DRAFT – In an Era of Emergent Intelligence

Curriculum as Civic Armour: How Education Prepares or Undermines a Culture’s Will to Endure

Version:

0.1

## Purpose

This document provides a common reference point to support consistent understanding, analysis, and system design across programmes and workstreams. It aims to clarify key concepts and structures, reduce ambiguity, and enable alignment across technical and non-technical stakeholders. The content may be reused or referenced in other documents to support coherent planning, delivery, and review.

## Synopsis

The document introduces a structured approach to defining and relating core elements such as domains, entities, capabilities, and functions. It includes guidance on application, worked examples, and reference definitions. While not specific to a single project, it is intended to support ongoing initiatives by providing terminology and models that improve interoperability, traceability, and reuse.

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# Introduction

A culture does not survive because its borders are respected. It survives because its people understand what they are part of, why it matters, and what they owe one another.

Education is the transmission of that understanding. And in the modern world, it is the curriculums—what is taught, what is examined, what is quietly omitted—that forms the skeleton of national character. It prepares not just the next generation of workers, but the next generation of citizens. And when that curriculum forgets the deeper purposes of education, the culture forgets itself.

Civic duty, national identity, and moral clarity cannot be added at the last minute, in times of stress or threat. They must be cultivated steadily, in peace, across decades and generations. They are not delivered at the last minute by the military. They are prepared for in homes, reinforced in classrooms, and carried by institutions that remember their role in shaping not just knowledge, but cultural continuity.

Character starts with education. Exercises that become habits, that become virtues, that shape character—these are the traits that will serve learners well, whatever route they take through the possibilities life offers.

Character, composed of courage first and foremost which in turn supports curiosity, creativity, collaboration, and communication, will serve them whether they become academics, employees, founders, employers, discoverers, artists or caregivers. These same qualities will allow them to lift others as they rise, and by example, character as well. And if life throws at the nation or them personally, challenging duties they cannot—and should not—evade, including the defence of their culture against interference or coercion, they will draw on the very same qualities.

A key aspect is this: a generation that has not had to show valour will struggle to teach it or its constituent qualities. The same goes for courage—not just physical courage, but intellectual courage, moral courage, creative courage. Courage to inquire, to create, to speak, to shape a better future. In cultures that instinctively cut down the tall poppy, these virtues are quietly eroded.

A key aspect is this: a generation that has not had to show valour will struggle to teach it. The same goes for courage—not just physical courage, but intellectual courage, moral courage, creative courage. Courage to speak, to inquire, to shape a better future. In cultures that instinctively cut down the tall poppy, these virtues are quietly eroded. Teaching becomes focused on skill alone. But without civic anchoring, skill is directionless. Who wants a better plumber who steals from you?

Worse, when never tested, citizens may believe they possess courage and redefine it to fit their own comfort. In doing so, they erode its meaning—by mistaking withdrawal for humility, passivity for peacekeeping, or condemnation for moral clarity. They begin to believe that not acting is the same as principled restraint, because they have never been taught what courage actually requires, or costs. And when others do act with courage, they may be criticised, ridiculed, or torn down—because their actions expose the discomfort of those who have redefined inaction as virtue.

When there is no one left to teach courage, curricula fall back to teaching resilience. A culture that teaches its young only how to cope, without direction out towards better, risks confusing the two. Coping is essential—but it is not the same as acting with agency. Resilience may endure, but without purpose, it stalls. And when mistaken for courage, it can become a brake on transformation, rather than a bridge to it. Agency must be taught—so that learners not only endure their context, but shape it.

Too often, blame is placed on learners for lacking initiative, curiosity, or resolve—when in fact the failure lies upstream. It is the responsibility of the system, and those within it, to foster the qualities we claim to value. Teachers must be empowered—and expected—not merely to process but to shape. To shape learners, and by them, the future. This takes courage too. Institutional courage. Cultural courage. Individual courage. The courage to treat education not as a service transaction, but as the cultivation of the civic body itself.

This raises the question that often goes unasked: who should be teaching character? Some say it is the responsibility of the home. Others point to religion. Some expect schools to do it.

However not all homes are stable. Not all neighbourhoods are nurturing. And in an age of social media, even the state is viewed with suspicion.

In welcoming societies, source cultures bring different and sometimes conflicting sets of values. Some elevate honour or obedience above all. Others elevate restraint, personal freedom, or collective welfare.

