

INTEGRATION OF COMPUTER SKILLS IN THE BASIC EDUCATION PROGRAM IN THE NEW NORMAL

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KeyWords

Computer Skills, Digital skills, Education, Learning process, Information Age, New Normal, Teaching process

ABSTRACT

The goal of this research is to determine the importance of integrating computer skills in the basic education program in the new normal. Recognizing that computers are a 21st century tool available to all, that computers represent a significant impact to society, it is necessary to conduct the research on how computers can be used to increase and enhance student's education and development. With this, the researchers sought to answer the following questions (1) how is computer skills integrated in the program of the basic education in the new normal? And (2) what are the problems encountered in the integration of computer skills in the basic education program in the new normal. Based on the findings integrating computer skills in the Basic Education Program honed and improved the computer skills of teachers and students. On the other hand, the problems encountered in the integration of computer skills in the basic education program were cheating most likely happen in an online setting, when supervising students is much more difficult. In addition, one of the main aspects that come with the Hybrid-Flexible modality in the new normal is the ability to collaborate such as sending their classmates answers to task through group chats and the use of gadgets to take notes and sharing them with their friends and classmates. Overall, Integration of Computer skills in the new normal have positive and negative impact on the overall teaching and learning process.

Background of the Study

The way computers have invaded present-day society is remarkable. Businesses today rely on computer technology to assist personnel in almost every area of corporate life. In every walk of life, computer technology manifests itself. The 21st century ushered into the age of information and technology, where the world has undergone several social, political, economical, and cultural changes. The information age has spawned various high tech industries and fundamentally changed the way that we communicate. It provides new types of economic activity, alongside helping with the automatization and thus much faster economic production (Groover, 2021). Socially, it has led to new phenomena in human relations like the social media. It has even changed social spaces, e.g. Wi-Fi public and hotspots (European Commission, 2021).

Today's generation lives in a world where technology live in a world where technology is rapidly increasing, and new discoveries are made everyday. Computers have become a common piece of equipment in homes all over the globe. The ability to operate a computer is necessary for entering into the job field. The majority of careers in today's society revolve around technology.

Educators realize that students need to be proficient computer-users. Students need to be computer literate. In this regard, it is becoming increasingly popular for educational technologists to advocate integrating computers into the content areas of the curriculum. Teachers and administrators are recognizing that computer skills should not be taught in isolation. Students should be taught to apply computer skills in meaningful ways.

Effective integration of computer skills has two requirements: (1) the skills must directly relate to the content area of the curriculum and to classroom assignments; and (2) the skills themselves need to be tied together in logical and systematic information (O'Bannon &

Puckett, 2006). As early as the beginning of the 21st century, effective integration of computer skills is deemed necessary.

In this era of high-tech/innovative technologies, schools worldwide are becoming technologically oriented. Higher education institutions in Baguio City are likewise manifesting a technologically oriented school environment where computer skills play a significant role in learning. Today's innovative schools are geared toward expanding learning opportunities through electronic media. Anent this, the World Wide Web (WWW) may be viewed as a powerful tool for archiving and retrieving information.

In the nationwide survey of public and private primary and secondary schools conducted by SEAMO-INNOTECH, it was revealed that only 18 percent of the schools have computer literate teachers, the largest percentage of such schools are based in Metro Manila (Halover, 2010). In Baguio City, the Department of Education (Dep. Ed.) was a recipient of various ICT projects from both government and private institutions. The Office of the Congressman of Baguio City has been donating computers to several public elementary and secondary schools. A total of 25 public elementary and secondary schools were recipients of donations of computers and ICT equipment. In addition, public schools in Baguio City have been beneficiaries of the extension programs of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in Baguio City; among these is the University of Baguio. Training programs were conducted by these institutions, aside from the donated computers and other ICT equipment (Halover, 2010).

Recognizing that computers are a 21st century tool available to all, that computers represent a significant impact to society, it is necessary to conduct research on how computers can be used to increase and enhance student's education and development. Integrating technology for meaningful learning specifies that technology is added to enhance student learning and excitement in the classroom (Grabe & Grabe, 2001). Corollarily, Orlich, Hardon, Collahan, Trevisa, and Brown (2004) aver that technology has great potentials in helping students achieve maximum potential. As such, teachers carefully plan for appropriate integration of technology as an instructional tool.

This prompted the researchers to conduct a study on the integration of computer skills for the Basic Education. The results of this study will benefit school administrators and curriculum planners on how to plan and implement the functional integration of computer skills in the content areas of the curriculum.

