40 years of AJET: The first 10 years

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In this editorial, which continues the series celebrating the 40th anniversary of the *Australasian Journal of Educational Technology* (AJET), we explore AJET's first 10 years from 1985 to 1994. We trace the origins and evolution of AJET, from its establishment by the Australian Society for Educational Technology (ASET) to its current open access format supported by the Australasian Society for Computers in Learning in Tertiary Education (ASCILITE). The emergence of the journal came at a time of significant changes in the Australian education sector and it is in this context we analyse the content of early AJET articles, highlighting key themes such as the definition of educational technology, the evolving role of educational technologists, the concept of computer literacy, and early discussions on artificial intelligence. Finally, we reflect on the enduring questions regarding technology's impact on learning and the continuing relevance of AJET in a changing educational technology landscape.

Keywords: Australasian Journal of Educational Technology, AJET, Educational Technology, History, Editorial

Introduction

To celebrate the 40th anniversary of the *Australasian Journal of Educational Technology* (AJET) we will dedicate the next three editorials to exploring the origins and history of the journal. In this first editorial of the series we journey through the initial 10 years, from the first issue in 1985 to the last issue of 1994. Applying a 2025 lens to the emerging research of the 1980s and 1990s provides an insightful, and sometimes humorous, look at how researchers and practitioners have viewed the opportunities and challenges of educational technology over time. Consistent with Weller's (2020) argument of 'historical amnesia' in relation to the impact of ed tech and the pace of this change, there are many familiar viewpoints and arguments scattered across the articles of the first 10 years that can still be heard in the corridors of today's tertiary educational institutions. While technology has certainly changed the tertiary education landscape over the past 40 years, the revolutionary rhetoric commonly espoused by researchers and practitioners in the field, has not always been as revolutionary as expected (Selwyn, 2013). However, some have recently suggested that generative AI may be a technology that could buck that trend. But regardless, the revolutionary potential of educational technology is a recurrent theme that we will explore throughout this series of three editorials reflecting on the last 40 years of AJET publications.

The origins and history of AJET

The Australian Society for Educational Technology (ASET) established AJET in 1985 with the intention to broaden access to articles on educational technology that had previously been published in the society's yearbook which "deserved a wider readership" (ASET, 1985, p. 1). In the first AJET editorial the aim of the journal was established as the provision of 'accurate' and 'scholarly' work, which accompanied a call for

"contributions which are clear, concise (and even entertaining)" (ASET, 1985, p. 1). Articles were welcomed from all parts of the education sector, including K-12, higher education, vocational education, and industry. Since then, AJET has both narrowed and evolved in terms of its aims and scope.

AJET has experienced many different ownership and management models over the years. AJET Publications, run by James Steele, John Hedberg, and Sue McNamara published AJET between 1987 to 1996, before joint responsibility for the journal was taken up by ASET and the Australasian Society for Computers in Learning in Tertiary Education (ASCILITE), with Ron Oliver and Roger Atkinson as editors. Catherine McLoughlin took over from Ron Oliver when he retired as editor in 2002. In 2005 ASET was dissolved and ASCILITE assumed full responsibility for AJET, an arrangement which has continued to this day.

While branding and medium have changed, the core mission of widening readership has remained. AJET was originally called the *Australian Journal of Educational Technology*, but in 2004 a new title that broadened the scope to Australasian was adopted (see Atkinson & McLoughlin, 2004). In 2007 two other journals, the *International Journal of Educational Technology* (IJET) and the *e-Journal of Instructional Science and Technology* (e-JIST), merged with AJET. Also in 2007, AJET transitioned from a print-based publication to an online, open access journal. The principles of open access remain key to AJET's aim to ensure that the work it publishes can reach the widest possible audience. Currently, AJET is one of the very few top educational technology journals that maintains its open access status without charging article processing fees (Corrin et al., 2024).

