"The Experiences are Beyond our Expectations": Changing the Culture of Artificial Intelligence and Social and Emotional Learning in Educational Institutions – A Qualitative Evaluation Among Representatives of the SETCOM Project Partners

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In the evolving field of education, the intersection of artificial intelligence (AI) and social and emotional learning (SEL) is increasingly relevant. This article presents a qualitative evaluation among twelve representatives from eight SETCOM project partners to learn about their views, experiences and expectations regarding the project's content and organization. The findings indicate that despite initial apprehensions about AI, there was enthusiasm for its potential intersection with SEL. Participants appreciated collaborative opportunities and sought practical applications for project insights, aiming to enhance existing programs and stimulate new ideas. Challenges included managing tasks amidst AI's rapid evolution and the initial separation of the AI and SEL domains. The lack of AI regulations was a concern. Participants advocated for a proactive approach by educators in assessing AI applications, emphasizing ethical considerations in their use.

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"Izkušnje presegajo naša pričakovanja": Spreminjanje kulture umetne inteligence ter socialnega in čustvenega učenja v izobraževalnih ustanovah – kvalitativna evalvacija med predstavniki partnerjev projekta SETCOM

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Na razvijajočem se področju izobraževanja postaja presečišče umetne inteligence (UI) ter socialnega in čustvenega učenja (SČU) vse bolj pomembno. Članek predstavlja kvalitativno evalvacijo, izvedeno med dvanajstimi predstavniki osmih projektnih partnerjev projekta SETCOM, s katero smo želeli spoznati njihove poglede, izkušnje in pričakovanja glede vsebine in organizacije projekta. Ugotovitve kažejo, da so bili udeleženci, kljub začetnim pomislekom glede UI, navdušeni nad njeno potencialno sinergijo s SČU. Hvaležni so bili priložnosti za sodelovanje in si prizadevali za praktično uporabo projektnih spoznanj; za izboljšanje obstoječih programov in spodbujanje novih zamisli. Izzive jim je predstavljalo upravljanje nalog med hitrim razvojem UI in iskanje povezav med sprva ločenima domenama UI in SČU. Pomanjkanje predpisov o UI se jim je zdelo zaskrbljujoče. Udeleženci so se zavzeli za proaktivni pristop učiteljev pri ocenjevanju aplikacij UI, pri čemer so poudarili etične vidike njihove uporabe.

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1 Introduction

The pervasive influence of the digital realm has fundamentally reshaped our daily lives, revolutionizing how we communicate and interact with the world. While technological progress has bestowed numerous advantages upon us, it has concurrently introduced novel challenges to our social and emotional well-being. AI has the potential to make people's lives better in various ways; however, if AI is misused because of biased algorithms and a lack of rules, it could harm human rights and lead to unequal treatment by gender, race, etc. (Yang et al., 2021).

As digital technologies, including social media platforms, online learning environments, and communication tools continue to proliferate, there is a pressing need to thoroughly evaluate their effects on the social and emotional well-being of its users. Emotional well-being is characterized by the ability to experience and express a spectrum of emotions in a healthy and adaptive manner, fostering positive relationships, effectively managing stress, and cultivating an overall sense of contentment and fulfilment in life (Bakračevič Vukman & Licardo, 2010; WHO, 2014). Social well-being encompasses the quality and breadth of one's social relationships, support systems and community engagement, including elements such as a sense of belonging, connection, and positive social interactions (Košir, 2013). The most common definition of SEL components includes self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relational skills, and responsible decision-making (Weissberg et al., 2015).

1.1 The importance of SEL in the digital world of education

The deep integration of AI in education is noticeable in learning analytics, adaptive learning, intelligent tutoring systems, and the emerging concept of human-centred artificial intelligence (HCAI) (Shneiderman, 2020). Tools that can help teachers in their work include the following: the AI-enabled conversational robot (Chabot), AI-enabled personalization, smart content, learning pathways and recommendations, automatic evaluation of student learning outcomes with grading policy, intelligent assessment and evaluation, automatic question generation, automatic grading, AI-enabled plagiarism detection etc. (Yang et al., 2021).

