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LAFIAGI JOURNAL OF SCIENCE EDUCATION



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The editions are expected to be in two phases:

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1. Papers are expected from all aspects of science education, sciences and technology, technical education and modern technology related issues.
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 3. Manuscripts should not exceed 15 pages in length, including reference, tables and appendices (if any).
 4. The abstracts should not exceed one hundred and fifty (150) words.
 5. The cover page of the articles should bear; the title of the paper, the author's name, status, and departmental or unit address or institutional address.
 6. The authors should follow the American psychological Association (APA) reference format.
 7. Three (3) copies of the papers or articles (the original copy and two other copies should be forwarded).
 8. The paper which should have not been earlier published or sent for publication in any Journal should be sent to: the managing Editor of LJSE.
 9. The papers or articles should reach, the editorial Board through the address below between 15th January to 25th April, of each year.
 10. Each articles submitted should be accompanied with a Non-refundable screening fee of ₦400.00 only (either in bank draft or raw cash payable to the editor –in-chief
 11. Three (3) self-addressed stamped envelopes should be sent along with the Editorial Board. All correspondence should be addressed to the managing Editor, Lafiagi Journal of Science Education, School of Science. College of Education (Technical), P.M.B.1, Lafiagi , Kwara State.

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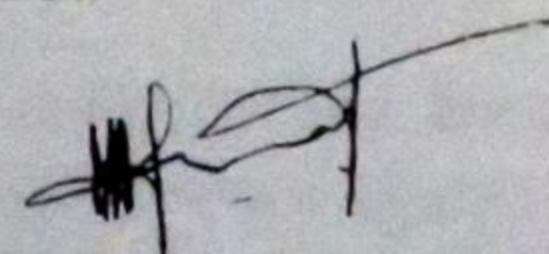
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FORWARD

After the last edition of this journal in March, 2001, the Editorial Board had been restructured after successful tenure of the previous board. Since then the new board had worked to improve on the efficient services of the last board members. Articles had undergone serious scrutiny of editing exercises in conjunction with the Editorial Advisers. The whole membership of the Editorial Board had to at a stage shift the Editorial room to the computer office to give adequate supervision to ensure correct and quality prints.

We therefore present the forth volume of this academic journal to increase the academic information necessary to engender national development. In this edition, there are various Research-based articles in Sciences and Education. There are also articles on information technology and education technology. Also included here are write-ups in vocation and technology education including computer as related to teaching of Mathematics.

This edition touches many areas of academic interest.



ADEREMI M. ADEWALE
Editor-In-Chief

A CRITIQUE OF UNIVERSITY OF ILORIN LIBRARY PROGRAMMES ON USER EDUCATION

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LIBRARY

ABSTRACT

User education in Libraries has been a continuous call for a long time. The reasons for this call is the role the library plays as a complementary agent to the teaching and learning process in the institutions of higher learning. This major role cannot be achieved if the users of the libraries are not given adequate education in the use of their collections. This paper examines the need for users education in the University of Ilorin Library, the methods of educating the users and suggestions for its improvement. No doubt academic library in the University of Ilorin has now realised the importance of user education in their services. But in practice no academic institution is in a position to provide regular user education programmes in a real sense for the benefit of all their users.

INTRODUCTION

The importance of Library in any institution of higher learning cannot be over-emphasized. This is because the library is an agency which engages in the collection, organisation, processing, reservation and information dissemination of recorded information in the various formats.

"Scholars regarded library as an indispensable social institution in the education process. Most convenient to its target users (Salisu, 1993). "According to Leo, (1999 p.2) library is usually regarded as a store house of human knowledge and established to complement the teaching learning process in the institutions of higher learning"

Majority of the users of our institutions' libraries, unfortunately, have poor reading habits. This, of course is common among the people of the developing countries where reading is mainly for achievement rather than pleasure. This is because of the poor provision of school and public libraries in Nigeria, majority of the users of our higher institution libraries come in contact with large libraries for the first time when they gain admission to the institutions. It is, therefore, important for the librarians to the institutions. It is, therefore, important for the librarians to device various ways of ensuring the maximum use of the library resources by the users.

