



Journal of OMEP

**Organization Mondiale pour l'Éducation Préscolaire
World Organization for Early Childhood Education**

Vols. 7 & 8, No. 1

2011

THE LIBRARIAN IN THE COMMUNICATION PROCESS: SCHOOL LIBRARY UTILISATION IN EARLY CHILDCARE

BY

¹E. P. UDOFIA (PH. D.), ²I. A. ETIM AND ³I. N. SHABI
¹DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL TECHNOLOGY AND
LIBRARY SCIENCE, UNIVERSITY OF UYO
²UNIVERSITY OF UYO MAIN LIBRARY, UYO
³OBAFEMI AWOLOWO UNIVERSITY LIBRARY, ILE- IFE

Abstract

The essence of communication whether done verbally or non-verbally is understanding the message in the light of the encoders thought. This paper highlights and discusses communication, its stages and its application in the school library to enhance children's reading and love for it. To do the above, this paper explores different definitions of the school library and also the resources needed to actualise the above. It highlights the problems associated with decoding messages to include the child's needs to battle with new concepts, difficult vocabulary, interpretation, selection, organization of information and connecting these to real life facts. It maintains that someone must assist the child with this enormous task and this is the duty of the school librarian. The qualities of a school librarian are discussed as well as strategies that should be adopted to stimulate children to find increasing enjoyment, make personal adjustments and acquire desirable social attitudes. It regrets that many school administrators do not seem to recognize this indispensable role of the school librarian as an intermediary, a resource that makes the material resources useful. It emphasizes this role among other recommendations, expressing that a good school library without a librarian to communicate the content to the children, is like a toy not played with.

Keywords: Intermediation, decoder, encoder utilization, accessibility, communication.

Introduction

Essentially, "messages" whether spoken or written are "sent" and "received" and confirmation of their receipt and interpretation is returned by a receiver to a sender. For this process to be perfected, there is need for good communication. This means that every communication must be as good as the workings of the human mind, as well as its interactions are complex. For this reason, management specialists and behavioural scientists have

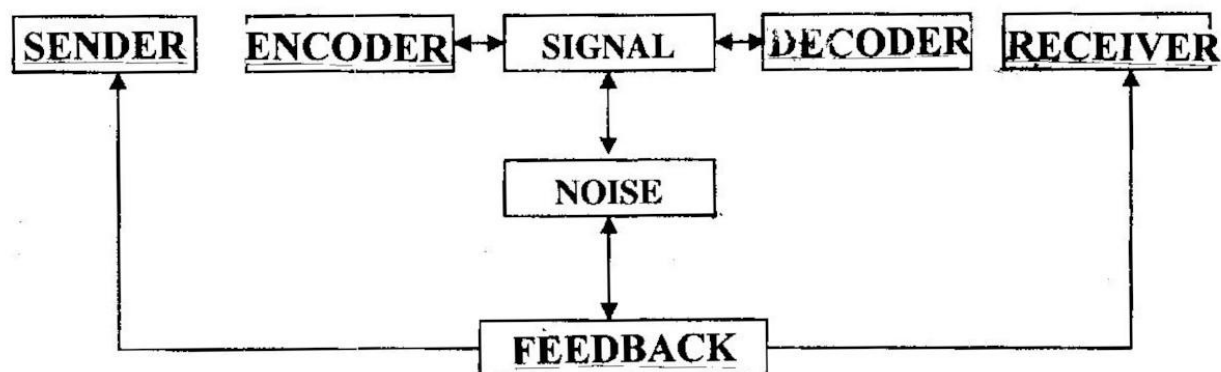
devoted much energy to analyzing the problem caused by bad communication practices and creating good communication systems. Before looking at this system, it is necessary to define communication. Communication is a process of information exchange between two or more individuals in an attempt by one individual to persuade or change the behaviour(s) of the other individual(s) (Ekanem, 2005).

