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Understanding the Evocation of Digital Media

The fact that girls still use computer and internet less intensive than boys and that highly educated young people present as much higher proportion of intensive users than low educated young people (JIM-Study 2005), has little implications with respect to social participation, to development of identity and access to education. Christian Pfeiffer and Manfred Spitzer can even argue – and find a high public acceptance - that there is a negative relation between the use of computer and the school performance and that the better performance of girls are just a result of their higher media abstinence.

Even though the claim of such a deterministic relation is not only (educationally) politically irresponsible but also scientifically highly dubious, it is at the same time a reaction to a failed policy of education with respect to the implementation of computers in schools. There the attention was focused on the skills for using computers. The new conditions of work, learning and playing, which are developing in the information society and the new relations, subsequently arising between these different spheres, have not been considered as challenge for a new media education. "Digital" inequality is currently expressed in the way in which the evocation of "intelligent" artefacts and social communication media are adopted and accepted. The point is not the amount and intensity of the use of computer. It is rather to use the new connections between human and machine, body and soul, symbol and physics, technology and content in a way enabling new forms interactions.

The challenge for initiatives of digital education with respect to girls and boys and for young people from different educational milieus and social backgrounds is to make digital media understandable in their role for the information society and their meaning for the development of identity. Digital media should be understand as "Montessori-Materials". They should be used as access-media for the understanding of new social realities in the information society and as media to think and act (learn) with in reciprocal interaction. In order to do so new relations between leisure and school, a new form of academic education of teachers and changing relations between pupils and teachers are essential.