Users need to learn to retrieve information and how to organise, evaluate and communicate it. In addition to acquiring library skills, there is a need to impart learning and communication skills. A few examples of institution of higher learning that organised user education programme of this nature include, UniJos Library, B. U. K. Library Kadpoly Library, Fajablirant (1978), defines, user education programme as "the teaching of these skills that will enable students to locate and use materials effectively, and feel confident in using the library". Also, it is to acquaint users with the use of the materials in the Library.

USER EDUCATION

There should be goals and objectives for User education in any types of Library.

FAJABLIRANT and STEVENSON (1978, P. 61) described the goals and objective of user education in academic Library as:

The goals and objective for programme of University Library User Education must be in agreement with the general aims of the Library, the aims which must in turn be related to the goals and aims of higher education.

The simple definition of user education is the instruction given to readers to help them make the best use of a Library. The main purpose of the instruction is to stimulate the use of the Library and its information resources.

USER EDUCATION IN ACADEMIC LIBRARIES

The main purpose of user education is to achieve not only a successful utilization of the Library resources but also to encourage and promote good reading habits.

According to MUOGLIN, (1988) user education is the process through which users are made to learn effectively and efficiently, user of the Library and its resources through the acquisition of skills in identification. This skills of identification is meant, to assist the users to make the best use of the Library to be able to retrieve information of value from the Library with minimum delay and difficulty.

It is however, unfortunate to note that the syllabuses and courses do not give room for leisure reading in institutions of higher learning. This of course should be an important point for consideration by the planners of our tertiary, secondary and primary schools syllabuses when formulating our educational policies.

It is not an exaggeration to say that most of our primary and secondary schools in Nigeria come in contact with large collections of books when they are admitted into the institutions of higher learning.

The target audience is assumed to be engaged in advanced studies and research in their various fields of specialization. The University Library is a powerful educational force behind the University, and it was to support the academic needs of the users that researcher attempted to investigate to what extent the target audience uses the Library in carrying out their research work. It is a general belief that if a library is not meeting the goals and aspirations of its users it is not functional.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Library instruction, or bibliographic instruction is the common name given to user education. In other words it is to produce intelligent use of the library, it is therefore very important that instructions on the use of the library be given prominent attention.

ISHOLA (1980, P. 5) in this contribution to the need for users Education observed that:

For full-time and part-time students of higher education, it is necessary that organised users education programmes is approved by the Academic Board/Senate.

OKESAN (1983, p. 63) sees library user education as the "various techniques of importing the much needed knowledge to the students in the use of library resources". In institution of higher learning in Nigeria, library user education is not a strange programme, it is even peculiar to learning in institutions world over, though the approaches differ given (1974). recalled the earliest account of library instructional method back to 1871, this implies that from the period to the present time, many institutions have been engaged in one form of users education or the other.

According to AGBAKABA, 1988; AKIN OJO, (1994) concerted effort have been made in recent times concerning the status and implication of library user education in some of the tertiary institutions in Nigeria. One of the most prominent efforts made in this area was that of University of Nigeria. Nsukka where library instruction has been made a compulsory and examinable course to all fresh students since students would not pay attention to a course that did not carry credits. Similarly, as part of the requirements of the University of Lagos, academic programmes students in all the departments of the University are required to take a course in General African Studies (GAS) with the use of the library.

Consequently, the present Library instruction and the use of standard Library handbook exist in a vacuum because they bear no relation to any particular problem the users have. Users usually find it difficult to use the libraries because of the hastily manner in which they are educated in their use, especially in the institutions of higher learning in Nigeria.

USER EDUCATION AT UNIVERSITY OF ILORIN LIBRARY

The insufficient use of the Library in the institution of higher learning in Nigeria may not be blamed on the users but also on the approaches of the user educators.

Many of our library user educators merely offer reading guidance to help them locate the materials on the library shelves. The library orientation programme usually given to the freshmen has been found to be inadequate, not only is the duration short, but also a great number of students misses it. The ideas to introduce the course "Use of Library" as a compulsory course emanated from the past experiences of the librarians in their interactions with the students.

They found out there was the need to provide more comprehensive training to the students if they are to maximize the use of the library, most of the students thus enter the Universities, polytechnics, Colleges of Education without the slightest idea of how to use a Library. They were given orientation which centred only on taking them round the library and explaining the various functions or services provided by the Library.

