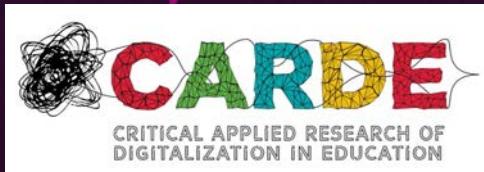
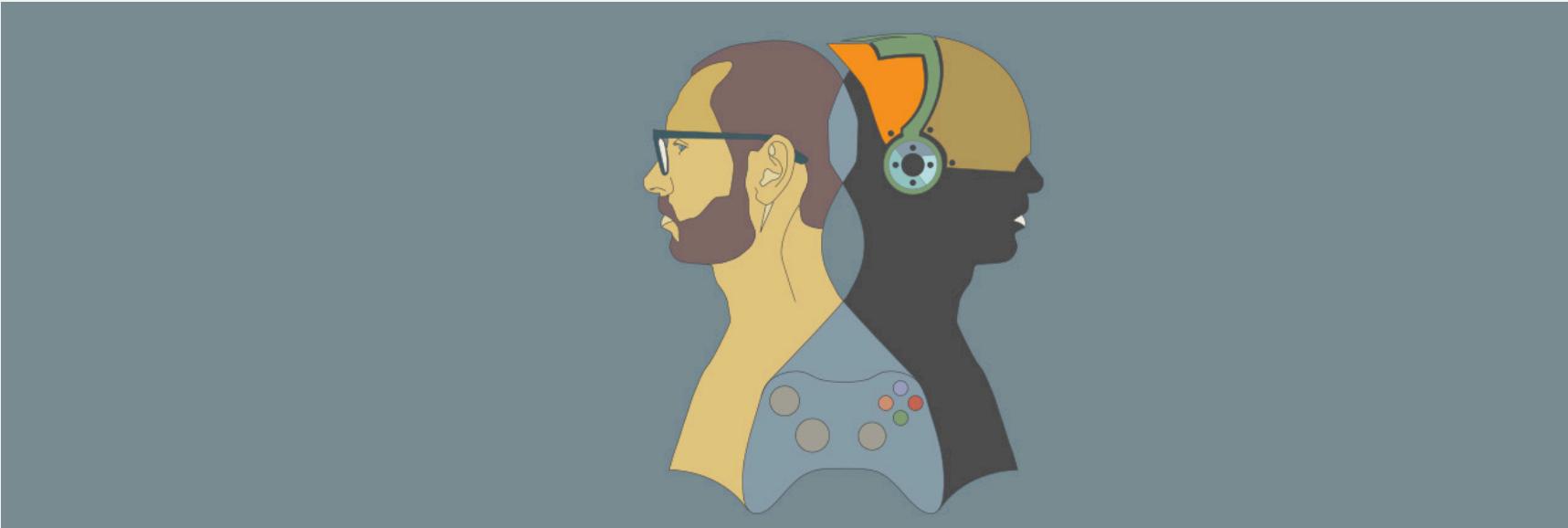


Utopian and speculative methods in imagining and co-creating the future of postdigital higher education

Imagining possible futures, Jyväskylä
19 June, 2024

Dr Marko Teräs
CARDE research group
Social Sciences, Tampere University





Background

Developer, educator, researcher in human-computer interaction, online learning, virtual environments, learning analytics, digitalization and datafication the past 15+ years



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Co-founder and lead of **CARDE** (Critical Applied Research of Digitalization in Education) research group.

Founded in 2020.

Website: <https://carde.group>





Current research project

“Speculative social science
fiction of digitalization in
higher education: Towards a
humanized digital future”

Funded by the Research Council of
Finland (2021-2025)

More at <https://carde.group>

Speculative fiction and utopian thinking as ways to imagine alternative futures

[Home](#) > [Postdigital Science and Education](#) > Article

Speculative Social Science Fiction of Digitalization in Higher Education: From What Is to What Could Be

Commentaries | [Open access](#) | Published: 25 October 2021

Volume 4, pages 224–236, (2022) [Cite this article](#)

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[Juha Suoranta](#), [Marko Teräs](#), [Hanna Teräs](#), [Petar Jandrić](#), [Susan Ledger](#), [Felicitas Macgilchrist](#)  & [Paul Prinsloo](#)

