

TEACHING OF COMMERCE WITH ICT: A NOVEL APPROACH

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Abstract

Today, ICT has transformed the ways human beings communicate as well as do things. It has widely impacted different sectors like tourism, transportation, telecommunication, governance, etc. In education also, it is playing a vital role from admission process to evaluation process. It has significantly revolutionized teaching process. It has made teaching more interesting, interactive, collaborative and useful by enriching the teaching methodology of almost every subject including commerce. Unfortunately, teachers of commerce seldom realize the importance of ICT in teaching of commerce and so hardly utilize ICT during teaching and thus generally teach commerce by using lecture method with a little or no help of ICT. So, the present paper is a humble attempt to understand the novel approach of teaching of commerce with ICT, highlighting on the relevance of ICT in teaching of commerce and on the suggestions for promotion of ICT in teaching of commerce for the betterment of teachers as well as students.

Keywords: *Teaching of Commerce, ICT*

Introduction

We are truly living in an ICT (Information and Communication Technology) inspired digital society and digital economy. Now-a-days, ICT has become talk of the day. Everybody, from street vendors to governments, from students to academicians, from daily wager to corporate, has embraced ICT with open hands and heart, be it smart phones, internet or computers. Today, India also, like many other countries, is embracing ICT in most of arenas especially education as education is experiencing

more and more positive changes in its system because of the use of ICT. “Research proves that appropriate use of ICT can catalyze the paradigmatic shift in both content and pedagogy that is at the heart of education reform in the 21st century” (Bransford, 1999). With the help of ICT, many Indian educational institutions are digitalizing a gamut of educational services not only of teaching but also of administration. Some of such online and offline digitalized form of services are delivering lectures, providing study material, marking attendance of students and teachers, giving admission, accepting fee, conducting examination, doing evaluation, declaring results, maintaining records, issuing books from library using barcodes, communicating with students and teachers, etc. The UGC Notification (Minimum Standards & Procedure for Award of M. Phil. / Ph.D. Degree, Regulation, 2009) dated 1st June 2009 has also mandated submission of electronic version of theses and dissertations by the researchers in universities with an aim to facilitate open access to Indian theses and dissertations to the academic community world-wide. Online availability of electronic theses, through centrally-maintained digital repositories, not only ensures easy access and archiving of Indian doctoral theses but will also help in raising the standard and quality of research. This would overcome serious problem of duplication of research.

To be precise, ICT is playing a vital role in each and every endeavour of education, especially teaching. It has made teaching more interactive and collaborative setting aside the monotonous traditional teachers-speaking and students-listening approach. It has brought positive revolutionary changes in the teaching methodology of many teachers of many subjects. But unfortunately, teachers (Teachers of commerce) hardly utilize ICT in teaching of commerce and thus teach commerce, a practical subject, in a theoretical manner by using just lecture method only, without giving any practical knowledge i.e. hands-on experience of the subject. It leads to inadequate learning experience in students (students of commerce) resulting in low employability not only of graduates but also of even among post-graduates. They face difficulties not only to get any job but also to start any business. In their daily life, they feel problem in dealing with banks, insurance companies, broking firms, sales tax/income tax departments, etc. This vicious cycle of ignorance about practical knowledge of commerce needs to be

stopped. With the uses of ICT, a lot can be done to bring improvement in the teaching of commerce. So, let's understand the novel approach of teaching of commerce with ICT, highlighting on the relevance of ICT in teaching of commerce and on the suggestions for promotion of ICT in teaching of commerce for the betterment of teachers as well as students:



(Source: http://www.nea.org/assets/img/content/090617Tech_Teacher.jpg, 2016)

Commerce

Commerce is a very broad subject. It is related with the commercial or economic education as it focuses on knowledge and skills that make students successful businessmen, financial analysts, bankers, accountants, IFAs, etc. It is a very important subject as it transforms students from simple and ordinary persons to extraordinary entrepreneurs who are able not only to earn their own livelihood and to lead a graceful life but also to provide livelihood to others by running big businesses and thus by generating millions of jobs for millions of unemployed people. It is such a comprehensive subject, comprising of theory as well as practical, that it has been described differently by different scholars so there is no single universally accepted definition of commerce. Let's have a look on some of the definitions given by the following scholars:

H. G. Shield: "Real commerce education is economic education-economic education, not of academic sort, long on theory and short of facts, but economic education which will give the student knowledge of the basic realities of business life and relationships. The basic science of business is economics and without a through grounding and awareness of economic problems much of the material included in secondary school."

