

# THE ROLE OF THE 'LIBRARY-TEACHER' IN UBE

By

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## **Abstract**

*The article makes a case for a full time qualified librarian in the school that will run the school library and teach the basic library skills to teachers, pupils and other library users within the school, the paper also recognized the body of knowledge to be imparted to teachers and pupils as library use education and calls for a curriculum for a well planned library use education in schools. As we have teachers for other subject in school, there should also be a teacher for library use skills and the school librarians will be that teachers. Hence, the coinage Introduction of the term 'Library-Teacher'*

## **Introduction**

This sub-theme, "The Teaching Role of the School Library in UBE" touched me most, out of all sub-themes because I could have ended up with both a library qualification and a teaching certificate when I graduated. After I had spent two academic sessions (2 years out of regulated 3 years) studying education as an elective and library science as a major, I had the opportunity to continue with the education elective in my 3<sup>rd</sup> year and earn a Certificate in Education as well as a degree in Library Science. I chose the Library Science solo-path way. I never got trained enough while in school to know that a Librarian has a teaching function. Now I know better and will discuss this in this paper. This is my revenge.

## **Teacher-librarian or library-teacher**

*The teacher-librarian:* Usually, a trained professional teacher takes up the role of a librarian because our educational system believes any body can be a librarian even though the person has no training at all in librarianship. Since there is a need borned out of reluctant compulsion rather than conviction, that English teacher usually doubles as one. Where the loyalty of the teacher-librarian lies? Teaching English.

Another breed of the teacher-librarian is the one that trained as a teacher and got some kind of library training usually very minimal. The loyalty of this teacher is also titled towards teaching his subject of specialization. Library services thereby suffer both ways.

*Library-teacher (my coinage):* Barely exists in our school system. This is my coinage for that type of professional that will proficiently exemplify the sub-

theme being addressed. Ideally he/she is a qualified librarian that teaches library science just like any other teacher such as: Agricultural teacher, Mathematics teacher etc. Library science simply means structured use of the library and its resources (human and information) to stimulate and enhance the users' information needs, skills and effective utilisation.

#### **What is this library science?**

- Professional competency by the manager of resources
- Organisation of printed, visual, aural, informatic resources
- Acquisition of relevant printed visual, aural, informatic resources (in-house and externally).
- Dissemination of these resources on demand or anticipatorily
- Systemization of available resources to produce "new" knowledge
- Programmed activities to promote optimum utilisation of available resources by client.
- Evaluation of services to ensure adequate and effectiveness.
- Stimulation of users towards literacy culture by library manager.

#### **What the library-teacher teaches**

Library skills are not innate skills. They have to be taught and learned and nurtured for optimum benefit. However, this must be in line with what library science is as I have earlier projected.

A curriculum (as simple as can be embraced by the different levels of users) must be developed and used to include the following:

- The role, duties/responsibilities of the Library (to include that of the librarian in the school system/curriculum).
- Techniques of acquiring library resources (to include the participation of pupil, teacher, parent, community at large in the selection process)
- Variety of library resources and effective utilisation (Learning-skills)
- Organisation of library resources (Library Use Skills) (colour classification for Lower Classes?)
- Programme of activities and services to enhance the Curriculum
- Role of Parents and community in fostering library culture.

These topics may not be taught strictly with chalk on board. There is need to include a variety of styles of teaching to hold the attention of learners.(Drama, Song, Recitations etc)

#### **Who is to be taught**

**Teachers:** A good number of school teachers do not understand the role of the School Library in the Curriculum and therefore still use rote learning whereas resources based encourages library utilisation and life-long learning skills. The

library teacher therefore must organise constant workshops/seminars to ensure that teachers are library-friendly.

These groomed “teacher-librarians” can safely be used to counter shortfall of School-Librarians.

**Pupils/Students:** Library period on school time-table must be established to teach pupils and students library use skills and study skills (learning to learn). This must be structured to last through the 9-year school period (primary through junior secondary)

The mode of teaching concepts must embrace play method, projects, films, videos, and the regular chalkboard.

**Parents:** There is a fundamental need to stimulate parents to “teach” and encourage their children to “read” beyond prescribed school texts. There is also a great need to convince parents to acquire supplementary readers for their children to expand their access to learning resources. Family libraries must be encouraged and the participation of parents in school library development must be stirred. One sure way is through seminars, workshops, projects and involvement of parents as volunteer library resource workers. These have to be coordinated by the library-teacher.

**Community at large:** The library teacher needs the community to support the school library. The average Nigerian community is oral based, whereas access to printed, visual, aural and “cyber” information is the key to functional and national development in the new millennium and beyond. The school library, in the face of abysmally negligent, public/community libraries must provide information literacy services to the community outside the school. In order for community to fully utilise the services of the school library, it must learn information literacy techniques to be provided by the library.

### **Library in UBE**

What is UBE

The UBE provides universal access to basic education for all Nigerians through:

- Pre-school
- Primary
- Junior Secondary
- Migrants (Fisher-people and Nomads)
- Drop-Outs
- Adult Illiterates

**UBE/Library:** Interdependence

Universal access to all public and school libraries for the UBE programme.

Both Concerned with providing “unlimited” access to relevant information for functional living.

Emphasis on learning-to-learn as a life habit (reading habit/culture). The UBE Implementation guidelines (2000) registers libraries as a spatial enablers of learning without which no meaningful learning and teaching can take place. The Education For All (EFA) framework of Action document (international counterpart of UBE) states "there is a need to recognise libraries as invaluable information resources that must work in partnership with school and community workers.

Libraries therefore need to become a vital link in providing educational resources for all learners-pre-school through adulthood, in school and non-school settings.

The teaching role of the school library therefore is not hidden from the UBE planners but what may be elusive now is implementing the plans as well as active participation of library planners at all levels of the UBE process.

#### **Implementation strategies**

- Library schools in Universities to expand opportunities of specialising as school librarians
- Pivotal Teacher Training Programme for UBE to include a library component that presently is absent from the "approved" curriculum. (As UBE Librarian, I have made some useful observations to NTI on this )
- Provision of physical school libraries in all schools
- Library period to be on all school time-table (decision to be taken at JCC level and NCE level)
- National Minimum Standard for school libraries to be reviewed and enforced.
- Library committees be a compulsory feature of PTAs at National, State and Local Levels. (The NPTAN Chairman is met on this).
- A concerted effort by all library bodies, the National Library of Nigeria, Nigerian Library Association, and all other affiliated sections of the NLA, as well as all friends of the library to ensure that government policy on libraries in UBE is actualized.
- Provision of library resource materials through standard regulation at NCE meeting. (10% of school budget) is recommended.

#### **Conclusion**

The school library is not aside from, or a buttress to the curriculum, but its skills is very foundation of the curriculum. If UBE is to maintain quantity and quality on what children are taught and what they learn, school libraries must feature prominently, in teaching learning-skills to pupils. Learning skills must be taught and learnt, as they are not innate skills. Teachers must be stimulated to ensure resources based teaching and learning rather than the traditional role learning, which still features prominently in Nigerian Schools.

Government must be seen to implement the provision of school libraries as has been stipulated in the UBE Guidelines.

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