When Roger Atkinson and Catherine McLoughlin retired as editors in 2012, AJET adopted a new rolling basis of appointing lead editors. In the subsequent years the lead editors have included Sue Bennett, Barney Dalgarno, Gregor Kennedy, Michael Henderson, Eva Heinrich, Chwee Beng Lee, Petrea Redmond, Gwo-Jen Hwang, Kate Thompson, Jason Lodge, Linda Corrin, Feifei Han, Henk Huijser, and Chris Deneen. The journal has continually been supported by a network of associate editors, copyeditors, editorial boards, and reviewers who together make the publication of this high-ranking journal possible.

The state of the education sector and educational technology in Australia between 1985 - 1994

The 1980s was a time of great change in the educational sector in Australia, while at the same time educational technology was growing and evolving globally. In 1985 Australia had approximately 10,000 schools, 18 universities, 47 Colleges of Advanced Education (CAEs), and 84 Technical and Further Education (TAFE) institutions (Goozee, 2001; Lake et al., 2022). In the schools sector there was a major push from the government to improve the retention rates of students completing Year 12, as well as to increase the computer literacy of students (Hedberg & McNamara, 2002). At the same time, the TAFE system went through a period of structural and governance change where state governments shifted the responsibility of TAFEs from their education portfolios towards their employment and training portfolios (Goozee, 2001). In 1986 the TAFE system was the largest educational provider in Australia, catering for more than twice the number of students as CAEs and universities combined (Holmes, 1986).

In the higher education sector, policy discussions were beginning in 1985 that would ultimately result in the publishing of a policy discussion paper in 1987 by the Minister for Employment, Education, and Training, John Dawkins, proposing major changes to higher education in Australia (Marginson, 2004). These changes included the amalgamation of many CAEs with universities or the granting of university status to CAEs (e.g., the Mitchell CAE became Charles Sturt University in 1989) marking the beginning of the move towards the massification of higher education in Australia (Horne, 2020). The introduction of the Higher Education Contribution Scheme (HECS) in 1989, a loan scheme for student fees where future repayment would be contingent on income, was another outcome of what would come to be known as the "Dawkins Revolution" (Watts, 1992). As a result of this period of expansion and change, the number of universities in Australia increased from 19 in 1985 to 37 in 1994. It has since been observed that around this time "Dawkins…turned colleges into universities, free education into HECS, elite education into mass

education, local focuses into international outlooks, vice-chancellors into corporate leaders, teachers into teachers and researchers… He remodelled higher education and how it was funded in only a few years." (Croucher et al., 2013 cited in Sharrock, 2013).

Throughout this decade, educational technology continued to evolve and become a bigger presence in educational environments across all sectors. The microcomputer was starting to make its way into classrooms, although the high costs still prohibited widespread adoption. In Australian primary schools the Apple IIe was the computer of choice. This computer gave many children their first glimpse at programming through interaction with the LOGO turtle software, as well as the use of Appleworks for word processing, spreadsheets, and databases (Hedberg & McNamara, 2002). The study of information technology was introduced into Australian secondary schools alongside a shift in focus from content to "skills, knowledge, and understanding" (Hedberg & McNamara, 2002, p. 116). Universities, too, embraced educational technology both in practice and as a subject of research. While the World Wide Web would not emerge until 1993, in the 1980s the use of email and teletext was becoming more prevalent and connections across greater distances (including internationally) were increasingly enabled by the opening up of satellite networks to educational institutions (Davies & Seumahu, 1985).

The first issue of AJET

The first issue of AJET contained eight articles on topics ranging from microcomputers to telecommunication satellites, and from human-computer interaction to the use of media in the classroom. The editorial of the first issue focused on the purpose of the new journal, situating it in the context of exponential growth in information technology when "education is more important than it has ever been" (ASET, 1985, p. 1). In the first article of this issue, Maggs and Ray (1985) took readers back to the beginning of civilisation to consider the evolution of the role of technology in society. This was followed by an exploration of the concept of computer literacy and the use of the microcomputer, which was still a relatively rare and new arrival in classrooms at the time. Concern about the impact of technology on the 'status' of teachers was front of mind as they posed the question: "will in due course, the students sit in their own homes with their terminals, learning at their own pace and thus superseding schools and teachers altogether?" (p. 6). While we still have schools, universities, and teachers, the possibility of remote, personalised, self-paced education has certainly been realised over the last 40 years yet rapid changes in technology continue to require educators and educational institutions to adapt, especially in the age of generative AI.

