

# The Development of Children's Personal Values in School

**Working Together: Research and Practice Meeting 2023**

Royal Holloway University of London, UK

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A cooperation between  
the University of Basel and  
the University of Applied  
Sciences and Arts FHNW

# The VALISE Project



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## VALISE – The Formation of Children’s Values in School

A Study on Value Development among Primary School Children in Switzerland and the United Kingdom. (Funded by the SNSF, Duration: 2020-2024)

### Project Leaders

Professor Elena Makarova (University of Basel, Switzerland)

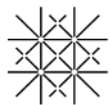
Professor Anat Bardi (Royal Holloway University of London, UK)

Dr Anna K. Döring (University of Westminster, UK)

### Cooperating Partners

Professor Julie Lee (The University of Western Australia, Australia)

Professor Maya Benish-Weisman (The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Israel)



University  
of Basel

Institute for  
Educational Sciences

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WESTMINSTER

VALISE

Values in School Education  
Wertebildung in der Schule



# Agenda

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- 1 The “**VAL**ues In **School Education**” Project (VALISE)
  - 2 Values
  - 3 Values in the School Context
  - 4 First Findings from the VALISE Project
  - 5 Conclusions
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1 The “**VAL**ues In **School Education**” Project (VALISE)

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# 1. The VALISE Project

## Methodology

Over time ( $t1-t4$ , CH from Spring 2021 to Summer 2022; 15 month)

Across countries (CH/UK)

Questionnaires and interviews

## Sample CH

N=1342 primary school children (grade 1, ages 5-7 at  $t1$ ),

N=118 primary school teachers

(67 schools from German speaking cantons of North-Western Switzerland)

## Sample UK

N=538 primary school children (years 1-3, ages 5-8 at  $t1$ ).

N=37 primary school teachers

(11 schools from South England; Berkshire, Surrey, Greater London and Essex)



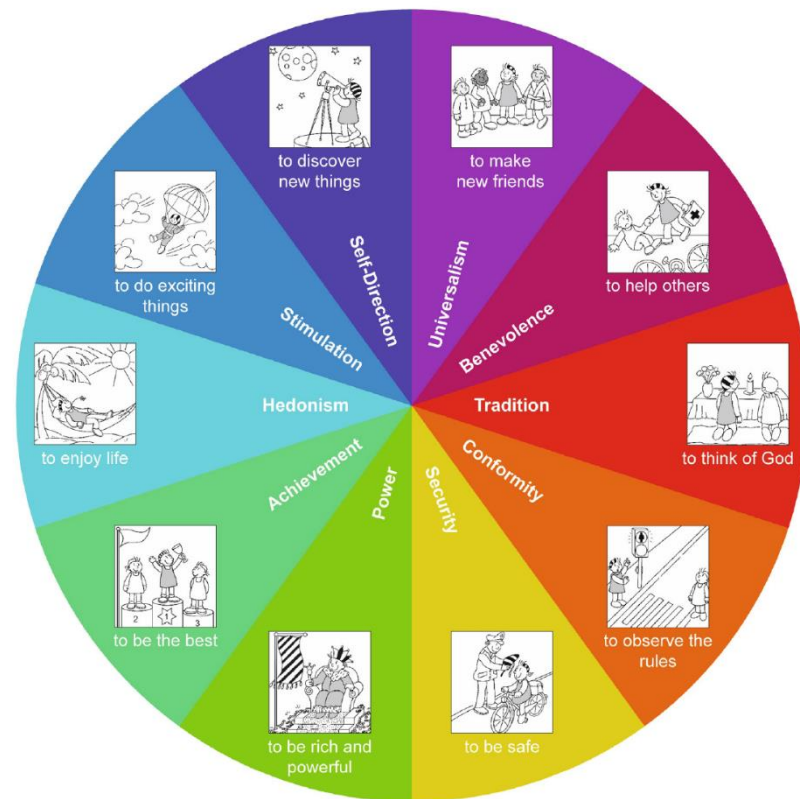
<https://www.unibas.ch/en/research/value-bildungswissenschaftenformation-in-school/>



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## 2. Values



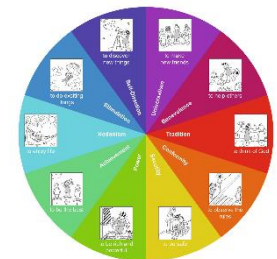
- 10 Basic Value Types
- 4 Higher-Order Value Types
- Circular structure
- Motivational relationships between the individual values

