Policy Design and Leading Change:
From National Strategy to the Classroom Floor

Rabbi Dr Glenn Y. Bezalel
3 February 2026

The Future Of Education
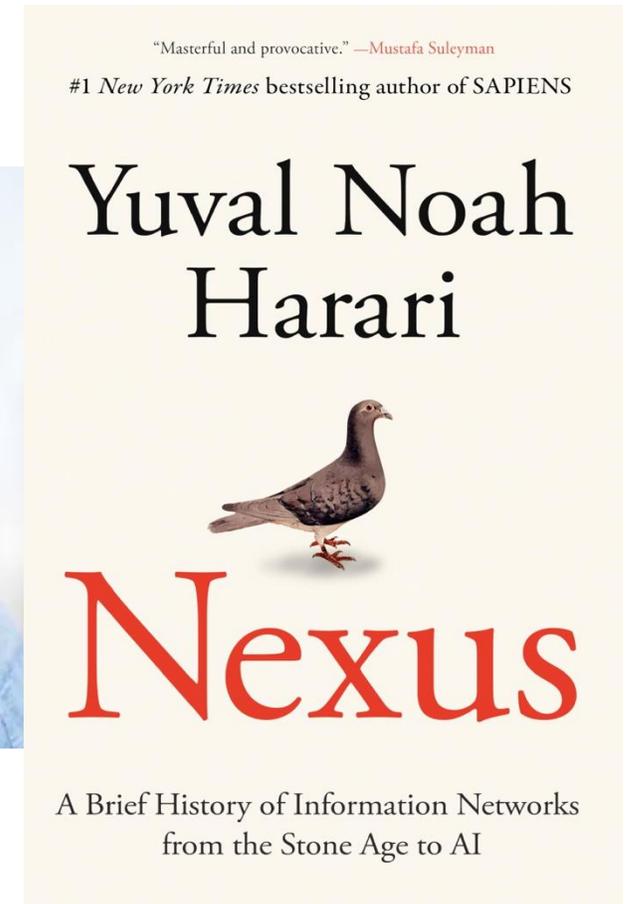
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1. Human-Centred

The Educational Challenge

"Today, nobody has any idea what to teach young people that will still be relevant in 20 years."

Yuval Noah Harari on *The Late Show with Stephen Colbert*, 10 March 2024

"Masterful and provocative." —Mustafa Suleyman

#1 *New York Times* bestselling author of SAPIENS

Yuval Noah Harari

Nexus

A Brief History of Information Networks from the Stone Age to AI

What are we aiming for?

The purpose of education is to develop students who are "acceptable at a dance and invaluable in a shipwreck".

J. F. Roxburgh (1888-1954), Scottish Headmaster

Character: Well-rounded individuals

It's the economy, stupid:
Productive individuals

Citizenship: Jewish and
Democratic values

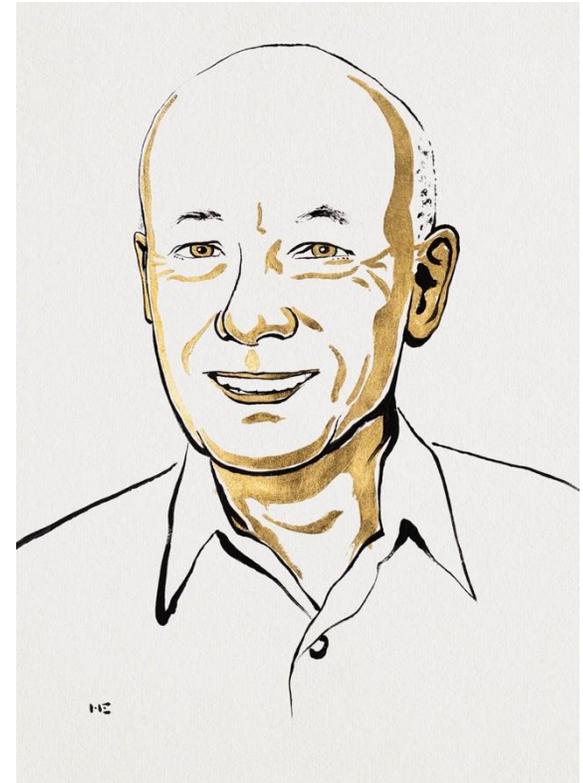# What do you think is the aim of education?

