the role of character education in today's colleges and universities.

## Organization of the Study

Chapter one has provided an overview and an introduction to the study. This chapter provides basic information that will be explored in more depth in the following chapters. The literature review is situated in chapter two, which provides a historical background for the study

of values clarification. This groundwork provides the reader with the context of development of the study. After having established this context, chapter three explores the method used to conduct the study. The third chapter describes reasoning for a phenomenological, interview-based strategy; how and why the chosen students were interviewed; and the plan for analyzing the data collected in the study. Chapter four shares relevant information on each of the participants in order to frame the conversation for the reader. Chapter five explores the results of the study. Chapter six includes a discussion of the results and offers further areas of study.

# CHAPTER TWO

## LITERATURE REVIEW

A literature review helps researchers understand where they have been and where they are going, and therefore, is an essential element to an empirical research study. In order to perform important research, one must initially understand the literature (Boote & Beile, 2005). In his text on phenomenological research methods, Moustakas (1994) contended a preparatory step in engaging in phenomenological research is to conduct a review of the literature. In this review, the researcher, "assesses the prior relevant studies; distinguishes their designs, methodologies, and findings from the investigators' own study; and indicates what new knowledge he or she is seeking and expects to obtain" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 111).

Boote and Beile (2005) emphasized the importance of a high-quality literature review in educational research, noting that "a thorough, sophisticated review of literature is even more important in education research, with its messy, complex problems, than in most other fields and disciplines" (p. 3). Creswell (2007) concurred and wrote, "the strongest and most scholarly rationale for a study, I believe, comes from the scholarly literature" (p. 102). The purpose of the literature review is to provide a reason or rationale for the study, as well as share relevant background information on the topic.

The available research on values clarification is both complex and vast. There are many potential categories and sub-categories that could be included in order to fully explore the literature on this topic. For the purposes of this study, this literature review outlines: student development theory, leadership, personal integrity, the history and definition of values, the significance of values clarification, the definition of values clarification, an explanation of the values clarification process, and examples of how values clarification has been used in various

disciplines. This literature review describes the background for the study and emphasizes the necessity of educators to fully understand how students experience values clarification. Specifically, it is important to understand how educators can encourage values clarification in students.

## Student Development Theory

There are many changes occurring in a student's life as he or she moves through his or her college experience, resulting in growth helping to construct identity (Chickering & Reisser, 1993). Through longitudinal analysis, Astin (1977) concluded students undergo many changes in college, including in attitudes, values, and self-concept. These changes are often classified as development, and are framed in the context of student development theory. Development involves changes that are "systematic, [organized, and] successive…and are thought to serve an adaptive function, i.e., to enhance survival" (Learner, 1986, p. 41). According to Kitchener (1982), changes in interpersonal relationships may be a consequence of physical maturation (or deterioration), environmental influences, or the interaction of the individual and the environment. The term development implies there is an inherent positive value to growth, and growth should be sought as a psychological, educational and moral end (Feldman, 1972; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991; Perry, 1970). Colby and Sullivan (2009) emphasize the importance of development as well. The authors articulate, "Research in moral, civic, and political development, for example, shows the critical role that moral and civic identity play in making espoused values real in one's actual behavior" (Colby & Sullivan, 2009, p. 24).

To investigate changes in a student's values development, student development theory was the conceptual framework used (see Figure 1.1). The primary theories used were developed by Perry (1999), Kohlberg (1972), Gilligan (1982), and Chickering and Reisser (1993).

According to Chickering and Reisser (1993), developing integrity is one of the ultimate goals in psychosocial development. One salient aspect of developing integrity is the clarification of personal values. "Movement toward greater integrity involves efforts to bring behavior into alignment with a personally valid and internally consistent set of values" (Chickering & Reisser, 1993, p. 236).

Perry (1999) believed the congruence of values and behaviors is established in the latest (the most highly developed) position. He maintained, "as you become more aware of your own position [your values], certain decisions become easy" (Perry, 1999, p. 191). Additionally, Kohlberg's (1972) theory purports moral reasoning and values definition develops through college. Kohlberg viewed moral development as representing "the transformations that occur in a person's form or structure of thought" (Kohlberg & Hersh, 1972, p. 54). Carol Gilligan (1982) discussed the concept of the woman's moral "voice," and how this affects development. She explained women are relationally focused, and often face conflicts between personal integrity and devotion to the family (Gilligan, 1982).

Chickering and Reisser's work on identity development has informed student affairs practitioners that environment is critical to identity development (1993). The authors affirmed the most important duty of higher education in the twenty-first century is to form and sustain educationally powerful environments. In agreement, Delve, Mintz, and Stewart (1990) asserted it is important for student development professionals to consider the interaction of people and the environment when examining human development. For this study, the Leadership Certificate served as the environment. This study examined how the environment of the Leadership Certificate supports the clarification of values among its members.

The community must support the moral development (and therefore values clarification) of the students in order to achieve the highest results. Hersh and Schneider (2005) indicated, "The formation of …personal and social dispositions is powerfully influenced by the character of the community culture, and the community's own integrity and vitality depends, in turn, on the values, actions and contributions of its members" (p. 8). Additionally, Nesteruk (2007) advocated for what he deemed ennobling relationships and environments throughout the institution, being sure to involve cross-disciplinary collaboration. In *Learning Reconsidered*, Keeling (2004) advocated for broad-based learning initiatives, involving the entirety of the college environment:

> Learning is a complex, holistic, multi-centric activity that occurs throughout and across the college experience. Student development, and the adaptation of learning to students' lives and needs, are fundamental parts of engaged learning and liberal education. True liberal education requires the engagement of the whole student – and the deployment of every resource in higher education. (Keeling, 2004, p. 6)

## Personal Integrity

Anecdotally, people define personal integrity in different ways. Additionally, personal integrity can be used interchangeably with other concepts, such as character and/or personal responsibility. The clarification of values is a component of personal integrity and character education. Hersh and Schneider (2005) wrote, "Personal responsibility and social responsibility involve the moral obligation to both self and community, and both forms of responsibility rely upon such virtues as honesty, self-discipline, respect, loyalty, and compassion" (p. 8). In the Social Change Model (Higher Education Research Institute, 1996), the value of congruence ties closely to personal integrity and values clarification. In the context of the Social Change Model,

congruent people are those whose actions match their values and principles. Congruence is when people behave with consistency toward others, never wavering on their beliefs (Higher Education Research Institute, 1996).

Through a study examining characteristics of moral exemplars, Colby and Damon (1992) identified characteristics of people who lived with integrity. Through their study, the authors determined that integrity and a strong sense of personal values were important elements of each exemplar's day. In describing integrity, the moral exemplars discussed:

> The importance of showing a commitment to truth, having a sense of concern broader than oneself… a compulsion to do the right thing … and using self-examination to support a lasting commitment and sustained capacity for change. Living a life of integrity involves continual personal reflection coupled with a congruence of actions – a lifelong process. (Liddell, Cooper, Healy, & Stewart, 2010, p. 13)

Personal integrity (and therefore values clarification) is an important aspect of a larger construct of character development. The construct of character can be defined in different ways as well. Strange (2004) simplified the definition of character to read, "to possess character is to name with confidence where one is going and how one's actions reflect that commitment, to understand how one's identity affirms such a goal, and to stand connected to others in the midst of a community" (p. 31). Swaner (2005) contended a sense of character is an essential skill for students to learn in order to meet the challenges that lie ahead of them.

**Chickering and Reisser**

Chickering and Reisser's work concluded that developing character (such as personal integrity) is the culminating event of a college education (Chickering & Reisser, 1993; Evans, 1987). Various researchers (see Komives, Longerbeam, Owen, Mainella, & Osteen, 2006;

Liddell et. al, 2010 for examples) use Chickering and Reisser's (1993) identity development theory as a framework for their respective studies. For the current study, the definition of personal integrity used is the one purported by Chickering and Reisser (1993), and includes three essential aspects. Personal integrity involves:

> (1) humanizing values – shifting away from automatic application of uncompromising beliefs and using principled thinking in balancing one's own self-interest with the interests of one's fellow human beings, (2) personalizing values – consciously affirming core values and beliefs while respecting other points of view, and (3) developing congruence – matching personal values with socially responsible behavior. (Chickering & Reisser, 1993, p. 236-7)

This study focused on Chickering and Reisser's ideas of humanizing and personalizing values (1993). Values clarification happens in the vectors of humanizing and personalizing values. This definition was chosen because not only is it used in other studies, but it also captures the essential elements of integrity (recognizing you have values, naming those values, abiding by those values, and being proactive in living those values). The developing congruence segment is particularly critical to me, as I believe an important part of integrity is "living your values." This definition clearly delineates it is important to recognize your values, be able to understand and reason through your values, as well as demonstrate your values.

**William Perry**

In his work, Perry (1999) focused on the intellectual and ethical development of students during the college years. Perry noted students move along *positions* in their path from adolescence to adulthood. These positions represent forms of development in cognitive development. The evolution of the positions entails a progression in specific "forms in which the

students construe their experience… 'forms' characterize the structures which the students explicitly or implicitly impute to the world, especially those structures in which they construe the nature and origins of knowledge, of value, and of responsibility" (Perry, 1999, p. 1).

Perry's model consists of nine positions. While most freshman students were found to operate in positions 3-5, "most seniors were found to function in positions 6, 7, and 8" (Perry, 1999, p. 62). In position 6, students are in Commitment Foreseen. Position 7 is named Initial Commitment, and is followed by position 8: Orientation in Implications of Commitment and position 9: Developing Commitment(s) (Perry, 1999).

In position 6, students begin to realize there is a capacity for Commitments (to affirm for one's own) in their lives (Perry, 1999). "In position 6, Commitment is foreseen as the resolution of the problems of relativism, but it has not yet been experienced" (p. 153). Students' cognitive development continues into the seventh position. "Position 7 describes that state in a student's life in which he has undertaken to decide on his own responsibility who he is, or who he will be in some major area in his life" (p. 170). It is in this position where students may determine what role they will take on in the future. "Position 8 describes a level of experience in which the stylistic issues of Commitment have emerged in greater prominence over external forms" (p. 171). In the eighth position, students have determined their role (for example to become a doctor), but are struggling with how to do that, and the magnitude of a decision facing them for the entirety of their lives (Perry, 1999).

Position 9 is the ultimate goal in actualizing ethical and intellectual development. "Position 9 describes a maturity in which a person has developed an experience of 'who he is' in his Commitments both in their content and in his style of living them" (p. 171). It is in this position that students feel more settled. It is unusual for college students to reach the

culmination of position 9. In Perry's research, 75% of the sample was judged to have developed into position 7 and 8. However, the actualization of the intellectual and ethical development results in position 9, where there is a sense of being in one's life (Perry, 1999).

## Leadership

Although there is an emphasis on leadership development programs in higher education, few institutions offer these programs as part of the formal curriculum, resulting in a gap within the literature (Cress, Astin, Zimmerman-Oster, & Burkhardt, 2001). Recently, there has been a proliferation of leadership programs on college campuses (Dugan, 2006; Komives et. al, 2006; Thompson, 2006). This may be due in part to the movement toward a more holistic approach to student learning through updated mission statements and a push toward a more globally-conscious graduate (Thompson, 2006). However, research is scant on the models used in leadership education and the research on college student leadership (Dugan, 2006).

Students involved in leadership programs benefit from their participation. In a longitudinal study from 10 institutions, the results show evidence of gains in students who participate in leadership development programs (Cress et al., 2001). In this same longitudinal study exploring outcomes of leadership activities, Cress et al. (2001) demonstrated students who participate in leadership programs (both curricular and co-curricular), "indicated positive growth and change on the developmental outcomes… Specifically, leadership participants showed increased gains in the three leadership areas of skills (e.g., decision making abilities), values (e.g., sense of personal ethics), and cognitive understanding (e.g., understanding of leadership theories)" (p. 18). Additionally, Zimmerman-Oster and Burkhardt (1999) found in a large-scale study funded by the Kellogg Foundation that "78.6% of students perceived improvements in

their personal/social responsibility and 44.4% experienced perceived improvements in ethics as a result of participating in leadership programs" (p. 9).

In creating an effective leadership development program, Connaughton, Lawrence, and Ruben (2003) assert that leadership development is a fundamental responsibility of the modern college and university. Osteen and Coburn agree stating, "successful collegiate leadership programs are embedded in and aligned with the following four contextual layers: higher education's purpose, institutional mission, administrative support, and collaborative environment" (2012, p.5). Connaughton, Lawrence, and Ruben (2003) cited nine foundations on which the pedagogy of leadership is founded. The foundations are complex, other-oriented, interactive and dynamic, contextual, a science and an art, enacted through communication, increasingly mediated and virtual in nature, leadership may be emergent, and leadership can be learned and taught (Connaughton et al., 2003). The authors emphasized the importance of an engaging, interactive classroom where reflection is encouraged. To educate leaders, it is critical to allow students to apply the leadership theory they have learned in the classroom to their leadership practice (Connaughton et al., 2003). Additionally, Guthrie and Thompson (2010) assert that "leadership education be comprised of a balanced mix of three elements: formal education in theories and principles of leadership, practical experience, and reflection on experiences in light of formal education" (p. 50).

In order to maximize the benefit of curricular leadership development programs, educators should continue to clarify personal values in college students and integrate values development into the curriculum. The current paradigms of leadership development necessitate the development of both personal and social values in leaders (Cress et al., 2001). The Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS) suggested "leadership

development involves engaging with learning opportunities in one's own environment… to build one's capacity or efficacy to engage in leadership. This developmental approach entails moving from simple to more complex dimensions of growth" (Komives et al., 2006, p. 402). Northouse (2010) agreed emphasizing, "it is crucial to state that *leadership involves values*, and one cannot be a leader without being aware of and concerned about one's own values" (p. 395, emphasis in original). Thompson (1991) echoed the importance of teaching moral responsibility, particularly to our leaders, encouraging "any institution which is concerned with the moral imperatives must teach responsibility, for responsibility is the other side of morality" (p. 4).

**The Certificate in Leadership Studies**

The Leadership Certificate at the southeastern university being studied was proposed in 2005 as a part of the University's Quality Enhancement Plan (Dalton & Beckham, 2005; Marcus & Laughlin, 2006) with classes first offered in the Fall of 2005. This multidisciplinary certificate was founded to integrate leadership theory with practical leadership and service-learning experiences. Specifically "it combines social change theories of leadership…The Leadership Certificate program prepares students for real-life leadership roles on campus, in home communities, in statewide positions, and in national and international communities" (Dalton & Beckham, 2005, p. 1). Upon completion of the Leadership Certificate courses, students are able to demonstrate leadership skills, and demonstrate knowledge and apply leadership theories. The four overarching learning outcomes for the Certificate are: "gaining theoretical knowledge of leadership theory, increasing self-awareness through personal reflection, increasing leadership skill development, and the ability to apply theory-to-practice in multiple contexts" (Guthrie & Bovio, 2014, p.27).

Through the curriculum of the Certificate, there is an emphasis on values clarification and development. Mentioned specifically in the Certificate's learning outcomes is a section on Values Clarification. "Students will demonstrate the ability to clarify their personal values and discuss how their values can affect their career goals and relationships with others" (Dalton & Beckham, 2005, p. 1). The founding documents of the Leadership Certificate detail areas of knowledge, skills, and values that students who successfully complete the Leadership Certificate will possess: (1) the individual, (2) in partnerships, (3) in groups, and (4) in community. In the individual area, self-awareness and critical thinking are cited as two sub-outcomes of the Leadership Certificate program.

> Students who graduate with a Certificate in Leadership Studies will possess knowledge, skills, and values in the following areas: Individual, Self-awareness: character development and personal integrity; clarifying individual values, personality, leadership and learning styles. Critical Thinking: critiquing, analyzing, and thinking with complexity, depth and creativity; applying theory to practice; reflection and evaluation… (Dalton & Beckham, 2005, p. 2).

The Leadership Certificate was chosen for the current study because the students involved have been exposed to and have learned leadership theory and self-awareness. This background in leadership as a discipline affords students a common language and skills to discuss their clarification of values. Through their time in the Leadership Certificate program, students obtained leadership skills and knowledge. Specifically, after successfully completing the Certificate, students are able to "demonstrate leadership skills including decision-making, directing others, team building, taking initiative, educating…The student will be able to demonstrate knowledge and application of leadership theories… leadership strategies, and leader

accountability (ethics and values clarification)" (Dalton & Beckham, 2005, p. 1). By having this common background, the Certificate serves as a rich environment to study values clarification.

## History of Defining Values

Values education has a long and storied history, documented as early as the ancient Greeks. The Greeks believed the heart of values education was motivation. To the "Greek philosopher the question was: What is the good? The next question was: How do I obtain it? If the good is happiness, then how do I become happy in my life?" (Hall, 1973, p. 40). These questions all centered around motivation, the principle force behind values education in the ancient Greek society.

### Christianity

Along with the Greeks, another significant influence on values education was the Christian values system which continues to influence values today. In Christianity, values are stated objectively (rather than motivation); these are rules that were meant to be followed. For example, "if I know the objective values and their priority, the only question then will be: How or what do I do to obtain or develop them? This concept of the objectivity of values continues with us even today" (Hall, 1973, p. 40). Christians have a set of values, and it is the responsibility of the person to develop and live the prescribed values. Mulkey (1997) wrote a summarizing article on the history of character education schools in the United States. He began with discussing the Colonial schools and how they taught Christian values. "In fact, in 1776, school textbooks contained 100 percent moral and religious content" (Mulkey, 1997, p. 35).

### Separation of Values in Schools

When the colonies became states and the United States a nation, a greater separation between church and state developed. From 1776 to 1825, schools went through a transition.

Initially, American schools were community-based and religiously oriented. With the influx of immigrants, many of who settled in the larger cities and were from varying religious backgrounds, a secularization of the schools began resulting in a non-spiritual educational system (Mulkey, 1997). The certain editions of the Bible were banned in the public school classroom by 1870, and "for the next 20 years, educators argued whether it was possible to provide moral training without religious instruction" (Mulkey, 1997, p. 35).

In 1916, a college president created the Children's Morality Code. The code touted the following values: "self-control, good health, kindness, truth, sportsmanship, teamwork, self-reliance, duty, reliability, and good workmanship" (Mulkey, 1997, p. 36). From 1924-1929, Hartshorne and May conducted a significant character education study. In this study, the researchers sought to determine the effects of moral education (including religious and non-faith based) on students' values-based behavior (Mulkey, 1997). Through their research, the authors found that by the measures used in the study, the training and education had no effect on moral conduct. After this study, "John Dewey once again focused attention on the need for moral training/character development/values education… Later, Dewey also criticized the schools for separating the acquisition of knowledge and the growth of character" (Mulkey, 1997, p. 36).

**The Psychoanalysts**

Hall (1973) contended that in contrast to Christianity, the psychoanalysts, specifically Freud (1961), Jung (Jacobi, 1970), and Sullivan (1953), emphasized the ideas of development and formation in values formation. Freud's work showed development happened throughout life, and people go through changes in each stage of development (1961). This was a less objective stance on values than the Christians took. The psychoanalytic idea was that our values were

learned over time and through development. Values are not prescribed, as is the Christian belief (Hall, 1973).

Until the psychoanalysts altered the conceptualization of values formation, values education was connected to morality (and therefore was objective).

> That is to say, in order to live the authentic life, especially in the religious thought such as Christianity, one had to possess certain values in a given hierarchy. Since the hierarchy was considered known, it was only a question of how to live them. Therefore, educational theories were orientated around the idea of telling the person what the values were in order that they could live them. There was an explicit acceptance of the theory that the cognitive… was the most important influence on a person. In other words, if the person understood the information, he would then act. (Hall, 1973, p. 43)

The formation of values was considered something cognitive in nature, something that came to the child from a given authority (Hall, 1973). Rogers affirmed this notion (Rogers & Stephens, 1967). Rogers' work "notes that many values are not chosen freely. We have been taught certain values and have not examined them closely for ourselves" (Uustal, 1978, p. 2060).

Hall (1973) also discusses the theory of psychosynthesis, developed by Assagioli (1971; 1974). Assagioli's work is similar to the work of Jung (Jacobi, 1970). The psychological faction (according to the psychoanalysts) is focused on authentic existence. "This realm of identity and future aspiration and goals led to the area of values… The development of values, then, has to do with the formation of one's identity and development which is intricately related to one's life experience" (Hall, 1973, p. 45). The psychoanalytic approach is present today. Many values education programs do not simply dictate values and ask students to figure out how to obtain

them. Rather, students are challenged to determine what they value, and how they can live their life according to those values.

## Definition of Values

In order to understand values clarification, it is first important to understand the definition of values. However, there is not one clear definition of the word, "value." "One can find consensus for no definition. About the only agreement that emerges is that a value represents something important in human existence" (Raths, Harmin, & Simon, 1966, p. 9). Many researchers used each other's work to define values.

### The Individual

In his book, Hall (1973) touted many definitions of a value. He wrote that a value is a matter of choice. A value is something selected from a set of options, and then someone acts upon it. After this choice and action is made, the value is then integrated into the person's character (Hall, 1973). His second definition reads, "A value is the stance that the self takes to the total environment as expressed through its behavior, ideas, body, and feelings, and imagination" (Hall, 1973, p. 55). This definition of values relates to the Jungian and Piagetian viewpoints. Hall then rephrased the definition of a value from Raths, Harmin, and Simon's book, *Values and Teaching* (1966), "This value definition also emphasizes the process of valuing… the process of valuing as having seven aspects… a value has seven criteria which can be divided into three categories: (1) choosing; (2) prizing; (3) acting" (Hall, 1973, p. 55).

After discussing the positives and negatives of each different value definition, Hall (1973) restated his personal definition of value. Hall's redefinition of value reads:

> We define a value as being the stance that the self takes to the world through the feelings, ideas, imagination, and behavior of the individual. The valuing process comes about

> through the free choice of the individual…This choice must consider the consequences or the alternatives that are evident and must be, of course, a choice from alternatives. Essential…is that the choice must have been acted upon and become a permanent part of the life plan of the person if it is to be called a value. Finally, the person must be happy with the choice, and the choice must be on that enhances the development, emotional and spiritual, of that individual. (Hall, 1973, p. 66)

**A Basis for Your Actions**

Uustal has a much simpler definition of values, "Values form your philosophy and are the basis for your actions" (1978, p. 2058). The author also referenced Simon's definition of values, stating values are a set of personal beliefs. A set of values acts as general rules of behavior. Personal values are standards of conduct that one attempts to maintain (and live up to) throughout life. Additionally, these values help us to explain our actions, evaluate new ideas, and form personal relationships (Uustal, 1978).

**Values as Preferences**

In their study regarding affective learning, values and the field of social work, Neuman Allen and Friedman (2010) defined a value as "a concept or an ideal that we feel strongly about, so much so that it influences the way in which we understand other ideas and interpret events. Values are preferences…" (p. 2). The authors wrote that when the term "value" is used as a verb "it means to prize or hold in high esteem" (Neuman Allen & Friedman, 2010, p. 2).

**Business Context**

In his work with organizations and businesses, Coye (1986) referenced two definitions of values. He stated that values act as a standard for judging worth (1986). When one values something, it has a higher worth than something that is not valued. Coye (1986) also referenced

Morrill's definition "values serve as the authorities in the name of which choices are made and action taken" (Morrill, 1980, p. 62). In another business, goal-oriented mindset, Mosconi and Emmett described values as providing "standards for behavior, orient people to desired outcomes, and form the basis for goal setting" (2003, p. 70).

### Values as Desirable States

In his work, Kinnier (1995) utilized the definition of values purported by Schwartz and Bilsky (1987). "Values are (a) concepts or beliefs, (b) about desirable end states or behaviors, (c) that transcend specific situations, (d) guide selection or evaluation of behavior and events, and (e) are ordered by relative importance" (Schwartz & Bilsky, 1987, p. 551). In the context of health professions, values can be described as "qualities that the individual considers desirable or not, and in these situations they often relate to the quality of life" (Feldman-Stewart, Brennenstuhl, Brundage, & Roques, 2006, p. 350).

### Values Definition for this Study

While all of the definitions center on the same concept, the nuances of the definitions of a value are different. These differ according to context and to the individual author. For the purposes of this study, values were defined as follows: Values are a set of chosen, strongly held beliefs that form your philosophy and are expressed through feelings, behaviors, and decisions. Values serve as general guides to behavior and choices. Chosen values emphasize the standards you try to endorse and maintain throughout life.

## Definition of Values Clarification

As is true with the term values, there are differing definitions of values clarification in the literature. Attarian defined the process simply, "Values clarification is a theory that helps people define their values" (1996, p. 41). Uustal (1978) offered a slightly different definition,

emphasizing the varying nature of values clarification. She pointed out that values clarification is a dynamic, rather than a static process of imparting values.

> It is a theory, a process, and a collection of tools designed to assist each of us to find our own answers to a variety of questions and areas of concern in our lives. Values clarification helps us feel better about ourselves by focusing on our values and our value… Values clarification offers a process for sorting the issues we face and can help us close the gap between what we say and what we do. (1978, p. 2060)

**Values Clarification as a Process**

In their seminal work on values clarification Raths, Harmin, and Simon (1966) defined the process of valuing. This process later morphed into what is commonly known as the values clarification process. The authors wrote:

> Unless something satisfies all seven of the criteria noted below, we do not call it a value. In other words, for a value to result, all of the following seven requirements must apply. Collectively, they describe the process of valuing.
>
> 1. *Choosing freely*… Values must be freely selected if they are to be really valued by the individual.
> 2. *Choosing from among alternatives*…Only when a choice is possible, when there is more than one alternative from which to choose, do we say a value can result.
> 3. *Choosing after thoughtful consideration of the consequences of each alternative*…A value can emerge only with thoughtful consideration of the range of the alternatives and consequences in a choice.
> 4. *Prizing and cherishing*... We prize and cherish the guides to life that we call values.

5. *Affirming*…We are willing to publicly affirm our values. We may even be willing to champion them…
6. *Acting upon choices*…In short, for a value to be present, life itself must be affected. Nothing can be a value that does not, in fact, give direction to actual living…
7. *Repeating*… Values tend to have a persistency, tend to make a pattern in life. (Raths, Harmin, & Simon, 1966, p. 28-9)

Hall (1973) wrote that the values clarification method is a process to help people to discover "what important choices they have made that they are continually, in fact, acting upon in and through their lives… Value clarification is a method that helps people to clarify what these underlying choices are" (p. 51). Boone (2003) is of the same mind as the aforementioned authors by stating, "Values clarification is about acknowledging that individuals have different values and, therefore, are likely to make different decisions about the same topic" (p. 2).

The clarification of values helps people to make decisions consistent with one's beliefs. In values clarification, to know what one prizes allows people to choose what they value and incorporate it into their daily lives (Simon & deSherbinin, 1975). Simon and deSherbinin (1975) also listed in their definition how the process is taught. The process is taught by utilizing both real-life circumstances and fictional stories. However, whenever the process is explained, people always wrestle with concerning issues in daily life (Simon & deSherbinin, 1975). Nevertheless, values clarification does not only happen in emotionally laden difficult decisions. It also helps to make smaller decisions. "The values clarification process is at work when you consider what may be a minor decision like your approach to selling a car. It comes into play with heavy issues, too; e.g., will you use drugs?" (Simon & deSherbinin, 1975, p. 679).

Purpel (1991), a critic of the values education movement, defined the process as follows, "The values clarification program involves an ingenious and deceptively simple pedagogy designed to encourage students to reflect on their personal feelings and 'values' and to come to choose and affirm them" (p. 310). He criticized the movement, writing "there is no particular effort to distinguish among categories of values, but the intent seems to be mainly one of encouraging and supporting individuals to be in close touch with their feelings and attitudes" (Purpel, 1991, p. 310). Purpel did not agree with the lack of a moral choice of values in values clarification. He argued the values clarification process (and the Kohlbergian approach as well) had "a deficiency, namely, the failure to provide for any serious contemporary political, contextual, historical, or social analysis" (Purpel, 1991, p. 310).

**Kirschenbaum's Definition of Values Clarification**

As one of the leading researchers on values clarification, Kirschenbaum (1976) saw fault in Raths' original seven sub-processes. Kirschenbaum argued the sub-processes are not sufficient to address the entire valuing process. He viewed Raths' definition as lacking in how values are clarified and developed (Kirschenbaum, 1976), while also not being operational. "How proud must someone be of a belief before it may be considered a 'value?' How many alternatives must be considered before the criterion of choice among alternatives is satisfied?" (Kirschenbaum, 1976, p. 101). Due to the perceived shortcomings in Raths' model, Kirschenbaum created his own model of the valuing process. "The valuing process is a process by which we increase the likelihood that our living in general or a decision in particular will, first, have positive value for us, and second, be constructive in the social context" (Kirschenbaum, 1976, p. 102). This definition does not insure good decision-making; rather, it simply increases the probability of good decisions.

Kirschenbaum's model holds five dimensions, each with subprocesses. "The five dimensions are not discrete psychological processes; an individual can be engaged in all of them or some of them at the same time. It is helpful to separate them primarily as a means toward clarity of educational goals" (Kirschenbaum, 1976, p. 102). The five dimensions are: thinking, feeling, choosing (or decision making), communicating, and acting. Each of these dimensions are described in the following sections.

**Thinking.** Included in the dimension of thinking is thought on various levels (Bloom, Krathwohl, & Masia, 1956). Additionally, it includes critical thinking (Raths, Pancella, & Van, 1967), moral reasoning (Kohlberg, 1968), and other types of creative thinking (Kirschenbaum, 1976). In this realm, educators can simply encourage students to think. People are encouraged to increase their critical thinking skills, divergent thinking, and moral reasoning (Kirschenbaum, Harmin, Howe, & Simon, 1977).

**Feeling.** The dimension of feeling surrounds acknowledging one's feelings. Feelings can either be helpful or a hindrance in effective thinking, choosing, and living (Kirschenbaum, 1976). "People who are aware of their feelings are psychologically more mature" (Kirschenbaum, 1976, p. 102). This maturity allows people to obtain their goals more readily. "When we are not aware of or we attempt to deny our feelings, they often emerge anyway in surprising ways and often interfere with our conscious goals" (Kirschenbaum, 1976, p. 102). In this dimension, people work on being aware of one's feelings, discharging distressful feelings, and experience positive self-concept (Kirschenbaum et al., 1977).

**Choosing.** The choosing dimension involves five different areas. Choosing encompasses goal-setting, information/data gathering, choosing from alternatives, considering the

consequences, and choosing freely (Kirschenbaum, 1976; Kirschenbaum et al., 1977). This dimension is also referred to as the decision-making dimension.

**Communicating.** The dimension of communicating is essential, as people do not exist in a vacuum, and are continuously interacting with others. "The ability to send clear messages is an important valuing skill… sharing our feelings and thoughts can have a clarifying effect… Another valuing process here is empathy, active listening, or taking another's frame of reference…Conflict resolution is a third valuing process" (Kirschenbaum, 1976, p. 103). Important aspects of this dimension include: sending clear messages, including public affirmation; empathic listening; and no-lose conflict resolution (Kirschenbaum et al., 1977).

**Acting.** The last dimension, acting, is a proactive concept. In this dimension, the theory purports people are repeatedly, consistently, skillfully, and competently acting on the values they hold dear (Kirschenbaum et al., 1977). "To act repeatedly upon our beliefs and to act consistently toward our goals increases the likelihood that our living will have positive value to us…competence is going to increase the likelihood that the process and product will be satisfying" (Kirschenbaum, 1976, p. 103).

**Kirschenbaum's definition.** Kirschenbaum's definition of values clarification is defined as "an approach that utilizes questions and activities designed to teach the valuing process and to help people skillfully apply the valuing processes to value-rich areas in their lives" (Kirschenbaum, 1976, p. 103-4). However, Kirschenbaum did not assert that values clarification will be the one true answer for humankind, as it does not provide all of the answers. Yet, Kirschenbaum's work does explain a process for valuing. The author posited if people engage in this process, their lives will have more positive value and they will become constructive global citizens (Kirschenbaum, 1976).

**Values Clarification and Morality**

Values clarification does not have a moral connotation; rather, values clarification is about understanding what is viewed individually as important. "It is the goal of values clarification to unmask what is important to the individual… Values clarification, therefore, focuses on what is the right decision about a person's feelings about life or about a particular idea" (Boone, 2003, p. 1). When it comes to values clarification, there is no absolute truth. Rather, it is about understanding and championing what one believes to be true (Mosconi & Emmett, 2003). Therefore, when in the classroom, Kirschenbaum advocated for assisting students in developing their own values, rather than the instructor imposing his or her values on the students (2000). However, there was criticism to the values clarification approach. It was criticized for what was perceived as the promotion of moral relativism (Smith, 2013).

Kirschenbaum (2000) argued against critics who claim the values clarification process is devoid of morals and is egocentric. He claimed we showcase our values (specifically in the classroom), and students see the modeling of the behavior. The process of values clarification provides a means to teach students a set of skills that will be with them always; rather than our values that will only be with students when we are with them. Therefore, it is not devoid of values, but devoid of judgment and a perceived morality.

In contrast to the moral education prescribed by some of their contemporaries (and in agreement with Kirschenbaum's ideas), Simon and deSherbinin (1975) outlined why values clarification does not address moral issues in its approach. "Moralizing offers the illusion of looking like the right way to go, but its whole focus – trying to shape and manipulate people in to accepting a given set of values – is doomed to failure" (Simon & deSherbinin, 1975, p. 682). If a student has not been educated on how to formulate his or her own values, other people may

influence his or her values. For example, "if a student has not been taught to examine and weigh his own values, he is prey to the next fast-talking moralizer who comes down the road. The next one might, in fact, be hustling drugs" (Simon & deSherbinin, 1975, p. 682). However, like Kirschenbaum, the authors recognized the importance and impact of strong role models. When positive role models surround youngsters, the youngsters tend to reflect the behavior of those role models (Simon & deSherbinin, 1975).

**Values Clarifying Exercises**

One method employed by educators to assist students in clarifying their values, is the use of Values Clarification exercises. The process begins with recognition of a value problem, such as apathy (Kirschenbaum et. al, 1977). Then the intervention is conducted. This intervention's purpose is to change the state of affairs (confusion and conflict) within the person. In order to do so, the process involves a form of questioning through activities (or strategies). The questioning includes many different content areas, all of which help people to determine answers to value-laden problems in their lives (Kirschenbaum et. al, 1977). These values clarification exercises are often designed to help people become more aware of their own values (Mosconi & Emmett, 2003).

