

ENHANCING EFFECTIVE TEACHING AND LEARNING OF SOCIAL STUDIES THROUGH THE APPLICATION OF INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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Abstract

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is revolutionizing all segment of the education industry across the globe, and Social Studies cannot be left out in the train. The application of ICT in the teaching and learning of Social Studies is the needed synergy that can enhance its effective teaching and learning in schools. This paper x-rays the various ways ICT can be applied to enhance effective pedagogy in Social Studies in schools. It also posits some useful recommendations for implementation by government.

In today's world, success in all facets of human endeavor seems to become impossible without the application of information and communication technology. Information and Communication Technology (ICT) tools are major driving forces of globalized and knowledge-based societies of a new era (Osakinle and Ekundayo, 2010). The growing complexities of the present educational system globally, the new technical environment, the merger of digital electronics and internet technology and societal demand have made the application of information and communication technology imperative in teaching and learning in schools. The introduction/advent of the computer and their information and communication technology devices have revolutionized the nature of human activities and operation in virtually all fields of endeavor (Nwachukwu, 2008). Between 1993 and now, technology has revolutionized our thinking and the way we work, play and even pray. This implies that every facet of human endeavor is driven by information and communication technology globally, including education. Accordingly, ICT application has the potentials to accelerate, enrich and deepen skills, to motivate and engage students in learning, to help relate school experiences to work practices, to help create economic viability for tomorrow's workers, contribute to radical changes in schools to strengthen teaching and to provide opportunities for connection between the schools, to strengthen teaching and to provide opportunities for connection between the schools and the World (Ajayi, and Ekundayo, 2009). ICT has resulted in very profound and remarkable changes on the quality and quantity of teaching, learning and research in educational institutions. Education is no longer simply to convey a recognized body of knowledge but to enhance the ability of each learner to generate access, assess, adapt and apply knowledge and information to solve complex problems (Modamori, 2005). By a stretch of analysis, teachers are no longer styled as sole repository or fountain of knowledge, who distribute information, skills, attitudes, ideas, values to the learners, teaching and learning can equally and conveniently take place

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through the application of information and communication technology to enhance effective teaching and learning. Gone are the days of hypodermic needle method of teaching when teachers saw themselves as knowledge oracle (Ajayi, 2000).

The norm of trend in every living society today is the application of information and communication devices in education, engineering, commerce, banking, industries, agriculture, medicine etc. in both developed and developing nations of the World. These information and communication technological devices have changed the image of teaching and learning in this twenty-first century especially in developed nations of the world. Berenfield (1999) adumbrated that in these countries, ICTs have changed how people live, work and play. Most of the developed countries have *exploited* the potentials of ICTs to transform their educational landscape at tertiary, secondary and even primary school levels, particularly the instructional process (Ofoefune, 2005). World Bank (2002), cited by Ofoefuna(2005), also averred that ICT held out the opportunity to revolutionize pedagogical methods, expand access to quality education and improve the management of educational system. The revolution has changed where and how people learn in recent times, and it has also improved the quality and quantity of leaning delivery within the informal and formal school setting.

Drawing from the forestated acknowledgement of information and communication technology in various fields of human endeavor, including education globally, the concern of this paper therefore is to address the application of information and communication technology in the teaching and learning of Social Studies in schools to enhance effectiveness. This is done under the following subheadings:

- ❖ Definition of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and Social Studies.
- ❖ Objective of Social Studies
- ❖ History of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in Nigeria.
- ❖ Leading Information and Communication Technology Devices Useful for Teaching and Learning.
- ❖ Application of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in Social Studies Teaching and Learning.
- ❖ Recommendations
- ❖ Conclusion

Definition of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and Social Studies

Information is an assemblage of facts or ideas about something. Odogbor and Oyibo (2010) affirm that information is a body of knowledge, ideas or taught that is transferred or passed from one person or group of persons to a target audience.

Communication by way of definition is the sharing of information between two or more persons or group of persons to reach a common understanding. To Lewis (1975), communication means sharing messages, ideas or attitudes that produce understanding between a sender and a receiver, Oyeoma and Obiekezie (2000) opined

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that communication is the process of transferring ideas, skills or attitudes from one person to another accurately and satisfactorily.

Technology as a concept has legions of meaning. Toomolade (1998), technology is the application of scientific knowledge in solving the problems of man and environment. Ayelaage and Abidoeye (2005), preferred to define technology as the practical application of science or the art or science of applying scientific knowledge to practical problems. It is the utilization of scientific ideas and techniques in the performance of industrial tasks aimed at creation of goods and services to satisfy man's needs in the society.

