

Review Article

Experience as Concept: The Power of Nominalization in Meaning-Making

Maryna Tsehelska^{1*} and Olena Iliencko²

¹Kryvyi Rih State Pedagogical University, 50000, Ukraine.

²O.M. Beketov National University of Urban Economy in Kharkiv, 61002, Ukraine.

Corresponding Author: Maryna Tsehelska Kryvyi Rih State Pedagogical University, 50000, Ukraine.

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Abstract

Philosophical discourse often treats abstract concepts such as responsibility, resilience, or meaning as products of advanced theoretical reflection. However, less attention has been given to how such concepts emerge from everyday human experience. This paper addresses this gap by examining nominalization—the linguistic process of turning actions into entities—as a cognitive mechanism that enables the transformation of lived experience into philosophical meaning. By analyzing the first of six conceptual maps, this study demonstrates how the "Activity Loop" (action) is distilled into "Human Needs" (concepts). This transition represents the "Realistic Reflection" at the heart of human development: the ability to move from the concrete doing to the philosophical being. The study proposes that philosophical literacy develops through language-mediated abstraction embedded in social and educational practices.

Keywords: Nominalization, Metacognition, Human Needs, Philosophical Education, Reflective Practice

1. Introduction

Philosophy has traditionally been associated with abstract reasoning, systematic theorizing, and formal intellectual traditions. Concepts such as responsibility, resilience, justice, or meaning are often treated as outcomes of advanced philosophical reflection rather than as products of ordinary human cognition. Yet developments in the philosophy of language, cognitive linguistics, and educational theory increasingly suggest that abstract philosophical thinking does not arise exclusively within academic discourse. It may also emerge from everyday linguistic and cognitive practices through which individuals interpret and reorganize their lived experience. Human beings continuously structure experience through language. Actions, interactions, emotions, and events are not merely perceived; they are named, categorized, evaluated, and stabilized in discourse. Over time, repeated experiences are transformed into generalized conceptual categories that enable reflection beyond the immediate situation. A central linguistic mechanism supporting this transformation is nominalization—the process by which dynamic processes (to decide, to act, to cooperate, to struggle) are re-conceptualized as abstract entities (decision, action, cooperation, struggle).

While functional linguistics has largely examined nominalization as a grammatical resource that increases lexical density and supports academic discourse, its broader cognitive and philosophical significance remains insufficiently explored. Nominalization does more than

condense information: it stabilizes transient processes into conceptual objects that can be analyzed, evaluated, and integrated into moral and existential frameworks. This paper proposes that nominalization functions as a cognitive bridge between lived experience and philosophical meaning-making. Through the linguistic reification of processes, individuals move from situational engagement to generalized conceptual knowledge, enabling reflection on ethical, social, and existential dimensions of reality. In this sense, nominalization is not merely a formal grammatical transformation but a mechanism of concept formation and philosophical abstraction.

The study integrates perspectives from philosophy of language, theories of concept formation, and systemic-functional linguistics with reflective analysis of metacognitive conceptual mapping used in bilingual educational contexts. Particular attention is given to how structured conceptual mapping scaffolds progressive abstraction across key experiential domains of human life. It is argued that philosophical thinking develops through gradual abstraction within six core experiential domains that organize everyday meaning-making. These domains represent recurrent areas of lived experience in which individuals repeatedly transform concrete actions and situations into stabilized conceptual and philosophical categories.

2. Nominalization as a Bridge Between Experience and Conceptual Meaning

Nominalization enables individuals to transform temporally bound actions into stable conceptual objects of thought. Actions such as *to help*, *to struggle*, or *to choose* unfold in time; they are embedded in concrete situations and interpersonal contexts. When these processes are reconfigured as *help*, *struggle*, or *choice*, they become linguistically stabilized entities. This transformation allows experiences to be categorized, compared, evaluated, remembered, and shared within broader social and cultural systems of meaning. Through repeated acts of linguistic abstraction, individuals construct conceptual networks that extend beyond immediate experience. What was once a situational event becomes a recognizable pattern. What was once personal becomes communicable. In this way, nominalization does not merely rename experience it reorganizes it into conceptual form.

2.1. From Procedural to Conceptual Knowledge

From a cognitive perspective, nominalization supports the transition from procedural knowledge (*knowing how something happens*) toward conceptual knowledge (*understanding what something represents*). Procedural knowledge is grounded in participation and repetition: one helps, decides, cooperates, fails, tries again. Conceptual knowledge emerges when these repeated processes are linguistically stabilized and treated as categories. This transition enables individuals to move from describing events to interpreting their significance. For example, repeated experiences of helping others may gradually be conceptualized as *kindness*, *responsibility*, or *solidarity*. At this point, the focus shifts from isolated actions to stable traits, values, or norms. The individual is no longer merely performing actions but recognizing patterns that can be evaluated and internalized. Nominalization thus functions as a cognitive compression mechanism: it condenses multiple instances of experience into a single abstract label. This label, in turn, becomes available for reflection, comparison, and ethical judgment.

2.2. Conceptual Stabilization and Philosophical Reflection

From a philosophical perspective, nominalization enables experience to become thinkable at a higher level of abstraction. Dynamic processes are transformed into conceptual entities that can enter systems of reasoning. Once *to act responsibly* becomes *responsibility*, it can be debated, defined, institutionalized, or problematized.

➤ By Converting Actions into Entities, Language Makes it Possible to:

- Identify recurring patterns of behavior
- Evaluate moral consequences
- Compare alternative courses of action
- Construct shared value systems

In this sense, nominalization supports ontological stabilization: fleeting experiences acquire conceptual

endurance. They become part of a structured moral and existential vocabulary through which individuals interpret themselves and others. Philosophical meaning, therefore, does not originate solely in abstract theorizing. It emerges when lived experience is linguistically reorganized into conceptual categories that allow reflective distance. Nominalization provides precisely this distance: it separates the thinker from the immediate flow of action and creates space for interpretation.

2.3. Nominalization as a Mechanism of Philosophical Literacy

While systemic-functional linguistics traditionally treats nominalization as a resource for textual condensation and academic abstraction, the present study approaches it primarily as a cognitive and philosophical mechanism. Within this framework, nominalization enables individuals to conceptualize lived experience as part of broader moral, social, and existential structures. Philosophical literacy, in this view, is not merely familiarity with philosophical doctrines. It is the capacity to transform experience into conceptual meaning. Nominalization is one of the key linguistic tools that makes this transformation possible. By stabilizing experience into conceptual form, it creates the conditions under which reflection, evaluation, and philosophical inquiry can occur.

