

A LECTURER'S DILEMMA

*To be neutral or
not to be neutral?*



INTRODUCTIONS

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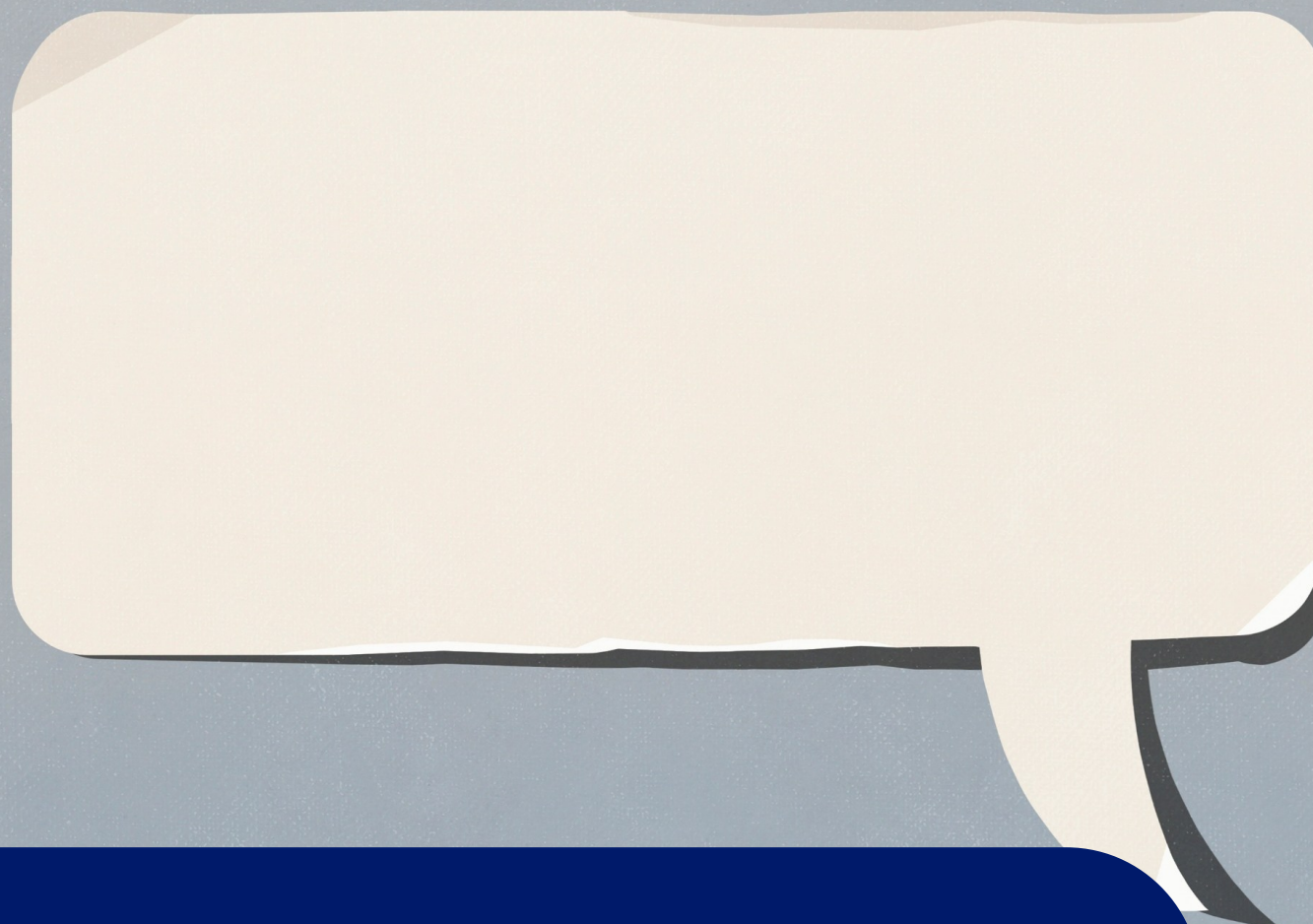
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ON THE MATTER OF INDOCTRINATION

UANTWERP SUMMER SCHOOL

Programme overview | Philosophy and Society | Summer School | Antwerp Summer University | University of Antwerp

www.uantwerpen.be

FYI

Voor iedereen die studenten doceert, of kent, met interesse in klimaatactivisme!

