

Re-imagining the moral purpose of VET

Professor Geoff Hayward
Faculty of Education
University of Cambridge



We must all become citizens and learn to be critical of ourselves and our society. To do this requires us to develop powers of independent reason and judgment.

Socrates 470-399 BCE

A global policy refrain

Education, education, education

≠ Beruf

≠ Bildung

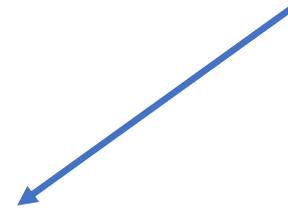
Nein, Nein, Nein

Wilhelm von Humboldt

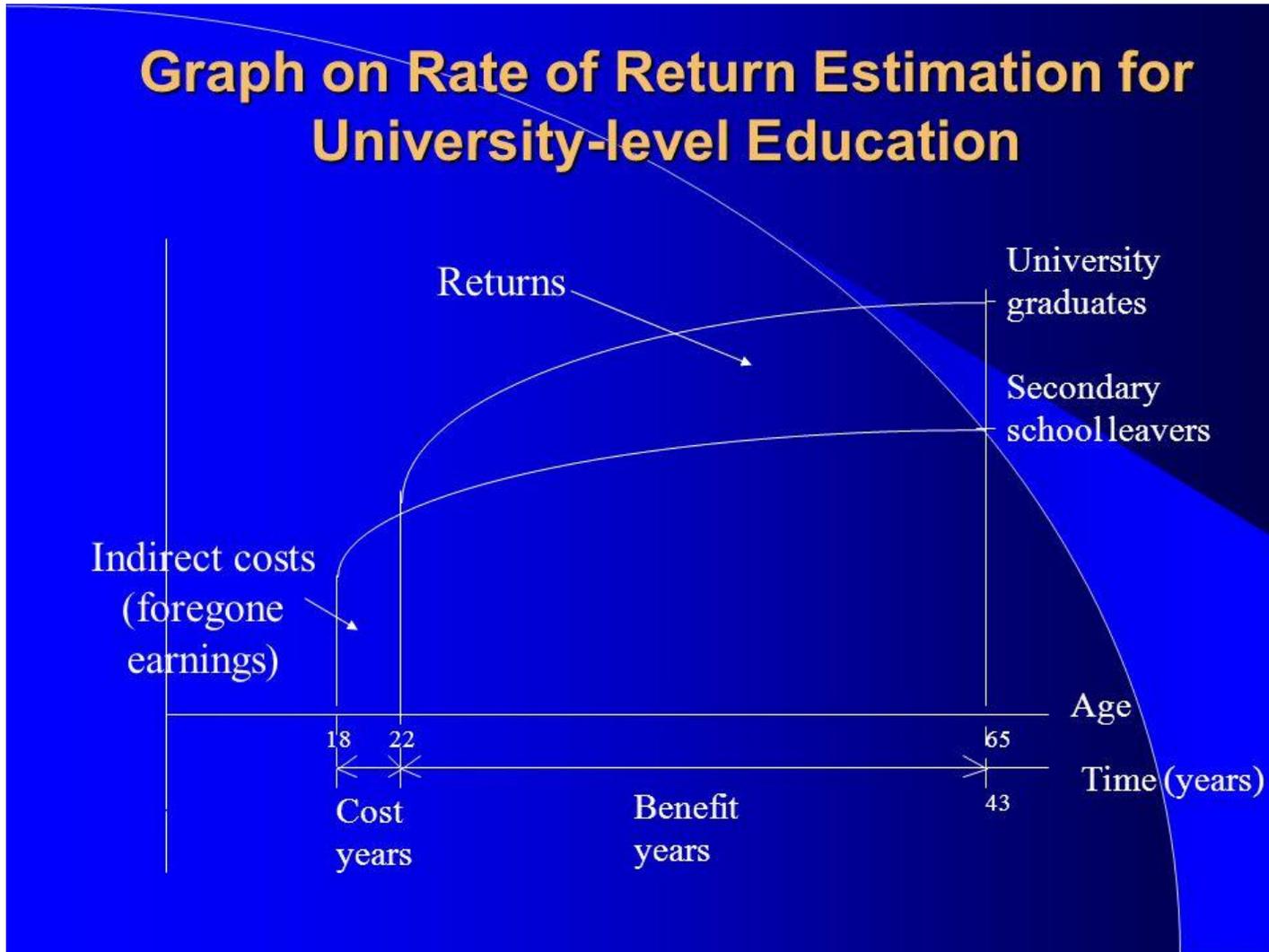


Education for what purpose?

