

SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS AS PEDAGOGICAL SPACES. THE PROFESSIONAL USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS IN YOUTH WORK

PIATTAFORME SOCIAL COME SPAZI PEDAGOGICI. USO PROFESSIONALE DEI SOCIAL MEDIA NEL LAVORO GIOVANILE

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SOMMARIO

«Se io come professore di educazione consigliassi a dei genitori in un tram come dovrebbero comportarsi con il loro bambino, con tutta evidenza troppo stanco, allora probabilmente agirei presuntuosamente ma non professionalmente, perché il tram non è il luogo della mia professione» (Giesecke, 1997, p. 47). Ma cosa succederebbe se gli specialisti dell'educazione volutamente espandessero gli spazi educativi professionali convenzionali agendo in modo pedagogico anche sulle piattaforme dei social media? Sulla base di alcune esperienze condotte all'interno di alcuni centri ricreativi per i giovani, questo documento illustrerà e discuterà le pratiche pedagogiche realizzate nelle piattaforme di social media nell'ambito del lavoro quotidiano con i giovani. Gli esempi provengono da interviste qualitative condotte con operatori professionisti nei centri sociali per giovani. Un secondo focus sarà sulla percezione delle piattaforme di social media come spazi pedagogici. Per quanto riguarda il rapporto tra attività sociali interattive e attività di coltivazione delle immagini, i risultati mostrano uno squilibrio, meno evidente nella pratica ma molto più evidente nella percezione. Questi risultati saranno discussi in riferimento al concetto di spazi performativi di Löw (2016) e quello di Forme di Base delle Azioni Pedagogiche di Giesecke (1997), concetti che sono anche usati

per mostrare l'importanza di concepire le piattaforme di social media come spazi pedagogici. Oltre a queste implicazioni positive, vengono sollevate anche questioni etiche e sfide nuove per l'azione pedagogica.

PAROLE CHIAVE

Piattaforme di social media, lavoro con i giovani, spazi pedagogici, azione pedagogica.

ABSTRACT

«If I as a professor of education give advice to parents in a streetcar about how they should deal with their obviously overtired child, then I probably act presumptuously but not professionally, because the streetcar is not the place of my profession» (Giesecke, 1997, p. 47). Yet how does it look if educational specialists deliberately expand the conventional professional-educational spaces by acting in a pedagogical way on Social Media Platforms? On the basis of several practice situations from youth recreation centres, this paper will illustrate and discuss the pedagogical ways Social Media Platforms are used in daily youth work. The examples come from qualitative interviews that were conducted with professional youth workers. A second focus will be on the perception of Social Media Platforms as pedagogical spaces. With the regard to the relationship between social, interactive activities and informative, image-cultivating activities, results show an imbalance – less in practice but highly noticeable in perception. These results will be discussed in reference to the concept of performative spaces by Löw (2016) and the Basic Forms of Pedagogical Actions by Giesecke (1997), which are also used to show the importance of perceiving Social Media Platforms as pedagogical spaces. In addition to these positive implications, the outlook also raises ethical questions and challenges for pedagogical action.

KEYWORDS

Social Media Platforms, youth work, pedagogical spaces, pedagogical action.

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1 Introduction

More young people and adults are using the internet on a daily basis than ever before. The Social Media penetration worldwide is ever-increasing.¹ According to Statista (2018), 71% of internet users are Social Media Platform users (for adolescents only see mpfs 2017). The great importance of this technology raises the question about the extent to which educational fields can also use the potential of the internet in general and of Social Media Platforms in particular. It must be considered that Social Media Platforms are «not youth-only spaces» (Stix, 2014), since corporations are just as present there as are adults who are networking both on a professional and a private level. Accordingly, the question of whether educators should be present on Social Media Platforms is outdated. It is more important to develop a purposeful social interaction with each other that does not disadvantage either the educational professionals or the young people.

