

RELEVANCE OF USING COMPUTER SIMULATED APPROACH IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF CHRISTIAN RELIGIOUS STUDIES CURRICULUM IN SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS.

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Abstract

Computer simulation is a new trend of computer technology that has been applied in many fields including education and has proven to be productive as it allows students to create and explore situations that they will not normally be able to witness and spark up interest in learning. This paper examines the importance of computer simulation approach in the implementation of Christian Religious Studies (CRS) curriculum in senior secondary schools. Despite the enormous function of computer simulation method in teaching and learning, it appears that senior secondary schools utilize less of it which maybe the reason for the low achievement and interest in CRS. Computer Simulated Approach provides an entirely new learning environment for senior secondary schools. Critical thinking and evaluation skills are growing as important as CRS students have an increasing volume of information from varieties of sources to sort through. The use of Computer Simulated Approach will affect the complete learning of CRS in senior secondary schools' students now and in the future. The study concluded that Computer Simulation Approach is a practical way of improving senior secondary school students understanding and learning of CRS and also recommended that CRS teachers should employ the Computer Simulation Approach to teach students in order to enhance students' understanding in implementation of Christian Religious Studies Curriculum in Senior Secondary Schools.

Definition of Key Terms

INTRODUCTION

The increase in the level of moral decadence and insurgencies in our society is an indication that there is poor religious teaching and the teaching method in the secondary school system. One of the factors responsible for the failure to achieve the objectives of the CRS curriculum over the years results from the use of some ineffective teaching methods by teachers. Abosede, (2007) hints that the poor performance of students today in some school subjects is due to the ineffective method of teaching adopted by the teachers. He explained further that the observed abysmal performance among learners today is not only as a result of individual differences but more of the quality of teaching method. The teaching method is important index in the teaching and learning process of the students to learn at the end of teaching. Hence, the use of a good teaching method in the teaching of CRS plays an important role in harmonizing classroom instruction. Nevertheless, it has been noted with dismay that even a subject as important as CRS is taught using the traditional lecture method (talk and chalk)

(Asogwa&Echemazu, 2011). Organizing an effective teaching method for Christian Religious Studies guarantees better understanding and also stimulates and motivate students' achievement (Abdukamid, 2010).

Computer simulations are “techniques aimed at providing students with a highly simplified reproduction part of a real or imaginary world.” (Feng, 2010) They are considered one of the most effective ways to promote deep conceptual understanding of the real world. Computer simulations are computer-generated versions of real-world objects or processes. The main purpose of computer-assisted instruction is to deliver the contents of the course through computers and realize instructional endeavours through the help of computer applications.

Teaching of Christian Religious Studies in Secondary Schools

Christian religious study was introduced in secondary schools through the various schools that were established by the different missionaries who came to evangelize the people such as the Catholic, Anglican, Methodist, Church of Christ in Nigeria now Church of Christ in Nations (COCIN). In those days, it was known as Christian Religious Knowledge (CRK). In such schools, the religious study was naturally given a prominent place in the school curriculum covering Bible stories, memory work and hymn singing. The doctrines of the churches were learned. The teachers in secondary schools were at the same time preachers to the local congregation or responsible for catechetical instruction. The teaching of Christian religious studies in secondary schools enabled the secondary students to know about the resurrection of Christ and that He lives with us always (**Onwuka, 2009**)

Government intervention in education took place between 1970 and 1976, the government indicated that Christian Religious Studies was one of the subjects approved for the secondary schools and that it should be imparted to students by qualified teachers. The methods used in teaching other subjects were equally applied in teaching Christian Religious Studies although indoctrination ranked highest as a method of teaching. Christian Religious Studies is a discipline that gives students the knowledge and skills of Christian Religion for their moral-spiritual and academic development for national development Parker, (2004). Therefore, in order to maintain good governance and stability of the state, the optimal achievement of the above objective Christian religion in our senior secondary schools will depend largely on the appropriate application of instructional materials like Computer Hard and Software, good teaching methods, techniques and relevant skills. However, the place of instructional materials especially Computer Technology cannot be overemphasized if senior secondary school students must be made to understand the values of Christian religious studies. This is because Computer Simulated Learning provides students with meaningful instruction in the learning process.