Nicholas: "Commerce is kind of training which prepares the individuals to enter business occupations to achieve their primary aims."

ICT

ICT is an umbrella term that encompasses all communication technologies such as internet, wireless networks, cell phones, satellite communications, digital television, etc. that provide access to information. It is also such a comprehensive term, consisting of theory as well as practical, that it has been described differently by different scholars so there is no single universally accepted definition of commerce. Let's have a look on some of the definitions given by the following scholars:

Blurton: "ICT is an accepted acronym of the word information communication technology. It is a diverse set of technological tools and resources used to communicate and to create, disseminate, store and manage information."

Daintith: “A branch of engineering dealing with the use of computers and telecommunications equipment to store, retrieve, transmit and manipulate data.”

Relevance of ICT in Teaching of Commerce

ICT is very much relevant in teaching (teaching of commerce). It has the capability and potential to make teachers more self-sufficient, more capable, more competitive, more updated, more social, etc. in the following ways:

- It makes teachers’ task of teaching more easy, interesting and innovative by incorporating multimedia (images, videos, colors, animation, etc) besides just plain text.
- It enables teachers to help students to retain the learnt material for a longer time by involving multiple senses of students like touch, visual and auditory.
- It helps teachers to present their teaching material in a systematic way by using PPTs (Power Point Presentations) so that they may not stray away from their topic while teaching students.
- It helps teachers to record their lectures by availing recorders so that students may listen to them as many times as they wish to understand the matter clearly and deeply as per their needs.
- It improves teachers’ on-campus and off-campus communication with students by offering a variety of mediums of communication like instant messaging, social media, e-mail, video conferencing, etc. to suit their needs.
- It makes teachers’ teaching process economical in terms of time, money and energy by providing mike, speakers, LCD, projectors, recorded videos of lectures, etc. to handle a large number of students at the same time.
- It enables teachers to help students in drill and practice of difficult portion of commerce by providing various teaching modules of commerce using CAI (Computer-Assisted Instructions).

- It helps teachers not only in drafting, organizing and maintaining various documents easily and effectively by offering special features of MS Office like editing, spelling check, alignment, font coloring, font size and many more but also in saving their precious time by providing the search option for finding the exact location of the file, in case they forget it.
- It ensures teachers about the safety of their official confidential data by providing passwords, login access, etc. to prevent unauthorized access to it.
- It helps teachers to do research work in a better way with more accuracy and convenience by providing various accounting softwares like SPSS, MS Excel, etc.
- It helps teachers to keep themselves aware about the updated rules and regulations issued by various organizations (RBI, SEBI, IRDA, etc) and government ministries (Finance, Commerce, Corporate Affairs, etc) by visiting their websites.
- It enables teachers to enhance their understanding towards the latest development of commerce taking place in their own as well as in other countries of the world by establishing and maintaining their professional networks across the whole world by availing the mediums of social networking sites, mobile apps (Whatsapp, etc), emails, video conferencing, etc.
- It enables teachers to give students the practical knowledge of the following aspects of commerce:
 - How to file income tax returns online;
 - How to deposit several taxes online;
 - How to register businesses online;
 - How to raise funds online;
 - How to trade in stock exchange online;
 - How to do Net Banking;
 - How to do commercial correspondence through e-mails;
 - How to prepare, maintain and evaluate financial records in electronic form;
 - How to test hypothesis using SPSS and other research softwares;Thus, the list is endless and ever evolving...

