Editorial

Ola Berge
Researcher, Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training
journal@udir.no

This third issue of the Nordic Journal of Digital Literacy of 2018 is comprised of three research articles.

In the first, “What is the ‘problem’ that digital competence in Swedish teacher education is meant to solve?”, Hanell explores how policy makers argue for the importance of digital competence. In addition to studying how the ‘problem’ is framed, Hanell is also questioning what the consequences of such a representation might be. Through document studies and using the “what’s the problem represented to be?” approach, the author finds the issue digital competence in teacher education is meant to solve is ultimately an issue of economic growth and global competition. Such an instrumental perspective on technology in education at the expense of ideals concerning democracy, citizenship and Bildung might have undesirable consequences, Hanell concludes.

The second article, “Everyday Digital Schooling – implementing tablets in Norwegian primary school” by Krumsvik, Berrum, and Jones, is concerned with assessing the outcomes of implementing digital technologies in schools. The study includes the full cohort of students who started using tablets in one municipality, and the outcome measures are “traditional” learning outcomes such as reading, arithmetic and English as a second language as well as perceptions of school enjoyment and learning environment. The instruments for assessing outcomes are not part of the implementation process itself, but results from national standardized tests. The methodological aspect of this study is of particular interest, as this kind of effect studies are not common in Nordic research on ICT in education. The article presents results from the first part of a trailing research program, and shows few school-level effects resulting from the introduction of tablets and little to indicate a strong connection in this respect. The authors do, however, indicate that more time might be needed before on can expect to see anticipated results from the tablet implementation initiative.

The third and final article in this issue of NJDL is “Teacher educators’ perceptions of working with digital technologies” by Madsen, Archard, and Thorvaldsen. The authors address the apparent gap between policy expectations as expressed in Norwegian curricula and what practitioners are doing by investigating what differences can be found regarding teacher educators’ attitudes towards the use of digital technology in Norway and New Zea-
land. A comparative analysis reveals that while Norwegian teacher educators’ use of technology are correlated and predicted by their attitude, the New Zealand educators’ use are correlated and predicted by the level of their digital competence. A better understanding of the nature of the gap between policy and practice is essential, the authors maintain, in order to develop appropriate policies for education.

These three articles address concerns that are fundamental to use of information- and communication technologies in our school systems, and they contribute to a deeper understanding of our field in their respective ways. This issue might be of special interest to policy makers, but we do believe that both practitioners and researchers will find it both worthwhile and enjoyable to read this edition of NJDL.