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The Pedagogy of a Classroom for Intellectual Virtues

Chris A. Smith 

The University of Tasmania, Tasmania
Email: ca.smith@utas.edu.au

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Abstract

Educating for intellectual virtue is a form of character education that aims for students to develop intellectual virtues, such as intellectual courage, humility, tenacity, honesty, curiosity, attentiveness, and open-mindedness. Recently, Kotzee *et al.* (2021) argued that ‘the intellectual virtues approach does not have available a suitably effective pedagogy to qualify the acquisition of intellectual virtue as the primary aim of education’ (p. 1). In this article, partly as a response to Kotzee *et al.*’s (2021) challenge and partly to better understand and shape the intellectual virtues classroom, I explore at a pedagogical and epistemological level two theories I believe to be evident in the intellectual virtues classroom: virtue responsibilism and social constructivism. Through bringing these theories into conversation, I argue that a deeper understanding of the intellectual virtues classroom is elicited which is able to overcome Kotzee *et al.*’s (2021) pedagogical challenge for the intellectual virtues approach.

Keywords: Intellectual virtues; epistemology; pedagogy; social constructivism; virtue responsibilism; virtue epistemology; critical thinking

1. Introduction: The Pedagogy of a Classroom for Intellectual Virtues

Imagine a classroom focused on intellectual virtues. Students are collaborating to practise, habituate and grow a range of intellectual virtues, such as intellectual courage, humility, tenacity, honesty, curiosity, attentiveness, and open-mindedness. The teacher is modelling the use of these virtues for the students in the way they relate to, and guide, students in their learning. The intellectual virtues possessed in varying measure by students within the group guide their learning together, helping them collaborate effectively to navigate challenges and ambiguity as they co-create shared understandings of concepts. In this classroom, in this type of learning, what is happening at a pedagogical and epistemological level? This article applies some relevant theories from epistemology and pedagogy to understand such a classroom, and in so doing, provides a response to a recent challenge to intellectual virtues education.

The primary aim of education for intellectual virtues is the development of intellectual virtues. Intellectual virtues motivate, incline, and enable those who acquire them to

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be excellent thinkers, competent in their knowledge pursuits. Interest in intellectual virtues as a primary goal of education has been gaining momentum in both school and university contexts (Dow 2013; Baehr 2015, 2021; Croce and Pritchard 2022). Education for intellectual virtues is a form of character education, emphasising that education should be formative, with a focus on who students are becoming as thinkers, in addition to what they can do as thinkers. Intellectual virtues education closely aligns with, and even builds upon, other contemporary approaches to education that seek to help students develop the attitudes and dispositions to be lifelong learners, such as Claxton's (2017) Learning Power approach.

Recently, Kotzee *et al.* (2021) in 'Educating for Intellectual Virtue' argued that intellectual virtues cannot be a primary goal of education. Kotzee *et al.* (2021) highlight a new challenge to intellectual virtues education called the pedagogical challenge: that 'the intellectual virtues approach does not have available a suitably effective pedagogy to qualify the acquisition of intellectual virtue as the primary aim of education' (2021: 1). In this article, partly as a response to Kotzee *et al.*'s (2021) challenge and partly to better understand and shape the classroom described above, I explore at a pedagogical and epistemological level two theories I believe to be evident in the intellectual virtues classroom.

The paper has three sections. Firstly, I explain Kotzee's *et al.*'s (2021) pedagogical argument in greater detail. Secondly, I analyse the intellectual virtues classroom through the lens of a virtue theory and a social theory before proposing that these theories when considered together constitute an effective pedagogy for intellectual virtues education. Thirdly, I argue that such an understanding of the intellectual virtues classroom overcomes the pedagogical challenge proposed by Kotzee *et al.* (2021).

2. The Pedagogical Challenge

The pedagogical challenge posed by Kotzee *et al.* (2021) is that the intellectual virtues approach 'does not have available a suitably effective pedagogy to qualify the acquisition of intellectual virtue as the primary aim of education' (Kotzee *et al.* 2021: 1). The challenge is primarily concerned with whether the intellectual virtues approach can effectively develop better thinking skills in students and whether it can provide adequate guidance for the 'nuts and bolts' of the day-to-day intellectual problems they face. In short, two words summarise the pedagogical challenge facing the intellectual virtue approach: *growth* and *guidance*. It is about *growth* because Kotzee *et al.* (2021) question whether intellectual virtues can be developed effectively in students in a way that improves their thinking skills. It is about *guidance* since Kotzee *et al.* (2021) question whether intellectual virtues can provide sufficient guidance to navigate the immediate intellectual tasks faced by students, such as: 'how to evaluate this argument or how to solve this mathematic problem or how to interpret this poem' (2021: 20).

