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Collaborative Teaching as a Strategy for Imparting Information Literacy in Students: Faculty – Librarian Perceptions.

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COLLABORATIVE TEACHING AS A STRATEGY FOR IMPARTING INFORMATION LITERACY IN STUDENTS: FACULTY – LIBRARIAN PERCEPTIONS.

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Abstract

The study examined the perception of the teaching faculty and librarians on collaboration as a strategy for imparting information literacy to the undergraduate students of Nigerian universities. The descriptive survey design was adopted for the study. Two questionnaires were used to collect the data from samples of 150 lecturers and 64 librarians which were drawn from population of 2526 lecturers and 64 librarians. The stratified proportionate sampling technique was used to draw the sample that represented the faculty while the entire population of the librarians was sampled due to the small size. The findings revealed that the teaching faculty and librarians perceive collaborative teaching as relevant means of improving students overall learning. While the librarians expressed readiness to collaborate with the teaching faculty in all the stages of the teaching process from lesson planning to evaluation of learning outcomes, the teaching faculty showed some sense of apathy with respect to entering into full collaboration with librarians in teaching especially in areas of lesson planning and evaluation. This implies that the faculty does not either have full grasp of the procedures for developing student's information literacy or the contributions of the librarians in this regard. It was recommended among others that the Nigerian Library Association and university libraries should embark on advocacy programmes to sensitize the stakeholders in the Nigerian education system and university administrations to encourage collaborative teaching between the faculty and librarians

Key words: Collaboration, Collaborative Teaching, Learning, Information Literacy, Librarians, Teaching Faculty.

Introduction

Acquisition of skills in effective use of information is seen as a necessary requirement for students' optimum performance in learning. The availability of diverse and more complicated information resources, occasioned by the advances in information and communication technologies (ICT), has brought about additional challenges on the students, who have to learn how to obtain and effectively use information from these sources for maximum performance. This has necessitated a shift in the method of teaching from the traditional approach to resource-based approach requiring the impartation of information literacy skills in students. Information literacy has been identified as the basic foundation of learning in an environment of abundant information resources occasioned by the advances in technological development. Igbo and Imo (2010), citing Bruce (2002), have observed that the complexities of the information and communication technologies (ICT) have brought about the realization that students need to engage with the information environment as part of their formal learning process. This now entails instructional activities tailored towards helping students to appreciate the rich information resources and learn how to locate, access and effectively utilize these sources.

Conceptually, information literacy has been defined by Zurkowski as the ability to locate, process and use information effectively, which equips individuals to take advantage of opportunities inherent in the global information society (Doyle:1994). Also the American Library Association – ALA (1989) defined information literacy as a set of abilities requiring individuals to recognize when information is needed, evaluate and use effectively needed information. Application of the principles of information literacy in learning would help an individual to have knowledge of what is happening around the world in terms of existing information. It will equally help the individual to identify, evaluate and use required information, develop in the individual the ethics of information use as well as help him to

critically analyze and make use of information for his own benefit and the benefit of others. This is implied in Bruce's (2002) four pillars of learning in the context of ICT in a globalized world. These pillars include: learning to live together; learning to know; learning to do and learning to be. As revealed in the above two definitions, an information literate person is described as one who can recognize when information is needed, locate the information where it is stored, evaluate the available information when located, process the information usefully and use the information to accomplish a task or solve pressing educational problems.

It may be difficult for one discipline oriented teacher to impart the above orientation to students, hence the need for collaboration in teaching. Mohktar and Majid (2006) have defined collaboration as a mutually beneficial and well-defined relationship entered into by two or more organizations to achieve results they are more likely to achieve together than alone. Arguing along this line, Ushuel (2007), pointed out that for imparting information literacy skills to students, courses/learning experiences should be organized with cooperation among faculties of education, department of ICT education and instructional technologies, department of information management and university libraries. In the context of this work, imparting information literacy in students through collaborative teaching entails establishing a partnership between the faculty and librarians which will allow the librarian to teach the processes of information access to students as an integral part of the course. This implies that the librarian should be part of the overall teaching process from planning to evaluation of learning outcomes to ensure that information access aspect is reflected in the content. Theoretically this argument could be situated within the embedded librarianship model (Kwanya, Stilwell & Underwood, 2011). This model is loosely used when a librarian is absorbed (as part of an on-campus class) as a member of the teacher-student team, from the start of the semester through to the end. In support of this model Freiburger and Kramer

