

Using Values To Identify Program Needs

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The author presents a systematic way of looking at the situations of people with whom we program to enable us to more effectively identify their needs. Using values as the basis for the framework, because "... our values give meaning, perspective, and importance to the needs, new technical ideas, or actions we experience," Forest identifies seven value-type categories and proceeds to demonstrate how they can be used as a guide for program situation analysis. Perhaps you'll find his matrix model and suggestions for ways of using it helpful to you.

Background

Programs must be based on "needs."¹ True. But whose needs? How are these needs identified? How and where do you start identifying them?

How can an Extension community development agent systematically assess the community he works in so he can better know the community's needs and problems (gaps between what is and what should be).

How can a youth agent or home economist know the needs of teenagers or homemakers more completely?

In answer to these questions, we as Extension educators must

break programming situations into more understandable, manageable components through "situation analysis."²

Here's the crux . . . what systematic framework can most effectively guide a situation analysis for identifying that client's needs? In this article, a framework is presented to help us systematically look at the situations of people we work with, whether they be minority groups, community citizens, homemakers, farmers, youth, businessmen. This systematic look will help identify needs.

To be really useful, our situation analysis framework must *focus on identifying people's needs*, not

things or communities or other im-
personal factors. If we focus on peo-
ple and if people *are* what they
think and do, we need a framework
based on people's thoughts and ac-
tions.

All of our thoughts can be cat-
egorized into beliefs, attitudes, or
values.³ Of these three thought
types, I suggest analyzing program-
ming situations according to the
prevalent societal values because
our values give meaning, perspec-
tive, and importance to the needs,
new technical ideas, or actions we
experience.

What are values? They're under-
lying, centrally located, abstract
ideals we have. They're our concep-
tions of desirable states of affairs,
our biases, our standards, or bases
for justifying our actions. Values
aren't tied to any particular object.
They're feelings or emotional men-
tal thoughts useful as guiding prin-
ciples. They're bench marks or as-
sumptions that support further logi-
cal thought.⁴

To illustrate, *beliefs* are what
Extension professionals and clients
know and understand about a com-
munity, groups of people, or a per-
son. Their *attitudes* are favorable
or unfavorable feelings toward the
community or specific people. Their
values are the biases or standards
they use to judge the importance of
people, the communities they live
in, and the many aspects of their
lives. The attitudes we have toward
the community usually result from
a mix or combination of our beliefs
(what we've come to know) and

our values (what we've come to feel
as important).

Williams strongly supports us-
ing people's values for categorizing
situation analyses to identify needs
when he states:

Values are not the same as
needs, desires, or motives — for
everyone at some time has desires
that he judges negatively, and one
may evaluate highly for others, a
condition he himself does not de-
sire to attain or experience. There
would be no human values were
men not energetic organisms, but
"energy" alone cannot generate
the standards we call values. The
remarkable thing is, rather, that
values can "steer" or "canalize"
or actually "define" powerful
needs and gratifications in ways
far removed from biological
promptings.⁵

Thus, because of the nature of
values and their relation to needs,
it's useful to categorize people's val-
ues in analyzing programming situa-
tions. Values are the precursors to
people's needs. They're used by
people to define and express their
needs. Values are the bases of all
educational endeavors. As Exten-
sion educators, our knowledge, our
opinions, and our motivations are
naturally guided by our underlying,
psychological, subjective thoughts,
assumptions, and values. It's quite
natural to make the values our cli-
ents have more explicit, and use
them as guidelines for situation
analyses.

Fortunately, a relatively small
number of basic values (Rokeach⁶
says 24 or 36, Williams⁷ says 15)

are held by people in our society. Some commonality does exist in what people value.

What Value-Types Influence Needs?

The question then is: What values are prevalent in our society? Allport, Vernon, and Lindzey⁸ offer a basic framework from which to evolve a list of value clusters. They suggest six value- or interest-types: (1) theoretical, (2) social, (3) political, (4) religious, (5) aesthetic, and (6) economic. They say six types of personalities exist in our society with some people guided more by theoretical assumptions and biases, some by economic biases, some by political, and so forth.

