

# NON-BOOK MEDIA FOR EFFECTIVE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE UNIVERSAL BASIC EDUCATION PROGRAMME IN NIGERIA

By

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## Introduction

The Universal Basic Education (UBE) Programme of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, which was formally launched by President Olusegun Obasanjo on 30<sup>th</sup> September, 1999, aims at achieving the following specific objectives.

- developing in the entire citizenry, a strong consciousness for education and a strong commitment to its vigorous promotion;
- the provision of free, universal basic education for every Nigerian child of school-going age;
- reducing drastically the incidence of drop-out from the formal school system (through improved relevance, quality and efficiency);
- catering for the learning needs of young persons who for one reason or another, have had to interrupt their schooling through appropriate forms of complementary approaches to the provision and promotion of basic education;
- ensuring the acquisition of the appropriate levels of literacy, numeracy, manipulative, communicative and life skills as well as the ethical, moral and civic values needed for laying a solid foundation for life-long learning.

In this paper, an attempt has been made among other things, to discuss how *non-book media collections* in schools and public libraries can facilitate effective implementation of Universal Basic Education in Nigeria.

The choice of schools and public libraries is deliberate. It is in schools that most children of school age make their first significant contact with non-book media. The public library remains "the people's university" catering for not only the basic educational needs of children and adult learners, but also secondary and higher education needs (Article 3, 1 of World Declaration on Education for all).

## Definition

Although the focus of this paper is "non book media collection", it seems a good starting point to define "media" generally. Media can be defined as "Channels through which messages, information, ideas and knowledge are

conveyed or disseminated. They are the tools or instrument through which stimuli can be passed or obtained". (Adewoyin, 1991: 70). Media could be graphic, photographic, electronic or various combinations of these.

Non-book media, also referred to as new media, audio-visual resources, etc., is defined as "those materials which do not depend solely upon reading to convey meaning. They may represent information through the sense of sight, as in visual media, or through the sense of hearing as in audio media or through a combination of senses." (Dike, 1994: 100). From the above definitions, it is not difficult to appreciate the concern of the school librarian for non-book media.

Non-book media offer educators one of their most powerful tools for enhancing learning and acquisition of skills. Enright (1972: 62-68) comments on recent developments in the field of education that have led to dramatic changes in concepts and practices. Education has now become student-centred and resource-based and learning is seen as a dynamic and interactive process. The idea of the static curriculum has given way to that of the curriculum which evolves and can be adjusted to new situations and which can allow the student to learn at his own pace. The goal is to create an environment that is rich in learning stimuli, from which the student can actively and independently learn; and to establish the conditions for developing a spirit of creative enquiry, in which the student is given more autonomy and more responsibility with respect to his own learning.

The role that non-book media play in the process of learning is widely recognised and both the software and hardware are being acquired by school libraries to facilitate teaching in classrooms, laboratories, etc.

#### **Classification of non-book media**

The variety of non-book media include:

- Audio media;
- Visual media;
- Audio-Visual media.

**Audio-media:** These non-book media carry sound alone. Examples include audio-tapes, record players, public address systems, discs, telephone, microphone, drums and of course the human voice.

**Visual media:** These forms of non-book media are pictorial in nature and can be seen. They can be subdivided into two namely, *projected* and *non-projected* visuals.

As the name suggests, projected visual media require light for projection. Examples include the film projector, episcopes, epidiascopes, microfiche and microfilm readers. The non-projected visual media do not require light sources. They include two and three dimensional objects, prints and realia.

Two-dimensional objects have length and breadth alone. These include pictures, photographs, maps, diagrams, artwork, etc.

Three-dimensional objects are the ones having space, length, breadth, volume or depth. Examples include models, mock-ups, puppets, diorama, specimen and globe.

**Audio visual media:** These non-book media are also referred to as transmitted media. They combine sound and pictures. Examples include the television and for our purposes, the Educational Television (ETV), Instructional Television (ITV), and Closed Circuit Television (CCTV). The main difference between educational television and instructional television is that while educational television is directed at larger audience, instructional television is directed at a smaller and specific audience.

#### **Criteria for selecting non-book media**

Some of these criteria are applicable to the print media while some are specifically for non-book media.

**Curriculum:** In selecting non-book media, it is important for the school librarian to bear in mind the curriculum of the school. Since the curriculum eventually translates into instructional objectives, the school librarian should work closely with classroom teachers. Non-book media collections in school libraries should facilitate learning in the cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains of knowledge. For cognitive which has to do with the acquisition of facts, principles, data, radio or other forms of audio media may be considered. For affective or psychomotor, other forms of media that carry sound and pictures are necessary.

**Availability:** Before one selects any form of media, one must ascertain whether such a media exist or not. It would be unreasonable to select any form of media, which is outside one's reach. If it is not available in your school library, can you get to borrow from a neighbouring school library? Can you produce it locally? If the answer to these questions is No, it is no use selecting such media.

**Age, level, interest and background of the users:** The school librarian or teacher has to consider whether the material to be selected is appropriate to the age and level of students and whether they suit their interests and background. There is need to find out whether the users are homogeneous or heterogeneous. It should be noted that one form of media might not be adequate in achieving one's instructional objectives. Hence, a multi-media approach might be necessary.

