



Journal of Intercultural Management and Ethics

JIME

ISSN 2601 - 5749, ISSN-L 2601 - 5749

published by

Center for Socio-Economic Studies and Multiculturalism

Iasi, Romania

www.csesm.org

TABLE OF CONTENT

Editorial.....	3
Julian Warter	
Why Do We Feel Anger... But Nurture Hatred? An Evolutionary Perspective on the Emotional Roots of Intergroup Conflict.....	5
Paulo Finuras	
Ethics and Interculturality: A Decolonial Approach	15
María Grace Salamanca González	
Curricular Renewal: A Faculty and Student Guide to Maximizing Educational Investment .	27
Hershey H. Friedman, Robert Fireworker	
Gala Galaction – An Ethics in Development Management Based on Christianity and Socialist Ideology at the Beginning of the 20th Century. Social Realities and Theoretical Context	43
Aurelian Virgil Băluță	
Intercultural Coaching Case Studies	57
Philippe Rosinski, Bérengère Ligthart-Gleyze, Orie Yokoyama, Erika Bezzo, Maureen Bridget Rabotin, Nora Sar, Adrian Green	
The Artificial Womb	73
Mircea Gelu Buta	

CURRICULAR RENEWAL: A FACULTY AND STUDENT GUIDE TO MAXIMIZING EDUCATIONAL INVESTMENT

Hershey H. Friedman, Ph.D.

Professor of Business, Department of Management, Marketing, and Entrepreneurship
Koppelman School of Business, Brooklyn College, CUNY, USA
E-mail: x.friedman@att.net

Robert Fireworker, Ph.D.

Professor of Business Analytics & Information Systems,
Peter J. Tobin College of Business, St. John's University, USA
E-mail: bobprof@gmail.com

Abstract

This paper serves as a dual guide, both illuminating the most relevant avenues of study for students and providing educators with actionable insights to enhance their course design. It delves into the critical intersection of higher education, evolving workplace demands, and the accelerating integration of artificial intelligence. It highlights a concerning gap between academic training and the practical skills employers seek, marked by dissatisfaction with graduate preparedness and significant underemployment. To address this, the research identifies essential competencies for navigating an AI-driven future, such as critical thinking, intellectual humility, ethical judgment, and interdisciplinary collaboration. Critically, it examines shortcomings within current higher education models, including departmental silos, rigid thought patterns, and diversity initiatives that may inadvertently promote division. Instead, it argues for a transformative educational approach prioritizing adaptable skills, cultural sensitivity, productive dialogue, and collaborative knowledge exchange. In essence, as technology and workplace dynamics rapidly shift, universities must move beyond simply awarding degrees and focus on cultivating individuals who are lifelong learners and ethical decision-makers in complex professional environments. By reforming curricula to blend theoretical knowledge with practical application and fostering a collaborative relationship with AI, higher education can better equip graduates for successful careers and impactful societal contributions.

Keywords: AI, higher education, underemployment, skills, upskilling and reskilling, critical thinking, cultural humility, longtermism, victimhood culture, cancel culture, brokenists, learning organization.

Introduction

Artificial intelligence (AI) has fundamentally reshaped education, moving beyond mere personalization to deliver dynamically adaptive learning ecosystems. Each student's educational journey can be meticulously crafted by AI, optimizing content, pacing, and modalities in real time, fostering profound mastery and engagement. Generative AI dramatically accelerates learning by enabling precise, on-demand information retrieval, effectively eliminating the need for exhaustive reading. For instance, instead of navigating hundreds of pages to grasp the core tenets of Marxist economic theory, AI can produce a tailored explanation of key concepts like surplus value and class struggle, adjusted to the user's comprehension level. Similarly, rather than sifting through an entire medical textbook

to understand the symptoms and treatments of a rare disease, a user can generate a concise synopsis, including current research and clinical trial data.

AI can empower educators by automating complex administrative functions, freeing them to cultivate deeper student-teacher relationships and provide nuanced, individualized support. Furthermore, AI-driven assessment tools have transitioned from static evaluations to continuous, formative feedback mechanisms, offering granular insights into student progress and enabling immediate instructional adjustments. Recognizing the imperative of AI literacy, forward-thinking educational systems are integrating comprehensive AI curricula, equipping students with the critical skills and ethical understanding necessary to thrive in an increasingly AI-integrated world. Is higher education realizing the full benefits of AI tools in its pursuit of advancement?

Sadly, the higher education landscape is increasingly at odds with workplace realities, revealing a profound disconnect between academic preparation and professional demands. A comprehensive 2021 survey by the Association of American Colleges and Universities exposed a critical skills gap, with merely 60% of employers believing recent graduates are adequately prepared for *entry-level* positions (Flaherty, 2021, para. 21). This stark statistic implies that a significant proportion of college graduates enter the job market without the fundamental competencies required to succeed in their chosen fields, raising serious questions about the current educational model's effectiveness.

Underemployment has emerged as a substantial challenge for college graduates, dramatically undermining the traditional value proposition of higher education. Research from the Strada Institute for the Future of Work demonstrates that approximately 52% of recent graduates and 45% of those with decade-old degrees find themselves in positions that do not require their hard-earned academic credentials. The economic implications are profound: while graduates in degree-aligned roles enjoy an 88% earnings premium, underemployed graduates experience a dramatically reduced financial benefit, earning only 25% more than their high school-educated counterparts (Weissman, 2025).

The skills deficit extends beyond technical knowledge, with employers consistently reporting significant deficiencies in critical soft skills. Studies indicate that 73% of U.S. employers struggle to find graduates proficient in essential workplace competencies such as critical thinking, communication, and active listening. Comparative analyses reveal that recent college graduates often fall short in crucial areas like adaptability, intellectual curiosity, strategic thinking, and interpersonal relationship building (Robinson, 2024; Wilkie, 2019). This skills gap is further highlighted by a recent survey showing that 75% of companies express disappointment with new graduate hires, citing concerns about motivation, professionalism, and communication abilities. Employers frequently express reservations about Gen Z's perceived work habits, teamwork abilities, and overall professional preparedness (Blake, 2024).

