

INVESTIGATING THE PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED BY STUDENTS' DURING TEACHING AND LEARNING OF KEYBOARDING SKILLS IN FEDERAL POLYTECHNIC NASARAWA STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

Teaching and learning of Keyboarding skills in tertiary institutions is pertinent to the in Office Technology and Management (OTM) programme because the knowledge of this course is important. OTM graduates must be conversant with the operation of machines with keyboards. This study was designed to determine the Problems Encountered by students during Teaching and Learning of Keyboarding Skills in the department of OTM, Federal Polytechnic Nasarawa, Nasarawa State. Two research objectives, two research questions and two hypotheses guided the study. The study adopted survey research design. The population of the study consisted of 10 lecturers and 1,250 students who were drawn from the department who offer keyboarding as a course at ND level in OTM department. Simple random sampling technique was used to draw the sample size of 146 students out of the population of students. All the 10 lecturers were used for the study since the population was sizeable. The total sample of the study was therefore 156. A structured questionnaire with a five-point Likert scale and 22 constructs was used to gather data for the study. Cronbach Alpha reliability study was used to ascertain the internal consistency of the instrument and it yielded a coefficient of 0.86. The Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions It was found amongst others that students do not adhere to the rules of learning keyboarding and that many students prefer the "hunt and peck" method rather than the touch method and students do not use the right fingers on the right keys. Based on the findings of the study, it was recommended amongst others that since keyboarding is a skill course which its practical application is noticed by both employers and the society at large the instruction should be rigorous The teaching of keyboarding should be handled by qualified lecturers.

Keywords: Instruction, Learning, Keyboarding and Skills, Office, Technology and Management (OTM).

Introduction

Introduction course teaches the learner to bring the learner into the state of knowledge. The aim of teaching and learning go hand in hand. The teacher who is knowledgeable in the education is to impart knowledge to the learner. The teacher prepares instructional materials for the purpose of achieving the objectives of the lesson. Most objectives aim to equip the learner for paid job or for self-reliance therefore, the quality of the teacher and the preparation determines what the learner will be or do after graduation. Sometimes problems are encountered in the teaching and learning of keyboarding course. Teaching according to Hornby (2010), is the activities of educating or instructing; activities that impart knowledge or skill. Hornby (2007) also defined teaching as detailed information on how to do or use something. Teaching is very important in practical courses such as keyboarding, Shorthand and so on. Problems encountered on the effective teaching and learning of keyboarding will affect the students' performance at learning times, during examination and after schooling. It is therefore, important that the teaching and learning of keyboarding skills in the OTM department be detailed in order to identify the various constraints obstructing students' achievement in the learning of keyboarding course. Keyboarding is one of the core courses in OTM programme. It is a skill course which has a strict and firm method of teaching and learning process. It is aimed at producing document or information through operating the computer/typewriter keyboard. The learner should aim at producing mailable copy of a document through the operation of the keyboard without looking at the keys. The keyboard is designed in a way that manipulation of the mechanical device results in the production of a mailable copy. Keyboarding is "an art of producing prints like characters on paper by pressing keys on the machine called computer, to meet the need to communicate in most appropriate manner by writing" (Garba, 2011).

She maintained that keyboarding has been the method in use by secretaries. It has been a vital course of study in institutions of learning. Problems abound in the teaching and learning of keyboarding skill because its rudiments must be observed from day one. The student must learn to master the keyboard by memory. The student's brain should be the eye when on the keyboard while the real eye is on the document being produced. The students are always in a haste to

