## Dealing with Disagreement:
## Coming to Terms with the Social Nature of Knowledge

In contemporary networked societies, the controversial nature of knowledge is increasingly in the public eye. When learners go online, they often encounter conflicting knowledge claims about scientific issues, current events, historical events, and more. Sometimes the experts are also in disagreement. Reasonably responding to such disagreements is vital for making wise personal and social decisions. But how can learners make sense of disagreements when their own knowledge of the disputed issues is limited? And how can they reconcile the conflicting perspectives of diverse epistemic authorities? In this talk, we will argue that disagreements in the public sphere are both a pressing educational challenge and a valuable opportunity for developing learners' understanding of the social nature of knowledge, including their own positions as knowers.

First, we will present a framework that addresses how learners make sense of disagreements by understanding the nature and causes of the disagreement, evaluating competing sources and claims and, where possible, resolving the disagreement. We will also present empirical findings for each of these components and some of their reciprocal relations. This analysis can extend to understanding expert disagreement as well as disagreement more broadly. Second, we will discuss recent research efforts to foster learners' competence to reason about disagreements. Drawing on insights from these studies, we will illustrate emergent design principles and scaffolds for promoting productive engagement with disagreements. To conclude, we will present open challenges, such as identifying false controversies and understanding how expert consensus develops despite ongoing uncertainties. Learning to deal with disagreements, we propose, is an opportunity for grasping how knowledge is socially constructed through processes of debate and consensus formation, and how learners can manage their dependence on knowledgeable others in times of uncertainty.

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