

## **Research As an Act of Recognition: The Project TOBIS. Innovative Cooperation Between School Authorities on Digital Change And OER/OEP**

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Research on open education in schools usually addresses, for instance, the uptake of Open Educational Resources (OER) in the classroom or Open Educational Practices (OEP) of teachers and students. At the same time, there are only a few studies on initiatives that do not only include the group of school authorities but place them at the center of their participatory research, acknowledging the shifting role school authorities play in times of datafication and digitization of schooling.

Originally, in Germany, school authorities were responsible for 'external' educational matters such as furnishing and maintenance of school buildings, equipment, teaching, and learning materials and responsibility for non-teaching staff. As a result of modernization initiatives, school authorities are now given further participation possibilities when it comes to the 'internal' design of regional school systems, for e.g. setting parameters when implementing the concept of inclusion, all-day schooling, or educational technology.

This presentation explored the approach of the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) funded project TOBIS to strengthen transprofessional cooperation between school authorities and other education stakeholders to promote the use of open educational resources (OER) and open educational practices (OEP). The project emphasized the stakeholders' role as 'new drivers' of complex development processes. It also advised the development of their own infrastructure and the implementation of state solutions to promote the use and dissemination of OER and OEP.

A needs analysis conducted during the initial phase of the project elicited two main challenges. First, school authorities adopt different approaches to communication and collaboration across stakeholders — schools, IT services, media competence centers, and teacher training providers—which affect the type and intensity of their influence. Second, the needs differ in the extent to which they impact decisions related to schools' educational concepts. While responsible for funding technical infrastructure and devices, school authorities can also influence whether these investments support pedagogical approaches such as Open Educational Practices.

Drawing on research and empirical insights from TOBIS, the presentation addressed a dual challenge: supporting school authorities in enabling the development of Open Educational Practices in schools, while helping make their own work and impact more visible and

recognized within their networks, through research, and in the public sphere through publications.

**Keywords:** open educational practices, open educational resources, Federal Ministry of Education and Research, project TOBIS