
EXPLORING 21ST CENTURY ICT TEACHING TOOLS FOR SOCIAL STUDIES INSTRUCTIONAL DELIVERY

Mumini Bamidele **TIAMIYU**
Department of General Studies
Oyo State College of Agriculture and Technology
Igboora, Oyo State

Abstract

Nigeria is currently experiencing dividends of democracy. In this situation, freedom of technology and education are absolute necessities. With democracy, it is a matter of individual or masses' choices and the society as a whole. Teaching is therefore expected to contribute directly to the development of good citizenship, loyalty to civic responsibilities and human relationships through effective use of technological innovations, one of such is information communication technology (ICT). With the use of ICT tools in the teaching of social studies, students will be helped to acquire a philosophy of life, historical evidence, attitudes, skills, concepts, understanding and knowledge about the society they find themselves. This paper was borne out of the interest to proffer solutions to nagging instructional problems encountered by Social Studies teachers. However, it focused on the prospects of using ICT tools in the teaching of the subject matter-Social Studies. The paper concluded by suggesting among others that, Nigerian teachers should be ICT compliant.

Keywords: Social Studies, Society, Teaching, Technology.

Introduction

The term Social Studies is used to designate a school subject that deals with human relationship. Its origin can be traced to the 20th century, precisely 1916. Here, Aristotle was quoted saying “he who does not feel the necessity of society is either a good or beast”. Mahabir *et al* (2011) illustrated this by quoting J.F Forrester and Moffat’s definitions of Social Studies as the study of the society and its chief aim of helping pupils to understand the world in which they have to live, how it came to existence; this would help them become responsible citizens. Social Studies aims at promoting critical thinking, a readiness for social change, creating a disposition for acting and appreciating other cultures realizing the importance of the interdependence of man on man in any societal setting.

Ogundare (2003) gave his definition of Social Studies in three ways; content, purpose and methods. In defining Social Studies according to content, Ogundare (2003) posited that Social Studies are those whose subject matters relate directly in the organization and development of human society, and to man as a member of a social group. Ogundare’s definition according to purpose, dictated that Social Studies is a set goal which describes how the content of citizenship education is organized and taught. His definition, according to method reiterated that Social Studies is a discipline which deals with the process of thinking, decision-making, value analysis and inquiry skills. The term ‘Social Studies’ also depicts ways in which teaching and learning activities slide over to produce facts and information.

Information and communication technology could also be described as a scientific, technological and engineering discipline coupled with management techniques used in handling information, its application and association with social, economic and cultural matters. Fasea (2003) defined Information and Communication Technology as the present age where information is explored, the ability and capacity to acquire, analyze, communicate and retrieve information which have become attributes of man in the society. Hornby (2001) defined information technology as a superhighway; an extensive electronic network such as the internet; use for transfer

of information. It was also defined as the use of computers and telecommunication for sharing, retrieving and sending of information. For one to use ICT, he or she has to be informed; getting informed entails possessing facts and validated figures. Historical evidences and its associated problems: relics, pictures, locations and geographical evidences are curtailed in the solutions provided by ICT for its end users to maximize effectively in their attempts in procuring solutions to educational and non-educational problems. The role of information technology in social studies is a central matter in ensuring quality assurance in the educational sector. There are two important reasons that make information familiar with the use of ICT; first, students become familiar with the use of technology especially computers and they operate on the super-highway of information disseminated and retrieved. Secondly, information technology improves the qualities of graduates of Social Studies by ensuring that they acquire validated facts for their findings.

In recognition of the value of computers, the federal ministry of education had developed literacy education for all forms of education, an evidence of this is the National Open University initiative of the federal government. The implication is that one uses internet compliant computers to work and learn at any time irrespective of the age, tribe and distance. The term “computer literacy” is very broad, ranging from elementary knowledge of computer operations to complex technical computer programming and repairs. Robert, Michael, Sharon and James (2002), defined computer literacy as ability to understand and use a computer system to achieve objectives from top level approach to downward approaches i.e. from the teachers’ preparation stage to classroom delivery stage.

