How and by whom are our postdigital futures designed? Can educational futures be designed at all, given their inherent uncertainty? How do we anticipate design to reconfigure our social worlds? Designing technology is always already about creating inherently political and affective sociotechnical future relations (Light and Akama 2014). These can point towards ‘big futures’, i.e., radical ruptures and epochal change, or ‘little futures’, emergent processes in mundane, everyday practices (Michael 2017; Pink et al. 2022). In this sense, ‘design’ has many meanings. It can be seen as a professional practice, but also as a knowledge practice, an ontological practice (Escobar 2018), an entrenched practice that reproduces exclusions (MacKenzie, Rose, and Bhatt 2021), a collective practice opening up new futures that call authority into question (Costanza–Chock 2020; Networked Learning Editorial Collective 2021), a speculative practice (Goodyear 2021), and a practice of creative (re-)appropriation and redesign through use (Lachney et al. 2021). With ‘postdigital’, we position this special issue ‘after’ the hype promising digital solutions. Instead, it invites critique of the assumptions built into much writing about the digital, and investigates the ‘muddiness’ of practice (Jandrić et al. 2018; Knox 2019). This special issue aims to open up conversations around design and educational futures (where ‘education’ is understood in a broad sense, beyond formal educational institutions, covering all spheres of life as well as access to education).

With ‘design practice’ and ‘futures making’ taking such a central role in today’s discussions about education and technology (EdTech), there is an urgent need to explore the sociotechnical imaginaries, design proposals and lived experiences around these issues. Theoretical work needs to engage with, e.g., the inherent contradiction embedded in this field when education is understood as designed (teaching, edtech), and yet indeterminate (learning, growing). We need empirically grounded work on the struggles over futures, when initiatives vie over the right to design educational futures, with alt-right, left, progressive, ecological, and efficiency-oriented proposals for what each prioritises as ‘feasible’ and/or desirable educational futures. A key moment in designing (postdigital) futures is collaboration and participation (Lindström et al. 2021): If we acknowledge that designing technology is also designing sociotechnical relations, then the participation of those who will use the edtech and/or are affected by it into the design process is essential.

We are interested in proposals that draw on, for instance, design theory, educational theory, decolonial approaches, STS, HCI, critical data/algorithm studies or historical analysis to contribute to ongoing critical debates about design, education, and imaginaries about our postdigital futures. Potential topics of interest include, but are not limited to:

- **Problematising design**: If ‘design’ is not a straightforward concept, what are the conditions of possibility of design? Where is design located: in processes of technogenesis, in artefacts or in use? Whose design counts as most valid or valuable? Which (hegemonic) struggles over design can be observed? What role do repair, maintenance or stewardship play in design?
- **Historicising design**: How are local, translocal, or connected histories of design at the nexus of education and technology entangled with past futures? How has the idea that futures can be designed (or that relations or education can be designed) emerged over time to become self-evident?
- **Theorising design**: What do we assume design to be? What is design if it is not finding solutions? Who counts as a designer? When is design? Where are the limits of design? Where does design bump against engineering or Gestaltung? How does design align with the indeterminacy and muddling through of education? Who or what has power in design processes?
- **Responsibility and design**: Who takes responsibility in (participatory) design practice? Who is assigned responsibility? What do we see as designable? How does design relate to problem solving? How do educators and educational researchers participate in technological development? How does policy limit or open up design?
- **Openness and design**: What does it mean if education is seen as holding the difference between technology and practices open? How does the design of open educational resources shape/reclaim education as commons?
- **Industrial design**: Even if we conceptualise design as ontological design, does writing about design nevertheless privilege industrial or commercial design? Which social processes lead which designs to dominate educational practice? How do critical engagements with industrial design in capitalist contexts aim to reshape education?
Guest Editors
Felicitas Macgilchrist (Leibniz-Institute for Educational Media and University of Goettingen), Juliane Jarke (ifib & ZeMKI, University of Bremen), Heidrun Allert (University of Kiel,) Teresa Cerratto-Pargman (Stockholm University). Feel free to contact Felicitas Macgilchrist to discuss your possible contribution.

References