"How Web 2.0 can be used to enhanced Teaching and Learning in Ghana"

Technological innovation is taking place at a breath-taking pace. Simple, open source internet-based applications and services designed to enhance teaching and learning are now available to the wider public at little or no cost at all. These new online social media technologies is known as Web 2.0 applications/ technologies - sometimes refer to as **'social media'** - enable people to collaborate, create, share and publish information bringing about development.

The world is a global village and Ghana must not be left out but must take advantage of the opportunities derived the best from the internet and technology for development.

It is in line with this fact that The Ghana Information Network for Knowledge Sharing (GINKS) in collaboration with the International Institute for Communication and Development (IICD) organized a one-day forum on Information Communication Technology (ICT) bringing together basic school teachers and education workers in Accra. The objective of the forum was to introduce web 2.0 to participants, using vivid examples, give more insight into how to use the social media tools to enhanced teaching and learning in Ghana and also to create awareness and knowledge on the use of the Social Media in education and encourage teachers to use it in their teachings.

In his brief statement address, Mr. Ibrahim Inusah, Coordinator of GINKS entreats participants to embrace and effectively apply this method of teaching in the classroom.

In an address to open the forum, the Acting Director of ICT at African University College of Communications (AUCC) and a facilitator of the forum, Mr Prince Deh, said the programme would help the teachers to understand how the Social Media had helped improve delivery for academic contents in classrooms and, therefore, the need to integrate it in their classroom lessons for the purpose of engaging students' creativity and collaboration in ICT.

He said the forum would also help them increase teachers awareness on the application of the Social Media in education through the appropriate authorities, broaden their minds and that of students in ICT, as well as use it as a tool for teaching in the classroom.

Prince Deh, defines web 2.0 or social media as a collaborative tool that helps to share information etc with friends, families, colleagues etc. and urged them to make use of these medium in the classroom. Prince stressed that irrespective of ones geographical location,

gender, cultural background etc. teachers across board can use these tools to interact effectively with other colleagues teachers worldwide by a click of a button. He mentioned that such communication and interaction is made possible by the use of social media tools. He said again that social media goes beyond the use of computers but through phone calls where one can record and share video, pictures and audio with friends.

"Social media/new media are dynamic platform which enables people to read and leave comments in a more interactive and user friendly manner. For instance, on facebook people can leave various degrees of comments on people's walls"

"So far as we can use these social media tools in our social life, we should develop the habit of using these tools in the classroom for teaching and learning". Prince stated that most often there are misconceptions about the use of social media tools but that is not the case as it has its advantages and disadvantages.

On the presentation of the concept of the forum, Mr. Ogochukwu Nweke, Lawyer/ Lecturer, Centre for ICT, African University College of Communication started by asking participants the age bracket of the students they teach urging them to use ICT as a platform in teaching students and also accept it as a form of education in Ghana.

Ogochukwu said teachers know the behaviours of student they teach and they can clearly tell their level of knowledge.

As part of the concept, Ogochukwu used the forum to showcase videos demonstrating different web 2.0 tools that are appropriate for use in the classroom and also showcase some new patterns used in teaching and learning. He stated that such pattern must be known to enhance the communication between the teacher and the student.

"There is no library in this world that is well equipped and well resourced as the internet. He said there is lots of useful information on the internet for all age groups and for various purposes" by Ogochukwu

Drawing on some comparison, Ogochukwu said in the past, Africans use the metal drum and that is technology and also a method of communication. We are growing to changes but the problem is that we are not paying attention to our children's needs. He said most students often spend more time in the internet cafe and entreats teachers to take advantage of that to use the social media platform and the internet to deliver lessons.

He said the youth are more comfortable and feel more involve in the use of social media tools. Since most students know how to use the internet, when teachers use the social media to give assignment they will be able to read more from the internet.

According to him, most children already know more about the social media and the internet, our responsibility is to introduce the technology as part of the teaching pattern in the classroom.

He said students sometimes ask frustration questions in class but stated that these questions are simple a way of helping the students discover themselves. For most of the young people today, social media is their element, it is a place of freedom, where they gain a lot of control, feel more relax and comfortable as they get involved and collaborate with others.

He expressed the hope that teachers will pay particular attention to the reality and reactions of students and help them understand their desired goal in life.

"The face of classroom has not changed 100 years. Web 2.0 is the freedom, a platform for collaboration, this is the future. Young people feel more responsible when they are engaged but become lazier when not engaged"

He said most teachers are used to the traditional method of teaching where students write, read and digest notes and pass their examination. He said some students have adopted the use of web 2.0 tools to discover more from the internet thereby taking responsibility to get information and news, in this way knowledge stick faster and this can change the face of teaching and learning in Ghana.

He said children are pressing parents to buy them modem to be able to have access to the internet because they want to be on the same platform with their peers through social media platform. Despite infrastructure challenges faced by Ghana in the area of connectivity, we must fight hard to break those barriers.

"When it comes to the use of social media platform, Africa is first and yet we don't know how to effectively use this platform"

There are privileges and opportunities on the internet and teachers must know how tap into these opportunities and utilize it. Ogochukwu said for instance teachers can create blog site and post questions and ask their students to read and provide answers directly through the blog post, in this way they are using the web 2.0 tools effectively.

He said teachers must open up a little and introduce these medium in their class and encourage students to learn how to use the tools by giving assignment based on their interest areas such as youtube (watch educative video materials online), skype, facebook to chat and learn.

Some participants raised concern on the banned on the use of mobile phones in school whiles others think it will be a starting point for the students to get used to the computer keyboard.

"In Ghana if students have been banned from using mobile phone, how would they be able to use the keyboard when they have access to the computer? Elsewhere in Canada students are taught how to use keyboard right from school". Participant

"We get to certain period in evolution and certain tools must be used to aid teaching and learning in classroom" Ogochukwu

Speaking on Google translator, Ogochukwu mentioned that social media tools are very useful in the 21st century and it is interesting how one can even use the Google translator to learn and even communicate in different languages without prior knowledge. He mentioned that one can use Google to communicate or research in the various local languages in Ghana (Akan, Ga, Ewe and Hausa). The use of the social media also frees the mind to be used for other equally important things in life.

Ogochukwu said one of the easiest ways to do research is to find out what other teachers are doing elsewhere and how they do it. He urged them to have facebook account to enable them share information thereby increasing their capacity.

"The generation we are in now is to accept the fact that we can be multi-talented people. There is a generation gap between the youth and the old, we should be brave enough to sell the new ideas of web 2.0 to the Directors of Education and they will embrace" Ogochukwu

The educator and the teacher is everything and we must go out of the way to bring the children to the technological path. We are now living in the knowledge world and that must reflect in our education sector and we should go the extra mile to bring onboard the Directors in Education to understand the relevance of these tools. *"I am an ICT teacher and participated in one of GINKS ICT training organised for teachers last year and as a result I now set question and direct student to use the internet to find answers and am amazed at results received from the class on daily basis" Janet Takpo.*

"We are in the life long learning period and the internet has all the resources and now people are learning every now and then even through distance learning. The generation of today in distance learning has metamorphosed into what is called e-learning. People can even make use of virtual learning platform to have access to links to download e-books etc for learning and teaching". Participant

"Teachers must volunteers to write articles and post it on the internet so that Ghana can have local content information available on the internet. The numerous information we find on the internet today did not get there by magic, these information were posted by human beings and we can all contribute in creating local content" Participant

Mr. Prince Deh in his concluding remark said he is overly energized and waiting for the next action and thank all participants.