Rate of return to schooling



$$\ln[w(s, x)] = \alpha_0 + \rho_s s + \beta_0 x + \beta_1 x^2 + \varepsilon$$



Jacob Mincer

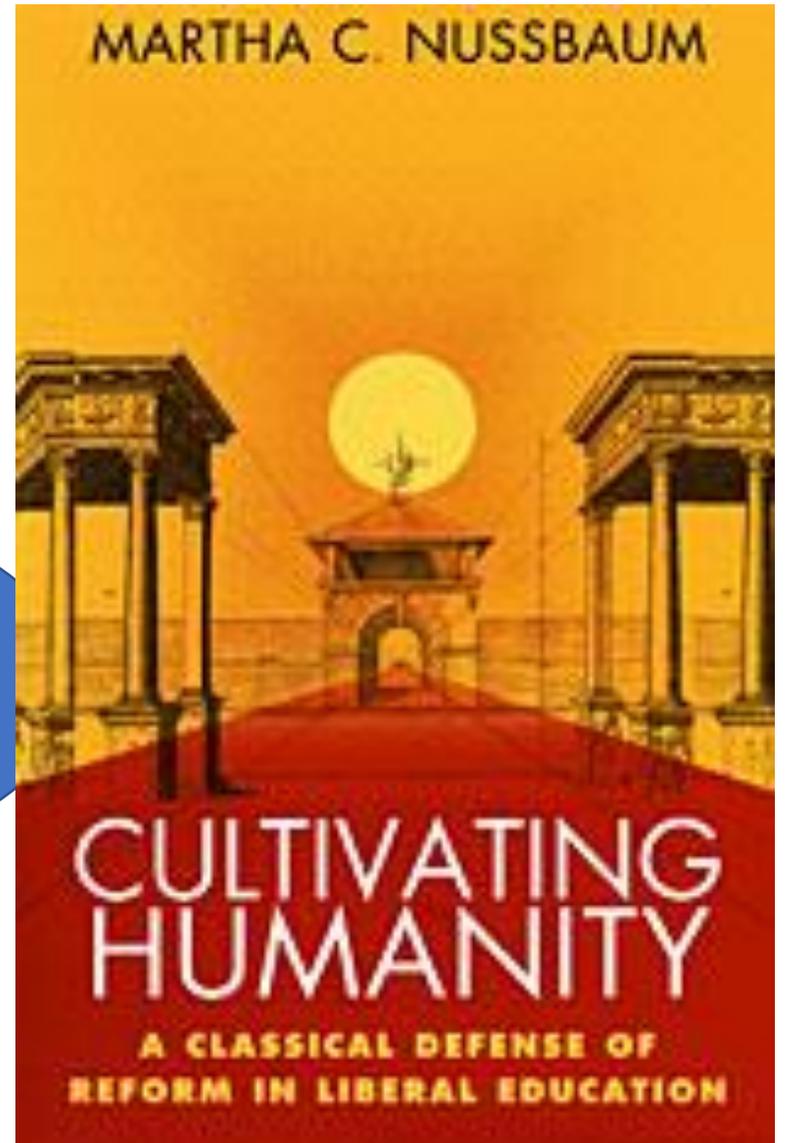
The New Labour View



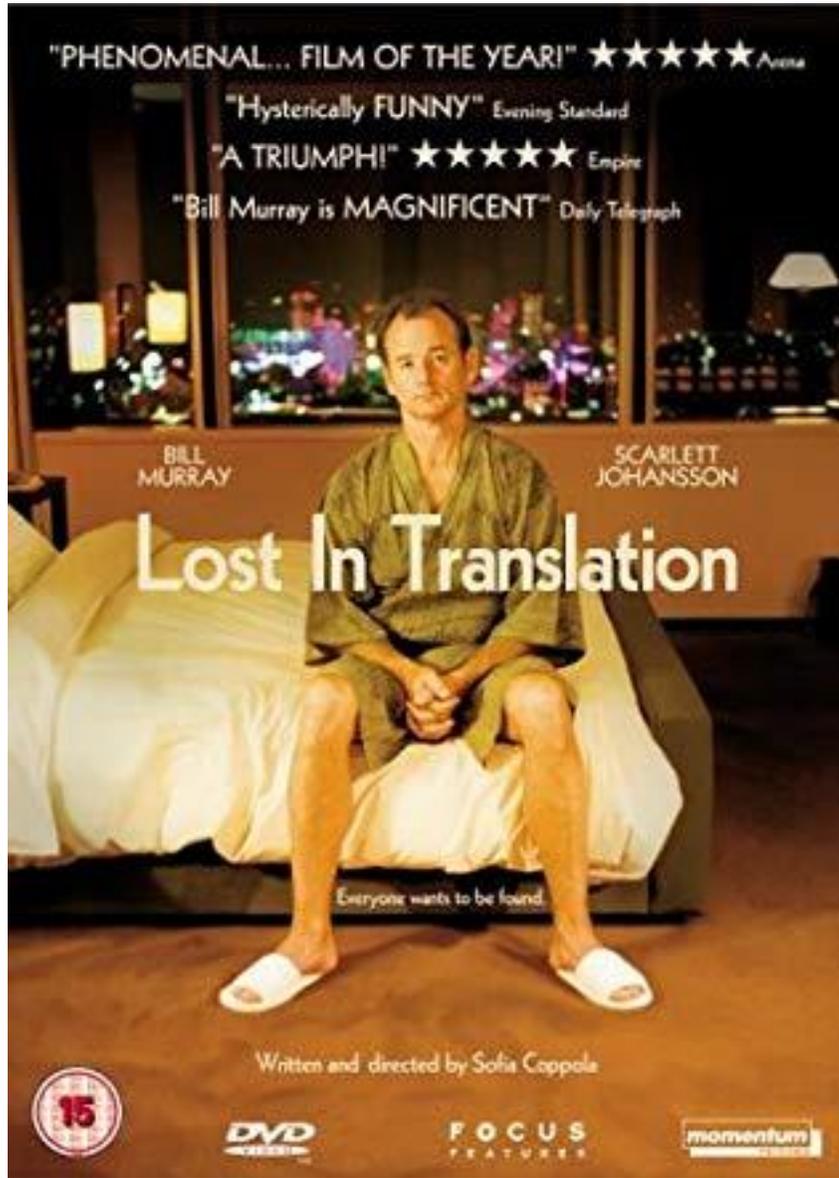
What all this means is not that the role of Government, of the collective, of the services of the State is redundant; but changed. The rule now is not to interfere with the necessary flexibility an employer requires