The Library and Information Science educator: nurturing for strategic learning experiences

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Masters Degree in Library and Information Science Ngozi P. Osuchukwu is a certified Librarian of Nigeria (CLN), and Lecturer in the Department of Library and Information Science, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, Anambra State, Nigeria. She has presented and published many articles, locally and internationally. She is currently doing her Ph.D in Department of Library and Information Science in Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, Nigeria. Her research interests include community information and engagement, literacy, ICT and library development, women, children and social justice. She is a member of National Association of Library and Information Science Educators (NALISE) and Nigerian Library Association (NLA).

Masters Degree in Library and Information Science Victor Wagwu is a certified Librarian in Nigeria (CLN), and Lecturer in Ignatius Ajuru University of Education Rumuorlumeni, Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria. He is currently doing her Ph.D in the Department of Library and Information Science Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka, Anambra State, Nigeria. Victor Wagwu has published several scholarly articles and presented papers, locally and internationally. His research areas are library professional development, Knowledge Organisation and Information Retrieval. He is a member of Nigerian Library Association (NLA).

1 It is a changed version of the paper presented at the conference IFLA WLIC 2019 – Athens, Greece – Libraries: dialogue for change in Session 234 – Education and Training.
Abstract/Aim: The aim of this article was to highlight the experiences of Library and Information Science (LIS) educators in integrating strategies in library schools, examine the outcome of the experiences, identify the lessons learnt and ascertain the implications of the findings.

Methods: This was a report of LIS Educators in Nigerian Library Schools. The activities were carried out in Madonna University, Nigeria and Ignatius Aguru University of Education, Rumuorlumeni, Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria. Fifteen LIS educators were involved in the activity. The method used were dialogues, focal group discussion, talk shows and presentation. The strategies were implemented from 2017 to 2019.

Results: It was shown that LIS educators incorporated world book day, world literacy day, world language day, human rights anniversary, IFLA global vision, motivational and ICT trainings into the curriculum. The streaming and initiating of these activities stimulated interest in career charting of students as well as attracted more recognition and acknowledgement to LIS departments. The lessons learnt included craving from students and colleagues for more engaging programs, admiration from other departments and awareness creation for inclusive learning program.

Conclusion: There is need to re-strategize the trainings and curriculum in library schools in order to remain relevant with global trends in information service. Therefore, updating the trainings and LIS education are very important in building vibrant career ready professionals. LIS is a serious business and the educators must keep the motor of change moving with stimulating dialogue and practices. This will help to produce professionals who will fit into the information society with career readiness.

Introduction

Education adds value, imbues respect and dignity because it creates advantages for adoptable changes. The Library and Information Science (LIS) educators ensure the steering of sustainable strategies by making learning enriching in order to perpetuate the great discipline that has all the sense of worth in information dissemination. This is a competitive world where adaptability and re-branding influence on the environment. The notion makes it critical for LIS educators to continue to re-learn, strategize and innovate avenues of sustaining their students with exciting, stimulating methodologies. This profession, which has existed with all the beautiful principles, needs to keep standing and the people that must ensure this are: the LIS educators in the library schools, in their departments, in their different study platforms and in their community development. Hence the tenets of LIS education have become imperative for the survival and development of new information for students who need to be equipped with the necessary skills for support and all

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time quality service delivery. It is on this view that the LIS educators must brace up in all frontiers. It is not just about the courses lined up in the curriculum but the delivery, the fire in the teaching, the souls being stirred and the mindsets being changed, right in the classroom. In other words, an enthusiastic LIS educator is a great asset for no other professional degree platform focuses on the combinations of information, people, needs, value, learning and technology. This is LIS in its entirety and what the essential change advocates. Besides, the scenario in the global trend has made anyone who is not measuring up to be beaten and overtaken by the change. A good educator does not admit defeat; rather, he re-strategizes with enriching classes that assure total quality delivery. This line of thought must have made Alleyne to state “the correlation that for LIS schools to escape extinction, there must be a strategic plan to diversify”.