However, most institutions have since discovered that the orientation programmes are not detailed enough as they hardly last more than a few hours. It is therefore, imperative that for the students to maximize the use of their libraries for learning and research, they must be adequately "tutored/educated. The common practice of educating students to use the Library in University of Ilorin Library is via Library orientation which is normally planned as part of the general orientation programmes for the new-intakes. Such library orientation does not usually last more than a few days featuring:

- An address by the University Librarian coupled with a lecture on the use of the library resources.
- A guided tour of the library in groups by the fresh students to see the essential parts of the library.
- Distribution of the library handbooks or library guides during registration.
- A course in GNS is an integrated part and examinable.

ORIENTATION PROGRAMME

Apart from the fact that the general orientation programme is usually scheduled in haste to last for only a day without adequate awareness, the library aspect of the activity is slated within thirty minutes or an hour for the University Librarian's address on the use of the library within the limited time, the librarian has no alternative than to

rush his address at the orientation area. The fault may come from the organising committee who may be ignorant of the importance of this in an academic community.

In addition, a library handbook which would have equally educate users on the various library services is non-existence except the general University Library guides which only contained the rules and regulations of the Library.

The inadequate provision of time to fully educate the students in the use of the library is partly due to late admission of students and partly due to the fact that the institution authorities lay more emphasis on the lectures the students will receive, but they fail to realize the role the library can play in the attainment of this goal of passing examination. The users need to have fundamental knowledge of the role of the Libraries in the society.

In University of Ilorin, library user education is usually conducted through displays and general talks on library facilities and its resources. All these usually take place when new students are being oriented through instructional periods keyed to specific subject group in the institution. Much as one will agree with those methods as a means of achieving the desired goal of educating the users on how best to use the library effectively and life-long education on the use the library have not been achieved. (Eatwell, 1981) observed that: Education in Library techniques is essential and Librarians and their Universities fail if they send graduate out into the world without a knowledge of Library use.

The present system of user education in Libraries where users are merely shown the library resources without adequate training in their use and without the close attention of the library staff, has been criticized by many contributors of user education.

Phillips and Taylor's for example believe that:

The present method of library instruction is sterile and self defeating, because it is directed towards showing users one of the methods of defining and seeking possible answers to problems in which does not reflect or achieve the desire goal of educating the users. (Phillips and Taylor, 1972).

Consequently, the present *Ubrang* instruction and the use of standard library handbook exist in a vacuum because they bear no relation to any particular problem of the users. Users usually find it difficult to use the libraries because of the hasty manner in which they are educated in their use especially in the institution of higher learning in Nigeria.

SUGGESTED METHODS OF EDUCATING USERS

It is note-worthy to commend some institutions where user education is regarded as so important that students have to pass prescribed examination in order to earn some academic credits which are regarded as part of their requirement towards their degrees. Examples are the University of Jos, Kaduna Polytechnics, The Bayero University Kano, to mention but a few.

THOMPSON (1985) assesses the implication of non-introduction and poor execution of user education in our academic libraries in which he affirmed that there is no excuse for not providing it. To him, it is absolutely essential but, if done badly, it can seriously harm the library's reputation within its academic community, since what is worth doing at all is what doing well, the usual library part of the general orientation programmes is not enough to educate students of higher institutions of learning on the use of the library.

The library is an academic nerve centre of an institution which is not only useful to students but the entire academic community. Thus, a marathon orientation is not an effective method of instructing students in the use of library instead, the first one week or two of any new academic session should be set aside for orientation. There should be something like "Library week" in each session. The week long exercise should include programmes like lectures, seminars, symposium, film show, book display and exhibitions etc.

In addition, National University Commission should as a matter of urgency make the teaching of library science or the use of library a compulsory credit course instead of its present status as being integrated with GNS.

Finally, acquisitions of relevant information/materials on the library itself is another unique method of educating the students, apart from the fact that these materials will help the students in the continuous assessment exercise of GNS the use

of Library they will also afford them the opportunity to know more about the uses of the library.

CONCLUSION

The importance of academic Library and user education programme in Nigerian Universities cannot be over emphasised. Thus, the inability of the present days students in making effective of the Library is one of the major factors affecting our educational standard. Proper Library user education is therefore essential to expose the students (fresh students in particular) to the world of knowledge. "The library" where there is a variety of information materials (books, journals, magazines, newspapers, etc.) useful to their academic programmes.

Any effort geared towards the users education in our institution is not a waste but a way towards an academic excellence.

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