Lifelong learning:
Learning for its own sake

Critical thinking:
intellectual virtues

Success in the age of AI

Peter Howitt, Nobel Prize Winner for Economics 2025

"People skills will be most important for success. By that I mean working with others, leadership, communication, personal care."

Success in the age of AI

Guy Diedrich, Cisco's Senior Vice President and Global Innovation Officer

"Instead of just taking classes directly related to the technical side of their field, students should be exposed to philosophy, psychology, ethics, problem-solving, and things that are actually going to be embedded into what they do every single day as AI and technology practitioners."
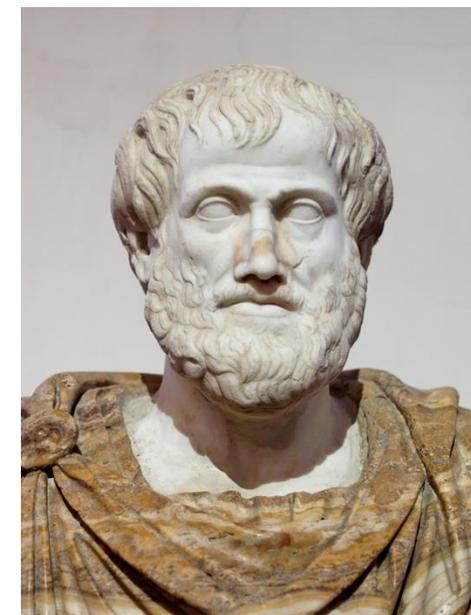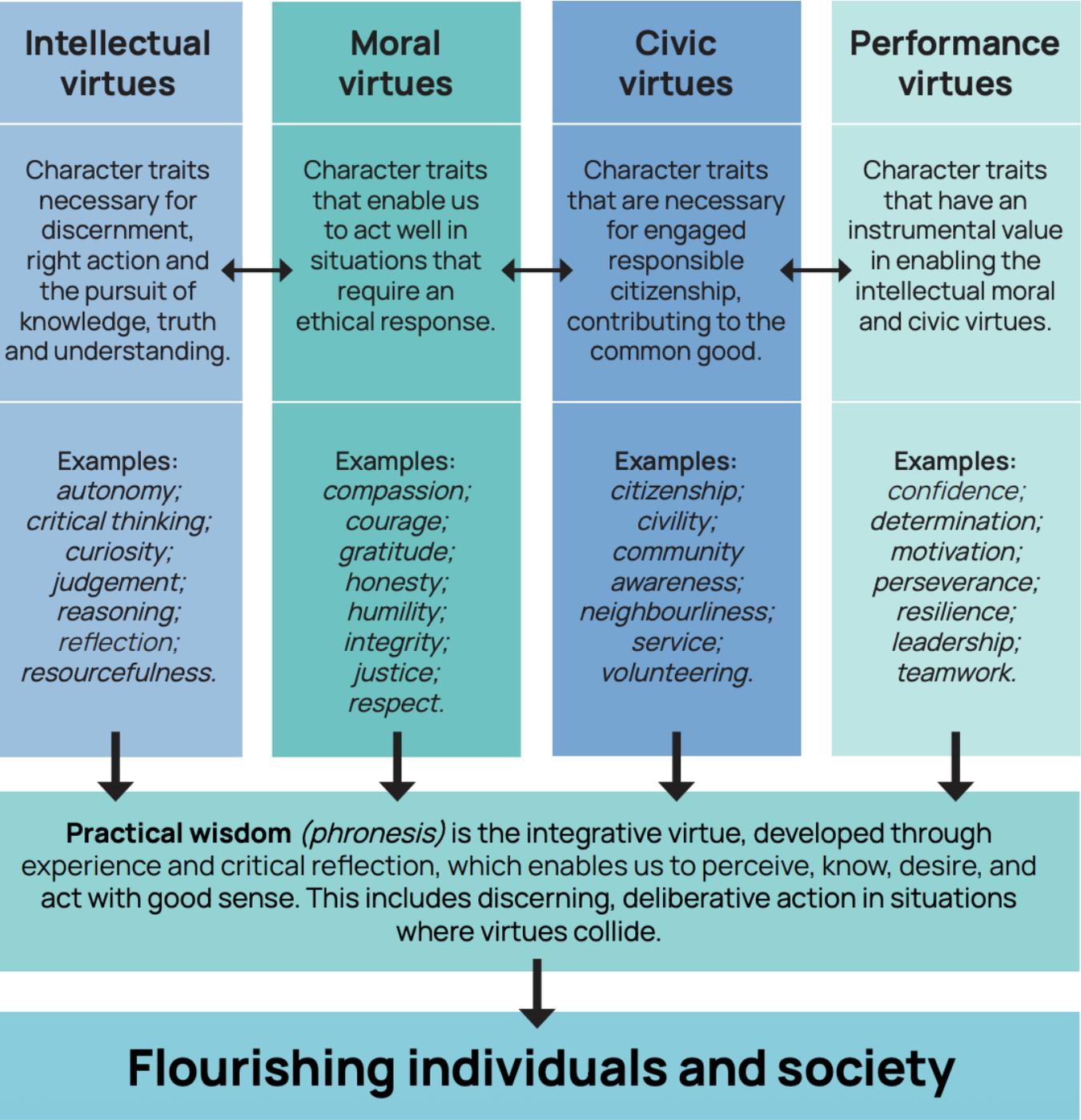
Timely Skills for the Age of AI