Christian Religion Studies Curriculum

In line with the current efforts to instill discipline and enhance empowerment in the Nigerian youths, the Christian Religious Studies curriculum is expected not only to impact the content of the Bible but also moral lessons and instructions. Religion provides the moral foundation of every society. It teaches that certain things are good and certain things are bad, that certain things are right while others are wrong. Without sound or strong moral foundation, every society and nation may eventually collapse; The curriculum presents God as creator and

sustainer of human life and the source of Christian belief, value, joy and hope. Apart from the Bible which is the basic source of the material for instructions, the curriculum provides resource materials for the CRS teachers so that they can teach lessons that are interesting, informative and life-changing. The teaching and learning of the Bible can help Nigerian youths in preparation for useful living within the society and preparation for higher education (Shehu, Umar and Babayo 2018)..

Relevance of using Computer Simulated Approach in the Implementation of Christian Religious Studies Curriculum in Senior Secondary Schools.

Today, it has become absolutely imperative for students in Christian Religious Studies and teachers to acquire Computer Simulated Approach skills and competence and utilize them to access the internet for current information which will equip them for academic and personal development, self-reliance and possibly self-employment and less dependent on computer experts for every work.

According to Sreelekha (2018), education in Nigeria cannot be relevant without effective preparation and involvement of pupils and students in the acquisition of Computer Simulated Approach for their effective academic excellence and performance in schools. Therefore, for students to acquire academic excellence and better performance in schools, teachers should be ready to acquire Computer Simulated Approach professional skills to give what is required to their students. Teachers are expected to possess Computer Simulated Approach skills and be able to utilize them and impart them to the learners. The acquisition of CSA skills is not enough but the ability to utilize the skills and impart them to the learners for personal development and academic excellence is more important.

According to Ugwu (2005), teachers like any other professional workers, need essential tools to do their work, most excellently. Certainly, it is true that the central figures in any learning situation are always the students and the teachers. It is equally important to know that learning may be generally enhanced by the utilization of the many resources available in the schools. However, teachers planning of effective learning activities could be easier, less time consuming and often vastly expanded in potential scope when the teacher knows precisely what type of Computer Simulated Approach materials are available to him and to draw upon them regularly to affect the teaching ability.

He added that secondary schools, especially in developed world, are under pressure to make students more personally familiar with emerging technology as opposed to what is happening in developing countries like Sub-Saharan Africa. This trend has, therefore, influenced their teachers' education programmes to appropriately train pre-service teachers to improve the academic performance of their students in secondary schools. There is, therefore, generally a belief that students graduating from secondary schools must have levels of expertise beyond a simple ability to use the current technology, what is needed is technological competence.

Winn, Stahr, Sarason, Fruland, Oppenheimer and Lee (2005), asserts that if the students must cope with the educational demand of the modern time, the teacher should be as broadly educated as possible. And that a teacher that fall short of these requirements, particularly as it applies to Computer Simulated Approach may lose his or her relevance in this modern time. For Christian Religious Studies, teachers to be able to efficiently carry out these functions, he or she must be knowledgeable in Computer Simulated Approach and

possess the ability to access current information on the internet and to adequately face the challenges of imparting Christian Religious Studies knowledge to the learner using the new Information Technology as the medium. The teacher could develop a more flexible teaching method which may include web-based format, use of current education technologies to complement the existing teaching aids.

