Core Values of SCOE Students and Employees
Concordance and Discordance

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Précis

An understanding of the degree to which individuals share the same values (value concordance) or endorse different values (value discordance) can improve interpersonal relationships and facilitate learning. SCOE's students and employees (educators, staff, and administrators) share many values; members of both groups frequently identify compassion, kindness, and fun as core values. Students and employees also exhibit similarities in the value they place upon spirituality. However, students–especially those in the Come Back Kids program–place far more importance upon self-control than do employees. Conversely, optimism is endorsed more often by SCOE employees than by students. Classroom activities and other programming can be designed to promote success and create positive learning environments by leveraging shared values, and by acknowledging and accommodating values that differ between individuals.

Core Values of SCOE Students and Employees: Concordance and Discordance

"The standards by which you live must be your own standards, your own values, your own convictions in regard to what is right and wrong, what is true and false, what is important and what is trivial. When you adopt the standards and the values of someone else or a community or a pressure group, you surrender your own integrity. You become, to the extent of your surrender, less of a human being."
  – Eleanor Roosevelt, *You Learn by Living*

Core values form the foundation for decision making and personal choices in a variety of situations. Awareness of one's own values and those of others sets the stage for good communication. Some people find that they share values with those around them–a situation that is labeled value concordance–while others discover that their most fundamental values are more unique, resulting in value discordance. In either case, awareness of values sets the stage for building better relationships. In no arena is this more important than in education, where everyone must come together to support student success.

Seity's app and website include a tool that helps users identify their core values. The tool begins by presenting 20 value **categories** and asking users to select the four categories with which they most strongly identify. Each of these categories contains four values, so by selecting four categories the user has identified 16 potential values. The tool goes on to ask the user to select from these 16 options the four values that most strongly motivate or inspire them. The four resulting selections are the individual's **core values**. Rigorous testing has confirmed that the four values each user selects with Seity's tool are, indeed, more inspiring and motivating than other values (Stanislaw & McCreary, in preparation), which justifies labeling them as *core*.

This report presents findings from students and SCOE employees who used Seity's tool to identify their core values between June 1, 2020 and June 30, 2021. Most users of the tool selected their four core values immediately after they selected their four categories. However, some paused after their category selection and chose their values later. Individuals were included in this report only if they selected their core values within 7 days of selecting their categories.

A total of 459 students and 475 SCOE employees met the criteria for inclusion in this report. A majority of the students (77%) were in the Come Back Kids program when they selected their core values, while most of the employees (81%) worked at SCOE or were affiliated with a school or program other than that attended by the students. Most of the employees did not have positions that placed them in direct contact with students, but many were responsible for programming activities or overseeing services that impacted SCOE students and their families. Table 1 has additional details regarding each user's affiliation.

Table 1. School or work site for students and employees included in this report.

Affiliation	Students	Employees[1]
Come Back Kids	77%	7%
Valley Charter High School	8%	2%
Stanislaus Military Academy @ Teel	7%	4%
John B. Allard School/Tactical Character Academy	4%	3%
PACE	2%	2%
SCOE	2%	59%
Other	0%	22%

What We Know

Figure 1 uses word clouds to display the values selected by students (on the left) and employees (on the right). Values are arranged alphabetically from left to right and top to bottom. Values that were selected more often are displayed in larger text, while the text is smaller for values selected less often. Values selected by fewer than 3.0% of the students or 2.5% of the employees are omitted entirely. It is important to remember that the word clouds do not display the responses of any one individual; rather, they show the pattern for each group as a whole.

Student Value Selections   **Employee Value Selections**

Figure 1. Word clouds for core values selected by students (left) and employees (right).

