

INNOVATIONS IN SHAPING THE FUTURE OF MODERN TEACHING AND LEARNING BY SCHOOL LIBRARY MEDIA CENTRES IN NIGERIA

Oyewo, R.O. and Abatan R.A.

Department of Library and Information Science, Faculty of Management and Communication Science,
Oyo State College of Agriculture and Technology, P.M.B 10, Igboora.

Abstract

The paper discusses the innovations that change and reshape the focus and pattern of library service delivery in the school libraries in Nigeria. The paper discusses the concept of bibliotherapy, makerspaces and emerging technologies and how they can be integrated and employed in the school libraries to meet the needs of the users.

Keywords: *Innovations; Bibliotherapy; Makerspaces; Emerging technologies; Modern teaching and learning; School library media centre in Nigeria.*

Introduction

Libraries and librarians in the 21st century provide information most especially with the use of communication technologies (ICTs) infrastructure which helps people to develop the capacity to effectively use information, and preserve information to ensure continuous access for future generations. Ramzan, (2004) submitted that introduction of ICTs particularly hardware and software to service delivery in the library provide innovative user services where librarians gain knowledge of new technologies through continuing education programs, professional training, and revisions to library school curricula, which help them benefit from the new technologies.

Libraries are now expected to provide a range of information and communication technologies necessary for retrieving information quickly from both immediate and remote databases to users, as well as creating a need for library cooperation and consortium initiatives (Okiy, 2005). Libraries offer series of services which range from promotion of literacy, to offering free access to information, digital inclusion through access to Information and Communication Technology (ICT), Internet connection and skills with support of a dedicated staff who have deep understanding of local needs are means of providing information for sustainable development. IFLA (2013b) submitted that access to information supports development by empowering people, especially marginalized people and those living in poverty, to exercise their rights, be economically active, learn new skills, enrich their cultural identity and take part in decision making.

Before now, the school libraries were collections of content related publications that students could use for research. The school librarian catalogues, organise,

and assist with accessing these materials. The school librarian's role was limited to that of "keeper of the books. However, of recent, several major events precipitated the first radical change in school libraries. In 1960, the American Association of School Librarians (AASL) published standards for school libraries with recommendations for equipping qualified school librarians with quality literature and non-fiction books, films, filmstrips, slides, and other audiovisual equipment (AASL, 1960). Also, there was the release of ground breaking research on the impact of a centralized school library staffed by qualified school librarians on students' learning at a time when there were few school librarians (Gaver, 1961). Today, school librarians are entering another period of radical change as they combine their information specialist roles with technology integration. It is imperative to submit that as ICTs are changing the means and methods of service delivery in the library. This assertion is affirmed by the submission of Ramzan, (2004) and Guiding and Murray (2004) that librarians in developed countries moved quickly to learn and adopt information technologies because ICTs are posing challenge to librarians in developing countries such as Nigeria. This is evident through integration and adoption of ICTs by the librarians in delivery of library services in the 21st century.

Moreover, librarians in this era need to keep abreast of new innovation being developed and adopted in library service delivery because ICTs bring about new innovation which requires adoption of different skills in order to cope. Edem (2008) submitted that librarians are expected to continuously enhance and improve on their knowledge, skills and personal characteristics in the use of technologies in order to improve productivity, efficiency and competitiveness.

