The Need for Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) in Teaching Social Studies in Nigeria Colleges of Education: Issues and Challenges

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ABSTRACT

The world today is technology driven which has brought about development in all spheres of human endeavour. Based on this, there is urgent need to use Information and Communication Technology (ICT) which can be seen in computers, satellite, global system of mobile communication etc. and its application to the teaching of social studies in Nigeria Colleges of Education. This paper establishes that relying on textbooks and traditional patterns of teaching cannot make for effective teaching and learning of social studies. The paper therefore, highlights the need to use information and communication technology (ICT) in teaching of social studies in Nigeria Colleges of Education. It also highlighted some of the problems and challenges militating against the use of ICT in teaching and learning of social studies and concluded that government should make provision for ICT in Nigeria Colleges of Education and train teachers in the skills as this will make tertiary institutions of learning remain relevant in the global scheme of things educationally.

INTRODUCTION

The world is experiencing changes owing to advancement in information and communication technologies. Butcher (2003), stresses that the introduction of information and communication technology (ICT) in education is a panacea to ensuring quality in education. Its usage in teaching enriches the teachers and the students with current information. The role of social and

studies teacher in assisting learners to acquire relevant knowledge and skills cannot be over-emphasized. The teacher has vital roles to play in the communication and implementation of social studies curriculum. The teacher translates educational policies into practice and educational programmes into action Falade (2002).

The present classroom instruction where teachers use traditional approaches to teach social studies such as story telling, prepared speech and lecture method have not really helped to improve teaching and learning of social studies. This method of teaching social studies can rarely be used to change attitudes or attain higher cognitive goals. Taba (1962), notes that people are disappointed with schools for failure to help society solve the problems created by technological transformation. Taba observes that, there has always been mismatch between need of the society and school functions. This indicates the inability of schools to produce for the society the necessary human resources.

Conceptual Explanations

Information and Communication Technology
According to Okoye (2005), information and communication technology is the use of electronic means to collect data, process, store, retrieve and make available different types of messages to anybody seeking to get or use it anytime, anyhow and anywhere in the world, for the pursuance of national economic advancement. Odachi (2009), sees ICT as a range of technology for gathering, storing, retrieving, processing, and analyzing information. World Bank (2002) defines ICT as a set of activities that facilitate the capture, storage, processing, transmission and display of information by electronic means.

Social Studies
The concept of social studies as a subject has been variously defined. Mbaba (2008), defines social studies as the aspect of learning which deals with how to get on with ones environment, physical as well as human and how to develop those skills, knowledge, attitudes and values that are characteristics of responsible and responsive citizens in a given society. National Teachers Institute (2007), conceptualizes social studies as a subject that deals with man's interaction with his environment in order for him to acquire the relevant skills, knowledge, attitudes and values that will make him live harmoniously with his environment. Kissock (1981) sees it as a programme of study which society uses to instill in learners, knowledge, skills, attitudes and values that are considered worthwhile.

The Status of ICT in Teacher Training in Nigeria
In Nigeria the teacher in the 21st century faces a challenge of having to update his/her knowledge to be able to use ICT either as one who uses ICT in the classroom or as an e-facilitator or e-moderator of open and distance

learning. Teacher educators and teachers are concerned more with efficiency rather than effectiveness when they adopt ICT in education. Thus, ICT is used to make their jobs easier instead of making learning more effective. As a result, the teaching/learning process has not embraced current educational paradigm which emphasizes student-centered instruction with the teacher as the facilitator rather than teacher as the source of knowledge (F.M.E 2010).

Offiah and Essinah (2010) in a study in Awka Educational zone showed that less than 15.5% of the teachers are computer literate. The story is not different in most of the other educational zones; in some cases, it might be worse. At all levels in Nigeria, lecturers/teachers have generally been polarized in their acceptance of the new technologies, while some have enthusiastically integrated technologies into their classrooms, others have totally rejected it. Adams (2000) showed that many beginning teachers do not feel adequately prepared to use ICT in the classroom. Otuka (2010) has observed that over 80% of teachers at the post-basic and basic levels who attended the Science Teachers Association ICT Annual Workshops (2004-2010) had no knowledge of the basic applications of the computer. Bates (2009), stated that teachers act as road blocks against the implementation of new technologies and often not ready to accept any changes in their role.

The Universal Basic Education (UBEC) and the National Teachers Institute (NTI) carryout teachers' development workshop for over 300,000 basic education teachers every year. Acquisition of ICT skills has never being a major part of the training. The exposure of these teachers even to computer appreciation only will make a lot of difference as it will at least arouse their interest.

The need for Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in teaching social studies in Nigeria Colleges of Education

The application of ICT facilities in teaching and learning social studies in Colleges of Education in Nigeria has numerous advantages. ICT facilities make learning more flexible, interesting and reduce students boredom. According to Okoye (2005), the arrival of ICT does not just allow students to learn new and existing ways; it provides useful opportunities for them to access more advanced and wider ranging areas of learning and equally develop manipulative skills. Nwachukwu (2008) stated that ICT is believed to empower teachers and learners. It transforms the teaching and learning process from being highly teacher dominated to student centered. This transformation leads to increase learning out comes for studies, this creating opportunities for learners to develop their creativity, problem solving abilities, communication skills and other higher order skills.

