

Chapter 5

Integration of Electronic Learning in the Educational Process as a Veritable Tool for Sustainable Inclusion Learning: An Overview

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ABSTRACT

The integration of technology in the classroom is viewed as an important strategy to increase the effectiveness of the teaching-learning process. Teachers are encouraged to integrate technology into their instructional practices, as ICT is believed to have the potential to revolutionize an outmoded educational system. This chapter therefore is an overview of the integration of e-learning in the educational process as a veritable tool for sustainable inclusion learning. It specifically discussed inclusion education as a concept, e-learning system, its' importance to education, teachers, and students as well as e-learning as a veritable tool for sustainable inclusion learning. The chapter also made some recommendations for effective and functional application of e-learning for sustainable inclusion learning.

INTRODUCTION

The obvious is that the emergence of information and communication technology (ICT) is a global phenomenon that has given birth to technological advancement leading to the emergence of various forms/ways of communication as well as dissemination of information in every facet of life including education. In fact, attention has shifted to how the application of ICTs can effectively and continually enhance human existence and well-being. On the side of education, the emergence of ICT is perceived as a turning point. This is because education from inception is being rated a very socially oriented activity and

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quality education has traditionally been associated with strong teachers having high degrees of personal contact with students and technologies. In other words, Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) have become commonplace entities in all aspects of life. The use of ICT has practically changed the practices and procedures of nearly all forms of endeavour within business and governance. While in education, ICT has begun to have a presence but the impact has not been as extensive as in other fields. The obvious is that the use of ICT in education lends itself to more student centered learning settings and often this creates some tensions for some teachers and students. But with the world moving rapidly into digital media and information, the integration of ICT into teaching-learning practices is becoming more and more important and this importance will continue to grow and develop beyond this 21st century. Obviously, the world has turned into global village courtesy of ICT and the information super highway-the internet which has captured the attention of both old and young and every aspect of human activity. In the education sector, it is like a sweet breeze that is blowing good leading to it being embraced by both teachers and students as an effective means of teaching and learning. Computer technology which was introduced in the early 1980s was seen as an innovation that might be adopted in the classroom as expectations were high that it would change the face of education. It was envisioned that there would be extensive use of ICT and that eventually, with e-learning in the classroom, textbooks might even be obsolete. Yet such a scenario has not come to pass after almost four decades. Nevertheless, the use of ICT in education is considered an important innovation in classroom teaching, and is advocated by many educational policy-makers (Wong and Li, 2008). The integration of technology in the classroom is viewed as an important strategy to increase the effectiveness of the teaching-learning process. Teachers are encouraged to integrate technology into their instructional practices, as ICT is believed to have the potential to revolutionize an outmoded educational system (Aczel *et al.*, 2008). In recent time, the emergence of COVID-19 pandemic (Corona-virus) in 2019 which in early 2020 led to total locked-down of every aspect of global activities gave credence to the above assertions as the pandemic also forced educational institutions including universities to shut down with those from developed nations resorting to online teaching and learning approaches to keep students interested at home and fulfill their academic cycles, while some considered adopting a hybrid teaching technique that combines traditional and online approaches. As a result, the classroom traditional methods of teaching students (which require actual interaction between the teacher and students) become more or less obsolete during the pandemic which has not even fizzled out (Ifijeh & Yusuf, 2020). It is imperative to state that the concept of online education is not new to universities or even colleges in the developed world such as Europe, North America, and parts of Africa and Asia. As outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, on the other hand, has forced universities all over the world to adopt online education (Czerniewicz, 2020) it also a clarion call for educational administrators to holistically employ the same tool for sustainable teaching and learning. As observed, technology has become an increasingly important part of our lives, ICT integration in the field of education is inevitable (Hew and Brush, 2007). Regrettably, it has been noted that in spite of varying degrees of ICT acceptance in schools in many countries, no major changes have occurred in teaching practice and classroom activities (Coll *et al.*, 2009) especially in developing counties and this has negative effect on inclusion learning. Inclusion is the right of all individuals to participate actively in all aspects of community life. As explained by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) and the Division for Early Childhood (DEC), the desired results of inclusive experiences for students of all sort and their families include a sense of belonging and membership, positive social relationships and friendships, and development and learning to reach their full potential (DEC & NAEYC 2009). Barriers to inclusion may be particularly acute among students with learning disabilities

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