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Assessment of Electronic Learning Usage in the Upper Basic Education French Language Curriculum: Implication for Evaluation of Library and Information Science Resources

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Abstract

People who work in a library and information science unit are passionate about making a positive difference in the world. Librarians are the people who work in this field, and their job is to bridge the gaps that exist between people, information, and technology. In today's classroom instructional delivery, the use of electronic learning (e-learning) has become imperative. Thus, the study investigated the extent of implementation of e-learning in the upper basic education French language curriculum and its implication for the evaluation of Library and Information Science Resources. A sample of 370 students participated in the study. A 15 – item questionnaire was used to collect data from the respondents. The internal consistency of the instrument was tested using Cronbach Alpha method. It yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.92. The data obtained were analyzed with mean and standard deviations. The results showed that the implementation of e-learning in the French language curriculum was mainly in the use of French language learning CDs while all other aspects of it were virtually not implemented. This finding has implicated the expertise of the educational measurement and evaluators in that the result of the study will be used by them to take appropriate valued judgment on the use of e-learning in the delivery of Library and Information science.

Keywords: Basic Education, Electronic learning, French language curriculum, Educational evaluators, Library and Information Science Resources

Introduction

People who work in a library and information science unit are passionate about making a positive difference in the world. Librarians are the people who work in this field, and their job is to bridge the gaps that exist between people, information, and technology. In

today's classroom instructional delivery, the use of electronic learning (e-learning) has become imperative in the education sector. Education is a crucial and critical means of attaining individual, institutional and national goals. This is because it is designed to drive the development of appropriate skills for social and economic transformation. It is in recognition of this that NEROC (2013, p.3) has one of the goals of education in Nigeria as the "Development of appropriate skills, mental, physical and social abilities and competencies to empower the individual to live in and contribute positively to the society". Hence, education provides opportunities for citizens to participate in nation building. In line with this, Global Partnership for Education (2015) views education as the process of enabling individuals to develop their capabilities through the acquisition of requisite knowledge, skills, values and attitude for their own benefit and for the benefit of the society. So, education in its essence equips the citizens with life-long knowledge and skills with which they face real-life challenges and play the role of functional and competent contributors to nation building. For education to really achieve this, it has to be qualitative, relevant and globally competitive.

The above desired quality of education is based on the fact that we are in a global contest and context, fuelled by globalization. Globalization is one of the characteristics of the modern world in which the world has been moulded into a global village where the world is seen as a single community that is connected by electronic gadgets. It is bringing the world closer politically, economically, socially, culturally and educationally (Isyaka, 2004). Hence, Obanya (2010) maintains that no part of the world can afford to remain isolated and untouched by global events. So, international best practices, standards and benchmarks have become the norm in intellectual discourse as everybody seems to be trying to meet up with global development trends. That is why the 21st century world is experiencing unprecedented transformation that cuts across all areas of human endeavour (Yaya, 2015). Nigerian education system is not left out as it is aimed at repositioning itself in line with global best

practices in order to be producing globally relevant products that will be capable of competing for available opportunities at home and abroad (Sa'ad, 2015). This will require the acquisition of scientific and technological skills for the products of the school system to learn effectively and live productively in an increasingly digital society. The present researchers believe so because of the pivotal role being played by technology in the entire globalization process.

Technology has to do with devices and tools that are designed to solve real-life problems. Onyeke (2018) states that it deals with material and immaterial entities created by the application of mental and physical efforts for the purpose of achieving some values. On his part, Olarinoye (2019:306) describes technology as "...the totality of the means employed by people to provide mental objects for human sustenance and comfort". It includes all instruments, communicating and transporting devices, traditional and emerging hardware and software such as radios, computers, televisions, overhead projector, motion pictures, mobile phones, audio compact discs, audio books, video recorders, video compact discs, digital versatile discs, interactive white boards, etc (Eze, Ugwuanyi and Okeke, 2020). It is made by the people for the people. Its main purpose is to enhance the quality of life. It has been doing that in all spheres of life. The accelerated development being witnessed across the world in various professional fields is largely attributable to it. In education, it has been in the forefront of preparing individual for living and working in a global society as well as improving students' achievement in school subjects (Ugwuanyi et al., 2020a, 2020b, 2020c, 2020d; Ugwuanyi et al., 2019a, 2019b, Ugwuanyi & Okeke, 2020; Onah et al., 2020; Ejimuonye et al., 2020a, 2020b)..