Values clarification exercises contain four main elements. The first includes choosing a value-laden matter "such as an issue related to friendship, family, health, work, love, sex, drugs, leisure times, personal tastes, or politics" (Kirschenbaum, 2000, p. 5). This topic can be chosen by the educator or by the participants. Next, the leader raises a question, or facilitates an activity, "sometimes known as a values clarification 'strategy,' to help the participant(s) think, read, write, and talk about the topic" (Kirschenbaum, 2000, p. 5). During the third stage, the leader makes sure all perspectives are treated with deference, therefore creating a safe space for

conversation. In the fourth element, the organizer helps the members to use valuing processes or valuing skills to rectify the problem at hand. The fourth element involves "understanding what one prizes and cherishes, publicly affirming one's values in appropriate ways, examining alternative viewpoints, considering the consequences of various choices in a thoughtful manner, making a choice free from undue peer or authority pressure, and acting on ones beliefs" (Kirschenbaum, 2000, p. 6).

## History of the Values Clarification Movement

Like many educational movements, the values clarification and values education movements have endured a long history. Much of this history has involved advocating for and arguing against values education in the classroom. Kirschenbaum (2000) summarized the history:

> Values education in the twentieth century has been like a pendulum, beginning with explicit character education at the turn of the century and swinging toward progressive citizenship education in the twenties and thirties. Taking values education for granted was characteristic of the forties and fifties... In the sixties and seventies values clarification, values analysis, and Kohlberg's moral development were predominant. A more directive form of moral education took place in the eighties. Now, character education has become prevalent through the nineties and into the new millennium. (Kirschenbaum, 2000, p. 19)

The values clarification movement has a storied past, and higher education practitioners have used values clarification since its beginning (King, 2009). Much of the history over the past four decades mirrors the social history of the United States during that time (Kirschenbaum, 1992). In the 1960s, there was a push to focus on specific values. In the 1970s, the

independence of the era encouraged values educators to focus on students' ability to decide their own values. In the politically conservative 1980s, there was a focus on the Judeo-Christian morals. In the 1990s, there was again a concern for moral and values education due to the increasing drug problem and disintegration of the American family (Kirschenbaum, 1992). Research and publication regarding values clarification followed societal trends, with research increasing steadily from the late 1960s, peaking in the 1970s and then declining again in the 1980s (Kinnier, 1995). The following sections will detail the history of the values clarification movement.

**Religion and Values Education**

Values education has been woven into the curriculum of the United States for many years. During the colonial era, values education was integrated with Protestant religious education. "The *New England Primer* mixed religious doctrine into grammar lessons… The Protestant connection to values education in schools persisted well into the 19th century. Horace Mann of Massachusetts…firmly believed that the Bible should be read in public schools" (Lockwood, 2009, p. xi).

As there was greater influence and rioting by other religious factions (for example the Catholic's uprising in 1844 Philadelphia due to the exclusive use of the Protestant Bible in schools), the values education of Protestants moved away from the schools (Lockwood, 2009). In the private Catholic schools, values and religion were still being taught. In the early 20th century, values education was deemed character education. "Character education aimed to get young people to hold and act upon certain values, such as honesty, patriotism, and courtesy, often tied to conceptions of good democratic citizenship and a sound work ethic as opposed to religious doctrine and traditions" (Lockwood, 2009, p. xii).

**The Beginnings of Values Education**

With Kohlberg's work in the 1960s, the moral development approach to values education was launched. At the end of the 20th century, character education reemerged as the dominant theory of values education in schools. This signaled a move away from moral development in the classroom (Lockwood, 2009).

The year 1966 began a new era in values development in schools. That year, Harmin, Raths, and Simon authored and released the book *Values and Teaching* (1966). This text was the first in a series of research that advocated for a specific "Values Clarification" approach to character development. In 1966, Kohlberg also turned his attention to education. "Values clarification, along with the cognitive developmental approach to moral education of Lawrence Kohlberg, dominated the field of moral or values education for the next 20 years" (Leming, 2010, p. 96).

The first people to establish a specific Values Clarification process and approach were Raths, Harmin, and Simon in 1966 (Lockwood, 2009). From the 1960s until the 1980s, the Values Clarification approach was the most popular method to teach character development in schools and counseling (Kirschenbaum, 2000). "As popular as values clarification was throughout the 1970s and into the 1980s, within a few years it had fallen from popular esteem" (Kirschenbaum, 2000, p. 7).

**Criticism of Values Clarification**

In detailing the history of values education, Leming criticized the values clarification movement because there was not a focus on strong research procedures (2010). He argued the lack of high quality research on the process was ignored because of the ease and popularity of the approach with teachers and students. A body of values clarification research was not present

initially, but there was a wave of new studies in the mid- to late 1970s (see Kirschenbaum for a list of these studies). In fact, in the 1970s, 40 books were published on the values clarification approach (Kirschenbaum, 1992).

In the early days of values clarification work, the process was called hedonistic, superficial, relativistic, and value free among other monikers (Kirschenbaum, 1976; Kirschenbaum et al., 1977). There was much rhetoric surrounding the lack of morality in values clarification. "The primary reason for these reservations centers on the exponents' emphasis on value neutrality…Values Clarification makes no distinction between moral values and nonmoral values" (Lockwood, 2009, p. 8). However, values clarification researchers disagree with this stance. Kirschenbaum wrote, "Called before the committee, we can only say that values clarification is not and never has been 'value free'" (1976, p. 104).

**In Defense of Values Clarification**

Kirschenbaum (1976) combated the critics' ideas that values clarification lacks morality. There are different sets of values in the world, and young people may see different examples of moral values (for example in teachers, churches, national leaders, sports heroes/heroines, etc.). "There are too many models modeling different values – different goals, life styles, speech patterns, moral codes, orientations toward work and play, life and death. Which models are the real teachers, which are charlatans? How does the young person decide?" (Kirschenbaum, 1976, p. 100).

Researchers contended they are not attempting to impose specific values; rather they were advocating for the education of the process. "In that sense, it is also a 'relativistic' procedure. Responses are not judged as better or worse; each student's views are treated with equal respect" (Kirschenbaum et. al, p. 744). Overall, the process of values clarification does not

encourage certain values, but it does encourage different types of thinking. "Thinking critically is regarded as better than thinking noncritically. Considering consequences is regarded as better than choosing impulsively or thoughtlessly. Choosing freely is considered better than yielding passively to authority or peer pressure" (Kirschenbaum et. al, p. 744).

**The 1980s and the decline of the values clarification approach.** The 1980s brought a strong decline of the values clarification approach and a shift in terminology. In the late 1980s, the terminology moved from moral education, returning to character education. Character education "was given legitimacy in the United States when in 1987 the Secretary of Education, William J. Bennett, organized a conference in Washington, DC entitled *Moral and Character Education*" (Leming, 2010, p. 100). This conference indicated that character education (and not values clarification) would be a priority of the Reagan administration (Leming, 2010).

Kirschenbaum (1992, 2000), one of the leaders of the values clarification approach, offered five reasons for the decline of the approach in the 1980s. He listed the following as the reasons for the regression, "changing times, faddism, stagnation, erratic implementation, and a major flaw in the theory of values clarification itself" (Kirschenbaum, 1992, p. 773). He explained there was a huge spike in the use of the values clarification approach, but it seemed to be a fad that was often implemented sporadically. While he believed values clarification is an important step in the development of citizens of character, Kirschenbaum realized there was an error in his initial theory (Kirschenbaum, 1992; Kirschenbaum, 2000). "Values clarification made an important contribution …With the benefit of hindsight, we can recognize that values clarification was a good idea that was taken too far" (Kirschenbaum, 1992, p. 774).

Lickona (1993) cited a few different reasons as to why the support of character education waned in the 20th century. He cited Darwinism as a change of thinking. Now that people were

learning of Darwin's theory of evolution, everything (including morals and values) were in flux. Lickona also credited the arrival of positivism in American colleges and universities from their European counterparts as a reason the popularity of character education waned. There was "a radical distinction between facts (which could be scientifically proven) and values (which positivism held were mere expressions of feeling, not objective truth)" (Lickona, 1993, p. 6).

**Values Clarification in the Past Three Decades**

In the mid-1990s, Kinnier proposed a new conceptualization of values clarification known as values conflict resolution (1995). He stressed the values clarification movement had its benefits, but he criticized the approach, because it did not accurately operationalize a measure for being clarified. In his approach, Kinnier (1995) proposed "the new goal of [Values Clarification] interventions should be the resolution of specified values conflicts, and the appropriate measure for such a goal should be how resolved individuals are about those specific conflicts" (p. 22). Among others, Kinnier's (1995) criticism was in the application of the values clarification approach, not necessarily the crux of the approach.

**Kirschenbaum's Reflections in 2000**

In a paper written in 2000, Kirschenbaum described his new thinking regarding values clarification. He reflected on the history of the values clarification through his life. Through the constant criticism and his life experience, the author detailed the problems with values clarification; however, he also lauded the process as an important piece of character education. He critiqued the concept that values clarification should not teach specific values (Kirschenbaum, 2000).

In contrast with his earlier writings, he no longer agreed that the teacher does not impose his/her values on the situation. There are certain values inherent in teaching values clarification.

However, the important distinction is the teacher or counselor should continue to encourage the student/client to formulate his or her own opinions and values.

> For example, by teaching students to listen to one another with respect, we are teaching the value of respect. By teaching group members to look at the other person's point of view, we are encouraging them to value fairness and empathy. By urging people to close the gap between what they say and what they do, we are teaching the values of honesty and integrity…there was a value-laden, moral context implicit in the values clarification process itself. Although…not explicitly teaching respect, honesty, empathy, and other moral values, they were part of the hidden curriculum. (Kirschenbaum, 2000, p. 9-10)

Although in retrospect, Kirschenbaum saw the error in the lack of acknowledgment that values are present in the teaching of values clarification, yet he still believed the values clarification process was important. Kirschenbaum (2000) encouraged young adults to think deeply about social issues to determine the best decision for themselves. However, while doing so, Kirschenbaum believed educators should teach the virtues of our social traditions.

Through this self-reflection, the author concluded, "values clarification is only part of a much broader process of values education" (Kirschenbaum, 2000, p. 15). He purported that values clarification is still an essential piece of the values education process, but he emphasized (as critics of values clarification did) that it is only a piece of the development:

> Values education must be comprehensive to be most effective. If our goal is to promote good character in youth, such as the core values of trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, caring, fairness, and good citizenship, then we should welcome all the best methods. (Kirschenbaum, 2000, p. 18)

## Significance of Values Clarification

Values clarification is an essential element of character education, as it is the first step in understanding personal integrity. "I saw that values clarification by itself was insufficient for values and character education, but that it could be an important ingredient in a more comprehensive approach" (Kirschenbaum, 2000, p. 18). Personal integrity and established values can help a person to make decisions for which he or she feels comfortable.

### Decision-Making

Decision-making can be a complicated process, leading to dissatisfaction if one does not know his or her values (Mosconi & Emmett, 2003).

> An individual who is able to identify his or her own values is able to attribute worth to situations and objects and, therefore, make personally satisfying choices. Conversely, a lack of clarity in values or dissonance between values and choices leads to a lack of motivation, poor decision-making, and dissatisfaction. (Mosconi & Emmett, 2003, p. 70)

One's own established values serve as a guiding principle to give order to the decision-making practice. "Through the process of working on their values through values clarification, many people have found their daily lives taking on new order and direction" (Simon & deSherbinin, 1975, p. 679).

### Defining Complicated Concepts

Values clarification processes help people define complicated concepts in their own terms. For example, in a study on high school students' career development, researchers found that when students explored their own values in a specific values clarification curriculum, they were more likely to delineate success in their own words (Mosconi & Emmett, 2003). In this same study, "the students indicated that they found participation in the values clarification

curriculum to be helpful in understanding values, their future careers, and the ways in which they define success" (p. 75). This demonstrates the personal benefits to students who engage in values clarification exercises. Kirschenbaum affirmed the positive effects of values clarification by writing:

> The values clarification theory suggested that young people who used these valuing processes in making decisions would become less apathetic, less flighty, less overconforming, less overdissenting, and on the positive side, more zestful and energetic, more critical in their thinking, more consistent, and more likely to follow through with decisions. (Kirschenbaum, 2000, p. 6)

**Personal and Societal Benefits**

There are two goals inherent in the values clarification process. When people live with their values, the objectives of the processes are: (1) an individual benefit and (2) they are productive members of society.

> As we see it, when our living has value for us, we prize and cherish more of our choices, beliefs, and activities. We experience a stronger self-concept. We experience greater meaning in our lives. We are less apathetic and flighty, more purposeful and committed. This does not mean we are always "happy." It means that we are living vitally, experiencing the richness of ourselves, others, and the world around us as we move toward self-selected, meaningful goals. To be socially constructive is to act in a way that promotes the values of life, liberty (i.e., freedom, justice and equality), and the pursuit of happiness. To state it differently, to be socially constructive increases the likelihood that others will have lives that have value to them, so long as they do not infringe on the rights of others. (Kirschenbaum, Harmin, Howe, & Simon, 1977, p. 744)

Values clarification within a group setting, in addition to the individual, is also beneficial. The valuing process assists groups and individuals to clarify their values so that individuals are happier in their own lives, and therefore are productive members in their groups and community (Kirschenbaum et al., 1977).

### Advocating for Values Clarification

In the 1970s, researchers felt strongly that people benefit from values clarification. "About 80% of the studies lend credibility to the assertion that use of the valuing process leads to greater personal value (e.g., less apathy, higher self-esteem, etc.) and greater social constructiveness (e.g., lower drug abuse, less disruptive classroom behavior, etc.)" (Kirschenbaum et. al, 1977, p. 745). The experts avowed the values clarification process was an essential piece of educating our society toward a helping society (Kirschenbaum et. al, 1977).

## Disciplines that Use Values Clarification

Values clarification has many uses in different settings, although it is based in the context of education. The values clarification process has been "applied to every school subject area and to career education, religious education, health education, sex education, and drug education…used in public and private schools, by families, by scout troops, in churches and synagogues, and in other community settings" (Kirschenbaum, 1992, p. 772). Specifically, Kirschenbaum (2000) developed Values Clarification curriculum or training for the following:

> School districts, state education departments, the U.S. Air Force and Army, American Personnel and Guidance Association (now the American Counseling Association), American Red Cross, American Lung Association, Lutheran Brotherhood, United Methodist Women, Catholic Education Association, the Canadian postal service – the list was long and varied, as schools, government agencies, and institutions in all walks of life

> sought to learn about this then current method in education, counseling and the helping professions. (p. 7)

Values clarification exercises are useful in many disciplines; a few of these disciplines are described in the following sections.

**Education**

Education is one area where values clarification has been most widely used. Many processes were developed in classrooms, including most of the aforementioned historical information. There are different methods of utilizing values clarification. For example, the following methods are often used in school implementation of values clarification in the curriculum: time set aside during a course, as an elective, supplementing subject matter, career and drug education programs, and other ways (Simon & deSherbinin, 1975). The values clarification process is used throughout education.

**Drug education.** Drug education is one area that has historically used values clarification techniques. In the mid-1970s, "drug educators across the country increasingly used values clarification techniques" (Simon & deSherbinin, 1975, p. 679). With the use of values clarification in a study of 851 students in the 5$^{th}$ through 10$^{th}$ grade, the researchers discovered, "following values clarification training, the young people cut back significantly in their use of drugs" (Simon & deSherbinin, 1975, p. 680).

**Social work education.** Values clarification has been used in social work education. In their study regarding affective learning in social work, Neuman Allen and Friedman (2010) expressed the importance of values in the profession. Specifically, it is important for social work students to know their values so they may properly interpret them in conjunction with the Code of Ethics. The authors wrote, "if the student is to assimilate the profession's values regarding the

value of inherent dignity and worth of each individual, s/he must interpret this new material so that it is consistent with ideas already held" (Neuman Allen & Friedman, 2010, p. 6). In a study regarding social work students and overcoming ethical dilemmas in domestic violence situations, Bent-Goodley (2007) found values clarification to be a valuable aspect of their training. "It is critical to require assignments that encourage students to engage in values clarification and examine their bias and experience... fully explore themselves, clarify course content, and simultaneously connect theory with practice" (Bent-Goodley, 2007, p. 83).

In order to assist in the socialization into the profession, a holistic approach (including identification of values) is necessary for social work students. "To help with socializing students to the profession, it is important to address a comprehensive approach to education. To accomplish this, the educator cannot solely focus on cognitive knowledge, but needs to incorporate all the learning domains into learning" (Neuman Allen & Friedman, 2010, p. 10). Galambos (2009) also emphasized the importance of values clarification in social work education. "The major point, however, is that to be effective, social work curriculum must carve out the time and space for concentrated focused classroom discourse on social work values and values clarification" (p. 346).

**Other Disciplines Using Values Clarification**

**Counseling.** In an article written in 1980, Glaser and Kirschenbaum encouraged the use of values clarification in counseling settings. The authors found it to be a useful approach in many disciplines, including counseling. However, the values clarification approach should be used in concert with other complimentary counseling strategies (Glaser & Kirschenbaum, 1980). There are four areas of counseling the researchers feel the values clarification approach can be helpful. The settings are "using the clarifying question in one-to-one counseling, using

clarifying strategies in one-to-one and group counseling, using values clarification to personalize instruction, and using values clarification for one's own personal and professional growth" (Glaser & Kirschenbaum, 1980, p. 570).

**Career counseling**. Values clarification was found to be beneficial in career development, and should be contemplated when making career choices (Mosconi & Emmett, 2003). Many times in high school career counseling, the "best" career is the most "successful" career. In a 2003 study, Mosconi and Emmett explored students' values clarification and its impact on their definitions of success. The purpose of the research was a "to describe the ways in which vales clarification exercises may expand and not narrow students' definitions of success" (Mosconi & Emmett, 2003, p. 69).

The authors sought to use the values clarification exercises to provide "students with opportunities to explore and identify their own values may permit the development of a realistic and future-oriented set of career and life expectations and, correspondingly, an increased satisfaction with one's life" (Mosconi & Emmett, 2003, p. 69). At the conclusion of the study, the authors affirmed values clarification is important in career development of high school students. They concluded, "Although values clarification is only one part of the career development equation, it is clearly a vital one" (Mosconi & Emmett, 2003, p. 77).

## Qualitative Research

Qualitative research methods have roots in the Colonial period, when the settlers would observe and report back about the "Others" living in the colonies (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005a). "This close involvement with the colonial project contributed, in significant ways, to qualitative research's long and anguished history, to its becoming a dirty word" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005a, p. 1). After being used by the colonists, qualitative research methods were also used in other

social sciences, such as: education, history, political science, business, medicine, nursing, social work, psychology, media studies, cultural studies, urban studies, human geography and communications (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996; Denzin & Lincoln, 2005a). The observational quality and thick description make the qualitative approach an attractive one to social science researchers. Denzin and Lincoln wrote the following to describe qualitative research:

> Qualitative research is a situated activity that locates the observer in the world. It consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible… qualitative research involves an interpretive, naturalistic approach to the world. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them. (2005a, p. 3)

Qualitative research is rich and description and context (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996; Creswell, 2007, 2008) and answers questions such as: "'What is it like to experience such a phenomenon?' 'What can it mean that someone behaves in such a way?'" (Giorgi, 2009, p. 63). Specifically, the qualitative research approach answers the question of, "what" (Wertz, Charmaz, McMullen, Josselson, Anderson, & McSpadden, 2011). Through the qualitative method, the researcher hopes to tell the story of the people being studied by asking specific questions. In order to tell the story, substantial analysis occurs throughout the entire research process (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996). In order to interpret people's stories through the investigation, the researcher acts as a tool for the study (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996; Creswell, 2007, 2008).

Not only does qualitative research tell the story of people or a phenomenon, but it also uncovers social issues. Qualitative research can be viewed "as a 'window' through which we might 'see' and comment on significant social issues" (Miller, 1997, p. 2-3). Qualitative

researchers investigate everyday experiences, including education. Qualitative research focuses mostly on understanding everyday life in varying social contexts (Miller, 1997).

Qualitative researchers "make problems, grounding them in the everyday realities and meanings of social worlds and social actors, rather than taking problems from policymakers, general theorists or others" (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996, p. 5). As opposed to quantitative measures, the qualitative approach tells the story of the subject (Creswell, 2007). Due to its flexibility and everyday problem solving, the qualitative approach is attractive to educational researchers. In education, we uncover what we see in people and then ask how to understand the story (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996; Creswell, 2008). Quantitative methods do not fare well in "examining the complex and dynamic contexts of public education in its many forms, sites, and variations, especially considering the… subtle social differences produced by gender, race, ethnicity, linguistic status, or class…" (Lincoln & Cannella, 2004, p. 7). Through a qualitative approach, the researcher explores the human element, and how people experience the world, therefore working well in educational research. "Qualitative researchers stress the socially constructed nature of reality, the intimate relationship between the researcher and what is studied, and the situational constraints that shape inquiry. Such researchers emphasize the value-laden nature of inquiry" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005a, p. 10). Therefore, qualitative investigators attempt to assign meaning to social experiences, rather than measuring variables, as in quantitative research (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005a). For this study, I chose a qualitative approach because of the richness and depth it provides in order to fully understand the values clarification process.

Central to the movement toward qualitative inquiry are the many forms of "interpretive and critical paradigms…this movement encompasses multiple paradigmatic formulations. It also

includes complex epistemological and ethical criticisms of traditional social science research" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005b, p. x). In qualitative research, investigators attempt to critically analyze the conditions of daily life (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005b). There are many different forms of qualitative research methods purported by different authors (e.g. Creswell, 2007; Coffey & Atkinson, 1996; Denzin & Lincoln, 2005a, 2005b; Miller, 1997 and others). The next section will detail the qualitative method being used for this study: phenomenology.

## Phenomenology

A phenomenological study explores the essence of the experience. For the purposes of this study, the phenomenological approach is the most appropriate to understand how students experience the clarification of values in college. Wertz (2005) explained the phenomenological approach as, "hospitable, accepting, and receptive in its reflection on 'the things themselves'… a low-hovering, in-dwelling, meditative philosophy that glories in the concreteness of person–world relations and accords lived experience, with all its indeterminacy and ambiguity, primacy over the known" (p. 175). The following sections define phenomenology, provide a brief history of its evolution, and provide an outline of phenomenological research methods and how they were employed in this study.

### Phenomenology Defined

Literally, phenomenology is the study of the phenomenon. The word is derived from the Greek word, *phainomenon*, meaning, "to appear" (Lewis & Staehler, 2010). Wertz (2005) wrote, "Phenomenological methods are scientific by virtue of being methodical, systematic, critical, general, and potentially intersubjective. Like all good science, they require critical thinking, creativity, and reflective decision making that give rise to many procedural variations and innovations" (p. 170). In his text on phenomenological research methods, Moustakas (1994)

offered extensive information on the phenomenological approach. He asserted the approach is grounded in the essence of the experience. In a phenomenology study, one should return to the phenomenon in order to describe the experience in one's own words (Moustakas, 1994).

Creswell (2007) defined a phenomenological study as describing "the meaning for several individuals of their lived experiences of a concept or a phenomenon…describing what all participants have in common as they experience a phenomenon" (p. 57-8). Patton's (2002) definition varies slightly from Creswell's, but has similar concepts. He wrote that a phenomenological study focuses on how people make sense of the experience, and then how a person translates it into the consciousness (Patton, 2002).

Phenomenology is a study of the individual experience. "Phenomenology studies the structure of consciousness as it is experienced from the first person perspective, focusing on the central characteristic of intentionality" (Dall'Alba, 2009, p. ix). Gall, Gall, and Borg (1999) highlighted that a phenomenological study involves researching the inner experience. The authors stated phenomenology investigates "reality as it is subjectively experienced by individuals" (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 1999, p. 309).

In his interpretation of Husserl's work, Sandmeyer related phenomenology to archaeology, where the researcher must dig below the surface to fully understand the experience of the participant (Sandmeyer, 2009). Husserl, a philosopher and an early phenomenologist, was adamant that "pure phenomenology is unlike any empirical science… for its subject matter is neither any factual process nor any factual ego. Intentional consciousness investigated by phenomenology is rather the essential structures of consciousness as it intends an objectivity" (Sandmeyer, 2009, p. 44). In another philosophically-based definition, Heidegger (2010) wrote,

"the phenomenological base posture…in the wildest sense is a descriptive analysis of the essence of the phenomena of consciousness that are not psychological apperceived…" (p. 4).

Though the phenomenological method is based in the philosophical phenomenological focus, the two are different. "Both contributions are important. But a phenomenological study (as opposed to a phenomenological perspective) is one that focuses on descriptions of what people experience and how it is that they experience what they experience" (Patton, 2002, p. 107). Giorgi, who wrote on the transition of phenomenology from a philosophical lens to a methodology, detailed a "quick definition of phenomenology is its identity as a method for investigating the structures of consciousness and the types of objects that present themselves to consciousness" (2009, p. 87).

Phenomenological studies have a long history (Dall'Alba, 2009). Phenomenology was founded in the fundamentals of philosophy, but "has also been employed across the humanities, social sciences, and service professions over the last century; since the 1960s, phenomenologists have used clearly defined methods for formulating meaning-oriented, descriptive knowledge in psychology" (Wertz, et al., 2011, p. 4). The term "phenomenology" has been used for over 200 years. The use of phenomenology has not waned; however. In a more recent text, Lewis and Staehler (2010) defined phenomenology as the science of a phenomenon. The method explores how people experience the phenomenon, not necessarily the phenomenon itself (Lewis & Staehler, 2010). The philosophical basis for the study of the phenomenon examines how people understand themselves. "Phenomenology investigates the person's way of being-in-the-world by descriptively elaborating the structures of the I ('ego' or 'self'), the various kinds of intentionality (ways of experiencing), and the meaningful ways in which the world is experienced" (Wertz, 2011, p. 126).

Chapter 2 provided the background literature for the basis of the study. This chapter began with an overview of student development theory, personal integrity, and leadership. Then, values were explored, including defining the term "values," and the history of defining values. The definition of values clarification was introduced, beginning with a history of the values clarification movement. Chapter 3 delineates the methodology used to discover how students clarify their values in college through the phenomenological method.

# CHAPTER THREE

# METHOD

Chapter three describes the research methodology that was used in this study of values clarification in college students. This chapter explains the overall research design, the specific phenomenological design, the sampling strategy, the data collection procedures, as well as measures taken to increase rigor.

## Description of the Data Presentation Strategy

The purpose of this study was to contribute to a better understanding of how undergraduate students clarify their values in college. The research questions addressed the phenomenon of values clarification through the undergraduate experience, specifically in leadership courses for junior-level students. Both the purpose of the study and the research questions were based on arguments concerning the underlying problem: how students understand what they value through college.

### Research Design

The method for this study was a qualitative phenomenological study. I wanted to understand the essence of the experience of values clarification; therefore, the phenomenological approach was the most appropriate for this study (Creswell, 2007). Furthermore, as the research question comes out of "an intense interest" for me, the phenomenological method is the most relevant (Moustakas, 1994, p. 104). Values clarification is not a one-time event; but rather, an on-going activity. The use of the study of the phenomenon (or phenomenology) is the most appropriate research method (Swartz, 2007).

To conduct this study, I facilitated two meetings with junior-level students enrolled in leadership classes. Prior to the first meeting, I gathered demographic information on each

participant. To do so, I sent participants an email and asked them to supply me with pre-determined demographic information (see Appendix I). Through face-to-face meetings, I engaged students in a Values Clarification activity (Simon, Howe, & Kirschenbaum, 1978) to help the students to understand what their values are and to get them thinking about values. This activity was meant to give students language and structure around what they deem as their values. Additionally, I conducted two semi-structured interviews. Convenience or non-probability sampling determined the participants. I sought to control the sample to create a balance between race and gender representation; however the availability of the students did not fully allow me to do so. Through these Values Clarification activities and semi-structured interviews, I attempted to answer the aforementioned research questions.

**Qualitative Methodology**

I chose to use a qualitative methodology because in studying values, I attempted to understand the conditions of daily life. Additionally, the following considerations (purported by Creswell, 2007) emphasize qualitative inquiry as the best course of action for this particular study:

1. I studied students in their *natural setting*, in the university setting within the context of their classes.
2. In conducting interviews, I (as the researcher) was the *key instrument* in the research.
3. Through creating themes, I conducted *inductive data analysis*.
4. The focus of my research was learning about values, my focus remained on the *participants' meanings* of how they experienced the clarification of values.
5. In conducting multiple interviews, I attempted to get a *holistic account* of the phenomenon of values clarification (Creswell, 2007, emphasis in original).

## Phenomenological Methods and this Study

I chose a phenomenological study because I believe capturing the essence of the experience is the best way to determine the answers to my research question (Creswell, 2007, 2008; Moustakas, 1994). In addition, the phenomenological research method is becoming more popular for use in education (Dall'Alba, 2009). Its popularity in education may be "understood in the context of its potential contribution to re-thinking our understanding of the complex phenomena we encounter in the dynamic and, at times, confronting world in which we find ourselves in this 21st century" (Dall'Alba, 2009, p. 1). In lending a rich, textural description of the phenomenon, individual learning is better understood (Moustakas, 1994). This approach was useful in understanding how values are clarified. Additionally, the phenomenological approach is interested in describing both "what is given to consciousness and how it is given" (Giorgi, 2009, p. 68). Therefore, it assists in answering the questions, "Do students clarify values in college? If so, how?"

### Phenomenological Research Methods

"Phenomenological research utilizes the full sensitivity, knowledge, and powers of comprehension of the researcher and is consequently quite personal" (Wertz, 2011, p. 130). I was interested in understanding the personal experience of students going through a values clarification process and in how students make decisions based on their values. However, for this study, the focus was how students clarify their values. Therefore, I chose the phenomenological approach. It is common in the phenomenological research for the problem to arise out of an intense interest in the topic. Often the investigator's enthusiasm spurs the study, and this personal interest of the researcher focuses the topic (Moustakas, 1994).

**Phenomenological reduction.** One of the sub-methods of phenomenological research employed was phenomenological reduction. Giorgi (2009) stated even though phenomenological reduction implies a lack of information; it is actually an expansion of information in the research. Phenomenological reduction "is actually a heightening of the experiencer's presence to the activity of consciousness. It makes more available to the researcher the contributions of consciousness to the constitution of the object or state of affairs being presented…" (Giorgi, 2009, p. 91). When researchers use phenomenological reduction, they are specifying the meaning of the results (Giorgi, 2009). Through phenomenological reduction, the researcher describes only what one sees (Moustakas, 1994). The chore is "describing in textural language just what one sees, not only in terms of the external object but also the internal act of consciousness…the rhythm and relationship between the phenomenon and self... The task requires that I look and describe…" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 90).

Phenomenological reduction involves two steps: bracketing, and horizonalizing (Moustakas, 1994). When bracketing, the focal point of the observations of the researcher and participant were physically written (or typed) into brackets. By placing the core of the research into brackets, "the entirety of the research is only directed toward the topic and the question" (p. 97). Bracketing also helped to frame past knowledge "so that critical attention could be brought to bear on the present experience" (Giorgi, 2009, p. 91). Bracketing allows the researcher to have a "fresh approach to the raw data" (p. 100). In the horizonalizing process (the second step in phenomenological reduction), each statement was initially given the same weight. This allowed the researcher to keep an open mind while reviewing the data collection. "Later, statements irrelevant to the topic and question as well as those that are repetitive or overlapping are deleted" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 97).

**Imaginative variation.** After phenomenological reduction, the researcher engaged in imaginative variation. Through imaginative variation, the researcher looks at the statements from many angles, drawing different themes. These themes are textural descriptions of the experience. Through this process, the investigator learns that there are many truths in the data; each person has a different meaning in the essence of the experience (Moustakas, 1994). This process allowed the researcher to remain as neutral as possible to the collected data; therefore assisting in mitigating researcher bias.

**Phenomenological analysis.** Since this study was a phenomenological study of the essence of the experience of values clarification, the analysis was on going (Creswell, 2007). Giorgi (2009) wrote that once the researcher has laid out the essence of the phenomenon, it is essential to next precisely describe the phenomenon. The data analysis consisted of first writing down themes I believed I heard throughout my conversations with the participants. Then I looked for confirmation through the following procedures. Reading for the "sense of the whole" is the first step in phenomenological protocol (Wertz, 2011). This general coding is the first stage in data organization. Often, it is referred to as the first level of coding (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996). The next step was to begin transcribing the interviews.

In order to fully understand the experience of the participant, I listened to the recordings of the interviews multiple times. As I listened to the first few recordings, I transcribed the conversations. Concerned about the use of my limited time, I paid a professional transcriptionist to transcribe the rest of the interviews. After transcription, I coded the responses looking for themes, following standard qualitative data analysis methods. Transcribing and listening to the interviews was the first step in identifying and actualizing themes. This initial transcription served as the first time I begin to identify themes within the data (Ryan & Bernard, 2003).

Giorgi (2009) advocated for four steps of protocol analysis. Wertz summarized his steps by outlining: "(1) reading for a sense of the whole; (2) differentiating the description into meaning units; (3) reflecting on the psychological significance of each meaning unit; and (4) clarifying the psychological structure(s) of the phenomenon" (2011, p. 131). The first step involves open reading, followed by determining meaning units, then psychological reflection and structural understanding and description (Wertz, 2011). I followed these steps in my analysis.

The phenomenological method is flexible and adaptable to the different styles of research problems and investigators (Wertz, 2011). However, Creswell (2007) suggested specific guidelines for data analysis in a phenomenology. First, following Creswell, I described my personal experiences, and how these experiences shaped my research. This disclosure allowed the reader to understand the biases I brought to the research. I then developed a list of significant statements. Then I took these significant statements, and looked for themes. After that, I wrote the textural descriptions of how the experience happened, including verbatim examples. I did my best to include the "what" and the "how" of the experience for the participants (Creswell, 2007).

## Population

The population in this study was undergraduate college students. Specifically, undergraduate college students enrolled in leadership classes. Even more specifically, I interviewed juniors who were enrolled in or had completed at least one leadership class. A list of all leadership classes that qualified for this study is included in Appendix C. I solicited participants in the Leadership Certificate. Since my response rate was high enough, I did not need to solicit students who have formerly taken leadership classes to retain a higher sample size.

