ADOPTION OF M-LEARNING IN THE PRIMARY SCHOOL SOCIAL STUDIES CURRICULUM IN NIGERIA: PROSPECTS AND CHALLENGES

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Abstract
This paper examined the possibility of the adoption of mobile learning into the primary school social studies curriculum in Nigeria, the benefits of m-learning, challenges and prospects were also explained. The importance of the social studies in the primary school curriculum and ways the m-learning could be adopted so as to enhance learners' performance and foster teacher's presentation was also discussed.

Key words: M-learning, Social Studies Curriculum, Primary school, Nigeria

Introduction

The term 'M-learning', or 'Mobile Learning', has different meaning for different communities. Although related to e-learning and distance education, it is distinct in its focus on learning across contents and learning with mobile devices. Mobile learning is any sort of learning that happens when the learners is not at a fixed, predetermined location, or learning that happens when the learner takes advantage of the learning opportunities offered by mobile technologies. In other words, mobile learning decreases limitation of learning location with the mobility of general portable devices (Encyclopedia Wikipedia, 2010).

Learning with portable technologies include but not limited to handheld computers, Mp3 players, notebook and mobile phones. M-learning focuses on the mobility of the learner, interacting with portable technologies and learning that reflects a focus on how society and its institutions can accommodate and support an increasingly mobile population. There is also a new direction in M-learning that adds mobility of the instructor and includes creation of learning materials "on-the-spot", in the field using predominately smartphone with special software such AHG cloud note. Using mobile tools for creating learning aides and materials become an important part of informal learning (Encyclopedia Wikipedia, 2010).

According to Boyinbode and Akinyele (2009), mobile and wireless technologies are being used in diverse areas such as travel, education, stock trading, military, package, delivery, disaster re-coverage, and medical emergency care, but emphasis in this study is on the mobile learning. Mobile and wireless systems cover two areas viz: mobility and computing. Mobile computing means continuous accessibility to the user while wireless implies communicating without wires. Technology has improved substantially, making mobile devices remarkably convenient and affordable and m-learning a reality.

The value of mobile learning according to the Encyclopedia Wikipedia (2010) states that,

- it is important to bring new technology into the classroom especially in the social studies instruction,
- it will be more light weight device compare to books, PCS, etc.,
- mobile learning could be utilised as part of a learning approach which uses different types of activities,
- mobile learning supports the learning process rather than being integral to it,
- mobile learning needs to be used appropriately, according to the groups of students involved in the social studies instruction,
- mobile learning can be used add-on tool for students with special needs. However, for SMS and MMS, this might be dependent on the students' specific disabilities or difficulties involved,
- good support is needed,
- mobile learning can be used as a 'hook' to re-engage disaffected children, and
- it is necessary to have devices for classroom use.

The challenges of mobile technologies inclusion in the primary school level could include:
- connectivity and battery life,
- screen size and key size,
- ability for authors to visualise mobile phones for delivery,
- possibilities to meet required bandwidth for nonstop/fast streaming,
- number of file/assets' formats supported by a specific device,
- content security or copyright issue from authoring group,
- multiple standard, multiple screen sizes, multiple operating systems,
- reworking standards, existing e-learning materials, or mobile platforms,

Social and Educational Challenges include: (Moorer, 2009)
- accessibility and cost barriers for end uses,
- how to access learning outside the classroom,
- how to support learning across many contexts,
- content's security (or) pirating issues,
- frequent changes in devices models/technologies/ functioning etc
- conceptual difference between e-and m-learning,
- developing an appropriate theory of learning for the mobile age,
- design of technology to support a lifetime of learning,
- tracking of results and proper use of this information,
- no restriction on learning timetable,
- personal and private information and content,
- no demographic boundary,
- disruption of pupils personal and academic lives,
- access to and use of the technology in developing countries,

Attewell (2005) says the use of mobile technologies to support, enhance and improve access to learning is a relatively new idea and while many teenagers and twenty-something are expert mobile phone users many educators are not.

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Sharples (2000), mobile learning (m-learning) is the point where mobile computing and e-learning intersect to produce anytime, anywhere learning experiences. Advances in mobile technologies have enhanced m-learning tools at just the right moment to meet the need for more cost effective just in time training options learning on the go. Electronic learning offer method which decreases the limitations of traditional education but learning offers more. The educational technology depends mainly on teacher and the pupils that must be physically present to participate in the learning process. Regardless of the obvious advantages of a direct contact between a teacher and students, immediate feedback in the additional classroom education has many disadvantages lead to search for new and more effective educational methods. E-learning offers new methods for education based on computer interest technology. M-learning is the intersection of mobile computing and e-learning. M-learning has the ability to learn everywhere at every time without permanent physical connection to cable network. M-learning defined as a learning that is facilitated and enhanced by the use of digital mobile devices that can be carried and used anywhere and anytime such as mobile phones and pDAS (Egunjobi, 2007).