It is recognized worldwide as a tool for making the learners innovative and motivating them towards learning. It helps in unlocking the transformative power and wider benefits of education to the learners by making it possible for them to access quality education (Ayelaagba, 2014). It is mainly as a result of technological advances today that learning can

take place anywhere and anytime even when the learner may not intend or be aware of it. With virtual classrooms and digital libraries, schools are becoming borderless (World Economic Forum, 2015). In addition to the promotion of effective learning, the availability and accessibility of rich array of technologies help to make learning fun and essay. This desire for effective learning is what Nigeria needs to stimulate and sustain in its citizens in the course of its drive for self-reliance. The country needs to create a skilled and creative workforce that will transform it into a nation with strong and dynamic economy (NERDC, 2013). In fact, the potentials of technology to strengthen an education sector and transform a country into a knowledge based and globally competitive entity have occasioned the clamour for the promotion of e-learning in the Nigerian educational system.

Technology based learning has to do with the application of technological devices, tools and processes in teaching, learning and school administration. This is a necessity in today's existence as the 21st century has presented to the world new opportunities and challenges. Hence, for children, youths and the generality of the citizens to adapt and thrive in the rapidly changing world, they have to acquire the necessary scientific and technological knowledge, skills, values and attitudes. The quest for that in the Nigerian educational system is aptly captured in FRN (2012)'s stipulation that makes the use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) mandatory at all levels of educational institution. The purpose of the stipulation is to "... provide the learner with the basic IT knowledge and skills for entrepreneurship, wealth creation and educational advancement" (FME 2014, p.17). This implies that there are some skills and knowledge that every learner needs to acquire in order to function maximally in using technological tools and to further their academic pursuits in various fields of human endeavour. That is why Achimugu (2010) described e-learning a transformational phenomenon needed for the provision of the necessary shift to learner-centered environment. One of the major areas where that is needed is in the implementation of the upper basic education French language curriculum.

The upper basic education French language curriculum is a set of carefully planned well written and documented objectives, contents, learning experiences and evaluation procedures. In line with the nation's ideological leaning towards technology based learning, the planners of the curriculum while stating its general objectives opine that "It seeks to encourage teachers to lead the learners to use French language as a tool for enhancing technological excellence in whatever discipline they may choose in future" (NERDC 2012, p.1). This is in accordance with the prescription of Ogbechie (1999) that the curriculum in the nation's educational system should be made capable of producing knowledgeable, skilled, creative and globally competitive students. By intending to build the French teachers' capacities for the promotion of technology based learning in the discharge of their responsibilities, the planners of the curriculum wish that both the teachers and the students must function and fit into the technology dominated global village, flow with the changes, master them and become agents. As good as the intentions of the planners are, available research evidence indicates that the chances of their realization may be bleak (Okorie, Agabi and Uche 2005; Aguele, 2007; Enakrire and Onyenenia, 2007; Chukwudim, 2013; Eze, Ugwuanyi, and Okeke, 2020).

Technology based learning has been proven to be quite expensive in such areas like infrastructure, course development and delivery. Studies by Okorie et al (2005), Enakrire and Onyenenia (2007) and Chukwudum (2013) point to the fact that high cost of technological tools and poor funding of educational institutions have been identified as some of the factors that have been driving the country's educational system backward. As a result of this, school facilities are grossly inadequate and mostly in bad shape across the country. Technological tools are in short supply and often of low quality. The already bad situation is worsened by the endemic corruption and mismanagement in the country. This is corroborated by Eze, Ugwuanyi and Okeke (2020). All these are in addition to other big problems facing the

Nigerian education sector concerning e-learning such as unstable power supply, poor internet access, poor digital literacy, lack of will power by the government, etc. All these challenges cast doubt over the attainability of the lofty goal of achieving technological excellence through the implementation of the upper basic education French language curriculum. Therefore, the problem of the study posed as a question, is to what extent is e-learning being implemented in the upper basic education French language curriculum.