to operate successfully in a highly fluid changing economic market. It is to equip the employee to survive, prosper and develop in such a market, to give them the flexibility to be able to choose a wide range of jobs and to fit family and work/life together. (Tony Blair, 2007)

Surely education is about more than this?





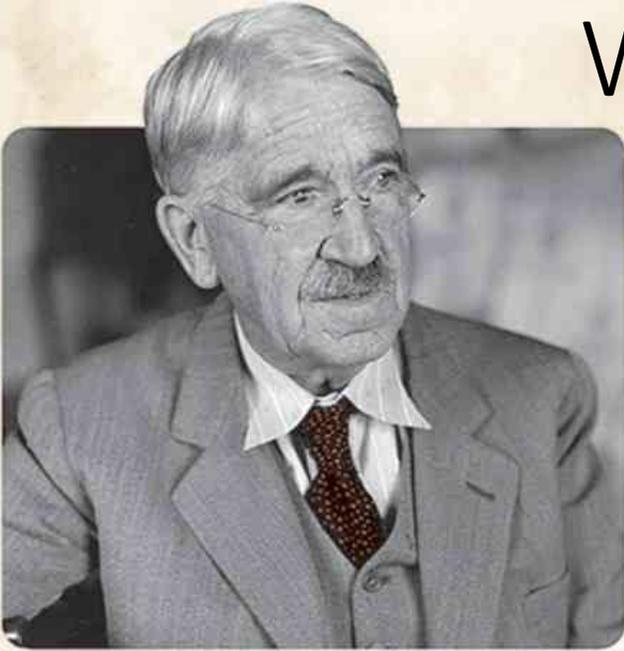
Martha Nussbaum



Beruf = ????????

Bildung = ????????????

What is a vocation?



