E - Learning in the Field of Social Studies Education

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ABSTRACT   The world is not static, it is dynamic, and we are living in a world of advance electronic device. In other not to be backward in the field of education, teachers handling different subject should be well-equipped with the use of electronic learning devices related to their areas of studies. This paper examines the introduction of e-learning devices in the field of Social Studies. The paper also examines the Concept of Social Studies, reasons for the Study of Social Studies in Nigeria, what's electronic learning (e-learning)?, usefulness of electronic learning in Social Studies Education, e-learning in the teaching-learning environment, advantages of e-learning and disadvantages of e-Learning. Conclusion and recommendations were also in this paper.

Key Words: E-Learning, Field, Social Studies, Electronic Service and Education.

Introduction

Social Studies as a definite field of study did not develop with the establishment of schooling in Nigeria. But the founding fathers of education were concerned with the development of a whole man through education. Adaralegbe (1990) sees social studies as "a study of man in his totality". It was introduced to find solution to some societal problems. Also to guide individuals in ways of reacting to and interacting with people, conditions and actions to ensure the survival and growth of themselves as individual of their society and the total society of man.

The paper e-learning in the field of social studies education has been designed into different parts. The abstract forms the first part of the paper followed by the introduction which forms the second aspect. The third area considers the concept of social studies. It is the fourth part that dealt with the reasons for studying social studies in Nigeria schools. The fifth aspect of the paper examines electronic learning i.e. what is e-learning and the usefulness of electronic learning forms the sixth aspect. The seventh part of the paper has recommendation and conclusions.

The Concept of Social Studies

Social Studies is a dynamic academic field of study. It is not static, it develops everyday is as much the society keeps on confronting challenges in the environment. That is why Social Studies is battling with many contemporary emerging issues in the society. The subject (social studies) is considered to be those common learning's of man's interaction with his social and physical environment. It is not only a study but a way of life, or how man influences and is influenced by his Physical, Social, Political Economics, Psychological and Cultural Environments. Social Studies is considered as a subject within the school programs that provides coordinated systematic study drawing upon many disciplines such as Anthropology, Archeology, Law, Philosophy, Psychology, Political Sciences and others Social Studies in more distinguished as a field of study, as it is designed to promote civic competence, and it is integrative, incorporating many fields of endeavor, that is why the Nigerian National Policy on Education (NPE, 2007) has identified it as one of the core subjects in the secondary school curriculum, with a view to providing avenues to make the learner acquire the skills of comprehension, application of knowledge, analysis, synthesis and evaluation, necessary for the purpose of effectiveness in the society.

The modern history of social studies in Nigeria has it root in ripples of curriculum innovation which began in Europe in the early 1930s. The war crises of (1939 – 1945) was responsible for the apparent inactivity's during

this period. The idealism of this period and a determination to create a better society through education caused many to turn to the school curriculum as a means of bringing that society into being.

It was an extension of this general awakening in curriculum reforms that led to the introduction of Social Studies at an Advance Teacher Training College of the Western Region (Ohio project) in the late 1950s in America. This experiment had a carryover effect into Aiyetoro Comprehensive High School (Ondo State then but, Ekiti State now), Nigeria where the first Association of Social Studies masters was formed early in the 1960s under the auspices of the former Western State Ministry of Education and the American Agency for International Development in 1969. One of the earliest achievements of this team was the publication of the first Social Studies Textbook for use in the lower forum of Secondary schools.

Reasons for the Study of Social Studies in Nigeria

Social Studies came as an answer to specific and national problems. In the 1960s most educators in Nigeria arrived at the conclusion that the school must be Nigerian in outlook. Rather than emphasizing foreign ideas (Ayodele, 2006). It was thought that through social studies education a love of the country could be developed in our school children in such a way they would develop a strong attachment to their country and government.

Furthermore, to expose them to the problems in our society and equip them with the necessary skills needed for their survival, Social Studies was consequently considered relevant.

From the definition so far discusses, it is clear that Social Studies is organized as a school subject to serve two closely related purposes:

I. To guild people towards understanding people at various distances from them, the conditions in which people find themselves, and the methods the employ to cope with problems;

II. To guide pupils in ways of reacting to and interacting with people, conditions and actions to assure the survival and growth of themselves as individuals of their society and of the total society of man,

As it has been clearly, enunciated, Social Studies is a subject which has it roots in many discipline, but focuses mainly on social actions to bring about changes in the society.

