# Integration of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Facilities into Activity Method in the Teaching of English Language: Curricular Implications for the Teacher

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**Abstract:** This paper delves into integration of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) facilities into activity method in the teaching of English Language in pre-primary and primary schools. Various activities with which to engage the pupils in teaching-learning process were examined. These activities include: dramatization, games, dialogue, competition and inquiry. Different ways by which ICT facilities could be integrated into these activities for effective teaching and learning were elucidated. The curricular implications for the teacher are also discussed.

**Key words:** Integration · Information · Communication · Technology · Curricular · Teacher

## INTRODUCTION

Teaching is an art that has facilitation of learning as it's primary purpose. It requires intuition, creativity, improvisation and expressiveness. Teaching, according to Aguokogbuo [1] and Aguokogbuo [2] is viewed as any activity engaged in by one person in order to facilitate learning on the part of another. One vital issue that stands out in the concept of teaching is that it is activity-based. Activity is required both on the part of the teacher and on the part of the learner. The teacher in trying to facilitate learning on the part of the learner needs to appropriately plan. One of the aims of such planning is to ensure that teaching elicits and sustains the learner's attention, motivation, interest and effort to learn. Another aim of such planning is to ensure that learning activities bring about the intended learning; that is achieve the instructional objectives. The teacher in pre-primary and primary school is therefore faced with the challenge of mastering the content of what he should teach the pupils as well as being resourceful and creative enough to adopt or adapt the teaching methods and strategies that can help him achieve his instructional objectives with ease.

The teaching methods and strategies which the teacher in pre-primary and primary schools ought to use should be such that demands active participation of the pupils. It is established that pupils learn better what they do. Activities give reality to learning. The activity method

of teaching is founded on the principle that learners, rather than being passive, should be active participants in the teaching-learning process. Classroom activities for learners involve both their physical and mental exercise. The activities stimulate learning and facilitate the learners' creative expression of ideas.

The conventional methods of teaching of which activity method is one, have been found inadequate especially in this technology age. Information and communication technology (ICT) is currently permeating every field of life, education inclusive. Crier [3] notes that the traditional teacher using the traditional methods of teaching cannot keep up with, much less, teach the major learning of even a single field. This is because of knowledge expansion as a result of research. The surge of information in different disciplines in recent years is beyond the capacity of a teacher to manager without the aid of ICT facilities. Eya [4] predicted a transformation of the teaching-learning process owing to the introduction of ICT in education. The introduction of ICT in education in recent time, has brought the educational systems of nations all over the world under increasing pressure to use ICT to teach pupils and students the knowledge and skills they need to acquire in the 21st century.

**Activity Method and ICT Facilities in the Teaching of English Language in Pre-Primary and Primary Schools:** The teacher using activity method of teaching can employ

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one of, or a combination of the following activities, integrating them with ICT facilities in the teaching of the English language in pre-primary and primary schools.

**Dramatization:** Dramatization requires participants to assume realistic social roles and to interact with one another in terms of a common social situation [5]. Aguokogbuo maintains that most classroom dramas aim at teaching a topic. Mkpa [6] sees dramatization as a method in which learners render vividly a play or act a character in a play. In dramatization, the roles are distributed and studied in advance following the original material from where the dramatization is based. Dramatization fosters team spirit and helps in achieving socially desired ends. It helps the pupils develop skills in interpersonal relationship as they act or watch characters perform their roles.

In English language teaching, the teacher can guide the pupils to read and dramatize a comprehension passage. Dramatizing such passage, can instill deeper insight in the story, thereby making the meaning of the passage read clearer to them, Nwogwu [7] notes that puppet plays could be used to teach reading to primary school pupils. In teaching parts of speech to pre-primary and primary school pupils, dramatization can also be applied. For instance the following could be dramatized:

| | |
|---|---|
| Verb | Sit: Sit down |
| | Ada is sitting down |
| Adverb- | Slowly: Walk slowly. |
| | John is walking slowly. |
| Preposition - | On: On the table |
| | John puts his book on the table. |

Educational programme in form of drama can be recorded using Video tape recorder or compact disc and used in teaching these topics to pupils. A drama or play let on the comprehension passage read or parts of speech studied could help to sharpen the pupils' understanding of what was taught. In addition to pupil' enactment of the story in the passage or parts of speech learnt, they can watch similar ones on the Video and react to what they have watched. The teacher Jiere, acts as a guide and a facilitator in the teaching-learning process.

