

Philosophical design in digitally saturated environments

- continental philosophy translated to design didactics

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The paper departs from an analysis of transnational policy papers (OECD, WEF, EU, UNESCO) advocating for the value of the digital in education. The research organizes the intellectual underpinnings of institutional arguments, criteria and justifications of the digital, as they are evangelized through concepts like "e-learning", "blended learning", "flipped classroom" etc. Even though the linguistic innovations in this area are abundant and dynamic, I argue that its origins spring from the same source of western thinking, namely analytical philosophy, which in turn has its origins in a cartesian tradition. Put more simply: all major political institutions seem to agree that the digital (often concretized as behavioural learning designs) facilitates a generic learner's global access to universal, objective knowledge.

But in the same policy papers, a case is built for "practice based learning", "situated learning", "differentiated learning" and for building relations with the business community, also casting the learner as a unique subject, anchored in historical and local situations. Through a Boltanski-Thevenot optic I argue that this is a "monstrous composite", creating a - for the learner - self-contradictory, and untenable theoretical situation.

As a remedy, I argue for a deep approach (Biggs, J., & Tang, C., 2011) that subordinates the technological experience - and its paradoxical role in learning - to philosophical systems. As opposed to thinking the digital as a taken for granted infrastructure, or unquestionable ground from which we seek out design solutions.

The result is a proposal of how different methods could integrate philosophy as a way to a) put forth interesting artefacts with available technology b) acquiring important technical skills in the process c) through playful engagement with deeper philosophical thinking.

A number of philosophical clusters (time permitting) will be translated to, and exemplified, in partly empirically tested, partly speculative design didactics (i.e. as suggestions for exercises in a workshop), inspired by recent and contemporary scholars that have mediated or formulated grand philosophical theories of technology:

- Gilbert Simondon (artefacts that create associated milieus)
- Don Ihde (artefacts derived from post-phenomenological analysis).
- Andrew Pickering (cybernetic, adaptive artefacts)
- Yuk Hui (artefacts as interobjective, mediated by web-ontologies)
- Bruno Latour (artefacts that cross different modes of existence)
- Paul Dourish (artefacts as embodied interaction)