To move towards responding to Kotzee *et al.* (2021) and answering the question posed in the Introduction, it is necessary to notice two primary happenings in an intellectual virtues classroom: firstly, the development and use of intellectual virtues and secondly, the social nature of the learning. To this end, I will outline two theories, one from epistemology and one from educational theory, which explain important facets of this type of learning: virtue responsibilism and social constructivism. Virtue responsibilism is a specific form of virtue epistemology which can account for the use and development of intellectual virtues, whilst social constructivism is an epistemological and pedagogical concept which is commonly referred to by educators to comprehend the social

nature of learning (Yilmaz 2008; Amineh and Asl 2015). Since the two primary elements in the classroom being considered are intellectual virtues and the social environment, these theories should be pertinent to developing our understanding of this type of learning.

3. A Virtue Theory: Virtue Responsibilism

Education for intellectual virtues is founded in the field of virtue epistemology. Virtue epistemology is an approach to epistemology that shifts the primary focus of analysis from the properties of beliefs to the character of agents, from propositions to persons. In this approach, a person receives praise or blame based on how their beliefs are formed, what beliefs they maintain and, most importantly, for their intellectual character. Of central concern in this evaluation is the extent to which the person possesses intellectual virtue. Zagzebski (1996) provides a helpful definition of virtue that she argues is adequate to cover moral and intellectual virtue:

A virtue, then, can be defined as a deep and enduring acquired excellence of a person, involving a characteristic motivation to produce a certain desired end and reliable success in bringing about that end. (Zagzebski 1996: 137)

A few comments about Zagzebski's (1996) definition are helpful for the purposes of this article. Firstly, an intellectual virtue is an 'excellence of a person'. Since the excellence is cognitive, intellectual virtues are, at least, cognitive goods, making good thinking and thinking skills a condition of possessing an intellectual virtue. If a person lacked the ability to think well or employ thinking skills effectively, they could not be said to possess intellectual virtue. Secondly, an intellectual virtue is part of a person's character as it is a 'deep and enduring' trait of a person. This means that once an intellectual virtue is developed, it is relatively stable and predictable in its existence and expression, making it difficult and slow to change. Thirdly, an intellectual virtue is an 'acquired' excellence. Since an intellectual virtue is an acquired rather than an innate trait of a person's character, it can be developed. Many virtue ethicists and epistemologists propose, in agreement with Aristotle, that virtues develop through the habituation of virtuous practices, requiring a great amount of effort and time to develop. Fourthly, a virtue involves 'a characteristic motivation to produce' and 'reliable success in bringing about' a 'desired end'. Zagzebski (1996) argues that an intellectual virtue aims at truth, or at least cognitive contact with reality, and a person who possesses intellectual virtue is typically motivated toward, and successful at, achieving it. Zagzebski (1996) claims that the motivation and success components are both necessary to evaluate an agent for their beliefs as they account for two aspects that are commonly associated with moral thinking: the state of the heart and the results of the action, or thought in this case.

Since its inception, virtue epistemology has diverged in two primary directions: virtue reliabilism and virtue responsibilism. Virtue reliabilism emphasises the role of competences, which can be faculties or sustained states, in producing beliefs that count as knowledge and for which their possessor receives credit for successfully 'hitting the target': truth (Sosa 2007: 22–4). Virtue responsibilism differs from virtue reliabilism in that it focuses more on character than faculties. Code (1984) argues for the notion of 'responsibility' in contradistinction 'reliabilism' as it emphasises the active and responsible nature of agents in shaping their intellectual character, and for which they deserve praise or blame. Such an active and responsible conception of agents is more applicable

to the purposes of education, particularly formative or character education which seeks to develop virtues in students. Further, if virtues were conceived as more innate than acquired excellences, the possibility of formative education would be undermined.

Having sketched the nature of virtue responsibilism as an explanatory tool for the virtue component of the intellectual virtues classroom, I now turn to consider a theory that can contribute to our understanding of the social nature of the classroom in social constructivism.