It is very clear now that development in information technology is rapidly revolutionizing social sector, economic sector and educational aspects of human endeavors in the developing world, the same influence is currently invoked in Nigeria’s society today. The paper therefore explored to know how information technology tools could be use for effective teaching, learning and profered solutions to the perceived barriers that may hinder effective usage of Information Technology.

Information Technology: The Nigerian Contextual Belief

Osunwa (2001) defined information technology as any form of technology techniques used by people to handle information, meaning that technology supports activities such as creating, storing, manipulating and communicating with reference to methods, processes and application. Information technology is the application of scientific study of arts using mastery and utilization skills to develop body of knowledge, Students would be allowed to express themselves by first, learning from their mistakes, correction from colleagues and teacher National Policy on motivated teaching skills.

The National policy Information Technology (2001) sees information technology as the bedrock for national survival and development in this rapidly developing society. Thus, it defined Information and Technology in two ways: Information technology includes any equipment, interconnected systems or sub-systems that are used to automate, manipulate, display, interchange, transverse, control, transmit or reception of data or information. Information technology means computers, ancillary equipment, software and hardware (firmware) and similar procedures including support services.

The definition, according to National Policy on Information Technology connotes three things: information technologies as a tool for the development of any society and surviving tool of any organization which involves technologies. One of such is the computer; thus, retrieval and exchange of information become easy and also remain support device for any delivery.

In the Nigerian educational context especially in the teaching of social studies, information technology would assist technology-driven teachers to: get resources easily for complex teaching scenario: help locate history geographically and develop thinking and reasoning skills of learners; help students become aware of diverse ethnic groups and traditions of different societies in Nigeria; expose basic skills of technology literacy to both the teacher and learners; identify and proffer solutions to societal problems; awareness and understanding of any physical environment either

in parts or whole, either in its natural form or man-made, in cultural or spiritual form for national development; give them the capacity to acquire basic skills of reading, speaking, writing and calculation; acquire observational, analysis and inferential skills; determine diversity and interdependency ratio of any society; and learn basic norms of their society. The spirit of togetherness is encouraged, here, all cultures associate with the use of ICT in one way or the other. Students' confidence level is improved positively, the power of imagination and resourcefulness is increased in social studies students, and teachers continuously desire to learn more skills to support their historical evidence (Online Instructional Materials) and trends and changes in kingdoms, laws and orders of any society, group or countries are always available online to support teaching.

21st Century ICT Teaching Tools

In the teaching of social studies in schools, the following are some of the technologies used by developed nations as supportive devices in instructional delivery, some of these could fit into the existing curriculum and educational position of Nigeria if integrated well. These are: Blended Learning, Multimedia Kits, Webquest, Games and Simulation.

Blended Learning

Nicholas (2004) defined blended learning as a combination of face-to-face and online instructional strategies. It involves the use of technology to augment traditional methods of disseminating knowledge, ideas and skills which students need to become educationally independent learners. Andrew (2012) defined blended learning as changing students' experience. He further described blended learning as considering trends where: Classrooms are not only form of learning, Social interaction as growing part of learning, Technology and computers as immigrants, Learning occurs out of sequence, Students constructing contents rather than consuming.

The argument then remains that most schools in Nigeria are not buying the idea of using blended learning approach in

instructional deliveries, one must agree with the truth that youths and children nowadays are already experimenting this experience regardless of whether they are initiated or not. It is not surprising to see junior secondary students exploring features of computers or media with little or no supervision, this justifies the position of Nigerian children as members of digital natives. Funny enough, these kids often teach their teachers some technological skills that they coup from their uncles, nieces and parents at home. Because these kids are 21st century kids, their attributes include learning technology fast either by regurgitating skills learnt through touching, experimenting, assimilation, inquisitive questions and disengaged-assembled techniques.

However, Martin Weller (2002) in his work “Delivery Learning on the Net” described blended learning as pedagogical continuum extending from didactic instruction and a continuum technology ranging from high-end complex technology at the top scale to low-end technology at the bottom scale. Interpreting this, one would see that for blended learning to be effective, the teacher must play the leading role; that is, he must relate with students from his position as facilitator to guidance; become a helper in generating skills and information; and relate horizontally with students exposure.