Mausany (1984) seems to agree with the above view in expressing, that Social Studies teaching aims at achieving these different kind of objectives of the subject looking his classification of objectives into the three domains of:

➢ Cognitive i.e. knowledge of the physical and social environment ability to observe, analyze and infer, and also to form sound social economic and political judgment

➢ Affective: sympathetic appreciation of the diversity and interdependence of peoples. Attitudes of co-operation, togetherness and comradeship, values of honesty, integrity, hard work, fairness and justice:

➢ Psychomotor: Skills of map work, direction giving, manipulation of basic household tools, chanting and illustrating etc.

From the above, the goals of Social Studies can, therefore, be summed up as, preparation for effective participation and contribution to societal welfare and development. Thus, like the all embracing purpose of education, the objectives of social studies is 'Socialization,' the objectives must be related to the aims and objectives of education which also mirror national objectives.

Thus in Nigeria, the followings are the aims and objectives of education on which premise, the objectives of Social Studies teaching and learning are built:

i. The inculcation of national consciousness and national unity;

ii. The inculcation of the right type of value and attitudes for the survival of the individual and the Nigerian society.'

iii. The training of the mind in the understanding of the world around, and

iv. The acquisition of appropriate skills, abilities and competences both mental and physical as equipment for the individual to live in and contribute to the development of his society (NPE, 2007).

Following from (i-iv) above, the objectives of social studies in Nigeria include the followings:

i. The creation of an awareness and an understanding of our evolving social and physical environment as a whole in its nation man – made, cultural and spiritual resources together with the national use and conservation of these resources for national development;

ii. The development of the capacity to learn and to acquire certain basic skills, including not only those of listening, speaking, reading, and writing and of calculation, but also the skills of hand and head together with those of observation, analysis, and inference which are essential to the forming of sound social, economic and political judgment;

iii. To ensure the acquisition of that relevant body of knowledge and information which is an essential pre-requisite to personal development as well as to a positive personal contribution of the betterment of mankind;

iv. The development of a sympathetic appreciation of the diversity and inter-dependence of local communities, the wider national and international community;

v. To develop in students positive attitudes of togetherness comradeship and co-operation towards a healthy nation. The inculcation of appropriate values of honesty, integrity, hard work fairness, justice at work and play as one's contribution to the development of the nation;

vi. To encourage learners to appreciate that all the things they have learnt are interrelated;
    Through Social Studies, it is possible to present knowledge as a whole instead of as a series of specialized fragments.

vii. The promotion of effective and active citizenship; and

viii. Inculcation of good moral e.g. loves one another, sympathetic etc.

What's Electronic Learning (E-learning)?

Electronic learning connotes assimilating information's and comprehending knowledge through electrical devices. The electrical device includes electrical and electronic hardware's and computing software. The learning from internet facilities, websites and the global system of mobile communication in the environment are also part of the devices. The electronic hardware is a multimedia item which includes Radio, Television, Computers, Audio Players, Video Players, Projectors, Discs like CD Rom, Floppy, DVD, USB Storage media support, Flash Drives.

Usefulness of Electronic Learning in Social Studies Education

With the improvement in technology the world has been reduced to small global village. The interdependent of nations across the world has also erected a nexus between nations of the world. All these are possible as a result of electrical and electronic devices. Consequent upon the above, it is easier to pass information across within few seconds from one place to the other.

The use of electronic devices to facilitate teaching learning processes in Social Studies education cannot be overemphasized. Today power points are used to teach in classroom. Students now have asses to computer sets. Also, projectors, television and video machines can be used to enhance the impacting of knowledge in Social Studies class. In order to encourage easier dissemination of knowledge the Social Studies teacher can make use of these devices in the classroom setting. Such E-learning devices include;

Radio: Social Studies instructions and learning experiences can be recorded and played at the station for public enlightenment. A Social Studies expert or a resource person from related field might be invited to participate in the programme. The presenter asks questions on the topic. This is not for students in schools alone, but for everybody listening to the programme. The introduction of Global system of mobile communication (GSM) facilitates the contribution of people at home and others. Questions can be asked from outside and the public can contribute from outside through the use of GSM. Listeners can participate through the dial phone numbers given. Such programmes can be used to correct bad habits in the society also new information's can be easily disseminated to the public concerning any emerging issues in the society e.g.

spotlight programme (a phoning programme) enlightenment campaign can be carried out on human right and the spread of HIV/AIDS. All these are social issues in the society.