These findings collectively highlight a need for comprehensive reform in higher education. The traditional academic model must evolve to bridge the growing chasm between classroom learning and workplace expectations. Educational institutions must prioritize practical skill development, experiential learning, and the cultivation of adaptable, industry-relevant competencies. By realigning curricula with the dynamic demands of the modern workplace and taking advantage of AI tools, universities can restore the transformative potential of higher education and ensure that graduates are genuinely prepared to thrive in their professional careers. While education is a component of career success, it alone is not enough. The benefits of a comprehensive education extend to success in numerous life pursuits.

The purpose of education has long been an issue of complex deliberation among educators and scholars, revealing a multifaceted landscape of potential outcomes beyond

mere vocational training. Researchers have articulated several dimensions of educational value, ranging from pragmatic career preparation to profound personal development. These dimensions include cultivating essential life skills, fostering intellectual growth, developing ethical frameworks, nurturing empathy, inspiring continuous learning, enhancing critical thinking capabilities, stimulating creativity, and promoting tolerance and intellectual humility (Friedman & Friedman, 2021a).

Students primarily view higher education through an economic lens: over half of higher education students (51%) are motivated by the prospect of higher earnings, while nearly as many seek improved job benefits (45%). A substantial 40% are pursuing degrees due to field requirements, and 39% aim to explore potential career paths (Mowreader, 2024). The 2025 State of Higher Education survey indicates that while public perception views college costs as too high, most Americans, including those without degrees, acknowledge the value of higher education, especially concerning career success (Gallup, 2025). However, the transformative power of education extends far beyond immediate financial considerations. The most compelling educational experiences integrate practical career preparation with deeper intellectual and personal growth, creating a holistic approach that simultaneously addresses both professional competence and individual enrichment.

Employers increasingly recognize that exceptional employees possess more than technical expertise. They seek individuals with sophisticated cognitive abilities, strong ethical foundations, adaptable thinking, and interpersonal skills that transcend narrow disciplinary knowledge. This emerging perspective suggests that higher education's ultimate value lies not just in job market credentials, but in its capacity to develop well-rounded, intellectually curious, and socially conscious individuals who can navigate complex professional and personal landscapes with nuance and creativity.

By embracing a multidimensional approach to education, institutions can bridge the gap between economic pragmatism and profound personal development. This approach ensures that students are not only prepared for immediate career challenges but are also equipped with the intellectual tools, ethical frameworks, and adaptive capacities necessary for long-term professional and personal success in an increasingly dynamic global environment.

Deconstructing the Problems Within Higher Education

In today's volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous (VUCA) business landscape, organizational survival hinges on agility and resilience. Companies must prioritize hiring adaptable individuals capable of rapid retooling to meet evolving demands. The threat of obsolescence, driven by technological advancements and globalization, surpasses that of traditional competitors, as evidenced by the retail sector's disruption. To thrive, organizations must cultivate resilience, exemplified by Apple Inc.'s dramatic turnaround from near-bankruptcy in 1997 to its current position as a market leader, achieved through continuous innovation and diversification into new product and service categories (Friedman & Lewis, 2014).

The digital age and artificial intelligence have dramatically transformed workplace dynamics, rendering static skill sets obsolete almost as quickly as they are acquired. In today's rapidly evolving workplace, job mobility has become the norm. The average professional typically spends around four years with a single employer and can expect to navigate approximately twelve different jobs throughout their career (Kolmar, 2022).

The exponential growth of information and the rapid transformation of professional requirements mean that recent graduates must be prepared for continuous learning. A degree is no longer a permanent credential but a starting point for ongoing skill development. Employers now prioritize adaptable individuals who demonstrate intellectual curiosity and the capacity to quickly absorb and apply new knowledge. Employees need transversal skills

(also known as transferable skills). These competencies, extending beyond specific job roles, enable adaptability and innovation across diverse contexts.

AI will transform and have a massive impact on many jobs. Professionals who adapt and learn to work alongside AI will be most successful. Conversely, those characterized by inflexibility or an inability to acknowledge the limits of their own knowledge will find themselves increasingly marginalized. Between 2025 and 2030, nearly 40% of workers' existing skills are projected to undergo significant change or become obsolete. While the increasing adoption of AI is expected to create new jobs, it is also projected to displace many existing ones. Employers emphasize public support for upskilling (enhancing existing skills) and reskilling (learning entirely new skills) through funding and provision (e.g., providing training programs, educational materials, workshops, etc.) to meet the future needs of the workplace (World Economic Forum, 2025). Individuals and organizations must embrace lifelong learning and proactive upskilling and reskilling to stay ahead of the evolving AI landscape. Comprehensive development of skills like critical thinking, information literacy, complex problem-solving, creative ideation, and sophisticated interpersonal and intrapersonal proficiencies—including communication, teamwork, persistence, and global awareness—is crucial.

Because most colleges and universities use a department structure, teaching the skills needed in an AI world becomes problematic. In the corporate world, a 'silo mentality,' characterized by departmental isolation and knowledge hoarding, stifles organizational innovation. Effective corporate leaders actively dismantle these barriers (silo-busting) to promote collaboration. The goal is to make the organization more efficient and resilient.

A damaging silo structure frequently exists in academic departments, creating an unfounded sense of disciplinary or sub-disciplinary superiority. This leads to the erroneous belief that one discipline possesses exclusive knowledge, impeding critical thought and promoting 'déformation professionnelle'—a restricted, discipline-bound perspective. The well-known interdepartmental conflicts within academia, such as those between economics and sociology or liberal arts and business, are a direct consequence of this mentality. In academia, faculty loyalty tends to be to the department and the discipline, not the organization or the students (Friedman & Friedman, 2021b). To adequately prepare students for a world reliant on cross-disciplinary collaboration, academia must shift away from its obsession with territoriality/turf.

