

Chapter 14

Perspectives of Collection Development in Libraries.

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Introduction

The school library is an integral part of the teaching-learning processes in the school system. And as such, it must be based on the sound foundation of quality information resources and services. Traditionally, the school library is a library that is in the primary or secondary school whose collection is meant to serve the young ones. It is an organized collection of books and other materials for the use of teachers and pupils (Ogunmilade, 1995). According to Udofia (2000), the school library is defined as an organized collection of print and non-print materials carefully selected, described and systematically arranged in a school for use by teachers, pupils and students to aid the attainment of their educational goals. For the school library to thrive, it must be able to deliver the right information to the right person at the right time in the right format and in the right location. This can only be made possible through a planned action on library collection. It is generally agreed that both the quantity and the quality of a library's collection depend almost entirely upon the library acquisition programme, including its acquisition policy, its acquisition procedures, and, of most importance, its selection methods. This process cannot be approached in a haphazard manner, but must be carefully planned and constantly evaluated and monitored. The totality of this

whole process is what is referred to as collection development. Library collection development is the process of identifying strengths and weaknesses of the school library collection in terms of students' needs. The parent institution is expected to provide a broad range of educational, informational, and recreational reading resources through its school library in order to support the curriculum and produce students who are effective users of ideas and information, competent and enthusiastic readers, independent learners and positive contributors to the school community and to society. This paper, therefore, is aimed at assisting teacher librarians in knowing the current trends in collection development with a view to applying same in their various school libraries.

Collection Development

Collection development focuses on the building of library collections, ideally following guidelines already established and articulated in the library's written collection development policy (Jenkins, 1997). It can be viewed as a process of planning a library's stock acquisitions programme, first to cater for immediate needs and more importantly, to acquire a collection capable of meeting future requirement of a particular school (Jerkins, 1997). It is a systematic and dynamic process of identifying, selecting, obtaining, evaluating, weeding, managing, and maintaining, in good physical condition, the materials that a library make available to its users through its different collections(Freiband,2002). Reitz defines collection development as the process of planning and building a useful and balanced collection of library materials over a period of years, based on an ongoing assessment of the information needs of the library's clientele, analysis of usage statistics and demographic projections, normally constrained by budgetary limitations (2005). It includes the formation of selection criteria, planning for resource sharing and replacement of lost and damaged items, as well as routine selection and de-selection decisions. From the foregoing, collection development could be re-defined as the process of selecting, acquiring, processing/organizing, storing, evaluating, de-selecting and the overall management of information materials and their usage to suit the purpose of the library. It is an on-going process that changes as the community changes.

Purpose Of Collection Development

The main purpose of developing the school library collection is to support the learning processes of the school. The resources to be selected must support the curriculum. Therefore, the developmental level, interests, needs of students, their reading level should be considered when deciding or selecting materials for school library. The school library is established to impact or influence students' (pupils') academic performance and achievement positively. It also exists to enhance acquisition and development of knowledge and information transfer through inquiring. It enhances the general development of life-long learning and to provide access to information. Collection

development therefore, is the library housekeeping operation or simply put, technical works of a library. The motive is to make the collection information source more useful and accessible to users.

Determining User Needs

Building collections which fail to satisfy the information needs of the users would be a futile exercise. It is thus essential to ascertain such needs continuously and to anticipate future user needs. Ragannathan (1989), states that user analysis is the first step to collection development. Evans (1992) extends this premise to include normative needs as well. These needs must then be weighed up against an understanding of what would be realistic expectations for resources to meet these needs. For the purpose of developing collection development policies, it is necessary to study the primary users of the collection, and to find out if there is information routinely sought on a particular topic by the readers. Then it is necessary to ensure that these topics are adequately covered in the collection. Much information can also be gleaned by studying syllabi, minutes of academic meetings, perception of the users to analyze the size, depth, breath and growth of the library's collection.

Collection Development Policy

A collection development policy (also known as collection development statements) guides decisions for a library. The policy sets a library's priorities and plans the growth of the collection over time. Fourie (2001) defines a collection development policy as "the written statement that provides planning and implementation guidelines for collection building tasks." The American Library Association (ALA) defines it as documents which define the scope of a library's existing collections, plan for the continuing development of resources, identify collection strengths, and outline the relationship between selection philosophy and the institution's goals, general selection criteria, and intellectual freedom.

According to Ifidon (2006), written collection development policy is a document that set out the guidelines for systematically building up a library's book-stock. On limited his definition to book-stock but in this era, print and non print materials are applicable. There are two types: written and unwritten. But the written one is better and of more lasting value provided it is periodically evaluated, revived and revised in line with the changing trends in the parent institution. The policy also serves to eliminate personal bias and provides continuity over several years, collection development policies should contain statements on:

- a. Selecting and buying materials
- b. Accepting gifts donations
- c. Weeding and disposing of weeded materials
- d. Procedures for managing challenges to materials in your collection.

