INTEGRATING ICT INTO LEARNING SITUATION FOR IMPROVED LEARNING

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ABSTRACT

There is so much emphasis on the integration of ICT into teaching and learning processes for the out modeled education to witness revolution so as to make learning more meaningful and more individualized. ICT when well integrated into the teaching in learning situation can create condition that optimizes learning and this will inadvertently remove the drudgery that is associated with learning in an environment that is not conducive for teaching and learning. The paper opens up what ICT is capable of achieving in terms of interjecting improvement to the teaching- learning processes and exposes the fact that the use of ICT will bring about learning opportunities for all.

INTRODUCTION

ICT is a set of powerful tool that the teacher and learner can use to facilitate teaching and learning processes. Learning is principally a process for acquiring information and processing experience in which the learner selects and constructs knowledge that is useful and appropriate for himself/herself and in turn uses this to drive and determine his or her own continuous learning process (Adewale 2007). Learning has been an important aspect of human kind for through it one becomes more knowledgeable and therefore wiser and being able to participate more in what goes on around one's environment. Learning from the above can be said to bring about awareness and to make individuals to seek knowledge in order not to be shut out of global events. This importance of learning in linking people to global events makes the integration of ICT into learning an important one.

Information Communication Technology is a key tool that has impacted our view of the world and how we live (Aboderin, 2009). It is a tool in the hands of the teacher to help him examine the nature of the classroom environment and it is also a tool in the hands of the efficient student to re-define and redesign his/her learning. Doing this makes learning more interesting and meaningful not only to the learners but to teachers. The place of ICT in education and the world in general cannot be underestimated. This is because ICT opens the door to the world, allowing learners to access libraries, other learners and experts on various areas of specialization thereby making learning easy and education more accessible to every willing student.

DEFINITION OF INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

There are so many definitions of ICT and this goes to say, there is no universally accepted definition of ICT. The term defines a universally accepted definition as each person sees it in the way he uses it and because its concept, methods and applications are coming up and there is improvement on a daily basis because things keep changing daily.

The Information Technology Association of America (ITAA) defined it as the study, design, development, implementation, support or management of computer based systems particularly software application tools for participating in global markets, promoting accountability, improving the delivery of basic services and enhancing local development opportunity (UNDP, 2006). The definition emphasizes the global use of ICT to bring about development; if this is the case its integration into learning process will be of great benefit not only to an individual but to the nation at large.

Ogunsola (2005) sees ICT as an electronic based system of information transmission, reception, processing and retrieval which has drastically changed the way we think, the way we live and the environment we live in. its importance lies in the fact that it can be used to access global knowledge and help in communicating with other people thereby expanding the knowledge base of an individual which eventually leads to national development. Integrating ICT into learning situation will thus be of great value as individuals involved in the learning situation would have got immersed not in localized knowledge but a globalized one. ICT can be used to find, explore, analyze, exchange and present information responsibly and without discrimination. One characteristics of ICT that enhances knowledge acquisition and updating is the fact that it is open to the use of everybody. ICT gives users the quickest access to ideas and experiences from a wide range of culture, people and communities. It links people to the issues in the world and make learning easy and development possible.

Siray-Blatchford (2003) defines it as anything which allows us to get information, communicate with each other, or to have effect on the environment using electronic or digital equipment. This definition emphasizes the effect ICT has on the environment. Definitely when the right type of information is tapped from ICT and integrated into learning, the learning environment becomes livelier and students learn more easily than in the usual "hard way". Thus, there will be a positive change in the learner in the way he/she behaves to the learning materials. Aboderin (2009) sees ICT in its entirety as covering any product that will share retrieve, manipulate, transmits or receives information electronically in a digital form.

COMPONENT PARTS OF ICT
There are three major words involved in ICT but the three are interwoven and interconnected to bring out the effectiveness of ICT in all human endeavours. The information part of ICT concerns how ICT can be used within a business or organization to achieve goals and stated objectives (www.tutor2u.com) while the 'C' part refers to the communication and this involves the use of data by electronic means usually over some distance. Communication is the transmission, reception and processing of information with the use of electronic circuit. The 'T' part of ICT refers to technology which can be defined as a complex integrated process aimed at determining and resolving human problems.

Examining the above definitions of ICT and its component parts closely, one discovers that integrating it into learning process will bring much benefit not only to the teachers and learners but also to the nation at large as it will enable both teachers and learners to be

globally linked and learn from the world events, adapting such to suit their own teaching and learning purposes. It then follows that no matter how enormous the challenges facing the use of ICT in improving learning, it is important that ICT be integrated into institutions of learning and concerted efforts must be made to ensure access by both teachers and learners for the purpose of meeting the learning curiosity of Nigerians (Aghenta, 2006).

LEARNING AND TEACHING STYLES AND ICT

There are various types of learning, some people prefer to read or listen while others like learning through visual approach. Learning opportunities must be provided in a variety of ways so that none is disadvantaged by the approach (Carbo, 1986 and Campbell 199). Teacher centered learning approaches often favour passive reception of knowledge whereas learners centered approaches encourage a process of active enquiry. Learners are beast motivated to learn when they can take responsibilities for their own learning as it is an active process.

