

INTEGRATING INSTRUCTIONAL TECHNOLOGY INTO THE TEACHING OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE

BY

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Abstract

This conceptual paper intends to point out the significance of technology in the teaching of English language in colleges, particularly in Kwara State. In as much as, most developing countries are advanced in the use of technology in the classroom, Nigeria in general and Kwara State in particular is lagging behind in the use of technology in the teaching/learning environment. The level of investigation of the use of technology is very low particularly for educational purposes. Therefore, this paper will identify the possibility of the use of educational technology in the classroom when teaching English language. However, the integration of technology can be considered major facility in improving teaching and learning approaches of the future teachers of language and as a learning tool for students. Therefore, integrating technology in the educational system at all levels of education will enhance the performance of students in English language and the entire learning subjects.

Keywords: Integration, innovative technology, English language, education, teaching and learning.

Introduction

Every nation attaches priority to the education of her citizens, which is a long term investment by State and federal government for a better life in the society. The Nigerian states have taken great steps in establishing and promoting the educational sector from the pre-colonial period to the present time by establishing primary schools, secondary schools, and tertiary institutions including universities, and the training of teachers. According to Okpaka (2011) in a paper, revealed that ‘the foundation for the development of education in Nigeria started after independence when the Nigerian states continued to make progressive efforts in stabilizing and promoting education to meet the challenges of manpower development necessary for human and material development’. The efforts led to the establishment of more primary and secondary schools that bring about the increasing literacy rate, training of more teachers, the production

of graduates with a technical discipline, providing a suitable environment for learning as well as encouraging research.

However, these achievements were not adequately sustained due to the inconsistency of educational development in line with world standard and Nigeria's national development objectives. This can be attested to by the collapse of teacher training colleges, destruction of technical education, poor implementation of educational process like Universal Primary Education, Universal Basic Education, 6-3-3-4 system, etc by not inculcating moral values and training right from primary to secondary schools and teachers are not well trained as it used to be before now to equip them with the knowledge of subject content and methodology. However, education should be disseminated by observation, inculcating moral values, experience, discovery, acquisition of skills, and information following the Nigerian national educational aims and objectives that state:

1. The inculcation of the right type of values and attitudes for the survival of the individual and Nigerian society.
2. The training of the mind in the understanding of the world.
3. The acquisition of appropriate skills and competencies both mental and physical as necessary for the individual to live in and contribute to the development of the society.

The National Policy on Education (1987)

Several educational policies and strategies have been put in place to address the implementation of these objectives in which the strategic aspect needs to be looked into by the government.

Recently, the integrated technology was introduced into the education system of the nation starting from elementary school to higher institutions. The primary school teachers still find it difficult to practice it due to lack of knowledge on how to use technology as there was no opportunity to receive training on how to use the modern infrastructure. Most teachers cannot afford to buy computer for their personal use and no regular access to internet. Teacher thereby, stick to the traditional approach to teaching that do not benefit the learners.

In the past two decades, the acceleration of change in technology spread globally and it has become the driving force behind the development of programming and economic growth (Tsai & Chai, 2012). The IT in the Nation's classrooms is a significant pattern in the recent system of education. The development in technology has greatly influenced the entire aspect of the life

of the people. There is no negative effect of technology on the recent development of the purpose of education in Kwara State. In the past few years, there have been changings in technology, the teaching strategies and the teaching materials (Heyberi, 2013). Vatanartiran and Karadeniz (2015) also researched the benefit of IT in teaching and learning to encourage teachers' use of the pedagogical technology in the classroom. Therefore, it is important to harmonize IT into the teaching of English Language to achieve the required goal for better approach to teaching.

The harmonization of IT into classroom teaching cannot be underestimated as it has become very important in preparing for the future generation. In studies by AL-mujaini (2006) and Abu-Rmaileh and Hamdan (2006), they discover that integrating technology into classroom teaching encourages learners to actively participate in the teaching and learning process for better performance. However, for future development introducing IT will be an influential factor in enhancing the process of learning in the colleges. However, most teachers are not well equipped to use IT in imparting knowledge in all the levels of education in Nigeria and Kwara State in particular. This has been a thing of concern to stake holders in the nation. In view of this, Al-Ghazo, (2008) also shows concern for the poor performance of teachers in using IT in secondary school classroom and suggested that implementing IT into the school curriculum will be a thing of great importance, and teachers should be well trained on how to apply technological tools in imparting knowledge. Roblyer et al (2012) also reveal in their study that the integration of technology in teaching and learning process begins by identifying problems faced by using technology and providing adequate solution for better implementation in the teaching and learning environment. In other words, the process requires that appropriate teaching electronics and computer should be provided before the implementation.

