

Teachers' Perception about Information and Communication Technology

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Abstract

This research article is an attempt to identify the perception of teachers towards Information communication technology (ICT) in classroom teaching. A survey research design was used to carry out the research. Using the opportunity sampling procedure, the perception of thirty English teachers teaching at ten selected community schools in Gorkha district were taken as samples. A questionnaire was used to collect the data. After analyzing the data, it was found that the ability to operate, use, assess, communicate, organize, transfer, download, and create modern data is referred to as computerized competency. These talents are critical for both students and instructors in the development of e-learning. Teachers' favorable digital education aptitudes have a big impact in teaching and learning when all of these factors are considered.

Key Words: Information Communication Technology, Perception, competency

Introduction

Developing teachers' competencies enables them to perform better in the classroom, and greater performances often imply improved educational quality. This quality can only be achieved through reflective teaching practices, in which teachers use all of their knowledge, make use of their skills to encourage and stimulate learning, and evaluate the results of their efforts.

Information Communication Technology has become an integral part of life of people. During the last two decades, countries have invested heavily in ICT to focus in learning and teaching to improve the quality education. 'ICT (Information and Communication Technology) this concept involves transfer and use of all kinds of information. ICT is the foundation of economy and a driving force of social changes in the 21st century. Distance is no longer an issue when it comes to accessing information; for example, working-from-home, distance learning, e-banking, and e-government are now possible from any place with an Internet connection and a computing device' (Gaorana, 2011).

ICT is an umbrella term that includes all technologies for the communication of information. It can be defined as the use of hardware and software for efficient management of information that are used to transmit, store, create, share or exchange particular task. The technological channels such as e-mail, blogs, websites, and wikis can

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be used in order to present lessons, administer the tests, instruct about the tasks, assess students' works, and provide them correct feedback and so on. One can find that some of the context of learning English language on computers with internet access, microphones, videos, projectors, interactive white boards (IWBs), OHP, a tape recorder, a white board etc.

Context

Nepal has also been trying to upgrade the quality of English language teaching. In this process language teachers play a key role to teach methodology and improve quality of education. They are expected to meet the needs and standards of English as an international language. In this respect, Coskuner (2001) stated that English language teacher should be able to satisfy the expectations of regularly increasing number of students by using up-to-date teaching methodologies performed with dedication and enthusiasm. By considering all these dimensions, Richards & Lockhart (cited in Wichadee, 2011) indicated that language teaching is not universally regarded as profession that is, having characteristics, as requiring specialized skills and training and as being a lifelong and valued career choice.

It is believed that poor quality of language teaching leads to lack of sound teacher training and teacher professional development (Vo & Nguyen, 2009). The quality of the learning process is highly affected by teacher effectiveness. Polk (2006) identified ten basic characteristics of effective teachers. This includes knowledge of pedagogical content, communication skills, prior performance, creativity, professionalism, student assessment, self-development, personality, content knowledge, and the ability to model concepts in their content area.

None of the methods will be effective if the teacher himself/herself is not aware of the need to improve their professional competence. Therefore, the teachers need to be motivated and created favorable conditions in which the teachers realize own needs to improve their professional progress. Hence, this study sheds light to one of the major teaching competencies needed by the teachers based on the framework developed by NCED.

In the context of Nepal, the changes in the modern education system make the training and professionalism of teachers necessary i.e. improvement of their professional competence and it can be recognized as a priority not only to raise the quality of education systems in various part of the country, but also to increase competitiveness around the world. The main purpose of modern education is to match current and future needs of the individuals, society and the state, the preparation of multi-developed personality of a citizen of the country, capable to social adaptation in the society, to the beginning of employment, self-education and self-improvement. For this, we need professional teachers who are currently competent, talented, innovative and creative problem solvers, skilled and critical thinkers.

ICT use has been gradually increasing in Nepal's diverse areas, in places like schools, banking, and hospitals. It has been utilized in both the public and corporate sectors to

facilitate work and provide information. Both students and teachers profit greatly from the usage of ICTs in the classroom. As a result, we can see that different ICT technologies are employed to teach language skills. Students become more critical, analytical, creative, and productive through student-centered learning. Teachers that utilize ICTs in the classroom help students learn language skills more effectively. ICT has a reputation for being a useful and important learning tool, however it is neglected in language classrooms.