operate the keyboard without minding the rules of the operation. They find it difficult to look away from the keyboard. Often, many students disobey the rules of learning keyboarding skill because as learners they think that the hunt and peck method is easier. It is a bad beginning to look at the keyboard while typing because when this habit is formed it is difficult to correct . Also sitting position matters a lot in the learning of keyboarding skill. The placement of the manual/keyboarding text is important because all these are aimed at making the learner efficient in the course. The skill of keyboarding is a basic skill to OTM students because that is what the public assesses the graduate of the programme with. Skill is the practical ability to do something. Fadare (2004) viewed skill as expertness; aptitude and competencies appropriate for a particular job. A skill has been achieved when an action can be exercised easily. In order to attain to this skill, the individual need to acquire basic training or knowledge levels related to the task to be performed whether through formal, informal or a combination of the two. Keyboarding skill according to Garba (2011) is the mastery and proficiency of one using the computer keyboard to produce documents that are mailable. Keyboarding skill is therefore, the ability to use the keyboard of a machine in a proficient manner. It includes the ability to produce a document/information speedily and accurately without looking at the keys while producing the document.

Statement of the Problem

Keyboarding is one of the vocational courses taught to OTM students in which the teaching and learning pose problems. Teaching and learning is a process of acquiring knowledge. Knowledge is an important aspect of human endeavour, if the right knowledge is acquired the appropriate application will be maintained this is vice versa. The society expects graduates of Office Technology and Management to be proficient especially in keyboarding skill because this is the major duty performed by a secretary in an organization. Nwosu (2008) observed that “with or without technology effective keyboarding is very much required of a secretary”. Baba, Victor-Igwe and Baba (2015) state that it is the expectation of the labour market that every graduate of Office Technology and Management is equipped with skills that will enable him to be competent, employable or self-reliant. It is observed that most OTM students are not skilful in the operation of the keyboard. Most of the students cannot operate the keyboard without looking at the keys and they do not have the speed and accuracy needed in typing. They neither obey the

sitting position rules nor the rules of right placement of manual. This is a concern to lecturers and employers of labour. This growing concern, therefore, necessitated the researchers to embark on the study problems encountered by students during Teaching and Learning of Keyboarding Skills in OTM department, Federal Polytechnic, Nasarawa.

Review of Related Literature

The quality of education of a country determines the quality of graduates the educational system will produce. Esene (2013) supported this view by saying that “even the so-called non-enlightened who are generally labelled the illiterates in our society seem to be raising similar questions as those of the enlightened on the issue of quality of education. He maintained that Section 12, Subsection 114 of the FRN (2009 edition) of the National Policy on Education copiously documented on the monitoring and maintenance of minimum standards of education. It also stated that the reason why the Federal Government set up the various commissions/boards/councils is to ensure that the minimum academic standards prescribed by these Federal Education Parastatals are not compromised in any way. OTM graduates are trained with modern automations, materials and equipment in order to cope with all the changes occasioned by ICT driven era.

Abang (2009) stated that secretaries have the vital roles to play in enhancing the attainment of organizational goals. The modern business office is a paperless office which facilitates the process of correspondence handling and operation. This means that the modern business office uses computer machines through keyboarding to keep and maintain documents as against the traditional method of using papers and cabinets to preserve documents. Even the traditional methods involve keyboarding because the secretary must type the documents before they can be preserved.

Oborah (2011) described the concept of keyboarding as the development of the ability to input data by touch using the alphabetic and numeric keys on a computer keyboard. He maintained that the touch method involves striking the correct key with the correct fingers without looking at the keyboard as contrasted with the concept of “hunt and peck”. Hunt and peck involves the use of few fingers to reach the keys by looking at the keyboard and this is usually the practice of the

unprofessional users of the keyboard. He further stated that the touch technique adopts the home row keys on the base for the operations on keys which include keys on the keyboard. Fingers of the left-hand place on 'a s d f and fingers on the right hand on; l k j, and from these home keys other keys on the upper and lower rows of the keyboard are reached. The thumb (either left or right) is used for the 'spacebar'.

Agwu (2001) defines teaching as a cluster of activities that the teachers engage in during some specific time period. Teaching is the different methods and the systematic means of presenting subject matter and learning experiences. According to Sequeirs (2012) it is an accepted fact that teachers are usually not born but made. Caupin (2006) states that competency can be viewed in terms of "ability", "aptitude", "capability", "competence", "effectiveness", "knowledge" and "skill".