Since 2010 an increasing number of youth workers have started using Social Media Platforms in their professional contexts (Korfmacher, 2011). Because life-world orientation and client-orientation are basic principles of youth work in youth recreation centres,² youth workers were early adopters when it came to the use of Social Media Platforms in their daily work (JFF, 2011). Therefore, their early experiences can be transferred to other educational fields in order to enrich them.

2 Theoretical background: social media platforms as pedagogical spaces

While youth work practitioners often consider Social Media Platforms to be handy organising tools for their daily work, scholarship-based arguments emphasise that it is more helpful to consider Social Media Platforms as pedagogical spaces. In the following, two theoretical frameworks will be presented. The first

¹ Social Media (Platform) is a catch-all term for a variety of internet applications that allow users to create and distribute content, interact with each other and support social structures. According to Ebersbach et al. (2016), Social Media Platforms include wikis, (micro-)blogs, social networks, and social sharing. Several examples include Wikipedia, Wordpress & Twitter, Facebook & WhatsApp, and Instagram & YouTube.

² A youth recreation center in Germany is a non-curricular learning environment for young people primarily between the age of 12 and 21 (but some are as old as 6 and as old as 27). A youth recreation center supports opportunities for young people to develop their physical, social, emotional, and cognitive abilities and to experience achievement, leadership, enjoyment, friendship, and recognition. The offered activities include organised instructional programs such as dance, music, crafts, and theatre as well as opportunities for unstructured activities such as game playing, socialising, and outdoor play. The educational professionals or so-called youth workers are trained social workers, educators, or kindergarten teachers (see Schmidt 2011, p. 17ff.; see Deinet & Sturzenhecker 2013).

frame is the concept of performative spaces which was developed by Martina Löw in her work *Sociology of Space* (2016). This concept has been transferred to Social Media Platforms and their structures by Julia Gerodetti (2009), who has demonstrated that the concept has useful applications with respect to Social Media Platforms. The second frame will be the pedagogical fields including the five Basic Forms of Pedagogical Actions by Hermann Giesecke which are part of his work *Pedagogy as Profession* (1997).

2.1 *Performative spaces*

Martina Löw (2016) developed the idea of a «relational model of space». The basic idea of her concept is that individuals act as social agents and constitute spaces in the process. Spaces are hence the outcome of action. At the same time, spaces structure action, which consequently means that spaces can both constrain and enable action. Löw distinguishes analytically between two generally mutually determining factors: «spacing» and «synthesis». Spacing refers to the act of situating people or social goods in places, or the state of being thus situated. According to Löw, however, an ordering created through placing is only effectively constituted as space if the elements that compose it are actively inter-linked by people – in processes of perception, ideation, or recall. Löw calls this synthesis. The core of the model is that spaces should no longer be seen as containers, a physical space with four walls and a ceiling, but rather as spaces that are constructed through actions. A performative space has its own set of conventions and expectations, in which one can act out certain roles or responsibilities.

To prove this concept works for Social Media Platforms as well, Julia Gerodetti examined the structural features and space-defining features of Social Media Platforms (2009). She showed that reality is not only reflected but newly constructed on Social Media Platforms. Spacing and synthesis were found in forms of communication, in arrangement processes, and in the attribution of meaning. She concludes that youth work has to liberate itself from container-thinking as a prerequisite for developing «appropriate strategies for professional action» (Gerodetti, 2009). In turn, the functions of internet technologies need to be rethought. Especially a Social Media Platform should no longer be regarded as an electronic communication tool that depicts a supposedly foreign world (Gerodetti, 2009). If educational professionals want to provide orientation and support to young people, they have to recognise not only the risks of the technology and its potential to facilitate organisational tasks, but also its pedagogical potential.

2.2 *Pedagogical fields*

In his theoretical work *Pedagogy as Profession*, Hermann Giesecke (1997) developed the concept of five Basic Forms of Pedagogical Actions. His concept is also based on the idea that spaces are constructed through reciprocal actions but places the focus more on pedagogy. While an institution like a youth recreation

centre is by definition a pedagogical field, not all actions are educational per se. Conversely, however, any pedagogical acting makes a space a pedagogical one.

