



Universiteit
Leiden

The Netherlands

Digitization and changing reading practices in academic studies

Kuhn, Axel

Citation

Kuhn, A. (2019). Digitization and changing reading practices in academic studies. *Txt*, 19-42. Retrieved from <https://hdl.handle.net/1887/3204536>

Version: Publisher's Version

License: [Creative Commons CC BY-SA 4.0 license](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/)

Downloaded from: <https://hdl.handle.net/1887/3204536>

Note: To cite this publication please use the final published version (if applicable).

DIGITIZATION AND CHANGING READING PRACTICES IN ACADEMIC STUDIES

Axel Kuhn

Institute for Book Studies

FAU Erlangen-Nürnberg, Germany

1 Reading in academic studies

Learning performance is determined by reading comprehension and reading behavior, which have a major influence on academic accomplishments.¹ Without the adoption and development of academic literacy, students can rarely maximize their learning potential. Recently, the academic reading capabilities of students have led to an increasing dissatisfaction among lecturers and to a progressing helplessness among students: many lecturers complain that texts are not read thoroughly enough anymore.² This constant criticism of the lecturers, as well as noticeable consequences in their performance ratings, are subsequently decreasing students' learning motivation and their engagement in academic courses. Therefore, although students do not seem to have reduced their reading efforts for academic studies, the efforts are not providing the same learning benefits as in former generations.

Lecturers complaining about learning behavior and reading

¹ Cf. C. Frauen et al., *Lesekompetenz – Schlüsselqualifikation und Querschnittsaufgabe* (München: Oldenbourg, 2007), p. 9.

² Cf. D. Blum, “‘Keiner liest...’ Lesekompetenz fördern – ein Modell aus dem Fach Kirchengeschichte”, *Tübinger Beiträge zur Hochschuldidaktik* 13, no. 2 (2017); D. Schulte, “Vom Bücherfrust zur Leselust. Wissenschaftliche Textkompetenz von Studierenden steigern”, *Neues Handbuch Hochschullehre G* 3, no. 6 (2006), pp. 1–24.

problems of students are in fact a recurring topic in the history of education systems.³ The current discourse nevertheless appears to be different, because digital transformation has clearly changed social communication processes and individual communicative activities in everyday life. The principles of digital communication are, at the same time, opposing an education system that has been established in the tradition of the written word of modernity.

This article uses an explorative approach to give some insights into changing reading routines and their consequences for academic reading. While previous research related to digital reading focused on the transformation of reading processes when engaging with text, this article aims to supplement this research by using a praxeological approach for analyzing the more complex reading behavior of students. To do so, the article will use the results of an explorative experiment utilizing reading diaries. These diaries indicate that there is an increasing insufficiency in academic reading routines, caused by changing implicit knowledge regimes for reading in everyday life.

1.1 Digitization and reading processes

Explanations of the increasing mismatch of reading competencies of students and reading requirements in academic studies include different narratives. One argument is simply characterizing students as a generation with merely simple and pragmatic information needs.⁴ Another argument is based on the increasing matriculations, which might on average reduce read-

³ Cf. U. Preußner and N. Sennewald, “Literale Kompetenzen an der Hochschule – eine Einleitung”, in *Literale Kompetenzentwicklung an der Hochschule*, eds. U. Preußner and N. Sennewald (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2012), pp. 7–37; S. Rühr and A. Kuhn, eds., *Sinn und Unsinn des Lesens – Gegenstände, Darstellungen und Argumente aus Geschichte und Gegenwart* (Göttingen: V&R unipress, 2013).

⁴ Cf. E. Albrecht and K. Hurrelmann, *Die heimlichen Revolutionäre: Wie die Generation Y unsere Welt verändert* (Weinheim: Beltz, 2016), pp. 145–148.

ing competencies, because the student's cohort simply becomes more heterogenous.⁵

Most arguments however involve digitization, which seems to devaluate reading as a cultural technique altogether.⁶ Although related assessments have remained only discursive statements so far, it has been proven that digital media is indeed transforming cognitive processes and strategies when engaging with texts. Caused by the increasing mediatization of living environments⁷ and the associated differentiation of reading media like e-mails, websites, chats, weblogs, messaging, social networks etc., reading socialization has obviously changed, and with it, the interaction between people with information in written form.⁸

Especially in younger generations, reading processes have become more focused on efficient information retrieval and less focused on reading as a complex experience. Reading processes and text reception units have become shorter, fragmented, and erratic. The dominant strategy for reading has become an increasingly discontinuous approach of texts, ignoring textual structures and content orders for a fast and efficient identification of information. The consequences are reduced reading comprehension as well as reduced involvement, often causing emotions of boredom, overstraining, and impatience when reading.⁹

⁵ Cf. C. Ganseuer and U. Klammer, *Diversity Management – Kernaufgabe der künftigen Hochschulentwicklung* (Münster: Waxmann, 2015).

