Artificial humanity and human artificiality

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Jon Dron, October 2023

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IFNTF
International Federation of
National Teaching Fellows

How Education Works
Teaching, Technology, and Technique
Jon Dron

Athabasca University
FACULTY OF SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY
School of Computing & Information Systems
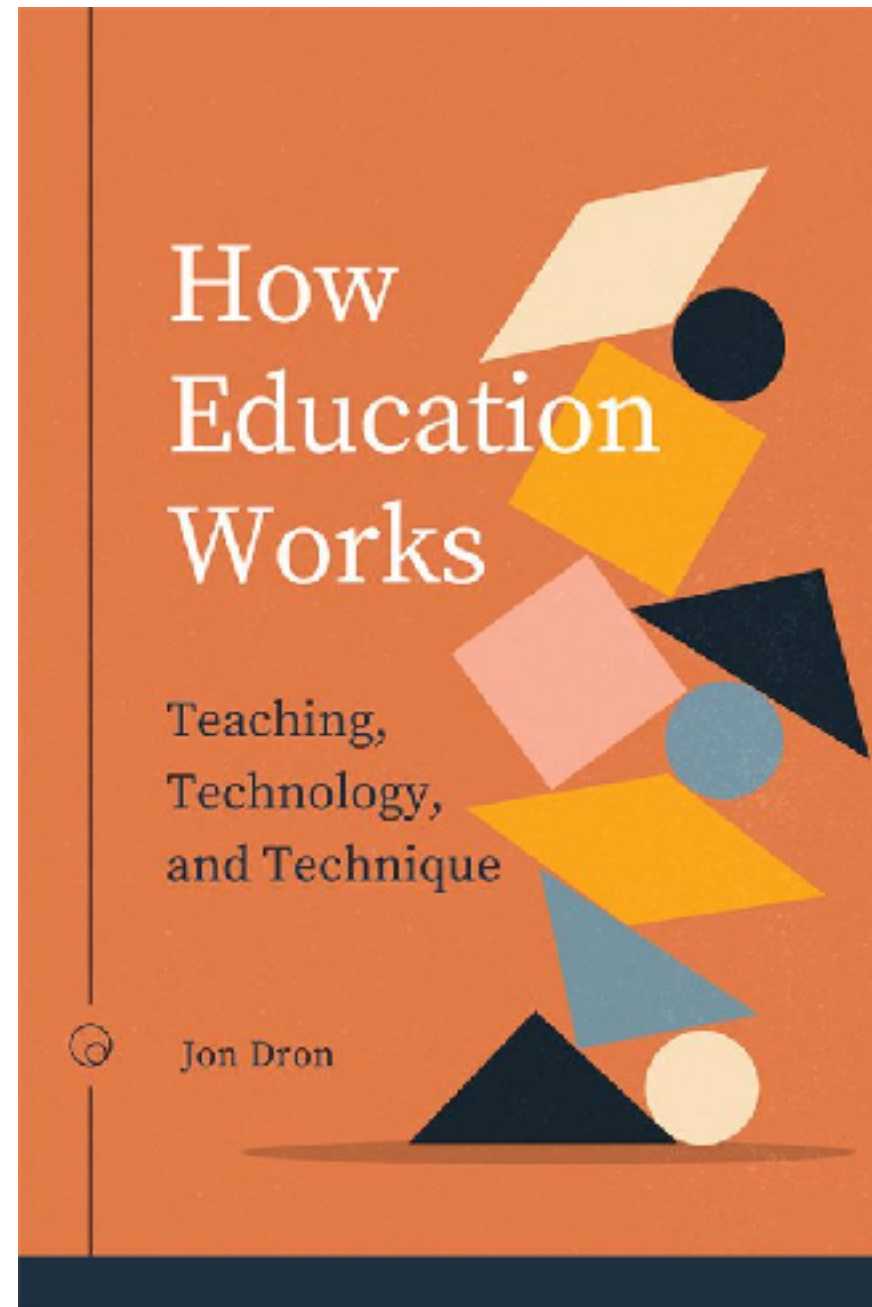
Technology Enhanced
Knowledge Research
Institute (TEKRI)
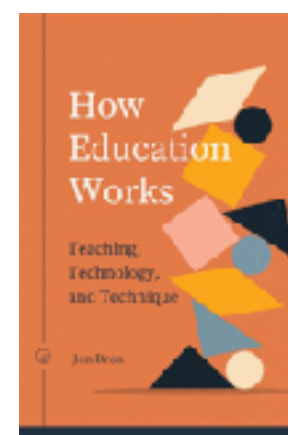
So I asked ChatGPT+ to introduce me in 75 words…

Dr. Jon Dron, a distinguished figure in learning technologies and distance education, has carved an impressive academic trajectory from Sussex University to his current position at Athabasca University. Recognized as a National Teaching Fellow in the UK, he's acclaimed for merging passionate teaching with groundbreaking research. His expertise spans from social learning and motivation to innovative pedagogies for online education. A prolific writer and speaker, Dron's contributions are globally acknowledged and revered. ☺️

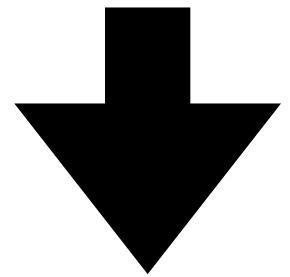# Whose (or what's) intelligence is this?