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) therefore is a broad term that has to do with the harnessing process, the methods and the products of electronic and communication related technologies (and other related resources in today's knowledge driven society) for enhancing the productivity, the spread and efficiency of a set of programmed activities geared towards the achievement of clearly determined goals (Obanya, 2002). The World Bank (2002), posits that information and communication technology consist of hardware, software, network and media for collection, storage, processing, transmission and presentation of information (voice, data, text and images). Abdulahi (2006), opined that information and communication technology is the level of literacy required in the collection of data, processing and dissemination together with their related methods and management through the use of computer and telecommunication technology information and communication technology is the creation, collection, storage, processing, display and use of information by people and machines (open university, 2006) Odogbor and Oyibo (2010) viewed it as an assemblage of system, such as micro-electronics computer, hardware, software and telecommunication devices that enable the processing acquisition, storage and dissemination of pictorial, vocal, textual, numerical information/data etc. as quickly as possible through communication networks. In sum, information and communication technology is the system that processes, stores and or transfer (communicates) information.

Social Studies as a school discipline have been defined by litany of authorities based on their perception, beliefs or prism. Adarelegbe (1975) in his definition, stated that social studies is the study of how man influence and in turn influenced by his physical, social, political, religious, economic, psychological, cultural, scientific and technological environments. The Nigerian Education research Council in (1981) also supported the view of Adarelegbe by defining Social Studies as those common leanings of man's interaction with his social and physical environment – a way of life, of how man influences and is influenced by his physical, social, political, economic,, psychological and cultural environments. Okobiah (1984), Ogundare (1987) and Ogundele (1987) saw Social Studies as an interdisciplinary approach to the study of main in group interrelationship aimed at producing good citizens with the needed skills, competencies and values to contribute positively to our ever changing World Mezieobi (1992), sees it as a formalized correlated or integrated study of man and his environment

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which imbues the learner with the cognitive skills, values, attitudes and competencies that will enable him become an informed, rational, analytical, participative and functional citizen in his environments and beyond, Iyamu and Edozie (2001) emphasized that Social Studies is a dynamic systematic and integrated discipline for generating knowledge, attitude and skills necessary for dealing with contemporary issues. It is an integrated field of study that attempts to study man in-depth within the ramification of his dynamic environment, as well as equipping him with positive knowledge, attitudes, values and adaptive interactive skills for the purpose of producing a socio-civically competent, humane and effective citizenry who can contribute positively to the good of the society (Odogbor, 2010). Drawing from these definitions, Social Studies as a discipline explores how man interacts with his dynamic environments and the relationship between man and his fellow men.

Objective of Social Studies

Adaregbe (1981), Aina Adeyoyin, Obilo, and Ahmadu (1982), identified the following as the objectives of Social Studies:

- 1) Create an awareness and understanding of our evolving social and physical environment as a whole in its natural, man-made, cultural and spiritual resources together with the rational use and conservation of these resources for national development.
- 2) Develop a capacity to learn and to acquire certain basic skills including not only those of listening, speaking, reading and writing, and of calculation, but also those skills of hand and head, together with those of observation, analysis, and inferences which are essential to the forming of sound social economic and political judgment.
- 3) Ensure the acquisition of that relevant body of knowledge and information which is an essential prerequisite to personal development as well as to a positive personal contribution to the betterment of mankind.
- 4) Develop a sympathetic appreciation of the diversity and interdependence of all members of the local community and the wider national and international community.
- 5) Develop in young people positive attitude of togetherness, comradeship and cooperation towards a healthy nation; the inculcation of appropriate values of honesty, integrity, hardwork, fairness and justice at work and play as one's contribution to the development of the nation.
- 6) Promotion of an understanding of the social problems of their locality and finding possible solutions to them.
- 7) Development of the ability to think reflectively and come to independent conclusions.
- 8) Creation of awareness that discipline is essential for an orderly society and
- 9) Demonstration of flexibility and willingness to accept necessary changes within a system that is education, government, law, for the good of all.

