

**THE ROLE OF INFORMATION COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)
IN THE REALIZATION OF UNIVERSAL BASIC EDUCATION (UBE)
OBJECTIVES IN NIGERIA**

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ABSTRACT

Attention is currently being paid to the UBE programme by the Federal and state ministries of education. The reason is because the programme is seen as an avenue towards the eradication of illiteracy and a means for laying the foundation and promotion of individual as well as national self-reliance. Conventionally, education regardless of the level involves passing across information which must be appropriately communicated or disseminated for a bumper result to be realized. Since ICT which includes computers' applications, internet services, telecommunication etc helps in obtaining effective and purposeful management of information system thereby allowing for quick dissemination of information and management decision making towards the attainment of set goals; the application of ICT with the UBE programme will definitely help towards the realization of the objectives of UBE programme . hence , the paper examined the role's of ICT in the realization of UBE programme and stressed the need for Nigeria government to be more realistic and pragmatic in their approach to the programme especially in supplying all necessary instructional materials most especially computer sets to schools and also ensure that teachers who are the disseminators of education are computer literate.

Introduction

Education is the process through which the potentials of individuals are developed through exposure to the acquisition of experiences in form of skills, knowledge and values needed for the transformation of behaviors thereby making the individual acceptable, relevant and a contributor to the progress of his society. From this definition, education can be seen as an industry where all that are needed by the recipients and the society at large are acquired in an organized, equipped and coordinated environment. The sole aim of which is turning out good products for the labour market and the entire society.

Education is an important tool in the hand of any society to fashion out all that will usher in comfort and progress. That is why qualitative education should be pursued for the realization of educational goals. Nigerians had and are yet clamouring for qualitative education such that will catapult for the entire nation from the status of developing to a developed nation. This is the major reason why the UBE programme currently adopted should be given the necessary support by all and sundry and qualitatively pursued in Nigerian schools. This is bearing in mind the fact that the UBE programme constitutes the foundational segment of Nigerian educational system. It should be noted that any foundation that is not solidly laid, whatever is eventually built on it will likely collapse.

For quality to be obtained and for the set objectives of the UBE to be realized, several factors will have to be taken into consideration and some of these factors include:

Supply of qualified teachers; conducive environment; supply of texts; availability of instructional material including ICT gadgets for meaningful teaching and learning to take place.

Teaching is not supposed to be done in abstraction if retention and recalling are to be encouraged. That is why ICT, which are modern educative avenues, should be incorporated into the teaching devices to ensure good output. These new trends and innovation have become part and parcel of the educational system of the developed nations. Nigeria a developing nation should seek for ways of getting developed following the pace already set by the developed countries.

Since teaching involves communication of facts, truth, messages, skills etc. there is the need to examine the role that ICT can play in the effective dissemination of educational contents and the promotion of education in Nigeria. For the UBE programme to be given the desired boost, ICT seems to be a sure avenue to be explored. This is the focus of this paper.

Brief examination of the UBE programme

The Universal Basic Education according to the Federal Ministry of Education (1999) refers to nine (9) years programme meant for early childhood, pre-primary, primary education, first three years of secondary education (Junior Secondary School) and basic and functional literacy for all school children, youths and adults.

Basic Education according to Yoloje et. al (1993) means the type of education in quality and content that is given in the first level of education. In Nigeria, the programme covers nine years, as indicated above. As stated in the Federal government Blue Print (1999), Basic Education is the foundation for sustainable life-long learning, it is designed to allow for functionality, eradication of illiteracy, ignorance, poverty and the stimulation of the much needed personal as well as national development.

The UBE programme according to Bagudo (2001) was formally launched by President Olusegun Obasanjo on 30th September, 1999. The programme aims at achieving the following specific objectives:

- Developing in the entire citizenry a strong commitment for education and a strong commitment to its vigorous promotion;
- The provision of free, universal basin education for every Nigerian child of school going age;
- Reducing dramatically the incidence of drop-out from the formal school system, through improved relevance, quality and efficiency;
- Catering for the learning needs of young persons who for one reason or another have had to interrupt their schooling through appropriate forms of complimentary approaches to the provision and promotion of basic education and.