Ibe-Bassey (2000) defined communication as “the transfer, transmission or exchange of ideas, knowledge, beliefs and attitudes from one person to another”. Communication system comprises a communication cycle with a number of stages where a message is conceived by a sender, encoded and relayed via a route to a

Stages of Communication

Stage One: Conceiving the Message

The first stage in the communication process involves a sender's decision to communicate a particular message. Such messages could be involuntary e.g. a scream or a careful reasoning, a result of impulse



Culled from Ibe-Bassey (2005)
*Engineering Process of
 Communication.*

Fig. 1. Shannon Weaver Model of Communication Process

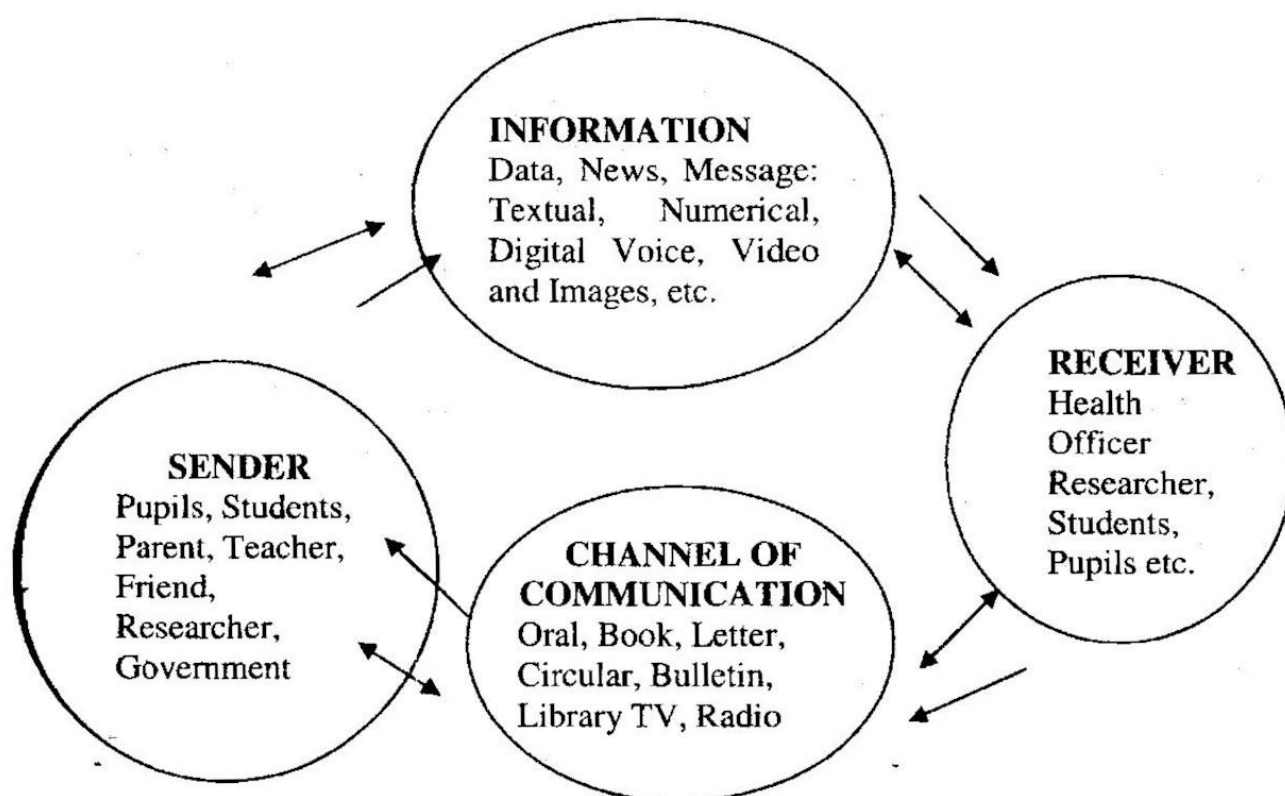
receiver who decodes and interprets and confirms to the sender that it has been understood. The process is set out in this diagram.