(2009) suggested that the librarian so assigned should have a special understanding of the subject matter of the department or user area in which s/he is embedded. This is important when one considers the pivotal role of the library in promoting scholarship in university education. Driving this point home, Oladele (2010) sees the librarian as the intellectual who by virtue of training and educational advancement has the ability to enter into partnership with the faculty to impart in the students the skills of information literacy and research.

This study therefore, seeks to find out the perception of the faculty and librarians in Nigerian universities about collaborative teaching as a strategy for imparting information literacy to students. It is hoped that the result of the study will help the planners of the academic curriculum of the universities to realize the need to incorporate aspects of information literacy in the overall programme of the university and encourage partnership between the faculty and information professionals in teaching students for better learning outcomes.

Statement of the Problem

The result of studies conducted by Ottong (2005), Igbo (2008) and Igbo & Imo (2008) have revealed that Nigerian students lack information literacy skills. This finding confirms the earlier report of the Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development (2000) and NISER/World Bank(2002), as cited in Ahiazu (2005), which had earlier lamented the lowering competence of Nigerian graduates, which was attributed to lack of skills in information handling.

Collaboration between the teaching faculty and librarians has particularly been identified as a very effective means of enhancing students' skills in the use of information and their overall performance in learning (Ghandi, 2004; Appleton, 2005; Kearns&Thrasher, 2005 and Ojedokun, 2005). Irrespective of the obvious advantage, it has been noted that faculty members show a lot of resistance and resentment about collaborating with librarians in this regard. They have been seen as either apathetic or even deliberately obstructive towards efforts to initiate joint instructional arrangements with librarians. The study of McGuiness (2006) laid much credence to the above

assertion. She noted that information professionals, who are eager to collaborate with faculty for imparting information literacy in students, frequently vent their frustration with what has been dubbed the "faculty problem", deeming faculty either apathetic or even deliberately obstructive towards their efforts to initiate joint instructional arrangements. For instance, in the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, concerted efforts are being made to prevent the university from integrating the course "Use of the Library and Study Skills" as part of the curriculum to be taught to first year students by librarians. The reason adduced by the General Studies Unit which teaches an infinitesimal part of the course in the Use of English Course is, that librarians are not in a position to teach such a course. This may not be an isolated case.

The above scenario clearly throws some doubts on the faculty's understanding of learning in the present ICT dispensation, including the roles of librarians and the place of collaborative teaching in enhancing not only the information literacy of students but their overall learning. The problem of this study therefore, is to find out the perception of the faculty and librarians in Nigerian universities about collaborative teaching as a strategy for imparting information literacy to undergraduate students.

Objectives of the Study

The following objectives formed the basis for this study:

1. To find out the perception of the faculty and librarians on the benefits of collaborative teaching for imparting information literacy to students.

2. To identify the perception of the faculty about collaborating with librarians in teaching for imparting information literacy to students.

3. To identify areas of possible collaboration in teaching between the faculty and librarians for imparting information literacy to students.

4. To find out the challenges encountered by librarians in initiating collaborative teaching with the faculty.

Literature Review

Studies on collaborative relationship in teaching between the teaching faculty and librarians have been conducted by such authors as Breviek (1991), September (1993), Doiron and Davies (1998), Bruce (2002), Graftein (2002), Russell (2002) and Mohktar and Majid (2006). Describing collaboration for information literacy, Breivik (1991) asserts that it is a partnership between stakeholders with pedagogical expertise, subject expertise and expertise in information organization and technology. Similarly, September (1993) posits that development of information literacy of students requires the marriage of knowledge, experience and skills of professional educators, academics and information professionals. The above positions limited the development of information literacy in students to the efforts of the information professionals and the faculty alone, though these two groups are the major key players in the process as they have the opportunity to interact with the students more directly. A more comprehensive description is the one that identifies the role of the administrators in enhancing collaboration or information literacy development through creating a supportive atmosphere and practical opportunities for cooperation among librarians, classroom faculty and information technologists . Hence, The University of Texas at El Paso Library (2016) asserts that success in implementing information literacy depends on collaboration between classroom faculty, academic administrators, librarians and other information professionals. The above views rightly show that collaboration entails the pulling together of ideas and expertise of individuals from different professional backgrounds to achieve a common objective.