Figure 3. The Values Framework Schwartz (1992), own representation

## 2. Values

Value Type	Motivational Goal
Universalism	Understanding, appreciation, tolerance and protection for the welfare of all people and for nature
Benevolence	Preservation and enhancement of the welfare of people with whom one is in frequent personal contact
Tradition	Respect, commitment and acceptance of the customs and ideas that traditional culture or religion provide the self
Conformity	To comply with social expectations and norms, follow rules
Security	Safety, harmony and stability of society, of relationships, and of self
Power	Social status and prestige, authority and leadership
Achievement	Personal success through demonstrating competence, ambitions
Hedonism	Enjoy life, having a good time
Stimulation	Looking for an exciting life with adventures and risks, novelty, and challenge in life
Self-direction	Independent thought and action-choosing, creating, exploring, freedom

Table 1. Schwartz's basic values (1992)





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### 3. Values in the School Context

- **High importance** of the school environment for the socio-emotional development of children and adolescents (Eccles, 1983; Eccles & Roeser, 2010).
- **Proven relevance** of the influence of the school environment on the value formation of students (Berson & Oreg, 2016; Daniel et al., 2013; Luego Kanacri et al., 2017).
- Transmission of values in schools occurs **explicitly** through educators value-related educational goals, curricular teaching objectives, mission statements, etc. and **implicitly** through teachers' own values, the school climate and peers (Döring, Makarova, Herzog & Bardi, 2017; Makarova, Herzog, Trummer & Frommelt, 2018).



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# 4. First Findings from the VALISE Project

## Picture-Based Value Survey for Children (Döring et al., 2010)



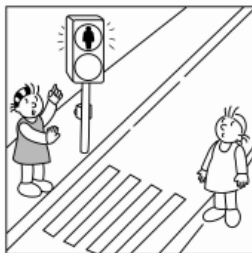
to be rich and powerful



to be safe



to be the best



to follow the rules

Very important


How I want to be in my  
 life...

Not important at all

# 4. First Findings from the VALISE Project

## Teachers' value-related educational goals

*“How similar do you want your pupils to be to the people described?”*

Value	Variable	Item
Universalism	PVQ_UN1	They think it is important that every person in the world be treated equally. They believe everyone should have equal opportunities in life.
	PVQ_UN2	It is important to them to listen to people who are different from them. Even when they disagree with them, they still want to understand them.
	PVQ_UN3	They strongly believe that people should care for nature. Looking after the environment is important to them.
Benevolence	PVQ_BE1	It's very important to them to help the people around them. They want to care for their well-being.
	PVQ_BE2	It is important to them to be loyal to their friends. They want to devote themselves to people close to them.
Tradition	PVQ_TR1	It is important to them to be humble and modest. They try not to draw attention to themselves.
	PVQ_TR2	Tradition is important to them. They try to follow the customs handed down by their religion or their family.

Table 2. Portrait Value Questionnaire, PVQ-21 (Schwartz, 1994)

# 4. First Findings from the VALISE Project

## Value-related school climate (teachers)






*“The following questions relate to the climate in your school. For each statement, please tick the box that applies to you.” In my school...*

... colleagues help each other.

12-Item School Climate Measure Scale  
(Berson & Oreg, 2016)

## Value-related school climate (children)

7. In my school we help each other.

				
not at all	very little	a little	somewhat	a lot
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

No Answer

Children's School Climate Measure Scale  
(adapted from Berson & Oreg, 2016)

