

Utilization of Audio-Visual Aids in Facilitating Teaching and Learning in Adult Literacy Programme

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ABSTRACT

This study was designed to highlight the impact of utilizing audio visual materials in the facilitation of Adult Literacy classes in Kano State. The paper examines instructional material concept, classification of instructional materials, qualities of instructional materials, guiding principles for the use of audio visual aids, the need for audio visual in teaching and learning process, adult literacy concept, impact of utilizing audio visual material in adult literacy classes, improvisation of instructional material and finally, the paper recommended that; when using audio-visuals aids, you must carefully outline specific goals for your audience, careful selection of materials will make teaching/ learning process lively and very effective, facilitators must decide on facts that need to communicate and how they can best be organized, facilitators should produce teaching aids, and make proper use of them and lastly, the materials to be selected must be based on level of your audience, because how you present them will also influence their effectiveness.

Key Words: Utilization, Audio-Visual Aids and Adult Literacy

Introduction

Audio-visual aids are tools used by teachers in teaching learning situations to motivate, guide and enhance teaching and learning. Audio-Visual aids are referred to as Instructional Materials. They are items, (hardware) or software, which can help the teacher to teach effectively and the learner to learn effectively. They refer to all items or things that can be seen, or manipulated with the objective of enhancing teaching learning process. Instructional materials are alternative channels through which the classroom teacher can use to concretize a concept during his or her lesson (Obianwu, 1985). Obianwu added that, learning is faster and more lasting when use of instructional materials. To achieve educational objectives, the learner needs to be exposed to real life situation, by use of audio-visual aids such as pictures and diagrams.

Instructional materials are very vital in teaching /learning process. They aid teaching and learning generally. In recognition of their importance, the National Policy on Education (2004) stipulates that Audio-visual aids center will be set up under the auspices of Federal, State Government and there will be close co-operation and consultation between the center and all educational institutions for the development and effective utilization. This will add more emphasis to the use of instructional materials in the educational system.

This paper is therefore, aimed at highlighting the impact of utilizing audio visual materials in the classes of adults' people, in order to assist and make their learning very easy, effective, and much interesting. Using audio-visual aids will help the adult learners to follow through the logic of the lesson. This is effective because the learners will grasp easily what is being presented after reading, watching and hearing which are the different perspectives of learning new information.

Instructional Material

Instructional materials are concrete materials or tools used by teachers in teaching-learning situations to motivate, guide and enhance teaching and learning (Omeagboji, 2005). Obianwu, (1985) sees instructional material as alternative channels which the classroom teacher can use to concretize a concept during his or her lesson. This helps in a way to bring the student face to face with reality. Instructional materials therefore help teachers to arrange more effective environment for learning. Dike (2008), stated that Instructional materials help teachers to convey the intended message effectively and meaningfully to the learners so that he can receive, understand, retain, recall and apply the experiences to reach overall educational goals. Put more succinctly, instructional materials concretize ideas, concepts, theories, facts, principles and generalizations. They are dependable on capturing students' imagination and interest in the topics taught to them (Dike, 2008)

The importance of instructional materials is too obvious to be over emphasized. According to Omeagboji, (2005), instructional materials increase the rate of learning, save teachers' time and efforts, increase the learners' interest and facilitate retention of what is learnt. Instructional materials are items which can help the teacher to teach effectively and the learner to learn effectively. They refer to all items or things that can be seen, heard, read or manipulated with the objective of enhancing teaching-learning process. Instructional materials simplify and give vividness to explanations rendering the teaching more accurate. Nzewi, (1995) itemized the importance of instructional materials as follows:

- They make learning more permanent.
- They facilitate the learning of abstract concepts and ideas, that is, they help to concretize the ideas and so stimulate the imagination of students.
- They help to arouse and sustain interest.

- They provide experiences and contribute to the efficiency, depth and variety of learning.
- They offer a reality of experience which stimulates self-activity on the part of the students. Thus, they keep the students busy and active thereby increasing their participation in the lesson.
- They make the job of the teacher easier; he is saved from much talking; they offer him an avenue to illustrate concepts clearer and better and they reduce the time he will normally spend on only verbal explanation.

