

Intro text for the HUB draft

Welcome to the Easy Learning Part of the Digitclue HUB! This is a collaborative learning space on issues related to Digital Inclusion which you are free to use in order to obtain and/or strengthen your knowledge of the digital world and its didactic aspects with a special focus on how to make it more inclusive for pre-service teachers, in-service teachers, and university trainers/staff and learners.

One of the core principles of the Digitclue HUB is that one can learn through engaging with a number of interconnected texts. The starting point of this learning mosaic is the core text on Digital Inclusion. As you read the text, you will be able to click further by following the links represented by underlined concepts, which will lead you to the respective texts. Each text contains a list of references allowing you to look into further literature. [Further concepts will be added step by step]

In case you want to keep track of your learning path, you are welcome to choose the option: “Portfolio”. This enables you to save the texts you have been working through in one learning session [this function is under construction].

Digital Inclusion

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Digital Inclusion can mean different things in different contexts unlike digital accessibility, which focuses on the use of digital systems and services by people to the widest extent possible. Depending on the social environment someone is inhabiting, working or studying in, it can be defined in various ways. Furthermore, different disciplines (including anthropology, sociology, educational science and technology studies, humanities, architecture, engineering, and math domains¹) and research fields explore and apply knowledge on digital inclusion.

Digital inclusion refers to the ability of individuals and groups to access and use information and communication technologies regardless of their gender, age, socio-economic position, location, language, physical challenges etc.

¹ STEM

Jochim (2021) defines digital inclusion as the possibility for everyone to participate in the digital media world. Here the term primarily refers to digital participation and related core issues of social inequality, and the unequal access to media and the internet. This implies not only having access to the internet, but exclusion due to lacking infrastructure. A number of authors (Norris, 2001) also refer to the notions of the digital divide/inequality and digital inequality (Robinson et al., 2015). Additionally, the individuals' competency is of high relevance, which is addressed by comprehensive discourse about digital competencies (Vuorikari et al., 2016). Only rarely discussed, is the momentum of different digital culture(s) and cyberethics, i.e. further concepts which may lead to a different perception of the meaningfulness of digitality for any purpose (Köhler, 2021). There is an absence of competences to communicate due to lack of knowledge of sign language, braille, using captions, generate image descriptions and other media as specified by Web Content Accessibility guidelines.

Dickel and Franzen's (2015) sociological approach to digital inclusion, highlights that the digital change in the last decades, leads to new opportunities for digital participation and interactions in and through digital media. They view the increase of digital usage, as a sign of increased inclusion of society to participate, even in the scientific world. There are new possibilities to share and comment on developments in society. Franzen and Dickel here refer to "democratization of science". The base of this definition is Dirk Baecker's (2016) application of Luhmann's theory of the epoch change to the context and processes of digitalisation. The idea is that digitalisation has the potential to change social formations. This means that digitalisation not only refers to new possibilities of participation, but also changes society and reconfigures social relationships, and thus the dynamics and understanding of inclusion (Dickel & Franzen, 2015). (digital transformation)

Lea Schulz's (2020) phenomenon of digital inclusion is captured in her novel concept of "Diclusion", which is an attempt to think about digitality and inclusion in an integrative and holistic way. This term refers to the handling and use of the digital media seen through the lens of inclusion. As it is thought of an integrated concept, both phenomena (digital and inclusion) mutually influence each other and can benefit from each other. Schulz uses this word in the context of the educational sector, but it can also be applied within other social spheres and with regard to different social phenomena and processes such as; race, gender, ethnicity,

multilingualism, migration, sexual orientation, mental, sensory or physical disabilities, family, religion, world-making, culture, age, social class, and many others (Schulz, 2020).

The term diversity means variety, dissimilarity or heterogeneity. This includes various dimensions such as: gender, sexual identity, age, world view, social and ethnic origin, health and many more. Inclusion takes up this concept and is illuminated in all social areas of life, work and also learning, in a versatile and cross-thematic way. Through the new possibilities of digital usage, approaches like activism can be transferred from the offline world into the online world, which is then called digital activism (Disability rights movement to acknowledge lobbyism of organisations and individuals representing people with a disability e.g. “not without us about us”). Political confrontation can be transferred to the virtual sphere. Together with the political dimension comes the question whether digital inclusion should be considered a human right (Flavo, 2017)? With the internet it is possible to spread ideas, ideologies, and stories all over the world. For young people in particular, who are growing up with digital media, it is a medium for sharing stories, experiences and wishes, processes and practices, captured by the concepts of digital storytelling/narrative (Dogan, 2021).

Besides the numerous advantages that accompany the usage of digital media, there are also aspects of exclusion. Like in many other areas, there exists a digital gender gap as well as a digital queer gap, which varies across the world (Mobile Gender Gap Report, 2020). Another aspect is the digital age gap. Digitalisation can lead to social inequality for people 65+, who as research shows, tend to use digital media to a lesser extent for a number of reasons (Schumacher Dimech & Misoch, 2017) and this provides a less pronounced digital literacy (Jones & Hafner, 2021; Falloon, 2020). These gaps can be summarized under the term digital divide, which describes the inequality concerning usage and access to digital media (Hartung-Ziehlke, 2020).

Today it is common in well-off countries (and beyond) to have access to the internet and digital devices. However, digital inclusion is also related to socioeconomic factors, since it is not possible for everyone to buy the required “digital infrastructure”, like PCs, laptops, smartphones, and internet access such as Wi-Fi-devices. A second point which is important in this context, is related to education and labelled as “digital literacy” (Jones & Hafner, 2021; Falloon, 2020). Many apps and websites presume that every user can handle the sometimes complex requirements. Thus, apart from the needed infrastructure, users need to have specific digital skills (Garmendia & Karrera, 2019). Two important related terms here are: digital native

and digital naive. They are describing to what extent and in what way people can make use of digital media in a critical, creative, and varied way (Ganguin & Meister, 2013). Indeed it has been addressed earlier (Frindte & Köhler, 1999) that there are communicative techniques that serve inclusive practices. Most recently, just before and within the pandemic, the aspect of providing appropriate skill sets and programmes for development of competencies leads to unifying approaches on an international level with European (DIGCOMP, 2022) or even global standardization (UNESCO OER, 2022; UN SDGs, 2022).

Social exclusion is related to digital exclusion, since the category of language must be considered as well when trying to understand the digital as a space of in-/exclusion. Especially for ethnic minorities it is difficult to navigate through the internet, as there are seldom websites in their native language (such as Romani) or the possibility to translate doesn't exist (Garmendia & Karrera, 2019).

The so-called digital transformation does reach out to every domain of society. Among them, the conditions of knowledge access, including learning and other forms of participation, are influenced by technological conditions worldwide. Not only in Europe, educators are faced with the challenge of using digital media extensively in teacher training and at any educational institute, or to allow and support its usage. Most recent media concepts such as BYOD (bring your own device) or OER (open educational resources) represent only some aspect of comparatively extensive development dynamics. Industry itself does trigger further dynamics in the context of the so-called 4.0-metaphor and the respective new production technologies, which call for extensive momentum in potentially inclusive practices (Köhler & Marquet, 2017).

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