3. Literature Review

3.1. Language as Action and World-Structuring Practice

Philosophical meaning does not emerge in isolation from language. Within the philosophy of language, speech is understood not merely as description but as action. Demonstrated that utterances perform acts: they promise, declare, commit, and institutionalize realities [1,2]. Language, therefore, functions as a world-structuring mechanism rather than a neutral representational system. From a socio-semiotic perspective, conceptualized language as a resource for meaning-making embedded in social practices. Meaning is not an abstract system detached from life; it is shaped within interaction and institutionalized through discourse [3]. This aligns with discourse-analytic traditions that show how linguistic forms stabilize particular ways of interpreting reality [4-6]. Together, these perspectives support the view that abstraction is not merely a cognitive event but a socially mediated linguistic practice.

3.2. Concept Formation and Grounded Cognition

The transformation from lived experience to abstract concept has been extensively explored in cognitive and developmental theory. Argued that higher psychological functions emerge through language-mediated internalization [7]. Words reorganize experience; naming transforms perception into conceptual thought. Similarly, Demonstrated that shared intentionality and symbolic communication enable humans to construct culturally stabilized meanings [8]. Concepts are not isolated mental representations but socially distributed achievements. From a grounded cognition perspective, proposed that abstract concepts remain rooted in embodied simulations of experience [9]. Abstraction does not detach

from experience; it reconfigures it at a higher level of symbolic compression. These frameworks collectively suggest that concept formation depends on repetition, pattern recognition, and linguistic stabilization—processes central to the present study.

3.3. Nominalization and Grammatical Metaphor

Within systemic-functional linguistics, nominalization has been treated primarily as a resource for textual condensation and academic abstraction. M. A. K. Halliday and Christian M. I. M. Matthiessen (2014) describe nominalization as a form of grammatical metaphor whereby processes (e.g., to decide) become entities (decision). This shift increases lexical density and supports the construction of disciplinary knowledge. However, while traditional accounts emphasize discourse function, recent educational applications suggest that nominalization also plays a cognitive-developmental role in learners' meaning-making [10,11]. When actions are reified into conceptual nouns, experience becomes stable, discussable, and evaluable. Thus, nominalization may be interpreted not only as textual condensation but as ontological stabilization of experience: it allows transient processes to become conceptual objects within thought.

3.4. Multimodality and Conceptual Mapping

Meaning formation increasingly extends beyond verbal language. Multimodal research demonstrates that conceptual abstraction operates across linguistic, visual, and schematic modes [12-15]. Metacognitive mapping techniques show that conceptual stabilization can be scaffolded visually through recursive schematization [10]. Such mapping practices externalize cognitive processes, making the transition from procedural knowledge to conceptual abstraction observable and pedagogically manageable. This multimodal dimension is central to the present study, which analyzes a conceptual map as both linguistic and visual evidence of abstraction in action.

4. Methodology

4.1. Research Design

This study employs a qualitative conceptual-analytic design situated at the intersection of systemic-functional linguistics, discourse analysis, and cognitive theory. The objective is not to measure frequency of nominalizations statistically but to examine how nominalization functions as a cognitive mechanism in the transformation of lived experience into philosophical meaning. The empirical focus is the first of six conceptual maps, titled the "Activity Loop," which models the progression from concrete action to abstract categories of human needs. The map is treated as a multimodal artifact combining linguistic units (verbs, nominalizations, evaluative nouns) with schematic organization.

4.2. Data

The primary data consist of:

1. The conceptual maps representing the "Activity Loop."
2. Linguistic units embedded in the map, particularly:
 - Verbal process forms (e.g., *to act, to choose, to help*).
 - Nominalized forms (e.g., *action, choice, help, responsibility*).

- Abstract evaluative categories (e.g., *need, value, meaning*).

The selection is theoretically motivated: the map exemplifies a transition from procedural knowledge (doing) to conceptual knowledge (being).

4.3. Analytical Framework

➤ The Analysis Proceeds in Three Stages:

• Stage 1: Functional-Linguistic Analysis

Using systemic-functional principles, instances of nominalization are identified and categorized as grammatical metaphors [16]. The shift from process to entity is examined in terms of metafunctional reconfiguration (ideational and textual).

• Stage 2: Cognitive-Developmental Interpretation

The analysis interprets nominalization as stabilization through naming [7,9]. Recurrent experiential patterns are traced to demonstrate how repetition and pattern recognition produce conceptual condensation.

• Stage 3: Discursive-Philosophical Interpretation

Using discourse-analytic approaches, the stabilized nominal forms are examined as carriers of evaluative and normative meaning [4,6]. At this stage, abstract categories such as *responsibility* or *need* are interpreted as philosophically interpretable constructs emerging from ordinary activity.

4.4. Validity and Theoretical Coherence

The study ensures theoretical triangulation by integrating:

- Speech act theory
- Socio-semiotic linguistics
- Cognitive-developmental theory
- Grounded cognition
- Multimodal discourse analysis

Rather than privileging a single disciplinary lens, the methodology positions nominalization at the intersection of language, cognition, and social practice [1-3,7-9,13].

4.5. Methodological Claim

The central methodological claim of this study is that nominalization can be empirically observed as a transitional mechanism between:

- Procedural repetition (experience),
- Linguistic stabilization (concept formation), and
- Philosophical interpretability (meaning attribution).

By analyzing how the "Activity Loop" map converts actions into conceptual entities, this study demonstrates that philosophical literacy does not originate exclusively in theoretical discourse but emerges through everyday language-mediated abstraction.

5. Methodology: Mapping the Metacognitive Landscape

This study employs a Phenomenological-Linguistic framework. We look at the "Life-World" (*Lebenswelt*) through the lens of functional linguistics. The maps presented are used as tools for "Realistic Reflection," allowing individuals to visualize their internal motivations as structured categories.

5.1. Map 1: The Hierarchy of Existential Distillation

The first conceptual map functions as the foundational empirical model of this study. It visualizes how nominalization transforms kinetic activity into stabilized

existential categories. The map models the transition from situational engagement to abstract philosophical orientation through a recursive reflective structure.

