



## A REVIEW OF THE METHODS AND STRATEGIES APPROPRIATE TO THE TEACHING AND LEARNING OF OFFICE TECHNOLOGY AND MANAGEMENT IN THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY

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### Abstract

The paper highlighted the issues of methods and strategies in the teaching and learning of Office Technology and Management. It noted that the utilization of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) as instructional materials with appropriate strategies has provided Office Technology and Management (OTM) recipients with knowledge and skills for operation of this technology in business offices. Various suggested methods and strategies considered appropriate for the teaching and learning of Office Technology and Management in tertiary institutions were discussed. The paper concludes that teaching must be according to the school curriculum for the realization of its goals and to a large extent, improve the quality of instruction in the classroom, it recommended, among others, that in choosing method and strategy in the teaching and learning of OTM, the expectations of both the school and the world of work in terms of curriculum development must be considered.

**Keywords:** Teaching and Learning, Strategies, Office Technology and Management, Information and Communication Technology, Curriculum Development.

### INTRODUCTION

Education is a systematic training and instruction designed to transmit knowledge and develop skills in individuals. Education is a process of changing the behaviour pattern of individuals in the desired direction (Vin-Mbah, 2012); it also involves a continuing development of relevant knowledge, skills and habits whose broad understanding and application enable individual to contribute meaningfully towards the growth of their society. Vin-Mbah (2012) says that the success or failure of any educational endeavour depends ultimately on the method adopted by the teacher. Methodology, according to Bello in Vin-Mbah, (2012) is first a science and then a way of teaching and teaching strategies. As a science, it studies teaching methods. The person studying them, usually the teacher or learner to be, endeavours to understand some of the various methods employed in teaching different subjects set of students and age grades.

Teaching, according to Smith and Laslett (1993) in Vin-Mbah, (2012) is an all-purpose profession engaged in human resource development for individual and economic growth. Teaching has been defined as an attempt to help someone acquire or change some skills, attitude, knowledge and idea. The teachers' task is to create desirable changes in behaviour or in tendencies toward behaviour in students. The goal of teaching is to bring about the desired learning in students. Therefore, teaching is the degree to which the teacher has been able to impart knowledge in students.

Oko (2005), defined teaching as the deliberate effort by mature or experienced persons to impart information, knowledge and skills to immature or less experienced persons through a process that is morally and pedagogically acceptable. Teaching is also a systematic activity deliberately engaged in by somebody to facilitate the learning of intended worthwhile knowledge, skills and value by another person and getting necessary feedback. According to Borich (2004), teaching is an exercising process of helping students to discover new sounds with which they can communicate. It involves creating environment in which students can safely suspend the absoluteness of their everyday realities to enter a world which previous learned rules do apply.

According to Odah (2010), methods of instructions in Office Technology and Management (OTM) will remain as variable as the teacher who provides models and directions for learning. According to Ochonogor and Ajaja (2005), the primary function of the teacher is to facilitate learning by various means. The intention of teaching is to bring about learning. Therefore, it is impossible to understand what teaching is until we know what learning is. Learning is not only about verbal knowledge acquired through institution, study and rote memory. The term learning embraces work or activities in every aspect of life. To the psychologist, learning is a process which produces progressive series of changes in behaviour and experience as a result of the sum total of all such changes. Educationists consider learning to be a permanent change in behaviour which results from activity, training or observation (Vin-Mbah, 2012). Learning as a process may be seen as the acquisition of new knowledge, ideas, skills, value and experiences which enable the individual to modify or alter his/her action, realise his/her action or desired goals. Therefore, it must bring about permanent changes in the person and the changes must be in the knowledge to be used, in character being acquired, in skills to be developed or an attitude to shape.

Information technology has aroused more curiosity than ever before in teaching. The utilization of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) as instructional materials with appropriate strategies has provided Office Technology and Management (OTM) recipients with knowledge and skills for operation of this technology in business offices. Office Technology and Management educators should be trained and retrained on how to use these instructional facilities to impart desirable knowledge to students (Odah, 2010).

Based on the requirement of information technology and objectives set for students in tertiary institutions, the National Policy on Computer Education observed that there is an urgent need to examine the depth of students' awareness and extent of utilization of ICT facilities coupled with other uses of the computer for teaching and learning OTM. In recent years, the office environment has changed due to the innovations occasioned by the computer especially the internet. Many new technologies have been developed to replace old ones. For instance, in the education sector, technological innovations have considerably altered the nature, content and environment of businesses.

The information age requires that learning must be a life-long process and to prepare students for life time of learning. Schools must, therefore, teach students more than facts. The students must be made to learn how to think and learn. Ile (2005) suggests that curriculum must provide skills of critical thinking in learning OTM to equip students of OTM in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Ile (2005) also believes that teaching of Office Technology and Management is fundamental for economic and personal success in the information age. In the work place of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, computer and other technological tools are used as common tools and there is the need to prepare students to learn how to work comfortably with all kinds of technology in the work station. Osuala (2004) is of the opinion that students of OTM should be trained to have a clear understanding of the limitation of technology, ability of applying technology to problems and to question technology. Unfortunately, it appears that most OTM graduates seem to lack the requisites skills and knowledge required to function effectively in the job place in the emerging era of technology due to the methodology in the teaching and learning OTM.