Additionally, intellectual arrogance is often quite common in academe. It is not unusual for faculty from one discipline or sub-discipline to look down on others. Academic snobbery creates a toxic environment where theoretical mathematicians dismiss applied work in many institutions. This damaging division extends to philosophy and is mirrored by the entrenched disagreements among economic schools.

Young people are facing an alarming mental health crisis, with rising rates of rage, depression, and despair, and many high schoolers feeling pessimistic about their future. Sadly, higher education institutions might unintentionally contribute to this growing problem (Haidt, 2023; 2024). This is another reason students must be cautious in choosing the right courses and avoiding others. Globally, nearly one in five (19%) young adults in 2023 claim that they lack reliable social support (Helliwell et al., 2025).

This paper delineates the key competencies required for students' professional and personal success and highlights detrimental practices impeding effective life navigation.

Navigating Curriculum: Prioritization and Exclusion in a Changing World

Distinguishing Critical from Uncritical Thought

The insidious trap of binary, dualistic, or black-and-white thinking severely impairs cognitive flexibility, forcing individuals into a rigid worldview where nuance vanishes and

everything is starkly categorized as good or bad, right or wrong. This cognitive distortion, known as 'splitting' in psychological terms, cultivates inflexible attitudes and flawed decision-making and fuels a toxic environment of conflict, bias, and stifled creativity. The destructive hyperpartisanship gripping legislative bodies, where politicians routinely adopt extreme positions, is a chilling illustration of this cognitive pathology. This rigid, polarized mindset indubitably creates a breeding ground for prejudice and sows the seeds of societal division (Friedman, 2025).

In a compelling analysis, French (2025) posits that understanding today's American political landscape demands a confrontation with the unsettling theories of Carl Schmitt. This German political theorist, infamous for his Nazi Party affiliation, asserted in his 1932 work, *The Concept of the Political*, that a fundamental 'friend vs. enemy' dichotomy defines politics. He dismissed liberal pluralism as a vulnerability, advocating for a rigid 'us vs. them' division as a prerequisite for political efficacy. As French argues, this adversarial worldview equates acts of compassion towards political rivals with weakness or betrayal, a stark departure from the Founding Fathers' vision of a nation grounded in justice, humility, and the inseparable pursuit of happiness and virtue.

The narrative that colleges and universities prioritize indoctrination over intellectual development has gained significant traction. J.D. Vance, in his 2021 speech "The Universities are the Enemy," fueled this narrative by portraying universities as "hostile institutions" that legitimize "ridiculous ideas" and promising to launch an "aggressive attack." This attack is currently taking place under the presidency of Donald Trump (Patel, 2024). Despite the lack of concrete evidence supporting claims of systemic indoctrination, this inflammatory rhetoric has likely played a substantial role in the precipitous decline of public confidence in higher education. While acknowledging that the image of college campuses as monolithically liberal is probably amplified, a college president admits it is not entirely inaccurate. He specifically points to a probable imbalance, with professors feeling more pressure to express liberal views than conservative ones (Weiner, 2025).

The stark ideological asymmetry within academia, where Democrat professors outnumber Republicans by a minimum ratio of 10:1 and numerous departments lack Republican representation, creates an environment where open discourse on politically sensitive topics is severely compromised (Lalgie, 2022; Quinn, 2024). Therefore, engaging in such discussions is often unproductive and potentially detrimental.

In any case, the job of educators is to teach students how to think and not what to think. There are numerous issues where it is unclear which side is right, and educators should not see their job as proselytizing, especially when teaching courses that have nothing to do with this issue (Weiner, 2025). Disturbingly, instances have surfaced where even mathematics professors have egregiously diverted class time to proselytize their personal views on the Middle East conflict, effectively transforming academic settings into platforms for political advocacy.

Binary thinking represents a reductive intellectual approach that artificially constrains complex realities into simplistic, dichotomous categories. This mode of thought strips away the rich nuance and contextual complexity inherent in most meaningful issues, creating false equivalencies and overlooking critical subtleties. In contrast, mindless thinking epitomizes a profound intellectual lethargy—a cognitive state characterized by passive acceptance, reflexive reactions, and a fundamental absence of critical reflection.

Critical thinking must be prioritized to overcome the limitations of simplistic, binary thinking and mindless thinking. This involves a commitment to rigorous self-examination, systematic analysis, and a willingness to challenge our own assumptions. Coupled with the practice of deep (active) listening—which demands intellectual humility and empathy—critical thinking facilitates genuine engagement with diverse perspectives. These skills are

vital for fostering healthy intellectual discourse and strengthening democratic principles. By applying critical thinking and deep listening, we can transform potential conflicts into opportunities for mutual understanding, leading to more productive negotiations and enhanced problem-solving in our increasingly interconnected world. Additionally, critical thinkers are individuals who know how to solve problems because of the way they examine different points of view, weigh the validity of arguments, and have the ability to recognize underlying assumptions. They know their own cognitive biases and are open-minded and willing to change their opinions (Dyer, 2011, p. 2).

Students should not take courses encouraging binary or mindless thinking; faculty should avoid teaching them. Rather than promoting growth, these courses can negatively impact individuals and their professional lives. They cultivate unproductive cognitive patterns that undermine psychological well-being and workplace effectiveness. Such courses may inadvertently amplify psychological vulnerabilities through oversimplified interpretations, hinder collaborative abilities by promoting divisive viewpoints, induce cognitive rigidity, limit adaptability, and create unnecessary tension through adversarial dialogue. Educational approaches should cultivate critical thinking, emotional intelligence, and genuine cross-perspective understanding to support individual and professional development.

Ethical thinking should be incorporated into critical thinking. Indeed, Paul (1988) argues that ethical education without critical thinking promotes indoctrination, not understanding. Critical thinking is the engine of ethical action. It actively drives the process of ethical reasoning by forcing people to dissect information, challenge assumptions, and consider alternative viewpoints. Without this stringent analytical framework, the ability to pinpoint ethical dilemmas, construct persuasive ethical arguments, and defend moral choices with sound reasoning is rendered impossible. Furthermore, critical thinking equips us to apply ethical frameworks with precision, allowing us to navigate complex moral landscapes and predict the consequences of our actions. By honing our analytical skills, we create a robust foundation for ethical decision-making, ensuring that our moral compass is guided by reason and evidence.