The theme of computer literacy also featured in Hedberg and Perry's (1985) article on human-computer interaction (HCI) in which they introduced HCI as an important concept for educators to understand and use when choosing educational technologies and designing resources for their teaching. A stark contrast with the technology of today was evident in this article when the authors noted that, at the time, Apple's Lisa computer, complete with 5 megabyte (mb) hard drive, cost US$10,000. Fast forward 40 years and one would struggle to find a computer that only held 5mb of data.

The role of physical technologies such as videodiscs (Dunbar, 1985) and telecommunications satellites (Davies & Seumahu, 1985), along with information retrieval systems such as Viatel (Hosie, 1985) were a key feature of several articles in this first AJET issue. The aim of these articles was less about presenting empirical research, and more focused on a discussion of the emergence of these technologies, their core features and specifications, as well as potential uses for education in the contexts of early childhood through to tertiary and beyond. An exception was Russell (1985) who conducted a study of the use of media materials in university instruction by collecting feedback from teaching staff through a questionnaire and interviews. Some findings presented in this article are no longer relevant to most institutions, such as the concern that having to physically carry the overhead projector to the classroom was a deterrent to the use of lecture slides. However, other comments about the workload involved in preparing media materials and lack of access to expertise to help with the technical development and aesthetical design of these materials continue to arise in research and practice today. Another exception to the more commentary-focused articles was Angus (1985) who applied the Luria model to the evaluation

of psychometric testing for information processing among primary school children. Additionally, Lange (1985) analysed the traffic of the PEACESAT (Pacific Education and Communication Experiment via Satellite) satellite over a two-week period in order to make suggestions for improvements to the network.

When examining the way in which AJET articles were written in the first issue, it is pleasing to see the diversity of authorship. Unlike today, where almost all authors are academics associated with one or more higher education institutions, authors in the first issue of AJET came from universities, institutes of technology, industry, and government departments (in both Australia and Canada). Despite being called the 'Australian' Journal of Educational Technology, the international nature of the journal was evident right from the start. In terms of authorship, five of the eight articles were solo authored, with the other three having two authors. This contrasts with recent issues of AJET where, for example in 2024, the average number of authors per article was four. The length of articles in this first issue is also much shorter than current standards (i.e., AJET's current word limit is 8,000), with an average article length of 4,294 words. When AJET first launched there was little consistency around the formatting of articles with only one article in the first issue having an abstract (Lange, 1985), none having keywords, and one including a reference list that doubled as an annotated bibliography. The first issue of 1991 appears to be the first time that more specific information was provided for authors in relation to article types and word counts (Hedberg, 1991). Over the years, the AJET editorial team have developed clearer formatting requirements and introduced several consistent article elements (e.g., the inclusion of a section on the implications for policy and practice from the last issue of 2019, and the declaration of authorship (Thompson et al., 2022)).

The trends and bibliometrics - 1985 - 1994

From the first issue of AJET in 1985 to the last of 1994, 10 volumes, 20 issues, and 145 articles were published, which is an average of 7.25 articles per issue. The early issues were dominated by commentary papers reporting on the history, current state, and future prospects of particular educational technologies including television, radio, videodiscs, and telecommunication satellites. Many of these early papers were revised versions of presentations given at conferences such as EdTech'86 - International Educational Technology Conference and Exhibition. Somewhat unexpectedly, one paper in the second issue of 1987 was written in the format of a script for an audio visual detailing how teleconferencing was enabling distance education in New Zealand (Hansen, 1987). In the first issue of 1988, ASET published their response to the Dawkin's review which included a call for additional changes to improve educational technology in the higher education sector (Steele et al., 1988).

