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Navigating the Digital Age: Values-Based Decision-Making in a Connected World

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Critical Questions

Can we create this?	→	Should we create this?
Who will benefit?	→	Who will pay for it?
What problem does it solve?	→	What problem does it create?

Youth and the Internet

99%

85%

Technology | Human Values

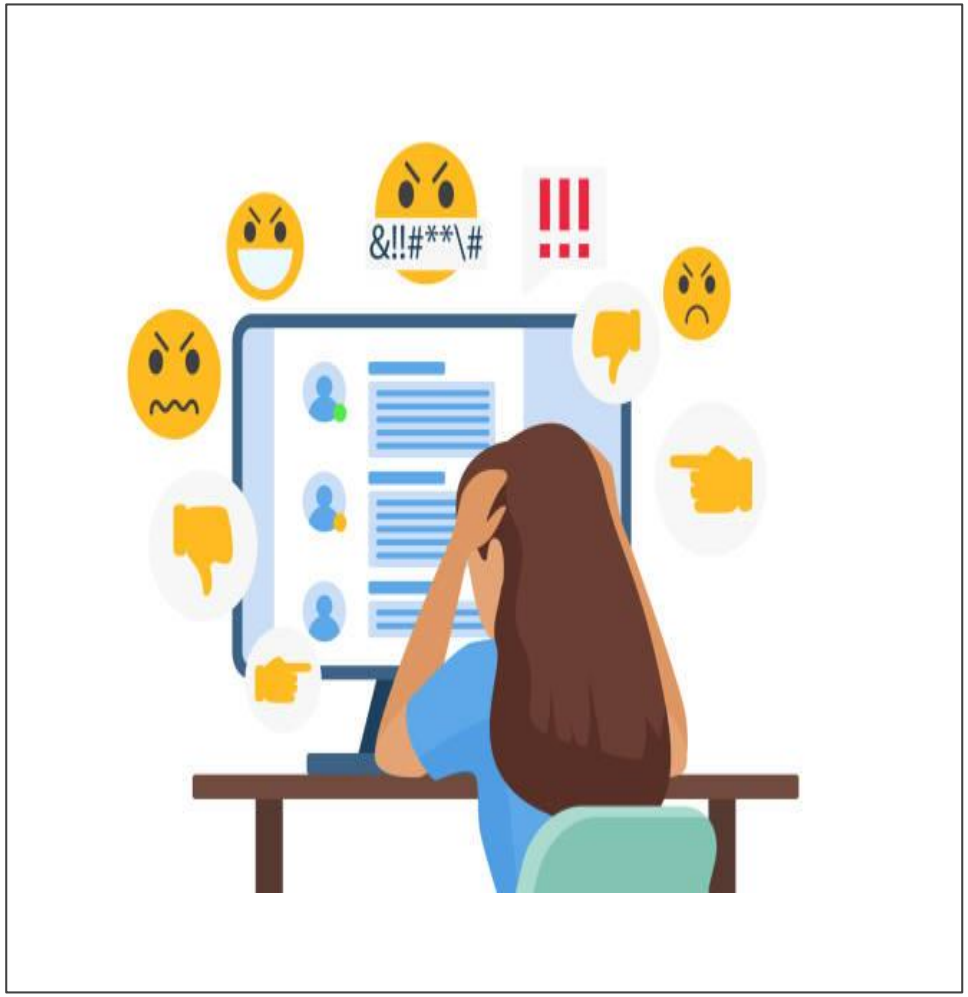
Our youth must be shown that not all worthwhile things are instantly accessible and that there are levels of sensibility unknown to them.

