Nordic Journal of Vocational Education and Training

Call for abstract for special issue of NJVET:

"Technology-mediated learning in VET. Perspectives on changing educational landscapes in the 21st century"

Guest editors:
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Theme:
The challenges and opportunities of a digitalised era when it comes to the planning, implementation and evaluation of educational practices have been focused upon in research and by policy makers over the last decades. Digital technologies have been framed in terms of an educational panacea for a rather long time envisaging the implementation of so called digital innovations in schools and other professional arenas as the solutions to a wide range of issues, from inclusion to accessibility and equity, to growing efficiency and marketisation (Messina Dahlberg, 2015). Digitalisation is seen as playing an important role in creating open, inclusive participation. It has shaped the practice and outreach of education since the advent of the internet, not least in relation to the inclusion of marginalized groups in society for whom education was not a prioritized agenda. However, digitalisation and its role in education continues to be treated uncritically. Many innovative developmental projects in schools and adult education, including vocational education and training (VET), are the outcome of individual efforts and are often delivered as ready-to-use packages from private organizations, rather than emerging from organic pedagogical investments and developmental endeavours based on end-users' actual needs. Thus, critical perspectives have started to raise concerns about the actual benefits of the implementation of technology-mediated learning (TML) in educational contexts, in favour of an approach that takes technology as not inherently likely to bring advancements in education, but rather as an approach that takes technology *as it is* used in practice (Selwyn, 2011).

Such tensions and contradictions take on new dimensions in VET, both for educators and students in upper secondary vocational education including vocational adult education. Issues of professional-based training, control, standardization, globalization and sustainability are only some examples of the challenges where TML and learning environments are seen as possible and relevant solutions in a post-modern era (see also Moreno Herrera, 2016). Furthermore, there exists a paucity of scholarship that focuses on pedagogical issues related to the use and implementation of TML in VET. Educational institutions are currently facing several challenges that deal with increasingly digitalised teaching and learning practices where more critically and theoretically informed pedagogical development work is needed.

The symposium organised at the 2018 annual conference NORDYRK on digital driving simulation in vocational training: educational challenges and opportunities in the natural resources use program (YRKSIM) is one step towards this direction (Gustavsson, Berglund, Messina Dahlberg & Holmén, 2018). Simulator-based learning and instruction in VET is one example of the ways in which TML can contribute towards the creation and development of emerging practices that, in turn, aim at bridging the gap between theory and practice and virtual and real in today's changing educational landscapes.

Taking the above as point of departure, this special issue draws attention to and sheds light on two overarching issues that are central for the development of VET research and practice: i) to investigate and critically review some of the identified challenges and opportunities that arise with the digitalization of vocational training and ii) to shape and develop successful systematic development work as conditions for change in educational practice as well as in the overall organisation.

The sub-themes that are of interest for the special issue relate to the area of vocational education and training. These include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Virtual reality and simulation
- Game-based learning and serious games
- Online learning and distance/web-based education
- Blended learning
- Digital tools and practice for documentation and evaluation of students' learning
- Online tools during workplace-based learning

We are mainly interested in studies that focus on social interaction and/or curriculum development and practice-based/action research and reports on development projects (the latter will not go through a double-blind peer-review process). Research that focus on textual data, for instance, literature, curriculum, historical data are also elicited.

Call for abstract specifications

1. The following information should be included in the abstract (max 1000 words)
    - Name, affiliation
    - Theme, rationale
    - Theoretical framework
    - Methodology and data
    - Spell out how you think your study will contribute to the special issue
2. A biographical text, including the authors' recent publication track-record (max 100 words for every author)

Abstract should be submitted to giulia.messina.dahlberg@gu.se by **15 September 2018**. Notification of acceptance and editors' feedback will be sent out by the end of October. The deadline for the first draft of the articles, unless negotiated in advance with the editors, is **31 March 2019**.

References

Gustavsson, S., Berglund, I. Messina Dahlberg, G. & Holmén, J. (2018). Digitaliseringens utmaningar och möjligheter för undervisningen - exemplet körsimulering i naturbruksutbildning. Paper at *Nordyrk,* 11-13 June, Oslo Askerhus, Norway.

Messina Dahlberg, G. (2015). *Languaging in virtual learning sites. Studies of online encounters in the language-focused classroom.* Doctoral dissertation. Örebro: Örebro Studies in education nr. 49.

Moreno Herrera, L. (2016). Yrkesutbildningsutmaningar i nya tider: vilken väg ska vi ta? (Vocational education and training in new times: what is the best way forward?). *Nordic Journal of Vocational Education and Training, 6*(2), 66-83.

Selwyn, N. (2011). Editorial: In praise of pessimism – the need of negativity in educational technology. *British Journal of Educational Technology, 42*(2), 713-718.