Furthermore, Cener, Acun, and Demirhan (2015) posit that integrating IT in teaching language has a significant impart in enhancing the subject. Its implementation can also improve students' ability to express, share information, and effectively interact among themselves. In other words, teachers are responsible to implement IT in the classroom activities as required by National Council of education (Kemp et al., 2014). In addition, Roblyer and Doering (2012) reveal that the integration of technological tools into teaching language helps to enhance the

experiences of teachers in teaching and it also facilitate learners' decision making, brainstorming, critical reasoning, and problem-solving skills.

It is highly impressive to see that there is rapid spread of the use of technology in education in Nigeria among the developing countries trying to integrate information technology into teaching in the classroom (Ahmed, 2016). In view of this, AlBataineh and Anderson (2015) present that teachers have been compared to acquire adequate knowledge in order to change their teaching approach by adopting the newly emerging technologies in educational system. Therefore, the development of integrated technology has placed a significant pressure on teachers at every level of education in the developing countries (Ageel, & Woollard, 2012; Eristi, Kurt, & Dindar, 2012). Contrarily, most teachers are facing some problems in implementing the integration of technology in their classroom teaching. Such problems according to Almekhlafi and Almeqdadi (2010), Alhashem and Al-jafar (2015), and Mohamadkhani, Farokhi, and Farokhi (2013) are lack of knowledge about how to use technology integration in lessons, lack of resources to take off, lack of enough time, lack of confidence among teachers to use integrated technology, and lack of training opportunities for teachers. The levels of education and experiences by teachers can as well affect the implementation of integrated technology into the various levels of education in Nigeria.

According to Al Bakri (2013), technology is commonly used in education and for training in advanced countries and in the third world. Currently, in Nigeria there is need for adequate training courses to develop teachers' knowledge of effective application of integrated technology. Therefore, forceful measures should be taken towards training teachers, providing the necessary tools, constant light and Internet to achieve better result. Computer literacy should start from elementary level of education. It is also pertinent that administrative workers are well equipped and encouraged to learn how to operate computer (Gasaymeh, Al-hasanat, Kraishan, and Abutayeh, (2017). The integration of IT into the curriculum can help instructors to overcome challenges facing their teaching in classrooms, particularly, the nation's cities and rural schools (Duran, Brunvand, Ellsworth, & Şendağ, 2012, Hur & Suh, 2012, Ciampa & Gallagher, 2013, Liu, Tsai, & Huang, 2015, Machado & Chung, 2015, & Al-Maagbeh, 2015).

INTEGRATION OF TECHNOLOGY TO TEACHING

The harmonizing technology into classroom activities is highly commendable in education due to its functions. According to Cauley, Al Bataineh, and Anderson (2015) integrating technology into classroom teaching is more than simply applying a device to perform some duties as a result of its complicated nature. The difficulty is derived from the fact that it is new and difficult to understand as it is meant for teaching, administrative purposes, and researching. According to Bandyopadhyay (2013), IT can be fully integrated when students can use it in learning as a core aspect of basic education. It is a valuable tool to enhance the quality of teaching and learning the school curriculum if well understood. The utilization of IT in classroom teaching is documented and supported by the International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE), National Educational Technology Standards (NETS), and National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE), promote the practices and implementation of IT in education. According to Albugami and Ahmed (2015) agree that the adoption of technology is a powerful way to contribute to changes in education. The advancement in information and communication technology encourages the teaching of IT in many countries around the world. Therefore, teachers are expected to be trained and apply the use of technology in their classrooms teaching as it provides assistance and guidance for teachers to follow and opportunity to use different methods to enhance teaching and learning (Ageel & Woollard, 2012 & Buabeng-Andoh, 2012). Al- Madani and Allaafiajji (2014) in their research posit that learners and teachers should use different communication devices in and outside school. According to Anderson, Groulx, and Maninger (2011) and Baytak, Tarman, and Ayas (2011), they find that the IT for self-efficacy is now an essential aspect of teaching/learning and their findings show improvement in students' performance and learning through the use of technology in teaching and learning process. Therefore, Technology can be said to improve learners' interest in learning through motivation, engagement, collaboration, and social interaction.