Cognitive skills	Self-efficacy	Leadership	Technology skills	Working with others
Analytical thinking	Curiosity	Agility	AI skills and big data	Civic literacy
Creative thinking	Flexibility	Entrepreneurism	Cybersecurity	Collaboration
Multidisciplinary thinking	Motivation	Ethics	Digital literacy	Communication
Problem solving	Self-awareness	Sustainability	Media literacy	Social responsibility

Based on:
https://www.weforum.org/publications/the-future-of-jobs-report-2025/in-full/3-skills-outlook/

OECD_Learning_Compass_2030_Concept_Note_Series.pdf

OECD

WORLD ECONOMIC FORUM

Intellectual virtues	Moral virtues	Civic virtues	Performance virtues
Character traits necessary for discernment, right action and the pursuit of knowledge, truth and understanding.	Character traits that enable us to act well in situations that require an ethical response.	Character traits that are necessary for engaged responsible citizenship, contributing to the common good.	Character traits that have an instrumental value in enabling the intellectual moral and civic virtues.
Examples: *autonomy; critical thinking; curiosity; judgement; reasoning; reflection; resourcefulness.*	Examples: *compassion; courage; gratitude; honesty; humility; integrity; justice; respect.*	Examples: *citizenship; civility; community awareness; neighbourliness; service; volunteering.*	Examples: *confidence; determination; motivation; perseverance; resilience; leadership; teamwork.*

Practical wisdom *(phronesis)* is the integrative virtue, developed through experience and critical reflection, which enables us to perceive, know, desire, and act with good sense. This includes discerning, deliberative action in situations where virtues collide.
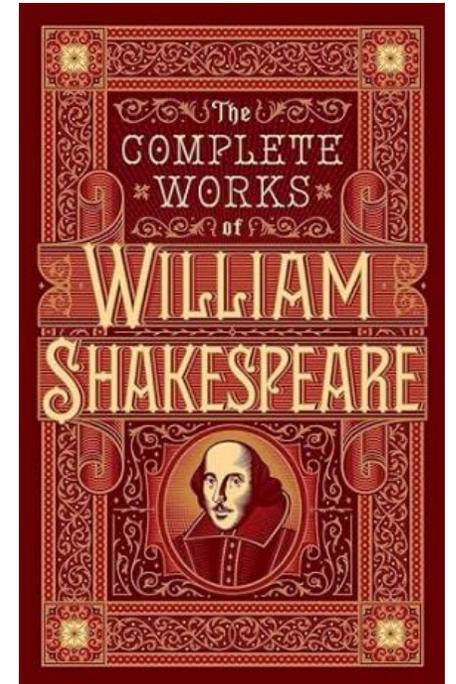
Flourishing individuals and society