First, some theory

Free to read and download

How Education Works

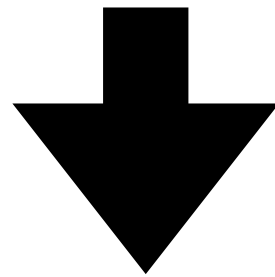Teaching, Technology, and Technique

Jon Dron
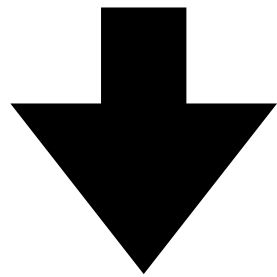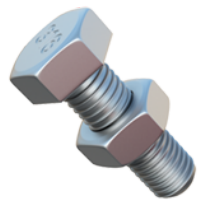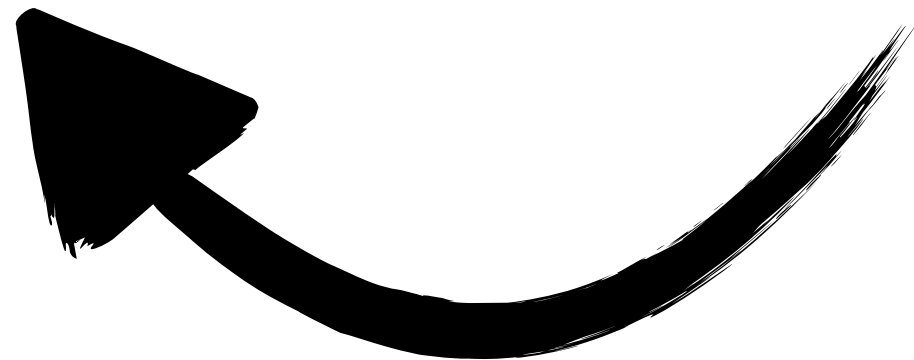
https://howeducationworks.ca

Defining "technology"

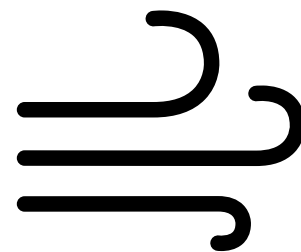W. Brian Arthur:

The orchestration of phenomena to our use

me:

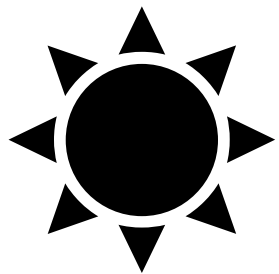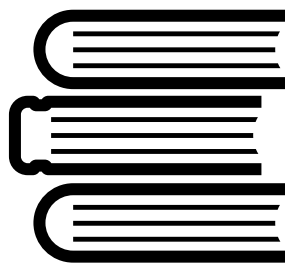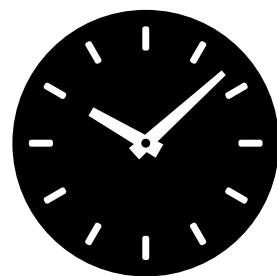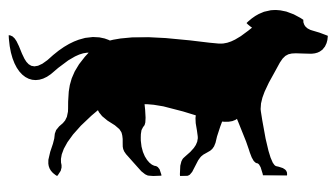organizing stuff to do stuff

Including what we do, what has been done,
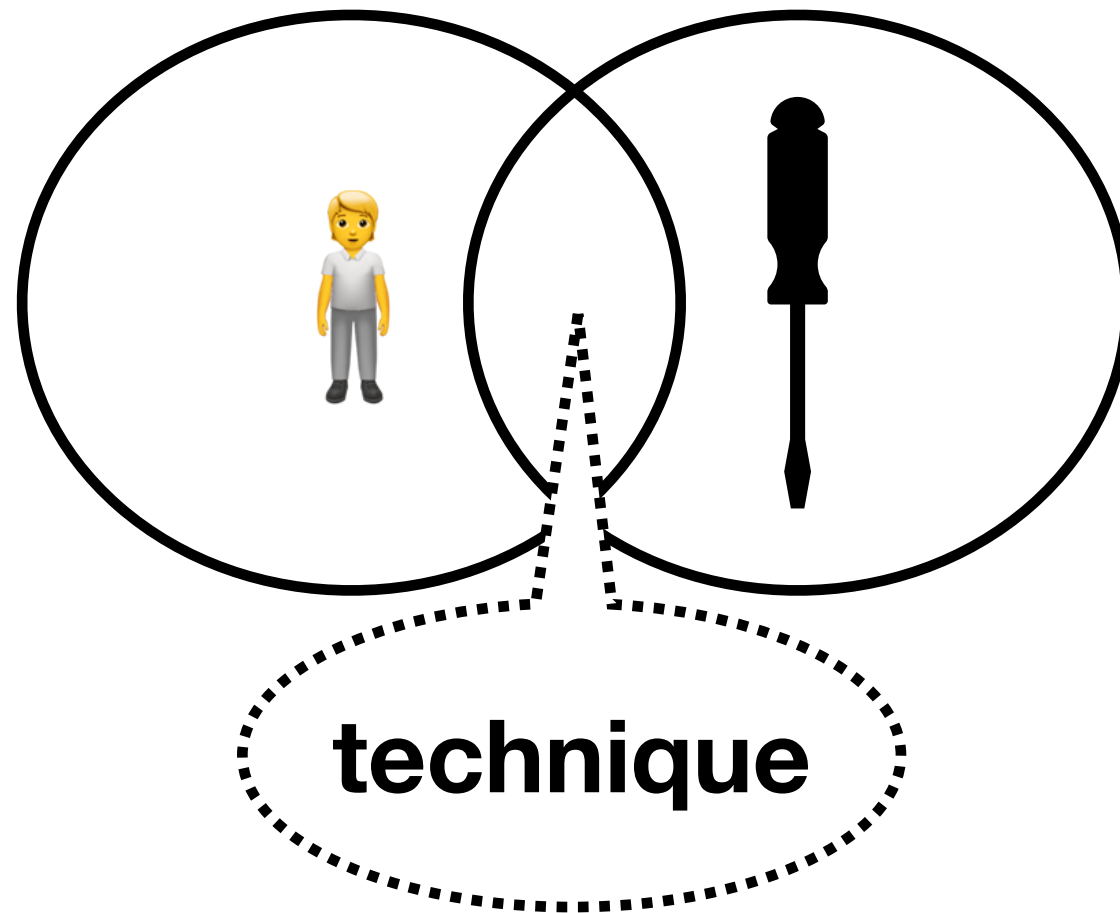and what we do with what has been done
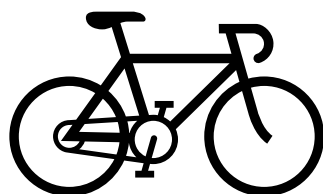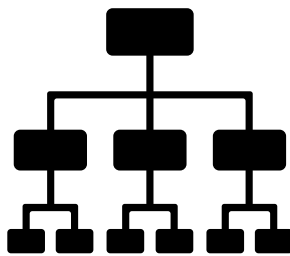
any
stuff

What can be done with this?

