

Rediscovering education in an age of AI

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What is the purpose of education?

- Learning to learn
- Improving yourself
- Self actualisation
- Improving yourself
- Making yourself a better person
- Opening doors
- Transformation
- Learning the rules of the game
- Enlightenment
- Creating opportunities
- Learning to critically think
- Inspiration

Some provocations

What's the point if AI is doing everything anyway?

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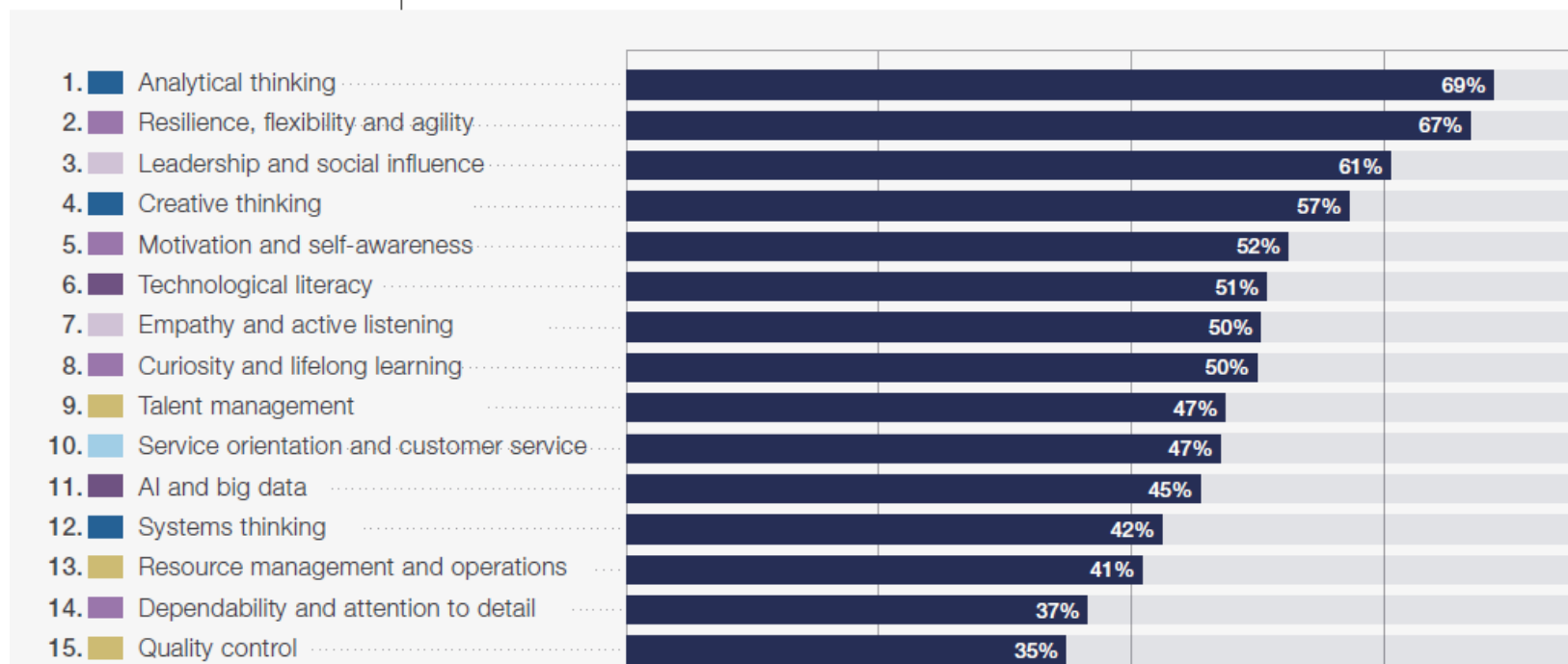
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FIGURE 3.3

Core skills in 2025

Share of employers who consider the stated skills to be core skills for their workforce.