**User's Capability:** It is important to be sure that there is someone in the school capable of utilising the form of media selected. This person should be able to teach others how to operate or utilise them. It is no use selecting a form of media, which no one can effectively operate.

**Cost:** The school librarian should consider the financial implications of whatever media he wants to select for use in the classrooms. Is adequate fund available to produce necessary consumables? If the answer is Yes, is it cost effective to use such media or are there cheaper ones which can be used to achieve the same result?

**Infrastructural facilities:** Amenities such as pipe-borne water, electricity, etc., should be considered. If there is no electricity, for instance, coming from NEPA or the school generator and the media cannot operate on batteries, you need not select such media for your collection.

**Personnel:** As we have already seen, certain forms of non-book media have expensive and complicated hardware. They require maintenance and have to be repaired when they breakdown. Consequently, before selecting such media, it is important to ensure that there are competent technicians or audio-visual experts. If not, are they easily accessible for possible assistance?

These are by no means all the criteria for selecting non-book media but they are certainly the very important ones. School/teachers/librarians must recognise the fact that no single form of media is best for all subjects. They should be conversant with the content and duration of any form of media selected. This implies that before any form of media is selected, such media should have been previewed, assessed and evaluated. It is important for the school librarians to have ready answers to the questions posed by the classroom teachers. They should have some working knowledge of what is in the school library. To plead ignorance is to deny yourself of some of the respect due to you and your profession.

The classroom teacher often needs guidance in the use of non-book media and the school librarian, the likely custodian of these materials, is often the first person to inquire from.

#### **Contributions of non-book media to the effective implementation of UBE**

Non-book media increase learning effectiveness. Since learners are more likely to retain and recall with ease a greater percentage of what they hear, see and manipulate at the same time, emphasis should be placed on media which enhance such activities. With appropriate and judicious use of relevant media, the rate of learning can be increased while at the same time, retention and recollection are enhanced.

With judicious use of appropriate media, learning becomes real, concrete and immediate. Media add audio and visual dimensions to learning. With the use of appropriate motion pictures, objects and events can be brought to the classroom to concretise learners' experiences and to make their learning real and immediate. This will help broaden their knowledge, increase their level of understanding and discourage rote learning. To achieve effective learning, media are indispensable since memory is frail and fickle unless it rests on understanding.

Non-book media facilitates the individualisation of instruction. In the past, the teacher was the only source of knowledge. Today, he is at the very best, a facilitator of learning, a guardian or motivator. Non-book media provide alternative avenues of learning and each learner can now proceed at his or her own pace and time. Programmed Instruction (PI) for instance, takes care of the problem of fast and slow learners.

Non-book media democratises education. It has been said that everybody in one way or the other is handicapped, especially in the Third World countries. If the potentials of Educational Television (ETV) via distance teaching are fully exploited, those who live in rural or remote areas should have equal access to education like those in urban areas. It is interesting to note that with the use of appropriate non-book media, the deaf, the dumb and the blind now have equal access to educational normal learners.

Non-book media help in focusing attention and motivating learners. When relevant non-book media are used to introduce, develop and conclude teaching, learners' interests are aroused and this is a key factor in any successful learning activity.

Non-book media lend support, authority and authenticity to teaching. For instance, if a teacher tells his students that the Nigerian civil war was brutal, the learners may not fully appreciate this but if the teacher shows the film or the video of the war to buttress his point, the learners are likely to see for themselves the extent of the brutality or destruction.

Non-book media provide experiences that may not otherwise be available to learners. For instance, showing the film/video of the snow, the desert, certain animal-life in their natural environment, certain natural phenomena as volcanoes, floods, etc., will provide firsthand experiences which would not otherwise be available to learners.

Non-book media help in clarifying complex events or situations and in reducing or magnifying objects and events. For instance, an insect or bacterium can be magnified by the microscope or other media materials for a close and more detailed study.

Non-book media enhance the participation of learners. When their interests are well aroused, they take part actively instead of being passive learners.

Certain forms of non-book media help to educate more people in less time. For example, thousands of people can be reached and educated in different places at the same time by a single teacher, using the radio and television.

#### **Recommendations and conclusion**

Nigeria is quite in a hurry to eradicate illiteracy or at least reduce it to the barest minimum. This requires a recommitment to basic education more than what it is now. The following recommendations are proffered:

- (a) Government should urgently establish non-book media manufacturing centres in every state of the federation. Already, there are in existence, Science Equipment Manufacturing Centres in different parts of the country. These centres fabricate laboratory equipment and formulate chemicals for use in science laboratories. The impact of these centres on the study of science has been very positive. Admittedly, not all non-book media materials can be produced in such centres. There are some that are already available

in the open market and could be easily purchased but there are some we have to produce ourselves and by so doing popularise their utilisation in schools. Non-book media is so central to basic education: we need to ensure their availability and utilisation.

- (b) Library schools should introduce programmes in media librarianship. At present, there are courses in this area that form part of degree programmes. What is perhaps required is a programme completely devoted to the study and production of media at the postgraduate level. A crop of librarians specialised in media will emerge.

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