According to Giesecke, reflection is always the antithesis of action (1997, p. 45). He sees his concept of the Basic Forms of Pedagogical Actions as an instrument for reflecting on the pedagogical action (Giesecke, 1997, p. 17). Acting pedagogically is defined as positively influencing a person to become a mature individual by offering opportunities for educational processes (Giesecke, 1997, p. 22ff.). Learning is identified as the goal of pedagogical action; this can either be gaining new knowledge or new abilities – irrespective of employability for employers (Giesecke, 1997, pp. 24, 30). This learning takes place in pedagogical fields. Giesecke points out that a pedagogical field is a stable context in which framed pedagogical action takes place, and «The decisive factor is that a pedagogical field makes reciprocal, direct interaction possible» (Giesecke, 1997, p. 55). Especially in youth recreation centres, Giesecke states, it is important to be aware that pedagogical actions can also include arranging the conditions of opportunities for the young people to set themselves goals and to realise their goals (1997, p. 64). The five Basic Forms of Pedagogical Actions are as follows:

- *Arranging*: when pedagogical professionals arrange situations for open learning processes, they create a situation that is self-educational. Educational professionals also arrange situations for counselling as much as possible in order to create a climate of trust, to ensure discretion and to prevent disturbances.
- *Animating*: pedagogical professionals motivate young people to use learning arrangements, they promote personal engagement and activity, and they enable experimentation.
- *Informing/counselling*: for Giesecke, informing is pedagogical action when it refers to and is embedded in current life situations and when it helps to free someone from behavioural insecurity. Counselling – one step further – offers to help to solve an individual problem satisfactorily and to act successfully.
- *Teaching*: pedagogical professionals clarify relatively complex factual connections in a longer argumentation process (Giesecke, 1997, p. 76 ff.).

It is important to mention that Giesecke differentiates the information output of mass media from any kind of pedagogical action. He maintains that the pedagogical action always takes place in a face-to-face setting where reciprocal, direct interaction is possible. He admits that only in the interactive situations that are established «afterward» can pedagogical action occur (Giesecke, 1997, p. 47 ff.).

3 **Methods**

This research paper is part of a larger PhD-research project that examines the extent to which youth workers perceive Social Media Platforms as a tool that can be used methodically for pedagogical purposes. To do so, the research project

needed to be separated into several subtopics and subquestions. The present paper focuses on pedagogical spaces and will answer the following question: To what extent do youth workers perceive pedagogical actions on Social Media Platforms as pedagogical and perceive Social Media Platforms as pedagogical spaces?

For the entire research project a qualitative study design seemed appropriate, and therefore the study is based on Reflexive Grounded Theory Methodology (Breuer, 2010). This research style is a reading (Mey & Mruck, 2011, p. 21) of the original Grounded Theory Methodology based on Strauss and Corbin (1996), but more weight is given to the researcher's reflexivity.

Data were collected through a multi-method research design that included ethnographic methods and interviews (Spradley, 1979; Flick, 2002; 2011). The results that will be presented in this research paper come mainly from episodic interviews (Flick 2011). The basic idea of the episodic interviews is based on the findings of memory and knowledge psychology, according to which people have different knowledge stores: episodic-narrative and semantic-conceptual knowledge (Flick, 2011a, p. 28ff.). Information about a person's episodic-narrative knowledge can be revealed about narratives that address a context-sensitive situation. Information about the semantic-conceptual knowledge of a person is obtained through argumentative theoretical discussions of the interviewee. This interview method is highly suitable for interviewing professionals about their professional activities and routines (Flick, 2011b, p. 276; 2002, p. 165) and for studies that aim at knowledge, experience and change from the point of view of respondents (Flick, 2011b, p. 278).

