



Education as a hope in uncertain times

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Consciousness as a compass for navigating learning in uncertain times

Understanding consciousness as an awareness of the mind's processes and content, this presentation has two main aims. First, to present a theoretical model of the development of consciousness. Based on theories and empirical evidence from developmental psychology and neuroscience, this model supports the argument that Theory of Mind and Metacognition are intertwined core elements of consciousness. We also argue that Theory of Mind and Metacognition are enhanced by underlying mechanisms, such as the efficiency and/or efficacy of executive functions (working memory, attention control and flexibility). Second, to present findings from recent studies conducted in our laboratory, showing that in different developmental phases (infancy, early and late childhood, and adolescence) different facets of consciousness and different aspects of executive functions exert a prominent role in learning. They, thus, differentially influence school performance at successive educational levels. Overall, these results point to the need to develop new curricula and teaching methods aligned to the students' abilities but also enabling individualization of teaching according to the possibilities of each individual student. It is proposed that this alignment between the development of consciousness and educational curricula is important if we are to fully capitalize on students' abilities and available skills, and, hence, foster their ability to meet the demands of a continuously changing society in times of uncertainty.



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