

THE ROLE OF ICT IN MODERN EDUCATION

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Abstract: 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, broad casting technologies (radio and television), and telephony. Improving the quality of education and training is a critical issue, particularly at a time of educational expansion. ICTs can enhance the quality of education in several ways: by increasing learner motivation and engagement, by facilitating the acquisition of basic skills, and by enhancing teacher training. In this article there will be discussed the influence of ICT to the education and most popular ICT tools will be analyzed.

Key words: E-learning, ICT, learner-centered environment, collaborative learning

One defining feature of ICTs is their ability to transcend time and space. ICTs make possible asynchronous learning, or learning characterized by a time lag between the delivery of instruction and its reception by learners. Online course materials, for example, may be accessed 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. ICT-based educational delivery (e.g., educational programming broadcast over radio or television) also dispenses with the need for all learners and the instructor to be in one physical location. Additionally, certain types of ICTs, such as teleconferencing technologies, enable instruction to be received simultaneously by multiple geographically dispersed learners (i.e., synchronous learning). Besides, teachers and learners no longer have to rely solely on printed books and other materials in physical media housed in libraries (and available in limited quantities) for their educational needs. With the Internet and the World Wide Web, a

wealth of learning materials in almost every subject and in a variety of media can now be accessed from anywhere at any time of the day and by an unlimited number of people. This is particularly significant for many schools in developing countries, and even some in developed countries, that have limited and outdated library resources.

Nowadays, there are different types of ICT integrated learning styles in modern education. For example, distance learning, web based learning and blended learning.

Open and distance learning is defined by the Commonwealth of Learning as “a way of providing learning opportunities that is characterized by the separation of teacher and learner in time or place, or both time and place; learning that is certified in some way by an institution or agency; the use of a variety of media, including print and electronic; two-way communications that allow learners and tutors to interact; the possibility of occasional face-to-face meetings; and a specialized division of labor in the production and delivery of courses.”

Web-based learning is a subset of e learning and refers to learning using an Internet browser (such as Netscape or Internet Explorer).

Blended learning refers to learning models that combine traditional classroom practice with e-learning solutions. For example, students in a traditional class can be assigned both print-based and online materials, have online mentoring sessions with their teacher through chat, and are subscribed to a class email list. Or a Web-based training course can be enhanced by periodic face-to-face instruction. “Blending” was prompted by the recognition that not all learning is best achieved in an electronically-mediated environment, particularly one that dispenses with a live instructor altogether. Instead, consideration must be given to the subject matter, the learning objectives and outcome, the characteristics of the learners, and the learning context in order to arrive at the optimum mix of instructional and delivery methods.

Creative Learning. ICT-supported learning promotes the manipulation of existing information and the creation of real-world products rather than the regurgitation of received information.

Integrative learning. ICT-enhanced learning promotes a thematic, integrative approach to teaching and learning. This approach eliminates the artificial separation between the different disciplines and between theory and practice that characterizes the traditional classroom approach.

Evaluative learning. ICT-enhanced learning is student-directed and diagnostic. Unlike static, text- or print-based educational technologies, ICT-enhanced learning recognizes that there are many different learning pathways and many different articulations of knowledge. ICTs allow learners to explore and discover rather than merely listen and remember.

Collaborative learning. ICT-supported learning encourages interaction and cooperation among students, teachers, and experts regardless of where they are. Apart from modeling real-world interactions, ICT-supported learning provides learners the opportunity to work with people from different cultures, thereby helping to enhance learners' teaming and communicative skills as well as their global awareness. It models learning done throughout the learner's lifetime by expanding the learning space to include not just peers but also mentors and experts from different fields.

ICTs have also been used to improve access to and the quality of teacher training. For example, institutions like the Cyber Teacher Training Center (CTTC) in South Korea are taking advantage of the Internet to provide better teacher professional development opportunities to in service teachers. The government-funded CTTC, established in 1997, offers self-directed, self-paced Web-based courses for primary and secondary school teachers. Courses include "Computers in the Information Society," "Education Reform," and "Future Society and Education." Online tutorials are also offered, with some courses requiring occasional face-to-face meetings.

To effectively harness the power of the new information and communication technologies (ICTs) to improve learning, the following essential conditions must be met:

- Students and teachers must have sufficient access to digital technologies and the Internet in their classrooms, schools, and teacher education institutions. High quality,

meaningful, and culturally responsive digital content must be available for teachers and learners.

- Teachers must have the knowledge and skills to use the new digital tools and resources to help all students achieve high academic standards.

ICTs are making dynamic changes in society. They are influencing all aspects of life. The influences are felt more and more at schools. Because ICTs provide both students and teachers with more opportunities in adapting learning and teaching to individual needs, society is, forcing schools aptly respond to this technical innovation.

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