



INTEGRATION OF INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT) TO TEACHING AND LEARNING FUNCTIONAL LITERACY IN NIGERIA

John, Jonathan kehinde

Corresponding Author- kennyjonathan731k@gmail.com

Department of Adult & Non - Formal Education, Federal College of Education (Special), Oyo

Abstract

The paper examines integration of information and communication technology to teaching and learning functional literacy in Nigeria. Functional literacy is a proliferation for human development. Many adult literacy centres seem to focus mainly on the teaching of the skills of reading, writing and calculation. This paper elucidates various ways of building functionality in adult literacy programmes through the integration of Information and Communication Technology (ICT). The functional potentials of ICT in adult literacy programmes include critical consciousness, improved productivity; improved political participation, eradication of poverty, and maintaining relevance in the changing world. Discussions were made on how ICT can enhance the teaching of functional literacy. Conclusion was drawn and the following recommendations were made: ICT should be integrated into adult literacy programme, adult educators and instructors should be trained in the use of ICT in teaching and learning process and the government should provide sufficient financial support for adult literacy programme.

Keywords: Integration, Information, Communication, Technology, Teaching, Functional literacy, Nigeria.

Introduction

Adult education is an educational programme which is planned and methodically applied for the training of those adults who did not benefit from the regular formal educational programmes at the early stage of their lives. It is an educational enterprise meant to provide literacy, remedial, and continuing education for adults and adolescents outside the regular educational system in order to complement, or supplement regular/formal education. Adult education is any kind of education designed for the illiterate population, the formal school drop-out, and the unskilled and semi-skilled workers which is carried on outside the formal school setting. Adult literacy programme is an integral part of adult education which offers illiterate adults access to the three basic literacy skills of reading, writing and arithmetic. Literacy programme is geared towards developing the ability of the recipient to have access to the printed word. This type of literacy programme is referred to as traditional literacy, the present computer age, demands literacy programme that goes beyond the teaching of reading, writing and arithmetic. In most of the third world nation some adult acquire literacy education that has to do with ICT, on this background the paper tries to see the integration of functional literacy in adult education programmes as very important especially in the area of ICT.

Clarification of Concept

Concept of Functional Literacy

Functional literacy is work-oriented, career-oriented or occupation-oriented literacy. Functional literacy is tailor-made to the needs of a group or individuals, in content and method, and combines the skills of reading, writing and arithmetic with social, technical and occupational training. Functional literacy is the type of education directed to one's occupation or one's way of life and that is of immediate use to the recipient in his work (Alao, 1990).

A cursory look into most literacy programmes in adult education centres indicates absence of functionality in those programmes. Functional literacy should be all-embracing, covering the educational, economic, political, social, psychological and cultural life of the adult learners. Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has made the world a global village. ICT has altered the process and products of various enterprises including education, thereby providing efficiency and effectiveness in various organizations. The traditional literacy which focuses mainly on the teaching of reading, writing and arithmetic is insufficient for enabling the adult learners adapt in this computer age. Literacy programme of the adult learner needs to be made functional in order to produce functional adult populace who could contribute meaningfully in nation building. One of the Universal Basic Education (UBE) Goals and Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) is to provide literacy for all. ICT possesses the potential

of providing functional literacy for adult learners if well integrated in the programme.

The integration of ICT into adult literacy programmes will go a long way to adequately develop the adult populace who form the nation. This paper therefore elucidates the various ways adult literacy programmes and the adult recipients can be made functional through ICT.

Functionality of Adult Education Programmes through the Integration of Information and Communication Technology (ICT).

Adult literacy programme can be made functional through the integration of information and communication technology. Functional literacy education is adult and non-formal education programme which aims at training adults to acquire more skills on the job. The term also aim at upgrading the knowledge of an individual adult to acquire additional knowledge that make him function very well on the job. Functional literacy education is the totality of allowing adult learners to acquire new skills that make them to think critically in another area of knowledge so that they can contribute to the development of their society. For example, a graduand of adult education programme in ICT can also receive a training that has to do with software development by annex that individual receive functional literacy education. The integration of ICT into adult literacy programme could help to achieve functionality of the programme and adult learners in the following ways:

Critical Thinking Deals with Creative and Judgmental Thinking Ability.

According to Onu & Ikeme (2008), critical thinking involves using one's brain to mentally manipulate information to form concepts, solve problems, reason and take decisions. They stress that critical thinking is the act of using the mind to conceive ideas, draw inferences, and make judgments. On their part, Onu & Ikeme (2008) lamented that very few people utilize their ability to think thereby allowing themselves to be caged by their problems. There is need for functional adult literacy programme geared by ICT in order to develop in the adult learners critical thinking skills which is an entrepreneurship quality needed for human capital development.

Functional adult literacy integrated with ICT training could instill in the adult learners critical thinking skill through information processing. Therefore, Umoh (2010) states the following ICT training critical (thinking) skills are very important to the adult learners to understand the rudiments of ICT. This includes;

1. **Access:** Ability to not only know what to collect but also knowing how to collect and retrieve information.
2. **Manage:** This include ability to apply skills and tasks in an existing organization or scheme.
3. **Integrate:** Ability to interpret and represent information.
4. **Evaluate:** A task of making judgment concerning the quality, relevance, usefulness or efficiency of information.

5. **Create:** The tasks of generating information by adapting, applying, designing, investing information. The adult populace is laden with a lot of life tasks which if not articulately tackled could lead to untimely death. It is therefore of utmost importance that the adults are equipped with the skill of critical thinking. Critical thinking skill will help the adult learners to critically examine situations and issues confronting them, thereby become sensitized to take positive decisions and actions to tackle the challenges of life.

