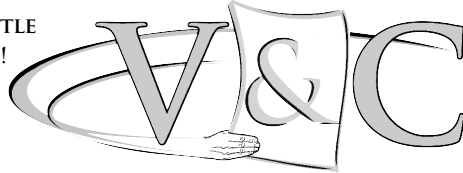


# VOICE AND COUNTERVOICE

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## HAND-TO-HAND EXPRESS

THE PEOPLE HAVE A RIGHT TO VOICE AND COUNTERVOICE

~ No. 8/18: DIGITAL EDUCATION ~

### INTRO

With the introduction of "digital education" a new school reform promises the solution to the present quality defects in the educational system: By means of electronic media such as computers, interactive digital boards, and tablets, children are meant to become more independent, more competent and better qualified for day-to-day life. This is at least what is being promised by IT companies such as Google, Microsoft, SAP or Telecom, who are the driving force behind this reform.

However, serious doubts are being raised by experts, who not only express strong objections, but have examined and evaluated the experience other countries have had with "digital education" and have concluded that rather than making progress, it's been a big step backwards, and even a real danger. You'll read more about this in this issue. [1]

The editors (and./hm.)

### Digitalization instead of natural experience

csc. The German "Jugendreport Natur 2016" (Youth Report Nature 2016) revealed that nature is no longer discovered and experienced in a playful way, but is "trained" in school lessons and at home. "It is not this result of the

### Digital education does not result in better learning

lr./fh. In 2012, after a low score in the PISA\* Ranking, Australia invested approximately 2.4 Billion Australian Dollars in laptop facilities for schools. In 2016 they began removing these devices from the classrooms. The reason: The students have done everything with it except studying. A trend back to traditional teaching materials is seen also in South Korea, Thailand, USA and Turkey. A 2015 report by the OECD\*\* depicts a similar picture. The report shows that students who use computers at school very often, show far worse learning results. In countries having invested greatly in

digitalization no improvement in Reading, Mathematics or Science could be ascertained whatsoever. According to John Vallance, Director of Sydney Grammar School, one of the most prestigious private schools of Australia, it is above all else this which helps for better learning: qualified teachers, well-structured lessons and traditional teaching methods. [2]

\*Program of the OECD for international student assessment

\*\*OECD: Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, an international organisation with 35 member states, aiming at improving economic cooperation among member states.

### Educational software retards students' maturation

js./da. Politicians and leading media are promoting digital education as a chance for individualized learning. Schoolbooks are to be replaced by learning programs on electronic devices. Joerg Draeger, board member of the German Bertelsmann foundation reports: "Knewton software is screening everyone who uses that software. The software

meticulously monitors and saves what, how and how fast a student learns." With the help of the obtained data, the software attempts to "optimize" the student into a predefined direction. This leads to the stunting of a student's maturity and ultimately leads to the development of a system to control humans. [3]

**"The reality is that technology is doing more harm than good in our schools today."**

Andreas Schleicher, Director for Education and Skills OECD

study which is perplexing, but the rapid pace with which the alienation from nature is progressing," writes the newspaper "Stuttgarter Zeitung" in Sep-

tember 2016. A British TV station showed that children between the ages of 8 and 18 are exposed to electronic media for an average of 7.5 hours a day and

### Brain damage in small children

gb./pb. Children learn by imitation, mainly from the example of their parents. When the parents are often busy with a computer, a smartphone or watching TV, also the child will ask for it. When a small child has much screen time, physical activities like painting, modelling clay, romping around, climbing etc. atrophy. But such activities are important stimuli for an optimal development of the child's brain. If the manifold movements lack at this age, certain brain structures develop improperly or not at all. As a consequence, thinking, learning, acting and planning will become stunted and impaired for life. Therefore it is all the more important that schools in addition to parents promote development through these youthful activities, instead of hindering them by a comprehensive introduction of electronic media. [4]

therefore have no time anymore for playful movement and real creative experiences in nature: for example, they no longer know how it is to climb a tree. Playing amongst children, as a very crucial development process, is replaced by playing in a virtual screen reality. This prevents the formation of a healthy relationship with nature, with fellow human beings and last not least with themselves. [5]