Uhegbu (2000) further illustrates the process in a four level cycle. The sender sends information to users which include pupils, students, parents, teachers, friends, researchers, Government Agencies and so on; the information itself which includes: data, News, Message, Textual, Numerical, digital, video, voice and images; channel of communication which includes: Oral, books, latter, circulars, bulletin, TV, radio, library; and the receivers which include: Farmer, Teacher, Health Officer, Researcher and Student/Pupils.

such as when a sender barely decides to say or do a thing; or thirdly sent as a product of careful reasoning; emotional process or an external stimulus.

Stage Two: Encoding the Message

Before any message is sent out its recipient, the sender first decodes it in an appropriate language. This language may be verbal such as speech or carefully written document, a number, diagram, picture, drawing, symbol or non-verbal such as an expression, posture or gesture. Whatever the message is, effective communication depends on the appropriateness of the language be it verbal or non-verbal.



Adapted from Uhegbu (2001).

Fig. 2: Structure of Information Flow

Stage three: Selecting the Communication Medium

General media include letters, interviews, books, journal articles, electronic mails, telex, internet, etc. Many things determine the choice of communication medium. Some of them are potential effectiveness, need for speed, need for fact, confidentiality, time, cost, books, etc.

Stage Four: Decoding the Message

Before any reaction can be elicited from a message, the message must first be understood. This is a very serious aspect of communication and involves the sender realizing and making sure that his language is within the ability and comprehension of his prospective receivers. Where a receiver does not share a sender's language, sender's vocabulary, sender's sentence

structure, sender's professional bias, or sender's over simplicity of language causing resentment and sender's cultural or educational bias, failure by a receiver to decode a message successfully usually occurs.

Stage Five: Interpreting the Message

Besides understanding a message, a receiver needs to be able to interpret it correctly as the underlying import of a message may be different. Many messages are capable of more than one interpretation giving both the apparent meaning and the "double – Entendre".

Stage Six: Providing Feedback

Feedback provides a means of reassuring a sender that a message is received, comprehended, and correctly interpreted. A feedback may be positively expressed as a smile or written as an acceptance; or negative as

shown by an angry silence etc. such feedback is essential for effective communication and for the sender to know if his message is correctly pitched; or another medium called for. How do these apply to library?

The Library in the Communication Process

To answer this question, we need to define the "school library". Dike (2000) defined the school library severally depicting its many facets of operation. Firstly, she sees the library as an "information centre" where teachers and pupils come into contact with the world, acquiring general information which forms the basis for all further learning. She also defines it as "a learning laboratory" where users develop the skills required for lifelong learning – a workshop for carrying out projects and assignment.

Dike (2000) quoting Roe also defined school library as an oasis of information in a general formal system. This provide refuge, a port of call for readers in search of adventure, a tree for children who climb high in the process of discovering life and; a place for sharing and coach for good conservation (Dike: 2000). It is also a place for creative experience (Dike: 2000). The story hour in particular provides interaction for socialization. Dramatization and scientific searches also create opportunity for gaining experience.

Summarily, it can be concluded that for a child who is learning to discover the world and be relevant, the world of books, stories, games, puzzles, audio-tapes and computers are her best play-ground, (Udofia: 2000). Yet, this school library no matter how rich in resources, would make very little or no impact and stands to fail to actualize

the above, unless machinery is set in place for proper communication of the content of the available resources. It will simply be like a toy not played with (Dike, 2000).

The School Librarian as a Receiver of Information for Children

Basically, the child needs information that leads to his/her holistic development. For the child, receiving and decoding information is an enormous task as she needs to combat many things – at the level of the book viz. provide adequate explanations for new concepts, battle with difficult vocabulary connect the facts to real life for proper interpretation and feedback. Besides if he is reading to learn, there is need for selecting information, organizing the information and integrating it. How can he achieve these? By creating resource utilization processes to maximize effectiveness through effective selective, reading and use of the available resources for the children.

