

ENHANCING QUALITATIVE MUSIC EDUCATION IN NIGERIA THROUGH INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

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Abstract

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is about digital information passing between devices. It has become a livewire that every successful business fellow, public or private set – up and particularly, researchers and educators must embrace in order to enrich and/or develop the nation and her people. The use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has increased in the society and its development has changed every aspect of the human life. This paper therefore explores the objectives of ICT in Nigeria as proposed by National IT policy. The essence, importance, prospects and striking challenges of the application of ICT to Music Education are briefly mentioned. This paper recommends way forward such as provision of ICT facilities, adequate funding, government commitment and the training of technical expertise, among others, to fully exploit the benefits of ICT in our schools.

Introduction

Music teaching has become one of the most challenging professions in our society where knowledge is expanding rapidly and much of it is available to music students as well as teachers at the same time. As new concepts of learning have evolved, music teachers are expected to facilitate learning and make it meaningful to individual learners rather than just to provide knowledge and skills. Today, modern development of innovative technologies have provided new possibilities to the teaching profession and at the same time, placing more demands on teachers to learn how to use this new technologies in teaching. These challenges require teachers to continuously retrain themselves on the use of computer in assessing internet to acquire new ideas, knowledge, and to acquire skills while maintaining their jobs (Mishra, Promila and Harish, 2007).

ICT remains one of the best ways through which one can enrich himself or herself with useful knowledge and skills. The most common form of ICT is the computer which happens to be the most recent and exciting of revolutionary technical advancement. The application of ICT in education is known as e–education. E–education according to FME (2004) is the comprehensive framework for delivery of education using ICT as a tool.

Information

Information is one of the unique factors that serve as pivot for the existence and survival of man in both his micro and macro environment. As a matter of fact, an individual who is not informed may soon discover himself or herself deformed. According to Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary (2004), information refers to facts or details about something or somebody. Such facts or details have influence on how people relate with one another and how they react to situations and circumstances. Challenges in music education as a discipline or career are adequately tackled depending largely on information that music educators/experts in music technologies, and researchers in the field of music have at hand.

Communication

Communication can simply be seen as the transfer of information from one place or medium to another. According to Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (2004), communication is the activity or process of expressing ideas and feelings or of giving people information. People communicate through many media, e.g. Music, Radio, Television, Mobile Phone, Computer, papers, etc. Any technology in the form of ICT must communicate in both directions. There must be the communicator, the media/channel, and the receiver. Music instructions or information, for instance, can be communicated by teacher, through the use of computers (on line), to the student

Technology Education

Technology education is the training that brings about human ability to change the world around him. It enables him to cut, shape or put together materials, move things around and to utilize the five natural senses (sight, smell, taste, touch and hearing) in a most unusual and far reaching manner (Olorundare 2001). In this case, the importance of technology in music education cannot be over looked.

However, today, a variety of ICT can facilitate not only delivery of music instructions, but also learning process itself. Also, ICT can promote professional development, international collaboration and networking in music education. There is a range of ICT options from video conferencing through multimedia delivery to web site, which can be used to meet the challenges music teachers face today.

The era of Information and Communication Technology (ICT), is one that has witnessed monumental transformation in every field of humanity, including music. Salau (2003) opined that ICT is seen as the technologies used in collecting, storing, editing and passing of information in various forms. These include the use of communication satellite, radio, television, telephone, video, tape, recorders compact disc, floppy disc, and the computers. These devices have made ICT an instrument of dynamic and progressive changes in our society and as such, have tremendously influenced development of all human endeavours: social, economic, technology, business, labour and education (Osewinyen, 2008).

The Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN) in the National Policy on Education (2004: 17, 24) asserts that:

In recognition of the prominent role of Information and Communication Technology in advanced knowledge and skills necessary for effective functioning in the modern world, there is urgent need to integrate Information and Communication Technology into education in Nigeria. Government shall provide necessary infrastructure and training for the integration of ICT in the school system in recognition of the role of ICT in advancing knowledge and skills in the modern world.

The vision of afore-stated IT policy if considered in the area of functionality, innovation, challenges and prospects in our present educational system is to make Nigeria an IT capable country in Africa and a key player in the information society by the year 2005 (FME, 2004), using it as the engine for sustainable development and global competitiveness. Thus, on the advocacy for effective communication in all spheres of human endeavours by all the people in Nigeria and in the world at large, ICT becomes inevitable. The case of ICT in music education is not exempted.