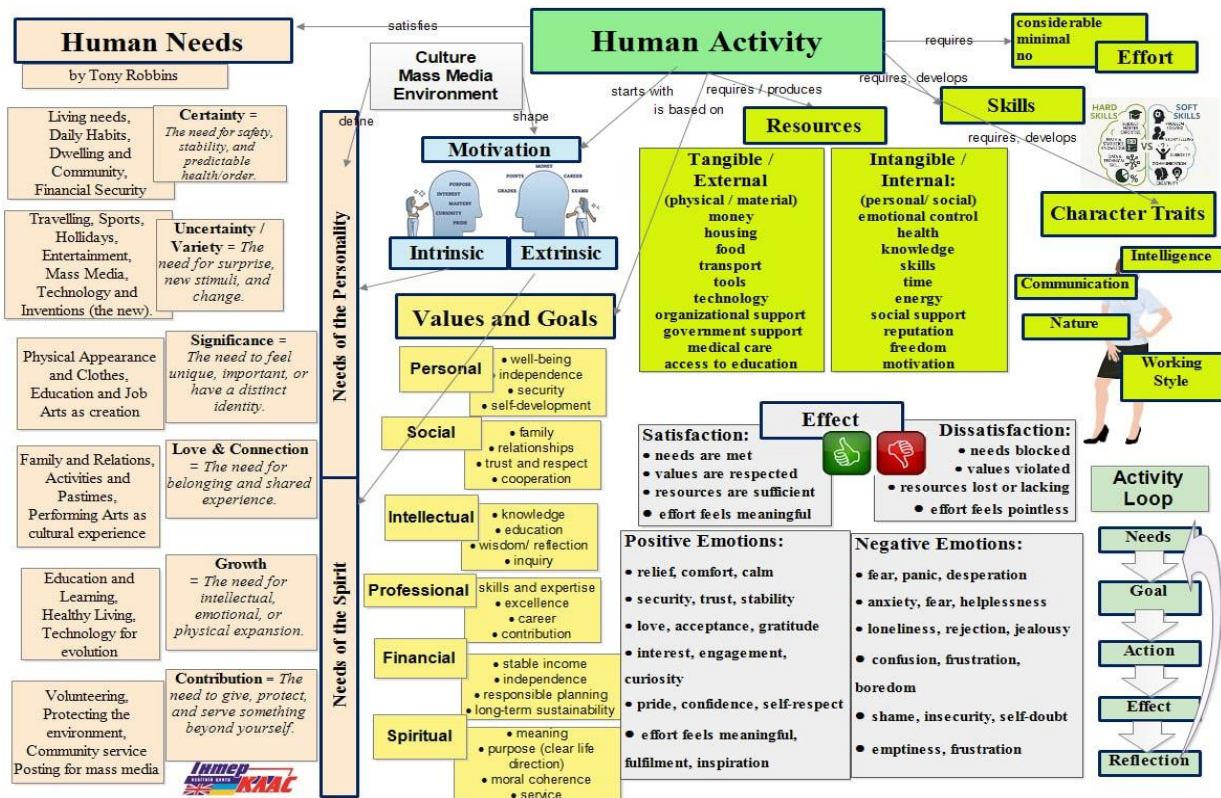


Figure: Map 1 Theoretical Analysis: The Hierarchy of Existential Distillation
The Activity Loop as Existential Engine.

At the center of the map lies the Activity Loop, composed of five interconnected stages:
Need → Goal → Action → Effect → Reflection

This loop represents the minimal structure of human engagement with reality. A perceived lack generates orientation (need), which becomes intentional direction (goal), enacted behavior (action), and observable consequence (effect). However, philosophical meaning does not arise during action itself. It emerges at the stage of **reflection**, when the individual interprets outcomes and evaluates them emotionally and cognitively.

It is at this reflective point that nominalization performs its central function. Temporally bound events are stabilized into conceptual categories. Repeated successful outcomes may be condensed into *confidence* or *competence*; repeated frustration may stabilize as *insecurity* or *disappointment*. Through this process, experience becomes conceptually organized. This reflective stabilization constitutes what may be termed **existential distillation**: the condensation of dynamic experience into enduring conceptual orientations.

5.1.1. Dual Structure of Aspirational Organization

Map 1 further demonstrates that reflective abstraction organizes human aspiration into two interrelated domains.

➤ Needs of the Personality

- This domain includes nominalized consolidations of survival and social impulses:
- Certainty
- Variety
- Significance
- Love / Connection
- These categories represent stabilized interpretations of recurring affective and relational experiences. At this level, abstraction supports identity, predictability, and belonging.

➤ Needs of the Spirit

A second level emerges when foundational patterns achieve relative stabilization. Reflection extends beyond maintenance toward transcendence.

- Growth
- Contribution

These categories are not immediate impulses but longitudinal abstractions across multiple activity cycles. They reorganize action toward expansion and service rather than mere stability. The hierarchy therefore suggests a philosophical progression from stabilization to transcendence.

➤ **Resources as Preconditions of Abstraction**

A distinctive contribution of this map is its integration of material and psychological preconditions. It distinguishes between:

- Tangible resources (housing, food, financial means)
- Intangible resources (knowledge, time, energy, skills, emotional regulation, character)

This distinction underscores that higher-order abstraction presupposes sufficient stabilization of foundational conditions. Philosophical aspiration is scaffolded upon embodied reality.

➤ **Emotional Feedback as Reflective Data**

Finally, the model conceptualizes emotion as feedback within the Activity Loop. Positive emotions signal alignment between needs and outcomes; negative emotions indicate disruption or blockage.

Philosophical literacy, in this framework, consists in the ability to interpret emotions as structured data. When emotional experiences are nominalized—threatened certainty, frustrated growth, unmet recognition—they become cognitively organized and available for reflective evaluation.

➤ **Analytical Significance**

Map 1 demonstrates that philosophical categories do not originate as detached theoretical constructs. They emerge through repeated cycles of action and reflective naming. Nominalization functions as the cognitive mechanism that stabilizes lived experience into existential orientation.

This first domain therefore establishes the foundational movement of the study: from activity to abstraction, from doing to being.

5.2. The Taxonomy of Interpersonal Proximity: Nominalizing the Social World

The second experiential domain extends the movement from internal existential organization (Map 1) toward the interpersonal sphere, where philosophical meaning emerges through structured reflection on human connection. If the first map modeled the stabilization of individual aspiration through the Activity Loop, Map 2 shifts attention to the relational field in which identity and value are negotiated socially. This map introduces a taxonomy of interpersonal proximity, demonstrating how fluid and often ambiguous social encounters become stabilized into conceptual categories through nominalization. In doing so, it shows that relationships are not merely lived—they are cognitively organized through linguistic abstraction.