Goal 4 of Sustainable Development Goals and Library Services

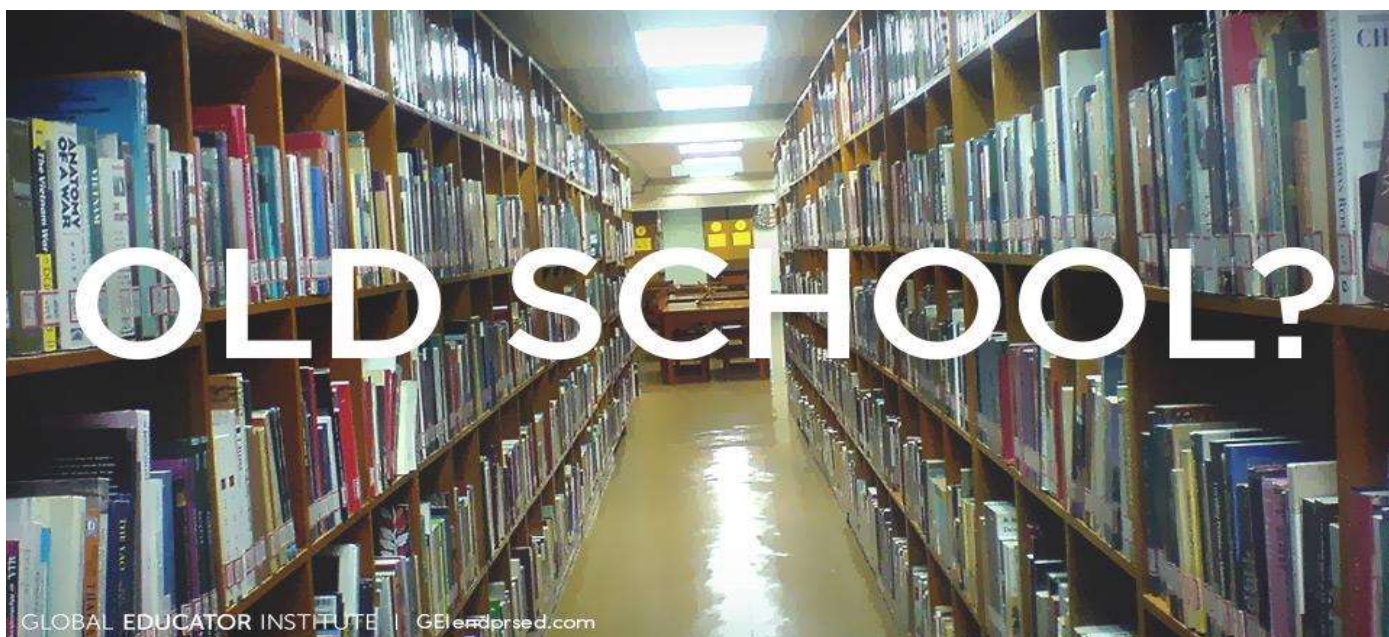
Goal 4 of sustainable development goals emphasized the need for quality and inclusive education. It is stated in the SDGs document as “Ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education and promoting lifelong learning opportunities for all”. The library is a powerful means to achieving and realizing the goal 4 of the SDGs. Dada (2016) submitted that the library is an agency for discovery, innovation, vocational skills repository, scholarship and research such that librarians as well as other information professionals working within the library help to leverage knowledge acquisition through the provision of up-to-date and relevant information, manpower training and capacity building, all of which can impact on the realization of SDG 4. Chigbu and Nkechi (2013) corroborated this assertion by stating that the realization of a country’s vision is knowledge-driven and librarians are active players in identifying, maintaining and making available knowledge assets.

Moreover, Oyemike *et al.* (2016) in their study submitted that the impact and contribution of the library professionals were not highly felt and pronounced in the MDGs era despite its central position in the development of the economy but its contributions are not conspicuous to all. They submitted further that it could not be empirically proven that this is the extent to which library and information centres (LICs) contributed towards the realization of MDGs. Yet it could not be denied that they contributed to its minimal realization. This therefore showed that the library has great potential in contributing to the achievement sustainable

development goals 4, if explored, most especially with the adoption of emerging technologies in libraries. According to Anyaoku, (2017), achieving the sustainable development goals requires the input of all institutions concerned and while some institutions’ contributions can be direct, some can be indirect through the support to other agencies while Abdullahi and Abdullahi (2017) noted that government cannot achieve the SDGs alone and that the library, being a vital tool for national development, needs to take up its responsibility in providing information services for the attainment of the SDGs.

Ubale, and Yahaya, (2016) submitted that library is not only just one of the institutions that government needs to support in fulfilling and achieving sustainable development goals but a vital one. Hence, the need for librarians and libraries to take up their responsibilities as professional information analysts in offering ideas and services for the attainment of the SDG. Also, Onah *et al.* (2015) submitted that unhindered access to information in libraries is required for the actualization of all the SDGs.

With the potential of libraries in contributing to the achievement of sustainable development goals, researches (Onah *et al.*, 2015; Okunlola *et al.*, 2018) have shown that constraints to effective contribution of libraries towards the realisation of SDGs include lack of reliable and accurate data, negligence of libraries by governments, poor perceptions of the library profession, low level of private sector, interest in library services, poor lobbying and advocacy skills amongst librarians, paying lip services to library development programmes by government and low level of partnership drive among librarians.



21st Century Library



Innovations in the school libraries in the 21st Century revolve around provision of spaces for activities other than reading. These include, break away rooms where users can discuss, brainstorm and debate freely. Relaxation rooms where students can relax, watch movies, and play; and napping stations where users can take a short nap or sleep, makerspace and use of bibliotherapy.

