

# Culturalization of Digital Lifeworlds: The impact of arts education in the context of digitalization.

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## Susanne:

Yes, hello everybody! I'm glad to talk to you all over the world. I would like to welcome you to my lecture "Culturalization of digital lifeworlds: the impact of arts education - in the context of digitalization". Oh, I have a little bit of trouble with my presentation.

## Creative Generation:

In the bottom left-hand corner there should be some controls.

## Susanne:

Yeah, I have them already open, but I couldn't work with it. Sorry, I'll try again. So, hopefully it works now. Yeah! Sorry.

In my lecture I would like to start by discussing the current situation of the digital transformation of cultural and arts education institutions in Germany.

Then, on the basis of a research project, I would like to look at the current perspective of 14 to 24-year-olds in Germany on cultural participation, new digital forms of artistic expression, and their view of digital living worlds.

From these two perspectives I would like to draw a final conclusion on the challenges and opportunities of arts education in relation to the impact on arts education in the context of digitalization.

I will start with the situation of arts education in Germany.

In the year 2000 there was a large federal/state program in Germany on the topic of "Arts Education in the Media Age" – a five-year project with a total of around 12 million euros. The special thing about this project was not only that 13 German states were jointly involved with the federal government, but also that it was a joint project for schools, non-formal educational institutions, and universities.

Model projects for the application of new technologies in arts education were supported. A part of the program was already in 2000 dedicated to the training of the senses like virtuality, the handling of analog-digital interfaces within learning in mixed reality scenarios.

One colleague commented at the end of the program: Now we have all the basics for entering the new media age!

How has the situation in Germany developed since then?

Unfortunately, quite differently than the colleague thought! Within the various artistic disciplines, arts education has concentrated almost exclusively on analogue offerings in Germany. This applies to both non-formal and formal arts educational offers.

Digital developments have been treated almost exclusively within media education, as a part of arts education. But Media education in Germany is concentrating less on digital artistic aspects and more on questions of media protection or critical media handling.

What are the reasons for the strong digital abstinence of artistic disciplines within arts education in Germany?

One reason is certainly the fear of the educators to keep up with the rapid development of digitalization.

Another reason is the lack of technical equipment. In addition, an educational polarization can also be observed. For example, there are some researchers in Germany, such as Manfred Spitzer, who regard the digital as a disadvantage for the development of children and accordingly criticize the use of digital technique in educational contexts.

... and then came Corona.

In a fast-track approach in all artistic disciplines of Arts Education, an attempt was made to stay in touch with young people digitally during the lockdown. Many digital arts educational projects have emerged.

One example is "Corona Diaries", encouraging young people to develop digital film diaries about their life in the lockdown.

But all these quick attempts ultimately failed to solve the underlying problems: there is still no further training in arts education on digitality. There is still no funding of digital technology in non-formal arts in Germany. And Corona has also intensified the longing of educators for analogue educational work.

A further problem in non-formal arts education is the third-party funding of the institutions via attendance fees, which is not compatible with the free logic of digital platforms.

What about today's perspective of the 14 to 24-year-olds here? In a mixed method research project "Post-digital Cultural Youth Worlds", funded by the Federal Ministry of Education Research, which my academy carried out together with the University of Erlangen, more than 2,000 14 to 24-year-olds were interviewed in a nationwide representative survey as part of one method module.

First of all: What does post-digitality mean?

It is a term that Negroponte, professor at the MIT in Boston, coined as early as 1998. He states: "Like air and drinking water, being digital will be noticed only by its absence, not its presence. [...] Computers will be a sweeping yet invisible part of our everyday lives." And in doing so he refers to driverless cars or cyborgs, people who have for example chips implemented in their skin.

Another very good example of overlapping analogue and digital space is the smartphone game Pokemon-Go.

What about the cultural participation of 14 to 24-year-olds in the post-digital age?

100% of 14- to 24-year-olds have long received art and culture in analogue and digital form. The situation is differently with regard to their own art production: A third has so far only practiced this in analogue contexts. This circumstance could also be attributed to the very strong analogue orientation of arts education in Germany.

When asked about the most important places of art reception, the 14- to 24-year-olds name online platforms in first place, followed by streaming services, then broadcast, data and media carriers and live events in non-cultural places, even before live events in cultural institutions.

As in other studies, the question of who influences the choice of art and culture emphasizes the important role of the social environment, especially parents and friends. At the same time, the importance of Internet ratings, own web research and suggestions from platforms is also shown here. These digital ways can restrict access to the spectrum of

art and culture as much as the social environment.

This is because commercial search engines such as Google and co. filter in the context of their advertisers on the one hand, and are self-referencing through algorithms on the other. In this way, searches are oriented to the past searches and interests of the person. So there is also the danger of being trapped in a cultural filter bubble!