Figure 1 reveals that students and employees have a relatively high degree of value concordance; the words that are most prominent in the student word cloud are also prominent

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[1] Percentages exclude 10 employees with multiple affiliations and 42 employees with unknown affiliations

in the employee word cloud. The four values chosen most often by students are compassion, fun, kindness, and freedom. For employees, the four most popular values are compassion, faith, fun, and kindness. These selections are similar to the student selections, with the exception of students choosing freedom where employees chose faith. This general trend towards value concordance suggests students and employees have multiple opportunities to build and maintain positive relationships with each other.

The concordance between student and employee values is particularly evident in Figure 2, which displays the percentage of students and employees who chose each value in the compassion and fun categories. The columns in Figure 2 are "stacked": The percentage of students and employees selecting compassion as a core value (17% and 23%, respectively) is on the bottom of the two leftmost columns, the percentage choosing kindness (15% and 17%) is stacked on top of the compassion percentage, and so on. (Table A1 in the Appendix details the percentage of students and employees selecting each of the 20 categories and 80 values.) The columns for the fun category (on the right in Figure 2) are almost identical for students and employees, while the columns for the compassion category (on the left in Figure 2) are also highly similar.
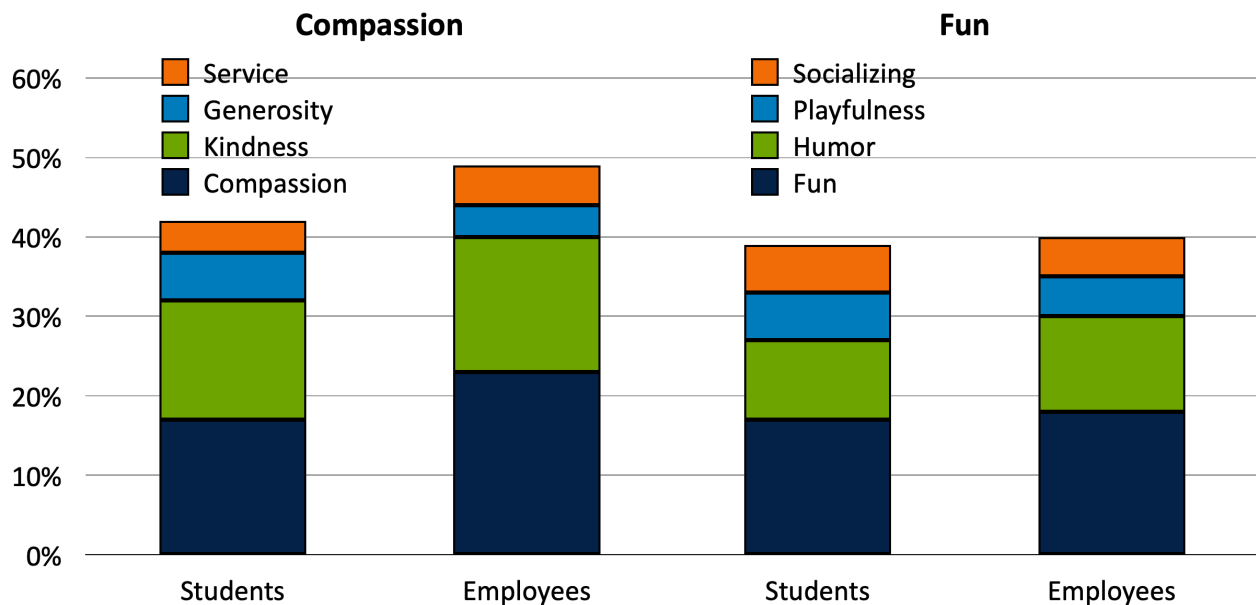
Figure 2. Percentage of students and employees selecting core values related to compassion (on left) and fun (on right).

The importance that many students and employees place on compassion and kindness provides a building block for positive relationships if both groups see the shared value carried out in behavior, and publicly acknowledge acts of compassion and kindness. Similarly, many students and employees consider fun to be an important value, and should be highly receptive to classroom activities, professional development trainings, and other programming that are designed with this principle in mind.