**Games:** Games, according to Ofoefuna and Eya [8] "Are social activities that are played like sprint by two or more people in a competitive sport in order to exhibit some positive knowledge, attitudes, values and skills that can lead to a winner". Taba [9] notes that games have been introduced in primary schools as a means of giving motivation through participation and competition. When games are used in teaching- learning process, it reduces the artificiality of the classroom. Games produce excitement, laughter and fun to the pupils while learning. Games help the pupils to think fast and logically as they seek to win the game. A teacher can use game(s) to evaluate the pupils so as to identify the pupils that have learnt what was taught and those that have not.

A game-like activity could be used while developing aural/ oral skills of the pupils. According to UNESCO [10] the more competent a child is in listening, the easier it is for him or her to-listen and understand utterances in a language being studied. He stresses that the more often a child listens to utterances in a language, the more he/she becomes used to listening and greater will be his language development. Pupils studying English as a second language should be made to perceive and produce correct pronunciation, stress and intonation in the language.

It is imperative that the English teacher bears in mind, when trying to help the Nigerian child acquire competence in aural and oral skills, that the average Nigerian child faces difficulty in producing some English sounds arising from the interference of his or her native sounds with those of English.

The teacher could apply a game-like activity while developing the aural/oral skills of the pupils. He could read an interesting story with beautiful pictures illustrating the story in the book. He makes the pupils sit in such a way that they can all see the pictures in the book clearly. When the teacher finishes reading, he could call the pupils in turn to tell him about the pictures in the story. At this point, the teacher can engage the pupils on the game of telling the story based on the pictures in the story book. The ability to tell the story mentioning the main issues sequentially could be taken note of. He also takes note of the pupils' pronunciation, intonation and diction and diagnoses their faults and makes necessary corrections. The teacher can make this approach take a more game-like shape by deciding, based on certain rules related to sequence, diction, pronunciation and intonation, on who tells the story better than the other. A game such as scrabble can be used by the teacher to teach vocabulary, spelling and pronunciation to pupils.

An educational programme in form of game can be used with the aid of computer, video tape recorder/machine to teach various aspects of the English language.

**Dialogue:** Dialogue involves two or more people. Pupils can be organized for controlled dialogue. The teacher's role is to moderate and direct the focus of the dialogue. The dialogue strategy can be used to teach various aspects of the English language. The teacher can raise an issue related to a topic on English language that forms the basis of conversation among the pupils. The teacher can construct a dialogue on which to engage the pupils so as to develop their oral skills. He/she then identifies how well or wrongly a pupil pronounces certain words and effects correction where necessary. According toEya and Igbokwe[4] providing opportunities for speaking at school is very vital since the home does not offer children the required opportunities for linguistic interaction in the target language-English.

ICT facilities can be integrated into the conventional dialogue strategy. According to Nwogwu [7] computer Assisted Instruction (CAI) has the potentials of encouraging student-student interactions and enhances peer group discussion. Computer-mediated communication (CMC), which is a process of human communication via computers can be used to organize a dialogue on a topic among pupils. The teacher can also liaise with a radio station or a Television station to organize a "Radio Link" or "Television Link" programme, whereby the pupils will be engaged in a discussion on a topic raised by the teacher via radio and telephone or television and telephone. The pupils can conveniently do this at the comfort of their homes. The pupils' discussion can be recorded using radio tape recorder and played back for necessary corrections.

**Competition:** In teaching the skill of writing, the teacher can set an essay competition on a given topic. This can be done as a follow up on dialogue. The pupils can be asked to write an essay on a topic already discussed. When the pupils finish writing, the teacher goes through the essays and make corrections. Competition can also be used while teaching preposition to the pupils. The teacher can hide some objects around the classroom and pupils are required to look for them. The pupil that finds any of the objects will have to state where he or she found it. The teacher then observes their use of preposition, reinforces correct use of it and makes corrections where necessary. Competition can also be applied while teaching parts of speech to pupils. The pupils can be engaged in a competition of supplying 5 of three-letter words or four-letter words that belong to a particular part of speech. For instance,

**Noun:** bed, pen, cap, bag, cup
**Verb:** come, clap, sing, jump, wash.

Integration of ICT in the competition activity can come in form of asking the pupils to type their essays or answers to questions asked using the computer. This can be applied among the senior primary school pupils.

