A SURVEY ON EFFECTIVE USE OF COMPUTER ASSISTED LEARNING BY TEACHERS FOR SCIENCE EDUCATION IN THE GAMPOLA EDUCATION ZONE

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Sri Lankan government spends lot of money to introduce computer assisted learning (CAL) to the school system. However, my observation is that CAL is not been frequently used in teaching in the schools of Sri Lanka. Thus, the main aim of this study was to determine whether school teachers use CAL in teaching effectively or not and to analyze the factors that can affect the teachers' decision in selecting CAL as teaching method in schools of the Gampola educational zone, with special attention to teaching science education. A mixed model with both quantitative and qualitative sampling was used in this study. Background information of the school was investigated through interviews. Thirty teachers and 80 students were invited to response to a set of questionnaires. In-depth investigation on teachers' conceptions of teaching, usage of IT in teaching and impact of CAL in teaching were carried out by interviews, 30 lesson observation and document analysis. Results suggested that only few teachers rarely use CAL in teaching. Although several factors have used in the analysis, no strong relationships of effects have been identified between the response variable, ICT usage with those factors. However, analysis revealed that the ICT training prior to taking the teaching appointment have positively related with the ICT usage by teachers. On the other hand, I observed that most of the studied schools have well equipped ICT laboratories with qualified instructors and thus, lack of ICT usage was not due to unavailability of resources. Teachers that used ICT in teaching only in 4 out of30 lessons I had observed during the research. The quantitative analysis in this study does not show significant correlation between teachers' conceptions of teaching and amount of time for using IT in teaching. The study recommends that support from principal and colleagues will be an essential factor influencing teachers' use of CAL in teaching.