EDITORIAL | EN · AI-ASSISTED

Foreword to the first issue

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Teaching in transition

Teaching has always evolved in line with the technological possibilities of its time. What is new is the pace at which artificial intelligence (AI) is transforming higher education today. For many students, AI has long been part of everyday life: in a survey conducted by the CHE Centre for Higher Education during the winter semester of 2025/26, 81 per cent of 28,584 students of business and economics, law, and social work stated that they used AI at least once a week (Horstmann et al., 2026). If AI is such an integral part of studying, it also changes the way we plan courses, support learning processes and conduct assessments. This development presents us with a challenge. Above all, however, we see it as an opportunity to rethink teaching and learning and to shape them consciously.

A space for exchange

The three of us have been teaching for some time at the Technical University of Applied Sciences Würzburg-Schweinfurt (THWS), in the Faculty of Applied Social Sciences and at the THWS Business School. We met in the way people typically meet at a university: through teaching. We were brought together by a shared interest in AI in teaching and a desire to make a difference ourselves. Through our discussions, we have realised just how much we learn from one another when we openly share our experiences. We would like to open up this exchange to others through *Practice of Artificial Intelligence in Higher Education* (PAIHE).

PAIHE is a long-term, freely accessible space for teachers and for everyone who works in and around teaching at higher education institutions. We use “higher education institution” as an umbrella term for all types of institution, such as universities, universities of education,

universities of art and music, and universities of applied sciences. The aim here is to make visible the challenges that many teachers face simultaneously. Together, such challenges can be better understood and resolved. PAIHE complements existing opportunities for exchange about teaching by documenting practice and making it citable, so that others can build on it.

From practice, for practice

“Practice” in the title is a statement of intent. The contributions arise from teaching practice and are aimed at those who shape teaching. At the same time, we aim to do more than simply exchange experiences. The framework for this is provided by the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL): teachers deliberately and critically examine how their students learn, often starting with questions arising from their own teaching. They make their approach and findings public in a way that allows others to examine and use them (Felten, 2013). This is intended to combine experiential knowledge with a scholarly foundation. Teaching with AI is not “complete” after a single iteration. If a contribution builds on a previous iteration, it therefore references that earlier contribution. Over time, this reveals how teaching continues to evolve.

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Embracing the provisional

Because AI is developing so rapidly, much of what teachers are trialling today is provisional. We do not see this as a shortcoming, but rather as a characteristic of a young field. The answers remain provisional, but reflection on one’s own teaching can still be well-founded. PAIHE is therefore explicitly a space for experimentation and for the unfinished. Experiences that did not go as planned are also welcome. Much can be learnt from them, and they can save others from taking certain detours. Critical voices are equally important to us, as they sharpen our perspective and advance the collective discussion.

About this issue

The first issue begins with three contributions by the editors. The foundations paper “Performance is not learning: A minimal consensus for designing university teaching with generative AI” (Article 1; Warnke et al., 2026) explores how teaching can be designed so that the use of AI builds competence rather than merely boosting performance, and what common ground teachers from different disciplines can draw upon in this regard. The English-language practice report “The Practice of Reflective Teaching with AI: Future Skills Development with Offline LLMs” (Article 2; Bolsinger et al., 2026) uses a specific course as an example to illustrate how such a design might take shape within a discipline. The empirical paper “Reflective use of AI in university courses: Findings from a pretest at the end of the 2026 summer semester” (Article 3; Mühling et al., 2026) reports on an initial survey of students in courses that followed an earlier version of the minimal consensus. This

contribution is based on self-reported data from the students. It describes how students themselves assess their use of AI; it does not provide evidence of effects.

We are open about how we are building PAIHE. All three contributions have been published under the launch procedure: we are jointly responsible for them, but they have not been reviewed by uninvolved persons. The launch procedure is a transitional rule for the 2026 volume, applying to contributions by the editors as long as two uninvolved reviewers have not yet been found for these contributions. All other contributions undergo editorial review by two uninvolved persons under the regular procedure. Peer review, i.e. review by external experts, does not currently take place. Our aim is for the regular procedure to apply to all contributions. We are working towards this. We will decide when our own contributions will also undergo the regular procedure, on the basis of the feedback on these first contributions. The procedure applied is stated on the first page of each contribution.

Contributions are published on an ongoing basis in German or English and are compiled into a single volume per calendar year. German-language contributions are generally also provided with a clearly labelled, AI-assisted English version, which is approved by the authors and may be published at a later date. The original remains the authoritative version. In this issue, such a version appears initially for this foreword. We aim to ensure that, in future, all German-language contributions are provided with an English version.

An invitation

With this issue, we are making a start. PAIHE is intended to grow through the experiences, questions and ideas of many. The fact that the three of us teach at the same university and share similar teaching experiences shapes our perspective. We therefore look forward all the more to other disciplines, other universities and other perspectives. We warmly invite teachers and everyone who works in and around teaching at higher education institutions to submit their own contributions, to engage in dialogue with us, or to read along.

We would like to thank the team at the THWS Library, which runs the eJournals platform and thus makes PAIHE possible. Networking has begun among the three of us. We look forward to continuing it together with you.

Würzburg, November 2026

Sven Warnke, Harald Bolsinger, Tanja Mühling

Statement on AI use

We used generative AI in preparing this foreword.

Ideas and structure. Claude (Anthropic; in the project, the Claude Opus 5.5 model), October and November 2026: analysis of our brainstorming sessions and structuring of the text. Our own collection of ideas served as the starting point.

Drafting and revising. Claude, October and November 2026: drafting of wording.

Checking sources. Claude, October and November 2026: verification of sources.

We have verified all content and sources and take responsibility for them.

About this translation

Tool: DeepL Translator (DeepL Pro), 1 November 2026

Human review: The translation was checked against the original with the assistance of Claude (Anthropic) and revised by the editors, who are also the authors; approved by the authors on 2 November 2026. The full text has not been independently proofread.

The reference list is reproduced from the original.

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