Guest Editors' Introduction: AECT24: Framing the Future of Learning and Technology

Dousay, T. A., Reese, R. M., & Asino, T. I.

The AECT24 Proceedings special issue of the Journal of Applied Instructional Design captures the dynamic and interdisciplinary conversations shaping instructional design and technology today. Focused on **human-centered technology, ethical innovation, and the evolving landscape of learning,** this collection showcases a broad spectrum of research, practice, and applied scholarship presented at the 2024 AECT International Convention, held virtually and in Kansas City. These proceedings highlight how educators, researchers, and practitioners are addressing contemporary challenges in educational technology and learning sciences.

AECT24: Framing the Future of Learning and Technology

The 2024 AECT Convention underscored the **transformative role of emerging technologies, instructional design strategies, and ethical considerations** in shaping education's future. The call for proposals invited scholars to explore the complexities of technology-enhanced learning while examining issues of access, opportunity, and the evolving needs of learners across contexts. The works featured in this issue reflect a shared commitment to **rethinking traditional paradigms, fostering responsible innovation, and advancing impactful, research-informed practice** in instructional design.

Featured Presidential Sessions

This special issue includes three **Presidential Sessions**, which were identified through peer review as particularly emblematic of this year's conference theme. These sessions highlight research and practice that push the boundaries of **instructional design, AI integration, and ethical considerations** in technology-enhanced learning.

1. **In Design Justice and Critical Reflection in Instructional Design: A Single-Case Study of Team Development**, Deborah A. Lowe explores how instructional designers can serve as agents of change by addressing systemic injustices in higher education through transformative needs assessment and social justice-oriented design practices.
2. **In Assessing Student Perceptions and Performance in Digital Learning Spaces through an Equity Lens**, Naomi T. Lin, Huilin Li, Cindy Mui Perez, Yu Yan, and Karen Flammer investigate disparities in digital learning environments and how intentional course design can mitigate equity gaps.
3. I**n Drawing the Line: Keeping Colorism Out of the Classroom**, Paris Love, Belky Perez, Stella Smith, Jennifer James, and Tamika Fuller examine the impact of colorism on students' academic and social experiences and proposes strategies for fostering inclusive teaching practices.

Expanding the Discourse

Beyond the Presidential Sessions, this issue comprises a diverse range of 55 manuscripts, each contributing unique insights into contemporary instructional design challenges. Some of the key topics explored in this issue include:

- **Artificial Intelligence in Education**: From generative AI-based chatbots for open and distance learning to ethical considerations in AI-driven qualitative research, multiple studies provide perspectives on AI's evolving role in instructional design.
- **Virtual and Immersive Learning Environments:** Several manuscripts examine the educational applications of spherical video-based VR and the human-computer interaction aspects of virtual learning.
- **Accessibility and Inclusion:** Research exploring assistive technology in secondary education and AI-enabled video accessibility solutions for higher education institutions emphasize the ongoing efforts to create more inclusive learning environments.
- **Student Engagement and Emotional Competencies:** Studies on emotional intelligence in online learning and the role of note-taking in student engagement offer important perspectives on cognitive and affective factors in digital learning environments.
- **Professional Development and Data-Driven Insights:** Investigations into data mining for online educator PD and association rule mining in instructional resource recommendations highlight the power of learning analytics and data-informed decision-making in instructional design.

Looking Ahead

The AECT24 Proceedings serve as both a reflection of where the field stands today and an indicator of where it is headed. The contributions in this issue reinforce the need for **critical engagement with emerging technologies, interdisciplinary approaches to instructional design, and a steadfast commitment to ethical and responsible innovation** in all aspects of education.

As we continue to navigate the complexities of integrating technology into instructional practices, this special issue serves as a valuable resource for educators, researchers, and practitioners. It is our hope that the findings, discussions, and innovations presented here will inspire future research, inform instructional practice, and contribute to a more **inclusive, ethical, and effective** learning landscape.

We extend our gratitude to all contributing authors, peer reviewers, and AECT24 Convention Planning Committee members for their dedication and expertise in bringing this issue to fruition.

- Zeni Colorado-Resa, Culture, Learning, & Technology

- Yvonne Earnshaw, Design & Development
- Beth Oyarzun, Distance Learning
- Beth Jordan, Education in the Health Professions
- Joe Gaston, Emerging Learning Technologies
- Jen Johnston, Graduate Student Assembly
- Shamila Janakiraman, International
- Danilo Baylen, Learner Engagement
- Jenny Bauman, Organizational Training and Performance
- Logan Arrington, Research and Theory
- Matthew L. Wilson, Teacher Education
- Ginny Smith, Technology Integrated Learning

–Tonia A. Dousay, Rebecca M. Reese, Tutaleni I. Asino

Editors, AECT24 Proceedings Special Issue

Journal of Applied Instructional Design