

THE EMERGING INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY (ICT) ISSUES IN EDUCATION IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is one of the emerging issues in Education in Nigeria. This paper discusses ICT facilities such as e-mail facilities, networked education programmes, internet, catalogues etc which have helped adults and working class people advance in education. The use of ICT has brought life to education and learning, as it has made distance learning easy, convenient and affordable in the absence of known teacher. These challenges to the traditional system of education have been properly focused in this paper.

Introduction

Emerging issues in education may simply be defined as those things which are *new* in education or the new methods or new ideas in educational development. As Diamond (1995), noted, with the advent of ICT, the traditional method of teaching in schools is gradually phasing out. The old method of education now seems archaic, because of the evolution of computer in the education world.

The introduction of computer into education has brought life to education. The print era has erased the old ways of keeping records. The process, acquisition, storage and dissemination of information in the educational sector have assumed a novel shape. The world of technology has made the world borderless. It is now easy to communicate or reach any one, no matter the distance. A student can now be taught by an unknown person. Awotua-Efebo (2006). stressed that the emergence of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in education has made a total difference to the meaning of education. Cyber space is now the order of the day. Educators and learners can now get and disseminate information with fewer arduous. However, a lot of ICTs are emerging in the education world, amongst which are enumerated below:

Networked System

This is a kind of distance learning, this this method the teacher uses instructional media. It involves interactions and communication from one computer system to another. The learner is totally separated from the teacher. Information and communication technology are immensely involved. The courses done through (his process is otherwise regarded as virtual course. This is because they are delivered within the computer system. This method facilitates studying in distance education, and it is always convenient for the learner.

According to Babaiola (2007), the open and distance learning is an easy means of achieving the global objective of providing education for all by the year 2015. A learner starts learning at a convenient time. Several tools are involved for the transmission of information in a virtual study. These are tools like - electronic mail listserv, the World Wide Web, internet relay chat.

The e-mail facilitates discussion between a learner and the teacher. Questions, answers and comments are communicated through the e-mail or listserv. Also web chat aids communications via the computer between an education and a learner. The learner gets questions from his lecturer, and replies at his own time. Learners in most cases are working class people and very busy families.

Distance learning is favourable to particular classes of people especially the Armed Forces and other security agencies whose jobs involves frequent movement from one place to another (Ojo et al, 2005). Communications like presentation of course content, assignments, quizzes, students projects and electronic research papers, are usually done through World Wide Web (www). Learning **through** the electronic media is superb.

Opportunities for Distance Education

This is a new development in Nigeria, but it has been in existence in English speaking countries and the western countries. The use of Networked Education has created opportunities for those Nigerians who would have stopped their education halfway. The emergence of Networked Education makes it possible

for Nigeria to register and study in the Universities abroad. This era of networked education has posed a very big challenge to the old archaic style of teaching and learning.

As Ani (2007), commented 'New and Emerging Technologies' challenges the traditional process and learning and the way education is managed. Every data required for a course is forwarded via the computer. The values and dreams of distance education are becoming a success due to the evolution of information and communication technology.

Increased Learned Opportunities

The learning opportunities are now increasing at its pace. Almost every part of the world has embraced electronic networked education. Examples of such countries are America, Australia, Newzealand, and the United Kingdom. All parts of the universe are projecting interests on distance learning through networking. (Brown. 2006).

An already existing networked education in Africa is the World Bank African virtual university. There are courses like computer science, nursing and computer engineering. Another reality in the networked electronic education is the university of South Africa which are schooling from distance. Nigeria also has seen the Networked education as a means to increase access to education, as well as quality assurance.

Opportunities for Flexibility Education (Adult Education)

Flexibility learning is a system of teaching and learning in diversified ways. It is specially concerned with adults. This type of learning demands for self independence and self determination. The study materials would be sent to the learner in form of text, CD ROMS and cassette bands. It is usually interactive, and friendly. The CD or cassette is usually programmed in such a way that the learner would be listening to the instructor's voice. This is where interaction comes in. The instructor must instruct the learner to commence, stop, go back or answer some test questions. The interactive role in the networked education makes the learning enjoyable.

This method is considered most ideal for adults. Fulton (1992), says in the past, most distance education focused on adult learners especially in rural districts.

Opportunities for Alternative Choice

Distance learning is often seen as the last resort to people who could no get essay access into the conventional studies. The distance learning provides opportunities of learning to those in despair. The networked education system is upgrading. The networked education recognizes every learner; their interest is to make sure that the learner gets the certificate at the end of the day. The courses are highly accredited.

In other words, the networked education re-packages the opportunity as one of the choices by individual students to get what -they want at the end of the programme, without down grading the value of their education.

Standard Delivery and Standard Quality of Education

The method and techniques of teaching in conventional institutions is different, when compared with networked education. The conventional school teaching is usually prepared alone by untrained teachers, most of whom are not even graduates.