Technologies in Blended Learning

Andrew (2012) described virtual technologies as wider ranges of technologies to support online presence either through real-time interaction or asynchronous personal repositories, e.g. Skype, SMS (Short Messages Services), e-Portfolio, Blogs, Websites and Podcasts. This category fall into Online Presence. The other category include Online Resources; these include the Google, Courseware Management Systems (CMS), Electronic Databases (ED), Digital Libraries and Online Publication. All these provide unregimented access to resources that are never personal, a publicized resources for both teacher and students to explore. Appliances that can be used for virtual technologies include: Videocassette Players, DVD Players and Camera. All these could be used to support learning in

classroom and outdoor scenarios, the fact remains that facts and information are never fabricated, manipulated or lifted; learners and teachers learn simultaneously and pragmatically.

Technology enabled classrooms and computerized classrooms are the most identifiable learning environment in civilized nations, this attainment could be achieved in Nigeria if every educator contributes his or her quota to the refurbishment of the educational sector. A computerized classroom or laboratories provide unrestricted access to relevant information needed by students at all level of teaching and learning process; this information they build their experiences on since the best way to learn is through a constructivism; a learner creates his learning experiences through hand-on activities. Here, students are allowed to interact with the computer and with colleagues; interact with computer based instructions; computer assisted instructions and computerized aided designs to develop personalized learning experiences aided by teachers'/instructors' supervision and motivation. The content delivery strategies used by teachers could be supported by blended learning if it is in form of drill and practice applications, games, simulations, pictures, images and tutorials, all these would give students/learners the opportunity to choose a learning style they prefer and at the same time creating space for self pace learning circumstances.

WebQuests

Literatures have attempted defining WebQuests, the simple meaning is "*Web Based Questions*". Janet (2005) defined WebQuests as educators' use of technology to construct meaningful knowledge and skills for students to work independently in technologically advanced society. This definition is subject to "*how and why*" technology in social studies instructional delivery. Dodge (1997) in Janet (2005) defined WebQuests as an inquiry-oriented activities in which the information needed by learners in content delivery are resourcefully placed on the internet and from the internet. The basics of WebQuests is that it can be used for all subjects and topics; a multidisciplinary activity which includes a task, sources, process,

guidance and conclusion. The interesting part of WebQuests is that it increases motivation and interest level of learners showing areas where students err along the line.

Creating WebQuests for Social Studies Instructional Delivery

In creating a WebQuests for instructional deliveries in the teaching of social studies, a web page must be created first together with either Netscape composer, Dreamvafer, Microsoft FrontPage: these are some web authoring software that could be used to create a webpage, the following steps and procedures may be taken into consideration:

WebQuest Element	Function
1. Introduction	A scenario points to key issues or concepts to prepare the students to ask questions.
2. Task	Students identify issues or problems and forms questions for the issues.
3. Sources	Resources are identified by the teacher to investigate the quest. Here, teachers help to provide links to websites and print-based materials.
4. Process	Students assume roles and begin to identify procedures to follow.
5. Conclusion	Quests often ends with evaluation of the process students used along with continuous investigation.

Source: Robert et al (2002)

The implication of using WebQuests for instructional delivery in Social Studies depicts Authenticity in facts, positive and constructive critique of facts, deeper thinking skills, cooperative learning and; students and teachers' proficient use of technology.

Multimedia Kit

Media is a channel of communication; multimedia is a combination of audio, video and audio-visual. A multimedia kit is a collection of teaching and learning materials involving more than one type of medium and organized around a single topic. The kit may include a CD-ROM, filmstrips, slides, audiotapes, videotapes, still pictures, study prints, overhead transparencies, maps, worksheets, charts, graphs, booklets, real objects and models. These are some samples of items that are found in the multimedia kit but a teacher is free to include his or her choice, for instance, in the teaching of family, a teacher may include pictures of a father (man), mother (woman) and combination of two or more children (male and female; boys and girls) for easy identification. Still pictures could also be brought in for recognition purpose, it could be in slides, filmstrips or transparencies for projection through projectors. The advantages of using multimedia kits in teaching include: Multimedia kits arouse interests because they are multisensory, A mechanism for stimulating cooperation and group work and It could be used anywhere including outside classroom setting.