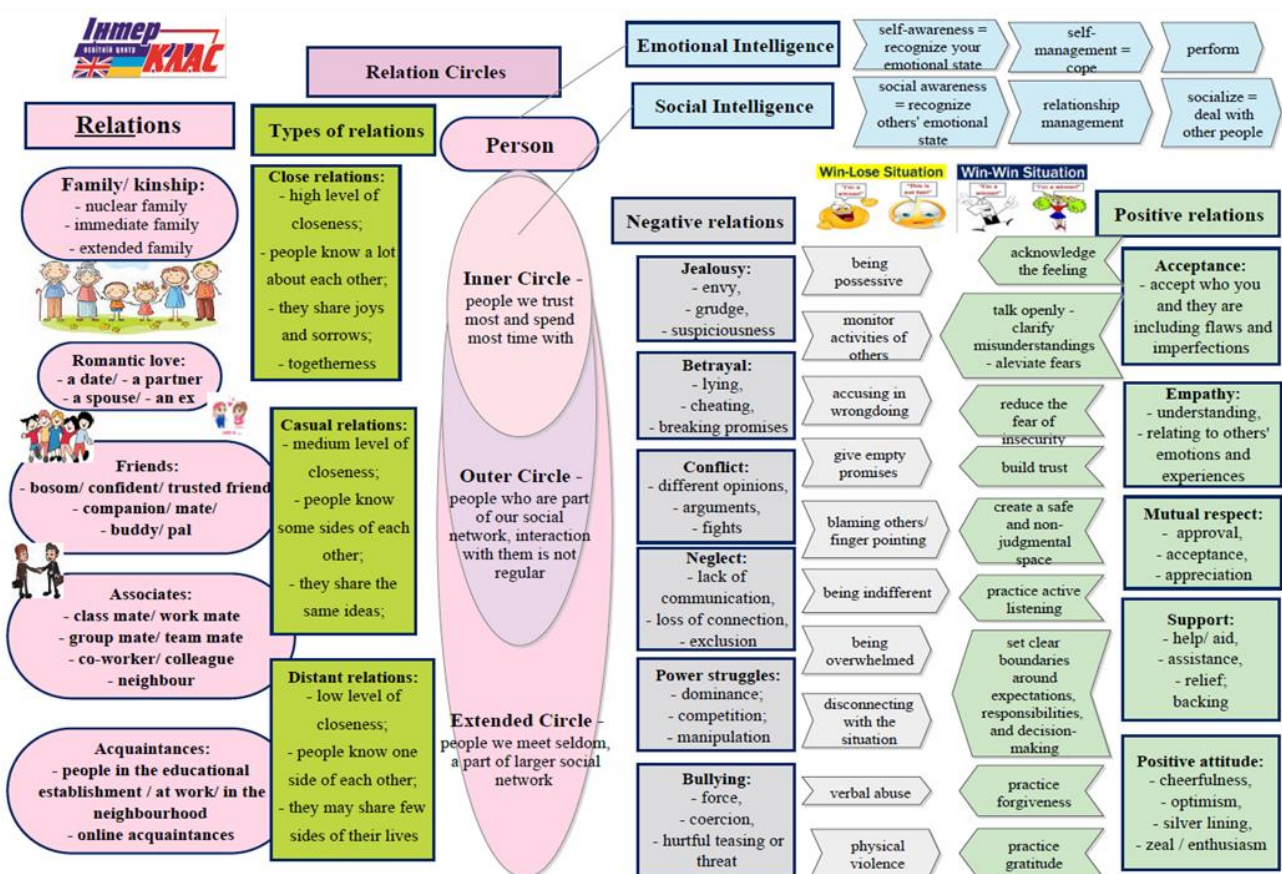


Figure: Map 2. The Taxonomy of Interpersonal Proximity: Nominalizing the Social World Relational Circles as Conceptual Stabilization

At the center of Map 2 lies the construct of **Relation Circles**, which organizes human interaction into three concentric spheres:

1. Inner Circle
2. Outer Circle
3. Extended Circle

Each circle represents a distinct level of interpersonal proximity, emotional investment, and mutual knowledge.

➤ Inner Circle

The Inner Circle includes close relations characterized by intimacy, shared vulnerability, and emotional reciprocity. In this sphere, lived experiences of support, conflict, reconciliation, and attachment become stabilized through nominalized categories such as trust, loyalty, devotion, and solidarity. Here, philosophical questions of identity and belonging emerge: the self is partly constituted through deep relational bonds. Nominalization enables the transformation of repeated relational acts (to support, to protect, to forgive) into enduring relational virtues.

➤ Outer Circle

The Outer Circle represents moderate proximity structured by shared contexts—professional, educational, or communal. Interaction is organized around roles and responsibilities rather than intimacy. Nominalized concepts such as cooperation, respect, professionalism, and accountability stabilize this sphere. Reflection at this level reveals that identity is not fixed but relational and context-dependent. Social roles become conceptual entities that structure behavior and expectation.

➤ Extended Circle

The Extended Circle includes distant or functional contacts. Interaction is limited, episodic, and bounded. Conceptual categories such as formality, distance, and neutrality stabilize these interactions. At this level, the self defines its boundaries against a broader social environment, demonstrating that proximity is not merely emotional but structurally organized. Through this three-tiered taxonomy, the diffuse experience of “knowing someone” becomes conceptually stratified. Nominalization functions as a tool of relational clarification, enabling distinctions in degrees of closeness, responsibility, and vulnerability.

5.2.1 Emotional Literacy as Reflective Mediation

A central dimension of Map 2 is its treatment of emotional experience as structured feedback within interpersonal systems. Social friction—jealousy, exclusion, power struggle, misunderstanding—remains chaotic until linguistically stabilized.

The map integrates four pillars of emotional intelligence:

- Self awareness
- Social awareness
- Self-management
- Relationship management

These categories function as mediating structures between reaction and reflection. Immediate emotional responses (e.g., anger, hurt, resentment) become conceptually reorganized through nominalization into more analytically precise categories such as insecurity, fear of exclusion, or threatened recognition. In this process, emotion shifts from impulse to data. The learner moves from reactive participation to interpretive agency. Similarly, relational disturbances are reframed through abstract concepts such as acceptance, empathy, boundary-setting, active listening, and mutual respect. These nominalized forms transform conflict from personal confrontation into analyzable relational imbalance. Thus, the transition from a reactive Win-Lose orientation toward a reflective Win-Win orientation becomes a process of conceptual restructuring.

5.2.2. The Nominalization of Social Agency

Map 2 ultimately demonstrates that social life is cognitively constructed rather than merely instinctive. By naming emotional states—optimism, resentment, suspicion, gratitude—individuals acquire the linguistic instruments necessary to regulate interpersonal dynamics within the broader Activity Loop introduced in Map 1. Philosophical maturity, within this domain, is defined as the ability to shift from situational overwhelm to reflective coherence. Instead of being governed by immediate reaction, the individual interprets social events through stabilized conceptual categories. Abstract moral constructs such as forgiveness, fairness, integrity, and gratitude emerge not as externally imposed prescriptions but as condensed interpretations of repeated relational experience. The Taxonomy of Interpersonal Proximity demonstrates that harmony is not accidental but constructed through deliberate acts of reflective naming. Nominalization transforms fluctuating social encounters into structured layers of proximity and responsibility. Through this domain, the study extends its central claim: philosophical meaning does not originate solely in theoretical abstraction but in the stabilization of lived relational experience. Naming becomes an act of social agency. The movement from concrete social friction to abstract relational harmony is therefore neither automatic nor purely emotional. It is a structured process of linguistic and philosophical distillation.