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History of Information and Communication Technology in Nigeria

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) which is a revolution that involves the application of computer, internet and other telecommunication technology devices in every area of human endeavor started in the seventies when computers came to the shores of Nigeria. When computers were introduced into Nigeria, it was confined to certain big and industrial establishment (Salami and Ajibara, 2000). It started making impact in the field of manufacturing, health care, education, commerce, policing, banking, agriculture and other fields of human endeavor in the 1990s. Liverpool (2001) affirms that many institutions began to establish computer Centre and the Computer Centre of university of Jos was founded in 1991. Later, major landmarks in information and communication technology was recorded as a result of the astronomic growth of global network like broad band and internet, and this led to the transformation of business and trade within and outside Nigeria. They have also empowered individuals and communities with new ways of doing things, as well as transformed our ways of learning and sharing knowledge (Akor and Ekuje, 2006). This, thus prompted the federal Ministry of Education in Nigeria to make a pronouncement on the objectives of computer Education.

Later, the advancement in research and development in the computer-based networking system resulted in the creation of internet which is network of computers (Oyedekun, 2006). The internet is the global tangle of interconnected computer networks linked by standard telecommunication lines (Onyewuenyi, 2002). It is a worldwide system of computer network. It is made possible by an information-exchange protocol: transmission control protocol/internet protocol (TCP/IP) that lets all computers talk to one another regardless of individual operating systems or platforms (Onyewuenyi, 2002). Users can obtain information about any subject or topic by connecting to the internet. The internet was first known as ARPANET and was started by U.S. government in 1969 –Advance Research Projects Agency (ARPA) that would allow researchers working on computers at one University to connect to computers at other universities. (Digital Bridge institution), Afolabi (2001) affirms that the first Nigeria's Website, a company known as TRIDAS international was opened on November 10, 1995. It later started providing users information in Nigeria on the World Wide Web (WWW) (Onyedokun, 2006). This World Wide Web (WWW) also called the web is a subset of the internet. The Web is a series of interconnected servers that support special formatted documents. A server is a programme or a computer response to request from other programmes and delivers the requested documents as quickly as possible. Afolabi (2001), further posits that the communication technology in Nigeria is beginning to witness the phenomenon of cybercafés in major cities for access to the internet under the regulation of the Nigerian Communication Commission (NCC).

In 1979, the Nigerian University Commission (NUC) provided e-mail services to the universities through the Nigerian University network. The E-mail is a computer electronic way of sending letters which will be delivered to owners (through the computers) in a very short time (Akintoye, 2000). This led to the launching of the National Information Technology Policy in 2001. This development saw many

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organizations, government establishment, individuals, institutions of learning linking to the internet.

In Nigeria today, the use of information and communication technology has grown astronomically and it has given birth to new products and ideas, it has equally made quality a watchword in the educational sector.

Leading Information and Communication Technology Devices Useful for Teaching and Learning

Gillespie (1996), posits that there are many devices of ICT that are useful and vital to the teaching and learning process. Some of these devices includes television, radio, pager, computer, e-mail, e-learning, internet, fax, CD-Rom, Video Conferencing, Film Projectors among others.

- a) **Television** is a receiver provided to watch programmes in a media centre or a teacher lounge (Brown, Lewis and Harclerod, 1977). It is a material in the classroom and thus, it provides, enhances, stimulates and enriches learning.
- b) **Radio** is the most widely used means of communication. Information, news as well as teaching and learning can be carried out effectively through the use of radio. Educational programmes are being transmitted by the different radio stations in Nigeria for different levels of learners (Akinmoyewa, 1995).
- c) **A Pager** is a veritable ICT device operated via radio signal, and thus, can be used to receive messages and it can as well be used for teaching in the classroom.
- d) **A Computer** is an electronic-mechanical device that is capable of receiving, storing or processing data as an input, and process same in the processing unit called software in accordance to set of instructions. The computer is an essential tool in ICT that enable work to be done at greater efficiency and speed with less effort.
- e) **E-mail** is electronic method of sending mails or other forms of information or message to families, friends and colleagues around the world. It is faster and cheaper than any other conventional means of sending information/mails.
- f) **E-learning** is the use of internet and digital technology to create experiences that educate our fellow human being (Horton, 2005). It is all about learning that occurs at the computer which does not necessarily or always involve the physical face-to-face contact between the teacher and the students.
- g) **The Internet** is a worldwide system of computer network. It is a computer-assisted mechanism for assessing vital information, and it is also a very good source for receiving and sending messages.
- h) **Fax** is used for sending text in black and white via the telephone network.
- i) **CD-Rom** is a compact disc for storing data or information.
- j) **Video Conference** is a device for organizing conferences through the use of satellite or television network. It allows for exchange of voices, graphic and moving images, and individuals can hear each other very clearly, it is equally very useful for distance learning.
- k) **The Film Project** is used to compute images, objects, drawings, carving, pictures etc for teaching and learning.