4. A Social Theory: Social Constructivism

Social constructivism is a primary form of constructivism. Constructivism is a pedagogical, psychological and epistemological concept that can be understood as a metaphor in which knowledge is constructed by knowers in a way similar to a builder constructing a building (Moshman 1982). The knowledge constructed by knowers is like a building under construction in that new ideas or experiences function as materials to be incorporated into an existing structure in ways that are fitting. Leaving the metaphor behind, constructivism contains two essential ideas: firstly, the active role of learners in knowledge acquisition (Fox 2001: 24), and secondly, the influence of learners' pre-existing ideas on future learning (Yilmaz 2008). Numerous categorisations have been proposed to delineate the varieties of constructivism, but a twofold division is adequate for the purposes of this paper: individual and social constructivism. This categorisation is adequate as it captures an important distinguishing feature of various forms of constructivism, and each category is influential in education and significant in the literature.

Individual forms of constructivism focus on individual, internal constructions of knowledge. These constructions are the result of individual interpretations of experiences and the establishment of a coherent set of one's own ideas (Piaget 1952; Piaget and Duckworth 1970). Knowers are not passive in this process, as though they are being acted upon by their experiences and receiving knowledge; rather, they actively build and shape their knowledge of the world. This active construction involves making connections between existing beliefs and new ones, as knowers interpret and respond to new ideas and experiences to ensure equilibrium (Piaget 1952; Piaget and Duckworth 1970). It is 'an adaptive activity requiring building conceptual structures and self-regulation through reflection and abstraction' (Yilmaz 2008: 165).

Social constructivism differs from individual forms of constructivism, in that knowledge is conceived as a product and accomplishment of society rather than an individual. Most forms of social constructivism stem from the work of Vygotsky (1962, 1978) and emphasise the role of community and language in the development and transmission of knowledge. For some social constructivists, such as Rorty (1979), knowledge is located entirely within the community of knowers; there may be no external relation to an independent world (Matthews 2003; Boghossian 2006: 52; Cobern and Loving 2008: 436). On this account, communities of knowers give form to the world through human language, imposing their values and purposes on the world in the process; knowledge consists entirely of these corporate linguistic constructions. For moderate social constructivists, knowledge is found within communities and is maintained on account of consensus within the community and some degree of coherence or 'fit' with the external world (Ernest 1994: 8; Young 2008). It is this moderate form of social constructivism that is most congruent with the epistemology of virtue responsibilism as it maintains a connection between the community and the world as it is.

5. Bringing a Social Theory into Conversation with a Virtue Theory

Having briefly described the nature of virtue responsibilism and social constructivism, I turn now to consider why it may be necessary and beneficial not to consider these theories, along with their epistemologies and pedagogies, in isolation, as we seek to understand what is happening in a classroom where students are learning collaboratively to develop and use intellectual virtues. The theories should not be considered in isolation for at least two reasons related to the intertwined reality of the classroom and recent trends in the literature.

Regarding the intertwined reality of the classroom, since intellectual virtues and the social context are integrated in the reality of the classroom, they should be integrated in our understanding of the pedagogy that explains and shapes it. To elaborate, in the classroom described in the introduction, virtue responsibilism and social constructivism can contribute to our understanding of the two main components of the learning: virtue responsibilism explores students' development and use of intellectual virtues, whilst social constructivism explores their collaborative learning. Since both theories are well founded in literature and explain different aspects of learning, their application is relevant and appropriate to this classroom. However, to leave each theory as distinct and consider the classroom as being divided between what is happening at a virtues level and what is happening at a social level, creates a dualism that falls short of appreciating the reality of what is occurring in this type of learning, as the use and development of virtue is not separate to the social context; they are entangled. If the reality is that virtues are integrated with the social context of the classroom, our understanding of its epistemology and pedagogy should also be integrated and explicit. As such, bringing social constructivism into conversation with virtue responsibilism is necessary to understand and shape the reality of this classroom.

Recent trends in the literature demonstrate a growing interest and encouragement to explore further the connections between virtue epistemology and social epistemology in education (Watson 2016). For example, a special issue the *Journal of Philosophy of Education* (2013) compiled a selection of essays from virtue and social epistemologists. As the editor of the compilation, Kotzee (2013) outlines in the Introduction the case for 'greater cooperation between the two fields':

What the two fields of social and virtue epistemology share is not only a criticism of the metaphysics of knowledge (still occupied with the Gettier problem and how to deal with epistemic luck), but also a clear focus on the normative dimensions of epistemology. Not simply interested in what knowledge is, both social and virtue epistemology regard it as epistemology's task to understand how to further knowledge or how to be a good knower. The connection with the work of the philosophy of education is obvious and pooling the conceptual resources for the two subjects promises much by way of solving questions of mutual concern. New tools to understand knowledge, knowers and mechanisms to spread knowledge will be of great interest to the study of education. (Kotzee 2013: 158)

Since social constructivism maintains a social account of knowledge, it can be considered a form of social epistemology. Hence, bringing social constructivism into conversation with virtue responsibilism responds to Kotzee's (2013) encouragement, pooling the conceptual resources of social epistemology and virtue epistemology and applying them to the study and practice of education. Thus, exploring the relationships between

virtue responsibility and social constructivism to articulate the epistemology and pedagogy implicit in the intellectual virtues classroom should be of great interest to the study of education.