Eind augustus is er een zomerschool in Antwerpen die zich focust op de klimaatactivisme. Climate Obstruction NL geeft een workshop, net als Tractie en Stroomversnellers. Daarnaast heel erg veel input over klimaatactivisme en protest!

Stuur vooral door aan mogelijke geïnteresseerden 😊 <https://www.uantwerpen.be/en/summer-winter-schools/philosophy-and-society/programme/programme-overview/>

2:28 PM



H

HM

Indoctrinatie!!1 2:53 PM



Source: Signal conversation, own work

DEFINITION

Indoctrination is the act of inducing “a person or group to accept a set of beliefs uncritically”

(Copp, 2016)

A person as being indoctrinated if they accept a belief non-rationally, that is, not on the basis of argument or the available evidence.

(Hand, 2018)



FOX BUSINESS

▶ **MIKE JOHNSON (R-LA) | HOUSE REPUBLICAN CONFERENCE VICE CHAIRMAN**

**ELON MUSK & BILL MAHER TALK SCHOOLS
INDOCTRINATING STUDENTS, CENSORING SPEECH**

▶ **4:52P CT**

Pause (k)

BITCOIN	27,979.00 ▼ 1415.00 -4.81%	ETHEREUM	1,824.50 ▼ 73.10 -3.85%	DOW	46.46 -0.14%
CURRENCIES	▶ D/USD 0. UNDERSTAND THE PRINCIPLES OF 003				FOX BUSINESS

Inclusive Mindset and Intercultural Competence

Source: <https://innerdevelopmentgoals.org>



Willingness and competence to embrace diversity and include people and collectives with different views and backgrounds.



FEATURED | EDUCATION

DEI Required: 67% of Universities Mandate 'Diversity' Indoctrination

April 15, 2024

by TIM MINELLA

Source: <https://www.goldwaterinstitute.org>

MORAL EDUCATION FACES A DIFFICULTY:

- “1. Moral education aims to bring it about that children subscribe to moral standards and believe them to be justified.
2. There is reasonable disagreement about the content and justification of morality.
3. Teaching propositions as true, or standards as justified, when there is reasonable disagreement about them, is **indoctrinatory**.”

***Hand**, A Theory of Moral Education (2018)*

***CAN WE DO
WITHOUT
MORAL
EDUCATION?***

ON SUSTAINABLE EDUCATION



***“THE AIM OF
EDUCATION IS THE
KNOWLEDGE, NOT
OF FACTS, BUT OF
VALUES.”***

William Ralph Inge

Cambridge University, professor, philosopher



SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS



Source: <https://www.government.nl/topics/united-nations/>

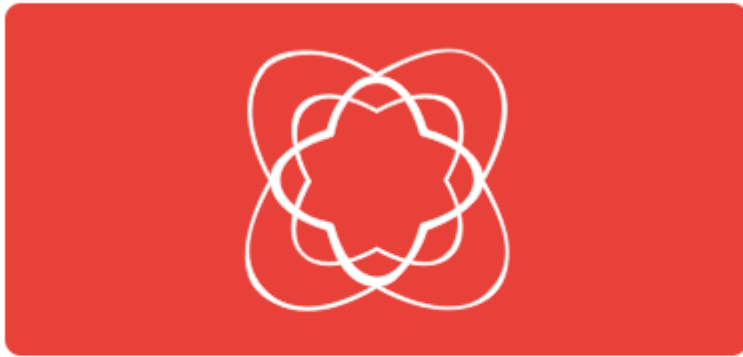
INNER DEVELOPMENT GOALS



Source: <https://innerdevelopmentgoals.org>

INNER DEVELOPMENT GOALS

Humility



Being able to act in accordance with the needs of the situation without concern for one's own importance.

Empathy and Compassion



Ability to relate to others, oneself and nature with kindness, empathy and compassion and address related suffering

Courage



Ability to stand up for values, make decisions, take decisive action and, if need be, challenge and disrupt existing structures and views.