# 4. First Findings from the VALISE Project

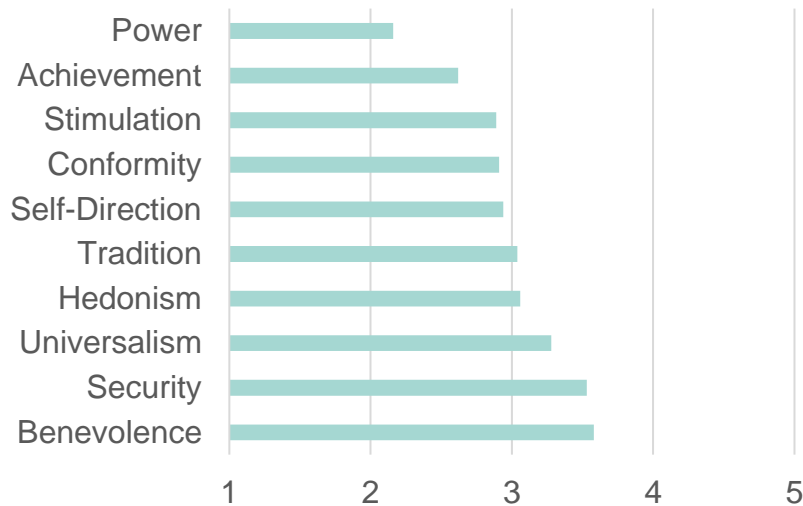


Table 3. **Children's** value priorities; UK Sample

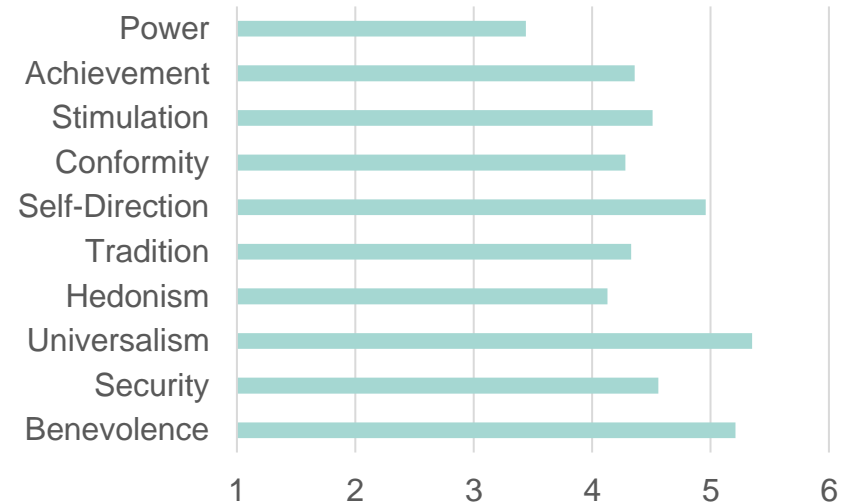


Table 4. **Teachers'** value-related educational goals; UK Sample



# 4. First Findings from the VALISE Project

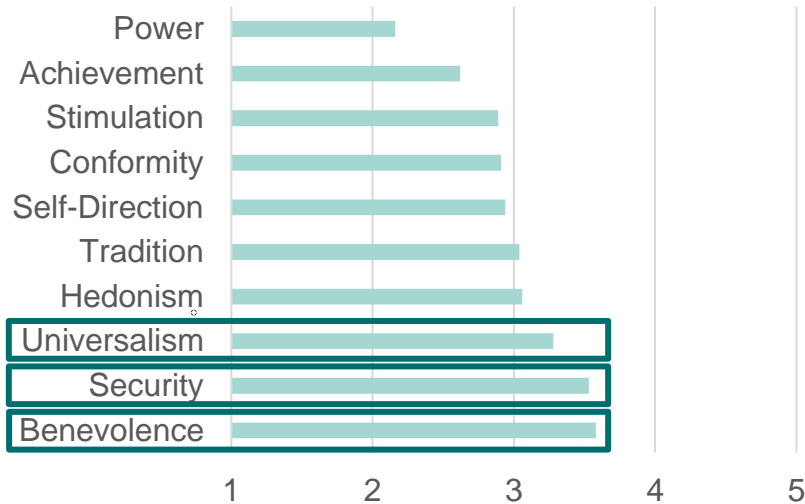


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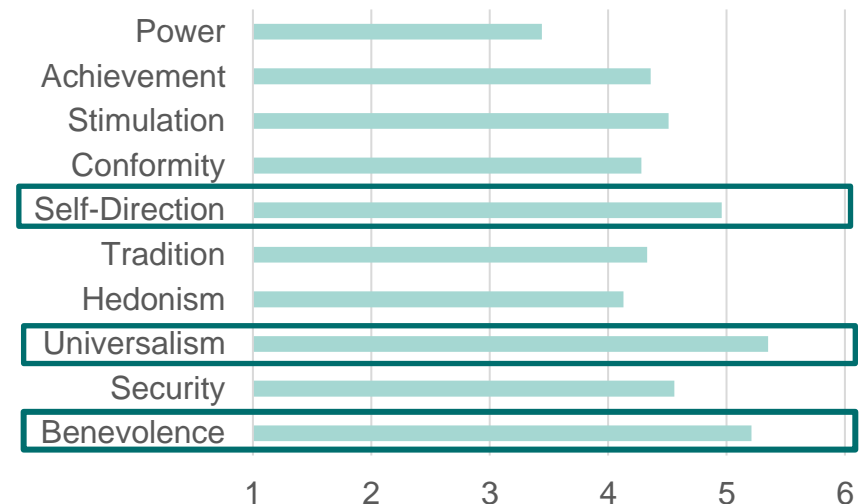


