PRACTICAL WAYS OF BRINGING INNOVATIONS AND CREATIVITY INTO THE SCHOOL LIBRARY SYSTEM

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Abstract
This article describes the practical ways of bringing innovations and creativity into the school library media programme in Nigeria. Discussion focused on areas on creativity and innovations such as environmental design, staffing, outreach activities, library cooperation, and introduction of ICT system.

Keywords: Innovations, Creativity, School library system

Introduction

The word 'library' is rich in tradition, meaning and usage. The definition of school library given by various library scientists and associations reflect this heritage. Throughout the world the library of a school is considered as part and parcel of the academic set-up. It is created and maintained to serve and support the educational activities of the school.

School libraries are libraries setup in primary and post-primary school communities with the objective of inculcating reading habit in the young ones and also, the ability to learn independently. The school libraries are very important even though they are often overlooked, thereby preventing their adequate utilization.

The reading and learning skills obtained by the pupils or students at their young ages, can be put to use for the rest of their academic lives and that is why it is important to allow new innovation and creativity in school library system. Creativity is the power or quality to create rather than imitate (Stein, 1997). It is an idea that all experts think crazy when proposed it and everyone else think it obvious once it is proven (Koshland, 2003).

Creativity is bringing into existence something new, it is a new idea that can be used to solve problem (Burke, 1994). Akinboye (2007) understands creativity as bringing something new from old concept, design, idea and so on. All the new ideas that are introduced in the library may be referred to as creativity because it is through these ideas that a problem is solved. On the other hand, innovation is the implementation of new ideas to produce a new service or product (Martins, 2003). It is the conversion of new knowledge into new product and service. Innovation is modifying, improving the existing service or product (Avlontis, 2001).

Creativity and innovation are different from each other, but they are interrelated in one way or other. They could be regarded to as the root of human development and progress. Creativity is about thinking of methods to improve our old product and services and putting idea into practice is an innovation. Innovation is an ongoing process, which requires a continual scanning of future.

The History of Creativity in Library
There have been improvement/developments in library and information services for a long time. Circumstances or situation, at a particular time in the history, call for new dimensions or innovation in doing things. In 1874, Thomas Jefferson sold his collection to the library of congress to replace the books in Congressural library, which had been burnt by the British. This single act influenced policies at the library of congress right up to the present time.

The introduction of knowledge classification scheme by Melvin Dewry in 1876, the establishment of carnage libraries in 1879, the development of catching code and lately the online catalogs are innovation in library development. Also, the development of reference services. Online-database, technological advances in library instructions, Hybrid automated system at Brigham University are creative services in the technology of library (Riggs, 1989).

Practical Ways of Bringing Innovation and Creativity into School Library
The introduction of innovation and creativity into the school library system as a way of improving the quality of teaching and learning can bring in desired results provided the school has the full complement of library resources, personnel, and necessary infrastructure.

The following are some of the practical ways of bringing the innovation and creativity into our libraries.
1.   Environment and Design:
There must be a kind of environment that will assist the user to learn at ease. A school library should be provided with facilities that can make it to be called a library and not just a reading room. The library should be designed in such a way that the students can comfortably navigate it. An effective bulletin board should be in the library to give ideas as to what to read, what to watch and what to write about, ideas about how books connect the real world can be display using bright colour, bold graphics which should attract students to pay attention to what is on the bulletin board

2.   **Staffing:**
In any organization, change is un-avoided, innovative and creative as well as radical thinkers who are trained as librarian should be hired. Goals should be set at regular basis and appraisal of such goal should be examined regularly too. Consideration should be given to new ideas that are generated, regardless of whether some are unrelated while encouraging the developers to identify and develop their best ideas into high quality project.

3.   Outreach Activities
These are activities carried out beyond the library and campus wall. These are meant to benefit libraries and librarians with limited access to the new development in the profession for instance:

a.   Strengthening small libraries: The University or higher institutional library can provide expert services to school libraries by assisting in organising and collection of materials; especially school libraries with inadequate facilities. Also reading campaign programme and competitions could be sponsored by such libraries in collaboration with publishing companies.

b.   Publishing programs: The library can successfully engaged in community outreach. Information program on health or social issues will be published and such information are compiled from relevant materials/documents in the library.

c.   Book Mobile: The school library may contain books that are rarely used or have multiple copies of one book that are rarely checked out. School libraries are often the recipients of hefty book donations. If the school library ends up with books in excess, library staff can start a community book mobile. A book mobile is a neighborhood activity done by dropping-off books to students in the community. The low income and at-risk children who are likely not able to have access to books are considered.

d.   Capacity Building: Librarians can design a refresher program on capacity building for librarians outside the library. To help keep disadvantage librarian up-to date with new development in the profession.

e.   Another outreach activities could be cross border training,

3.   **Collegisation of University Libraries**:

This is an issue in the universities i.e formation of colleges and adoption of college system. Each of the colleges must have a library and book banks that are more specific to the need of the students with Librarian to manage. There must be policies to manage the libraries under the college.

4.   **Research Commons:**

Research commons is a space allocated to a specific group of people and offering a differentiated service. (Daniel 20100. it provides specialized space and offers specialized support to graduate students, and academic staff (Teacher) to have a quiet reading. It should be equipped with computer work stations that are fully connected to internet, a multimedia room and discussion room etc.

5.   **Library Period:**

A library period as well as students' readers club can be introduced into the school time table. The club should be anchored by innovative and creative personnel.

6.   **Library cooperation**

This cooperation explains the reasons why university libraries should cooperate with themselves in sharing services and resources for which each has expertise; especially in using e-resources. Library cooperation is involved in coordinating subscription, training and guidance of other libraries. The advantages of which, could be for funding and strengthening the small libraries.

7.   **ICT System in Libraries**

a.   Provision of ICT services for disabled or handicaps; with the advancement of technology worldwide, libraries in schools had also witnessed some innovations,

therefore, school libraries should take care of students in handicapping conditions such as hearing, visually impaired and so on. In order to meet the needs of students with disability, the library should allot an equipped computer laboratory for the disabled. The laboratory should have computer with a Job Access With Sound (JAWS) software to enhance hearing or open book software etc. These facilities provide a reading environment for a person with disabilities.

b.   Incorporator web 2.0 tools in the library: This allows librarians to have adventure and create blogs where librarians can interact with their users and also get feedback from them. When librarians interacts with the library users, library management get to know the exact need of the users, hence create room for improvement It is a customer care approach to library service.

Conclusion
When librarians continue thinking creatively then the library will be seen as a productive place rather than a place to find "dusty and old books on the shelves" (Caroline, 2011). Therefore, if the above discussed innovative suggestions are implemented, our school library will experience a re-birth in service.

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