Participants from an online survey about *Online Youth Work* (Korfmacher, 2011) were contacted for interviews. At the end of the online survey, they were asked about their willingness to support a PhD project on Social Media and youth work and asked to enter their contact information. This pool contained 18 contact details. Filters were set, to ensure interviews with persons who had both professional social work skills and the most experience in Social Media use and so could provide the best information. The persons to be interviewed ideally had to fulfil the following criteria: (1) degree as social worker, (2) employed in a youth recreation centre (3) chiefly responsible for the maintenance of the Social Media accounts. During two phases of data collection in 2012/13 and in 2017, twelve different youth workers were interviewed. Six of them were interviewed in each data collection phase.

The interviews took place in the youth recreation centres in or near Berlin, where the youth workers were employed. All interviewees participated voluntarily. Of the ten interviews of phase 2012/13, two were spontaneously conducted in a team of two youth workers (one male-male, one male-female). In the remaining individual interviews, three of the interviewees were female, five male. Out of these twelve participants, six youth workers were interviewed again in 2017; five were male and one female. Although all of the interviewees had a pedagogical or educational background, not all had a degree in social work. This restriction was accepted as the pool of contact details was limited. One youth

worker was not chiefly responsible for the maintenance of the Social Media Accounts as he spontaneously replaced his sick colleague.

The collected data were first processed using the transcription system and software F5 and then transferred to the MAXQDA analysis software. To analyse the collected data, open coding, axial coding and selective coding as described in the Grounded Theory Methodology were performed. The coding paradigm developed by Strauss and Corbin (1996), which is recommended by Breuer (2010), was also used to structure the outcomes.

4 Results

To what extent do youth workers perceive pedagogical actions on Social Media as pedagogical and perceive Social Media Platforms as pedagogical spaces?

The results will be presented in two sections. The first section presents selected situations of the everyday use of Social Media Platforms and illustrates their pedagogical implications. Therefore two viewpoints on Facebook posts will be presented – the ones that youth workers receive and the ones that youth workers publish themselves. The second section focuses on the youth worker’s perception of pedagogical actions on Social Media Platforms and of Social Media Platforms as pedagogical spaces.

4.1 Pedagogical implications of actions on social media platforms

The first viewpoint illustrates these pedagogical implications through the example of Facebook posts published by young people.

Because the youth worker Clara (all names of interview partners are anonymised) is a Facebook friend with some of the young people she works with, she finds out when insults are made or conflicts arise and therefore has the opportunity to make an impact. «Then I noticed, she says, that this one starts to chat with that one, and [writes] «You’re so stupid» on the wall. And then of course I could take action in advance. And then when they came in, I had this piece of information that I otherwise wouldn’t have had, and I asked them all to come in to my office and brought it up quite frankly». Intervening in conflict situations is part of the everyday pedagogical actions of youth workers.

The first step involves calming down the situation, which is then placed in a pedagogical framework and processed together with those involved. Clara is able to step into the situation either directly (by posting a comment on the Social Media Platform) or at a later point (by arranging for a conversation in the youth recreation centre). She finds it very helpful to find out about things indirectly, since the individual involved in the conflict would not otherwise have come to her to talk about it. Because Clara also receives information through her Facebook friends that was not explicitly addressed to her, it is incumbent upon her as a professional to deal sensitively with this information and to decide whether she should make active use of it or only observe the situation passively.

The youth worker Felix left a comment on a picture that two girls had posted. The picture showed the two girls sitting on streetcar tracks. Felix felt that it was necessary to challenge the girls' reasons for posting the picture. «Okay, he says, it's not so clear what you're trying to say with this photo. Are you trying to say that you don't want to live anymore and you're waiting for the next streetcar to come and run you over?». Through the youth worker's reaction to the photo, the girls thus experience how their actions affect others. Because the messages conveyed through the photo were made a public subject of discussion, the girls were obliged to reflect on their action. Educational processes were thereby stimulated. In addition, Felix was sensitised to the situation and, if necessary, could initiate a meeting that involves providing crisis counselling or information.