Though there is this proposal of disintermediation which describes a growing trend towards end user searching; young readers need someone whose job it is to select, decode and interpret information to them, let us consider the junior primary classes for an instance. Udoh (1998) asserted that one main purpose of the school library is to stimulate and guide pupils in all phases of their reading so that they may find increasing enjoyment and satisfaction; provide opportunity for boys and girls to develop helpful interest, make satisfactory personal adjustments and acquire desirable social attitude.

Information utilization is the actual putting into appropriate use of required information. Uhegbu (2000),

add this differs according to users and **their** information needs and the **librarian** designs activities for this **effective** utilization. Some of them **include**:

1. Story Hour

The above again has implication for intermediation. One of the earliest forms of literary mediation is storytelling. The power of the storyteller's art enables the listeners to lay hold of and contemplate experience, catching the truth of life (Dike: 1998). Story telling inspired the listeners, furthers their thoughts, and laid a sound foundation for reading. Besides, it attunes children to the elements of literature comprising character, flow of events, shape and rhythms as well as terminology. A good story hour contact with the librarian gives realistic connection to children's real life experiences as applicable to the particular children users, making them develop interest, desirable social attitudes and adjustment. The librarian must first receive the account of such stories before passing same on at the story hour.

2. The Acquisition Process

Another significant role of the librarian in receiving information for children users is that of selecting books that are audience appropriate. There are books that take into consideration reader's prior knowledge and interests, thus promoting meaningful learning by making the reader integrate

new information with his existing knowledge. To determine these audience appropriate books, the librarian must first read, scan the books ascertain their appropriateness before passing them on to the right readers in order words, the librarian first receives the information as communicated before providing the access to the children.

3. Creating Facts and Promoting Reading.

The job of creating facts and promoting active reading for meaningful learning are the librarians. For instance using the K-W- L graphic method will enable children to grasp the content of a typical book to be read as well as the normal lessons as it captivate their full attention. To do this the librarian must first read the story – relate it to children's possible previous knowledge and lead them in by announcing the topic. After this children are made to brainstorm asking the questions.

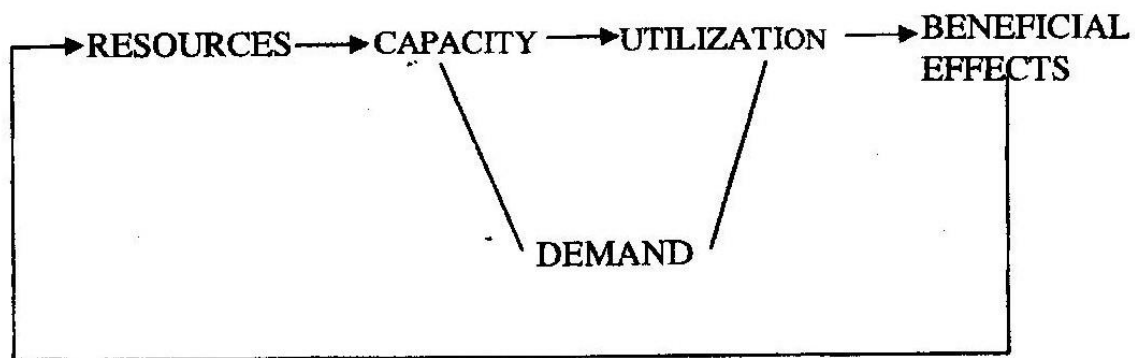
- (K) What do we know about the topic?
- (W) What do we want to find out? (Purpose)s
- (L) What do we learn about this topic from the reading?

After reading, it is the librarian's responsibility to match children's lives experiences with the author's intended message. Note that children contribution would greatly ginger children interest in reading and this has great impact on life-long learning.

4. **Sharing of Creative Expression**

As earlier said, the library is a place for sharing creative expression and social interaction. To make this effective, the librarian reads the story such as "Chicken Licken: or : Chika Chika-Boom Boom: or : The Wolf and the Seven Little Kids: narrate the story and assign parts as the children

an indispensable resource. This is the duty of the school librarian. An example of such a case could be in a technical area like a science or art project. For instance, children having investigated why leaves are green: This question raises a lot of curiosity in children. For this to be sustained there is need to select appropriate materials or resources for the children.



