

L–9: Understanding Values, Attitudes and Ethics



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Lesson – 9

Understanding of Values, Attitudes and Ethics

Learning outcomes: At the end of this lesson, you will be able to:

- LO 1. Describe the role of values in personal life.
- LO 2. Explain importance of positive attitudes.
- LO 3. Justify the need to follow ethics.

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Lesson – 9

Understanding Values, Attitudes and Ethics

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Values, attitudes and ethics are like the lubricant that is instrumental in running the mechanism of human social life smoothly. Without it, a purposeful life cannot be lived, since they affect the credibility of the activities being carried out by any human being. In a way, they depict the individual qualities a person chooses to represent; to guide one's actions; the sort of person one wants to be; the manner in which a person treats himself/herself and also others, and the interactions one carries with the society. They are very important in every aspect of life, and a teacher needs to be conscious about it and ought to demonstrate his or her commitment by being a role model and intends to develop the core ethical values and positive attitudes in the students. On the face of it, generally for a new teacher it is difficult to differentiate all these terms as this has not been their area of study or work. In this lesson, the concepts of values, attitudes and ethics are discussed and their importance in the life of every human being and civilized society.

2.0 VALUES

Values refer to the beliefs for which a person has an enduring preference. *Values* are defined as the principles and ideals, which helps a person in making the judgment of what is more important. Values exist in the mind and are independent of public affirmation. Following are some examples.

- a) Respect to parents
- b) Helping the needy
- c) Simplicity
- d) Charity
- e) Integrity
- f) Rejecting bribe
- g) Respecting purity of material and thoughts
- h) Respect Purity of Environment
- i) Use of only handmade clothes such as Khadi.

2.1 More about Values

Values are the principles and ideals that help a person in making judgment of what is more important in one's life. Values are not feelings, but they are preferences. Although values are expressed as feelings, but they are more than feelings. One need not have an agreement or consent or acceptance from others for valuing something in his actions or life. Some other aspects with respect to values are given below:

- a) Values are stimuli for thinking.
- b) They differ from person to person.

- c) Advise/ guide what we wish to achieve
- d) Determine or discriminate between choices based on level of importance.
- e) Motivate people to do better in life
- f) Some values are inborn; some are inculcated later in life.
- g) Values are taught by a teacher only through demonstration. A student learns the most by teacher's actions rather than lectures alone.

2.2 Attributes Related to Values

The values inculcate several good human attributes. This section discusses how good attributes can be developed or created in a teacher due to sound values. Basic or most fundamental attribute of a good teacher is abundance of universal and selfless 'love' towards his/her students, fellow teachers and his institution. Every other good quality or value emerges from this one source. Sage Patanjali in his epic work, '*Ashtang yog, shat-sampatti and saadhan chatushtya*' specifies many good attributes related to values that students expect to see in their teacher:

- a) Be impartial. Should not favour anybody due to caste, religion, region or gender.
- b) Be truthful and honest about his readings of himself and about evaluating the students. Whatever he promises, he must fulfil diligently and happily.
- c) Not copy material from any source without due acknowledgement or should not steal credit for students' achievements or work done.
- d) Carry out basic teaching craft with great care. Be punctual, plan lessons ahead of time, be very concise and precise.
- e) Be open- hearted and not greedy.
- f) Be transparent in academic matters and while dealing with all. Maintain cleanliness in all transactions. What he thinks, what he speaks and how he acts must all be aligned and harmonious.
- g) Be contented and satisfied with self-achievements, his student's performance, and facilities provided by the management.
- h) Make a thorough preparation for classroom presentations and rehearse well so that maximum output can be delivered to students, effectively.
- i) Read and study regularly technical literature and teaching material inside and outside the syllabus.
- j) Have a calm and balanced mind to face the adverse situation and must not have revengeful attitude.
- k) Have excellent discriminatory mind - what to retain and what to discard as useless material.
- l) After doing all the hard work and labour and the desired result is not achieved, he should be ready to let it go and accept it.

3.0 ATTITUDES

Attitudes are often the result of experience or upbringing, and they can have a powerful influence over behaviours. In simple terms, 'attitude' is a way of looking at a particular object, person, thing, or event. It indicates the approach taken by the observer to deal with a situation, person or object. In psychology, an attitude refers to a set of emotions, beliefs, and behaviours toward a particular object, person, thing, or event. While attitudes are long lasting, they can also change. The change can happen due to circumstances or it can be induced by repeated exposure like demonstration, positive reinforcement and so on. The Krathwohl's taxonomy of affective domain describes five levels of attitude development- *Receiving, Responding, Valuing, Organization and Characterization*. The associated video describes these levels in more detail.

"Attitude is a small thing that makes a big difference."