⁶ Cf. A. Kuhn, "Das Ende des Lesens? Zur Einordnung medialer Diskurse über die schwindende Bedeutung des Lesens in einer sich ausdifferenzierenden Medienlandschaft", in *Sinn und Unsinn des Lesens – Gegenstände, Darstellungen und Argumente aus Geschichte und Gegenwart*, eds. S. Rühr and A. Kuhn (Göttingen: V&R unipress, 2013), pp. 219–240.

⁷ Cf. J. van Dijck, *The Network Society* (London: SAGE Publications, 2006).

⁸ Cf. N. Baron, *Words Onscreen: The Fate of Reading in a Digital World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015); A. Kuhn and S. Hagenhoff, "Digitale Lesemedien", in *Lesen. Ein interdisziplinäres Handbuch*, eds. U. Rautenberg and U. Schneider (Berlin/Boston: de Gruyter, 2015), p. 361; A. Mangan and A. van der Weel, "The evolution of reading in the age of digitization: an integrative framework for reading research", *Literacy* 50, no. 3 (2016), pp. 116–124.

⁹ Cf. A. Kuhn, "Lesen – beschleunigt, fragmentiert und mit habitueller Ungeduld", *Zeitpolitisches Magazin* 15, no. 33 (2018), pp. 20–22.

1.2 Praxeology

Despite its inherent logic, reducing the impact of digital transformation of reading on cognitive processes and text engagement strategies is concealing the fact that digitization is also universally changing the embedding of reading and texts in daily lives. Its consequences have been rarely addressed in reading research so far,¹⁰ especially because theoretical and methodological concepts are still missing.¹¹ Research perspectives therefore need to shift their arguments to reading spaces and explain reading as a cultural practice including different reading modes, reading subjects, reading motivations, reading objects, and reading contexts.

A possible approach for doing so is the perspective of praxeology,¹² which is based on a fundamentally modified understanding of social action, social subjects, and social communication. Culture and social structures are thereby defined as an “array of activities”,¹³ which are embedded materially and corporally in living environments. Practices like reading are defined as comprehensive, pre-shaped patterns of activities; as typical acting and behavior; and as specific form of social interaction, produced and reproduced by subjects in complex relational arrangements of bodies, artifacts, and symbolic meanings.¹⁴

Therefore, practices like reading are commonplace and typical patterns of behavior that have not consciously come into

¹⁰ An exception is research on reading socialization of children.

¹¹ Cf. Mangen and Van der Weel, “The evolution of reading”, p. 118; A. Kuhn and S. Hagenhoff, “Kommunikative statt objektzentrierte Gestaltung: Zur Notwendigkeit veränderter Lesekonzepte und Leseforschung für digitale Lesemedien”, in *Lesen X.0 – Rezeptionsprozesse in der digitalen Gegenwart*, eds. S. Böck et al. (Göttingen: V&R unipress, 2017), pp. 33–41.

¹² For basics, see A. Reckwitz, “Grundelemente einer Theorie sozialer Praktiken – Eine sozialtheoretische Perspektive”, *Zeitschrift für Soziologie* 32, no. 4 (2003), pp. 282–301.

¹³ Cf. T. R. Schatzki, “Introduction: Practice Theory”, in *The Practice Turn in Contemporary Theory*, eds. T. R. Schatzki et al. (London: Routledge, 2001), p. 2.

¹⁴ Cf. S. Hirschauer, “Verhalten, Handeln, Interagieren”, in *Praxistheorie – Ein soziologisches Forschungsprogramm*, ed. H. Schäfer (Bielefeld: transcript, 2016), p. 46.

being by drafts, goals, or plans, but are socialized pre-reflexively and practiced unconsciously and automatically using physically incorporated knowledge. Using this approach, reading practices can be described as habitual movements of bodies in specific situations, involving influential material objects and associated knowledge regimes. Practices enable individual acting, require humans for their reproduction, and exist independently from particular subjects. Practices in this regard are the smallest social and cultural units and can be analyzed as discrete events, as regularly linked events, and as complex practice formations.¹⁵

In addition, reading practices are based on physically incorporated knowledge, which becomes visible only in repeating routines of action sequences, spatial constellations, and body movements. This incorporated knowledge is provided and restricted by collective knowledge regimes, affecting its adoption and evaluation. Consequently, specific action sequences, spatial constellations, and body movements are unconsciously reproduced or left out because they are collectively accepted or rejected. Knowledge regimes can be further differentiated: explicit knowledge regimes have been consciously designed as institutions by powerful individuals, organizations, or social systems. They are usually recorded in documents and are openly communicated. Sticking to their rules is widely expected, also because not doing so may result in negative consequences for individuals.¹⁶ In contrast, implicit knowledge regimes are invisible regulations of everyday life, which are adopted automatically by observation.¹⁷ Practices and knowledge regimes are transformed mutually over time, becoming only visible retrospectively as cultural change.