Considering virtue responsibility and social constructivism in an integrated way improves and expands the ability of each theory to explain the intellectual virtues classroom. Virtue responsibility benefits from the addition of social constructivism's emphasis on the social nature of knowledge as it expands the locus of evaluation from an agent to agents; from an individual to a group. This shift enables a greater appreciation and articulation of the influence of language and culture on social knowledge than virtue responsibility is capable of in isolation. Such an appreciation and articulation is necessary, as our knowledge pursuits, particularly in the classroom and workplace, are increasingly collective and collaborative due to technological developments and the emergence of a knowledge society. An integrated understanding of the intertwined nature of virtue and the social context is also significant as it contributes to Sosa's (1980) call for further development of the concept of virtue and a greater appreciation of the role of environment and community in intellectual virtue. Thus, virtue responsibility benefits from social constructivism when integrated to understand and shape the intellectual virtues classroom as it can explore the social and linguistic nature of knowledge and virtue in greater detail than virtue responsibility alone.

Social constructivism without virtue responsibility lacks theoretical and normative content which could serve to ground and guide the knowledge groups' construct. Social constructivism helps us to appreciate the role of language and culture in relation to knowledge but it provides no guidance as to how knowledge is developed or judged in community, simply that it is a social construct. Virtue responsibility provides the guidance that social constructivism lacks. This guidance is via intellectual virtues functioning both in the individual and group, regulating the group's inquiry and deliberation to such an extent that it may, at least, limit the breadth of ideas believed to be reasonable, and at most, avoid relativism. Thus, both virtue responsibility and social constructivism benefit from the other when considered in an integrated way.

For these reasons, virtue responsibility and social constructivism when considered in isolation are unable to explain adequately the entangled nature of the intellectual virtues classroom; a classroom where students are collaboratively learning to develop and use intellectual virtues. Further, the ability of each theory to contribute to our comprehension and crafting of the intellectual virtues classroom is enhanced when applied to each other as they can account for the virtue and social aspects of the learning in an integrated way. As such, bringing social constructivism into conversation with virtue responsibility has been shown to be beneficial to each theory's ability to comprehend and craft the intellectual virtues classroom. From this point forward, I refer to the integration of virtue responsibility and social constructivism as *virtue constructivism*. I am proposing virtue constructivism as a useful term that captures specific understandings of the virtue and social components extant in the intellectual virtues classroom. Virtue constructivism can be understood as a lens through which we can analyse the epistemology and pedagogy of the intellectual virtues classroom with greater perspicuity. I am not proposing a new theory at this point; I am integrating specific understandings of the virtue and social components of an intellectual virtues classroom in a summative concept. I now turn to consider whether, and how, virtue constructivism can overcome the pedagogical challenge posed by Kotzee *et al.* (2021).

6. A Response to the Pedagogical Challenge

In response to the pedagogical challenge proposed by Kotzee *et al.* (2021), I will argue that intellectual virtues education is already able to provide growth in, and guidance by, intellectual virtue. Further, and importantly for the purpose of this paper, I will argue that virtue constructivism allows for greater growth in, and guidance by, intellectual virtue than intellectual virtues education alone. As a point of comparison throughout these two arguments, I will compare the degree of growth and guidance provided by intellectual virtues and virtue constructivism with that provided by thinking skills, such as critical thinking. If it can be demonstrated that virtue constructivism provides more growth and guidance to good thinking than thinking skills, then virtue constructivism is able to overcome Kotzee *et al.*'s (2021) pedagogical challenge.