In 1988 AJET introduced book reviews as an article format, with the first article of this type by Singh (1988) reviewing a book on the convergence of distance and mainstream education. Although, it should be noted that book reviews are no longer a format published by AJET. Special or themed collections of articles were evident in the early issues, where authors could submit their work for consideration around the nominated theme. In the editorial of the second issue of 1992, Hedberg (1992) announced a special issue call on "multimedia and its role in learning" with the instructions to fax any interest to the editor for articles or "even a disk which might be included in the next issue!" (p. iii). It is unclear from our analysis of the online archives of AJET whether such a disk was made available, with no mention of it in subsequent editorials.

Figure 1 (below) outlines the different formats of articles present in AJET in the first 10 years. Commentary articles involved the profiling of a technology, policy, and/or learning environment, and often included a discussion of background, current state, and future directions. This category made up the majority of articles in the early years of AJET (52%). This was followed by the category of empirical research which incorporates research-based articles that employ some form of quantitative, qualitative, or mixed methods to investigate a particular educational (technology) problem or context. While this type of article is most common in current editions of AJET, this was not the case in the first 10 years of the journal. The category of practice reports encapsulates articles that tell the story of an educational technology implementation, including a reflection on design elements, methods of implementation, and what was learnt, but it does not constitute any formal research of the implementation. Literature review articles

contain a review of the literature around a particular topic; however, it should be noted that these articles were in a traditional literature review format, not the systematic review format increasingly common in modern academic publishing. The conference categories cover two reviews of educational technology conferences and five transcripts of keynote presentations given at various conferences.