Interactive technologies like ICT encourage active learning and with the increase popularity of computers, students all over the world one now learning with technology as opposed to learning about technology. Teachers can provide good learning opportunities with technology as opposed to learning about technology .Nelson, 2001 shows that teachers can provide powerful learning opportunities through ICT when students are responsible for their own learning and are active learners defining their learning needs, finding information, assessing its values and building on their own knowledge base. In the information age therefore, the implication of a move from teacher-centered to learner centered education is that it is important for students to be able to analyze, synthesize an enormous amount of information thus being able to determine what should be learned how it will be learned and when it will be learned.

IMPACT OF THE USE OF ICT

The rapid development of ICT particularly electronic communicating and easy access to information through the internet and e-mail is now an important part of modern life and one that remains inseparable from modern education. The use of ICT by teachers and students has the potential to lead to changes in the role of the teacher, the students and the school. The teacher's role as described by Scheffer and Logan (1999) should be to work in collaboration with students as knowledge is applied to authentic situations. It is no longer a situation where teachers will centre on transfer of content from himself to students. ICT has made it possible for learning to emanate from student's enquiry, initial thinking and problem solving based on information accessed from a variety of sources.

For teachers to become confident, critical and creative users of ICT they must have access to professionally developed programmes that will enable them to have multiple skills both in the use of the technology and on task design. Teachers therefore need not only the ICT skills but also the models of best practice and knowledge to support learning. Teachers need to understand the need to integrate ICT into learning environments and interpreting curriculum

documents to make decision about designing, delivering, managing and evaluating instructions. Making use of ICT in schools for learning will make coming to school more enjoyable particularly with respect to the internet and e-mail access for students.

IMPORTANCE OF INTEGRATING ICT INTO LEARNING SITUATIONS

Integrating ICT into learning has a lot of advantages for the teachers, learners and nation at large. Emphasizing on the importance of ICT as a powerful tool for extending educational opportunities to all, a World Bank development document states that "ICT(s) greatly facilitate the acquisition and absorption of knowledge, offering developing countries unprecedented opportunities to enhance educational system, improve policy formulation and execution, and widen the range of opportunities… and open access to knowledge unimaginable not long ago".

ICT has the potential for increasing access to, and improving the relevance and quality of education hence it is important for it to be integrated into learning situations as it provides opportunities to be extended to marginalized, rural and scattered populations, people traditionally excluded from education due to cultural and social reason (girls, women, persons with disability, the elderly and others who for the cost of education or time constraints are unable to enroll in school for education.

The use of ICT for learning will culminate in students' use of internet which will aid students to be able to type work, search the internet for information and use spell checks to improve on their spoken and written English. The use of ICT will prop students to look for more information at a wider range than books. With the right investment in hardware and software and teacher professional development, teachers will be moved to a higher stage of integration of ICT into teaching and learning. With the use of ICT, students will be able to catch up with class work even outside school hours.

To Shobanjo (2010) the incorporation of e-learning method into tertiary institutions will help students and lecturers to gain access to global standards of education. The use of e-learning to Shobanjo will lead Nigerian students and lecturers to their course materials anywhere in the world in a cost effective manner. Shobanjo also believed that the Nigerian education system can be improved by laying a solid foundation for e-learning. It is a reliable, efficient and less expensive method of teaching people and one which has the capacity for reaching a wide audience. Integrating ICT into learning will give opportunity to people to learn anytime and anywhere. Integrating ICT into learning situation would help solve some of the challenges of lectures and students in the nation's institution. Such include, over-crowded lecture rooms, exploitation of students through illegal sales of handouts and hiccups in lecture hours during industrial actions in tertiary institutions.

CONCLUSION

The paper has looked at the integration of ICT unto learning. The paper has shown that the best learning is one that is student centered. With ICT, student will be able to access and work on their learning programmes on a range of settings including school and home.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To integrate ICT into learning situations, enough computers must be provided and possibly provide a teacher with a lap top computer. For effectiveness to be realized in the integration of ICT for improved learning, students must be encouraged to have a positive attitude to the use of ICT.

Teachers must be enterprising, innovative, adaptable and socially responsible participants in the information economy.

The government at all levels must be ready to invest a lot of money on information technology in schools and the school management should manage whatever fund is given very well and for what it is meant.

Students should be encouraged to search for information on the net for their assignments. To make the integration ICT into learning complete, both students and teachers must be computer literate.

Both students and teachers must learn about time management skill and effective use of Web Communication Technology. Training in the effective use of ICT should be made available. To Shobanjo a "do it yourself approach" should be embarked upon in terms of training. Trainers should be equipped with skills that would help them to design their own e-learning course and also build on-line courses.

Institutions of learning should also have web-portals where all their works can be accessed electronically. Teachers should be aware of the learning styles of students so as to help them learn well while integrating ICT into learning. Verbal instructions should accompany on screen instructions and should endeavour to make hard copies of the screens version of the text taught available (Teaching and Learning in http://www.aare.edu.au/01 paplaid01027.htm Accessed 20-11-10.

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