¹⁵ Cf. F. Hillebrandt, *Soziologische Praxistheorien. Eine Einführung* (Wiesbaden: Springer VS, 2014), p. 59.

¹⁶ see 2.1 *Hermeneutics as knowledge regime of higher education* for an explicit knowledge regime.

¹⁷ Cf. A. Reckwitz, “Praktiken und ihre Affekte”, in *Praxistheorie – Ein soziologisches Forschungsprogramm*, ed. H. Schäfer (Bielefeld: transcript, 2016), pp. 163–180.

1.3 Explorative research by reflexive photography

To gain insight in current reading practices of complex texts¹⁸ and interpreting their underlying knowledge regimes, an explorative diary study was performed at the University Erlangen-Nürnberg. Its primary objective was to reveal the invisible and unconscious patterns of reading behavior of students. Related to the central ideas of praxeology, hypotheses for expected results and pre-defined set-ups of reading were renounced. Instead, reading practices were documented, described, and reflected freely without predetermined expectations.

An appropriate method for measuring unconscious aspects of practices is the method of reflexive photography,¹⁹ by which individual everyday activities are documented visually by images and reflected later by the picture taking subjects using an open guided interview. Non-verbal documentation techniques allow the representation of reading in its subjective physical and spatial perceptions. At the same time, the images can be analyzed as self-revelation of subjects in their reading practices:²⁰ already the selection of specific motives and choosing specific image perspectives unconsciously reveal relevant aspects of reading practices. By reflecting their own images, the subjects become experts of their own acting and may complement the visual information by simultaneous rational assessments.

Over one regular week of the lecture period, 20 students

¹⁸ Complex texts are specialist, factual, fictional, or journalistic texts, which can be defined relatively by linguistical and textual complexity, perceptual requirements of contextual knowledge, and high demands for reading competencies. Cf. W. Graf, "Leseverstehen komplexer Texte", in *Lesen – ein interdisziplinäres Handbuch*, eds. U. Rautenberg and U. Schneider (Berlin/Boston: de Gruyter, 2015), pp. 185–205. Reading for interpersonal communication, e.g. by e-mail or messaging were excluded.

¹⁹ Cf. P. Dirksmeier, "Zur Methodologie und Performativität qualitativer visueller Methoden – Die Beispiele der Autofotografie und reflexiven Fotografie", in *Raumbezogene qualitative Sozialforschung*, eds. E. Rothfuß and T. Dörfler (Wiesbaden: Springer VS 2013), pp. 88–101.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 88.

documented each of their reading acts of complex texts by freely taking pictures of their reading stances, their reading material, their reading media, their used or otherwise important artifacts, and their reading places. In addition, they noted the geographical place, time, and duration of each reading sequence. Following the visual documentation, the finished visual reading diaries were reflected on by a brief guided interview: the students were asked to remember their reading motivation and body posture in particular reading sequences; to evaluate the importance of place, time, and reading media for their reading experience; to identify important beneficial or distracting elements; and finally about their moods and emotions before, during, and after reading. The students documented a total of 394 reading sequences, of which 142 were identified as reading for academic studies.

The documented and reflected reading sequences were subsequently deconstructed by the principles of objective hermeneutics, and similar reading acts were summarized as collective and repeated reading routines. Accordingly, typical reading sequences in everyday life were differentiated by repetitive times, durations, places, and interlinked practices. Furthermore, typical spatial constellations of reading were characterized by places and their arrangement of artifacts. Additionally, similar spatial positions of readers, their postures, and their body movements were identified. All aspects were finally connected with statements about cognitive and emotional effects. The results are typical formations, performances, and perceptions of reading practices.²¹

2 Reading practices in academic studies

One documented complex reading practice was reading for aca-

²¹ Cf. S. Rau, *Räume – Historische Einführungen* (Frankfurt am Main: Campus Verlag, 2013), p. 133 et seq.

dem studies, especially for preparing and revising courses, for preparing presentations, for exam preparation, and directly in courses at the university. Reading for academic studies thereby is a lasting desideratum in reading research: if at all, it is only mentioned in guidebooks for academic research and writing, widely taken for granted and not needing explanation.²² Therefore, its processes have neither been described systematically yet²³ nor reflected in its consequences for learning subjects.²⁴ Instead, academic reading is shaped by the powerful explicit knowledge regime of the western hermeneutics, which is unconsciously reproduced by students in their academic reading practices.

2.1 Hermeneutics as knowledge regime of higher education

Modern principles of higher education emerged from the scholastic and humanistic ideals of thinking as an archetype of science and the tradition of enlightenment as the comprehension, interpretation, and evaluation of individual aspects of human culture and society.²⁵ Based upon knowledge in written form and intertextuality, complex texts and text networks are therefore still the central sources for academic studies, displayed by the academic importance of longer text units in their entirety and given order.²⁶

Complex texts and text units therefore should be used for

²² Cf. O. Kruse, "Schreiben lehren an der Hochschule: Aufgaben, Konzepte, Perspektiven", in *Wissenschaftlich schreiben – lehren und lernen*, eds. K. Ehlich and A. Steets (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2003), p. 95.

