

KEYBOARDING SKILLS: A PANACEA TO GLOBAL BEST PRACTICES IN TEACHER PREPARATION

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Abstract

Global best practices in teacher educational institutions may relate to specific programme of the institution or the entire teacher education programme. For our Nigerian teacher educational institutions to meet up the global best practices in teacher education, keyboarding skill must be given a top priority. This paper considered keyboarding, globalization and their historical development, the place of keyboarding in global best practices in teacher preparation, benefits of keyboarding skills to the teacher, teachers' challenges to the use of keyboarding skills and recommendations were made that to be successful and relevant in today's business world the knowledge of keyboarding is a must.

Keywords: Keyboarding, Globalisation

In the past, keyboarding was only restricted to the typewriters and calculators. As times goes by and with the evolution of modern information and communication technology systems, the keyboarding became an indispensable tool for the successful operation of information and communication. All information and Communication systems makes use of the keyboard as input devices be it the handset, landline telephone, calculators (all types), typewriters, computers among others.

Hannatu (2011) described the keyboard as that part of machine that consist of four rows, each having about twelve keys and at the base of the keyboard there is a long narrow bar called the space bar. However, the keyboard system has grown beyond this ancient system of arrangement of the typewriter. Some keyboards are visible from outside like the typewriter while some are hidden in the system. The arrangement of the keyboard depends on the functions and operations of the system. For instance the computer keyboard is similar in arrangement with that of the typewriter but have other specialized keys which are not found on the typewriter and a detachable keyboard

component. Most input devices (keyboard) of the modern information and communication technology systems have a 'QWERTY' ALPHABET ARRANGEMENT OR THE ASDF/LKJ commonly referred to as 'HOME KEYS' arrangement. The key board is the focus point used in global electronic interconnectivity.

The term globalization is a multi-variant concept, changing its meaning within different situations. It has been defined from both economic and political perspective. It has also been seen as a process.

From the economic point of view, Okpara (2003), described globalization as a process in which the World's countries and their economies are increasingly intergrated as a function of rising cross boarder economic activities. In this context cross boarder economic activity includes exchange of material things, knowledge and ideas instantaneously through the use of input devices (key board) in information and communication technology. Globalization is the universalisation of certain economic practices, ideas, knowledge, identities and structures. The concept of globalization aims at creating a world that is increasingly inter connected with information and communication technology systems in which national boundaries are less important.

As a political concept, globalization is concerned with power, status etc within an organization rather than with matters. It breeds revelry among members of body politic which most often degenerates in to conflict and if not checked leads to crisis situation. Okpaga (2003) described globalization as the establishment of material liberal state enabled by a capacity building initiative and disciplined by a democratic politics well enough to maintain the legal, administrative, political and infrastructural conditions for private capacity building.

Globalization involves the transformation of relationships between states or individuals that have well established liberal democratic institutions and those that are yet to reach that level. Globalization as a process is continuous and ever-changing. Adejo (2003) sees it as the culminations of gradual inter community contacts propelled by materialistic and exploratory motivations. Generally, globalization emphasizes on the multiplicity of linkages and inter connectedness that surpass the nation states which together constitutes the modern world system. It sets up a process through which events, activities and decisions in one part of the world affects or have great consequences for other parts of the world.

Historical Development of Keyboarding and Globalisation.

The idea of keyboarding originated with the invention of machines to produce legible materials and fasten calculations. This could be dated back to over a century ago. History had it that the first typewriter to be patented in the United states of America was invented by William Austin Burt of Mount Vemon , Michigan in 1829, followed by a later improvement by Christopher L. Sholes of Milwaukae in 1867. The present keyboard arrangement was done by Shores and associates in 1872 after several

improvements on the earlier systems. This arrangement brought about great convenience on the use of the machine. However, there is no limit to improvement; inventors still continued to strive on how to improve on the keyboarding system until in 1878 a giant stride was made by incorporating the lower case (small letters) and the upper case (capital letters).

Following this stride countless improvements were made and several office equipment manufacturing firms emerged. By 1909, there were about 89 office equipment manufacturing firms (typewriters) in United States of America alone. By 1933, International Business Machines (IBM) began the manufacture of electric/selectric typewriting machines and other office machines using the keyboard. This improvement brought about the manufacture of other word processors which uses the, keyboard as input devices, (Akindele, 1996 and White and Clerk, 2006). The computer which has occupied a central place in office technology is a word processor and also makes use of the keyboard, arranged and patterned alongside the conventional typewriter.