There are several advantages to having a CDP in a library. Firstly, a CDP Prevents a library from being driven by events and individual enthusiasms and from buying at random poorly planned set of resource. It can also help to introduce change into a library without too much resistance as guidelines are clearly set out in such a policy. CDPs are good communication tools both internally and externally. A Collection Development Policy is very valuable as a planning tool for collection development. There is general consensus in what should be included in a Collection Development Policy. Atkinson (1986), Budd and Harloe (1997), Fourie (2001) and Intner (1996), concur that the following should be included in a Collection Development Policy:

- Mission and goals of the library and the parent institution
- Purpose of the collection development policy
- Composition of the user community.
- Subject by subject evaluation of the collection past, present and future
- What type of access is provide to the collection
- Way in which funds are allocated from the library's budget
- Criteria for the selection of material (both tradition and digital resources)
- Who has overall responsibility for the CDP
- How the library deals with gifts
- Censorship, copyright and intellectual freedom issues
- Weeding policy
- Evaluation of the collection
- How document delivery services and resource sharing facility impact upon collection development.
- How decisions are made in the selection of appropriate versions of items, i.e. print, electronic, multimedia or combinations of these
- Implications of collaborative collection development within a consortia environment.

Elements of Collection Development

Collection development is an important system in the library and includes other elements such as: community analysis, selection/selection policy, acquisition, weeding or de-selection, and Evaluation.

1) Community Analysis

This is the first phase of collection development and involves exploring your learning community to know the needs and interests of your users (Student's teachers & community villagers). This is a systematic process of collecting, organizing and analyzing data about the library and its environment (Greer and Hale, 1982). They further opined that the purpose of community analysis is to help the library choose

from among alternatives in allocating resources. A valid objective understanding of the community is essential for school library planners. This will equip them with the knowledge to develop appropriate service priorities for the potential users of the library. Community analysis includes examining the community from four perspectives namely: demographic data, community groups, agencies and life styles.

Understanding of the location, income level and diversity will help the school librarian focus on collection areas that are considered weak and need weeding. Community analysis further helps the school library to interact with students on a personal basis. It is an on going process. The school library community consists of the students and pupils, teachers, parents, school administrators, staff, and members of the community. Therefore, community analysis will enable the library planners to acquire a material that is capable of satisfying the information needs of these users. The school library is also part of a larger system that includes state, province, regional national and global concerns. For example, your state may have specific mandates that will impact your collection development policies and procedures (eduscapes. Com/sms)

2) Selection

This is the process of deciding which materials should be added to library collection. Also selection is a decision making process that involves selecting among items, determine the worth of an item, or deciding on the timeliness or durability of an item. You must systematically judge the quality, and value of an item and weigh this information against finding and development priorities (educapes.com/sms).

Selection is at the heart of the library collection development process. It is a core function that builds up the library holdings for a particular user community e.g. school learning community.

Libraries should have a standard set of policies, procedures and guidelines for selection of library materials in order to meet the objectives of the school library collection. Selection is collaborative in nature. It is done by the school librarian in partnership with the stakeholders (teachers, staff, students, administrators, community leaders, etc). It is necessary to be objective so as to provide materials that reinforce intellectual freedom and supports or reflects the school curriculum, social and cultural values of the community. The school librarian should develop a cordial and positive relationship with the staff, students and the community. This in essence, shall reveal the expertise of the teachers, needs of students and the curriculum. The process of selecting library materials include: where to select items, criteria for selection; how items will conform to intellectual freedom, the objective of the school and its library and the reevaluation of materials (Greene, 2004).

Selection tools (Aids): These materials help the librarian to know what to select and for whom to select and they include current awareness services often provided by publishers even before they are published via flyers, blurb, new title information slips with imprints of books to be published. Some of these selection aids are Wiley Blackwell, the Bookseller, Spring Books, Forthcoming Books, Books in Print, Publishers Catalogues, Publishers Trade Book Annual (PTLA), Cumulative Book Index, African Book Publishing Record, Bibliographies, Annotated Lists, patron requests, reviewing journals and award winning lists. Selection considerations include:

- Purpose, scope, audience
- Reading level
- Authority, honesty, **credibility of author**
- Subject matter
- Comparison with other works**
- Timeliness of subject**
- Accuracy
- Impartiality
- Literary merit
- Logical organization**
- Support Curriculum**
- Demand**
- Local Content**

3) **Selection Policy**

Broad Criteria for Selection: Material will be chosen for inclusion in the library only if it reflects the objective of the library in:

- a. Relevancy: Their relevance to the current or future curriculum, and reflection of learning outcomes and educational goals of the school.
- b. Appropriateness: Should be for subject area, age, emotional development, ability level learning styles, social development of students and cultural and socio economic backgrounds, as well as the professional needs of teachers.
- c. Appearance and quality of format. Items should attract users, with images, graphics etc which support the text, and be durable and of good quality.
- d. The cost of an item should be considered in terms or value for money, suitability for users and the achievement of its stated aims.
- e. Items selected should help students gain social and cultural awareness and sensitivity by providing access to local, regional, national and global ideas, experiences and opinions and the points of view and contributions of our ethnic and national heritage.

