Continuing Professional Development of Teachers in ICT, in the Colleges of Technology in Oman
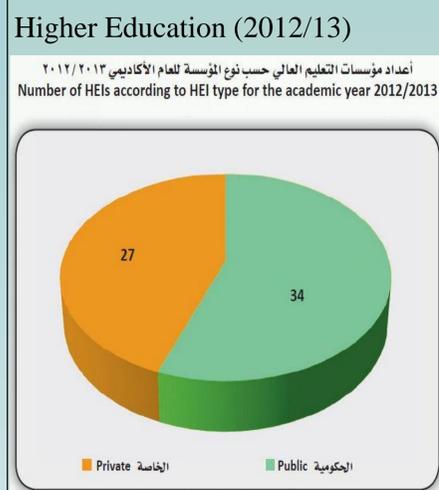
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Demographic and Education Statistics

Introduction:

ICT integration in education has become one of the highest priorities. Teachers need many things in order to implement ICT in their practices:

(a) Access to technology
(b) Professional development
(c) Some freedom in the curriculum
(d) Constructivist teaching beliefs

- The first three factors are increasingly available nowadays. However, most teachers have not integrated ICT in their practices.
- Decision whether to use technology or not depends largely on teachers.
- Studies have indicated increasing access and use of technology, but only for low level tasks such as word processing and presentations.
- Reform in ICT might not succeed unless teachers' pedagogical beliefs are understood.

Country	Oman
Population	2.7 million (census 2010)
Number of Schools in 2011/12	1,040 government schools
Number of Students in 2011/12	517,041 students

Higher Education (2012/13)

أعداد مؤسسات التعليم العالي حسب نوع المؤسسة للعام الأكاديمي ٢٠١٢/٢٠١٣
Number of HEIs according to HEI type for the academic year 2012/2013

Private الخاصة Public الحكومية

More than 80,000 students

61 Higher Education Institutions

School graduates in 2012/13	48240 students
Higher Education Enrolment in 2012/13	28774 (59.6% of school graduates)
Enrolled to Colleges of Technology	10750 (27.7% of enrolment)

Educational ICT:

A. Standardized and common technologies for teachers such as whiteboards, projectors, productivity tools (Word, PowerPoint, Excel).

- Available for a long period of time and has become part of teachers' daily practice.
- Associated with teacher centred approaches .

B. Current technologies such as computer software, smartboards and Virtual Learning Environments (VLEs).

- Newer and their rapid improvements may pose challenges for teachers.
- Associated with student centred approaches.

Levels of Course Software Application:

1. *Primary:* transmitting information to students: e.g. email, lecture notes and reading lists
2. *Secondary:* questioning students and reflection on learning: e.g. online quizzes or practice
3. *Tertiary:* interaction, dialogue and discussions: e.g. wikis, discussion threads, twitter

Why ICT?

ICT integration is education is very important for many reasons :

- *Economic:* to be well prepared for future jobs and careers. All citizens go through compulsory education and increasing numbers go through higher education.
- *Social:* based on common belief that technologies help students become better educated and well-informed.
- *Educational:* Enhancing teaching and learning.
- *Catalytic:* Accelerating learning
- *Flexibility:* learning regardless of time, place and class size.

Previous Research Example:

Jimoyiannis and Komis (2007) examined the beliefs and attitudes of 1165 teachers in Greece towards ICT and found that "the availability of ICT tools does not seem to be a factor favouring or promoting by itself the teachers' use of ICT for educational purposes" (p158).

TPACK: A framework for Understanding Teacher Knowledge

Levels of Influence in Teacher PD

ICT training, is it effective?

- One of the main problems of ICT PD, is looking at technology in isolation.
- Teachers who consider themselves competent in technology do not necessarily use their skills for pedagogical purposes.
- Adding technology to existing practices does not automatically lead to better practices.
- ICT policies should see technology not as a trend, but as an efficient teaching and learning tool.
- PD in this field is often characterized by 'one shot', 'one-size fits all' programs where teachers are listeners and do not experiment with technologies.
- There is dissatisfaction with one-off courses delivered by external 'experts' who provide training about what technology can do, without clearly linking it to teaching practice. Teachers might not have a clear view of how technology is linked to pedagogical enhancement.
- Technologies are rapidly developing and focusing only on technologies means that these skills would soon be outdated.
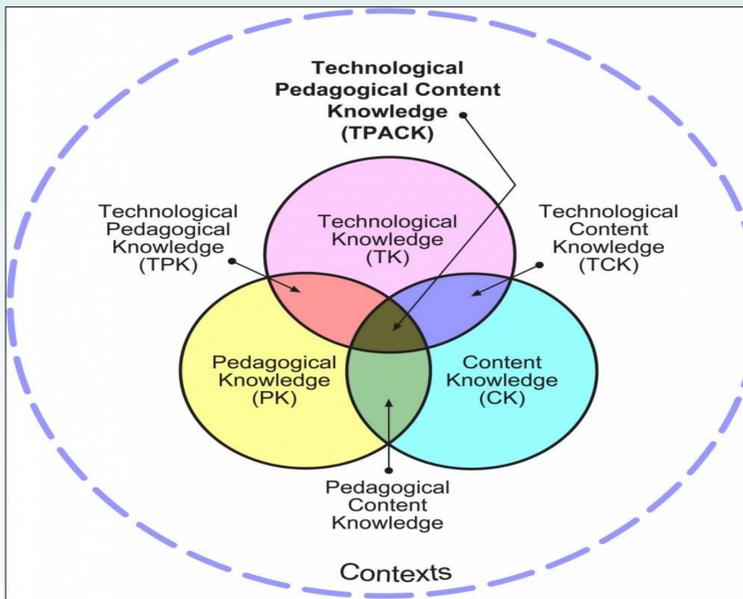
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