 4806 Accesses  23 Citations  18 Altmetric  1 Mention [Explore all metrics](#) →



METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

METHODOLOGY

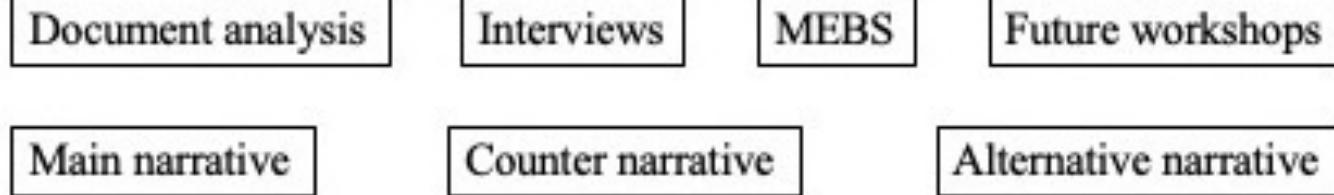
DATA COLLECTION

REPORTING

Institutional Ethnography

Social Science Fiction

Extending IE
with SF



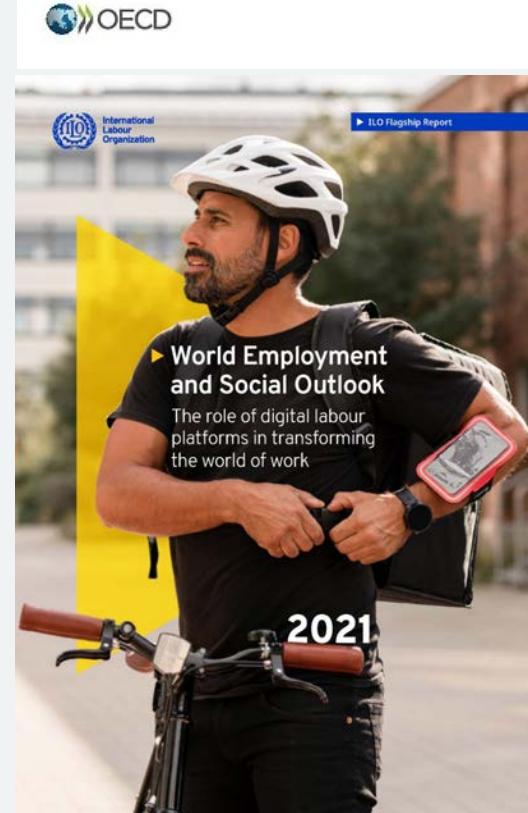
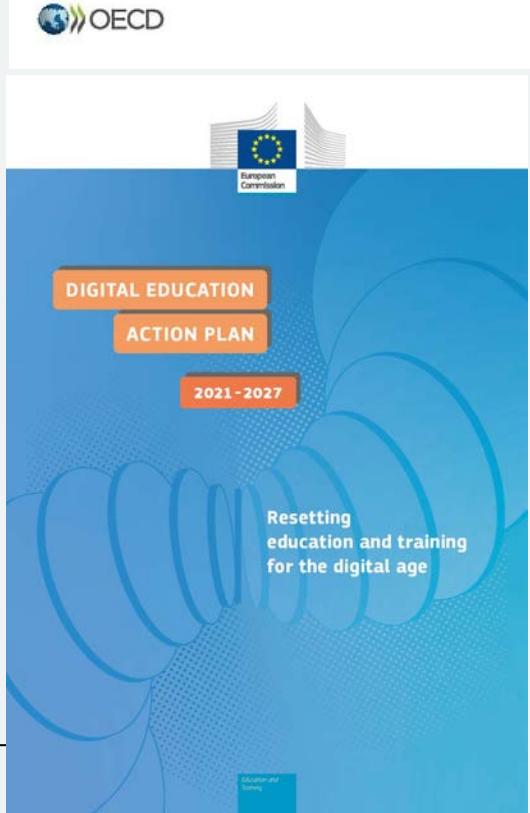
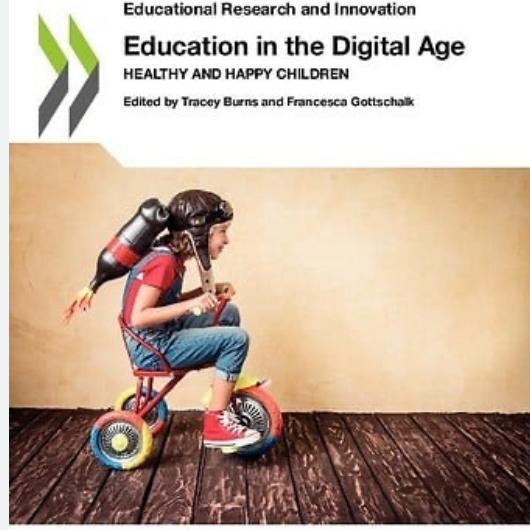
Speculative social science fiction of digitalization in higher education

