

Sharpening skills and questioning values

We're proud to be hosting a Character Development Seminar from the Josephson Institute of Ethics this week on the Drake University campus. In addition to all of our Iowa staff, we've invited our trainers and some key community volunteers to join us.

We spent a good deal of time yesterday talking about values. Afterward, a school administrator mentioned that she is rethinking her school's community service program. The school mandates community service as a graduation requirement. What was the reason that prompted her to question their program? Our values discussion – specifically pragmatic values (what is useful or what works), pleasure values (what we want or desire) and ethical values (what we think is right). The administrator was questioning the worth of the community service program. Was it still a valuable requirement if the students were doing community service because it was required, not because it was the right thing to do?

Of course, in this situation students could participate both because it was the right thing to do and because it was required. Additionally, they could begin the program with one value and end with another. However, it does prompt some interesting thoughts.

Think about your values and why they are important to you. Which values are based on what is useful for you or are what you desire? Which of your values are based on what you think is right?

 We took some time out to take a photo of the group participating in the training.