- Ensuring the acquisition of appropriate levels of literacy, numeracy, manipulative communicative and the skills, as well as the ethical moral and civic values needed for laying a solid foundation for life-long learning.

Since the Universal Basic Education among other things as indicated above is to ensure the acquisition of manipulative, communicative and life skills, ICT if brought in and fully encouraged will help in accelerating the realization of this aspect of the UBE objectives.

Information Communication Technology

Information Communication Technology (ICT) according to Ntukidem (2005) refers to the host of systematic equipment and materials essentially computer based which are used to achieve the set goals of an organization in relation to the functions of an office. He further stressed that it is concerned/dealt with the study or the use of computers, telecommunication for storing retrieving and sending information of all kinds in form of numbers, words pictures by secretaries for both internal and external use for effective achievement of organizational objective.

In the same vein. Taiye (2006) states that ICT involves the use of micro-electronic computing telecommunication for acquisition, processing, storage and dissemination of words, pictures, text and numerals, it involves all issues relating to computers the software, the computer language, the telecommunication, communication protocols, and its application in performance of office, school and all organization's duties and routines. ICT as stated by Taiye (2006) helps in obtaining effective and purposeful management information system which could assist quick dissemination of information and management decision making towards the achievement of organization's objectives.

ICT therefore includes duties performed, procedures followed and device employed in collecting and the manipulation, transformation, storage, retrieval and dissemination of data and information.

Emmanuel 2005) added that ICT is not limited to computer applications but also includes internet services, new print, and all the compositions that make up of internet. He therefore classified the ICTs into three, namely:

1. Information technology which has become synonymous with the use of computers.
2. Telecommunication technologies comprising telephone (with fax) and the broad casting media such as radio and television which has been extended through satellites installations
3. Net working technologies of which the boss known is the internet, but which has extended to mobile phone technology, electronic mail (E -mail) and electronic data interchange as principles of data communication.

The advantages and relevance of ICT to education cannot be underrated. They are indeed numerous based on the various definitions of ICT given above. That is why accessibility to ICT should be very easy for all Nigerian youths through the school. While accessibility to the use of internet may not be too easy especially at the

Universal Basic Education level, accessibility to the use of computers should not pose any problem at all.

Undoubtedly, small kids with computer sets in their homes are better equipped for educational achievement. It will not be out of place to have Nigerian primary schools where the foundation of education is to be laid to be fully equipped with computer sets in other to buttress success in Nigeria education

At this period, when Nigeria is advancing in the way of technology and clamours, for the adoption of ICT in education, how well equipped are Nigerian schools in terms of the provision of computer sets which many believe to be the most common segment of ICT.

Studies carried out recently to find out the availability of computer sets in primary schools in Ilorin metropolis revealed a shocking situation. Out of the sixty public schools randomly selected for the study, none of the schools has computer set.

The above finding shows that not much has been done in the employment and exposure of the UBE pupils and students to the world of the ICT. Exposing them to computer education and usage will help in the advancement of education and general development in Nigeria. The role that ICT can play in propelling Nigerian education system to greater height cannot be over emphasized. Some of these roles are discuss-, a below

The role of ICT in the realization of USE objectives in Nigeria

According to Ajayi Y. A. and Salami A (2001)) ICT can help to facilitate learning and classroom effectiveness. For instance, educational contents and information stored or recorded in computer software such as diskettes can be displayed through the hardware for all the pupils or students to see and grasp as learning progresses. Thus helping to facilitate the achievement of the intended learning outcome.

Undoubtedly, computer a unit of ICT when employed in education can deliver instruction directly to students by allowing them to interact and communicate directly with lessons programmed in the system. Hence while it may not be too easy for the classroom teachers to pay particular attention to each student, the use of computer will help i n catering for this loophole.

Through the use of computers in schools, learning materials can easily be produces. Sometimes to source for relevant materials needed for teaching can be cumbersome but with the aid of ICT especially computer set, relevant materials can be produced with ease for the enhancement of classroom effectiveness.

Education is expected to forestall parochialism; that is, ignorance and narrow mindedness. One of the ways to attain this is through exposure to computer world since it can help in widening the scope of learners' horizon. Learners will be exposed to what operates outside their immediate environment i.e. International issues through the internet

ICT if fully employed in Nigerian schools especially for the UBE programme, will help in changing our conventional out dated practices such as chalk and talk

methods which amount to theoretical presentation of knowledge. ICT will allow for pragmatic approach to teaching and make learning more permanent.