With regard to growth, Kotzee *et al.* (2021) question whether intellectual virtues can be taught by teachers and effectively developed in students in a way that improves their thinking skills. In responding to this element of the pedagogical challenge, it is first necessary to recall that to possess an intellectual virtue is to have both the motivation and ability to seek knowledge effectively, making thinking skills inherent in the possession of an intellectual virtue. This means that to develop an intellectual virtue, by definition, requires growth in thinking skills, as it makes the agent more effective in reliably succeeding in their knowledge pursuits. Since effective thinking skills are a necessary feature of an intellectual virtue, demonstrating growth in intellectual virtue is sufficient to show growth in thinking skills.

Intellectual virtues education has well developed practices for developing students' intellectual virtues. Such practices have been outlined and developed by many authors over the past few decades. (Battaly 2006; Baehr 2013, 2015; Kidd 2015). Most recently, Jason Baehr's (2021) *Deep in Thought: A Practical Guide to Teaching for Intellectual Virtues* provides a comprehensive approach, including practical teaching strategies, to develop intellectual virtues. Not only are teaching strategies available, but there is growing evidence that intellectual virtues can be developed in students. For example, a recent study by Orona (2021) demonstrated that curiosity can be deliberately cultivated in students with measurable growth. Thus, education for intellectual virtues already has a variety of teaching strategies and growing evidence of its ability to develop intellectual virtues in students.

Virtue constructivism enables greater growth in intellectual virtues than intellectual virtues education in isolation, on account of its expanded social nature. Through a greater appreciation of the social context in which virtues develop, virtue constructivism can be used to shape environments to enhance virtue formation and explain with greater precision why some environments are better than others for the development of virtue. Aristotelian virtue epistemologists appreciate the role of practices in the formation of habits contributing towards the development of virtue. However, these practices are often conceived, at least implicitly, as repeated actions of an individual who is cognisant of them, rather than as socially constructed practices embedded in communities and institutions which are enacted, often without conscious awareness. Smith (2013) applies Pierre Bourdieu's notion of *habitus* from the social sciences to Aristotle's idea of habits to demonstrate how as social creatures, our ways of being are not 'without inertia'. Rather, they are typically acquired subconsciously through being in community (2013: 75–84). This implies that the habits we develop and which contribute to the formation of virtue are not simply selected *from* our social contexts, they are also transmitted *by* our social contexts. A helpful example of how this

expanded social understanding of virtue can be applied to develop virtue in students can be found in the work of Youngs (2021). Youngs argues that education can be seen as a living story with narratives constructed from the relationships and pedagogies in classrooms. Further, Youngs argues that specific narratives can be helpful or unhelpful for the development of specific virtues, the implication being that teachers should endeavour to shape classroom narratives so the desired virtues can be brought to the fore. 'Teachers create world; their intentional style of pedagogical approach weaves a narrative in which learning of a particular kind will take place and in which distinct intellectual virtues are most readily cultivated' (Youngs 2021: 21). Therefore, virtue constructivism enables greater growth in intellectual virtues than the intellectual virtues approach in isolation as it is better able to understand and shape the social contexts by which virtues are acquired.

With regards to guidance, Kotzee *et al.* (2021) question whether intellectual virtues can provide sufficient guidance to navigate the immediate intellectual tasks faced by students, such as: 'how to evaluate this argument or how to solve this mathematical problem or how to interpret this poem' (2021: 20). Once again, the intellectual virtues approach to education has much to say about providing guidance through the daily intellectual tasks facing students. This guidance by intellectual virtues takes several different forms beyond that of a thinking skill.

Since intellectual virtues involve a deep and enduring motivation to apply relevant thinking skills when appropriate to the context, the guidance provided by intellectual virtues can be over a greater duration and across a greater number of contexts. In terms of duration, since intellectual virtues are deep and enduring traits of character, the guidance they provide is over a greater period. Students equipped with intellectual virtue are more likely to apply their thinking skills to future challenges than students only equipped with intellectual skills, as they have developed the inclination to do so as part of their possession of virtue. In terms of guidance across a range of contexts, since intellectual virtues require a degree of sensitivity to context, they are more able than thinking skills to guide thinking across diverse contexts. This is because thinking skills are often rule bound whilst intellectual virtues are not solely founded in rules, which enables intellectual virtues to be applied across different contexts, even non-propositional contexts such as the performing arts. For example, as a student composes a piece of music for a specific purpose, they can moderate their thinking by asking themselves questions: *Am I being intellectually careful to incorporate the essential elements of this genre? Am I being honest as I compose this piece by ensuring my work is not too similar to other composers? What should I do to improve my composition to ensure my work shows intellectual carefulness and honesty?* As such, intellectual virtues provide guidance for longer periods and across a greater variety of contexts than thinking skills alone.