The Importance of Social Studies in the Primary School Curriculum

Fagehinbo (2002) states that, the interest in social studies as a school subject in Nigeria had first been demonstrated in 1963 when members of the social studies department of the comprehensive high school at Aiyetoro in the present Ogun State of Nigeria started to work on a book on the subject. This department began with a few American teachers, assisted at the beginning by two Nigerians. The Amodu Bello University, Zaria Nigeria, has been organising a series of workshops that have produced social studies syllabi for primary and post-primary institutions for the northern states of Nigeria.

Ogundare (1988) explains that, social studies was introduced to Nigerian schools to correct the imbalance of colonial education and to inculcate in Nigerian children awareness of their own environment, national consciousness and national pride. The implementation of the 1977 and 1981 National Policy on Education, which become operational in 1987, approved the teaching of social studies in both primary and secondary schools in Nigeria.

Fegeyinbo (2002) states that, social studies equip children with the knowledge and understanding of the past necessary for coping with the present and planning for the future, enable them to understand and participate effectively in their word, and explain their relationship to other people and to social, economic and political institutions. Social studies can provide students with the skills for productive problem solving and decision making as well as for assessing issues and making thoughtful value judgements. Above all, the social studies help students to integrate these skills and understanding into a framework for responsible citizen participation, whether in their play group, the school, the community, or the world.

According to the Encyclopedia Wikipedia (2010), the energy, curiosity and imagination of young children lead them to action and interaction within their environment from a narrow, unilateral perspective. They live in a family, play in a peer group, and make decisions about how they will relate to other people. Many times, teachers suggest that at the primary level everything they do is related to socials studies,

but it is important to recognise that an effective social studies programme cannot be just a haphazard collection of unrelated activities. It must be organised systematically around concepts from history and the social sciences.

Allen (1993) states that, active, curious children need, want and are able to learn skills that are taught and reinforced in social studies classes. These skills are required for processing information so that they can make generalizations and integrate new information into a developing system of knowledge. Children formulate many of their attitudes and values occur primarily outside the school setting. However, the social studies programme should provide a setting for children to acquire knowledge of history and the social sciences and to be exposed to a variety of opinion, facilitating the formulation, re-assessment, and affirmation of their beliefs. The larger social world penetrates their lives through television and other media, travel, family and friends; but young childhood lack the conceptual base to integrate the new knowledge these experiences brings.

According to daily contribution on Google (2001), social studies enables children to participate effectively now in the groups to which they belong and not to look only to their future participation as adult. The school itself serves as a laboratory for students to learn social participation directly and not symbolically. Democratic and participatory school and classroom environment are essential to this type of real-world learning.

If the social studies are not part of the elementary curriculum, we cannot expect our children to be prepared to understand or participate effectively in an increasingly complex world. They need to encounter and re-encounter, in a variety of contexts, the knowledge, concepts, skills, and attitudes that form the foundation for participation in a democratic society. Otherwise, we are in danger of disrupting the critical balance between individual and community needs. Social studies are intended to help children understand, evaluate and make decisions regarding these often competing claims.

The adoption of mobile learning in the social studies instruction in primary schools will enable the children formulate fairly accurate conceptions of work, wants and scarcity and evidence the capability of developing a method for making decisions (Egunjobi, 2007). Mobile learning gives the children opportunity to understand more about their own uniqueness and their relationship to the world in the classroom.

Although mobile technology is still evolving with most mobile devices supporting numerous communications and technology standards, there are currently very few applications of these devices to support and enhance teaching and learning activities. Integrated appropriately, mobile devices can help students acquire the skills needed to survive in a complex highly technological-based economy (Stephanie, 2009).

Teaching with mobile technology helps to capture pupils' attention and engage them in the learning process. However, the result of using these tools ultimately relies on the effectiveness of the instructor's instructional approaches. Goode (1996) argues, that, technology is not a substitute for good instruction; effective teachers integrate technology in their lessons to engage the multiple learning styles of the diverse learners in the classroom. Furthermore, the most effective way to benefit from the use of technology tools is to integrate them into the curriculum as opposed to integrating curriculum into the existing technology.

