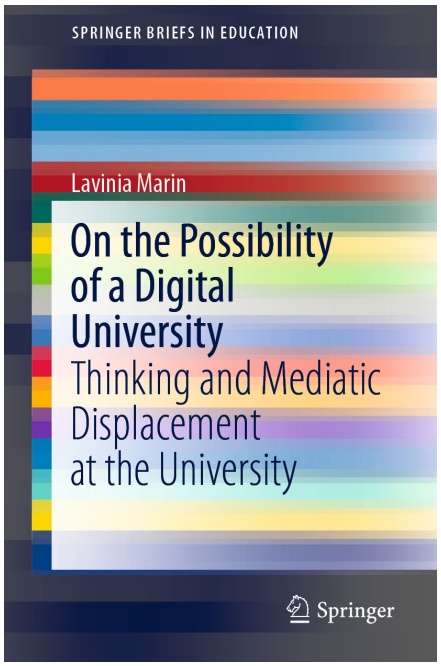

Education : Educational Philosophy

Marin, Lavinia

On the Possibility of a Digital University

Thinking and Mediatic Displacement at the University

- Uniquely combines the educational philosophy and media theoretical perspectives
- Opens a new line of debate by presenting a new theory of the media specificity of the university
- Proposes a new understanding of what distinguishes a university from other institutions of learning
- Presents historical evidence to support the major claims

This book proposes a philosophical exploration of the educational role that media plays in university study practices, with a focus on the practices of lecturing and academic writing. Are the media employed in university study practices mere accessories, or rather constitutive of these practices? While this seems to be a purely theoretical question, its practical implications are wide and concern whether such a thing as a 'digital university' is possible. The 'digital university' has been, for a long time, a theoretical construct. However, in the aftermath of the Covid-19 pandemic, moving the university into the digital realm has become a necessity. The difficulties in transitioning to an online university during the 2020 pandemic showed the increased urgency of the questions explored in this book. The book describes lecturing and academic writing through the lens of a phenomenology of gestures and arrives at a description of the experience of university thinking as expanding the subject's range of experiences about the world and about one's modes of thinking about the world. The media configuration characteristic for university study practices is a movement of rendering inoperative one medium through another medium so that thinking can emerge, a movement called 'mediatic displacement'. The question of the digital university becomes then a question whether mediatic displacement is possible on a digital screen. Although this is conceivable, digital technologies are still relatively new, and we are not used to playing with them in a profanatory way as the book discusses through the example of videoconferencing and MOOCs. The promise of the digital university seems to remain utopian until we figure out how to enact the techniques of mediatic displacement currently flourishing at the physical university.

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