## Sample

In conducting a research study, one of the first choices is the selection of sample, determining the optimal participants to fully explore the relationship with the subject matter (Wertz, 2005). For this study, I utilized convenience or non-probability sampling. Non-probability sampling is the most common type of sampling in qualitative research (Merriam, 1998). Non-probability sampling is used because the participants are convenient, accessible, and contain the characteristics the researcher seeks to study (Creswell, 2008). Convenience sampling is a type of non-probability sampling. In convenience sampling, the investigator chooses the participants when they are willing and able to participate in the study (Creswell, 2008). Merriam defined convenience sampling as "just what is implied by the term – you select a sample based on time, money, location, availability of sites or respondents, and so on" (1998, p. 63).

One important criterion of the phenomenological sample is that the participants selected for inclusion have experienced the phenomenon in question (Creswell, 2007). In this case, the phenomenon was the clarification of values through a leadership class. Therefore, all participants needed to be enrolled in a leadership class either at the time of the interview or have successfully completed a leadership course in their undergraduate tenure at the institution.

### Purposeful Sampling

I used purposeful sampling to capture students enrolled in leadership classes. "Purposeful sampling is based on the assumption that the investigator wants to discover, understand, and gain insight and therefore must select a sample from which the most can be learned" (Merriam, 1998, p. 61). Patton (2002) advocated for purposeful sampling by writing the power of purposeful sampling comes from a focus on in-depth understanding of the subject matter. By emphasizing a specific group, the participants (or cases) selected are rich in

information pertinent to the study. This in-depth awareness of the experience allows the researcher to learn a great deal about a specific group, leading to the term purposeful sampling (Patton, 2002).

**Juniors**

The first step in purposeful sampling is to determine the characteristics imperative to the study (Merriam, 1998). Then, the researcher matches a group of people to the predetermined criteria. In my case, I interviewed junior-level students who were currently enrolled or had completed leadership classes. I investigated junior-level students because they are a group that is not often investigated, and have begun (and completed parts of) their identity development in college (Chickering & Reisser, 1993). In the junior year of college, social integration becomes more important than academic integration (Terenzini & Wright, 1987). Therefore, junior-level students are interested in not only academics, but also in their social experiences.

Juniors were an appropriate group to study, as they have completed many developmental tasks, but have not finished developing their identity. In regard to Chickering and Reisser's (1993) identity development vectors, MacKeracher (1998) asserted that in the first and second year in college, students focus on developing competence, managing emotions, moving from dependence through autonomy toward interdependence, and developing mature interpersonal relationships. However, by their final year in school, the most salient and pertinent development is happening in the establishing identity vector (MacKeracher, 1998).

I sought to control the sample to account for race and gender, thus allowing for multivocal and cross-cultural representation (Christians, 2005). To do so, I looked at the total enrollment of juniors in the Leadership Certificate program to get some sense of how many women/men, race variations, etc. there are in the population. I tried to match the total population

as well as I could in my sample. However, limiting the study to juniors did not allow me to get a good cross-section of races, genders, etc.

Students were asked to volunteer to participate, so any junior-level students that were currently enrolled in a leadership class or who had completed a leadership class were eligible for the study. For the purposes of this study, a leadership class is a course approved by the Leadership Certificate as a course that directly applies the concepts of leadership as a discipline. The leadership courses were pre-approved to serve as courses that are applied in order to earn the Leadership Certificate (see Appendix C).

**Recruitment of Sample**

To recruit students for the study, I sent an electronic mailing (email) to the students enrolled in the Leadership Certificate classes (see Appendix H for text of email). Prior to emailing the currently enrolled students, I obtained permission from the Leadership Certificate Coordinator to access the junior-level students in the Certificate. When students replied to the email, I then contacted them and determined an amenable time to meet on an individual basis. Prior to the first face-to-face individual meeting, I asked the participant to fill out a demographic form (see Appendix I for an example).

Since there was a lack of response (less than a 10% response rate), I went to the classes in the Leadership Certificate and asked for volunteers to sign up to be interviewed. Then I contacted the students on an individual basis. I obtained permission from the class instructors prior to entering the classroom to recruit for study participants.

When speaking to the class, I solicited participation (see Appendix F), and stressed that participation was voluntary. I gave each student a piece of paper while I discussed the study. If a student wanted to be contacted for an interview, they wrote their contact information on the

sheet. If a student was not interested, then no contact information was listed, e.g. the student returned a blank sheet of paper. This process insured anonymity and attempted to reduce pressure to participate. I then contacted the students who volunteered on an individual basis to participate in the interviews.

**Sample Size**

In qualitative research studies, there are no definitive rules as to how many participants to interview for a study (Merriam, 1998). While there is no set number of participants necessary to sample, Creswell (2007) recommended sampling three to ten subjects for phenomenology. Guest, Bunce, and Johnson (2006) indicated that some authors believe the smallest sample size is 15 for qualitative studies, while others recommend six to eight interviews. Wertz (2005) noted there is no formula for the number of participants; rather, it is essential to reflect upon the quality of the data gathered to determine if the research goals are met. Guest et al. found, "data saturation had for the most part occurred by the time we had analyzed twelve interviews" (2006, p. 71). To adhere to the aforementioned suggestions for sample size in a phenomenological, qualitative study, the current study consisted of 15 participants.

**Saturation**

I sought saturation in my interviews. Ryan and Bernard (2004) stated saturation occurs when the interviewees no longer offer up new information. The authors described "the point at which no new themes are being identified as *theoretical saturation"* (Ryan & Bernard, 2004, p. 1). Wertz defined saturation as the redundancy of findings (2005). Kerr, Nixon, and Wild (2010) described saturation as "data adequacy," where there is no new information being discovered through additional participants.

Cutcliffe and McKenna (2002) asserted saturation is reached when there are no new encounters, or when no new themes are discovered. This saturation (as purported by the aforementioned authors) was sufficiently reached by the 15th participant interview. "For most research enterprises, however, in which the aim is to understand common perceptions and experiences among a group of relatively homogeneous individuals, twelve interviews should suffice" (Guest, et al., 2006, p. 79).

**Autobiographical Statement**

As a qualitative researcher, it is important to make my values explicit in regard to my study (Creswell, 2007). As a course instructor in the Leadership Certificate, I noticed the students in my class seemed to be more developed than other students with whom I had contact. Personal integrity has always been an area of research interest for me, and these particular students seemed to be living lives of integrity. I was drawn to ask, why do some students have a better grasp of their own personal integrity than others? I was curious to learn if the curriculum was encouraging development in personal integrity.

More specifically, I was curious as to how students were developing a strong sense of their own values. I noticed in class, there were a number of students who held steadfast values, and did not compromise when it came to their values. I wondered, where did they learn this commitment to their values? Did we help to clarify it for them through the course curriculum? Do we, as instructors, influence their definition and clarification of values? If not, how is this clarification of values happening for them?

**Personal Experiences**

There are some personal circumstances framing my research. During the time of the interviews, I was an instructor in an undergraduate leadership course, and had been a Teaching

Assistant in the past. I was invested in the success of the students involved in our Leadership Certificate program. In the Spring semester of 2010, I worked professionally (in a living learning community coordination role) with the student affairs office that supported the Leadership Certificate. The student affairs office operated as a partner with the academic unit to instruct the Leadership Certificate curriculum. Through the curriculum in the leadership courses, the instructors get to know their students quite well. As an instructor, I learned a lot about my students, and the students in the Certificate program as a whole. I was invested in their learning, and hoped to aid in their successes. Eight of the participants I interviewed in my study had previously been enrolled in the Leadership and Change course that I instructed. However, I did not recruit them any differently than the rest of the study participants. This prior knowledge allowed the students to be comfortable with me. This close involvement in the research was also beneficial to me as a researcher. In fact, my dedication and extreme interest in the topic was a positive attribute to my study (Creswell, 2007).

Toma (2000) advocated for qualitative researchers to be closely involved in their work. Authors agree that in qualitative research, you cannot become completely objective (Holloway & Biley, 2011; Sword, 1999; Toma, 2000). Therefore, Toma (2002) asserted the importance of being involved with the research, as good subjective data arises between close association between the investigator and participants. Toma continued by writing, "more intense interactions strengthen end products in qualitative research. Getting closer to your subjects makes better qualitative data" (2002, p. 179). Whitmore, Chase and Mandle (2001) agreed emphasizing researchers should be immersed in the research to enhance the richness of the data.

Since the qualitative researcher is a part of the research process, there is no ability to remove oneself completely from the research process. The qualitative research process has

autoethnographic elements and is reflexive (Holloway & Biley, 2011). To better comprehend the experience of the participants, investigators look to their interactions and connections with the participants. In fact, in the qualitative research process, it is imperative to not put a distance between the researcher and participants, as "the self is always an integral part of any study" (Holloway & Biley, 2011, p. 971). Therefore, my involvement as an instructor in the Leadership Certificate did not detract from the efficacy of my research; in fact, it enhanced the research project.

Due to my subjective stance on the research topic, I was able to get more in depth with the data, creating a thick, rich description of the experience (Toma, 2000). In order to have qualitative validity, a phenomenological study must address the following: "investigator bias (explicitness) and an emic perspective (vividness) as well as explicate a very specific phenomenon in depth (thoroughness). Investigators have the responsibility to clearly state study validity threats, prioritized criteria, and specific techniques employed" (Whitmore et al., 2001, p. 529). By exploring each of these in the previous section, I strengthened my qualitative validity in the study.

There was also a danger of selection bias in my research; however, selection bias also could have been positive. Collier and Mahoney (1996) asserted many reputable studies produce important results, even though the procedures may have violated the standards of case selection in the literature. Since selection bias is a term that has grown out of quantitative research, the qualitative researcher must be careful to not overgeneralize findings. However, selecting a particular homogeneous sample can benefit the qualitative researcher, as it allows the investigator to make narrower comparisons. "The advantage of narrower comparisons in which the investigator focuses on cases that are more causally homogeneous, and hence more

analytically tractable" (Collier & Mahoney, 1996, p. 89). I was sure to not overgeneralize my findings through my research.

## Data Collection Procedures

The method for this study was a qualitative phenomenological process where I conducted two semi-structured interviews with junior-level students who were currently enrolled in (or have successfully completed) classes with a leadership focus. Additionally, through the conversations with these participants, I asked them to complete a Values Clarification activity (Simon et al., 1978). This Values Clarification activity helped the participants frame the context for the conversations. Through the Values Clarification activity, students were asked to answer questions as they relate to their own values clarification (Simon et al., 1978). In the interviews, participants were asked how their leadership class (or classes) affected their clarification of personal values.

Additionally, the students answered questions as they related to their decision-making surrounding their values and how their leadership classes affected their lives, specifically in regard to how they conceptualized their values. I asked students to define their personal set of values, and how they believe their values fit with their daily experiences as student leaders. I conducted two meetings with each participant. The only follow-up was source checking to insure I interpreted the thoughts of the respondents appropriately (Creswell, 2007).

Undergraduate students in a Leadership Certificate course were included in the study. Additionally, supporting leadership courses (such as courses with the LDR prefix but not included in the core required courses to obtain the Certificate) were also considered to increase the pool of students. However, those courses were not needed. The participants were all enrolled or had completed at least one core course of the Certificate. Time availability of the

students and the researcher determined who was included in the study. Junior-level students were asked to volunteer to participate, so any junior-level student enrolled in a specified leadership class or who had successfully completed a leadership course was eligible for the study. Courses approached (since the 10% response rate was not reached from the initial email to all juniors in the Certificate) were the entry-level course, Leadership Theory; the second course in the Certificate, Groups and Communities; and the third course in the Certificate, Leadership and Change.

In attempting to recruit students for the study, I first emailed the students enrolled in the Leadership Certificate classes. When students replied to the email, I then contacted them and determined an amenable time to meet on an individual basis. Since there was a lack of response, I went to the Leadership Certificate classes to ask for volunteers to sign up to be interviewed. When I attended the courses (with the instructors pre-approved permission), each student was given a piece of paper while I discussed the study. If a student wanted to be contacted for an interview, then he or she wrote their contact information on the sheet. If a student was not interested, then no contact information was listed (the student returned a blank sheet of paper). I then collected all sheets. This process insured anonymity and reduced pressure to participate. Once all volunteers were identified, then I individually contacted each to student to arrange a time that was amenable for the student and me to meet for the interview.

**Interview Format**

For the interview process, I utilized a semi-structured interview format coupled with a Values Clarification activity (Simon et al., 1978). The combination of these two methods assisted in maintaining a consistent conversation with the activity and allowed the students to have a baseline for communication. Conducting the Values Clarification activity helped the

participants frame their thoughts prior to the more in-depth semi-structured interview. The Values Clarification activity assisted students to begin to clarify their values and begin thinking prior to the second interview session. This step also helped in the analysis, as I was able to compare the conversations surrounding the Values Clarification activities, and have documents I analyzed at a later date to assist me in completing the full picture of the student experience (or phenomenon) with values clarification (Simon et al., 1978). These multiple forms of data assisted in triangulation.

**Interviews**

Interviews are popular tools in qualitative research methods (Creswell, 2008; Patton, 2002). Specifically, the interview is an important aspect of phenomenological research (Giorgi, 2009; Moustakas, 1994; Patton, 2002). In a qualitative interview, the investigator asks participants broad, open-ended questions while the investigator documents the answers (Creswell, 2008). Interviews are designed to garner information on an individuals' perspective. Through qualitative interviewing, there is the assumption that the participants' experiences can be articulated, and these articulated experiences are significant in the life of the participant (Patton, 2002). Since I sought to understand the way students know their values, the interview was an appropriate way to do so. "I interview because I am interested in other people's stories. Most simply put, stories are a way of knowing" (Seidman, 2006, p. 7). For this study, I was interested in hearing the stories of the students' values clarification process.

While not exclusively a qualitative method, the one-on-one interview is popular with qualitative researchers because it allows the participants to express ideas comfortably (Creswell, 2008). The interview process allows the researcher to attain rich, comprehensive accounts of the experiences of a participant (Fontana & Frey, 2005). The goal of a phenomenological interview

is to fully understand the experience from the perspective of the participant. Giorgi wrote, "what one seeks from a research interview in phenomenological research is as complete a description as possible of the experience that a participant has lived through" (2009, p. 122).

In a structured interview process, the questions are prescribed and there is no variation in the interview (Fontana & Frey, 2005). In an unstructured interview, there is no guidance and structure; the respondent guides the interview (Fontana & Frey, 2005). For the purposes of this study, I utilized a semi-structured interview technique. The semi-structured technique is a combination of the structured and unstructured interview (Merriam, 1998). The semi-structured interview is guided by a list of questions to be explored; however, the specific order and wording of the questions is not predetermined. Through the semi-structured interview, the researcher can respond to issues in the interview, and allows flexibility for new ideas from the participant (Merriam, 1998). For my study, I chose a semi-structured approach because it allowed me some flexibility in the conversation with the students; however, I was able to also keep some guidelines, and have specific questions to help consistently guide the conversation. I employed this more casual approach in order to create ease among the participants because "emotions are central to the conduct of interviews" for both the participant and the researcher (Ezzy, 2010, p. 163).

Additionally, I chose semi-structured interviews because I wanted a methodology that allowed me the most informal, comfortable conversation with students during the interviews. For students to discuss personal feelings, such as values, they needed to feel at ease with me as an interviewer. By using semi-structured interviews in a phenomenological methodology, I was able to accomplish this goal by creating an atmosphere of a conversation as opposed to a formal, heavily structured interview.

Interviews do not occur in a vacuum. Interviews occur within a specific time, with a specific history, a specific context, and with specific politics in play (Fontana & Frey, 2005). Individual accounts shape the realities, known as reflexivity of accounts (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996). The context of both the researcher and the participant play a role in the interview.

> To ask questions, and to listen to the answers, requires a simultaneous sense of one's own sense of self as an interviewer independent of the interviewee and an openness to, a dependence on, what the interviewee has to say because without this the relationship is impossible. (Ezzy, 2010, p. 164)

Regarding informal interviews and their conversational style, Melia (1997) asserted the data collected is the opinion and account of the participant. The interview is not simply the account of the participant. The collected data is a result of the interaction between the researcher and the participant (Melia, 1997). An interview is not a one-way communication between the researcher and participant. Rather, it is the natural interchange of two people asking questions and receiving answers. This conversation results in a cooperative effort, deemed the interview (Fontana & Frey, 2005).

While an interviewer strives to make the situation as comfortable as possible for the participant, the interviewer shapes the interview in a semi-structured process (Patton, 2002). This methodology allows the researcher to determine what is most important throughout the conversation.

> The sequence may be flexible; the question wording may be flexible; it may be dressed up like a conversation between friends. But an interview is not a conversation. It is a deliberately created opportunity to talk about something that the interviewer is interested in and that may or may not be of interest to the respondent. (Dingwall, 1997, p. 59)

In order to create this open environment, the semi-structured interview had open-ended questions. Specifically, the phenomenological interview is an informal, cooperative process. The investigator utilizes open-ended questions and comments to guide the conversation (Moustakas, 1994). The semi-structured interview is a mixture of structure, but has the freedom of flexibility.

It is essential for the researcher throughout the interview process to gain concrete examples of the phenomenon. Lived examples of the phenomenon were what informed me as the researcher in order to fully understand the experiences of the participants. "The most outstanding quality of data sought by the phenomenological researcher is concreteness, that the descriptions reflect the details of lived situations rather than hypotheses or opinions about, explanations of, interpretations of, inferences, or generalizations regarding the phenomenon" (Wertz, 2005, p. 171). Therefore, it was important that I asked participants to provide me with examples during the interview (see Appendix G for sample interview questions).

Prior to embarking on any interview or activity, I first insured the participants had a full understanding of his/her participation. In following guidelines for informed consent, I confirmed that the students agreed to participate without coercion, then I answered any questions, to be sure there is full and open information (Christians, 2005). Additionally, I employed all possible safeguards to protect participant identities. It is essential to insure confidentiality of the participants (Christians, 2005).

To protect participant identities, I utilized pseudonyms. A pseudonym is a fictional name given to a study participant (Ogden, 2008). The pseudonyms were chosen at random, and do not represent racial or ethnic backgrounds. However, when choosing pseudonyms, I attempted to choose names that would typically coincide with the gender of the participant.

Seidman (2006) outlined the structure for in-depth phenomenological interviewing. Seidman advocates for a structure of three separate interviews. The first interview focuses on the life history of the participant, the second on the details of the experience, and the third on the reflection of meaning. He has found this structure provides a strong foundation for the interviews, each interview enlightening the next (Seidman, 2006). However, Seidman also noted this structure may be altered "as long as a structure is maintained that allows participants to reconstruct and reflect upon their experience within the context of their lives, alterations to the three-interview structure…can certainly be explored" (p. 21-2). Seidman also wrote that each of these interviews should be ninety minutes long. However, he mentioned there is nothing absolute about the timeframe, and it can be altered. In fact, he emphasized with younger participants, shorter interviews may be more beneficial (Seidman, 2006).

In addition to the length of the interview, Seidman (2006) outlined the time frame to conduct the interviews. The interview structure he found to work best is from three days to a week apart. Seidman (2006) asserted this is enough time for the participant to reflect upon the previous interview, but is not too much time for the participant to forget the context in the next interview. Seidman wrote this is the ideal timeframe; however, "there are no absolutes in the world of interviewing… it is almost always better to conduct an interview under less than ideal conditions than not to conduct one at all" (2006, p. 22). Given this information from Seidman in conducting phenomenological interviews, I conducted two interviews with each participant that were spaced approximately one to two weeks apart.

**Values Clarification Activity**

The Values Clarification activity I conducted is based on the work of Simon, Howe, and Kirschenbaum (1978). While there has been some criticism of their ideas of what Values

Clarification means and the process it is based upon; the handbook has been widely used by teachers and administrators. Additionally, I felt as though the activities helped the students to begin to think about their values, before we began discussing values. I utilized Strategy Number 1: Twenty Things You Love to Do. I utilized a modified version of the questions in Strategy Number 10: Values Whips in my interview process (Simon, Howe, & Kirschenbaum, 1978). Each strategy asks the participant to answer a question or series of questions (see Appendix A and Appendix B).

In Strategy Number 1, students are asked to list twenty things he or she loves to do on a single piece of paper. The goal of this activity is to answer the question, "Am I really getting what I want out of life?" After students write down their twenty things, I asked them to make notations on the left side of their papers. The notations included such things as dollar signs ($) representing what activities cost more than $5, placing the numbers 1-5 on the five most important items, writing a "T" next to those items that take more time, etc. (Simon, Howe, & Kirschenbaum, 1978). This process aided the participants in thinking about how they spend their time, and if they are spending time on the things they truly value. See Appendix A for a full description of the activity.

Strategy Number 10 was a bit different from the first Strategy. In my interviews, I modified some of the questions from this activity to fit my process. In this original "Value Whips" activity, students come up with quick answers in the classroom, and the teacher "whips" around the room to answer questions quickly. While I asked the participants to answer the questions quickly, I did not share these questions with multiple students. I simply asked the participant with whom I was working at that time to answer the questions. Some questions I asked included: What is something you are proud of?; What is some issue about which you have

taken a public stand recently?; and List five things that you would be willing to fight for (Simon, Howe, & Kirschenbaum, 1978). A full description of this activity can be found in Appendix B.

## Data Analysis

Throughout a qualitative study, analysis is on-going (Creswell, 2007). The data analysis process "should not be seen as a distinct stage of research; rather, it is a reflexive activity that should inform data collection, writing, further data collection, and so on" (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996, p. 6). However, the organization of data happens in a prescribed method for a phenomenological study, as purported by Moustakas (1994). First, the researcher lays out the transcribed interviews. Giorgi (2009) also asserted the transcribed interviews are data and even when they are written, the interviews are still a description.

After transcription, the data is horizonalized, being sure to apply equal value to every statement that relates to the question. After that process, the researcher lists the meaning or meaning units. Finding common themes, the statements are then clustered. The overlapping or repetitive themes or statements are then eliminated. Then, "the clustered themes and meanings are used to develop the textural descriptions of the experience. From the textural descriptions and an integration of textures and structures into the meanings and essences of the phenomenon are constructed" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 118-9).

Giorgi's (2009) method to conducting phenomenological research paralleled the work of Moustakas (1994). He outlined three concrete steps for the method: "(1) Read for the sense of the whole… (2) Determination of meaning units… (3) Transformation of participant's natural attitude expressions into phenomenologically psychologically sensitive expressions" (p. 128-130). In the first step, the researcher explores the entirety of the description. The researcher reads all transcripts to get an idea of the entire picture of the essence of the experience. In the

second step, the researcher begins to break down the text into more usable meaning units. It is in this step where the researcher uses phenomenological reduction and begins to code the data (Moustakas, 1994).

The third step is the most involved, and requires the most work; however, it is the heart of the method. It is in this step that the researcher revisits the raw data and meaning units and draws meaning from the participants' experience of the phenomenon. It is then the duty of the researcher to appropriately present the essence of the experience. "One has to dwell with the data, change it and vary it imaginatively, which includes imagining the opposite of what one might desire to express, until one finds an expression that is suitable" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 132).

**Coding Strategy**

Coding is an organizational process, but is also a step in the data analysis (Adair & Pastori, 2011). By creating and abiding by a coding strategy, the study's trustworthiness or validity will increase (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). This system allows the researcher to condense the ideas from the data into useable parts (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996; Morrow, 2005). The purpose of coding is to connect different ideas throughout the data. By connecting the data with common elements, it assists the researcher in organizing, retrieving, and interpreting the data in a succinct pattern (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996).

Coding is helpful in managing the data into useable themes. The coding process is a meaningful practice in the research process (Adair & Pastori, 2011). Utilizing a coding strategy assists the researcher in making sense of the data and organizing it into themes. "The main goal of such coding is to facilitate the retrieval of data segments categorized under the same codes. Coding in this context is essentially a process of indexing the data texts" (Coffey & Atkinson, 199, p. 28).

The process of coding also helps to eliminate unwanted data and to "clean up" the collected data. It is a combination of both the reduction of data and the complication of data. The process is used to typically narrow down data into simpler groupings, to determine useful data, to create new questions and a deeper understanding of the data (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996). By managing the data and creating themes, the researcher is better able to organize and analyze collected data.

Not simply data organization, coding is an important aspect of qualitative analysis. "Coding is much more than simply giving categories to data; it is also about conceptualizing the data, raising questions, providing provisional answers about the relationships among and within the data, and discovering the data" (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996, p. 31). It assists in organizing and arranging data into logical parts. The coding framework is the blueprint of that logic (Adair & Pastori, 2011). Through the coding process, the researcher gains a better understanding of the data, because the process allows the investigator to look at the information through a new lens. "Coding qualitative data enables the researcher to recognize and recontextualize data, allowing a fresh view...Because coding inevitably involves the reading and re-reading of data and making selections from the data, it involves interpreting the data set" (Coffey & Atkinson, 199, p. 45-6).

An important way to analyze data is coding schemes. A quality coding scheme assists in increasing the trustworthiness of the data. The scheme involves a consistent, logical, methodical, and scientific process of data analysis (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). The first level of coding will break up the information into larger usable themes. In first-order coding, instinctively occurring themes are ascribed to the groupings of data (Carsten, Uhl-Bien, West, Patera, & McGregor, 2010). After devising these first-order codes, I tallied the frequency of each code. I then determined a minimum of frequency. If it was not there, then I eliminated it as a first-order code

(Carsten, et al., 2010). Then, as I continued my analysis, I developed and created new codes, all the while modifying and refining the original coding scheme (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005).

**Analytical Method**

The research method is a phenomenological study of the essence of the experience of values clarification in the context of a course in a Leadership Certificate. The analysis was ongoing and thick in description of the experience (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996). I chose a phenomenological study because I believe capturing the essence of the experience is the best way to determine the answers to my research questions. The thick description involved in the qualitative research methods helped to tell the story of the students' experience through their values development and clarification.

Since I was involved in all aspects of the data collection and analysis, the analysis was ongoing. This process allowed me, as the researcher, to experience the full body of knowledge surrounding the research questions. This immersion in the data occurred during each stage of the interview process: the interview itself and collection of data, the analysis, transcription, multiple readings of the transcripts, listening to the interviews repeatedly, and review of other data (Morrow, 2005). Through this immersion, the researcher eventually has a deep understanding of all data and how the data relates, the *data corpus* (body of data) (Morrow, 2005).

The data analysis consisted of transcribing the semi-structured interviews and coordinating the Values Clarification exercises (Simon, et al., 1978). Beginning with transcription, I coded the responses looking for themes, following standard qualitative data analysis procedures. Since this is a phenomenological study, I followed the guidelines Creswell (2007) suggested for data analysis in a phenomenological study. First, I described my personal

experiences, and how these experiences have shaped my research. This disclosure will allow the reader to understand the biases I bring to the research (Creswell, 2007).

I then developed a list of significant statements, seeking how the participants experienced the phenomenon. I then took these significant statements, and looked for themes. I then wrote the textural descriptions of how the experience happened, including verbatim examples. Next, I detailed how the experience happened, the structural description. In this section, I discussed the context (as well as the content) of the participants' experiences. Finally, I wrote a description of the phenomenon to capture the "essence" of the experience. I was sure to include the "what" and the "how" of the experience for the participants (Creswell, 2007).

More specifically, I followed Moustakas' modification of the Van Kaam method of analysis of phenomenological data (1994). Moustakas outlined his abridged method with the following steps:

1. Listing and Preliminary Grouping
2. Reduction and elimination: to determine the Invariant Constituents
3. Clustering and thematizing the Invariant Constituents
4. Final identification of the Invariant Constituents and Themes by Application: Validation
5. Using the relevant validated invariant constituents and themes, construct for each co-researcher an Individual Textural Description of the experience, include verbatim examples from the transcribed interview
6. Construct for each co-researcher an Individual Structural description of the experience based on the Individual Textural Description and Imaginative Variation

7. Construct for each research participant a Textural-Structural Description of the meanings and essences of the experience, incorporating the invariant constituents and themes. (Moustakas, 1994, p. 120-1)

**Strategies for Dealing with Researcher Bias**

In attempts to mitigate researcher bias, I wrote a journal during my research experience. Through this journal, surrounding the interviews, I wrote the answer to the question, "How am I feeling today?" After the interview, I answered many of the following questions, "What are my initial thoughts after the interview? Was there anything unusual in the interview? How am I feeling after the interview?" This procedure is consistent with Morrow's (2005) suggestions in order to deal with biases and assumptions.

Morrow suggested self-reflection be conducted, and provides multiple ways to do so. The author cites one of the most meaningful and valuable methods of self-reflection is to keep a journal. In this journal, the researcher records experiences and reactions to the study. In addition, Morrow (2005) suggested noting any biases that may emerge. By noting these biases, the researcher can be separated and later be examined and possibly incorporated into the data analysis (Morrow, 2005).

Ezzy (2010) contended critiquing one's own emotions through the research process is difficult, but it can also be rewarding. In order to challenge myself to maintain a low bias, in this journal, I wrote down not only what was happening that day, but I also kept a record of my emotions (see the aforementioned questions). This helped me to keep my feelings in check, particularly when I conducted interviews. Johnson (1999) asserted investigators must be critical of themselves in order to maintain integrity. By maintaining a sense of integrity, a researcher can avoid uncritical verificationism (Johnson, 1999). Since integrity in the research process is

essential (through intentional reflection and analysis), the journal was one way to insure my personal integrity through the research process (Whittemore, et al., 2001).

Holloway and Biley (2011) also advocated for personal reflection of the researcher, as well as reflection on the participants' emotions. Qualitative research involves the recognition of feelings and emotions of both the participants and the researcher. It is essential in qualitative research to value the emotions of the participants during data collection and analysis (Holloway & Biley, 2011). This researcher reflexivity aids in enhancing the trustworthiness of the research. In order to enhance the credibility of the study, "*researcher reflexivity* provides an opportunity for the researcher to understand how her or his own experiences and understandings of the world affect the research process" (Morrow, 2005, p. 253).

Additionally, it is important for the researcher to identify their own biases in the research process. Morrow (2005) emphasized a standard practice in qualitative research: making one's implicit assumptions and biases overt to self and others. In qualitative research, there are inherent biases that may impede the accurate and just collection and analysis of data. By naming these factors and the investigators emotional involvement in the research, the investigators are able to mitigate the bias. However, the bias is not eliminated, as each investigator *"always* believe something about the phenomenon in question and that a greater grounding in the literature militates against bias by expanding the researcher's understanding of multiple ways of viewing the phenomenon" (Morrow, 2005, p. 254). Therefore, throughout the data collection process and the reporting of the results and analysis, I documented my own biases, as well as my emotions connected to this study. For example, I knew some of participants prior to their interviews. In order to combat bias, I utilized journaling and peer debriefing to insure knowing the participants did not bias me.

Additionally throughout the data collection and analysis process, I utilized peer review. Peer Review is "a method used by… researchers to inform decision making and to improve the research process and outcomes by engaging independent and qualified experts to provide critical and consultative evaluation of the merits of a research project or product, proposal" (Chenail, 2008, p. 605). Peer review utilizes an expert in the field of study to provide the researcher with an objective source when analyzing data. Additionally, a peer reviewer "can provide support and guidance, challenge researchers' assumptions and findings, and help improve the study's rigor or trustworthiness" (Chenail, 2008, p. 606). I asked a colleague who was familiar with my topic to look over my raw data. I then asked if the results I found were plausible (Merriam et al., 2002). We consulted via email and telephone. Additionally, we would have conversations as I was processing through the data.

**Strategies for Improving Data Quality and Credibility of Interpretation**

In phenomenological methodology, the investigation is valid when "the knowledge sought is arrived at through descriptions that make possible an understanding of the meanings and essences of experience" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 84). To improve data quality, I employed two techniques in my research: triangulation and member checking. In order to enhance the research project, trustworthiness is essential. There are many different strategies to enhance trustworthiness into data analysis, these include: peer debriefing, co-coding, member checking, and an audit trail (Oliver, 2011).

In triangulation, the results are valid when differing methods of data collection used yield the same results. Triangulation involves repetitiveness within a single study, versus repetitiveness across multiple settings (Bloor, 1997). In triangulation, the researcher uses more than one method to gather information (Bloor, 1997). Through this gathering of information,

validity occurs due to the repetition of findings through multiple procedures. These multiple methods mitigate the probability the results are due to a measurement bias (Bloor, 1997). However, true objectivity cannot be captured. Therefore, "triangulation reflects an attempt to secure an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon in question… Triangulation is not a tool or strategy of validation, but an alternative to validation" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005a, p. 5). In order to have triangulation, I used the information gathered in the Values Clarification activities, as well as the semi-structured interviews, as two sources to triangulate.

In member checking (sometimes called "member validation"), the researcher presents the information gathered to the subjects to insure the interpretation is accurate. Creswell (2008) defined member checking as a process where the investigator asks multiple participants to verify the correctness of the information reported. The process of member validation contributes to the validity by exhibiting the similarity between the information the researcher has uncovered and the experiences of the participants involved (Bloor, 1997).

In the process of member checking, the researcher takes the interpretation of the participants' experience to the subjects and inquires if the subjects agree with the descriptions. Cutcliffe and McKenna (2002) advocated for member checking as well. The authors asserted, "all criteria developed for use in qualitative studies rely heavily on presenting the findings to respondents and asking them to verify whether or not they agree with them" (p. 615). Through my interviews, I often asked if I was accurately interpreting the information the participants were sharing. I often asked clarifying questions, and received affirmations from the participants as a form of member checking.

## Data Presentation Strategy

### Format

Data is presented in three ways, it is described, analyzed and then interpreted. This format is consistent with reporting and analysis of qualitative data (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996). Chapter 4 includes background information on each of the participants. In Chapter 5, the findings are explained. First, any relevant information and quotes from interviews are cited. Next, code explanation and connections to the literature are included, followed by data analysis. Then, Chapter 6 explains the meaning of the data and offers suggestions for future research.

In this study, I sought to find that students clarify their values in college; specifically, they are able to name what they hold most dear. The point was to learn if students engage in conversations surrounding values with their Leadership Certificate classmates. It was anticipated that students would report they had an opportunity to explore their values in the Leadership Certificate courses. In addition, not only did they explore their values, but also had their values challenged through the coursework, and have since clarified what they hold most true.