The cultures education curriculum, then, becomes one of the few remaining tools capable of transmitting a unifying set of expectations—not just for success in the current shared culture, but for character.

What remains is the culture’s curriculum—not just as a container of knowledge, but as a quiet, nurtured to evolve enduring consensus of what a culture believes its young should *become* – not just what they will be able to *do*.

A shared culture can, over time, smooth out these tensions—not by erasing difference, but by cultivating common reference points. The process is difficult at the best of times, made more difficult when trust in institutions is eroded.

When that consensus is vague or absent, education becomes unmoored. Character becomes accidental.

This is where many modern curricula have drifted. Civics, where it exists at all, is often a minor strand. Political philosophy, if present, is offered without urgency or obligation or involvement. There is no education as to the components of governance of the towns, cities and nations they life within, and their singular purpose of each. Most citizens are never taught what components exist, what their primary purpose is for, and whom to go to for what tasks. Why the separation of concerns between the judicial, legislative, execution, the press. How through the eras different forms of Nationalism, Socialism, Federalism, Confederacy were tried and which one endured and why.

Neighbouring states are not taught about. There is history, but of Greece and Macedonia, Persia, and Rome—distant and abstract. Teaching about dynasties and shoguns rarely show the problem is universal, however what does get across is that it is the past, so who cares bare passing an exam. What is missing is continuity: the understanding of the different modes of governance that were tried and then rejected, from fiefdom to monarchy to democracy; and the variant approaches to provide power to the people while tempering it with bodies of wisdom.

Nor is there a study of why these institutions fail – and against the sway of the fifth estate, teaching the difference between institutions – and corrupt governers of them so they are don’t pull down edicifes but pull down and replace the demagogues that poisoned their execution.

However, often Military is taught – because it is so vivid – but disconnected from the long line of failure of other institutions beforehand, while being morally sanitised to express that war is bad, out of contex.

Nor are they taught what values to strive for on their respective continuums. The values that once formed the distinction between foolhardiness and bravery, between courage and valour, are now seldom taught, even as concepts.

The rise of the fourth estate, once envisioned as a check on power, is now itself a volatile force—especially in the era of algorithmic media. The result is a populace increasingly engaged emotionally, but rarely grounded intellectually in the systems they inhabit.

Curricula too often approach conflict as something external—something tragic, but unrelated to domestic decisions. A curriculum that teaches war only as historical events misses the importance of the thread that causes them. Conflict is never just about weapons and fronts: it is the outcome of decisions, made by kings, lords, parliaments, or peoples—often slowly, sometimes foolishly, often too late, reactive to an influx of foreign culture that has been happening for a long while prior. Students need to be shown how cultures—perhaps even similar to their own—failed to recognise danger, had no education or comparison to lean on to weigh the pros and cons, how leadership misjudged threats, how democracies ignored warnings, and how peace was lost not by action, but by assumption and unpreparedness to external forces.

This is not about teaching Conflict. Schools should not teach children to fight. But they should teach them character.

In this chapter, we explore how curriculum design shapes strategic imagination, the distinctions between personal and civic character, and how the erosion of moral vocabulary leaves a people unprepared not just for conflict, but for responsibility. We look at what is missing—and what could be restored.

# Who Teaches Character in a Fragmented Culture

Character is easy to point to when it’s already there. It’s much harder to build. And harder still to decide who should.

Traditionally, families claimed this role. So did religious institutions. So did mentors. So did elders. Everyone had a view—and many believed it was their duty. Over time, the subject became charged, debated, and politicised. Then, almost imperceptibly, it faded the other way. As trust in institutions declined and generational memory thinned, fewer wanted to take up the task. The techniques to pass it on were lost. What remained became rote—disconnected from meaning, drained of power. The correct answer, though uncomfortable to many, remains: all must play a part.

In such a setting, character education has become a contested space. Everyone once believed it was their responsibility—homes, faiths, schools, communities. But as institutions became politicised, the subject became sensitive. The result is not clarity, but abandonment. Homes assume it’s the school’s job. Schools are warned not to overstep into values. The state is cautious, not wanting to appear ideological. And so character falls through the gaps, both invisible and unclaimed.

Yet it remains true: all must play a part. Families pass on lived experience and personal ethics. Faiths offer enduring frameworks of meaning. Schools provide structured exposure to shared cultural reference points. And the state has a civic interest in shaping not what people believe, but how they behave toward one another in a plural society.

