

EDUCATIONAL TECHNOLOGY
AND
6-3-3-4 EDUCATION SYSTEM



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AN APPRAISAL OF SECONDARY SCHOOL MEDIA
SERVICES IN THE CROSS RIVER STATE

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INTRODUCTION:

The new philosophy of education has brought about innovation in educational methodology. Education is now learner-centred and the classroom oriented teaching is fast giving way to individualized instruction. Learning has also gone beyond the cognitive areas. These changes call for indept clear visions in all teaching/learning processes.

THE CONCEPT OF EDUCATIONAL RESOURCE CENTRE: Meaning, Function and Organization.

Educational resources have been broadly seen as anything used to meet an educational need. (Edwards 1). This includes messages, people, materials, devices, techniques and settings. According to Edward's definition therefore, the entire world is a resource centre. A resource centre may therefore be defined as a department that facilitates education and training through the design/production of media and materials, and the delivery of support services to the entire system where it is situated. A comprehensive definition of this concept is at times difficult to give but eminent scholars do try to give working difinitions by listing various functions performed by a creditable resource centre. This functions include seeing an ERC as a multi media library which makes available;

- to students, teachers and any other interested party sources of information both in print and non-print forms.
- a centre for providing a wide range of equipment for the production and reproduction of software by both pupils and teachers.
- a centre with a chief purpose of encouraging self-instruction, either supervised or entirely independent.

(Mertens,² Based on these three broad functions of an ERC, the provision of facilities for individuals working either on their own or in small groups, ranging from two students to a whole class of about 40 students, is the chief purpose of a creditable media centre.

There are six groups of interrelated and interlocking services that a functional resource centre should perform. These are the information, reading, production, instructional, reference and consultant services. These services represent operational functions of an ERC that must be performed on an effective and continous basis if programme accountability is to be achieved.

An ERC usually is made up of several units namely:

- (a) an information unit
- (b) a reference unit
- (c) a production unit
- (d) a curriculum development unit
- (e) an educational research unit
- (f) a language development unit
- (g) an audio-visual unit.

These units are better administered centrally by a director who controls the management of the centre and is assisted by assistant director (science) and assistant director (Arts). These assistants would co-ordinate the programmes of the centre while the various unit heads would be incharge of their respective units. No two resource centres are exactly alike even when all the seven units listed above are fully established and functioning, they are generally influenced by their environment. Often times the needs of the patrons and the objective of the centre determines the set up pattern adopted.

Most ERC directors find it expedient to have the various units close by, as much as the organization permits, to avoid duplication of services and materials, waste of time and energy. For such reasons, it is common to notice that in all functionally organized resource centres, activities which are logically related and which would be economically administered are grouped together as a department. A centralized facility is built on the premise that one large space will be set aside and will include a central storage place for the learning materials, and an office space for the director and his staff. On the other hand, a decentralized facility advocates having spaces in several areas of the centres in close proximity to the instructional materials being used. One pattern is not actually preferred over the other, but the centralized facility affords better supervision and control on both the staff and materials. Besides, records of usage can easily be maintained since every equipment materials and activities are housed in one space. Whatever organizational pattern an ERC adopts, the clients and the management staff require provision for:

- (a) Small group and individual study areas,
- (b) Storage facility for instructional materials close to these study areas,
- (c) Storage facility and distribution of technical materials,
- (d) Production workshops for graphic materials, audio recordings, photographic production etc.

AN INTEGRATION OF EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INTO THE NEW EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMME

Two types of learning resources can be identified as existing in most of our learning environments for use in this new programme. In the first instance, there are few resources acquired through a systematic design/production. These are the learning materials which have been specifically developed as Instructional system components in order to facilitate purposeful formal learning. These are materials like the slides series, Instructional films, graphic materials etc. There are also other learning resources by utilization. These have not been specifically designed for Instructional purpose; but for the mere fact that they are present within the environment, these materials are discovered and used for learning purposes. These resources range from a small string of thread to more sophisticated materials like the computer. Based on the working definition attempted earlier in this paper, it is obvious that a listing of likely materials in a resource centre can never be exhaustively done.

A critical examination of the new policy reveals that it is only in the secondary section of the new structure that revolutionary changes have been made in terms of duration of the programme, curriculum content, and the end product expected. One major feature of the system is in the operation of a diversified curriculum expected to cater for individual differences among the learners. To achieve this noble objective, implementers of the policy must make deliberate efforts to exploit the potentials of the two categories of materials identified within the learning environment. Both the resource centre programmes and the new educational programmes are therefore inter-dependent and inseparable. An ERC could be seen as a factor for educational excellence, because its teaching act involves creating of environment in which learners will be confronted with knowledge and ideas and be presented with various opportunities to achieve skillful performances in the process. Educational resource centres ought to be the hubs of the new educational system if the end product of the system is the major concern.