5.3 The Structural Dialectics of Knowledge Acquisition: Education as Existential Formation

The third experiential domain shifts from interpersonal organization toward the institutional and cognitive structures that shape human development. Map 3 conceptualizes education as a structured process of existential transformation, in which learning is progressively nominalized into stable competencies and identity traits. Where Map 1 modeled existential motivation and Map 2 relational proximity, Map 3 situates philosophical development within organized systems of knowledge acquisition. Learning is presented not as accidental accumulation, but as a dialectical process involving structure, effort, and retention.

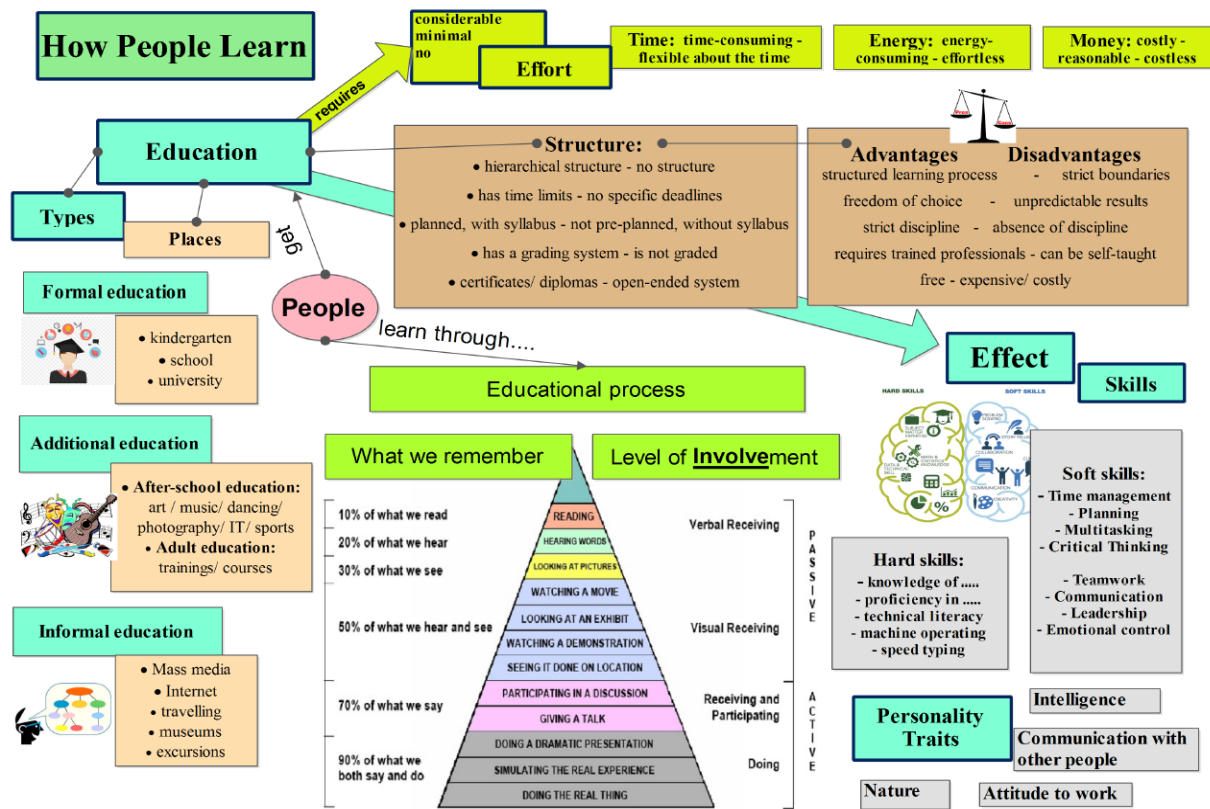


Figure: Map 3. Knowledge Acquisition

5.3.1. Education as a Nominalized Institution

The map distinguishes three forms of education:

- Formal education
- Additional (non-formal) education
- Informal education

Formal education is structured by curricula, evaluation, certification, and standardization—each itself a nominalized category that transforms the fluid act of learning into institutional reality. Additional education mediates between structure and flexibility, while informal education emphasizes autonomy and self-direction. The shift from “learning” to “education” exemplifies nominalization at the societal level: continuous activity becomes stabilized as an institution embedded in systems of validation and expectation.

5.3.2. From Action to Competence

At the center of Map 3 lies the Educational Process, which mediates the transformation from individuals into skilled agents. The model contrasts passive engagement (reading, listening) with active engagement (discussing, practicing, simulating, teaching). Through nominalization, verbs such as reading or practicing become measurable categories of involvement, while repeated action stabilizes into abstract outcomes such as competence, mastery, and proficiency. The philosophical implication is clear: understanding is proportional to participation. Abstraction does not precede action; it emerges from embodied engagement.

5.3.3. Effort, Resources, and Existential Cost

Map 3 explicitly acknowledges the material and psychological investments required for growth: time, energy, and money. These function as existential inputs within the broader Activity Loop. Intellectual development is therefore not purely inspirational but resource-dependent. This recognition introduces a philosophical realism: knowledge formation has a cost. Growth presupposes sustained allocation of limited resources.

5.3.4. Discipline and Freedom

A structural tension runs through the map: institutional discipline versus individual autonomy. Formal systems provide accountability and certification but may restrict flexibility; informal learning offers freedom but risks fragmentation. This dialectic reveals that intellectual formation requires balance. Structure enables stabilization; autonomy enables exploration. Both are necessary for mature development.

5.3.5. The Distillation of the Professional Self

Ultimately, the educational process culminates in the stabilization of repeated action into identity.

- Repeated practice becomes proficiency.
- Group participation becomes collaboration or leadership.
- Managing difficulty becomes resilience or discipline.

Education thus completes another cycle of existential distillation: activity is transformed into trait, and effort into character. Knowledge becomes embodied competence. Map

3 demonstrates that education is not merely preparatory but formative. It is a structured environment in which lived effort is stabilized into durable capacities. Nominalization operates here at multiple levels: learning becomes education, action becomes competence, participation becomes identity. Through this process, intellectual growth becomes philosophically interpretable as a dialectic between structure and freedom, investment and transformation.

5.4 Skills for Life and Cognitive Mindsets: From Acquisition to Competence

If Map 3 conceptualized education as structured formation,

Map 4 marks a decisive epistemological shift: the movement from knowledge acquisition to functional competence. The question is no longer how learning is organized, but how learning becomes operational. Across the previous maps, experience moved from need and reflection (Map 1), to relational organization (Map 2), to institutional formation (Map 3). Map 4 synthesizes these domains by showing how repeated action, structured education, and social interaction stabilize into Skills for Life. Here, nominalization transforms knowledge into instruments of self-governance.