Benefits

Technology helps endow our world with meaning,

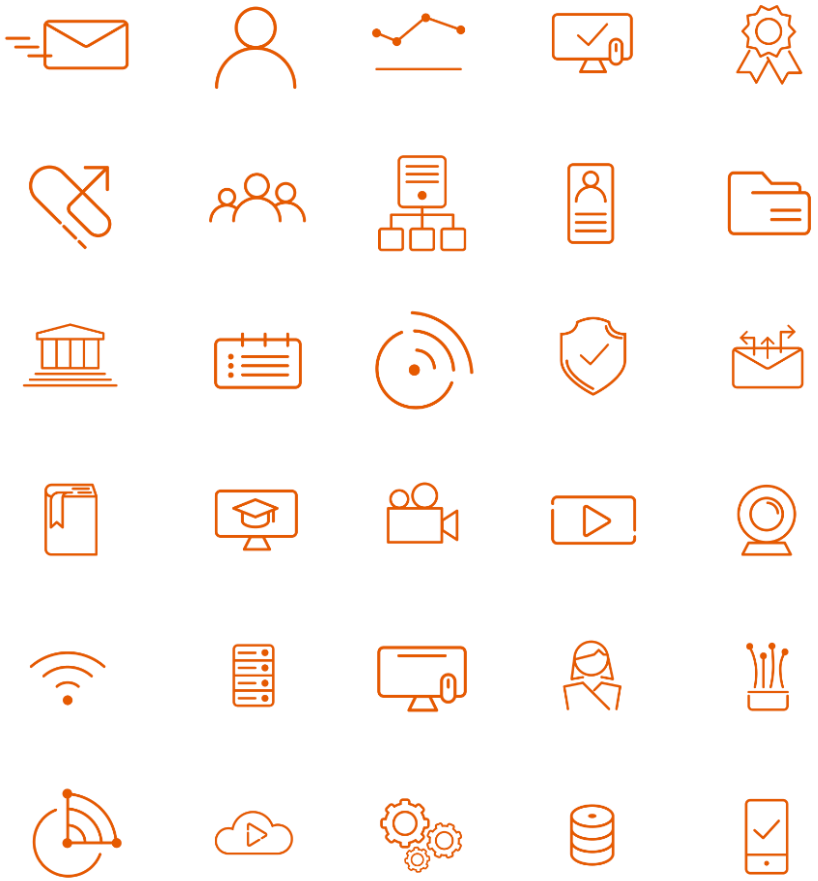
Challenges

- Cyberbullying
- Misinformation
- Superficiality



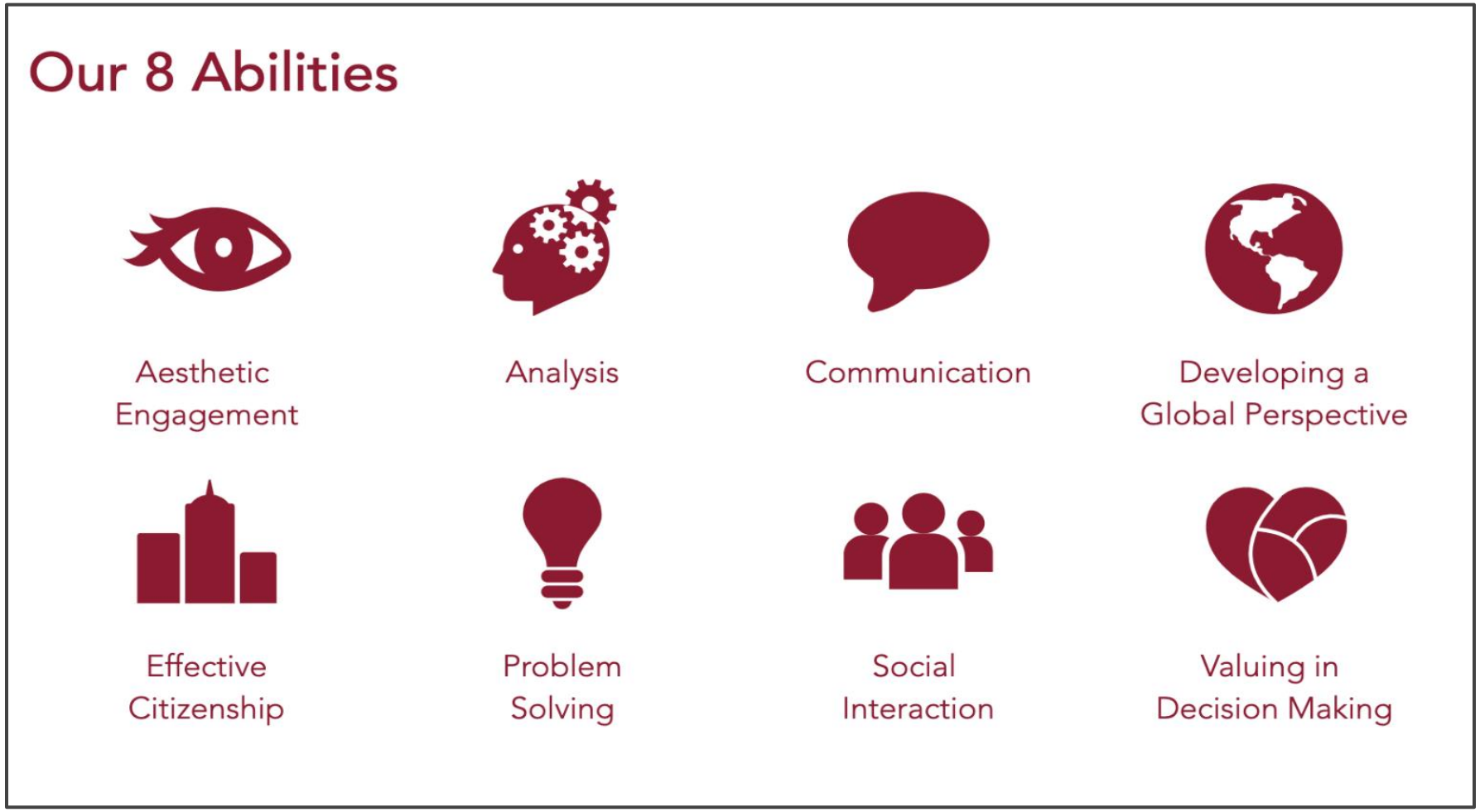
This presentation advocates for values-based decision-making to help educators empower students in navigating technology ethically, critically, and responsibly in a digital world.