Intellectual virtues can also provide guidance in deliberation and inquiry as intellectual virtues are thick moral concepts, as described by Williams (1985). A thick moral concept is one which provides both descriptive and normative content, describing a judgement and reason for a judgement. The language of intellectual virtues is 'thick' in that it is not only able to evaluate good thinking; it also directs good thinking. For example, if someone says you were careless, you understand two things immediately: a negative judgement of your inquiry (being wrong) and some direction for improvement (being more careful). This directs future inquiry to explore the breadth and depth of issues more comprehensively. Similarly, if someone calls you closed-minded, you understand the judgement (being wrong) and the direction for improvement

(being more open-minded). When this ‘thick’ language is understood and used by individuals and communities, they can challenge and direct each others’ knowledge pursuits. Therefore, intellectual virtues provide substantial guidance to good thinking.

Virtue constructivism provides greater guidance to thinking than intellectual virtues education in isolation due to its expanded social nature. The guidance by virtue is not solely available in the habits and metacognition of virtuous agents; it is available in the community around them. In other words, the level of guidance in virtue constructivism is expanded from being isolated to within knowers, to being between knowers and their communities. As students learn, they are being guided by their own intellectual virtues and those in the community around them. In a similar way to how social norms can function as types of high-level rules to regulate thinking, intellectual virtues function as these social norms. This function means that collaborative inquiry is regulated and guided by the intellectual virtues present within the group.

The guidance provided by virtue constructivism may be illustrated by explaining how the guidance provided by social constructivism can be enhanced in virtue constructivism. According to social constructivism, students require the guidance of an expert and scaffolding as they operate within a zone of proximal development; a zone in which the challenge is slightly beyond their ability and in which most learning or development occurs (Vygotsky 1962, 1978; O’Donnell 2012). The guidance required by students when the challenge is high in social constructivism is derived from sources largely external to the students, thus making them dependent, at least to some extent, on the experts or scaffolds over time. In contrast, virtue constructivism provides guidance to students both internally, through the working of virtue in their own intellectual deliberations and inquiries, and externally, through their collaboration with others who possess virtue. This means that virtue constructivism may be able to guide and scaffold students functioning in the zone of proximal development to such an extent that they are able to achieve success without, or with less guidance by, an expert, making them less dependent on others over time as their intellectual virtues continue to develop.

The guidance provided by virtue constructivism can function to limit or expand inquiry. It can limit the scope of inquiry as the intellectual virtues of the group function as types of social thought rules or norms which can serve to limit the scope of ideas that can be counted as reasonable or acceptable, likely avoiding relativism. Conversely, virtue constructivism can expand inquiry as the virtues present within the group direct the group’s research in new directions that would not have been considered if the virtues of the group were not functioning together. In summary, virtue constructivism shifts the guidance provided for intellectual tasks from being within individuals to between individuals; it enables a collective level of guidance to be applied to good thinking. Therefore, virtue constructivism provides a greater level of guidance than thinking skills or the intellectual virtues approach in isolation, as it guides students in their intellectual lives both at the level of the individual and at the level of the group.

7. Conclusion

Re-imagine a classroom focused on intellectual virtues. In this classroom, in this type of learning, what is happening at a pedagogical and epistemological level? In this article, I have sought to explore this question and respond to Kotzee *et al.*’s (2021) pedagogical challenge by demonstrating the capacity of intellectual virtues education to ensure growth and guidance to good thinking. Further, by bringing social constructivism into conversation with virtue responsibility in virtue constructivism, I have argued

that a deeper understanding of the intellectual virtues classroom is articulated that provides greater growth in and guidance to good thinking than the intellectual virtues or critical thinking approaches in isolation. In so doing, I have responded to Kotzee *et al.*'s (2021) claim that intellectual virtues education lacks an effective pedagogy by arguing that virtue constructivism ensures greater *growth* and *guidance* to good thinking via intellectual virtues than seeking to develop intellectual virtues or thinking skills in isolation. As such, virtue constructivism has been introduced as a term that captures an integrated understanding of the virtue and social components extant in the intellectual virtues classroom and as a lens through which the epistemology and pedagogy of intellectual virtues education is more perspicuous.¹

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Chris Smith is a secondary school teacher in Sydney and a doctoral student at the University of Tasmania, Australia. His current research interests include epistemology, particularly virtue epistemology, educational theory and practice, and leadership. Chris is convinced that intellectual virtues are necessary and beneficial for learners and leaders in the knowledge society of today.