It has been found by Zumyil (2019) that Christian Religious Studies tend to be abstract in some situations and to remove the abstractness associated with the subject, the use of instructional materials in the form of Computer Simulated Approach is essential because it is very clear that traditional method of teaching can no longer provide Christian religious teachers with all the requisite skills they need to teach effectively in the classroom. The use of Computer Simulated Approach in teaching is a relevant and functional way of providing education for learners to assist them in imbibing the required capacity for the world of work. Ruthven, Ilori, (2016), observed that teachers need to integrate Computer Simulated Approach (CSA) in their instruction and this includes senior secondary school Christian Religious Studies teachers. Effective use of CSA facility in the teaching and learning process reinforce the teachers' ability to cater for individual differences and enhances learner's involvement, participation and understanding in the implementation of Christian Religious Studies curriculum. It also helps students in grounding their thought and feeling and in turn contributes to academic performance in the subject in school. In this era, CSA is recognized as a means of quality assurance in curriculum implementation. For instance, Christian religious teacher's use of CSA to instruct senior secondary school students will help them to learn better as they do not always forget what they are taught when used alongside the traditional method.

Duyilemi, Olagunju & Olumide (2014). argue that internet usage for teaching and learning Christian Religious Studies can assist the teachers to discover new methods and simple processes of implementing the curriculum, while the students can construct their understanding and be in control of their topic through the sharing of ideas and experiences worldwide by accessing a diverse collection of information from books, magazines, newspapers and many others. According to Bayrak (2008), there have been numerous surveys designed to provide information on the extent to which schools are developing the capacity to integrate Computer Simulated Approach into teaching and learning and management process. He further stressed that evidence of the impact on teaching and learning indicates that where the use of Computer Simulated Approach is most effective in enhancing the learning experience teachers have been able to integrate several technologies such as laptops, internet and interactive whiteboards. Such combination of hardware helps Christian Religious Studies teachers to develop innovative approaches to implementing Christian Religious Studies curriculum effectively in senior secondary schools.

Before delving into a full discussion of the use of Computer Simulated Approach in Christian Religious Studies, it is good to give a brief highlight on the ways or means by which Computer Simulated Approach could be utilized as given by UNESCO (2004) which has been useful to Christian Religious Studies teachers in senior secondary schools. The enhancement approach where Computer Simulated Approach is used will enhance the topic being taught. An example where senior secondary school teachers could benefit maximally is when they open a website called a tracker. According to Obrien (2006), the tracker is an online instructional material for tracking current events. Such current things can be obtained

on such sites which are important to teachers. The complementary approach sees Computer Simulated Approach as playing the complementary duty of empowering the students learning skills. It enables them to improve their work through word processing. The integrated approach which stipulates the planning and use of Computer Simulated Approach within a subject area is to promote a particular concept, skill and improve students' goal attainment. This implies that the Christian Religious Studies curriculum has to be carefully reviewed by the Christian Religious Studies teacher to enable him select the appropriate Computer Simulated Approach materials.

The use of Computer Simulated Approach is important in education. Ayeni, & Ogunbameru, (2013) explained that Computer Simulated Approach can promote students' intellectual qualities through higher-order thinking problem solving, improved communication skills and deep understanding of learning tools and concepts to be taught. To Suneetha & Mayuri, (2001), Computer Simulated Approach promotes a supportive and interactive teaching and learning environment, creates broader learning communication and provides learning tools for students, including those with special needs. According to Aremu, (2005), they are also said to improve school attendance level and enable the creation of new and effective curriculum. Computer Simulated Approach has contributed to the implementation of Christian Religious Studies curriculum in many respects. In Christian religious education, it could be observed that Computer Simulated Approach is helping students to learn by enabling them to consolidate and deepening their knowledge, understanding and skills.

Computer Simulated Approach is a strategy that can help improve the implementation of Christian Religious curriculum and can help to raise student's interest by encouraging them to go to the net to get new information, knowledge and understanding about Christian religious studies. This can be through using Internet or CD Rom sources. Computer Simulated Approach enables students to work effectively and to access much more information than non-Computer Simulated Approach source can allow. The special and automatic function of CSA is that it enables Christian Religious Studies students to explore aspects of Christian Religious Studies more effectively. Christian Religious Studies teachers should choose Computer Simulated Approach resources that relate to a particular topic while other Computer Simulated Approach is given to the students to work with.