The digital landscape provides a continual sense of connection, convenience, and information access. However, overusing informational and communicational technology impedes overall learning by causing challenges in maintaining focus and attention, influencing memory processes, and conflating online social environments with reality, resulting in additional issues related to self-image and self-esteem (Firth et al., 2020). An overreliance on digital devices and online interactions can precipitate feelings of loneliness, anxiety, and depression (Hunt et al., 2018), cyberbullying (Kozmus & Pšunder, 2022), attention difficulties (Kozmus & Kozmus, 2023), and diminished well-being (Valkenburg, 2022). The ubiquity and profusion of online information are dynamically reshaping cognitive processes, influencing the acquisition, storage, and evaluation of knowledge, which enables individuals to engage in autonomous and critically evaluative information processing across diverse contexts (Ackerman and Thompson, 2014). The significance of this autonomous and critical information assessment becomes particularly pronounced in the realm of online information dissemination, where factual content often intermingles with misinformation, propaganda, and manipulative elements, thereby exerting a notable influence on decision-making processes (Wang, 2022).

In response to these challenges, educators and educational and other institutions should promote responsible social media usage, cultivate digital literacy skills, and create secure online environments that foster positive interactions and improve emotional and social well-being. Future AI should become more focused on considering human contexts and societal dynamics, to amplify human intelligence and promote people's well-being (Yang et al., 2021). HCAI is therefore a promising approach for designing AI systems that support creativity, responsibility, and social engagement. It also emphasizes considerations of privacy, security, environmental protection, social justice, and human rights (Shneiderman, 2020).

Maintaining a harmonious equilibrium between the digital and real worlds is essential for preserving psychological and social health and flourishing in our progressively interconnected society. By nurturing critical thinking, empathy, and digital literacy skills, students can foster a positive online presence, participate in respectful online interactions, and contribute to an inclusive digital culture. Educational contexts should prioritize SEL, emphasizing skills like empathy, self-awareness, and

relationship building. The systematic cultivation of these social and emotional skills allows educators to aid students in developing resilience, empathy, and positive social behaviours, in both the online and offline realms. Moreover, teachers are the main promotors of the implementation, evaluation, and outcomes of SEL programmes (Vršnik Perše et al., 2020).

Empirical study

In the framework of the SETCOM project, a qualitative evaluation was planned at the time of the project application, together with a quantitative one, to gain broader insight into the reflections, experiences, and expectations of the project participants regarding the organisation and content of the project (Zurc & Ferligoj, 2023).

In this article we present the findings from the representatives of all eight SETCOM partner institutions on the project's progress, their perceptions on the importance of participation in the project, the organisational and content composition of the project team, the applicability of the project outcomes, suggestions for further activities and transfer of the knowledge and skills acquired in the project.

1.2 Method

Based on our previous studies on qualitative higher education evaluation at the University of Maribor (Zurc, 2021, 2022, 2023), a qualitative study with a group interview was designed to obtain personal and group reflections, experiences, expectations, agreements, and the individual views of participants on the project's progress and future development. A group interview was carried out at the 7th pedagogical meeting of the project on the 23 November 2023 by the MS Teams online meeting tool. All participants were familiar with the topics of discussion and had sufficient experience to discuss the given questions, since they are all actively involved in the implementation of the project. The interview was recorded, and findings are presented jointly.

1.3 Measurement tool

A semi-structured interview was designed and used as a measurement tool to guide conversation with the project partners' representatives. The questions were designed to cover their reflections from the initial decision to join the project, through the experience of project implementation, to the planning of activities and the implementation of the results obtained from the project. The questions were simple and open-ended and follow the methodological recommendations for designing and implementing group interviews (Klemenčič & Hlebec, 2007).
Interview questions:

1. What does participation in SETCOM mean to you personally and to your institution?
    a. What are your feelings about, and experiences with the project?
    b. Who motivated or invited you to participate in the project?
    c. Why did you decide to participate in the project?
    d. What are your expectations?
2. How did you approach the implementation of the project (organisation, content)?
    a. How did you divide the project tasks in your organisation?
    b. How do you communicate within your project team?
3. In what ways do you use/transmit the results of the project in your environment?
    a. Has SEL/AI helped you to change the climate and communication methods in your organisation with stakeholders (e.g., learners)?
4. Where do you see opportunities to apply and further develop the skills and equipment acquired during the project in your work and life in the future?
    a. Do you think that the use of SEL/AI will change in your organisation because of the project activities?

1.4 Data collection procedure

The data collection protocol precisely followed the protocol of previous studies on qualitative higher education evaluation with group interviews involving students and personnel from the University of Maribor (Zurc, 2021, 2022, 2023). A qualitative

evaluation with representatives of all eight SETCOM project partners was carried out on 23 November 2023, from 13h 6m 0s to 14h 41m 40s. The group interview thus lasted a total of 1 hour, 35 minutes and 40 seconds. The whole conversation was carried out remotely by MS Teams, which had previously been used for project communication, especially with the Norwegian partner. The date of the meeting was pre-determined, in the framework of the organisation of the planned 7th pedagogical meeting and coordinated with the participants.