Companies face significant legal risks from unethical employees. Conversely, employees with strong integrity contribute to a productive and honest work environment, mitigating the dangers of theft and the distribution of harmful products. Recognizing this, many leading organizations prioritize ethical practices as a key competitive advantage, particularly in attracting top talent. Some even pursue B Corporation certification, demonstrating a commitment to balancing profit with social and environmental responsibility through stringent transparency and accountability standards (Friedman & Clarke, 2022; Friedman & Mizrachi, 2022).

Intellectual Humility vs. Intellectual Hubris

Those with hubris or overconfidence exhibit an excessive belief in their own intelligence, are prone to flawed judgment, and refuse to acknowledge limitations or consider new ideas. The stark contrast, noted by Bertrand Russell, between the certainty of the ignorant and the doubt of the wise (Chastain, 2017) highlights the danger of unquestioned confidence. Individuals must be wary of those who speak with absolute conviction, understanding that certainty does not equate to truth.

The Semmelweis Reflex, a term derived from Dr. Ignaz Semmelweis's groundbreaking hand-washing recommendations for doctors as a way to minimize the deaths of women giving birth, illustrates our inherent inclination to dismiss novel information that contradicts established beliefs, thus hindering the acceptance of potentially beneficial ideas

(Friedman, 2017). There are many other examples of scientists and researchers refusing to consider new ideas.

Piller (2025) contends that the long-standing amyloid hypothesis, asserting that amyloid plaques cause Alzheimer's, has impeded the search for effective treatments. He argues that the dominance of this theory, sustained by groupthink and potentially fraudulent research, has diverted substantial funding away from other promising avenues, contributing to the alarming increase in Alzheimer's mortality. In contrast, mortality rates for other major diseases, such as cancer, have significantly decreased.

Resnick (2019) has the following to say about intellectual humility.

Instead, it's a method of thinking. It's about entertaining the possibility that you may be wrong and being open to learning from the experiences of others. Intellectual humility is about being actively curious about your blind spots. One illustration is in the ideal of the scientific method, where a scientist actively works against her own hypothesis, attempting to rule out any other alternative explanations for a phenomenon before settling on a conclusion. It's about asking: What am I missing here? (Resnick, 2019, para. 12).

Effective critical reasoning necessitates a comprehensive evaluation of all viewpoints, moving beyond mere acceptance of established beliefs. True logical thinkers engage with and consider opposing perspectives across all disciplines. Intellectual growth is impeded by certainty and faulty logic, while intellectual humility and acknowledging knowledge limitations are crucial for progress. This echoes the ancient wisdom of the Talmud, which advises, "Teach your tongue to say, I do not know." Suppressing alternative viewpoints can have severe consequences, hindering scientific advancement and societal well-being.

The Intersection of Diversity and Victimhood: Challenges and Considerations

Identity politics and DEI can be powerful tools. However, both of these can be weaponized and create artificial barriers between groups. Thus, while aiming to address historical injustices, identity politics has inadvertently fostered a social climate marked by emotional polarization and fragmented dialogue. By prioritizing group-based identities, it has transformed complex social issues into simplified, emotionally charged narratives, hindering constructive engagement. This focus on identity can lead to increased tribalism, reduced empathy for those outside one's group, and a grievance-centered discourse that emphasizes differences over commonalities, creating echo chambers and obstructing nuanced understanding.

Research indicates that the emergence of a "victimhood culture" has significant societal consequences. This cultural shift, which blends elements from honor cultures (heightened sensitivity to offense) and dignity cultures (reliance on third-party intervention), can lead to various problematic outcomes. For instance, Campbell and Manning (2018) highlight that encouraging individuals to view themselves primarily as victims can diminish psychological resilience. Instead of fostering agency and self-efficacy, this perspective may cultivate learned helplessness. It undermines personal responsibility by framing challenges as primarily caused by external factors. This emphasis on victim status diverts focus from problem-solving, hindering the development of constructive solutions. Moreover, According to Lukianoff and Haidt (2018), victimhood culture fuels social division by creating a binary of victim and oppressor, which erodes social cohesion and understanding, leading to a society marked by continuous moral conflict driven by competition for victim status.

Additionally, victimhood culture can foster unhealthy dynamics such as competitive victimhood, where groups compete for recognition of their suffering (Young & Sullivan, 2016). This competition can diminish the gravity of real hardships while elevating minor

grievances. While this analysis acknowledges the existence of legitimate victimization and structural inequalities, it suggests that framing victimhood as a core aspect of identity may ultimately hinder both individual growth and societal progress. A culture of victimization undermines students' future success and increases legal disputes.

Lukianoff and Haidt (2018) contend that academic environments sometimes encourage cognitive distortions, leading to the potential weaponization of the concept of microaggressions. They pose the question: Are phrases like 'melting pot,' 'the most qualified person should get the job,' and 'where are you from?' inherently aggressive?" When individuals are systematically indoctrinated into a victim narrative, they develop a hyper-vigilant worldview, perceiving pervasive hostility, and fueling a destructive cycle of resentment that poisons social harmony. Kaylan (2010) argues that teaching any group that they are always right undermines critical thinking and breeds resentment, making it difficult for individuals to adapt to society or work. "Minority cheerleading" programs that promote infallibility can lead to this negative outcome.

The critique of DEI initiatives has gained traction in recent years, with several states challenging and even banning these programs. Recently, in a significant shift, the University of Michigan announced closing its Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion and discontinuing its prominent DEI program (Bianco, 2025). The concerns raised by Friedman and Vlady (2024) about DEI's narrow focus on demographic diversity are echoed by others who argue that true inclusion requires a more comprehensive approach. DEI's emphasis on race and gender often overlooks other forms of discrimination, such as those against individuals who are obese, disabled, or less educated. This limited scope fails to address the full spectrum of biases that exist in society and workplaces. Michael Sandel (2020), a prominent Harvard philosopher, argues that disdain for those without higher education is the final socially acceptable form of prejudice in contemporary America; no one minds mocking "Rednecks." A more inclusive approach would recognize that "everybody counts or nobody counts," acknowledging the diverse range of experiences and challenges faced by individuals beyond just race and gender (Friedman, Vlady, & Friedman, 2023).