The Prospects of m-learning in the Educational Pedagogy

The ongoing challenge remains as to how best improve learning and teaching methods for tomorrow's workforce. With rapid pace of growing globalisation and foreign competition, it is imperative that modern day educators embrace new technologies a method to align their teaching skills with the expectation of "wired" generation. Mobile learning can be one of the innovations used to help fill these needs. This quantitative study was designed to explore and discover valuable that can be used to understand and overcome potential barriers of educators, to adopt mobile technology as a learning tool (Channe, 2004).

Mobile learning, or m-learning as it is often called, is a relatively new tool in the pedagogical arena to assist students and teachers as they navigate the options available in the expanding distance world. SMS is used for communication between the learners and the teachers. Different approaches have been proposed on the use of digital and interactive technology in mobile learning contexts. In line with recent findings in the literature, mobile learning systems benefit from an interactive design and development process within a holistic, socio-technical system view. This system view make allowance for the complex dynamism between teachers, student, researchers, the multiplicity of contextual factors, and the specifications and requirement of the digital devices and applications. (Attewell, 2005)

Mobile learning has become a major topic for the learning research for so long. Mobile teaching provides a richer and more meaningful context for immediate or natural interaction with the material (Roger, 2005). He opined further that, mobile learning decreases limitations of learning location with the mobility of general portable devices. It focus on the mobility of learner, interacting with potable technologies, and learning that reflect a focus on how society and its institutions can accommodate and support increasingly mobile population.

M-learning is convenient in that it is accessible from virtually anywhere. M-learning, like other form of e-learning is also collaborating, sharing is almost instantaneous, among everyone using the same content, which leads to the reception of instant feedback and tips. M-learning also brings strong portability by replacing book and notes with small RAMs, filled with tailored learning content. It is simple to use mobile learning for a more effective and entertaining experience. (Attewell, 2005).

Channe (2004), says m-learning is a brand new and learner centered computing paradigm, which is believed, into really enable anytime and anywhere learning, with its distinguishing features from other previous concepts of learning, such as computer-based learning and electronic learning (e-learning).

Wikipedia, therefore encyclopedia (2010) defines as m-learning as any sort of learning that happens when the learner is not at a fixed, predetermined location, or learning that happen when the learner takes advantage of the learning opportunities offered by mobile technologies.

The use of mobile phones as an educational tool is highly motivating for students. Using the latest technology in a device that they are familiar with creates authentic learning while staying motivated. Yet mobile phones come with both advantages and disadvantages. Text bullying targets of personal theft and unrestricted access to the internet (that assuming all of the students devices can actually connect to the internet)

seem to be the biggest disadvantages. Using devices that do not have GPRS/3G capability,. and are not owned by individual to eliminate these risks which also in turn creates another problem. (Rogger, 2005).

M-learning is a mental extension of e-learning it has the potential to further expand where, how, and when, we learn and perform in all aspects of our life. One of the key benefits of m-learning is its potentials for increasing productivity by making learning available anywhere, and anytime allowing learners to participate (Channe, 2004).

In educational pedagogical activities of time and place, mobile technologies have the power to make learning available and accessible than we are used to existing e-learning.

Concept of Social Studies in Nigeria

The concept of social studies was borrowed and the content of social studies in Nigeria has been an integral part of the Nigeria indigenous curriculum right from the earliest times except for certain modification to accommodate societal dynamism.

The nature and objectives of social studies in Nigeria schools indicate the affective orientation of the subject abound in the teaching and evaluation of the subject in the schools.

Social studies in Nigeria schools may be seen as a subject meant to develop in students a critical and balanced awareness. Ogundare (1988) posits that the modern social studies programme emphasises the promotion of how to think, over what to think. He further opines that social studies in Nigeria is aimed towards social attitudes formation and that the need for establishing social studies programme arises when a society determines that is it requires formal instruction to develop a common set of understanding skills, attitudes and actions concerning human relationship among all members of the society.

The various views on the nature of social studies portray the subject areas as functional in orientation. It is expected that there would be a remarkable change in the nature of the personalised and exposed learning opportunities provided by social studies. Social studies is viewed mainly as a formal instruction to develop a common set of understanding, skills, values, attitudes habits, and action concerning human relationship in the society. In Nigeria and perhaps like other places, it has to do with the development of socio-civic and personal behaviour. These are expensive or the effective orientation of social studies in Nigeria schools.