It is important to remember that Figure 2 illustrates the data for students and employees as a group; individual students may or may not share the same values as employees with whom they interact. Almost one third of the students (29%) and a higher proportion of employees (40%) chose at least one value from the compassion category, but 71% of students and 60% of employees did not choose any. This does not imply that those 71% of students and 60% of employees do not value compassion, kindness, generosity, or service; it means instead that they have other values they regard as more important. Even so, students and employees cannot assume that their own core values are shared with other students and employees, even if those values are among the most popular selections.

This is illustrated in Figure 3, which displays the percentage of students and employees selecting values in the spirituality and freedom categories. Faith (shown in the bottom of the two leftmost columns) is one of the four most popular values among employees. Eighteen percent selected it, compared to only 8% of students. This may seem to indicate that students and employees have discordant values, but they have similar selection percentages for the other three values in the spirituality category. Values clustered together in the same category share many commonalities, so there is greater agreement regarding faith-related values than is suggested by the percentage of students and employees who selected faith as a core value.
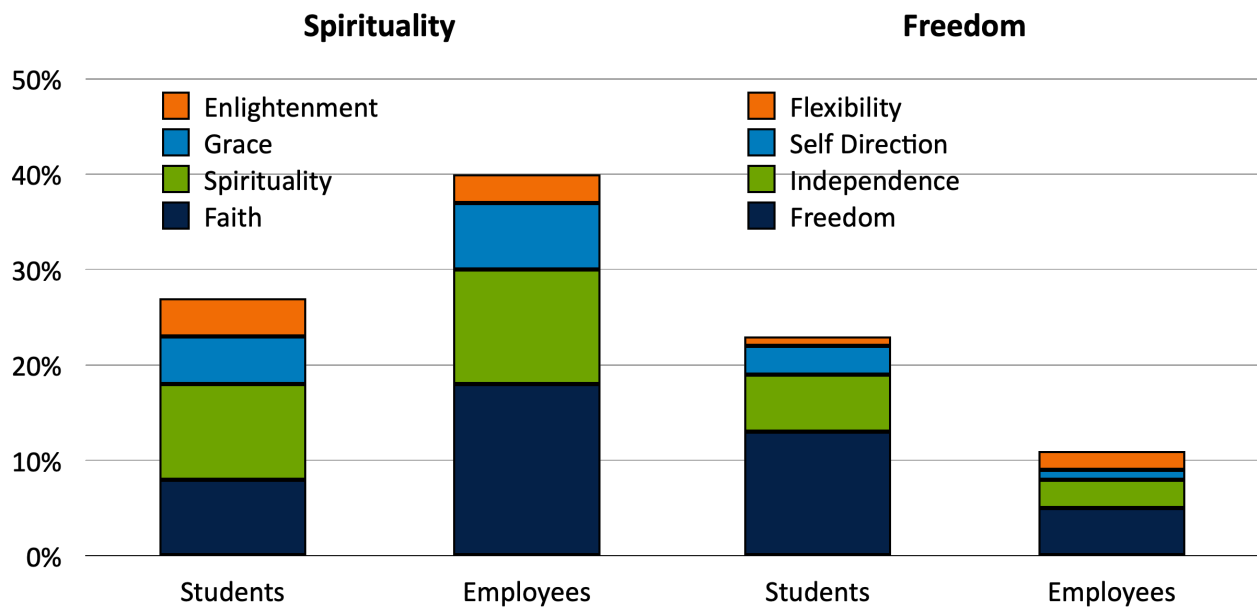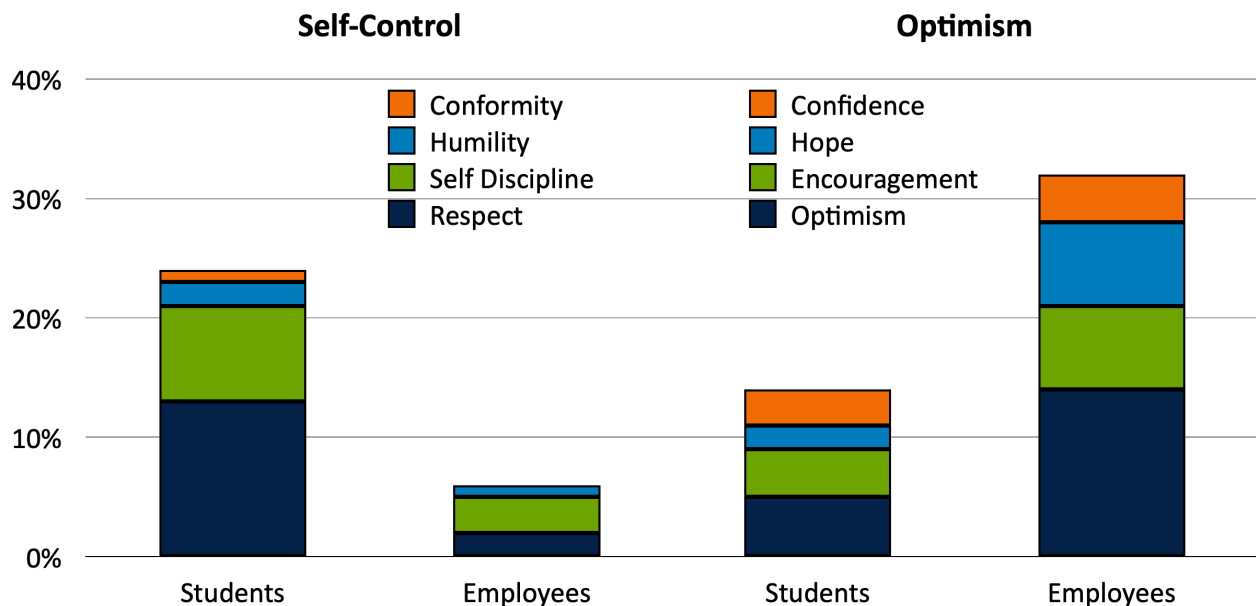