Timeless Virtues
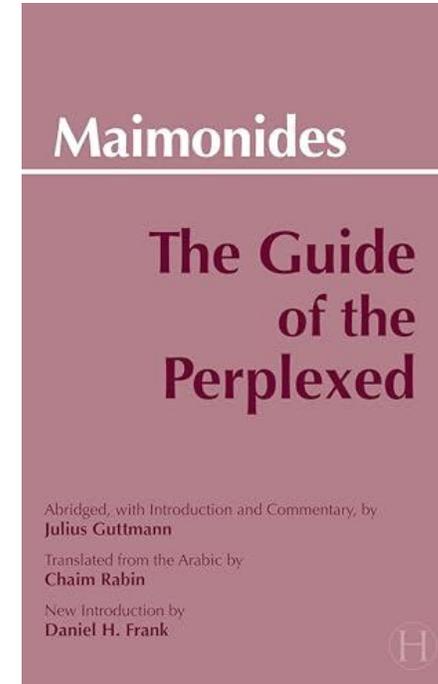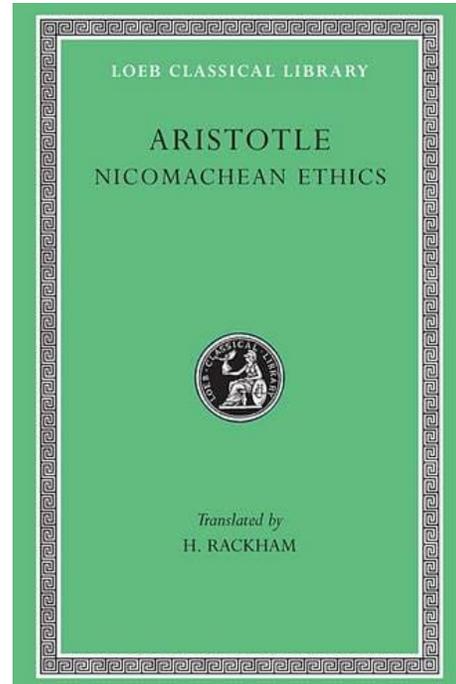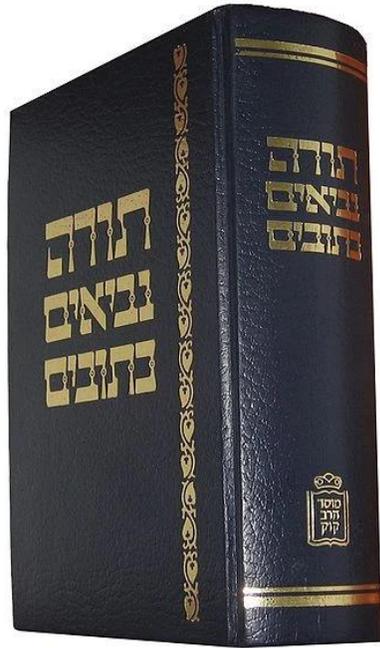
Pursuing Wisdom

"Intelligence is what you use when you don't know what to do."

Attributed to Jean Piaget (1896-1980)

Pursuing Wisdom

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2. Cocreation

Your Brain on ChatGPT

"Everyone is cheating their way through college."

"College is just how well I can use ChatGPT at this point."

"An essay with ChatGPT, it's like it just gives you straight up what you have to follow. You just don't really have to think that much."

