**INNOVATIONS IN TECHNOLOGY FOR TEACHING AND LEARNING OF SOCIAL STUDIES**

**BY**

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**Abstract**

*Information communication technology (ICT) is one of those automation induced revolutionary changes in education that reached the schools in the advanced world in the sixties. Irrespective of the fact that information communication technology (ICT) has aroused controversies from its adherents and opponents, it has continued to be looked at, from the perspective of Social Studies classroom teaching-learning process, as an effective innovation. Our society today is reliant on technology for so many things; paying bills, staying in touch with family, researching simple questions and even checking out at the grocery store couldn’t be done today without our technological resources. It stands to reason that as Social Studies instruction prepares students to be productive members of society, educational institutions must pay more attention than ever before to information communication technology. This paper focuses on the essence of ICT in teaching Social Studies instruction, instructional improvements related to the use of ICT in Social Studies, the objectives of ICT implementations in our educational system, the causes of low ICT application in teaching Social Studies instruction and finally the place of Social Studies in solving the problems of ICT in the teaching and learning of Social Studies.*

**Introduction**

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is electronic technologies used for information storage and retrieval. Development is partly determined by the ability to establish a synergistic interaction between technological innovation and human values. The rapid rate at which ICTs have evolved since the mid 20th century, the convergence and pervasiveness of ICTs, give them a strong role in development and globalization (Nwagwu, 2006). ICTs have a significant impact on all areas of human activity (Brakel and Chisenga, 2003).

The field of education has been affected by ICTs, which have undoubtedly influenced teaching, learning, and research (Yusuf, 2005). A great deal of research has proven the benefits to the quality of education (Al-Ansani, 2006). ICTs have the potential to accelerate, enrich, and deepen skills, to motivate and engage students, to help relate school experience to work practices, create economic viability for tomorrow's workers, as well as strengthening teaching and helping schools change (Yusuf, 2005).

The followings are the aim and objectives of ICT implementation in education according to Aduwa-Ogiegbean and Iyamu, (2005); to implement the principle of life-long learning / education; To increase a variety of educational services and medium / method; To promote equal opportunities to obtain education and information; To develop a system of collecting and disseminating educational information; To promote technology literacy of all citizens especially for students ; To develop distance education with national contents; To promote the culture of learning at school (development of learning skills, expansion of optional education, open source of education etc.) and lastly; To support schools in sharing experience and information with others.

Social Studies Educationteachers could use ICT in lesson delivery and facilitate the process of learning for the learners. ICT could also be utilized to stimulate economic, social, political and scientific issues or problems of interest to Social Studies Education class. This innovation or technological development is varied and has had a spillover effect on the schools with special emphasis on the teaching-learning process that is continuously yawning for improved performance. Hence concerted effort must be made to prepare teachers of the next millennium to be capable of managing ICT in their teaching-learning processes.

**Information Communication Technology and Social Studies**

Information communication technology can be defined as the study and the use of computers, microelectronic etc for storing and transferring of information. It can also mean the development, design, study, implementation and management of computer related information. (Nwanyanwu, 1999).

Across the disciplines, technology offers unique opportunities to teachers. Examples of these opportunities include the ability to research, create, presentations and communicate on discussion boards. For Social studies, technology offers a new way to reach out for the world. Much of the Social Studies curriculum is based around the ideas of learning about the world around us and the myriad ways that people across the globe function and love differently but effectively. With ICT, Social Studies teachers have a chance to allow the learners to explore and experience the world in a new virtual way. Through ICT, the learners can now see satellite or regular pictures of geographic locations of their choice. Communicate instantly with international children through email, instant massager or skype, explore a historic tomb through the virtual world of the computer, listens to cultural music through hi-tunes and CD players among other opportunities.

**Essence of Information Communication Technology in Teaching Social Studies**

ICT is helping in many ways in the teaching and learning of Social Studies. Some of the importance are explained below;

1. **Access to Variety of Learning Resources:** In the area of technology, ICT aids plenty of resources to enhance the teaching skills and learning ability. With the help of ICT in Social Studies, it will be easy to provide audio visual education. The learning resources are being widens and widen. Now with this vivid and vast technique as part of the ICT curriculum, Social Studies learners are encourage to regard computers as tools to be used in all aspects of their studies. In particular, Social Studies learners need to make use of the new multimedia technologies to communicate ideas, describe projects and other information in their work.
2. **Immediacy to Information:** ICT enables immediacy to information in teaching Social Studies. Now in the year of computers and web networks the pace of imparting knowledge is very fast and one can be educated anywhere at any time.
3. **Collaborative Learning:** ICT encourages easy study as well as teaching in groups or in clusters in Social Studies classroom. With the use of online people can unite together to do the desired task. The internet and its web sites are now familiar to many children in developed and developing countries such as Nigeria, with this, the teachers and learners of Social Studies find it very easy to seek information.
4. **Authentic and Up to Date Information:** The information and data which are available on the net is purely correct and up to date. Using ICT in teaching Social Studies will enable the students to have purely authentic information about what is happening around them and also helps in updating the Social Studies learners on the current information.
5. **Participation of Learners:** ICT encourages active participation of the Social Studies learners and their thinking in classroom. ICT enables Social Studies Learners to respond to the interaction going on in the classroom therefore making the classroom an active class.
6. **Information Recall:** Information presented to Social Studies learners visually is very difficult to forget it. Therefore with the use of ICT in Social Studies makes learning more easier and also enables the learners to remember what they have learnt.
7. **Stores Records of Learners:** Applying ICT in Social Studies instruction enables the teachers to store the performance of the learners and can be retrieved at will for assessment and evaluative purposes.
8. **Feedback Purposes:** The use of ICT in Social Studies makes learners to lookout for performance remedy.