Figure 3. Percentage of students and employees selecting core values related to spirituality (on left) and freedom (on right).

The same cannot be said for the freedom category (the two rightmost columns in Figure 3). Freedom is one of the four most popular values among students; 13% identified it as a core value. However, freedom was selected as a core value by only 5% of employees. Students also selected independence more often than employees (6% versus 3%, respectively). Thus, students and employees are relatively discordant in the importance they assign to freedom.

Figure 4 illustrates two other categories that exhibit high degrees of discordance: self control (on the left) and optimism (on the right). Students endorse self-control far more often than employees, and within that category they are most inspired and motivated by respect. This finding is driven almost entirely by students in the Come Back Kids program; 15% identified respect as a core value, compared to only 4% of students in other programs. One possible explanation for this finding is that many students chose to attend Come Back Kids because they felt disrespected or unable to demonstrate their potential, and attributed this to their lack of a high school diploma. However, regardless of the reason underlying the prominence of respect as a core value among students, employees can use respect as a motivational factor and boost student engagement by providing classroom activities that provide opportunities for students to exercise, and be recognized for, self-control. In all activities, employees should communicate respect for students and establish classroom norms that support it. Team building activities can also highlight the importance of mutual respect.

Figure 4. Percentage of students and employees selecting core values related to self-control (on left) and optimism (on right).

Overall, employees embraced optimism to a greater extent than students. Those employees who see optimism as a core value will naturally display more affinity with students who share their positive vision of the future. Another aspect of optimism–feeling confident of success–is important to employees but may be a challenge for students who may be striving to establish a sense of competence and identity. Acknowledgement of the struggles that adolescents and young adults face in completing this developmental task will help bridge the gap between students and employees. Activities that bolster self-confidence will also support students as they face challenges to competence and identity.

