

Is There Still Room for Wonder in School? Reflections on Early Childhood Education

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Abstract

Wonder is widely recognized as one of the fundamental impulses that initiates cognition and reflection. However, in contemporary educational discourse and practice, its significance appears to have been marginalized. The dominance of outcome-oriented education, curriculum implementation, and the standardization of teaching processes raises the question of whether there is still room for the experience of wonder in early childhood education.

The aim of this presentation is to reflect on the role of wonder as a pedagogical category and to highlight its potential for fostering children's thinking, cognitive curiosity, and active engagement in the learning process. The paper will present selected philosophical and pedagogical perspectives on wonder and discuss the main challenges related to its presence in contemporary schooling. The discussion will address whether current early childhood education provides opportunities for children to experience wonder as a source of questioning, reflection, and independent knowledge construction. The presentation is theoretical in nature and seeks to reintroduce wonder into pedagogical discourse by emphasizing its significance for designing educational environments that support reflective thinking, openness to experience, and meaningful learning.