"Any type of writing in life, I use AI. I need AI to text girls!"

nymag ✓
New York Magazine

🧵 nymag

https://nymag.com/intelligencer/article/openai-chatgpt-ai-cheating-education-college-students-school.html

Character: 'Frictionless Convenience'

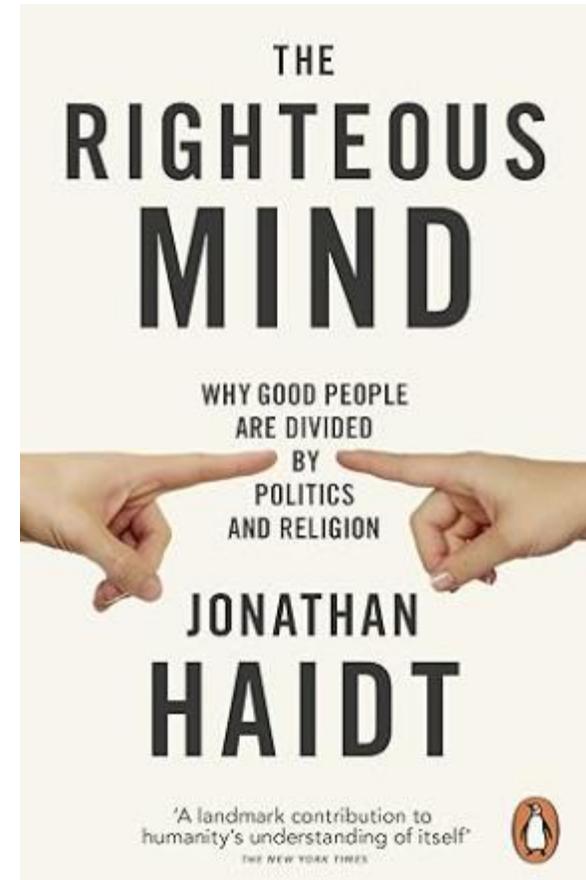'Self-care', trust in technology, illusion of self-sufficiency:

❑ Isolation and loneliness

❑ Echo chambers of our own making

❑ Americans spending, on average, 240 fewer hours per year interacting face-to-face than in 2003

❑ In the past two decades, Americans spend nearly 12 more hours per week at home

❑ Young people lack close friendships, delay romantic relationships, abstain from sex, avoid starting families, and increasingly report feeling socially adrift.

❑ Online spaces reward superficial interaction and filter out the subtleties that build real trust

Rachel Botsman, 26 March 2025, The RSA

https://www.thersa.org/rsa-journal/trust-fall/

Morals and the Teen Mental Health Crisis

❑Digital environments disrupt emotional regulation, attention, sleep, and social development, especially during adolescence, when the brain is most plastic

❑Phones displace the real-world interactions through which moral foundations are formed

❑A phone cannot replicate the embodied empathy that emerges when one person helps another in distress

❑**Girls** are especially vulnerable to environments that weaponise social comparison and moral outrage.

❑Without opportunities to earn respect, test limits, and belong to meaningful groups, many **boys** drift into disengagement, aggression, and despair.

THE
RIGHTEOUS
MIND

WHY GOOD PEOPLE
ARE DIVIDED
BY
POLITICS
AND RELIGION

JONATHAN
HAIDT

'A landmark contribution to
humanity's understanding of itself'
THE NEW YORK TIMES

https://client.13d.com/share/69694e8817426

AI and Child Development

"We're not adapting tools to fit our children; we're reshaping children to fit the tools. We're lowering the bar to conceal our kids' shrinking capacity for comprehension."