A number of benefits are derivable from faculty- librarian collaboration in teaching. Bruce(2002), confirming this assertion, identified collaboration as one of the important yardsticks for best practices in education, adding that it fosters the sharing of ideas, expertise and provides opportunity for students' exposure to different pedagogies and techniques,

enabling colleagues to become familiar with each other's field. This implies that collaboration, in addition to enhancing teaching and learning, also provides opportunity for social/ professional interaction among the stakeholders. Similarly, the views of Doiron and Davies (1998) and Russell (2006), indicate that collaboration enhances effectiveness and efficiency in teaching methodology, providing room for meaningful contribution from the teaching faculty and the librarians, allowing a more productive use of resources, application of educational technology for independent and problem-based learning.

Collaboration in teaching for imparting information literacy entails role relationships between the professionals involved. Graftein (2002) identified the role of the librarian as mainly teaching generic information skills while the faculty is responsible for imparting those skills that are embedded within the research paradigms and procedures of their disciplines. However, there is need for joint planning based on a common goal which has been identified as a prerequisite for actualizing the different role assignments identified above. On this note, Mohktar and Majid (2006), have recommended that the teacher and librarian should work together to develop lesson units, plan student learning activities, identify and select appropriate learning resources The authors added that the above initiatives help to achieve a level of collaboration that has more instructional impact and educational value which is likely to be sustained.

Some factors have been identified as impediment to achievement of collaboration in teaching. Most of these factors have been tied to the attitude of the teaching faculty towards collaborating with librarians. According to McGuiness (2006) and Moor (2006), librarians have realized and are convinced that the best way to develop the skills for life-long learning occasioned by the paradigm shift in education of the 21st century is by partnering with the teaching faculty. This realization has also changed the idea of the library as a store house to an interactive learning environment where information is selected by users as the basis for

problem solving rather than strictly prescribed by the academic faculty. McGuiness (2006) reporting the different studies conducted by Julien and Boon (2002), Julien and Given (2003) and Markless and Sreatfield, indicated a lot of apathy, resentment and outright rejection by the faculty to collaborating with librarians in teaching. The studies noted that the faculty are possessive about their courses, uncooperative, arrogant and uncaring with regard to their students' needs; have limited conception of the role played by librarians in the academic community and as such, regard libraries as information stores and believe that students can develop good information skills without the assistance of librarians. The literature reviewed mainly showcased studies conducted in the European countries. There is dearth of literature in the area of study from African perspective, especially Nigeria. This work, therefore, is designed to fill this gap.

Methodology

The descriptive survey research design was adopted for this study. The population of the study comprised all academic staff in the four federal universities in the South – East geo-political zone of Nigeria. This is made up of two thousand, five hundred and ninety (2590) subjects comprising of two thousand, five hundred and twenty- six (2526) lecturers and sixty-four (64) academic librarians. The composition of the population according to the universities is contained in table 1 below. The stratified proportionate sampling technique was used to draw a total sample of one hundred and fifty (150) lecturers from the four universities thus; UNN 64; NAU 42; FUTO 31; and MOUAU 13. However all the sixty –four (64) academic librarians were used for the study as there was no need for sampling because of the smallness of the population. This brought the overall sample for the study to two hundred and fourteen (214). Two questionnaires titled, "Faculty – librarian collaboration in imparting information literacy" for librarian and faculty respectively were used as instruments for data collection. The reliability of the instruments was determined through a trial test carried out with 5 librarians and 12 lecturers respectively from two state universities from Anambra and Imo states. The Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficient was used to establish the reliability of the instrument at 0.78 and 0.72 respectively. Four point likert rating questions were administered to the respondents. Out of one hundred and fifty and sixty-four copies of questionnaires distributed to the faculty and librarians respectively, only one hundred and twenty-nine and

fifty-three which represented eighty-six percent (86%) for lecturers and eighty-three percent (83%) for librarians respectively were returned and used for the analysis. The decision was taken on 2.50 which was the criterion mean. The mean scores were used in analyzing all the data generated.