The ineffectiveness of many DEI training programs stems from their binary classification of people into "oppressor" and "oppressed" categories. This oversimplification can create resentment and division, particularly when concepts like "white supremacy culture" are presented without nuance. Such approaches may inadvertently contribute to social division rather than fostering unity and understanding. DEI training programs, particularly those that emphasize a "blame and shame" approach or that heavily focus on group-based guilt and identity politics, can backfire. These methods may lead to increased defensiveness, resentment, ethnocentrism, and even a hardening of existing prejudices. Furthermore, the emphasis on identity politics in DEI initiatives can exacerbate tensions and undermine the goal of creating a genuinely inclusive environment. By focusing on group identities rather than individual merit, these programs may conflict with principles of meritocracy and fairness (Friedman, Vlady, & Friedman, 2023).

To overcome the limitations of current diversity and inclusion practices and to counteract divisive tendencies, a shift towards a more comprehensive and nuanced strategy, along with bridging approaches and philosophical reframing, is essential. This entails broadening the scope of initiatives to encompass a wider spectrum of experiences and challenges while simultaneously prioritizing the establishment of inclusive environments that value individual merit and contributions. Crucially, training programs should be designed to cultivate understanding and empathy, steering clear of divisive rhetoric and instead emphasizing shared values and common goals alongside shared human experiences and genuine dialogue. Recognizing the complexity of individual identities and moving away from

fixed, defensive identity positions and a culture of victimhood towards a dynamic, interconnected understanding of self is paramount.

Ultimately, by implementing these changes, organizations and society at large can foster genuinely inclusive environments that benefit all individuals, irrespective of their background or identity. This approach moves beyond superficial representation to create a culture where every person feels valued, respected, and empowered to contribute their unique perspectives, thereby strengthening the organization as a whole. A renewed focus on empathy and collaborative problem-solving, coupled with a dynamic understanding of self, can pave the way for a more constructive and unified social discourse, fostering a sense of shared humanity.

A growing body of evidence demonstrates the value of diversity—especially the diversity of opinion—in creating a thriving, innovative organization (Duarte et al., 2015; Friedman, Friedman, & Leverton, 2016; Phillips, 2014). Leadership consisting of only old, white men or only young African-American women will not be as creative as one composed of diverse individuals. Discriminatory hiring practices fundamentally contradict the principles of both meritocracy and equal opportunity. Disregarding qualifications and skills in favor of irrelevant characteristics denies individuals a fair chance at employment and undermines the notion that success should be based on ability and achievement.

Toxic curricula that promote anger, hatred, and a culture of victimhood have no place in education. Instead, we must focus on fostering the essential skills of empathy, compassion, and genuine concern for others, which are critical for both personal and societal well-being. Educators should not teach such courses, and students should avoid them. Such individuals would likely struggle in a collaborative work environment, fostering conflict and hindering team productivity due to their heightened sensitivity and adversarial outlook.

Cultural Humility/Global Citizenship vs. Ethnocentrism/Provincialism

Truly transformative DEI programs are characterized by a commitment to cultivating empathy and understanding, actively promoting inclusive behaviors, skillfully facilitating open and respectful dialogue, strategically focusing on dismantling systemic barriers rather than assigning individual blame, and fostering a culture of cultural humility.

Ethnocentrism, the insidious belief in the inherent superiority of one's own culture, breeds judgment and prejudice, undermining the foundations of respectful cross-cultural interaction. In stark contrast, cultural humility acknowledges the intrinsic limitations of cultural understanding, emphasizing lifelong learning and critical self-reflection. While a nuanced approach to cultural relativism is essential for fostering empathy, its extreme application, which absolves all cultural practices from ethical scrutiny, poses a significant danger.

Our world is inextricably linked, a truth laid bare by recent events. The swift global spread of viruses is a reminder that actions and crises transcend national borders. Global citizenship, therefore, demands a shift in perspective, recognizing that our individual choices ripple outwards, impacting lives across the globe. This understanding necessitates a commitment to collaborative solutions, addressing transnational challenges with a shared sense of responsibility, and acknowledging that local actions have far-reaching, global consequences.

At the heart of global citizenship lies the Kabbalistic principle of "*Tikkun Olam*," the call to "repair the world." This concept urges us to extend our concern beyond immediate surroundings, actively working towards a more just, sustainable, and compassionate world for all. By cultivating empathy and cultural understanding, we forge a mindset crucial for tackling pressing issues like climate change, public health crises, and social inequalities. Global citizenship challenges us to reconcile our local identities with a profound commitment

to humanity as a whole, fostering a collective effort to build a more equitable future for our interconnected planet.

. McCarthy summarizes what it means to be a global citizen:

At its core, being a Global Citizen means believing that extreme poverty can be eliminated, and that the resources to end it can be mobilized if enough people take action. It means learning about the systemic inequalities that fuel poverty — racial, ethnic, gender, sexual, and economic inequalities — and joining us in taking action to overcome these in a way that's sustainable.

Most importantly, it means realizing that when we use our voices together, we are powerful and we can ensure lasting change in the mission to defeat poverty, demand equity, and defend the planet (McCarthy, 2022, paras. 6-7).

Longtermism is the ethical framework that prioritizes the future of humanity, asserting that future lives hold equal moral value. It demands that we consider the long-term consequences of current actions and act as stewards to ensure a prosperous and sustainable future. This philosophy requires us to minimize existential risks and make choices that benefit future generations. Moreover, people's lives in one country are not more valuable than lives in another. Longtermism fundamentally asserts that all individuals, regardless of their location or time of birth, deserve equal moral consideration. Thus, from a longtermist perspective, an action that improves the lives of 1,000 individuals in one nation while negatively impacting 5,000 individuals in another would be considered morally reprehensible.

