

Call for Papers, Annual CultMedia Conference Chemnitz 2021

“Distance Learning – Learning at a Distance: (Media) Technology, Politics and Individual Environments in Current Learning Processes”

Date: 12. – 15. September 2021

Venue: Technische Universität Chemnitz

Theoretical framework:

Education in times of a mediatized and digitized culture has been the focus of educational debates for several years. In schools, there are high expectations of the educational use of digital technologies, devices and learning apps for conveying specialist content and for the introduction of simple programmable devices, such as Calliope (see Bergner et al. 2017). In particular, the contribution to the development of skills in dealing with digital technology is discussed. In contrast, there are numerous critical stances and realistic perspectives coming from the educational practice regarding the limits of digital education (see Lembke / Leipner 2018).

In Germany, the aspects of the debate and related projects are strengthened and bundled by the strategy of the Kultusministerkonferenz “Education in the Digital World” (see Kultusministerkonferenz 2017). This strategy paper covers competencies for school education in primary and secondary levels as well as higher education and vocational education, which should enable citizens to actively participate in the digitized society. The focused digitalization of the education system was promoted in the years 2019/2020 through the “Digital Pakt Schule” and the funds made available with it.

The practical and innovative successes achieved in this way (cf. Brandt / Bröll / Dausend 2020) have so far remained selective and project-based. Until now, most requirements for digitally supported teaching have not been established within the educational institutions. The corona pandemic in spring / summer 2020 turns out to be a “stress test” (Engels 2020) for digitization in education. Problems arise in particular with regard to individual skills, which are a prerequisite for the use of digital media in schools (cf. Schulte et al. 2020), as well as the social inequalities associated with digitization (cf. Eickelmann / Gerick 2020). Nevertheless, the pandemic and the associated restrictions are referred to as a “catalyst” (Hoffmann 2020) or “driver” (Blömer / Voigt / Hoppe 2020) of digital innovation in the field of education.

Objectives of the conference:

According to the research tradition of the CULTMEDIA network, digitization in the education system (after the corona pandemic) is to be countered with a holistic view, which takes into account media-technical and technological aspects on the one hand, but also cultural and social aspects as well as mutual influences between these aspects, on the other. Accordingly, cultural perspectives on technology are also included in the analysis. This involves cultural forms of perception and action from and with media technologies, e.g. technical-euphoric and -pessimistic perspectives, cultural utopias, national educational policies and specific educational cultures.

Education is understood here in a holistic sense and includes institutionalized education in pre-school, primary and secondary levels as well as university and vocational training, but also processes of education in the broader sense, which could be understood under the concept ‘lifelong learning’ and also include digital learning cultures through tutorials, information networks, etc.

These are the focal points and questions of the conference:

- 1) **Media technology as a means and content of education:** Which digital instruments can be used in the various educational institutions with which restrictions for educational purposes? To what extent do content and / or didactic methods have to be adapted to the digital technology? What are the consequences of digitization for exams? How could digital education be evaluated? To what extent can digitization contribute to the effectiveness of teaching and learning processes? Which technological trends have developed in online teaching during the corona pandemic? Has this changed digital learning? What possibilities and limitations does digital technology offer when it comes to mentoring learners?

- 2) **Politics as a driver and restriction of digital education:** To what extent do political decisions and measures contribute to the promotion of digital education in schools and universities? Which goals are achieved and which are not? What are the political obstacles that make efforts to achieve digital education fail? To what extent does the digitization strategy fit into the currently prevailing fashions of educational policy and to what extent can associated ideologies be criticized?

- 3) **Education for a digitized culture:** What influence does the use of digital media in education have on the (children's) individual life-worlds? Which individual skills are required when dealing with digital media in a digital society? What social and cultural inequalities exist with regard to these competencies and how do we deal with them (ethically)? What opportunities and problems arise with digital learning during the corona pandemic (also in cross-cultural comparisons)?

- 4) **The future of education and its institutions in a digitized culture:** To what extent does digitization change the understanding of education? What role do learner participation and interaction play? To what extent are traditional educational institutions such as schools, colleges and universities still important in digitized cultures and what role will the teachers play in the future? To what extent does distance learning also question the legitimacy of school, college and university (for a critical position on the introduction of e-learning at Italian universities during the corona pandemic, see Agamben 2020)?

Suggestions for other focal points are more than welcome. In addition to scientific contributions that consider these topics in a theoretical or analytical framework, practical contributions are also welcome. These practical inputs could present specific tools, developments, practical problems and solutions in the context of workshops or input lectures. A panel discussion with representatives from research and educational practice is also planned.

We look forward to receiving a preliminary title and a proposal for a suitable focus (1 - 4) by January 31, 2021. You will receive preliminary confirmation of your proposal. Please submit your abstract (max. 150 words for each abstract) in German and English by 3 May 2021 by email.

We ask for a clear connection to the main focus of the conference as well as to the relevant research.

The conference committee Prof. Dr. Leena Bröll (Universität Chemnitz, Conference Host)

Prof. Dr. Björn Egbert (Universität Potsdam)

Prof. Dr. Bernd Meier (Leibniz-Sozietät der Wissenschaften zu Berlin)

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