

Spinoza's Conatus in Sense-making Pedagogy: With Special Reference to the Triad of Epistemology- Ontology-Act Theory

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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. In these processes and practices, external meanings are converted into internal senses (Vygotsky's *vrashvanie*) and these senses are crystalized as power. This power can be equated with Spinoza's conatus (self-striving power). The conatus principle argues that the nature of all finite things is the striving to persevere in being. Conatus turns out to play a significant role in education. It is not an exaggeration to state that the aim of education is to foster conatus in the individual.

This presentation explores a Spinoza-Vygotsky approach to sensemaking pedagogy towards the enrichment of conatus with special reference to the triad of epistemology-ontology-act theory.

Keywords: Spinoza, Vygotsky, Conatus, Sense, Epistemology, Ontology, Act Theory