Sources: [1] "Speech by P. Hensinger, 21st June 2017": Trojanisches Pferd "Digitale Bildung" - auf dem Weg zur Schule ohne Lehrer? (Trojan Horse "Digital Education" - on the way to a school without teacher?) | [www.eltern-fuer-gute-bildung.de/dl/GEW\\_BB\\_Digit\\_Bildung\\_170621.pdf](http://www.eltern-fuer-gute-bildung.de/dl/GEW_BB_Digit_Bildung_170621.pdf) [2] [www.smh.com.au/national/education/the-reality-is-that-technology-is-doing-more-harm-than-good-in-our-schools-says-education-chief-20160330-gnu370.html](http://www.smh.com.au/national/education/the-reality-is-that-technology-is-doing-more-harm-than-good-in-our-schools-says-education-chief-20160330-gnu370.html) | OECD-Bericht 2015 "Students, Computers and Learning: Making the Connection" [3] Book by J. Draeger / R. Müller-Eiselt: (2015): "Die digitale Bildungsrevolution: Der radikale Wandel des Lernens und wie wir ihn gestalten können" ("The digital education revolution: The radical change in learning and how we can shape it") | [www.s-oe-s.de/aktuelles/themenabend-mit-peter-hensinger-das-smartphone-mein-personal-big-brother/](http://www.s-oe-s.de/aktuelles/themenabend-mit-peter-hensinger-das-smartphone-mein-personal-big-brother/) [4] [www.natursoziologie.de/NS/alltagsreport-natur/jugendreport-natur-2016.html](http://www.natursoziologie.de/NS/alltagsreport-natur/jugendreport-natur-2016.html) | [www.liliputlounge.de/news/eltern-smartphone/](http://www.liliputlounge.de/news/eltern-smartphone/) | <http://visionsblog.info/2017/05/20/die-cyberattacke-auf-unser-gehirn/> [5] [www.stuttgarter-zeitung.de/inhalt.jugendreport-natur-2016-bananen-wachsen-im-wald-und-baeume-haben-eine-seele.963b3c36-b7ab-474c-94bb-43b4745ad44c.html](http://www.stuttgarter-zeitung.de/inhalt.jugendreport-natur-2016-bananen-wachsen-im-wald-und-baeume-haben-eine-seele.963b3c36-b7ab-474c-94bb-43b4745ad44c.html) | [www.natursoziologie.de/NS/alltagsreport-natur/jugendreport-natur-2016.html](http://www.natursoziologie.de/NS/alltagsreport-natur/jugendreport-natur-2016.html) | [www.heise.de/tp/news/Natur-Defizit-Syndrom-2005182.html](http://www.heise.de/tp/news/Natur-Defizit-Syndrom-2005182.html) | Book by M. Spitzer, 2012: "Die digitale Demenz. Wie wir uns und unsere Kinder um den Verstand bringen." ("Digital dementia: How we deprive us and our children of our minds.")

**Virus alert!** Countervoice web sites seem to be at high risk of virus attacks. Hand-to-Hand Express avoids this danger - information concise and to the point, without using the internet - Advice for all who still consult the links: never access the internet from a PC with sensitive data.

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### Digital media impair speech development and reading ability

**büm./sem./da.** A new study presented in 2017 by the US congress of pediatricians points out that the development of speech is hindered in relation to the degree of the use of digital media. For with the use of digital media, children do not experience tone of voice, facial expression or emotions of their counterpart. As a result, the children's development of speech is hindered by virtual communication through

Facebook or WhatsApp. In the past 25 years, aside from the impairment of speech development, also a significant decline in reading has become apparent. Today many children rarely hold a book in their hands, instead they are busy almost exclusively with digital media. This impairs the ability to read, which is important for the learning and understanding of many school subjects. [6]

### Digitalization casts its shadow

**fb./ks./db.** The book "Digital Junkies" by psychiatrist and media therapist Bert te Wildt describes the smartphone as an addictive substance and gateway drug. People are being spellbound by these devices with intentionally integrated reward mechanisms: Every time the user turns on the device, he sees a nice WhatsApp message, an interesting headline or a new e-mail. That these mechanisms do work is confirmed by results of a "BLIKK-study"\*: "More than 60 % of the nine to ten-year-old kids cannot occupy themselves for more than 30

minutes without using digital media." The internet and game addiction has increased drastically amongst young people – as reported by the German medical journal "Deutsches Ärzteblatt" in December 2016. Meanwhile, it is known that internet addiction often correlates with suicidal thoughts, depression, ADHD\*\*, autism, aggressiveness and other addictions. [8]

\*„BLIKK-media“ is a German charitable project of the professional association of paediatricians investigating accomplishment, learning behaviour, intelligence, competence and communication.

