
Information And Communication Technologies (ICT) In The Teaching Of Political Science

By

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Abstract

The importance of ICT in the World can not be over emphasized. Information systems are used in almost every business sector, government agencies, manufacturing, accounting, marketing etc. To benefit from the uses of ICT, teachers need to make good use of them. They need to be used as instructional material since they make learning more meaningful and concrete. They can be applied in various ways during teaching. However, there are some challenges such as security, electricity, personnel etc. It is the view of this paper that these challenges can be reduced if governments at all levels increase funding of ICT, adopt positive attitude towards implementation of ICT policies, internet centres should be cited in all schools at subsidized rate in order to promote computer literacy of all citizens and easy access to information and computer literacy awareness campaign should be carried out in the country just as it is done for HIV.

Introduction

Teachers are often accused of over-verbalization. This means excessive use of words to convey meanings, unfortunately some of us do love to hear the sound of our voices, so much so that we forget to consider whether or not students are really understanding and enjoying whatever we are saying. The problem is that we tend to talk too much without really saying anything. We also tend to "talk at" our students instead of tending to "talk with" them. Thus we keep on talking regardless of students' non-verbal signals that they are bored or even completely lost.

Methods of teaching are planned activities involved in the presentation of curriculum, like the lecture, project, discussion, tutorial or discovery methods are example of bringing the learner into contact with the subject matter. The effectiveness of this contact demands activities and materials. These may be in the form of games; role-playing, demonstration and experiments visit to real life situation, real objects and specimen, symbolical and pictorial representation.

Teachers should continually bear in mind that man learns through his senses. Some learn better by one or the other of the senses. To some seeing is to believe. To

others, the senses of hearing, touch, smell and taste dominate in acquiring knowledge. For the intended learning to take place, the teacher must communicate effectively with the learner. In order to achieve this, the teacher must understand something of the communication process to the extent that it will enhance a wide choice of his channel of transmitting his message to his students.

The best way of helping students to learn is to bring them face to face with the world which education intends to introduce to them. This is done by using real things in real life situation. Where real life situations are not possible, the alternative is for the teacher to use representation of real life situations. Whether real or substitutes, they have a common goal. They help the teacher to vary the intended message effectively and meaningfully to the learners so that the learners receive, understand, retain and apply the experiences gained to reach overall educational goal. Instructional materials therefore constitute those things the teacher uses to teach and the learners learn. They are the variety of materials which can be used to make our lesson more vivid, interesting and more understandable to our students. They result in more effective learning of factual information, and skills in less time than mere verbalization (Eregha, 2008). The paper thus highlights the need and applications of ICT as veritable teaching tools in the teaching of Political Science. The problem here is that the globalised World, ICT tend to play major role in teaching – learning process. This we lack in Nigeria and the inability of governments at all levels to adopt policies aimed at the application of ICT in teaching and learning, the falling standard of education may not improved.

Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) equipment are the most appropriate instructional material in the global world and Nigeria will benefit so much from the application of ICT in the teaching of Political Science. The question to ask here is, what is ICT?

Information and Communication Technologies (ICT)

Information and Communication Technologies has plethora of definitions because it is used differently by various academics in the field of science and technology. Emadu and Asan (2004) define ICT as the technology of gathering, storing, processing, sharing, distributing and communicating vocal, pictorial, numerical and textual information through computer networks to various audiences. Emadoye (2002) defines ICT as computing and telecommunication technologies that provide automatic means of handling information. While Ugah (2005) defines ICT as electronic-based technology generally used to collect, store, process and package information as well as provide access to knowledge.

All the definitions, point to the fact that ICT is the application of computers and other technologies to the acquisition, organization, storage, retrieval and dissemination of information.

ICT is made up of various components, some of the ICT tools include:

- i. Print Media (Newspaper, books, Journals, Magazines etc);

- ii. Electronic Media (radio, television, videos etc);
- iii. Computers;
- iv. Telephone; and
- v. Communication Networks.

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These are very vital to all the elements of teaching and learning Political Science.

ICT is so important to sustainable development in Nigeria hence the Federal Government of Nigeria in May 24, 2001; launched the National Policy for Information Technology (IT). Later, the National Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Strategic Action Plan Committee was inaugurated and mandated to draw up an e-strategy action plan and programmes that compliment national development objectives and priorities, to recommend potentially successful projects and programmes on a sector-by-sector basis whose implementation would drive ICT growth in Nigeria, and to develop bench marks, deliverables and timelines for the Strategic Action Plan and Programmes (FGN, 2001). The overall goal of the policy was to make Nigeria an IT capable country in Africa and a key player in the Information Society, using IT as the engine for sustainable development and global competitiveness. To achieve these objectives, education must play a major role. Here, the uses of ICT in teaching political science are our main concern. Because, it is one of the discipline that creates the necessary and sufficient knowledge for leadership in a state.

The Uses of ICT in Teaching Political Science

ICT perform these and other functions in teaching and learning situation.

1. They supply a concrete basis for conceptual thinking and reduce meaningless word responses of students.
2. They make learning more permanent since the students see what they hear.
3. They offer a reality of experiences, which stimulates self-activity on the part of the students.
4. They have a high degree of interest for students, and sustain aroused interest.
5. They develop a continuity of thought, especially motion pictures.
6. They contribute to growth of meaning and hence to vocabulary development.
7. They provide experiences not easily obtained through other materials and contribute to the efficiency, depth and variety of learning.
8. They help in the storage of information needed for quick references and guidance in governance.

The overall uses of ICT is summed up by the Chinese adage, which says; “when I hear I forget but when I see I remember and when I do I remember”.