We are part-technology. Technology is part-us.

technique
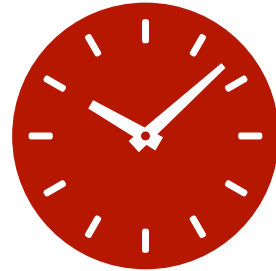
Participants, not (just) users

Technique

What we do with what has been done

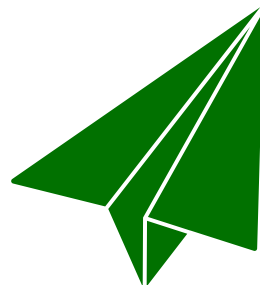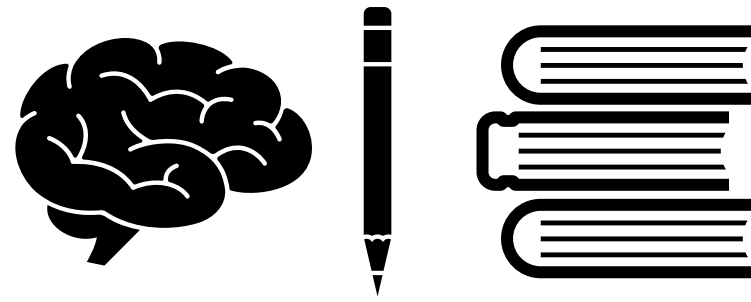**A technology enacted by a human**

Hard technique

We are parts of the orchestration (methods, processes, procedures)

Soft technique

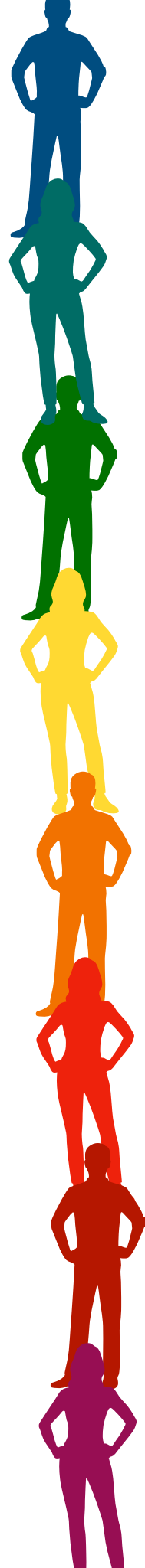**We are the orchestrators (the ways we do stuff)**

Most technologies demand a mix of both hard and soft technique.

Some, like pencils or language, are innately soft. Others, like production lines or regulations, tend to be hard

Through our technologies we participate in the collective intelligence of our species

No one learns alone

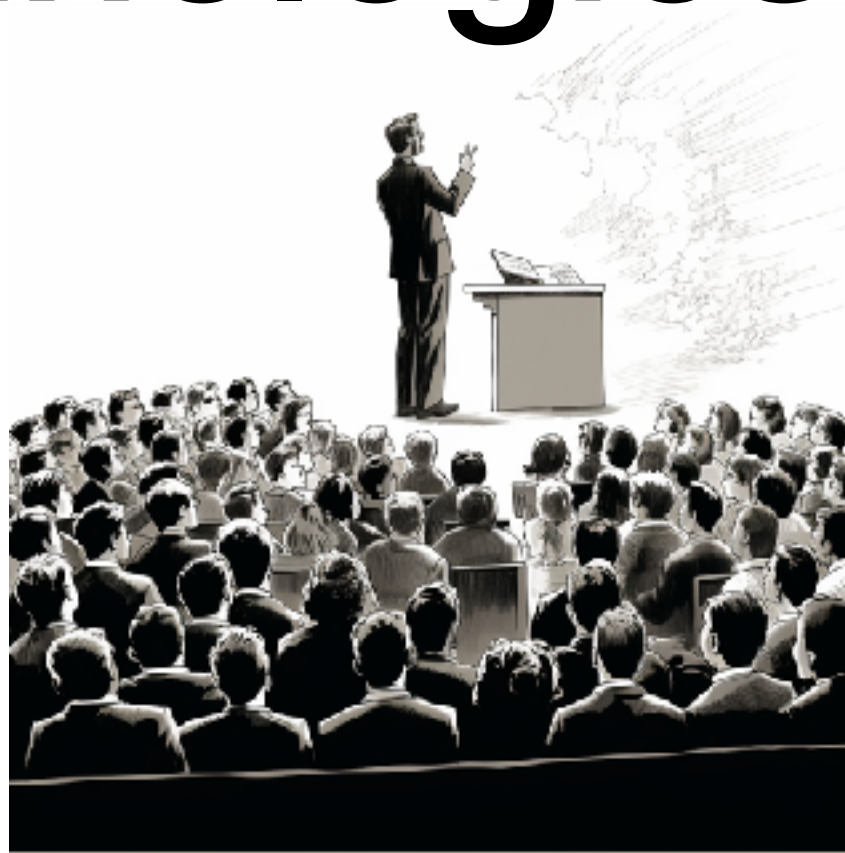No one teaches alone

Almost all of our intelligence is artificial

Education

Developing the techniques needed to participate in our societies

A technology built from countless technologies
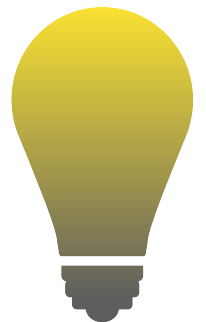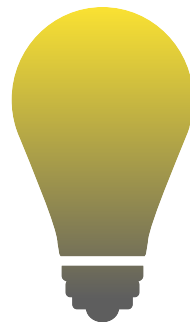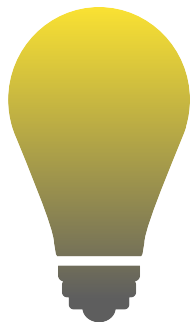
Pedagogies are technologies, too

We are all learning technologists

Co-participants

Everyone is a teacher

And so are our creations

If education is a technology, what is it for?

