Call for Contributions

Adult education research on digitalisation:
Concepts – Scopes – Understandings

The network "Adult Education Digitalisation Research" (NED)[1] was founded in 2019 and has since grown to become the largest network of the Adult Education Section of the German Educational Research Association (DGfE)[2]. The anthology "Erwachsenenpädagogische Digitalisierungsforschung: Impulse - Befunde - Perspektiven" (Adult Education Digitalisation Research: Impulses - Findings - Perspectives)[3], which emerged from the network, contributed to the first classification and outline of a dynamic field of research that will continue to occupy adult education research due to the rapid development of media and technologies and the associated societal and social changes. We take this fact and the need to further substantiate the field of research as an opportunity to invite the members of the network in particular, but also all other interested academics, to contribute to the second anthology entitled "Adult education research on digitalisation: Concepts – Scopes – Understandings". Our aim is to make the German discourse on research on digitalisation in adult education more accessible to an international audience through an English publication and to strengthen the ability to connect with international discourses.

The questions of where we currently stand as a network in the discourse of digitisation research in adult education and where it should go in the future, are the guiding principles of the anthology. At the same time, this framework will serve as a starting point for the research-based examination of the following three central key issues:

1. **Conceptual understandings, classifications and scopes in adult education research on digitalisation**

The starting point for the present will be a theoretical conceptual localisation. Established terms and concepts should be both sharpened and critically examined as well as questioned with regard to their suitability for adult education research on digitalisation. The aim is, on the one hand, to bring more clarity and consistency to the discussion. On the other hand, it aims to contribute to a better differentiation of approaches and understandings, ultimately to a deeper penetration of the research field on the other. The following questions, among others, can serve as inspiration for this:

- What is the reason for a separate field of research on digitisation in adult education, or what is its genuine subject matter? What are the central questions being addressed, what references are made and what further references would be necessary?

[1] https://nedswerk.de/en/
[2] https://www.dgfe.de/en/divisions-subdivisions/division-adult-education
[3] https://www.wbv.de/shop/openaccess-download/6004789w

- How does the discourse of digitalisation in adult education research relate to other discourses, such as "digital education", "media education" in the sense of "Medienbildung", "digital skills", "digital transformation", "digitality", etc.?
- What links does adult education research on digitalisation have with other educational sub-disciplines, and what interdisciplinary links might also be helpful or necessary?
- What understandings of media and digital technologies used in adult education research on digitisation and how does this impact on the subject areas (e.g. basic education and literacy) of adult education/further education?

2. Future perspectives for adult educational digitisation research

Future research on digitalisation in adult education needs to analyse the dynamics and tensions between societal, social, economic, institutional, organisational and technical developments in order to understand and respond to the associated challenges, such as the "digital divide" of the first, second and third order. The aim here is to exploit the opportunities of networked teaching/learning environments and individualised educational opportunities as well as to address and critically reflect the risks of social exclusion at the micro-didactic level. In addition, the macro- and meso-didactic levels should also be taken into account by addressing issues related to the political dimension of governance and possible influences on organisations and the adult education system as a whole. This also applies to a critical examination of current media developments and phenomena – for example, the issues of artificial intelligence (AI) and datafication for adult education need to be considered from both an ontological and a functionalist perspective. In addition, there is the task of adult education as a practical field of action and of into the digitisation of adult education as a field of research:

- How can future challenges be addressed in order to enable learning across the lifespan and thus also social participation?
- To what extent does adult education research need to address the increasing influence of the tech industry on adult education/continuing education and the associated economic interests be addressed by adult education research on digitalisation and reflected on them from a (media) critical perspective?
- Which current technological developments will be relevant for adult education/continuing education in the future and how can these developments be critically accompanied by adult education research on digitalisation?
- What ethical issues are gaining in importance and how can research on digitalisation in adult education contribution to addressing them?
- How will the relationship between teachers and learners change in the future? What role will face-to-face courses play and how will course formats, roles and business models change? What financial, legal and policy issues will arise as a consequence?

3. Methodological and methodical approaches in adult educational digitisation research

This raises the question of methodological and methodical approaches that can meet the current and future challenges in adult educational research on digitalisation:

- How is research on digitisation being conducted in adult education?

- Which methodological approaches and which methodologies are particularly appropriate? How can research methods respond to the dynamics of the field?
- What needs methodologically rethinking in the future? What might new research approaches look like?
- How do digitalisation and digitality affect the research process? What new approaches and perspectives do digital technologies offer for research and which developments should be viewed critically?

The themes presented offer starting points for your own considerations, which are either directly relevant or raising further questions. We would particularly like to encourage academics during the qualification phase and beyond tenure to present their research projects in the form of a contribution. Colleagues from disciplines other than adult education are also welcome to submit their research findings in the context of adult education, digitalisation and digitality. Contributions should be previously unpublished. It is planned to publish the anthology as open access.

Schedule

Please send us your contribution proposal in the form of an abstract of no more than 1,500 characters (incl. spaces, footnotes and literature). Preferably in one file (MS Word or PDF) by **30 November 2024** to franziska.bellinger@uni-koeln.de, ricarda.bolten-buehler@euro-fh.de and matthias.rohs@rptu.de

Abstracts should include the following information:

- Title of the article
- First and last name of the author(s)
- Institution, of applicable
- 3 to 5 keywords

You will receive feedback on the acceptance of your contribution by **15 January 2025**. If accepted, the full manuscript (maximum of 45,000 characters including spaces, footnotes and references) must be submitted by **31 March 2025**. The contributions will be subjected to an editorial review.

We look forward to your contributions!

The editors
Franziska Bellinger, Ricarda Bolten-Bühler and Matthias Rohs