How to Integrate ICT to Improving Functional Literacy

Information Communication Technology (ICT) is global phenomena that came in early 21st century with the aim of improving productivity among adult learners simply because of the peculiarities of the problem of adults, ICT improve in their productivity. Today in most of the adult and non-formal education centres, some hardware have been introduced to ease learning among adult toward improving their ability in learning. Integration of ICT improves a lot in terms of learning among adults; a research was conducted in using Computer Assisted Instruction (CAI) among adult learners in teaching mathematics the results was shown that those teaching with the package

proved more productive than the ones that were taught with conventional methods (Wushishi, 2015). More so with current introduction ICT some adult learners come up with beautiful designs of variety of activities that can earn them a living. Today with the introduction of Point of Sale (POS); it gives adults opportunities to be more productive.

Political Participation

Information Communication Technology (ICT) assists adults in participating politically in the following ways:

- a. It is easy for contestants to reach the community during political activities.
- b. Messengers can communicate through What's App about political activities between the contestant and adults in the communities.
- c. Dividends of democracy are also derived through the use of handsets as ICT an gadget, for example, adult farmers are informed on the issue of distribution of fertilizers and other farm inputs.
- d. With the introduction of cash policies like trader money; more adults receive loans as dividends of political participation.

Poverty Alleviation

The concept simply means eradication of poverty among adults in the community;

ICT can alleviate poverty in the following ways:

- a. By the introduction of POS devices for business with which income is earned.
- b. Most adults in the community today can open a commercial business centre for photocopying and other services.
- c. In those days, in most communities; adults opened phone call centres in the community.
- d. Today ICT alleviates poverty for adults by using handset to purchase and sell credit.

Integration of ICT in Functional Literacy

The integration of ICT in adult literacy programme could assist in equipping the adult learners with employable skills. The adult learners on graduation can then open up ICT business centres for income generation. They could be trained on the mechanics of ICT facilities. ICT has the potential of empowering individuals with entrepreneurship skills such as Internet services, data analysis, printing, designing and various art works.

For relevance in the changing world no adult literacy programme could be said to be functional if it does not help the learners to adapt to situations in the changing world. The dynamic nature of the society and the world at large poses certain challenges which call for adult literacy programmes that will help them to keep abreast with current issues, so that they can remain relevant in their trades and other aspects of their lives. We are presently living in the

information age, characterized by the acquisition, analysis, and communication of information through the use of ICT facilities.

This is the computer age and other forms of communication which constitute the information super high way. It is characterized by the use of computer-based information systems to convert, store, protect, process, transmit and retrieve information. The Internet opens the world of knowledge with large quantity of information made available by diverse people and institutions which could solve most information related problems. Advances in the field of ICT have brought about changes in lifestyles, education, governance, organizations and industries.

Advancement in research, science and technology has brought about knowledge expansion, and current issues today become obsolete in near future. Adult literacy centres need to integrate ICT training in their programmes in order to equip the adult learners with the skill of information retrieval, storage, processing and transmission. ICT skill will help the adult learners to keep abreast with current issues in different fields of life, thereby moving with and remaining relevant in the changing world.

Crisis in Nigerian education system and in adult education in particular could obstruct free flow of information in conventional classroom settings. Some of the crisis include: inadequate infrastructure, lack of reading materials, over-populated classrooms, and inadequate qualified teaching personnel (Odo, 2010). These

crises need urgent ICT intervention in adult literacy programmes for the functionality of the programme.

Conclusion

The above strategies will improve and bring about the functionality of the adult learners functional literacy programmes which need to be made functional in order to equip the recipients with functional skills with which they can function effectively and efficiently in their various trades and be able to contribute meaningfully to the development of their country.

In this age of computer, it is becoming increasingly difficult for anyone to function effectively in any field without good knowledge and skills in ICT. Adult literacy centres therefore have to incorporate ICT skills in their programmes. The incorporation of ICT skills into literacy programmes of the adult learners has a lot of benefits that cannot be over emphasized. The paper has delved into some of the ways the integration of ICT in adult literacy programmes will help to make the programme and the recipients functional. Integration of ICT in adult literacy programmes will surely contribute to the achievement of the goals of Universal Basic Education (UBE) and that of Millennium Development goals.

Recommendations

1. ICT should be integrated into adult literacy programmes.
2. Adult educators and instructors should be trained on the use of ICT in teaching and learning process.

3. Government should provide sufficient financial support for adult functional literacy programmes.
4. Government should support and encourage most of the skills acquired through functional literacy programmes to be translated to ICT gadgets.
5. Sensitization and awareness should be encouraged by the stakeholders on the need for integration.

References

- Alao, J.D. (1990). Literacy: Tool for social change and economic recovery. *Education today*, 2 (3), 23-25.
- Odo, L.C. (2010). *Integration of information and communication technology in Nigerian educational curriculum in the 21st century*. Paper presented at the 2010 first International Conference of the Curriculum Development and Instruction, University of Nigeria, Nsukka.
- Umoh, I.W. (2010). Information and communication technology (ICT) and graduates preparation for leadership: strategies for integrating resource development. *Nigeria Journal of Curriculum Studies*, 17 (2), 106-114.
- World Bank. (2002). *Empowerment and poverty deduction: A source book*. Washington-D.C: World Bank.

Wushishi A. I (2015). Effect of Computer Assisted Instructional Packages on Academic Achievement and Retention in Mathematics among Adult Learners in Minna, Niger State
MSC Thesis unpublished.