Harder

Softer

Achieving learning outcomes

Gaining credentials

Learning useful skills

Remembering important facts

Learning how to behave

Learning to think

Learning values

Learning to live, work, and play with others

Learning to live well
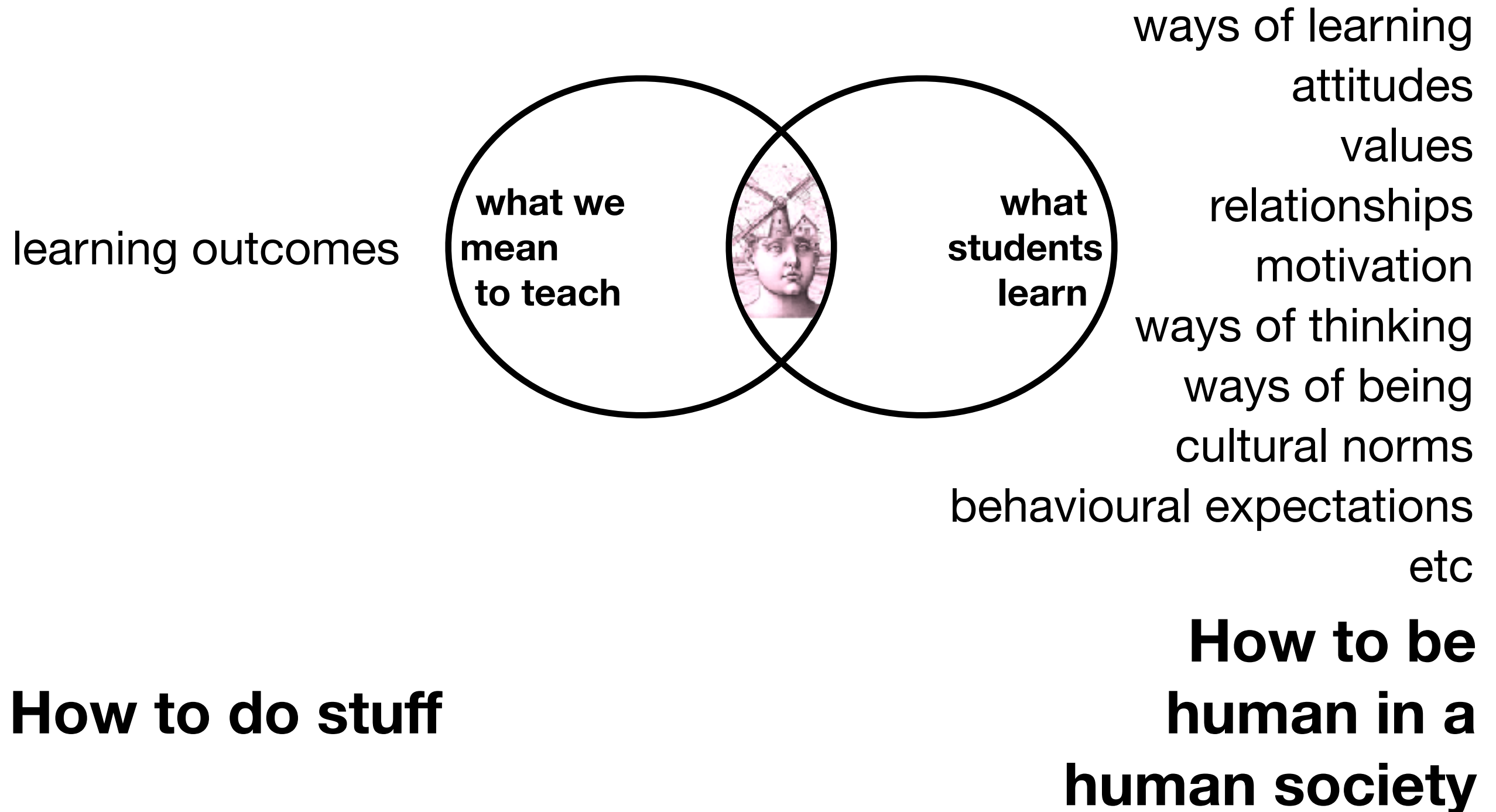
Learning to adapt

Sustaining happy, safe societies

The grist.

The mill.