The more frequent selection of respect by students in the Come Back Kids program than by students in other programs points to a limitation of this report: More information is needed

regarding students in all SCOE programs to determine whether the findings can be generalized to all programs, or if they apply only to particular schools or to students with specific developmental backgrounds. It may also be the case that the values selected by SCOE employees vary, depending upon such factors as their position within SCOE, whether they work at SCOE or a school setting, etc. These issues will be examined in a future technical report when more students and employees have participated in Seity. It will be particularly interesting to compare the values of students to the values of educators who work most directly with them, and to compare the values endorsed most strongly by both groups to values that individual schools may have formally adopted. These comparisons will be conducted once sufficient data have been accumulated to permit the derivation of meaningful conclusions.

Summary and recommendations

Values are important defining characteristics for individuals. Seity's app and website provide a tool for identifying the four "core" values that users find most inspiring and motivating. Many students and SCOE employees share the core values of compassion and kindness. Behaving in a manner consistent with these values, and publicly acknowledging acts of compassion and kindness, can build environments that facilitate learning and the development of positive interpersonal relationships. Many students and employees also share fun as a core value and should respond well to activities that include elements designed to promote play, humor, and light-hearted socialization.

There are also consistent differences between students and employees. Members of both groups often endorse spirituality as important, but employees are more likely than students to identify values associated with spirituality as core. The two groups differ even more in their endorsement of freedom and self-control, which are much more likely to be selected as core values by students in the Come Back Kids program than by employees or by students in other programs. Conversely, employees are more likely than students to endorse optimism as a value. Furthermore, even though many students and employees share one or more core values, some individuals have core values that are unique and not shared with others. It is important to recognize this, acknowledge and respect the differences that often exist between individuals, and structure learning and work environments to accommodate all students and employees regardless of their values.

Acknowledgement

Reference

Stanislaw, H., & McCreary, J. (in preparation). *Identifying core values with a novel, ipsative preference assessment*. Manuscript being prepared for publication submission.

Appendix: Technical details

The word clouds in this report were generated using TagCrowd.com. The option for the maximum number of words was nominally set to 48, but "ties" in the data resulted in 50 words being included in the student cloud and 51 words being included in the employee cloud.

Three pairs of statistical tests were conducted for this technical report, using Monte Carlo simulations to calculate chi-square values for 100,000 replications of each null hypothesis. The simulations were generated using custom Fortran programs compiled using Absoft Fortran version 21.0.1.

The first pair of statistical tests examined the null hypothesis that students selected their categories and core values at random, which would have resulted in each category being selected by 20% of the students and employees, and each value being selected by 5% of the students and employees. Table A1 lists the actual percentages of category and value selections. The null hypothesis was rejected for category selections by students (χ^2 = 355.72, p < .001) and for value selections by students (χ^2 = 1,184.83, p < .001). The second pair of statistical tests examined this same null hypothesis for the employee category and value selections. This hypothesis was also rejected for categories (χ^2 = 425.68, p < .001) and values (χ^2 = 1,768.72, p < .001). Collectively, these findings indicate that students and employees did not select their core values at random; some tended to be selected more often than others, as suggested by the word clouds in Figure 1.

The third pair of statistical tests examined the null hypothesis that the probability of selecting any given category or value was the same for students and employees. This hypothesis was rejected for categories (χ^2 = 202.04, p < .001) and for values (χ^2 = 431.23, p < .001), indicating that some categories or values were more likely to be chosen by students than by employees, while others were more likely to be chosen by employees than by students (as suggested by the differences between the student and employee stacked bar columns in Figures 2-4).

Table A2 highlights how student and employee selections differed from each other. A positive entry in the table indicates that students (or employees) selected the corresponding category or value *more* often than employees (or students), while a negative value indicates that students (or employees) chose the corresponding category or value *less* often than employees (or students). For example, freedom was chosen as a core value by 13% of students and 5% of employees (see Table A1). If students and employees had selected freedom equally often, 9% of both groups would have chosen freedom as a core value. Instead, 13% of students chose freedom, which is 4% above the expected value of 9%. Only 5% of employees chose freedom, which is 4% below the expected value of 9%. Table A2 lists these deviations from the percentages that would have been expected, had both groups chosen each category or value equally often.