Furthermore, in the studies of Kemp et al. (2014), Mohamadkhani, Farokhi, and Farokhi (2013), AbuSeileek and Abu Sa'aleek (2012), and Riasati, Allahyar, and Tan (2012) revealed that teachers use IT most frequently for personal and administrative purposes and less for teaching purposes. They add that technology like the internet and computer can increase teachers and learner's experiences to make them effective in the classroom and managing the

skills online. In another study, Sahin and Uluyol (2016) revealed that teachers need support, encouragement, and privilege to improve the level and quality of the use of technology in their classrooms teaching. Abukhattala (2016) also investigates language teachers' willingness and readiness to integrate IT into teaching in higher institutions and the findings reveal three themes: the understanding of technology, the types, and method of teaching and learning through IT.

However, some teachers were investigated by Erişti, Kurt, and Dindar, (2012) to know their views on implementation of IT and the teachers reveal difficulties and problems experienced in the process with regard to the use of IT in teaching. Kimmons, Miller, Amador, Desjardins, and Hall (2015) also study the level of preparation of teachers to use technology in their teaching. The outcome shows that most teachers are not prepared to use IT in their teaching due to lack of knowledge about IT, lack of tools, and training.

Challenges of Implementing IT in Nigeria

Al Mulhim (2014) in his study, reveals some challenges that hindered teachers' use of IT in their classroom training as lack of enough access to technology equipment and shortage of time. However, some teachers according to Al-harbi (2014) avoid using audio-visual aids in classroom due to shortage of laptop computers, access to internet, and computer labs. Hakami, Che Hussin, and Dahlan (2013) also investigate the problem affecting students' success in IT. They find that the ratio of available computer in schools is 1 to 10 (i.e one computer serving 10 learners in every institution despite the fact that using computer assisted learning is very helpful and should be used for all the courses. Therefore, providing adequate and sufficient computer and supportive facilities for the teachers and learners enhance effective teaching and learning in all levels of education. This view is supported by Roblyer and Doering (2017) who emphasize that the implementation of technology can be successful when there are enough computer and teaching aids for supportive changes in students' performance. Tezci (2011) also finds that many teachers have no personal computer and have no access to internet which has been seen to have effects on the school IT implementation than those with computer and access to internet because of the limited number. The effect of Wiki technology in improving learners' essay writing was studied by numerous researchers. In that case, learners could join the Wiki page for read and write passages, and responding to the passages written by their fellow

classmate by giving feedback. This approach helps students to learn and master some vocabulary, spelling, and sentence structure by reading the work of their classmates. Therefore, there are numerous advantages and other benefits of using this technology by learners (Costley, 2014; Lin & Yang, 2011).

The deteriorating situation of education in Nigeria calls for urgent innovation to salvage the situation. Kwara state is among the least developed states in Nigeria in teams of education. In view of this, the state government in collaboration with the federal government should as a matter of urgency look into transforming all education sectors in the State and the nation generally.

Rapid digital innovation is the trend in all aspects of education across the globe, which is fundamental and significant in the present day development in education. This is what is attracting most Nigerians to go and study in abroad. Digital is number one indication in operating education in the developed nations. It is necessary to transform and develop digital capability throughout all the levels of education in Nigeria generally and Kwara State in particular. We are capable of doing it as the Giant of Africa. Extending digital experiences into teaching, learning, administrative duties, research by staff and students ought to be a welcome idea that will go in line with the day-to-day social life and work that we are experiencing. The knowledge of computer science has become a necessary tool in the development of education all over the world, which should be considered in Nigeria as a way of enhancing teaching and learning experiences and to transform research. This will help to reform and change our current education to a modernized scientific and digital environment.

Although, many universities in Nigeria have adopted specific digital strategies in teaching and learning, and research as a way of moving towards using technology, despite the fact that they lacked vision and commitment to facilitate and implement it effectively as its being used in advanced countries. In view of this, many universities invested heavily in IT systems, which did not actually achieve the anticipated outcomes and benefits. Some institutions failed to realize that they needed a digital and business strategy that fit for the digital age to meet with the era of digital education. Building a strong internet network that can help to boost digital literacy amongst students, teachers, academics, admin, and non-academic staff, is essential to achieving sustainable change across the nation to meet the global practices. This is the time for

all levels of education right from elementary school to the university level to become digitized because digital has come to stay across the world. This is an era where computers rule the world and play an important role in education while technology plays a vital role in entertainment, business relations, movies, music, and in all aspect of our everyday lives. Research has shown that 90% of students have access to the mobile device at their daily life, so, it's not a surprising thing to have the evolution of teaching methods and classrooms innovation in the direction of technology.