ways of learning

attitudes

values

relationships

learning outcomes

what we mean to teach

what students learn

motivation

ways of thinking

ways of being

cultural norms

behavioural expectations

etc

How to be human in a human society

How to do stuff

What happens when we learn to be human from things that are not (quite) human?
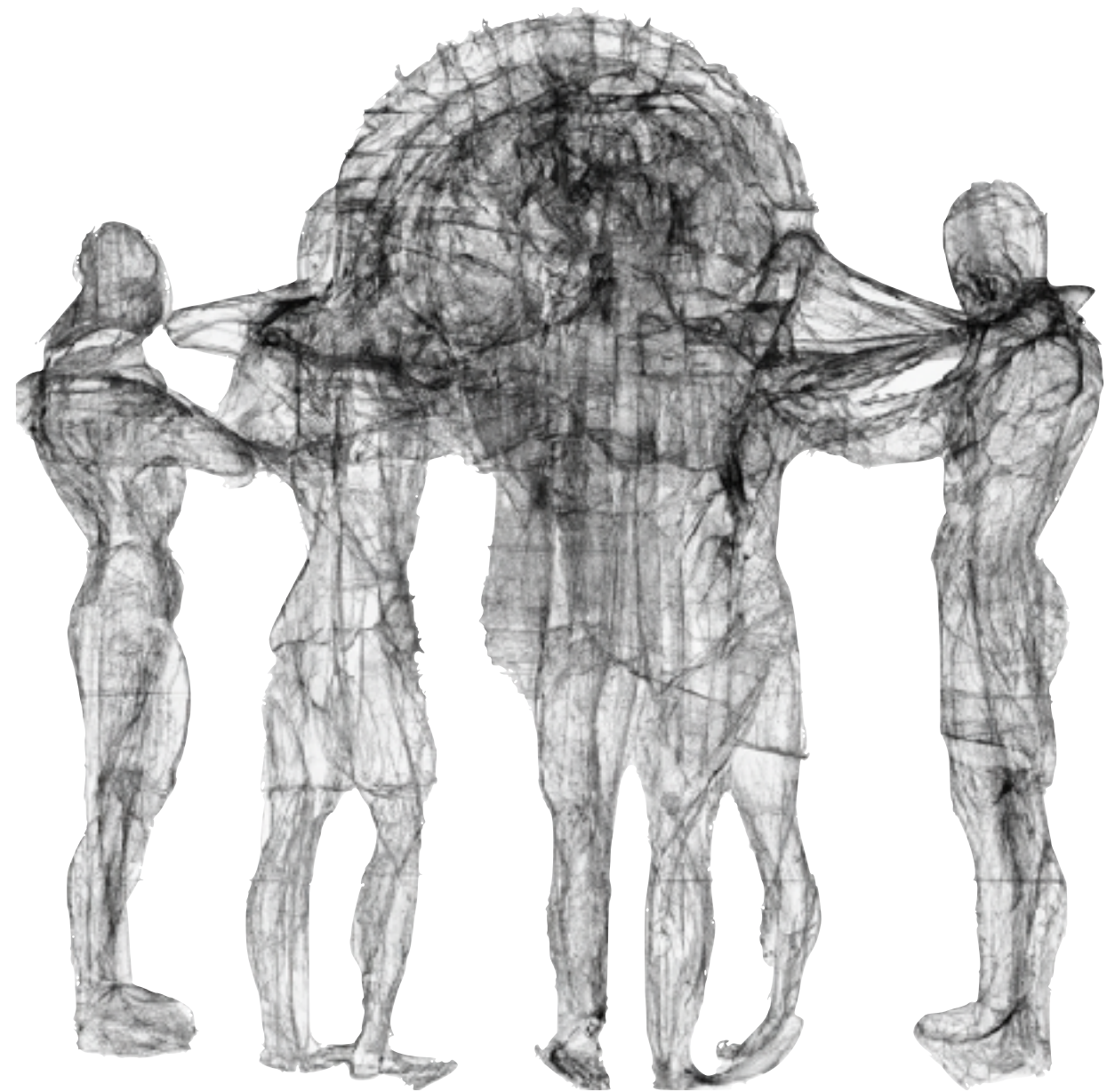
Until now, automation has replaced only **hard** technique

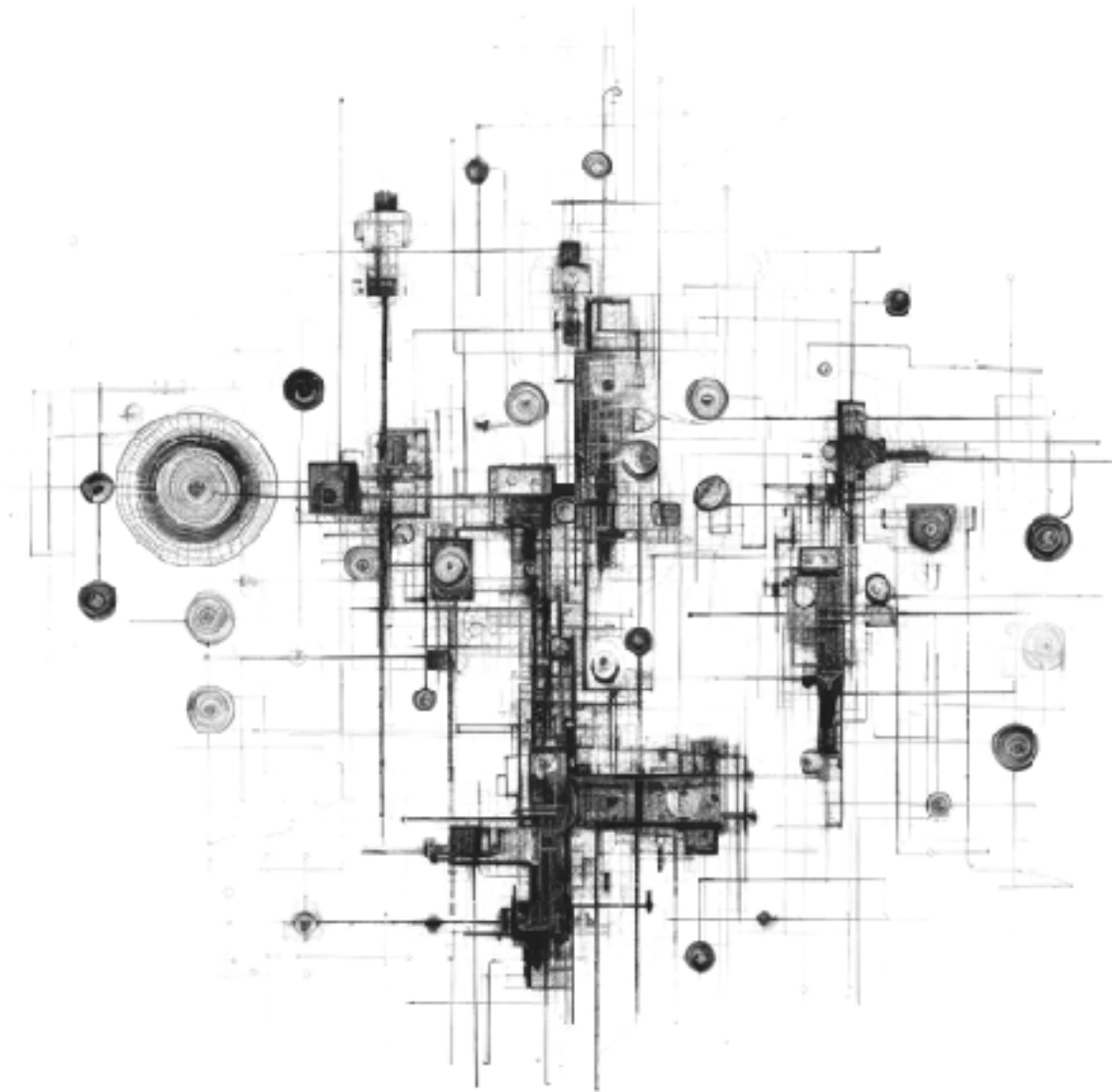Generative AIs automate and replace **soft** technique

