

ENHANCING ADULT AND NON-FORMAL EDUCATION THROUGH EXTENSIVE READING

Avwenagha, Daniel Obruche

*Department of Educational Psychology
Delta State College of Education, Mosogar*

Abstract

This paper discussed how extensive reading could be used to improve the quality of Adult and Non-formal education in our society. It further discussed the concept of reading, types of reading skills that are involved both in intensive and extensive reading. How it can enhance the quality and adult learning in our society. The paper equally presents reasons why there is a fall in adult and non-formal education and suggestions were highlighted for improvement.

Introduction

The problems of improving Adult and non-formal education have been identified as critical to re-orientate Adult learners in Nigeria. Many people caught in this web of poor learning habits need to be re-orientated to good learning culture. Therefore, another opportunity for this chunk of individuals is to avail themselves of acquiring skills that are involved both in intensive and extensive reading. This paper provides most Adult learner with the situations in which learning takes place. Where there is little reading, there would be little language. Further education especially in Adult learning depends on the quality and quantity of reading. The Adult learner needs all the important study skills, require quick, efficient and imaginative reading (Bright & McGregor, 1976, Lotachukwu Ochege, 2009).

Meaning of Adult Education

The concept “Adult education” is a microcosm of the macro concept of “education” for the former merely refers to the kind of learning which takes place among adults. This is the idea that tends to emerge from the amalgam of definition of the term.

Adult education is generally accepted as education and training provided specially for adults outside the regular school system (Ngwu (2003), Agholor and Omoroghonmwan, 2011). According to Merriam and Brocket (1997) and Abamba (2014), Adult education is defined as activities intentionally designed for the purpose of bringing about learning among those whose age, social roles or self perception define them as adults.

In the Nigerian National Policy on Education (NPE) Revised (2012), Adult education is seen as “the entire body of organized education processes whatever the content, level and method, whether they prolong or replace initial education in schools, colleges and

universities as well as in apprenticeships, whereby persons regarded as adults by the society to which they belong develop their abilities, enrich their technical or professional qualifications or turn them in a new direction and bring about changes in their attitude or behaviour.

Deleon and Abamba (2014) of UNESCO echoes this idea when he refers to adult education as “all kinds of education for adult’s in-school and out-of-school, formal and informal, full-time and part time for persons who no longer attend schools as well as for those who never attended a school.

However, the use of the concept “Adult Education” depends on how the society perceives it and what is prevalent at the time of writing.

Duke (1982:73), Agholor and Omoroghunwan (2011), opined that Adult education may be organized in three ways namely:

- To train adults to get a qualification (e.g. second chance, remedial education)
- As a national mass education programme in Nigeria. This does not necessarily lead to any academic qualifications.
- As a deliberate training programme for adults in specific skills

Okedara (108:17) classified adult education into three modes: formal, non-formal and informal. In this opinion, formal education usually involves remedial education or extra mural classes that lead someone to obtain a certificate. Non-formal adult education covers training and instruction outside the formal education system and may be organized in the form of individualized apprenticeship, vocational training in craft centres and even a nationwide mass literacy campaign.

Aims of Education

Eduwen (1997), Agbonkonkon and Obaseki (2011) opined that the essential aim of adult education is to help man to integrate fully into the society in which he lives and become a functional self-reliant human being. According to the general conferences of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) held in 1976, the aims of adult education should be to contribute to:

- i. Promoting work for peace, international understanding and co-operation
- ii. Developing a critical understanding of major contemporary problems and social changes and the ability to play an active part in the progress of society with a view to achieving social justice
- iii. Promoting increased relationship between physical and cultural awareness of the people and their environment
- iv. Creating an understanding and respect for the diversity of customs and cultures on both the national and international levels.
- v. Promoting increased awareness of and giving effect to various forms of communication and solidarity at the family, local, national and international levels.