It must be pointed out that ICT facilities create new instructional model, promotes teacher's productivity and helps to expand learning time beyond school period (Okoye 2005). ICT education provides students and teachers of social studies opportunity of being competent and skilled in using ICT

resources in the classrooms. It can bring about and stimulate higher thinking processes.

Mohammed and Ekpunabi (2003) Otuka (2010) and Kwache (2012) state the merits of ICT in teacher training as follows:

1. It promotes the competence of the teacher
2. The teacher develops interest and confidence in his/her work
3. It improves the teachers handling of large classes.
4. Teachers studying by distance or long vacation programmes have access to information from their lecturers or other sources e.g the internet.
5. It enhances the quality of teacher education by exposing pre-service and in-service teachers to resources and information beyond their immediate horizon.
6. It promotes the teacher's capability to carryout meaningful research.
7. Trainees have the option to select learning materials that meet the level of their knowledge and interest.
8. It promotes effective and efficient education administration.

According to Kwache (2012), institutions that encourage their teachers and learners to use ICT are more efficient and productive. ICT enhances teaching and learning as it involves the usage of variety of tools to enhance and facilitate teachers' pedagogical activities through its dynamic, interactive, flexible and engaging content.

Therefore, social studies programme in Nigeria Colleges of Education which prepares teachers to handle the Junior Secondary School of our educational system should be broad and include the latest development in the information and communication technology if Nigeria must remain relevant in the global scheme of things educationally.

Problems Associated with the use of Information and Communication Technology in Teaching and Learning of Social Studies

ICT is encouraging both students and teachers to be lazy as some simply down load information and type their names without making a bit of personal input. As a result, there is always a similarity as students use a common source. In academic circles, the blatant copying of people works in the internet without due acknowledgement amount to a crime which is punishable offence.

Also the use of ICT especially the internet is gradually killing an already dying reading culture as students have little or no time to make reference to books talkless of reading such texts. ICT has brought about Hi-tech cheating in examination in tertiary institutions in Nigeria today. Gbenda (2008) identifies some of these ICT related cheating devices to include: Hit-Tech Micro Computers, Mobile Phones etc. On a general note, repetitive use of the internet causes strain injury, back problems and painful eyes caused by prolonged usage of computers.

Challenges of Using Information and Communication Technology in Teaching Social Studies in Colleges of Education

There are many challenges militating against the effective use of ICT in teaching and learning of social studies in Colleges of education and they are as following:

1.   *Power Supply:* The state of power supply in the country has made the Power Holding Company to be unreliable and electronic device entirely depends on constant power supply and since the power rarely comes, the facilities cannot be used. Gbaje (2007) agreed to this when he noted that electricity is needed for the resources to be accessed at anytime and from any part of the world.

2.   *Inadequate Manpower and lack of basic ICT Skills:* It is observed that most teachers lack the necessary skills required for its application in social studies classrooms and also very few Colleges of Education have made provision for ICT facilities to their teachers (Nworgu & Oyim 2005). This is a very serious problem because teachers cannot inculcate the desired learning to the students if the ICT facilities are not available. Moreover, there are not enough engineers on the area of computer repairing so when there is faults it becomes a problem to repair them or even get their spare parts.

3.   *Virus:* Virus is another big problem that affects most computers and when this occurs, documents or programmes stored in the computer are seriously affected.

4.   *High Cost:* The high cost of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) equipments especially the laptops have contributed to less patronage as the financial resources from government is poor.

5.   *Poor Telecommunication System:* The fluctuating network especially the internet creates problem to the users. The adverse effect is that users living in areas without network coverage or with poor tele-communication system cannot have access to the net. It becomes necessary that there must be network at all times. But the present situations leaves much to be desired.

CONCLUSION

The need for ICT in the teaching and learning of social studies in Colleges of Education in Nigeria cannot be denied, it increases learning outcomes for students thus creating opportunities for learners to develop their creativity, problem solving abilities, communication skills, etc. Therefore, government should make provision for ICT in Nigeria Colleges of Education and train teachers in the skills. This will make tertiary institutions remain relevant in the global scheme of things educationally.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Since the government is interested in carrying her citizens along in her quest for development, effort should be made to put in place a regular power supply as well as reducing the cost of ICT facilities to affordable prizes. Teachers should be sensitized on the various ways of using these ICT facilities in teaching social studies through workshops, seminars and conferences. There should be an effective monitoring system to ensure that these ICT facilities already provided are properly maintained and utilized for effective social studies instruction. To develop competencies in teachers' use of ICT materials, ICT applications should be an indispensable aspect of contemporary teacher education curriculum. Philanthropic organizations and institutions should make efforts to donate these ICT facilities to our institution of learning.

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