



UNIVERSITY OF
GOTHENBURG

ADDRESSING CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES

INPUT & REFLECTIONS FROM ACADEMIA

”Teaching controversial issues raises challenges for both teachers and school Directors. However, being able to discuss sensitive and controversial issues in a respectful way is a **vital skill in a democratic culture**”.

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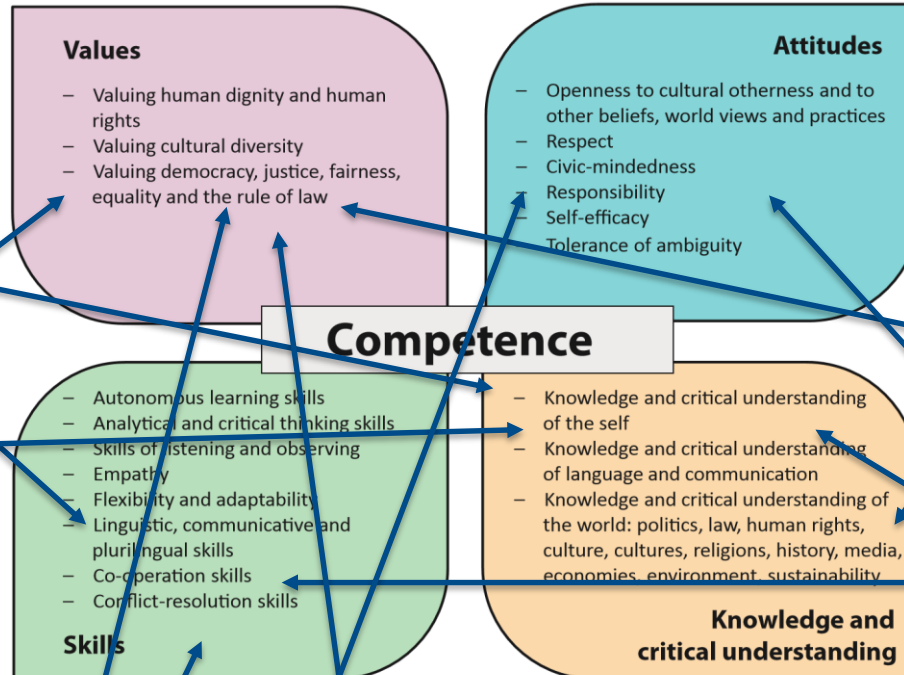
Why – is it relevant to address controversial issues in a safe school setting

Research says

- Schools are "natural spaces" for democratic citizenship to develop.
- Young people who are attracted to extremist milieus give voice to experiencing democratic alienation, they have been scielenced, sometimes bullied by teachers and peers.
- Their undemocratic utterances and attitudeds have been addressed in an undemocratic manner.

You say

- There might be a Lack of trust between teachers and students. Not having your voice heard, or your opinions devaluated - can be a painful experience.
- There are everyday challanges in the sorrounding world, we can help our students see beyond "black and white". *Students have the right to enjoy the benefit of their childhood in all school work.*
- *We need to establish links between past and present and build counsciousness about universal values, to realise them and defend them.*



”Writing the Jankiel Fensterszab biography”.

- Historiography
- Giving democracy (and the Holocaust) a framework
- Giving history a soul
- Problem based shared learning

”Life skills and #metoo”

- Outlook, world news
- Giving students a voice
- Awareness of own and others views

”Teacher vs Student: From crisis of trust towards new relationships”

- Putting democratic citizenship on the table
- Student participation
- Promoting freedom of (and responsibility for) expression



Challenges

According to "Free to speak safe to learn" Democratic schools for all – Courvey – first trends in 2018

- Critical thinking (71% very important) and freedom of speech (70% very important) - ranges under the top rated elements in CE and HRE.
- The extent of applied methods is for critical thinking (37% great extent) and for freedom of speech in relation to controversial issues (47%).
- We are on our way....
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- 30% address controversial issues in practice
- 10% use the CoE material "managing controversy"
- 15% use the CoE material teaching controversial issues.