

Review

Connected code : why children need to learn programming

Kafai Y., Burke Q., The MIT Press, Cambridge, MA, 2014. 200 pp. Type: Book

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Computational participation, computational thinking, or computing skills? Which is it that K-12 students should learn? Emphatically the first, argue the authors of this text.

Mindstorms [1] was perhaps the seminal text on computational mastery for the young. Papert argued over two decades ago that children not only could learn to master machines, but that it would both increase the way they interact, and expand the way they think about the world around them.

This text follows Papert down that road, perhaps updated for more recent technologies. The flavor can be gleaned from the chapter titles: "The Comeback of Coding," "Connected Learning," "From Code to Applications," "From Tools to Communities," "From Scratch to Remix," "From Screens to Tangibles," "Connected Teaching," and "Coding for All."

This is emphatically not a book on how to code, as it offers little on technical considerations or application design. That is not the point here. What is considered is the importance of computational thought and its potential spillover into what I might call life thinking. Essentially, it is about how to think, or more specifically, how to teach how to think and how to teach at all. The authors are proponents of participatory learning, group interaction, and instructors who are involved in moving their students from the video screen into the world.

This book is highly recommended reading for all those who seek to travel the same road. There are 18 pages of notes, a detailed section of very specific and seemingly complete references, and an excellent index.

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1) Papert, S. A. *Mindstorms: children, computers, and powerful ideas*. Basic Books, New York, NY, 1993.

Reviewer: David Bellin

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