²³ Cf. A.C. Garcia, *Textarbeit in der geisteswissenschaftlichen Lehre* (Berlin: Frank & Timme, 2016), pp. 43–52.

²⁴ Cf. P.J. Brenner, "Die Grenzen des Geistes – Zur Infrastruktur geisteswissenschaftlicher Arbeit", in *Geisteswissenschaften wozu? Studien zur Situation der Geisteswissenschaften*, eds. H. Reinalter and R. Benedikter (Thaur: Druck- und Verlagshaus Thaur, 1997), p. 56; M. Krähling, *Wie wird geisteswissenschaftliches Wissen gemacht: Arbeitsprozesse in den Geisteswissenschaften – Ergebnisse einer qualitativen Studie* (Konstanz: KOPS, 2010), pp. 8–12.

²⁵ Cf. R. Bod, *A New History of the Humanities – The Search for Principles and Patterns from Antiquity to the Present* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), p. 346 et seq.

²⁶ Cf. G. Antos & Hasler, U. & Perrin, D., *Textoptimierung*, in S. Habscheid (ed.), *Textsorten, Handlungsmuster, Oberflächen – Linguistische Typologien der Kommunikation* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2011), p. 638.

individually reconstructing, interpreting, and absorbing knowledge by cognitive processes of memorizing and connecting new information with prior knowledge and experiences.²⁷ For making this kind of written knowledge accessible, high-level reading and language competencies are required.²⁸ Assertions in texts must be identified and connected by describing, extracting, and referencing information. Assertions and information then must be related to prior knowledge from other texts to create coherencies and to develop associative stocks of knowledge, usually done by categorizing, systemizing, contrasting, and combining information. Additionally, the significance of assertions, meanings, and associations must be evaluated in situational contexts and objectives, using methods of selection, supplementation, ranking, and commenting. Finally, knowledge gained must be logically structured, compiled, and memorized.

Consequently, higher education is strongly correlated with deep reading processes,²⁹ which firstly enable comprehension and absorption of written knowledge. Deep reading therefore requires cognitive processes involving all cerebral areas. Therefore, it is time-consuming and exhausting; vulnerable to distraction; and highly in need of motivation, awareness, and concentration by the reader. In this context, academic reading has become the subject of an explicit and powerful knowledge regime, regulating reading sequences, spatial constellations, and body movements, coded primarily in instructions for academic research.

Accordingly, academic reading should be implemented sys-

²⁷ Cf. H. H. Hiebel, *Interpretieren – Eine Einführung in die literarische Hermeneutik* (Würzburg: Königshausen und Neumann, 2017).

²⁸ Cf. C. Tenopir et al., *Electronic journals and changes in scholarly article seeking and reading patterns*, *Aslib Proceedings: New Information Perspectives* 61:1 (2009), p. 19.

²⁹ Cf. B. Brummett, *Techniques of Close Reading* (Los Angeles: SAGE Publications, 2010); M. Wolf & M. Barzillai, *The Importance of Deep Reading, Educational Leadership* 66:6 (2009), p. 32.

tematically and steadily as an isolated practice in daily routines. It should have fixed times and places as well as sequential routines of action. Additionally, readers should be prepared by intrinsic motivations and by feeling relaxed and refreshed when starting. Places for academic reading should avoid distractions as much as possible while being individually stimulating. For this, a fixed working place is recommended, which is adequately illuminated, ventilated, and climatized. It should furthermore eliminate noise and motion, for example, by other persons or media. Immediate surroundings should be organized, neat, and tidy. Finally, body movements when reading should be strongly standardized using an office chair and a desk to avoid back pains and muscular tension. Writing practices are recommended for excerpts, annotations, and notes as supplementary practices for academic reading, joining drinking for hydration as the only accepted secondary activities.³⁰

2.2 Academic reading practices of students

The lasting effectiveness of this explicit knowledge regime can be confirmed by analyzing the students' documented and reflected reading practices for academic studies in their reading diaries:

1. The reading practices for academic studies are embedded in the students' everyday lives by fixed and scheduled times, especially for course preparation in the morning before going to university and for preparation of presentations in the evening. Academic reading sequences are additionally oriented towards explicit learning tasks and are typically not finalized before accomplishing their

³⁰ These recommendations evolved historically from scholastic traditions and are repeated steadily in manuals for academic studies to the present times (Cf., e.g., Garcia 2016; Brenner 1997; Krähling 2010; Kruse 2003).

objectives. Thus, students' reading practices for academic studies cannot be characterized as fragmented, as they are rarely interrupted and therefore can still be described as isolated, primary activities. Also, their reading practices for academic studies are drawn out in longer reading periods, lasting between 45 and 180 minutes on average. Writing as paraphrasing, noting, and annotating is almost always connected to reading practices for academic studies, as well as drinking water to support concentration. Only some interlinked practices, mainly eating, listening to music, and using different Internet media for content reception and interpersonal communication contradict the absolute adoption of the knowledge regime. But these practices do not happen as excessively as discursive statements in media indicate, but rather as short breaks and breathers between longer reading periods.

