



Tecno - When Technology Teaches, Who Shapes the Mind?

Roma - 30 lug 2026 (Prima Notizia 24) How Sweden, New Zealand and India are redefining education through a balanced approach to AI, books and critical thinking.

There has been an amazing technological revolution over the first quarter of the 21st Century. The world of classrooms has transformed greatly worldwide. Chalk boards are now replaced by smart boards, libraries have been shrunk to tablets and notebooks are more often than not being replaced by keyboards and touch screens. Digital education came with great potential: the knowledge could be accessed by all, education was interactive and children could be educated without regard to geographical location. Technology was adopted with pride in the school. How much of a computer, tablet or digital device they had was a measure of their progress. Parents were pleased with this change and felt that the use of digital tools would better equip children for their future. Sure enough, technology provided new opportunities and made learning more convenient than ever. However, as digital technologies have grown and developed so quickly over the years, a pertinent question has emerged: is technology being used as a tool for learning or has it become the nucleus of learning? This issue has been brought to the forefront again following Sweden's differentiation from others in the digital classroom and its decision to increase the number of printed books and handwriting in school – especially for younger students. It wasn't about not using technologies; it was about not being over-reliant on technologies that could reduce children's reading ability, focus, handwriting skills and ability to think deeply. In New Zealand an iPad program was discontinued and the primary school returned to books, notebooks and handwriting in the younger school ages. It was a simple but profound conclusion that its decision drew, that technology can enhance the education but it cannot replace the mental and emotional growth an individual can gain from reading a book and writing by hand. Such changes should not be seen as opposition to change. Rather, they remind us that there is a need for balance in order to make real progress. Education in the modern day can sometimes confuse the process of quickness with understanding. There is an abundance of information instantaneously passing through, but wisdom is patiently growing! A child may be able to see an answer in your face within seconds, but real education only starts when a child reflects upon this and questions it, and starts to see the deeper meaning. This is beautifully put by Dr. Sethi, originator of Sethian Philosophy: If a child can think, he will know where to look. "This is one of the biggest challenges for education in our time." Answers can come from search engines and information can be organised by Artificial Intelligence, but nothing can replace curiosity and imagination and independent thought. Learning takes place only when children ask questions, analyse, make up and discover. What really matters is not the technology, but how the technology is applied. Technology continues to be one of the biggest accomplishments of mankind. But as children grow to rely on digital devices in the years in which they are supposed to be working on concentration, imagination

and self-discipline, one of the most valuable aspects of education is lost. More and more research has identified brain areas that are activated in the process of handwriting. For every single handwritten sentence, coordination of memory, language, movement and thought is required. Handwriting fosters deeper learning by engaging the mind, as each letter and word is created. A notebook is thus more than a stack of blank paper, it's a workshop where ideas slowly form. Another benefit that books can provide that digital screens don't is that you can concentrate fully on them. The printed book will not interrupt the reader with notifications, ads or endless scrolling. Encourages contemplation and extended focus. Digital platforms, in contrast, vie for attention all the time. The brain starts to think that it needs constant stimulation, with the constant notifications and short content it is exposed to, making longer reading more challenging. As Dr Sethi cleverly says: Learning without speed is to be understood silently leaving the classroom. Today's children have extraordinary access to information, but many have trouble reading and thinking about it and writing thoughtfully and for long periods of time. There are so many things we know, but sometimes we lack understanding. There's more to the conversation than learning. Too much screen time has an impact on children's physical and emotional health by causing eye strain, sleep problems, not spending enough time outside, and not spending enough time with others. The childhood that is filled with stories, reading, drawing and talking is now at risk of being over taken by its screens. Dr. Sethi adds one more thought-provoking thought: The objectives of technology must be tools for intelligence, not for its replacement. This DOES NOT contradict the concept of innovation. Rather, it calls us to build on what the human can do, not erode over time the habit of thoughtful, disciplined and creative thinking. Education dates back to ancient times, and it has much more significance than the mere transfer of information. This has formed character, helped to develop judgment, taught patience and developed values. What these attributes foster depend on inspiring teachers, rich discussions, thoughtful reading, thoughtful writing, and authentic human relationships, and no digital device can replace these. The lessons learnt from the experiences in Sweden and New Zealand are relevant for some other countries like India. India is one of the fastest-growing Digital societies in the world and Digital education has enabled millions of learners with amazing opportunities like Online classrooms, Educational platforms and Artificial intelligence. This is a good step forward, and we're all happy about it. But with each technological development comes a need for responsible thinking. Children are now better acquainted with smartphones even before they are able to hold a pencil properly or read books. While convenience is convenient, it can also creep in and endanger experiences which foster patience, imagination and confidence. Dr. Sethi says that this worry is very clearly stated: All conveniences "must be for the humanness itself that they were designed for. Writing will help develop patience. Reading is a way to expand imagination. Children's confidence will be developed if they are able to articulate their ideas. These characteristics can't be downloaded or automated, they have to be lived, learned and developed. Artificial Intelligence could very well prove to be an incredible support for education. It clarifies complex ideas, interprets languages and provides an efficient and large-scale structure from which to find ideas. However, nothing can be as satisfying as solving a challenging problem on one's own or finding a new and unique idea by their own work. Sweeping claims of the superior classroom have never been based

