



IMPROVISATION OF INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS IN ADULT EDUCATION: THE ROLE OF FACILITATORS

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Abstract: *Education all over the world plays a major role in determining the pace of growth and development of any nation. Also, leadership and quality of any organization will definitely affect the productivity level of that organization. Education as an arm of government should also have at the helm of its affairs leaders who can manage the class effectively to achieve the deserved result. This paper focus on the role of facilitators in improvisation of instructional materials in Adult education. The paper looked at what is improvisation? Who is a facilitator? Why improvising? Instructional materials that are applicable to adult education. The role of facilitators in improvisation and problems associated with the role of the facilitator in improvisation. Recommendations for achieving overall goals of improvisation are also presented in the papers, some of which include: Facilitators should be skillful in improvisation. Facilitators should update their knowledge on regular basis through seminars, workshops, in-service and on the job training in addition to research and self-study.*

Keywords: Improvisation, Facilitator, Adult education, Instructional Materials.

Introduction

The demand for efficiency and productivity in all human endeavour leads to the shift in teaching and learning methods. Adult Education which has as its major concern, capacity building for its recipients in order to make them more functional and contribute more positively to the society is not left out. According to Obiozor and Obidiegwu (2013), perceived adult education as a kind of specially designed programme or activity geared towards the creation of learning opportunity for the adults, a chance to acquire a specific skill and participate in a life developing or a life changing process which enables the adults to utilize such acquired knowledge, skill and literacy and operate independently within and outside his environment. It therefore follows that adult learning programmes ought to be systematically organized and prudently managed by adult's education facilitators.

In teaching learning processes, adult learners emerged as the most important factor for consideration in the

planning of learning experiences. It is increasingly been realized that his life is full of experiences and action. To him his senses of seeing, hearing, touching, smelling and tasting form the basis for understanding the environment. It is in this light that instructional media and resources otherwise known as educational technology become very important as a companion in learning. Educational Technology has been defined as a complex integrated process involving people, procedure, ideas, devices and organisation for analyzing problems and devising, implementing, evaluating and managing solutions to those problem involved in all aspects of human learning. (Fadoju 2003), a close look at the definition will reveal that educational technology is an all-embracing concept that has direct implication on the total educational process. The process involves the learners, the contents, the teacher, methods, resource materials as well as other educating agents.

Teaching process is a highly complex and demanding activity. It involves selecting the course



content, setting up the objectives, selecting the teaching methods and evaluating procedures. Perhaps, the most challenging aspect of the teaching methods is the selection of the device or teaching technique that will help the facilitator to pass the information to the learners. Educational technology enables the learners to learn more easily, understand and remember what they are taught when the ideas of being taught are shown to them vividly. This is based on the premise that the sight of an object creates an image of it in the mind and as long as the impression is in the mind, the memory remains (Aja-Dopemu, 1987).

Hence, teachers of all subjects including adult education use appropriate materials known as instructional materials to supplement or illustrate clearly, the information being passed on to learners. Such teaching if properly utilized, make adult education learning experiences more meaningful and memorable to learners.

“Teaching materials” is a generic term used to describe the resources teachers use to describe the resources teachers use to deliver instruction. Teaching materials can support student learning and increase student success. Ideally, the teaching materials will be tailored to the content in which they’re being used, to the students in whose class they are being used, and the teacher. Teaching materials come in many shapes and sizes, but they all have common ability to support student learning”.

The success of any learning process depends largely on the instructional procedures. For a given instruction procedure to achieve desired objectives, it must be proper by harnessed through adequate and proper use of instructional facilities.

Adult education facilitators have different meaning to various scholars. Nzenneri (2008), sees facilitators as a person who consciously and systematically administers the teaching-learning activities, programmes and processes with the primary aim of assisting programmes and processes with the primary aim of assisting others to learn. Ruben (2010), defined adult education facilitator as someone who is full-time or part-time or even voluntary professional

educator working exclusively with adult education facilitators as a leader, consultant, a community educator, or a specialist who works with the adults.

Why Improvisation?

Improvisation is the term for the action of improvising. In a technical context, this can mean adopting a device for some can mean adopting a device for some use other than that which it was designed for, or building a device from unusual components in an ad-hoc fashion.

