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Editorial

The Editorial Board of International Journal of Research in E-learning (IJREL) is privileged to present a new volume 10(2) 2024. The content of the current issue was divided into four chapters. The first is devoted to Theoretical, Methodological and Practical Aspects and Psychological Determinants of ICT and E-Learning in Education. The second contains articles concerned with Innovative Methods and Technology in Education. The third concerns Research on Distance, Online and Blended Learning Before, During and After the Pandemic Time of COVID-19. And the forth includes the Report on the international scientific conference DLCC2024.

The first part of the volume Chapter I: "Theoretical, Methodological and Practical Aspects and Psychological Determinants of ICT and E-Learning in Education", contains three articles.

The article **Education in the Era of AI, Enhancing Skills, Challenges and Perspectives – International Context and National Experience** prepared by an international team of experts from five countries – **Nian-Shing Chen**, from National Taiwan Normal University, Taiwan; **Eugenia Smyrnova-Trybulska**, from University of Silesia in Katowice, Faculty of Arts and Educational Sciences, Katowice, Poland; **Nataliia Morze,** from Borys Grinchenko Kyiv Metropolitan University, Ukraine; **Anna Ślósarz,** from University of National Education Commission, Institute of Journalism and International Relations, Kraków, Poland; **Todorka Glushkova,** from Plovdiv University "Paisii Hilendarski", Bulgaria; **Małgorzata Przybyła-Kasperek,** from University of Silesia in Katowice, Institute of Computer Science, Poland; **Miroslav Hrubý**, from University of Defence, Brno, the Czech Republic and **Štefan Gubo,** from J. Selye University, Faculty of Economics and Informatics, Komárno, Slovakia. The article summarizes insights from a round table debate on AI in education, focusing on three main topics: e-learning and soft skills enhancement, good practices using AI for soft skills development, and AI's perspectives and challenges in education. The experts concluded that AI and robots can revolutionize education via creating personalized, efficient, and inclusive learning environments. Benefits include task automation, real-time feedback, and support for diverse needs. However, challenges like equity, privacy, bias, and ethical concerns must be addressed. Success requires adequate

teacher training, focus on equity and accessibility, ethical considerations, strong data protection, and maintaining human interaction and creativity. By addressing these challenges thoughtfully, education systems can fully harness AI's potential to improve learning outcomes.

Tomasz Kopczyński, from University of Silesia in Katowice, Poland, elaborated on the research titled **The Use of Artificial Intelligence in Didactics and Academic Research: A Pilot Study Among Academic Lecturers in Poland.** The article reports on a pilot study examining AI use in didactics and academic work among Polish university lecturers. The study aimed to identify experience levels, barriers, and training needs related to AI. Conducted via a survey of 120 lecturers, it found most limited AI experience. Key barriers included lack of training, insufficient time, and inadequate technical support. Lecturers with higher academic titles and less frequent AI use showed greater training needs. Science and technical academics used AI more than others. The study highlights the need for training programs and technological support to enhance AI use in education. Preferences for AI tools were linked to financial accessibility, indicating a need to promote free or low-cost tools. These findings can inform strategies to support AI implementation in higher education, improving teaching quality and research efficiency.

The third research on **Technology Empowering Women of India** was prepared by **Harshita Bhatnagar**, from Vidya Bhawan Rural Institute, Affiliated to MLSU, India. This study examines the impact of technology on women's empowerment in India, focusing on awareness and adoption rates among women. Conducted with 120 women from semi-urban Udaipur, Rajasthan, it found that technology is mainly used by educated women aged 25–50, primarily homemakers. They use devices like smartphones and laptops for work, entertainment, and learning. However, many women lack knowledge of cyber security ethics and face barriers such as technical issues, privacy concerns, gender discrimination, and digital divide. Domestic responsibilities and low literacy rates also hinder technology adoption. The study suggests that strong support from family, government, policymakers, and educational institutions is crucial for empowering women. It calls for awareness programs, e-training, and better cyber security norms to enhance technology use. The economic and psychological impacts of demonetization and COVID-19 have highlighted the need for digital empowerment, making it a priority for nations.

Natalia Maria Ruman, from University of Silesia, Faculty of Arts and Sciences on Education, and **Zdenek Mruzek,** from Albrechtova Stredni Szkoła in Český Těšín, presented the research titled **Challenges for Youth Resulting from the Internet Use – a Reflection on the Example of Two Secondary Schools: in Pszczyna and in** Český Těšín**.** The article explores the vast possibilities of the Internet and its impact on young people. The research aims to understand both the negative consequences and positive outcomes of Internet use among students. The first part of the study covers key updates in new media, focusing on the Internet characteristics. It addresses various aspects of Internet use, including psychological

mechanisms, media education, challenges of online activities, and socio-practical phenomena in the digital world. This theoretical knowledge forms the basis for empirical research on the importance of computer and Internet use in secondary school students' lives. The results of this research, discussed together with their elaboration and the presentation of ways to counteract the threats and methods of a positive use of the Internet, can be a valuable source of knowledge, useful both in the pedagogical work of those involved in education and for parents, since they are most responsible for the education of their children in the use of media.