Although no preparation for participation was necessary, all participants were informed in advance of the selected topics of discussion during the first and second invitation letters (10.10.2023 and 19.11.2023), together with the link to the online group interview. The meeting was held in English; however, translation support for answering in English was available from the interview providers but was hardly needed.

The entire data collection process was conducted in accordance with the fundamental ethical principles of qualitative research. Participants voluntarily agreed to participate in the group interview and were informed that they could withdraw their participation at any stage of the research without consequences. The analysis of the data collected was conducted in a way that ensured the anonymity of the participants. The material collected was analysed without distinguishing between the statements of individual participants. Personal data and any information that could in any way reveal the identity of the participants was removed from the analysis and presentation of the results (Zurc, 2023).

1.5 Sample

One or two representatives, a leader and/or a multiplier from each of the SETCOM project partners--the University of Maribor, Nord University, the Maribor Friends of Youth Association, the Maribor Andragogical Institute, the Municipality of Maribor, the Hoče Kindergarten, the Draga Kobala Maribor Primary School, and the Secondary School of Economics and Gymnasium Maribor--were invited to participate in the group discussion held at the 7th Pedagogical Meeting. The representation of all partners in the group discussion provided the implementers

with a holistic picture of the contribution from each partner participating in the SETCOM project. The representative of one project partner was able to be present for only a part of the meeting; therefore, she provided written responses to the initial discussion topics received on the second invitation to the group interview.

1.6 Data analysis procedure

Data analysis was carried out by qualitative content analysis manually in MS Word. The qualitative analysis process was based on three levels of analysis (codes → categories → themes) (Adam et al., 2012). The individual themes/categories are presented or illustrated by verbatim statements from the participants. The results are presented in the tables below.

2 Results

Tables 1 to 4 present the results in more detail; the conceptual design of each theme, the categories, and codes, each illustrated by authentic statements from the interviewees.

Table 1 presents the factors that, according to the interviewees, were decisive in their approach to the project, the feelings they experienced and the expectations they had of the project, especially at the beginning.

In the first place, participants pointed out that they were invited to the project, that they were interested in learning something new (about SEL and AI) and that they found the combination of AI and SEL interesting. Other important motivations included the desire to be involved in a large project, having been without a project at the time prior to applying, being employed in such a position, and being interested in networking with people working in diverse fields:

> *"And I decided to participate in this project because it was interesting for me how we will find solutions for synergies between social emotional skills and AI. It was interesting that at the beginning nobody really knew a lot about AI, how to implement it in the education, research work or whatever we do. And because I like to learn" (P-1/1).*

Table 1: The importance of participating in the project

Theme	Categories	Codes
The importance of participating in the project	motive/decision to participate	invitation (5) learning new things (knowledge about SEL, how to integrate AI into work) (4) interesting design, relevance of the project (combination of AI and SEL and finding links) (4) desire to participate in a large project desire to acquire the project employment in a project position in the organisation bringing diverse people together
	feelings/experience of the project	fear of how to act/contribute to the project (3) gratitude for joint (informal) activities (2) gratitude for cooperation and communication (2) fear of, prejudice against AI gratitude for education on SEL insecurity about the wide gap between SEL and AI unfamiliarity with how to work with representatives from different organisations the project enriches them joy at seeing the results so far
	expectations for the project	translating knowledge into practice, enriching programmes, new opportunities for action, educational planning (6) applying new knowledge, ideas, help for the future (5), high expectations for the SETCOM Competence centre (2) cooperation, staying in touch, networking (2) good conference good monograph formal participation in the development of AI policy at the organisational level

Representatives from the partner institutions mostly felt a sense of awe and gratitude. Fear of how to act to contribute to the project, fear of or prejudice towards the AI and gratitude for the common (informal) activities, for the cooperation and communication, but also for the training in SEL. They also mentioned uncertainty regarding the gap between SEL and AI, the unfamiliarity of working with representatives from different organisations, the enrichment from the project, and the joy of recognising their achievements so far.

