

ABSTRACT

The Laptop in Schools Programme

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Using a mixed-methods approach, this study sought to identify the challenges encountered during the implementation of the Laptop in Schools programme at a secondary school in Trinidad and Tobago, and the extent to which the programme's goals were achieved. It focused on the use of laptops in the classroom, programme implementation, and the benefits to teachers and students. Data were collected through questionnaires, interviews with teachers and the principal, a focus group, and participant observation. The participants comprised the principal of the school, two heads of departments, one senior teacher, five subject teachers, and 16 students between the ages of 11 and 16 years. The findings revealed many barriers to implementation, including: a) the fact that the purpose for which the laptop was intended was unclear to students, and owning the device did not appear to make a significant difference in their attitude to learning; and b) the lack of teacher efficacy and understanding about the educational purpose of using laptops as well as the use of technology in the teaching and learning process. It is suggested that the implementation of the programme might have been more successful if pre-implementation activities had sought the buy-in of parents, teachers, and the principal.

Keywords: Case studies; Secondary school students; Secondary school teachers; Educational policies; Computer uses in education; Information and communication technology; Laptop computers; Trinidad and Tobago