- vi. Developing the aptitude for acquiring either individually or in groups or in the context of organized study in educational establishments specially set up for this purpose, new knowledge, qualifications, attitudes or forms of behaviour conducive to the maturity of the personality
- vii. Ensuring the individual's conscious and effective incorporation into working life by providing men and women with an advanced technical and vocational education and developing the ability to create new material goods and new spiritual or aesthetic values.
- viii. Developing the ability to grasp adequately the problems involved in the upbringing of children
- ix. Developing the attitude for making creative use of leisure and for acquiring any necessary or desired knowledge
- x. Developing the necessary discernment in using mass communication media, cinema and the press and interpreting the various addressed to modern men and women by society.
- xi. Developing the aptitude for learning to learning.

In realizing these aims, one of the tool is enhancing the standard of adult education through extensive reading. The adult needs a better reading culture to achieve the aims of adult education. In any educational endeavour reading is very important therefore extensive and intensive reading is important for the improvement of adult learning.

Reading is the ability to reconvert written or printed symbols into speech or its mental equivalent. According to Ayoola (2006), university English for all students reading is a way of building up from what has been put down in the written form. The written symbols are used to form words and sentences which are in turn expected to represent certain information or intention. Reading is thus a form of communication during which the content, challenges and claims made by the writer are gone over by the reader who tries to capture the substance of the written material (Aliyu, 2006).

Types of Reading

Ayoola (2006), Ochege (2009) identified two basic reading namely:

- i. Extensive reading
- ii. Intensive reading

Extensive Reading: Extensive reading is defined by Ochege (2009), as a continuous reading at the fastest speed which permits a reasonable level of understanding and remembrance of lengthy portion of reading materials such as short stories, novels, magazines, newspapers etc, this is done in the shortest possible time. Extensive reading aims at the following:

- i. Extensive reading aims at reading for enjoyment and understanding of gist of the story without much attention to the details
- ii. It is essentially reading for quantity as opposed to reading for quality as an intensive reading

Intensive Reading: This is the in-depth type of reading with the aim of understanding and comprehending every detail of the passage. It also involves the assessment of the reading material to know whether it is appropriate or inappropriate, whether the author is biased or objective (Alobo, 2006).

English Language and Communication Skills

The adult learner needs this type of reading to enhance his reading for leisure and writing skills in community development.

Skills needed for intensive reading:

- Word Perception Skill
- Literal Comprehension Skill
- Re-organization Skill
- Evaluation Skill
- Affective Skill

Word Perception Skill: This involves as the physical action of the eye movement etc the action of the eye of the reader glancing the printed material for the purpose of identification and recognition and differentiating of one word from another. It also involves the ability to internalize each word recognized as well as making out of words and phrases of the passages

Literal Comprehension Skill: This ability focuses on ideas or information, which are explicitly stated in the text or given passage such as ideas of the passage characters, places of actions cause and effects, sequence, etc in essence of ideas with the surface message of the text of the message.

Inferential Skill: This involves using the knowledge gained through reading the passage to answer the questions, which are not directly found in the passage. The Adult learners are therefore expected to read, think and apply. The adult learner in this case should be creative, imaginative and then arrive at an implied meaning of the detail of the story or passage. For example, question like what is the writer's intention calls for the use of inferential skill. This is because the answer may not be explicitly stated in the passage.

Re-organization Skill: This skill requires the learner to organize and analyze ideas, fact and information directly stated in a given passage/story on his own for purpose or understanding the story in his own. To comprehend a story the individual must acquire the ability of re-shuffle, re-arrange and reasonable back of the various pieces of the story. This involves paraphrase, summarizes, classify people want and categorize them.

Evaluation Skill: This essentially involves the development of sense of critical judgment and appropriate reaction to what is read. This involves making a critical decision as the appropriateness or inappropriateness of what is read.

Affective Skill: This skill has to do with emotion; how the reader appreciates what he or she reads. The value, norms and reactions of the character in the novel, poem, stories etc he or she participates and tries to feel the same way like the writer or in other word an empathizing spirit.

