

# Digitalization challenging physical culture and education – Current issues in sport pedagogical research

Stefan Meier<sup>1</sup>, Daniel Rode<sup>2</sup>, Sebastian Ruin<sup>\*3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Institute of Sport Science, University of Vienna, Vienna, Austria

<sup>2</sup> Department of Sport and Exercise Science, University of Salzburg, Salzburg, Austria

<sup>3</sup> Institute of human movement science, sport and health, University of Graz, Graz, Austria

\* sebastian.ruin@uni-graz.at

## EDITORIAL

Submitted: 14 December 2022

Published: 2 May 2023

### Editor-in-Chief:

Claudio R. Nigg, University of Bern, Switzerland

### Guest Editor:

Sebastian Ruin, University of Graz, Austria

### Citation:

Meier, S., Rode, D., & Ruin, S. (2023). Digitalization challenging physical culture and education – Current issues in sport pedagogical research. *Current Issues in Sport Science*, 3(3), Article 001. <https://doi.org/10.36950/2023.3ciss001>

## ABSTRACT

This Special Issue focuses on technology and how people are making sense of this related to body, movement, exercise and health through a sport pedagogical lens.

### Keywords

*digital, digitalization, physical education, sport pedagogy, technology*

## Editorial

Sport pedagogical research is concerned with advancing body- and movement-related processes of experiencing, learning, and subjectivation in the context of sport, physical education (PE), physical activity (PA), and play through theoretical, empirical, and practice-oriented scholarship.

If you walk into any sport pedagogical setting today, the chances are high you will find that digital media, computer devices, or internet applications play an important role for how people are making sense of issues related to body, movement, exercise, or health. Digitality is also featured prominently in many policy documents and PE curricula and there is a growing number of best practice examples for using digital technology in the PE classroom. At same time, people

are still challenged to find rewarding answers to this “new media situation” (Taekke & Paulsen, 2021, p. 1), or “digital condition” (Stalder, 2018), in which sport, PE, PA, and play have arrived.

Sport pedagogical scholarship has tried to meet these challenges with both, pessimistic concerns about digital technology affecting young people’s PA and with optimistic assumptions about technology’s beneficial effects, for example, on PE. Put in the metaphor used by Taekke & Paulsen (2021, p. 2), there has been a tendency to take “for granted that digitalisation has a certain impact, X,” on sport pedagogical settings and phenomena as if digitalization and these settings and phenomena “were like two billiard balls”. Discussions then have focused on “what the impact of X is (whether positive or negative, big or small)” (Taekke & Paulsen, 2021, p. 2).

However, sport pedagogy is recently moving beyond such reductionistic and deterministic billiard ball approaches (e.g., Rode, 2021): What is challenging about digitalization is that it cannot be reduced to questions about inherent or univocal effects of digital technology, viewed as a “technological fix” (Peters et al., 2021, p. 2) or grasped through notions of the digital as separate other to a natural body, physical activity, or sports. Digitalization, like other media revolutions before, instead opens new possibilities for human activities and experiences in sport, PE, PA, and play, but also entails “coverings, oblivions, challenges and problems” (Taekke & Paulsen, 2021, p. 1) while leaving open how to respond to and shape these developments.

Following this line of thought, recent scholarship has, for example, developed entangled pedagogical approaches “where there is a mutual shaping among technology and pedagogy based on the purpose, context and methods” (Wallace et al., 2022, p. 4). It has yielded case-based approaches aimed at better understanding “why, how, for whom, and to what (if any) benefit” (Armour et al., 2016, p. 1) technology is used in PE (Casey et al., 2016). And it has revisited established principles of teaching and learning critically (Meier & Ruin, 2021). Empirical research has, for

example, explored how entanglements between persons and their digital self-tracking devices are shaped in processes of embodiment (Rode & Stern, 2022). It has explored which new roles, tasks, and possibilities for participation emerge in tablet (Greve et al., 2020) and video camera (Goodyear et al., 2014) based PE lessons following different learning approaches. And it has investigated how certain PE-related online formats, which gained particular interest during the coronavirus pandemic, blend PE, popular physical culture, and internet lifestyle capitalism and (re)produce exclusionary assumptions about movement, bodies, and PA (Bowles et al., 2022; Lambert et al., 2022).

These spotlights show that digitalization raises issues about how fundamental sport pedagogical categories can/must be (re)conceptualized, what knowledge, norms and ideals concerning these categories or concerning the digital is perpetuated, how learning in PE may be (re)configured, or how pedagogical practice may be (re)located in the field. The articles featured in this hot topic section contribute to advancing the research and scholarship on such current issues challenging sport pedagogy in the digital age.