Clara takes the information that she receives about the young people through their posts and uses it to create a feeling of emotional attachment when she communicates with them afterward. «For example, she says, let's say you already commented on Facebook, «Looks great, you have a new dress». Then they'll come to you and say, «Wow, Clara, really? Does the dress look nice? Be honest»». The youth worker reacts appreciatively and on an individual basis to those things that matter to the young people at the moment. The very fact that she engages in the communication style of the young people also allows her to create a positive climate and elicit a feeling of emotional attachment. Clara herself describes this as strengthening the contacts. Or to put it another way, she uses the Social Media Platforms in a supporting way in order to develop an educational relationship with the young people or strengthen it. These foundations for building a trustful educational relationship are arranged by the youth worker.

The second viewpoint illustrates the pedagogical implications and intentions of Facebook posts published by the youth workers themselves.

Felix has both pedagogical and administrative intentions when he documents the activities of the youth recreation centre by posting pictures on Social Media Platforms. For one thing, the posts are meant to foster a sense of belonging to the youth recreation centre by reminding the young people of positive shared experiences and motivating them to reflect on these experiences and verbalise the emotions that are connected with them. «If there's a nice photo there, Felix says, and then someone would react like «Yeah, I was there. That was really cool», I mean, that would be achieving a great deal». In addition, Felix would like to stimulate a dialogue with the young people about these specific activities. Through the comment function, he offers a low-threshold opportunity for this dialogue and motivates the young people to express themselves. Along the way, he receives feedback through these comments and is able to arrange more attractive activities. At the same time, both Felix' documenting posts and the young people's dialogue that follows send a signal to external parties, who thereby get an impression of the youth recreation centre's activities and target group as well as of the youth worker's working principles; this message is one of liveliness and openness.

Both Clara and Felix use the Social Media Platforms in order to arrange or initiate everyday educational activities or special experiences. They see the great-

est advantage in the fact that they can quickly reach a large target group (i.e. all the young people who are connected with the youth recreation centre) through their posts. This becomes especially apparent in Felix's youth recreation centre, where daily posts are made about the current educational activities. In doing this, Felix also reaches a target group who otherwise does not visit the youth recreation centre but rather comes selectively to outdoor events. «Like for example now in the summer, he says, when we go swimming someplace, that gets posted then». Advertising the swimming excursion by means of posts on Social Media Platforms makes it possible for the young people mentioned above to gain access to the youth recreation centre and its educational staff and to participate in educational activities. In turn, Felix can use this opportunity to communicate with the young people and build trust. Another type of environment can also offer a favourable context for breaking down barriers between the different groups of young people and initiating new group dynamic processes. Clara, for example, had tickets for the performances of *X Factor* and *Supertalent* and posted, «I have tickets or I don't have any more tickets». She therefore makes it possible for the young people to experience something special – something out of the ordinary – and creates opportunities for educational processes. Arranging participation in special experiences and educational activities accordingly entails a form of pedagogical action and goes far beyond the level of mass-media advertising.

4.2 *Perception of pedagogical implications*

The preceding examples have illustrated the pedagogical implications dealing with two-way postings. In several cases, direct interventions were undertaken on the Social Media Platform. In carrying this point further, the question arises regarding the extent to which the two youth workers perceive their actions on Social Media Platforms as pedagogical and clearly name them as such.

When asked about her understanding of the term, Clara defines pedagogical action as «any action that you practice in an educational way in relation to young people». As an example she cites reactions to conflicts on the basis of pedagogical expertise and knowledge about developmental psychology – namely, «to know what might be meant and then to address that». In doing so, she employs a provocative language style – so-called modulations (see Cloos et al., 2009) – in order to make the young people aware of their behaviour and its consequences. For Clara, this type of pedagogical action can unquestionably also be found on the Social Media Platforms. She explains by giving a further example of a male teenager who photographed himself in a bodybuilder pose. «And, Clara comments, I say, «My goodness, you want to show off what a strong man you are!» and do that with one of those smileys at the end so that he knows what I mean by it». Here, too, she uses modulations to force the young man in a friendly way to reflect on his behaviour and make him aware of the effects of the posted picture. In addition, Clara would have the opportunity to use the interaction on Facebook as a basis for later follow-up communication with the young man within

the youth recreation centre. Especially striking about Clara's understanding of pedagogical action is that she places the primary focus on conflict situations and problems. For her, pedagogical action therefore encompasses corrective action.

