EDITORIAL

The IADIS International Journal on WWW/Internet (IJWI) is a peer-reviewed scientific journal published exclusively in electronic format. The IADIS IJWI is devoted to the WWW and Internet broad fields. The mission of this journal is to publish original contributions in its domain fields to disseminate knowledge amongst its readers and be a reference publication. It publishes original papers, review papers, ongoing research papers, technical reports, case studies, conference reports, management reports, book reviews, notes, commentaries, and news on future scientific events.

This volume (Volume 23, Issue 1 - ISSN: 1645-7641) combines 6 selected original papers that bring together researchers covering the wide spectrum of the WWW and Internet presented in different areas and contexts.

The first contribution to this issue entitled “FROM LEARNING TO LEADING: HIGHER EDUCATION IN THE DIGITAL ERA” authored by Teresa Dieguez and Conceição Castro explores how higher education fosters digital and transversal competencies amidst the rise of digital transformation and Industry 4.0. Through a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) and empirical case study, findings show a gap between students' awareness of digital transformation and their understanding of its key concepts. This study advocates for interdisciplinary learning and closer collaboration between universities and industry.

The second paper, by Daniel Ullrich, Lara Christoforakos, Andreas Butz and Sarah Diefenbach, entitled “SUPPORT OF HYBRID TEACHING BY AN AVATAR: DEVELOPMENT AND EVALUATION OF THE "FERNSTUDENT" CONCEPT”, focuses on the concept of Hybrid Teaching. How it enhances accessibility but poses challenges like limited interaction for remote students and teacher overload. To address this, the authors developed the Fernstudent - a physical avatar representing remote learners in classrooms. It was performed field and longitudinal studies that showed improved social presence and participation of remote students compared to standard tools. Broader evaluations confirmed feasibility, though adaptations are needed for different disciplines and further development is required.

The third paper, “LEVERAGING SELF-DETERMINATION THEORY IN THE DESIGN OF AN ONLINE TRAINING MODULE FOR VIRTUAL AND BLENDED INTERNATIONAL COLLABORATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION”, authored by Alice Barana, Vasiliki Eirini Chatzea, Kelly Henao, Ania Maria Hildebrandt, Marina Marchisio Conte, Daniel Samoilovich, Georgios Triantafyllidis and Nikolas Vidakis presents an online training module that was developed to help higher education staff implement virtual and blended international collaboration. It was designed using Self-Determination Theory and the INVITE Learning Design Framework. A survey was performed and results from 150 participants showed that the module effectively supported autonomy, structure, and involvement. Teachers and staff reported similar positive perceptions, offering insights for future training module design.

Rebeca Mendes, Ana Veloso, David Sena, Diogo Guerra, Rodrigo Teixeira and Salvador Luís authored the fourth paper entitled “SKYE PLATFORM: UTILITY AND USABILITY ASSESSMENT FOR SUPPORTING BLENDED PSYCHOLOGICAL INTERVENTIONS. This study reports on Skye, which is a digital platform aimed at supporting psychotherapy for young adults with anxiety. It is evaluated its utility and usability from both professionals' and clients' perspectives. Using a four-phase design thinking approach, this research includes concept, design, development and assessment. Two groups tested the platform remotely: mental health professionals (desktop version) and young adults (mobile version).

In the fifth paper, named “TRANSVERSAL SKILLS IN PEDAGOGICAL SETTINGS: EMPIRICAL INSIGHTS FROM QUANTITATIVE AND QUALITATIVE RESEARCH”, the authors Marc Beutner and Jan-Phillip Lüttke examine the gap between teaching intentions and student acquisition of transversal skills—like critical thinking, resilience, and digital literacy—in a rapidly changing VUCA (an acronym for a world of volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity) world. Although the results indicate strong teacher commitment, they also highlight an ongoing gap between instructional goals and students’ demonstrated application of these skills.

The sixth and final contribution with the title “USING SLA AND AI TO SUPPORT LEARNING: A CASE STUDY IN PRACTICE-ORIENTED IS EDUCATION”, written by Cherifa Boudia, Amina Houari and Kamal Benhaoua explores how Social Learning Analytics (SLA) dashboards and Generative AI can jointly improve student performance and collaboration. This study examines the integration of Social Learning Analytics (SLA) dashboards and Generative AI (ChatGPT) in an introductory Information Systems course on Merise database modeling. Findings show that carefully combining these tools can enhance learning outcomes. Generative AI acted as an effective cognitive scaffold, significantly improving students’ accuracy in converting conceptual models to logical data models. It supported learning by offering immediate, interactive guidance on rules and procedures.

It is widely recognized that technology is ever-present and has the potential to enhance various facets of society. These papers demonstrate that technological advancements have expanded our ambitions, promoting a more global and international approach to its development and application.

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