

## **Editorial: The Uptake of e-Learning and Use of Technology Tools**

**Denise Gaspard-Richards**

**The University of the West Indies, Global Campus**

Greetings and welcome to Issue 1, 2024. A new Editor and Copy Editor have joined our team. We welcome Dr. Avanelle Joseph-Edwards and Keziah Simmons-Grant in these respective roles and wish them well as they continue the work in service to the campus and to our work team. In this Issue we present articles from or about Tanzania, Nigeria, The USA, India, Spain, Ethiopia, and Serbia. We examine themes related to the uptake of e-learning and the integration of ICT in teaching and learning, inclusive of use of technology tools and assistive technologies.

### **Refereed Articles**

The articles in this section are drawn from geographic locations including Tanzania, Nigeria and the USA. The themes explored in these articles include student preferences in e-learning, mitigating apathy in online courses, developing ICT skills for use of e-learning resources among faculty, and evaluating the use of assistive technologies in the classroom.

#### *Mitigating Apathy in Online Graduate Courses*

In our first article in this section, **Stephenson and Kelani** evaluate the external validity of the seven principles proposed by Arthur W. Chickering & Zelda Gamson (1987) in the context of online teaching. Their study presents a Hierarchical Principles Model, which repurposes and reorders the seven principles in a hierarchical arrangement for faculty to use as a best practice technique to mitigate apathy in masters' courses in the virtual environment. Among the seven principles, the Model found that encouraging student-faculty interaction is perceived to be the *most* effective for the graduate students, and prompt feedback was the *most* appealing and beneficial. Communicating high expectations was the *least* appealing principle, while encouraging student-student interaction created the *most* hindrance to online learning. Moreover, from a generic perspective, managing their own study time and flexibility is what students liked *best* about virtual learning. What they found *least* effective is their perceived limited communication or interaction with faculty, and students at this level were found to expect faculty to be constantly engaged online.

#### *Information literacy Skills as Predictors for use of digital library resources by academics*

Shifting the focus to academics, this article notes that although many Nigerian universities are making efforts to provide access to digital library resources, the level of utilization of these resources have not been encouraging due to several factors. **Ikenwe and Aiyebilehin** note that information literacy has been identified as a major factor when considering the factors that enhance use of digital resources. In their investigation of how information literacy skills predict the utilization of digital library resources by university teaching staff, they used multiple regression analysis to determine a weak but positive relationship between the skills and utilization of digital library resources. The findings of this study imply that focus on abilities to utilize these resources will improve the use of digital resources by university teaching staff. The authors recommend librarians offer training to promote the use of digital resources by lecturers.

#### *Uptake of e-learning: Student perceptions*

In this article **Kisanjara and Maguya** discuss the phenomenon of low e-learning uptake at Mzumbe University with focus on the perceptions of students. The concepts discussed include the e-learning supporting environment and the perceived advantages of using e-learning. Using PLS-SEM and

CFA for data analysis, the authors report results that suggest the students have a negative perception of the use of e-learning. In addition, inadequate availability of Internet connections, low-quality LMS materials and content, a lack of proper e-learning user training, and slow e-learning system accessibility were found to be contributing factors to the low uptake of e-learning. The authors recommend that significant reformulating of ICT policy to comply with new guidelines or procedures in order to successfully implement e-learning as a cutting-edge technological innovation for services linked to student teaching, learning, and administration.

#### *Availability and use of Assistive Technologies in Schools*

In this study **Juma and Ntulo** examined the use of Assistive Technologies (AT) among pupils with hearing and visual impairment in selected primary schools in Zanzibar. The findings indicated that primary schools in Zanzibar had access to hearing aids, sign language interpreters, braille, and speech recognition software, however utilization posed challenges for most pupils. While pupils with impairments perceived the positive impact of assistive technologies in learning and performance, they encountered several obstacles, including shortage of devices, insufficient training for both teachers and pupils, lack of qualified teachers for instructing pupils in their use, communication issues with hearing-impaired pupils, negative attitudes toward Assistive Technology, and inadequate quality of available devices. The study recommends government allocation of substantial funds for the procurement and maintenance of assistive technologies and the establishment of support systems and resource centers to enhance effective utilization of assistive technologies in primary schools in Zanzibar.

#### **From the Field**

The articles in this section focus on issues affecting teaching and learning in Nigeria, Spain, Ethiopia and Tanzania. The authors explore the use of e-learning tools and the effects of technology use on student discipline in schools, and we also examine the opportunities and challenges for use of ICT in both the secondary school and higher education environments.