As Afe (1992), noted that even with the best of educational policies and designs and the expenditure of colossal sums of money on education, the ultimate realization of any set of aims for education depends on the teachers, they will ultimately be responsible for translating policy into action and principles into practice in their interactions with their students that is to say, the total realization of aims of education, lies on the quality of teacher. The type of teacher available in given institution, affects the performance of the students, because it is what a teacher has that he will give to his students. The greatest input in education is the teachers. If a teacher is qualified and enriched with knowledge: definitely, his students would be loaded with knowledge. Afe (1991), comments that next to students are teachers as the largest most expensive and crucial input of an educational system. The conventional teaching is contrasted with the networked education or virtual education which is a kind of a team work. An instructor or teacher works hand-in-hand with the students; they both buy the idea of the other. The concept of networked.education brings out the meaning of education as a combined effort and at the same time pays much attention to quality stands. Those who are involved In the management of virtual networked education are usually experts in their skills.

Access to Information

Accessing of information is very easy in networked cyber space. One accesses a wide range of information in the internet without limit. For instance, (o inquire concerning registration, school fees,

available courses, research results, news and reviews, one simply goes with cyber links and easily furnishes himself with every information required. One can also buy books on line; get catalogues and even have access to library catalogues. Students even get (their study materials through the cyber space; the learners also acquire extra lectures by reading lectures of other students on the internet; as such, there is opportunity for other resources of learning.

Improved Innovation

The networked education has brought about new innovation. Instead of the old method of asserting footnotes, references and acknowledgements; there is this novel use of hypertext links. Everything seems new, with virtual learning. Different forms of writing, language reading are evolving from the world of technology. Learners are also observed to be more competent and literate than those taught in the conventional era. The teaching profession is likely to take another form with the introduction of information and communication technology in networked education. The learning theories and practices are also assuming a new device.

In spite of the numerous advantages of the emerging issues on education explained above they still have some challenges. These challenges are-

- i. Responding and adapting to change.
- ii. Changes in structure of knowledge
- iii. Academic scholarship
- iv. Avoiding Marginality,
- v. Contacting more students.
- vi. Quality maintenance.

Responding and Adapting to Change

The traditional method of teaching and learning in school is now facing a very big challenge. And it is very difficult in this respect for teachers to adjust to the new digitized system of teaching. Those in the computer science education are already facing challenges. Directors and managers of companies and industries have now embarked on employing individuals who are trained or particularly skilled on peculiar software/hardware products. They even prefer employing people with industry certificate in computer to university graduates. This challenge has put a sort of pressure on academic and training institutes who must adapt the curriculum of activities and the course in their programmes to suit the new innovation. The conventional teachers and institutes are all on their toes, and as they must work hard to beat the challenges confronting them from the world of Technology.

(b) Changes in Structure of Knowledge

The users of information in networked education suffer the problem of differentiating the sources and stuff of information they get through the computer because all information look alike viewing them on the visual display unit.

(c) Academic Scholarship

As a result of virtual education, (the electronic forms of journals has become the order of the day. The conventional print journals are now relegated to the background. The challenges here is the

extent to which the schools which are committed to scholarship will be interested in taking to new styles of academic practices, so as to meet up with the demands of the cyber age.

(d) Avoiding Marginality

The borderless nature of the improved education pattern is the most noticeable feature. Universities and corporations are now assuming the same styles. The gaps between teaching and learning are decreasing as well. Students in the conventional schools do ail sorts of things, in competition with the students in networked education.

(e) Contacting More Students

Due to the advantageous features of the networked education, every student seems to be more interested in the system than the conventional method. Students are now trooping to the virtual universities because of the Internet, video, and other networking involved. This has brought a remarkable challenge to the conventional schools; and as such, the later must strive to ensure the availability of computer networking in their own system.

(f) Quality Maintenance

The computer based training in virtual schools of learning, has increased the quality of networked education, thereby depreciating that of the conventional institutes. Basically, for other schools to maintain a quality standard of education, they must resort to Computer-Based Training (CBT).

Recommendations

The following recommendations are proffered for maximizing emerging ICT issues in Nigerian Education:

1. Nigerian school administrators should try and encourage the use of computers in schools.
2. Students should make use of Internet to search for admission, register, pay school fees, and even obtain extra lectures from other schools.
3. Nigeria teachers and lecturers should deliver lectures through the Internet and networked education.

Conclusion

The emerging issues in Nigeria education have brought a new meaning to education. The evolution of the information and communication technology in education system makes education very interesting. The networked education has given a new hope for the future. In short, no system beats networked education. It has made the global walls of education borderless, thereby reaching the remotest area. The computer era has introduced new paradigms to education. It is an emerging issue that Nigeria must increasingly adapt to her education system.

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