Education sector has experienced inadequate budgeting allocation and poor funding for some time now, which has resulted into much talked about falling standard of education in Nigeria. Sometimes, instructional materials cannot be obtained by the facilitators for several reasons, among which is lack of money to buy them, non-existence of such materials or even lack of interest by the facilitators. In the case of lack of money to buy ready-made instructional materials for their non-availability, a resourceful facilitator should try to produce his own through his personal efforts or genuity.

Over reliance on imported material have its shortcomings because most of the educational instructional materials brought from abroad are designed in foreign languages with the content not having much relevance to the linguistic and cultural patterns of Nigeria. Shortage of indigenous instructional materials from Western countries, some of such aids may not have general acceptability across religions boundaries.

Bassey-Ibe (1999), advanced some reason why a facilitator needs to improvise:

- i. A UNESCO survey in 1978 conducted by network on communication in Africa showed that less than 50% of the population speaks English. This is a limitation to the use of such aids especially when the local language is a medium of instruction in most of Adult education centres.
- ii. Most of the instructional materials are imported from Western countries which may not be



adequately compatible with education practices in the country.

In adult education, facilitators are encouraged to improvise their instructional materials, rather than wanting for government to provide standard equipments for which the money may not be available. The improvised materials may not be of the same quality as the standard ones, yet they can serve a good purpose.

Instructional Materials that are applicable to Adult Education

The Magnetic Board

The magnetic board is a device that functions like the flannel board. It is however, more durable than the flannel board. It is made of a metal sheet that hangs on the wall or on a stand. The chart or flash card to be stuck to it is fixed with magic powder or solid magnet. The metal hinges on the backslides makes it foldable and portable.

Video Recordings

Video recordings are valuable instructional material for instruction in adult education class. It has a lot of advantages over other instructional devices because they can introduce varieties of exciting adult experiences into the classroom. Large adult class can be taught with video tapes and repetitions affected when necessary.

Laminated Charts

Most frequently and cheapest instructional material is chart. It reduces cost most especially at this time of economic meltdown, if the chart is laminated, it gives it resistance to water and moisture and the chances of tearing with frequent use is reduced. When charts are lightly framed on the top and base edges, they could be rolled up when not in use and preserved for a longer period.

Pictures and Photographs

Newspapers or magazines could provide these. Pictures and Photograph depicting the topics under discussion can be obtained in local newspapers or magazines and used for class illustrations depending on the subject matters. Photographs and pictures generally arouse interest, especially when such instructional materials have a clear message to deliver.

Model

According to Afolabi & Afolabi (2010), experts in educational technology have agreed that using real objects (relia) to teach is the best option of instructional materials. It is where this is not available that teachers go for the second best instructional materials which are the models. They itemized other condition that could warrant the use of models as alternative to relia as:

- When relia is too tiny e.g. an atom, a tiny seed like millet.
- When relia is too big to be brought to class e.g. train, aeroplane.
- When relia is harmful and dangerous e.g. knife, gun, sword etc.
- When relia is too sensitive and delicate e.g. computer
- When relia is too expensive.

Field Trip

This is any learning activities that are carried out by learners as a group, outside the classroom under the guidance of the tutor. Trips are expected to be made to places related to the topic treated. This enables the adults to see things in their natural setting and as professional experts work on them. It may be visitation to historical places etc. It enables learners to have first-hand information. Learners gain experience that cannot be brought to classroom situation. The materials students come in contact with during these visits are known as community resources as a result of the education contents the materials possesses.

Chalkboard

Most commonly used instructional materials by facilitators are the chalk boards. When it is necessary for teacher to illustrate any idea chalk board is used. Before using the chalkboard, the facilitator should ensure that the board is clean and that the learners can see without strains what he writes or draws on it. Chalkboard drawing must be bold and clear. Where possible, illustrations on the chalkboard can be prepared in advance and kept away until they are needed. As much as possible, the facilitator could avoid putting too much of the content on the board at a time.



Bulletin boards

Bulletin boards are of various types and uses. Magnetic and flannel boards are also forms of bulletin boards. Bulletin boards are used for carrying important information for publicity. It should be located in places where everybody can see them. Information which are displayed on bulletin boards should be removed whenever they become outdated and be replaced with new ones.