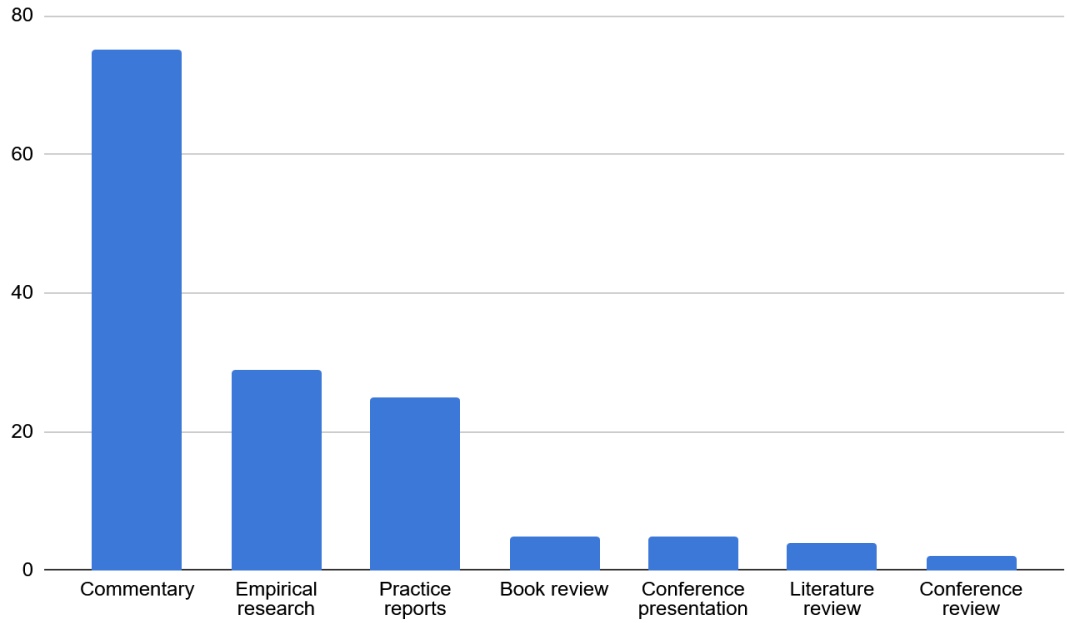

Figure 1. The formats of AJET articles from 1985 - 1994

Thus, the first 10 years of articles saw diversity in the affiliation of the organisations and institutions of authors, with a spread among universities, TAFEs, schools, industry, and government. Table 1 includes the affiliations with three or more articles published in AJET in the first 10 years. While universities dominate this list in terms of the frequency of articles published, there were many single articles from organisations such as the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC), the Department of Defence (Navy), KPMG, the Satellite and Telecommunications Association, the Tasmanian Department of Education and the Arts, UNESCO, IBM, and Telecom Australia Research Laboratories, to name a few. There was also international representation among authorship with 18% of affiliations situated outside Australia.

Table 1
Affiliations of authors with three or more articles published in AJET between 1985 - 1994

Affiliation	Count
University of Wollongong	10
University of Sydney	6
University of New South Wales	5
Curtin University of Technology	5
Queensland University of Technology	4
Monash University	4
Western Australia Institute of Technology	3
Scottish Council for Educational Technology	3
Richmond College of TAFE	3
Murdoch University	3
Florida State University	3
Canberra College of Advanced Education	3
James Cook University	3

The topics covered in AJET articles in the first 10 years vary considerably. However, there are some key concepts and technologies that were featured more prominently. In this section we will provide a summary of some of these core concepts and the role they played in the development of educational technology in the 1980s and 1990s.

The field of educational technology

When AJET launched in 1985 the field of educational technology was not new, but it was going through a period of growth in both prominence and impact. Many articles in the early years focused on definitions of educational technology and the role of key stakeholders in supporting its continued development and implementation. At the time, ASET had a holistic definition of educational technology that gave AJET authors an indication of the scope of the field, which was: "the design, application, evaluation, and development of systems, methods, and materials to improve the process of human learning" (cited in Steele, 1986, p. 130). Building on this definition, McNamara (1987, p. 103) focused on the value proposition of educational technology by exploring the components making up the field, including:

- instructional design
- information technology resources and management
- systems and curriculum development
- cognitive and information processing
- media production
- research and evaluation of instructional products and processes
- human resources development and management
- training and management of training systems and facilities
- instructional research and learning research

Change was a common theme in discussions of the educational technology field. Reflecting on the EdTech'88 conference, McNamara (1989) observed that it was important for the field to plan longterm, "rather than being motivated by 'crises' which need urgent resolution" (p. 45). In hindsight this is an interesting statement, considering that it was the crisis of COVID-19 that propelled technology to the forefront of the world's educational systems to facilitate necessary rapid shifts to online education. Similarly, the recent emergence of generative AI is challenging the ways we assure learning in our institutions and prompting broader discussions of the purpose and structure of education institutions as a whole.

The relationship between the field of educational technology and other fields was also a focus of many articles over the first 10 years. For example, Becker (1991) explored the role of instructional technology and design in the integration of behavioural and cognitive psychologies. McBeath and Atkinson (1992) discussed the interrelation between the fields of curriculum development, instructional design, and educational technology, proposing a model that facilitates a holistic approach to the production of effective educational materials. They posited that joining educational technology with other fields requires a shared understanding both in terms of language and ideology along with organisational structures that help facilitate this integration of different fields.

The role of educational technologists

With the emergence of educational technology came the rise of the role of the educational technologist. In the 1980s this title was often used to describe many different functions in relation to the use of technology in education. The importance of the role was emphasised across several AJET articles in the first 10 years, both in terms of the technological and pedagogical skills necessary to advise educators, as well as the need for educational technologists to act as change agents (Millar, 1985). Campion (1989) advocated that educational technologists need to "locate their work within broader debates about technological change" (p. 23), which he felt was not a standard practice at the time. There was also recognition of the constantly changing nature of the role of educational technologists when Latchem

(1986) observed that "sometimes it has been that of the fool and sometimes that of the sage, the courtier, the beggar, the physician, the judge, the teacher or the learner" (p. 7). Ausburn and Ausburn (1986) suggested that the educational technologist's role is to move teachers beyond the drill mode of traditional computer-based instruction, and towards a mindset of newer educational possibilities provided by emerging technologies.

