

MENDIVE

REVISTA DE EDUCACIÓN

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Educate in amazement: a book for these times

Educar en el asombro: un libro para estos tiempos

Educar em maravilha: um livro para estes tempos

Ileana Caridad Delgado Cabrera

Universidad de Pinar del Río "Hermandos Saíz Montes de Oca". Pinar del Río. Cuba.

Correo electrónico: icdg@upr.edu.cu

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Ecuyer, C L. (2018) *Educate in amazement. How to educate in a hectic and hyper-demanding world?* Barcelona Spain. ISBN: 978-84-15577-42-3

The author of this book, Catherine L'Ecuyer, is a Canadian writer placed in Barcelona. She is an Official European Research Master and Doctor in Education and Psychology. In 2015 he received the Pajarita Award from the Spanish Association of Toy Manufacturers for promoting the culture of play in the communication means. She was invited as a speaker to the Education Commission of the Spanish Congress of Deputies and to the Second European Summit of Education organized by the European Commission. She advised the Government of the State of Puebla in Mexico for a reform of early childhood education and he was part of a group working for the Government of Spain on the use of technology among children, she also participated in a report on the digital readout for CEREALC, UNESCO. She is a researcher and author of several books and articles on the subject of education.

It is extremely important to refer to issues related to the excessive use of technology at an early age, its consequences, the role of the family and teachers in the face of this phenomenon. As the influence of digital technology, and especially the internet, increases, the debate about its repercussions intensifies: is it a boon to humanity, as it offers limitless opportunities for communication and commerce? Or is it a threat to our way of life, since it undermines the social fabric, the affective and effective relationships

between the members that make up a society? Does it threaten our well-being? This is an interesting but essentially academic debate. Because for better or worse, digital technology is already in the midst of our lives.

This book, which could be considered essential in working with the new generations of teachers in training, appeals to the freedom of children to discover the world around them, to learn at their own pace and to enjoy their free time. In modern times we subject children to a lot of activities that are focused on observing around calmly to think before acting and lose their fear of the effort required to learn.

How to achieve that a child, and later an adolescent, is able to be calm observing calmly around him, to wait before having, able to think, with motivation to learn without fear of effort?

This writer, an expert in education, refers to the fact that children grow up in an increasingly frantic and demanding environment that, on the one hand, has made the task of educating much more complex. For their future success we see it necessary to program them for endless activities that are separating them from the usual leisure, free play, nature, silence, beauty. Their life has become a veritable race to skip stages, which takes them further and further away from their own nature. Many children are missing the best thing in life: discovering the world; assuring them of future success also takes them away from their reality, from what is essential. This is a book that provides tools to make children and adolescents act with enthusiasm and are able to discover the world, to enter reality. A deafening noise silences its questions, the shrill screens saturate their senses and interrupt the slow learning of everything wonderful to discover for the first time. Educating in amazement is to rethink learning as a journey that is born from inside the person.

Pablo d'Ors, in his narrative of the autobiography of Charles de Foucault, says that "the greatest misery of man is his dispersion. We are scattered in many places and nowhere, and this is how we started by not meeting and how we ended up not even knowing who we are". That is a good description of what is happening to many of us.

We must prepare our future teachers to immediately meet these needs of boys and girls in the not too distant future, but at the same time meet the needs of their families, since in many cases and without having knowledge of the Consequences of these practices are the ones that little by little are leading their children to that social fragmentation and loss of the ability to be amazed with everything that surrounds them.

Human vanity!, Huxley said: "It is easier to believe a thrilling falsehood than truth without interest." We are human and limited, that is a truth without interest. That our children can become the next Einstein that is an exciting falsehood. Tempting, right?

Following a phrase by Chesterton, which the author quotes in this book ("There are no things without interest. Only people capable of understanding them"), how can we awaken the interest of our students?

Interest is a wish. And what awakens desire is beauty, meaning, "why" and "what for" what is done is done.

In the pages of this great work mentioned one of the great memories that marked the life of Catherine, from the pedagogical point of view: I remember a teacher who told me a beautiful story. He told his four-year-old students that they could draw a picture for their parents. One of them was left doing nothing, sad. Then she remembered that both of that child's parents were blind. She told her that if she drew a picture, she would make small holes in the strokes so that her

parents could "touch" the picture. The boy began to draw with indescribable enthusiasm and filled the sheet with lines. Children need meaning in order to motivate themselves.

Therefore, it is important to encourage internal and transcendent motivations (sense) our children and get away from everything that encourages them external motivations (screens, punishments, rewards, etc).

This reflection leads to another: ¿Is the display an external motivation?

For an immature mind yes. The one who holds the reins before the screen is not the child, but the algorithms of the device's application, which engages with the attractiveness of its sounds and images. These stimuli are rewards that artificially motivate the child. In fact, the neurologists already know that you cannot diagnose a child with ADHD while in front of a screen because the *locus* of control (the place from which attention control) is not internal to the child, but it is external.

"A study with 14,000 students from the University of Michigan concludes that young people today are 40 % less empathetic."How do you explain this tremendous empathy deficit? How can parents and teachers help to cultivate this ability to put ourselves in the place of the other, to feel like the other, to think like the other?

Why is it important to educate our children in reality? Many people say: you are against new technologies. We use technology every day, they are great tools. In developing brains (in children), technology has effects on learning, which are not always good. And it is not a mere opinion, there are many studies on the screen effect that associates early screen consumption with inattention, impulsivity, etc.

Therefore, the fundamental thesis of this book is that "the best preparation for

the *online* world (online) is the *offline* world (outside of Internet browsing)." And this has just been confirmed by the OECD in its PISA Students Learning and Computers report, in which it surprised everyone with its conclusions: the computer used in the classroom, above the OECD average, gives significantly worse results; countries that have invested in new technologies in the classroom have seen no improvement. The report concludes that the best way to prepare students for the digital world is not to facilitate access to high-tech devices and services, but to enhance reading and mathematics. There is a before and after to that study. Now using tablets in the classroom is no longer "a fad".

In short, the role of the teacher is threefold. First to perceive the needs of the child, through sensitivity. Second, gauge reality for the child. Third, accompany the child discreetly in his exploration. None of these tasks can be carried out by a screen, since sensitivity, "calibrating reality" and discreet accompaniment are deeply human acts that neither a device nor the algorithms of an application, however perfect, can replicate. Educate and teach children to perceive their realities, to achieve with amazement and curiosity everything that will accompany them in the rest of their life; none of this is possible without the presence of their parents and teachers.

In conclusion, in an educational world that is increasingly "digitized", we must remember that the role of the teacher has much more importance than we imagine. Not only because the teacher is the basis of exploration towards reality, but also because he transmits to his students the attitudes that he has embodied with his life. Teachers need to realize the impact they have and will have, not only on a whole generation of children, but also on the future of humanity, because as Kundera said: "Children are not the future because one day they will be older, but because humanity is going to get closer and closer

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to the child, because childhood is the image of the future".

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