DEMOCRACY — AND — EDUCATION

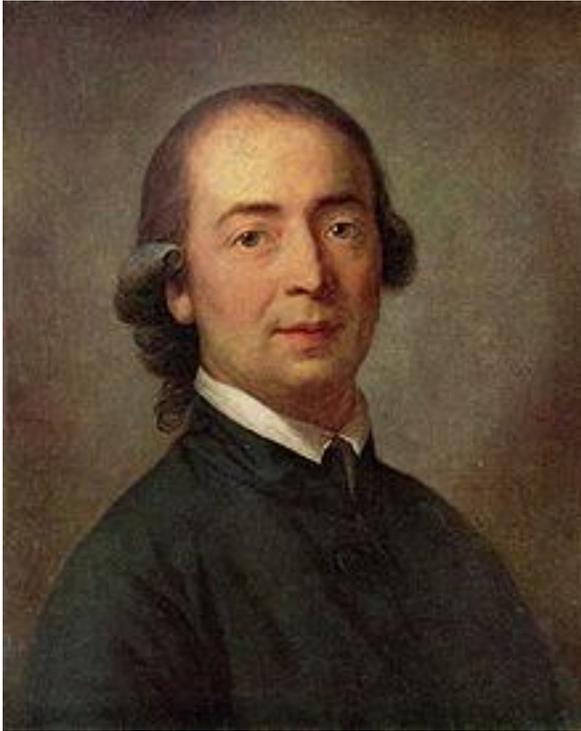
JOHN DEWEY

A vocation means nothing but such a direction of life activities as renders them perceptibly significant to a person, because of the consequences they accomplish, and also useful to his associates.

= BERUF

The opposite of a career is neither leisure nor culture, but aimlessness, capriciousness, the absence of cumulative achievement in experience, on the **personal side**, and idle display, parasitic dependence upon the others, on the **social side**.

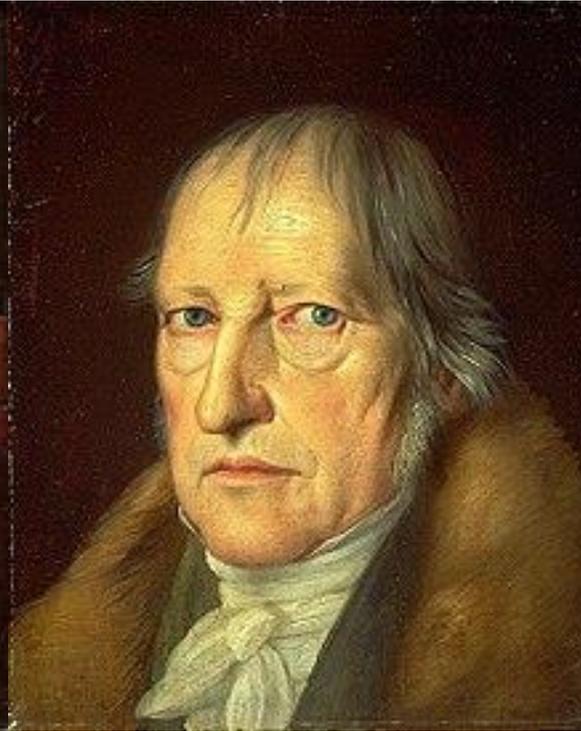
Bildung – help!



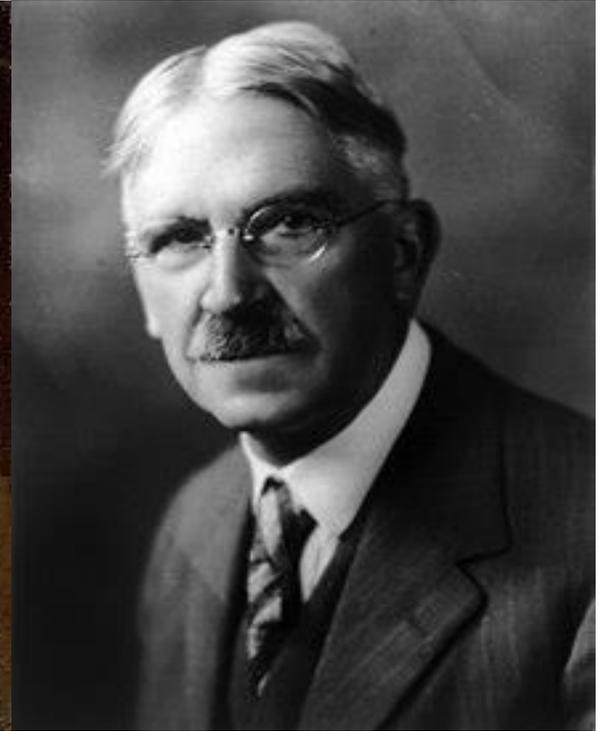
Johann Gottfried Herder
1744-1803



Johann Wolfgang Goethe
1749-1832



Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel
1770-1831



John Dewey
1859-1952

Bildung – my understanding

- The self-formation/realization of an individual whose conduct is governed by a highly developed inner character, not by imitating the conduct of others (Bruford, 1975)
- The identification and development of one's talents through education and experience; finding a **vocation** which contributes to your growth and maturation and the society in which you live
- It involves a transition from inwardness to outwardness and the development of a fully rounded personality
- This involves learning that is a passionate search for truth (self-knowledge) which is arduous and requires the exercise of responsibility (Hegel)