Enhancing Adult Learning Through Extensive Reading: If intensive reading is the development of certain identifiable skills for maximum response in the comprehension lesson, extensive reading is the application of such skills in a much wider context of communication. Exposures to varied reading materials enhances communicative competence in terms of increased vocabulary, knowledge, ability to interpret and rate of reading (Williams 2004, Ochege 2009).

Adult learners are not interested in wide range of reading due to their limited time having been curbed in the web of responsibilities because of lack of time, they often rely on instructors made notes without sourcing materials would not develop them intellectually. Ajoola (2006) states that “learners who have thirst for learning would obtain more information from other sources to complement what he has already taken down during lesson.

Extensive reading improves linguistic competence in students and widens their horizons. This can be achieved when Adult learners are encouraged to seek for information outside, they should be encouraged to read books, newspaper, novels and bulletins and interact with people from different cultural background. Apart from the normal lecture notes taken from the classroom, notes can be taken from books, journals, novels, newspapers and periodicals.

The adult learner read extensively in order to acquaint themselves with the current happening within his or her contemporary and global societies. The Adult learner needs to be exposed to reading wide, so as to know other people’s way of life and the happenings around them. The aim of Adult Education according to Eduwen (1997), Agbonkonkon and Obaseki (2011) states that the essential aim of adult education is to help man to integrate fully into the society in which he lives and become a functional self-reliant human being. Extensive reading increases the adult learners vocabulary and increases their experiences.

Reasons Why Adult Education Seems to be Falling

- i. *Unseriousness on Part of the Adult Learners:* Many of them are lazy, they do not want to read varied and wide materials.
- ii. *Lack of Motivation on the Part of Government and Teachers:* the adult learner do not have a very good foundation so they are not used to reading not to talk of wide reading of various materials.
- iii. *Most of the Adult Learners Fund Themselves:* One of the most pronounced problem among Adult learners today is that most of them fend for themselves. In many years, Adult learning centres was the responsibility of the State Government/Local Government authority. It is a known fact that most Adult learners combine their jobs with their studies. This made it impossible to have time for extensive reading.

- iv. *Psychological Problem:* Many Adult learners are faced with economic stress of which the economy has pose on most people. The thinking has shifted from how to improve themselves on reading materials to how to manage their resources. Most of them do not have adequate jobs and cannot afford to buy newspapers, journals, bulleting novels and story books.
- v. *Environmental Factor:* Noisy environment discourage reading. The home is saddled with a lot of activities.
- vi. In some cases many of their mates are no longer interested in reading. They have given up hopes of reading.
- vii. The Adult learning centres lack professional teachers. Many of the teachers are not well paid, some take it as a part time work.

Importance of Extensive Reading to Adult Education

If intensive reading is the development of certain identifiable skills for maximum response in the comprehension lesson, extensive reading is the application of such skills in a much wider context of communication. The Adult learner needs exposure to varied reading materials such as daily newspapers, journals, etc enhances communicative competence in terms of increase in vocabulary, knowledge, ability to interpret and rate of reading.

Information widens people's knowledge and scope and it is out of an individual's knowledge, content and experiences that effective decisions are usually taken. This is true in Adult learning. One of the major problems leading to the wastage of human resources in unrealistic academic and vocational expectations, misplacement of priorities and interests because of lack of appropriate reading culture. Through extensive reading the Adult learner can avoid frustration, lack of interest, social maladjustment, reduction of input and output, work manipulation and misuse of talents. Extensive reading can help the Adult learner solve the problem of job-dissatisfaction, apathy to work, non-challant attitude to work and other aberrative work practices (Daodu, Elegbede and Adeotun, 2016). In order for Adult to assess information, the Adult programme in Nigeria should encourage extensive reading. With this, it is expected that the Adult learner acquire skills and information appropriately when due. Information is seen as the spring board to any decision-making an individual has to make in life. If proper disseminated good decision-making is carried which in turns enhances the growth of the individual and society at large.

