

THE IMPACT OF ICT AS INSTRUCTIONAL PACKAGE ON TEACHING ART HISTORY IN
NIGERIA SCHOOL SYSTEM

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ABSTRACT

Information Communication Technology (ICT) no doubt rules the world now. It has become uniquely phenomenal mode of communication in all human activities – socially, politically, religiously and more importantly in the education system. It is difficult to talk about effective instructional packages in education system generally and Nigeria in particular without ICT. ICT instructional packages exist in different forms such as overhead projector, slides, computer, the use of visuals, electronic gadgets – CD, DVD, tape recorder, and radio set. The teaching of art history as a subject at any level of education system in Nigeria requires the use of visuals such as pictures, illustrations and diagrams for effective teaching and learning of it because of its wide scope in the school curriculum. The paper looked into the impact of ICT as instructional package for effective teaching and learning of art history in Nigeria school system. It revealed that ICT makes for easy and effective preparation, presentation and understanding of concepts and icons involved. Thus, ICT plays important role in effective instruction in the education system in Nigeria. The paper recommended among others that every art teacher particularly art historians should be computer literate and the capacity to teach with power-point computer package.

Key Words: Information Communication Technology, computer, instructional package, art history

INTRODUCTION

Information Communication Technology popularly known as ICT has become a common high profile information dissemination device. It is common in the sense that virtually all human activities, world over make use of it. Most third world countries such as Nigeria have witnessed and experienced the use of ICT at all levels of human operations – be it socio-cultural, political, religious and more importantly in the educational sector. Therefore, ICT as an instructional package in the school system should be intensified as inevitable to enhance effective teaching and learning in Nigeria. The National Policy on Education NPE (2004) has placed emphasis on functional and technical education. That is education that de-emphasizes theoretical teaching that creates boredom. Functional education makes teaching and learning lively. With the emergence of ICT which has gradually formed part of the National Curriculum every facet of human life should imbibe the new learning aid culture. In his view, Jajua (2000) said that one of the recent drives of the society towards making education relevant is making ICT a common feature of the educational system. Information and Communication Technology devices exists in many ways ranging from simple handsets, palm-top, laptop and desktop. All these machines are virtually electronically powered. All these are various forms of computer, an integral part of ICT. Other aspect of the ICT components include internet, satellite, cable net. Prior to the emergence of ICT, information technology aided teaching packages were in forms of radio, tape-recorder/player, overhead projectors, slides, fax and telephone. Generally, the teaching and learning of the various subjects in our school system should be done using ICT instructional package because of its numerous advantages over the traditional methods. Kwache (2007) said “in concrete terms, ICT enhances teaching and learning through its dynamic interactive flexible and engaging content”. The teaching and learning of art history in the various levels of education has not been properly exhumed because of its non usage of ICT as instructional package which will help to meet the need of the new generation. Therefore, the focus of this paper is to examine the impact of ICT instructional package in the teaching and learning of art history in our school system.

The Impact of ICT as Instructional Package on Teaching Art History in Nigeria School System

THE CONCEPT OF ICT

Information Communication Technology (ICT) is usually used as an extended synonym for Information Technology (IT) but is usually a more general term that stresses the role of unified communication and the integration of telecommunications (Telephones line and wireless signals), intelligent building, management systems and audio-visual system in modern information technology, (Wikipedia Encyclopedia). With the emergence of ICT and its involvement in technologies globally, many definitions have been given to it by different people based on their personal experiences on the usage in human activities. Simply put, ICT is a phraseology for a range of technologies for gathering, storing, retrieving, processing, analyzing and transmitting information to the final consumer. According to ICT in Education Web definition, ICT is the term now widely used to cover all the computing and telecommunications in an institution, whether used for research, teaching or administration. In similar vein, Ghaseni (2004) defined ICT as all that is involved in gathering and processing information using modern communications technology such as computers and other related equipment so that the services generated can reach all that desire them at reasonable cost and in good time to the over all benefit of mankind. Similarly, Nnadozie (2007) quoting Ehikhamenor remarked that ICT is the technology required for information processing in particular and the use of electronic computers and computers software to convert, store, protect, process, transmit and retrieve information. In a wider spectrum, ICTs stand for information and communication technologies and are defined as a diverse set of technological tools and resources used to communicate, and to create, disseminate, store and manage information, These technologies include computers, the internet, broadcasting technologies (radio and television) and telephony (Education Web definition). In summary ICT involves computer technology, communication technology, mobile technology and internet technology. It performs a wide variety of activities reliably, accurately and quicker as instructional package in teaching of art activities generally and art history in particular in Nigeria School System and beyond. At this time, it is important to explain some of the ICT components such as computer, internet, satellite, cable net, etc.