Several articles focused on the challenges those in educational technologist roles faced. Greig (1986) saw an opportunity for educational technologists to help with the resource shortages of the 1980s, "but they do not yet hold political power in our tertiary institutions" (p. 30). When describing the progress of educational technologists in secondary schools in Victoria, Rey (1986) noted that "the history of educational technologists can be likened to that of a person staggering down a road, taking two steps forward and one step back before suddenly stumbling up a blind alley. Occasionally an opening appears leading to a new road" (p. 13). There were also many discussions about the differences and similarities between educational technologist and instructional designer roles, such as Strain and Inglis (1990) who advocated for the convergence of the skill sets of the two roles. As AJET also contained articles examining the use of educational technology in training in industry, the title of a performance technologist was sometimes used to indicate someone with a similar role to an educational technologist in the education context (e.g., Foxon, 1993, 1994; Rossett, 1991).

Computer literacy

The term *digital literacy*, as we know it today, was not common in the articles of the first 10 years of AJET. Instead the concept of *computer literacy* was discussed in relation to a number of different aspects of interaction with, and use of, technology. Interestingly, the discussion of computer literacy was not defined by age, as it later became in the years of the digital native debate (Bennett et al., 2008). This may be due to the fact that, at the time, computers were new technologies to both teachers and students alike. Noone (1993) emphasised the importance of developing computer literacy by noting the difficulty everyday users of technology had in interpreting instructions that came with new technologies in user manuals. A particular aspect of computer literacy that featured across several articles in the early years of AJET was keyboarding, which was still an emerging skill at this time. This was identified as a challenge for the Victorian correspondence school (Srivastava et al., 1986) to allow students to take advantage of technology to support distance learning. In a study of five to 11 year olds using electric typewriters to learn how to type, Carnegie (1990) advocated the development of keyboard skills as a way to enable fluent learning performance, which they claimed is only achievable when a skill like typing is left to the unconscious self.

Educational technologies

From the first issue of AJET onward there was a focus on the microcomputer which was just starting to become more commonplace in educational institutions and homes. Some articles profile the use of particular technologies such as the Apple IIe (King & King, 1993). Others (Fleer, 1989) looked at the perceptions of schools and community in relation to the introduction of microcomputers into schools in Western Australia, particularly schools with substantial enrolments of Indigenous students. Rehn (1992) explored different tools (e.g., MacRecorder, HyperCard, and Authorware Professional) that can be used on a Macintosh computer to develop a two-way interactive language teacher. Similarly, Nelson (1993) discussed the possibilities in relation to audio for language learning using Windows-based computers. Some articles were presented as a 'how to' guide on the use of a particular technology or software tool, such as desktop publishing (Jolliffe, 1987), computer simulations (Gatto, 1993), or selecting computer-based authoring packages (Jamieson & Hosie, 1992).

The use of radio in education in Australia can be traced back to the 1930s when the Australian Broadcasting Company (ABC) ran a program of lectures over a six-month period in partnership with the University Extension Board (Greig, 1987). The second issue of AJET in 1986 was almost entirely dedicated to the use of radio in education. The articles were written primarily by station managers of campus-based and educational public broadcasting networks, which had been designed primarily to provide educational

content to the public for the purposes of continuing education. At the time, several universities had their own radio stations, although the resourcing for these was often very tight (Lambert, 1986). At the same time as the first campus-based educational radio station in the southern hemisphere, run by UNSW, ceased broadcasting in 1986, after 25 years of delivering educational content (Hedberg, 1986), other university radio stations were exploring co-production to help boost their sustainability (Martin, 1986). It was suggested by Holmes (1986) that the challenge of making radio-based courses into successful educational experiences is to ensure that students are "motivated to tune in, must understand the purpose of the radio broadcast, be able to relate it to their present stage of progress in the course, be encouraged to respond to the program content, and they must receive feedback on the response" (p. 88). It can be argued that these guidelines for encouraging learner engagement with radio could be applied to any educational media at any time, although the radio broadcast of the 1980s is more likely to be a podcast in present times.