Generative AIs

Remixed
collective
human
intelligence
and creativity

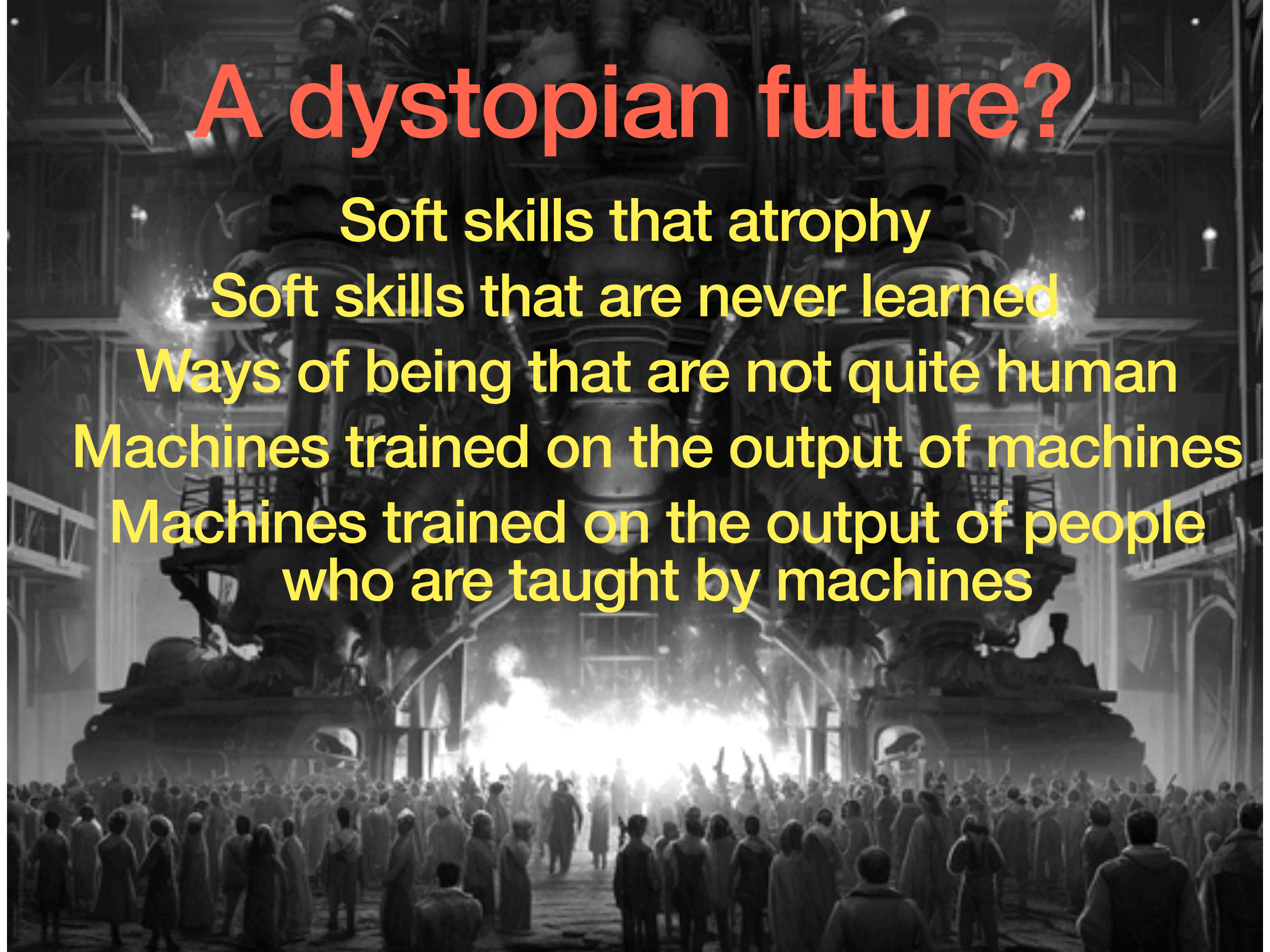# Signals, but no signification

A dystopian future?