Beruf = Bildung – my understanding

- *Beruf* is a process of formation, an ongoing process of both personal maturation as one pursues the vocations of life – work, being a parent, a citizen and so on
- *Bildung* is an outcome, a tradition, an ideal to be aimed for
- *Bildung* is commensurate with Dewey's conception of a vocation which leads us back to *Beruf*
- Vocational **EDUCATION** and Training therefore needs to embrace both *Beruf* and *Bildung*

What are the purposes of VET?



My concern here is young people, 16 – 21, for whom we, as a society, have a moral responsibility

- Provide the knowledge and skills needed to pursue competently the multiple vocations of life: work, parent, citizen
- Provide an education that will enable young people to adapt as the economic base of society changes
- Develop the capability to live intelligently and pursue a life worth living, as a citizen participating in a society not just as a worker
- Enable us to become more human

Becoming more human?

“The manifestation of ... thought is not knowledge, but the ability to tell right from wrong, beautiful from ugly. And I hope that **thinking gives people the strengths to prevent catastrophes in these rare moments when the chips are down.**”



Hannah Arendt (1906—1975)

What should we teach and how?

- Rules and practices essential to social survival are listed
- Behaviour is shaped to conform to those rules through systematic instruction and modelling with positive reinforcement
- A controlled social environment designed to encourage co-operative and socially useful forms of behavior
- The Skinnerian approach akin to processes of moral education described by Uri Bronfenbrenner (1971) in the Soviet Union
- Such a regime might deliver a compliant worker who accepts flexibility (turn up on time, do what you are told, don't complain)
- Will you know what to do 'when the chips are down'?

A philosophical analysis – R.S. Peters

- Virtues (die Tugend) can be divided into at least two groups
- Honesty, tidiness, punctuality are NOT motives for action. They tend to be situation specific and dependent upon the probability of rewards and punishments
- Gratitude, prudence, compassion are motives for action, they contain within themselves reasons for action, making them less context dependent
- It is this latter group that we should be most concerned about as they underpin the vocation of being a citizen, of becoming more human

What does this all mean for VET

MARTHA C. NUSSBAUM

Beruf = Bildung = Becoming more Human

Confucius argued that *rén, humaneness*, was the essence of being human:

"wishing to be established himself, seeks also to establish others; wishing to be enlarged himself, he seeks also to enlarge others."¹

