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Afiliada à



It ain't what you don't know that gets you into trouble. It's what you know for sure that just ain't so.

Mark Twain

This phrase is found in the opening of an American comedy-drama film entitled: *The Big Short*, based on the 2010 book “The Big Short: Inside the Doomsday Machine” by Michael Lewis about the financial crisis of 2007–2008, and portrays a certain similarity with the debacle of Brazilian education.

Having been in charge of REM for the last 30 years makes me reflect about the problems of Brazilian education, portrayed once more in the PISA test given by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). In addition, since 1876, Henri Gorceix, founder of the School of Mines of Ouro Preto, warned that the primary and secondary education in the capital were weak, and that this would reflect on the quality of the engineers that Brazil was graduating.

Karen Cator began her carrier as a professor in Alaska, became an executive of Apple between 2001 and 2009, and in the Barack Obama government was in charge of elaborating a plan to be apply new technologies in the classroom. In an interview with the magazine *Veja*, she was asked: “*Why do so many experiences with technology in the school fail?*” *Whereby she replied: “Because to be effective, we need to have competent people to execute them. To furnish professional development is fundamental, but it is of no use to supply a computer for everyone, if it will not be well utilized.”*

In 2000, Brazil invested 2.4% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in Basic Education. In 2012, the value almost doubled to 4.7% of the GDP; this was above the amount of 3.7% recommended by OECD, but the results continue to be weak.

Another problem that affects science, as a whole, is the *Publish or Perish* attitude that describes the academic pressure to rapidly and continually publish academic work to sustain or further one's career, but this is almost synonymous of rejection, exemplifying what one of the associated REM editors has written: *The paper is interesting. However, a large number of similar works is available. Many researchers have studied it for many years. Authors need to show some original works in the paper to be considered by the Journal. The paper needs much more details and improvements to be considered by the Journal.*

In an interview for the “Yellow Pages” of the *VEJA* magazine, in their Nov. 26, 2008 issue, the anthropologist Eunice Durham was asked: “*why are the professors so self-critical?*” *Her reply was: “They are extremely corporatists. They might be conscious of the low level of education in the country, but are used to attributing the fiasco to external factors, such as the fact that the government does not provide them with the training and that the salary is low.”*

Can it be that all of this explains the “debacle” of education in Brazil? Maybe not, but the thoughts of Mark Twain and the other affirmatives of this editorial, should be seriously considered by those responsible for education, principally by us professors and promoters of science.

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