Table 4. Teachers' value-related educational goals; UK Sample





# 4. First Findings from the VALISE Project

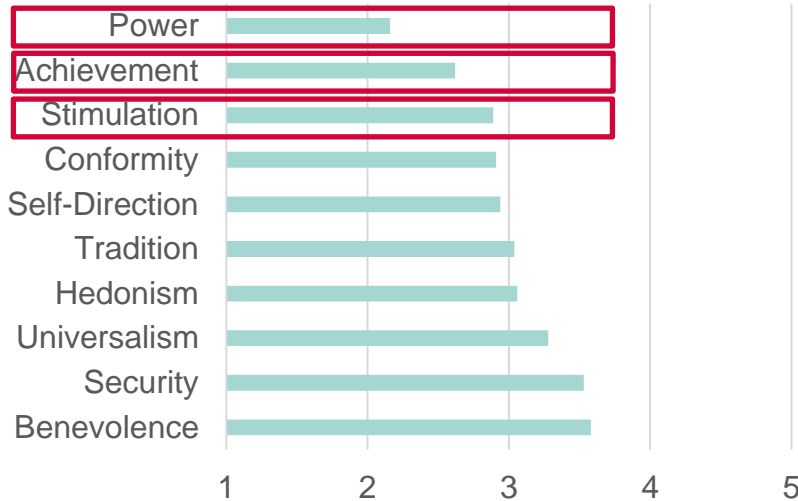


Table 3. Children's value priorities; UK Sample

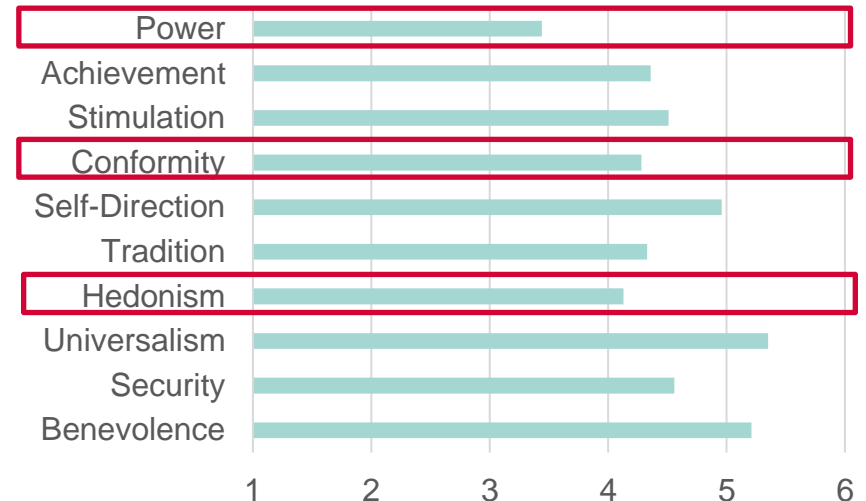


Table 4. Teachers' value-related educational goals; UK Sample



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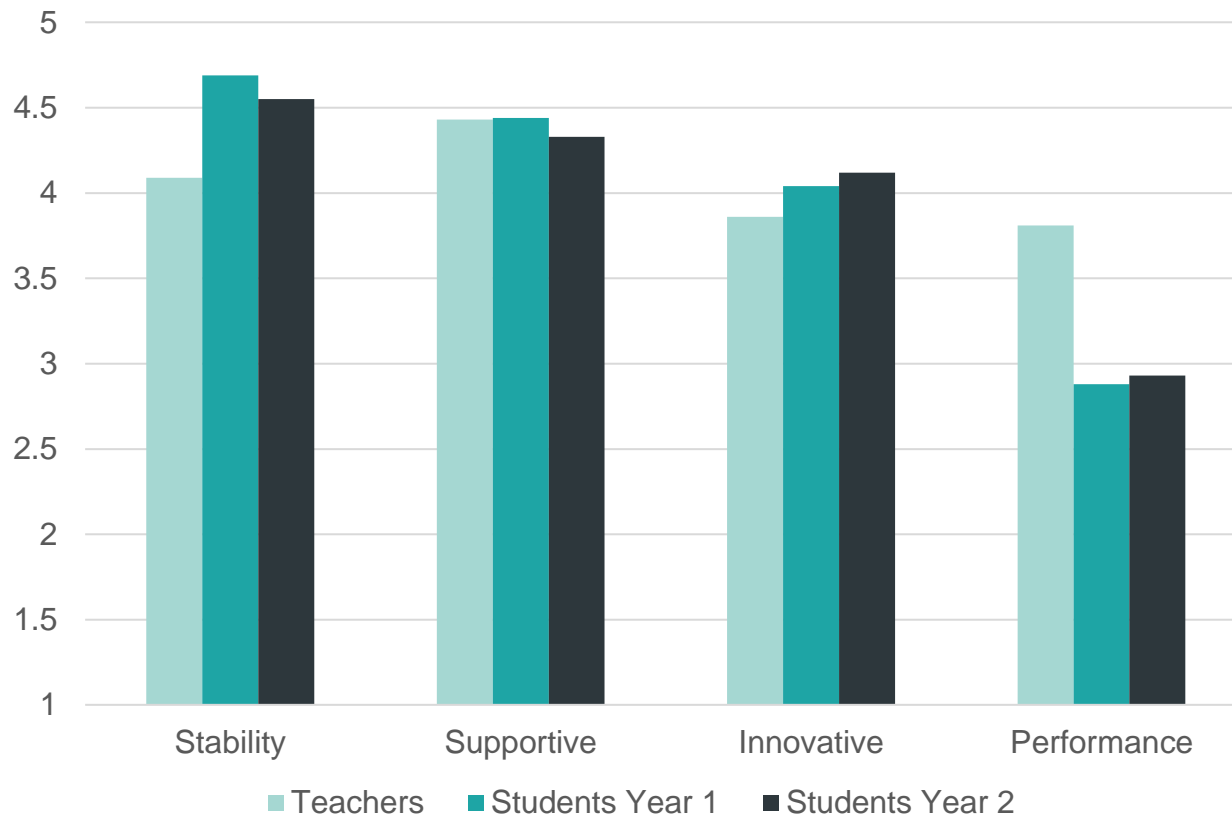


Table 5. Teachers' and children's value-related **school climate**; UK Sample



## 4. First Findings from the VALISE Project

*“I think that it’s really important to role model those skills with the children and how you treat the other adults and members of staff within the school setting as well.” (Participant C)*