Jared Cooney Horvath
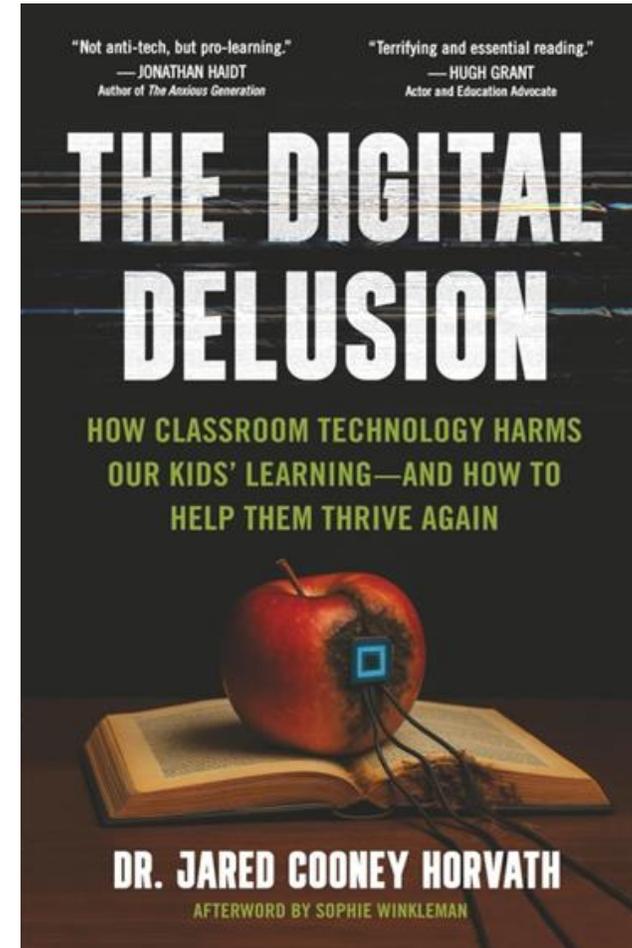
AI and the 'Cognitive Struggle'

❑ **The optimistic view – Cognitive Struggle:** Every student now has access to their own private AI tutor. They will get the exact help they need whenever they need it, and hence, their understanding of maths will grow.

❑ **The realistic/pessimistic view – Cognitive Outsourcing:** Students who can't be bothered doing their homework but don't want to get in trouble can take pictures of the questions, send them to ChatGPT, copy the working out, and score full marks.

https://eedi.substack.com/p/is-maths-homework-dead?triedRedirect=true

Pursuing Wisdom in the Age of AI

1. 'The Cloister': create space for traditional learning, where devices are excluded

2. Assume all study outside the cloister is with the use of LLMs

3. Inside the cloister, allocate time to:

   a. reading printed books

   b. discussion of texts and problems

   c. writing essays and problem-sets with pen and paper

   d. assessment via oral and written examinations

4. Require time in the cloister to be around seven hours a day, leaving the rest of the time for using AI

5. Revise admissions procedures to ensure the university attracts students capable of coping with the above.

**Niall Ferguson,
4 July 2025, The Times**

https://www.thetimes.com/article/196414b8-96ba-4e7a-971d-2101226b1d7e

Reimagining School Life

"Go to school for the social experience. Use more AI. The conventional school experience could be a lot better. ...We can have individualised teachers – that's going to be much better. And you go to school with a bunch of other kids to hang out with other kids. Education is a social experience."

Elon Musk, interview with Entrelligence

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3. Proactive Hope

Schools as 'Communities of Understanding'

Pastoral (existential):

Kind: "empathic" understanding

Ethos (social):

Aware: "communal" understanding

Academic (epistemic):

Ready: "cognitive" understanding

Towards "Communities of Understanding": a framework for controversy in schools

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[a]Deputy Head (academic), City of London School, London, UK; [b]Faculty of Education, University of Cambridge, Cambridge, UK