Character is not owned by one institution. It is transmitted by their collaboration—or lost by their silence.

Yet culture depends on it. And education remains the last space where nearly all citizens still pass through a common structure. If we abdicate this space, character formation becomes haphazard—shaped by media, peers, and algorithms more than principle, purpose, or responsibility.

A modern curriculum cannot force virtue. But it can form the conditions in which virtue is visible, discussable, and expected. It can give language to courage, examples of civic sacrifice, stories of hard decisions, and frameworks for distinguishing between good intentions and good outcomes.

Most importantly, it can insist that these are not abstract. That character is not a private affair. It is how a culture transmits its willingness to survive, to cooperate, to grow—and to stand for something when tested. And it can do something else, equally vital: it can recognise and reward courage when it appears.

Courage in expression, creativity, and inquiry—especially when the outcome is uncertain—should not be seen as deviation, but as development. Education should be the institution that actively en-courages such courage. The curriculum, and how it is delivered, should create space for risk-taking, value inquiry over certainty, and provide repeated opportunities for students to test ideas, express doubt, and attempt the uncertain without fear of shame. It should reward not only outcomes, but attempts—because it is in the act of attempting that cultures grow. The willingness to attempt, even when failure is possible, is not recklessness. It is the raw material of change. Attempting is the acting out of courage. The act itself is the catalyst from which all cultural momentum is generated. Education must prioritise the willingness to try over the need to perfect. Then, over time, it can help refine the quality of the aims behind those attempts. But in that order. Act before restraint. Not the other way around.

That character is not a private affair. It is how a culture transmits its willingness to survive, to cooperate, to grow—and to stand for something when tested.

If no institution is willing to carry that burden, the culture won’t carry it either.

Appendices

Appendix A - Document Information

Authors & Collaborators

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### Versions

* 1. Initial Draft

### Images

[Figure 1: TODO Image 2](#_Toc144995112)

### Tables

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### References

**There are no sources in the current document.**

### Review Distribution

The document was distributed for review as below:

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### Audience

The document is technical in nature, but parts are expected to be read and/or validated by a non-technical audience.

### Structure

Where possible, the document structure is guided by either ISO-\* standards or best practice.

### Diagrams

Diagrams are developed for a wide audience. Unless specifically for a technical audience, where the use of industry standard diagram types (ArchiMate, UML, C4), is appropriate, diagrams are developed as simple “box & line” monochrome diagrams.

### Acronyms

API

: [Application Programming Interface](#Term_ApplicationProgrammingInterface).

DDD

: Domain Driven Design

GUI

: [Graphical User Interface](#Term_ApplicationProgrammingInterface). A form of [UI](#Acronym_UI).

ICT

: acronym for Information & Communication Technology, the domain of defining Information elements and using technology to automate their communication between entities. [IT](#Acronym_IT) is a subset of ICT.

IT

: acronym for Information, using Technology to automate and facilitate its management.

UI

: User Interface. Contrast with [API](#Acronym_API).

### Terms

Refer to the project’s Glossary.

Application Programming Interface

: an Interface provided for other systems to invoke (as opposed to User Interfaces).

Capability

: a capability is what an organisation or system must be able to achieve to meet its goals. Each capability belongs to a domain and is realised through one or more functions that, together, deliver the intended outcome within that area of concern.

Domain

: a domain is a defined area of knowledge, responsibility, or activity within an organisation or system. It groups related capabilities, entities, and functions that collectively serve a common purpose. Each capability belongs to a domain, and each function operates within one.

Entity

: an entity is a core object of interest within a domain, usually representing a person, place, thing, or event that holds information and can change over time, such as a Student, School, or Enrolment.

Function

: a function is a specific task or operation performed by a system, process, or person. Functions work together to enable a capability to be carried out. Each function operates within a domain and supports the delivery of one or more capabilities.

Person

: a physical person, who has one or more Personas. Not necessarily a system User.

Persona

: a facet that a Person presents to a Group of some kind.

Quality

: a quality is a measurable or observable attribute of a system or outcome that indicates how well it meets expectations. Examples include reliability, usability, and performance. Refer to the ISO-25000 SQuaRE series of standards.

User

: a human user of a system via its UIs.

User Interface

: a system interface intended for use by system users. Most computer system UIs are Graphics User Interfaces ([GUI](#Acronym_GUI)) or Text/Console User Interfaces (TUI).