- f. Authority, reputation and qualifications of the author, producer or publisher.
- g. Scope of the work, adequacy of coverage and level of detail is the scope too narrow or too wide for intended users?

4) **Acquisitions:** Simply put, acquisition is the process of obtaining materials for building up of library collection stock. These materials may be purchased, donated, exchanged, or linked, in case of electronic materials. This is the process of selecting, ordering, and receiving materials for library or archival collections, which include budgeting and negotiating with outside agencies' such as publishers, dealers, and renders to obtain resources to meet the needs of the institutions' clientele in the most economical and expeditious manner (edushares 2014).

The acquisition process involves confirming the details of price and publication, locating the item, ordering it, and processing the item and the paper work once they arrive. Specifically, the acquisition procedures include:

- i) Collection orders
- ii) Check and verify bibliographic information
- iii) Choose an option for placing orders
- iv) Assign a purchase order
- v) Place the order
- vi) Bookkeeping (records)
- vii) Receive materials
- viii) Return books (if any is in bad condition)
- ix) Process the books
- x) Make payments

5) **Collection Evaluation:** This involves examining a particular collection for currency, condition, reading levels, use, variety and depth, school curriculum and number of books on each topic. A variety of methods can be used to conduct collection evaluations. Computer system reports can be generated to determine circulation counts, average age of collections, number of books, inter library loan data, charging and discharging statistics etc. These statistical reports are best used in conjunction with qualitative methods of evaluation. Qualitative methods include manual surveys to identify gaps in the collection and examining the condition of books, interviews with library patrons, and staff and comparisons with standards and bibliographies.

6) **Weeding (De-selection):** Weeding is an important part of any library's collection maintenance program. It involves the removal of outdated, unused or worn-out items, so that current, information-rich and visually appealing materials are easily seen and accessed. It is of great significance to non fiction collection.

Reasons for Weeding:

- Poor physical condition of material
- Lack of usage
- Outdated (obsolete)
- Stereotypical content
- Duplicated or superseded content
- Poorly written
- Change in curriculum
- Inappropriate reading level for collection.

Collection Development In School Libraries: The Akwa Ibom State Experience

Public Schools Scenario: Collection development process is carried out at the State level by the Ministry of Education and the State Library Board for public (government) primary and secondary schools that have libraries. The Selection and acquisition of Library materials (mainly books) is handled by the Curriculum Development Unit in the Ministry of Education while the processing i.e. the technical services including cataloguing and classification of the books is assigned to the State Library Board (Inyang et al, 2012). This method of collection development for school libraries in Akwa Ibom State is quite unprofessional, unethical and biased as "professional librarians" are completely denied the opportunity to carry out this responsibility along with the curriculum experts.

This style is opposed to the theories of collection development in librarianship. It is a political propaganda known as "Ikama Idia Nkpo" and used for embezzling government funds and budget assigned for the development of education and school libraries thereby, leaving most public primary and secondary schools without functional or no libraries. Some schools especially in the rural areas have no library at all because books acquired by the ministry of Education are sent to few schools in the urban areas.

Private schools scenario: These schools are of grades (1,2,3,etc) and they are on their own. The grades 1 and 2 are standard model schools of high repute like Top Faith, Ritman College and the likes. They have good libraries. Collection development is planned by the management via consultant services from librarians like the late Mrs Anke Ukpak and AKNLA. They also draw inspiration from AKNLA as they readily respond to our invitations to Annual Library Week programmes where their library staffers are trained. The other grades share the challenges of the rural public schools with no libraries. The reason is not far-fetched as some of the proprietors know next to little about libraries and collection development.

2.6. Problems of Collection Development in Digital Era

- a. Lack of user-friendly environment: a user friendly environment means both the physical setting and the organization of user interface.
- b. Problems of digital divide. The 21st century society is marked by a growing need for information skills at all levels, including school, university, workplace and ordinary life. Digital divide deals with the difference between those who have access to information and those who don't have. This is applicable even to school libraries, those in the urban and rural areas. The same is applicable to upper grade schools and those of lower grades' access to information is inadequate.
- c. Problems of user training.
- d. Problems of library classification.
- e. Problems of staff development approach.

Conclusion

This paper examined collection development in school libraries under sub-headings as definition of terms, its purpose, policies, elements, collection versus private schools scenarios, etc. It could be concluded that collection development is the process of selecting, acquiring, processing, organizing, storing, evaluating, de-selecting and the overall management of information materials and their usage to suit the purpose of the library. It is an on going (dynamic) process that changes as the community changes. Collection development policy is an important tool that serves as the blueprint that guides the entire collection development procedures.

Recommendation

The paper recommends that NLA and NLA should liaise with the legislative arms of government to influence the enacting of a law that will make it mandatory to actively involve librarians in collection development process for school libraries in Akwa Ibom State and Nigeria. NLA should develop partnership with the administrators and proprietors of private schools to create awareness of school library services and resources as well as their relevance to lifelong learning.

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