



Practices, Skills, and Knowledge - PraSK

An exploration of learning opportunities in education and professional practice as a dimension of social and technological change.

The exploration is motivated by, on the one hand, rapidly and ever-changing practices with technology in everyday life, specifically in the aftermath of Covid19, on the other hand, a noticeable focus on practices in recent research publication flows (2019-2020) pertaining to education and technology.

In this context, “practices” refer to everyday *doings* with digital tools inside and outside educational settings (Bagga-Gupta, Messina Dahlberg & Lindberg 2019; Schatzki 2019), while “skills” and “knowledge” are understood holistically and relationally as the competences and professional judgements needed in order to choose, perform and complete relevant actions related to a limited field of instruction, either in school or in a professional area (Hager & Beckett 2019).

Through observations of a variety of practices that are emerging with technology implementation in education, new competences required in future educational sectors can be identified and critically examined. Skills and knowledge are shaped and specified in these social practices, where people, contexts, commercial and non-profit actors, and artefacts, such as digital tools and resources, play a part (Bagga-Gupta, Messina Dahlberg & Gynne 2019; Bonderup et al. 2019).

The pandemic crisis that struck the world in spring 2020 has had far-reaching consequences for learning contexts both in compulsory school, higher education, and professional sectors. Emergency distance education has been implemented in schools and universities on a global scale, allowing for participation in educational activities despite the necessity to stay at home. The swift move towards practices highly supported by technology is a proof of a global readiness for a broad integration of digital tools in institutional education, even though asymmetrical conditions between groups across the global South and North are evident. The sudden restrictions and lockdowns worldwide have provoked a variety of disruptive operations with the purpose to create remote teaching and learning in some weeks. Among a range of aspects, this transition has revealed urgent needs for hands-on competence development among educators at all levels. Institutional efforts to create a basic level of competences, and management of technicalities among staff in a time of crisis, has generated new and broadened communities of practices with regards to the involvement in digitalized educational contexts. Knowledge regarding these practices have not yet been articulated and shared, and, moreover, lessons from emergency solutions are to be considered in discussions on conceptualizations and practical realizations of digitalized education with high quality.

It is noteworthy that recent events that have pointed to the presence and availability of digital resources and tools for learning, sometimes described as “disruptive elements” (Hampel 2019) in the classroom, are not sufficient conditions for the implementation of the same. On the contrary, uses of media and technology for educational purposes seem to be dependent on “disruptive events” in the global society in order to become meaningful and relevant for learning (Schatzki 2019). Consequently, changes in practices with digital resources and tools can be challenging to predict and plan for. Still, innovative and transformed *doings* with tools will most certainly modify competences, more precisely, skills and knowledge, required and targeted

in various relational learning situations including humans and machines. Indeed, traditional attempts to design education and learning processes by means of prediction and rational planning are challenged by increasing complexity that can no longer be disregarded, and new ways of designing education and learning are needed (Pendleton-Julli & Brown 2018). Therefore, it is imperative to create arenas where theoretical and empirical contributions on emerging practices are highlighted (Cerratto Pargman & Jahnke 2019), and where relationships between practices, skills, and knowledge can be discussed.

The PraSK exploration is kicked off by a seminar series that encompasses different disciplines with the potential to embrace reflective endeavors related to current practices and competences at play in increasingly digitalized learning and working lives; these include computer science and informatics, human-computer interaction, educational sciences and subject didactics, philosophy, and media and communication. The seminar series aims to highlight and critically examine theoretical and empirical research issues in order to bring forth state-of-the-art scholarship of relevance to the exploration.

Instead of focusing on “best practices” in teaching and learning, the PraSK theme is concerned with identification of practices in movement inside and outside educational institutional settings, and as a way of coping with current complexities and uncertainties. For example, what happens when algorithms are implemented to improve equality in students’ school choices, distribution of excellent teachers, and grading? Which communities of practices are forming on various virtual-analogue sites and how do these re-negotiate notions of skills and knowledge?

Against such a backdrop that points to complexified contexts for learning and communication (Hager & Beckett 2019), the PraSK seminar series is an attempt to bring into dialogue both theoretical perspectives on transforming practices and real-life experiences from different fields of expertise, with the ultimate aim to advance frontline understandings of the relationships between practices, skills, and knowledge. The following seminars will initiate this endeavor; they explore thematic strands within the field of PraSK, and are relevant for current educational and professional challenges.

References:

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