Library Makerspace for inclusive and qualitative education

Makerspaces in libraries according to (Pryor, 2014; Boyle *et al.*, 2014) are definitely a trending topic in library discourse. Therefore, the establishment of creative spaces (that is any place where the community can come together for informal and shared social learning) in libraries has been an emerging trend worldwide in recent years. This implies that the use and adoption of makerspace as a mean of promoting learning in the library is relatively new. Makerspace is

a service provided by today's library brought about majorly by advance in technology such as computers, 3-D printers, audio and video capture and editing tools, as well as traditional arts and crafts supplies. Library makerspace is also known as Hackerspace or Hacklab. Canino-Fluit (2014) explained makerspace in library as an activity that encourages students to use their minds in a more holistic way: to create, use, and share ideas that ultimately lead to creation of new things. School library makerspace gives all students access to resources which can be used to develop their creativity. The first library makerspace has been arguably opened at the Edge in the State Library of Queensland in 2010 and since then it has continued to appear and evolve in libraries around the world. Britton (2012) submitted that when makerspaces are incorporated into libraries, classrooms and other educational settings, students are offered new opportunities to collaborate, learn through play, solve problem, build, investigate, and produce.



Moreover, there has been a paradigm shift in library from physical collections in the digital world through the adoption of emerging technologies which lead to the use of makerspace as an innovative way of learning in order to build the library patron; confidentiality and creativity with the use of digital tools and resources. Studies, according to Gerstein (2014) and Fleming (2015) submitted that makerspace is turning knowledge into action by allowing the minds of the learners to do creative thinking and get access to enabling resources that could help them bring their thoughts into reality by promoting collaborative thinking, practising, forming and creating new 'things'. With makerspace, the library is more than just books but rather community engagements which implies that students learn beyond the classroom. This is why Burke (2015) submitted that makerspace is a mechanism for encouraging students to experiment and learn beyond the classroom and outside of the normal structure of their assignments. Reserachers (AIR, 2014; Guha *et al.*, 2014) have suggested that student engagement and achievement increase when teachers challenge students with real world problem solving such as project-based challenges which enable students to collaborate, communicate effectively, use evidence-based judgment, persevere in problem solving, and exhibit strong organisational and self-management strategies. The ability to transfer knowledge and skills through technology and rich environments such as makerspaces results in deeper learning. Without mincing words, the 21st century can be described as skills driven era that requires an individual to be able to acquire relevant skills Therefore, makerspace can

provide and enhance the form of education needed in this era.

Bibliotherapy for inclusive and qualitative education

Evidence has proven over the years that reading books can be used as a therapy for coping with socio-environmental issues such as disfunction families, blended families, drug abuse, death, bullying, aggression, anxiety, street urchins, illness and non-conforming behaviours among the others. According to Sullivan and Strang (2002) books can assist with the resolution of more complex problems. Today's classrooms are full of students coping with family issues such as divorce, blended families, drug use, death or illness. Hence, bibliotherapy can be used to correct and normalise a child's world by offering coping skills and reducing their feelings of isolation, reinforcing creativity and problem solving (Berns, 2004).

Bibliotherapy is reading to heal, It involves the selection of reading materials which includes fiction and non-fiction books that can be used to guide readers to realise greater self- understanding, self- reflection and comfort when faced with problems, loss, disabilities, illnesses and other challenges (Adeyeye, 2019). It is a combination of two Greek words "biblio" meaning book and "therapeia" meaning healing (Strurm, 2003) and involves the reading of books, stories and poems creatively in order to make people feel better in themselves and about themselves. Through bibliotherapy, the passion, enthusiasm and delight for reading is shared with another individuals or groups of people to produce affective change and to

promote personality growth and development. It is an attempt to help individuals understand themselves and cope with problems by providing books that are relevant to their situations and developmental needs at appropriate time. Also, bibliotherapy is a multi-faceted concept but very relevant to the aims and objectives of librarianship such that when it is properly implemented, benefits derivable include an awareness that others have faced similar problems, the knowledge that alternative solutions to problems exist, the development of a freedom to talk about problems, the growth of problem solving skills, the development of a positive self-concept, relief of emotional and mental stress, the development of honesty in self-image and the fostering of a better understanding of human behaviour.

Bibliotherapy is of two types-the clinical bibliotherapy and developmental bibliotherapy. Developmental bibliotherapy is practiced by librarians, non-medical staff and teachers to facilitate and help students cope with issues or situations that could affect their learning and behaviour in order to facilitate normal development and self-actualisation. It is used to help students address issues or situations that affect their behaviours (Cook *et al.*, 2006). Many a times, students may become increasingly burdened with diverse issues that affect them psychologically. Bibliotherapy, as a strategy can be used to help students deal with these issues which may include loss of parents, aggressiveness, low self-esteem, rape, peer influence, alcoholism, drug abuse and other issues affecting their lives (Wadsworth 2007). The process of bibliotherapy, when followed technically and completely, can help students understand the feelings they have, find solutions that will work and make them feel better about themselves which will increase their personal success (Dirks, 2010). Developmental bibliotherapy can be done on group basis or personal basis with the help of a librarian.