Major Objectives of E – Education in Nigeria

FME (2004) listed the major objectives of e – education in Nigeria as follow:

1. Enhancing access to quality education: E – education has potentials of reaching out to so many learners and offering education whose quality is not compromised. The large number of pupils for basic education in Nigeria can be trained more effectively by using e – education protocols. This is also applicable to music education.
2. Improve the education delivery system: ICT tools aid both teachers and students in teaching – learning process. Self – learning capabilities of ICT enabled education will enhance mastery of school subjects by Nigerian students as well as aid teachers in the Nigerian schools. This assistance will in turn be evident in the improved performance in school and public examination. Thus, ICT could as well enhance good learning capabilities and mastery of music subject/courses by music students and also aid music teachers in the Nigerian schools.
3. Ensure optimal utilization of existing of ICT resources: A cursory at the school system in Nigeria will review series of efforts at the three levels of government (Local, State and Federal) at implementing some forms of ICT enable delivery. The demands that all states of the federation have some forms of computer education programmes such as tech net, digital library, poly net, and mUNET. These bring lots of duplication under e – education framework resources to be pulled and optimally utilized.
4. Ensure a global competitive education system: When a global adoption of e–education as a delivery is achieved, any nation or educational system that does not conform will produce graduates that are not globally acceptable. With the adoption of e – education in Nigeria therefore, the nation will be on the right course of global competitiveness. In fact, through e–education most music teachers/educators have studied various Universities abroad.
5. Reduce or eliminate anti – social activities in the school system: The two counterproductive phenomena (Examination malpractices and cultism) which have strangulated the education system are caused by a host of factors including poor academic preparation of students. Since e–education has the potential of evaluating students’ performance and reducing the incidence of the vice, the elimination of examination malpractices and cultism subsequently make learning and teaching more effective.

Adherence to the above stated objectives of e – education in Nigeria by FME (2004), will to a large extent, enhance good standard of teaching/learning of music education in Nigeria.

Essence of ICT in Music Education

The essence of ICT in music education in our schools cannot be overlooked. The integration of ICT into music curriculum will make students and teachers to have equal access to richer learning materials. It will further help them to control their learning, environment, improved literacy level, language and communication skills. It is therefore important, in this regard, to continue to emphasise on the importance of staff development in our educational system in order to help teachers acquire knowledge and skills. Thus, perspectives that will improve instructional effectiveness and increase productivity in music education through the use of ICT has the potential of making music students in Nigeria to share their knowledge with peers in other countries, get access to outside the country (Nigerians or non – Nigerians) and collaborate with other students anywhere in the world on their projects. Also problems of inadequate facilities in school arising from insufficient funds to finance the equipment of every school could be obviated through sharing of facilities across school networks (Elizabeth, 2008). Olalude (2006), quoted in Regha (2007), noted that ICT has positively influenced the quality and quantity of teaching; learning through dynamic, interactive and engaging contents and research in traditional and distant educational institutions around the world. He further pointed out that ICT has the potential to accelerate, enrich and deepen skills, motivate and encourage students in

learning, help to relate school experiences to work practices, help to create economic viability for tomorrow's works, contribute to radical changes in schools, strengthen teaching and provide for connection between institutions and the world. All these are of importance to music education in Nigeria.

Importance of Training Music Teachers on the Application of ICT in Music Education

The training of music teachers is very paramount in our nation's educational system. Music teachers should therefore be developed on the acquisition of ICT knowledge and skills, in order to:

- i. Be qualified and competent to employ the tools of technology to supplement their traditional teaching methods and thereby achieve enhanced students' learning in music education.
- ii. Use the tools of technology to keep themselves abreast with the latest development in music education.
- iii. Contribute to their professional advancement. Also, music teachers in Nigerian schools should be encouraged, by the government and management of various schools/institutions, to be developed or to undergo training in computer studies in order to acquire basic knowledge and skills of operating and using various applications in computer, such as distinction between system software and application software, using word processing, document preparation and printing, spreadsheet applications, including graphical and statistical analysis of data, computer aided teaching and learning, using the internet for e – mail and file transfer, “surfing the internet for searching and selecting educational content and ideas for teaching” (Mishra et al 2007), etc.

Challenges of Information and Communication Technology in Music Education

There are several challenges to the successful use of ICT, particularly in music education. Ohibusuyi (2008) quoted in Suleiman (2008: 89 – 90) opined that different challenges facing higher education have been identified as responsible for the harvest of poor quality education which hinders the achievement of sustainable development. These include:

1. Lack of expertise and skilled manpower: Owing to limited resources, Nigeria neither has the local capacity to develop the necessary human resources in this field nor the means to attract highly skilled and expensive experts from abroad. Skilled manpower for the development of ICT in music education is very crucial.
2. Limited internet connectivity: Internet connectivity, though vigorously pursued in Nigeria, is still limited. In some institutions of higher learning where there is internet connectivity, it is seen to be limited only to the library and information and communication technology (ICT) centers and not to offices. Also, the current speed of connection may be inadequate for internet browsing. This makes its development in music education ineffective.
3. Poor infrastructure: Nigeria lacks the infrastructural facilities for the full scale development of e – learning facilities, apart from high cost of using and maintaining technology. Internet access is still concentrated mostly in urban centers and a few institutions of higher learning.
4. Non – affordability of computer and internet connectivity: Some music teachers in tertiary institutions or schools where music is studied cannot afford computer system and/or internet connectivity that would enable them to enhance good quality music education through ICT.
5. Teachers' attitude: Another problem associated with the effective use of e – learning in music education may be connected to the non – familiarity of this Information and Communication Technology (ICT) by most teachers. In other words, some music teachers are lazy and develop cold attitude to browsing or getting useful information from internet and

- other Information and Communication Technology means such as Radio, Television, Mobile Phone, etc.
6. Unreliable power supply: Electric power supply is unstable and thus poses challenge to the use of new technology in music education.

Prospects of ICT in Music Education

ICT has the potential to:

- i. Motivate and encourage music students in learning
- ii. Increase, enrich and deepen skills acquired by both the music teacher and the student.
- iii. Contribute to radical changes in school system.
- iv. Help to create economic viability for young music teacher. Since music education has a lot of career prospects, ICT will help the teacher to function effectively and be useful to the society.
- v. Strengthen music teaching/performances and provide opportunities for connection between institutions and their host communities.
- vi. Avail music teachers with opportunities to always upgrade or improve themselves in the teaching profession by getting up – to – date information.
- vii. Faster communication speed: In the past, longer time is taken for any news or messages to be sent. But now, with the internet, news or messages are sent via e – mail to friends, business partners or anyone efficiently. With the capability of bandwidth, broadband and connection speed on the internet, information can travel fast at an instance. It saves time and is inexpensive. Music teachers do not at all time need to travel far to get information on music courses or programs.
- viii. ICT creates paperless environment: This means that information can be stored and retrieved through digital medium instead of paper. On – line communication via e – mail, on-line chat and instant messages also help in creating paperless environment in music education.
- ix. Effective Sharing of information: ICT helps to expose music scholars/educators to sharing and exchanging of opinion, news and information through discussion group, mailing list and form on the internet. This sharing of knowledge will contribute to the sustainable development of music education in Nigeria.
- x. It can be used to keep track of stock/inventory in music business setting like music production/recording, marketing, etc.
- xi. It helps to eliminate the risk of travelling in search of information associated with music education such as admission form, registration form, course outlines etc. Information regarding all these can be accessed on the internet. Through ICT, members of families can also be fortunate to be offered sponsorship abroad and employment can also be created.
- xii. ICT can be used to increase (music) literacy level when family members are exposed to it.
- xiii. Music teachers can use ICT as recreational tool when boredom sets in.

The Way Forward

Our educational system should aim at the creation of a new society of educational professionals who will adopt practical reasoning, creative production of things and preventive diplomacy in national resolution of human and environmental problems that may impede sustainable development and economy (Adeboyele, 2000).

Based on the foregoing importance, challenges and prospects of ICT in Music Education, this paper recommends the following, in order to have a solid ICT programme especially with regards to music education in Nigeria:

1. Non – governmental organizations should endeavour to give support to augment government efforts especially in the area of funding ICT.
2. Government should show commitment by establishing support and monitoring teams (with branches in all the tertiary institutions) to ensure proper running of the programme.
3. More awareness should be created by every educator on the usefulness of ICT for enhancing good quality of the teaching/learning process in music education and other subjects.
4. Technical experts on ICT should be made available by the government and private individuals within the country, Nigeria.
5. Computer hardware and music software resources should also be made available by public and private institutions where music is offered.
6. Government and private organization should ensure that there is stable power supply to run ICT programme.
7. Internet connectivity should be made available in both rural and urban areas, and computer system should be distributed to all academic staff in institutions of learning, in order to have direct access/connectivity to the internet for research purposes.
8. Parents should endeavour to purchase computers in order to create access for their children to have first – hand knowledge and skills in ICT through computer operation.

Conclusion

Nigeria is well endowed with natural and human resources, but can hardly take care of its citizens due to inability to develop our technology and educational system through effective teaching and learning of science and technology and art subjects like music, so as to develop people in such a way that will not only lead to increase in productivity achieved, but also increase the people's talent, creativity, self confidence and self respect. Indeed, for sustainability and successful application of ICT, an assessment expert adequately equipped with ICT, teaching (experience), operational and communication skills should be constituted in our schools/colleges in order to make the students and teachers (in the field of music) have access to quality teaching and learning.

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