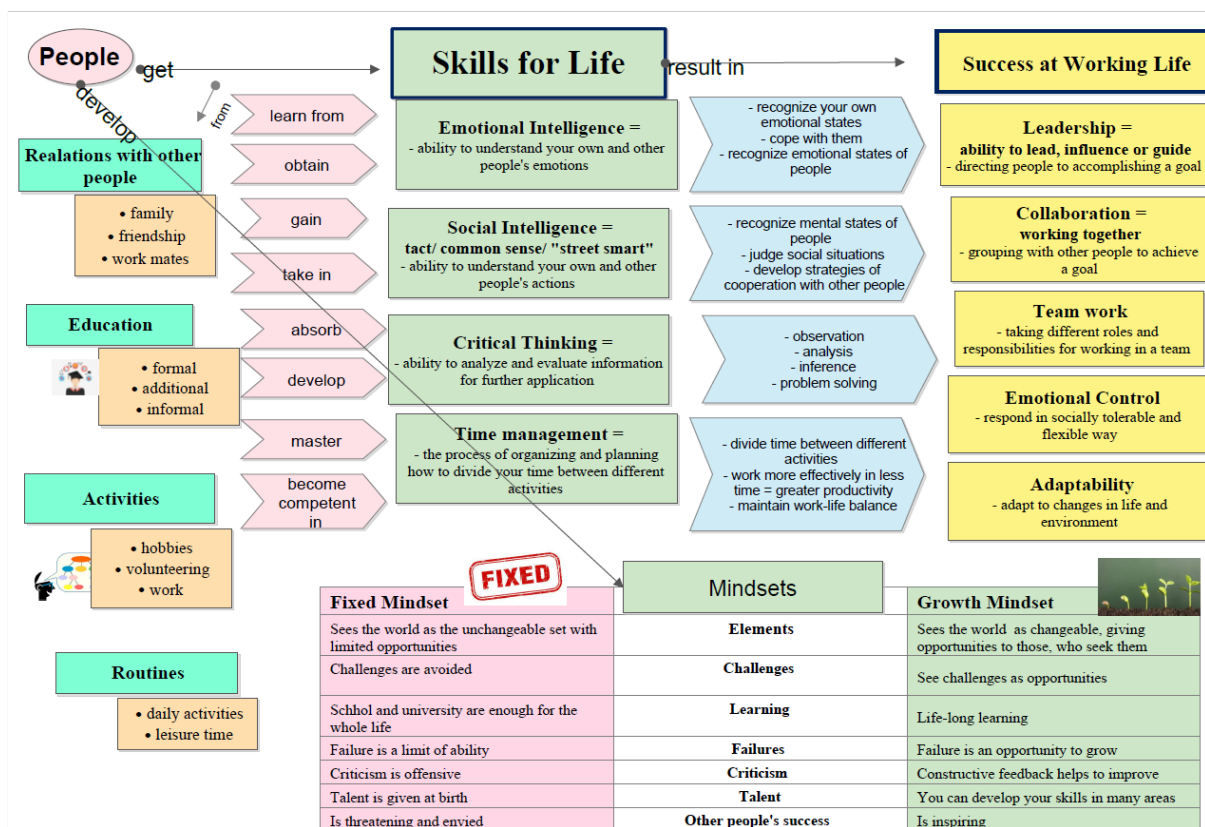


Figure: Map 4. Skills for Life

5.4.1. From Absorption to Competence

Development is modeled as a progression: absorption → mastery → competence.

What begins as participation gradually becomes capability. Discussion becomes communication skill; repeated analysis becomes critical thinking; sustained cooperation becomes teamwork competence. Through nominalization, verbs such as to analyze, to manage, or to adapt solidify into durable capacities. The epistemological implication is central to the study: knowledge is not informational possession but embodied ability. Action stabilizes into identity.

5.4.2. Mindsets as Interpretative Structures

A core philosophical dimension of Map 4 lies in its distinction between two cognitive orientations:

- **Fixed mindset:** ability is treated as static and limited.
- **Growth mindset:** ability is understood as developable through effort and reflection.

The difference is ontological. In one case, failure is nominalized as incapacity; in the other, as feedback. The way experience is categorized determines the horizon of possible development. Thus, language does not merely describe performance—it frames potential. The naming of experience regulates future engagement.

5.4.3. Competence as Structured Self-Governance

Map 4 operationalizes key life competencies—critical thinking, emotional intelligence, time management, leadership, adaptability—not as abstract ideals but as stabilized outcomes of repeated practice.

- Time becomes a managed resource.
- Emotion becomes regulated response.
- Cooperation becomes structured collaboration.

In each case, nominalization condenses process into capacity.

Everyday actions accumulate into coherent professional identity.

5.4.4. Growth as Recursive Stabilization

The synthesis of Map 4 identifies the growth mindset as a precondition for ongoing development. Without interpreting experience as expandable, stabilization halts. With it, the Activity Loop reactivates at a higher level: reflection shapes mindset, and mindset shapes future action.

Competence is therefore not a final state but a dynamic equilibrium between environment, effort, and interpretation.

5.4.5. Structural Continuity

If Map 3 demonstrated how institutional systems shape knowledge, Map 4 demonstrates how individuals internalize and operationalize that knowledge.

➤ **The trajectory across the four domains now becomes visible:**

- Experience generates reflection.
- Reflection stabilizes into relational and institutional forms.

- Institutional learning consolidates into competence.

Nominalization functions throughout as the mechanism of existential distillation—transforming action into skill, skill into mindset, and mindset into identity.

5.5 Adventures, Risks, and Psychological Resilience: The Nominalization of Uncertainty

If Map 4 demonstrated how competence stabilizes within structured environments, Map 5 examines what happens when structure is deliberately suspended. This domain moves to the boundary conditions of experience—situations of risk, instability, and uncertainty—and asks how exposure to the unknown becomes a mechanism of existential formation. Across the previous maps, action became reflection, reflection became education, and education became competence. Map 5 tests these stabilized capacities under pressure. It shows how uncertainty itself can be transformed—through nominalization—into resilience.