I suggest the following seven value-type categories for guiding a programming situation analysis:

1. Social-psychological.
2. Economic.
3. Physiological and health.
4. Socio-political.
5. Education.
6. Environment and natural resources.
7. Ecological relationships.

To systematically and effectively analyze the community (or your local county or regional or state Extension program, the 4-H Club system, or a home economics organization) to identify programming needs, we can look at the community guided by the seven categories of value-type clusters.

Once the community is divided into the seven categories, we can

identify needs in a category examining the present "what is" status of the many characteristics closely tied to the underlying value. By comparing the levels of "what is" against "what should be," needs and gaps will be determined in each of the categories.

As an example, people value physiological well-being and health. Therefore, we ought to examine the things having developed or not developed based on the health value in a community. The examination of these things should tell us which ones are adequate and which ones aren't. The physiological and health value undergirds many things in a community, such as amount of available food and clothing, nutrition level of infants, community hospital capacity, the number of physicians and dentists in town. More specifically, a need would exist if hospital beds per 1,000 community population were one-half the recommended number, because the underlying physiological and health value of people isn't being fulfilled. Such an identified, defined need is a basis for developing an educational program related to improving hospital facilities.

Here are further descriptions of the seven categories, with examples of variables to be analyzed and possible needs.

Social-Psychological

People consider the dignity and freedom of individuals important. However, people exist in social sit-

nations. Thus, this value is a *social-psychological* one. Individuals live, think, and act in relation to other people. This category accounts for some of the social, leisure, recreational, and religious type values.

More than any other value-type, analysis of things within this category will tell us the level of our clients' motivation and attitudes. This category suggests we should determine people's openness to change, self-concepts, and whether people feel they can solve their problems. If an alienation test found a certain group of people to be much lower in their perceived ability to influence the community than average citizens, a need exists if Extension educators value the dignity of all people.

Measurements of these phenomena include calculating the participation levels in community activities, assessing levels of cooperation and conflict in activities, determining religious affiliations, and observing and surveying opinions and attitudes of people toward subjects such as changing rural America.

Economic

Our capitalistic system is based on production, distribution, and consumption of commodities. Money is our means of commodity exchange between people. Our everyday activities depend on the dollar. In fact, when we talk of how much anything is worth, it's convenient to assign a dollar value to it. Economic value does communicate. Most of

our basic needs are met by exchanging money for other commodities. What we get depends on how much we have. Even one's status in society is in many cases based on occupation or means of employment, again, an economic laden activity.

Measurable phenomena in this category are income, farming efficiency, unemployment, marketing facilities, new industry, taxes paid, all varieties of production, available jobs, and the types of jobs. To be more specific, if we value all persons being treated equally economically, a need may exist when one group has more unemployment or lower income than average.

Physiological and Health

Obviously this value cluster encompasses the basic value of life itself. Certain physiological needs (food, shelter, water, disease control) are basic.

This category suggests an analysis of such things as food production, adequacy of hospitals, medicine, welfare, water, sewage disposal, and food facilities. Knowledge of hygiene habits, nutrition, shelter and housing, and the attitudes of people toward them could also be indicators of needs if lower than what our values imply. The adequacy of police and fire protection are also included here.

Socio-Political

The democratic ideals and values of our country undergird the

phenomena in this category. Our value is that people govern themselves. Our culture values people becoming involved and, through the decision-making process, developing social and governmental institutions of, for, and by themselves. This basic value also recognizes the need for some type of governmental organizational structure whereby people can systematically relate to others now and in the future.

Socio-political analysis would determine memberships in neighborhood organizations, voter registrations, percentage voting, openness of system to concerns of people, distribution of tax dollars, perception of farmers' ability to influence laws and policies affecting their business, and the interrelatedness between social groups and political office holders.