Felix defines pedagogical action as arranging workshops, animating, or conveying tolerance within the group. In this respect, however, he refers only to the face-to-face work that takes place within the youth recreation centre since he doubts that pedagogical action can be transferred to Social Media Platforms. «With regard to the networks» he says, «we have to ask ourselves if it's a form of pedagogical action when I publish the daily events and offers. Because that's actually really just public relations work, information activities». Thus, although he acts in a thoroughly pedagogical manner on Social Media Platforms, he does not reflect on or speak about this activity accordingly. For him, the Social Media Platforms serve less as additional spaces of pedagogical action and more as tools that make administrative tasks easier.

5 Discussion

In the following, the presented results will be discussed. According to the structure above, first, the pedagogical implications of Social Media Platforms will be discussed referring to the theoretical frameworks of Löw and Giesecke. Second, the phenomena of not perceiving the full pedagogical potential will be analysed and discussed.

5.1 *Performative spaces and pedagogical fields*

It has become obvious that Social Media Platforms as performative spaces (see Löw) also hold potential as pedagogical spaces in which youth workers can act pedagogically. The youth workers Clara and Felix engage in performance. They interact with young people, they intervene in cases of disagreements or bullying, they stimulate the young people to reflect on their actions, they document and motivate the young people to express themselves and to participate. By acting this way, functions are attributed to Social Media Platforms. And from the pedagogical actions of Clara and Felix, Social Media Platforms enable numerous pedagogical spaces. For example, they create spaces of interaction, spaces of interventions, and spaces of reflexion for young people, spaces of documentation and participation. Besides these obvious ones, Clara and Felix constitute and provide an entry space for young people that lowers the threshold for access to the youth recreation center and the pedagogical staff. Finally, these spaces have to be set up as pedagogical spaces – to offer occasions for learning.

Also, the Basic Forms of Pedagogical Actions (Giesecke, 1997) can be used to reflect and highlight the implementations of pedagogical action on Social Media Platforms as pedagogical spaces. An exception is the category of teaching, which could not be found in the youth worker's actions.

- *Arranging on Social Media Platforms.* By using the diverse communication channels of Social Media Platforms, youth workers arrange the conditions for trustful educational relationships or arrange situations that make trustful counselling possible.
- *Animating on Social Media Platforms.* Youth workers animate the young people to take part in pedagogical activities such as excursions and other pedagogical situations. Likewise they animate the young people to express themselves on Social Media Platforms.
- *Informing/counselling on Social Media Platforms.* On the one hand, information and counselling can be offered on the Social Media Platforms; on the other hand, they can also merely be referred to on Social Media Platforms and take place in face-to-face settings offline.

Despite Giesecke (1997), as the examples here have made clear, a face-to-face setting is no longer a fundamental condition for pedagogical action, due to the interactive nature of Social Media Platforms. This does not mean that every pedagogical action can be transferred to online spaces. Both Clara and Felix consider that sometimes a face-to-face conversation cannot be replaced by messages sent on Social Media Platforms. For this reason it is always important to work «on both tracks» (Clara).

5.2 *Imbalanced perception of pedagogical implications*

The phenomena of not perceiving the full pedagogical potential is not an isolated case. Empirical analyses have found an imbalance between two kinds of actions that take place on Social Media Platforms: into social, interactive activities and informative, image-cultivating activities (Alfert, 2013, p. 91). Social, interactive activities are understood as making contact and maintaining educational relationships (Brüggen & Ertelt, 2011, p. 10; Gerodetti, 2009), offering support in crisis situations (Alfert, 2013, p. 93), encouraging participation and discussion (Ertelt & Brüggen, 2011, p. 11; Davies & Cranston, 2008, p. 19), and providing a platform for reflection (Gerodetti, 2009; Alfert, 2013, p. 93). The informative, image-cultivating activities include the use of Social Media Platforms for advertising, public relations work, and prestige enhancement of the youth recreation centre (Alfert, 2013, p. 91; Davies & Cranston, 2008, p. 19).