This chapter described the data presentation strategy. Support for the selection of a qualitative approach for this study was included. Additionally, the phenomenological method, as well as the format of the interviews, was described. The phenomenological method included interviewing junior-level students enrolled in a leadership class to determine if and how they clarified their values in college.

# CHAPTER FOUR

# PARTICIPANT PROFILES

The purpose of this study was to understand the essence of junior-level students' experience in their values clarification in the context of an undergraduate Leadership Certificate at a large, Research I institution in the southeastern United States. In the spring semester 2012, 15 students were interviewed two separate times each, regarding their experience with values clarification. The purpose of this chapter is to provide an overview of the participants in the study as context for the reader. It begins with an overview of the all participants. Then, each section shares insight surrounding the individual participant and his or her interviews. The participants are briefly described and their values are listed. More in-depth descriptions of their experiences are shared in following chapters. However, this chapter lays the groundwork for their experiences.

## Brief Profile of Participants

In this study, a total of 15 students were interviewed on two separate occasions. Each student was junior-level and was simultaneously enrolled in or had completed at least one core course in the Leadership Certificate. Eleven participants had completed the Leadership Theory and Practice (Theory) course, and two were enrolled in Theory at the time of the interview. Seven participants completed Leadership in Groups and Communities (Groups), while one was currently enrolled in the course. Nine participants had completed Leadership and Change (Change). Two students were enrolled in Leadership Experience (Experience), while one had completed the course.

Each participant identified areas of co-curricular involvement at the institution on a demographic form prior to the first interview. Two participants listed only one co-curricular

activity, three participants listed two activities, two listed three activities, three students listed four and five activities, one listed six activities, and one student listed being involved in eight co-curricular activities. The co-curricular involvement varied from academic clubs (pre-dental society, pre-Student Affairs professionals club, honors college delegate), to multiple different service groups (community service groups, service fraternity, service scholarship), to social justice organizations (global peace group, disability advocates, women's center), leadership-focused activities (community service leadership seminar, working in a leadership office, LeaderShape), teaching (teaching assistants), Greek organizations (fraternities and sororities, Panhellenic executive board positions, Order of Omega), to living learning communities (women in the sciences, technology, math and engineering; a living-learning community dedicated to social justice advocacy), to recreation and sports (outdoor sport facilitation, intramural sports, club sports), to religious and political groups (campus ministry, Christian sorority, College Republicans) to university recognition, employment and leadership (Resident Assistants, Orientation Leaders, student alumni groups, Homecoming council, student government, student union governing board).

Of the participants, ten were female and five were male. Nine students self-identified as Caucasian. Six participants self-identified as non-white: one Jewish Hispanic, two White Hispanic, one Mexican, one African American, and one Jewish Caucasian. One of the participants was 18-years-old, four were 19-years-old, and five each were 20- and 21-years-old.

There were a variety of majors represented by the participants. Seven students were double-majors. The majors included the following: International Affairs (four students); Political Science (three students); Psychology (three students); Interdisciplinary Social Sciences (two students); Family and Child Science (two students); Biological Sciences; Editing, Writing

and Media; Business/Finance; Hospitality and Event Management; Sociology; Spanish; Statistics; and Urban and Regional Planning.

Table 1 provides a visual overview of the characteristics of the participants. Included is demographic information, such as the student's pseudonym, gender, and ethnicity. The participant's status in the Leadership Certificate is also shared in Table 2.

Table 1

*Participants' Gender, Ethnicity, Major and Age*

| **Name** | **Gender** | **Ethnic Identity** | **Major** | **Age** |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Cathy | Female | Caucasian | Political Science/ Interdisciplinary Social Sciences | 20 |
| Ella | Female | Jewish, Caucasian | Hospitality and Event Management | 21 |
| Isaac | Male | Caucasian | International Affairs | 20 |
| Jamie | Female | Caucasian | Statistics | 19 |
| Jessica | Female | White, Hispanic | Psychology | 19 |
| John | Male | Mexican | Editing, Writing, and Media/ Spanish | 18 |
| Kylie | Female | Caucasian | Political Science/ Interdisciplinary Social Sciences | 20 |

Table 1 - continued

| Name | Gender | Ethnic Identity | Major | Age |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Mercedés | Female | Caucasian | Family and Child Science | 20 |
| Michael | Male | Jewish, Hispanic | International Affairs | 21 |
| Pete | Male | Hispanic | Biological Sciences | 20 |
| Ryan | Male | Caucasian | International Affairs/ Business Finance | 19 |
| Susan | Female | Caucasian | Family and Child Sciences | 21 |
| Traci | Female | Caucasian | Psychology/ Sociology | 21 |
| Vanessa | Female | Caucasian | International Affairs/ Psychology | 19 |
| Vera | Female | African American | Political Science/ Urban and Regional Planning | 21 |

Most participants identified their hometown communities as within southeastern United States. One reported a rural community as her hometown. Three participants were from urban areas. The remaining 11 participants were from suburban areas. Not all participants reported the socio-economic class of their hometown communities. Of those that did report, one reported coming from a lower class background. Two reported being from the lower middle class. Seven

reported hailing from the middle class, and three from the upper middle class. Of the self-report of the community makeup, two participants shared that their hometown community was both conservative and held strong Christian-religious values.

Table 2

*Classes Participants Have Taken or Are Enrolled In Currently*

| **Name** | **Theory** | **Groups** | **Change** | **Experience** |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Cathy | Completed | Completed | Completed | Completed |
| Ella | | | Completed | |
| Isaac | Enrolled | | | |
| Jamie | | Completed | | |
| Jessica | Completed | Completed | | |
| John | Completed | | | |
| Kylie | Completed | | | |
| Mercedés | Completed | Completed | Completed | Enrolled |
| Michael | Completed | Completed | Completed | |
| Pete | Completed | | | |
| Ryan | Completed | Enrolled | Completed | |
| Susan | Completed | Completed | Completed | |
| Traci | Completed | | Completed | Enrolled |
| Vanessa | Completed | Completed | Completed | |
| Vera | Enrolled | | Completed | |

Throughout two interviews, the participants stated 60 unique words/phrases to describe their values. The values listed were: acceptance, accountability, achievement, adventure, ambition, appreciation, authenticity, balance, balanced judgment, care, community, compassion, creativity, curiosity, dedication, dependability, discipline, diversity, education, empathy, equality, faith, family, freedom, friends/friendship, grace, grit, happiness, heart, honesty, humanity, humility, individuality, integrity, justice, kindness, learning, listening, love, loyalty, open-mindedness, opportunity, passion, patience, peace, poise, relationships, religion, respect, responsibility, self-awareness, serenity, service, simplicity, sound decision-making, steadfastness, structure, trust, truth, and work ethic. Out of the sixty named values, more than one participant mentioned twenty-two of the values. The following table shows the values mentioned by more than one participant.

Table 3

*Common Values and Unique Participants Who Named Those Values*

| Number of Unique Participants Naming the Value | Value Mentioned |
|---|---|
| 2 | Acceptance |
| 2 | Compassion |
| 2 | Education |
| 2 | Friends/Friendship |
| 2 | Heart |
| 2 | Individuality |
| 2 | Kindness |
| 2 | Love |
| 2 | Passion |
| 2 | Service |
| 3 | Authenticity |
| 3 | Equality |
| 3 | Faith |

Table 3 - continued

| Number of Unique Participants Naming the Value | Value Mentioned |
|---|---|
| 3 | Trust |
| 3 | Truth |
| 4 | Learning |
| 4 | Loyalty |
| 4 | Respect |
| 5 | Integrity |
| 5 | Relationships |
| 6 | Family |
| 7 | Honesty |

Table 4

*Participants' Stated Values in First and Second Interviews*

| **Name** | **Values Interview 1** | **Values Interview 2** |
|---|---|---|
| Cathy | Education. Equality. Heart. Disclipine. | Equality. Education. Heart. |
| Ella | Happiness. Service. Ambition. Family. Dedication. Loyalty. | Ambition. Passion. Loyalty. Family. Dependability. Happiness. Service. |
| Isaac | Honesty. Integrity. Work ethic. Balanced judgment. | Work ethic. Equality. Fairness. Acceptance. Trust. Honesty. Steadfastness. |
| Jamie | Empathy. Friendship. Authenticity. Loyalty. | Authenticity. Friendship. Empathy. |
| Jessica | Adventure. Relationships. Family. Opportunity. Acceptance. Structure. | Adventure. Curiosity. Relationships. Acceptance. |

Table 4 - continued

| Name | Values Interview 1 | Values Interview 2 |
|---|---|---|
| John | Individuality. Appreciation. Authenticity. Love. Honesty. | Equality. Authenticity. Truth. |
| Kylie | Honesty. Kindness. Responsibility. Accountability. | Honesty. Heart. Responsibility. Kindness. Respect. Individuality. |
| Mercedés | Integrity. Balance. Grace. Poise. | Integrity. Balance. Achievement. Poise. |
| Michael | Family. Friends. Learning. Open Mindedness. | Family. Friends. Education. Kindness. |
| Pete | Respect. Truth. Decision-making. Patience. Religion. | Relationships. Family. |
| Ryan | Faith. Integrity. Respect. Humility. Learning. | Honesty. Integrity. Faith. Family. Relationships. |
| Susan | Honesty. Peace. Creativity. Relationships. Freedom. Simplicity. Respect. | Respect. Honesty. Loyalty. Peace. Learning. |
| Traci | Humanity. Compassion. Service. Integrity. | Humanity. Family. Service. Compassion. Community. Integrity. Faith. |
| Vanessa | Learning. Passion. Honesty. Truth. Trust. Justice. Diversity. | Learning. Passion. Honesty. Integrity. Diversity. Authenticity. |
| Vera | Love. Listening. Relationships. Honesty. Serenity. Self-awareness. | Trust. Loyalty. Love. Compassion. Faith. Serenity. |

The remainder of this chapter contains profiles of each participant. The values named in their first interview are listed on the first line after their name. The values they self reported in the second interview are provided on the second line after their names.

## Cathy

*Education. Equality. Heart. Grit/Discipline.*
*Equality. Education. Heart.*

Cathy is a 20-year-old Caucasian female double majoring in Political Science and Interdisciplinary Social Sciences. She was a senior by credit, but a junior by year in school. She described her hometown community in Central Florida as suburban and lower middle class. Cathy was quite involved on campus, serving in multiple community service groups and a leadership office on campus. For her leadership curriculum, she has completed Theory, Groups, Change, and Experience.

Cathy's named values were consistent throughout both of her interviews. Cathy described the value of heart in two different ways. In her first interview she said,

> Just letting people in and cherishing them in your heart. I feel like that's, that's when I love the most, when people that are close to me and I just see and feel this closeness…letting someone know that you are willing to act, to put them into my heart… Because everyone has something wonderful about them.

In her second interview, Cathy defined heart as,

> Being able to see the potential that other people have….something in you that makes you want to support them and help them and encourage their heart. And being open to take somebody for what they are and just cherish them and support them and want the best for them as you want the best for yourself.

She is passionate about community service, education and equality. She plans on pursuing a career in either human rights or immigration law. She noted this decision has been influenced by her coursework, both inside and outside of the Leadership Certificate. Through her interviews, she recounted many instances of how community service has impacted her life. For example, in both interviews she articulated a story about how she is teaching an expectant mother English. The mother told Cathy that when her daughter is born, she will have Cathy's accent. Through the telling of this story, Cathy was so overcome with emotion she began to cry. She indicated that the effect you can have by community service is simply overwhelming.

**Ella**

*Happiness. Service. Ambition. Family. Helping others. Dedication. Loyalty. Ambition. Passion. Loyalty. Family. Dependability. Happiness. Service.*

As a 21-year-old junior Hospitality and Event Management major, Ella was incredibly involved on campus. The Jewish Caucasian female was an active member of her sorority. She was serving and had served with the Panhellenic Council in several high-level positions. She has taken the Change course in the Leadership Certificate. She was proud of her accomplishments. In her first interview, she said, "I think I've developed a lot over the years and I have found what's important to me in life… I definitely am proud what I've been through in the past and how I've turned out as young adult so far."

Her hometown community is suburban and middle class. She grew up on the Eastern side of the United States. During her interview, Ella stressed the importance of relationships. She had a strong family influence throughout her upbringing, she grew up living next door to her aunt and cousins, and many of her cousins lived nearby. She mentioned that one of her cousins is one of her best friends in college and is grateful for that relationship.

Her value of relationships was also demonstrated by her passion for working with Greek letter organizations. Through her involvement in Greek letter organizations, she attended a national leadership summit, coordinated philanthropic events, and led the campus-wide Panhellenic Council. She put a lot of her energy into the leadership positions she had, and prided herself on her dedication. She recounted that she only does things with her full passion, because if she is not passionate about the cause, then it is simply a waste of her time. "Everything I do, I'm just really passionate about. I don't think you should do it if you're not because I think it's a waste of time."

### Isaac

*Honesty. Integrity. Hard work/good work ethic. Balanced judgment.*
*Hard work. Equal treatment. Fair judgment. Acceptance. Trust. Honesty. Steadfastness.*

Isaac is a 20-year-old junior studying International Affairs. The Caucasian male described his hometown community as suburban and middle class. He grew up with his nuclear family, though he moved around a lot during grade school. Isaac was currently enrolled in the Theory course. On campus, he was involved as a challenge course facilitator and a rock wall supervisor at the on-campus recreation facility.

In his interviews, Isaac talked a lot about the importance of hard work, and doing a good job at everything he does. He stated that he tries to always do his best. When he does not perform at the highest, he indicated that he falls short of his values. When he falls short, he is then disappointed in himself. He said, "I think I do my best. I think there are always times where you kind of fall short of your values. And that's when you're disappointed in yourself." He further explained that he tries to live these values in the work he does inside and outside of the classroom.

## Jamie

*Empathy. Friendship. Authenticity. Loyalty.*
*Authenticity. Friendship. Empathy.*

Jamie was a 19-year-old Caucasian female. She was a junior by credit and a Statistics major. She grew up in a suburban, middle class community in central Florida. Jamie was enrolled in the Groups class for the Leadership Certificate during the time of the interviews. She was involved on campus. Her leadership positions included involvement in a women's science and engineering living learning community, a coordinator of a leadership seminar, a position in a global peace group, and LeaderShape. When asked how her values play out in her leadership, she responded that she does not necessarily recognize it in her leadership. When asked why, Jamie said, "Because it's just who I am. A part of me. I don't even have to realize it."

Jamie discussed the importance of knowing what you value and living those values through her life. She discussed how she specifically chose these values because other values were part of them. "I picked authenticity, friendship and empathy… I picked those because a lot of things stem off of them… A lot of people pick love. But in order to be empathetic, you have to love so it's kind of a two-for-one."

She described herself as a happy, compassionate, social person, enjoying having relationships and interacting with people. When asked about something she is proud of, Jamie noted her ability to connect with people. She said people find her approachable. She credited the effect she has on others to her personality and always being a happy person. Jamie was proud of the relationships she has been able to forge. When those relationships are challenged, she has found herself being drawn to people that value similar things. During her interview, Jamie discussed a challenge with some of her friends. Since community service is an important part of

her life, when she looked for new friends, she found meaningful relationships with others who also enjoy service.

### Jessica

*Adventure. Relationships. Family. Taking Advantage of Opportunities. Acceptance. Structure with Flexibility.*
*Adventure. Curiosity. Exploration of Options. Relationships. Acceptance.*

Jessica was a 19-year-old female Psychology major. She described herself as White Hispanic. Her upbringing was in an urban and suburban upper-middle class household in central Florida. She has taken Theory and Groups in the Leadership Certificate. Jessica was active on campus, and involved in homecoming planning, her sorority, the student alumni association, as well as the women's center.

When talking about her college experiences, it was clear the junior sees changes within herself. She noted she has really changed since coming to campus, particularly surrounding her leadership. "I appreciate new experiences so much more now and I'm so different than the person I was five years ago." Jessica was proud of her involvement on campus. During her interview, when discussing the potential of the homecoming activities for the upcoming year, her face lit up; clearly excited by the work she does and will do. When talking about her leadership potential, Jessica said, "I have more to me than I thought I did."

In describing her leadership, she outlined a skill and a flaw in herself. Jessica discussed an ability she has to not let others know when she is upset. She shared that she could be incredibly upset, and her world could be crumbling around her, but no one would know she is upset. Jessica copes by making light of the situation. She said this benefits her because as she leads others, as they are not affected by her negative energy.

## John

*Individuality. Appreciation. Authenticity. Love. Honesty.*
*Equality. Authenticity. Truth.*

John was an 18-year-old male who was a sophomore by year, and junior by credit. He self-identified as Mexican from a low socioeconomic background. In his interview, he shared that he is recovering from an addiction. Additionally, he shared that therapy is an important part of his life to continue healing. John was double majoring in Editing, Writing, and Media, as well as Spanish. On campus, his involvement was as a mentor. He has completed the Theory class for the Leadership Certificate.

John shared in his interviews that he is quite reflective, and ruminates daily on his life. He reported that he is creative, and at times, wishes he were not as creative, because he spends a lot of his time thinking. He mentioned that he wished he had a greater inclination to science or math, rather than writing, music, and existentialism. However, music is incredibly important to him, as he cited influences from musicians, lyrics, and songs multiple times throughout his interviews.

When discussing his values, John did not feel as though his values are solidified. He mentioned that he has tried to narrow down a list of values "countless times," and reported that each time, the values are different. However, he believes he does things in his life,

> Not to meet my values but rather to meet the way that I want to approach my life. I wish that I approached my life around my values but since my values aren't so solidified, I think I have to take a different approach.

## Kylie

*Honesty. Kindness. Responsibility. Accountability. Being a good person.*
*Honesty. Heart. Responsibility. Kindness. Respect. Individuality.*

Kylie lived in Texas her entire life until she went to college. The 20-year-old Caucasian female described her hometown community as Southern and suburban. This community is upper-middle class. While at the university, Kylie was involved in a Christian sorority, the College Republicans, as well as campus ministries. She completed the Theory class, and was a junior by credit, double majoring in Political Science and Interdisciplinary Social Sciences.

She was a transfer student, formerly on a full athletic scholarship. Through her experiences transferring to a different institution, she recognized the importance of being independent. She said, "You know, they're not going to do it and you have to figure out how to do it yourself because nobody's going to tell you… coming into college, you have to grow up." She stated that because she chose to no longer be an athlete when transferring institutions, she had to get a job to earn money for school.

Throughout her conversations, she shared the importance of honesty in her life. She also told a story about how she babysits two challenging children for no pay because their mother needs the help. She said, "as much as it sucks to spend the entire day with two little seven-year-olds, it's probably more beneficial for them and I know it helps their mom out a lot. So I actually do get something out of it…"

**Mercedés**

*Integrity. Balancing Priorities. Grace. Poise.*
*Integrity. Balance. Achievement. Poise.*

Mercedés was a Caucasian female who described her hometown community as upper-middle class and suburban. The 20-year-old junior was majoring in Family and Child Sciences. She was quite engaged on campus, specifically in community service work and her Greek letter organization. She held a scholarship for her continued work with community service, she was active in her sorority, serving on the Panhellenic recruitment staff, in the Order of Omega, and

involved in a campus-wide community service and leadership program. Mercedés was proud of her accomplishments and how they have helped her to form who she is as a person.

> I think something I'm proud of at this point is that I've really identified the things that I want to be a part of my future…and the way that I handle myself and I've been able to find experiences to better prepare me…I'm super proud of not only what I'm doing … but also how I was able to find this experience and it's really going to help me in the future.

At the time of the study, Mercedés was enrolled in the Experience class, and has completed the other three core classes in the Leadership Certificate (Theory, Groups, and Change).

Mercedés was a student who seemed quite grounded. Through her interviews, she shared stories regarding her leadership experiences and the struggles she has faced. To resolve these struggles, she has taken a mature, sophisticated stance that focused on her personal value set as well as the values her groups espouse.

**Michael**

*Family. Friends. Learning. Open Mindedness.*
*Family. Friends. Education. Kindness.*

Michael was a 21-year-old male junior majoring in International Affairs. He identified as Jewish and Hispanic. On campus he was involved in an honor fraternity and the student disability resources union. He described his hometown community as suburban. In the Leadership Certificate, he has completed the courses of Theory, Groups, and Change.

Michael had a group of very close friends that he went to high school with and this group has become better friends in college. He mentioned that it was nice to have that community to lean on as he transitioned to college. He cited the familiarity as something that helped the move from high school to college go smoothly for him; his friends from his hometown were critical in

his transition to the university. When asked about what one quality he looks for in a friend, he answered with loyalty. Additionally, he stressed the importance of his religion and culture influencing his values and relationships.

**Pete**

*Respect. Truth. Sound Decision-Making. Patience. Religion. Relationships. Doing What's Best. Family.*

Pete was a first-generation college student, and a first generation American citizen. The 20-year-old sophomore by year, junior by credit was a Biological Sciences major. He was involved in a fraternity and served as the President of the Pre-Dental Society. A Hispanic man, he described his hometown community as suburban. At the time of the interviews, Pete was enrolled in the Theory course, and had not taken any other Leadership Certificate class.

Through his interviews, he articulated being proud of his attendance in college. He is relationship-focused and indicated he has changed as a person in every semester in college. One way he changed in college was that he takes more time to make decisions. "Sometimes I'll take two more seconds to think about something before I make a decision." He is more thoughtful in those decisions and asks others around him their opinions before deciding. Pete discussed how his leadership style changes from being President of the pre-dental society to when he works with his fraternity. As President, he tries to delegate more of the work in order to give his membership more responsibility. "I guess I delegate to them more and with me delegating to them, it gives them more responsibility." When working with the fraternity, where he is not in a position of leadership, he does more of the work himself.

**Ryan**

*Faith. Integrity. Respect. Humility. Caring for People. Learning. Honesty. Integrity. Faith. Family. Relationships.*

Ryan was a sophomore by year, and junior by credit. He was a 19-year-old Caucasian man double majoring in International Affairs and Business Finance at the time of the interviews. Additionally, his concentration was Chinese, and he was enrolled in the Leadership Certificate and an international studies certificate. He described his upbringing as urban in a middle class socioeconomic community in south Florida. In his teenage years, he was raised in a suburban part of central Florida in an upper middle class area. He was homeschooled through high school and worked full time in what would have been his senior year in high school. For his co-curricular activities, he was involved in a Christian fellowship, the student government association, the board of the student union, a global peace group, and was involved in intramural walleyball. Ryan completed Theory and Change, and was enrolled in the Groups course in the Leadership Certificate at the time of the interviews.

Ryan described himself as a Type A perfectionist, and his performance in school as incredibly important to him. He discussed how it was a challenge to drop a class recently when he was overwhelmed. "I was talking to a friend one night, and I was like, you know what, I'm scared. I've never not done well in school, I've never not been able to do something and get it."

Throughout his interviews, he also shared that he is an old soul. Ryan detailed feeling responsible at all times. He shared that he feels older than his peers, more mature. "And sometimes I just want to be stupid. It's a very weird though for me because I'm always this parent of my group. I'm the one who is always monitoring… I'm really old at heart." Ryan is a strong proponent for his Christian faith. He credits some of the feelings of responsibility to that faith.

### Susan

*Honesty. Peace. Creativity. Relationships. Freedom. Simplicity. Respect. Respect. Honesty. Loyalty. Peace. Learning.*

Susan, a 21-year-old Caucasian female, was majoring in Family and Child Sciences. Her career goal was to be a therapist for abused and neglected children. She was involved in a global peace organization and had a job off campus. Through her interviews, she talked about not wanting to hold a specific leadership position, because she felt she was more of a silent leader. Susan has taken Theory, Groups, and Change in the Leadership Certificate.

Susan described her Southern hometown community as rural, very "church-centered," and a small-town/community feel. These Christian beliefs have influenced her and her family's life in many different ways, including when she was chastised for not attending a religiously affiliated college. She identified growing up in the lower-middle class. She described herself as quirky, sensitive, and a positive person. Susan stated she enjoys being around people (and family is incredibly important to her), but she also appreciates time alone. "Where I'm from, we have this little spot that not many people know about so when you go there, it's completely quiet and it's just awesome."

## Traci

*Humanity. Compassion. Service. Integrity.*
*Humanity. Family. Service. Compassion. Community. Integrity. Faith.*

Traci was a 21-year-old White female majoring in Psychology and Sociology. She was a senior by credit and a junior by year. In the Leadership Certificate, she has completed Change and Theory. Additionally she was enrolled in the Experience class at the time of the interviews. She described her hometown community as a suburban beach town in the southeastern United States. The community is predominately white and middle class.

Traci smiled frequently and was an incredibly positive person. The outgoing student, Traci was involved in many activities on campus: Orientation leader, on the club softball team, the Public Relations Secretary of her service fraternity, recruited for the admissions into the

honors program, involved in the future student affairs professionals organization, had an internship with a spiritual life project and held a job as a student assistant on campus. She talked about how her senior year in college will be about giving back to the institution and those who helped her during her college career.

Community service is an important part of Traci's life. She enjoys taking care of people. In her first interview, she said, "I'm always like the mama hen taking care of other people. And giving back to others is really important." She continued, "I think you should always care for common man and whether that's treating the earth right or, or just smiling and making someone's day, that can do a lot for people."

**Vanessa**

*Learning. Passion. Honesty. Truth. Trust. Justice. Diversity.*
*Learning. Passion. Honesty. Integrity. Diversity. Being true to yourself.*

Vanessa was a 19-year-old Caucasian female. She was a junior by year in school, and senior by credit majoring in International Affairs and Psychology. For the Leadership Certificate, Vanessa completed Theory, Groups, and Change. On campus, she was a Resident Assistant, a Teaching Assistant for a living-learning community focused on social justice, participated in a leadership seminar, and was active in a global peace initiative. She described her hometown community as a small, suburban community in central Florida. She was from a middle class background, and the community has politically conservative values throughout.

Vanessa has a great sense of humor, and she joked about how the interview was in the morning, and she needed time to wake up. During the interview, Vanessa described herself as both goofy, and incredibly serious. Her passions lie in discussions about justice and a genuine care for people.

> I do have some sort of a passion for talking about justice and to a certain extent like writing and hugging. I love giving people good hugs. It may not seem like that big of a deal, but it is something that I do appreciate doing and it is a way to show other people that I care. So I consider it to be kind of important.

Vanessa enjoys thinking. She was constantly reflecting and detailed a reflection journal that she used both in class and for her leadership positions. She relied on this notebook to help to process conversations and values. "I just sit around and think all the time about everything. There's hardly a time when I'm not thinking, it can become overwhelming…"

She has articulated her values, and indicated that she feels they are always present, even though they may not be in the forefront of her mind. "I don't sit down and say, because I value this, I'm going to do this. But it does have a background role, I think, in everything that I do, especially since I started thinking about them more." Vanessa described her value of honesty as a "super value," complete with the visual image of a super hero's cape.

> It's one thing that I always try to do, no matter what, I'm always doing. I don't really have to think about it anymore… and I think with honesty, it's kind of cut and dry. Either you're being honest or you're not… it's a super value, with a cape.

**Vera**

*Love. Listening. Relationships. Honesty. Serenity. Being in touch with yourself. Trust. Loyalty. Love. Compassion. Faith. Serenity.*

Vera, a 21-year-old African American female, was double majoring in Political Science and Urban and Regional Planning. She was minoring in Public Administration, and working on her Certificate in Leadership Studies. In the Leadership Certificate, she had taken Change and was enrolled in Theory at the time of the study. On campus, she was a Resident Assistant and involved in two activities: a school spirit-based group and the student United Way. She grew up

in a middle class urban environment, living with five people in her household. She was the President for her high school class for three years.

Vera is a light-hearted person, spoke quickly, and laughed throughout the interviews. However, she also had a serious side. As an introspective person trying to improve herself, Vera talked about some of her mantras.

> Listening, learning, loving, and letting go. You know, I am letting go of some things I cannot change. Letting go of situations that don't want to change, no matter how hard you try to make them change. You know, learn, live, and let go. Don't chase it… Don't chase it, don't try to replace it: live, learn and let it go.

When describing her childhood at school, she mentioned being the champion for people whose voices might not be heard. She credited her advocacy perspective to her home life; as the youngest child and only girl, she was often not heard. She discussed how if she can tell that someone wants to speak, and cannot, she makes every effort to draw out the person's voice. She saw herself as a champion for those who cannot speak for themselves. "I'm like that voice of reason speaking up for those who can't speak up for themselves."

## Summary

This chapter provided a brief overview of the participants, including background and demographic information on each of the 15 participants. By using the participants' viewpoints and their own words, this assists the reader in beginning to understand the students' individual perspectives. This chapter begins to portray the participants' personalities and experiences in their values clarification process.

# CHAPTER FIVE

# RESULTS

This study explored if and how junior-level college students clarified their values while in college. Specifically, the study set out to understand the environment of the Undergraduate Leadership Certificate and how that experience intersects with the natural student development in college. While exploring the overarching research question, Do students clarify their values in college, and if so, how?, the following questions were investigated:

1. To what extent do students clarify their values in college?
2. What is the essence of the experience of values clarification through college?
3. If students do clarify their values in college, by what process does that happen?
4. Do students clarify their values through a leadership course?
5. What most influenced the students' values clarification process?

In this chapter, the collected data addresses the research questions.

Through this research and analysis, I have discovered that students do clarify their values in college; however, they articulate their values to different degrees. For example, in reflecting on her values, Susan says, "I think a lot of them are cultured from the environment I was raised in. And I think I learned them there, but I think I learned to identify them here…" In clarifying values and attempting to answer the five research questions, four themes emerged: the influence of peer relationships, the influence of role models, campus engagement experiences, and participating in leadership courses. This chapter will discuss each of the questions and will expand in detail with the four themes, sharing examples from participant interviews.

## Peer Relationships

Research shows that peer relationships are important throughout the development of students in college. These relationships aid students in their transition to college (Swenson, Nordstrom, & Hiester, 2008). Peer relationships influence a student's identity development (Chickering & Reisser, 1993). Baxter-Magolda (1992) found that among other factors, peer relationships had an impact on college students' intellectual development. In a 2011 study, students reported their peer relationships have stronger influence on learning and development than their relationships with faculty (Bowman & Seifert). Relationships with their peers can also have an impact on their satisfaction in college (Astin, 1993). Through this study, I identified the influence of peer relationships as a theme for values clarification. When attempting to address the five guiding questions for this study; (1) the extent to which students clarify their values, (2) the essence of the experience, (3) the process, (4) the leadership courses, and (5) the most influential aspect, it became clear that peer relationships were an essential theme in each answer. Not only do peer relationships contribute to values clarification overall, but they also impact the depth of clarification, contribute to the overall experience and process of clarifying values, and even had a role in the leadership courses.

### Forming Relationships and the Transition to College

As participants formed relationships and created friendships in college, their values clarification was influenced. For some participants, using their values was a way to create a new relationship. Cathy said she values equality and "ensuring that everyone has the same educational opportunities, that's how I forge some relationships." While other participants, such as John, discussed how some peer interactions allowed him to see what he did not value; and

therefore, helped to clarify his values by identifying things that he did not value. Susan shared how conversations in class about values helped her to become friends with her classmates.

> I met my friend [Jessica], in theory…but then I also met [Vanessa and Jamie] in groups and communities and after every class, we would congregate and talk… about half the time, [it would end up being] oh, I heard you say you value relationships. I do, too… I think sometimes we talked about [values] and we didn't know we talked about it.

She went on to explain that these friendships (specifically those friendships with classmates in the Leadership Certificate) assisted in challenging her beliefs, which, in turn, helped her to identify her value set.

As students transition to college, relationships with peers are powerful. During this time, friendships with a shared value set can ease the transition to college, or students can struggle when values are not shared. Michael discussed how his roommates in college are his friends from high school. Since college, their bonds have strengthened. He discussed how they all share the faith of Judaism and he owes a lot to those friends. He articulated this strong set of shared values is what has kept their relationships strong. Additionally, he credits his friends with easing the transition to college.

Ryan shares a different perspective on his transition to college and a more challenging living situation. He detailed a roommate situation that was "really tough my freshman year." He believes that this situation made him "coarser." He explained that he would go to parties with his friends and roommates his first year in college, but he chose not to drink alcohol, while his classmates drank and engaged in other riskier behaviors. When he came to school he was very staunch in his faith, and felt that consuming alcohol was not appropriate. Detailing his first year in college, Ryan says:

> I was like I'll go with you, but I'm not going to do what you're going to do… Now I understand why you do what you do. I guess it's fun, but not for me. I guess I uphold certain things as important and I'm not going to back off. Not to say that I haven't backed off on certain things… I think it was having experienced some things… I think that has allowed me to not be as critical of some of my friends…You live your life; I'll live my life. We can still be really close and get along.

**Perspective Changing**

Ryan discussed how his peers influenced his judgment of others. Other participants shared how their classmates pushed them to think about things differently, which allowed for critical thought and analysis of their current values. Some of this thinking has influenced students to change (or solidify) and clarify different value sets. Ryan shared a story about a woman in his class who is passionate about education reform. Ryan had never really thought about education reform; however, when he heard her perspective on reform, he was surprised.

> Wow, you're coming at this from a similar perspective that I would come at it from. It's really unique because it's not normally the same values that I hold… So you think about stuff that you never would have thought about, or you never would have heard about.

When Ryan was asked if there were other people who influenced his values, he shared that his Bible study leader (an upper-class student) affected his values. He shared that this leader was incredibly influential in Ryan's life. Ryan said his leader was constantly challenging him to think deeper about the bible and his religion. The way his leader lived his life was also important to Ryan. He had a role model of someone who was 21 and seeing how his faith really mattered to him. Ryan did not see many people his age truly living their faith-based values.

> Seeing someone who made time first and foremost for stuff like that was something that was cool to see…Seeing someone who made a deliberate effort, someone who is always encouraging me to do the same thing. This was something that was really neat. And just having that really close relationship with someone… there's so much about you that changes through a relationship like that.

Through the interviews, Jamie realized how much she has changed in college, and how much she was influenced by her relationships. During the second interview, Jamie shared that the questions triggered some anecdotes from her first year in college. She says that she changed a lot since high school.

> It's very interesting. I know that I have definitely changed since then. But there are these special moments that you don't really forget but you realize how impactful they were… It was a good thing to remember and just be thankful for… I ended up talking with one of my friends. We had a discussion – thank you, thank you. And she was like "when did I do that?" It's not even that huge of a difference to her but, for me, it was everything. That's literally coming from that discussion. I really appreciate these people for what they have done for me because I don't think they realize it necessarily. And it's definitely made more of an impact on me that I realized.