THE ORGANIZATION OF SCHOOL MEDIA SERVICES IN THE CROSS RIVER STATE.

The end product of the 1976 universal primary education scheme is currently the material for the 6-3-3-4 tier of the present educational programme. So in effect the new educational policy started with nation wide launching of UPE scheme. During the 1982/83 academic year the Cross River State Ministry of Education responded to the call by the Federal Government and implemented the entire programme - the 6-3-3-4 system. So that by the end of 1984/85 session she has graduated her first batch of junior secondary school "leavers".

Cross River State was therefore one of the first states to experiment this new programme and this is why it is expedient to appraise her media services, knowing fully well what impact media can have on learning. More so, the junior secondary school in the state started life with various teething problems. (Anam)³

However, before the new scheme took off, in 1972 the state educators had seen the need to develop her educational programmes through the provision of various media services. An idea of educational resource centre was nursed in that same year. Three main units were considered very essential in the provision of these services and these were:-

- (i) The school library unit
- (ii) The Science and Technology Unit and
- (iii) The curriculum development unit

These three units were initially cited at Uyo urban so as to make use of the UNESCO experts who were serving at the then Advance Teachers' College, Uyo. These units later became the core of the state educational resource centre, presently established as an arm of the Ministry of Education. According to records from the centre, the structure of the centre when fully established will consist of the following components:-

- (a) Libray Unit
- (b) Curriculum development unit
- (c) Audio-Visual Unit
- (d) Educational research unit
- (e) Design and production unit
- (f) Educational information unit
- (g) Language development unit.

Some of these components are established and functioning; others are yet to be established, but the centre is providing media services to secondary schools within its environs.

A. Services from the Library Unit.

The Library Unit of the centre is creating a lot of impact in secondary school within the state. A functional library in secondary school has been recognized as indispensable to the healthy life of a school. The State Government sees it as a centre from which the local culture can be disseminated. (Usua)⁴ This unit therefore provides consultancy and reference services to the teaching staff and the students respectively. The term consultant services used here applies to those specialized activities and services provided by the professional media staff to assist teachers in setting up and developing print and non-print collection in their respective schools. The unit establishes and maintains a model school library and this provides reference services to the schools. It has a rich stock of print media ranging from textbooks to reference books.

It also stores away some non-print materials like the 8 mm, 16 mm films and their projectors. This unit is designated the school library unit' because its effort is geared towards assisting principals set up their school libraries. The librarian incharge of the unit visits the schools in the state, identifies needs and gives assistance as required. Short courses are often organized by the unit for school library attendants while the reference library at the unit serves as a workshop for both the attendants and student assistants.

The unit aims at changing that old fashioned concept of seeing a school library as a store house for books to seeing them as teaching and learning laboratories because of its effort at pooling together few audio-visual materials found within the schools. In spite of all meaningful efforts, lack of fund has almost relegated the unit to a subordinate role of gathering few materials and providing the necessary space for using them. The much needed advisory as well as supervisory assistant provided by this unit to individual schools is inadequate compared to the present needs of these schools.

B. SERVICES FROM THE CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT UNIT.

The curriculum development unit is another dynamic component of the centre. Due to 'knowledge explosion' of the latter part of this twentieth century, information is doubling daily, hence the task of selecting materials for study presents a major problem to the educators. As discussed earlier, a significant point of departure from the conventional educational system has been in the area of curriculum. The current curriculum for junior/senior secondary has been diversified to include pre-vocational subjects. At this unit therefore, books on these new areas are acquired from the publishers for content/format review. A panel of subject experts guided by some criteria, review these works in the light of their knowledge about the target learners. Finally, the selected print media are distributed to schools and recommended for use in the secondary school programme. It also prepare teachers' guide and students' work books whenever there is fund.

The other twin duty of this unit seems to be delegated to the background and that is the revision of current syllabuses and the designing of instructional materials for teaching them. This duty should actually act as a focal point for new curricula and should have certain selective effect on the materials adopted for use in the schools, unfortunately no attention is given to it.

Services from the Design and production unit of the centre evolves from the Science and Technology unit which was established in 1972. This unit is specifically known for the production of instructional materials for the teaching/learning of Pure Sciences.

Between 1976 and 1982, the unit is said to have supervised materials worth over N1.6m to secondary schools in the state. What the unit has engaged itself in from that 1982 till date is actually an improvisation of most of the materials/aids needed in the teaching/learning processes. Materials like substituting empty body cream bottles for reagent bottles, local distillation equipment consisting of a pot, iron pipes running through a wooden boat of cold water for the commercially or factory made distillation flask, ballons for the lungs' model and locally produced test tube racks etc. The unit receives order from principals of schools for any required material and this is designed according to specificatins, produced and delivered for very little amount. Samples of materials improvised are displayed for the attention of all interested principals.

d Services from the Language Development Unit.