-Winston Churchill, Former British leader & PM

Attitudes are the 'glasses' through which one sees oneself, others, events, experiences, the future, and the world around him. Everyone wears 'attitude glasses' and each one's glass is unique to him/her. What a person sees - light vs. dark, rosy vs. gloomy, clear vs. distorted, all depends upon a person's attitude. The way s/he sees things appear very real to him/her, even if it's not the truth. A person's attitude affects his/her behaviour. S/he thinks and behaves in a way consistent with his/her attitude, which becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy.

Attitude comprises basically of mind-set, viewpoint, beliefs, preferences and such others. These elements add to the personality of a person. His/her skill in facing the challenges of life and moving ahead is often shaped by the attitude s/he holds. Following are some of the good attitudes:

- a) Compliance with rules promptly
- b) Honestly paying taxes
- c) Teaching the students with necessary preparation
- d) Friendliness
- e) Sympathy
- f) Sincerity.

Attitudes are generally classified as positive and negative attitude. However, two more types of attitudes about which a teacher needs to be aware of are Neutral attitude and Sikken attitude. All these types are discussed briefly in the following sections.

3.1 Positive attitude

Persons with positive attitude generally don't care about the hurdles in life. They nurture their skills daily and overcome daily hurdles in life. In addition, they avoid negative thoughts and persons with negativity. They recognize their mistakes, own them, take responsibility

about them and instead of being ashamed of them, they vow not to repeat the same thing. For the beginners, the best way to maintain a positive attitude is to believe in oneself, avoid negative thoughts and persons with negativity.

A person with positive attitude will look for the good in other person's acts and nature, no matter how bad they behave or how bad is their attitude. In a workplace, positive attitude keeps the work moving and progressing, smoothly and fosters team spirit and co-operation. Four important positive attitudes are briefly described here:

- a) **Confidence:** This attitude is necessary to approach life with zest. A confident person looks at the challenges and says "I can overcome this". Confidence will start with being confident with self.
- b) **Happiness:** A happy mind is an abode for all the good things in life. Confident people are quite happy as they are not worried about results, interviews and other similar things in life. Persons with this attitude are happy within themselves.
- c) **Sincerity:** A person with positive attitude is generally sincere. Sincerity is one trait that you should never let go off or compromise with. S/he is aware of the work to be done and know that the only way out of a situation is through it.
- d) **Determination:** A person who is driven by strong will overcome all impossibilities. A right dose of hard work, effort and determination are essential to achieve the desired goal.

3.2 Negative attitude

"A bad attitude is like a flat tire. You cannot go anywhere, until you change it!"

- An American proverb

Persons with negative attitude ignore the good things in life and only think about whether they will fail. They often find a way out of tough situation by running away from it. They mostly compare themselves with other persons and find the worse in others. In other words, they are exactly the opposite of those with a positive mind-set. Here are a few important negative attitudes which should be avoided:

- a) **Anger:** A person with a negative mind-set is often found to be angry most of the time. Many times, there is no specific reason behind their anger. Anger is the root cause of self-destruction. While some amount of anger is good to get things going, extreme cases of anger only lead to all around destruction.
- b) **Doubt:** A person can question oneself. But, s/he should never doubt himself/herself. Unfortunately, those who have a negative mind-set, often doubt themselves. Self-doubt leads to no progress and often leads to low confidence.
- c) **Frustration:** This attitude leads to all round dissatisfaction with self, others and environment, at all times. If a person is frustrated that can be seen on his/her face, may confront some serious difficulties. Frustration is the biggest roadblock in one's

career advancement. It is an irritant and it keeps preventing a person from taking any positive step forward.

3.3 Neutral Attitude

A third type of attitude which is quite common is the *Neutral Attitude*. In a neutral attitude person, there is neither any doubt nor there is any kind of hope. Such a person generally tends to ignore the problems in life and waits for some other individual to take care of their problems. Such persons generally have a lazy life and they are often un-emotional and insensitive about others. They never feel the need to change themselves as they can simply live with the way they are. Another example is when a common person shows lack of interest in serious national matters such as politics, finance, debt, legislation and such others leave everything to rulers and administrators.

3.4 Sikken Attitude

A fourth type of attitude is the *Sikken Attitude*. A person with *Sikken* attitude tends to destroy every image that comes in connection with a positive image. This type of attitude is more of a negative attitude and is very destructive and dangerous. For example, assume that a person with such attitude hates spiders and openly says, "I hate spiders!". Whenever he will see a spider, he will proceed to kill it first, without giving it a single thought. It is difficult to change a person with this type of attitude as it is deep rooted within their personality.

4.0 ETHICS

'Ethics' is a branch of moral philosophy – which depicts a sense of rightness or wrongness of actions. Ethics are well-defined standards that a person should comply with, concerning rights, obligations, fairness, and benefits to society and so on. Ethics refer to the guidelines for conduct, that address question about morality. In other words, it is a discipline that identifies human conduct about, good or evil, just or unjust, fair or unfair practices. The ethical standard puts a reasonable obligation to stop crime like stealing, assault, rape, murder, fraud and so on.