Adapted from Popoala (2009).

for dramatization. For this to work out and achieve its purpose, the librarian must first be the receiver of such information as considered intended by the author.

5. **Intermediacy**

Many books are used at different levels. This responds to the problems of intermediacy. This means that a person who sends information has no absolute guarantee of who exactly is going to interpret it. This intermediacy arises from the fact that information usually takes the form of a coded representation of entities and must be interpreted. More so especially the librarian becomes

On this, Popoala (2009) asserted that availability and accessibility bring about effective utilization of information with the resultant beneficial effect. In other words it is possible to have good resources; where the librarian does not effectively match these resources with the demand, the beneficial effect that accrues may be very minimal.

Conclusion

Authors and researchers have identified among many causes of the failure of the school system – poorly equipped libraries but rarely does anybody talk about poorly staffed school libraries. (Aborishade: 2001). The above support the fact that strategic as the school librarian is, his role is pathetically not yet known to the public. The fact remains that the material

~~source~~ can only be effectively utilized
~~where~~ the librarian's role is non-
~~dispensing~~ but intermediating.

Recommendations

- a) School administrators need a change of perception in order to be aware of the unique role of the school librarian in their attaining the goals of establishing schools. This being the case, There is need to employ professionals to man school libraries just as professional teachers are employed for the purpose of effective school curriculum implementation.
- b) For the school librarian to function effectively as the receiver of information, and change his misconceived place as “book dispenser”, he must posses among others, unique qualities of being confident in himself, have the joy of acquiring more information, be inquisitive, and have the ability to sensitize his children to also desire to know more. Besides he must be willing to assist his patrons and prove to be a worthy encyclopedia, who is also current enough to man the Information Technology resources for current information acquisition, storage and retrieval to children patrons.
- c) The ministry of education should interview and send qualified librarians to school so as to inculcate the reading culture and bring about the desired development of culture for life- long learning.

References

- Aborishade, F. (2001). "Nigerian Education Still in the Doldrums after 41 years". In: E. Edukugbo (ed.). *Vanguard*. Thursday, October 4, p.13 and 16.
- Armbruster, B. B. (1998). "Choosing a Reader Friendly Text". In: *Reading in the Context Areas. Evaluators' handbook*. New Jersey: Prentice Hall.
- Dike, V. W. (1998). "Reading Promotion in Nigeria: The Role of School Libraries". In: D. F. Elaturoti (ed.). *School librarianship, yesterday, today and tomorrow*. Ibadan: NSLA, p.173 – 188.
- Dike, V. W. (2001). "School Library Facilities Require for Successful Implementation of the UBE Programme in Nigeria". Paper Presented at 11th Annual Conference of NSLA, Nsukka.
- Ekanem, E. O. (2005). *Classroom management*. Uyo: Inela Ventures and Publishers Limited.
- Evans, D. W. (1998). *People, communication and organizations*. London: Pitman.
- Ibe- Bassey, G.S (2000). *Principles and practice of instructional communications* 2nd ed. Uyo: Dorand.
- Marshall, J. (1994) *The values and impact of information*. London: Bowker Saur.
- Popoala, M. O. (2009). Effective Library Services as Value for Money in Libraries. I. O. Busanjo Fountain of Knowledge. *Journal of Library and Information Science* Volume (1): 1 – 8.
- Shannon, W. (1954). *Procedures and Effects of Mass Communication* in G. S. Ibe- Bassey (2000). *Principles and practice of instructional communications* 2nd ed. Uyo: Dorand.
- Udofia, E. P. (2000). "The Library as A Participant in The Implementation of Universal Basic Education". *The Researcher*, 2(3): 50 – 75.
- Udoh, V. W. (1998). The Perceived Role of the Teacher Librarian in Effective Implementation of the Educational Programme in Schools in D. F. Elaturoti, pp. 201 – 215.
- Uhegbu, A. N. (2001). *The information user: Issues and themes*. Enugu: John Jacob's Classic Publishers Ltd.