

Charting the Course: Teacher Agency and Institutional Change in the Digital Transformation of Education

Olivia Wohlfart & Ingo Wagner

Background

- Digital transformation of the education system (European Commission, 2020) demands sustainable changes at all levels of stakeholders (Eickelmann & Gerick, 2017)
- Teachers are crucial stakeholders in promoting digital transformation (Wohlfart & Wagner, 2023)
- Calls for a critical reflection on the digital transformation of schools and teaching (West, 2023)
- Theory of *Institutional Agency* as a foundation (DiMaggio, 1988; Lawrence et al., 2009)
- *Teacher Agency* = ability and readiness of teachers to actively make decisions and influence their actions to shape teaching and school organization (Bridwell-Mitchell, 2015; Hargreaves, 2005; Lockton & Fargasson, 2019)

Research Goal

Investigate the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on developments in schools and teaching in the context of digital transformation and their connection to *Teacher Agency*

Methodology

- Longitudinal study with semi-structured interviews at 3 points in time (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011)
- 30 interviews from 2020-2022 (29-66 Minuten)
- Transcription & anonymization (Dresing & Pehl, 2020)
- Qualitative content analysis according to Mayring (2015)

Findings and Discussion

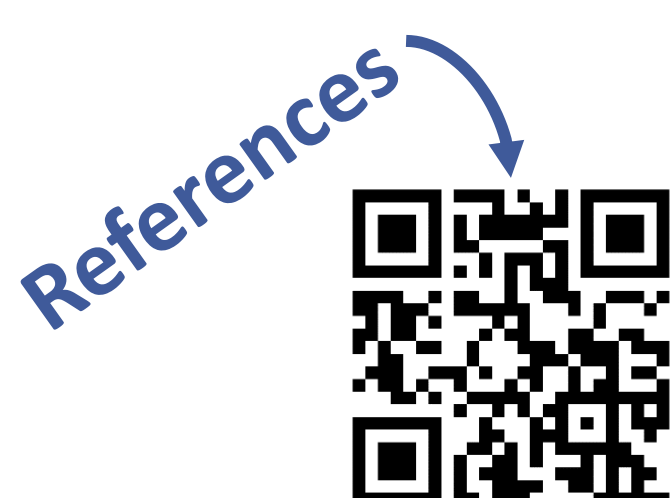
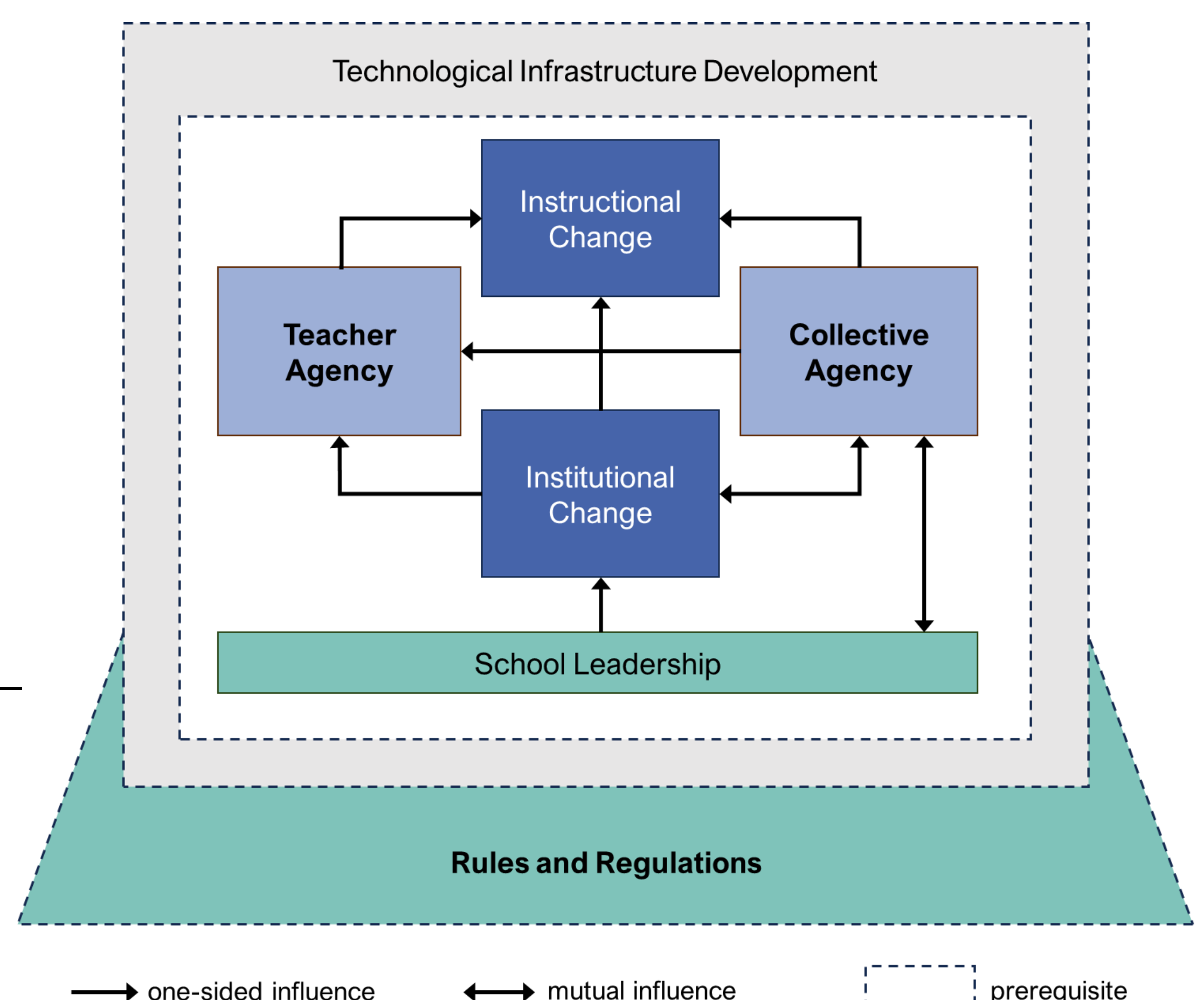
Teacher Agency enabled significant changes at the levels of teaching and the school institution during the COVID-19 pandemic

Instructional Change: Adjustments in formats, development of teaching materials, changes in assessment practices, transformation of the role of teachers

Institutional Change: Improvement of infrastructure, adjustment of workspace design, creation or revision of media concepts, strengthening of collaboration

Professionalization and critical reflection on the transformation process and the use of digital media increased over time (dependent on supporting factors – see *heuristic model in Figure 1*)

Figure 1: Interconnected dynamics: teacher agency in digital transformation



Dr. Olivia Wohlfart & Prof. Dr. Ingo Wagner