

Teacher Competence in ICT: Implications for Computer Education in Zimbabwean Secondary Schools

By

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Abstract

This study examined the ICT competences of rural and urban day secondary school teachers in Chegutu District, Mashonaland West Region. The study looked into the training and literacy levels of computer usage by the practitioners with a view to find out the areas of strengths and weaknesses in ICT usage. Upon identifying weaknesses, the study aimed at providing recommendations for improvement. One hundred and twenty out of 320 secondary school teachers participated in the study by providing data which was sought through the use of questionnaires and a competence practical test. The instruments required information on ICT training background, competence and literacy level of the educators. Results reveal that the majority of the teachers were computer illiterate because they were not exposed to ICT training or the practical hands on experience. A significant number had no formal ICT qualifications. A few, however, had a diploma in computers while none had a degree. Results from the practical test given indicate that the majority of the respondents were not able to use the basic software in computers for lesson delivery. Further indications are that teachers lack the necessary skills and knowledge of computer. In terms of applicability of the packages teacher weak knowledge levels show that their competence in ICTs for classroom use still lags behind. Challenges to ICT competence were identified as lack of adequate computer hardware, limited knowledge on how to make full use of ICTs in the classrooms and limited understanding on how to integrate ICTs into the teaching processes. To counter the effects of challenges, schools should fundraise in order to purchase computers. Staff development in ICTs should also be undertaken. All stakeholders should take part in mobilising resources for ICT resource centres. Teacher training institutions should offer ICT training to student teachers during their residential courses.