*“If we’re saying we value perseverance and those kind of values, teachers are encouraged to explicitly say that if you see it in a piece of work [...] say it out loud rather than saying, great piece of work, I liked your handwriting [...] talk about the values that you see.” (Participant F)*

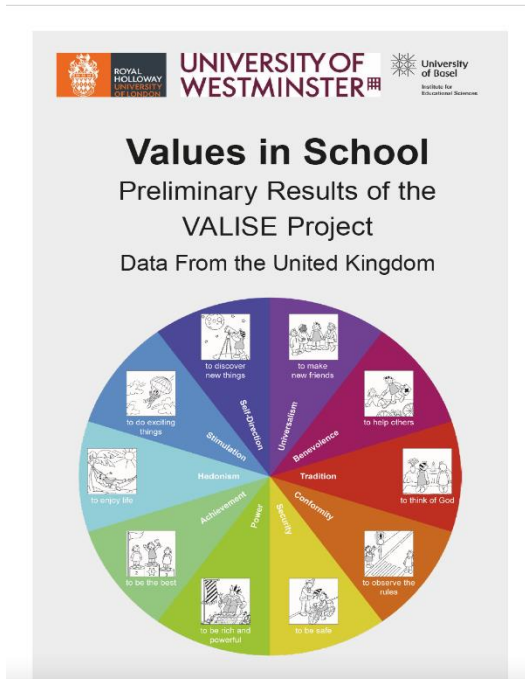


# 4. First Findings from the VALISE Project

1. Mechanisms of value transmission
2. Implicit vs explicit instruction of values
3. Values which are most difficult to teach
4. Value transmission through taught lessons
5. Opportunities for value transmission in the wider school environment
6. The role of collective worship and cultural days
7. School ethos and the impact of the head teacher