Main narrative:
How is digitalization
discursively constructed
in the contexts of HE?

Counter narrative:
What is the lived
experience of being a
teaching academic?

Alternative narratives:
How do academics envision
desirable/undesirable
futures?





Future visions



Future

visions

and policies





Higher education and research

Higher education institutions and science agencies

Policy and development in higher education and science

International strategy for higher education and research

Steering, financing and agreements

Higher education and degrees

Science and research

Statistics

Vision for higher education and research in 2030

The vision for the Finnish higher education and research in 2030 was drawn up in cooperation with higher education institutions and other stakeholders and was published in October 2017.

NB: This project has ended and the webpage will no longer be updated.

The purpose was to formulate a future scenario which enables the development of a high-quality, effective and internationally competitive higher education system in Finland by the year 2030.

In the course of this work, different alternatives and models for improving the Finnish higher education system were examined and their impacts and feasibility assessed. The development needs of the Finnish higher education and research were reviewed and the future desired state defined on the basis of the changes in the national and international operating environment.

The work was carried out in broad and open cooperation with the higher education institutions and their staff, students and stakeholders.

See also

[Roadmap for Implementing Vision 2030](#) PDF 736kB 31.1.2019

[Proposal for Finland](#) PDF 467kB 24.10.2017

[OECD report on collaboration among higher education institutions](#) PDF 1.1MB 17.11.2017

**National
future visions
and policies**

Critical Document

Discourse Analysis

Critical discourse analysis of
intergovernmental and governmental,
international and national documents

OECD

UNESCO

World Economic Forum

EU

Finnish Ministry of Education

Finnish National Agency for Education

Finnish Government

Digivision 2030 initiative



The Palgrave Handbook on Critical Theories of Education

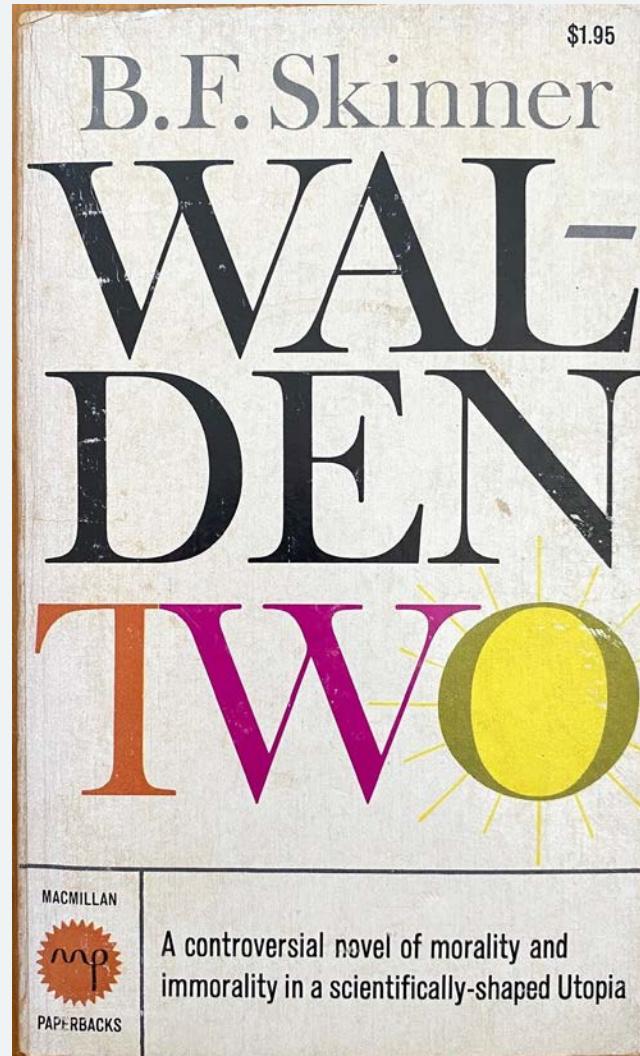
Edited by
Ali A. Abdi · Greg William Mislaszek