2. The spatial constellations of reading practices for academic studies can be fundamentally separated in predetermined public spaces and arranged private spaces. Predetermined spaces mainly include the seminar rooms of courses, in which books, printed texts, hand-written notes, digital texts, and presentations are read. These spaces obviously do not meet the requirements of the knowledge regime of academic reading: the students are distracted by other students, uncomfortable seating, poor illumination, and stale air, restricting concentration.

The students' arranged private reading spaces for academic studies, on the other hand, are universally characterized by explicit working places at home. They are always organized by using a writing desk, an office chair, writing tools, and subjective tidiness. When reading for their academic studies, the students watch out for ade-

quate illumination, fresh air, and quietness. Personal and familiar artifacts are used for mental stimulation and comfort. Academic reading practices using beds, couches, or the floor are almost non-existent, just as little as academic reading in public transportation or waiting rooms. Occasionally contradicting the spatial knowledge regime for academic reading are outdoor locations, especially parks, swimming pools, green fields, and forests.

3. In accordance with the dominating spatial constellation of academic reading at a desk at home, the body movements in the student's reading practices for academic studies are also widely standardized: by using specialized office chairs, the typical body posture is sitting upright or slightly bent over at the desk with the hands on the desk and the feet slightly bent under the seat. Variations of this posture arise only from using different reading media: when using paper sheets or printed books lying on the desk, the head is slightly lowered. When using digital texts on screens to read, the head instead is slightly raised. Movements of head and arms result mostly from supplementary writing practices, but the body posture rarely changes while reading.

The far-reaching reproduction of the knowledge regime of hermeneutics for academic reading can thus be confirmed in the reading diaries: reading practices for academic studies are widely standardized by set times; are rarely interrupted; occur at clearly assigned, quiet, and organized working places; and are performed while sitting at a desk, only altered when executing supplementary practices.

3 Academic and everyday reading practices

Despite an unchanged knowledge regime for academic reading

and its steady reproduction in students' reading practices for academic studies, its effectiveness for learning by reading is nevertheless diminishing.³¹ As an explanation cannot be found in academic reading behavior itself, it must be derived from associated reading experiences.

3.1 Moods and emotions as indicators of academic reading issues

The transformation of reading experience becomes apparent in the evaluation of reading practices for academic studies by the students: moods and emotions related to standardized reading sequences, spatial constellations, and body movements are strongly negative, especially the duration of academic reading, the one-dimensional concentration on texts, and the monotonous involvement, which are described generally as tiring and exhausting. The students also describe their mood before reading as having feelings of reluctance, pressure, and compulsion. Mood improvements are achieved by finishing reading practices for academic studies, not related to gained knowledge or satisfied interests, but rather to "getting it done".

Reading practices for academic studies are therefore integrated in everyday life as compulsive tasks, and not as subjects of favorable reading experiences. Rigid reading postures at the desk and missing body movement are also negatively evaluated, because they are experienced as artificial, compulsive, exhausting, and tiring. The spatial constellations of private reading places in contrast are experienced as relief when reading, justified mostly by the perception of personal objects.

Altogether, motivation for academic reading, which should be gained from content and the students' interests, is negatively influ-

³¹ Cf. T. Morstein and U. Preußner, "Das Buch muss mich von der ersten Seite an fesseln... sonst lese ich es nicht" – Das Leseverhalten von BA-Studierenden der Germanistik und seine Konsequenzen für die Kompetenzentwicklung", in *Literale Kompetenzentwicklung an der Hochschule*, eds. U. Preußner and N. Sennewald (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2012), p. 139.

enced by the explicit knowledge regime of academic reading. Reading practices for academic studies are therefore hardly ever experienced as a positive, voluntary, and meaningful experience, but rather as extrinsically forced work,³² which also, and probably for this reason, often does not provide the expected gratification related to learning.

3.2 Implicit knowledge regimes opposing academic reading practices

The increasing emotional rejection of academic reading practices cannot be explained by the transformation of reading processes and reading strategies. Instead, the unconscious patterns of socialized reading practices must be revealed. To do so, it must be considered that reading practices for academic studies are determined not by one but by multiple knowledge regimes.