On the other hand the idea of globalization can be traced back to the European exploration expeditions of the 14th and 15th centuries whose climax was the discovery of the Caribbean Island by Christopher Columbus in 1492 and Indian Port City of Calcutt by Vasco da Gamma in May 28th 1478. This giant stride was followed by other expeditions to discover other parts of the known world today.

Then came the era of mercantilism and trafficking in human beings (Slave trade), which later gave way to industrialization and struggling and partition of the world by the stronger nations, (Adejo, 2003 and Kingsley and Chidi, 2010). This era of colonization brought about the great need for development in communication systems for administrative purposes and trade which later paved way for information and communication technology (ICT) revolution, whose only input device or system is the keyboard.

The Place of Keyboarding Skills in Global Practices in Teacher Preparation.

Keyboarding skills are very essential in dispensing office duties, research of any type, communication and relating with the world around us. Since the invention of the computers and other office machines that uses the keyboard as input device, it has become an indispensable fact that there is at present a wide spread technological revolution in the way and manner of rendering office services, teaching, research and communication. For the fact that Secretaries are the back-bone of business offices, this revolution seems to have affected them more than any other group of workers. Secretaries are therefore witnessing new changes and challenges in their jobs and responsibilities to the extent that any secretary that fails to embrace this change is living in the past and may soon become obsolete. These changes have also reflected on the tools of rendering secretarial and other office or professional duties and services.

Keyboarding, though can be traced to the office machines, however, the word came into prominence during the information age, (Ekpenyong and Iregbidion, 2009). Keyboarding is the manipulation of the machine keyboard by touching and its benefits includes enhanced use of time and effective performance of tasks. In keyboarding emphasis is on the skills of entering alpha-numerical data for the primary purpose of obtaining, storing, processing and disseminating information.

Skill is associated with performing a given task in less time, using minimum effort and with high rate of accuracy. Obioma and Uteh (2011), opined that a student is considered unskillful if the student is unsure about which finger goes on which key. Braimoh and Iredia (2009) pointed out that a student is unskilled if he/she lacks at least a bowing acquaintance with keys striking techniques.

The basic skills and competencies which the keyboarding provides according to Ndinechi, (1990); Okafor, (1992) and Nwosu, (2001) includes:

- *Typing straight copy and statistical data from original sources using machine controlled properly, accurately and speedily.*
- *Editing, centering and tabulation capabilities using present format.*
- *Performing arithmetical and statistical calculations.*
- *Formating the text, proof reading and displaying it in an acceptable form according to general office standard or procedure,*
- *Neatly correcting errors, using various means.*
- *Preparing, storing, retrieving, discriminating, processing and analyzing information or data.*
- *Familiarity with relevant software packages.*
- *A good command of English, punctuations and spellings.*

Denyer, (2012), maintained that information and communication technology systems are only an aspect of office efficiency. They do not increase office efficiency neither are they economical by themselves but a resourceful and skillful machine operator can bring about the efficiency and economy of time and resources. Technologies has advanced from manual to automated office, electronic office, the paperless and people less office, cashless transactions, marketing place and marketing space etc. All these are made possible through skillful manipulation of the keyboard.

Keyboarding skill is not limited to the secretaries or operators of office machines but has become an indispensable tool in the hands of every individual especially skilled workers. Keyboarding is required form global practices such as communications, calculations, research, teaching, learning etc.

Benefits of Keyboarding Skills to the Teacher.

There is no doubt that keyboarding skills promotes productive teaching and learning. Information and Communication technology also increases the teacher's intellectual and creative abilities through the use of audio, text, multicolor images,

graphic motions, power point presentations, e-learning etc. Information and Communication Technology gives the teacher ample and exceptional opportunities for high, quality teaching. The classroom teacher cannot afford to lag behind in using multimedia to raise the intellectual and creative abilities of his learners.

Other benefits of the keyboard to the classroom teacher according Rack and Kamal (2007) are summarized as follows:

- *Facilitating easier and cheaper access to information on education and business services.*
- *Faster manipulation of data thereby permitting efficient research development, evaluation and monitoring.*
- *Creation of greater excitement and interaction in the classroom.*
- *Redistribution of available resources through the provision of information.*
- *Allowing quality improvement through monitoring of educational resources.*
- *Better and faster provision of information thereby permitting improvement in managerial skills and decision making.*
- *Offer opportunity to collect and store enormous volumes of educational data, process educational transactions with great speed and accuracy.*
- *Visual library and distant learning education.*

Information and Communication Technology for educational purpose is also designed to meet a comprehensive range of e-learning requirements through the following:

- *Personalized feedback to the student and instructors with information on each student's progress and proficiency level.*
- *Internet enabled assessment, allowing teachers to personalize learning based on assessment results.*
- *Rich media responsibilities that promotes intensive curricula for texts, video, audio, interactive and animated content, all of which address multiple learning styles and needs.*
- *Integrated and saleable architecture for reliable, comprehensive and e-learning solutions; (Iwu, 2011)*

Teachers challenges of Use of Keyboarding Skills.