Using Alverno College's Valuing in Decision Making Ability, I hope it inspires you to integrate valuing into your curriculum as a means for empowering youth as ethical digital citizens.



Alverno College's 8 Abilities

ALVERNO COLLEGE
ESTABLISHED 1887



VALUING IN DECISION MAKING

The goal: Taking a variety of perspectives and experiences into account is an important part of decision making. We want students to understand the moral dimensions of their decisions and accept responsibility for any consequences in all facets of their life.

Why it's important: The ability to understand your own values as well those of others transfers to all aspects of students' personal and professional lives. This ability builds self-awareness as well as empathy and a deeper understanding of humanity.

Valuing in Decision Making

Valuing in
Decision Making

Three Core Dimensions

- Value Examination & Interpretation
- Moral Sensitivity
- Ethical Reasoning

Valuing in Decision Making

My phone makes me feel connected to the world. Especially during covid times it allows me to, in a sense, be present without actually being in that space. It allows me to experience and enjoy different things and cultures, and that I may have thought would be out of reach. I see my phone as an extension of myself.

Value Examination & Interpretation

Valuing in Decision Making

Directions for Group Activity: Designing Accessible Technology

- **Form Groups**: Work in small groups, each assigned a unique perspective (e.g., a person with a disability navigating inaccessible platforms).
- **Analyze a Scenario**: Your group will design a website or app with accessibility in mind, considering the assigned perspective.
- **Research and Reflect**: Investigate the challenges, emotions, and ethical concerns associated with your perspective.
- **Propose Solutions**: Identify accessibility challenges in current designs and brainstorm potential improvements for universal access.
- **Answer Key Questions**:
    - How does understanding diverse perspectives shape decision-making in technology design?
    - What role does empathy play in creating ethical and inclusive digital spaces?

~~Deliverables include a brief report of your findings, proposed solutions, and responses to the questions above.~~

Moral Sensitivity

Valuing in Decision Making

Assignment: Ethical Decision-Making in Facial Recognition Technology

Directions: Analyze a case study on the 2021 Facial Recognition Technology (FRT) controversy. Explore the ethical arguments surrounding FRT using three key frameworks: Deontological Ethics, Utilitarian Ethics, and Virtue Ethics. Prepare a brief analysis addressing the ethical complexities of FRT.

