

Sense-making Pedagogy: K. Lewin's Field Theory and Vygotsky's Perekhivanie as a Human Existential

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Abstract

Contemporary education is attempting to reform itself by promoting standardization approaches (e.g. global education, 21st century generic skills, OECD's key competencies). This trend forces scholars and practitioners to regard education as a prescription for various problems and challenges. They become to think that education should serve to solve those problems and challenges in the world (e.g. globalization, knowledge-based society) and they degrade education to a lower position than economic and political positions. They are obsessed with the ideas that education is a means of fulfilling something.

Meaning-centered education or sense-making pedagogy explore the counter-tide for an alternative vision of education, where students and instructors engage in open meaning-making processes and self-organizing educational practices. (Kovbasyuk and Blessinger, 2013) This presentation explores a Lewinian-Vygotskian approach to meaning-centered education with special reference to field theory and emotional experience (perekhivanie).

This presentation sheds light on emotional experience (perekhivanie) as a human existential and a personality developmental trigger. Perekhivanie is a process which integrates the relation of person and environment. The author shows a metaphor of a coin. The top of a coin is assumed to be meaning (znachenie) and the back is considered to be sense (smysl), and the coin has a thickness. The very thickness can be perekhivanie. Meaning (znachenie) can be converted and crystalized into personalized sense (smysl) through perekhivanie. In concrete settings of education, the significance of perekhivanie cannot be too emphasized.

Keywords: meaning, sense, Lewin, field theory, Vygotsky, perekhivanie