ABSTRACT
From the so-called 'culture wars' to global military conflicts, issues of controversy impact the lives of young people and their families in a very real and deeply personal way. With academic debate on how to frame controversy in the classroom dominated by the epistemic criterion, pastoral care can often be overlooked as part of the educational response in schools. In arguing that the school classroom has a central place in teaching and learning about issues of controversy, school leaders must contend with the wellbeing and safeguarding of pupils when such topics are inevitably raised. Drawing on Dan Kahan's 'cultural cognitive thesis', this article argues for a holistic educational approach towards controversy that fully accounts for the existential, social and epistemic dimensions inherent in issues of controversy. Successfully grappling with timely controversial topics necessitates complementary pastoral and academic provision that are underpinned by a robust and transparent school ethos. In recognising that different schools will wish to emphasise and nurture for different character virtues and principles, the educational landscape must provide for pluralist values in a multicultural society within statutory guidelines for a truly inclusivist environment. In turn, we advocate for school leaders, teachers and other stakeholders to reframe schools as 'communities of understanding'. This champions the study of controversy through a dual pathway of 'understanding' as cognitive comprehension hand in hand with 'understanding' as empathic, showing care for the other as well as oneself.

City of
London
School

City of London School

Critical Thinking and Citizenship

"It's more important than ever that we give young people the knowledge and skills to be able to challenge what they see online. [We need] to embed critical skills in lessons to arm our children against the disinformation, fake news and putrid conspiracy theories awash on social media."

Bridget Phillipson, UK Education Secretary, cited in Badshah 2024

# Critical Thinking and Citizenship

Critical Thinking and Citizenship

Critical Thinking and Citizenship

Civic Online Reasoning:

1. Read laterally: leaving a site to see what other digital sources say about it

2. Show click restraint: resisting the urge to immediately click on the first search result

3. Use AI! Learn how to evaluate the trustworthiness of what you have read

Civic Online Reasoning
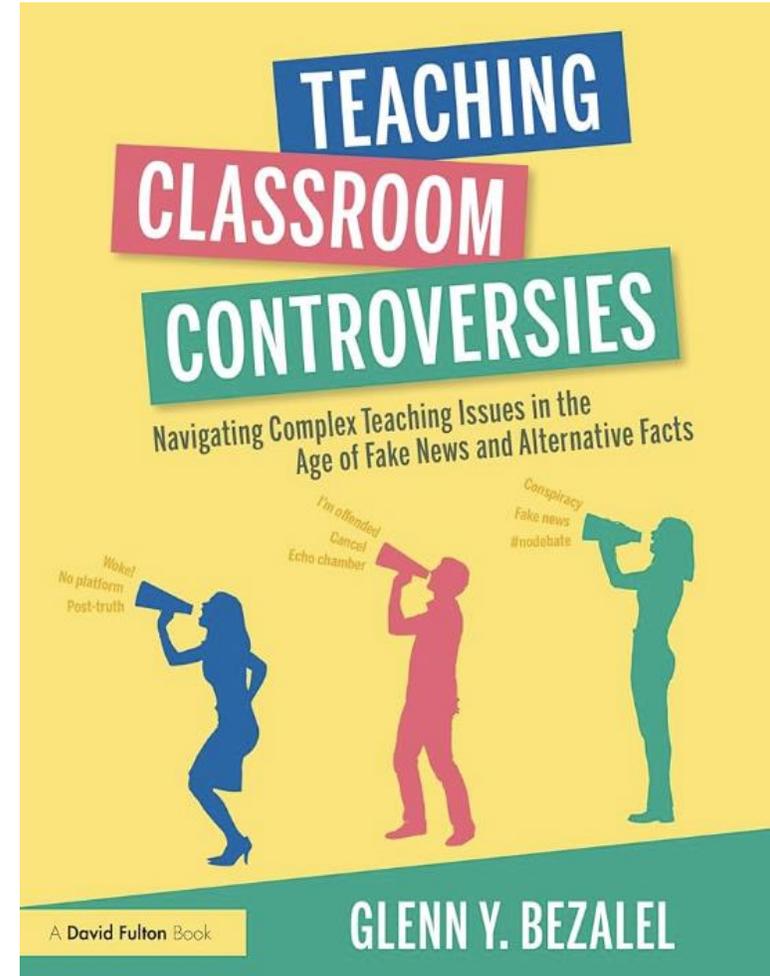
Aim of Education

"To educate a person in mind and not in morals is to educate a menace to society."

Theodore Roosevelt (1858-1919)