In Nigeria, LIS education started in the 1960s. Today, it is offered in various tertiary institutions like Colleges of Education, Polytechnics and Universities. Many LIS educators have recommended invigorating curricula contents for the training facilities based on the needs and the prevailing conditions of the socio-cultural environment and for contemporary innovations. It is a good thing that Nigerian Library Association (NLA), Librarian Registration Council of Nigeria (LRCN) and National Association of Library and Information Science Educators (NALISE) are making giant strides in restructuring and shaping the stories of LIS schools in Nigeria. The need to add contemporary innovations in the LIS profession is imperative to enable graduates to be globally competitive. The onus lies on the LIS educators to be proactive professionals who are taking actions in nurturing the students into smart, well informed future librarians. This paper highlighted the experiences of LIS educators in the context of nurturing students for strategic learning.

Objectives of the study

The main objective of this study was to highlight the experiences of LIS educators in the context of nurturing students for strategic learning. Specifically it:

1) harnessed the experiences of LIS educators in integrating strategies in library schools

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5 J. M. Alleyne, op. cit.


2) examined the outcomes of the experiences
3) identified the lessons learnt
4) pointed out the implication of the study.

Statement of the problem

The survival of any entity is paramount which makes it imperative to adopt new strategies for sustainability. LIS is not different from other disciplines that want to meet the ever changing needs of the society. The world recognizes fast thinkers, pro-activists and hard-core professionals who make things happen. Whatever made this profession look like they churn out docile, soft, timid professionals? The teaching from the comfort zone has to stop to give way to proactive professionals who are willing to step out and take action on what trends, what is new, who has it, where it happens and how it can be grabbed? The best place to change this disturbing inclination is the library school with the LIS educators. The library schools need to reform, rebirth and rebrand students into viable career professionals. The LIS educators have the power to turn the library schools not only as places of learning what are in the curriculum but welcoming spaces to bridge the digital divide where every student can create and experiment.9 Hence, the educators need to project strategic learning for wholesome professionalism. This study looked into the strategic experiences of LIS educators in nurturing students for competitive advantage.

Literature review

Educators are important not just in LIS but in every human discipline. The National Academy of Sciences stated that “nearly everyone now accepts the premise that teachers make a difference in the lives of their students”10. Based on this, the LIS educators adopt strategies, mix and navigate methods that ensure quality educational system11. As the teachers update their knowledge, they also turn the classroom to exciting platforms where students who will be professionals derive satisfaction in their learning. It requires commitment, determination and sheer dexterity to match the needs of the students and come out tops as champions. The acquisition of multidisciplinary knowledge places greater emphasis on training and fully articulated learning programs to meet the requisite of the professionals.12 Perhaps, this made International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE)13 to set up the goal on the standards of educators to be learner, leader, citizen, collaborator, designer, facilitator and analyst. These are who LIS educators meant to be.

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9  J. C. Bertot, L. C. Sarin, op. cit.
11  T. A. Akinde, A. E. Adetimirin, op. cit.
Therefore, the LIS educator brings to the table the values of the profession and understanding information in everyday life, focusing on multiple literacies, learning and collaborating spaces, meeting technology needs, competencies and facilitating open data\textsuperscript{14}. What he needs in large doses are education and training to impart knowledge on maker spaces, Google, smartphones proliferation and all activities on and outside the web to keep the trail blazing\textsuperscript{15}. As “libraries do not have the monopoly of providing access to information anymore, there is need for LIS educators to emphasize their values as providers of unique (digitized) content and as service providers, rather than as providers of published information that can be found elsewhere”\textsuperscript{16}.