It is said that a large number of teachers of the present day have no interest in their profession but they continue in the profession only as mechanical wage earners. The facilities and incentives offered in this profession are so meager that many of the talented persons do not think of becoming teachers but seek positions elsewhere. Lack of recognition of the teachers in this country is a very sore point. They have not yet been given the same footing as a doctor, a lawyer or an engineer in the society. The significance of the role of the teacher is hardly recognized, though it has become a fashion to observe the teacher's day. The teachers of today suffer from neglect, indifference and insecurity. We always expect a lot from a teacher who has so little power and alarmingly insufficient facilities. The net result appears to be a widespread dissatisfaction at present in the teaching profession as a whole. The teachers should possess certain competencies. The present study has tried to examine teachers' perception about ICT which is one of the competencies out of eight presented in Teacher Competency Framework -2012:

Content knowledge

Pedagogical knowledge

Knowledge about children/ learners

Learning environment and classroom management

Communication and collaboration

Continuous learning and professional development

Legal bases and professional conduct

Information and communication technology

ICT proficiency is one of the eight fundamental core abilities included in Teachers Competency Framework-2012 (NCED, 2012). It is the capacity to effectively teach and learn in the following field using information and communication technologies.

- Selecting and utilizing integrated learning strategies of information and communication technology for the facilitation of learning.
- Developing digital materials according to the learners' need or utilizing the available materials appropriately.
- Exhibiting learners' self-learning and making mutual communication and collaboration effective through the medium of information and communication technology.
- Utilizing ICT for the evaluation of learning and providing feedback.
- Demonstrating appropriate professional conduct being familiar with the principles of ICT in education and the development of digital culture.

Research Question

How do English teachers perceive ICT in language teaching?

Theoretical Foundations

Information and Communication Technological Competencies are based on using tools and technical equipment for the reaching, disturbing and transferring the knowledge. They include any technology that helps to produce, manipulate, store, communicate, and/or disseminate information. ICT competencies are concerned with the use of technology in managing and processing the information include all technologies for the manipulation and communication of information. It means that the ICT competency is very important to improve the communication in the learning and teaching process.

Since Computer- assisted Language Learning started in 1960s then after Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) such as computers, internet, audio-visual tape recorders, television, mobile phone, overhead projector have been massively used all over the world in teaching/learning practices.

ICTs can be used in educational tools for different purposes, and facilitate interaction between instructors and students. Distance learners can benefit through interaction with instruction through different ICT tools. These platforms support multiple intelligence and students can get rich experience by text, graphics, audio and visual. The integration of ICT can revolutionize an outmoded people, and have rapidly transformed important aspects of people's lives. Moreover, teaching English has become more challenging job in the present era because of the experimentation of theories, methods, principles, the advancement of information and communication technology. The development of ICT – electronic mail, internet, multi- media, possibilities to use collaborative platforms, undoubtedly, influences the process of using them in everyday classroom teaching and learning. ICT no longer serves to be a simple additional means but ICT is an indispensable part of the modern and contemporary learning environment Kalnina, S., Kangro, I. 2007 (cited in Isisag).

Most countries around the world are focusing on approaches to integrate ICT in learning and teaching to improve the quality of education. Indeed, Nepal also couldn't be far-way from ICT effectiveness in teaching practices. The MoE has implemented the programs related to ICT in Education such as the one Laptop per Child (OLPC) pilot project in selected 26 schools of six districts (MoE, 2013). Similarly, the Department of Education (DoE) provided internet connectivity to 85 secondary schools conducting distance education program (DoE, 2012). It indicates that Nepal is being engaged in ICT for teaching/learning practice pro-actively.

It can be effective tool for English Language Teaching in the schools because students could learn the various aspects of English languages including grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation etc. Moreover, ICTs can play a vital role in learning language skills i.e. listening, speaking reading and writing. ICT tools are the store of English language because most of the information is written in English so that the students can learn language skills in different ways. It also helps students to understand international standards of English Language and make them enable practice adequately in their life. In addition, ICTs are generally accepted as a modern instrumental tool that enables the

educators (teachers) to modify the teaching methods and techniques in order to increase the students' interest. Nowadays, teachers and learners are much eager to use ICTs in their learning process. ICTs makes the students be able to learn in easy way. They can watch practical knowledge while learning. It has used the pictorial documents and makes it easy to learn. Learners can learn themselves by using ICTs. Therefore, uses of ICT by the teachers have been increasing in the school.

ICTs have been integrated as potentially powerful information- handling tools for educational change and improvement. Different types of ICTs which include radio, television, mobile phone as well as latest digital technologies such as computers, OHP, laptops and the internet are widely used in the present ELT classroom. The selection and use of ICT tools in ELT class depends on different factors such as class size, classroom management, electronic literacy of the teachers and students, subject area and availability of the tools.

The technology is an advance for learning English language if we possess it differently. Much research shows that by using computers, students become better problem solvers and communicators.

