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Think Outside the "Values" Box

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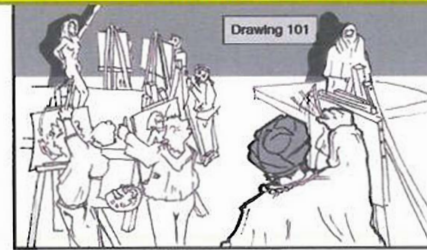# THINKING OUTSIDE THE "VALUES" BOX

INTRODUCTION

"...[C]ritical thinking is the general term given to a wide range of cognitive skills and intellectual dispositions needed to effectively identify, analyze, and evaluate arguments and truth claims; to discover and overcome personal prejudices and biases; to formulate and present convincing reasons in support of conclusions; and to make reasonable, intelligent decisions about what to believe and what to do." —Bassham et al., *Critical thinking: A student's introduction*, 2008

(1) The core values of a community determine what is right within that culture or society.

"That's not the way we do things around here ... unless, of course, that way is more profitable."

(2) In approach and/or application a set of core values is usually valued by a community and/or devalued by others (relying on circular reasoning).

Drawing 101

"Cultural Relativism in Classroom"

(3) Natural biases and limitations of upbringing or indoctrination may inevitably lead us to hang on to preferred beliefs (to simply do things right) and ignore or resist doing the right thing.

PROBLEM

(4) This presents the PROBLEM of whose ethics (and what values) we are going to "teach" (i.e., instill and enforce) via ethical codes.

"I expect you all to be independent, innovative, critical thinkers who will do exactly as I say!"

(5) Most evils are due to moral defects of character or upbringing quite as much as to lack of critical thinking.
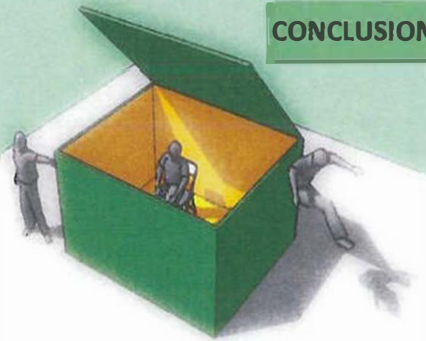
"Remember, you can fool some of the people all of the time. Those are the people we need to concentrate on."

(6) Many times we must think outside our cherished values to do the right thing.

THE SATURDAY EVENING POST
Founded A.D. 1821 · Weekly · Benj. Franklin
OCTOBER 9, 1939 · 5cts. THE COPY

THE DOUBLE RIDE
By Francis Wallace
GOVERNMENT-RUN-EVERYTHING By John Raymond McCarl

CONCLUSION

(7) One SOLUTION is to think outside our values (or character "education") by improving ethical analysis and evaluation skills.

'Miss Dugan, will you send someone in here who can distinguish right from wrong?'

Drawing by Dana Fradon; © 1975 The New Yorker Magazine, Inc.

(8) So, the right action (or practice) may be a function of our Critical Thinking.

I DONT CARE WHAT ANYONE ELSE SAYS... I DO MY BEST THINKING INSIDE THE BOX...

(9) "...without the ability to think critically and independently, citizens are easy prey to dogmatists, flimflam artists, and purveyors of simple solutions to complex problems." — *American Association for the Advancement of Science*, 1989

Talavera, I. 2011. Beyond ethical codes: A call for critical thinking in religious culture. *The Forum on Public Policy: A Journal of the Oxford Round Table* 2011 (November): 1-14. http:// forumonpublicpolicy.com/vol2011no3/archive/talavera.pdf (accessed July 4, 2013).