Purpose of the Study

To find out the extent to which e-learning is being implemented in the Upper Basic Education function language curriculum.

Research Question

To what extent is e-learning being implemented in the upper Basic Education French Language Curriculum?

Methods

The study adopted a descriptive survey design. It was adopted because the study was interested in investigating the implementation of e-learning in the upper basic education French language curriculum. The population of the study consisted of all the 3,688 junior secondary III students who were studying French language in the 2019/2020 academic session in all the public secondary schools in Nsukka Education Zone of Enugu State. This population was chosen because they had been exposed to the upper basic education French language curriculum for almost three years, and as such were expected to be able to offer a reasonably informed opinion on the implementation of e-learning in the curriculum. The sample for the study was 370 of the students that were randomly selected through simple random sampling using balloting. The instrument for data collection was a researcher constructed 15-items questionnaire.

The questionnaire had one cluster which sought to find out the extent to which the students believed that e-learning was being implemented in the upper basic education French language curriculum. The instrument was structured on a 4-point scale on which the students reacted to. The items in the questionnaire were weighted thus: High Extent (HE) =3.50-4.00, Moderate Extent (ME) =2.50-3.49, Low Extent (LE) =1.5-2.49 and No Extent (NE) = 0.00-1.49. The instrument was validated by two specialists in the teaching of French as a foreign language (FFL) and one specialist in Educational Measurement and Evaluation. All of them were lecturers in University of Nigeria, Nsukka. The internal consistency of the instrument was tested using Cronbach Alpha method. It yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.92. The data obtained were analyzed using mean scores and standard deviations.

Table 1: Mean and standard deviation analysis on the implementation of e-learning in the Upper Basic Education French Language Curriculum

S/N	ITEM	HE	ME	LE	NR	IX	SD	Decision
1	Belonging to a social networking site that is only for French learners.	0	0	0	370	1.00	0.00	No Extent
2	Browsing the internet for French language learning purposes.	7	45	201	117	1.84	0.75	Low Extent
3	Engaging in electronic French language learning games.	0	9	29	332	1.13	1.18	No Extent
4	Finding the meaning of French words through mobile phone.	5	38	186	141	1.75	0.96	Low Extent
5	Getting awareness about the national ICT policy during French lessons.	0	0	19	351	1.05	0.33	No Extent
6	Helping to improvise French language learning materials to the class.	3	14	63	290	1.27	.07	No Extent
7	Having French language lessons in language laboratory.	0	0	0	370	1.00	0.00	No Extent
8	Listening to French language learning audio CDs.	211	75	48	36	3.25	0.72	Moderate Extent
9	Submitting French language assignments through e-mail.	0	0	0	370	1.00	0.00	No Extent
10	Tuning in to French language radio stations.	18	31	77	244	1.52	0.87	Low Extent
11	Using motion pictures during French language lessons.	0	0	0	370	1.00	0.00	No Extent
12	Using overhead projector during French language lessons.	0	0	0	370	1.00	0.00	No Extent
13	Using the CDs that accompany the recommended	188	63	46	73	2.99	0.81	Moderate Extent

	French language textbooks.							
14	Watching French language learning CDs.	32	58	109	171	1.87	1.14	Low Extent
15	Watching French language television channels.	4	26	67	273	1.35	0.98	No Extent
Grand mean and standard deviation						0.57	1.53	

