

### **Instruction**

**Step 1:** In the first week of class, give all students the writing exercise (20 min.)

1. Download and print copies of the [writing exercise](#). Make sure you have at least one copy for each student in your class.

2. In a lecture or section, tell students:

“Effective communication is an important skill in science, technology, engineering, and math careers. To practice communication, today you will complete a 10- to 15-minute writing exercise. You will not be writing about science, but about something else you already know.”

3. Give one writing exercise to each student, explaining that the task is about values many people find important. Ask students to concentrate on the task in silence.

4. Allow students 10 to 15 minutes to complete the writing exercise. Let students keep their writing, explaining that their work will not be graded.

**Step 2:** Give students the writing exercise again before the midterm exam (20 min.)

Following the same instructions as in Step 1, re-administer the [writing exercise](#) in the week before the class midterm exam, explaining that you are once again giving students an opportunity to practice their communication skills. If you do not give a midterm exam, then simply give the writing task at some point in the middle of the term.

**Step 3:** Compare men’s and women’s grades (20 min.)

In the [research](#) that inspires this toolkit, the main outcome measure is the gap between men’s and women’s grades in STEM courses. Studies show that classes where students complete this toolkit’s writing exercise have smaller gender gaps in grades than do classes where students do not complete the writing exercise.

Here is one way to measure whether the writing exercise had this effect in your course:

1. For the term BEFORE you used this toolkit, subtract the average final exam grade for women from the average final exam grade for men (Time 1 Gender Grade Gap)
2. For the term in which you used this toolkit, do the same: subtract the average final exam grade for women from the average final exam grade for men (Time 2 Gender Grade Gap)
3. Compare the two gender grade gaps. The Time 2 Grade Gap is likely smaller than the Time 1 Grade Gap.

**Step 4:** Share your story here (optional)

Describe your experiences using this toolkit on the [Stories From the Field page](#). We may contact you and ask to feature your story on this website.

### Writing Exercise

1. Please read the list of personal values below. Then **circle the TWO or THREE values that are MOST important to you**. Note that there are no right or wrong answers; just be honest.

- |  |                                |                                       |
|--|--------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Athletic ability   | Creativity                     | Relationships with family and friends |
| Being good at art  | Government or politics         | Sense of humor                        |
| Belonging to a social group (such as your community, racial group, or school club) | Independence                   | Spiritual or religious values         |
| Career   | Learning and gaining knowledge |                                       |
|  | Music                          |                                       |

2. Now look back at the values you circled. Think about times when these values were, are, or will be very important to you. **Then describe WHY these values are important to you.** Focus on your thoughts and feelings. Don't worry about spelling, grammar, or the quality of your writing.

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Positive Transformation

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**3.** Once again, look back at the 2-3 values you circled in part 1.  
 First, write each value in a “Value” blank below.  
 Then, for each value, give the top two REASONS WHY that value is important to you.

**Value 1.** \_\_\_\_\_

**Reason 1.** \_\_\_\_\_

**Reason 2.** \_\_\_\_\_

**Value 2.** \_\_\_\_\_

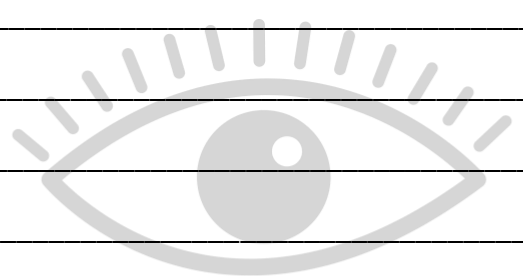
**Reason 1.** \_\_\_\_\_

**Reason 2.** \_\_\_\_\_

**Value 3.** \_\_\_\_\_

**Reason 1.** \_\_\_\_\_

**Reason 2.** \_\_\_\_\_



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**4.** For each statement below, circle the number that shows how much you agree with it.

**These values have influenced my life.**

Strongly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Slightly Agree	Moderately Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6

**In general, I try to live up to these values.**

Strongly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Slightly Agree	Moderately Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6

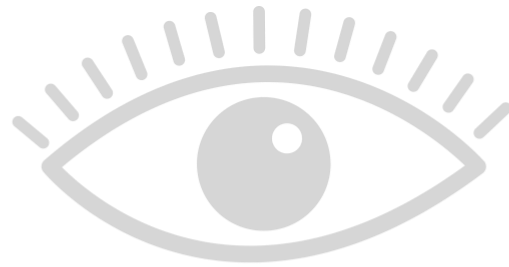
**These values are an important part of who I am.**

Strongly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Slightly Agree	Moderately Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6

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1	2	3	4	5	6
<b>I care about these values.</b>					
Strongly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Slightly Agree	Moderately Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6

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# The Third Space

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