When asked what made such a strong impact on her through her experiences with her friends, Jamie noted her change in her confidence. She shared that the people closest to her tell her that she is no longer the person she was before – and this is a good thing. Jamie's confidence in herself is rising. She credited this increase in her confidence to the friends she made that share her values. "It has something to do with the people that I am interacting with. People like

Vanessa who are challenging me in a good way, because they have the best intentions for me. They want me to become the best person I can be."

**Romantic Relationships**

Not only friendships, but also romantic relationships have an influence on students' values. John discussed a romantic relationship that had recently ended. This was a painful experience for him, and taught him a lot about what he did not value in himself. He also learned what he did and did not value in a partner.

When asked if she is was a different person before college than she is now that she is in college, Jessica responds, "oh, leaps and bounds… and I've only been in college for two years." She then shared that prior to college, she had a long-term boyfriend. Jessica was not herself while she was in that relationship. She, instead, was trying to be what she thought her partner wanted her to be. Jessica wanted to make him happy. But, then the relationship began to fall apart. As it fell apart, Jessica realized that she wanted to be "the person I know I could be and so I ended things and now I am, I'm so independent." Before this decision, Jessica indicated that she was completely dependent on her boyfriend.

Through this change, Jessica saw her growth – she was becoming an adult. She has confidence that she can do what she needs to do on her own. "Before high school, I was very dependent on my parents. I was so homesick my first semester of college. Like depressed, homesick and now I don't really want to go home." She said she is relieved that she is no longer living up to other's expectations any longer. She was happy that now she makes her "own expectations for myself…And I'm very self-aware…And I don't think I had that before." Jessica continued by saying that she was simply going through the motions before, doing what she

thought everyone expected and wanted her to do. But once she realized she wanted to be her own person, and no longer in her relationship, she felt free.

> I think that was just my letting go of not just this relationship, but my high school years… This is the time, you know…I've had the best year ever. I've taken advantage of so many more opportunities than I would've if I had stayed in that [relationship] because he was not very involved… And so I feel like it did kind of hold me back a little bit. He hated that I was in a sorority…. I would never have just grown up as much as I have and I think that that the change was me letting go of all that.

Jessica now cites adventure as one of her values. If she had not had this experience with her romantic relationship, Jessica would not have had the chance to clarify this value of adventure.

Peer relationships are essential for values clarification in college. For some students, they learned what they did not value through relationships. While others had a change in perspective and learned what they do value. Others still learned about themselves, and grew confident as a result of their relationships with their peers in college.

**Role Models**

Role models are mentors for college students. Researchers have demonstrated that mentoring opportunities and role modeling leadership skills, such as personal values definition, and developmental coaching, have the potential to impact students' leadership capacity (Campbell, Smith, Dugan, & Komives, 2012; Godshalk & Sosik, 2000; Popper & Lipshitz, 1993). In this study, participants cited learning values from role models in their lives. When returning to the five guiding questions for this study; (1) the extent to which students clarify their values, (2) the essence of the experience, (3) the process, (4) the leadership courses, and (5) the most influential aspect, it became clear that role models were another essential theme. Role

models specifically influenced the intensity of the values clarification and not only the overall essence but also the process by helping students to clarify their own values through the opportunity to observe real people living and acting on their values. These students saw a personification of values and specific examples of how values appeared through action, which in turn, assisted the students in the development of their own values. Some participants cited role models from the college experience; some shared how their family members influenced them, while others cited influential people from other parts of their lives.

**College Experiences**

Throughout the interviews, participants shared the importance of role models in the values clarification process within the college environment. The participants indicated there were groups of role models that were influential. Additionally, they shared specific individuals who have affected their values clarification processes in college.

Not surprisingly, college professors were mentioned as people who had a strong influence on the development of the participants' values identification through college. Michael discussed his larger lecture classes, and that he was nervous to participate in the beginning of his college career. However, now that he has gained confidence and has seen his Leadership Certificate instructors believe in him and share his values, he is more likely to participate in class. Michael also discussed how he sees instructors care about his development, whether that is in a larger general education class, or a smaller Leadership course. That context of care for his development greatly influences his decision to participate in class. When faculty members are more invested in the individual student, Michael is more likely to participate in class.

Broadly, Traci cited the people with whom she interacts at college as influential to her. "I reflected on how much my undergrad experience has really changed my values and has tested

my values…I think it has a lot to do with the people that are surrounding me." She went on to share that had she not interacted with people in college who she perceived as good examples of character, as well as the poor examples of integrity, she would not have her value set formed in the way in which she has currently. Traci also discussed the importance of college mentors. She said her mentors have "led me through the beginning of undergrad. People that I've viewed as mentors and as leaders really provided that [leadership and support] for me."

Traci was broader in her examples of role models that were influential to her clarification of values, while other participants were more specific. For example, Ella discussed her relationship with her Greek Life Advisor as someone who was influential to her values clarification. One important aspect of the relationship with Ella and her Advisor are their one on one conversations. In these regular meetings, Ella details how important they are in her development.

> It's hard to summarize who you are, what you want on paper… And so they really help me articulate what I'm trying to say and what's important to me and so I don't think I would've necessarily been able to say these are my values and this is why [without these conversations with my Advisor]. But I've had a lot of time to develop as I said, and a lot of people helping along the way so…I have to give them a lot of credit because… sometimes just speaking with advisors or people in higher ed, they just get your mind working in a different viewpoint and so that, that was great.

Michael also named a specific person in the college environment who served as a role model for him and helped him to clarify his values. He described the motivational speaker who he saw speak as a part of the University's summer orientation program. This speaker discussed how to make the most out of the college experience. Michael reported that he thinks of this

speech and this orator a lot. "He was pretty inspiring. I think that was what catapulted me in the very beginning. You know, coming to college and making the most out of learning and everything." Specifically, the motivational speaker helped Michael to think about and clarify his value of learning in college. Michael later went on to discuss how important education is, and shared that it is something he values strongly.

**Family**

Role models in the college environment have an effect on the values clarification of some students; however, when asked, many students shared their connections to their family around values clarification. By attending college, participants cited it helped them to articulate the values that were instilled by their families. For example, Ella shared how coming to college has allowed her to articulate the values that her parents taught her, "my college career… that's when it clicked and I learned how to articulate it…But looking back, values have been in my life since I can remember anything. My parents are amazing…they just were great examples for me." She also shared how her cousin, who attends the same school with her, reminds Ella of her values from home. She said that her cousin is her best friend. Michael also shared that he knew his family was one of his top values; however, when he came to college, he began to realize the true importance of family. He said that he misses his family while he is at school, and goes on to say, "now that I'm here and I go home for breaks and stuff, I really appreciate their company more, so I definitely think that kind of opened my eyes to how important family is in my life."

Role models are influential on students' development and clarification in values. Some role models are found in the college environment. While some role models from pre-college are continuing to influence students' development while in college. Whether it is a one-time speech or a relationship formed over years, role models help students to clarify their values in college.

## Campus Engagement

Students' investment of time and energy to educationally purposeful activities while in college is a strong predictor of student learning and development (Astin, 1993; Kuh, Kinzie, Buckley, Bridges, & Hayek, 2007; Pace, 1984; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991, 2005; Wolf-Wendel, Ward, & Kinzie, 2009). Involvement and integration theories purport that the more involved a student is in extracurricular activities, the greater the level of success (including persistence) in college (Astin, 1984; Tinto, 1993; Wolf-Wendel et. al, 2009).

Many scholars have researched the effect of involvement and student success, and much has been grounded in Astin's theory of involvement (1977, 1993).

> The general notion is that students will get more out of college if they put more into it. If students become involved in class discussions, student activities, and residence hall programs, they will become engaged with and learn from other students and faculty (Webber, Krylow, & Zhang, 2013, p. 592).

This also holds true for moral development. For example, in a study of over 300 accounting students, Brown-Liburd and Porco found that students who participated in extracurricular activities demonstrated higher levels of cognitive moral development (2011).

One avenue for a student to be involved in college is through campus engagement activities. Axelson and Flick share that student engagement began to refer to, "how involved or interested students appear to be in their learning and how connected they are to their classes, their institutions, and each other" (2011, p. 38). "Student engagement represents the time and effort students devote to activities that are empirically linked to desired outcomes of college *and* what institutions do to induce students to participate in these activities" (Kuh, 2009, p. 683). Engagement includes activities and practices that lead to learning, including co-curricular

activities, connection with faculty members, service learning, or integrative educational experiences (Kinzie & Kezar, 2006; Kuh, 2001; 2003; 2009). Therefore, it is no surprise that when discussing values clarification in college, participants cited their engagement experiences as an influential area. Through the study, participants often cited their different campus engagement experiences as venues for them to clarify their values. These experiences culminated as another theme that emerged through the analysis of the participant interviews that related back to the principle questions of the study. Campus engagement directly impacted (1) the extent to which students clarified their values, (2) the essence of the experience, (3) the values clarification process itself, (4) the leadership courses, and for some participants, emerged as the (5) most influential aspect. For the purposes of this study, campus engagement activities encompass formal leadership positions, community service, on-campus employment, Greek letter organizations, as well as involvement in co-curricular seminars, clubs, and organizations.

**Leadership Positions**

For the purposes of this study, leadership positions are inclusive of traditional positional leadership roles, as well as involvement in other co-curricular activities. Positional leadership refers to a formal position that is held with a title. In a 2014 study, Juntrasook defined the paradigm of positional leadership as "to be a leader (or to be entitled to lead) is to take on a formal role in a headship position" (p. 22). For example, positional leadership includes formal positions in student clubs and organizations (i.e. President, Secretary, Executive Board, Chair). However, leadership is often defined in numerous ways in addition to formal, positional leadership. Since the definition of leadership goes beyond simply a formal position one may serve in a group, multiple types of leadership are included in this section. These include, but are not limited to, participating in a one-time program or conference, involvement in clubs and

organizations without a formal title, and community service. In addition, on-campus employment is also considered a leadership position, as students may view these positions as both employment and an involvement activity.

Participants cited their positions in student organizations as places where their values were reflected, specifically through their leadership styles. Ryan thinks his leadership style reflects his values. He specifically cited his position in student government as an area where he is really able to showcase his values. "I feel that my values are very similar to many other people in being honest and truthful and helpful, and serving." Ryan also mentioned that his involvement in a Christian organization allows him to demonstrate his servant leadership style. In her role as an orientation leader (specifically in her first year), Traci worked to find her personal leadership style. Traci's values of humanity and service showcased themselves while in her second year as an orientation leader. In that second year, Traci's values influenced her to concentrate on mentoring other orientation leaders to discover their own personal leadership style.

Through their leadership positions in college, both Jessica and Traci experienced values clarification and an increased confidence shift. While in high school, Jessica did not hold leadership positions. However, in college, she was in a leadership position and responsible for leading an event. Through this experience, she realized she enjoys leading. "I think that just kind of created this shift in my brain from follower to leader. And I just realized that, I guess I have more, I have more to me than I thought I did…" This leadership experience helped Jessica to define what she values by believing in herself and her potential to lead. As an Orientation Leader, Traci clarified her values, including her value of integrity. "Looking back, there are so many life experiences and through that leadership opportunity, I found who I truly was." She

was challenged as a leader through this process, and realized that she is important. Her integrity value was clarified. She said, "I always viewed myself as, I do great things but I never thought I am the result of great things. You know, like I can do great things because I am great."

**Membership in Student Organizations**

While holding formal positions in clubs and activities is one form of leadership, it is not the only form of leadership. Leaders are also found in the membership of student organizations and clubs. One aspect of involvement in these organizations that participants cite as important in their values clarification is their participation in activities.

On a large campus, there are many opportunities to become involved. Participants shared coming to college and being involved outside of the classroom has helped them to define their values. Ella shared her involvement was influential in her values clarification, it "really ignited my passion again for service and wanting to continue that." Mercedés, who is active in many organizations, felt as though she has been able to balance her time in a healthy way. She credited this ability to balance her time well to her values definition. "I've chosen activities that are fulfilling for me and make me excited and I'm doing well at them while still having personal time and personal life." Traci was able to identify the value of community and team through her involvement. "I think that through orientation, through [her fraternity], through all of those experiences, the common factor is that community… it has held for me. And that's something I've come to value very strongly. Because interdependence in others."

While on-going involvement in clubs and organizations helps to clarify values, participants also cited short-term programs as influential on the values development. For example, Cathy, Jamie and Vanessa participated in a summer leadership seminar the summer before their first year in college. In this weeklong seminar, Cathy "did a lot of values reflection."

The seminar peaked Cathy's interest in participating in leadership courses. During this seminar, Cathy was "spelling out my values, was seeing what service is like, was being introduced." Serving as a Teaching Assistant is also a short-term leadership experience. As a Teaching Assistant for a social justice-based program, Vanessa has reflected on her values and how her leadership style reflects those values.

**Specific Activities/Exercises**

Through their involvement in clubs and organizations, multiple participants cited specific activities/exercises that helped them to clarify their values. These activities were conducted through retreats, activities, programs, and other co-curricular experiences. For example, when asked how she knows these are her values, Vanessa said she has thought a lot about her values in college. She was constantly participating in activities that help her to clarify her values, determining what is important to her. By identifying her values, Vanessa found purpose in her actions. Vanessa reflected on the question of knowing her values:

> It's also a forced activity in every flipping thing I do…. it is a good activity … I don't think anyone realizes really until you start thinking about it …how important it is to know what your values are and to really think about them so that you're doing things purposefully. I think that values and knowing my values helped me find purpose. What I'm doing and not just doing it because oh, it feels right… why am I involved in [a living learning program around social justice]? Why am I involved in [a service activity]? Why am I an RA?

Participants shared how they have completed multiple values clarifying activities. Traci shared how during two retreats (in two years) she was asked guiding questions about her values, as well as the values of the group. The group came together to determine what they value; for

example, “who is the group of people that you know can support you through anything.” While the process created some change in Traci, it showed her she values a lot of different things. Flippantly, Vanessa says values clarification activities can be obnoxious and annoying. But, when asked more about it, she shares the repetition of the activities is useful.

> I think having continually done specific exercises, maybe I got it a little quicker than some other people might...When the first time, honestly, no one gets it the first time. Well, some people might and good for them. But most people are like, why am I talking about this? …When you start to continue doing it, applying these values and when you see them play out within things that you’re actually doing that’s outside of the classroom and outside the learning experience, you’re like, well, this is kind of cool… Okay, I see now, like how that makes sense… I was continually thinking about it and really understanding and finding a reason why. Having a real reason for why they’re my values and not just saying they are because it’s part of the exercise.

A popular and impactful activity/exercise cited by seven participants (Cathy, Ella, Jamie, John, Mercedés, Traci and Vanessa) was “Trash Your Values.” While there are many different iterations of the activity, generally participants are asked to select a number of values (normally beginning with five to ten) from a list that they hold true and place each one on a single sheet of paper. Then, silently, students are asked to throw away or “trash” one of their values until only one remains. The exercise encourages participants to reflect on what they value most in life. When talking about the activity, Traci says,

> We’ve done activities called trash your values which was really crazy… I cried the whole time. Why am I throwing it away? And so those activities are where you really have to

> reflect on what is the most important to you out of all of… the things that you deem important.

John and Vanessa discussed choosing (circling) your top values from a sheet with a number of value words on it. While Vanessa had done this activity multiple times, she still found it useful. Her thought process went like this,

> I've done this. Like really, I've thought about it. Like really, really. But again, every time, like there's still meaning in it because every time I can still sit there and think, for the top three that I want… do I want it to be these three? … So I think they're all important, even if after a while, you're just like… okay. I'm doing this. I've done it 100 times. I've packed my values. I've torn them up. I've trashed them.

**Campus Employment**

As well as being involved in co-curricular activities in college, many also work in paid student leadership positions while in college. In a 2012 study, Salisbury, Pascarella, Padgett, and Blaich found employment has a substantial positive effect on leadership development. In this study, participants shared how their on-campus employment aided their values clarification.

Many on-campus employment opportunities are seen both as a student organization and a job. These leadership jobs, such as the Resident Assistant or Orientation Leader are leadership opportunities as well as paid positions. In contrast to working as an office assistant or in the dining halls, these leadership jobs are more complex and encourage leadership development. These are typically competitive leadership positions on campus and often involve mentoring, advising, and/or supervising other students. For example, these positions are often considered student leadership positions, and the training of these students is thorough. While both of these roles are paid positions, the developmental nature of the experience creates a community of

learning. Additionally, the role is typically approached through a developmental lens for the employer. Supervisors often think about how a student can learn from the experience, but also can complete tasks. The line is often blurred between a student leader position and a job.

Vanessa and Vera discussed their roles as a Resident Assistant. Both women shared the impact of the role on their values. In her role as a Resident Assistant (RA), Vera thought about her values. In RA Training, she reflected on how the experience is congruent with her values. During training, someone said, "don't be sad because it's over, smile because it happened and you had that experience." That resonated with Vera because that is how she tries to live her life. She felt congruence within the role and her values. Vera reflected on her time as an RA, and upon reflection, she feels the role is connected to her value set. "I'd hope that would be in line with my values and I really do think it is. Like obviously in line with the specific values that I spoke on and some that I may not articulate but still hold true."

Traci discussed her role as an Orientation Leader, and Isaac shared his work at the recreation center as impactful on their clarification of values. For example, Isaac works on campus in the outdoor recreation center. When he has been working, the idea of values has "kind of provoked my thought. Just things that are difficult decisions, I guess, make me consider my values, to make sure I'm acting accordingly." His role as a challenge course facilitator was essential in Isaac's values clarification. Through facilitation, he learned what was important to him through exposure to other's leadership.

**Community Service**

Participating in community service while in college has been found to be beneficial to undergraduate students (Astin, Sax & Avalos, 1999; Batchelder & Root, 1994; Eyler, Giles & Braxton, 1997; Eyler & Giles, 1999; Hesser, 1995; Vogelgesang & Astin, 2000). Service in the

community (along with reflection) has also been found to aid in progression of moral reasoning in college students (Boss, 1994). For the purposes of this study, community service is defined as activities that benefit others, and the participants are not compensated. For example, volunteerism, service-learning opportunities, philanthropy, and service organizations are all examples of service. The participants in this study cited their service as an area where they clarified their values in college. Specifically, nine participants mentioned service in their interviews. Cathy, Mercedés, Jamie, Ryan, Susan, Vera, Vanessa, Ella, and Traci all mentioned community service as a way to assist them in their values clarification.

Some participants spoke of service as a means to live their values. Through their service, they were able to see the congruency between their values and the community service in which they were engaged. For example, Cathy believes passionately in providing educational equality. In Cathy's service work, she tried to "make sure that there's equality of educational opportunity." This is one way Cathy has found congruency in her values. "I believe that service is a mechanism through which you manifest values. You show people what your values are. That's where congruency shines through."

Whereas some participants used service to see the congruency in their values, other students used their community service to clarify their values. When participating in service work, students were able to clearly identify what they value. Cathy shared that participating in service is what really helped her to identify the things she truly values. "I don't think that I really realized them as values instead of just things that I care about…until service was incorporated." Later in the interview, Cathy elaborated on how serving has helped her define her values, as well as her future goals.

> Seeing the way that service has been a way for me to translate my values and be able to understand my past experiences as well as shape my future. When I first came to [college], I knew exactly what I wanted to do. I had an exact job in mind and literally zip codes where I'd be spending the rest of my life. And then through service and through being able to see what I really felt, and then test that out with my hands, and test that out with people, it's, I've seen so much more. You know, being the city manager of north to central coastal Floridian cities isn't really what I'm about. That's, that's what I can be, not what I can do. Not what I want to do. But seeing, like yes, immigration policy, immigration law, human rights law, Foreign Service offices. Like yes, that's what I'm actually passionate about and I would not have known that had I not been able to reflect and had I not been able to see what I really think and what I really feel through understanding my values in these courses and seeing how they can, how you can demonstrate congruence through service.

While some students used service to clarify their values, other students cited service as one of their values. For example, Traci cited service as an important part of her undergraduate experience. She also named "service" as one of her core values. Her value of service drives Traci in many areas of her life. "To be able to serve others is probably one of the most important things that I have done in my life… I think that I have it bad sometimes but then to look at other people, I'm living the dream."

**Greek Letter Organizations**

"Research on the effects of Greek life on college student moral development has generally concluded that membership in these organizations does little to enhance moral development" (Mathiasen, 2005, p. 242). However, in a case study, Mathiasen found that one

fraternity was a positive influence on the moral development of its members (2005). Additionally, Long (2012) found in a study of 15 Southeastern institutions, that Greek members experienced gains related to the values of scholarship, leadership, service, and friendship.

In the current study, participants who were highly involved in Greek letter organizations (specifically Panhellenic sororities) cited their Greek letter organizations experiences as influential on their values clarification while in college. For example, Mercedés shared her involvement in Greek letter organizations as an area where her values have been clarified. When asked where she learned to make "values-based decisions," Mercedés replies, "Greek life… In a lot of ways, people, I think, hint at it or assume it, but it's very explicitly discussed in Greek life."

Two areas where values are specifically discussed are during the recruitment and new membership process. Both Ella and Mercedés discussed how they clarified values through their involvement with their respective sororities. Ella began exploring her values during recruitment. During recruitment, she participated in the "Trash Your Values," the values clarification exercise where she listed ten values. Then she had to knock it down to five, to three, to one. She also shared there were many conversations surrounding values during this time. "If you'd probably asked me that [what are your values] freshman year, I'd be like, uhhh. But a lot of the workshops we do surround values… even within my individual sorority." She went on to share as new members, values are an area of focus. She said her time as a new member helped her to clarify her values.

Both Mercedés and Ella were involved on the staffing side as recruitment over their time in college. When they went through recruitment, they clarified values. However, when they led recruitment efforts, they also learned about their values. Ella says, "I try to lead by example… I

definitely look through the lens of values because not only for my own values but for my organization's values and representing what we stand for." Mercedés' experience in leading Panhellenic recruitment was influential on her values development. Through this experience, there was a lot of emphasis on determining what are your personal values, and how your personal values align with the organization's values. Mercedés shared that in recruitment, it is important that your actions also match the values of your organization. In this process, she is a role model. Mercedés is "supposed to be setting an example for all the other girls." Therefore, she made responsible choices. While she would like to go out and party and be a bit irresponsible, she remembers being a role model, "I hate the way I feel when I see [the women she is leading] out who are looking up to me. This is an example of having to make a choice based on my own personal values and the values of organizations on campus that I represent."

Through recruitment, Mercedés cited three specific activities that are conducted with potential new members and the recruitment staff surrounding values. One of the activities is "Trash Your Values." For the second activity, Mercedés explains,

> We do an activity called big R, little r and the rs for ritual and so the big R being the ritual that your founders wrote and what those values are—love, honor, truth or noble womanhood, whatever they are. And then talking about the little r, which is just the actions, you do on a daily basis, brushing your teeth, whatever. Going to dinner and seeing how the way that you behave and those little rs match your big R…

The third activity is the life values inventory. This is an online quiz that Mercedés explains as placing emphasis on what you value. The inventory breaks down values and time into four categories: things you value and spend a lot of time doing; things that you do not value and do

not spend time on; things you do not value, but spend a lot of time on; and things that you do value, but do not spend a lot of time doing.

The participants who discussed how Greek letter organizations clarified their values often discussed how their organization's values were congruent with their own values. When asked if he thinks his fraternity has had influence on his personal values, Pete reported it does. When asked how, he responded "Values. I mean, like doing what's right. You know, those are one of our three cardinal principles: Virtue, diligence and brotherly love." Mercedés posited that when people in college talk about values, they first think about bad choices. While she believed this is valuable, she also saw value in thinking about her own values and the values of the organization that she represents. She specifically discussed how her sorority has had an impact on her value set.

> My sorority has a very strong creed that we are pretty passionate about and so those values are very important to me…and I think that's where the poise comes from. Our three core values are love, honor and truth and it talks just a lot about gentle, graceful, noble womanhood and how important that is in terms…

Traci's involvement in her service fraternity has benefited her values development. Service has always been a "very important thing" to Traci and reinforcing that value for service is the diversity of her fraternity. "It's probably the most diverse group on this campus. …You can find people from every religious background, any racial background, sexual orientation. People from different countries." What was particularly interesting for Traci was how so many people from so many backgrounds could come together to form a community, despite the differences they have. "They came together for the common purpose of service and that, being

immersed in that group has really opened my eyes to other lifestyles and other beliefs." These experiences clarified her values of service and community.

Through their Greek letter organizations, participants shared there are opportunities to clarify their values through workshops and meetings. Ella discusses a campus-based Greek leadership summit as a place where her values continued to be clarified. She also attended an international intensive Greek leadership conference between her sophomore and junior year. Through this five-day experience, Ella was not with anyone she knew, and she was able to better define who she was as a leader.

However, Ella cites her involvement in the Panhellenic Council as the area where she most clarified her values. In her role, she was responsible for leading the Panhellenic sororities on campus. This is a high profile and influential student leadership position. Ella took this responsibility seriously, and she led with her values.

> When I think of what I want to do, or where I want to take the community, or what our community needs, I really go back to my own personal values…the values of Panhellenic, of our individual organizations. We're a very values based organization which I feel like is going to help me so much in the long run, especially with self-awareness and knowing what you want to get out of things… Greek life in general, especially in the position I'm in now, everything that I do, I kind of want it to be in the vision, in the values and so I had to, you know, really become self-aware of what I wanted to accomplish. You know, how I want to be remembered or what are the things that are important for me to leave my legacy and so I think in doing that, in focusing on those values, I focused on my own.

Whether it is a Greek letter organization, a faith-based group, or a service club, campus engagement was influential in the participants' values clarification. Through this engagement, students were able to learn about themselves, and determine what they value. These organizations also acted as a laboratory for participants to "practice" their values through their leadership positions and involvement in clubs and organizations.

## Leadership Courses

Leadership courses instruct students to become more globally competent leaders, and result in their marketability in the workforce. The unique nature of the classroom environment allows for significant gains in leadership learning and behavior (Rosch & Anthony, 2012). The reflective and experiential educational environment of leadership courses creates an opportunity for students to make meaning of their experiences, and understand their roles as leaders in the process (Guthrie & Bertrand Jones, 2012). "Having a comprehensive leadership education program provides the knowledge and skills that students need to become nationally competitive. Students with a strong leadership learning foundation become leaders in their academic fields" (Osteen & Coburn, 2012, p. 8).

One of the specific guiding questions for this study was (4) Do students clarify their values through a leadership course? Simply stated, the leadership curriculum has helped students to clarify their values. Participants mentioned the previous three themes in relation to the theme of leadership coursework. Through this reflective and experiential nature of the classroom, participants reported clarifying their values in the context of the leadership coursework. Participants identified specific features of the leadership courses that impacted their values clarification that are included in subsequent sections: specific values clarification activities and assignments, faculty characteristics, the small class size, the culture of the Certificate, and the

opportunity to practically apply and reflect on the curriculum. When asked if she would think about her values in the same way if she had not taken the leadership classes, Cathy said, "I can't say that I would. I can't say that I'd be aware of what my values are." Ryan shared, "I would definitely say I've reflected on my values a lot because of the classes."

In her interview, Mercedés shared how her coursework explored her values differently. She mentioned the progression of the courses and how she reflected on her values. She said the Theory course explored what it means to be a well-rounded leader. In these courses, she read a lot of other people's thoughts on what they value. Through reading about other people's values, Mercedés began to think individually about what values she holds. In the Groups course, group dynamics are explored. "We talk about values again and how values of a group…create the experience for you…it's more of a simulation than actual life experience." In this experiential learning experience, Mercedés was told what to do to be a good group member, and then she acted it out. In the Change course, there was a lot of discussion. There was "a little bit of talking about what other people value, but more talking about how as an individual and in your individual situation, you can use your values and articulate them or whatever it is, for whatever change you're inspiring." Mercedés' experience is that in Change, she talked more about her own experience, where in her other two classes, the coursework was more focused on the values of others.

**Specific Courses and Values Clarification**

When asked if leadership courses allowed participants time to reflect on their values inside and outside of the classroom, thirteen participants indicated the leadership courses allowed them to reflect on their values. For example, Mercedés recounted these conversations in many different aspects of her college experience. However, where she discussed the topic "a lot" was

in her leadership classes. “We talk a lot about values and what it means to be an authentic leader and leading with strong values… definitely at school is where I’ve had the most actual conversation and reflection.” Vera also went through each course and how it helped to clarify her values, specifically how she applied leadership theory to her values. She shared the Theory course helped her to jot down her values to see if they are congruent with the theory. “Theory helps me to put the puzzle together, it helps me to be a leader…Change was personal and depth, where leadership theory brings me back into how I can make it more successful in my organization. That’s what theory does for me.”

Seven students indicated the Change course allowed them to reflect on their values. Seven individuals also cited the Groups class as providing the opportunity for reflection, while one mentioned the Leadership Experience course. Nine participants shared the Theory course allowed them to reflect on their values. Additionally, one student mentioned a Religious Ethics course as a class that encouraged her to reflect on her values, and another student shared the same for her Social Problems course in Sociology. See Table 5 for the individual courses mentioned by participant.

Table 5

*Participant and Course Mentioned to Reflect on Values*

| **Course** | **Participant(s)** |
|---|---|
| Change | Cathy, Ella, Mercedés, Susan, Traci, Vanessa, Vera |
| Experience | Traci |
| Groups | Cathy, Jamie, Jessica, Mercedés, Michael, Susan, Vanessa |
| Religious Ethics Class | Vera |
| Sociology - social problems | Traci |
| Theory | Cathy, Kylie, Mercedés, Michael, Pete, Ryan, Traci, Vanessa, Vera |

**Assignments and the Leadership Certificate**

Participants shared various experiences when asked what specific assignments and/or activities in the Leadership courses contributed to reflecting on their values (descriptions of select assignments are shared in Appendix J). Participants often shared more than one assignment or activity. Class discussions were the most commonly cited experience in the Leadership courses that allowed students to think about their values. Of the 12 responses, six respondents cited the Change course, and three each cited Theory and Groups. For example, Ryan cited the "constant application questions" as an area where he reflected on what was important to him, how to lead, and how to handle situations that came his way. Six people shared the importance of readings (four referenced Theory, while one each referenced Change and Groups). For Jamie, the section of the text from the Groups class has facilitated her reflection on her values. Specifically, she discussed the list of values at the end of the text. Being cited five times were in-class activities as a broad category; two participants mentioned the activities in Change, two in Theory, and one in Groups. One activity Jamie mentioned was the leadership challenge with the five pillars of leadership. In this activity, Jamie explains, "one of them is clarify your values, so obviously it's a core part of leadership."

The remaining responses were more specific. Five students referenced the Personal Change Paper in Change as an opportunity to reflect on their values. For example, Mercedés shared the personal change story assignment was the most influential work for her in the leadership coursework. Through this assignment, she reflected on her values.

> I don't necessarily know if this is the way it was for other people but because mine was kind of a change of personality, or more of an awareness of things that I value that maybe

I shouldn't. Because it was so reflective, I was able to see how values played into things that I wrote about.

Vera also mentioned the Personal Change paper. She shared that she had to "travel through what has happened to you, where are you now, and how has that affected you...what do you want to change?"

Four students shared the Values Portrait from the Groups class as a way to clarify and reflect on values. When specifically asked what experiences from her leadership courses helped her to identify her values, Susan first cited her values self-portrait. The assignment was for Susan to articulate her values in a video format.

> At first, I kind of thought to myself how do I sum up how I feel in words, like single words? I really hated that. But then I got to thinking; because everyone was like love, hope… So asking me to do that made me think and when I thought it was things that I think had been challenged or had hurt my feelings and that made me feel like more strongly about those things. So I think how I identified them, one was being asked to identify them. Made a big difference.

Three participants cited the "Trash Your Values" activity in the Change course. Three participants also noted the Change Prospectus from the Change course as a time to reflect on their values. Ryan discussed how the final projects (including the Change Prospectus) encompassed all he learned through the semester, including how his values influenced his leadership. He said the final papers were "key." Also from the Change class, two students noted the importance of class presentations. From the Groups course, two students shared that engaging in community service allowed them to reflect on their values, while two people noted the Mentor paper in Theory.

Additionally, there were some responses only one participant noted as helpful in his or her clarification of values. These assignments were as follows: leading class sessions, reflection, the interview with a mentor assignment, the leadership philosophy paper, the peer interview, and reading summaries. Additionally, one respondent each mentioned the importance of the following papers from the Groups course: final paper, Intergroup Dynamics paper, Leadership Learning Plan, Mentor paper, and Reflection paper.

Table 6

*Assignments and Values in the Leadership Certificate*

| **Course** | **Assignment** | **Participant(s)** |
|---|---|---|
| Change | Change Prospectus | Vera, Traci, Ryan |
| Change | Class activities | Susan, Vera |
| Change | Class discussions | Cathy, Vanessa, Susan, Vera, Traci, Ryan |
| Change | Class presentations | Ella, Ryan |
| Change | Leading class sessions | Ryan |
| Change | Personal Change Paper | Cathy, Mercedés, Vanessa, Susan, Vera |
| Change | Reading in text | Ella |
| Change | Reflection | Ella |
| Change | Trash Your Values | Cathy, Vera, Traci |
| Change | Writing Papers | Vera |
| Experience | Interview with Mentor | Cathy |
| Groups | Class discussions | Mercedés, Susan, Jamie |
| Groups | Community Service | Jessica, Susan |
| Groups | Final summary paper | Susan |
| Groups | Intergroup Dynamics Paper | Mercedés |
| Groups | Leadership Learning Plan | Vanessa |
| Groups | Mentor Paper | Michael |

Table 6 - continued

| Course | Assignment | Participant(s) |
|---|---|---|
| Groups | Narrowing values from list activity | Jamie |
| Groups | Reading in text | Jamie |
| Groups | Reflection Paper | Jessica |
| Groups | Values Portrait | Jessica, Vanessa, Susan, Jamie |
| Theory | Class activities | Susan |
| Theory | Class discussions | Cathy, Kylie, Jessica |
| Theory | Cross the line activity | Ryan |
| Theory | Leadership Philosophy Paper | Traci |
| Theory | Mentor Paper | Kylie, Isaac |
| Theory | Peer Interview | Ryan |
| Theory | Reading in text | Pete, Isaac, Mercedés, Vanessa |
| Theory | Reading Summaries | Kylie |
| Theory | Writing Papers | Vera |

**Quality of the Faculty**

While assignments and class discussions were important in values clarification in the Certificate, there were other specific experiences cited by the participants. For example, the quality of the faculty was important to values clarification for the participants. Ryan expressed that he enjoys and appreciates the one-on-one relationships with his instructors in the Leadership Certificate. He mentioned his instructors were concerned about him as a person, inside and outside of class. Ryan said the teachers seemed to "really enjoy" their jobs. "The leadership classes have really changed my view on what it is to be an educator and what you can learn from it…they seem very passionate. That is something that has really altered my view on learning." Michael said the Leadership instructors value the relationships of the individual student more so

than his other professors. Susan agreed and shared the instructors (and the care they provide to the students in the Certificate) are essential. She said,

> The teachers are really invested and they really care. And it's not like it's a class where you grade 700 scantrons. It's a class where you hear what we say and you see how we interpret this reading and how we can apply it and I think, too, like you guys are really able to help us see it in our lives…

Instructors also helped students to think about their values. In Change, Vera's instructor would encourage the students to think a bit deeper: how is this congruent with your value set? What was that sparking moment for you? The discussions were meaningful to her, and she enjoyed exploring the deeper meanings through conversations.