Instructional materials can be classified according to usage. Some are visual instructional materials such as computer hardware, pictures, charts, diagrams, geoboards, diaries block flannel boards, overhead projectors, newspapers, magazines, maps, models etc. Some are audio-visual instructional materials which include television, video tapes, films, computers etc. There also are have audio instructional materials which include radio and cassettes. Finally, there are special instructional materials for the physically handicapped people such as Braille machines, auditory tubes etc.

Based on the above, the use of instructional material in adult literacy classes is found to be very useful and will make the adult participants develop interest in the learning activities. This is in line with the opinion of Ukejeh (2012) who said that; “learning takes place effectively when the teacher sets out to provide learning situation in which the learner will learn because of his natural reactions to the provided materials”. He added that during the process of learning, the teacher has to provide the learning situation to satisfy the natural reaction of the learner and this is through the use of instructional aids. The attention of the learner is caught and his interest is also won and he is ready to learn.

Qualities of a good instructional materials,

Instructional materials though very important but does not substitute the role of the teacher. It rather supplements the efforts of the teacher in an attempt to achieve the instructional objectives. The type of instructional materials used by a teacher depends on the topic objectives, age and cognitive readiness of the learner. Instructional material must possess the following qualities or characteristics as stated by Ezike and Obodo (2005):

- A good instructional material should be adequate for the age of the learner.
- It must be absolutely relevant to the objectives of the lesson.
- It should be clear in illustration for student's understanding.
- It should be simple not be congested with irrelevant details that can obscure major element of interest.
- It must be adequate in size not too small nor too large.
- It should be improvisable.
- It should be affordable.

- It must tend towards durability.
- It must be reliable and valid.
- It must be amendable to the process of evaluation.

Guiding Principles for the Use of Audio-Visual Aids

Salau (2000), gave out the following guides for the use of audio visual materials.

- 1) The communicator must first get his audience's attention. He should realize that, like children, the learners would in all probability be inattentive, given their new learning situation. He must get them to listen to him, look at the poster he puts up or watch the demonstration he plans.
- 2) He must communicate in such a way that the learners can understand what he is saying. They must understand the visual materials as well as the words.
- 3) He must get his message across in such a way that it is accepted. Assuming that the learning context relates to health or agriculture, the expectant mother must be willing to go to the health centre for further information while the farmer must be persuaded to go the local agricultural office for further information and the villager must accept the idea of vaccination.
- 4) Know already? What are their attitudes towards the subject being learnt through the audio-visual aid? And to you the communicator? What are their communication skills? Do they understand the words and visual materials you are using? How does the social situation affect their acceptance of what you are communicating?
- 5) Look at the students' background to develop materials that challenge them without overwhelming them. This will help them learn at the fastest rate possible for them.
- 6) As you design your course, include some extra material that can help bring struggling students up to speed. Step-by-step explanations in more simplified language, as well as lessons that involve multiple senses, can help guide these slower learners to true understanding.

The Need for Audio-Visual in Teaching/ Learning Process

A Chinese prompt says, "If I hear, I forget; if I see I remember." In addition to the Chinese position on learning, It is necessary to add that "I would remember for much longer if I both hear and see". This underscores the significance of both audio and visual media in teaching and learning. Visuals only constitute mute pictures. Audios only constitute sounds, teaching the learner to imagine Antigua's pictures to put more meaning into pictures. That is why projected materials (films, slides e.t.c.), audio materials (CD, records e.t.c), broadcast materials (radio, television) and display materials (charts, flannel graphs, maps; posters, pictures, photographs e.t.c) are all crucial media in teaching adult classes.

In practical terms, audio material are more expensive and so less readily available than visual materials within the context of the totality of literacy teachers in the country. This

explains why across the country, the probability is that more of visual materials are used by literacy teachers.