## **Methods and Techniques of Teaching**

There are many methods and techniques for effective teaching. These different methods and techniques should be used skilfully in the class by the teachers in order to teach students effectively. The skilful and competent teacher uses as many methods and techniques as possible because there is no single method which is regarded as the best for every teaching situation. In a single lesson, therefore, the teacher can employ as many methods as possible. The success of every method depends on the calibre of the teacher and his professional experience in the field of teaching. According to Ajaja (2009), method can be defined as a procedure by which a goal is reached, a purpose accomplished or a result achieved. Method can also be defined as a practical application of teaching principles based on the nature of the learner, the nature of the subject and the learning needs of the students.

Teaching methods can be generally classified into two categories, namely: child-centred methods and teacher-centred methods. Some criteria or principle are necessary for the selection of instructional method or methods a teacher can use in the teaching-learning process. These are necessary if the teacher's aim of imparting knowledge to his students is to be successful. The principle include; the type of subject and the type of lesson, that is, the lesson pattern. According to Oyekan (1994), teaching methodology is concerned with what method approach, individuals or group of teachers select and use in actual classroom situation.

Ogwo (2006) outlined a number of teaching methods which are considered as effectively related to the teaching of OTM:

### ***Demonstration Method***

It is a generally accepted learning theory that the greater the degree of active participation and sensory involvement by the learner, the more effective will be the basic and most often used, method of instruction for teaching skill-type subjects is the demonstration method (Ojo, 2011). One of the most effective methods in the teaching of skills and performance oriented subjects in Office Technology and Management is demonstration method. The teachers using demonstration method explain steps in operations and techniques of handling office technologies in work stations and learning environments. The teacher equally goes further using instructional materials to demonstrate to the students the steps or processes involved in the use of the gadgets. Students learning with this method observe and ask questions for clarification. At the end, the students are required to demonstrate the same activities as the teacher had done. The demonstration method in OTM requires careful planning and skilful execution.

### ***Field Trips Method in Teaching OTM***

A field trip is a journey by a group of people to a place away from their normal environment. The purpose of the trip is usually observation for education and to provide students with experiences outside their everyday activities, such as going with teachers and classmates to relevant industries in order to bridge the missing gap and gain practical and useful workplace experiences. Field trips method in teaching of Office Technology and Management is an organized visit of students and teachers of Office Technology and Management to a place of interest to achieve stated instructional objectives. This method is organized as a supplement to the regular classroom and laboratory instruction. It exposes the learner to have close contact with some of the ICT facilities which are hardly available in the classroom. The students integrate knowledge and skills acquired through classroom instruction and practical operation of this technology with actual practices in the world of work.

### ***Discovery Method in Teaching OTM***

Discovery method can be considered as any procedure in which the teacher by posing appropriate problems to encourage students to think for themselves and become more independent. The major proponent of discovery approach is Bruner. Bruner (1966) agrees that learning involves the active processing of information, and that it is organized and constructed in a unique way by each individual. He stressed that knowledge about the world is not simply poured into the individual. Instead, individuals attend selectively to the environment, process and organize the information into the unique models of the environment. With this method of teaching OTM, much learning is expected through exploration that is motivated by curiosity.

***Group Discussion Method in Teaching OTM***

The discussion teaching method is a design that provides opportunity for discussions between teacher and students, and students to students. It is a method that centres on shared conversations, discussions and exchange of ideas in class. According to Omatseye (2008), this method gives opportunity for all to sit and listen as well as talk and think, thus, emphasizing the process of coming to know as valuable as knowing the right answer. In applying the group discussion method to the teaching-learning process, the teacher plays the role of a manager, guide, initiator, referee and summariser. In other words, students in this group discussion are not passive listeners neither is the teacher a sole performer. The group method of teaching OTM requires the experience and skill of the teacher to take decisions so as to determine the basis for which the activity will be carried out; how the grouping will function and the flexibility envisaged (Aguokogbuo, 2000). This is fundamental in Office Technology and Management class where instructor grouped students during practical and observe their performance.

***Dalton Instructional Methods in Teaching OTM***

The Dalton instructional method is also the laboratory method of teaching Office Technology and Management which involves assessing the students periodically in ICT laboratory to determine the level of skills and performance of the students. Laboratory method is a way or process through which an activity is carried out by an individual or a group of individuals for the purpose of making personal observations of processes, products or events. This method gives the students the opportunity to work at their own pace, tackling the subject in whatever order they choose as long as the assignment is completed in the required time.

***Socratic Instructional Method of Teaching OTM***

According to Nnadozie (2000), Socratic method is a method of teaching which calls for the active co-operative quest for knowledge. This method is sometimes referred to as the question and answer method of instruction. Socratic method is used to know the ability of students in response to certain questions after intensive practical training. This method has an added advantage of helping the students to develop mental processes of emphasis on the cognitive and affective domain.

