Balancing structure and openness – supporting dialogue and action within educational institutions for human-centered education in the digital age with the HERMMES community and culture grid

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The debate on education in the digital age is characterized by tensions and controversies which can be found both in academic and political discourses, with pre-pandemic description and critique of the influence of economic stakeholders (Förschler, 2018) being followed by descriptions of their pandemic-driven acceleration (Cone et al 2021, Williamson, Hogan, 2020). Available tools and materials (e.g. the EU SELFIE tool www.education.ec.europa.eu/selfie) are better aligned with mainstream approaches toward developing digital curricula, while educational institutions that aim at developing more sustainable, critical, age-adequate, holistic concepts and practices are faced with a number of challenges (Brandau, Alirezabeigi, 2022). It can thus be considered ironic, though not surprising that in order to prevent detrimental effects of digital media use on social and emotional skills of children and adolescents (long before recent initiatives such as https://phonefreeschoolsmovement.org/), team conflicts and tensions can abound, which in turn require superior social and emotional skills on the meta-leval of interaction within the team.

The HERMMES community and culture grid as a part of the pan-european HERMMES project (www.hermmes.eu) aims to support kindergartens and schools in moving from a culture of conflict driven by simplistic questions such as whether digital media are good or bad, towards a culture of shared curiosity by providing multi-facetted questions and exemplary answers on the why, when and how of digital and non-digital media use by colleagues, children and their parents. It is based on experience and materials from several sources: Experiences of the Norwegian and European Waldorf Parent Associations, experiences with UK digital school policy, experiences witin the binational SMASCH project (cf. Brandau et al 2022), interviews within a PhD project on impulse questions for kindergarten

teams (Bleckmann&Denzl 2022), as well as the German Prevention Project ECHT DABEI (Bitzer et al, 2018). The grid is structured in three vertical domains that are each subdivided into different
levels of abstraction - from overarching impulse questions to ensure openness (Bransby, Rawson, 2021), to specific resources for practice so provide stucture and immediate support.
• cooperation with and support for parents on questions of (digital) media education.
• adults´self-reflection of their own media use and biography
• rules and agreements for on (Digital) Media Use in the School/Kindergarten

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