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Postphenomenological perspective on learning - A case study of learning through technological mediation

Merleau-Ponty sees learning as bodily situated and therefore happening in relation to the physical and social environment. It depends on human bodily capacities, such as the mental, emotional, and physical, in relation to environmental allowances and constraints, as the preconditions for learning. In postphenomenological sense these capacities are mediated by technologies and media. This article explores human learning as a postphenomenological phenomenon through a case study.

In the case study a trumpet teacher and a student explain their experience of teaching and learning to play trumpet. Through their explanations and demonstrations, the technological mediation such as transparency, multistability, as well as virtualization of technological potentialities gains new pedagogical meanings. The findings show how learning is not a necessarily a matter of workings of a human mind, but rather relation between the performer and the instrument, and consequently the public to which the music piece is performed.

The study introduces postphenomenological concepts as a pedagogical terminology. It opens new ways of understanding human learner as a homo-faber that learns by interacting with its environment through conception and reception of technological artefacts. Finally, the paper addresses ecological explanation of learning which allows for discussing sustainable education, as technologies are becoming increasingly multistable. The paper concludes with an alternative explanation of learning to those of classical learning theories such as behaviorism, constructivism, and cognitivism.