



Excellence in education: a question of talent and engagement

EUNEC seminar on ‘Excellence in education’

Amsterdam, 21 May 2012

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Agenda

- Developing students' talents
- Higher learning achievements: a limited and risky ideal
- Engagement as a quality of learning processes
- Engagement as a quality of learning results
- Discussion

Talent

Higher
achievements

Engagement as a
quality of learning
processes

Engagement as a
quality of learning
results

Discussion



Talent:

- aptitude
- domain-specific
- can not be learned
- needs to be developed through a.o.
 - stimulating environment
 - personal attributes like perseverance



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Developing talent:

- achieving according to one's abilities
- developing diverse talents
- discovering one's talents



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Higher achievements: a limited and risky ideal



Limited:

Realizing learning achievements is only part of what education is for and what schools do



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Risky

Attention is drawn away from what is not measured by standardized tests and directly expressed in marks

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Risky

One-sided emphasis on subjects that
are considered economically useful
creates uncritical citizens

See also Martha Nussbaum (2010)
'Not for profit'

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Risky

Encourages tactical behaviour of schools, students and parents

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Higher learning achievements: a limited and risky ideal



Limited:

- Realizing learning achievements is only part of what education is for and what schools do

Riskant

- Attention is drawn away from what is not measured by standard tests and directly expressed in marks
- Uncritical citizens
- Encourages tactical behaviour of schools, students and parents
- **Students**
 - who are focused on their own success
 - who experience learning as meaningless



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Student engagement

Aspects of engagement :

(Fredricks, Blumenfeld & Paris, 2004)

- behavioral
 - emotional
 - cognitive
- To be distinguished but not separable
→ Result of interaction between individual and environment
→ can be influences

Two traditions:

- research on engagement with the school as an institution
- research on engagement with school tasks: learning motivation

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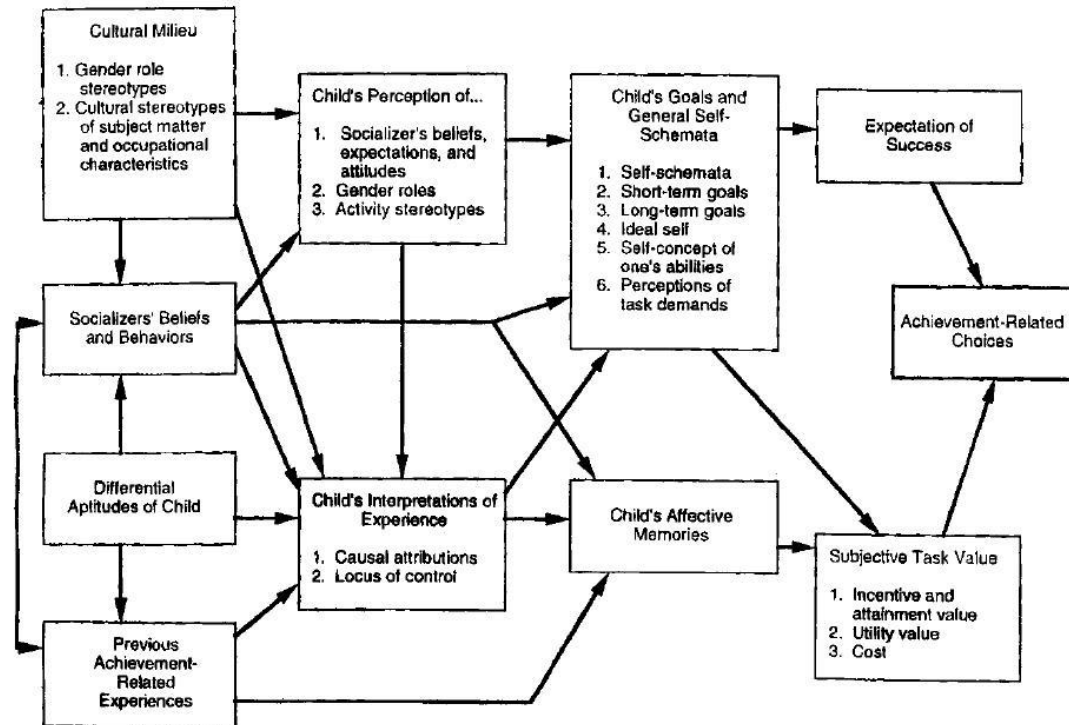


Engagement with the school as an institution





Engagement with school tasks: learning motivation



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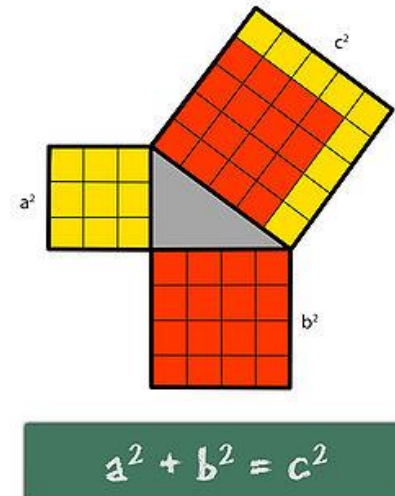
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1. Knowledge and skills as means of dealing with questions



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2. Engagement with subject matter: contributing to answering questions - solving problems



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Intermezzo: sociocultural theory - practices, activities and motives



Individual acquisition of knowledge
and skills → improving one's ability
to participate in social practices

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Intermezzo: sociocultural theory - practices, activities and motives

Jean Lave & Etienne Wenger

Learning = development from 'peripheral' participant to central participant

In activities that are of importance for society

Legitimate peripheral participation



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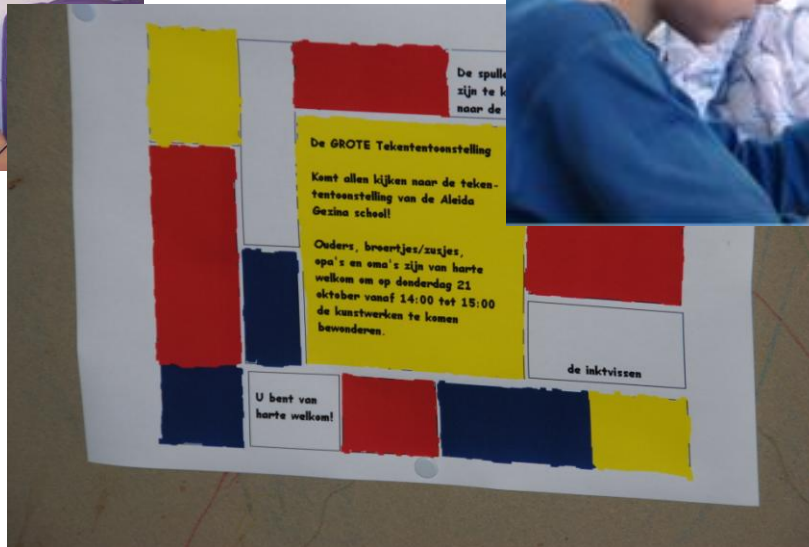
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3. Participation in social practices as a way of learning



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4. You can matter



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Engagement at the top and bottom of the ladder



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Summary

Excellence asks for

- valuing and developing a broad range of talents
- doing this with the quality of engagement
 - engagement as a quality of learning processes
 - engagement as a quality of learning results

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Questions?

Discussion