> *"We are feeling very good about the project, and the experiences are beyond our expectations. We have learned a lot about AI. We are also transferring all this knowledge to our colleges and what is very worthwhile is the network we have built in this project" (P-4).*

They also presented their expectations from the project. Many of them stated that they expected to put what they had learnt into practice, to enrich their existing programmes, to come up with ideas, to find new ways of working in their organisation, to plan training and to use the new knowledge and ideas they had acquired in the project to help them in the future. They also highlighted their high expectations for the SETCOM Competence Centre, their wish to continue to cooperate, stay in contact and network in the future in various activities, including possible future projects, and the good outcome of the planned conference, the publication of a good monograph, the end of the project and their formal participation in the making of policy on AI.

> *"My expectations are that (…) the Competence Centre will continue to help us with using AI wisely and sharing this idea among (…) teachers and other people from the community" (P-3).*

Table 2 presents the ways in which the representatives of the project partners divided up the project tasks in terms of organisation and content, the way in which communication within the project team took place and the challenges they faced because of their involvement in the project.

In the distribution of project tasks, the representatives of the partner institutions often pointed out the initial separation of tasks according to the content related to AI/SEL and the separation of training according to AI/SEL. Some of them pointed out that they were already a coordinated team when working on projects, or that the organisation had several coordinators. Usually, the representatives had regular meetings with their superiors, reported to colleagues or held weekly technical meetings.

> *"So mostly (…) has done the AI and mostly (…) has done the SEL and I have mostly been doing both - sort of" (P-2/2).*

Table 2: Organisational and substantive implementation of the project

Theme	Categories	Codes
Organisational and substantive implementation of the project	distribution of project tasks	division of tasks, according to the content of SEL, AI (2) separation of training, according to the content of SEL, AI (2) involvement in the established modus operandi (2) multiple coordinators regular meetings with management, presentations to other staff (2) weekly technical meetings
	communication between project collaborators	live: regular participation (2) live: communication with superiors and accounting (2) lots of meetings (2) live: weekly meetings hybrid: bi-monthly meeting of representatives mostly online: regular meetings
	challenges of the project	too many tasks, too much work, not enough technical support (4) only one involved in the project in the organisation (lots of activities) (2) communication gap between SEL representatives and AI representatives (2) little communication takes place, mainly to inform colleagues

Communication between those involved in the project within and between organisations was mostly face-to-face, or online, but also in hybrid formats. Representatives highlighted the frequency of meetings, especially when the two areas of focus, AI and SEL, were separate.

> *"Well, most of the time we communicate online, even if technically we are all located in the same office building, we communicate through e-mail and MS Teams and we did most of our meetings online" (P-2/1).*

The challenges most frequently cited were too many tasks and work, not enough technical support, and a lot of monitoring of new developments, since many changes in the field of AI were taking place during the project period. In some organisations, only one person was involved in the project and that individual thus had more work to do.

"Additionally, we didn't have and still don't have enough technical support. (…) It is a lot of work. Those are all meetings that some of us must attend. So, it's a lot of meetings for some of us" (P-1/1).

"I will be brief; because I am the only one in our organisation that worked on this project, I didn't have that much communication with other colleagues" (P-6).

Table 3 presents the ways in which representatives of the partner institutions are integrating the project results into their own environments.

Table 3: Transfer of project results into the environment

Theme	Categories	Codes
Transfer of project results to the environment	knowledge transfer	various knowledge transfers (3) lots of learning about AI, as it is constantly changing (3) changing teaching and learning processes a more person-centred approach to working with AI, how it can and cannot be used a focus on the beneficial use of AI everyone is aware of the importance of SEL and how to use it
	gradual introduction of changes	the climate has changed little (2) not much change, a lot of talk about the social and emotional competences first steps have been taken, there is always a learning curve we have started to talk, changes are happening it's a process, it hasn't spread everywhere yet, success depends on acceptance by colleagues AI is a new world, talking about it, using the tools is not of interest to everyone in the organisation
	no changes	the climate has not changed they have not changed the way they communicate in general, they do not have many problems in communication no changes in AI yet

The interviewees consider that knowledge transfer in the different areas is going well so far, that there are constant changes in the way AI is used and therefore much learning is needed in this area, but they are focusing on finding beneficial uses for AI. They have a more person-centred approach to AI.