Nnaji (2014) observed that office technology and management education is education for and about training in business skills, competencies required for use in business offices, clerical occupations and that which gives occupational identity. Boytzis (2010) defined skill as the ability to demonstrate a system and sequence of behaviour that is functionally related to attaining a performance goal. Atakpa (2014) viewed skill as the rapidity, precision, expertise, dexterity and proficiency exhibited through mental and manual repetition of performance of an operation. It is a well-established habit of doing something through acquisition of performance capabilities. Nnaji and Bagudu (2017) stated that keyboarding skill acquisition prepares individuals for self-employment. Etonyeaku (2013) opined that skill is the capacity of a person to accomplish a task with desired precision and certainty. It involves practical knowledge in combination with cleverness, expertise, dexterity and ability to perform function which could be acquired or learnt in school. Secretaries in the modern business offices have functions beyond the traditional functions. The goal of a skill is to integrate productive efforts for proper maximization or utilization of resources and to get optimum output. Keyboarding skills are those tactical methods applied in the manipulation of the keyboard which include the knowledge of the home keys and the proper use of the other keys, ability to type without looking at the machine, speed and accuracy and so on.

Objectives of the Study

Specifically, the objectives of this study was to:

1. Determine problems encountered by students during Teaching and Learning of Keyboarding skills in OTM department, Federal Polytechnic, Nasarawa.
2. Ascertain the factors responsible for the problems encountered by students during Teaching and learning of keyboarding skills in OTM department, Federal Polytechnic, Nasarawa.

Research Questions

The following research questions were raised to guide the study.

1. What are the problems encountered by students during Teaching and Learning of Keyboarding skills in OTM department, Federal Polytechnic Nasarawa?
2. What are the factors responsible for the Problems encountered by students during Teaching and Learning of Keyboarding skills in OTM department, Federal Polytechnic Nasarawa?

Methods

Survey research design was adopted for the study. Nwachukwu and Husayn (2013) noted that a survey design is one which involves the assessment of public opinion using collection of detailed description of existing phenomena with the intent of using the data to justify current condition and practices or to make better plans for improvement. The population of the study consisted of 10 lecturers and 1,250 students who were drawn from the department who are offering keyboarding as a course at ND level in the OTM department, Federal Polytechnic, Nasarawa. Simple random sampling technique was used to draw the sample size of 146 students out of the population of students. All the 10 lecturers were used for the study since the population was sizeable. The total sample of the study was therefore, 156. A Structured Questionnaire of five-point Likert scale with 12 and 10 constructs was used to gather data for the study. Cronbach Alpha reliability was used to ascertain the internal consistency of the instrument and it yielded a coefficient of 0.86. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions. The

decision rule was that any mean response of 3.00 and above was regarded as accepted while any mean cut-off point equal to or less than 2.99 was rejected.

Table 1: Mean values and Standard Deviation on Problems Encountered by Students during Teaching and Learning of Keyboarding Skills in Tertiary Institutions in OTM Department

S/N	Constructs	Mean	SD	Remarks
1	Students do not adhere to the rules	3.16	0.37	Accepted
2	Many students prefer the “hunt and peck” method	3.61	0.48	Accepted
3	Students do not use the right finger on the right key	3.68	1.02	Accepted
4	Students lack speed and accuracy ability	3.45	0.79	Accepted
5	Lack of creativity	3.28	0.45	Accepted
6	Lack of interest in Learning	3.26	0.44	Accepted
7	Sitting position poses problems to students	3.39	0.62	Accepted
8	Students refusal to training	3.08	0.72	Accepted
9	Inability to master the keys off head	3.41	0.49	Accepted
10	Difficulty in the placement of fingers	3.02	0.72	Accepted
11	Bad habit of rubbing the keys before striking	3.42	0.49	Accepted
12	Poor knowledge of English	3.41	0.49	Accepted

The result in table 1 showed that all the respondents with mean scores ranging from 3.02 to 3.68 unanimously accepted that problems are encountered by students during teaching and learning of keyboarding skills in OTM department.