Studies have shown that many LIS educators and Library Schools are taking action and driving the change in initiating dialogues for all time LIS education. For instance, science and society, merger with other departments\textsuperscript{17}, curriculum restructuring\textsuperscript{18} partnership\textsuperscript{19} diversity and inclusion have been adjudged as strategies for future LIS education and training\textsuperscript{20}. Diversity is truly needed in blending the desired change for survival. Similarly, “DLIS experiences in the Caribbean have been responsive to international trends in library education and manpower requirement, upgrading and restructuring programs to meet demands”\textsuperscript{21}. Indeed, “LIS education is reaching out to a wide variety of faculty specializations”\textsuperscript{22}. The indication is that the educators recognize, students would no longer be taught that, it is enough to stand behind a desk waiting to serve but to create enriching services and taking them to where they are needed.

Perhaps, the best qualities an LIS educator can have are willingness and readiness to try new teaching strategies. Kampen stated that “he constantly renews himself as a professional on his quest to provide students with the highest quality of education possible. This teacher has no fear of learning new teaching strategies or incorporating new technologies into lessons”\textsuperscript{23}. This sums up the initiative to add to the existing learning with topical global dialogues for participation from the classroom. The new analyses, integration of scientific and social standpoint with growth

\textsuperscript{14} J. C. Bertot, L. C. Sarin, op. cit.
\textsuperscript{19} D. Shumaker, The embedded librarian: innovative strategies for taking knowledge where it’s needed, Medford, N.J. 2012.
\textsuperscript{21} M. Shane-Scale, Blending in Department of Library and Information Studies (DLIS), University of the West Indies [online], [available 8 VII 2020]. Available on the World Wide Web: https://www.slideshare.net/mscale/blending-in-dlis-revised.
\textsuperscript{22} A. K. S. Yadav, op. cit.
mindset are what library schools need in nurturing strong willed professionals. Lankes, et al strongly pointed out that “librarians can be radical positive change agents in their communities, dedicated to learning and making a difference”. This learning must start with the educators to emphasize that professionals participate actively in the new trends and dialogues for change.

Clearly, change in library education is the key. This explained the reason libraries have been at the centre of social justice, change, and innovation, offering services that engage, educate, and empower their users. This description presupposes that LIS educators widen their scope to integrate real activities and global trends in the classroom as part of curriculum. Whatever happens to fifth Law of Library Science – Library is a growing organism? The growing organism happens in the classrooms as well. It does not reside in the libraries alone. Thus, the educators must bring in activity of international days, IFLA global vision, National Library activity, open government, civic engagement, human rights, democratic values and ideal. They students need to improve on what they learnt in the library school not learning them as fresh ideas on-the-job. Non-integration of real life activities and global trends as part of the curriculum might have made LIS profession to be so boring without initiatives to infuse interesting activities.

Methodology

The activities for this report was carried out in Madonna University, Nigeria and Ignatius Aguru University of Education, Rumuorlumeni, Port Harcourt, Rivers State. The LIS educators from these universities participated in the learning strategies in their library schools, respectively.

There were fifteen Faculty members made up of Professors, PhD holders and Master’s Degree from LIS. Methods used were dialogues, focal group discussion, talk shows and presentation. The FGD took place at the library schools, respectively consisting of nine participants at Ignatius Aguru University of Education, Rumuorlumeni, Port Harcourt, Rivers State and 6 participants from Madonna University, Nigeria. The initiatives started from 2017 to date and have become annual events in both universities. There were series of dialogues and talk shows with the students at every session. The events used were motivational sessions, International Day of Mother Tongue, World Book Day, Global Hand Washing Day, World Literacy Day, Human Rights Day, IFLA Global Vision, SDGs and Nigerian Library Week. All the activities were integrated in the curriculum and executed in the LIS departments with students’ full participation. The results of the learning experiences were presented in logical framework and tables.