Visual materials can make valuable contributions to literacy teaching and learning in several ways which include the following:

- Using visual can help focus the attention of your audience as they see what you say at the same time they hear what you say.
- Visualizing provides variety in your teaching and helps make the subject more understandable.
- Visuals can enrich the experience of your audience by giving them the opportunity to see things they ordinarily do not see.
- Visuals can overcome limitation of size, space and time, things that are too large or too small to be easily seen can be reached or enlarged in models or pictures so that your audience can understand them more easily. Things that are too far away for your audience to see firsthand can be brought to them in drawings or photographs. Similarly, things that happened in the past or things that might happen in the future can be visualized to give them greater meaning.
- Visuals can add meanings to the words you use. Each of us gives meaning to words based on our experience. Visuals can help provide the common experience necessary for effective communication.

Adult Literacy

The terms 'literacy' and 'adult literacy' have been variously defined by different scholars in different contexts. Hence conceptual clarification here is necessary. The key word here is “literacy” and as such it deserves a brief analysis that would help to give a clearer understanding of the broader term “adult literacy”.

In the simplest sense, literacy means “the ability to read and write in a given language, but this definition appears very inadequate because it does not give a clear picture of the level of one's ability to read and write”. This myopic conception has led many countries to construe and apply literacy to education in different ways and contexts. For example, Sosu (2006) observes that “Albania, Djibouti, Niger, Sierra Leone, Senegal provide a definition for literacy in terms of “the capacity to read and write”. In Ethiopia, it implies the “percentage of the population aged 10 and above who can read and understand a short and simple statement”.

For Akinpelu (2002), Literacy means more than the skills or the ability to read and write alphabets, words and simple statements. This is what Wagner (1991) calls “native or low literacy”. In view of this, the concept of adult literacy is derived from the general concept of literacy. In other words, it is in an aspect or a type of literacy that has to do with the adults. An adult in this case is someone, in the Nigerian context, who is eighteen years and above, and who is mentally, physically, socially and psychologically mature.

Adult literacy therefore has to do with the ability of an individual adult (man or woman)

to read, write and communicate in known language(s), as well as the ability to do basic mathematical computations far beyond basic literacy level. In simple terms, adult literacy should be seen as a tool that can equip the individual to improve himself intellectually, to empower himself economically, and to make himself socially and politically relevant.

Adult Literacy programme can be categorized into two: basic adult literacy and functional adult literacy programmes (Ezimah, 2004). The Basic Adult Literacy Programme is mainly designed to arm or furnish the students with the rudimentary skills of reading, writing and computation through the use of the local languages, especially the mother tongue. The objective is to equip the learners with basic skills of communication and understanding of their environment. On the other hand, functional adult literacy programmes combine both the teaching of literacy, numeracy and vocational skills. The objective is to equip recipients with skills and knowledge that could make them employable and useful in other spheres of life on completion of training. For this reason, adult literacy learning programmes should take place in the context of development or livelihood activities.

Therefore, for adult literacy to be well organized, there is great need for the use of audio visual material in teaching and learning processes. Gopal (2010) stressed that audio-visual materials help the teacher to overcome physical difficulties of presenting subject matter. That is, with audio-visual materials, the barrier of communication and distance is broken. He added that; Audio-visual resources can play a major role of making learning permanent. Gopal (2010) stressed that “audiovisual methods do seem to facilitate the acquisition, the retention and the recall of lessons learned, because they seem to evoke the maximum response of the whole organism to the situations in which learning is done.

Impact of Utilizing Audio-Visual Materials in Adult Literacy Classes

The use of audio-visual aids in the learning environment is important in lots of ways. One of the ways in which they are important is that they can accommodate various learning styles which produce effective learning. Some adult learners learn successfully when they see what is being talked about. Further, others learn best when they can touch or practice anything in line with what has been taught while some others can understand fully by relying on hearing only and so on. Aggarwal (1960) explains that the effectiveness of acquiring new knowledge, skills and attitudes by learners depends on the techniques used and the learning styles of the students. The learning style of an adult directs the way information should be presented to them or which techniques to use.

In illustration, the audio-visual aids can be used in new language acquisition. In a class of adult learners, an audio-visual aid such as a video which shows people having a short dialogue may be used for effective learning. This will assist the adult learners to learn best by hearing how words are pronounced in a language being used, and see which hand gestures accompany the said words. The adult learner will find it easy to grasp how

language is used and be able to use the same gestures when using that language. Further, the learners will find it easy to remember depending on their learning style such as hearing and seeing. The new knowledge can be made concrete by directing them to practice what they watched and heard in the short video.