Educators must cultivate a profound commitment to cultural humility and longtermism, relentlessly challenging the destructive fallacy of ethnocentrism. Our imperative transcends nationalistic agendas; it empowers a generation driven by the unwavering pursuit of global well-being, prioritizing actions that uplift the entirety of humanity and safeguard the future of our shared planet. The mantra should be, "Let us endeavor to make the world great."

Constructive Engagement vs. Canceling People and Institutions

Lukianoff and Schlott (2023) argue that both the left and right engage in "canceling," a practice that undermines freedom of expression. They contend that the enjoyment derived from the social destruction of individuals is inherently problematic. Furthermore, they link the impulse to cancel with cognitive distortions such as dichotomous thinking, labeling, and negative filtering. Canceling people has a chilling effect on democratic discourse and is unsuitable for a country or an organization; people should not be afraid to express their opinions freely. Many comedians are scared to do shows on college campuses because students have become hypersensitive and are quick to say, "That's racist," "That's sexist," or "That's prejudice" (Donnelly & Zerbib, 2015).

A low-pressure environment, where unusual viewpoints are valued, is essential for unlocking people's creative potential. In contrast to high-pressure, hierarchical settings, teams that embrace psychological safety and encourage unconventional ideas consistently achieve superior performance, as demonstrated by Google's Project Aristotle (Duhigg, 2016). Moreover, Kaufman and Gregoire (2015) found that divergent thinking, a crucial element of creativity, thrives in playful, low-anxiety environments. Thus, fostering a safe space for unusual viewpoints is vital for innovation.

Friedman and Lipman (2023) advocate for rejecting "cancel culture," arguing that it leads to the dismissal of significant contributions from historical figures. They cite examples like Thomas Jefferson, Abraham Lincoln, Martin Luther King Jr., and even biblical figures

such as Abraham, Moses, and David, emphasizing that all humans are flawed. They contend that focusing solely on imperfections obscures the valuable lessons we can learn from these individuals. The authors point to numerous online resources (e.g., Brandy, 2023) that reveal the complex and often contradictory nature of even the most admired individuals, reinforcing the idea that no one is without imperfections.

De Jong (2023), a behavioral expert, introduces the "puritanism fallacy," which highlights the tendency to question sincerity based on perceived inconsistencies. He illustrates this with examples like Al Gore's energy consumption and corporations' conflicting actions regarding climate change. De Jong suggests a more constructive approach, encouraging incremental progress and acknowledging initial efforts rather than demanding immediate perfection. He argues that expecting flawlessness from individuals or organizations is unreasonable and that appreciating positive changes is crucial for fostering continued improvement.

The puritanical fallacy, driven by a demand for absolute purity, fosters a punitive mindset that sees flaws as unforgivable transgressions. This emphasis on retribution, rather than restoration, directly fuels demolitionist impulses, as it justifies eradicating anything deemed imperfect, denying any possibility of redemption.

It is not only people that are being canceled. The "brokenists" are totally disillusioned with the state of American institutions. They contend that the elites, intellectual and cultural landscape, and vital public services have been fundamentally compromised. To them, the traditional American power structure has morphed into a corrupt and overgrown entity, a dangerous fusion of government and corporate power that threatens to overwhelm the country. The rise of homeschooling, the consumption of alternative media, and the exodus from coastal areas are symptoms of this decay. While their political views vary, brokenists are bound by a shared sense of systemic breakdown: they believe the systems that once functioned no longer serve a large segment of society. Their shared assessment of failure is a more potent unifying factor than their disagreements about how to rebuild.

Instead of resorting to the destructive practice of canceling individuals and dismissing their achievements, educators should champion a model of constructive engagement. When errors arise, the focus must shift to open, empathetic communication to strengthen understanding and facilitate positive change. Rather than eliminating essential institutions like the police, efforts should concentrate on reforming them to better serve the community.

Learning Organization Where Knowledge is Shared vs. Knowledge Silos

In today's interconnected workplace, where isolated roles are increasingly uncommon, the ability to collaborate effectively is paramount. Moreover, a company's most potent asset—the creative potential of its workforce—is demonstrably enhanced through synergistic team dynamics. This principle aligns seamlessly with Peter M. Senge's (1990) influential work, "The Fifth Discipline," which propelled the learning organization concept into the forefront of management thinking. Senge, a recognized visionary, emphasized the necessity for organizations to transcend obsolete structures, highlighting that yesterday's solutions often create today's challenges. Consequently, the traditional hierarchical model, which inhibits innovation by disregarding collective intelligence, is fundamentally at odds with the tenets of a learning organization. Instead, leaders must evolve into architects of dynamic learning environments, fostering continuous growth and knowledge exchange among their teams.

A genuinely effective learning organization transcends mere knowledge acquisition; it cultivates a dynamic environment where knowledge is not only created and transferred but also actively integrated into the organization's behavioral framework, enabling continuous adaptation and evolution. As defined by Garvin (1993), such an entity excels in leveraging shared knowledge, fostering collaborative synergy over departmental silos, and committing to

relentless personal and professional development. This necessitates a robust infrastructure that facilitates the seamless flow of information and ideas, empowering the organization to navigate and thrive amidst fluctuating market conditions. Ironically, higher education institutions tend not to be learning organizations (Friedman & Kass-Shraibman, 2017).

Organizations that actively hinder knowledge sharing and adaptation embody the antithesis of a learning environment. This manifests as knowledge silos, where departments or individuals isolate crucial information, obstructing collaborative progress. Traditional hierarchical structures, emphasizing top-down control, further restrict the flow of information, stifling innovation. Similarly, burdened by excessive rules and procedures, bureaucratic organizations create an environment where knowledge sharing and adaptive change are impeded. Ultimately, these characteristics culminate in a stagnant organization that resists change and fails to integrate new information, effectively creating a barrier to growth and progress.