26 J. C. Bertot, L. C. Sarin, op. cit.
Results

Table 1. Characteristics of the participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S/N</th>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>LIS Educators</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Professor</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>F</td>
<td>P.hD</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
<td>P.hD</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>F</td>
<td>MLIS</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
<td>MLIS</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The table shows that fifteen LIS Educators were involved in the experiences of nurturing and building future librarians with strategic innovations. The different categories of LIS Educators showed 1 Professor, 8 Ph.D holders and 6 MLIS holders. They all have the same goal – to stimulate learning in library schools.

Table 2. Experiences and the outcomes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategies Integrated</th>
<th>Reasons for the engagement</th>
<th>When conducted</th>
<th>Target participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>World book day:</td>
<td>To stimulate learning and nurture ideas for future practices</td>
<td>April 23 from 2017–2019</td>
<td>Lecturers, staff and students from other departments, Librarians</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>World literacy day:</td>
<td>To impart skills on speaking and inclusive participation of host communities</td>
<td>September 8 from 2017–2019</td>
<td>LIS educators and students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother tongue day:</td>
<td>To create ideas on team building and collaboration with other groups on indigenous knowledge</td>
<td>February 21 2018–2019</td>
<td>Lecturers, staff and students from other departments, Librarians</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Global hand washing day:</td>
<td>To impart ideas and enjoin human face in social services</td>
<td>October 15 2017–2019</td>
<td>University community and host communities, schools and park</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IFLA global trend: Participation on global vision, dialogue, learning and sharing on IFLA global advocacy document, Libraries for human rights: Knowledge on rights, talk shows and sharing</td>
<td>To share and inculcate participation and contribution to professional information To showcase versatility of LIS education and libraries on social justices and impart ideas for service delivery</td>
<td>September, 2018 and 2019</td>
<td>LIS educators and students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<td>-------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Library Week and policy and information LIS students participation on Library Association conferences</td>
<td>To create awareness on the essence of library profession and innovative practices To incorporate the students in identifying with the professional associations for learning, mentoring and striving for success</td>
<td>October from 2017–2019 July and December 2017–2019</td>
<td>Lecturers, staff and students from other departments, Librarians</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivational day: Talk show, dialogue, capacity building, questions and answers</td>
<td>To enlighten, enrich, stimulate, empower as well as make LIS students feel loved and cherished</td>
<td>Every quarter</td>
<td>LIS educators, students and invited guests</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SDG and AU 2063: Talk shows, dialogues, learning and sharing</td>
<td>To share global knowledge and empower LIS students to facilitate to groups and communities</td>
<td>Every semester</td>
<td>LIS educators and students</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Results showed that the LIS educators incorporated world book day, world literacy day, world language day, human rights anniversary, IFLA global vision, SDG and AU 2063, motivational day and library week. These events were executed in LIS Departments in both universities.

**Outcome of the LIS strategic activities**

During the activities and focus group discussion, the following results were recorded:

- Active participation of LIS educators and students
- Successful streaming and initiating of the activities as parts of LIS education and training to stimulate interest in career charting
- Recognition and acknowledgement of LIS department as well as space creation for effective coaching and mentoring
Improved respects and regards to LIS Educators and the students
- Interests to submit and present papers at the State Chapter of Nigerian Library Association Conference by LIS students
- Improved self-confidence in LIS students
- Desire for capacity building and readiness to innovate more programs for LIS education

Lessons learnt

From the discussion, the lessons learnt included:
- Students desire for more social and real life activities within LIS practices
- LIS educators have innate ideas which opened up when they are challenged
- LIS education has wide scopes and contents to stimulate learning and sharing
- LIS students simply need a push to display intelligence and technical know how
- The processes of education and training for LIS are more practical with human face and social services
- LIS educators became more daring while students became more knowledgeable and proud of LIS

Discussion

The characteristics of the LIS educators (Table 1) show the active participation of mentors and coaches in driving the change in library schools. It relates to IFLA recommendation “to create strong and united library field powering literate, informed and participative societies”\(^\text{28}\). The indication is that it brought everyone to the table to display assertive mind set and sharing of ideas in enhancing the library schools.