Sebastian Ruin and Martin Giese identify body, movement and experience as fundamental issues whose conceptualization is crucial for sport pedagogical work on the theoretical, practical, and empirical levels in sport pedagogical contexts. With that in mind they seek to (re-)locate body, movement, and experience in a digitized world, confronting traditional sport pedagogical conceptualizations with philosophical and sociological considerations on digitality.

Stefan Meier and André Poweleit investigate to what extent issues of digitalization appear in PE curricula as it is the central role of a curriculum to act as a systematic framework for the course of learning. Following a comparative approach, the paper critically examines how digitalization is interpreted for official curriculum texts in and across current curricula in three German-speaking countries.

Daniel Rode and Benjamin Zander focus on a specific kind of websites that became popular for the remote teaching of school physical education in Germany during the coronavirus pandemic. Following a poststructuralist approach and treating these websites as a discourse arena, they investigate how students are discursively positioned as subjects of pandemic PE.

Thomas Hoffmann and Gregor Wolbring critically reflect on the sport of people with disabilities, how the phenomenon of the so-called super-crips through technological possibilities becomes more and more techno-super-crips. Still geared to the logic of higher, faster, further, technical possibilities are used compensatorily and, if necessary, also beyond that, which brings with it a variety of consequences for sport and the athletes concerned.

## References

- Armour, K. M., Casey, A., & Goodyear, V. A. (2016). A pedagogical cases approach to understanding digital technologies and learning in physical education. In A. Casey, K. M. Armour, & V. A. Goodyear (Eds.), *Digital technologies and learning in physical education: Pedagogical cases* (pp. 1–12).
- Bowles, H., Clift, B. C., & Wiltshire, G. (2022). Joe Wicks, lifestyle capitalism and the social construction of PE (with Joe). *Sport, Education and Society*. Advance online publication. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13573322.2022.2117150>
- Casey, A., Armour, K. M., & Goodyear, V. A. (Eds.). (2016). *Digital technologies and learning in physical education: Pedagogical cases*. Routledge.
- Goodyear, V. A., Casey, A., & Kirk, D. (2014). Hiding behind the camera: Social learning within the cooperative learning model to engage girls in physical education. *Sport, Education and Society*, 19(6), 712–734. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13573322.2012.707124>
- Greve, S., Thumel, M., Jastrow, F., Krieger, C., Schwedler, A., & Süßenbach, J. (2020). The use of digital media in primary school PE – Student perspectives on product-oriented ways of lesson staging. *Physical Education and Sport Pedagogy*, 27(1), 43–58. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17408989.2020.1849597>
- Lambert, K., Luguetti, C., & Lynch, S. (2022). Feminists against fad, fizz ed: A poetic commentary exploring the notion of Joe Wicks as physical education. *Physical Education and Sport Pedagogy*, 27(6), 559–577. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17408989.2021.1911982>
- Meier, S., & Ruin, S. (2021). Digitalität als Thema eines mehrperspektivischen Sportunterrichts? [Digitality as a topic of multi-perspective PE?]. *Bewegung und Sport*, 75(2), 8–15.
- Peters, M. A., Jandrić, P., & Hayes, S. (2021). Postdigital-biodigital: An emerging configuration. *Educational Philosophy and Theory*. Advance online publication. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00131857.2020.1867108>
- Rode, D. (2021). Digitalisierung als kultureller Prozess – Grundlegende Bestimmungen und sportpädagogische Anschlüsse jenseits der Technologie [Digitalization as a cultural process. Basic concepts and sport pedagogical implications beyond technology]. In C. Steinberg & B. Bonn (Eds.), *Digitalisierung und Sportwissenschaft* (pp. 39–62).
- Rode, D., & Stern, M. (2022). Entanglement, irritation and routinisation: The embodied pedagogy of digital activity tracking. *Sport, Education and Society*. Advance online publication. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13573322.2022.2029391>
- Stalder, F. (2018). *The digital condition*. Polity.

Taekke, J., & Paulsen, M. (2021). *A new perspective on education in the digital age: Teaching, media and Bildung*. Bloomsbury Publishing.

Wallace, J., Scanlon, D., & Calderón, A. (2022). Digital technology and teacher digital competency in physical education: A holistic view of teacher and student perspectives. *Curriculum Studies in Health and Physical Education*. Advance online publication. <https://doi.org/10.1080/25742981.2022.2106881>

## **Acknowledgements**

### **Funding**

The authors have no funding or support to report.

### **Competing interests**

The authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

### **Data availability statement**

All relevant data are within the paper.