De Jong (2023, pp.-73) discusses a simple solution to becoming a "high-trust leader in our low-trust times." This requires creating a culture of appreciation and empathy. He cites research involving 400,000 subjects demonstrating that employees' global number one job preference was working where they would have "good relationships with my colleagues." De Jong emphasizes that empathy, particularly active listening, is crucial for strong relationships. He defines empathy as "the process of demonstrating an accurate, non-judgmental understanding of the other side's needs, issues and perspective" (p. 73). Consequently, courses that fail to cultivate empathy and appreciation for others are detrimental to students' future professional success.

Conclusion

Companies are increasingly moving away from requiring college degrees, opting instead for skill-based hiring strategies for a wide range of positions. One goal is to increase opportunities for individuals, especially minorities, without college degrees (Goger, 2025; White, 2025). Placing college graduates in jobs below their skill level leads to underemployment, wasting their potential and education.

This paper presents a strategic roadmap for reshaping higher education, designed to guide students in making informed course choices and empower faculty to modernize their teaching approaches. By examining the crucial connection between academic institutions, shifting workplace needs, and the rise of artificial intelligence, the research exposes a significant and growing gap between what students learn and what employers require. This gap is evidenced by alarming data: a majority of recent graduates are underemployed, and employers consistently report that new hires lack vital workplace skills.

To bridge this divide, the paper pinpoints key competencies for success in an AI-driven world, such as critical thinking, intellectual openness, ethical decision-making, and collaborative problem-solving. It also critically assesses current educational practices, highlighting the limitations of siloed departments, rigid thinking, and diversity efforts that may inadvertently promote division. Instead, the study champions an educational transformation centered on adaptable skills, cultural awareness, productive communication, and interdisciplinary knowledge sharing. Ultimately, universities can more effectively prepare graduates for fulfilling careers and meaningful societal contributions by redesigning curricula to integrate theory with practical application and preparing students to collaborate with AI.

References

Bianco, A. (2025, March 27). University of Michigan closes its DEI office, ending multi-million dollar investment into diversity. *Politico*.

- <https://www.politico.com/news/2025/03/27/university-of-michigan-dei-office-00255509>
- Blake, S. (2024, September 23). Companies are quickly firing Gen Z employees. *Newsweek*. <https://www.newsweek.com/companies-are-quickly-firing-gen-z-employees-1958104>
- Brandy. (2023). "MLK Jr. is not who you think he is": We didn't know these historical figures were incredibly problematic until now. *Nature World Today*. <https://natureworldtoday.com/historical-figures-is/>
- Campbell, B. A., & Manning, J. (2018). *The rise of victimhood culture: Microaggressions, safe spaces, and the new culture wars*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Chastain, T. (2017). Quotes on truth, doubt, and certainty. <http://www.chastaincentral.com/tims/truth.html>
- De Jong, T. (2023). *Future human behavior: Understanding what people are going to do next*. Routledge.
- Donnelly, M., & Zerbib, K. (2015, August 23). Comedians dump campus gigs: When did colleges lose their sense of humor? *The Wrap*. <https://www.thewrap.com/comedians-avoiding-campus-when-did-universities-lose-their-sense-of-humor/>
- Duarte, J. L., Crawford, J. T., Stern, C., Haidt, J., Jussim, L., & Tetlock, P. E. (2015). Political diversity will improve social psychological science. *Behavioral and Brain Sciences*, 38, 1-13. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/S0140525X14000430>
- Duhigg, C. (2016). What Google learned from its quest to build the perfect team. *New York Times Magazine*. <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/02/28/magazine/what-google-learned-from-its-quest-to-build-the-perfect-team.html>
- Dyer, L. (2011). *Critical thinking for business students*. Captus Press.
- Flaherty, C. (2021, April 6). What employers want. *Inside Higher Ed*. <https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2021/04/06/aacu-survey-finds-employers-want-candidates-liberal-arts-skills-cite-preparedness>
- French, D. (2025, January 27). Us and them is all the rage. *New York Times*, A17.
- Friedman, H. H. (2023, July 21). Cognitive biases and their influence on critical thinking and scientific reasoning: A practical guide for students and teachers. *SSRN.com* <https://ssrn.com/abstract=2958800> or <http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.2958800>
- Friedman, H. H. (2025, January 27). The perilous path: Binary thinking, certainty bias, misinformation, and their role in mass atrocities. *SSRN*: <https://ssrn.com/abstract=5113704> or <http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.5113704>
- Friedman, H. H., & Clarke, C. (2022). Deadly consequences of emphasizing profits over human life: How corporate greed has caused the death of millions. *Journal of Intercultural Management and Ethics*, 5(3), 19-35.
- Friedman, H. H., & Friedman, L. W. (2021a). Are we losing sight of higher education's purpose? *Academia Letters*. Article 2634. https://www.academia.edu/50284569/Are_we_Losing_Sight_of_Higher_Educations_Purpose
- Friedman, H. H., & Friedman, L.W. (2021b). Has higher education fallen down the rabbit hole and landed in the bizarro world? You bet it has! *Academia Letters*, Article 2655. <https://doi.org/10.20935/AL2655>