COMPUTER

Since the evolution of computer and because of its numerous benefits, many definitions have been attributed to it. Simply put, computer is a machine in varying sizes that performs some basic and complex tasks (programmes) depending on its configuration. The programmes of the computers are stored within the computer and can be retrieved and processed by the same computer. According to Encarta Microsoft Premium (2009), computer refers to machine that performs tasks such as calculations or electronic communication under the control of a set of instructions called a programme. In his view, Akukwe (2004) noted that computer is an “electronic device that is capable of accepting, storing and processing data as well as outputting the result by following a set of instructions called programme”. Computer ranges from simple calculator to varying sets/grades of handsets.

INTERNET

This is a computer-based global information system. According to Encarta Premium (2009) the internet is composed of many interconnected computer networks. Each network may link tens, hundreds or even thousands of computers to enable them to share information and processing power. The internet has made it possible for people all over the world to communicate with one another effectively and inexpensively.

SATELLITE

This refers to any object placed purposely into orbit around earth, other parts or the sun to tap and disseminate information.

All these are ICT resources that can generate data for effective teaching and learning of all subjects including art history.

TEACHING/INSTRUCTIONAL PACKAGE

Teaching means the imparting of knowledge from an experienced person (teacher) to another person (learner) desirous to learn. Onwuka in Izuagba (2004) defined teaching as the ‘various activities undertaken by a more experienced and more knowledgeable person in order to enable the other (learner) learn’. With the use technological device teaching processes improved and assumed a high scale. This is called technology in teaching. According to Encarta (2009), technology in teaching means having access to the internet and programmed instruction. That is instruction delivered in a graded sequence of steps, usually by means of a computer or other devices. Therefore, instructional package is a systematic presentation of concepts, ideas, facts etc. to the students (learner) for effective understanding.

Instructional packages existed in the following forms – tape cassettes, radio sets, telephone (audio) which enhance instruction. There are visual materials which illustrate visual stimuli and symbols and include: slides, overhead transparencies, film strips, etc and are commonly referred to as projected visuals. The non-projected visuals include still-pictures, chalkboard, bulletin boards, charts, models, posters and real-life specimens or objects. Audio-visual materials include video-tapes, video machine, sound film strips, television, etc (Lemchi, 2007). All these were commonly utilized instructional materials as earlier observed before the emergence of ICT.

THE CONCEPT OF ART HISTORY

Art history is an important aspect of the visual arts in the sense that it traces the origin, styles, tools and production of the visual images. In a wider spectrum, art history is an empirical and intellectual discipline that investigates specific art objects in time and space demanding interpretation and evaluation (Kleinbauer and Slavens, 1982). For the art historian, a work of art becomes a man-made object of aesthetic significance – a historical phenomenon. He documents the art works through analytical, interpretative and evaluative processes. Wikipedia Free Encyclopedia opines that art history has historically been understood as the academic study of objects of art in their historical development and stylistic contexts, that is genre design, format, and look. This includes the major arts of paintings, sculptures, and architecture as well as the minor arts of ceramics, furniture and other decorative objects. Art history is theoretically based and broad in scope and covered the different aspects of the visual arts and other related areas. The underlying keywords in the study of a work of art include the; who, what, when, where and why. Also, a comparative analysis of one work from the study of art history is difficult and therefore requires ICT as a measure to enhance the teaching and learning of it, in Nigeria and other countries.

THE USE OF ICT IN TEACHING AND LEARNING OF ART HISTORY IN NIGERIA

There are a lot of advantages of ICT in the teaching and learning of virtually all subjects especially art history. According to Encarta (2009), Computer programmes or applications exist to aid every level of education from programmes that teach simple addition or sentence construction that teach advanced calculus. Prior to the emergence of ICT the teaching of art history was based on the old method of using charts, models and chalkboard illustrations which wasted a lot of time and of course energy. The preparation of the various instructional materials manually was highly stressful and discouraging to the teachers. There is no doubt ICT has come to relieve the teacher's pains and stress of preparing instructional materials manually and at the same time ensure effective learning result. The use of ICT in teaching and learning of art history will help the pupils/students to learn and understand faster and also enhance their retentive memory. This is because of the use of visual images/icons in consonance with the power-point package. Power-point is a programme designed using the computer to ensure effective teaching and learning. It is used to prepare topics for presentation in a sequential order. The power-point package is usually designed for projection on a screen. Usually what people see in concrete form have long lasting effect on them. Visual learning as asserted by Dale in Anulobi (2008) stated that:

- 75% of human knowledge is through the sense of sight.
- 13% through the sense of hearing
- 06% through the sense of touch
- 03% through the sense of smell.

