



Lonka, K. (2017). Building a school for the digital natives generation. Debates on education, 45. Barcelona: Fundació Jaume Bofill and UOC. ISBN: 978-84-946592-4-9

Finland is a well-known advanced country when it comes to education, with a leading educational system deserving good results in several studies and reports such as PISA. Nevertheless, there are some difficulties to cope with, namely the engagement of students. The biggest challenge education has to face in today's paradigm is to change the learning environments, since there is a huge gap between the way education is conducted and what is happening out of the schools. The generation of digital natives is prone to dislike the traditional methods in education even when good results are formally reported.

"Building a school for the digital natives generation" is the transcript of Kirsti Lonka keynote speech at MACBA Auditorium, Barcelona. The speaker is Professor of Educational Psychology at the University of Helsinki, Extraordinary Professor at the Optentia Research Focus Area (South Africa) and member of the Advisory Board of the Graduate Institute of Digital Learning and Education (Taiwan). She is currently working on innovation in higher education and in engaging learning environments (ELA). This work refers in two parts to some main points on challenges for education to take into account.

In the first part, the author states several facts that shape education within the current Finnish system. Thus, we learn about how the arts, sports, handicrafts and cookery skills are boosted, about 21st century skills, the autonomy of very well-trained teachers, and other details. Then, there is a space to explain the need to change the learning environments: students use mobile devices everywhere but in the school, where they have to keep them in their pockets instead of taking advantage of their possibilities. This situation leads to a lack of engagement of the students. The Finnish problem, according to Prof. Lonka, is that boys tend to get bored and alienated from the school system whereas girls are getting burned out and those who are good at science tend to hate it. Finally, the author claims a pedagogical leap in order to solve the current problems in education. She refers again to the 21st century skills, the critical thinking, the epistemic change, the change of our ways of teaching and learning, and the use of the physical spaces in schools. A new technology-rich learning environment, Minerva Plaza, is presented as a model.

The second part of the transcript is devoted to answering specific questions. These questions deal with different topics. For instance, the reliability of PISA report to measure educational results, how to start profound changes in teacher training, the role of team management in this change, the curricula in Finland and how to engage the students. The following questions focus on the need to promote the use of technology for learning and how it can diminish bullying cases, help students with special needs and bring motivational learning into the classroom. All answers are founded upon the knowledge and the expertise of the speaker.

To sum up, we can highlight that schools have not really adapted to the digital natives generation, and so disaffection is a global problem. Finland is a good referent to look at, but improvement is also needed.

This is an inspiring document, better if directly linked to the video of the oral speech as the speaker's intonation gives sense to the text rhythm and style, natural rather than literary. All formats, anyway, are a good resource to pick worthwhile ideas.

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