More specifically, if all eligible voters ought to register and vote in elections, anything less suggests a need. If people ought to influence community or group decisions, and they don't belong or participate, a need exists.

Education

Undergirding this category is the basic value that all people be literate and learned. It's closely related to the socio-political ideals—people must be educated and knowledgeable to govern themselves. People have an inherent right to know.

Havighurst says "education always takes place in and for a given society."⁹ This suggests people learn

through many sources, not from just formal schooling. Thus, adequacy of *both* the formal and informal school settings must be analyzed and determined.

Needs would exist if we found low abilities and willingness of local families, schools, churches, libraries, and media to support learning compared to desirable standards or state averages. Money spent, library usage, type of mass media programming, and attitudes toward day-care centers and actual levels of knowledge on particular programming subject matter would be indicators or measurements.

Environment and Natural Resources

Allport suggests "aesthetic" values are basic to some people's needs.¹⁰ However, all people need the environment around them for their basic physiological survival. Natural environment thus goes beyond beauty, it's a contemporary concern because we now realize the possible limited capacity of our natural environment.

Measurements of needs are the adequacies of basic physical conditions, both natural and man-made. These include water pollution controls, billboard control, percentage of green belts, efforts of local garden clubs and others. More specifically, the number of billboards per mile, the oxygen level in streams and lakes, and the number of flowers and trees planted are all potential indicators of needs. For example, if we value our environment,

a need exists when the amount of oxygen in local lakes and streams drops below the acceptable water life support levels.

Ecological Relationships

No one exists in a vacuum. Thus, relationships in a given community or situation must be examined.

The adequacy of relationships are analyzed in other categories. For example, the examination of socio-political organizations presents some linkages (how much influence do farmers or women have on elected officials). Environment and natural resource needs also relate to this category (how well do people fit into the balance of nature or relate to it). Alienation (social-psychological) also gives measures of the ecology of any group (how well people do relate to one another). However, I strongly believe relationships between people and things are important and valued in and of themselves enough for a separate category to be included in our analysis framework.

The adequacy of these interrelationships would be indicated by the amount of communications and ties between people, groups, communities, and their natural environment.

Examples of measurements are the adequacy of all types of transportation, roads, pipelines; the adequacy of media such as telephones and newspapers; the degree of accessibility to all economic services

(such as marketing), to all governmental institutions (safety), to all educational institutions (adult education classes), and to all psychological services; the density of population or space per person; the patterns of dwellings and other facilities; how your community links up to communities outside of its own boundaries; and the migration and mobility, both within and without, in the community.

Using These Categories

How would a community development agent use these categories? First, they can be starting points in looking at the community.

Next, because each of the seven categories is underlain by values, the value is a standard for judging the seriousness of any need. To illustrate, if we accept the value of economic well-being for all people and the fact that certain minority groups don't have equal job opportunity, a serious need exists if our thoughts are to remain consistent.

Also, the seven-category composite vividly points out that others have many values just as valid as ours. For example, a wildlife specialist operating from an environment and natural resources set of values could conclude that the thistles, ragweed, and deerbrush along a fence row are perfect groundcover for small wildlife; an agronomy specialist operating from economic production-oriented values might think the same weed situation is entirely out of place, is a problem, and

therefore ought to be destroyed. Thinking of different values brings them into the open.

In addition, within each of the seven categories, certain specific questions may be asked. For example, using the economic category and relying on the components of a social system,¹¹ the following questions could be raised in determining needs related to unemployment:

1. What do unemployed *know* about available employment, or needed job skills? If they know less than the employed, a need exists.
2. How do unemployed *feel* about getting certain jobs? Do they want to do anything about them? If their motivations and feelings are negative, a need could exist.
3. What are the unemployed *doing* about getting jobs? What are employers *doing*? If action is minimum, perhaps a need exists to stimulate activity.
4. *Who's* helping them? What people are actually getting employed?
5. Who has the *influence and power* to help get employment for them? If those who have needs don't have any influence, they may need extra help.
6. What *resources* in the community can help them get training or employment? If money to build an industrial park is lacking, a need could exist.
7. What *expectations* do unemployed have of educators and employers in helping to get trained and employed?