**Class Size**

Participants also discussed the class size as important to their values clarification. Susan believed the smaller class size and the ability to have one-on-one conversations added to her learning. Through the small groups in the leadership classes, Susan made connections. She said the people in her group still call each other, and continue to hang out even though they are no longer in class together. Both Michael and Ryan specifically mention the smaller class size as influential on their clarification of values.

**Culture of the Leadership Certificate Curriculum**

In addition to smaller classes, participants shared the culture of and the multidisciplinary makeup of the courses as beneficial to their values clarification. Susan shared that the students in the courses are what make them special. She says the "right people" are in the courses. Susan explains her fellow students, "it just seems like they're there for the right reasons."

Vanessa shared a similar sentiment; there were the right people in the room to have values conversations. She explained it was not always an explicit conversation in values during class, "but more organically, like okay, my take on this specific thing that we're talking about is this because it relates to something that I value." Mercedés shared a similar thought. For her, it was not always explicit in the conversation, but it was often implicit during the class discussions. "It's not even necessarily explicitly values but ways as a leader, things that you should adopt or ways that you should communicate or personality traits you should try to adopt which in the end are values…" Vanessa shared that once she learned how to articulate and understand her values (and how they are applied), she thinks it comes up in conversation naturally.

> I'm not specifically talking about my values. I'm talking about something that's related to them. So I think when you talk about things in class, I feel like that has to be related to your values in some way because I'm not going to say something that's completely just off base.

Cathy cited the environment of the leadership classes as one of the reasons the courses helped to clarify her values. Specifically, it was an environment where students discussed values frequently. "It was a place to be open and not, in most cases, ashamed or feel like you were bragging about achievements and accomplishments because it was a constant environment for how do you make this better?" Cathy and her classmates would ask each other for help. When they were stuck, they would bring the situation to class, and ask colleagues. They would also ask for personal advice as well, such as "I'm stuck between two leadership positions. Can I do both? Should I do one? Should I do none? What do you think? What do you think… knowing that you understand values." This supportive, values-based classroom was critical to Cathy's growth. She likens the environment to fertilizer. "It's like Miracle Gro…for student organizations, for student

development. Just having, I'd say similar minded but differently oriented group of students that can challenge each other and support each other through different processes." For Cathy, had it not been for her leadership courses, she would have had little conversation about her values. Outside of her leadership classes, she only knows two people who talk about values, her "overdramatic boyfriend," and an "overcritical, über religious friend."

> I firmly believe that had I not taken the courses, that I would not have constantly been thinking about my values because … before, we have all these beautiful grand thoughts and plans about what university is going to be and had I not had that constant check… I think so much it framed my understanding of [college] as something that's service minded, a place that's service minded. And a place that, that students are not incubated, but supported to a state of constant challenge, constant leadership …I felt like I differed from other students because I had had that exposure but I felt that I was back in that ideal environment when in those classes.

Susan shared she values the diversity in the leadership courses. She believed that through this diversity, she has been able to learn and grow, especially when it comes to her value set.

> I think I've learned just in life but especially in our leadership classes is that the diversity in opinions and perspectives creates a better final product… our communities now are so diverse. There's not one homogeneous culture or community or anything anymore. And we still have very… flat lined ideals and ideas and it's hard for people to break away from that but when you throw like a little salt and a little pepper, like it just makes it better and easier to get and understand.

For Ryan, the students in the leadership classes, "knew and respected each other's values, it was an unspoken understanding of your values." He said through the coursework, students

were able to deliberately articulate what they believed, and what others in the class believe. He said the students feed off of each other, because they have close relationships where they have articulated their values. This allowed for constructive discourse around values, and students challenging each other's values. The students respected each other's differences, and did not want to offend each other. Through the Change course specifically, students shared many personal stories, so it was important to Ryan that the environment of respect was created. He said during the discussions, he learned a lot. Ryan would take what happened in one person's organization, and apply it to his. There were different perspectives around the room, which Ryan was thankful for. He would listen to his classmates, and try to think about his values differently. "I think you take from what they said, because they may have said something really insightful. And you take it back to your organization, and you try to implement it. Or you just think about it, and it changes who you are, or it changes your view." He summarized his experience, sharing that with so many different people in the leadership classes, he was exposed to many different ways of thinking (which he had not been before). This exposure allowed him to examine and then clarify his values.

**Practical Application**

Part of the culture of the leadership courses is the practice of practical application. Many participants discussed application as important practices that improved their values clarification. For example, in Cathy's first interview she shared the importance of application in her leadership courses. She sums it up as follows:

> I think that… leadership courses are the only time and place that students will be guaranteed to have an introspective look about what they actually truly feel and believe. Because in a class, they'll go, oh, how did you feel about this? You know, this character

> in a philosophy class. You know, what do you think about equality? Yes, yes, yes, but there's no connection with experience. I mean, for philosophy, you've never experienced, you know, a futile fiefdom. How do you know about what John Locke really thought? And in global lit[erature], I feel for the character that's living in the wake of the Haitian earthquake but I was not there… I feel it's so crucial, to be able to tie what you feel and what you think to what you've already done. I don't know if reflection can be taught but if it can, this is the closest thing that it comes to. And definitely seeing the way that service has been a way for me to translate my values and be able to understand my past experiences as well as shape my future.

Cathy related the learning from the classroom back to her life through these leadership classes. "Leadership is just what are your values and for many students, that's the first time you're spelling those out. And for me, it was the first time in an academic setting." What helped Mercedés immensely to clarify her values was that she was involved in leadership roles while she was in the coursework. Through conversations in class and assignments, "I was reading about a lot of things that I was able to easily translate into my real life leadership experience." She called it the "perfect marriage." She was able to apply what she was learning in her co-curricular involvement to her work inside the classroom.

Participants put an emphasis on the reflection of values with their practical application as a skill essential to their clarification of values. John, for example, said he reflects constantly in his life. However, the leadership classes have forced him to "reflect differently." He examined his values from time to time. Ella, Mercedés, Vanessa, Traci, and Cathy all shared the importance of applying reflection to their values in order for the clarification process to occur.

**Reflection**

For some students, the reflection continued over many semesters, and into many different classes. For example, Vanessa shared how her experiences in the different courses allowed her to reflect on her values. In her first year in college, Vanessa took the Groups course, and for her, this class was the first time she "was really thinking about my values a lot." She said throughout her involvement on campus over the next few semesters (when she was not taking leadership classes), she continued to reflect on her values. "I think the leadership classes, like Groups… really helped me think about [values] and really start to shape what I was thinking." While she was enrolled in Change and Theory, Vanessa was not concentrating on growing and learning her values. It was in these courses where she was refining her values and applying her values to have a deeper understanding of her personal value set. She said of the leadership curriculum, the classes spoke to her values first at "the surface level and then digging deeper… more of the digging deeper period that I think that was helpful."

Traci "absolutely" thought her leadership classes in particular have allowed her time to reflect on her values. In her theory class, Traci learned about how people personally identify with the different leadership theories. While in Theory, "a lot of it for me was trying to decide which ones would be my leadership philosophy." Through this course, Traci learned situational and servant leadership as philosophies that resonated with her. For her Change class, Traci reflected on change, how she changes, and how to lead others through change. "With the messiness of people, how am I able to stay true to those ways in which I say that I want to lead?" Through Change, she was able to apply the theories she learned in class with her student leadership experiences. "And how I've had to lead myself… has really given me a lot of great skills for the future."

Through her leadership classes, Susan said she reflected on her values. What was unique for Susan was she was not involved in as many organizations as her classmates, but she still was able to reflect on her values. When her cohort would apply the values conversations to their leadership positions in organizations, Susan would apply it to her personal life. With that personal reflection, Susan said, "I think I got a lot deeper reflection and a lot more reflection than a lot of the students did…" She went on to discuss her coursework, sharing she reflected on her values the most in the Change and the Groups courses. She says she reflected in Theory, but the course was much more structured, and did not allow for as much personal exploration. However, the Change class was "definitely more personal." She attributed this personal emphasis because she "had a lot going on personally." In Groups and Communities, Susan found a great balance because she was able to work with children and "because I value the innocence of children and my group was…with the children. And so not only did I get to spend time with those kids, it pulled out other things. Like…not having any money and being so thankful."

For Ella, the reflection did not end with the course. Ella noted that after her leadership course, she has been more reflective. "Since the class ended, I see a different groove that I've been in." She shared reflection has helped her to become more self-aware and conscious of her values. She said she has been thinking about things more. "I came in class prepared in that mindset, I think now that it's done and looking back on it, that it's going to play a big role. Now that it slowed down, I can reflect on what I just did."

Through reflection and the progression of courses, participants shared they not only clarified their values, but also found congruency with their values. For example, Cathy shared how in the beginning of the curriculum, there is "just that blatant question. Can you write out your values? Can you … write these out and explain them to each other." She went on to say in

each class there is a challenge to students' values, to determine what is congruent for each person. However, how congruence is measured differs slightly for each course.

> In leadership theory, it's about understanding what are your values and how do they affect how you are led and how you lead. For groups and community, it's understanding where your values fit in with the way that you consider yourself a citizen or community member. And for change, it's, what are your values and what are your values when you're all shook up. Are they the same? Do they suffer? Do they dip? Do they grow? …It's interesting because in conversations that we had with students, in change, especially, the way they related to the material. The way they related to what was going on. For example, I know one student in particular, … whenever we would talk about a difficult chapter… she'd say, well, I know that from my values, and then explain that… showing the congruency in which she saw that her values were the most central part to her and that's how she viewed the course and the subjects and the actions as a lens for understanding those… [Without the leadership courses] there'd just be thought and action. And there would be no such thing as congruency because I'd think something, then I'd do it. There would be no reflection. There wouldn't be what standard do I hold myself to, what standard do I hold others to. How do I gauge my actions? How do I make a path? There's no internal accountability, I suppose, otherwise.

This congruency was also found in Vanessa's reflection of her values in her activities. Vanessa was involved in multiple leadership experiences. Through these organizations and her leadership courses, she reflected on her values. She shared that the leadership classes have given her a foundation on which to reflect upon her other activities.

> In every aspect of my leadership especially, I am thinking about these certain things and leadership class has helped me understand how to frame that a little better… all of a sudden, it kind of helped me realize, okay, I'm doing this for a reason. Now how do I do it so that it's effective?

## Summary

Mercedés shared "I think college really brings the ideas of values-based decision-making to the forefront…the thing that I think is different about college is there's some niche for somebody and in every niche, I've found there's some kind of values conversation." For each participant in the study, they were able to name their values when asked. Through the interviews, four themes emerged as areas where values clarification happened in college. These themes were: peer relationships, role models, campus engagement, and leadership courses. Students clarified their values through different types of peer relationships including those that were romantic, perspective-shifting relationships, and relationships as they transitioned to college. Some of the peer relationships were positive relationships, while others were not. However, both types assisted in participants' values clarification process. Students also clarified their values from role models. Some of these role models were in the college environment, such as a professor, a Greek Life Advisor, or a motivational speaker during orientation. While other role models were outside of the college environment, such as parents and family members.

This study also found campus engagement was important for participants to clarify their values. In their leadership positions and membership in student organizations, participants shared how they were able to clarify their value set. Participants cited specific activities, such as Trash Your Values as helpful in clarifying their values. Campus employment, such as working

at the recreational center, was useful in clarifying values. Students also found community service and participation in Greek letter organizations as avenues to clarify their value set.

The leadership courses were areas where participants specifically named as aiding them in their values clarification. Students shared there were specific courses that were beneficial to learning about their values, and within those courses, there were specific assignments (such as the personal change paper) that assisted them in clarifying their values. The instructors in the leadership courses were cited as reasons students clarified their values. Additionally, participants believed the course size and the students enrolled in the courses were essential to their values clarification learning. The opportunity to apply what they were learning in the classroom to their lives and allowing time for reflection on their values was critical for some participants.

Learning to identify and clarify values in the context of the Leadership Certificate was useful for the participants in this study. By thinking about her values, Vanessa shared it is a purpose, a means to an end. She felt it was important to know her values to be able to create a path for her in college. By knowing her values, she knows the path she wants to take.

> I think that in knowing your values…it helps kind of find that purpose and create that meaning in what you're doing so it's not just fluff work. And I think that having really thought and dug deep… into what I really do value helps me know more about myself and who I am and what's important to me…So I think that after mushing them all together in a big mush pot of values making cake… I think that just knowing and thinking about them helps. It's just an important thing to do.

# CHAPTER SIX

## DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

> *I've said it a million times but if I could pick any chunk of my life, developmentally, how my brain has changed, the way I think, if there's any time that I feel like my values have been challenged and changed and have been solidified the most…in terms of all around impact, it would be in college.* Traci

The purpose of this study was to understand if junior-level students had clarified their values while in college, and if so, how these students clarified their values in the context of the Undergraduate Certificate in Leadership Studies. This phenomenological study was conducted with two separate semi-structured interviews of 15 participants. Each participant was currently enrolled in or had successfully completed at least one core course in the Leadership Certificate. Through the research, four themes emerged as to how students clarified their values (through the influence of peer relationships, role model relationships and their influence, campus engagement experiences, and leadership courses).

Based on my research, if the academy wants to enhance values clarification, the leadership courses could be one of the best avenues to do so. Each of the other three themes (peer relationships, role models, and campus engagement) all traced back to involvement in the leadership courses. In their peer relationships, students' values were challenged. Students observed role models living their values. Their campus engagement experiences provided the laboratory to practice the skills of values-based leadership. However, it was through the leadership courses that a majority of students made meaning of their experiences, including experiences with role models, peers, and campus engagement. Without the knowledge gained from the leadership courses, students may not have been able to clarify their values in the same manner.

In American culture, lapses in moral judgment can be found almost daily in the news. From our leaders in athletics to leaders in the business world, ethics seem to be questioned constantly. Sports writers are calling for less cheating in the National Football League (Fleming, 2015) after the recent "Deflate Gate" scandal involving the New England Patriots using under-inflated footballs during the playoffs as a way to gain an advantage. While in the business world, Russell (2014), writing for *The Washington Post* calls for leaders to consider ethics in their decision-making in the context of some recent missteps (i.e. Enron, Tyco, Worldcom).

Yet it is not only in sports and in business where values are questioned. The values of colleges and universities are also under examination. Colleges are facing significant scrutiny on their handling of sexual assaults on campus (White House Task Force to Protect Students From Sexual Assault, 2014). The State of Virginia has a mandatory reporting bill for all sexual misconduct in colleges in the State Senate (Portnoy & Anderson, 2015). In order to graduate students of character, without questionable ethics, the academy has a responsibility to educate students on their values.

In this world of unethical leaders, employers are increasingly seeking graduates who are both knowledgeable in academic disciplines, but can also lead ethically. The Collegiate Employment Research Institute at Michigan State University calls for graduates to become "T-shaped professionals," who are both deep in academic discipline and broad in their competencies (n.d.). Eisner (2010), conducted a study with a comprehensive literature review, and found that employers seek graduates with skills in sound judgment, decision-making, problem solving, and ethics among others.

Colleges and universities were founded to educate citizens of character. The missions of higher education institutions often involve educating leaders (Boatman, 1999). In a study of 100

private baccalaureate colleges, Taylor and Morphew (2010) examined mission statements. In their study, the authors found that across each of the five Carnegie Classifications studied, the mission statements of a majority of schools placed value on leadership. Additionally, there were moral and ethical themes, including themes of service to the community and world (Taylor & Morphew, 2010). In this age of increased accountability and lack of moral judgment, it is the responsibility of colleges and universities to educate students not only in their academic disciplines, but also in character.

In order to develop character, students must first know what they value. In order to know what they value, college students must go through the process of values clarification. For the purposes of this study, values clarification is defined as an on-going process of the development of defining what one values (what one believes to be most important and what one cares for most), and how one acts on those values in daily life. In other words, values clarification is the process of defining one's values. By clarifying values, these values will help to guide us in our daily activities and help to align what we say with what we do. After someone has clarified his or her values, he or she should be able to quickly name the values he or she holds most dear. This creates a deeper understanding of themselves, they become more self-aware, and this awareness allows them to become more uniquely themselves.

This study was conducted with 15 traditionally aged (between the ages of 18-22) junior-level students at a large public Research I university in the southeastern United States. For this study, junior-level was defined as having completed between 60 and 89 credit hours or students who are enrolled in their third consecutive year of full-time undergraduate enrollment. Each participant had successfully completed or was currently enrolled in a course in the Leadership Certificate.

## Summary of Study

In order to understand the essence of the experience of values clarification in the context of the Leadership Certificate, I utilized a phenomenological approach (Seidman, 2006). Creswell (2007) defined a phenomenological study as describing "the meaning for several individuals of their lived experiences of a concept or a phenomenon…describing what all participants have in common as they experience a phenomenon" (p. 57-8). In using phenomenology, the experience of clarifying their values for the students in the Leadership Certificate was understood.

Data for the study were collected over a semester-long period in the spring of 2012. Two semi-structured interviews were conducted with each participant. These semi-structured interviews were conducted with a phenomenological approach (Seidman, 2006) that allowed for the participants to share their stories with the interviewer. Prior to the initial interview, participants provided demographic information via e-mail. During the first interview, students completed a values clarification activity with the researcher. In both interviews, the researcher asked each participant to name their top five values. Additionally, questions were asked surrounding their experiences clarifying their values (see Appendix G).

The purpose of this study was to understand the experience of values clarification in college. In order to understand this phenomenon, the primary research question for this study was developed: **Do students clarify their values in college, and if so, how?** More specifically, the following research questions were explored:

1. To what extent do students clarify their values in college?
2. What is the essence of the experience of values clarification through college?
3. If students do clarify their values in college, by what process does that happen?

4. Do students clarify their values through a leadership course?

5. What most influenced the students' values clarification process?

## Discussion

Through data collection and analysis, I learned that students did clarify their values while in college. Four themes emerged as ways that participants clarified their values and directly related back to the five aforementioned questions: through role models both on and off campus; through good and challenging relationships with their peers; through campus engagement experiences, such as on campus employment, student organizations, community service and Greek letter organizations; and through the Leadership Certificate courses. However, students did not report learning their values in college. They often learned their values in their years before college. Participants reported they learn their values from different sources including: family (parents and others), faith, past experiences (a negative break up or changing high schools), innately ("I've always thought this way," or "It's just within me"), role models, and the "environment [they] were raised in."

However, when students came to college, their values were changed, reinforced, or modified. Their experiences while in college helped them to identify and articulate their values. For example, Susan reports learning her values from her upbringing. However, she shares that she learned to clarify and identify her values while in college. "I never really knew that I valued respect until other people didn't... I never knew I valued honesty until someone lied to me…I definitely learned those things at home… but I think they're identified when they're challenged."

### Primary Results of Research

Through the research on these participants, four themes emerged as to how students experience values clarification. Relationships with their peers and role models emerged as two

themes for students to clarify their values. Additionally, campus engagement opportunities and the leadership courses were two other themes that developed throughout the course of the research.

**Peer relationships.** The theme of peer relationships is important to the field of higher education because peers challenge each other in a way no one else can. Peer pressure, for both good and bad, is prevalent in the college environment. Contemporaries can push each other in different ways than administrators and faculty can. While in college, students are exposed to many different types of people, with different ways of thought. This exposure can challenge and consequently clarify values. For example, Traci talked about how she comes from hometown that is not accepting of the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender community. In her hometown, "everyone thought the same, everyone was Christian and no one thought gay marriage was okay." She explains that she thought these same things, because she did not know of any other view. Traci says it was the "brainwash of normalcy around there." However, when she came to college, her best friend identified as gay. This disclosure opened Traci's eyes to new beliefs. Through this experience with her peers, Traci's values were modified.

In college, students learn to live with others, work with others. A great roommate situation or a bad romantic relationship is going to influence what students care about. It is through these experiences that values clarification happens. Students are exposed to difference, and that is helpful for them to test the values they have held dear. Through this dissonance, values are clarified.

Both enriching and challenging peer relationships made a difference in clarifying values. Some students reported their friends supported their values, while other participants shared their significant other contradicted their values. At times, students used their clarified values to create

new friendships. For example, Susan met Jessica, Jamie, and Vanessa through the Leadership Certificate because they had articulated their shared values. Traci shared, "I think knowing and being able to articulate my values has been very key in relationships in general… since I know that these things are important to me."

**Role models.** The theme of role models influencing values clarification is important to the field of higher education because students are observing faculty and administrators to see how they lead with their values. It is important for employees to be positive role models to students. Students look up to these role models. When students see people living their values, it helps them to clarify their own values. Faculty and administrators should share their experiences, and help students to reflect on their experiences. By working in the academy, it is the responsibility of educators to be positive role models to help students to make meaning of their own experiences in college.

By observing people living their values, participants were then able to clarify their own values. One way students observed role models personifying their values were in one on one conversations. Whether it is a meeting with the Greek Life Advisor, a professor, or an employer, students enjoyed these experiences and the experiences had an impact on their values clarification. These mentors allowed students to process through their struggles and their triumphs, all the while providing leadership and support. Specifically, when faculty members showed investment in the student, that relationship was particularly meaningful. Through this relationship, participants defined their values.

Role models outside of the college environment were still influential to students' values clarification. This was especially true for family members. For example, Michael discussed how he missed his family when he was away at school. Therefore, he looked forward to coming

home, and when he was home, he spent more quality time with his family. Through this experience, his value of family was reinforced.

**Campus engagement.** Campus engagement is important to the field of higher education because engagement experiences are the laboratory for leadership. In their engagement experiences, students are beginning their leadership journeys. It is in this context that new leaders will apply their learning to their activities and clubs. This is where student leaders will make mistakes, learn, and grow into their leadership style. These engagement opportunities afford students the chance to make mistakes in a safe environment. College is the time to take risks as a leader, to discover yourself as a leader. In order to be able to have these opportunities for students, colleges and universities must continue to support clubs, organizations, and on-campus employment opportunities for students.

Campuses are filled with opportunities for students to be involved in leadership. College is a time where students can try different things. Opportunities exist through formal leadership positions, through involvement in clubs and activities, and through campus employment, among others. One way that students saw personal growth was through formal leadership positions. Some of these experiences were positive, while others were not as positive. For example, Mercedés learned how to lead authentically by not "doing it" correctly the first time. She says, "balance has been a really hard [value]…because I was doing it incorrectly and so realizing that I was not balancing well …I just saw how important that was." However, through this experience, she was able to learn how to lead with her values on the forefront. Ella's Greek letter organization leadership experience taught her how to lead a large group of women while also staying true to her values. Ryan also shared how he led with values through his student government leadership experiences.

Not only did students learn how to lead with their values, but also they were also able to refine their personal leadership style. Learning a unique leadership style is important because through this process, students learn about themselves. They make meaning of these experiences, and therefore learn and grow. When learning about their personal leadership style, participants became more authentically themselves, and portrayed their values through leadership. For example, Traci was able to discover how she wanted to lead through her Orientation Leader experience.

> You have to lead yourself first. And it's really hard to lead yourself when you aren't able to articulate what your guiding drives are… knowing your purpose and why you are doing things…it's been really rewarding because when I get out into whatever I do in the future, I know that I have that skill.

After discovering her own leadership style, in the second year, Traci helped to mentor others in discovering their own leadership styles. Also through this experience, Traci was able to boost her self-confidence. "Looking back, there are so many life experiences and through that leadership opportunity, I found who I truly was." Jessica also articulated that she increased her self-confidence through leadership positions. By increasing self-confidence, Traci and Jessica both felt a sense of purpose in their professional journeys. The sense of purpose and confidence is important because they will become stronger leaders as they continue to lead with their values.

Whether it is a long-term commitment to a club or a short-term experience, membership in student organizations allowed students to create community. These organizations and seminars are comprised of peers. These peers form a community around shared values. I learned that peer relationships were influential on values clarification. Therefore, these communities formed around clubs, organizations, and short-term experiences were impactful on

participants' values development. For example, Traci discusses her community within the club softball team. The softball team was the first place on campus where Traci felt like she belonged. The group was her sisters, and shared the same interests. When she joined the club softball team, it was the first time Traci felt like she was a part of something bigger than herself. This community was important for Traci in her transition to college.

Throughout organizations and clubs, students articulated that values clarification activities were incredibly helpful in defining their values. Through the interviews, there were many examples of how students used these activities to clarify their values. Specifically, seven participants cited the Trash Your Values exercise as particularly impactful on their values clarification.

Practical application in their campus engagement experiences was beneficial in participant's values clarification. When students were able to clarify their values and then practice using them in leadership and decision-making, it was meaningful to them. Their values became clearer through the application. One engagement experience where students were able to clarify their values was through campus employment. Another example was community service. Cathy spoke intensively about her service, and said that serving others helped her to clarify her own values.

Another campus engagement experience that participants shared as influential in their values clarification was involvement in Greek letter organizations. Each participant who was affiliated with a Greek letter organization mentioned his or her Greek experience during his or her interviews. When discussing values, each Greek-affiliate shared how their engagement in Greek letter organizations forced them to think about their values. Some Greek-affiliated

participants (Ella and Mercedés) shared that their Greek experience was incredibly influential on their values clarification while in college.

**Leadership courses.** The theme of leadership courses is important to the field of higher education because this study affirms that the co-curricular and curricular components together are important. Through the study, students cited both curricular mechanisms (papers, discussion, courses, etc.) and co-curricular mechanisms (break ups, roommate challenges, role models, clubs and organizations) as venues for their values clarification. However, the leadership courses were a place where students made meaning of their experiences. They were able to apply their out-of-class experiences and articulate what they learned through the leadership curriculum. The curriculum allowed students to reflect on their values in different ways, that without the classes, I am not sure participants would have been able to state their values as clearly.

The structure of the learning in the leadership courses was impactful for participants. The curriculum outlines what the students will learn, and creates a contract between the instructor and the student. If students participate, the instructor will teach this curriculum. The coursework affords students the opportunity to apply what they have learned outside of the classroom inside the classroom. The curriculum allows an opportunity to conduct targeted activities and assignments that focus on values. They learned about their values clarification through the discussions and reflections. It was important to the participants to be able to take the time to talk in class, and then take time away to think about what they value. Overall the leadership courses allowed students to think about their values. It is important for educators to take advantage of this structure. Therefore, higher education should continue to fund leadership courses.

Specifically, there were particular assignments that were beneficial in clarifying values. An example of a beneficial assignment is the consistent application questions. Through the courses, leadership instructors asked the participants to apply what they were learning in the classroom to their out of classroom lives. This practical application of leadership concepts was impactful. Students cited their assigned readings as helpful in their values clarification process. In addition, there were specific papers that were beneficial, such as the personal change paper and the change prospectus. The values portrait, where students had to choose three values and then discuss them was another assignment that impacted their values clarification. Susan shares,

> I just got out of groups and communities… we had to do our values self-portrait and we did it at the beginning… so the whole class, we kind of tied everything to our values and we just had our last class Thursday and… every question was, so how does this relate to your values? Values, values, values… I think at the end, it made us more thankful because not only could we apply our class to real life but I think we realized values that we said we had that we didn't have or that we didn't have that we thought we had.

It was not only the assignments that students shared as helpful in their values clarification process, but also the classroom environment. Participants cited the smaller class sizes of the Leadership Certificate as beneficial. Through the smaller class sizes, students were able to get to know each other, and know what they value. This afforded them the opportunity to have conversations with their peers surrounding values. Students in the courses come from different academic disciplines and varied organizations, but overall they had a shared value of wanting to lead. This shared value set allowed the classroom to become a laboratory for students to explore their values with people who may be different from themselves.

The faculty's investment in the individual student went a long way in the values clarification for participants. Ryan shares that he enjoyed the relationship with his leadership instructors and their investment in him was something he valued. These faculty relationships were similar to the relationships between students and their role models, each being influential on their values development.

Throughout the interviews, participants shared practical application as a beneficial aspect of the Leadership Certificate. The ability to take what they learned in the classroom and apply it instantly to their leadership experiences was essential. Ella articulates her parallels between her leadership classes and her leadership experiences,

> I just remember when I'd go back to my advisor… I'm taking this class at the perfect time… It was almost like therapy at some times and even just being able to listen to other people's values or what's important to them and their organizations…I think that it helped me think about my organization more and their values… it definitely helped me… values, just being able to understand the way things work and the cycles that things have to go through kind of made me more sane, like okay, it's going to be okay. This is normal. So, yes. Definitely… I just loved the class…I was always thinking about values and how I can kind of utilize this information and use it in everyday life.

The time for reflection in the leadership courses was also significant in students' values clarification process. Reflection happened both in and out of the classroom for participants. For Traci, reflection was essential in her values clarification. Traci specifically took time to reflect on her values, as that was important to her. In connecting the coursework to thinking about values, Traci says that in order to lead others, "you have to lead yourself first. And it's really hard to lead yourself when you aren't able to articulate what your guiding drives are… knowing

your purpose and why you are doing things." Vanessa also shared that she is constantly reflecting on her values, both inside and outside of the classroom.

**Secondary topics**. In addition to the four main themes that emerged (peer relationships, role models, campus engagement, and leadership courses), there were other experiences that directly related to the values clarification process for participants. These secondary topics were communication, challenges to values, and decision-making.

***Communication and values.*** Students indicated that communication about values was impactful in their values clarification. Essentially, simply having a conversation made a difference for the participants. Repetitive conversations surrounding values seemed to help to further clarify values, but having at least one structured conversation about values clarification aided students in their clarification. Being explicit in the conversation was helpful for students clarifying values. Participants shared that sometimes they thought they were having a conversation about values, but the instructor did not specifically articulate they were discussing values. Other times, the instructor would specifically ask how students are applying their values, or how they were using their values. Examples of this include values clarification activities. Mercedés saw values in many different experiences in college,

> I think there's a lot of places where people talk about values. I think the RAs talk about it in terms of how you live. Greek life talks about it in terms of organizational values. The [Leadership and Service] Center talks about it in terms of social justice values. I think that there are a lot of different avenues, you know, classrooms. They talk about how it affects your field, ethics, things like that…

***Challenging values.*** Values were also clarified for participants when values were challenged. When values are challenged, dissonance is created. In that dissonance is where

learning happens, and values are clarified. By challenging a value, students are forced to make a decision based on values. For example, Mercedés shared a story about having to make a choice between two of her top priorities. In order to make that decision, she relied on her values. Through this experience, she had to determine which of her opposing values was more important to her. This dissonance helped Mercedés to further clarify her value set, learning that one of her values outweighed the other when faced with an ethical decision.

***Decision-making and values.*** When a student can articulate his or her values, it provides a foundation for him or her for decision-making. This values foundation allows students to have a reflection point in decision-making. By knowing what is most important to him or her, the student can make values-based decisions. At times, students make values decisions overtly (e.g. I am in this situation, and if I value honesty, I will make this choice). Other times, the decision is inherent based on values (e.g. I just tell the truth). Vanessa explained this point,

> I wouldn't say that I make myself aware every day, how is this in line with my values? But I definitely do try to in all the things that I do, I try to make sure that I'm acting that would be in a way that I could like look back on and [say] … that's definitely something that I would do and something that I would be okay with… I do try to think… how is that going to sit with me later when I look back on this? And so I try to be aware of the implications of all of my actions and in a way, those do end up lining up with my values… a lot of times, I don't sit down and say, okay, because I value this, I'm going to do this. But it does just kind of have a background role in everything that I do, especially since I started thinking about them more. I'm doing a lot of this and it doesn't really line up with this really so maybe I should cut back.

The university environment is a place that has been created to help students to explore their values, it is a unique environment for students to have the opportunity to learn and grow. It is a place where values are challenged. While there, students' beliefs will be challenged, they will be exposed to new experiences, meet new people, and learn in the classroom. In order to help students to make meaning of these experiences, there are faculty members who are invested in their students. There are engagement opportunities for students to explore. The Leadership Certificate will help students to connect their clarified values to their leadership style. By clarifying values, students are committing to a new self. By knowing what they value, students are able to consciously lead with their values. Students are able to make decisions congruent with their value set.

In conclusion, only one of the four aforementioned themes has to happen within the confines of the classroom. The impact of the leadership courses will happen in the curriculum inside the classroom, but the other three themes exist in the co-curriculum. There are as many influences outside of the classroom as inside of the classroom. However, for students to be values-driven leaders, all four of these components must be present in the collegiate environment.

## Conceptual Framework

For the purpose of this study, I proposed the following conceptual framework. The conceptual framework served as a means to analyze and contextualize the data. The two large circles represent the environment of the Leadership Certificate and student identity development. These two circles representing environment and identity development intersect for students during the college years. It is at this intersection where values clarification occurs.

