

PowerPoint as an ICT Tool for Teaching and Learning in the Schools Focusing On Secondary and Tertiary Institutions in Nigeria

Segun Arifalo¹
College of Education,
Ikere-Ekiti.

Ajisola, Kola²,
College of Education,
Ikere-Ekiti.

Adeyinka Adesanmi³.
College of Education,
Ikere-Ekiti.

Enijuni Tola⁴
College of Education,
Ikere-Ekiti.

Abstract

Teaching and learning process in Nigeria school setting has become talk of every stake holders as a major factor in ensuring that educational goals are achieved in our society. This paper examined Information and Communication Technology (ICT) as a great advent that is out to assist the Teachers in carrying out effective and qualitative teaching in the classroom. Usage of ICT facilities such as PowerPoint Application Software to enhance teaching and learning and their associated problems were looked into in this paper. The effective handling of PowerPoint to present lecture notes in a classroom setting as discussed in this paper will improve the understanding and mastering of the subject matter of any chosen topic. This paper concludes that teachers should be trained in the area of ICT to enable them fit into the modern ways of impacting knowledge and that government should play their own roles to provide ICT facilities to schools. As part of the recommendations, government should improve on the stability of electricity power supply.

Keywords: PowerPoint, ICT tool, teaching and learning

Introduction

Modern ICT has created a *global village*, in which people can communicate with others across the world as if they were living next door. The world, being what it is today, a global village, has proven to be prominently invaded by ICT. The advent of ICT has greatly changed the traditional pattern of teaching

in the classroom to the use of ICT. ICT is constituted by the computer system itself – the hardware components, the software components for input, processing, storage, output and communication of information locally and globally. The use of ICT as described by [1] has become so important that it has become the most significant indices in national and economic development.

The National Policy on Education stressed the introduction of ICT into the system [2]. This, in no doubt clamored for the serious need in changing pedal from the traditional teaching method to the modern ways in conformity with what goes around in the developed world in order to be able to compete favourably.

ICT is similar to Information Technology (IT), but focuses primarily on communication technologies which include the internet, wireless network, cell phones, and other communication media that can be used to efficiently teach in the classroom.

While we recognize that the use of instructional technology in the higher education teaching and learning processes is still in its infancy in Nigeria, ICT instructional use is vital to the progress and development of faculty and students alike. Higher education institutions, especially those in the West, have adopted ICT as a means to impart upon students the knowledge and skills demanded by 21st century educational advancement (UNESCO, 2002a). According to UNESCO (2002b), ICT now permeates the education environment and underpins the very success of 21st century education. ICT also adds value to the processes of learning and to the organization and management of learning institutions. Technologies are a driving force behind much of the development

and innovation in both developed and developing countries. As such, all countries must seek to benefit from technological developments. To be able to do so, professionals (including faculty) have to be educated with sound ICT backgrounds, independent of specific computer platforms or software environments, to meet the required competencies of the ever-changing global environment [3].

When ICT in education does not achieve expected goals or when it introduces complicated educational reforms, students and teachers can lose focus on the essentials and become distracted by the rapidly changing technologies themselves. This result is likely when students and teachers have not been able to acquire a full understanding of the technologies, the role ICT plays and where, how and what technology to use. When the meaning of ICT and its unlimited potential in the educational arena are understood, rapidly changing technologies are not seen as overwhelming, but as enablers of greater critical thinking and problem solving in education (Iloanusi & Osuagwu, 2009) as quoted by [3].

The prospects for the use of ICT in teaching and learning in Nigerian higher education are positive, though there is much work left to be done. Aduwa-Ogiegbaen and Iyamu (2005) in [3] have observed that ICT enhances educational efficiency in general and that the efficiency of faculty teaching in Nigerian institutions stands to be improved. Many higher education faculty, for instance, are already teaching large classes of students using ICT materials. With enhanced ICT capabilities it would be possible to use carefully prepared ICT programs to ensure that learners are more accurately and systematically instructed using effective instructional technology [8].

Slide presentation software such as PowerPoint has become an ingrained part of many instructional settings, particularly in large classes and in courses more geared toward information exchange than skill development. PowerPoint can be a highly effective tool to aid learning, but if not used carefully, may instead disengage students and actually hinder learning [6]. PowerPoint enables teacher to prepare his lesson topic into slides accordingly and present such in the classroom in an interactive manner with the learners using computer system and a slide projector. This can be likened with Computer Assisted Instruction (CAI) where teacher uses a media

approach (T-media). Using this approach, teacher is free from the use of chalkboard and chalk, therefore concentrating on the subject matter. This method is time saving and allows full interaction between the teacher and the learners.