M-learning and Social Studies Instruction

Mobile learning is one of the latest innovation that can be integrated into any type of class structure. M-learning (the use of mobile technologies in teaching social studies) is a complimentary means for students and instructor to engage in social interaction, motivation and learning (Sum-Nussbann, 2007).

Although mobile technology is still evolving with most mobile devices supporting numerous communications and technology standards, there are currently very few applications of those devices to support and enhance teaching and learning in social studies. Interestingly, mobile devices can help students acquire the skills needed to service in a complex, highly technological, knowledge based economy.

Teaching social studies with technology helps to capture students' attention and engage them in the learning process. However, the results of using these tools ultimately relies on the effectiveness of the instructor's instructional approaches.

Major developments in computer and internet technologies have increased the availability of computer and internet access in schools. According to data from the national Center for Education Statistics (NCES, 2003), computers have been widely introduced into schools in recent years. In 2002, the average public school contained 131 instructional computers, and 99% of schools had access to the internet developments in computer hardware and software in the last decades have increased computer integration in social studies education (Awona and Benson, 2003).

Society is characterised by increasingly rapid social and technological change. Society's ability to orchestrate change frequently outstrips its ability to reflect on the ramifications of what it has done. Are children developing skills to absorb now information in light of the information explosion? Are they learning structures for understanding and adapting to change in technology? Are they beginning to learn about interdependence and the relationship of technology to social conditions?

Nearly all the children spend more hours each week watching television than they spend in any other activity besides sleeping. As they sit passively watching, they are bombarded by messages. Technology is just a tool that supports learning. However, in using mobile as a learning tool, teachers should feel comfortable allowing pupils to "move into domains of knowledge where they themselves lack expertise, and they must be able to make their own learning process when they encounter phenomenon they do not understand or questions they cannot answer" (Cullata, 2009).

Adoption of Mobile Learning into Primary School Curriculum

Adoption rates for new technologies can be slow or null for some instructors. Recent years was seen an incremental amount of mobile learning experiments for the purpose of implementation mobile ICTs into mainstream education. However the adoption of mobile learning in basic education-primary and secondary schools, is still disappointingly slow, rather than exponential.

There are other fears among instructors besides the fear of technology, one controversy among professionals is that mobile technologies could increase classroom absenteeism. Some instructors believe the advantages of mobile overweigh the advantage of not having a full lesson in the classroom. Some instructors believe it is demobilizing for pupils to fail to attend class, but others believe the technology can give students an extra tool to enhance their learning.

Mobile learning is the use of any mobile or wireless device for learning on the move. It is any service or facility that supplies as learner with general electronic information and educational content that aids their acquisition of knowledge, regardless of location and time.

Mobile learning, as a novel educational approach, encourages, flexibility, students do not need to be at specific age, gender, or member of a specific group to participate in learning opportunities, restriction of time, space and place have been lifted.

Mobile technologies enable students become more adaptable to flexible and contextual lifelong learning, a situation defined by Sharples (2000) as the "knowledge and skills" people need to prosper throughout their lifetimes. Clearly, these activities are

not confirmed to specified times and places; however, they are very difficult to achieve through traditional education channels. Put simply, mobile technologies fulfil the basic requirement needed to support contextual, life-long learning by virtue of its being highly portable, unobtrusive and adaptable to the context of learning and the learner's evolving skills and knowledge (Sharples, 2000).

Evidence from a range of studies indicates the potential that mobile technologies have to support important aspects of learning. However, it is clear from a number of study finding offering evidence about implementation approaches that developing relevant uses of mobile technologies to support learning is not concerned just with appropriateness of learner technologies or pedagogical approaches, but also with developing wider cultural acceptance and involvement in the contexts in which learning is supported.

Contemporary claims for the adoption of mobile information and communication technologies as learning and teaching devices are often based on two main theoretical perspectives: the socio-constructivist model of the teaching and learning process and the continuity pattern in education. These two theoretical approaches to education have constructed what may be considered a cultural model of education. This cultural model of education is largely shared by members of the scientific community. It also has nurtured common educational practices and seems to be shared by people involved in the educational process: practitioners, administrators, teachers and students. The question remains: is this culture of education shared by all the actors involved in the learning process?

The relevance of this issue is crucial given it is exactly in the name of a socio-constructivist cultural model and in the name of a continuity pattern in e-learning in which m-learning is subsumed.

Conclusion and Recommendation

M-learning is hoped to enhance students' performance in their learning and foster teachers presentation if properly and effectively adopted and measures could be put in place to curb those excesses or negative uses which can mar its proper implementation into the primary school social studies curriculum and in fact, other school subject curricula in Nigeria.

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