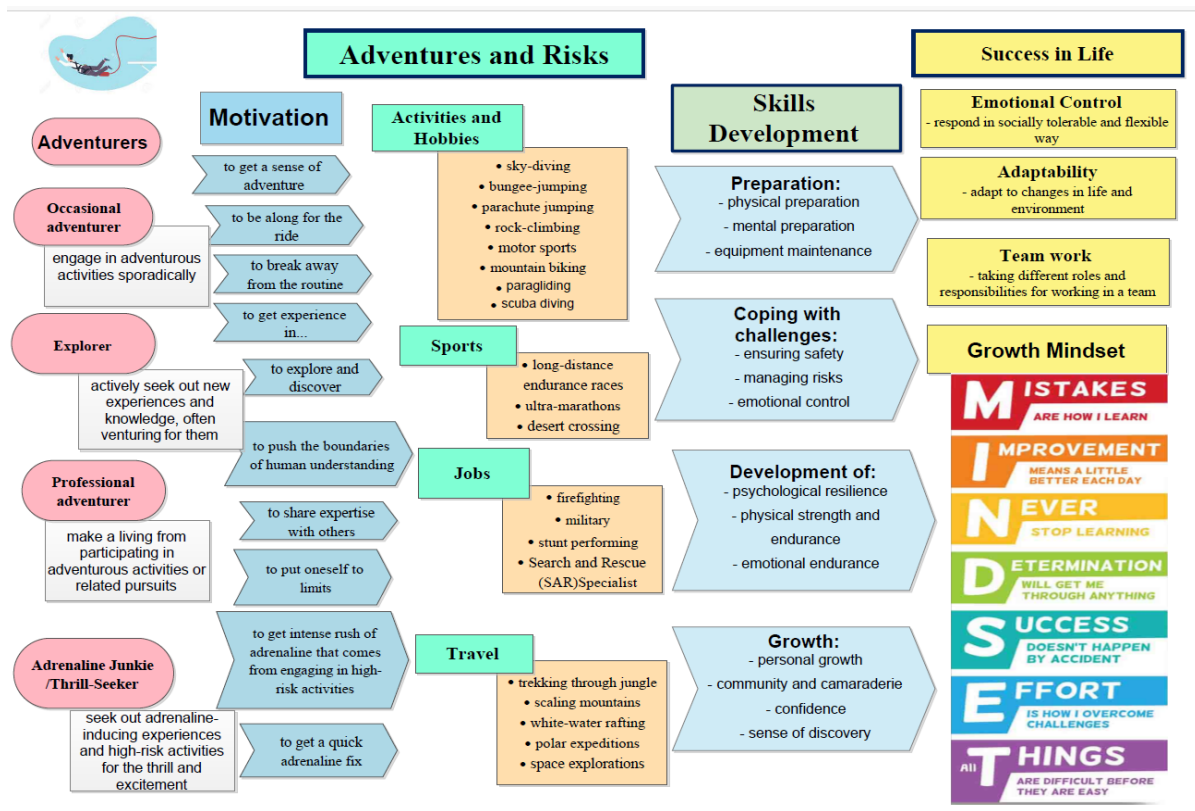


Figure: Map 5. Adventures and Risks

5.5.1. Risk as Structured Engagement with the Unknown

The map distinguishes varying orientations toward risk: occasional adventurers, professional risk-takers, and explorers whose identities center on boundary expansion. In each case, verbs such as to explore or to take risks become identity categories—Explorer, risk-taker, challenger. Physiological reactions—fear, adrenaline, tension—are not treated as raw impulses but are cognitively reframed as challenge, discovery, or self-testing. Through reflection, the

“adrenaline rush” becomes evidence of confronting limits. Risk is thus reinterpreted as a structured relationship with uncertainty. This marks another stage of nominalization: instability becomes growth potential.

5.5.2. Preparation and the Formation of Resilience

Unlike impulsivity, meaningful risk presupposes discipline. The map outlines a progression:

- **Preparation** (training, readiness, control)

- **Coping under pressure** (risk assessment, emotional regulation)
- **Resilience** (stabilized endurance through repeated exposure)

Here again, process becomes capacity. To prepare becomes readiness; to remain calm becomes emotional control; repeated confrontation with difficulty becomes resilience.

Importantly, this logic extends beyond extreme activities to professions structured around risk. In such contexts, resilience is not optional—it is socially necessary. Competence developed in earlier domains is intensified and tested.

5.5.3. Uncertainty as Existential Pedagogy

Map 5 radicalizes the growth mindset introduced in Map 4. Under stable conditions, adaptability and critical thinking remain abstract capacities. Under extreme conditions, they determine survival and ethical action. The Activity Loop

reaches its limit: goals encounter danger; action generates unpredictable outcomes, and reflection determines interpretation. Whether an event becomes trauma or growth depends on how it is named. Mistake can become failure—or lesson. Difficulty can become threat—or challenge. Thus, uncertainty itself becomes pedagogical. Risk is transformed from chaos into structured development.

5.6. Life Balance and Existential Harmony: The Geometry of the Self

The sixth and final domain addresses the question that emerges from all previous maps: how can the multiplicity of human engagements be integrated into a coherent whole?

If Map 5 tested competence under conditions of uncertainty, Map 6 turns toward integration. It conceptualizes **Life Balance** as the geometry of the self—a structured configuration of interrelated existential spheres.



Figure: Map 6. Life Balance

Nominalization reaches its most comprehensive form here. The self is no longer treated as an isolated subject, but as a central node within a network of stabilized domains:

- Family
- Friends
- Health
- Personal Development
- Career

- Finance
- Spiritual Life
- Social Life

Activities such as working, studying, exercising, reflecting, and earning are organized into enduring categories of responsibility and value. The Activity Loop introduced in Map 1 is now reframed holistically: every action affects the equilibrium among these spheres.

➤ Typologies of Existential Orientation

Map 6 proposes a typology of life strategies:

- The **Harmonizer** seeks relative equilibrium across domains. Balance becomes stability and integration.
- **The Prioritizer** intentionally concentrates energy on selected spheres at particular stages. Focus becomes strategic investment.
- **The Specialist** channels resources into one dominant domain, often achieving excellence but risking imbalance.
- **The Neglector** lacks reflective structure, resulting in fragmentation and stagnation.
- This typology demonstrates how patterns of attention stabilize into identity. Repeated choices become orientations toward life as a whole.

➤ Agency and Structured Self-Regulation

Life balance is not passive equilibrium but ongoing regulation. Daily verbs—*to plan, to rest, to maintain health, to sustain relationships*—are nominalized into self-care, discipline, and responsibility. Imbalance carries consequences. Overinvestment in one sphere may produce burnout; neglect of structure may yield stagnation. Conversely, harmonized engagement supports resilience, emotional stability, and sustained contribution. Thus, the geometry of the self is dynamic. Each domain influences the others, and coherence depends on continuous recalibration.

➤ Holistic Existential Distillation

Across the six maps, a cumulative trajectory becomes visible:

- Experience generates reflection.
- Reflection organizes relationships.
- Organization institutionalizes learning.
- Learning stabilizes into competence.
- Competence confronts uncertainty and becomes resilience.
- Resilience is integrated into balanced selfhood.

In this final domain, nominalization performs its most integrative function. Complex daily realities are organized into conceptual spheres, allowing individuals to oversee, evaluate, and intentionally structure their lives. Life balance is therefore not withdrawal from activity but reflective participation in it. Harmony is achieved not by eliminating complexity, but by naming, organizing, and proportioning it. Philosophical maturity consists in this capacity for structured integration—the ability to transform multiplicity into coherence.

5.7. Synthesis: Nominalization and the Emergence of Philosophical Literacy

The six experiential domains collectively demonstrate how lived experience becomes philosophically interpretable through nominalization. Across Maps 1–6, we observe a structured progression:

1. Map 1 – The Activity Loop: Experience is stabilized through reflection. Actions, needs, and outcomes are nominalized into existential categories such as satisfaction, confidence, or insecurity.

