Chapter 7
Integrating Digital Literacies Into an Undergraduate Course:
Inclusiveness Through Use of ICTs

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this chapter is to share a successful case of how ICT was used for educational inclusiveness by students from previously disadvantaged backgrounds. This chapter further illuminates how students could be supported in acquiring digital and academic literacy skills, within a discipline context. Lecturers often find it difficult to define digital literacy beyond the use of ICT in a classroom, or understand how students' acquisition of digital literacy skills could be supported or further expanded into students' academic literacy skills. This piece of work therefore, provides insight to academics, researchers and students, on how: (1) ICT could be integrated into the curriculum; (2) digital literacy could be embedded into the curriculum; and (3) students could be supported in acquiring graduate attributes and skills that make them fit for the workplace.

INTRODUCTION

The ubiquitous use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in the knowledge-driven business world, poses a dire need of graduates with the necessary literacies that deem them fit for such workplaces. It is therefore important to investigate how higher education could possibly equip students with these literacies, particularly, on how the curriculum could be designed to potentially foster these literacies. ICT integration into the curriculum is an overarching phenomenon in higher education, and literature on this demonstrates the shifting in meaning of integration, ranging from the use of computers and networks as tools for teaching and learning, to the appropriation of ICT to enhance different pedagogical approaches and student learning experiences (Venkatesh, Croteau, & Rabah, 2014). Recent studies further demonstrate how emerging technologies are being used in South Africa to enhance student learning in higher education (Bharuthram & Kies, 2013; Bozalek et al., 2013; Cloete, 2014; Czerniewicz & Brown, 2013). Irrespective of ICT being integrated into the curriculum, there is limited literature on how higher education fosters the development of students' digital literacies that are required for learning and subsequently, the workplace. Bozalek et al (2014) confirm that there is a disjuncture between curriculum design and what is required of working professionals, hence a recommendation to incorporate authentic tasks to promote contextually relevant learning. It is in this context that educational researchers have increasingly motivated for the integration of these digital literacies into the curriculum (Kirkwood, 2006; Beetham et al. 2009). Brown and Mayisela (2015) suggest that one of the possible means of addressing this, is by having Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) broadening their conceptualization of digital literacy beyond computer or technology literacy because the concept of digital literacy "encompasses a range of practices, including computer literacy, information literacy, media literacy, communication literacy, visual literacy and technology literacy" (p.16).

According to the Joint Information Systems Committee (JISC, 2014), digital literacies are "those capabilities, which fit an individual for living, learning and working in a digital society" (JISC, 2014). The Open University, UK, describes digital literacy to include the "ability to find and use information (otherwise known as information literacy) but goes beyond this to encompass communication, collaboration and teamwork, social awareness in the digital environment, understanding of e-safety and creation of new information" (Open University, 2012). Integrating digital literacies into the curriculum therefore, implies that the curriculum is more likely to foster authentic and multimodal learning experiences (Chase & Laufenberg, 2011). The literature suggests that students have a greater opportunity to take control of their own learning, and are better able to acquire academic and digital literacies

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