**palgrave
macmillan**

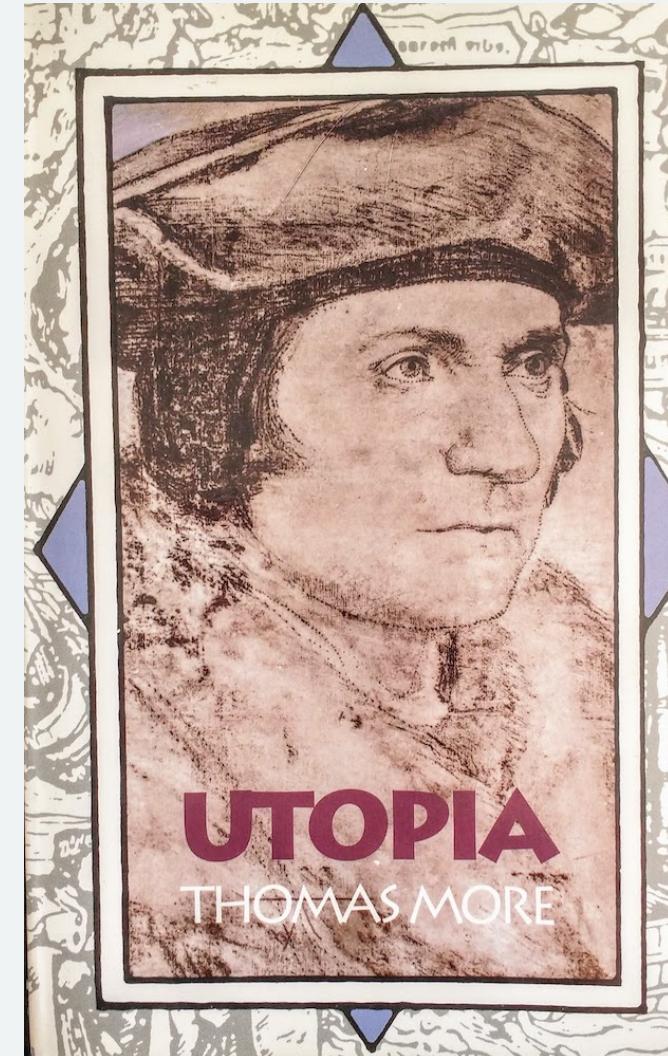


“Official Document Utopias”

- These documents build a picture of a future which can be ensured with digitalization/datafication
- They also build the future they only claim to predict
- Possible futures become *a* future
- **These utopias affect educational policies and decision-making and shape our educational systems**