From the table above, the students' responses indicate that technology based learning was being implemented in the upper basic education French language curriculum to a No Extent concerning items 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 9, 11, 12 and 15. They recorded mean scores of 1.00, 1.13, 1.05, 1.07, 1.00, 1.00, 1.00 and 1.35 respectively with corresponding standard deviations of 0.00, 1.18, 0.33, 1.07, 0.00, 0.00, 0.00, 0.00 and 0.98. On the other hand, e-learning was being implemented in the curriculum to a Low Extent with regard to items 2,4,10, and 14. They recorded mean scores of 1.84, 1.75, 1.52 and 1.87 respectively with corresponding standard deviations of 0.75, 0.96, 0.87 and 1.14. On a positive note, e-learning was being implemented in the curriculum to a Moderate Extent as it regards items 8 and 13. They recorded mean scores of 3.25 and 2.99 respectively with corresponding standard deviations of 0.72 and 0.81. With a grand mean of 1.53 and overall standard deviation of 0.57, the implementation of e-learning in the upper basic education French language curriculum is generally to a low extent.

Discussion

The findings of the study show that e-learning was being implemented to a moderate extent in terms of the students listening to French language learning audio compact discs and using the CDs that accompany the recommended French language textbooks. The result is in line with the expressed desire of the planners of the curriculum to use the French language to enhance technological excellence on the part of the learners (NERDC, 2012). It is an indication that some efforts were being made to realize the dream of developing the right attitude towards the acquisition of desirable knowledge and functional skills as specified in the curriculum. With proper use of the CDs, pronunciation will be improved by listening to

recorded monologues and dialogues of native speakers of French. By using them, the learners will encounter French in a repetitive fashion until mastery in a particular aspect of the language is achieved. Hence, the move to use the French language as a tool to key into global relevance and competitiveness is being appreciated to some extent.

However, the findings also show that technology based learning in the curriculum was being implemented to a low extent with regard to students browsing the internet for French language learning purposes, finding the meaning of French words through mobile phones, tuning in to French language radio stations and watching French language learning VCDs. The findings indicate further that technology based learning was implemented in the curriculum to no extent concerning the students belonging to a social networking site that is only for French learners, engaging in electronic French language learning games, getting awareness about the national ICT policy during French language lessons, helping to improvise French language learning materials to the class, having French language lessons in language laboratory, submitting French language assignments through e-mail, using motion pictures during French language lessons, using overhead projector during French language lessons and watching French language television channels. These results corroborate the earlier findings of Enakrire and Onyenenia (2007), Chukwudum (2013) and Eze, Ugwuanyi and Okeke (2020) which pointed out the gap between technological literacy and pedagogy in the Nigerian educational sector. This unfortunate state of affairs may be as a result of the prevailing culture of corruption in the country which makes it very difficult to witness the needed technological transformation in the Nation's educational system. This finding has implicated the expertise of the educational measurement and evaluators in that the result of the study will be used by them to take appropriate valued judgement on the use of e-learning in the delivery of French curriculum.

Implication for Evaluation of Library and Information Science Resources

These findings point to the need for thorough library and information science evaluation. People who work in the library and information science unit are passionate about making a positive difference in the world. Librarians are the people who work in this field, and their job is to bridge the gaps that exist between people, information, and technology. Through the use of e-learning facilities in the teaching and study of Library and information science, librarians aim to produce reader's advisory tools to inspire young pupils to develop a lifetime love of reading and learning. After determining that the use of e-learning is critical in the delivery of the French Language curriculum, more research into the discipline of library and information science is required in order to develop more pre-reading activities in various libraries, both online and in print, for students' quick access. This will go a long way toward improving student achievement in numerous scholastic courses.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The implementation of e-learning in the upper basic education French language curriculum is still in its infancy. Though some progress has been made as the students make use of audio compact discs in their French language lessons, many other aspects of basic technology based learning such as browsing of the internet, use mobile phones, use of electronic French language learning games, using motion pictures, watching French language learning VCDs, watching French language television channels, etc are virtually nonexistent. This shows that the country is yet to tap into the learning styles and dominant youth culture in the land. The researchers therefore make the following recommendations:

1. French language teachers should be retrained to better build their capacities to implement e-learning in the upper basic education French language curriculum.

2. Conferences, seminars and workshops have to be conducted for school administrators in a move to adapt education to the new generation of learners who are used to multimedia and hypermedia environments.

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