Source: WEF Future of Jobs Report 2025



At work

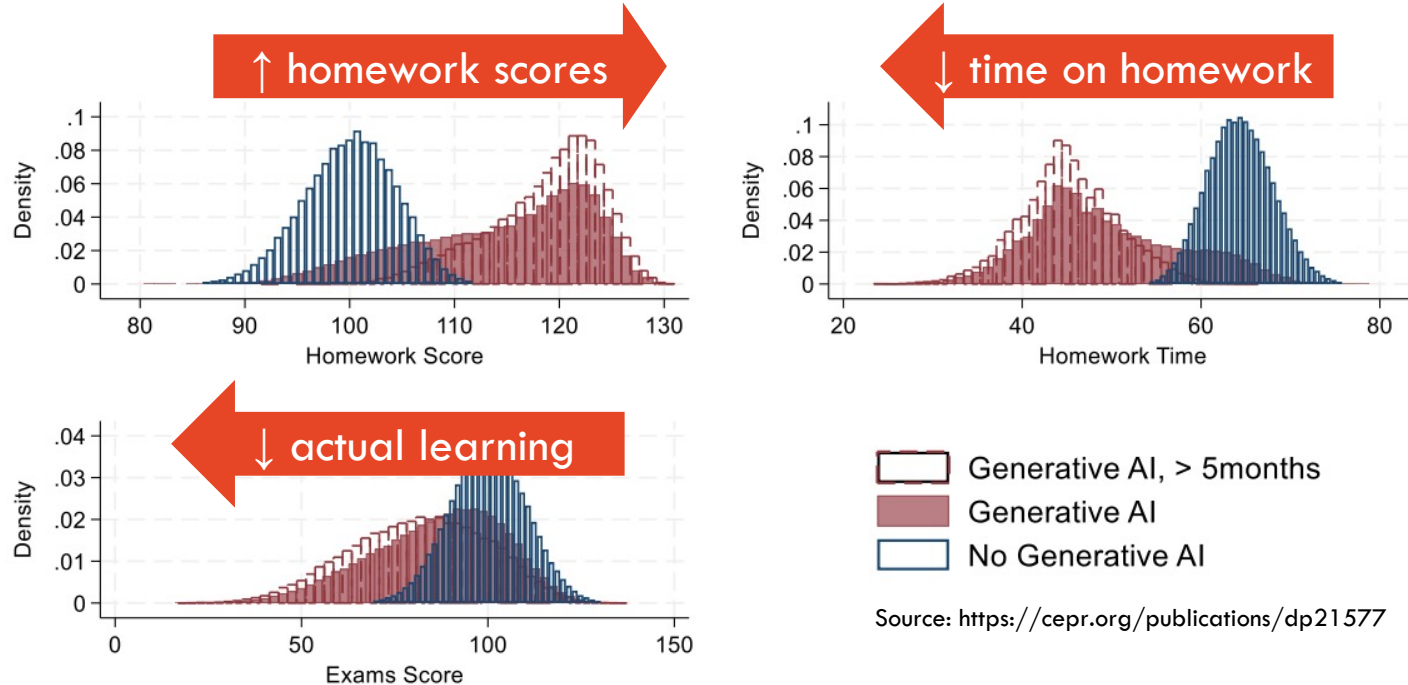
The point is to get to the top

In

education

The point is
the process
of getting
there

A “learning penalty” with general AI use?



What are we giving up, possibly without realising?

	Surrender	Offloading	Agency
Cognitive	• Accepting AI-summarised search results • Accepting AI-suggested corrections and completions uncritically	• Using AI to write an essay • Having AI summarise a reading • Asking AI to explain a concept	• Asking AI to be a provocateur • Setting up a custom AI that you can 'teach' • Using AI to provide viewpoints not encountered elsewhere
Meta-cognitive	• Going along with AI suggestions for what, how, when to learn • Not monitoring own use of AI • Using AI as a Socratic tutor	• Asking AI to plan a study schedule • Seeking AI advice on how to unpack a concept	• Asking AI to identify unknown unknowns • Using AI to produce practice scenarios

A metaphor for agency: AI × assessment “menu”

As a critical friend - Soups

- Suggest analyses
- Provoke reflection
- Provide study/organisation tips
- Practicing

Getting started - Entrees

- Suggesting structure
- Brainstorming ideas

Engaging with literature - Bread service

- Suggesting search terms
- Performing searches
- Summarising literature
- Identifying methodologies
- Explaining jargon
- Fixing reference list