**Instructional Improvements Related to the Use of ICT in Social Studies**

 According to Mezieobi, Fubara and Mezieobi (2008) highlighted some of these ICT instructional improvements in Social Studies;

1. **Computer Assisted Instruction in Social Studies (CAI):** CAI can be defined as an instructional design whereby computer systems deliver instruction directly to learners by allowing them to interact /relate with designed lessons that have been programmed into the system (Ughamadu, 1998).

According to Mezieobi, Fubara and Mezieobi (2008) Patrick Suppes who coined the term CAI classified it into three levels, namely;

1. Practice and drill level: This level exposes learner to the knowledge, concept and skills of computer which he had hitherto learned in order for him to pass through a series of computer and drill programmes for purposes of the learner becoming more proficient.
2. Tutorial level: The teacher here is the computer. The computer plays the instructional role of the teacher and at the same time interacting with the learner.
3. Dialogue level: Here, the learner’s level of interaction with the computer is high which enable the computer to give appropriate feedback in response.
4. **Computer Assisted Testing in Social Studies (CAT):** This is computer device that focuses mainly at the student achievements or performance and for finding solutions to the student errors for advanced instructional improvement.
5. **Computer Managed Instruction in Social Studies (CMI):** This can be defined as the use of the computer to organize and manage instructional and classroom activities. These activities includes; lesson plans, teaching time-table, construction-administration-evaluating-and scoring of tests and finally storing test and teaching practice results and retrieving them if need be.

 **Challenges of Low ICT Application in Teaching Social Studies**

1. **Lack of/poor perception of ICTs among teachers and administrators.** There is widespread ignorance and misconception about ICTs amongst teachers of Social Studies in Nigeria (Ighoroje and Ajayi, n.d). One of the major inhibitors to teachers of Social Studies fully embracing ICTs is the average teacher’s general lack of exposure to them. For most teachers of Social Studies, information technology is still something unfamiliar, distant, and mysterious. Rather than being seen as a tool for personal and national development, information technology is seen as a hurdle. Some teachers are not aware of the existence and importance of the Internet (Adomi, Okiy, and Ruteyan, 2003).
2. **Lack of/inadequate ICT facilities in schools:** According to Enakrire and Onyenenia, (2007) discovered that insufficient numbers of computers and peripheral devices inhibit deployment of ICT by (Social Studies) teachers. Similarly, Adomi (2005) discovered that unavailability of some ICT components in the schools hampered (Social Studies) teachers' use of ICTs. This problem may be due to underfunding (Enakrire and Onyenenia, 2007).
3. **Frequent electricity interruption.** Electricity failure has been a persistent problem militating against ICT application and use in Nigeria schools particularly in Social Studies classroom (Adomi, 2005; Adomi, Okiy, and Ruteyan, 2003). This makes the few schools with ICT facilities unable to use them regularly.
4. **Inadequate ICT manpower in the schools.** The main problem facing ICT programme is workforce training (Yusuf, 2005). Teaching as a profession in Nigeria is considered to be for poor people, therefore the few professional that are available prefer to work in companies and industries where they can earn better salaries. With this deplorable condition, teachers of Social Studies are not motivated to go the extra mile in assisting the students to acquire more knowledge in Social Studies through the use of ICT in teaching and learning (Oduroye,n.d).
5. **High Cost of ICT Facilities.** Cost has been reported as one of the factors which influence provision and use of ICT in Social Studies classroom (Adomi, 2006). The cost of computers is too high for many to afford. Monthly Internet rates are exorbitant and the charges for satellite television are unaffordable for most schools (Adomi, 2005). This has made it difficult for Nigerian schools to acquire and install ICT facilities for the use of teachers and students of Social Studies.

**Place of Social Studies in Solving the Problems of ICT in the Teaching and Learning Processes**

ICT usage for now in Social Studies classrooms recently is farfetched. But for us to commence our ICT induced classroom revolution in Social Studies, the following are to be done;

1. The federal government must through legislation make regular power supply an important part of our environment and life style including our educational environment.
2. An educational policy should be put in place making the use of ICT an integral part of the instructional media of all schools especially in the teaching of Social Studies.
3. The implementation take off year of the foregoing ICT related policy will be put at year 2018 (Yusuf, 2005). Prior to this period, universities faculties of education, department of Social Studies in colleges of education and some of the secondary schools of learning should include ICT such as computer assisted instruction in the classroom for proper delivering of Social Studies instruction.
4. ICT illiterate serving teachers in their large numbers should within a stipulated time frame show transparent evidence of learning how to use ICT or having mastered the ICT related in service training. This in turn be made a promotional criterion for Social Studies teachers.

**Recommendations**

Information Communication Technology into the Social Studies classroom is a great way to bring learners the interaction, pacing and sources they need to successfully master material. It allows Social Studies educators to greatly diversify instruction and provide powerful, authentic activities that will engage learners in the learning process. Effective use of ICT in Social Studies classroom can allow learners greater flexibility to assume a sense of ownership over their learning. In addition it can greatly increase the ability to scaffold instruction to meet the needs of all learners. Learners of Social Studies instruction are encouraged to regard ICT as tools to be used in all aspects of their studies. In particular, they need to make use of the new multimedia technologies to communicate ideas, describe projects and other information in their work. This requires them to select the medium best suited to conveying their message, to structure information in a hierarchical manner and to link together information to produce a multi dimensional document in Social Studies.

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