In the educational sector, most of the teachers find it difficult to study and use the keyboard. Some of them develop fear at the mere mention or sight of ICT gadgets. Some of the reasons for the poor use of or skillful operation of the keyboard are as follows:

1. Teacher's Attitudes.

Most of the teachers are reluctant to update their ICT knowledge or engage in ICT training. The reasons most of them give were too much workload, administrative duties or house chaos Presently, ICT is becoming a common place in education and training

can be obtained anywhere in an organized institution and other private arrangements to suit your requirements, (Rack and Kamal, 2007).

2. Lack of Encouragement from School Administrators.

. Lack of encouragement from school administrators is another reason militating against technology teachers' use of ICT in the classroom. Most of the school administrators pay lip-services to the use of ICT in the classroom. If the school administrators will install ICT teaching gadgets and facilities in the classrooms and make it compulsory for the teacher to use, they would comply. When there is no chalkboard or white board to write or teach in the classroom except the ICT gadgets, the technology teacher will be forced to learn the technology if the teacher is to remain relevant.

3. The Nature of Our Teacher Preparatory Institutions.

Most of the existing teacher preparatory tertiary institutions in Nigeria emphasis more on covering the curriculum, teaching practice and students industrial work experience scheme rather than embarking on academic research and relating with other institutions in other parts of the world. Some of the institutions do not have research based technology centres and where available are outdated. Outdated technology may equally create significant problems in terms of high cost of maintenance, inconveniences, less motivation, low speed and accuracy, storage and retrieval problems as well as low growth in educational applications. The application of outdated technologies will create more negative impact in our educational systems than expected, (Hansen and Hansen, 2006).

4. The Nature of Nigerian Society.

In Nigeria, most employers regard the knowledge of ICT as an additional qualification, an attachment to the main qualification or complimenting the main qualification. Nigeria has become a certificate conscious society, where certificate qualification serves as a pre-requisite for employment and not job performance, (Iwu, 2011). This attitude coupled with the poor condition of service of teachers makes those who are I C T compliant to seek for other jobs with better condition of services.

5. Resistance and Anxiety.

Most classroom teachers are opposed to change. This situation leads to resistance to and anxiety about I C T which in turn, influences the degree to which they can be used effectively. Hakinen, (2005) emphasizing on this situation, pointed out that negative attitudes and anxiety towards I C T may have negative effects on teaching and learning and cognitive performance of students.

Conclusion.

For Nigerian teachers to meet up with the current demands of the teaching profession, to keep abreast with the global challenges of the teaching profession, teachers need to be skillful in the operation of the keyboard. To meet up with these challenges the teacher preparatory institutions needs to be equipped with the modern

information and communication technology gadgets and such gadgets should be properly utilized in teaching and learning as well as educational research. Every teacher trainee should be made to undergo training in keyboarding skill acquisition especially those relating to I.C.T in teaching and learning. It is therefore imperative that teachers should embrace I C T and utilize the knowledge in the classroom. Any teacher that fails to embrace this wind of change sooner or later will be living in the past and would be irrelevant to the system. Every effort therefore should be made by the school management and the teachers themselves to embrace the relevant I C T.

Recommendations.

For our teacher preparatory institutions to embrace global best practices in teaching profession the following recommendations are made.

- 1, Practicing teachers should be encouraged to acquire the knowledge of relevant information and communication technology by their employers through part-time and full time study programme.
2. Professional teachers and trainees should avail themselves of every opportunity to learn the application of relevant information and communication technology in the classroom.
3. The management of teacher preparatory institutions should install I C T gadgets in the classrooms, laboratories and libraries and encourage their use by teachers and would-be teachers by providing technical assistants to put them through whenever they encounter difficulties in the application.
4. Evidence of the use of I C T gadgets in classroom instructions and research activities should be one of the criteria for employment, promotion and appraisal of teachers and workers.
5. Training and re-training of teachers on information and communication technology should be on a continuous basis.

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