In the 14 to 24-year-olds' own artistic production, educational background influences also digital participation: the proportion of young people with a low level of school education who are not artistically productive at all is significantly lower as well as the proportion who are artistically active in digital media.

What new forms of artistic expression have emerged under post-digital conditions among 14- to 24-year-olds?

I would like to pick out some artistic trends only pars pro toto: One is the trend to use existing artistic materials to create a new artwork, for example to reassemble scenes from a favorite movie into a soundtrack clip with a favorite band. This does not require musical instrumental skills but rather film music composition skills, as the following YouTube clip shows.

[Imagine Dragons - Radioactive]

Interdisciplinary performative art also plays an important role, increasingly replacing sector-specific artistic interests.

An example is the following YouTube clip: A young man plays a pop song on an analogous musical instrument, a piano, in a unique form of interpretation and performance. He has recorded 15 tracks of himself with different musical parts, which he lays on top of each other, so that he plays with himself as a double, trio or even as a quartet.

[Piano music plays.]

Another artistic trend is playing with analog-digital interfaces. A well-known example of this are the Escape Rooms, the transformation of digital Atari game worlds into analog, or works of art that transfer digital experiences into analog.

Similar to how young people recycle art, old technology is put into new contexts. For example computer technology as fashion accessories in terms of the maker scene.

Another trend are interactive artistic co-productions. An older and very well-known example is the Gangnam style, which young people all over the world have danced together.

Surprisingly, the percentage of young people in the study who actively and creatively play with these artistic analog-digital forms is rather low. The proportion of 14 to 24-year-olds who have both artistically creative hobbies and a digital affinity for technology is also rather low at 7%. At the same time, however, this group shows a very emancipatory critical and creative approach to digital life worlds. This demonstrates the impact of arts education on digitality:

When it is linked to digital knowledge, it promotes young people to actively shape analog-digital environments.

What are the general perspectives of 14 to 24-year old Germans on digital worlds? Some of these are surprisingly critical: around half of 14 to 24-year-olds say that their behaviour is nowadays much more strongly and indirectly influenced by social media, likes and unlikes - and this assessment goes across all age and educational groups.

- 80% postulate that personal data should not be used by companies.
- 80% also say that offences in the digital space should be punished in the same way as in the analog space, for example sexual harassment or bullying.
- 59% demand international legislation for the Internet.
- After all, almost 45% are in favour of a state search engine.
- 62% demand public support for access to digital books.
- 65% demand that the content of cultural and arts educational institutions should be put into digital format.

This mood among 14- to 24-year-olds illustrates both the challenges and opportunities of arts education for cultivating digital worlds.

In order to cultivate post-digital living environments, it is essential to take responsibility not only for analog but also for digital cultural participation. In the future, this will require not only the systematic inclusion of digital spaces in arts education. At the same time, arts education should also advocate for young people to ensure that the digital space change from a commercial to a public space with legal framework conditions as already existing in the analog space. For example, the state should also be responsible for access to digital knowledge and culture and not leave this to commercial search engines.

This also requires a complete analog-digital reorganization of arts education. Digital is not an add-on. All educational processes have to be rearranged under questions like: Which areas of musical instrument learning are organized analog and which digital, for example via music tutorials? And how can analog-digital interfaces be created?

At the same time, arts education should also take up new artistic and aesthetic analog-digital forms of expression. Possibly, music schools in future should also offer compositional skills, for example for film music compositions, or performative arts skills and not just music craft skills.

Arts education should also promote artistically aesthetic experiments with analog-digital interfaces among young people, in order to get a feeling of the advantages and disadvantages of analog-digital transformations.

These experiences are an elementary basis for an aesthetic discourse on cultural questions of analog-digital environments!

And this is where the special potential of the arts and arts education becomes apparent. The current discourse on digitalization is being conducted primarily from technical or economic perspectives. However, a cultural discourse is also needed for a humane design of digital spaces and technologies.

Ultimately, it is a question of how we want to live in the future: Which cultural techniques will we leave to digital technology? So far, this is happening largely without reflection. For example, younger sections of the population can hardly read two-dimensional maps these days because digital navigation systems have taken over the task of showing the way. This is fine if it is based on a conscious decision that the humane mastery of this cultural technique is no longer necessary.

In the future, however, much more elementary humane cultural techniques will be held for disposal, such as learning foreign languages, writing or reading. Digital technology can already do all this. Therefore, a cultural discourse is needed to shape post-digital life worlds.

The task of the future is not to make people fit for digitalization. Rather, we should enable young people to see this process as an artistic process that they can actively shape analog-digital spaces! This is the impact of arts education in the context of cultivating digitalization.

Thank you for very much for your attention.