- Friedman, H. H., & Kass-Shraibman, F. (2017). What it takes to be a superior college president: Transform your institution into a learning organization. *The Learning Organization*, 24(5), 286-297. <https://doi.org/10.1108/TLO-12-2016-0098>
- Friedman, H. H., & Lewis, B. J. (2014). A new kind of CEO for the global information age. *Business Quest*. <http://www.westga.edu/~bquest/2014/ceo2014.pdf>
- Friedman, H. H., & Lipman, S. (2023, January 27). Cancelling "cancel culture." *Five Towns Jewish Times*. 41- 42. https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=4349065 and <https://www.5tjt.com/cancelling-cancel-culture/>
- Friedman, H. H., & Mizrachi, M. (2022). Humanity-centered leadership: Servant leadership with a worldview. *Analysis and Metaphysics* 21, 25–41. doi: 10.22381/am2120222.
- Friedman, H. H., & Vlady, S. (2024). The paradox of DEI: How lofty ideals became hated. *North East Journal of Legal Studies*. 44(4), 78-105. <https://digitalcommons.fairfield.edu/nealsb/vol44/iss1/4>
- Friedman, H. H., Friedman, L. W., & Leverton, C. (2016). Increase diversity to boost creativity and enhance problem solving. *Psychosociological Issues in Human Resource Management*, 4(2), 7-33.
- Friedman, H. H., Vlady, S., & Friedman, L. W. (2023). Teaching diversity correctly: 'Either everyone counts or nobody counts.' *North East Journal of Legal Studies*, 43(7), 194-221. <https://nealsb.info/j2023.html>
- Furedi, F. (2021). *How fear works: The culture of fear in the 21st century*. Routledge.
- Gallup (2025). Bridging the gap: Insights on cost and value of a college degree. <https://www.gallup.com/analytics/644939/state-of-higher-education.aspx>
- Garvin, D. A. (1993). Building a learning organization. *Harvard Business Review*, 71(4), 78-91.
- Goger, A. (2025). There's more to skills-based hiring than just removing degree requirements. Brookings.edu. <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/theres-more-to-skills-based-hiring-than-just-removing-degree-requirements/>
- Haidt, J. (2023, December 5). Jonathan Haidt: I'm worried about the boys, too. *Free Press*. <https://www.thefp.com/p/jonathan-haidt-worried-about-the-boys-too>
- Haidt, J. (2024). *The anxious generation: How the great rewiring of childhood is causing an epidemic of mental illness*. Penguin Press
- Helliwell, J. F., Layard, R., Sachs, J. D., De Neve, J.-E., Aknin, L. B., & Wang, S. (Eds.). (2025). *World Happiness Report 2025*. University of Oxford: Wellbeing Research Centre.
- Kaufman, S. B., & Gregoire, C. (2015). *Wired to create: Unraveling the mysteries of the creative mind*. Perigee Books.
- Kaylan, M. (2010, May 14). Defending Arizona's education law. *Forbes*. <http://www.forbes.com/2010/05/14/arizona-education-minorities-opinions-columnists-melik-kaylan.html>
- Kolmar, C. (2022, April 5). Average number of jobs in a lifetime [2022]: All statistics. *Zippia.com*. <https://www.zippia.com/advice/average-number-jobs-in-lifetime/>
- Lalgie, R. (2022, November 29). Zero Republican professors found across 33 departments at seven universities: College Fix analysis. *College Fix*. <https://www.thecollegefix.com/zero-republican-professors/>
- Lukianoff, G. & Haidt, J. (2018). *The coddling of the American mind*. Penguin Press.
- Lukianoff, G. & Schlott, R. (2023). *The cancelling of the American mind: How cancel culture undermines trust, destroys institutions, and threatens us all*. Simon & Schuster.
- McCarthy, J. (2022, July 6). What exactly does it mean to be a 'global citizen'? *Global Citizen*. <https://www.globalcitizen.org/en/content/what-is-a-global-citizen/>

- Mowreader, A. (2024, February 23). Survey: Why students enroll and why they persist. *Inside Higher Education*. <https://www.insidehighered.com/news/student-success/academic-life/2024/02/23/student-survey-gauges-importance-college-degree>
- Patel, E. (2024, July 19). J. D. Vance is coming for higher education. *Chronicle of Higher Education*. <https://www.chronicle.com/article/j-d-vance-is-coming-for-higher-ed>.
- Paul, R. (1988). Ethics without indoctrination. *Criticalthinking.org*. <https://www.criticalthinking.org/resources/articles/ethics-wo-indoctrination.shtml>
- Phillips, K. W. (2014). How diversity makes us smarter. *Scientific American*. <https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/how-diversity-makes-us-smarter/>.
- Piller, C. (2025). Fraud has delayed a cure for Alzheimer's. *New York Times, Opinion*, SR6-SR7.
- Quinn, R. (2024, October 21). Faculty overwhelmingly back Harris in November. But they won't tell students to do the same. *Inside Higher Ed*. <https://www.insidehighered.com/news/faculty-issues/2024/10/21/faculty-heavily-back-harris-they-wont-tell-students>
- Resnick, B. (2019, January 4). Intellectual humility: The importance of knowing you might be wrong. *Vox*. <https://www.vox.com/science-and-health/2019/1/4/17989224/intellectual-humility-explained-psychology-replication>
- Robinson, B. (2024, June 17). 2024 graduates lack skills in communication, collaboration, and critical thinking, study finds. *Forbes*. <https://www.forbes.com/sites/bryanrobinson/2024/06/17/2024-graduates-lack-skills-in-communication-collaboration-and-critical-thinking-study-finds/>
- Sandel, M. J. (2020). Disdain for the less educated is the last acceptable prejudice. *New York Times*. <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/09/02/opinion/education-prejudice.html>
- Senge, P. M. (1990). *The fifth discipline: The art and practice of the learning organization*. Doubleday.
- Weiner, G. (2025, March 30). Colleges have to be much more honest with themselves. *New York Times, Opinion*, SR5.
- Weissman, S. (2025, February 22). More than half of recent 4-year college graduates underemployed. *Inside Higher Education*. <https://www.insidehighered.com/news/students/academics/2024/02/22/more-half-recent-four-year-college-grads-underemployed>
- White, S. (2025, March 23). How skills-based hiring is expanding opportunity for all. *Forbes*. <https://www.forbes.com/sites/scottwhite/2025/03/23/how-skills-based-hiring-is-expanding-opportunity-for-all/>
- Wilkie, D. (2019, October 21). Employers say students aren't learning soft skills in college. *SHRM.org*. <https://www.shrm.org/resourcesandtools/hr-topics/employee-relations/pages/employers-say-students-arent-learning-soft-skills-in-college.aspx>
- World Economic Forum (2025). Future of jobs report. *Weforum.org*. https://reports.weforum.org/docs/WEF_Future_of_Jobs_Report_2025.pdf
- Young, D. J., & Sullivan, D. J. (2016). Competitive victimhood: A review of the theoretical and empirical literature. *Current Opinion in Psychology*, 11, 30-34.