However, the most important step when using bibliotherapy is to match appropriate books with various problems. There should be similarities between what the student has gone, or is going through and the character in the book. In other words, for the intervention to have a therapeutic effect, the reader should experience identification with the character in the story, situation or emotions and enables the reader relates his own real life situation and feels a sense of emotional release that leads to a sense of empowerment and insight resulting in new growth and development. Once the student is able to identify with the character in the book, he/she will experience

catharsis. It is after this that the student, with the help of the Bibliotherapist, gain insight into the problem and to realise he/she is not alone and that there are other people somewhere with similar problems who have been able to overcome it. Bibliotherapy is used to impart information, provide insight, stimulate discussions about problems, communicating new attitudes and values, teach new solutions to problems, and enhance self-regulation to furnish relaxation and diversion. The uniqueness of bibliotherapy is that it starts in an indirect manner by focusing on the reading of the storybook, to the knowledge that others are also passing through the particular problem (identification), and later to 'discovery of self' (catharsis), emotional release (insight) and end with how to solve the problem.

Carr (2006) and Silverberg (2003) have indicated that bibliotherapy can be used as a corrective and preventive measure. There are many factors to be considered when selecting books to use during bibliotherapy session. These include the comfort ability of the therapist with the text to be read. It is important that the therapist is comfortable with the recommended text, which he/she should have read several times. The ultimate goal in book selection is giving right books to the right persons, because recommending of a wrong book, at the wrong time to a reader can aggravate the situation that one is trying to remedy. It is equally important that the therapist has a good knowledge of the particular issue that needed to be dealt with, in order to know the particular goal of bibliotherapy intended to be achieved.

Bibliotherapy is considered as a service offered to ameliorate the emotional and psychological trauma of affected individuals most especially in the contemporary world. There was a belief in the healing power of books and the value of books as a source for improving the quality of life (Pardeck 1993). In 1939, bibliotherapy received official library recognition when the Hospital Division of the American Library Association appointed its first bibliotherapy committee. Basically, bibliotherapy can be defined as the use of books to help people solve problems (Forgan, 2002). In other words, it is a process which involves an individual reading about a character who successfully resolves a problem similar to the one he/she is experiencing (Sullivan and Strang, 2003). Therefore, using stories or narratives can help children to externalize or to understand that a separation exists between the self and the problem. Bibliotherapy can be an effective intervention when perhaps no other interventions are available for a child with social and

emotional problems in or beyond the school environment.

Pardeck (1990) submitted that a carefully selected book will allow students to see solutions to the problems without the burden of in-depth verbalization, or face to face confrontation. With bibliography, students with a particular challenge become involved in responding to a story read in the book, its characters, and the situation it describes and during a guided discussion, begin to find safe ways to explore their own world. Bibliotherapy, according to Berns (2004) allows children to share their thoughts indirectly through a third person or from the safe distance of a storybook character. Shy or withdrawn students “can identify with characters in books strongly enough to experience the catharsis and acquire some important insights” (Furner, 2004).

Bibliography assists students by providing literature relevant to their personal situations and developmental needs at the appropriate times (Hebert and Kent, 2000). The use bibliography therefore promotes inclusiveness which is relevant to SDGs by systematically using books to better address students or patrons’ emotional, behavioural and social concerns of various groups of people by providing information, insights and stimulate discussions about problems, communicate new values and attitudes, create awareness that other people have similar problems and provide realistic solutions to problems.

Conclusion and recommendations

This paper has demonstrated that libraries and librarian are key actors in the attainment of the SDGs even with the adoption and utilization of innovations in this era. This is because adoption of new ideas, innovation and ICTs in, library service delivery remains relevant in the information business because it provides quality services not bounded by geographical boundaries. Librarians play the role of knowledge acquisition and development of information literacy skills for life-long learning which is highly essential for promotion of quality education. Government should therefore invest in library as well as librarians in order to achieve the SGDs. Also, the ICT has affected the skills and responsibilities of the librarians because it requires high level of technical skills set for library professionals in order to make maximum use of new technological tools for providing effective and better services to the users. Therefore, there is a need for investment on librarians.

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