Soft skills that atrophy

Soft skills that are never learned

Ways of being that are not quite human

Machines trained on the output of machines

Machines trained on the output of people who are taught by machines
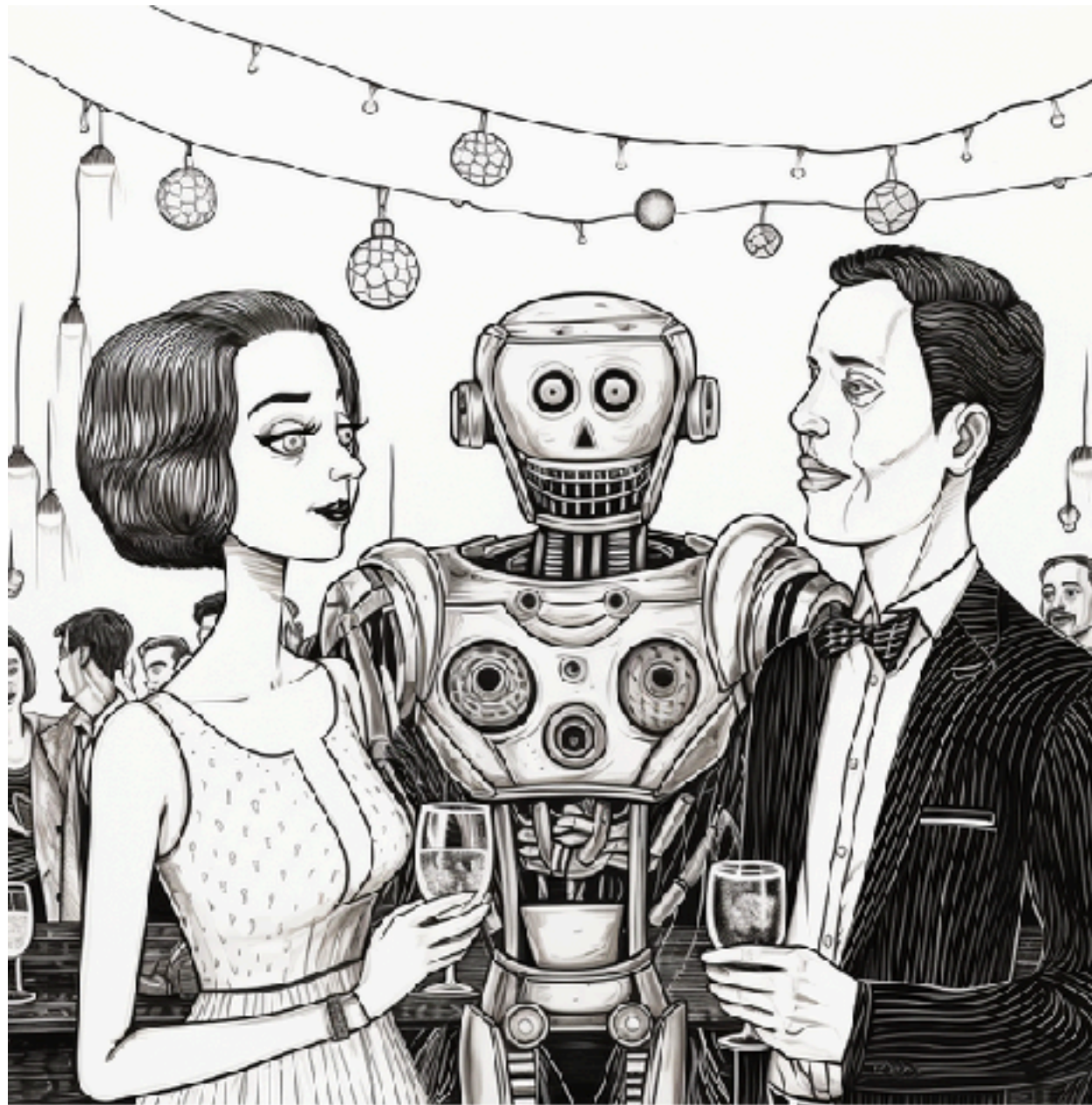
Evading the AI apocalypse
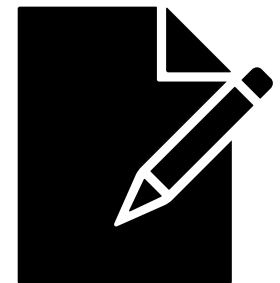
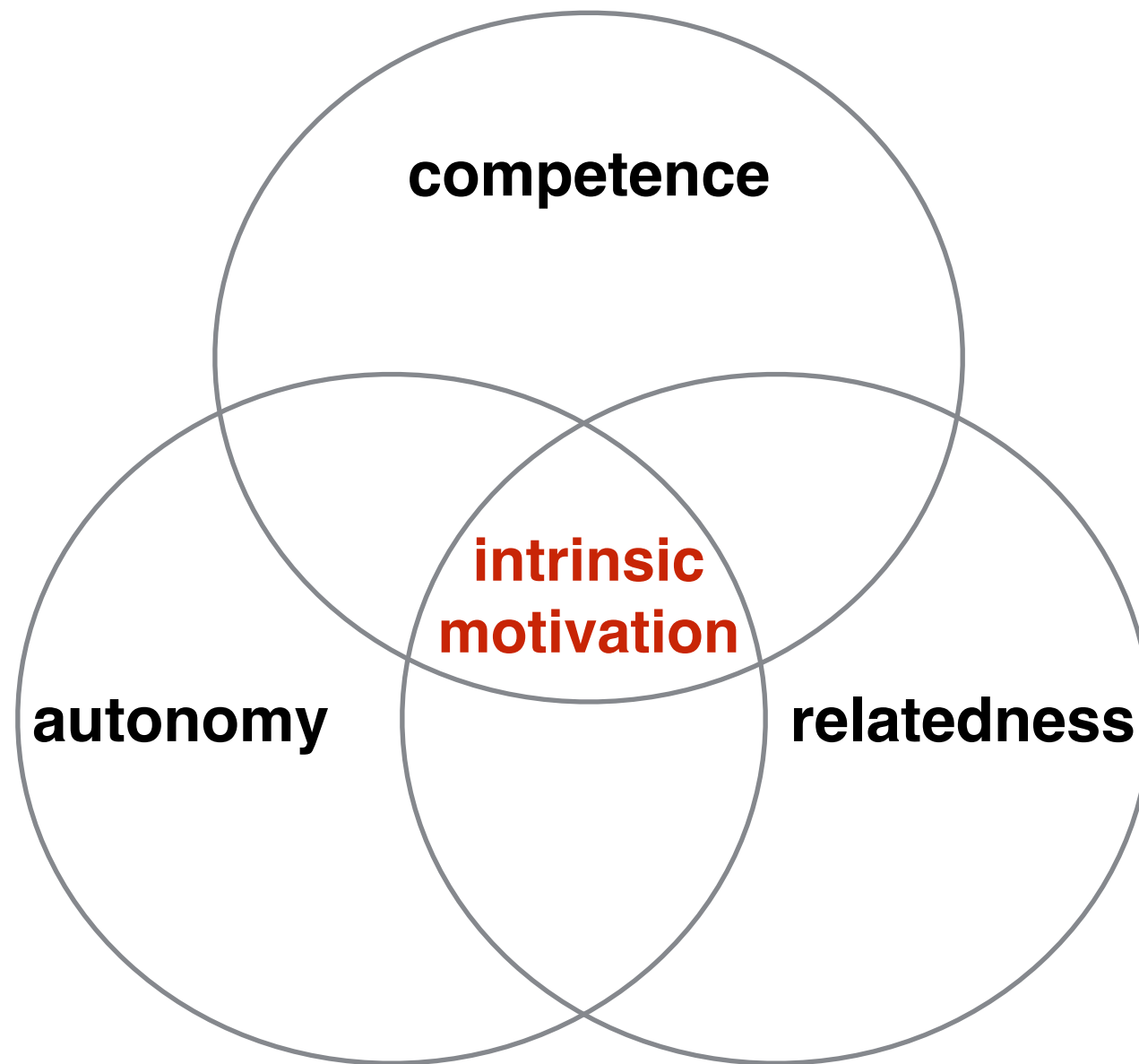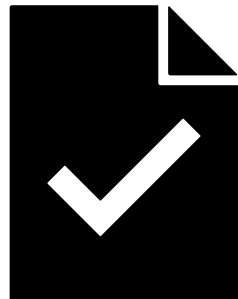# Contractors and team members, not tools