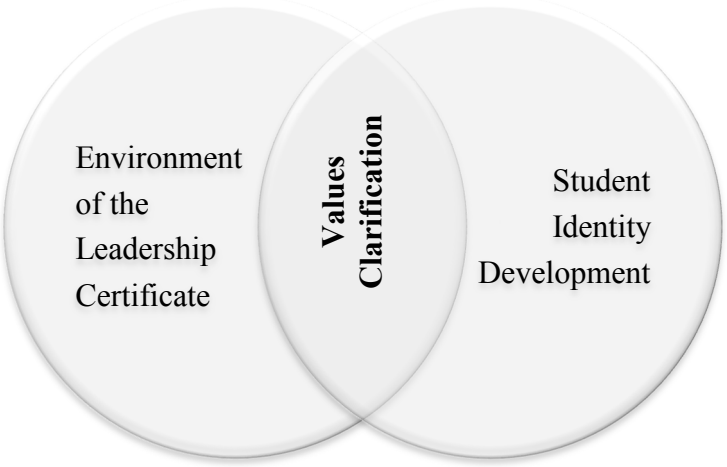


*Figure 2.* Conceptual Framework Revisited

Through data analysis, the conceptual framework fit well with the experience of the participants' values clarification. The environment of the Leadership Certificate was demonstrated in the students' responses of the class assignments, class discussion, class readings, students in the courses, and faculty members teaching the courses. Student identity development was seen through growth in break ups, roommate relationships, and conflict resolution. At the intersection of student identity development and the environment of the leadership certificate is where students' values clarification happened. Students clarified their values through relationships with their peers, role models, campus engagement experiences, and leadership courses. Essentially, the environment of the Certificate interacting with student development met in a place where students were able to clarify their values.

## Framing the Call for Future Research

To answer the primary research question (Do students clarify their values in college, and if so, how?), the literature was first explored. Values clarification literature demonstrated that

there were exercises and activities to complete in the classroom to allow students to clarify their values (Simon, Howe & Kirschenbaum, 1978). However, this literature on values clarification was older, mostly coming from the 1960s and 1970s (e.g. Kirschenbaum, 1976; Raths, Harmin & Simon, 1966; Raths, Pancella & Van, 1967; Simon & deSherbinin, 1975; Simon, Howe & Kirschenbaum, 1978). While this literature is dated, the findings have not changed. The outcomes from the current study bring data on values clarification into the current literature.

In fact, the results from this study parallel Sanford's (1966) model of challenge and support. Sanford proposed three developmental elements: readiness, challenge and support. These elements together create dissonance. "The range of optimal dissonance for any particular student varies depending on the quality of the challenge and support provided by the environment, as well as a student's characteristics" (Evans et al., 2010, p. 30). In this study, participants shared that the environment of the leadership certificate provided both challenges and support in a safe environment. It was then when values clarification happened. Sanford's (1966) model aligns with the conceptual framework for the current study. The environment of the leadership certificate interacts with the student identity development (Sanford's idea of challenge and support (1966)), and in the intersection of the two, values clarification happens.

The findings of this study may not be new to educators; however, the conversations may look different. For example, the way educators frame a conversation with the current generation of college students is different from how those conversations may have happened in the past. A conversation in 2015 will have a different tone from one that happened in 1965. The work of educators is similar to what educators were doing fifty years ago; however, the student demographics have changed, the environment has changed, technology has changed. But, the work of educators has not changed. It is important to continue to study this generation of college

students. This continues the research on values clarification, and brings it into this century. The following section will explore implications and recommendations for educators as a result of this research.

## Implications and Recommendations

This study argues for leadership opportunities through the experience of college. Leadership education is important in the academy. Leadership opportunities should be available in both in the curriculum and the co-curriculum. A college education is not just about learning the subject and graduating quickly. There is much more to the college experience. Through college, students should learn to be well-rounded citizens, good decision-makers, and people of character. People can learn subject matter. But college is much more than that; it is about developing students as the whole person. College is about teaching students to lead both inside and out of the classroom. There are many opportunities in the college environment to learn these skills, for example, on campus employment, Greek letter organizations, coursework, advisor influence, and roommate relationships, among many others.

### Conversations surrounding values

This study advocates for a return to values education in the classroom. Colleges should be teaching character and values development as this is what colleges are created to do. Colleges were founded on the core belief of educating men of character to be leaders. Character education begins with a conversation about values.

Therefore, the first recommendation is to have conversations about values with college students. One of the most important findings is that by having a conversation with students about values, it sparks students' thinking. By asking students to talk about values, they are thinking about values, and this is one of the first steps in values clarification.

These values conversations are critical. This concept may sound simple, but in practice it is not. There are some areas of academia where values conversations may happen more organically such as a conduct office. Conduct administrators may ask how the behavior that brings a student into the office aligns with their values. However, for an academic advisor who may not have the background information on a student, these conversations are not as organic. Or a faculty member who meets with a student about a homework assignment during office hours may not think to discuss values. However, each of these interactions provides an opportunity to discuss values.

Faculty and administrators have the ability to influence college students' values. Taking the time to ask a student what they care about or what they value aids in the values clarification of that student. When meeting with a student, an advisor can ask about future career plans, and how those tie to the student's values. Or an instructor can ask how the information learned in class can relate to his or her values. I recommend asking students about values, and sharing your personal values with the students. It is important to discuss values with all students, not just philosophy majors, or students in a leadership certificate. Faculty and administrators should seize the opportunity to have values conversations with students. Educators want students to become ethical leaders. A dynamic piece of ethics is values, and in order to become ethical leaders, students must first know what they value. The clarification process can begin with a conversation.

This study supports having values-based conversations inside and outside of the classroom. While there may be arguments against discussing values in the classroom, this study found that simply having a conversation to ask a student about their values assists the student in the values clarification process. Participants reported that being asked about their values helped

them to clarify their values. When a student reaches out to a faculty or administrator during a time of crisis, it can be beneficial to ask a student what they value. This helps the student to not only clarify his or her values, but also engage in values-based decision-making. Students can practice reflexive thinking. When a student shares a challenging time, advisors can ask what the student cares about, what is most important to them. By engaging students in those questions, mentors can assist students in making decisions based on their set of clarified values.

Discussions create connections and cohesiveness between students. Participants (such as Susan, Jessica, Jamie, and Vanessa) created friendships with other students in class that shared their same values. These friendships would not have been formed without those values conversations. When students create relationships and connections while at college, they are more successful in college. Through shared values, students can make these important connections with others.

One aspect of the values-based conversations is value activities. This includes values clarification activities. Values clarification exercises are often designed to help people become more aware of their own values (Mosconi & Emmett, 2003). When students participate in these activities, it sparks them to think about their values, to change, modify, or reaffirm their value set. College is the perfect environment for students to participate in these activities. Jamie shares her experiences,

> Values, I never really talked about it before… you never really take the time to sit down and actually think about what I personally value. When you get that list of a hundred values, each one probably applies to you in one way or another, but when you have to narrow it down and actually find what's at your core, I never really touched on that until college.

Though activities like Trash Your Values are impactful, students also shared that assignments focusing on values helped them to clarify their values. For example, some assignments that focus on values are the values portrait assignment, or the personal change paper. Incorporating these activities into the curriculum and the co-curriculum will help students to clarify their values while in college.

A recommendation is to make values conversations explicit. There is value for students when they can articulate that they are discussing values. In the classroom, students shared examples of how they lead with their values. Additionally, students share examples of their decision-making in the context of their leadership. This allows for students to learn how to lead with values from each other.

As there is continued emphasis on evidence-based decision-making and accountability on college campuses, this study reinforces the importance of discussing values on college campuses, and the role that faculty and staff can play in initiating and facilitating these discussions. This study brings values clarification into the present literature. As colleges and universities require evidence for their curriculum and co-curriculum, this study provides research articulating the importance of values-based conversations for students to clarify their values while in college.

This study has application in the college environment, not only encouraging conversations. Specifically, the implications and the recommendations of this study directly relate to three broad constituencies. The constituencies are as follows: faculty, administrators, and leadership educators.

**Faculty and Administrators Implications and Recommendations**

Faculty members and administrative staff are integral in the clarification of students' values while in college. Participants cited ways that faculty aided them in the growth, as well as

how administrators challenged them to think about their values. The following are implications and recommendations for faculty, administrators, and for both constituencies.

**Faculty.** Faculty members were found to have an impact on the values clarification of the participants. Through this study, specific recommendations and implications for faculty members have been discovered. I urge faculty members to ask students what they value during conversations, in both one-on-one conversations and through class discussions. Class discussions are a valuable avenue to assist in values clarification. When students are exposed to the ideas of others in the classroom, they are challenged to think about their own ideas, assumptions, and values.

I learned through the theme of role models that one-on-one interactions with faculty members are important to student's clarification of values. I encourage faculty members to show that they are invested in the students as people. For example, utilize time in office hours or downtime before or after class to talk one-on-one with students. By taking an opportunity to take an interest in the student, students make a connection with faculty members. These conversations help students to know what the faculty member values, which can help the student to determine what they value. By taking time to foster a relationship with the student, a faculty member may become a role model for the student, thus enhancing the values clarification process.

For faculty members who study higher education, another implication of this study is that it adds to the body of literature for junior-level college students. When exploring the research on college students, there is a large amount of research on first-year students. Additionally, research focuses on seniors (or graduating) students. However, there are fewer studies that focus solely on junior-level students. For faculty members who are researching the college population,

this study explores the experiences of junior-level students. Therefore, this study adds to the body of research.

**Administrators.** Through my study, I noted implications for university administrators, as well as faculty members. Often, students also see administrators as role models, whether it is a supervisor or an organization advisor. Administrators have the opportunity to reach students when they may be in crisis or in a turning point in their development. Often administrators are the ones with whom a student shares a challenge, such as a difficult roommate situation. Since this study found that peer relationships have an influence on students' values clarification, I encourage administrators to talk students through their experiences with a values lens. By having conversations about values in the midst of a challenging situation, administrators can help students to make meaning of those tough times. When a student disagrees with his or her roommate, it may be a bad experience for that student. However, an administrator can have a values-based conversation with the student to create a learning moment. Through tough times, students may learn what they value. Administrators can ask simple questions such as, "What have you learned about your values from this experience?" Asking this simple question brings a student's values to the forefront, allowing them ponder their values clarification.

Since this study demonstrated that students learn from role models and peer relationship role models, it is important for students to serve as a role model to other students. Administrators should create these experiences for students. As students mature, serving as a role model and a mentor for more junior students can be beneficial. For students to clarify what they value, it is important this behavior is modeled for them. Administrators should create environments conducive to peer role modeling. Administrators can encourage students to mentor other students, both formally and informally, in their groups and organizations.

College students who are involved on campus, are more satisfied with their college experiences, and are more likely to be academically successful (Astin, 1993; Light, 2001; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991, 2005). This study demonstrates the importance of campus engagement on the clarification of values for college students. The practical application of being involved in campus organizations and activities lends itself to further cementing personal values. Therefore, as an administrator, encourage students to join campus engagement experiences that are congruent with their value set. When a student has clarified values, and values are congruent with the organization, students can then easily lead with the organizations values in mind. As students rise to leadership positions, it may be easier for them to distinguish between their personal values and the values of the organization, thus aiding in their clarification.

Multiple students in my study mentioned that their involvement in Greek life has helped them to clarify their values. For administrators who work with Greek letter organizations, there is an opportunity to assist in the values development of their students. Advisors have the chance to work with students one-on-one. It is through these relationships that administrators can create individual relationships with their students. In the context of these relationships, advisors can become role models. In those individual relationships, advisors can ask students what they value, and challenge them to think about how his or her decisions in their organizations showcase their values. There is a unique opportunity with the students in Greek letter organizations to allow the clarification of their values.

For administrators who work in career services, student awareness of values is helpful in their career exploration and job placement post-graduation. There is an opportunity to ask students how their career goals fit with their values, because employers are now looking for well-rounded college graduates, with a breadth of knowledge and depth of experience (Harris, 2009).

In a recent study published by the Association of American Colleges and Universities, employers cited ethical judgment and decision-making as one of the top 17 priorities of employers of college graduates (2015). To help students become employed in full-time work post-graduation, career services administrators can have conversations about values and how those values fit with career goals.

**Both Faculty and Administrators**

When university administrators or faculty members employ students, they are creating a potentially meaningful relationship with the student employee. Through my research, I found that within the context of their employment, students clarified their values. Both Isaac and Traci specifically mention their on-campus employment. Knowing this, employers should incorporate values conversations and values activities into the student's work. For example, during staff trainings, conducting the Trash Your Values activity may assist students in their values clarification. Having a group discussion about values may also aid students in their journey. When employers are intentional in encouraging students to think about their values, this will help students to clarify their values.

In the context of student employment, students have the opportunity to apply what they have learned. The work environment can serve as a laboratory for students to discover their clarified values. Students can practice and apply values-based decision-making at work. Employers who desire to be intentional in having values conversations with their employees can create curriculum or learning outcomes surrounding values. During one-on-one supervision conversations, supervisors can engage in dialogue surrounding values with the employee.

As a member of the university community, it is the responsibility of faculty and administrators to conduct themselves in an appropriate manner. From this study, I learned that

students clarify their values by observing role models. Specifically, when students see positive examples of role models and observe people who they admire living their values, it helps the student to clarify their own values. Therefore, as role models, faculty and administrators should remember to be a positive example of someone who lives their values for the students with whom they work.

**Leadership Educators Implications and Recommendations**

These findings have important consequences for leadership educators. The findings from this study can implicate changes in practice, while also affirming some current practices of leadership educators. This study provides evidence and support for why leadership educators should continue to teach from a values-based lens. Leadership educators know that leadership can be taught. Leadership is not an inherent skill. One important aspect of leadership is knowing yourself (or consciousness of self). In order to know yourself, you must first know what you value. In order to have congruence, it is important to know what you value, so that your actions are aligned with your beliefs (Higher Education Research Institute, 1996). Therefore, it is important to leadership learning to clarify values in college.

It is important to continue to have values integrated into the learning outcomes or curriculum of leadership education. Values-based assignments and activities facilitate the clarification of values. Continue to utilize values clarification exercises. Engaging in these activities and experiences will assist students.

To enhance the theme of peer relationships and their influence on values clarification, one suggestion is to have students engage in peer-led discussion groups. Students benefit from their relationships with their peers, as well as conversations in the classroom. With peer-led

discussion groups, both of these influences are present. This could be a powerful way for students to clarify their values.

This study demonstrates that the use of reflection in leadership courses assists students in their values clarification. Incorporating reflection on values is important. Through reflection, students are able to take the values information with them, and reflect on their values at their own pace. The use of reflection in leadership education helps students to clarify their values. Reflection assists students in their own meaning making.

Practical application, as well as reflection, is another aspect of experiential learning that participants found valuable in their clarification of values. In order to enhance the experience in the classroom, applying the values and leadership work outside of the classroom is critical for leadership educators. In this study, Ella shared that her ability to practice leading with her values in her co-curricular involvement was critical in her values clarification. In order to solidify the values clarified in the classroom, leadership educators should seek opportunities to apply the learning in the classroom to students' co-curricular learning. This could include application assignments and activities.

In developing communities of learning, leadership educators should consider the size of the class or the group. Smaller class sizes encourage conversation, reflection, application, and interpersonal interactions. Keeping a class limited in size allows time for each student to participate and to share their values with others. In the smaller groups, students are able to listen to their peers and form relationships with their classmates. This close-knit environment aids in the clarification of values. In order to create a close-knit environment, a leadership educator must be dedicated to the students with whom he or she works. This study demonstrates that role models have an impact on values clarification. For students in the leadership courses, instructors

become those role models. In campus engagement activities, advisors become that role model. Leadership educators can become these role models through the smaller groups and a dedication to the students.

Through this study, students expressed that engagement activities and leadership courses are important in their values clarification. However, also impacting their values clarification were their role models, family, and friends. Therefore, it would be beneficial for leadership educators to incorporate peer interactions and role modeling in leadership education. For example, Ryan said he enjoyed the leadership courses and the people in the course. In the classroom, they had a tight knit community. However, the community did not extend outside of the classroom, especially because the students in the course were all highly involved and therefore had busy schedules outside of courses. He specifically cited since there was no reason to study together outside of class, there was a missed opportunity to get to know his classmates on a deeper level. For his Chinese class, students often studied together, and in that informal setting, he bonded with his classmates. As leadership educators, thinking about how to create more informal interactions between students for them to create meaningful peer relationships is beneficial. For example, assign group projects or tasks where students need to meet outside of the classroom or leadership experience, or an examination where students would benefit from working together outside of the classroom.

## Areas of Further Inquiry

In all studies, there are limitations of scope. The scope of this study was the values clarification process of traditionally aged junior-level students at a large, public university in the Southeastern United States who were involved in the Leadership Certificate. But through the investigation, I have found there are many key areas of further inquiry to provide additional

information to the literature on values clarification. Future research could investigate relationships between values clarification and several other measures such as student success, common values, identity and demographics, and co-curricular involvement.

**Values Clarification and Student Success**

As there is increased pressure on colleges and universities for accountability through retention, persistence and academic success, students who have clarified their values may be more successful academically. Future research could examine how clarified values impact student success. The research could explore if students with clarified values graduate at a higher rate, find employment at a higher rate, have a higher grade point average, or have deeper levels of engagement with the institution. Finding a correlation between these would help to justify funding, and potentially allocate more funding to leadership development programs. This could assist in the reaccreditation and recruitment processes for the university. A study or studies of this type would be very important to higher education and add to the literature on college student success.

An additional topic for future research could be on the experiences of leadership certificate students post-graduation. It would be interesting to explore how the leadership certificate continued to shape their values. Future research could focus on students five years or 10 years out of their undergraduate experiences to investigate if they maintain the same values. Additionally, do participants still cite the leadership experiences as impactful to their values clarification? How has the leadership certificate shaped their worldview? Do students still use the skills learned in the leadership certificate? It would be interesting to explore how (or if) their values have changed from their junior year in college. This study would then have impact on the

curriculum of the leadership certificate. Implications may arise as to how to structure the courses so that students continue to learn both during college and after graduation.

**Common Values**

Through the study, multiple participants named the same values as one of their top five values. Future research could examine if there are common values that appear for college students involved in a leadership certificate. Discovering this would help to determine if there is a curricular influence, or possibly an instructor influence. Additionally, this study could explore if there are inherent, shared values for those students who choose the leadership certificate courses or if students learn certain values as result of participating in the coursework. It would be interesting to find if there is a connection between leadership students and their named values. Are there subconscious influences on students that create these shared values? Or are these values more universal values? Research could explore if the institution type had an influence on the values of the leadership certificate participants, or the influence of their hometown. A study could also explore if there are universal values for leadership certificate participants. These studies could influence the curriculum and best practices of leadership education programs.

**Values Clarification and Student Identity**

This study did not explore the differences in values clarification among the differing identities of students. For example, the differences between races and ethnicities were not examined. This issue poses an interesting research topic. It would be interesting to determine if there are different influences for students of different races or ethnicities. Are there certain values clarification exercises that are more impactful to one group over another? Gender was also not examined. Exploring how gender affects values clarification would be useful. Are there differences between men and women in how they process their values? In how their values are

challenged? In how they make decisions based on those values? By discovering the answers to these questions, leadership educators can determine best practices regarding how to work with each of these distinct groups to best assist them in their values clarification.

**Values Clarification and Campus Involvement**

When participants who were involved in Greek letter organizations began sharing how their Greek Life experience impacted their values clarification, many additional research questions were raised surrounding Greek letter organizations and values clarification. Future research could explore the impact of Greek letter organizations on the clarification of values broadly. Research could identify specific factors within the experience that assist students in the articulation of their values. The Greek participants tended to be able to more clearly articulate values. Was it that students who selected Greek Life had already clarified values and found organizations congruent with their values? Or did the organization's values help to shape the individual's values? However, I did notice a difference between the sorority women and the fraternity men in my study. It would be interesting to explore the gender differences in Greek letter organizations. Future studies could explore the Greek population as a whole. Further areas of study could include: gender differences between sororities and fraternities; racial discrepancies between historically Black fraternities and sororities and predominately White fraternities and sororities; or differences between the socially focused organizations and the community service, professional or honorary organizations. An area of research with Greek organizations could attempt to determine at what point during their membership that values are clarified. Does it happen during recruitment, new membership, active membership, or through alumni status? This research could result in implications for Greek letter organizations in college, their curriculum, and leadership opportunities.

Finally, future research could explore whether work experiences on campus led to different values or values clarification activities when compared to students who worked in off campus employment. Does working on campus with access to the institution change values clarification? For students who work on campus, is there a way that they can apply their work to their values? For the on campus employment, it would be interesting to know if there is a difference in the values clarification process for the different types of student employment (i.e. working in dining services as opposed to being a Resident Assistant). Is there a training process, or the nature of the job that impacts the work differently? Answering these questions may have an impact on the university's policies and practices.

While there are research questions that were answered by this study, there is still ample opportunity for future research in the subject area. Due to study limitations, specific questions were answered. However, answering some questions creates an opportunity for areas of future research to continue to advance the field.

## Conclusion

Based on the themes that emerged from this study, undergraduate leadership students clarify their values in the context of four themes. Students clarify their values in the context of peer relationships. Role models assist students in their values clarification. Campus engagement experiences afford students an opportunity to clarify their values through practical application of their learning. Finally, leadership courses serve as an environment in which students clarify and make meaning of their values. These four themes interact with the student's identity development to allow them to clarify their values while in college. Furthermore, it was clear that these four themes directly related back to the guiding questions of the study, and were the most influential in the values clarification process. Peer relationships, role models, campus

engagement, and the leadership courses emerged as themes that influenced the following: (1) the extent of values clarification, (2) the essences of the values clarification through college, (3) the process in which they clarify values, and (4) the leadership courses' role in values clarification.

By understanding how values clarification is fostered in the college environment, faculty and administrators can encourage this important learning both inside and outside of the classroom. Those who interact with college students can ask them what they value. It is important to demonstrate values in mentoring and role model relationships. By actively engaging students in conversations surrounding their values, values clarification can be encouraged.

In summary, college is a time of growth and learning – both inside of the classroom and beyond the classroom doors. Colleges were founded on the organizational mission of educating men of character to lead their communities. Over the last four centuries, the missions of colleges and universities have shifted to include state-backed education, vocational education, technology, research, co-curricular involvement, international reach, and different pedagogies. However, educating students on character is still an important part of the college education. While students may not be solely learning the triviuum and quadrivium, students are still learning what it means to be an educator of character. Based on my research, there is value in the leadership curriculum which can and does educate students on character development. In order to teach character, students must first know what they value. Leadership courses help to clarify values. Therefore, this study enriches the literature on leadership education. It can assist leadership educators in their daily practice. Other scholars may find this worthy to assist them in their journey to educate students and to build character.

## APPENDIX A

## VALUES CLARIFICATION ACTIVITY #1

Strategy Number 1: Twenty Things You Love to Do
Taken directly from Simon, Howe, and Kirschenbaum (1978), pages 30-34

Purpose

An important question to ask in the search for values is, "Am I really getting what I want out of life?" A person who simply settles for whatever comes his way, rather than pursuing his own goals, is probably not living a life based upon his own freely chosen values. He usually ends up by feeling that his life is not very meaningful or satisfying. However, before we can go about building the good life, we must know what it is we value and want. This activity helps students examine their most prized and cherished activities.

Procedure

The teacher passes out paper and asks the students to write the numbers from 1 to 20 down the middle of the sheet. He then says, "And now will you please make a list of 20 things in life that you love to do."

To encourage the students to start filling out their lists, he might add, "They can be big things in life or little things." He may offer an example or two of his own. Or he might suggest, "You might think in terms of the seasons of the year for things you love to do."

The teacher also draws up his own list of 20 items, and as he reaches the end of his list, he might tell his students that it is perfectly all right if they have more than 20 items, or fewer than 20 items on their lists.

When the lists are done, the teacher tells the students to use the left-hand side of their papers to code their lists in the following manner:

1. A dollar sign ($) is to be placed beside any item which costs more than $3 each time it is done. (The amount could vary, depending on the group.)
2. The letter A is to be placed beside those items the student really prefers to do alone; the letter P next to those activities he prefers to do with other people; and the letters A-P next to activities which he enjoys doing equally alone or with other people.
3. The letters PL are to be placed beside those items which require planning.
4. The coding N5 is to be placed next to those items which would not have been listed five years ago.
5. The numbers 1 through 5 are to be placed beside the five most important items. The best loved activity should be numbered 1, the second best, 2, and so on.
6. The student is to indicate next to each activity when (day, date) it was last engaged in.

To the Teacher

This strategy can be repeated several times throughout the year. It is a good idea to save the lists and compare them over a period of time.
Any more than five or six codings at one sitting generally overloads the circuits.

The teacher might see ways of making additional use of the lists. For example, he might ask his student to describe on paper or orally to a partner how they like o do the item they marked with the number 1. The student would tell with whom, at what time, under what circumstances, he likes to engage in the chosen activity.

Or the teacher might ask the student to choose one of the items on his list and then privately, or discuss with a partner, five advantages, pleasures, gains, benefits, or satisfactions he gets from that activity.

A student might volunteer to write his list on the board, with the option to omit any items he'd rather not share. The teacher gives him a Public Interview based on his list. (See Strategy Number 12.)

I Learned Statements (Strategy Number 15) are an excellent follow-up to this strategy.

Additional Suggestions

The teacher might want to add additional elements to the coding system suggested above. Here are some more suggestions that the teacher may use or adapt:

1. Use the letter R for those things on your list which have an element of RISK to them. It can be physical risk, emotional risk, or intellectual risk.
2. Put an I next to any item with involves INTIMACY.
3. Mark with an S any item which can only be done in one particular SEASON of the year.
4. Put the letters IQ next to any item which you think you would enjoy more if you were smarter.
5. Place the letter U next to any item you have listed that you think other people would tend to judge as UNCONVENTIONAL.
6. Put the letter C next to items which you think other people might judge as very CONVENTIONAL.
7. Use the code letters MT for items which you think you will want to devote increasingly MORE TIME to in the years to come.
8. Put the letters CH next to the things you have listed which you hope your own CHILDREN would have on their own lists someday.
9. Which items on your list to you feel nobody would conceivable REJECT you for loving? Code them with the letters RE.
10. Place the letter O next to any items you would rather do OUTSIDE. Place the letters IN next to any items you would rather do INSIDE.
11. Put an MI by any of your items which you would not be able to do if you moved 1,000 MILES south form where you now live.

12. Choose three items which you want to become really BETTER at doing. Put the letter B next to these items.
13. Which of the items that you put on your list would you want to see on a list made by the person you love the very most? Mark these items with an L.
14. Next to each item write the name of a person you want most to talk to about that specific item.
15. Write the letter F next to those items which you think will not appear on your list five years from now.

## APPENDIX B

## VALUES CLARIFICATION ACTIVITY #2

Strategy Number 10: Values Whips
Taken directly from Simon, Howe, and Kirschenbaum (1978), pages 130-132

Purpose

The values whip is much like voting (Strategy Number 3) and ranking (Strategy Number 4) in that it provides a simple and rapid means for students and teacher to see how others react to various issues or questions. Typically, values-whip questions deal with one of the seven valuing processes: seeking alternatives, evaluating the consequences of alternatives, choosing freely, prizing choices or actions, affirming choices or actions, acting upon choices, and developing a pattern of behavior.

Procedure

The teacher or a student poses a question to the class and provides a few moments for the members to think about their answers. Then the teacher whips around the room calling upon students to give their answers. The answers should be brief and to the point, although sometimes a student may want to give a little background to better explain his answer. Students may choose to pass.

Sample Questions

1. What is something you are proud of?
2. What is some issue about which you have taken a public stand recently?
3. What was a recent decision you made that involved consideration of three or more alternatives?
4. What is something you really believe in strongly?

Additional Suggestions

1. What is one thing you would change in our world? In your town? Your school? Your neighborhood?
2. What is one thing you hope your own children will not have to go through?
3. What is one thing about which you have changed your mind recently?
4. Who is one person you know who seems to have it "more together" than you? What can you borrow from his life?
5. How did you handle a recent disagreement?
6. What would you have Ralph Nader work on next?
7. What could you give, personally, to the Presidential candidate of your choice?
8. What is one issue on which you have not yet formed a definite opinion?
9. Who is the fairest adult you know? What is his or her secret?
10. In your opinion, what should black people (or white people) be doing about integration?

11. What do you want to do about racism?
12. What is something in the news that really disturbed you lately?
13. Which local issue disturbs you?
14. Where do you want to be twenty years from now?
15. How much time do you spend worrying about nuclear warfare?
16. Would you be willing to limit car usage in order to reduce noise and pollution?
17. What one quality do you want in a friend?
18. What is something you really want to learn how to do before you die?
19. What are two places you must see this year?
20. What would you do if you objected to a new school policy?

Other questions for values whips may be found among the public interview questions (Strategy Number 12).

## APPENDIX C

## LEADERSHIP COURSEWORK

Course descriptions for the Undergraduate Certificate in Leadership Studies

The information on these courses was taken directly from the Center for Leadership and Civic Education's website at: http://thecenter.fsu.edu/students.html and other specific course-related sources.

**Certificate in Leadership Studies**: The 18 credit Certificate in Leadership Studies is an undergraduate program that is interdisciplinary, multidimensional, experiential, and multicultural. The Certificate is offered through the Center and the Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies. Award of Certificate is acknowledged on recipient's academic transcript.

The Certificate in Leadership Studies consists of at least 18 hours of course work. Following is a listing of 5 core courses for the Certificate in Leadership Studies:

**LDR 2101- Leadership Theory and Practice** (3)
Leadership Theory and Practice is designed to inspire, teach and engage students in the process of leadership learning. Students will be introduced to leadership theory and come to understand their unique role in leadership on campus, in their academic discipline, and within our larger society.

**LDR 2162- Leadership in Groups and Communities** (3)
Leadership in Groups and Communities is designed to inspire, teach and engage students in the process of leadership learning within the context of working with groups and communities. Students will also have an opportunity to develop skills necessary to be effective in the leadership process and practice these skills within their community. The course will be highly interactive with student participation and outside class involvement as critical components to the learning process.

**LDR 3214- Leadership and Change** (3)
Leadership and Change is an advanced undergraduate leadership course that examines the change process and prepares leaders who are effective in working with individuals, groups and organizations in leading and managing change. The course is designed to be an interactive theory-to-practice course focused on leadership as a change process.

**LDR 3263- Leadership Experience** (3)
This experiential based course offers participants an opportunity to put into practice the knowledge, theory, and skills they have learned in previous courses in the Certificate program. Students will select and create an experience, complete an experiential learning contract for the course, and do extensive reflection on their experience throughout the course.

**LDR 4105- Leadership and Complexity** (3)
This final course in the Certificate program builds upon the leadership literature, theory and experience created in the previous Certificate courses. This course provides opportunities for analysis of student's experiential opportunity, advanced theory to practice work, and development of personal leadership theory and integrated learning plan. Systematic reflection on applied leadership issues and strategies is an important component of this course.

**Supporting Leadership Course** (3)
The supporting leadership course must be approved by the Certificate Coordinator. Students must send a copy of the syllabus to the Certificate Coordinator and complete the Supporting Course Reflective Paper before the hours can be counted towards the Undergraduate Certificate in Leadership Studies.

The Supporting Course reflective paper should be 3-4 pages in which the student reflects on the content of the supporting course and how it connects to theory and concepts learned in Leadership Certificate courses. Specific theories, concepts, and how material covered in the supporting course influences your current leadership practice should be included. The reflective paper needs to be turned in by the last semester of the Leadership Certificate program.

**Approved Supporting Leadership Courses**

**ADE4930 - Leadership for Social Justice** (3)
This supporting course is being offered to students participating in the Social Justice Living Learning Community (SJLLC). If funding will allow, this course will be offered each semester to open this course to non-SJLLC students in the Spring. This course explores social justice issues and how, as leaders, we must consider the opinions of all in order to create positive sustainable change in the world. This course will seek a permanent LDR course number within the next year.

**ADE4930 - Leadership in Sustainability** (3)
This supporting course is being offered in Spring 2012 as a pilot course. It will focus on the process of leadership and creating positive change in the areas of sustainability, including, but not limited to economic, environmental, and sociopolitical sustainability. This course will seek a permanent LDR course number within the next year.

**LDR2163 - Emerging Leaders** (3)
This course enables students to develop their intellectual, interpersonal, and social skills through their experiences as members in organizations. This course is designed to prepare students for leadership roles and challenges they face in their organizations, on campus, and in the community. The course is highly interactive with student participation and outside class involvement as critical components to the learning process.

**LDR4404 - Student Affairs Leadership** (3)
This course offers practical information and activities designed to familiarize students with theories, organizational structures, and issues/trends/challenges of the student affairs profession. It is designed to provide students an opportunity to gain knowledge in the theory and practical

application of student affairs, with an emphasis placed on leadership development, problem solving, and career exploration.

## APPENDIX D

## HUMAN SUBJECTS APPROVAL MEMORANDUM

The following information was received via email from Human Subjects at Florida State University on January 17, 2012 at 4:07 p.m. Please note, Mackenzie Streit is the maiden name of Mackenzie Fritz.

Office of the Vice President For Research Human Subjects Committee Tallahassee, Florida 32306-2742 XXXXX

APPROVAL MEMORANDUM

Date: 1/17/2012

To: Mackenzie Streit

Address: XXXXX Dept.: EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP

From: Thomas L. Jacobson, Chair

Re: UseofHumanSubjectsinResearch Do Students Know Their Values? Examining Values Clarification in Undergraduate Leadership Students

The application that you submitted to this office in regard to the use of human subjects in the proposal referenced above have been reviewed by the Secretary, the Chair, and one member of the Human Subjects Committee. Your project is determined to be Expedited per per 45 CFR § 46.110(7) and has been approved by an expedited review process.

The Human Subjects Committee has not evaluated your proposal for scientific merit, except to weigh the risk to the human participants and the aspects of the proposal related to potential risk and benefit. This approval does not replace any departmental or other approvals, which may be required.

If you submitted a proposed consent form with your application, the approved stamped consent form is attached to this approval notice. Only the stamped version of the consent form may be used in recruiting research subjects.

If the project has not been completed by 1/15/2013 you must request a renewal of approval for continuation of the project. As a courtesy, a renewal notice will be sent to you prior to your expiration date; however, it is your responsibility as the Principal Investigator to timely request renewal of your approval from the Committee.

You are advised that any change in protocol for this project must be reviewed and approved by the Committee prior to implementation of the proposed change in the protocol. A protocol change/amendment form is required to be submitted for approval by the Committee. In addition,

federal regulations require that the Principal Investigator promptly report, in writing any unanticipated problems or adverse events involving risks to research subjects or others.

By copy of this memorandum, the Chair of your department and/or your major professor is reminded that he/she is responsible for being informed concerning research projects involving human subjects in the department, and should review protocols as often as needed to insure that the project is being conducted in compliance with our institution and with DHHS regulations.