Generating content - Mains

- Writing some text
- Making images, video, audio
- Making slides/decks

Analyses - Lighter mains

- Performing analyses of data, text
- Suggesting counterarguments

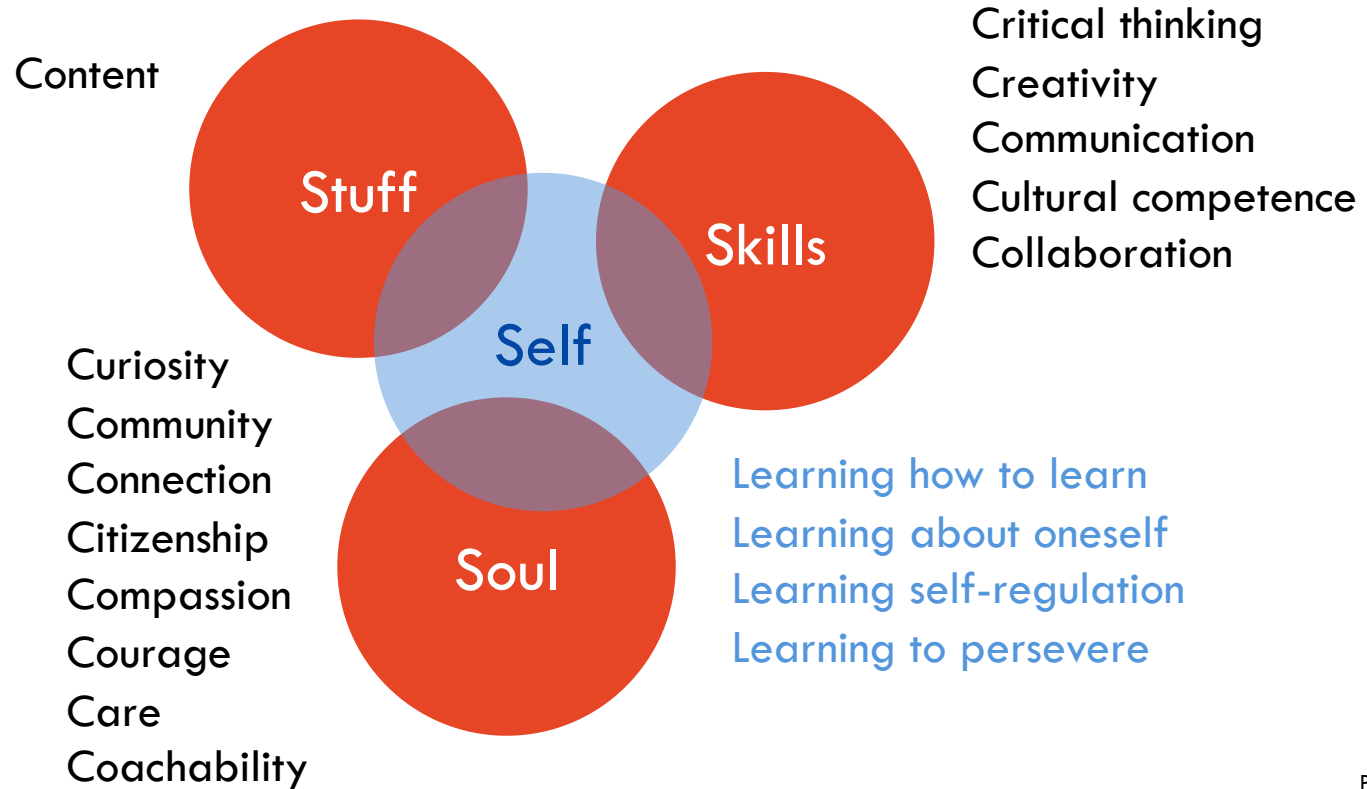
Editing - Coffees

- Editing tone
- Improving clarity and readability
- Fixing grammar
- Shortening

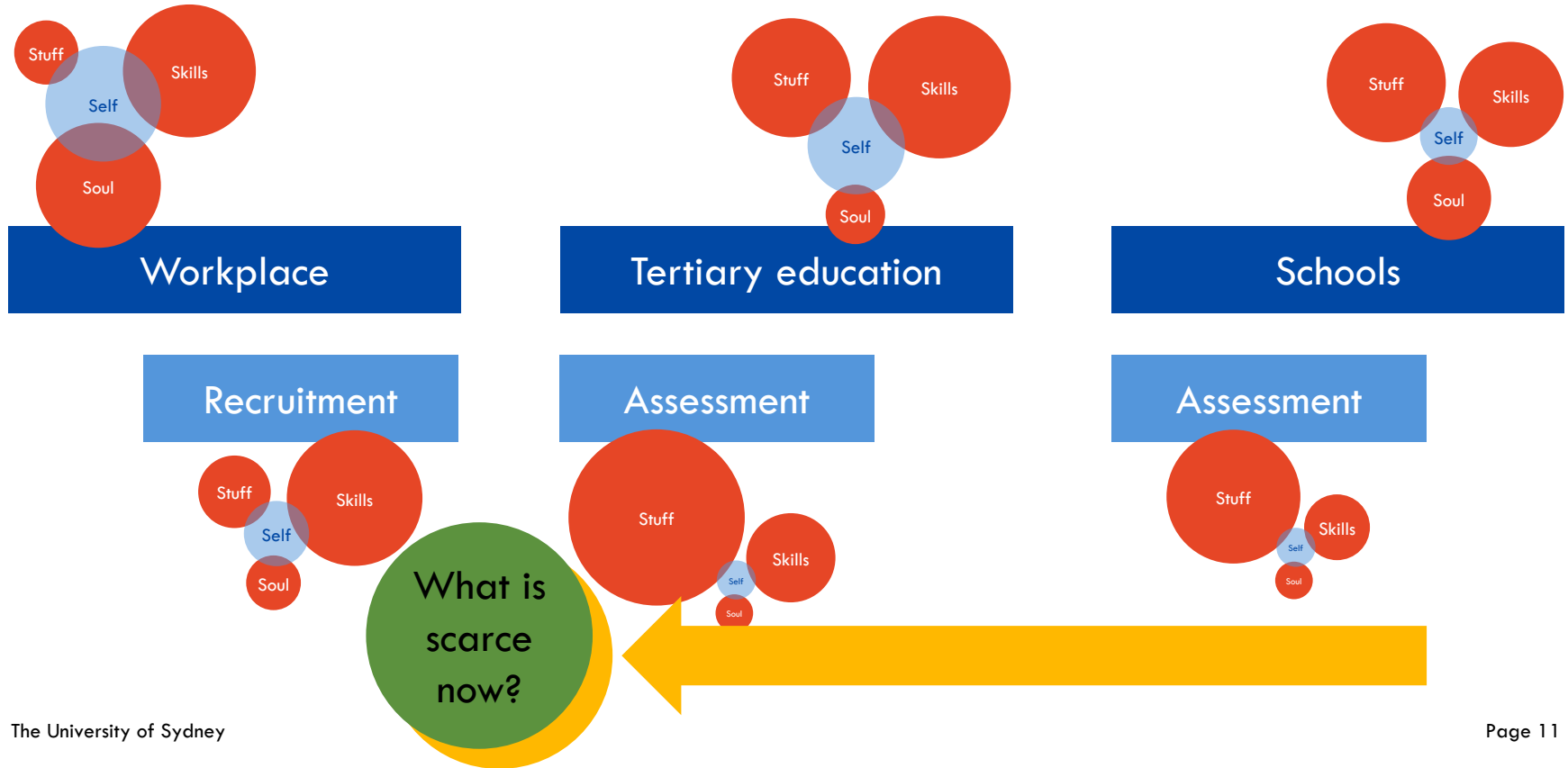
Feedback - Desserts

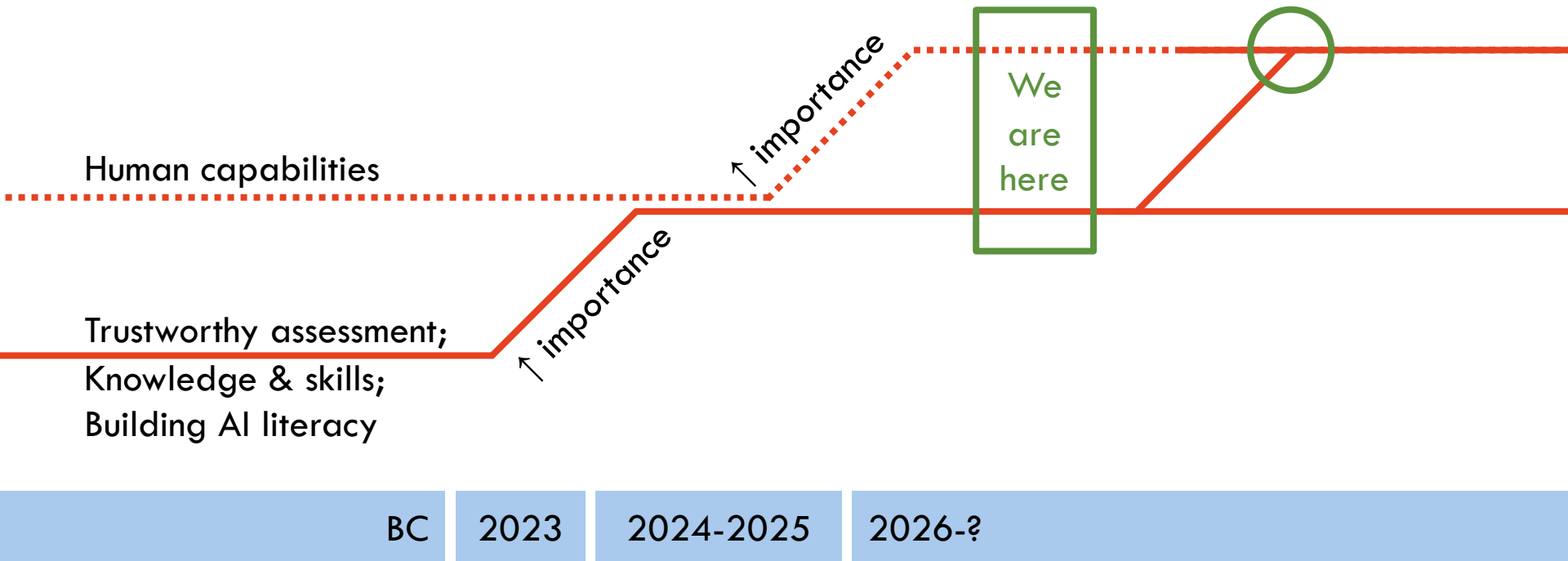
- On all of the above elements
- Specifically on rubric criteria

What is fundamental to being an educated human?



But is there misalignment?





Education in the age of AI (not “AI in education”)



Education in the age of AI