The combination of sense of sight and sense of hearing (the demand which is satisfied by ICT) creates room for better result. ICT assists the teacher easily and faster as a resource person to collect necessary data for his lesson preparation and presentation too. Thus, the teacher acquires mastery knowledge of the subject matter. The use of ICT saves the energy of the teacher because he talks less; he only guides through his comments in relation to the topics since the lesson is programmed and timed too. Actions they say speak louder than words, a common dictum is applicable here. Art history with its vast nature requires to be taught with ICT instructional packages to de-emphasize the theoretical nature. As noted earlier, students tend to learn, understand and retain faster what they see and hear in real life situation. For instance, the video CD on "The Agony and Ecstasy of Michelangelo" (The Twentieth Century Fox – Carol Reed Film, 2003), which focused on how Michelangelo was commissioned to execute the painting of the Sistine Chapel creates a long lasting picture in the memory of those who have watched it. The figure, Michelangelo makes an interesting art story during the Renaissance Western art period. Though a renowned sculptor was commissioned by Pope Julius II to conceptualize and paint the Sistine Chapel of St. Peters Basilica, Rome around 15th century (1508 –12). Honour and Fleming (2002) remarked "while Raphael was painting the stanza della segnatura, Michelangelo was at work on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel". Through ICT, the learner can learn and re-learn through self-teaching approach. Moreover, the learners learn at their own pace since they can also recall from the system what they had earlier learnt and also have access to the

The Impact of ICT as Instructional Package on Teaching Art History in Nigeria School System

internet. ICT can assist the students to do series of assignments that may be given to them faster and accurate because of active learning. According to www.elsevier.com/locate/compedu, "It is often assumed that active learning can be facilitated by ICT. Active presupposed that the learner has access to information sources. Such access nowadays seems increasing to be the province of the internet and of interactive, locally available data base such as encyclopedia on CD-ROM". It is also very easy to learn current issues and concepts in art history in any part of the world through information and communication technology. The persistent problems of teaching and learning of art history in the world have been unraveled and solutions proffered through the emergence of information communication technology. Such problems as identified by Oloidi (2003) include finance, language, religion, cultural, philosophy, and stylistic traits. Generally, the use of ICT in teaching and learning art history will go a long way to promote the development of the visual arts skills such as observation, identification, periodization, chronology and grouping. The teaching of art history in any level of the education system is becoming more demanding and challenging and therefore requires professional qualified teachers who are also computer literate. This will help them to fit into the fast growing society in this computer-era.

CONCLUSION

There is no doubt, ICT plays important role in every aspect of human activities – socially, religiously, politically and more importantly in education. ICT used as instructional package in teaching art history makes for easy and effective teaching and learning of the various art history concepts. ICT makes the whole world a global village. That is reducing the stresses and obstacles of reaching and searching for information from the different parts of the globe.

ICT is a new cultural phenomenon that should be imbibed by everybody in the country more importantly teachers of all cadre including art historians. ICT leads to mastery of subject matters, encouraged individualized teaching, and leads to self – study at one's pace.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) should be part and parcel of the education system in Nigeria. As a new cultural phenomenon, everybody should be encouraged to imbibe it.

- The government should organize seminars, conferences and workshops to all teachers in the various education levels in Nigeria on the uses of ICT as instructional packages in the teaching and learning of the visual arts and other related areas.
- All professional art teachers, art historians in particular should be computer literate to enable them utilize ICT as instructional package in teaching art history in our school system.
- Students should be encouraged to be computer literate to enable them have access to the internet for information and other data based items.
- Government should make efforts to provide ICT facilities to our schools and colleges for both teachers and students use.
- Finally, parents should be advised to provide ICT facilities in their homes for the students (their children) use after school to do their assignments and other related issues.

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