Television: In Social Studies education Television in regarded as audio visual instructional materials. It has an advantage of allowing the listener or public to see physically how issues are discussed and demonstrated on screen. The public can read the countenance of the people participating. Seeing is believing, it registers learning in the viewer than the radio because it is an audio-visual and instructional materials (Adeyemo, 1974). Good result is attained with the use of GSM.

Projectors and transparencies: They are placed on the projector and shoot on the screen usually a wall for the audience to see. It makes teaching easier.

Though a lot of work must have been done before getting to presentation stage. The user makes drawings and writings on transparencies designed to enhance the teaching learning process. This idea given room for class participation questions might be asked and solution are proffered to difficult areas of the topic.

Computer system: The relevance of computer in the social science discipline cannot be over emphasized, computer is a tool for processing information in the society. Social Studies teachers and students can purchase a set of computer or buy a designed Social Studies soft ware and get information from them. The information called data gotten from software can be followed in presentations for use in the classroom e.g. power point programme can be used to teach practical as well as theoretical area in Social Studies.

Computer is used to rapidly perform many mathematical calculation required in carrying out research in Social Studies. Social variables are classified and grouped through the application system of computer.

Computer system can store tremendous amount of data which can be located and retrieved efficiently. The capability to store volumes of Social Studies information of such is especially social in an information age.

In the school setting, marks of students of Social Studies discipline are gathered, imputed and computed with the use of computer system. This encourages quite release of results and other information pertaining to the student.

The introduction of internet facilities has reduced the world into a small village where information can be retrieved through globalization. The exploration can take place only with knowledge of computer. New facts about social factors are easily retrieved on the interment.

The knowledge acquired from the use of computer machine has assisted local societies to show case there rich culture to the world on a global scale. This technology is not only exposing our young to new cultural value including ways of doing things about social relationships, family, religion and human condition generally.

Computer has help to transmit and install values all these can be acquired through the interment services, Social Studies teachers using E-learning search for more authentic and new information so as to dish out current or latest ideas on contemporary issues thus shifting a higher level of cognitive skill.

E-learning in the Teaching Learning Environment

A well trained resourceful teacher is expected to facilitate the teaching learning process in our classrooms. It is the dynamic nature and flexibility of the teacher that can make the use of e-learning a reality and result oriented, venture. A conductive educational environment is required to allow free flow of knowledge from the teacher to the learners Gibson (2001) illustrates Brunner and Talley work that concern too group of students (A&B). Group A pupils worked in a network computer laboratory. The computer guided them through some well designed exercise in different subjects. They gave correct answers, the computer acknowledged them, all under the monitoring of their teacher. Group B pupils used computer to unearth an archaeological simulation, in the site filled with ambiguous evidence, thus found evidence that it was a better field. They argued and wanted their teacher to state whose interpretation of the site bets explained the bulk of the evidence. In discussing these two positions,

Brunner and Holt (1990) observed that the first situation learning was understood narrowly and e-learning was used as a means of achieving content mastery on the other hand, in the second situation learning was understood broadly and E-learning served as a catalyst and support for an extended classroom inquiry. On the first group, learning experiences and intuition were delivered through e-learning and it was effective and efficient. The other group relied on the enabling environment in which they learn and used their mind activity. Since you cannot give what you don't have, teacher and learners should acquit themselves with e-learning approach