Table A1. Category and value selections by students and employees.

Value category	Student selections	Employee selections	Percent	Core value	Student selections	Employee selections	Percent
				Adaptation	1%	3%	
Adaptabliity	7%	9%		Change	1%	0%	
				Resilience	1%	3%	
				Resourceful	1%	3%	
				Adventure	11%	9%	
Adventure	26%	17%		Courage	7%	1%	
				Risk-Taking	10%	1%	
				Spontaneity	2%	2%	
				Beauty	2%	1%	
Aliveness	13%	11%		Intuition	1%	1%	
				Movement	2%	3%	
				Nature	2%	3%	
				Authenticity	7%	12%	
Authenticity	16%	25%		Individuality	3%	1%	
				Integrity	3%	8%	
				Truth	5%	5%	
				Compassion	17%	23%	
Compassion	38%	42%		Generosity	6%	4%	
				Kindness	15%	17%	
				Service	4%	5%	

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Value category	Student selections	Employee selections	Percent	Core value	Student selections	Employee selections	Percent
Competition	19%	7%		Battle	5%	0%	
				Competition	6%	3%	
				Determination	6%	0%	
				Strength	5%	2%	
Creativity	26%	23%		Creativity	12%	11%	
				Imagination	10%	5%	
				Innovation	2%	3%	
				Vision	2%	2%	
Dependability	25%	33%		Honor	5%	3%	
				Loyalty	11%	11%	
				Responsibility	9%	9%	
				Trustworthy	8%	15%	
Freedom	27%	12%		Flexibility	1%	2%	
				Freedom	13%	5%	
				Independence	6%	3%	
				Self Direction	3%	1%	
Fun	37%	32%		Fun	17%	18%	
				Humor	10%	12%	
				Playfulness	6%	5%	
				Socializing	6%	5%	

Value category	Student selections	Employee selections	Percent	Core value	Student selections	Employee selections	Percent
Harmony	8%	19%		Diversity	0%	1%	
				Equality	2%	1%	
				Harmony	2%	10%	
				Peace	2%	4%	
Learning	25%	26%		Curiosity	3%	4%	
				Learning	10%	11%	
				Mastery	3%	1%	
				Wisdom	7%	6%	
Optimism	13%	29%		Confidence	3%	4%	
				Encouragement	4%	7%	
				Hope	2%	7%	
				Optimism	5%	14%	
Plans	16%	17%		Details	2%	3%	
				Organization	5%	7%	
				Reasoning	1%	3%	
				Strategy	3%	2%	
Results	20%	14%		Achievement	7%	4%	
				Growth	8%	3%	
				Impact	2%	3%	
				Reward	4%	1%	

Value category	Student selections	Employee selections	Percent	Core value	Student selections	Employee selections	Percent
Safety	12%	10%		Protection	3%	1%	
				Safety	5%	2%	
				Security	3%	2%	
				Stability	3%	2%	
Self-Control	27%	9%		Conformity	1%	0%	
				Humility	2%	1%	
				Respect	13%	2%	
				Self Discipline	8%	3%	
Spirituality	21%	30%		Enlightenment	4%	3%	
				Faith	8%	18%	
				Grace	5%	7%	
				Spirituality	10%	12%	
Teamwork	19%	21%		Collaboration	1%	4%	
				Connection	2%	3%	
				Synergy	0%	2%	
				Teamwork	10%	12%	
Tradition	5%	13%		Belonging	0%	1%	
				Civility	0%	1%	
				Preservation	0%	1%	
				Tradition	2%	6%	
Minimum	5%	7%	5%	Minimum	0%	0%	0%
Maximum	38%	42%	42%	Maximum	17%	23%	23%

Table A2. Differences between student and employee category and value selections.