Suggestions for Promotion of ICT in Teaching of Commerce

“A teacher can never truly teach unless he is still learning himself. A lamp can never light another lamp unless it continues to burn its own flame.”

- Rabindra Nath Tagore

To inspire students to adopt ICT in learning, teachers will have to adopt it first in teaching in true letters and spirit. The following suggestions may be advocated for the promotion of ICT among teachers of commerce so that they may be able to exploit its benefits judiciously in teaching of commerce:

- Teachers may be sensitized towards use of ICT in teaching of commerce through seminars, conferences, workshops so that they may adopt positive attitude towards the use of ICT in teaching of commerce.
- Teachers may be helped out for clearing and removing their doubts about the safety of ICT particularly in case of net-banking and e-commerce so that they may take full advantage of it in teaching of commerce without any hesitation and fear.
- Teachers may be given adequate training of ICT so that they may use it judiciously in teaching of commerce.
- Teachers may be guided to come forward first to make themselves familiar and comfortable with the latest happenings of ICT in commerce- be it online-shopping, online-banking, online-payment of bills of electricity, water, telephones, credit cards, etc. so that later on they may teach and inspire students to learn and utilize these upcoming new trends of commerce in true sense.
- Teachers may be provided digital infrastructure by installing computer systems in class rooms, computer labs, libraries, faculty hostels, senate hall, teachers' rooms etc. so that they may start using them frequently.
- Teachers may be provided 24*7 free and fast-paced Wi-Fi internet facilities so that they may access it any time without any inconvenience.

- Teachers may be provided accounting softwares like Tally and research softwares like SPSS to have a hands-on experience of using them so that they may use them properly in their daily life and may teach the same to students.
- Teachers may be encouraged to visit the websites of important organizations like RBI, SEBI, ICAI, Finance Ministry, HRD Ministry, UGC, etc. for getting information related to latest developments of commerce so that they may update themselves and their students with the latest data.
- Teachers may be inspired to visit frequently the websites of those prominent universities and institutions of repute in India and in abroad that are very much dedicated to commerce like Shri Ram College of Commerce, etc. so that they may have updated information about latest happenings in the field of commerce taking place in these organizations.
- Teachers may be encouraged to download mobile applications related to business newspapers, subject dictionaries, etc. so that they may become e-readers.
- Teachers may be encouraged to use digital stationary like e-paper for writing so that they may become habitual of using it instead of using just paper stationary and thus may go digital day by day.
- Teachers may be given research works/projects on latest developments of commerce like e-commerce, m-commerce, etc. so that they may explore them minutely in a systematic way and thus may teach the same to students.
- Teachers may be allocated adequate free time in the school time-table so that they may spare some time for the acquisition, maintenance and development of ICT skill-sets during school time itself.
- Teachers may be allocated adequate funds so that they may utilize them for the acquisition, maintenance and development of digital resources required in teaching of commerce.

Conclusion

ICT is playing a very important role in each and every endeavour of education. It is helping in executing distant education effectively. It is helping in research work also not only by inviting research papers for seminar/ conferences, etc. through websites but also by publishing and sharing them online. Realizing the benefits of ICT in education, today, many educational institutions are providing Wi-Fi facility to their teachers and students for utilizing the available services of ICT. UGC has also asked all universities to start online admission process from the session 2016-17. But the area of education which is extremely influenced by ICT is teaching. It has revolutionized teaching by modifying instruction strategies of many subjects including commerce. Unfortunately, teachers of commerce seldom realize the importance of ICT in teaching of commerce and so hardly utilize ICT during teaching and thus generally teach commerce by using lecture method with a little or no help of ICT. So, the present paper focuses on the relevance of ICT in teaching of commerce and on the suggestions for promotion of ICT in teaching of commerce for the betterment of teachers as well as students. Thus, it recommends teaching of commerce with ICT to make the teaching of commerce more effective, more useful, more practical and ultimately more successful.

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