Advantages of E-learning

- It stores much information and makes it readily retrievable from a number of locations dramatically saving time and reducing operating expenses, e.g., computer billing system now used in hospitals.
- It exposes students to variety of learning tools, expert opinion and alternative viewpoints (Ojo, 2005), i.e. multiple perspective.
- Their storage units are compact and easy to carry e.g., micro vault 512MB storage media support that holds approximately 178 floppy disks information and lap top.
- It helps students to become independent learners, develop critical thinking and problem solving strategies or policies, thus discouraging spoon-feeding.
- It makes the teacher active and work ahead his/her students because he would be occupied preparing next instructions or software to be worked on by his students so it does not make the teacher redundant. So it reinforces and enhances the teachers' lessons.
- It serves as a patient teacher because it allows the learner to go at his or her pace. He masters a task before moving to the next.
- E-Learning aids acquisition of skill since it presents drill and practice to learners, e.g., Computer assisted instruction on cooking methods. It saves teachers' time and energy in demonstrating difficult concepts, theories

and principles thus making his presentation exciting.
- Computer as a means of e-learning is not affected by noise but aids information verification since it is printed communication. Some programmed instruction software aid the teachers in getting accurate feedback on each learner's progress
- It aids high speed data transfer, e.g., 512 Mega bites micro vault USB storage media support.
- It aids dissemination of knowledge in other language other than the user's own language, e.g. KONYIN Yoruba keyboard attached to laptop or desktop
- It enhances client care in the field of dietetics and reduces human error.
- It allows for information search, team – work, brain – storming, revision and computer modeling
- It acts as a catalyst on both the teachers and students because they are more willing to learn and experiment, e.g. finding nutrient content of wild fruits or herbs in food laboratory
- It makes teaching more child – centered
- It makes one more professional since it makes people learn, acquire skills rather than dispense information
- It arouses interest than the traditional approaches
- A colleague having a teacher's prepared information storage can stand in for him when absent to teach or present the concept needed to be taught
- Teachers using e-learning search for more authentic and new information so as to dish out current or latest ideas on contemporary issues thus shifting to high – level of cognitive skills.

Disadvantages of E-Learning

- It is cost intensive
- Electric power supply is epileptic in Nigeria thus disturbing users
- In – availability of software in some discipline or areas is still a problem in e-learning

- Error in communication escalates of GSM is used in a noisy room
- E – learning gadgets lack human qualities since they cannot make judgments
- Their performance depend on perfection level of their designer, programmers and users.
- They become outdated with advent of new innovations
- Slow learners problems might be compounded and make them fall behind
- Students may feel isolated from their group members or pears
- Instructors may not be around when students or users need their assistance
- Poor network signals may constitute problems for user of E-learning gadgets, e.g. Television, Radio GSM, etc. (Olurankise, 2007)
- Many computer owners cannot download information from internet on their own systems due to lack of fund to get connected to internet like the affluence people in the developed countries

Conclusion

In conclusion, while it is possible for people to see both the negative and positive impact of e-learning on various aspects of learning and human behaviour. It is glaring that the positive sides of the option of E-learning outweigh the negative effects on Social Studies education in Nigeria. It is therefore become imperative for the educational planners, the operators of the curriculum and the students of Social Studies to embrace this new trend and exploit the opportunities of ICT to maximize the effectiveness of Social Studies education in Nigeria. Social Studies e-learning devices make the discipline interesting Fascinating and less tiring. They are less than perfect.

Recommendations

In accordance with the NCC's declaration: all teachers at all levels must undergo computer training programme as matter of compulsion. This will enhance their information delivery.

Institutions of higher learning should provide e-learning services by getting cyber café on their campuses to serve both staff and students at a reduced cost. Also, it will enhance accessibility when it is located on campus.

Since education is a social service issue, the government should strive to provide e-learning materials in schools. Most teachers and parents may not be able to afford it for themselves and their wards if not provided by the government.

There should be conferences, seminars, workshops organized for teachers on e-learning so as to make them current and alive in their duties.

Electronic learning gadgets should be introduced to teachers during training. It should be provided for teachers undergoing in-service learning also.

The school curriculum should be reviewed and designed to accommodate computer learning programmes. It will equip students and teachers for the future challenges on their work.

Computer to be purchased for the students should not be too costly for it to be affordable by them. The various computer systems should be the common type that its parts can easily be found and purchased in the market. There should be a maintenance culture that will guarantee the life span of these computer system and e-learning machines.

There should be proper stock record of their materials provided by the government. Proper care of e-learning materials should be encouraged.

Energy and power is very germane in the use of these e-learning gadgets. This can mar the good intentions of introducing it in schools. The government should put it on the priority list the generation of power to service these gadgets.

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Nobody can go back and start a new beginning, but anyone can start today and make a new ending.

~ Maria Robinson