

The Unicorn in the (Visual Arts Class) Room – Desires and Technologies in a Post-digital Era

This research aims to examine government digitalization policies and steering documents in relation to school and visual arts education. We explore how these documents are lived in the everyday practice of two visual arts teachers. We borrow the term *unicorn* from the field of business finance and computer sciences. The unicorn represents private venture firms with over a billion dollars in valuation (Kotha, Shin & Fisher, 2022). These almost mythical economical values are built on techno-optimism and idealized expectations of a utopic future.

The theoretical framework is built on Deleuze and Guattari's philosophy of segments. There are three lines in life; *the molar line* is a rigid line of segmentarity which leads to a calculated future which we as subjects are constantly plotting out with well-determined identities of things, aggregates as gender, social classes etc. The *molecular line* appears in the actualization of the present and breaks the molar lines. This happens as micromovements, tiny cracks that disorients and deterritorialize the determined identities and aggregates. The molar and molecular lines are constantly interfering and reacting upon each other as currents of suppleness or points of rigidity. *The line of flight* resists the molar and molecular lines and is rather like an explosion between the molar and molecular lines. More concretely, the molar line is made up by explanations, questions and answers. The molecular line is made up by silences, allusions, and interpretations. The line of flight is like a train in motion; it alter identities or erases them completely. However, the three lines continually intermingle (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987/2004).

The overarching methodology for this research is cartography. This entails mapping the intersections of digitalization policies, interviews with teachers and photographs of the storage rooms of the visual arts classrooms, and an in-service training day for teachers at teacher training programs organized by the Swedish National Agency for Education.

As suggested in the title, we find that there is a "unicorn in the room" that needs to be addressed. That is, an administrative authority with techno-optimist approaches concerning a "smart and fast" high technology educational future. This is a molar line made up by already pre-determined futures. The visual arts teacher practice is a molecular line, open for interpretations, misunderstandings, inventiveness because of the lack of resources, and gaps between the policies of the state and its practice in education.

This research is highly relevant concerning educational digitalization markets and the related situation of digitalization in the subject visual arts education. This research contributes with knowledge on digitalization policies and how they are enacted.

References:

Deleuze, G. & Guattari, F. (1987/2004). *A thousand plateaus: capitalism and schizophrenia*. London: Continuum.

Kotha, S., Shin, S. J., & Fisher, G. (2022). Time to unicorn status: An exploratory examination of new ventures with extreme valuations. *STRATEGIC ENTREPRENEURSHIP JOURNAL*.
<https://doi.org/10.1002/sej.1439>

Overview of Reviews

Review 1

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Evaluation of the Contribution

| | |
|-------------------------------|-----------|
| Coherence | (20%): 8 |
| Awareness | (20%): 8 |
| Perspective | (10%): 10 |
| Overall Recommendation (50%): | 8 |
| Total points (out of 100) | : 82 |

Comments for the Authors

The three lines in life provides a promising theoretical framework to discuss educational policies and visual art teachers practices related to the topic digitization. Findings regarding the molar line and the molecular line is included in the abstract. Have you identified any lines of flight as well? My suggestion for improvement is to include a sentence or two on potential findings related to lines of flight (resistance, ruptures, explosions?).

Review 2

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Evaluation of the Contribution

| | |
|-------------------------------|-----------|
| Coherence | (20%): 10 |
| Awareness | (20%): 8 |
| Perspective | (10%): 8 |
| Overall Recommendation (50%): | 9 |
| Total points (out of 100) | : 89 |

Comments for the Authors

The studys critical perspective is interesting and of importance for the field of educational visual art and the enactment of digitalization policies through the lens of two teachers. Abstract raises further questions about these two teachers: for example which school form do they represent, selection and so on. Policy in general is enacted in close relation to context, why the context with advantage can be developed in the presentation.