Table 1: Population of the Study

S/No	Institutions	Prof./ Reader	Senior Lecturer	Lecturer1 & Below	Academic Librarians	Total
1	University of Nigeria, Nsukka (UNN)	201	419	448	32	1100
2	Fed. Univ. of Tech. Owerri. (FUTO)	91	87	350	16	544
3	Nnamdi Azikiwe Univ. Awka (NAU)	143	208	362	9	722
4	Michael Okpara Univ. of Agric. Umudike. (MOUAU)	43	51	123	7	224
Totals		478	765	1283	64	2590

Source: Annual Abstract of Statistics 2016

Results & Discussion

Relevance of Collaborative Teaching between Faculty and Librarians.

The analysis of the responses obtained from faculty and librarians is presented in the table below.

Table 2: Mean Responses of Faculty and Librarians on the Relevance of Collaborative Teaching.

S/N	Items	Faculty					Librarians				
		UNN	NAU	FUTO	MOUAU	$\bar{X}$	UNN	NAU	FUTO	MOUAU	$\bar{X}$
1	Collaboration fosters sharing of ideas and expertise among professionals	2.96	3.96	3.70	3.56	3.55	3.75	4.00	3.67	3.42	3.71
2	Collaboration enables different professionals to become familiar with each others filed.	3.27	3.63	3.30	3.59	3.45	3.57	3.90	3.44	3.10	3.50
3	Collaboration enhances a more productive use of teaching and learning	2.94	3.67	3.77	3.44	3.46	3.54	4.00	3.33	2.98	3.46

S/N	Item									
	resources									
4	Collaboration between faculty and information professionals enhances the integration of ICT in classroom teaching and learning	3.13	3.25	3.80	3.07	3.31	3.39	3.50	3.44	3.11	3.36
5	Collaboration provides more opportunity for students' independent and discovery learning	3.50	3.29	2.57	2.96	3.08	3.18	3.50	2.89	3.57	3.29
6	Collaboration fosters students' satisfaction with learning experience	3.35	3.54	3.23	3.04	3.29	3.36	3.70	3.33	3.47	3.47
7	Collaboration provides the opportunity for in-time guidance and personalized help to students	3.75	3.38	2.90	2.89	3.23	3.32	3.40	3.33	3.28	3.33

Data in table 2 revealed that the lecturers and librarians see collaborative teaching as relevant in enhancing students' information literacy as well as improving their overall learning conditions as indicated in the mean ratings of the identified items which are above 2.50 (ranging from 3.08 – 3.71). Both respondents regarded the sharing of ideas and expertise between professionals as the most beneficial effect of collaborative teaching with mean 3.55 and 3.71 respectively. This finding is in line with the submission made by Bruce (2002) who states that collaboration fosters the sharing of ideas, expertise and provides opportunities for exposure to different pedagogies as well as enabling different professionals to be familiar with each other's field.

Faculty Attitude towards Collaborating with Librarians.

The faculty's perception about entering into collaborative teaching venture with librarians is shown in the table below.

Table 3: Mean Faculty Perception about Collaborating with Librarians in Teaching.

S/N	Items	UNN	NAU	FUTO	MOUAU	$\bar{X}$	DECISION
1	Collaborating with librarians enables me to become familiar with the library	2.77	3.25	3.30	3.26	3.15	Accepted

	resources available for the course I teach.					
2	Working closely with the librarian makes my teaching more interesting, effective and enriching	3.06	3.58	2.97	2.89	3.13	Accepted
3	Collaborating with the librarian is unimportant as the departmental resources/my personal collections are sufficient for me to plan and teach my course.	2.17	2.34	2.20	2.00	2.18	Rejected
4	Collaborating with the librarian is too time consuming	1.81	2.29	2.10	1.59	1.95	Rejected
5	I do not see any benefit working with the librarian	1,17	1.92	1.63	1.37	1.67	Rejected
6	I do not know the librarian enough to start working with him	1.69	1.75	1.90	2.44	1.95	Rejected