Value category	Student selections	Employee selections	Difference	Core value	Student selections	Employee selections	Difference
Adaptabliity	-1%	1%		Adaptation	-1%	1%	
				Change	0%	0%	
				Resilience	-1%	1%	
				Resourceful	-1%	1%	
Adventure	5%	-5%		Adventure	1%	-1%	
				Courage	3%	-3%	
				Risk-Taking	4%	-4%	
				Spontaneity	0%	0%	
Aliveness	1%	-1%		Beauty	1%	-1%	
				Intuition	0%	0%	
				Movement	0%	0%	
				Nature	0%	0%	
Authenticity	-4%	4%		Authenticity	-3%	3%	
				Individuality	1%	-1%	
				Integrity	-2%	2%	
				Truth	0%	0%	
Compassion	-2%	2%		Compassion	-3%	3%	
				Generosity	1%	-1%	
				Kindness	-1%	1%	
				Service	-1%	1%	

Value category	Student selections	Employee selections	Difference	Core value	Student selections	Employee selections	Difference
Competition	6%	-6%		Battle	3%	-3%	
				Competition	1%	-1%	
				Determination	3%	-3%	
				Strength	2%	-2%	
Creativity	2%	-2%		Creativity	0%	0%	
				Imagination	2%	-2%	
				Innovation	0%	0%	
				Vision	0%	0%	
Dependability	-4%	4%		Honor	1%	-1%	
				Loyalty	0%	0%	
				Responsibility	0%	0%	
				Trustworthy	-3%	3%	
Freedom	7%	-7%		Flexibility	0%	0%	
				Freedom	4%	-4%	
				Independence	2%	-2%	
				Self Direction	1%	-1%	
Fun	3%	-3%		Fun	-1%	1%	
				Humor	-1%	1%	
				Playfulness	0%	0%	
				Socializing	1%	-1%	

Value category	Student selections	Employee selections	Difference	Core value	Student selections	Employee selections	Difference
Harmony	-6%	6%		Diversity	0%	0%	
				Equality	0%	0%	
				Harmony	-4%	4%	
				Peace	-1%	1%	
Learning	-1%	1%		Curiosity	0%	0%	
				Learning	-1%	1%	
				Mastery	1%	-1%	
				Wisdom	1%	-1%	
Optimism	-8%	8%		Confidence	0%	0%	
				Encouragement	-1%	1%	
				Hope	-2%	2%	
				Optimism	-4%	4%	
Plans	-1%	1%		Details	-1%	1%	
				Organization	-1%	1%	
				Reasoning	-1%	1%	
				Strategy	1%	-1%	
Results	3%	-3%		Achievement	1%	-1%	
				Growth	3%	-3%	
				Impact	-1%	1%	
				Reward	2%	-2%	

Value category	Student selections	Employee selections	Difference	Core value	Student selections	Employee selections	Difference
				Protection	1%	-1%	
Safety	1%	-1%		Safety	2%	-2%	
				Security	0%	0%	
				Stability	0%	0%	
				Conformity	0%	0%	
Self-Control	9%	-9%		Humility	0%	0%	
				Respect	5%	-5%	
				Self Discipline	3%	-3%	
				Enlightenment	0%	0%	
Spirituality	-4%	4%		Faith	-5%	5%	
				Grace	-1%	1%	
				Spirituality	-1%	1%	
				Collaboration	-1%	1%	
Teamwork	-1%	1%		Connection	0%	0%	
				Synergy	-1%	1%	
				Teamwork	-1%	1%	
				Belonging	-1%	1%	
Tradition	-4%	4%		Civility	0%	0%	
				Preservation	0%	0%	
				Tradition	-2%	2%	
Minimum	-8%	-9%	-9%	Minimum	-5%	-5%	-5%
Maximum	9%	8%	9%	Maximum	5%	5%	5%