Green Paper: The University of Sydney's approach to learning, graduate capability and the student experience

Education and Students Portfolio

Some questions that we need to ask

- What is the value-add of university?
- What do we want students to know, do, and be?
 - Especially as cognitive labour becomes less scarce
- What do we certify if not outputs?
- What needs to be protected from AI, why, and how?
- What needs to change structurally?

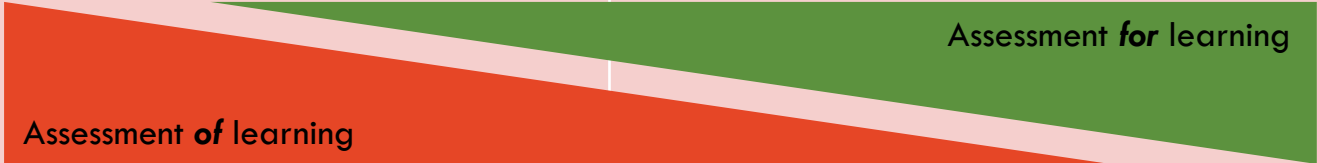
Thank you

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The elephants in the room

- Fixating on the unit
 - Instead of program level redesign
- Reversion to pen-and-paper exams
 - Instead of unpacking what we want assessments to develop & measure
- Devaluing of lane 2 ‘open’ assessments
 - Instead of designing these alongside lane 1 ‘secure’ assessments
- Focusing on provenance and ‘securing writing’
 - Instead of focusing on learning outcomes

Two-lane approach to assessment

	Lane 1 'secure'	Lane 2 'open'
Focus		
Purposes of assessment	✓ Verification of capability ✓ Providing for moments of feedback ✓ Motivating student work ✓ Signalling what's important * Engage with AI	✗ Verification of capability ✓ Providing for moments of feedback ✓ Motivating student work ✓ Signalling what's important ✓ Engage with AI
Security & integrity	Observed, in person	Not observed live
Position on generative AI	May or may not be allowed by examiner	As relevant, use of AI scaffolded & supported



