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Availability and Use of ICT among Teacher Educators in Karaikal Region

N.JOHNSON
Instructor in Educational Technology
Perhunthalaivar Kamarajar College of Education
KARAIKAL, U. T OF PUDUCHERRY
Email: johnchris81@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

This paper investigated the level of availability and use of ICT in different teacher training Institutes and colleges of education in karaikal region. The study revealed low level of usage of ICT gadgets and non-availability of some ICT equipments. The data for the study were gathered through a questionnaire administered to 150 respondents in Karaikal region. The results of the survey among teacher educators in different teacher training Institutes and colleges of education in Karaikal region revealed and suggested a low level of usage of ICT gadgets; non -availability of ICT equipments and that the respondents were disgruntled with the sluggish use and integration of ICT.
Keywords: *ICT; Teacher educators, Teacher training institutes, Colleges of education.*

INTRODUCTION

ICT is a generic term that refers to technologies which are being used for collecting, storing, editing and passing on information in various forms (SER, 1997). A personal computer is the best known example of the use of ICT in education, but the term multimedia is also frequently used. Multimedia can be interpreted as a combination of data carriers, for example video, CDROM, floppy disc and Internet and software in which the possibility for an interactive approach is offered (Smeets, 1996).

Educators at the teaching profession need to be able to exploit the potential of ICT to meet his or her teaching objectives. Educators at the College of Education level must not only equip themselves but equip trainees to evaluate examples of ICT, both during their training and in their future employment; to make sound judgements about when, how to use it, and to become confident and competent users of it. ICT has, therefore, provided opportunities for student teachers, academic and non-academic staff to communicate with one another more effectively during formal and informal teaching and learning (Yusuf, 2005b, pp. 316-321).

Teacher educators, in order to provide for the need of their trainees, need to be aware of the current thinking about good practice. They should also have knowledge and understanding of relevant research so that they can support the needs of the trainees. The primary goal of ICT in education is to enable stakeholders in education to develop national standards for educational uses of technology that facilitate improvement in all nations with particular reference to Karaikal region. This is to define standards for students, integrating curriculum technology, technology support, and standards for student assessment and evaluation of technology use.

It is widely believed that education should now be ICT challenged and biased. The availability and use of ICT in teacher training institutes and Colleges of Education has become imperative because of the fact that these institutions would produce teachers that need to teach/educate populace of values of ICT and its integration. Education at this level should be ICT compliance as it is being found useful in other sectors such as in e-banking, e-commerce, e-mail etc.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in karaikal region is lagging behind expectation and desire. Hence, the need to draw up and design learning process in the future and the role of ICT to support this process, with a focus on teacher training institutes and college of education. There is the need for a powerful role of teacher educators in the process of educational innovation and the implementation of ICT. The teacher training institutes and Colleges of Education

provide the teachers of the future with the prelude that teachers are the key figures in arranging learning processes. It is imperative to understand the importance of ICT among teacher training institutes and colleges of education. Teacher educators are the one who disseminates the knowledge of ICT to their students.

The nature and extent to which ICT is being used in education is considered to be a result of synergy between 'top-down' and 'bottom up' processes. Institutes such as teacher training institutes and Colleges of Education where prospective primary, high school, secondary school teachers are being trained have to shift their focus from dealing with present education to that of 'future education'. This invariably will make teachers to be prepared and encouraged for the implementation of ICT at different levels.

ICT is being used as an integrated component of the learning environment; teacher educators should develop understandings, skills, and dispositions with regard to technology integration into teaching and learning. A teacher educator is supposed to continue to develop the capacity in his work, to develop more opportunities and to help the student teachers to build upon what they have learned. Teacher educators, in order to provide for the need of their trainees, need to be aware of the current thinking about good practice. They should also have knowledge and understanding of relevant research so they can support the needs of the trainees.

Research questions

The main research questions are:

1 What is the level of availability and use of ICT among teacher educators in Karaikal region?

2 What is the teacher educators prospective role in ICT-designed learning environment?

Procedure and administration

150 teacher educators from 6 colleges of education and 11 teacher training institutes from Karaikal region were taken as the sample for the study. A survey on the availability and use of ICT materials was carried out using observation chat and interviews technique. Results from the observation are shown on Table 1.

RESULTS

Table 1: Level of Availability and Use of ICT in Colleges of Education and TTI's

ICT Materials	%
1. Colleges with computer	60
2. Used for research/education purposes	5
3. Used for administrative purposes	40
4. Colleges connected to internet	15
5. Colleges where lecturers can operate computers	20
6. Accessibility of computer to lecturers	17
7. Availability of software packages	9
8. Colleges without computer center	10
9. Colleges with generators for computers	7
10. Colleges that allowed students to interact with computers	25

DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

All the colleges and TTI's use computers for administrative purposes. Lecturers have no access to computers. It is very desperate to say even the only Government college of education in Karaikal had no internet access till date (December 2011). Many TTI's and colleges of education had no computer center. Only one college had standby generator and only few students were allowed to work with computers. The TTI's faculties are lagging in ICT skills when compared with the B.Ed teacher educators. Most of the teacher educators in general are in the state of technophobia towards ICT. It is quite evident that many researches (Norman, 1999; Tirene D and Luft, 2002), has found that students whose teachers had professional acumen in ICT performed better than those whose teachers did not.

Teacher educator's prospective role:

It is important that student teachers are well equipped to meet the challenges of ICT teaching in schools and that they are familiar with resources that impact on learning and teaching generally. Teacher educators should make effective use of hardware such as computers, projectors, wireless and portable devices, e.g. PC tablets and other handheld devices including digital and video cameras, as well as the use of learning platforms for learning and teaching. Within the context of the College environment, teacher educators will be required to make effective use of a wide range of resources and preparation for these experiences must be systematically addressed.

Teacher educators have a critical role in preparing student teachers to work within innovative technological learning environments. Clifford et al. (2004) argued that one of the tasks of teacher education programs is to find "ways to bring educators' attention to the implications of digital technologies for learning, to leverage rather than to dampen their power and to bring those technologies into classrooms in increasingly meaningful, effective and innovative ways.

CONCLUSION

Thus in the era of knowledge society one cannot be complacent and out of step with the vast strides of ICT. Teacher educators should use ICT to support existing pedagogies. A whole hearted and coordinated effort by the teacher educators will ensure success of ICT in a resounding manner. Teacher educators play a major role in bringing about the magical power of ICT to their dear students so that they do not fall behind in the quest of becoming a fully developed nation as envisaged by our former president Dr. A.P.J Abdul Kalam, by the year 2020.

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