***Strategies of Teaching and Learning in Office Technology and Management***

Strategies of teaching are teaching techniques employed by the teacher to enhance his/her teaching. Thus, the techniques to be employed will depend, to a large extent, on the subject-matter to be taught. Learning strategies are described as general plan formulated for determining how best to achieve an overall academic goal before dealing with the learning task itself. The following strategies of teaching and learning can, therefore, be considered as appropriate for teaching and learning in OTM:

***Computer Aided Instructional Strategy in Teaching and Learning of OTM***

The computer aided instructional strategy in OTM will enable the students to learn and acquire the knowledge, skills, ability and attitude necessary to function successfully in the global business and economic environments. This is done by integrating the appropriate technology to support practices that link learning objectives and high levels of achievement. Consequently, for this strategy to be effective, the institution must provide the technological environment, the curricular must be designed to suit the environment and students must be mindfully engaged in the teaching-learning process.

***Concept Mapping Instructional Strategy in Teaching and Learning OTM***

Concept mapping is a learning strategy that many students find useful in understanding complex ideas and clarifying ambiguous relationships. According to Ajaja (2009), concept mapping instructional strategy is creating a graphic representation of a topic to help the students visualize the key concepts and organize their knowledge more clearly than other strategies of study. A concept map is a two-dimensional representation of the relationship between key ideas. It shows how we think and suggest affinities and associations that might not otherwise be obvious. At first glance, a concept map looks like a flow chart in which key terms are placed in boxes connected by directional arrows. These boxes and directional arrows are meta-cognitive tools that empower the learner to take charge of learning in a highly organized and meaningful manner.

***Industrial Collaboration Instructional Strategy in Teaching and Learning of OTM***

According to Oduma (2008), industrial collaboration instructional strategy is the means of partnership with other bodies on something for mutual benefit. Universities, Polytechnics and Colleges of Education and industrial collaboration are an effective way of technology transfer and it is of mutual benefit to the school and industry. According to Frankie-Dolor (2002), the relationship between OTM and industry is necessary for helping schools for adequate placement of students in industry for industrial attachment, reviewing the training content area with the aim of designing effective curricula that is related to industrial human resources demand and improving the quality of skilled manpower being turned out. In line with this aspiration, it follows then that educational institutions offering OTM should collaborate with industry in all phases of the training programme. These will assist OTM recipients to acquire knowledge and skills of those technologies that are not found in the classroom. Nwosu (2006) asserts that learning environment must be a replica of office environment. He further noted that technologies in learning environment should be the same in the office environment. Oduma (2008) equally maintain that industry in this strategy will serve as laboratory where students will have the opportunity to apply the principles and practice of what they have learnt in school in the changing office environment.

### **Laboratory-Centred Instructional Strategy in Teaching and Learning of OTM**

Laboratory-centred strategy according to Oduma (2008) connotes that all instructions requiring the acquisitions of skills and use of instructional facilities should, of necessity, be taught in a well-equipped laboratory. A well-equipped laboratory will facilitate teaching and learning of OTM that require practical. Institutions offering OTM should ensure that there is a well-equipped laboratory in the institution of learning to enable students learn and acquire appropriate skills and knowledge for them to be functional in the world of work.

### **Simulation Instructional Strategy in Teaching and Learning of OTM**

Simulation instructional strategy in the teaching and learning of OTM is a role play strategy. Individual acts a part to express his/her own perception of the roles or functions worker perform while discharging office routine or duties. According to Farrant (1999) in Vin-Mbah (2012), play can be regarded as the experimenting stage of learning where the students tries out his newly acquired knowledge and skills with the activities of people and things. Hence, play encourages the student to stimulate creative imagination, provide opportunity for experimentation beyond the real level of development, exercise learning competencies, engage in independent learning and gain experience and express himself freely with confidence. Stimulation strategy is fundamental in OTM because it enables the students to play the role of a secretary or manager as if he is in real working environment during teaching-learning process.

### **Conclusion**

The use of appropriate method and strategy with facilities as instructional materials in teaching and learning Office Technology and Management in the 21<sup>st</sup> century appear to be strange in our educational system. A lot of Office Technology and Management educators still use the lecture method and other methods that are not appropriate in the teaching of OTM for the acquisition of skills. Therefore, it is the contention of this paper that teaching must be according to the school curriculum for the realization of its goals and to a large extent, improve the quality of instruction in the classroom. There must also be a cordial relationship among the teachers and the students to enforce the appropriate teaching methods and strategies to achieve the set objective of a particular subject.

### **Recommendations**

The following recommendations are made:

1. In choosing method and strategy in the teaching and learning of OTM, the expectation of both the school and the world of work in terms of curriculum development must be considered.
2. Curriculum planners and developers should review the outdated curriculum and introduce new curriculum that will guide OTM educators to teach the modern office technology.
3. Facilities should be provided to aid teachers as instructional materials for teaching.
4. Institutions should encourage collaboration instructional learning to cover the gap of the shortage of facilities in the institution.
5. Governments, such as Federal and State should equip office technology laboratories with necessary equipment for effective teaching and learning.
6. Office Technology and Management educators should be trained and retrained on how to use appropriate methods and strategies with instructional facilities to impart desirable knowledge to students.

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