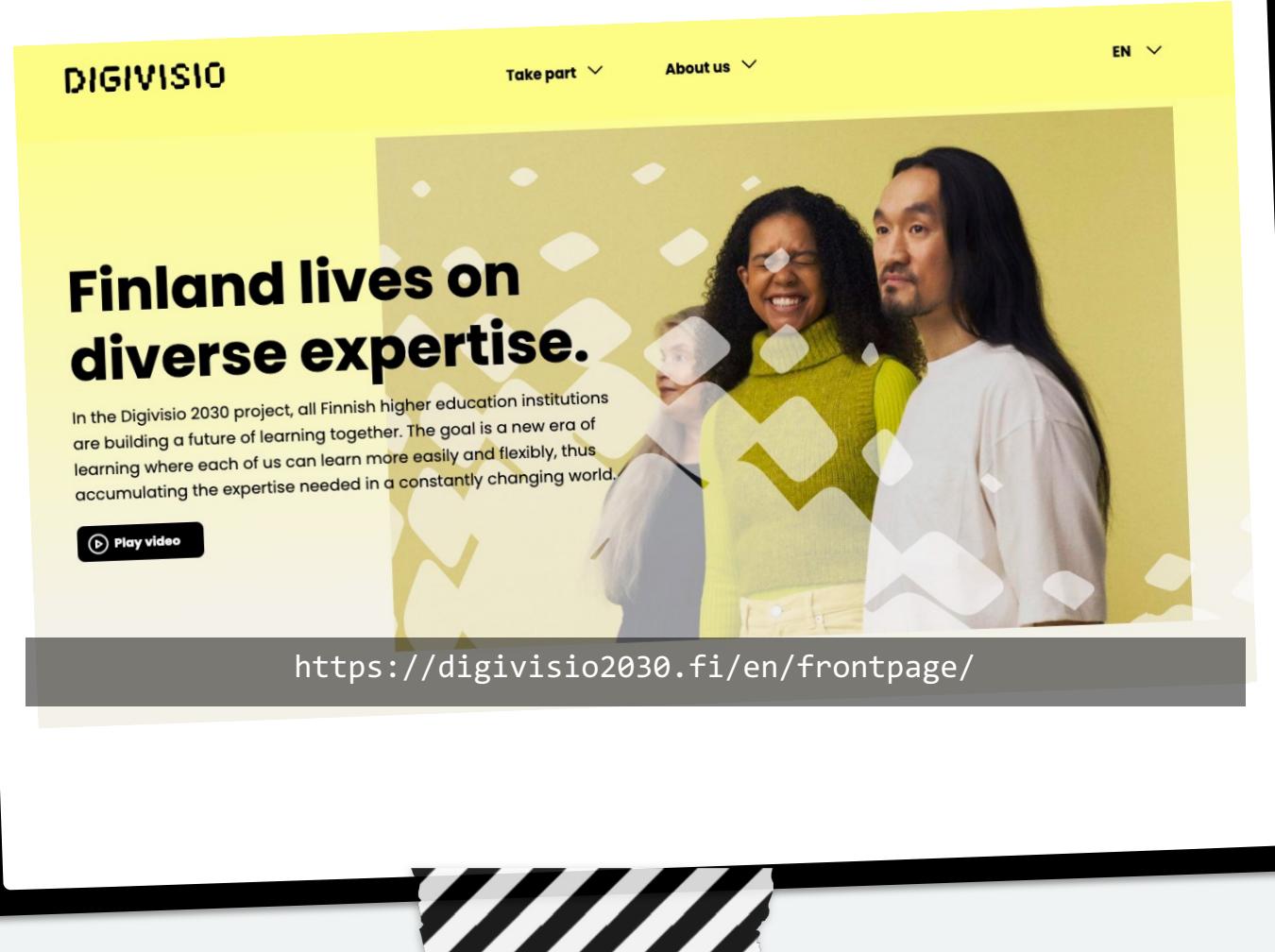


(1948)



(1516)

“Digivisio 2030”: Operationalizing a technological utopia?



DIGIVISIO

Take part ▾ About us ▾ EN ▾

Finland lives on diverse expertise.

In the Digivisio 2030 project, all Finnish higher education institutions are building a future of learning together. The goal is a new era of learning where each of us can learn more easily and flexibly, thus accumulating the expertise needed in a constantly changing world.

Play video

<https://digivisio2030.fi/en/frontpage/>

- A national initiative funded by the Finnish Ministry of Education and Culture
- All 38 Finnish higher education institutions have signed the project's participation agreement, and the project office was established at the end of 2020.
(<https://digivisio2030.fi/en/basic-information-on-the-digivisio-2030-project>)

Tiede & Edistys 1-2 (2024)

English book chapter coming
in 2024–2025.