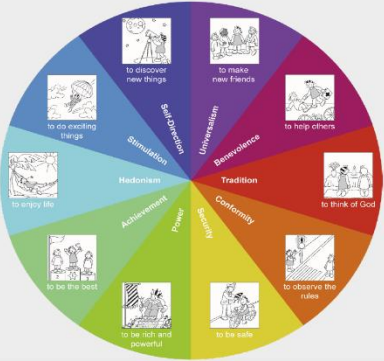
# 4. First Findings from the VALISE Project



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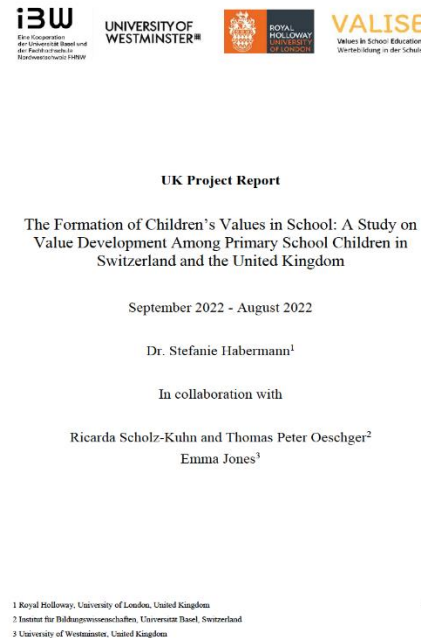
## Values in School

Preliminary Results of the VALISE Project  
Data From the United Kingdom



The circular diagram represents 12 values, each with an icon and a description:

- to discover new things
- to make new friends
- to help others
- to do exciting things
- to enjoy life
- to be rich and powerful
- to be safe
- to observe the rules
- to think of God
- to be kind
- to be fair
- to be honest
- to be brave
- to be strong
- to be confident
- to be happy
- to be successful
- to be popular
- to be powerful
- to be respected
- to be admired
- to be feared
- to be envied
- to be hated
- to be despised
- to be scorned
- to be ridiculed
- to be mocked
- to be teased
- to be bullied
- to be abused
- to be tortured
- to be killed



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## UK Project Report

The Formation of Children's Values in School: A Study on Value Development Among Primary School Children in Switzerland and the United Kingdom

September 2022 - August 2022

Dr. Stefanie Habermann<sup>1</sup>

In collaboration with

Ricarda Scholz-Kuhn and Thomas Peter Oeschger<sup>2</sup>  
Emma Jones<sup>3</sup>

1 Royal Holloway, University of London, United Kingdom  
2 Institut für Bildungswissenschaften, Universität Basel, Switzerland  
3 University of Westminster, United Kingdom



Universität Basel Institut für Bildungswissenschaften n|w

## Werte in der Schule

Zwischenstand der Ergebnisse aus der VALISE-Studie



The circular diagram represents 12 values, each with an icon and a description:

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<https://www.unibas.ch/en/research/value-bildungswissenschaftenformation-in-school/>

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# 5. Conclusions

- Children can already express what is **important to them in life** (value priority) at this early age.
- The **children's value structure** corresponds to the theoretical model of Schwartz (1994).
- The **children's value priorities** and the **teacher's value-related educational goals** are similar.
- Dissimilarities in the **school climate** for *Performance*.



# 5. Conclusions

Apart from helping children to learn, a **teacher has also an important role** to further equip their students with democratic values of citizenship, attitudes and beliefs and promote a classroom environment of mutual respect, care, honesty and trust.

Understanding the methods and processes of value transmission in the classroom **not only provides valuable insight into how school shapes children's value** but also **how children learn in general**.

Questions arise on what methods - **explicit** or **implicit** - the teachers employ to share values with their students. In an ethical classroom, teaching, modelling and reinforcement can foster the value transmission (Boekaerts et al, 2006).





# 5. Conclusions



**"I'M SORRY...BUT HOMEWORK IS JUST NOT  
A CORE VALUE FOR ME!"**

**Thank you**  
for your attention.

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# Questions