The roles of facilitators in information

Adult education facilitators played different roles according to the levels of their operations. However, the roles played by adult education facilitators in improvisation are as follows:

- (1) **Planning:** The facilitator formulates objectives to meet the assessed needs and also design programme of activities to achieve the objectives. Planning helps him to think ahead the instructional materials that will help him achieve his set objective within a very short time
- (2) **Organizational role** – He arranges different instructional materials, and choose the most appropriate of it to assist because adult education is all about fulfilling ones need.
- (3) **Methodological role** – Format, schedules and technique to produce the desired learning in each learning situation has to be selected by the facilitator, expository, exploratory, participatory and evaluative methods are commonly used in adult education. The facilitator should be able to know when and how to apply each method with appropriate instructional materials improvised.
- (4) **Diagnostic role** – The learning needs of the individuals for a particular learning task is found out by the facilitator, who will now use this to determine the type of instructional materials be improvised if relia cannot be found.
- (5) **Controlling function** – the facilitator monitors teaching and learning process so as to attain programme goals. He prevents all deviations in the quantity and quality of programme inputs, processes and outcomes. The input consists human and material resources, the processes are

the methods, techniques and devices while the output is the performance or competency indicators.

- (6) **Motivational Role** – Facilitator motivate the learners by making the class as much as possible interesting, he has to create both physical and psychological environment in which the participants can work and learn.
- (7) **Evaluative Role** – He assesses the effectiveness of the improvised instructional materials. It is the role of the facilitator to assess how an improvised. Instructional materials is effective to adult education programmes.

Problems Associated with role of facilitator in Improvisation

There has been a great emphasis on materials utilization in education as a result of their direct effect on the knowledge passed across to the learners.

Balogun (1982), described improvisation as a set of using alternative materials or equipment obtained from the local environment or designed or constructed by the teachers or with the help of the local traders to facilitate instruction. Mohammed (1991) saw it as an act of using and or producing similar or near similar instructional material. Improvisation according to Alonge (1983), is a way of minimizing cost on equipment and materials or an inexpensive method of widening inquiring or a challenge to curiosity, creativity and productive application of intellect. Despite the importance of improvisation, it is still been faced with a lot of problems. The following are some of the problems:

- (1) Most pressing problems faced by adult education linked with the problem of facilitators. Imhabekhai (2009), was of the opinion that a person that is not a trained adult educator, may not be able to function as expected in terms of teaching the adult and he maintained that there is need to differentiate between the method for teaching the young ones (Pedagogy) and the methods for teaching adults (andragogy). An untrained facilitator is not conversant with the unique characteristics of adult learners which borders on practicability, relevancy and self-



direction among others. As such, the purpose of learning may be defeated when such facilitator is not conversant with the unique characteristics of adult learners which borders on practicability, relevancy and self-direction among others, as such the purpose of learning may be defeated when such facilitator direct learning task to much theory and memorization.

- (2) Karami (2008), found out that some of the challenges faced by adult education facilitator in improvisation include: that facilitators are not involved in the development of materials used in teaching adults, materials are not easy for the learners to understand, and also the selection of methods to be used. The facts remains that facilitators can hardly do justice in delivering the knowledge materials which they were not involved in its formulation

RECOMMENDATIONS

Improvisation is important, as money is not always available to purchase standard teaching aids and equipment; therefore, the following recommendations are hereby suggested:

1. Facilitator should be skillful in improvisation
2. Students and local craftsmen should be used in improvising instructional materials such as wood and rope among others, should be utilized.
3. Government should encourage and motivate facilitators to embark on educational technology related strategies of making their class lively.
4. The care of teaching aids and equipment is as important as procuring them. A good teacher should adopt a definite approach to the care of instructional materials. He should understand how to care for different categories of equipment such as leather goods, nets, wooden and textiles material's.
5. Government both at federal and state level should fund adult education properly to assist in the process of improvisation of instructional materials for the teaching and learning of adult education.

6. Facilitators should update their knowledge on regular basis through seminars, workshops, in-services and on the job training in addition to research and self-study. They should as a matter of urgency acquire comprehensive knowledge on Information and Communication Technology so as to remain relevant in the contemporary society.

Conclusion

It can be concluded that improvisation of in institutional materials plays an important role in Adult education. Improvisation makes leaners to participate in creature and analytical thinking. Hence, adult facilitator should be trained through workshops and seminars on the role and importance of improvisation. Adult facilitators should incorporate this technique as one of the techniques used in teaching adult education since the study revealed that the use of improvised instructional materials enhance learners achievement in Adult education.

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