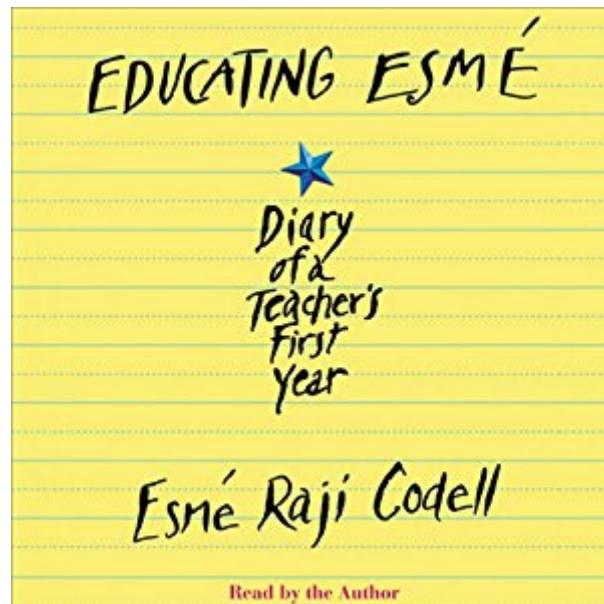


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# Educating Esme



## Synopsis

Esmé Raji Codell has come to teach, and she's not going to let incompetent administrators, abusive parents, gang members, or her own insecurities get in the way. As she puts it, she has "Thirty-one children. Thirty-one chances. Thirty-one futures, our futures. Everything they become, I also become." Codell's portrait of an inner-city elementary school is funny, poignant, and inspiring. Her struggle to maintain individuality in the face of bureaucracy and her defiant stand against mediocrity will reverberate in companies as well as classrooms everywhere. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

One of the best books about teaching I've ever read. Through humor Esme' manages to capture a provocative look at the underbelly of a school's culture. Though not every school matches her description, there is something every one in education will recognize from their own experience. It is hard to be an Esme' in today's schools, but that is the teacher every parent should want for their children.

To start out, this is not a textbook on how to be a teacher. It is not a psychological explanation of child behavior... it is simply the diary of a first year teacher. If you know that coming in, then be ready for one of the most eye opening books you'll read. With all the talk about what goes on in our schools, it's real look into what it is like being "on the front lines" with the children in america. If you have children entering school, this is an insight into what our teachers are going through (in some

places). They are underfunded, overworked, and are expected to be everything to these children. As a parent, it helped me understand better all the challenges that my children's teachers deal with. I've found myself to be much more sympathetic now, and willing to offer more help. The author is the kind of teacher that many of us had: one that cared enough to give more than just a routine class experience. Sadly, with all the constraints and demands put on them, I fear that we are going to push these people out of the profession if we don't help them soon. That's not to say this book is all gloom and misery. In fact, the author documents very well the joys of teaching and emotions of trying to care for children that don't have the best homelife for education. Please read this if you are a teacher, going into teaching, or have children in our public school education system.

This book is a reprint of a 1999 publication with a foreword by author Katherine Paterson. Probably the most appealing aspect of this book is Codell's honesty, not to mention the genuine excitement she brings to the page about her first year of teaching. She is honest about her principal, a man who has a real flair for mediocrity. Threatened by her competence and verve, he is always on her about something. When she begins to win accolades, he tries to keep her on after her first year, not because she is a great teacher but because she could be a feather in his cap. Codell is also honest about her abilities and efforts. She often wonders why others are so lazy when she gives so much to her classroom. She is also honest with her pupils, learning very early that she can't pity them, not if she is to help them to learn. When at the end of the year her below-par students actually gain a year or two in achievement on their tests, she is somewhat vindicated for her sometimes unorthodox but lively methods of teaching. Anyone reading this book would have loved to be in her class . . . if she had remained a teacher, that is. One almost wonders why she chose to take the job, to teach or to write a book? The very next year, having trained for such work, she becomes a school librarian. As an American one could feel cheated, in a sense. Why is it that some of the most talented and competent teachers leave the field after such a short time? In Esmeralda's case it may be that she is just too good, not too good for her students but too good for the system. Why would anyone want to work in a place where there are so many negative people including one's boss? How lovely it would be to work for a district that honors its teachers and pays them well. In a capitalist culture where corporations value their employees by way of the purse, why does that never translate to better salaries for educators, especially the gifted ones who are working harder than anyone else and yet get paid the same as someone next door who is only half as good and only

expends a fraction of the energy of someone like Codell? It is a question worthy of extended thought and research.

This was such a fun book, it was written in an easy to read manner, that really demonstrated the issues with being a teacher, and how hard it is to work in a low socio economic environment. At times I felt Esme was a bit too good to be true, but I understand that mindset and found her to be great. I would have liked more detail inbetween as some chapters where very far apart in time, but I loved reading this, it was an easy and fun read.

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