Combining the seven categories with the seven types of questions above provides a more complete analysis framework for looking at the actions of people in a situation.

Table 1 shows this more complete framework in the form of a matrix. The depth to which we want to analyze, the specific focus or subject matter of interest, the situation, the community, and the purposes of analysis will all affect how many or to what degree the boxes are used. Discretion and professional judgment will determine which values and actions are extremely important in one situation, but peripheral in the next.

Another way to use the seven categories is to clarify and specify already identified needs. Although phenomena in situations such as communities, families, and 4-H organizations can be broken into the seven categories for analysis, the seven categories can help in "cutting the pie" another way.

As an example, let's assume a state housing specialist has done an initial survey in Wisconsin of physiological and health conditions and identified housing as a real need. He realizes, however, housing is a rather gross need and must be clarified.

He can do this by looking at potential housing development from the perspectives offered by each of

Table 1. Matrix model for determining program needs — categories based on seven value-types.

Questions to ask in each category*	1 Social- psycho- logical	2 Economic	3 Physio- logical and health	4 Socio- political	5 Education	6 Environment and natural resources	7 Ecological relationships
1. What is the people's <i>knowledge</i> on certain subjects?							
2. What are people's <i>feelings</i> about certain ideas?							
3. What are people presently <i>doing</i> about it?							
4. <i>Who's</i> doing what?							
5. Who has the <i>influence and power</i> to do something?							
6. What <i>resources</i> are available?							
7. What <i>expectations</i> do people have of others?							

*Adapted from Loomis model.

the other six categories. Thus, he could have the:

- *Economist* deal with questions like: What type of housing is the cheapest possible? Can people afford it? Is a disproportionate share of a family's take-home pay going to housing?
- *Social psychologist* ask whether certain housing alienates people? Do old people have adequate housing? Do people desire to own or rent their house? Do people want to fix up their houses? Does the style and engineering turn people off?
- *Social politician* ask: What laws, regulations, and standards should be revised to benefit more people? What federal, state, and local housing assistance programs should be initiated?
- *Health person* ask: Are the sewage, water, and heat facilities up to standards?
- *Ecologist* question whether the housing is conducive or detrimental to supporting ongoing natural balances within nature? Will the density of a housing development benefit all people?
- *Environmentalist* ask if the particular present housing or development is displeasing to the eye? Will it conflict with other aesthetic surroundings?
- *Educator* ask: Are the knowledge level and attitudes of people regarding the laws, the economics, and the relationships too low? Do people know how to alleviate problems? Or can

they fix a sink or fill out an application for low-rent housing?

Many more questions with a potential for uncovering needs can be raised in each of the categories. But the point is... the various value orientations do offer different vantage points from which to analyze the needs. The different values can clarify specific needs to aim programs at, by forcing us to examine a need such as housing from different biases. The very act of looking at a need from various reference points separates needs from symptoms and high priority needs from low priorities.

Lastly, conflicts in needs and program priorities will obviously be exposed by this suggested analysis. For example, an analysis of things in the economics category may expose the need of low employment. Environment and natural resources and physiological-health analyses may expose air and water pollution problems. These two discoveries may be in conflict if increased employment means more factories and more pollution. Therefore, a key advantage of this analysis framework is to expose biases; to force us to look at people's situations from several viewpoints.

Accepting the various values forces us to involve vested interest groups in need analysis if we're really going to consider all values. An analysis shows that the same situation has the potential for different needs and program alternatives. The needs depend on the educator's original starting value point.

Priorities could thus be determined in several ways from an analysis using this framework. First, if a broad need such as housing is exposed in several categories as shown above, the need affects more than one basic value of people. A priority setting criteria could thus be the number of basic values undergirding an identified need. If problems related to housing are exposed in five of the seven categories, while another problem is exposed in only one category, you may want to program in housing.