2. Map 2 – Interpersonal Proximity: Social experience is transformed into structured relational concepts. Emotional

reactions are nominalized as trust, loyalty, cooperation, or empathy, enabling reflective social intelligence.

3. Map 3 – Education as Existential Formation: Knowledge acquisition becomes structured, stabilized, and nominalized as competencies, mastery, and professional identity. Effort, participation, and reflection produce measurable cognitive and moral growth.

4. Map 4 – Skills for Life and Mindsets: Competence is operationalized. Skills and mindsets, such as critical thinking, adaptability, and emotional control, are nominalized as enduring capacities for self-governance. The growth mindset frames experience as potential rather than limitation.

5. Map 5 – Adventures, Risks, and Resilience: Exposure to uncertainty and challenge is nominalized as discovery, determination, and resilience. The Activity Loop operates under extreme conditions, transforming physiological and emotional responses into reflective wisdom.

6. Map 6 – Life Balance: The multiplicity of human engagement is integrated into a coherent geometry of the self. Spheres of life—family, health, career, social, and spiritual—are stabilized into structured categories, enabling deliberate, reflective management of responsibilities and priorities.

➤ Nominalization as Cognitive and Philosophical Engine Across All Six Maps, Nominalization Emerges as the Core Mechanism of Existential Distillation:

• **From verbs to nouns:** Actions become stable concepts. *To act, to explore, to cooperate, to learn* → *action, exploration, cooperation, competence*.

• **From experience to reflection:** Repeated cycles of action and evaluation produce conceptual categories that structure perception, decision-making, and moral reasoning.

• **From individual to holistic selfhood:** Early stabilization of personal needs and goals (Maps 1–2) evolves into professional competence and resilience (Maps 3–5) and culminates in integrated life balance (Map 6).

In this framework, philosophical literacy is not imposed from theoretical abstraction but emerges organically as individuals reflect on and nominalize their experiences. Language mediates this transformation, enabling learners to construct meaning, evaluate consequences, and organize life into intelligible structures.

5.8. Implications

The maps demonstrate that philosophical thinking is deeply embedded in everyday cognition:

- Reflection transforms immediate action into conceptual understanding.
- Social and educational experiences scaffold moral and existential reasoning.
- Challenges, risk, and uncertainty test and refine conceptual categories.
- Integration across life domains enables coherent, reflective agency.

Ultimately, nominalization bridges experience and concept, allowing learners—whether studying philosophy through

English or navigating daily life—to move from concrete actions to abstract understanding, from transient emotion to structured insight, and from fragmented activity to coherent, purposeful existence. Philosophical literacy, therefore, is a cultivated capacity to name, organize, and reflect upon the self and the world, achieved incrementally across the structured experiential domains represented in Maps 1–6.

6. Discussion and Conclusion

6.1. Synthesis: Bridging Abstract and Practical Meaning

This study demonstrates how nominalization functions as a bridge between lived experience and philosophical reflection. Across the six experiential domains, abstract philosophical concepts emerge progressively from concrete human activity. Map 1 shows that reflection on the Activity Loop transforms immediate outcomes into existential categories such as satisfaction, confidence, or insecurity. Map 2 extends this process to the interpersonal domain, where social interactions are stabilized into trust, cooperation, and empathy. Maps 3 and 4 show that education and skill development formalize knowledge into competencies, critical thinking, and self-governance, while Map 5 illustrates how engagement with risk and uncertainty cultivates resilience, determination, and personal growth. Finally, Map 6 integrates these dimensions, demonstrating that life balance is a structured, intentional practice, wherein philosophical literacy manifests as the ability to organize, reflect upon, and harmonize multiple spheres of existence. Through this lens, nominalization is both cognitive and philosophical. It transforms verbs—actions, experiences, challenges—into nouns—conceptual categories that enable reflection, evaluation, and intentional action. Abstract meaning does not exist separately from experience; it emerges through structured linguistic, cognitive, and emotional processes. In educational settings, especially in bilingual contexts, this approach supports the simultaneous development of linguistic proficiency, cognitive sophistication, and philosophical awareness.

6.2 Limitations

While the six-map framework offers a comprehensive model of philosophical meaning-making, several boundaries must be acknowledged.

1. Contextual specificity: The maps are developed from reflective analysis and pedagogical practice in bilingual educational environments. Their generalizability to other populations or cultures may require adaptation.

2. Cognitive abstraction demands: The framework presumes learners possess a certain level of metacognitive skill. Younger or less experienced individuals may require additional scaffolding to navigate these conceptual domains effectively.

3. Nominalization as partial mechanism: Although central, nominalization is not the sole cognitive tool for meaning-making. Non-linguistic experiences, social modeling, and affective processes also contribute to philosophical literacy.

4. Operational complexity: Translating the maps into classroom practice requires careful sequencing, time, and teacher expertise. Full integration across all six domains is

ambitious and may be challenging in constrained curricula. Acknowledging these limitations clarifies that the framework provides a structured lens rather than a prescriptive formula. It highlights a pathway for reflective conceptualization rather than dictating fixed outcomes.

AI Usage Disclosure Statement

During the preparation of this manuscript, the authors used AI-assisted tools, including ChatGPT and Grammarly, to support language refinement, structural organization, and editorial clarity. These tools were utilized to improve readability, coherence, and linguistic accuracy, as well as to assist in refining conceptual phrasing. All intellectual content, theoretical arguments, conceptual models, and analytical interpretations were developed by the authors. After using AI tools, the manuscript was carefully reviewed, revised, and edited to ensure accuracy, originality, and scholarly integrity. The authors take full responsibility for the content, accuracy, and originality of the final submitted and published version of the article.

Final Summary

This paper argues that philosophical meaning emerges from the disciplined reflection on lived experience, facilitated by nominalization. Across six conceptual maps, we have traced a trajectory from concrete activity (Map 1) through interpersonal understanding (Map 2), structured education (Map 3), skill consolidation (Map 4), engagement with risk (Map 5), and finally, life balance (Map 6). The central thesis is reinforced: abstract philosophical thinking is not detached from life but grounded in it. By systematically naming and reflecting upon actions, experiences, emotions, and social interactions, individuals construct intelligible, evaluative categories that support ethical, cognitive, and existential development. In practical terms, the maps provide a scaffold for educators, learners, and reflective practitioners to connect theory with everyday action. Nominalization, metacognitive mapping, and reflective engagement collectively enable learners to move from doing to understanding, from encountering challenges to generating meaning, and from fragmented experience to coherent, purposeful life. Philosophical literacy, therefore, is an ongoing, active process, embedded in both thought and action, and realized through the deliberate organization of the self in the world.

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