Another key educational technology of the 1980s was television. In Greig (1986), the history of TV in education is presented, from the early 1960s when it first emerged in the university classroom, initially as a response to a lack of qualified science lecturers. Several articles addressed the resourcing required to produce educational content for TV and the production qualities possible, while others evaluated particular educational TV programs, predominantly for younger audiences. A constant theme across many articles on television in the first 10 years was the budgetary pressures around the development of educational media and the impact that was having on the sustainability of media production. In the editorial of the first issue in 1992, Hedberg (1992) noted that the educational television unit at the University of Sydney had just been disbanded, a trend that was seen across other university-based television units over the subsequent years. The advent of the Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) did inject resourcing into media production units and studios again in the 2010s, although not necessarily for development of broadcast TV programs.

Discipline-based studies

A feature of many of the commentary-based articles of the first 10 years was a broad sector or technology-specific view of the issue in question. Consequently, it was in the empirical articles that disciplines were featured more prominently. One example is Cochran et al. (1985) who looked at the use of technology to facilitate training of nurses in Broken Hill hospitals. Similarly, Looms (1990) explored the use of interactive media in language learning, profiling many programs available at the time to educators on videodisc. The science discipline featured in the study of an interactive multimedia program developed at the University of Wollongong to teach students about algal bloom (Corderoy et al., 1993). Taking inspiration from other disciplines was the focus of the work-in-progress project, as described by Allen (1991), who used a program designed to explore Beethoven's music to inspire the design of an interactive listening program for language learning.

Artificial intelligence

Despite the seeming newness of AI and its role in education, the first mention of artificial intelligence in AJET was made in 1987 in an article entitled "Artificial Intelligence and expert systems in education: Progress, promise and problems" (Romiszowski, 1987). Romiszowski opened the piece by commenting on the lack of agreement regarding a definition for AI and so, somewhat cheekily, adopted the following definition put forward by Rich (1983): "AI is the study of how to make computers do things at which, for the moment, people are better…" (p. 1). In this article, Romiszowski introduced a 2 x 3 matrix with rows for the user (student, teacher) and columns for the use of AI (tool, tutor, tutee) and used this to discuss current AI uses as well as future possibilities and challenges. Other references to artificial intelligence in this first decade included the application of AI to computer-based training to improve technical skills in industry (Goldsmith, 1988) and the relationship between AI and expert systems (Willie, 1990).

Theoretical framing of articles

It is a criticism often made of early educational technology research that it lacked sufficient theoretical foundation (Hew et al., 2019). As the majority of papers in the first 10 years of AJET were more commentary-focused than empirically-based, theory was often absent in these discussions and studies. In the editorial of the first issue of 1991, Hedberg (1991) remarked that a solid theoretical base was important for practitioners in their design of projects and programs. Reference to theory did increase over the decade, with the emergence of discussions around elaboration theory (Youngblood, 1990), critical theory (Nouwens & Robinson, 1991), and cognitive load (Hedberg et al., 1993). We have also seen an evolution of thinking around certain theoretical framings, for example learning styles (Lodge et al., 2022). Early articles made reference to the concept of cognitive styles as a consideration for instructional design (Bird & Gill, 1987), with acknowledgement of the role of preferences and ability to change in this critical discussion. In Brickell (1993), the concept of learning styles was presented as "biologically and developmentally imposed" (p. 104) which is something that empirical research has since called into question. Consequently, over time, AJET editors and peer reviewers have taken a more critical stance on theoretical validity as part of the process of review and publication.