The display of LIS educators’ experiences in their universities indicates the stimulation of interest, stepping out and taking action. These are the theories of change that discard the seemingly docile nature of some LIS professionals. It implies that the LIS educators can transform literacy, facilitate access to information and training which buttress the goals of the standard of educator which ISTE stated to be “learner, leader, citizen, collaborator, designer, facilitator and analyst”\(^\text{29}\). Just think about all the trends recommended by IFLA, the international days to be remembered and all the activities from world acclaimed organizations and agencies. All these are learning strategies to be packaged and incorporated in the classrooms.

It is clear from the outcomes that things are turning around for LIS educators, students and the library profession. The fear of the unknown can be demystified by the actions of the educators. With that, the students can easily rise up to the tempo and take up their spaces among their peers on the relevance of their profession.

\(^{28}\) Our vision...
\(^{29}\) ISTE standards...
Again, if the educators could attain this level of acknowledgement and recommendation on campuses, the students can achieve and facilitate access to information in whichever sector they get into.

Great lessons are appreciated when learning actually takes place. That fact that the students’ desire more social and real-life activities with the ideas of the LIS educators shows radical positive change that can happen in the library schools which can be taken beyond the classroom learning\(^{30}\). In other words, the lessons learnt indicate analysis of strong willed professionals dedicated to learning and making the difference for LIS will never be a bore when proper ideas keep the motor running.

**Implication of the study**

Library and information science has existed for years in many countries and in different tertiary institutions. But there seems to be something about the profession and education that makes people waive LIS away without much regard. The findings have highlighted the aspects of integrating global trends and international days to project human face and stimulate programs in the curriculum. If LIS educators pretend that everything is good with their teaching and students, their departments may continue to lose students to other seemingly viable departments. Since most people want to identify with success, this is a good time to become more proactive with LIS and show the good prospects of action filled library schools in order to gain what might have been lost.

**Conclusion and recommendation**

The world is changing, and the human disciplines are tailored to match the dynamic transformations. LIS education cannot remove itself from the global revolutions. The 21st century education commands training, learning and sharing. It demands, dissipating the tradition of “hush hush” with vocal ideologies. Therefore, strong identification with global trends and participation on dialogues on topical issues are needed in LIS training to produce the career ready professionals for the services, the world desires. The training must start from the library schools to the workstation for effective nurturing of champions in information services. Based on the findings of the study, the recommendations were:

1) The LIS educators must be poised to trail the blaze with learning experiences and make it happen in their library schools with their students.

2) Trainings, learning and re-learning must be regular tools for LIS educators in sharing ideas and building their capacities to delist timidity and fear of public reactions on facilitation of access to information.

3) The time has come for LIS educators to go all out and initiate programs that make the students feel good and proud of their departments.

4) LIS educators can collaborate with colleagues and groups in strategizing programs that enrich the curriculum for learning.

5) The educators must never lose sight of assessing their curriculum and navigating the global trend for best practices.

6) As teachers, leaders, mentors and coaches, the educators should continue to push for prowess in order to support students’ empowerment and success in making them the ready professionals.

References


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Ngozi Perpetua Osuchukwu
Uniwersytet Nnamdi Azikiwe w Awka (Nigeria). Wydział Bibliotekoznawstwa i Informacji Naukowej
e-mail: ngostary2k@yahoo.com
ORCID ID: 0000-0001-6439-6196

Victor Wagwu
Uniwersytet Edukacyjny im. Ignacego Ajuru Rumuorlumeni w Port Harcourt (Nigeria). Wydział Bibliotekoznawstwa i Informacji Naukowej
e-mail: vwagwu@gmail.com
ORCID ID: 000-0002-15348435


Nauczyciele bibliotekoznawstwa
i informacji naukowej: dbanie o strategiczne doświadczenia edukacyjne

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Słowa kluczowe: edukacja; doświadczenia edukacyjne; szkoły biblioteczne; nauczyciel bibliotekoznawstwa i informacji naukowej; strategia; trening
Treszczenie. Cel: Celem tego artykułu było podkreślenie doświadczeń nauczycieli bibliotekoznawstwa i informacji naukowej w zakresie integracji strategii w szkołach bibliotecznych, zbadanie wyników doświadczeń, określenie wyciągniętych wniosków i ustalenie implikacji wyników.


