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From the Editor's Desk 1(2)

Yurgos Politis

As the *jeXed* journal enters its third year of existence, we are delighted to present you with Issue 2 of the first Volume (2025), which brings together five challenging articles exploring the intersection of education and technology in diverse yet interconnected ways.

The article *The six fourth revolutions world we are living in* by Erna Oliver, is a thought-provoking piece arguing that the turbulence of 21st-century life cannot be understood by focusing solely on the Fourth Industrial Revolution. Instead, it suggests that six parallel 'fourth revolutions' – in industry, communication, education, human self-understanding, civilisation, and society – are simultaneously reshaping human identity, social structures, and global development. Each revolution builds on earlier historical shifts, from speech to digital networks, from Copernicus to Floridi, from educator-centred teaching to AI-driven personalised learning, and from hunter-gatherer societies to the information age. Their

combined effects generate both opportunities (connectivity, innovation, and new knowledge systems) and challenges (inequality, environmental strain, cognitive dissonance, and digital colonialism). The focus then turns to the Global South, with Oliver stating that it must understand these historical trajectories to navigate current disruptions, avoid repeating past mistakes, and adapt global innovations to local contexts in ways that support decolonisation, cultural preservation, and sustainable development.

The article *Teach, reflect, grow: Empowering aspiring educators through structured observations* by Yurgos Politis and Irene Lubbe, addresses a critical gap in doctoral training, i.e., the development of pedagogical competence. Through a structured three-step observation framework, the authors demonstrate how peer and expert feedback can cultivate reflective practice among Ph.D. students. This work reminds us that teaching is not merely an innate talent but a skill that can and must be developed through guided, collaborative, and iterative processes.

Building on the theme of innovative pedagogy, the next two articles turn to the realm of serious games as powerful tools for deep and experiential learning. In *Design and development of a serious game in service of higher education* Willem Oliver provides a practical, step-by-step guide for educators interested in creating their own games. He emphasises the importance of interdisciplinary collaboration, scaffolding, and emotional engagement, arguing that well-designed games can transform complex or 'boring' content into compelling learning experiences. This is complemented by the broader overview in *Serious games in service of higher education* by Erna Oliver, which traces the historical and pedagogical foundations of serious gaming while addressing persistent barriers to adoption, particularly in contexts like South Africa. Both pieces advocate for a shift from educator-centred 'parroting' to student-centred, interactive, and playful learning environments.

The conversation then shifts from games to generative artificial intelligence in *A pragmatic approach to using LLMs* by Tony Mays. Drawing on real-world projects from the Commonwealth of Learning, Mays argues for a measured, context-sensitive adoption of large language models in open and distance learning. Rather than rejecting

or uncritically embracing AI, he proposes a *kaizen*-inspired approach of continuous improvement, one that balances innovation with ethical considerations, accessibility, and pedagogical intentionality. This piece serves as a timely reminder that technology should serve educational goals, not dictate them.

This issue takes the reader on a journey from a broad/high level discussion on the historical changes in education and technology, to how education can evolve to meet the needs of 21st-century students, from the micro-level of classroom observations to the macro-level implications of AI and game-based learning.

These articles highlight several recurring themes:

- *The importance of reflective practice*, whether through structured observations, game-based debriefs, or critical engagement with AI-generated content.
- *The move toward student-centred and experiential learning*, enabled by technologies that promote interaction, personalisation, and real-world application.
- *The need for interdisciplinary collaboration and professional development*, as reflected in the design of serious games, the implementation of teaching observations, and the ethical deployment of AI.
- *The challenge of bridging theory and practice*, specifically in environments resistant to change or constrained by resources.

We extend our gratitude to the authors for their insightful contributions and to the reviewers for their rigorous engagement. May this volume serve as both a resource and a catalyst for ongoing dialogue and innovation at the nexus of education and technology.