Evidence from table 3 shows that the faculty accepted that partnership with librarians helps them to be familiar with information resources available for their courses (3.15) and that their teaching are made more interesting, effective and enriching (3.13). They disagreed with the negative assertions in items 3 – 6 which implies that the faculty have positive disposition on the roles librarians have to play in collaborative teaching. With mean response of 2.18 in item 3 the faculty is of the opinion that librarians are important in collaborative teaching. They equally believed that collaboration saves time in item 4 with mean 1.95 and that there are benefits to be derived from working with librarians as shown in item 5 with a mean rating of 1.67. Lastly the faculty's negative response to the assertion in item 6 shows that lack of familiarity with librarians cannot prevent any collaborative venture between them and librarians. These responses are in disagreement with the findings of McGuiness (2006) which indicated a lot of apathy, resentment and outright rejection by the faculty to collaborating with librarians in teaching. This difference could be rationalized by the time gap in the two research results of which events could have made the faculty to see things differently from how it was seen in 2006. Also with emphasis on e-learning across universities faculty members are beginning to appreciate better the benefits of collaborative teaching.

Possible Areas of Collaboration between the Faculty and Librarians in Teaching.

Responses of the faculty and librarians on their perceived areas of possible collaboration are presented in the table below.

Table 4: Mean Responses of Faculty and Librarians on possible areas of collaboration in teaching.

S/N	Items	Faculty					Librarians				
		UNN	NAU	FUTO	MOUAU	$\overline{X}$	UNN	NAU	FUTO	MOUAU	$\overline{X}$
1	Faculty-Librarian collaborating in developing lesson plans	1.88	1.95	2.37	2.41	2.15	3.07	2.50	2.89	2.54	2.75
2	Faulty-Librarian collaborating in planning students learning activities	2.96	3.08	2.53	2.37	2.74	2.96	2.90	2.89	2.96	2.93
3	Faculty-Librarian collaborating in identification and selection of appropriate learning resources	2.69	3.63	3.03	2.88	3.06	3.54	3.60	3.56	3.08	3.45
4	Librarians serving as research consultants to faculty and students	3.35	3.50	2.73	2.78	3.09	3.64	3.70	3.22	3.47	3.51
5	Faculty-Librarian collaborating in assessing students' learning outcome.	2.44	2.08	2.33	2.48	2.33	3.07	2.90	3.11	3.02	3.03

Data from table 4 above shows that librarians accepted that they can collaborate with lecturers in developing lesson plans, planning learning activities, identifying and selecting resources, rendering research consultancy and assessing students learning outcomes with mean 2.75 – 3.51. The faculty rejected the issue of developing lesson plans and assessing students learning outcomes with mean 2.15 and 2.33 respectively. This finding shows that the faculty has some reservations partnering with librarians in teaching. Faculty's resentment in allowing librarians to participate in the development of lesson plans is an indication that they have not fully grasped the role of librarians in student's learning. The findings further indicate that the faculty believes that the best role librarians can play is mainly that of provision of information resources and acting as support staff. This result strengthens the assertion in the literature that the faculty is resistant to collaborative teaching with librarians.

Godwin (2003) noted lack of appreciation and ignorance shown by teaching staff, while Faud (2000) argued that the problem of collaboration is resistance among faculty and the identification of the department to take on the major responsibility of the instruction.

Challenges of Collaboration between the Faculty and Librarians in Teaching.