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Application of Information and Communications Technology (ICT) in Social Studies Teaching and Learning

- ❖ Television can be used as a medium for teaching and learning Social Studies in Schools. Through the use of television, wide range of learners can be taught effectively at the same time at different locations. This can be achieved through the open broadcast, the open circuit and the closed circuit.
- ❖ Radio is also very useful in the teaching of Social Studies in schools both distant and remote places across the world. The lesson to be taught should contain the main points the learners intends to learn. Social Studies teachers and students can receive educational broadcast from federal radio stations in Nigeria or from state owned radio stations, and they can even record useful lessons from stations, if they so desire.
- ❖ Tape Recorder is one of the hardware materials found in the area of Social Studies teaching (Ukadile, 2001). Radio broadcast, telecast, oral lessons can be recorded on a tape through the help of tape recorder. The tape recorder is very useful in preserving and presenting Social Studies lessons and it can also help in communication skills among Social Studies students.
- ❖ Video Tape: video tape recorder and video cameras are all important instructional materials in Social Studies lessons (Ukadike, 2001). Social Studies teacher can record important scenes which cannot be carried into the class through the use of video cameras. The events, scenes or activities can later be played for the students.
- ❖ The overhead projector is an electronic device that is powered by electricity. It is a very useful device for the teaching of Social Studies in the schools. It projects images from a transparency onto the screen, and on the screen, students can see the projected images clearly.
- ❖ The use of computer in Social Studies Teaching cannot be over emphasized in today's ICT driven World. Problems solving and thinking skills that are usually emphasized in Social Studies teaching are practicalised through the use of computer. Computer is used for specialized instructions that entail stimulation and gaining data analysis, information interpretation for problem resolution in Social Studies (Okojie, 2009).
- ❖ Video Conferencing provides learners with ample opportunity in different locations to converge together to discuss topics of common interest to enhance their learning. It is similar to face to face situation involving a teacher and his students in the Social Studies classroom (Okojie, 2009).
- ❖ The electronic mail (E-mail) reduces to a large extent face to face contact between the teacher and learners. Materials to be taught in Social Studies can conveniently be sent through the use of e-mail to wide range of learners irrespective of locations.
- ❖ E-learning is a learning process facilitated via the use of ICT. It is learning activities based on electronic formats (Body's, 2005). It is education offered using electronic delivery methods such as CD-Roms, Video Conferencing, Website and E-mail (Okojie, 2009). E-learning gives Social Studies students the propensity to learn anytime in any location across the globe.

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- ❖ The Internet is an assemblage of computers and telecommunication devices with local, national and global connectivity and application. The use of internet enhances the effective teaching and learning of Social Studies in schools. It also makes teaching and learning in Social Studies to be interesting and rich as some of the information gathered from the internet are accompanied with good illustrations and pictures for better understanding.

Conclusion

Information and Communication Technology is the hub of present day education globally. In today's globalized World, information and communication technology is the needed resource to enhance the effective teaching and learning of Social Studies in schools. The application of ICT in teaching and learning of Social Studies is still very much at the infancy stage. The government therefore should as a matter of necessity adopt the recommendations of this paper, if Social Studies is to catch up with the globalized World.

Recommendations

To enhance the effective teaching and learning of Social Studies in school for qualitative and quantitative lesson delivery, the following recommendations should be adopted.

- (1) ICTs centers should be established in every primary and secondary school in Nigeria and in every Social Studies department in Colleges of Education and Universities in Nigeria. This can be achieved through the assistance of ETF, NGOs and the three tiers of government.
- (2) Government in conjunction with Education Trust Fund (ETF) should sponsor the training of Social Studies teachers at all levels of education in Nigeria on the use of ICT in instruction.
- (3) Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) should assist in the establishment of ICTs centers in all schools for easy accessibility.
- (4) Computer Literacy should serve as a requirement for promotion of teachers at all levels of education in Nigeria.
- (5) The prices of ICTs equipment and facilities should be subsidized or made duty free.
- (6) Workshops should be held regularly in order to fight against techno-phobia among Social Studies teachers.
- (7) Social Studies Association of Nigeria SOSAN should embark on training and retraining of Social Studies teachers at all level on the integration of ICT into Social Studies curriculum (Odogbor and Oyibo).

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