



Yehuda Elkana Center
for Teaching, Learning &
Higher Education Research

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Teaching Democratically: Values-Informed Teaching Development in University Alliances

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The Challenge:

How do we translate values into practice when it comes to teaching development?

State of Play



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Common Concerns

- Technical skills and competences often have higher-order priority.
- Values may seem irrelevant, inappropriate, or even unwelcome and dangerous for some colleagues.
- Values may be recognized as important but are difficult to translate into practice.
- Teaching development is generally difficult to institutionalize and scale for impact.



Growing Consensus that Values Matter

- Threats of democratic backsliding, questioning of knowledge creation, war, and attacks on institutional autonomy
- EHEA Bologna Follow-Up Group on Fundamental Values
- Institutional mission's role in curricular planning



Values in AdvanceHE's Professional Standards Framework 2023

- **V1** respect individual learners and diverse groups of learners
- **V2** promote engagement in learning and equity of opportunity for all to reach their potential
- **V3** use scholarship, or research, or professional learning, or other evidence-informed approaches as a basis for effective practice
- **V4** respond to the wider context in which higher education operates, recognising implications for practice
- **V5** collaborate with others to enhance practice

Teaching Development
for Values-Informed & Democratic
Classrooms at
Central European University (CEU)

Background: CEU's Mission Statement

Since its founding in 1991 by George Soros, CEU has become the leading anglophone university for the social and behavioral sciences and humanities in Central Europe. CEU is a distinctive institution—independent of government, sustained by visionary private philanthropy, committed to research excellence with a **strong social mission**, and both **international in outlook and accessible to diverse perspectives and communities**. Our mission has never varied and is as relevant as ever: we strive to be an **inclusive academic community committed to excellence in teaching and research in service of liberal democracy and the values of open society**.

A Values-Informed Curriculum for Early-Career Researcher & Faculty Teaching Development

- Inclusivity
- Reflective practice
- Research-informed and research-informing practice
- Scholarship of teaching and learning (SoTL)
- Socially and community responsive teaching

Embedding Values in University Alliances

Two alliances/networks

- CIVICA – European university alliance initiative
- Formerly, Open Society University Network (OSUN)

Built in the curriculum – across courses and alliance activities

- Dedicated courses, e.g., Democratic & Inclusive Teaching in Higher Education
- Open educational resource on *Inclusive Teaching*
- Annual Elkana Symposium on intersection of teaching, universities, and societies
- Workshops
- Forthcoming edited volume on *Teaching Democratically in Higher Education* and series on Academic Freedom and Democratic Universities

Democracy in Our Dedicated Course: A Multidimensional Approach

Since 2021 more than 80 participants from 10 HEIs



- **Democracy as Representation**
- **Democracy as Power Sharing**
- **Democracy as Choice and Autonomy**
- **Democracy as Equity**
- **Democracy as Theory and Practice**



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Sample Goals to	Sample Practices
Fostering of student choice and autonomy	Student-led weeks; choice of readings; multiple forms of assessment/choice of assessment format
Collective setting of values, goals, and mutual expectations	Classroom charter, ongoing discussions, voting
Active promotion of critical reasoning, dialogue, reflection, and thoughtful interrogation	Exploring debates and alternative perspectives in scholarship, Low-stakes assessments
Promoting diversity and voice	Journaling, classroom discussion techniques, including dialogical practices
Reconfiguring roles and social relations	Theater of the oppressed

Implementation in Your Context

The Case for Values-Informed Teaching Development

- Resistance to what can be perceived as a technocratic imposition of teaching development for certification.
- Values-informed development reminds us why teaching matters and the impact our teaching can have beyond the classroom.
- Whether disciplinary-informed, institution-informed, individually, values-informed teaching development promotes motivation, engagement, and community.

Recommendations for Preserving Academic Freedom & Teacher Autonomy

- Values-based teaching development cannot be prescriptive.
- Encourage practitioners to interpret values through practice, exploring what these values mean for them and how they inform their teaching.
- Practice, like democracy, should be **open-ended, non-teleological, and relational**.
- **Education**, in that same spirit, may have **goals at the micro-level**, but it must ultimately be about **growth, connection, and ongoing transformation**.

Next Steps

- What is one aspect of your mission or one value that you could do a better job of integrating into your teaching development?
- What is one place where you can begin?
- Questions and comments welcome
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