

# A Values-Based Approach to Higher Education

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# Introduction

“Most faculty members really have no underlying theory of the university or philosophy of higher education.... With few exceptions, even the best professors are competent experts who do research in some subject – or rather some small fragment of some subject... But... if one were to ask of them how their thing was supposed to fit into any broad educational scheme, what broad humanistic goals it was supposed to serve, and how those goals related to the goals of the Institute, and even what were the goals of the Institute, most of them would be stumped for an answer. They simply never give these matters a thought.”

Searle, J (1972). *The Campus War – A Sympathetic Look at the University in Agony*. Harmondsworth: Penguin.

# Aims and objectives

- To “give these matters a thought”:
  - What are (should be) the goals of higher education?
  - What does this imply about what constitutes good learning and teaching in higher education?
  - ... and how to achieve it?

# Some rival views of the aims of higher education

- A quick test of your intuitions:
  - With which of these quotations do you (dis)agree most strongly?
  - Why?

# Your vision of “the good” of higher education

- In small groups, discuss and answer:
  - What, in your view, is the purpose of higher education?
  - In light of this purpose, what is a good education?
  - So what does a “good learning experience” mean for you?
  - How do you know when education is good?
  - What does a student – and a graduate – of this higher education experience look like? What qualities will they possess and demonstrate?

## ... and finally

- Thank you for taking part!
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# PS: Quotation sources

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6. **Barnett, R (1994).** *The Limits of Competence: Knowledge, Higher Education and Society.* Buckingham: The Society for Research into Higher Education and Open University Press.