Secondly (and perhaps most critical), the seven categories can help resolve conflicts and set priorities by helping us clarify our own values. We'll find out just how strongly we value certain things. A conflict will force choices on us that in turn force us to sharpen our own values, assumptions, and commitments, unless we wish to "ride the fence" and do nothing. As Extension educators we must make judgments and commitments. At the very least, we should become aware of our values and biases so we can defend our choices logically.

Summary and Conclusions

The prevalent values in our society should be the guides for doing situation analysis. These values are bases for people's needs. Seven categories for analyzing a situation have been suggested, each category representing a prevalent societal value. These categories assume people's needs, and indicators of these needs

originate from one or more of the seven value-type categories.

The community development agent can use these categories as starting points, as a standard for judging the seriousness of the need, as a way to point out other valid values besides our own, as a guide to asking specific questions about the need, to clarifying and specifying already identified needs, and to exposing conflicts.

This framework for identifying needs doesn't give us a neat, concise, mechanical, step-by-step process for determining needs. In fact, if values do underlie our needs, subjective judgment is part of any need determination.

All seven categories are inter-related because our values aren't isolated, each affects the other. Therefore, these seven categories are focal points for guiding and directing analyses. Each category is important for gaining insight into a situation and for serving as a special vantage point to examine particular problems.

Beyond that, each Extension agent's imagination and ingenuity determines the success of any analysis. Programs based on needs in each of the seven categories will be those based on people's needs generated and given importance by their underlying value systems.

Footnotes

1. Patrick G. Boyle, *The Program Planning Process with Emphasis on Extension*, Publication #24

- (Madison, Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin, NAECAS, 1965); J. Paul Leagans, "A Concept of Needs," *Journal of Cooperative Extension*, II (Summer, 1964), 89-96; Gale VandeBerg, "Guidelines to Planning," *Journal of Cooperative Extension*, III (Summer, 1965), 77-86; and Ralph Tyler, *Basic Principles of Curriculum and Instruction* (Chicago, Illinois: The University of Chicago Press, 1950), pp. 13-16.
2. Leagans suggests the term "situation analysis." He also suggests we classify needs into meaningful categories. Situation analysis is thought of here as the initial phase of program planning. In this phase, the program planner examines the situation to determine needs, problems, audience, priorities, and desired goals. Although seen as a phase, analysis of a programming situation doesn't occur only at the beginning of planning — it occurs continually through the programming process.
 3. M. Rokeach, *Beliefs, Attitudes and Values* (San Francisco, California: Jossey-Bass, 1969).
 4. Values as standards and guidelines are also discussed by Leagans. He states we need standards to compare with. A standard is what's valuable. The suggested model here combines several of Leagans' propositions that we organize our analysis situations according to general values people hold, and that values be used to determine needs. See L. Raths, M. Harmin, and S. B. Simon, *Values and Teaching* (Columbus, Ohio: Charles E. Merrill Publishing Company, 1966).
 5. R. Williams, Jr., "Individual and Group Values," *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, 1967), pp. 20-37.
 6. Rokeach, *Beliefs, Attitudes and Values*.
 7. Williams, Jr., "Individual and Group Values."
 8. G. W. Allport, P. E. Vernon, and G. Lindzey, *A Study of Values* (Boston, Massachusetts: Houghton-Mifflin, 1960).
 9. R. J. Havighurst, "Social Class Influences on American Education," in *Social Forces Influencing American Education*, 60th Yearbook of the N.S.S.E., Part II, Nelson B. Henry, ed. (Chicago, Illinois: University of Chicago Press, 1961).
 10. Allport, Vernon, and Lindzey, *Study of Values*.
 11. C. P. Loomis, *Social Systems: Essays on Their Persistence and Change* (Princeton, New Jersey: Van Norstrand, 1950).