

An Examination of the Democratic Purposes of Informatics Education

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Abstract

To elucidate the theoretical and practical relevance of informatics education toward democracy would be one of the most urgent research topics today in order to advocate its justifiability as a public and universal matter that has to be addressed by the global society. For example, we have to prepare to answer following questions which might be given from those outside the ICT-education-practitioner-community; why does teaching ICTs have to be given certain priority despite many other social problems, or why is it allowed to be practiced in an official education system which is supported by its government budget? To answer these questions adequately, we have to present logics which prove the connection of informatics education toward some universal value which we have to seek and show its justifiability as a public and universal matter. And we would assert that democracy is the most basic among such values.

In this presentation, we would show an outline of the study that we are planning, which is about the construction of logics that provide a theoretical and practical basis between informatics education and democracy. For the beginning, we put these research questions:

1. How is the purpose of informatics education to be explained from the viewpoint of contributing toward the development of democratic societies?
2. What content should be given priority to learn in informatics education for the purpose?
3. How should we recognize and evaluate the learners' achievement in informatics education to make much account of the purpose?

To answer these questions, we have started a survey about the philosophical basis that justify an execution of a social policy obeying democratic ways of governance, which is mentioned as liberalism. The basic theory which gives a standard of the topic is that presented by John Rawls (2001). Rawls has made clear the difference between the conception of the good held by individuals and the justice as fairness which is to be achieved by society, and argued that "the justice" should be given the priority over "the good" for the sake of liberal society. In response to that, we have attempted to make a classification which divides informatics education for the justice and that for the good, by its purpose and the content.

We also refer to the theory of "the capability approach" presented by Amartya Sen and Martha C. Nussbaum. This approach is concerned with evaluation of a person's advantage in terms of one's actual ability to achieve various valuable functionings (Sen, 1993). The approach focuses firstly on achievement of human wellness to evaluate the realization of democratic society, and the opportunity to receive education is highly regarded. At this moment, we assume that the role of informatics education should be put to provide equal opportunity to acquire the capability of informatics.

Reference

- Rawls, J. (2001). *Justice As Fairness: A Restatement*. Belknap Press of Harvard University Press.
- Sen, Amartya. (1993). *Capability and Well-being*. In Sen and Nussbaum (Eds.), *The Quality of Life* (p.30), New York, the United States: Oxford University Press.

Keywords

Informatics education, purpose of education, democracy, justice as fairness, capability

Biography [Heading 2]



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