According to the Rwanda Development Gateway (2009) the world is experiencing a real-revolution in the dissemination of knowledge and the enhancement of instruction. ICT made both the content learning and the interactions of high-quality instruction affordable and available anytime. ICT in education has been identified as an innovative and effective means of technology and learning. Students of schools in urban areas have easier access to ICT whereas those students who are studying in remote areas have hardly any access to these technologies (ICT Master Plan, 2013).

The Web is a global library that is steadily growing in the depth and breadth of its contents. Communication over distance and time is an essential component of building on the work of other people. Thus, the Internet (which includes the Web) is of steadily growing importance in education. (Moursund, 2005)

IT has become a compulsory subject within the National Curriculum and studied by all school children. Besides, it helps to up-date skills and provides opportunity to work for themselves. It is believed that IT friendly school children can learn skills which help them to learn themselves. Language skills are taught by different approaches but the use of ICTs can be the best way of teaching language skills. Furthermore, listening and speaking skills should be taught by using means of communication technology either it is old or modern technology.

Methodology

This study used the descriptive research method to gather the needed data and gain more information about the study because the descriptive method is designed for the investigator to gather information about present existing conditions, to describe the nature of the situation as it exists at the time of the study and to explore of particular phenomena. The type of descriptive research used in this study is the survey type. The survey method

was applied and used in this study as it helped the researcher evaluate different answers of respondents regarding the attitude towards ICT competency.

Both primary and secondary data were used for the study. The primary data was collected from the English teachers teaching in the selected schools. As secondary sources: books, articles, journals related to teachers' competencies were included.

The researcher employed convenient random sampling in which the researcher randomly picks on any English teacher during the visit to the selected schools. The total sample size was composed of 30 English teachers who were from 15 different schools. The elements mentioned in the questionnaire were based on 8 major areas. It was a close-ended questionnaire.

Analysis

Respondents were asked to rate each of these categories under the heading of importance of ICT numerically: (1) not important, (2) little important, (3) moderately important, (4) important, and (5) very important. The consolidated points from the respondents' answers to each item in the questionnaire over a five-point likert scale. Interpretation was done comparing to the mean value

Perception towards the teaching competencies in Terms of Information and Communication Technology

S.N.	Information and Communication Technology	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
1.	To select and utilize integrated learning strategies including ICT for the facilitation of learning	4.40	Very Important
2.	To implement learning experiences that use ICT to support the attainment of planned learning outcomes	3.37	Moderately Important
3.	To provide opportunities for students to use ICT for a variety of purposes: for example, to support inquiry, advance communication, extend access to resources and encourage expression of ideas	4.31	Very Important
4.	To ensure students have equitable access to ICT	4.07	Important
5.	To adjust use of ICT to be inclusive of students learning styles and needs	4.07	Important
6.	To utilize ICT for the evaluation of learning and providing feedback	4.05	Important
	Overall Weighted Mean	4.04	Important

The above table shows the perception of teachers towards teaching competencies in terms of information and communication technology. Based on the above result, most of the respondents found that information and communication technology is important with the overall weighted mean of 4.04. However, the two variables 'To select and utilize

integrated learning strategies including ICT for the facilitation of learning' and 'To provide opportunities for students to use ICT for a variety of purposes: for example, to support inquiry, advance communication, extend access to resources and encourage expression of ideas' with the average weighted mean of 4.40 and 4.31 respectively were found very important by the respondents. And the lowest rated variable 'To implement learning experiences that use ICT to support the attainment of planned learning outcomes' with the weighted mean score of 3.37 was felt moderately important by the respondents.

Findings

It is found that a large number of teachers have positive attitude towards ICT. This means digital skills play crucial role to enhance students learning process, create the environment of global access and expanse the horizon of knowledge. They utilize their digital skills to increase their knowledge, to download course related authentic books, research articles and to share PDF files, slides through email.

ICT innovation has become the buzzword of the moment. As a result, today's teaching and learning methodologies are becoming increasingly computerized. Each human being should have the capacity and knowledge to handle and operate with those developments, according to the demands of the modern day. As a result, enhanced proficiency is necessary as a vital component to be a prosperous individual in this world. The ability to operate, use, assess, communicate, organize, transfer, download, and create modern data is referred to as computerized competency. These talents are critical for both students and instructors in the development of e-learning. Teachers' favorable digital education aptitudes have a big impact in teaching and learning when all of these factors are considered.

ICTs have positive effects on teachers' attitudes toward the language teaching and learning. Teachers, who felt more successful in school, were more motivated to teach and have increased self-confidence and self-esteem when using computer-based instruction. This was particularly true when the technology allowed learners to control their own learning. *(This research article is developed with the financial support of UGC, Nepal)*

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