The second section contains two articles concerned with Innovative Methods and Technology in Education. **Daria Becker-Pestka,** from WSB University, Gdańsk, prepared the article **A Portuguese Model of E-learning for Prisoners as an Example of Successful Application of New Technologies in Education of Convicts: A Case Study.** The manuscript discusses the use of e-learning in the education of prisoners in Portugal, highlighting its role in complementing traditional education and addressing digital, social, educational, and economic disparities. It identifies infrastructural disparities, lack of computer equipment, and Internet access as major challenges. Security concerns in penitentiary institutions are also noted. The focus is on lifelong learning, with projects like EPRIS@@ and Open University serving as examples. The research, based on case studies, document analysis, and interviews, aims to explore the implementation, objectives, tools, challenges, strengths, and evaluation of e-learning solutions for prisoners. The findings suggest that these innovative solutions can inspire prison staff in other countries and emphasize the importance of modern technologies in prisoner education. The materials were collected in 2022 from the Institute Piaget and the Open University of Porto in Portugal.

The research titled **Preparing Pedagogy Students for Teaching Programming in Early Childhood Education** was prepared by **Ewelina Rzońca,** from The Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University in Warsaw, and **Tomasz Warchoł**, from University of Rzeszów**,** Poland. The article examines the competencies of modern teachers in using information and communication technologies, especially in programming. The research aimed to assess the knowledge and skills of future early childhood education teachers in practical tasks. Conducted among students from two Polish universities, the study used a diagnostic survey with a knowledge test. The results showed that while future teachers have theoretical programming knowledge, only 35% could explain principles in detail, and practical application was less effective (45% for typical tasks, 47% for problem-solving). The authors suggest increasing programming-related study hours and emphasizing practical experience. They also highlight the need for a teacher education system that develops digital competencies, keeping pace with new technologies to prepare students for future challenges. Further research on digital competencies is recommended to adapt pedagogical programs and shaping future teachers' necessary skills.

The third chapter, concerning Research on Distance, Online and Blended Learning Before, During and After the Pandemic Time of COVID-19, includes one text. **Marzena Wysocka-Narewska,** from University of Silesia in Katowice, Institute of Linguistics, presented the study titled **English Teachers' Digital Competences in a Post-COVID Classroom: A Case Study.** The article examines the digital competences of English teachers in post-COVID classrooms from September 2022 to 2023. Initially, teachers lacked digital skills during the pandemic's early phase. In September 2022, a detailed analysis using the European Framework for the Digital Competence of Educators (DigCompEdu) was conducted. Teachers' competences were reassessed in September 2023 to evaluate the impact of time, experience, and training. The study, involving four teachers from two Polish primary schools, revealed varied proficiency levels over time. Three distinct patterns of competence development emerged. The findings indicate that teachers' digital skills are influenced more by their basic knowledge, education, and additional roles rather than age or seniority. The study suggests expanding research to a larger sample and examining actual classroom practices to better understand digital skill usage during language instruction.

The fourth chapter, **Reports,** includes one article **A Report from the International Scientific Conference "Theoretical and Practical Aspects of Distance learning" DLCC2024 (www.dlcc.us.edu.pl) subtitled: "E-learning & Enhancing Soft Skills" which was held at the University of Silesia, Cieszyn**, **Poland. Monday 14th and Tuesday 15th October 2024** written by **Eugenia Smyrnova-Trybulska**, from University of Silesia in Katowice, Faculty of Arts and Educational Sciences, Katowice, Poland, and **Aleksandra Słonka**, from the Higher School of Management and Entrepreneurship in Wałbrzych. The 16th International Scientific Conference, "Theoretical and Practical Aspects of Distance Learning" (DLCC2024), focused on "E-learning & Enhancing Soft Skills," was held on October 14–15, 2024, at the University of Silesia in Cieszyn, Poland. Organized by the Faculty of Arts and Educational Sciences, the Faculty of Computer Science and Materials Sciences, and the University of Silesia, it featured support from various international universities and associations. Among its participants were experts in e-learning area from 10 countries. Professor Nian-Shing Chen, from the National Taiwan Normal University, Taiwan, presented a Keynote Lecture titled "Revolutionizing Education with Pedagogical AI Agents" The conference gathered scholars, experts, and educators to discuss advancements in distance education, e-learning, and technology-enhanced learning. Papers from the conference published in a monograph by a distinguished publishing house, Springer, and will be indexed in Scopus. The event highlighted the importance of modernizing educational systems and implementing new technologies. The next 17th edition of the DLCC2025 conference is planned for October 2025 at the WSNE UŚ in Cieszyn. We thank you for your interest in this scientific event and invite you kindly to participate in this international forum.

We hope that studies and solutions in the present IJREL volume will be inspiring and encourage reflection on how to manage the increasing demand for online education in the current situation.

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