Spoken and written English of the majority of Nigerian pupils/students is nothing to write home about. That is why we have many students having below pass mark in English at WAEC level. Exposure to ICT especially computer manipulation and interaction will help in reducing failure in English language. With computers, large processing power and comprehensive language system, and the recalls through language system which have always allowed users to request for the use of conversational English like command and the building of vocabularies, learners will be better equipped to speak and write in English very fluently.

Moreover, the multi-sensor, objects like television and computer programmed instruction will definitely appeal to the sensory organs of the individual learner. With the use of computers, more than one sensory organ are involved in decoding information. The involvement of the hand in manipulating computer will surely help the decoder (learner) to understand, remember and recall easily what has been learnt through either of the senses used. As multi-sensory image stimuli, it will be appropriate to supply enough computers to Nigerian schools.

Progress comes in through creativity. Since ICT brings creativity as learners learn and discover new things, whatever will enhance this should be made available to learners in large quantity.

In the area of educational administration, ICT especially computer is a management aid. It can be adopted to alleviate stress on the part of the school management. Instead of having to use human energy to record pupils' or students' examination scores and other records computer can be used to carry out this assignment. That is, in scoring tests, keeping records, checking of students' needs, computation of grades, preparation of class items or enrolment, recording attendance, preparation of honours list, making mark adjustment and other special reports.

ICT can also be used by teachers for tutorial purpose. The information presented in smaller units on the computer can be followed by questions, students' responses can equally be analyzed by computer i.e by comparing such responses with the responses plugged by the author while appropriate feedback follows suit.

Stressing the role of computer as means of instructional material, Ajayi and Salami (2006) identified the following:

1. **A development system:** Materials developed at one local area stored centrally can be made available at another location for use to make teaching easy.
2. **An assessment tool:** Computer is so programmed to provide standardized testing situation, storage of scores and immediate feedback can be received by examiners.
3. **A delivery system:** Computer stores information as an aid to problem solving procedure thereby extending the capacity of teaching machines including the teachers who are sometime weighed down by fatigue.
4. **As a tool for research:** Facts and figures, statistical theories and modern research methods with various data analysis strategies are

available on the internet and the computer can be used to process data to answer various research questions.

5. As a study aid, computer can be used by teachers and students to calculate, solve mathematical problems, and retrieve needed information and for programmed instruction.

Computer can be used for word processing games, stimulation, the teaching of writing grammatical, lexical and stylistic analyses, creation of graphic arts, music composition, guidance and counseling. It instantaneously responds to students 'input; it serves many students, it aids instruction . it also has the ability to control. It helps to supply a solid basis for rational and conceptual thinking and makes learning meaningful and permanent and more functional. Learning is facilitated and enhanced with the aid of ICT

In conclusion. ICT in education will aid the achievement of anyone of the following in the teaching and learning process:

1. Attention and motivation;
2. Orderliness in the classroom;
3. Lesson presentation;
4. Remembering and recalling;
5. Guidance;
6. Active participation and response;
7. Feedback;
8. Assessment of performance aid;
9. Evaluation

The above roles of ICT in educational success are enough to convince Nigerian Ministries of Education to get the schools well connected and equipped with all information, communication technology gadgets. What are the things that our government should do specifically:

1. Nigerian government should enhance the possibility of realizing the UBE objectives by supplying the appropriate ICT equipment to the school e.g computer, internet etc
2. Government should also train the personnel that will operate the machines and should distribute the personnel to all the schools.
3. Government should enforce it on the school authority to allow all the pupils/students have equal access to the machine

Conclusion

Education is a necessity for all that is why Universal Basic Education is adopted in Nigeria. However, no meaningful education will take place outside the provision of relevant instructional materials ICT is one of the viable instructional materials that will enhance educational development. That is why this paper has examined the roles that ICT can play in the realization of the objective of UBE

programme. ICT if employed it will effectively allow for the acquisition of communicative and manipulative skills and other aspects of knowledge that will ensure self reliance. Hence, the need for our government to supply ICT equipment to schools.

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