



Digitalising Schools – the challenge of building educational environments for the future

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Abstract

This paper will focus on the process of digitalising schools as an innovative education strategy. In the paper we shall focus specifically on teachers and how teachers can be implicated in educational innovation that involves digital media. The paper draws on experiences from an ongoing project in Vejle, Denmark, where 40 schools highlight IT use, culture and diversity in The Knowledge Society School (<http://www.vejledigitaleskoler.net/>) Based on our experiences from the Vejle Digital Schools project and existing research literature, we argue that teachers have a central role in implementing educational transformations involved in the digitalisation of schools, but that teachers are also often hesitant towards the pressures of adopting change. One aspect of teachers' reaction to the digitalisation of practice is a feeling of losing control (e.g. with what pupils are learning) as ICTs are often conceptualised as media that are mastered by the pupils. In addition to this, loss of control seems to be intimately connected with the idea that technology will fail, i.e. that technical failure is a natural consequence of involving ICTs in education. Finally, teachers' reaction to the loss of control involved in the transformation of practice may be affected by the fact that ICT strategies in education are generally implemented as part of national education policies rather than local and practice based educational development. In the paper we shall argue that the problem of mastering teaching and learning is central not only to the digitalisation of education but to teaching as such, and that most teachers have experiences with coping with loss of control as an element of practice. Thus we see technical problems and loss of control as potential points for reflection on and transformation of practice that should be incorporated into innovative school developments such as the Vejle Digital Schools initiative.