\*\*Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder

*„People do not download, they busy themselves with something. And the deeper, the more intensively they busy themselves with something, the more is retained. [...] When I practice information processing in a computer and not in the brain, the brain hasn't learned anything.“*  
Manfred Spitzer, German neuroscientist and brain researcher

### Many things simultaneously – nothing properly

**urb./dc./bd.** Digital media entices children to twittering, mailing, replying to WhatsApp messages and listening to music while doing their homework. Due to the sensory overload the

things they have learned and stored in short-term memory are not converted to long-term memory. Alexander Markowetz, professor at the University of Bonn describes in his book "Digital

### Collective loneliness by Facebook & Co.

**mals./db.** Never before has a child seemingly had more friends than today with hundreds of contacts on Facebook, WhatsApp or Instagram. Everything is possible due to digital networking. But a study of the US psychologist Sara Konrath of 2011 with almost 14.000 college students over 30-years-old revealed: "The college students of today are not as empathetic as those of the 80s and 90s [...] We found the biggest decline in empathy\* after the year 2000." One

reason lies in the fact that only real, direct interpersonal contacts can activate the mirror neurons\*\* in the brain which are necessary for the ability to empathize. What remains is a collectively lonely generation of intensive users of social networks who have been deceived and denied a real life. [7]

\*Empathy is the ability and willingness to recognize and understand the thoughts, emotions, motives and personal characteristics of another person.  
\*\*Nerve cells in the brain held responsible for the creation of empathy

### Damage to health by WiFi in the classroom

**and.** More and more schools introduce iPads and laptops, which are connected via WiFi to the school network. With the use of these devices the students are meant to be prepared for working in modern, media-filled society. The consequences for health are completely overlooked, however. Various studies show that the permanent microwave radiation by WiFi and cell phones can lead to different impairments such as concentration disorders, headaches, ADHD or even cancer, especially with children and adolescents. Even the German Federal Office for the Environment warns against installing WiFi routers in spaces where people are staying perma-

nently. So these health risks are common knowledge. Considering the research results the increased use of WiFi-based learning devices is unjustifiable. [9]

Burnout" that such a life with permanent disruptions prevents the productive flow. Many things will be done simultaneously, but nothing "properly". This will have a negative influence on mental capacity and health, make oneself unproductive and eventually unhappy. [10]




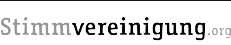


**Closing Point •**  
*This issue of V&C came into being at a meeting of V&C readers who wanted to become involved in writing articles. Many authors have written their first article with this issue. Are you interested as well in writing, researching or proofreading and thus helping us disseminate important counter-voices? Feel free to approach your V&C contact-person. He/She will connect you to a meeting of V&C writers in your vicinity. We are looking forward to meeting you!*  
The editors (and.)

**Sources:** [6] [www.merkur.de/leben/gesundheit/smartphone-verzoegern-Sprachliche-Entwicklung-kindern-zr-8282376.html](http://www.merkur.de/leben/gesundheit/smartphone-verzoegern-Sprachliche-Entwicklung-kindern-zr-8282376.html) | [www.aappublications.org/news/2017/05/04/PASScreenTime050417](http://www.aappublications.org/news/2017/05/04/PASScreenTime050417) [7] [http://psydok.psycharchives.de/jspui/bitstream/20.500.11780/3704/1/Haessler\\_PdKK\\_2012\\_5.pdf](http://psydok.psycharchives.de/jspui/bitstream/20.500.11780/3704/1/Haessler_PdKK_2012_5.pdf) | Studie von Dr. Sara H. Konrath, 2011: "Changes in Dispositional Empathy in American College Students Over Time: A Meta-Analysis Pers Soc Psychol", S. 180-198 [8] [www.drogenbeauftragte.de/presse/pressekontakt-und-mitteilungen/archiv/2015-3-quartal/ersteergebnisse-zu-blikk-medien.html](http://www.drogenbeauftragte.de/presse/pressekontakt-und-mitteilungen/archiv/2015-3-quartal/ersteergebnisse-zu-blikk-medien.html) | [www.aerzteblatt.de/треffer?mode=p&wo=272&typ=16&aid=184492&jahr=2016&s=Internet&nr=49](http://www.aerzteblatt.de/треffer?mode=p&wo=272&typ=16&aid=184492&jahr=2016&s=Internet&nr=49) [9] Article of P. Hensinger / I. Wilke, 2016: "Mobilfunk: Neue Studienergebnisse bestätigen Risiken der nicht-ionisierenden Strahlung" ("Mobile telephony: New results of studies confirm risks of non-ionising radiation") | Press information of Federal Environment Agency, No. 26/2013 "Nichts für Kindernasen: Dicke Luft in Schul- und Wohnräumen" ("Nothing for children's noses: Thick air in classrooms and living rooms") [10] Book by M. Korte, 2010: "Wie Kinder heute lernen" ("How children learn today") | [www.swr.de/swr2/programm/sendungen/wissen/synapsenstaerkung-im-neuronalschaltungel/-id=660374/did=13458446/nid=660374/15xaqt6/index.html](http://www.swr.de/swr2/programm/sendungen/wissen/synapsenstaerkung-im-neuronalschaltungel/-id=660374/did=13458446/nid=660374/15xaqt6/index.html) | Book by A. Markowetz, 2015: "Digitaler Burnout" (Digital Burnout)

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