The role of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in Social Studies Education

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Abstract

The place of Information Communication Technology (ICT) in the effective teaching and learning of Social Studies cannot be over emphasized. This paper thus examines the meaning, use, and benefits of ICT in Social *Studies Education. Problem that had been militating against the effective use of ICT are also examined. Such strategies that with enhance optimum use of modern instructional technology in the teaching and learning Social Studies in Nigeria are also proffered.*

Keywords: Information, Communication Technology, ICT, Social Studies

Introduction

ICT is an acronym that stands for information and communication technology and, in some other quarter's information and communication technologies. Information means facts or details about something. Technology is the study or use of electronic equipment e g computer for storing, analyzing and distributing information. Communication is the principle of transmitting information and the method by which it is delivered (as print or radio or television etc.

Conole (2006) defines ICT as transferring education. He sees it as a technology that provides opportunities for learning anytime anywhere; it provides access to wealth of resources and new forms of communication and virtual communities. Kham (1997). In his view defines ICT as an innovative approach for delivering instruction to a remote audience using the web as the medium. While in a recent development, Ally (2004) defines ICT as the use of the internet to access learning material; to interact with the content, instructor and other learners and to obtain support during the learning process in order to acquire knowledge, to construct personal meaning and to grow from the learning experience. Kante & Savani (2001) describe ICT as involving, at its most basic level, the use of some forms of electronic media to enhance the learning process courses via are delivered the e-learning when technology is used to bridge both the instructional and graphical gap often in concert with face to face communication.

In some parts of the third world counties as in Nigeria, ICT and internet facilities are becoming more and more popular and the Social Sciences in which Social Studies is an integral part cannot afford to stand aloof.

Information and Communication are integral parts of human society. In many cultures today, information presentation and retrieval are still done with the use of speech, drama, painting, song and dance. The use of writing changed this enormously and the invention of the printing press allowed communication on *a* massive scale through newspapers and magazines.

According to QCA schemes of work for ICT, Information and Communication Technology (ICT) are the computing and communications facilities and features that variously support teaching-learning and a range of activities in education.

There are so many mechanical devices employed in the teaching and learning of social studies subjects as to present systematically a programmed sequence of instruction to a leaner/learners. This programmed sequence is made possible via the computer. It offers much greater potentials and can be programmed to judge learner input and to tailor the lecturers via individual level of mastery.

It is observable that many roles are played by the various electronics learning machines, video/audio conferencing, interactive radio, computer, telephones and internet in teaching and learning of social studies.

Video audio conferencing and interactive radio devices are chosen for their features, their characteristics that suit the teaching and learning of social studies. Video conference is the technological means of instruction which affords participants the opportunity to see and hear each other from far way distances while audio affords participants the opportunity to hear each other from far distance.

The ability of the video conference and the use of computer networks of transmit audio, video and data renders it an appropriate means to teach Social Studies topics. Video conference has an edge over teleconference in that it is more suitable to social lesson to support the teaching and learning of foreign cultures.

It captivates students attention because of its bright picture. It also enhances the quantity of instruction by making the presentation of subject matter and the development of concept meaningful; hence, it makes learning more effective and more functional.

Internet based research also supports geographical inquiring in Social Studies education, thus, promoting the spirit of inquiry, observation and help learners to develop good skills.

Benefits of ICT in Social Studies Education

There is no doubt that the ICT has brought about certain benefit to Social Studies education, some of which are discussed below:

Effective use of ICT enhances the timely Transmission of information and knowledge especially in the area comparative analysis of our economy and political system which will promote the development of the nation.

Internet of net based courses provide flexibility in time space and distance by enabling Social Studies to engage in learning at any time of the day no matter where they are located so long as they have access to the Internet

Contemporary knowledge and skills become absolute in an ever faster pace, leading to a need for continuous life-long learning. Thus, Social Studies students can provide updated and consistent information when needed as they stand at a great advantage.

With ICT, Social Studies students need not expose themselves in the same degree as in a classroom or at a course; students can train and learn from their mistakes without exposing themselves to colleagues and teachers while making mistakes.

Finally, ICT support a range of communication strategies especially easy asynchronous communication between educator and learner and among learners where appropriate. This communication can be extended to include groups of people rather than just individuals.

Barriers to Effective Implementation of ICT in Social Studies Education

ICT can serve very useful purposes but some challenges and threats are associated with effective implementation. These are discussed below:

Accessibility and successfully

The number of computers available to students and teachers are very long or few. Therefore, it could be very difficult for e-learning to operate successfully. One cannot compare Nigerian situation with American situation where the student computer ratio has been consistently falling in the last 15 years from 125 1 in 1983 to 9.1 in 1996 with the current ration in Nigeria.

Polity Consideration

The formulation and implementation of policies in the ICT sector is still very rudimentary and calls for an integrated set of laws, regulations, and guidelines that can shape the generation, acquisition and utilization of ICTs. In March 2005, the Federal Executive Council (FEC) of Nigeria approved the National Information Technology Programme (N1TP). The purpose was to make Nigeria a capable ICT country in Africa and a key player in the society by year 2005. It is pertinent to note that 2005 has passed and BITDA has not met her performance expectation; instead she holds seminars on e-judiciary, e-Nigeria, e-government etc.

Poor Infrastructure

The telecommunication and electricity infrastructure in Nigeria are poorly developed Nigeria suffers epileptic and erratic power supply while per capital electricity consumption is terribly low For example, while South Africa electric power consumption is 3, 88 *2* kwatt per capital, that of Nigeria is 85 kwtt per capital. Besides, it is noted that valuable national information technology infrastructure such as SAT-3 fibre backbone are being under listed in Nigeria.

Records have shown that other barriers such as content development, quality of content, assurance of quality, diversionary tendencies, lack of ICT capacities, insight into ICT development, poor organization of resources and other challenges may likely affect the introduction and development of e-learning in Social Studies education

Conclusion and Recommendations

The benefit of information and communication technology to the meaningful teaching of Social Studies cannot be over-emphasized. Government and non-governmental organizations should provide enough computers and other relevant ICT devices such as video audio conferencing, internet interactive radio etc for the teaching and learning of Social Studies and give new technologies as priority so that every individual is motivated towards the use of .he technology.

The teacher of Social Studies has a vital role to play in teaching the subject to arouse the interest of the learners and he should plan ahead of the classroom teaching. He is equally supposed to consult relevant textbooks and materials that will make him deliver his lesson very well and effectively. The introduction of e-learning should be encouraged in the teaching of Social Studies, All lecture rooms should be provided with Internet facilities for easy access for teachers and learners. Finally, there should be regular training programmes on the use of e-electronic for all academic staff.

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