"First, we define goals, focus on the development of social and emotional competences and on understanding the basics of AI; we prepared materials, the font, image, and videos of robots and borrowed a book about robots

> *and social animation. We encourage activities to promote collaboration, empathy, conflict, resilience, and communication among young people" (P-5/2).*

Many people stressed the gradual introduction of changes in the organisation, which are not yet very visible in the climate of the organisation. They have taken the first steps, but there is always a learning curve. They speak a lot about SEL. The acceptance of change by colleagues is important, but since AI is a new world, not everyone is yet interested in this tool and individual colleagues accept changes differently.

> *"About the transfer, the results of the project for my environment, for instance, a week ago I prepared a workshop for our (…) service. The topic was how to use AI in our personal lives, and maybe just for fun as well. And I was a bit disappointed because there was no interest in the workshop" (P-6).*

A few interviewees said that they had not noticed any changes in the organisational climate or in the appropriate communication, and that they had not yet noticed any changes in the use of AI.

Table 4 presents the potential for further use and development of skills and equipment in future work. The responses are grouped into four categories: awareness, improvement of existing activities, introduction of new activities and future challenges.

The most frequent response from the interviewees was that they did not expect to see major changes in their organisation after the project, since people or systems must change first. Many stressed the awareness of the importance and use of AI in the organisation, or the awareness of the importance and use of SEL in the organisation, the awareness of the value of relationships, or the need to improve relationships in the organisation, and that there is a need for integration of SEL across the education vertical.

> *"The role of SEL is to (…) create a climate to dare, to trust, to help each other learn how to overcome prejudices against and fears of AI". (P-7).*

Table 4: Use and development of skills and equipment in future work and life

Theme	Categories	Codes
Potential for further use and development	awareness	not much will change in the beginning, people must change first we can expect change when the system changes awareness of the importance and use of AI in the organisation awareness of the importance and use of SEL in the organisation awareness of the value of relationships improving relationships in the organisation is needed the role of the CSE is to create a climate in the school to dare, to trust, to help each other to learn overcoming prejudice against and fears of AI integrating SEL into AI
	improving existing activities	enriching the content of existing programmes (3) making it easier for all stakeholders and organisations to work together (2) transferring AI and SEL knowledge into daily activities creativity in the implementation of activities (interactive games, digital stories for conflict resolution, expression of emotions) some will use AI, others will fear it small steps in organisation strong focus on SEL (relationships, courses, training, workshops) the transfer of AI skills is left to the initiative of the individual
	new usage	putting what you have learned into practice (AI teacher prompts) knowledge transfer and sharing positive experiences involvement in the formal development of AI guidelines SEL is long-term learning equipment should be engaging help with the weaknesses of AI
	challenges of the future	there will be less work testing AI and assessing individual values on an ongoing basis (too) rapid development of AI, we won't be able to wait for the system teachers testing whether something is useful or harmful, warning ... concern about unethical use of AI

As a way forward, representatives most frequently mentioned content enrichment for the programmes they already run, facilitating collaboration between all stakeholders, translating AI and SEL knowledge into everyday activities, involving creativity in the delivery of activities (interactive games, digital stories for conflict resolution, expressing emotions, etc.). They highlighted the awareness that fear, especially of AI, will still exist, but small steps in the organisation are needed, along with considerable emphasis on SEL (relationships, courses, training, and workshops), and the transfer of AI knowledge is left to the initiative of individuals for the time being.

> *"The results, and in particular the knowledge I am gaining from the project, are currently being transferred, mainly in the form of enriching the content of the programmes we are already running" (P-7).*

Innovations mentioned included putting what has been learnt into practice, sharing examples of good practice, developing guidelines for the use of AI, the long-term nature of SEL, and having SEL help with the weaknesses of AI. They also stressed the importance of making the equipment interesting.

> *"I must say that in our institution we have started talking about AI and SEL. Some changes are happening already and will be happening for--I don't know--5-10 years. It depends how our, my colleagues will change, or how they will accept change" (P-8).*

The representatives see the biggest challenge as the amount of work, which they believe will not decrease and that the lack of regulation in the field of AI will reflect on the values of the individuals. Given the rapid development of AI, there will be no time to wait for the system to change, but teachers themselves will have to test whether something is useful or harmful, and to warn and care about the ethical use of AI.

3 Discussion

The integration of AI in education, as explored through the SETCOM project, presents a multifaceted challenge characterized by emotional responses, workload considerations, and ethical dilemmas. These factors were revealed through the participants perceptions on the project's progress. The synthesis of findings provides

a comprehensive insight into how these key factors influence participants' engagement, experiences, expectations, and the implementation of project activities within educational settings. The three main factors discovered in the projects are briefly highlighted below.