In compliance with the provisions of the national policy on Education, a state language unit has been set up with the main objective of enhancing the study of languages especially Nigerian Languages.

Although the state government had proposed the teaching of Efik, Ibo or Hausa and the JSS and SSS levels, facilities to enhance their study are yet to be provided at the centre, there is provision for the study of French language at the moment. This unit which occupies a completely separate building from all other units runs formal class sessions for schools and interested workers. The unit keeps a special reference library for interested students and staff. It runs workshops and seminars for French teachers within the state and Liaise with some French speaking countries who sometimes sponsor some French programmes too.

e Services from the Information Unit.

This unit gathers and disseminates information about the centre. Schools need to know what service is available and who to seek out for assistance. But due to poor machinery this service is hardly rendered to schools. The unit collects instructional as well as informational films from bodies like the British Councils, centres for Educational Technology of some higher Institutions in the state for presentation to schools whenever the demand is made.

f The audio-visual unit is a mere store house for the audio-visual aids. Equipment like the overhead projectors, the film loop, the slide and the 8 mm projectors and available but not utilized. The research unit also is yet to function.

Available Media Services Within the Schools

An ERC according to the clarification by the National Policy on Education Implementation Committee is a learning centre designed to enhance the professional competence of the teacher. This sounds more or less teacher-centred. A similar centre that is specifically for the learners would be one situated within individual schools and serving the students needs solely. Unfortunately, no school in the state possesses such learning centre. Few secondary schools however do have school libraries and still fewer principals appreciate the importance of these services to the students. Out of the ten long standing Secondary Schools in Uyo and Calabar educational zones studied for this write up, only three schools possess book collections that could be termed 'school libraries'. Their collection range from 663 - 900 books, 108 - 350 periodicals for use by student population ranging from 700 - 1,500 students. Both the shelf-space for the stock and the reading space for the learners are so inadequate for the student population. In addition to these poorly equipped school libraries, few non-print materials were seen lying waste in the staff common rooms and in some principals' Offices.

In a study conducted by an undergraduate student of the University of Port Harcourt to ascertain the materials available for the teaching/learning of English in post primary schools within Uyo urban, it was revealed that there is no single school in that area with an adequate Instructional materials for effective teaching/learning of English Language or Literature in English. (Akpan)⁵ In a similar study carried out by another student, it was revealed that schools in Uyo vary in the materials and services they made available to the students. (Foster)⁶. This study further revealed that even the few available materials in the six schools studied were not utilized by both students and teachers.

Discussion.

A close observation of the schools with libraries revealed that none of the three schools had library periods in their time-table to encourage effective use of the resources. A comparison of what goes on in a functional resource centre with what is obtained at the ERC under study could reveal a lot of lapses in function. The centre is more or less a workshop for the staff of the centre, teachers and pupil have very little access to it. Also, the percentage of the schools that actually use the centre is very low. Only schools in Uyo and Calabar urban areas are aware of these services; the rural schools are completely cut off except for few rural schools with dynamic principals. A lot of factors have been discovered from the study as inhibiting effective media services in the state.

These factors include poor co-ordination among units, lack of a permanent building to house the materials and activities, and poor funding of the centre.

The demands of this new system of education are numerous and Cross River State though about the first to implement this programme seems the least prepared for it. Probably, there are some other states with similarly poor media services attempting in run the new system of education. The following suggestions if imbibed could help the Cross River State Educational resource centre as well as other developing resource centres to get fully established:

- 1 Since resource centres do not just exist in our secondary schools, and setting up of new centres is not envisage right away, a conversion of existing school libraries/book collections centre could be possible as a start. This has to be a steady and gradual process, not a change in nomenclature but in services provided. Such school library could be converted into a workshop first by
 - furnishing it to allow for individual study as well as group work,
 - a steady addition of a whole range of non-print materials and improving on the system of classification currently in used.
- 2 The systematically developed resources are in short supply due to some constraints, but some learning resources by utilization abound within our environment, these should be skillfully utilized to meet the educational needs of our secondary schools learners.
- 3 More professionals should be encouraged to head the various units of the centre.
- 4 Technicians and graphic artists should be trained and posted to schools to help develop school resource centres.
- 5 Teachers found integrating media potentials into their classroom instructions should be highly rewarded.
- 6 To achieve top level support from the Ministry of Education, Officers of the rank of Chief Inspectors of Education should head the resource centre and to avoid duplications of functions he should co-ordinate the activities of the entire centre.

CONCLUSION.

The aim of this paper was not to blow any trumpet, of-course the services are not worth blowing a trumpet. Better media services might be offered in future when the permanent site for the centre under construction is completed. However this paper is a forum to make more teachers and **students** within and outside the state aware of these services no matter how inadequate they are.

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