Moreover, Eze (2013) argues that humans learn easily and in the shortest period of time by audio-visual processes as compared to verbal explanations solely. For example, using a projector can help in achieving what has been stated. The images and sounds must be in line with what the instructor is stipulating. If the adult learner did not understand the instructor's words, he or she will be able to interpret what the projector is projecting.

Another factor that allows the audial-visual aids to be significant in the learning environment is that they can be used to motivate the adult learners. When the learning situation is effective enough, it will cause the learners to react naturally to the materials provided (Martin, 2009). Adults are pragmatic in nature, in that they always want to learn things that can be applied immediately. What makes this effective and motivating to the adult learners is that the audio-visual aids help the students gain knowledge by showing them how the learned concepts are applied in the labor market or real-life situation. The adult learners will be motivated to learn more because they show the relevance of what is being taught.

Further, Ngozi, Samuel and Ameh (2012) stated that the audio-visual aids are important because they may assist memory or retention of what has been taught. During the learning process, discussions and a lot of statements are made, and examples are given to help the learners understand which would create a platform for the learners to miss the main point. Hence, they can be used to pin-point the main idea during the discussion. An example of visual aid that would assist in this perspective is the black or white board. They can be used to write only the main concepts under discussion. Hence the audio-visual aids assist the learners who might have been lost in the discussion to keep track of what is being talked about.

Improvisation of instructional materials,

Improvisation is the act of making something by using whatever one can find because there is lack of equipment or material that is needed for a particular purpose. Improvisation of instructional materials is needed for a particular purpose. Improvisation of instructional materials is concerned with alternative source of supplementing and providing teaching material for a particular lesson. In the opinion of Eniayeju (2006), it is the act of using alternative material and resources to facilitate wherever there is lack or shortage of specific first hand teaching aids. It is the act of designing and producing instructional materials to promote classroom instruction.

Inherent in the improvisation process for Nnolim (1998) is the keen sense of creativity, resourcefulness and entrepreneurial skills of teacher or his/her nominee. The need for improvisation of instructional materials arose because of the scarcity and the

expensiveness of readymade materials for teaching and learning. Ogunsanya (1984) unveils the scarcity of instructional materials in most primary and secondary schools in Nigeria. He found out that one hundred percent of classroom teachers do not use films, slides, film strips, overhead projector and records. At times some of the instructional materials are not available in the right quality and quantity while some are obsolete to ensure effective utilization.

Conclusion

In conclusion, audio-visual aids play an important role in the learning process in various ways. One of them is that they are able to accommodate different types of learners. They are also able to help the adult learners to easily understand what the adult educator is talking about. Moreover, they can be used to motivate the adult learners by linking the audio-visual aids to the real world because they make the learners see how the learnt concepts can be applied. The audio-visual aids are effective in the teaching and learning process because they engage the learners by using more than one sense. They employ eyes, hears, touch and may also engage the feelings of the learner. However, the audio-visual aids can be limited in different ways because some of them cannot be used in remote areas. They may distract the learners from the facilitator, the equipment can be expensive among others. Instructional materials convey the intended message effectively and, meaningfully to the learners so that they can receive, understand, retain, and apply the experiences to reach overall educational goals. However, the utilization of these materials in teaching and learning process do not guarantee effective communication nor effective teaching and learning. It is the careful selection and skillful handling as well as appropriate presentation by the teacher that renders them useful in facilitating learning.

Recommendations

As the mere use of audio-visuals does not assure good communication or positive feedback from learners, therefore the following suggestions will be helpful to the facilitators:

- 1) When using audio-visuals, carefully outline specific goals for the audience.
- 2) Careful selection of materials will make teaching/ learning process lively and very effective.
- 3) Facilitators should decide on facts that need to communicate and how they can best be organized.
- 4) Facilitators should produce teaching aids, and make proper use of them.
- 5) The materials to be selected must be based on the level of your audience, because how you present them will also influence their effectiveness.

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