Source: <https://innerdevelopmentgoals.org>

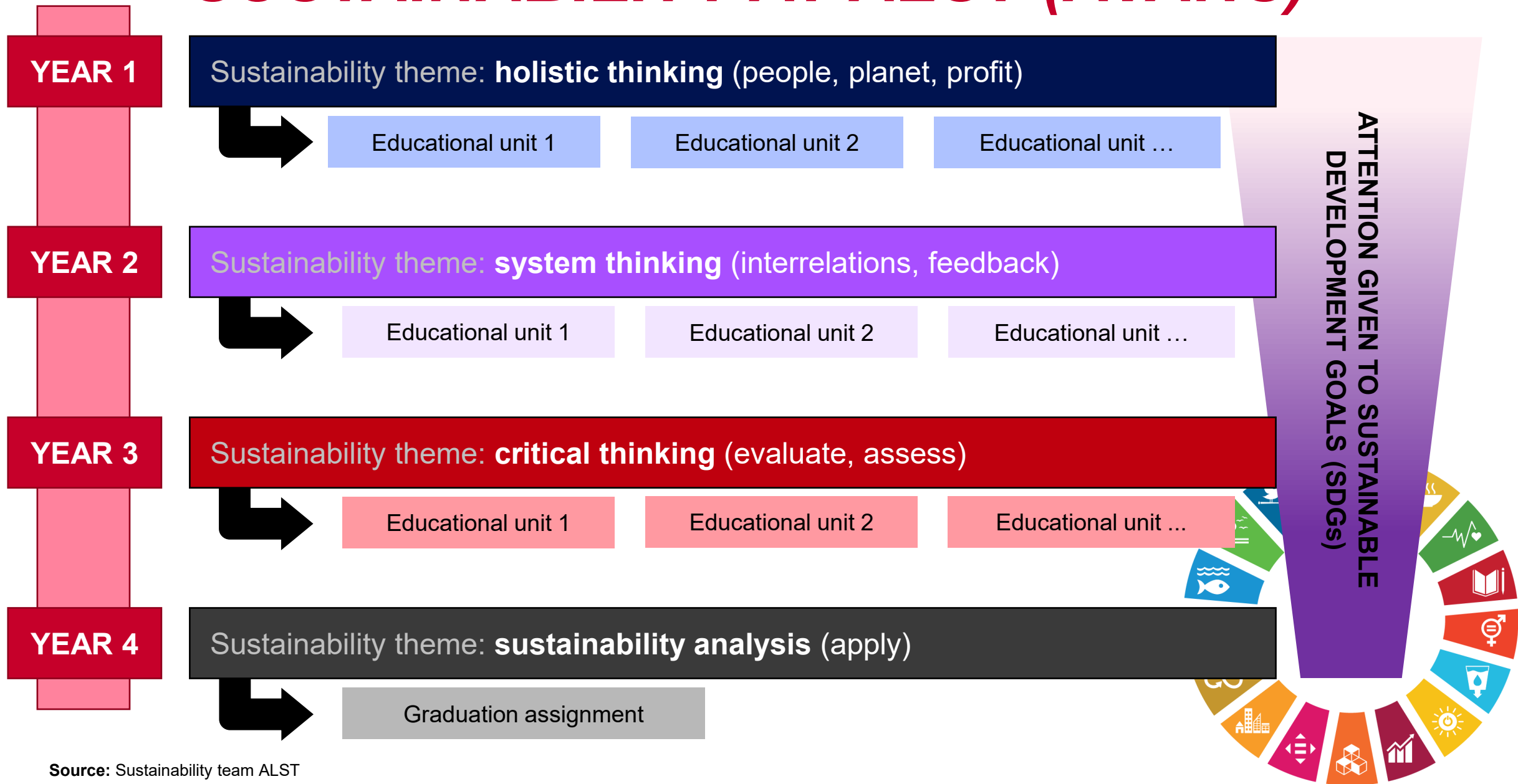
UNESCO - EDUCATION

“A world order anchored on the common values expressed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights is weakening. Our world faces a crisis of values evidenced by the rise in corruption, callousness, intolerance and bigotry, and the normalization of violence.”

“Values such as respect, empathy, equality, and solidarity must be core to the mission of universities, colleges, and technical institutes in the future. Higher education must foster ethics and support students to be better and more capable citizens with greater awareness of their civic and environmental responsibilities.”

Source: UNESCO (2021), Reimagining our futures together: a new social contract for education

SUSTAINABILITY AT ALST (AVANS)





NO
NATURE
NO
FUTURE

ON THE FUTURE OF EDUCATION

NOBLE EDUCATION

*Educating as a means of social orientation,
cultivating virtues, fostering critical thinking...*

*“We contend that a noble education should
develop future-focused citizens with the
resilience and foresight necessary to manage
our world more sustainably than previous
generations.”*