The need to make an individual learn, read, informed and enlightened is now felt by all persons: government and institutions in Nigeria. According to Akinpelu (2000), Agbonkonkon and Obaseki (2011), the greater the educational training of adult workers, the greater the economic and social growth and development of the country. Education develops the qualifications and skills needed in a country's work force thereby promoting economic growth. Extensive reading increases the Adult learner vocabulary, making them up to date in their environment. This is in line with the Nigerian National Policy on Education which stresses that education is not only the greatest force that can be used to bring about redress, but it is the greatest investment that a nation can make for quick development of economic resources. Since education is a lifelong process, workers, professionals and Adults irrespective of their previous education and training, require

extensive reading to update their knowledge, skills and attitudes in line with changes in information and communication technology.

The only thing permanent in this modern “Global Village” is change. Extensive reading helps the individual to cope (adjust) with these modern changes hence, fit properly into present socio-economic environment.

Outlined importance of extensive reading as it relates to adult learning includes:

- i. It enables or acquaints the Adult learner with current happening within his or her contemporary and global societies
- ii. It enriches and widens the adult learner experiences
- iii. It enriches Adult learners vocabulary
- iv. It exposes the Adult learner to other culture through varying readings.
- v. It makes the Adult to know most contemporary concepts, terminologies, registers, etc common to other profession
- vi. Through extensive reading the adult learner gets exposed to certain things that he may not necessarily have known.

Recommendation

- i. There is need to re-orientate the adult on the importance of extensive reading. They should be encouraged to have the habit of extensive reading.
- ii. Extensive reading should be encouraged as a recreation rather than whiling away time doing nothing after work.
- iii. The government should build library in strategic places where newspapers, bulletin, magazines and information are readily available for Adult Education.
- iv. There is need for government to build recreation centres in every community since some environments are too noisy for extensive reading.
- v. Newspapers sales spots should be given a face lift by making it compulsory for any newspaper sales spot to have seating or provide seating arrangement. This will encourage extensive reading. Many a time we see passer-by standing to read from newspaper stands.

References

- Abamba, G.O. (2014): *Adult Education: An Introductory text for Students in Tertiary Institutions*. Nigeria: Jeco Printing and Publishing Global.
- Agbonkonkon and Obaseki (2011): *Adult Education for Employment – A Key to Job Creation*. *Journal of Teacher Perspective*, 3(3), 453 – 457.
- Ali – Momoh, B. et al (2008): *The Reform in Vocational Education and the Challenges Ahead Through Educational Development in Nigeria*. *Journal of Educational Studies and Research*, 4(2), 184 – 189.
- Aliyu, J.S. (2006): *Upgrading English Achievement*. Zaria: Tamaza Company Ltd.
- Alobo, J.O. (2006). *English Language and Communications Skills*. Kano: Afro Mats de Printers.
- Ayoola, K.A. (2006). *University of English, for all Students*. Lagos: Olive Tree Publishing Ventures.

- Daodu, M.A., Elegbede, C.B. and Adedatun, G. (2016). Relevance of Occupational Information in Enhancing Youth Career Stability: Critical Essays in Guidance and Counselling for Nigerian Counsellors. Edited by Alfred A. Adegoke, Oyaziwo Aluede and George Ewemiya. *Journal of Counselling Association of Nigeria (CASSON)*, 55 – 63.
- Ebere, *et al* (2008): Teacher Competences: A tool for Functional and Quantitative Vocational Education in Nigeria in the 21st Century. *Journal of Teacher Perspective*, 2(3), 320.
- Ebohan, S.I. *et al* (2009): Colonialism, Western Education and Problems of Nigerian Politics. *Benin Journal of Social Sciences*, 17(1), 230.
- Encyclopedia Britannica Inc (2013) retrieved 14th April from www.britannica.com/:Behccked/topic/
- European Commission (2011): “Making a European Areas of Lifelong Learning a Reality” (A Communique).
- Federal Republic of Nigeria (2004). Compulsory, Free Universal Basic Education Act 2004. Lagos: NERDC Press.