**Inquiry:** Inquiry method of teaching is another activity-based approach in teaching-learning process. According to Aguokogbuo [1] "Inquiry method involves the learners in seeking information about ideas, facts and concepts by asking questions". In the same vein, UNESCO [10] states that the basis of the inquiry-based approach is to facilitate students-generated questions as the core part of the learning process. In this approach, the learners learn effective questioning techniques, seek for answers and consequently make their own discoveries. Inquiry-based approach in teaching-learning process promotes independent thinking and self reliance among pupils. The role of the teacher here is that of a facilitator, guide and partner. The teacher using this approach can pose open-ended questions on a topic being taught, while the pupils will be required to find answers to the questions. The English teacher can lead the pupils into generating their own questions on a learning content and guide them into finding answers to the questions by themselves. They could do this by consulting knowledgeable individuals, library, books, newspapers, Journals. This type of activity motivates the pupils because their own questions ultimately become the focus of research and learning.

The English teacher could use this approach to teach lexical structure. It can also be used to teach comprehension, whereby the pupils could be asked to find answers to questions raised from the comprehension passage they have read. In teaching parts of speech pupils could be asked to supply certain number of words that belong to a particular part of speech and make sentences with them. The teaching of vocabulary can also take an inquiry shape. Pupils could be asked to supply the synonyms and antonyms of certain words. ICT can be integrated into inquiry approach by teaching pupils in senior primary how to use the internet to obtain information. The pupils could be given assignment on a particular topic and asked to go the internet to obtain information on the topic.

**Curricular Implications for the Teacher:** It has been established that learners learn better when they are actively involved in the learning process. Learners ought to be active participants rather than passive for effective teaching and learning. The activity method of teaching offers the learner ample opportunity to be active in teaching-learning process, more especially when integrated with ICT facilities. This has some curricular implications for the teacher of English language; some of which include the following:

- The teacher should provide opportunity for every pupil in the classroom to participate in the activity. This will help to draw the shy ones and the introverts out of their shells.
- The teacher needs to be creative so that he can improvise certain instructional materials with which to engage the pupils in one activity or the other. This is important since some schools, especially public schools, lack some instructional materials due to inadequate funding.
- He should seek and provide activities that are interesting to the pupils. This is very crucial in that to participate actively in learning activities, the pupils need those activities that are interesting to them. Such activities serve as motivational factors in the learning process.
- The teacher ought to take cognizance of the ability level of the learners so that he can provide suitable activities for them. The activities should neither be too high nor too low for the learners.
- Most important, the teacher should be computer literate and knowledgeable in the use of ICT facilities In teaching-learning process. This is because he/she could not integrate ICT facilities if he/she is not computer literate.

## CONCLUSION

The activity method is directly linked to the activity/experience curriculum design which according to Mgbodile "Is so patterned to take care of the passivity and sterility of learning and the isolation of the learning experiences from the needs and interest of children as shown by the subject curriculum design". The guiding philosophy of the activity method is that people learn only what they experience. Learning occurs best when it is related to active participation of the learner. There is therefore the need for the teacher to provide ample, varied, suitable and interesting activities to pupils in pre-primary and primary schools. Pupils at these levels of education are at formation and foundation stage and

should be equipped at the onset with teaching strategy that will enable them to be active participants in the learning process. The pupils will thus learn better and retain what they have learnt.

It is also imperative that in this age of information and communication technology, that the teacher of the English language should be computer literate in order to integrate ICT facilities into the conventional teaching methods especially the activity method. This could make teaching-learning process more effective, interesting and rewarding both to the teacher and the pupils.

**Recommendations:**
- Seminars, workshops and symposium should be organized for teachers on the use of activity method of teaching.
- Teachers should be provided with varied and adequate instructional materials with which to engage the pupils in different learning activities.
- Ample time should be provided in the school time-table to accommodate the learning activities.
- In-service training on the use of computer in teaching-learning process should be provided for teachers in pre-primary and primary schools.

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