John, 2025, A Noble Education

A SIMPLE EXERCISE



Nestlé Good food, Good life

Non-Financial Statement 2024



Source: www.nestle.com

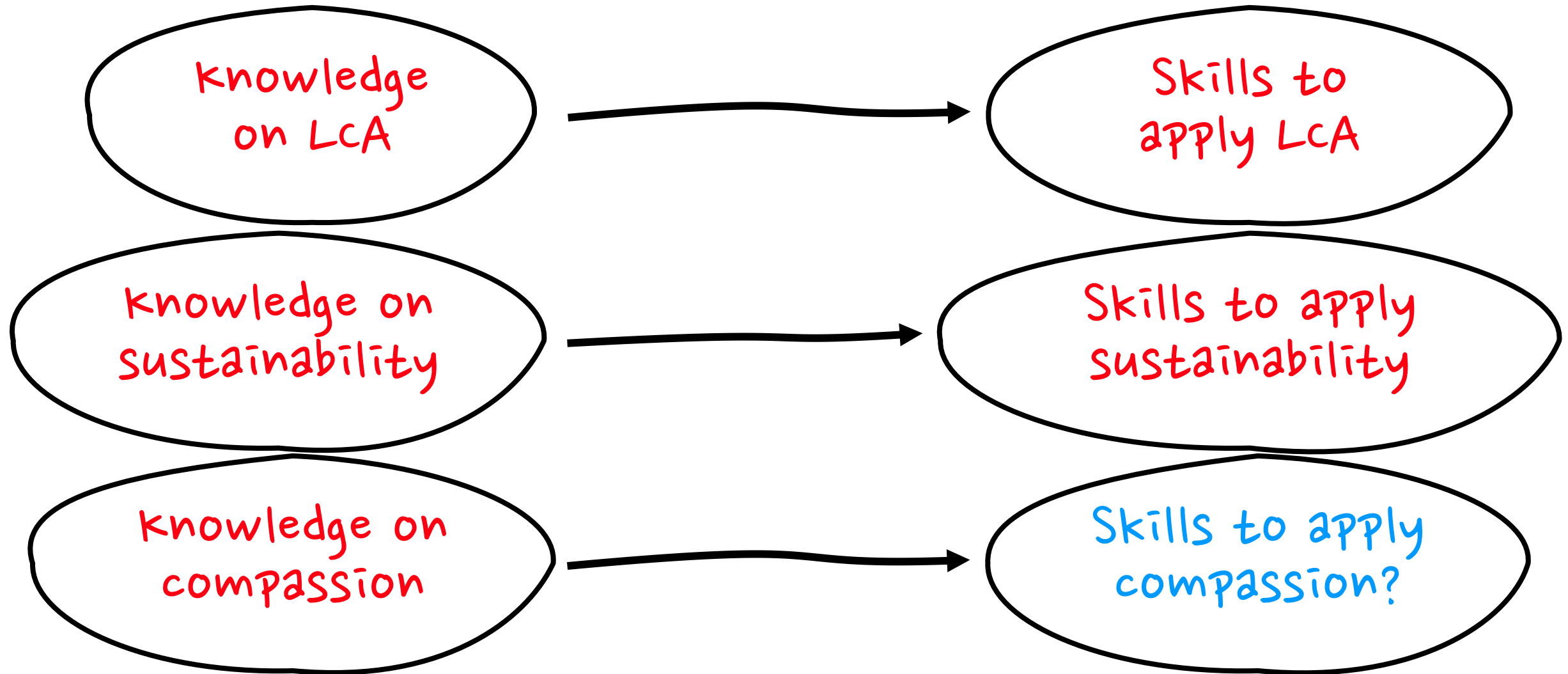


Source: www.somo.nl

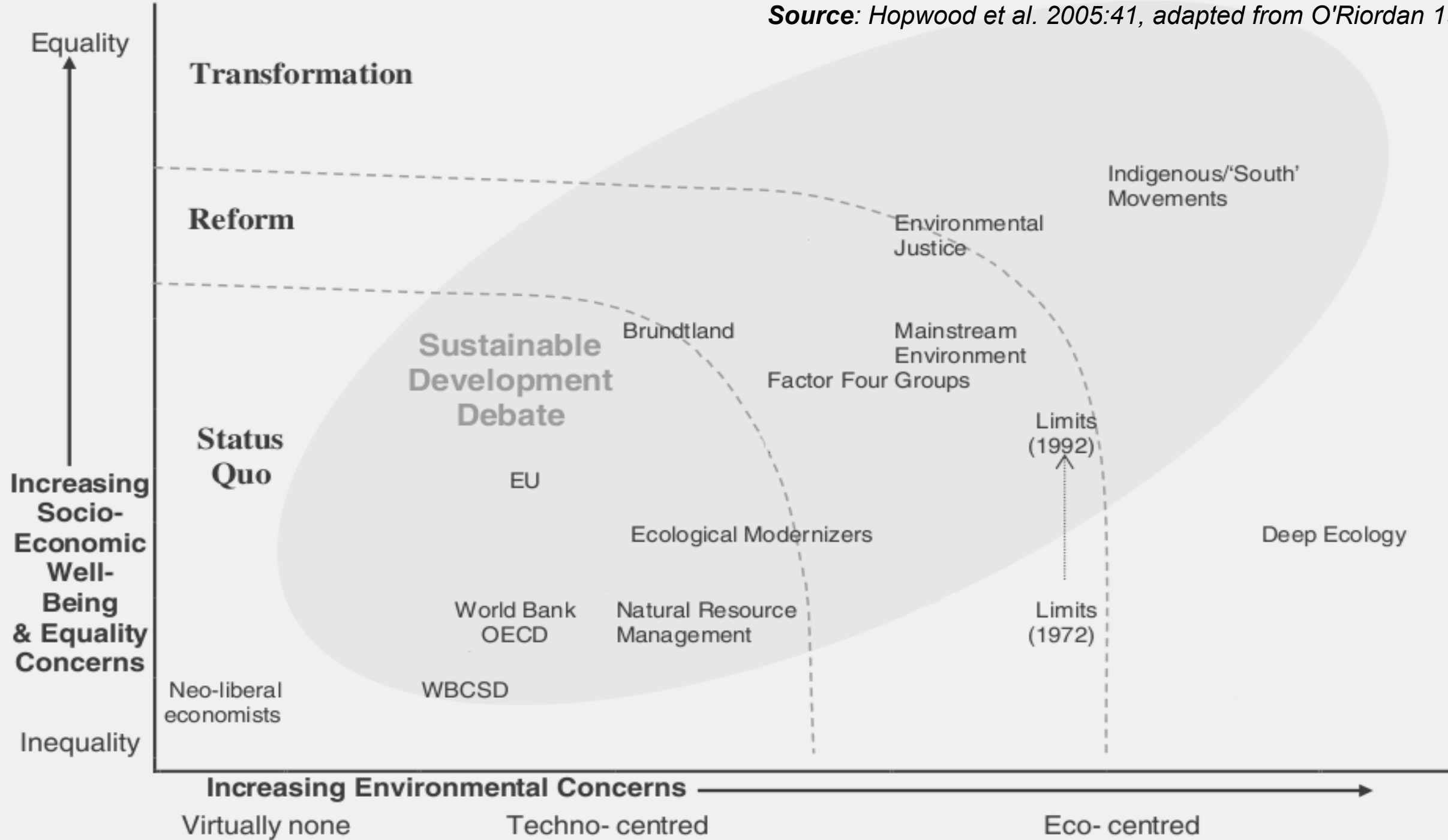
ETHICS FOR APPLIED SCIENCES

Theory	Virtue ethics	Deontology	Utilitarianism
Point of departure	Virtues (e.g. respect, modesty, honesty)	Norms, duty (mutually agreed upon principles)	Values (happiness, utility, pain/suffering)
Focus	Individual actor, character	The action itself, agency	The consequences of any given action
Exercise	<i>Read the following case study on Sámi in Norway, and provide an argument in favour and against development of wind turbines, based on two ethical theories.</i>		

TEACHING KNOWLEDGE & SKILLS



Source: Hopwood et al. 2005:41, adapted from O'Riordan 1989



objective

conservative

Facts

Descriptive

Plurality

Subjective

values

progressive

Prescriptive

Monism

“VEGAN TEACHERS MAKE STUDENTS FEEL REALLY BAD”: IS TEACHING SUSTAINABLE NUTRITION INDOCTRINATING?

WEBER, A. ET AL. (2022)

“The preliminary results of this study show that participants recognize a high risk of indoctrination when teaching sustainable nutrition, primarily due to their own teaching actions, such as deciding whether to reveal their own dietary choices to students. While some participants believed teachers must be restrained, others thought that open communication about personal choices could benefit student decision-making skills. In terms of avoiding indoctrination when teaching sustainable nutrition, participants advocated for student-centered and multi-perspective teaching approaches.”

IN CONCLUSION:

In the past, sustainability education was about teaching topics such as the Triple Bottom Line, SDGs, fairness. And skills such as critical thinking, MCA development and SLCA design.