 Wyniki: Wykazano, że nauczyciele bibliotekoznawstwa i informacji naukowej włączyli do programu nauczania: światowy dzień książki, światowy dzień czytania i pisania, światowy dzień języka, rocznicę praw człowieka, globalną wizję IFLA, szkolenia z zakresu motywacji i technologii informacyjno-komunikacyjnych. Podział studentów na grupy i inicjowanie wspomnianych działań pobudziło zainteresowanych karierą studentów, a także zyskało większe uznanie na wydziałach bibliotekoznawstwa i informacji naukowej. Wyciągnięte wnioski obejmowały chęć ze strony studentów i współpracowników do tego, aby bardziej zaangażować się w programy, podziw ze strony innych wydziałów oraz budowanie świadomości dla aktywizującego programu nauczania.

Wnioski: Istnieje potrzeba zmiany strategii szkoleń i programu nauczania w szkołach bibliotecznych, aby zachować zgodność z globalnymi trendami w usługach informacyjnych. Dlatego aktualizacja szkoleń i edukacji bibliotekoznawstwa i informacji naukowej jest bardzo ważna w budowaniu dynamicznych profesjonalistów gotowych do kariery. Bibliotekoznawstwo i informacja naukowa to poważna sprawa, a nauczyciele muszą utrzymywać siłę napędową zmian poprzez stymulowanie dialogu i praktyki. Pomoże to w stworzeniu profesjonalistów, którzy będą pasować do społeczeństwa informacyjnego z gotowością zawodową.


Lehrer/innen im Fach
Bibliothekswissenschaft und Wissenschaftliche Information: die Bemühung um die strategischen Bildungserfahrungen

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**Stichworte:** Bildung; Bildungserfahrungen; Bibliotheksschulen; Lehrer/innen im Fach Bibliothekswissenschaft und Wissenschaftliche Information; Strategie; Training

**Zusammenfassung. Ziel:** Das Ziel dieses Beitrags ist, die Erfahrungen der Lehrer/innen im Fach Bibliothekswissenschaft und Wissenschaftliche Information in Bezug auf die Strategieintegration in den Bibliotheksschulen hervorzuheben, die Ergebnisse der Erfahrungen zu untersuchen, die Schlussfolgerungen zu bestimmen und die Implikationen der Ergebnisse festzulegen.


**Ergebnisse:** Man stellte fest, dass die Lehrer/innen im Fach Bibliothekswissenschaft und Wissenschaftliche Information die folgenden Elemente in ihr Lehrprogramm einbezogen: den Welttag des Buches, den Welttag des Lesens und Schreibens, den Welttag der Sprache, den Jahrestag der Menschenrechte, die globale Vorstellung der IFLA, die Schulungen aus dem Bereich der Motivierung und der Informations- und Kommunikationstechnologien. Die Einteilung der Studenten in Gruppen und das Initiieren von den besagten Aufgaben motivierten die an der Karriere interessierten Studenten und gewannen Ansehen der Mitarbeiter der Fakultäten für Bibliothekswissenschaft und Wissenschaftliche Information. Die Schlussfolgerungen bestätigten die Bereitschaft der Studenten und der Mitarbeiter dazu, an Programmen häufiger teilzunehmen, die Bewunderung vonseiten anderer Fakultäten und die Bewusstseinsbildung zu aktivierenden Lehrprogrammen.