exclusively on fancy equipment. They have always had to rely on thoughtfully-trained teachers who can stimulate curiosity and spark the minds of young people. There's an important role for both parents too. Children will follow up actions before they follow up on words. Children grow up with digital devices being all the time in the foreground of their lives at home, and their perception of the world soon becomes that screens are central to life. Families need to provide opportunities for books to be read as a group, stories to be shared, for discussion to be encouraged, for ideas to be recorded and for technology to be put aside to allow for physical connection with people. But the meaning of educational excellence will have to be reconceptualized at school, as well. A great school isn't necessarily the school that has the latest and greatest technology but the school that fosters the curiosity, discipline, compassion and a love for learning that lasts a lifetime. Computers, tablets and Artificial Intelligence should be a valued teaching and learning aid but never a substitute for teachers, libraries, notebooks, laboratory or meaningful class discussion. Teachers offer something which technology cannot. They see when things are going wrong but aren't out in the open. They build confidence, inspire dreams and help to build character before it's time to start working. As Dr Sethi says: Teacher is not only a teacher of examinations, but a preparation for the human mind is a teacher of civilisation. Governments, therefore, should make sure that investment is provided for digital infrastructure, in parallel with investment in school libraries, printed books, handwriting, arts, music, sports and teacher development. The best of technology and humanity lie in working side by side and not against each other. Another great lesson of the Sethian Philosophy is: Character makes competence competence and skill, and skill transforms competence into civilisation, and knowledge makes character knowledge. To equip citizens is not the purpose of education, to equip them for responsible, compassionate and thoughtful citizenship. There is no need to turn off your technology, nor is there a need to worship your technology, in the future. It appeals to us to re-establish balance. Children should enjoy experiencing the joy of handwriting before they rely on keyboards, the companionship of books before endless scrolling and imagination before algorithms begin to dictate which options to choose. No matter how well this vision is summarized, it would be hard to do it as beautifully as Dr. Sethi's final comment: Let the child touch an idea first before touching a screen, let the self be discovered first by the child before he or she is searching the world. With the increasing potency of intelligent machines, originality, empathy, wisdom and ethical judgment will be more distinguishing features of humanity than technical prowess. These characteristics are not possible with software or downloadable from the Internet. They develop their patience through taking their time in education, wise educators, loving parents, and purposeful books and discipline. The simple book, notebook, pen and pencil remain a potent force in its own right that has yet to be replaced by any technology. They learn to be patient in an impatient world, they learn to concentrate in a distracted world and originality in a world that is often imitative. The educational introspection of Sweden and New Zealand will have more impact on the world if it inspires it to return to this balance than to reform education. They will remind the human race that the greatest technology that has been created is the awakened human mind. Dr Sethi K.C. Author, Conceiver of Sethian Philosophy, Daman, India Auckland, New Zealand



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