We are providing the map on which the student can move around, based on his/her own compass.

However, when we teach values and norms, are we not only providing the map, but also influencing the needle of the student?

Teaching skills and embedding values such as fairness, compassion and diversity is noble, but isn't it also subjective and bordering on indoctrination?

Or should we teach students the skills to apply both cruelty and compassion, and then ask the student to pick his/her own preference (= staying neutral).



THANK YOU!

Questions? Comments? Suggestions?

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SOURCES

- **UNESCO**, International Commission on the Futures of Education (2021), Reimagining our futures together: a new social contract for education, <https://doi.org/10.54675/ASRB4722>
- **Martin, C.** (2023), Educational Institutions and Indoctrination. *Educ Theory*, 73: 204-222. <https://doi.org/10.1111/edth.12574>
- **Hand, M.** (2018), *A Theory of Moral Education*, 1st Ed., Routledge Publishers
- **John, M.** (Ed.). (2025). *Routledge Handbook of global sustainability education and thinking for the 21st century*. Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003171577>
- **Inner Development Goals**, <https://innerdevelopmentgoals.org/>
- **Inner Development Goals Framework & Toolkit**, <https://idg.tools/framework>
- **Lundqvist, U.** & K d.Fine Licht (2025), Education for Sustainable Development and The need for education in ethics, In: *Routledge Handbook of global sustainability education and thinking for the 21st century* (2025)

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EXTRA MATERIALS

“IT SHOULD BE NOTED THAT NO (OR ALMOST NO) EDUCATIONAL EFFORT IS, STRICTLY SPEAKING, ‘VALUE FREE’. WHEN WE EDUCATE STUDENTS IN SCIENCE OR THE HUMANITIES, WE OFTEN TRY TO IMBUE THEM WITH CERTAIN VALUES OR NORMS, FOR EXAMPLE, BASED ON GOOD RESEARCH PRACTICE, OR WHAT A GOOD THEORY IS, ETC. FOR EXAMPLE, A GOAL (A VALUE) WHEN IT COMES TO PHYSICS IS NOT ONLY TO PRODUCE THEORIES WHICH CAN WITHSTAND RIGOROUS TESTING. WE ALSO WANT THEORIES THAT ARE SIMPLE, GRACEFUL, AND HAVE A HIGH DEGREE OF EXPLANATORY POWER. THERE IS ALSO A WIDE VARIETY OF NORMS WE TRY TO TEACH STUDENTS SUCH AS HOW TO BEHAVE IN A LAB, HOW TO WRITE A PAPER, AND WHAT IT IS TO CHEAT AND INSTILL IN THEM THE VALUES THAT THEY SHOULD NOT CHEAT. HOWEVER, THERE ARE MANY NORMS AND VALUES WE REGULARLY TRY TO TEACH STUDENTS, BUT SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND ETHICS ARE RELATIVELY NEW TOPICS TO EDUCATION.”

Source: Lundqvist, U. & K d.Fine Licht (2025), Education for Sustainable Development and The need for education in ethics

“A QUESTION THAT IS MUCH DISCUSSED IS TO WHAT EXTENT THE LEARNING OUTCOMES SHOULD REQUIRE A CHANGE OF THE STUDENTS’ NORMS AND VALUES, I.E., THEIR ATTITUDES. A STRONG BUT COMMON OPINION IS THAT EDUCATION SHOULD BE VALUE NEUTRAL OR VALUE FREE AND NOT FORCE ANY OPINIONS UPON THE STUDENTS, AND INSTEAD FOCUSING ON MAKING THEM CONSCIOUS DECISIONS THROUGH KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLED THROUGH METHODS AND TOOLS. HOWEVER, THE ‘ATTITUDE COMPETENCY’ IS CONNECTED TO NORMS AND VALUES AND CAN BE DESCRIBED AS “A CAPACITY THAT EXISTS IN A PERSON THAT LEADS TO BEHAVIOR THAT MEETS THE JOB DEMANDS WHICH BRINGS IN DESIRED RESULTS BEYOND KNOWLEDGE AND SKILL”. SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IS FURTHERMORE A VALUE-LADEN AND DEEPLY NORMATIVE CONCEPT (FOR EXAMPLE, UN 2015), WHERE THERE CAN BE AN EXPECTED AMBITION TO FOSTER GOOD FOR CITIZENS.”

Source: Lundqvist, U. & K d.Fine Licht (2025), Education for Sustainable Development and The need for education in ethics