Table 2: Analysis of the mean scores of respondents on the factors responsible for the Problems Encountered by Students during Teaching and learning of Keyboarding Skills in OTM Department.

S/N	Constructs	Mean	SD	Remarks
1	Unqualified lecturers	2.92	0.42	Rejected
2	Lack of encouragement by some lecturers	2.90	0.41	Rejected
3	Lack of equipment and machines	3.16	0.61	Accepted
4	Poor condition of equipment and machines	3.18	0.60	Accepted
5	Lack of target on the part of students	3.13	9.32	Accepted
6	Lack of lesson supervision	3.63	0.48	Accepted
7	Difficulty in adaptation to technology	3.24	0.63	Accepted
8	Poor educational foundation on the part of students	3.31	0.25	Accepted
9	Poor knowledge of English	3.41	0.49	Accepted
10	Non realization of Keyboarding as a skill course	3.00	0.36	Accepted

The result of Table 2 showed that respondents agreed with 8 items and have agreed that, the above factors were responsible for Problems Encountered by Students during Teaching and Learning of keyboarding Skills in OTM department with a mean score ranging from 3.00 to 3.63 while items 1 and 2 with mean scores of 2.90 to 2.92 have disagreed with the above factors to be responsible for the problems encountered by students during teaching and learning of keyboarding skills.

Discussion of Findings

Table 1 revealed that students do not adhere to the rules of learning keyboarding, many students prefer the “hunt and peck” method rather than the touch method and students don’t use the right

fingers on the right keys. This was in line with the study of Oborah (2011), who described the concept of keyboarding as the development of the ability to input data by touch using the alphabetic and numeric keys on a computer keyboard. He maintained that the touch method involves striking the correct key with the correct fingers without looking at the keyboard as contrasted with the concept of 'hunt and peck'. Hunt and peck involves the use of a few finger to reach the keys by looking at the keyboard and this is usually the practice of the unprofessional users of the keyboard.

The study also found that students lack speed and accuracy ability, creativity, interest in learning, Keyboarding manuals, bad habit of rubbing the keys before striking, lack of interest on merit-based learning, poor knowledge of English and Impatience. Sitting position also poses problems and there is refusal to follow instruction. This finding concurred with the study of Esene (2013), who noted that OTM education simply means educational process or content that has its primary aim as the preparation of people for roles in business enterprises. The need to constantly maintain and improve the skills of students in keyboarding arises because without efficient manipulation of the keyboard by students the training becomes a waste, useless and valueless in a competitive, complex and challenging society.

Another findings also revealed that there is lack of equipment and machines, Poor condition of equipment and machines, lack of lesson supervision, Non-realization of keyboarding as a skill course, difficulty in adaptation to technology, low assimilation, and poor educational foundation. This finding agreed with the study of Etonyeaku (2008) who states that skill is the capacity of a person to accomplish a task with desired precision and certainty. It involves practical knowledge in combination with cleverness, expertise, dexterity and ability to perform function which could be acquired or learnt in school.

Conclusion

The study was undertaken to investigate the problems encountered by students during teaching and learning of keyboarding skills in OTM department, Federal Polytechnic Nasarawa. As the findings of the study showed all the respondents agreed that students do not adhere to the rules of learning keyboarding, many students prefer the "hunt and peck" method rather than the touch method and students do not use the right fingers on the right keys. The findings further revealed that there is lack of equipment and machines, the poor condition of equipment and machines,

lack of lesson supervision, Non-realization of keyboarding as a skill course, difficulty in adaptation to technology, low assimilation, and poor educational foundation.

Recommendations

Based on these findings in the study, recommendations are made as follows:

1. Lecturers teaching keyboarding should be firm in the instruction and learning of Keyboarding because it is a skill course in which the practical application is noticed by both employers and the society at large. This will enable the students to be more serious in the learning of the course.
2. The heads of department should always ensure that the teaching of keyboarding is handled by qualified lecturers. This will reduce the problems encountered in the instruction and learning of keyboarding.
3. The school management should provide enough equipment and machines to enable students have access to such facilities for practice during free time.

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