As shown above, the students are explicitly adapting their reading practices for academic studies to the knowledge regime of hermeneutics and organizing it accordingly.³³ But simultaneously, they unconsciously experience these practices in the context of other implicit knowledge regimes for everyday reading, which have been radically transformed by digitization. Their influence will be outlined below by using three examples, focusing on conflicts with the academically demanded deceleration, decontextualization, and isolation of academic reading practices.³⁴ In order to do so, the non-academic reading practices of the students are used to gain insights into their unconscious reading socialization and its implicit knowledge regimes.

The first noticeable difference between non-academic and academic reading practices is their temporal embedding in daily

³² Ibid., p. 125.

³³ Cf. R. Bohnsack, *Rekonstruktive Sozialforschung – Einführung in qualitative Methoden, 7th Edition* (Opladen: UTB – Verlag Barbara Budrich, 2007), pp. 59–65.

³⁴ Cf. O. Kruse, *Lesen und Schreiben – Der richtige Umgang mit Texten im Studium* (Stuttgart: UTB – UVK, 2010), p. 17.

routines. Although steadily integrated reading routines still exist, especially reading in the evening before sleeping, reading behavior is strongly fragmented, location-independent, and spontaneous. Non-academic texts are read for shorter continuous periods, often only for a few minutes in spare time when traveling by train and bus, while waiting between courses, between social activities, or in other breaks. Spatial constellations and body movements seem to be arbitrary and insignificant for reading, instead they are mutually and dynamically adjusted. Reading practices altogether appear automated and unconscious activities for passing time. At the same time, these reading practices are evaluated by the students as productive activities for actualizing information by news and expanding knowledge in their interests and for personal development.

The underlying implicit knowledge regime is referring to the optimization of time and the acceleration of society: digital information environments are radically collapsing temporal structures of media communication by enabling access everywhere at any time.³⁵ People today have therefore internalized an interpretation of reality as fragmented and cyclical, characterized by steadily flowing communication, and have developed a perception of time as a scarce resource. Affected by this knowledge regime, reading practices are automatically influenced by aspects of time saving, e.g., by combining reading with other practices. At the same time, reading as a “useful” activity for self-optimization is used to turn “idle” time spans into something useful. Acceleration and efficiency of reading practices become symptomatic for a successful way of living.³⁶ Isolated and continuous academic reading practices are the opposite of this kind

³⁵ Cf. P. Virilio, *Fluchtgeschwindigkeit: Essay, 2nd Edition* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 2001), p. 29.

³⁶ Cf. G. Dobler and P.P. Riedl, “Einleitung”, in *Muße und Gesellschaft*, eds. G. Dobler and P.P. Riedl (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2017), p. 1.

of reading, because they cannot be embedded automatically and fragmented in daily routines, and therefore prevent time optimization by linking and changing practices. Reading practices for academic studies are hence evaluated unconsciously as a waste of time, limiting self-optimization.

A second difference between non-academic and academic reading practices is their interrelation to other practices. Using the smartphone or other digital devices, non-academic reading sequences are characterized by alternative media practices like listening to music, watching videos, or information retrieval on the Internet. Reading therefore becomes a practice interlinked with other media activities, which is positively evaluated by the students, justified also by pleasant body movements. The spatial constellation of reading therefore becomes a ubiquitous, virtual space, which also reduces distractions from noise and movements.

The underlying implicit knowledge regime for reading is the internalized expectation of media convergence. Digitization has erased former material boundaries of media, and their practices of information and entertainment are nowadays not considered to be separate anymore, but as part of indistinct communicative spaces and parallel media channels.³⁷ Information access and reading have become ubiquitous activities embedded in multiple media practices. Reading therefore must not be connected to specific times and places but can be realized spontaneously and automatically when needed. Academic reading as an isolated media activity does not correspond to this kind of convergence and is therefore evaluated as monotonous and rarely varied.

Finally, a third difference between non-academic and aca-

³⁷ Cf. T. Dwyer, *Media Convergence* (Berkshire: McGrawHill Open University Press, 2010); H. Jenkins, *Convergence Culture – Where old and new media collide* (New York/London: New York University Press, 2006).

demic reading practices is the embedding of interpersonal communication by students when reading. Non-academic reading practices are often interrupted by communicative practices using a smartphone. Along the lines of media convergence, communication through messaging systems appears as an inter-linked practice when reading, changing body positions and spatial constellations by the virtual presence of other persons. Communicating when reading is not evaluated as a distraction in non-academic reading practices, and at times, is even seen as enhancing the reading experience.

The underlying implicit knowledge regime is the digital imperative of permanent integration in digital social interaction and communities.³⁸ The students have thereby widely internalized its associated disposition of steady communication and its presumed importance for their social position. The internalized expectation of connectivity is contradicting academic reading practices, because they are considered to be isolated, excluding any other person. This temporary exclusion of students from their virtual communities is considered to be exceptionally negative, also because the students seem to irrationally fear a decrease in external perception and consequences for their social inclusion.