Game

A game provides a playful environment in which learners follow prescribed rules as they try to attain a challenging goal. Though, highly motivating, a game could be tedious and repetitive content, it thus requires a learner to solve set problems in order to succeed, this enables learners to master a degree of accuracy and efficiency. A game is an activity in which participants follow rules that looks like real life experiences as they strive along the procedures, it is a distinct between play and reality of life experiences.

Simulation

A simulation is an abstraction or simplification of some real-life situation or process. Some literature defined simulations as an abstraction of reality. A lifeless object can be simulated to perform the role of living objects, more so, it can be used to teach learning objectives. An example of this is robot. In a simulated environment,

motor skills are used to instill competencies that learners act upon and it thus, become part of them. Also, simulations are used to capture essential features of learning objectives without dwelling on distracting issues and content.

Conclusion

It is disheartening to note that the objectives of social studies education have not been achieved due to low utilization of ICT and its tools in schools, this actually contributed to teachers' incompetent rate and students' low performance in school subjects especially in national examinations like WAEC (West Africa Examination Council) and NECO (National Examination Council Junior Secondary School Examinations). If ICT tools are used effectively as discussed in the context of this paper, access to resources that will develop the nation and society at large would be fostered.

Suggestions

It should be noted that as stated by policy on information technology that Nigerian teachers should be ICT compliant, government should interfere in the provision of basic and up to date ICT tools for schools, alternative power supply including grants for sustainability, also, it could be provided by both school administrators and parents. Moreover, resource persons and skilled personnel should be recruited, trained and posted to school to assist in the utilization of ICT tools in schools. Lastly, let every Nigerian develop a good maintenance culture toward hardware and software resources in schools.

References

- Andrew, J. M. (2012). *Delivering blended learning space to the student experience*. *Educause*. Retrieved 11th January 2022 from <http://webquest.sdsu.edu/aboutwebquest.html>.
- Dodge, B. (1997). Some thoughts about WebQuests. Retrieved August 15 from <http://webquest.sdsu.edu/aboutwebquest.html>
- Fasae, F. B. (2003). Business education, technology and national development. *Business Education Journal*, 1, 22.
- Federal Republic of Nigeria (2001). *Nigeria national policy of information*

- technology (IT). Electronic version. Retrieved from <http://www.nitda.gov/doc/policy/ngtipolicy.pdf>
- Heather, S. & Michael, B. H. (2012). Classifying k-12 blended Learning. *Innosight Institute*. Retrieved 10th January 2022 from www.innosightinstitute.org.
- Janet, S. (2005). Using WebQuests to teach content: Comparing instructional strategies. *Contemporary Issues in Technology and Teacher Education*, 5(2), 138-148.
- Mahabir, S., Kaur, B. & Kant, K. (2011). Role of ICT in teaching of Social Studies. *ISJR*. www.isjr.net, developed by www.rajeshwarinfotech.com.
- Martin, W. (2002). Delivering learning on the net. *Routledge Falmer*. Retrieved on 12th January, 2022.
- Nicholas, G. (2004). Blended learning in k-12 Social Studies Instruction: Literature review. Retrieved 10th January, 2022 from ng@nicholasglading.com.
- Ogundare, S. F. (2003). *Fundamental of Teaching Social Studies*. Oyo: Immaculate City Publishers,
- Osunwa, A. A. (2001). Information technology and practical use of information and communication technology in Social Studies lessons. Unpublished.
- Hornby, A. S. (2001). *Oxford Dictionary of Current English*. Third Edition. London: Oxford University Press.
- Robert, H., Michael, M., James, D. H. & Sharon, E. S. (2002). *Instructional media and technologies for learning*. Seventh Edition. Merrill Prentice Hall. Upper Saddle River, New Jersey, Columbus, Ohio.
- Russel, J. D. (1986). *Instructional media and the new technologies of instruction*. Ibadan: Second Edition. Macmillan Publishing Co,
- Tom, F. & Colm, O'Doherty. (2006). Blended learning in social care education in Ireland. *Irish Journal of Applied Social Studies*. 7, 1.