

Call for Papers: Special Issue on

**Professional Development and Social Learning
in Formal and Informal Learning Contexts**

Guest editors:

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Only to a certain amount, professional development relies on formal training conducted and supervised by teachers and learning in courses. Professional development heavily relies on social interaction and communication between peers that take place as “peripheral participation” in a professional context. Increasingly, technology is being used as a tool to foster social exchange in organizational contexts in order to make “tacit” knowledge available, to spread knowledge among peers and to foster a culture of sharing in organizations.

This volume is focusing on recent research about the impact of social learning for professional development in various areas. Social learning refers to processes, where learning is situated in a social context and takes place in exchange with others. In social learning, most typically learners are engaged in a collaborative effort to construct an artifact (e.g. a text document). Social media tools and platforms, sometimes referred to as Web 2.0 applications, can support and stimulate this type of activities and provide a framework for learning activities on the Internet. Recent research has, for example, analyzed how people exchange information and knowledge, and how these platforms help to build social relations and networks among participants.

Social learning can take place in formal and informal learning contexts. Formal learning refers to organized learning and institutional environments that provide access to specified curricula. In contrast, informal learning does not follow a predetermined curriculum and expands beyond certain institutional environments. Social learning is an important element in formal learning contexts, where knowledge is communicated by a teacher and various kinds of social interactions contribute to successful learning. Learning platforms can support these processes of social exchange. However, traditional e-learning platforms often are primarily used for the dissemination of documents and materials. Given the success of Web 2.0-applications the potential of these platforms to foster learning and professional development by social interaction has to be discussed.

Informal learning contexts are essentially based on social exchange between peers who share their views, experiences and knowledge. There is an increasing number of online spaces wherein individuals can communicate with one another and which lend themselves for informal learning. Popular examples include social media platforms such as LinkedIn, Facebook and Twitter. These platforms essentially provide informal, social (learning) spaces that can initiate professional development processes. So far, empirical evidence has provided ambiguous results on the role and effectiveness of social media for informal learning and professional development. Consequently, more insights are required to better understand how social media can effectively be used to provide learning opportunities for professionals.

This special issue (SI) of Innovation and Change in Professional Education will discuss various points of view social learning within formal and informal learning scenarios with a focus on professional development. They can – but do not have to – relate to social media and other digital technology to enhance social learning in professional development.

The SI will address contemporary issues and topics, which are relevant for organizations, professionals, practitioners and researchers alike. Innovation and Change in Professional Education is a key international voice in the field of educational innovation and professional / post-secondary education (engineering, law, medicine, management, health sciences, etc.).

We welcome paper proposals that contribute to general significance of theory development or empirical research in social learning among professional, as well as the critical analysis of professional practice to the enhancement of educational innovation in the professions.

Paper Requirements

- Paper proposals must be in the form of a complete narrative paper, whether these papers are still in progress or already finalized.
- Word Limits:
 - 15 words or fewer for paper title.
 - 150 words or fewer for abstract
 - 6,000 words or fewer including references. Tables, charts, graphs, images, and figures should be added to the end of the document and are not included in the word count.
- Specific format or style, such as APA, is not required (at this stage).

Topics of interest include, but are not limited to:

- Small Group Research
- Team-Based Learning
- On-the-Job Training
- Social Learning as a:
 - strengthening mechanism (based on the notion of behaviorism)
 - phenomenon of (anticipated) reciprocity
 - dynamic differentiation process within groups
 - process to accumulate social capital
- Quantitative Studies on Social Learning:
 - Social Network Analysis
 - Discourse Analysis
 - ...
- Qualitative Studies on Social Learning:
 - (Semi-Structured) Interviews
 - Grounded Theory
 - ...

Important Dates

Papers submission: 15.11.2015

Author notification: 29.01.2016

Final version submission: 01.06.2016

Publication of SI: beginning of 2017

Submission procedure

Proposals should be submitted via eMail to the following address:

martin.rehm@uni-due.de

Please pay attention to choose "SI: Professional Development and Social Learning" as the Subject of your eMail.

Selection and Evaluation Criteria

- Significance to the readers of the book series
- Relevance to the topic of the special issue
- Originality and quality of ideas and research themes
- Significance to theory, policy and/or practice
- Quality, clarity, and readability of the article
- Quality of references and related work

Please send all inquiries regarding the SI to: martin.rehm@uni-due.de