Using PowerPoint an ICT tool to Impact Knowledge in the Classroom

According to [6] the potential benefits of using PowerPoint presentation graphics include the under listed:

- Engaging multiple learning styles
- Increasing visual impact
- Improving audience focus
- Providing annotations and highlights
- Analyzing and synthesizing complexities
- Enriching curriculum with interdisciplinary
- Increasing spontaneity and interactivity
- Increasing wonder

[5] highlighted two major practice that help teaching and learning when you use PowerPoint for teaching in the classroom, these are:

- Enhancing teaching and learning
- Breaking out topics into understandable points

Using PowerPoint makes it easy for you to integrate graphics and animations into your slides which can illustrate key points and processes for your students [5]. Preparing a presentation helps the teacher to provide good structure and maintain flow of the subject matter. You can then emphasise key points, focus attention, aid understanding using accurate charts and scaled diagrams that will help the learners to remember and spell more efficiently.

Some PowerPoint Features

The following are some PowerPoint features that can commonly be used by teachers during classroom interaction which will put perfection to the way presentations are made with PowerPoint.

Colour Combinations

Colour combinations should be put into consideration while preparing slide show using PowerPoint. Some text can be clear and easy to read when good colour combinations are used while some

text may be bad for those with colour blindness when bad colour combinations are used. Some colour combinations are just horrid and have bad contrast between text and background. As such, good colour combinations that can make your text readable are better used for presentation.

Backgrounds

The background used by a teacher while presenting his lecture with the aid of PowerPoint is very important to teaching and learning, as such, it should not be childishly prepared. A teacher should be aware of background/foreground combinations, as some are very difficult to distinguish for those with visual impairments. A dark background and light text for instance is best for dark classrooms. Whereas a light background and dark text is best for light classrooms and it is better to keep the same background colour throughout the presentation for uniqueness, then you avoid patterned backgrounds behind text.

Text Fonts

Use of fonts to prepare text for presentation by teachers should be carefully selected, for instance when you want to highlight an important point in your presentation, the use of **bold** is most preferred rather than Italics or underlining (as this can make the words 'run together'). You should be aware of the type of font used - 'sans serif' fonts such as **Arial** or **Comic Sans** are easier to read for many people. Blocks of upper case tend to be harder to read compared to lower or mixed case. It is recommended that you use mixed case.

Slide Layout

A teacher must be courteous of the use of slide layout tools wherever possible, note that you should not put too much information on each slide - six bullet points are optimal in order to avoid overload. You may use bullets or numbers to state your points rather than continuous prose. The use of left justified text with ragged right edge is okay for any simple presentation, then you use wider spacing between sentences and paragraphs and allow only one subject matter per slide.

Keystroke Shortcuts

There are some keystroke shortcuts you can use while you are presenting your slide show in the

classroom that will make the usage of PowerPoint more easier and faster.

- Next slide =N, Enter, Spacebar
- Previous slide = P, Backspace
- Go to slide "number"="number"+Enter
- Black screen = B
- White screen = W
- Change pointer to a pen =CTRL+P
- Change pen back to arrow = CTRL+A
- Erase onscreen annotation = E
- End slide show =ESC

When you seemed not to have mastered the keystroke shortcuts very well, you can press **F1** key for help while showing slide, this will popup the list containing the keystroke shortcuts.

The Challenges of ICT Tools Usage in our Schools

The challenges of the usage of ICT tools such as PowerPoint Application Software can be traced to the following factors as opined by [3] and [8].

1. *Electricity*: The major problem of E-learning in Nigeria is electricity supply which is not stable. Some areas in the Country which have not been connected to electricity supply, even most of the schools in cities are faced with shortage of electricity supply.
2. *Poor ICT Penetration*: This is another factor militating against the full implementation of E-learning in Nigeria schools. The poor penetration of e-learning and the usage of e-learning tools like PowerPoint for instance among Nigerian teachers has become alarming especially in the rural areas where the facilities are not just there.
3. *Basic ICT Infrastructures*: There is low access to ICT infrastructures which can provide adequate penetration to ICT tools. By this, massive usage of such ICT facilities to gear teaching and learning towards the modern ways of impacting knowledge in the classrooms is at a low level.
4. *Poor Economic Situation*: The state of the economy of most schools in Nigeria has formed barrier to proper access to ICT facilities.
5. *Poor Telecommunication Facilities*: All ICT tools depend whole on telecommunication facilities to function. The internet and intranet can only function when there is firm telecommunication facilities in place. Today

people are still faced with one problem or the other especially poor network resulting from the weak performance of the telecommunication facilities in our society.

Recommendations

1. Teachers should be trained how to prepare their lesson notes to slides for presentation in the classrooms.
2. Government should improve on electricity supply which happens to be one of the major factors hindering effective usage of ICT facilities in our schools.
3. Teachers should be encouraged access to ICT tools to enhance their teaching and learning performance.

Conclusion

By this paper, one can see that PowerPoint is an Application Software you as a teacher can use to enhance your oral presentation and to keep your students focused on the subject matter. It has also proved that when you show your students physical objects, they tend to grab it better and become more attentive listening to the teacher with rapt attention. Therefore if teachers are acquainted with the ICT knowledge, they will find it easier to manage their classroom with the latest technology in teaching and learning process. Government should endeavour, as matter of urgency, look into the power sector in order to stabilise electricity supply in as much as we want to sustain technological advancement in our educational sector. Then the provision of laptops and other software accessories in our schools should be more intensified at both rural and urban areas.

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