4 Conclusion

Academic reading practices are the result of a historically evolved, rigid knowledge regime for learning in education systems organized by written communication. But reading in everyday life and its spatial constellations and body movements have been digitally transformed by powerful implicit knowledge regimes of efficient use of time, convergent use of media, and

³⁸ Cf. J. van Dijck, *The culture of connectivity – A critical history of social media* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).

permanent social connectivity. This has led to increased tension between socialized reading practices and reading ideals in the academia. The resulting mismatch of everyday and academic reading practices is not visible in the academic reading practices themselves, but rather in students' experience. The associated increase of negative moods and emotions in turn reduces the effectiveness of these reading practices. Finally, this increase is mistakenly interpreted by lecturers as decreasing reading competency of their students, because the reasons for this development remain invisible to lecturers and students alike.³⁹

Reducing transformations of academic reading on digital reading objects and processes therefore is insufficient. Instead, digital transformation of reading must be recognized as a complex cultural phenomenon, which implicitly affects reading practices and reading extensively. While universities and lecturers react to changes in academic reading mostly by reducing the amount of texts, simplifying the content, and substituting texts with audiovisual material, it should be considered whether academic reading must be taught differently to enable positive experiences by and effects on students. The praxeological perspective and presented limited explorative insights into the students reading behavior thereby point toward many complex questions, which require further research.

³⁹ Cf. Morstein and Preußner, "Das Buch", pp. 138–140; Preußner and Sennewald "Literale Kompetenzen", p. 21.



BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Albrecht, E. and Hurrelmann, K., *Die heimlichen Revolutionäre: Wie die Generation Y unsere Welt verändert* (Weinheim: Beltz, 2016).
- Antos, G., Hasler, U. and Perrin, D., “Textoptimierung”, in *Textsorten, Handlungsmuster, Oberflächen – Linguistische Typologien der Kommunikation*, ed. S. Habscheid (Berlin/Boston: de Gruyter, 2011), pp. 638–658.
- Baron, N., *Words Onscreen: The Fate of Reading in a Digital World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015).
- Blum, D., “‘Keiner liest...’ Lesekompetenz fördern – ein Modell aus dem Fach Kirchengeschichte”, *Tübinger Beiträge zur Hochschuldidaktik*, 13, no. 2 (2017).
- Bod, R., *A New History of the Humanities – The Search for Principles and Patterns from Antiquity to the Present* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).
- Bohnsack, R., *Rekonstruktive Sozialforschung – Einführung in qualitative Methoden, 7th Edition* (Opladen: UTB –Verlag Barbara Budrich, 2007).
- Brenner, P.J., “Die Grenzen des Geistes – Zur Infrastruktur geisteswissenschaftlicher Arbeit”, in *Geisteswissenschaften wozu? Studien zur Situation der Geisteswissenschaften*, eds. H. Reinalter and R. Benedikter (Thaur: Druck- und Verlagshaus Thaur, 1997), pp. 45–90.
- Brummett, B., *Techniques of Close Reading* (Los Angeles: SAGE Publications, 2010).
- Dijck, J. (Jan) van, *The Network Society* (London: SAGE Publications, 2006).
- Dijck, J. (José) van, *The culture of connectivity – A critical history of social media* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).
- Dirksmeier, P., “Zur Methodologie und Performativität qualitativer visueller Methoden – Die Beispiele der Autofotografie und reflexiven Fotografie”, in *Raumbezogene qualitative Sozialforschung*, eds. E. Rothfuß and T. Dörfler (Wiesbaden: Springer VS, 2013), pp. 88–101.
- Dobler, G. and Riedl, P.P., “Einleitung”, in *Muße und Gesellschaft*, eds. G. Dobler and P.P. Riedl (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2017), pp. 1–17.

- Dwyer, T., *Media Convergence* (Berkshire: McGrawHill Open University Press, 2010).
- Frauen, C. et al., *Lesekompetenz – Schlüsselqualifikation und Querschnittsaufgabe* (München: Oldenbourg, 2007).
- Ganseuer, C. and Klammer, U., *Diversity Management – Kernaufgabe der künftigen Hochschulentwicklung* (Münster: Waxmann, 2015).
- Garcia, A.C., *Textarbeit in der geisteswissenschaftlichen Lehre* (Berlin: Frank & Timme, 2016).
- Graf, W., “Leseverstehen komplexer Texte”, in *Lesen – ein interdisziplinäres Handbuch*, eds. U. Rautenberg and U. Schneider (Boston / Berlin: de Gruyter, 2015), pp. 185–205.
- Hiebel, H.H., *Interpretieren – Eine Einführung in die literarische Hermeneutik* (Würzburg: Königshausen und Neumann, 2017).
- Hillebrandt, F., *Soziologische Praxistheorien. Eine Einführung* (Wiesbaden: Springer VS, 2014).
- Hirschauer, S., “Verhalten, Handeln, Interagieren”, in *Praxistheorie – Ein soziologisches Forschungsprogramm*, ed. H. Schäfer (Bielefeld: transcript, 2016), pp. 45–67.
- Jenkins, H., *Convergence Culture – Where old and new media collide* (New York/London: New York University Press, 2006).
- Krähling, M., *Wie wird geisteswissenschaftliches Wissen gemacht: Arbeitsprozesse in den Geistes-wissenschaften – Ergebnisse einer qualitativen Studie* (Konstanz: KOPS, 2010).
- Kruse, O., *Lesen und Schreiben – Der richtige Umgang mit Texten im Studium* (Stuttgart: UTB – UVK, 2010).
- Kruse, O., “Schreiben lehren an der Hochschule: Aufgaben, Konzepte, Perspektiven”, in *Wissenschaftlich schreiben – lehren und lernen*, eds. K. Ehlich and A. Steets (Berlin/Boston: de Gruyter, 2003), pp. 95–111.