Ethics is a system of moral principles decided by a group of persons, an organization, culture or society and every member of that profession is expected to abide by those. The *ethics* control and govern the behaviour of a person according to the norms set by others. Ethics attempts to answer the basic questions of the human morality such as:

- a) What should be a standard way for people to live?
- b) What are the appropriate actions in the given situations?
- c) What should be an ideal human conduct? and so on.

Ethics describes what is morally correct or incorrect, in the given situation and prescribes dos and don'ts. It also determines extent of rightness or wrongness of your options, as

required by a jurisprudence or law. Ethics are a guide to person for making the right option or choice. Therefore, teachers should:

- a) Be well informed about subject matter
- b) Provide excellent instruction with a deep obligation to help students learn
- c) Stimulate the spirit of inquiry in students for thoughtful formulation of worthy goals
- d) Not to deliberately suppress/distort subject matter relevant to the student's progress
- e) Regularly review and update instructional practices
- f) Refrain from plagiarism.
- g) Come to work regularly and on time
- h) Not use professional relationships with students for private advantage.
- i) Not to disclose information about students obtained in the course of professional service unless disclosure serves a compelling professional purpose or is required by the court of law
- j) Not to allow students to cheat in examinations
- k) Cooperate with colleagues to observe institution policies so the whole institution works effectively
- l) Criticise unsatisfactory institution policies tactfully, but firmly, to propose constructive solutions.

4.1 Ethical Violation

Any violation of ethics may affect the value and credibility of the activities which are done as a part of that teaching learning activity or business/service profession. Some examples of violation are:

- a) Overlook standard norms in practical examination
- b) Casual evaluation of answer books.
- c) Teaching from guides and refreshers
- d) Liberal marking the answer books to avoid efforts of teacher in taking retest and so on.

There can be academic ethics, business ethics, and others.

4.2 Academic Ethics

Mahatma Gandhi is known to follow principles of ethics some of which are very relevant for a higher education teacher as a professional:

- a) Truth
- b) Right Means and Right Ends
- c) Primacy of Duties over Right
- d) The Deed, not the Doer
- e) True Religion (Universality and Brotherhood)
- f) Service and Sacrifice (Yajna).

4.3 Business Ethics

In the sphere of business and services, the sellers and buyers follow some basic ethics, which are accepted as a baseline by every stakeholder in that activity. Following are some examples of business:

- a) Give the full amount in quantity and quality as agreed
- b) Provide timely after sales service
- c) Take care in handling customer material
- d) Use only genuine parts in a vehicle service centre
- e) Promptly address customer complaint.

5.0 DISTINCTIVE FEATURES OF VALUES, ATTITUDES AND ETHICS

Values, attitudes and ethics are important in every aspect of life. When you have to make a choice between two things, wherein *ethics* determine what is right, *values* determine what is more important amongst the available choices.

Table – 1 Features of Values, Attitudes and Ethics

Criteria	Values	Attitudes	Ethics
Key words in Definition	Principles and ideals, which help a person in making the judgment of what is more important.	The way of looking at a particular object, person, thing, or event. It indicates the approach taken by observer to deal with a situation, person or object.	System of moral principles decided by a group of persons, an organization, culture or society and every member of that set is expected to abide by those.
Effect of given situation	Not governed by situation.	Related only to specific situations.	These are situation specific. The person may behave other way in a different situation
How it is manifested	The manifestation of it differs from person to person, by the way of thinking by an individual. It is inherent part of thought process; due to personal preference.	By thinking, by feeling, by sensing, by intuition	By the way of informing to the person and monitoring; may not be personal preference/ choice; same for persons belonging to the same business/ teaching fraternity
To Guide	What is more important; based on values an individual makes	Action or expression (Verbal or non-verbal)	What is right/ wrong, good/bad, fair/unfair for society as whole; related

Criteria	Values	Attitudes	Ethics
	decisions such as how to live life; provides motivation, inspiration and decides emotional state		to morals; impose boundaries.

6.0 SUMMARY

Values help a person decide what is important in various choices and options before him. Attitude is like a pair of tinted eye-glasses through which s/he looks at the world and decides his/her further action. Ethics tells a person what to do and what not to do in that particular profession. Values, attitudes and ethics help a person to determine what is important and provide the general guidelines for any person's conduct. They help him/her to navigate through life successfully under all conditions.

ACTIVITY

List at least three examples for each of the values, ethics and attitudes from your daily life, which you may discuss with peers and mentors which is to be posted on the E-portfolio.

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<https://www.strateges.com/blog/2018/08/26/understanding-the-power-of-attitude-is-yours-worth-catching/>
- [3] <https://www.mkgandhi.org/articles/sept081.htm>

DISCUSSION FORUM

Start a discussion on social media about the ethical and unethical behaviour of a technical teacher related to use of online resources for teaching students?

ASSIGNMENT

1. List three values for a teacher to carry out teaching learning activities smoothly.
2. List three points describing ethical behaviour of a teacher towards a poor learner.
3. List three points describing to good attitude of a teacher towards laboratory work.