TUTKIMUSARTIKKELI



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Koulutus digitalisaation vallassa? Kohti data- ja algoritmiohjattua korkeakoulutusta

JUHA SUORANTA, MARKO TERÄS & HANNA TERÄS

ABSTRAKTI Suomalaisen korkeakoulutuspolitiikan tehtäväistä ovat pitkään olleet taloudellisen kasvun ja tuottavuuden tavoitteet. Perinteisesti niitä on pyritty edistämään korkeakoulujen rakenneellisella kehittämisellä. Tämän "korkeakoulutuksen tehostamisdoktriiniin" keinovalikoimaan on sittemmin sisällytetty myös korkeakoulutuksen digitalisaatio. Sen myötä tehokkuusdoktriinin painopiste on siirtynyt koulutuksen rakenteista opiskelijan henkisten kapasiteettien optimointiin. Suomessa korkeakoulutuksen digitalisaatio on ryhdyttynyt edistämään *Digivisio 2030*-nimisellä korkeakoulujen yhteishankkeella. Artikkelimme problematisoi hankkeen "arvolupauksia" ja tarkelee tätä kautta koulutuksen digitalisaatiota sosioeknisän kuvitelmana eli esityksenä, jonka on tarkoitus ohjata yhteiskuntaan ja ihmisten toimintaa kohti teknologiapainotteista tulevaisuutta. *Digivisio 2030*

Suomalaisen korkeakoulutuspolitiikan pitkäaikainen tavoite on ollut taloudellisen kasvun ja tuottavuuden edistäminen koulutuksen avulla. Koulutuksen digitalisaatio on siirtämässä tämän "tehostamisdoktriiniin" uuteen vaiheeseen. Digitalisaatiolla pyritään tehostamaan massoittuneen korkeakoulutuksen läpivirtausta ja tuottamaan opiskelijoille tietotaloudessa

tarvittavia kvalifiikaatioita. Kansantalouden kasvuun liittyvä kvalifiikaatiotehtävä on ollut keskeinen osa suomalaista koulutuspolitiikkaa 1960-luvulta lähtien. Uudistetun doktriinin ytimessä on siirtyminen koulutuksen rakenteista opiskelijan yksilöllisten valintojen optimointiin eli käytännössä opintojen nopeuttamiseen esimerkiksi tekoliypohjaisten sovellusten avulla

From high level hopes to local level utopias



Postdigital Participation in Education pp 177–198 | [Cite as](#)

[Home](#) > [Postdigital Participation in Education](#) > Chapter

From Official Document Utopias to a Collective Utopian Imagination

[Marko Teräs](#)  [Hanna Teräs](#) & [Juha Suoranta](#)

Chapter | [Open Access](#) | [First Online: 29 September 2023](#)

505 Accesses

Part of the [Palgrave Studies in Educational Media](#) book series (PSEM)

Abstract

In their chapter, Teräs, Teräs, and Suoranta critique the current dominant narrative of the digitalization of higher education. They argue that reports and vision papers by powerful international and national organizations such as the OECD not only predict but also build a certain kind of digital future. They call these reports “official document utopias,” and reflect on their discursive truth with past utopian literature. The authors argue that we should use collective utopian methods to imagine genuinely alternative “postdigital” futures, and to this end, they introduce the Method of Empathy-Based Stories. While discussing its history, they also reflect on its potential and limitations through a study with Finnish teacher students, imagining the digitalization of higher education in 2050.



***Speculative methods for
alternative digital futures
(on an organizational/people level):***

Method of Empathy-Based Stories (MEBS)

Scenario 1:
We are living in the year 2050. The practices of digitalization in education have progressed considerably. From the teacher's point of view the situation is good in every way. Why? Imagine a situation and write a short story about it.

Scenario 2:
We are living in the year 2050. The practices of digitalization in education have progressed considerably. From the teacher's point of view the situation is bad in every way. Why? Imagine a situation and write a short story about it.

74 students in a professional teacher education program.

39 stories based on the positive frame story, and 35 based on the negative alternative.

Holograms or Hemorrhoids? Student Teachers' Imaginings of the Digital Futures of Education

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Marko Teräs
Tampere University, Finland

Juha Suoranta
Tampere University, Finland

ABSTRACT
This study reports preservice teachers' perceptions of desirable and undesirable digital futures for education. Empathy-based stories were collected from 74 student teachers in Finnish professional teacher education. The findings were arranged into three positive and three negative future scenarios. In the positive scenarios, digital tools support human interaction and are subject to the teacher's agency. Teaching and learning remain essentially human activities, whereas technology has a supportive role. In the negative scenarios, learning is reduced to the acquisition of mechanical competences managed by technology and teachers becoming machine operators. These results could guide the development of teacher education, decision-making, and education policy toward meaningful digital futures.

