Chapter 1
Digital Learning and the Teaching–Learning Environment in the Post-Pandemic 21st Century

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ABSTRACT

The post-pandemic 21st century has witnessed a significant transformation in the teaching-learning environment due to the widespread adoption of digital learning. The COVID-19 pandemic accelerated the adoption of digital learning, transforming education globally. It led to increased reliance on online platforms, highlighting the importance of technology in education. While it provided flexibility, challenges like the digital divide and the potential loss of hands-on experiences emerged. This chapter explores the themes and gaps in the research to understand the scholarly conversation around digital learning. It also examines previous studies about digital learning published mainly in peer-reviewed journals. This chapter is a literature review with both methodological and theoretical approaches. These findings enabled us to discuss, compare, and contrast other theories, models, and definitions of key concepts. The chapter also covers the impact of digital learning on education, emphasizing its role in fostering flexibility, accessibility, and collaborative approaches.

INTRODUCTION

Overview of Digital Learning

Digital learning is a comprehensive phenomenon. Innovations in teaching are often synonymous with digital learning; therefore, its polysemous nature made it difficult to have a commonly agreed definition and classification (Audrin, & Audrina, 2022). Audrin and Audrina provide an overview of the research field of digital literacy in learning and education using text mining; it reviews 1037 research articles published on the topic between 2000 and 2020. This review reveals a plurality of terms associated with digital literacy. Audrin and Audrina identified six key factors that define the literature: information literacy, developing digital literacy, digital learning, ICT, social media, and twenty-first-century digital skills. According to Audrin and Audrina, these factors can be further grouped into three main streams, which are 1) digital literacy, 2) digital learning, and 3) twenty-first-century digital skills. Informational and technological foundations support these three streams. These results provide research avenues and a framework for digital literacy in education.

Digital learning can revolutionize education by fundamentally changing the nature of teaching and learning. It offers enhanced and interactive educational experiences, greater customization and personalization, and, perhaps most importantly, greater access to educational resources and opportunities. The extensive use of technology in the classroom also provides unprecedented chances for collaboration and communication between students, teachers, and other groups, opening up a world of possibilities for instruction, assessment, and research. Through digital learning, students can receive tailored instruction and feedback, engage in a wide range of activities that develop cognitive and affective skills, and encourage the development of creativity and problem-solving skills. Furthermore, digital learning can improve teaching practices, deepen student engagement, and support critical learning objectives.

Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015 [ESSA] refers to the term "digital learning" as "any instructional practice that effectively uses technology to strengthen a student's learning experience and encompasses a wide spectrum of tools and practices." This definition includes using online resources with the impact of the COVID-19 experiences. Our goal in this chapter is to identify the themes and gaps in the research to understand the scholarly conversation around digital learning. This chapter examined previous studies about digital learning published mainly in peer-reviewed journals. The databases used are Education Source, Google Scholar, ScienceDirect, SAGE Journals, Taylor & Francis Online, and ProQuest Central. The keywords and phrases used include information and communication technology, digital media,

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