Table 5: Mean Response of Librarians on the Challenges of Collaborating with Faculty in teaching

Data in the table below show the opinions of librarians on the factors that constitute hindrance to entering into collaborative arrangement with teaching faculty**.**

S/N	Items	UNN	NAU	FUTO	MOUAU	$\overline{X}$
1	Faculty regard the library as information store and librarians roles in the university as Book Keepers	3.25	3.90	3.11	3.41	3.42
2	Faculty regard librarians as supporting services providers	3.14	3.90	3.00	2.98	3.26
3	Faculty are reluctant in accepting the integration of information literacy into the academic curriculum	2.96	3.13	2.78	3.62	3.12
4	Non-acceptance of Librarians as academic equals by the faculty	3.32	3.40	2.89	3.12	3.18
5	Faculty being too possessive about their course and not ready to share aspects of their courses with anybody	3.11	3.70	3.56	3.09	3.37
6	Uncaring attitude of the faculty about students academic progress	2.75	3.00	2.89	3.06	2.93
7	Lack of understanding by the faculty of what teaching information literacy actually entails	3.14	3.80	2.89	3.26	3.27
8	Faculty's belief that students can develop good information skills through the process of writing assignments/term paper, research writing and presenting course work seminars.	3.21	3.60	3.11	3.01	3.23

From table 5 above it could be seen that all the issues identified as challenges of collaborating with faculty were rated highly by librarians. The highest mean rating of 3.42 was given to the issue of faculty regarding the libraries as information store and librarians as book keepers. This rating relates to an earlier assertion which shows that the overall expectations of the faculty from the librarians are that of information provision and rendering of support services. The table further reveals that the faculty is too possessive of their course (3.37) and they regard librarians as support staff (3.26) among others. These support the findings made by Julien and Boon(2002), Julien and Given (2003) and Markless and

Streatfied as cited in McGuinness (2006) which revealed that the faculty are too possessive about their course, uncooperative and regard the library as information store, believing that students can develop information skills without the assistance of the librarians.

However a close examination of responses from tables 3, 4 & 5 will show that the tick wall of resistance as described by McGuiness seem not to represent the true position of things. Table 3 indicates that faculty has appreciated the need for collaborative teaching. Table 4 shows that while faculty appreciates the need for collaborative teaching, they will however want the responsibility of developing lesson plan and assessing students' learning outcome to be their sole responsibility. From tables 3 & 4, it could then be seen that the responses of librarians in table 5 seem to be colored by their prejudice from previous experiences.

Conclusion

The paper has highlighted the importance of collaboration between the teaching faculty and librarians as a strategy for imparting information literacy in students, which invariably enhances teaching and learning, especially in a life-long context. It was revealed that the faculty and librarians view collaboration as a relevant strategy for improving students' information literacy as well as their overall learning conditions, with sharing of ideas and expertise between professionals as the most beneficial effect of collaboration.

For the librarians collaborative teaching initiative with the faculty should involve the entire teaching process including developing lesson plans, planning learning activities, identifying appropriate learning resources, rendering research consultancy services and assessing students' outcomes. The faculty shares similar opinion. They however have reservations on issues relating to developing lesson plans and assessing students' learning outcomes. This is an indication that the faculty has not fully accepted collaborative teaching in all its ramifications. This study concludes that they are still possessive of their teaching duties.

The faculty is aware of the positive contributions of librarians in enhancing teaching and learning, however the reason for their hesitation or outright indifference to accepting that librarians could be of positive use in developing lesson plans and assessing students' learning outcomes could be as a result of ignorance of the roles of librarians in the present information age.

The major challenge faced by librarians in entering into collaborative teaching with the faculty is the low level of enthusiasm shown by the teaching faculty who see the library primarily as an information store and librarians as bookkeepers and supportive staff.

Recommendations

Based on the above findings, the following recommendations are made:

➢ University regulatory agencies in Nigeria should encourage universities to adopt collaborative teaching as a basic requirement for teaching and learning.

➢ The university administrations should embrace collaborative teaching as an enabling tool for life-long learning by integrating it into teaching and learning policy and encouraging partnership between the teaching faculty and information professionals.

➢ Library associations should engage in effective advocacy to attract the interest of stakeholders in the education system at national level to promote collaborative teaching initiatives all levels of education.

➢ Libraries and librarians in respective universities should develop proper framework for systematic advocacy programmes, which will include getting the universities sensitized to see the need to encourage collaboration in teaching. This sensitization is necessary to enable the campaign get institutional backup with a view to including it in its developmental programmes.

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