This institution has an Assurance on file with the Office for Human Research Protection. The Assurance Number is FWA00000168/IRB number IRB00000446.

Cc: Kathy Guthrie, Advisor HSC No. 2011.7151

## APPENDIX E

## BEHAVIORAL CONSENT FORM

### FSU Behavioral Consent Form

Values Clarification and Leadership Coursework Study

You are invited to be in a research study of how undergraduate students clarify their values through their college experience. You were selected as a possible participant because you are currently enrolled in a leadership course. We ask that you read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to be in the study.

Mackenzie Streit, a doctoral candidate in the Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies, College of Education at Florida State University, is conducting this study. Kathy Guthrie, Assistant Professor in the Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies, College of Education at Florida State University, is supervising her in this study.

**Background Information:**
The purpose of this proposal is to contribute to a better understanding if and how students clarify their values in college. The research questions address the phenomenon of values clarification through the college experience, specifically in leadership courses. Both purpose and research questions are based on arguments concerning the underlying problem: how students understand what they value through college. Student development theory teaches us that throughout college, students go through significant development, including moral development (Chickering & Reisser, 1993; Gilligan, 1982; Kohlberg, 1973; Perry, 1970). It is both the environment and the maturation that occurs during college that affect growth. One aspect of students' development is the refinement of their personal values. Through an activity and interviews this study seeks to explore how current programs and practices influence values clarification, specifically courses that have a leadership-focus.

**Procedures:**
If you agree to be in this study, we would ask you to do the following things:

- Spend approximately two 45 minute to 1 hour sessions with the researcher for interviews and an activity;
- Complete a short demographic information form;
- Answer questions regarding your experience clarifying your values in two interviews;
- Agree to have the conversations recorded; and
- Allow the researcher to contact you after the two conversations to answer follow-up questions (for example, questions to clarify or confirm interpretations).

**Risks and benefits of being in the Study:**
The benefits to participation are assisting in understanding how undergraduate students clarify their values, and improvement of leadership courses in regard to how values clarification is explored.

**Compensation:**
If you complete two interviews, at the end of the second interview, the researcher will present you with a $10 gift card.

**Confidentiality:**
The records of this study will be kept private and confidential to the extent permitted by law. In any sort of report we might publish, we will not include any information that will make it possible to identify a subject. Research records will be stored securely and only researchers will have access to the records. Any tape recordings made will only be accessible to the researcher and possibly a transcription service. The tapes will be erased at the conclusion of the study. These tapes will only be used for educational purposes.

**Voluntary Nature of the Study:**
Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with the University. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time without affecting those relationships.

**Contacts and Questions:**
The researcher conducting this study is Mackenzie Streit. You may ask any question you have now. If you have a question later, you are encouraged to contact her at XXXXX. The advisor to this study is Dr. Kathy Guthrie, XXXXX.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher(s), you are encouraged to contact the FSU IRB at XXXXX, or by email at XXXXX. You will be given a copy of this information to keep for your records.

**Statement of Consent:**
I have read the above information. I have had the opportunity to ask questions, and have those questions answered. I consent to participate in the study.

_____ _____

Signature Date

## APPENDIX F

## RECRUITMENT SCRIPT

*Florida State University*
*Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies*

*RECRUITMENT SCRIPT*
*(To be read to students in leadership classes in attempts to recruit students to participate in the study)*

**Investigation of Values Clarification in Undergraduate Students**

Hello, my name is Mackenzie Streit and I am involved in a research study, "Investigation of Values Clarification" at Florida State University.

I am asking you to take part in a research study because we are trying to learn more about your experience in leadership courses and how these courses have impacted your personal clarification of values. You will be asked to participate in two interviews where I would ask questions regarding your experience in clarifying your values, and how this has been impacted by your leadership courses. During this time, I would also ask you to complete an activity surrounding your values. Through this study, there are no foreseeable risks or discomfort apart from what you would experience in a normal day. Your participation is voluntary, and you can stop the interview at any time without any penalty to you.

You will not benefit directly from participating in this research study. If you complete two interviews with the researcher, you will be given a $10 gift card as an incentive. You will not be reimbursed for any expenses related to this study.

For this study, you will be audiotaped. It is your right to review the audiotapes, and the tapes will be kept in a locked, secure office, and only be used for educational purposes. They will be destroyed approximately two years from the end of the research study.

Do you have approximately 45 minutes to one hour to participate in this research study at two different times? If you are interested, please list your contact information on the sheet you have been given, and I will contact you for a time that is amenable to both of us.

If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please feel free to contact Mackenzie Streit (XXXXX) or Dr. Kathy Guthrie (XXXXX), the research supervisor.

If you have questions regarding your rights as a research subject, contact the FSU IRB at XXXXX.

## APPENDIX G

## INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

### Meeting One Questions

*Semi-structured Interview Questions*

- What are your reactions in regard to that activity*? (General feelings, strength/struggling, identification of values, FEELING)*
- What was easiest for you about that activity? What was the hardest? Why? *(Identification of values, strength/struggling, THINKING, FEELING)*
- Changing gears a little bit, what is something you are proud of? *(Identification of values, DOING)*
- Do you think the things you love to do reflect your values? Why or why not? *(Congruence of values, DOING)*
- What are your values? *(Identification of values, THINKING, FEELING, DOING)*
- Have your leadership courses allowed you time to reflect on your values inside and outside of the classroom? If so, how? *(Congruence of values, formulation of values, values conversations, DOING)*

- Follow-up questions as needed.
- Additional prompts (use as needed):
    - What is some issue about which you have taken a public stand recently? *(Identification of values, DOING)*
    - What was a recent decision you made that involved consideration of three or more alternatives? *(Identification of values, DOING)*
    - What is something you really believe in strongly? *(Identification of values, THINKING, FEELING)*

### Meeting Two Questions

*Semi-structured Interview Questions*

- What is something you are proud of? *(Identification of values, DOING)*
- What is something you really believe in strongly? *(Identification of values, THINKING, FEELING)*
- What are your values? *(Identification of values, THINKING, FEELING, DOING)*
- Tell me about your values and how you feel you uphold those values in your daily life. *(Identification of values, congruence of values, DOING)*
- How do you know these are your values? *(Formulation of values, identification of values, THINKING, FEELING)*
- Describe how relationships with others have affected your own values. *(Congruence of values, formulation of values, FEELING)*
- How do you think you came to know these are your values? Were there experiences that led you to know these are your values? If so, what were those experiences, and how did you feel during those experiences? *(Formulation of values, identification of values, DOING, FEELING)*

- Please tell me about a time when your values were challenged before you came to college. How did you react? What were your behaviors? What was the outcome? How did you feel? Now, if the same challenge happened today, how do you think you would react? Would it be different? *(Congruence of values, identification of values, formulation of values, values development, DOING, FEELING)*
- Tell me about a time when your values were challenged. How did you react? What were your behaviors? What was the outcome? How did you feel? *(Congruence of values, identification of values, DOING, FEELING)*
- Have your leadership courses allowed you to engage in dialogue inside and outside of the classroom? If so, how? *(Congruence of values, formulation of values, values conversations, DOING)*
- Is there anything else I did not ask you that you would like to have been asked about?

- Follow-up questions as needed.
- Additional prompts (use as needed):
    - How do other people uphold their values? *(Congruence of values, THINKING)*
    - What one quality do you want in a friend? *(Congruence of values, identification of values, FEELING)*
    - What is some issue about which you have taken a public stand recently? *(Congruence of values, identification of values, DOING)*
    - What was a recent decision you made that involved consideration of three or more alternatives? *(Congruence of values, identification of values, DOING)*
    - What is one thing about which you have changed your mind recently? How did that happen? *(Congruence of values, identification of values, THINKING, FEELING, DOING)*
    - What is something in the news that really disturbed you lately? *(Congruence of values, identification of values, THINKING, FEELING)*
    - Is there anything else you would like to add?

## APPENDIX H

## RECRUITMENT EMAIL

Email to recruit participants for study

Subject Line: Participants being sought for a Values Clarification and Leadership research study

Hello-

Mackenzie Streit is looking for participants for her research study. You are receiving this email because you are a student enrolled in the Undergraduate Certificate in Leadership Studies at the Florida State University. Your e-mail address was obtained from the Coordinator of the Undergraduate Certificate in Leadership Studies program.

Through this study, we are trying to learn more about your experience in leadership courses and how these courses have impacted your personal clarification of values. If you take part in this study, you would be asked to participate in two 45-minute to one-hour interviews where I would ask questions regarding your experience in clarifying your values, and how this has been impacted by your leadership courses. During this time, I would also ask you to complete an activity surrounding your values. If you complete two interviews with the researcher, you will be given a $10 gift card as an incentive.

If you are interested in participating or have any questions about the study, please e-mail Mackenzie Streit: XXXXX.

Thank you very much for your consideration.

Sincerely,
Mackenzie R. Streit

If you have questions regarding your rights as a research subject, contact the FSU IRB at XXXXX.

## APPENDIX I

## DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONS

*Florida State University*
*Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies*

*DEMOGRAPHIC/BACKGROUND INFORMATION*

1. What is your name?
2. What year in school are you?
3. What is your gender?
4. How do you identify ethnically?
5. What is your major?
6. How old are you?
7. Describe the community in which you grew up (for example: urban, suburban, rural, Northeastern United States, lower socio-economic, etc.).
8. What is your involvement on campus (groups, clubs, work, athletics, leadership positions, etc.)?
9. What leadership classes have you completed (a list of leadership classes is listed below)?
10. In what leadership class are you currently enrolled (a list of leadership classes is listed below)?

**Leadership class list:**
**LDR 2101- Leadership Theory and Practice** (3)
**LDR 2162- Leadership in Groups and Communities** (3)
**LDR 3215- Leadership and Change** (3)
**LDR 3263- Leadership Experience** (3)
**LDR 4105- Leadership and Complexity** (3)
**Supporting Leadership Course:**

ADE4930 - Leadership for Social Justice (3)

ADE4930 - Leadership in Sustainability (3)

LDR2163 - Emerging Leaders (3)

LDR4404 - Student Affairs Leadership (3)

## APPENDIX J

## SELECT ASSIGNMENTS FROM THE LEADERSHIP CERTIFICATE

Select assignments from the Leadership Certificate

The information on these assignments was taken directly from the syllabus for the course indicated.

### LDR 2101- Leadership Theory and Practice - Spring 2015

Contribution to Class Learning Environment-30 points

Leadership is inherently a relational process that occurs among individuals. Within this course, each of us has a responsibility to create a dynamic learning environment in which we have the opportunity to understand, acquire, practice, reflect, and apply our leadership knowledge, skills, and values. Each member of the class is an expert in his or her personal experience we must be present to share this with our peers and learn from each other. In addition, reactions, interpretations and analysis of course readings are critical components of a learning environment. While many feel this cannot be accomplished in an online environment, I would argue that some online communities are quite successful at this. Questions will be posted for each unit and each student is expected to respond at least once to each question and at least once to another students' posting per question. Throughout the semester a total of 30 questions will be posted. If you miss one question, you will essentially be deducted one percentage point for your final grade. Discussion board for each unit will close down at 11:59 pm on the date it is to be completed. You will not be able to go back and take part in that unit's discussion after that time.

Personal Leadership Story and Learning Plan-15 points

You are asked to reflect on the leadership learnings and experiences in your life to write a personal leadership story. Reflecting upon life experiences from birth to the present day, students will create a leadership life story. You will think about what people, events, experiences, opportunities have impacted the way they think about leadership. You will use the following questions to remember and reflect on the foundational and growing experiences that create your story.

Remember:

- What is your first memory of a "leadership" experience?
- What is your earliest memory of a leader?
- What leadership roles (positional and non-positional) did you play in your family, in your community, in school, sports, or clubs and organizations, in spiritual or religious communities?
- Who encouraged or discouraged you to develop and practice your leadership skills? How did they do this?

Reflect:

- Do you consider yourself a leader? A change agent? What labels or titles do you self-identify with?

- How has your perspective of leadership changed over time?
- What events sparked the changes? What leadership lessons have you learned from these experiences?
- What images come to mind when you think of leadership qualities?
- What is your personal vision in life?
- What specific goals do you have to reach your vision?
- When reflecting on your leadership story, what stands out the most to you?

(3-4 pages)

Leadership Theory Quizzes- 10 points/each

Students will take two timed quizzes on leadership theories presented in class. These quizzes will include true/false, multiple-choice and fill-in-the-blank questions and are time-limited. Students may take the quiz from anywhere that they can access Blackboard. These quizzes will be available for a week and become unavailable at 11:59 pm on the dates they are to be completed.

The quiz is open-book and -notes, however since it is time-limited, searching for answers in unfamiliar material may be futile. A link to each of the quizzes will be available in the Assignments section on Blackboard. Remember that you will have only 40 minutes to complete each 20-question quiz (no matter when you start). There will be a timer on the screen for your convenience. The only restriction for taking the quiz relates to interaction with other people - this is an individual quiz, so please do not be in contact with anyone else while taking the quiz. Any other material assistance is allowed (e.g., textbook, articles, notes).

Application of Theory - 15 points

For this assignment students will select a movie with a leadership focus. This will be an out-of-class assignment and the movie should be preapproved by the instructor. Students will watch the movie with a focus on identifying and critically analyzing the leaders as well as the leadership themes, theories, situations, etc. in the film and then write a 3-4 page paper on the leadership aspects of the film; make sure to incorporate and cite at least 3 leadership theories/concepts. Students should look for leaders and leadership situations, watch how different characters react and interact. Students should reflect and react to the following questions: Can you identify a single leader? Are there multiple leaders and/or leadership situations? What kind of leadership behavior/style/skill does the leader exhibit? What about the followers, how do they behave? How are they treated by the leader? Do you see any of the leadership theories we've studied in action? The purpose of this assignment is for students to demonstrate their knowledge and application of leadership theories discussed in this course. Therefore, do not spend time in the paper summarizing the movie. Please follow the writing guidelines described in the syllabus.

Final Paper-20 points

The 6-7 page final paper serves as the course final exam. The final paper will serve as the student's *next chapter* for his/her Personal Leadership History (from the earlier assignment). **NOTE** NO late papers will be accepted for this final assignment.

This final paper should demonstrate an understanding of leadership theory, course concepts, and the student's own leadership style. There are three main components to this paper. First, students will be expected to pick a theory or theories that best represent their own style, describe the

theory or theories, and explain how it has influenced past and present leadership experiences. Second, students will include a personal definition of leadership and the values/assumptions that helped them to arrive at the definition. Third, students should also discuss what they envision their future leadership style to look like and why or why not it will change. Please note: this paper must describe your leadership learning over the course of the semester and cite at least SIX theories or concepts introduced in course readings and/or materials.

**LDR 2162- Leadership in Groups and Communities – Spring 2012**

Contribution to Class Learning Environment - 100 points

Leadership is inherently a relational process that occurs among individuals. Within this course, each of us has a responsibility to help create a dynamic learning environment in which we have the opportunity to understand, practice, and apply our leadership knowledge, skills, and values. Each member of the class is an expert in his or her personal experience, and we must be present to share this with our peers and learn from each other. In addition, reactions, interpretations and analysis of course readings are critical components of a learning environment. Therefore, students will be graded on their contribution to the class learning environment on two distinct measures:

1) Attendance: Students will receive one point for each class attended. Leaving early or arriving late will result in loss of the point for that class. As always, absences for illness and other situations *may* be considered excused if discussed with instructor ahead of time. Texting or using a cell phone during class will result in the loss of the point for that day. Additionally, 5 points will be given for engagement in class discussions throughout the semester.

2) Completion of readings/theory application: Students will be asked to provide a reflection for each day's assigned reading. This reflection needs to include *two main ideas* you personally value from the assigned readings, *one way you can apply* the assigned reading to your personal/organizational life (be specific and detailed in your application) and *one question or challenge* you have pertaining to the assigned material. Each reading reflection is worth up to 4 points and is due by the time class starts at 9:30am. Reading reflections will not be accepted after 9:30am. If you are ill, your reading reflection may be turned in before the start of class, but will NOT be accepted after class begins at 9:30am. There are 17 reading reflections throughout the course of the semester. The reading reflections will be graded on quality of ideas shared.

Facilitation of Classroom Discussion - 30 points

Since communication and facilitation of discussion are inherent skills in leadership, students will facilitate a class discussion. Each service-learning group will be responsible for one of the leadership practices. Students are expected to teach the key points found in the literature assigned for that day, engage fellow students in an activity which helps bring the practice to life, lead class discussion of material using student questions provided in the reading reflections, and provide an analysis of the practice. This facilitation/discussion is expected to last 50 minutes. An outline for the facilitation, detailing the proposed format and activity, is due three class periods prior to your presentation. You will be assessed on the following:

1) Ability to connect and apply key points in reading to current events or personal situations;

2) Ability to engage class in depth conversations about the topic;

3) Professional visual aids and presentation style including appropriate dress,

communication, lack of distractions, etc. □

Value Self-Portrait Video□- 20 points□

Students will reflect on their personal values and how they relate to leading groups and communities. These personal values will be shared in a form of a video self-portrait. This self-portrait will need to be 2-3 minutes in length. A clear communication on your personal values and relation to leading in groups and communities will be required. You will be assessed on your precise communication of your values, connection to leadership learning and length of video. A written copy of your script will be required with submission of your Value Self-Portrait Video.

Quizzes□- 50 points□

Students will take two quizzes over the course of the semester of approximately 25 points each.

Service-Learning Group Project□-150 points□

This project has four main components.

1) Students will provide at least 30 hours of community service at a Tallahassee non-profit agency. Ten hours of service will need to be completed with your entire group; ten hours of service must be completed with at least one other member of your group; and up to ten hours may be completed individually. Students will record service hours on personal hour log forms, which will be distributed and explained the second day of class. Verification on the hour log must come from the agency representative and be signed at the culmination of each service visit. Fifty points will be awarded for completion of the full 30 hours of community service, with a penalty of 5 points for every hour less than required at each checkpoint. *Numerical evaluation by your site supervisor will also impact this score.* To the extent possible, I expect you to spread your service out over the semester, so that you and your agency will benefit from your consistency over time.

2) Students will submit four journal entries throughout the semester, responding to prompts, reflecting on their service-learning experience, and connecting their service to course concepts.

3) Student groups will give a 30-minute presentation about their group service experience. This presentation will require participation from each member, an overview of the service-learning experience, and a visual representation of the work completed (photos, video, website, etc.). The purpose of this presentation is to practice using the theoretical frames of the course to describe your group experience. More guidelines will be discussed in class.

4) Students will individually write a 5-6 page paper synthesizing and reflecting on their group service experience and making effective use of the course literature. At least six citations (each referencing a different author) from the course readings are required.

**LDR 3214- Leadership and Change – Spring 2012**

Contribution to Class Learning Environment - 150 points

Leadership is inherently a relational process that occurs among individuals. Within this course, each of us has a responsibility to help create a dynamic learning environment in which we have the opportunity to understand, practice, and apply our leadership knowledge, skills, and values. Each member of the class is an expert in his or her personal experience, and we must be

present to share this with our peers and learn from each other. In addition, reactions, interpretations and analysis of course readings are critical components of a learning environment.

Therefore, students will be graded on their contribution to the class learning environment on two distinct measures:

1) Attendance- this will be measured by two points given for each class attended, leaving early or arriving late will result in loss of the points for that class. As always, absences for illness and other situations *may* be considered excused if discussed with instructor *ahead of time* (50 points);

2) Completion of readings- this will be measured by providing a summary sheet at the beginning of each class period in which reading is assigned. This summary sheet will need to include three key points learned from the assigned readings, one way that you will apply the assigned reading to your personal/organizational life and one question you have on assigned material read. Questions posed in your summary sheet will be used to guide class discussion that day, so when there is more than one reading, please specify what reading you are asking your question about.

Summary sheets will only be accepted in paper format and in person. If you do not attend class, you will lose these points as well as attendance points. However, if you are ill, summary sheets may be turned in *before* the start of class in paper format or via e-mail, but will NOT be accepted after class. After 12:30 p.m., no summary sheets will be accepted.

Each summary sheet is worth up to 5 points. The summary sheets will be graded on quality of key points and questions provided, critical thinking and reflection on readings and that the entire reading was analyzed. Be sure to present solid content and convey your message using appropriate grammar, syntax, punctuation, and language. (100 points).

10% Facilitation of Class Discussion - 30 points

Since communication and facilitation of discussion are inherent skills in leadership, students will be assigned to facilitate a class discussion. Students are expected to teach the key points found in the literature assigned for that day and engage fellow students in a discussion of material. This facilitation/discussion is expected to last 30 minutes. Depending on the class period, two students may present. We *highly encourage the use of activities* in your presentation. Please remember this is not to be a summary of the reading, but a discussion of the reading. Everyone will have read the article or chapter, so it is important to not simply summarize the reading, but rather, engage the class in conversation.

You will be graded on three things:

1) Ability to connect and apply key points in reading to current events or personal situations (10 points);

2) Ability to engage class in depth conversations about topic (10 points); and

3) Professional presentation style including appropriate dress, communication, lack of distractions, etc. (10 points)

Significant Personal Change Story - 60 points

Students will reflect on the most significant personal change experience up to this point in his/her life. Through the lens of our readings and class discussions, students will describe their change experience in a 4-5 page paper. The paper should include a description of the

change and response to it, in addition to a focus on the issues of readiness, urgency, resistance, transitions, and learning that may or may not have occurred throughout the change process. At least 3 citations from course readings will be required. In doing this, you are expected to:

1) Describe the personal change situation in a clear and concise manner (10 points);
2) Communicate your response to change and how it relates to class readings. Your discussion needs to be clear and fully developed (25 points);
3) Correctly cite at least three sources from course readings, including a bibliography or references page (this page does not "count" toward your 4-5 page limit) (5 points); and
4) Present solid content and convey your message using appropriate grammar, syntax, punctuation, and language. Papers should be typed, double-spaced, one-inch margins, with 12-point Times New Roman font. Required length of papers mean full pages of text, not half of a page dedicated to cover page items or one sentence at the top of a page (20 points).

Change Prospectus - 60 points

The final paper will be due electronically to XXXXX by 12:30 p.m. on April 19th. This assignment will be to outline a change initiative that you are committed to creating. This change initiative needs to look beyond personal change and focus outward on how you will lead change within an organization, group, community, population or society. This 5-6 page paper should reflect your leadership learning over the course of the semester and reference class experiences, readings, and presentations to support your leadership change plan. In doing this, you are expected to:

1) Briefly explain the context and need for the change (10 points);
2) Describe the plan of action (10 points);
3) Describe how you will successfully implement the change (situational) and the transition (psychological) throughout the initiative (25 points);
4) Cite at least five relevant references from the course. Proper citations are expected (Name of author, book/article, and year) (5 points); and
5) Present solid content and convey your message using appropriate grammar, syntax, punctuation, and language. Papers should be typed, double-spaced, one-inch margins, with 12-point Times New Roman font. Required length of papers mean full pages of text, not half of a page dedicated to cover page items or one sentence at the top of a page (10 points).

**LDR 3263- Leadership Experience – Fall 2013**

10% Learning Contract - 10 points

The learning contract is due prior to the start of the project work. Each student is responsible for creating the contract, having it signed by all three parties (host site contact, student and instructor) and submitting it to Dr. Kathy Guthrie by the start of the semester in which they are enrolled. Failure to turn in signed learning contract by the end of the first week of classes will result in being dropped from the course. *This assignment will be evaluated on ability to effectively communicate the project and learning objectives the student wishes to achieve, as well as the quality of writing in answering the questions.*

The learning contract does not need to be in a traditional essay format, but rather in a

Question and Answer format. The questions are provided below. Please provide signatures of both you and the site contact at the end of the document. This will need to be scanned and uploaded under the assignments tab.

General Information

1. What are the start and end dates for your experience?
2. Where will you physically be located to complete your hours?
3. Who will supervise you and your work (please provide name, title, organization, phone number and e-mail address)?
4. What is your plan to stay connected with this person; specifically when will you meet on a regular basis?
5. Provide a brief position description for your experience.

Learning Outcomes

What are your learning outcomes for this experience? Please provide 3 learning outcomes that explain what you want to learn. An example of a strong learning outcome is "I want to learn how the process of leadership is demonstrated in all aspects of the organization I will be working with."

For EACH of the three outcomes please provide at least 3 activities you will do to support that learning. An example of an activity is "I plan to meet with people in multiple areas within the organization I am working with to discuss how individuals with leadership positions are inclusive of everyone in the organization."

For EACH of the three outcomes please provide at least 2 resources you will use to support that learning (people, training manuals, etc.). Two examples of resources include "I will use my site contact as a resource in better understanding the organization" or "I will use Northouse's *Leadership Theory and Practice* to remind myself of leadership theoretical constructs in order to best observe the process in the organization I am working with."
** I suggest you write your learning outcome then writing directly under it what activities and resources you will do/use to support your learning.

Assessment

How will you assess the learning outlined in your learning outcomes? Discuss how you will evaluate your learning and report that information to your supervisor.

Thinking forward to your final. How will you demonstrate your overall learning in this project? What form will this take? Options include a 6-7 page paper, a website, video or any other way you feel you could demonstrate your learning from this experience. I recognize learning takes various forms for different people, so creativity is an option. However, you will need to discuss your plans here and get it pre-approved.

<u>30% Project Work- Tracking Sheets - 30 points</u>

A total of 120 hours are required of project work throughout the semester. You will need to keep track of your own hours using the template provided on Blackboard. At midterm time, October 14, 2013, your tracking sheet will need to be turned in. The final tracking sheet is due at end of semester, December 9, 2013. *The instructor will work with the student and site coordinator to assign the grade. This grade will be determined on the total number of hours served and interaction with site contact and staff.*

You have three main options for project work. These include:

Service-Learning Project- Service-Learning projects equally benefit the provider and the recipient of the service, as well as ensure equal focus on both the service being provided and

the learning that is occurring.

Internship- Internships are designed to help students understand and apply their leadership studies to the academic discipline/career field.

Research Project- Students will undertake independent, original research as a part of the undergraduate experience working with a faculty member.

10% Learning Style Reflection Paper - 10 points

A successful leader strives to learn from each and every experience. David Kolb (1984) emphasized the central role the experience plays in the learning process. Reflecting on how one learns provides insight into how to maximize opportunities. This paper will be focused on the student's current learning style. David Kolb's experience learning cycle will provide the theoretical framework for this 3-4 page paper.

Guiding questions for this paper is

1) What area of Kolb's learning cycle do you feel you are most aligned with in your learning style?

2) Provide a specific example from your experience this semester that demonstrates this type of learning. Finally,

3) How does this understanding of your learning style expand or confuse your knowledge of your personal leadership journey?

*This assignment will be evaluated on the ability to critically reflect and analyze Kolb's experiential learning cycle and experiences and communicate these thoughts through the paper.*

30% Reflection Journal Entries - 30 points

The reflection journal assignment aims at exploring the leadership implications of your experience. Student experiences should contain "fact" and student's own review and critique of performance. A minimum of 30 entries are needed for this reflection journal that is equivalent to one entry for every 4 hours of work. Length of each entry should be approximately 1 page double space typewritten. Journal entries should outline what happened in 2-3 sentences and then what you learned through the experience should be focused on. Entries can focus on specific situations, observations, course reading or application of previously learned theory to your experience. Journals in the form of blogging will be accepted, just make sure the instructor is aware of this. The first 15 journal entries are due on October 14, 2013. The second 15 journal entries are due December 9, 2013.

*This assignment will be evaluated on fulfilling the number and length of entries required, as well as the ability to incorporate weekly readings with service experiences. For example, if only 90% of the 30 required entries (which is 27 entries) are completed as outlined (1 page in length, discusses situations and thoughts, etc.), a grade of A- would be assigned for this portion of the course grade.*

20% Final Reflection Project - 20 points

The final reflection project may take the form of a 6-7 page reflection paper, a website, video or a project of your own creation. While the reflection paper is the most typical format students choose to fulfill this requirement, if you would like to create a website, video, or something else talk with the instructor. A website, video or anything else will not be accepted unless pre-approved by instructor. This final project will be a reflection of the student's experiences for the entire semester.

In the final project, students are responsible for answering:

1. Provide a brief overview of the project worked on this semester and the site you worked at.

2. How do your experiences this semester connect with lessons learned in prior Certificate courses?

3. What were your 3 personal learning objectives outlined in the learning contract?

4. How were your personal learning objectives accomplished?

*This assignment will be evaluated on the ability to critically reflect and analyze the coursework and semester experiences and communicate these thoughts through the final paper.*

**LDR 4105- Leadership & Complexity – Fall 2013**

Contribution to Class Learning - 45 points

Leadership is inherently a relational process that occurs among individuals. Within this course, each of us has a responsibility to create a dynamic learning environment in which we have the opportunity to understand, acquire, practice, reflect, and apply our leadership knowledge, skills, and values. Through reflection, each member of the class can be an expert in his or her personal experience. Our unique experiences inform and shape the meaning we make and our analysis of course readings, in order to share this knowledge we must be present to learn from each other. Interpretation and integration of course readings are critical components of a learning environment and will be graded components of the course.

Students will be graded on their contribution to the class learning environment on four distinct measures:

- Attendance - one point awarded for each on time arrival and presence for the full duration of the class meeting time;
- Completion and submission of Critical Question Reading Reflections (8) and Adaptive Issue Ideas (1) - one point possible for each reading reflection and issue idea completed and submitted to course blackboard site by Monday at noon before class (further description is below);
- One thoughtful, co-led facilitation of class discussion focused on key points, analysis and application of the course reading for that day (further description is below); and,
- Meaningful engagement in course discussions and critical question submissions - measured at the culmination of the course by instructor and peer evaluations.

Critical Questions Reading Reflections

Reading reflections will be considered on-time when posted on our course blackboard site by noon Monday before class.

Reading Reflections are composed of one critical question that comes from your analysis and application of the reading for that day. Questions should be designed to explore the reading in further depth. They may be brief, yet must be thoughtful and well-crafted. They should focus on analysis and application. They should not be simple yes/no questions or whose answer is clearly obvious in the assigned pages of the reading; instead questions should link your current knowledge and experience to your reaction and comprehension of the reading. Class facilitators will select the questions that will bring depth and integration to our class discussion.

Each posting is worth up to one point towards your Contribution to Class Learning Environment grade.

Adaptive Issue Ideas

On September 11th, in addition to your reading reflection question posting, you will bring to class two descriptive examples of adaptive issues you have observed and desire to understand as possible topics for your Adaptive Issue Analysis and Application Paper.

Course Facilitation

In pairs, you will facilitate one class discussion. Facilitation includes preparing an outline that will guide your questioning and management of the class discussion.

You and your co-facilitator will create an outline with three sections:

1. Questions to guide classmates to understanding and identifying key points from the readings;
2. At least 2 examples of the content's application to current events local or global; and
3. At least 3 Critical Questions you select from your peers Reading Reflection submissions.

The questions you select should be of the depth and quality to move the conversation you are facilitating forward. Each course facilitation is worth 10 points; pairs will be graded together on their outline, preparation, and conversation facilitation.

Adaptive Leadership Issue: Analysis &Application 10 pages - 50 points

The purpose of this assignment is to apply Adaptive Leadership concepts to an adaptive issue of your choice. Students will select an adaptive issue that matters most to them personally and/or professionally. To apply the concepts of Adaptive Leadership, students are expected to use the course readings by Heifetz and Linsky; to present your chosen adaptive issue, students are expected to cite a minimum of 3 sources as grounding literature to describe and gain perspective on the complexity of the issue. In addition, your personal experience observing, working, and/or leading within the issue may be used to provide detail and depth to your analysis. The 10 page analysis is an opportunity to apply Adaptive Leadership as a strategic framework in order to mobilize people to tackle the tough problem you have identified.

Full description with grading rubric will be distributed on the second day of class.

Due Dates: September 25th at 6:00 pm your completed paper is due for peer review through Blackboard. September 28th at noon your completed peer review is due back from your classmate through Blackboard.
October 2nd at 6:00 pm your final copy is due through Blackboard.

Leadership Identity Development Reflection & Learning Plan - 40 points

Through a study of the Leadership Identity Development (LID) model, leader development, leadership development, and theories explored in previous courses you will explore your leadership identity development. This exploration will culminate in a learning plan that identifies the leadership questions and/or skills you still seek to understand/develop. Students will create visualizations of their moments of personal growth through the Leadership Identity Development model in a manner most fitting to the expression of their journey. Creativity is encouraged – for example original works of art, poetry, music, or video – however your LID development moments and future lessons to learn must be evident in presentation.

Projects will be presented in class on November 13 and 20. In addition, students will meet one on one with course instructors to reflect on their leadership identity development and learning plan.

Full description of the assignment and grading rubric will be distributed in class on October 23.

Final Exam - 40 points

The course final exam will be based on student's understanding and application of Wheatley's work. It will be a take home exam. A detailed description of the exam will be distributed in class on November 20.

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## BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Mackenzie Ruth Fritz, born in Baltimore, Maryland and raised on the east coast of the United States, is the oldest child of James Brown and Linda Ruth Raab Streit. She has a younger brother, Captain Tyler Christian Streit, of the United States Air Force. She is married to Thomas LeRoy Fritz, Jr. Mackenzie earned her bachelor's degree in Biological Sciences with a minor in Spanish from the University of Delaware in Newark, Delaware. As an undergraduate student, she was a Resident Assistant, a Blue Hen Ambassador, and a Hall Director. Mackenzie earned her master's degree in Student Affairs Practice in Higher Education Administration from the University of Delaware. While a graduate student, she held an assistantship with the Office of Residence Life and the Office of Judicial Affairs. After graduation, she worked at Drexel University in Philadelphia, in the Residential Living Office.

Mackenzie then went to the Florida State University (FSU) to pursue her doctorate. While at FSU, she held an assistantship with the Hardee Center for Leadership and Ethics in Higher Education, as well as in the Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs. Additionally, she taught Leadership and Change in the Undergraduate Certificate for Leadership Studies, and was a Teaching Assistant for Student Development Theories and the American College Student in the Higher Education master's program. Mackenzie also worked with the Social Justice Living Learning Community in the Center for Leadership and Civic Education and in 2010, she earned the Institutional Research Certificate from FSU.

Mackenzie has over fifteen years supporting student success in higher education and currently works at Michigan State University, where she serves as the Associate Director of Residence Education in Residence Education and Housing Services. Her research interests

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