According to Alfert, a balanced relationship between these activities is the best (Alfert, 2013, p. 91). But in everyday youth work, imbalances in the relationship between social, interactive activities and informative, image-cultivating activities could be found; information activities, advertising, and public relations work were named significantly more often (Korfmacher, 2011, p. 19; Stix, 2015, p. 158). As in Felix's definition the informative, image-cultivating activities are more obvious than the pedagogical implications. Although Clara is interacting with the young people on Social Media Platforms and therefore is maintaining educational relationships, in her definition the intervention and support in crisis

situations carry more weight. It becomes obvious that Clara and Felix do not perceive the full potential of their actions on Social Media Platforms as pedagogical. To sum up, more emphasis needs to be given to the perception and the meaning of pedagogical actions on Social Media Platforms.

6 Conclusion, implications for practice, and outlook

As the previous discussions and representations have showed, the use of Social Media Platforms implies great pedagogical potential. However, this is often overlooked or underestimated by practitioners. The action in the context of Social Media Platforms is perceived by the youth workers only to a small extent as pedagogical; it is outweighed by the perception of Social Media Platforms as a tool for informative, image-cultivating purposes. This also influences the perception of Social Media Platforms as educational spaces. Based on the concept of the performativity of spaces and a structural analysis, it has been shown that it is helpful to consider Social Media Platforms as spaces. Based on the pedagogical actions of the youth workers Clara and Felix, which were categorised in five basic forms, the virtual space then was defined as a pedagogical space.

However, Social Media Platforms not only have (pedagogical) potential for youth workers in particular and educational professionals in general, but also demand ethical repositioning and pose challenges that can constrain pedagogical actions. Only a few will be named in the following.

In order to reach the young people, the youth workers use the most popular Social Media Platforms. These are commercial and are neither completely transparent nor well regulated, which has an effect on the handling of user data. From a pedagogical standpoint, this requires a careful examination and consideration of the advantages and disadvantages. Accordingly – and not only for reasons of channel reduction – it can be important to conduct a face-to-face conversation about a sensitive topic and to convey this to the young people. Handling data in a conscious and sensitive way is also necessary for documenting activities on Social Media Platforms, as Felix describes. When he posts pictures online, he needs to respect the personal rights of the young people and also consider if any information may unintentionally be revealed through the pictures.

Moreover, there is the ethical question of whether educational professionals may actively obtain and use information from Social Media Platforms (see Kutscher, 2015). A further challenge presents itself in the question of whether young people who do not have access to Social Media Platforms are being excluded or discriminated against. Reflecting on this issue is something that is necessarily a part of educational professionalism.

The use of Social Media Platforms holds pedagogical opportunities. At the same time, these sites also present new dimensions of responsibility with regard to the professional action of educators. Any possible negative consequences for young people must be consciously considered when pedagogical action is prac-

ticed on Social Media Platforms as new pedagogical spaces. In this respect it can be helpful if, through institutional agencies and collegial exchange, a specific (media-) pedagogical stance and a framework are developed.

Being an educational professional also means being familiar with the trends among young people and reacting to them in a pedagogical manner. In the case of Social Media Platforms, a continuous migration to new popular platforms can be observed – from MySpace to Facebook to Instagram to WhatsApp to Snapchat to whatever comes next (see mpfs 2017). It will be interesting to see how new present and future Social Media Platforms will also establish themselves in the medium term as a space of pedagogical action, what such action will look like there, and with which professional approaches and standards this action may come into conflict – thus requiring further reflection on the forms of pedagogical action in these pedagogical spaces.

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