Applications of ICT in the Teaching of Political Science

In view of the immense importance of ICT in the teaching learning of political science the following principles should be noted in their applications.

The Coconut **Class or Group Teaching**

Here, the large pictures and large font size characters are most suitable. The teacher uses the pictorial materials as a tool to convey his message. In giving factual information which involves visual description e.g. Army in Nigeria, a real war situation such as in the case of Israel and Gaza films etc. The films will be more helpful than verbal description or ordinary description for the understanding of the lessons. In Government class, multimedia projectors pictures are especially useful for stimulating students' imagination e.g. the picture of Barak Obama the President of United States of America visit to Ghana.

Creating Atmosphere for Learning

Motion Pictures can be used to give the background information of a subject matter. These pictures may not be as large as those of the real situation. They can be an abstraction from the lengthy film. The film remains on as long as the topic to which it is relevant is being handled; otherwise the students will not realize its usefulness e.g. film on decolonization Africa.

A tape recorder is an electronic gadget, which is designed for recording, storing and playing back recorded information. It is very valuable instructional material for the Government teacher. The tape recorder can be used to remedy the inflexible time scheme of radio programme, so as to suit the class time schedule. The recorded information can be kept and carried into the classroom for use at any time it is needed for a particular lesson.

Reference Purposes

Some ICT materials are so detailed that they are best suited for reference purposes (computers). Students can refer to such materials at their own time. Attention is directed to such materials during the lesson or at the end of the lesson. At the end of the lesson students can refer to them later. In some cases, the website contains some factual information that is needed during the lesson, such as tables, figures, diagram, etc.

A table is a system of condensed statements or compact scheme of numerical information systematically arranged in columns and rows designed to facilitate quick understanding. Tables are used to compare two or more sets of political phenomena, e.g. unitary and federal structures, presidential and parliamentary/cabinet systems, written and unwritten constitutions, capitalism and socialism, the 1979 and 1999 constitutions of Nigeria, Igbo, Hausa and Yoruba traditional political systems and so on. Tables can also be used to teach political phenomena involving series of numerical data, e.g. income and expenditure of government, election results of political parties or candidates and so on. Tables are also used to summarize series of

related data. These information are very vital in the teaching and learning of Political Science.

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Introduction and Revision

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ICT materials are used to arouse interest at the beginning of a lesson. This is done sometimes by questions, which can only be answered by referring to the information on the media on display at that moment. Some ICT materials are also better for revision than for actual teaching of the lesson.

According to Ofeafuna (2006) a radio set is a very powerful electronic gadget that transmits information to its listeners. It can be used at all stages of the teaching-learning encounter. It can be used to introduce a lesson where the period of the lesson coincides with the time of a relevant radio programme. Here, the radio programme serves as the set induction for the lesson. The teacher can make effective use of radio through take home assignment. The specific period of the programme and the specific points of ideas, which the students should look for in the programme, should be given to them in advance.

A television set is also a very fascinating electronic gadget which is a medium of transmitting pictorial views and sounds of events while they are taking place or from recorded films or tapes. The television therefore provides audio-visual services to its viewers. The television programmes which are of interest to the teacher and students of government are: news items, political discussions and broadcast, political interviews, T.V. debates, quiz and documentary programmes. The television, like the radio can be used at all stages of the teaching-learning process (Ofeafuna, 2006).

The Challenges of ICT in Teaching Political Science

According to Enadu and Asan (2005), the challenges of using ICT as a veritable tool for teaching Political Science in Nigeria are great and include:

- i. Poor electricity power supply in the urban and rural areas.
- ii. Unavailability of national ICT infrastructure.
- iii. Insufficient qualified ICT personnel in our institutions.
- iv. Poor implementation of ICT Policies especially in schools.
- v. Security problem in the schools.
- vi. Poor funding of schools;
- viii. Lack of space in the classroom for ICT materials especially in urban public schools and
- ix. Finally, time allotted to teach some topics are usually not enough for whatever activity he has planned for his class.

The Coconut

Conclusion

ICT is a veritable tool that can be used to improve on the standard of teaching political science and other subjects in Nigeria schools. Nigeria's abundant human resources serve as a potent force for growth and development. This will be possible only if the majority of people are IT literate. It therefore needs to invest heavily in the ICT education of its citizenry to achieve a literate workforce that will harness these abundant resources into tangible developments in a globalised World. Effort is made in this paper to pinpoint some of the areas where ICT can lead to improved learning, highlighted the challenges of the use of ICT and suggested solutions to the challenges.

Recommendations

In order to achieve the objectives of this paper, the following recommendations are made:

1. The Federal Government of Nigeria should embark on total rural-urban area electrification project to ensure that Power Holding Company of Nigeria (PHCN) provides constant electricity power supply to all parts of the country.
2. The Federal Government of Nigeria should put in place efficient National ICT infrastructure (i.e. satellite, Internet, and national data and information base).
3. The Federal Government should build ICT centres where ICT personnel can be trained.
4. The government should ensure that the implementation stage of government policies is properly monitored to ensure success.
5. The government should provide adequate security measure to protect ICT infrastructures in the schools.
6. The government should provide adequate funding, since poor funding has been a problem affecting public policy implementation in the education sector.
7. Non-government organizations (NGOs) and private companies should help to provide ICT facilities and training to Nigerian citizens as party of their social responsibilities to their operating environment.
8. Internet centres should be cited in all schools at subsidized rate in order to promote computer literacy of all citizens and easy access to information.
9. Computer literacy awareness campaign should be carried out in the country just as it is done for HIV.

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