#### *Using e-learning tools for teaching Biology in Senior Secondary Schools*

In the first article in this section, **Owolarafe and Bolaji** note that e-learning tools technology is the paradigm shift in facilitating learning in our world today and the driving force of education in developed countries. In their investigation of the accessibility and utilization of E-learning tools for teaching biology in secondary schools in Ilorin metropolis, the authors discuss the lack of access and low or non-utilization of e-learning tools for teaching biology in public secondary schools in Ilorin metropolis. They attribute this situation to factors such as a low level of awareness or lack of awareness on the part of teachers, poor policy formulation to incorporate the use of e-learning tools, and poor infrastructure in the schools.

#### *Technology Effects for Student Discipline in Public Secondary Schools*

Technology has been employed to streamline the process of acquiring knowledge and engaging in various endeavours, exemplified by the utilisation of computers. In this article **Silas and Mwila** explore the perception that secondary school students exhibit lower academic outcomes as a result of their excessive use of mobile devices. The results of this study suggest a positive and significant relationship between smartphone use and student discipline, watching television and student discipline, and between social media use and the discipline of students. However, the findings suggest a negative and statistically insignificant relationship between online gaming and student discipline.

##### *Change and challenge in the use of ICT in secondary schools*

Shifting emphasis to the secondary school environment, **Ravishankar and Wase** discuss the change process and challenges of ICT use in secondary schools in Addis Ababa. The authors note the importance of using ICT in today's teaching and learning process. The results of their study indicate that even in cases where ICT is used in schools, significant obstacles exist, including a lack of resources, poor Internet access, power outages, a shortage of time or restricted time for ICT use, a lack of technical support, a lack of funding from the government, and a lack of training for use in the secondary school system.

##### *Opportunities and Challenges for Integrating Technology in Higher Education*

**Gyawali and Mehndroo**, in this article note that the incorporation of computer technology in higher education has experienced substantial expansion and evolution in recent years. The authors examine the possibilities and problems that emerge throughout the integration process and discuss the advantages and the challenges encountered by educational institutions, instructors, and learners. The authors identify and assess opportunities such as accessibility to educational resources, personalized learning experiences, enhanced engagement and collaboration, and the acquisition of crucial digital skills that arise from the integration of computer technology. This study also looks at the possible beneficial implications of computer technology on the efficacy of institutions, cost-efficiency, and administrative functions. The study findings suggest need for a thorough examination of the opportunities and challenges that are involved with technology integration in higher education.

##### *Perceived advantages and limitations for use of educational tools in online learning*

Noting a significant increase in the use of online educational tools since the COVID-19 pandemic, **Alvarez-Alvarez and Mischel** highlight the views of professors/teachers and their students on the advantages and disadvantages of using *Edpuzzle* to enhance distance learning. Their study results reveal advantages including that *Edpuzzle* is a motivating, dynamic, and novel self-learning tool for students. Likewise, the professors/teachers who participated in the study noted that it is easy to use, focuses the attention of students, and is versatile. The disadvantages of the tool that were identified in the study include technological challenges and potential boredom. Based on their study findings the authors concluded that students have a preference for graphic and visual material to complement other learning tools to help them better understand the lessons. Having weighed the advantages and disadvantages posed by the professors/teachers and their students, the authors note the unique combination of interactive teaching that *Edpuzzle* provides, as promising for the future.

#### **Notes From the Field**

The article in this section focuses on the use of digital comics in smaller countries like Serbia to improve digital literacy among educators.

##### *Using digital comics for empowering ICT skills in adult education*

In this article, **Šarčević** introduces adult education practitioners to the use of digital comics in the teaching process and to micro-credentials for educators who are striving to increase their digital literacy. The author discusses the use of comics in digital form for an individualized approach to teacher training and the introduction of different forms of comics at all levels of formal education, where positive experiences in learning English stand out. Šarčević notes that in smaller countries such as Serbia there is understanding of the importance of the development and application of

digital technologies in education, and highlight that the number of courses for this segment of professional development is gradually increasing.

**Thank you from the Editorial Team!**

We thank all our authors for your patience during the long delays, while our peer review panels, and our journal managers work to improve the throughput. We look forward to our engagements throughout 2024 and to continuous improvements efforts in our service to you, our valued stakeholders.

A reminder to new and continuing authors of our journal guidelines that should be observed when submitting articles for publication. Your attention to the author guidelines at: <http://ijedict.dec.uwi.edu/submissions.php#guidelines> will enhance our review process and improve the time to completion by our review panels.

Denise Gaspard-Richards  
Chief Editor, IJEDICT

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