3.1 Emotional responses: the heart of change

Participants in the SETCOM project expressed a range of emotional responses to AI, from fear and apprehension to gratitude and joy. These emotions play a crucial role in the adoption and effective utilization of AI in education, influencing the overall climate within educational institutions. The impact of individual emotions on the collective workplace atmosphere, as noted by Totterdell et al. (1998), underscores the importance of addressing emotional dynamics proactively. Strategies to mitigate apprehensions about AI include raising awareness about AI's potential and limitations, emphasizing the value of SEL for ethical AI utilization, and fostering conditions for gradual changes within the educational community (Lipovec & Flogie, 2023).

3.2 Workload considerations: balancing innovation with capacity

The SETCOM project participants highlighted the increased workload associated with integrating AI into educational practices, echoing concerns over the need for technical support and the challenge of staying alongside of rapid advancements in AI technology. This observation aligns with broader educational experiences, where educators grapple with balancing innovative demands with existing responsibilities (Gartner, Krašna, & Lipovec, 2023). Effective strategies for managing this balance include providing comprehensive technical and professional development support, as advocated by change management and organizational behaviour research (Košir, 2012; Kotter, 2012). These strategies facilitate educators' adaptation to new technologies, ensuring that AI serves as an enhancement rather than a burden.

3.3 Ethical concerns: navigating the moral landscape

Ethical considerations are paramount in the deployment of AI within educational contexts. The SETCOM project participants, along with broader educational stakeholders, have raised concerns over data privacy, bias in AI algorithms, and

equitable access to AI resources (Gartner, Krašna, & Lipovec, 2023). The development and enforcement of ethical standards for AI use in education are crucial for safeguarding students' rights and promoting inclusivity. The European Commission's introduction of the first EU regulatory framework for AI highlights the importance of classifying AI systems based on the risks they pose, including specific considerations for educational applications (Artificial Intelligence Act: deal on comprehensive rules for trustworthy AI, 2023). This regulatory approach serves as a foundation for responsible AI implementation, emphasizing the need for ongoing dialogue and policy development to address ethical challenges in AI use.

3.4 Limitations and future directions

In exploring the integration of AI in educational settings, the SETCOM project, along with corroborative findings from across the educational technology landscape, has identified several limitations and challenges that warrant careful consideration. A primary limitation highlighted in this article revolves around the readiness and adaptability of educational institutions and educators to fully embrace and effectively utilize AI technologies. This challenge is not unique to the SETCOM project but is echoed by educational researchers globally who point out the varying levels of digital literacy among teachers and institutional readiness as significant barriers to the successful adoption of AI in education (Szostak, 2013).

The interoperability of AI systems with existing educational infrastructure and curricula also presents a notable limitation. The study findings highlighted the challenge of seamlessly integrating AI tools into established educational practices. This is a common theme in the wider discourse on AI in education, where the compatibility of AI technologies with current educational software and platforms, as well as their alignment with curriculum objectives, remains an open issue.

Furthermore, the emotional and psychological impact of integrating AI into education cannot be overlooked. Our group interview with SETCOM project partners sheds light on the mixed emotional responses from educators and students, ranging from excitement and curiosity to fear and resistance. These emotional dynamics are indicative of the broader ambivalence within the educational

community towards AI, underscoring the need for targeted professional development and support systems to address these concerns.

In conclusion, the limitations identified by our study, along with those recognized by educational technologists and researchers worldwide, underscore the multifaceted challenges of integrating AI into education. Addressing these challenges requires a concerted effort from policymakers, educators, and technology developers to ensure that AI technologies enhance rather than hinder the educational experience. As we navigate these limitations, the potential of AI to foster innovative learning environments remains an exciting prospect, promising to reshape the educational practice for future generations.

4 Conclusions

The results of our study shed light on the understanding and practical application of the interplay between AI and SEL in educational settings across educational vertical. The views of SETCOM project partners expressed the importance of participation in the project, the importance of the organizational and content structure of the project, the applicability of the project outcomes and opportunities for further activities and gradual introduction of changes in educational practice.

The SETCOM project provides a finetuned exploration of the challenges and opportunities presented by the integration of AI into education. By thoroughly addressing emotional dynamics, supporting educators in managing workload, and prioritizing ethical considerations, the educational community can navigate the complexities of AI adoption. Further studies are needed to address the holistic approach of AI technologies that enhance the educational experience, and fostering an environment where innovation and human-centric values coalesce to enrich teaching and learning for all stakeholders.

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