- Kuhn, A., “Das Ende des Lesens? Zur Einordnung medialer Diskurse über die schwindende Bedeutung des Lesens in einer sich ausdifferenzierenden Medienlandschaft”, in *Sinn und Unsinn des Lesens – Gegenstände, Darstellungen und Argumente aus Geschichte und Gegenwart*, eds. S. Rühr and A. Kuhn (Göttingen: V&R unipress, 2013), pp. 219–240.
- Kuhn, A., “Lesen – beschleunigt, fragmentiert und mit habitueller Ungeduld”, *Zeitpolitisches Magazin* 15, no. 33 (2018), pp. 20–22.
- Kuhn, A. and Hagenhoff, S., “Digitale Lesemedien”, in *Lesen. Ein interdisziplinäres Handbuch*, eds. U. Rautenberg and U. Schneider (Berlin/Boston: de Gruyter, 2015), pp. 361–380.
- Kuhn, A. and Hagenhoff, S., “Kommunikative statt objektzentrierte Gestaltung: Zur Notwendigkeit veränderter Lesekonzepte und Leseforschung für digitale Lesemedien”, in *Lesen X.0 – Rezeptionsprozesse in der digitalen Gegenwart*, eds. S. Böck et al. (Göttingen: V&R unipress, 2017), pp. 27–45.
- Mangen, A. and Van der Weel, A., “The evolution of reading in the age of digitization: an integrative framework for reading research”, *Literacy* 50, no. 3 (2016), pp. 116–124.
- Morstein, T. and Preußner, U., “‘Das Buch muss mich von der ersten Seite an fesseln... sonst lese ich es nicht’ – Das Leseverhalten von BA-Studierenden der Germanistik und seine Konsequenzen für die Kompetenzentwicklung”, in *Literale Kompetenzentwicklung an der Hochschule*, eds. U. Preußner and N. Sennewald (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2012), pp. 119–141.
- Preußner, U. and Sennewald, N., “Literale Kompetenzen an der Hochschule – eine Einleitung”, in *Literale Kompetenzentwicklung an der Hochschule*, eds. U. Preußner and N. Sennewald (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2012), pp. 7–37.
- Rau, S., *Räume – Historische Einführungen* (Frankfurt am Main: Campus Verlag, 2013).
- Reckwitz, A., “Grundelemente einer Theorie sozialer Praktiken – Eine sozialtheoretische Perspektive”, *Zeitschrift für Soziologie* 32, no. 4 (2003), pp. 282–301.

- Reckwitz, A., “Praktiken und ihre Affekte”, in *Praxistheorie – Ein soziologisches Forschungsprogramm*, ed. H. Schäfer (Bielefeld: transcript, 2016), pp. 163–180.
- Rühr, S. and Kuhn, A. (eds.), *Sinn und Unsinn des Lesens – Gegenstände, Darstellungen und Argumente aus Geschichte und Gegenwart* (Göttingen: V&R unipress, 2013).
- Schatzki, T.R., “Introduction: Practice Theory”, in *The Practice Turn in Contemporary Theory*, eds. T.R. Schatzki et al. (London: Routledge, 2001), pp. 1–15.
- Schulte, D., “Vom Bücherfrust zur Leselust. Wissenschaftliche Textkompetenz von Studierenden steigern”, *Neues Handbuch Hochschullehre G 3*, no. 6 (2006), pp. 1–24.
- Tenopir, C. et al., “Electronic journals and changes in scholarly article seeking and reading patterns”, *Aslib Proceedings: New Information Perspectives* 61, no. 1 (2009), pp. 5–32.
- Virilio, P., *Fluchtgeschwindigkeit: Essay, 2nd Edition* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 2001).
- Wolf, M. and Barzillai, M., “The Importance of Deep Reading”, *Educational Leadership* 66, no. 6 (2009), pp. 32–37.