- **Read the Case Study**: Familiarize yourself with the key debates and stakeholders in the FRT controversy.
- **Analyze Ethical Frameworks**:
  - **Deontological Ethics**: Focus on privacy rights and their inviolability.
  - **Utilitarian Ethics**: Evaluate societal benefits versus potential harm.
  - **Virtue Ethics**: Consider fairness, accountability, and human dignity.
- **Deliverable**: Write a concise reflection on the ethical implications of FRT from each framework and propose your stance on its use.

~~Be prepared to discuss your findings in class or with a small group.~~

Ethical Reasoning

Developmental Process for Valuing in Decision Making

Beginning

Levels 1 & 2

Foundational

- What are values?
- How do values emerge in my life?
- What emotions do these values evoke?

Intermediate

Levels 3 & 4

Cultural Mosaic of Values

- How do my actions & values impact others?
- What is the moral impact underlying this particular value?

Advanced

Levels 5 & 6

Integration

- What is my own living ethic?
- What are disciplinary frameworks of valuing that impact decisions?

Digital Citizenship & Valuing

Level 1: Identifying Values and Emotions Online

- Recognize personal and societal values in digital communication, such as respect, honesty, and empathy.
- Identify emotions evoked by online interactions (e.g., joy, frustration) and their impact on decision-making.

Level 2: Connecting Values to Online Behavior

- Articulate how core values like privacy, inclusivity, and fairness shape your behavior online.
- Discuss the intersection of cognitive, emotional, and behavioral aspects of digital engagement, such as avoiding harmful comments or protecting sensitive information.

Digital Citizenship & Valuing

Level 3: Analyzing Values in Digital Communities

- Explore the relationship between personal values and the collective norms of online spaces (e.g., group dynamics in social media or online forums).
- Discuss the ripple effects of individual digital actions on broader societal contexts.

Level 4: Using Ethical Frameworks for Online Decision Making

- Leverage perspectives from disciplines like media ethics or communication theory to evaluate moral dilemmas online (e.g., balancing freedom of speech with harm reduction).
- Apply these frameworks to make informed choices, such as reporting harmful content or respecting intellectual property.

Digital Citizenship & Valuing

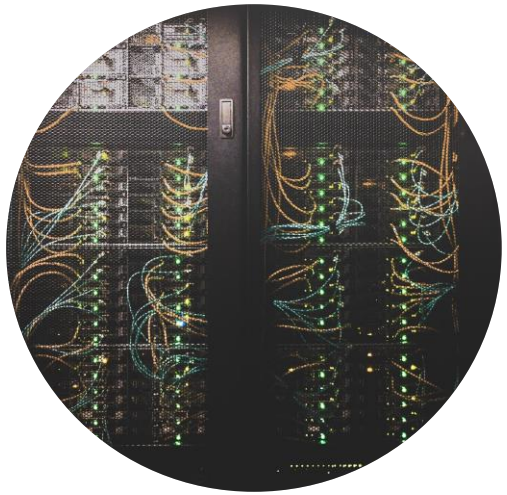
Level 5: Engaging with Ethical Codes in Digital Professions

- Reflect on how professional valuing systems, such as those in journalism, education, or technology, guide responsible digital practices.
- Analyze real-life scenarios where valuing frameworks address significant issues like misinformation, cybersecurity, or equity in tech access.

Level 6: Cultivating a Values-Driven Digital Identity

- Commit to ongoing reflection and development of a values-based digital self.
- Emphasize proactive steps for ethical leadership in online spaces (e.g., advocating for digital literacy, creating inclusive platforms).
- Showcase examples of taking initiative to address civic challenges online, such as combating cyberbullying or amplifying underrepresented voices.

As educators, it is our responsibility to guide and support students in this journey, ensuring they leave not only with knowledge but with a deeply rooted sense of ethical agency that prepares them to thrive and lead in a digitally interconnected world.



Technology | Human Values

We need to help youth proceed with their eyes wide open so that they may use technology to improve their lives rather than their lives being used by it.

Value: Professional Connections / Sharing Knowledge

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