Teachers will be able to derive useful insights from the results of the study. Considering the fact that computer skills should be taught holistically in meaningful context, teachers will be guided by the results of this study in integrating computer skills in the content areas of the curriculum. In their teaching, teachers can implement integrated computer skills program designed around collaborative projects jointly planned and taught by computer teachers and classroom teachers. Guided by the results of this study, computer teachers and classroom teachers will be able to work together to develop modules and lessons that will include computer skills, general information skills, and content-area curriculum outcomes. Students will benefit from the results of this study in that they will be guided better to be able to use computer flexibly, creatively and purposely. A well-planned computer skills training program will enable students to develop true computer literacy. These perspectives spell out the significance and importance of the study.

Statement of the Problem and Hypotheses

The aim of the study is to determine the importance of integrating computer skills in the basic education program in the new normal

Specifically, the researchers sought the answers to the following:

1. How is computer skills integrated in the program of the basic education in the new normal?
2. What are the problems encountered in the integration of computer skills in the basic education program in the new normal.

Methodology

The research is paper is primarily qualitative and descriptive in nature. It will interpret qualitatively the importance of integrating computer skills in the basic education program. It is descriptive since the researchers' investigation focused on improving the understanding the phenomenon of computer skills in integrating it in the basic education program in the new normal.

Discussion

Computer Skills Integrated in the Basic Education Program

The dynamics of the new normal inevitably paved the way for the integration of computer skills in all aspects of the curriculum as required by online classes. By integrating computer skills in the curriculum, the students developed their ability to communicate and collaborate (Andaya et.al, 2023). This affirmed the findings of Martinez, Lopez, Ortega and Rodriguez (2015) which posits that scholars mentioned that the incorporation of digital skills has developed better communication and learning. The use of different computer applications in the new normal revolutionized the making of assignments and projects which are also submitted online. Such applications are Canva for different graphic presentations; Trello for research and different apps for specific purposes.

On the part of the teachers, integrating computer skills in the teaching-learning process makes their work easier. Different computer applications enabled teachers to prepare their lessons, compute grades, gave feedbacks easily and more efficiently. Due to the pandemic, the University of Baguio adopted the Hybrid-Flexible modality in the new normal. Computer skills are integrated in this modality by using Google Classroom and Google meet in the online classes. Google classroom is the main platform for giving assignments, reminders and activities whereas Google meet is utilized to conduct online virtual classes. Since face to face activities are still discouraged, the Basic Education conduct virtual activities, competitions, and programs using Zoom platform. For easier dissemination of information, Google Space and Group Chat on Facebook are also

widely used. All of these virtual interactions hone and improved the computer skills of teachers and students.

In this study, the use of gadgets and computers greatly made students' life easier because they do not need to have a notebook. They could easily take down notes using any note-taking app in their devices. This also allowed them to easily share it with their classmates.

Problems Encountered in the Integration of Computer Skills in the Basic Education Program

Based from the study, students agreed that E-learning technologies are sometimes difficult to use and using computer systems requires a lot of mental efforts. Some students find computer online interaction unexciting as compared to the face to face interaction. This made some students lost interest in learning as proven by sudden deterioration of their academic performance. The study of Yalcin-Incik and Incik (2022) found that students and people born under Generation Z in general prefer to learn through modern technologies, and are sufficient enough in using said technology to fully implement it in the learning-teaching process in school. However, without sufficient capability in mastering digital technology, one's creativity in using the technology will be lacking (Sprenger & Schwaninger, 2021).

While Hybrid-Flexible learning was able to provide more opportunities to communicate and collaborate, enhanced communication may also lead cheating temptation in accomplishing task (Andaya et.al., 2023). The study found out that cheating most likely happen in an online setting, when supervising students is much more difficult. In addition, one of the main aspects that come with the Hybrid-Flexible modality in the new normal is the ability to collaborate such as sending their classmates answers to task through group chats and the use of gadgets to take notes and sharing them with their friends and classmates. Lastly, the findings of study support the basic idea that integration of computer skills is hindered by lack of functional laptop/gadget for few students. This is compounded by lack of connectivity or weak internet signal or connection.

Conclusion

Basic education in the new normal support the objectives of integration of computer skills in the content areas in the program since the objectives of integration is very much attained. The effectiveness of integration of computer skills denotes an environment of functional computer literacy in the Basic Education Program. Some problems encountered were the adequacy of resources and limitation denote a continuing program of improving and maintaining computer technology in the Basic Education program. Integration of Computer skills in the new normal has positive and negative impact on the overall teaching and learning process.

Acknowledgment



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