What works and what does not

Careful criticality has been an important part of AJET history. It was pleasing to see several articles that focused on what did not work as expected or that challenged the findings of previous articles. For example, there were three articles that examined the Suggestive-Accelerative Learning and Teaching (SALT) technique and found that use of this technique did not result in an improvement in learning outcomes (Dipamo & Job, 1991; Job & Dipamo, 1991). Another example is Foxon (1992) who critiqued Marsden's (1991) article on the value of post-course evaluations. While Marsden had questioned the usefulness of trainee reaction questionnaires, Foxon made a case for the continued utilisation of these questionnaires along with a discussion of how they can be designed in a way that ensures usefulness. It was common to see in the numerous commentary articles around particular technologies or context a consideration of the challenges and shortcomings of tools and structures, especially around technologies such as television and radio.

Final reflections

In the first AJET issue of 1986, Urwin (1986) undertook the task of predicting the future of educational technology. He predicted that transformation will occur:

> "By making unnecessary and irrelevant many of the current organisational constraints. By forcing recognition of the appalling pointlessness of much of the present curriculum. By allowing students to expand their horizons through the control of information. By showing students how the computer can put them in charge of their own learning" (p. 3).

Looking through the lens of 2025, the themes of personalisation and learner agency inherent in this quotation are still goals that educators and institutions work towards today. The shifting focus to enabling learners to have more control of their learning is one that has continued to evolve over time, but will perhaps be accelerated in this new era of generative AI. As this happens, key questions need to be asked around how we assure learning and whether the curriculum is still fit for purpose in this ever-changing environment. We are at a point where educators and institutions are weighing up what can and/or should be something a human does in relation to the learning process, and what is acceptable to offload to AI and other technologies. Boomer (1988) offered a prescient warning on this point in the early years of AJET by saying that "At rock bottom, I suggest, the most criminal use of technologies would be to deactivate brain cells" (p. 94).

This need for greater understanding of the relationship between technology and learning is still central to research and practice in the field of educational technology, and, consequently, the role of AJET. In 1986

Letchem (1986) commented that if "everything is now technically possible, what more can you tell us about how people learn and are motivated to learn?" (p. 7). With hindsight, it is hard to imagine that people thought the technology of 1986 enabled 'everything', knowing what we now know about how technology has advanced over the past 40 years. However, the idea of the importance of how people learn and what motivates them to learn is as vital as ever.

In the early days of AJET the technologies that were thought to have the most potential to revolutionise education were the microcomputer, radio, and television. At this time AI was still in its infancy. However, the questions around the broader role of educational institutions and educators in society were similar in nature to those we are experiencing today. In a speech published in AJET in its tenth year, given by the Assistant-Director General for Education at UNESCO (Colin Power) it was observed that by the time young people leave school they will have spent more than twice the amount of time they spend in class watching TV. As a result, Power (1994) reminded the audience that "Formal education systems no longer have a monopoly on knowledge and learning" (p. 70). In 2025, television is only one of many technologies that feature in the lives of learners, alongside the Internet, social media, AI chatbots, and many others. As we continue to explore the articles of the next 30 years of AJET in our upcoming editorials, we will trace the emerging applications of some of these technologies. As a constantly evolving field, the future of AJET will lie in its continued focus on innovation and the rigorous evaluation of educational technologies to provide impactful, evidence-informed guidance for educators and researchers.

Author contributions

Linda Corrin: Conceptualisation, Investigation, Writing - original draft, Writing - review and editing; **Feifei Han**: Writing - review and editing; **Henk Huijser**: Writing – review and editing; **Chris Deneen**: Writing – review and editing.

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Please cite as: Corrin, L., Han, F., Deneen, C., & Huijser, H. (2025). 40 Years of AJET: The first 10 years. *Australasian Journal of Educational Technology*, *41*(2), 1–14. https://doi.org/10.14742/ajet.11207