Keywords: *digitalization, teacher education, method of empathy-based stories*

Jungk, R., & Müllert, N. (1987). *Future Workshops: How to create desirable futures*. Inst. for Social Inventions.

Future Workshops

“What kind of future do we hope for?”

Consists of three phases: 1) Critique,
2) Fantasy and 3) Implementation

Future workshops were held for the
Tampere Universities staff on November
28 and December 5, 2023

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[Constructing Postdigital Research](#) pp 317–331 | [Cite as](#)

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Future Workshops as Postdigital Research Method

[Juha Suoranta](#)  & [Marko Teräs](#)

Chapter | [First Online: 02 August 2023](#)

203 Accesses | 2 Citations

Part of the [Postdigital Science and Education](#) book series (PSE)

Abstract

After the Second World War, many social critics thought technology had taken over all forms of modern thought and activity. To these thinkers, the arms industry, the cold war, nuclear threat, atomic science, overpopulation, lonely crowds, computing, famine, and ecological catastrophe were signs of technological determinism. The critics were utterly worried about the state of democracy in a technological world. The postdigital era faces similar challenges and even more pressing problems with the progress and inventions in digitalization. German-born Robert Jungk and Norbert Müllert addressed these problems from the 1960s onwards and wanted to search for solutions to technological determinism. Their answer was to invent a future workshop method that allowed ordinary people to participate in imagining the future and solve small and large-scale social problems. This chapter describes the future workshop as a viable postdigital research method that allows scholars methodological experimentation and switches from what is to what is not yet, but what could be.



1) CRITIQUE

Aim: Collective critique of the phenomenon of “digitalization of higher education”



2) FANTASY

Aim: To draft solutions to the ideas from the Critique phase

The background of the slide is a vibrant, abstract stained-glass window. It features a complex pattern of geometric shapes, including circles, squares, and rectangles, in a variety of colors such as red, blue, yellow, and green. The overall effect is a rich, textured, and colorful design.

3) IMPLEMENTATION

Aim: To evaluate the utopian propositions and plans based on the organizational and working context

Future Workshops result:

Tentative Digitalization Guidelines for

Tampere Higher Education Community

1. Start with the Human – Principle of Human-Centricity
2. Do It Sustainably – Principle of Sustainability
3. Develop Justly – Principle of Justice
4. Create Understanding – Principle of Understanding
5. Proceed Systematically – Principle of Systematic Approach

Created together with the participants. Posted on the Intranet. Shared with other actors at the university, for example the Digital Office and Digital and Sustainability Transitions in Society: a Double-Edged Sword (DigiSus) initiatives.



Ethics and policies

“We would underscore first and foremost that the **benefits of some types of AI use remain untested**, and in some cases blanket AI adoption mandates can contribute to both harm and waste. **In its implementation of the Executive Order, OMB should foreground that the presumption that AI adoption will in all cases enhance operations or efficiency, or will inherently improve innovation, has historically proven to be flawed.**”

[\(https://ainowinstitute.org/\)](https://ainowinstitute.org/)

POLICY

AI Now Submission to the Office and Management and Budget on AI Guidelines

AI Now Institute

Dec 20, 2023

Founded in 2017, the AI Now Institute produces diagnosis and policy research on artificial intelligence. We develop policy strategy to redirect away from the current trajectory: unbridled commercial surveillance, consolidation of power in very few companies, and a lack of public accountability.

Call for Book Chapters:

Postdigital Imaginations: Critiques, Methods, and Interventions

The edited volume concentrates on three themes:

1. Postdigital imaginative research methodologies and innovations
2. The role of imagination in postdigital arts, activism, politics and pedagogy
3. Postdigital experiments and interventions in multiple areas of society, including emerging technological practices

Editors

Petar Jandrić, Zagreb University of Applied Sciences, Croatia, Juha Suoranta, Hanna Teräs, Marko Teräs, Tampere University, Finland.

Please submit enquiries, abstracts, and chapters to Petar Jandrić: pjandric@tvz.hr.



Thank you!

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