Therefore, integrating technology into classroom activities is the trend all over the world. The following are also vital areas of innovation in our educational system that will be of benefit to all institutions and the Ministry of education:

Blended Learning

Technology-integrated classroom systems are the latest and most popular trend around the world in recent time. It comprises blended learning, virtual classroom, and learning management systems are examples of technology-integrated classroom system that are innovation in teaching methodology promoted by pedagogical experts while the methods involve the use of facilities, the role of the teachers, provide a structured teaching and learning activities, comprehensive learning experience among students, and the users of technology in language teaching and learning.

Technology is here in Nigeria and it has come to stay. For instance, social media has become the primary communication channel across the nation; everyone is always connected to mobile devices giving room to computing capabilities that gives room to the creation of new tools for teaching and learning to achieve the targeted opportunities. Digital communication is now the first choice for media consumption and learning. This, if implemented into the schools, will change the position of teaching/learning at all levels of education and the pupils/students at all levels will acquire the expected knowledge. If introduced right from primary school to higher schools will equip students with its knowledge enough to help them through the university, therefore, seating for IJMB and the like examinations will not be a thing to be panic about by candidates. So, the students will be more confident, better connected and more vocal than ever.

As this new era is more digitized than ever, if implemented into the Nigerian schools, students will be taught and learn through recent methods that suit their levels and at their pace. Since, students are expected to be taught and learn using strategies that are suitable for their personal preferences and at their pace. These will also make a university the rightful place for securing future employment rather than simply learning and self-development. Their experiences will be more critical than it has ever been as they will be engaged directly at school.

Online Courses

As a new innovative method of teaching, it is yet to be carried out in Nigeria due to care free attitudes of governance towards education, if the Massive Open Online Courses (MOOC) which has been established and explored as a new pedagogical approach all over the globe is yet to be known in Nigeria, there is problem. MOOC is a new wave of innovative teaching techniques and academics are exploring the new methods of teaching which are underpinned by digital technologies in only a few universities. If every levels of our education system are able to implement and make it compulsory, there will be no need for parents to send their children to foreign countries for studies. The knowledge of technologies in teaching and learning will rapidly help young learners to acquire new skills at a pace that most abled universities struggle to keep up with. Schools and universities need to demonstrate that they are able to provide the digital experience that young ones take for granted and instead of using it for stealing and fraudulent activities they will divert the knowledge to learning. Online teaching and learning became inevitable during the lockdown of states in the country as a result of the Covid 19 pandemic.

New and emerging technologies such as smart mobile, wearable devices and sensors, cloud-based IT, and advanced analytics are changing schooling and learning across all sectors of education into global awareness. These technologies if implemented in Nigeria generally and Kwara state particularly will present new opportunities to improve and redefine the colleges and university experiences. The campus activities including teaching and learning, research and working on complex projects with other universities around the world or partner with organizations will be a worthwhile experience. For example, when the pupils, students, teachers, professors and the administrative staff of every school either public or private are provided with information online through the school digital technologies, they will easily access the information and act on it at the right time and help them do their jobs better. Also,

the data information of every institution can be easily accessed and it gives the accurate numbers of students, teachers and non-teaching staff in every school at a glance to enable the authority provide adequate facilities and funding for running education at the State and Federal levels.

Imagine how excellent the education system will be when virtual and augmented reality is used to give prospective students a richer digital experience before and during university education in their daily activities and making different schools environments digitally exposible to students. For instance, considering a school that presents routinely tele-presence solutions that are used to support better teaching/learning and working whereby artificial intelligence is used to rapidly, accurately, presenting information of schools, and intelligently respond to queries coming via the school web.

It is expected that over time, most students from other countries will be attracted to Nigeria colleges and universities that embraced digital age rather than our children going to overseas for education spending billions of Naira annually for Foreign Education.

Recommendations

This paper, therefore, recommends that more equipment for literacy and technological instructions be provided by the Government at federal and states to facilitate teaching and learning at all levels of education. Teachers should be given the opportunities to attend workshops and conferences to acquire the needed skills for IT implementation. In-service training should be available for teachers to improve the skills and knowledge needed in their areas of specialization. Also, students should be trained on how to apply IT in their learning activities and daily life.

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