Innovatively without any direct application to the topic Christian Religious Studies teachers own pedagogical beliefs and values which play an important part in shaping technology-mediated learning opportunities. It is not yet clear from the research literature whether this result in technology is being used as a servant to reinforce existing Christian Religious Studies teaching approaches or as a partner to change the way Christian Religious Studies teachers and students interact with each other and with the tasks. Christian religious studies teachers need extensive knowledge of Computer Simulated Approach to be able to select the most appropriate resources. They also need to know how to incorporate the use of Computer Simulated Approach in their teaching or lesson.

The availability and use of Computer Simulated Approach in education lend itself to more students' centred learning setting. But with the world moving rapidly into digital, media and information, the role of Computer Simulated Approach in education is becoming more and more important and the importance has continued to increase in the 21st century hence the need to have Computer Simulated Approach in our senior secondary schools for the

teaching and in learning CRS. The availability and use of Computer Simulated Approach in the educational setting by CRS teachers in senior secondary schools will act as a catalyst for change in teaching and learning CRS in secondary schools. Computer Simulated Approach tools encourage and support independent learning by CRS students in senior secondary schools. Chen, Pan, Sung and Chang,(2013). explain that the availability and use of Computer Simulated Approach in learning by students in senior secondary schools setting can act to support various aspects of knowledge construction and as more students employ Computer Simulated Approach in their learning processes, the more pronounced the impact of this will become.

According to Olorukooba Sani & Kazeem (2016). Computer Simulated Approach increases the flexibility of lesson delivery by CRS teachers in senior secondary schools, and learners can access knowledge any time and from anywhere using Computer Simulated Approach. They further stressed that Computer Simulated Approach in senior secondary schools can help students to browse through e-books, sample examination papers of previous years. They also re-iterated that the use of Computer Simulated Approach allows the academic institutions and CRS teachers to reach disadvantaged groups in senior secondary schools reading CRS. According to Okeke (2014), Computer Simulated Approach has the potential to remove the barriers that are causing the problems of low rate of retention by CRS students at the Secondary School Level.

Computer Simulated Approach provides an entirely new learning environment for senior secondary schools. Critical thinking and evaluation skills are growing as important as CRS students have an increasing volume of information from varieties of sources to sort through. The use of Computer Simulated Approach will affect the complete learning of CRS in senior secondary schools' students now and in the future. The use of Computer Simulated Approach stimulates CRS students of senior secondary school to engage in active knowledge construction.

The use of Computer Simulated Approach in senior secondary schools especially computer and internet technologies enable teachers and students to have new ways of teaching and learning CRS curriculum rather than simply allow teachers and students of CRS to do what they have done before in a better way. According to Ogunleye (2002), Computer Simulated Approach has an impact not only on what CRS students of senior secondary schools learn but it also plays a major role in how they should learn. Also, the use of CSA by CRS teachers in teaching helps students to have access to CRS knowledge and they will have the latest knowledge about the subject. According to Aremu, (2005), Computer Simulated Approach can help the students to be self-reliant after completing their secondary schools. This is because they can be self-employed using the knowledge gained in that school. The use of Computer Simulated Approach facilities in the implementation of CRS in senior secondary school can unlock hidden potentials of the students as they lay their hands on the system, they get different knowledge from the system and that knowledge helps them achieve their dreams in life.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The study has established that Computer Simulation Approach is a practical way of improving senior secondary school students in understanding and learning CRS. Moreso, it aid teachers in teaching CRS effectively to their learners

Recommendations

Based on the paper, the following recommendations were made;

1. CRS teachers should employ the Computer Simulation Approach to teach students in order to enhance students' achievement and interest in CRS
2. School authorities should ensure the provision of adequate instructional materials including computer for teachers and students of CRS.
3. The secondary school CRS curriculum should be reviewed with a view to integrating computer simulation packages into the curriculum.
4. School principals, administrators, teachers and other stakeholders in secondary schools should be trained and updated periodically on the use of computer in the teaching and learning of concepts especially in CRS

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