CULTIVATING
HUMANITY

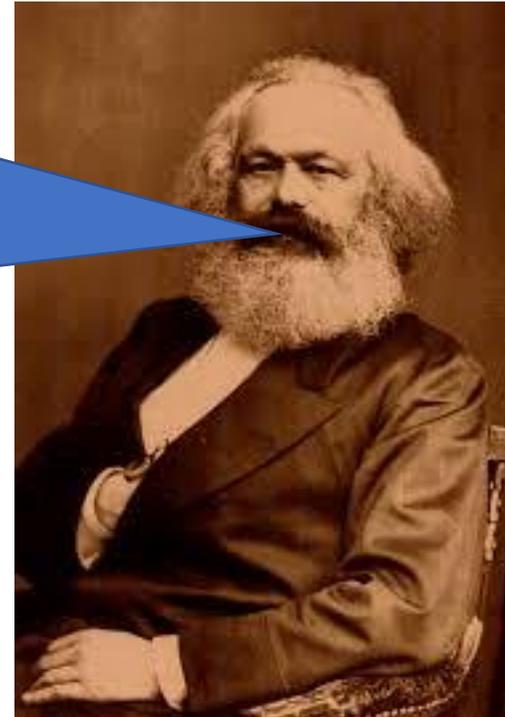
A CLASSICAL DEFENSE OF
REFORM IN LIBERAL EDUCATION

Brexit



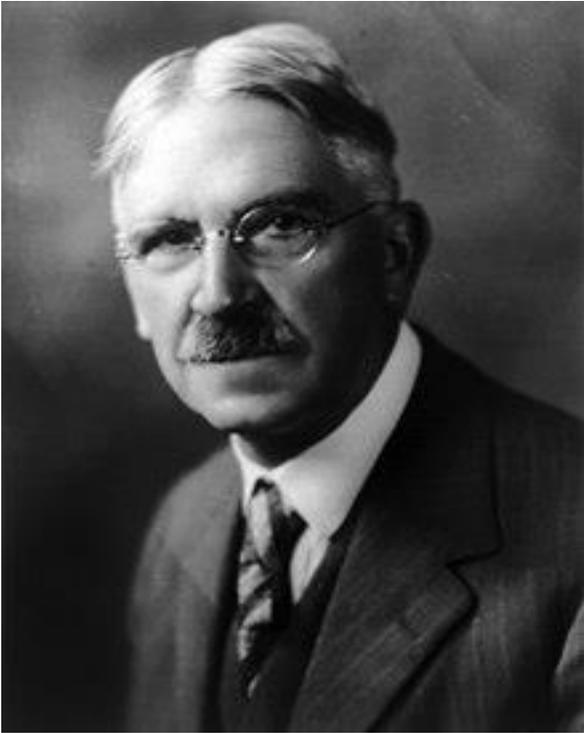
COMPETENZ =
CAPABILITY

There is a spectre
haunting Europe. It is
called ...



Can we really express the cultivation of virtue
as competenz? Should we focus on the outcome
or the process?

John Dewey again



Education is life itself

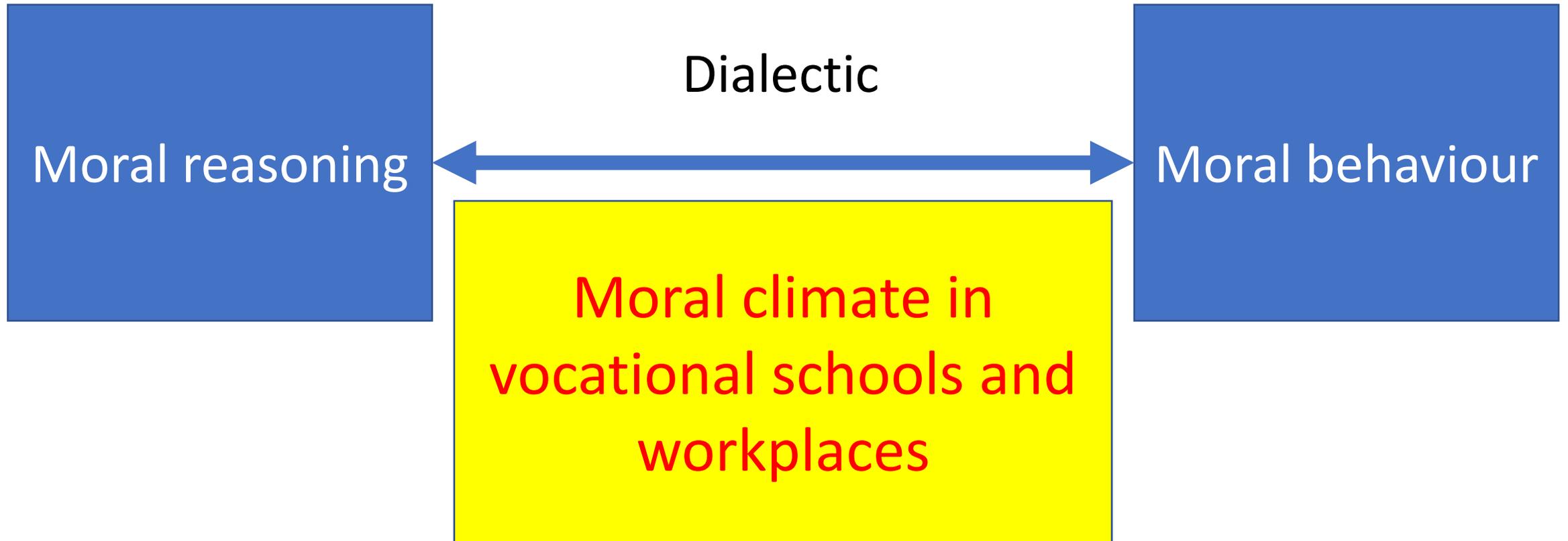
Example is notoriously more powerful
than precept: [actions speak stronger than
words]



‘Education [involves] a specific transaction which may go on between the generations of human beings in which newcomers to the scene are initiated into the world they are to inhabit.’

Michael Oakeshott (1901 – 1990)

It takes a whole village to raise a child



WARNING



**CHALLENGES
AHEAD**

vielen Dank