Separate roles, not overlapping

Supports for human connection
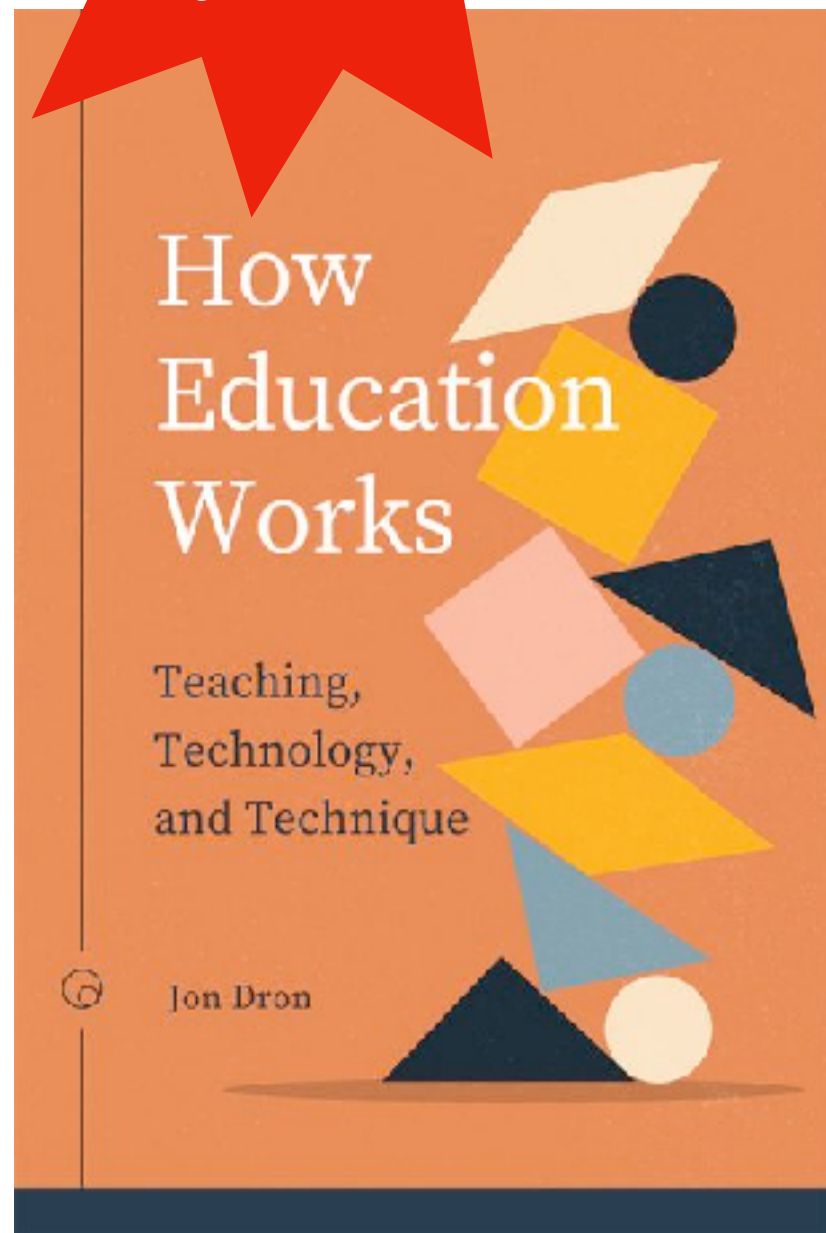
Decoupling credentials

Reclaiming the social

Courses as communities vs courses as products

Refocusing education

Thank you

How Education Works

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CONTROL AND CONSTRAINT IN E-LEARNING

Choosing When to Choose

JON DRON

TEACHING CROWDS

LEARNING & SOCIAL MEDIA