

Certificate and Diploma Courses in Library and Information Science in Nigeria - State of the Art

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One should perhaps begin by attempting to categorize the course/programme options possible in librarianship in Nigeria under the heading, *Certificate and Diploma courses*. Four categories are readily identifiable, viz, certificate course, undergraduate diploma course, higher national diploma course, and the post-graduate diploma course.

Certificate Course:

This could be loosely defined as any librarianship course formal or informal which attracts only a certificate of proficiency, as opposed to a regular degree or diploma. The course may or may not be based in an institution of higher learning, and may or may not require uniform entry qualifications for intending students.

Up till recently, the sub-professional library training in Ibadan consisted of a one-year certificate course. I am informed that the Kwara State College of Technology, Ilorin, also offers a one-year certificate course in librarianship with emphasis on library routines. Qualification for admission to this programme falls below the minimum academic requirement for a regular degree or diploma programme in higher institutions (i.e. WASC or GCE).

Certificate courses also exist in some Colleges of Education, for example, those at Eha-Amufu and Nsugbe (both in Anambra State). Librarianship is here taught usually as a subsidiary subject, alongside one or two other major disciplines. The programme itself which is of 3-year duration, leads to a National Certificate of Education (NCE). It is difficult to determine the quantity and quality of the library science input into it. On graduation, however, candidates are expected to serve as teacher/librarians in post-primary institutions thereby sharing their time equitably between classroom teaching and service in the school's library, if one exists.

Certificate - earning courses can also be run on ad-hoc, less-formal basis, and under the aegis of any reputable establishment. Recently, for example, the Centre for Management Development, Lagos, (CMD) advertized for a three-month certificate - earning course in library practice for library assistants. Earlier efforts in organising similar certificate courses include those of the School Libraries Section, East Central State Division, Nigerian Library Association, for Teacher Librarians (Nsukka 1972), School Libraries Association, for Teacher Librarians (Ibadan, 1979).

Non-graduate Diploma Course:

This programme is normally spread over two years and designed to provide formal library training to non-graduates in the profession. The programmes are tenable in post-secondary institutions, usually a university as is the case in Nigeria. On successful completion of the 2-year course,

candidates are awarded a Diploma in Library Studies (Ibadan) or Diploma in Library Science (Zaria, Kano).

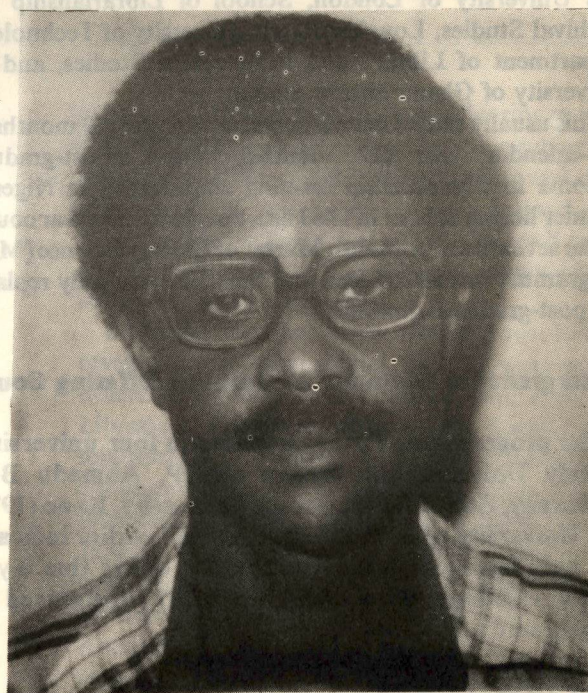
The first and only 2-year diploma programme in library science conducted outside a Nigerian university is that of the College of Technology, Owerri. It started in 1979 and leads, on successful completion, to the award of the National Diploma (ND) in Information Science.

This is certainly not an appropriate forum to enter into a debate on the merits or otherwise of a polytechnic - based library science training programme at the sub- and para - professional level vis - a - vis one that is based in a university. Suffice it to say that in several countries of the world such training is actively pursued at the polytechnic level, in addition to, or even in place of, university - based programmes. In Britain, in particular, polytechnics have been in the fore-front in the training of library personnel not only at the sub-degree level, but even at degree and post-graduate levels.

The first real effort to extend librarianship training to our country's polytechnic resulted from some aspects of the recommendations on the new National Policy on Education.¹

Features of the new National Policy on Education include the following:-

- (i) "the adoption of a 6-3-3-4 duration pattern (6 years of primary education, 3 years of junior secondary school, 3 years of senior secondary school and 4 years of university education) as opposed to the former 7 or 6-5 2-3 pattern inherited from the British ...;
- (ii) prolongation of university education by one year 3 to 4 years"².



N.I. ONYECHE

Department of Information Science,
College of Technology, Owerri

Several interpretations were given to these provisions of the policy the most significant being a general agreement that under-graduate diploma courses be phased out from universities when the proposed scheme became operational and consequently transferred to polytechnics and Colleges of Technology. This view was apparently underscored by the glaring absence of a specific role assigned to polytechnics in the proposed scheme.

Following the adoption of the new policy by the Federal Government, the National Universities Commission, the Nigerian Library Association and the Library Schools consequently came together to develop a three-year Nigerian National Diploma (NND) programme to be taught by Polytechnics and Colleges of Technology. Although the transfer move was ultimately suspended, the College of Technology, Owerri, nevertheless embarked on the programme, and as earlier mentioned introduced what is now called Information Science in 1979.

Following another nation-wide restructuring of polytechnic education, this programme reverted to the 2-tier structure of National (ordinary) Diploma (ND) of 2-years duration, followed by the Higher National Diploma (HND) also of 2-years duration.

Higher National Diploma Course:

Mention has just been made of the fact that the above programme exists only at the College of Technology, Owerri. Additional information on this programme will be provided later. It is perhaps pertinent to announce that the first set of 18 Higher National Diplomates passed out of the institution last year, September, 1983, and are currently serving the one-year NYSC scheme in different locations in the country.

Post-graduate Diploma Course:

Several post-graduate training programmes in library science the world over lead to a post-graduate diploma, e.g. The University of London, School of Librarianship and Archival Studies, Loughborough University of Technology, Department of Library and Information Studies, and the University of Ghana library school.

This usually ranges from a one-academic year (9 months) to one-calendar year (12 months) course. Post-graduate diploma in librarianship training commenced in Nigeria's premier library school in 1963 as a one-academic year course. In the seventies a 12-month Master of Library Science (MLS) programme was introduced and this has eventually replaced the post-graduate diploma.

Undergraduate Diploma: Institutions Offering Course

The programme at present exists in four universities namely University of Ibadan (1970)³, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria (1968)⁴, Bayero University, Kano (1977)⁵ and University of Maiduguri (1982). As earlier indicated the only Nigerian polytechnic which offers this 2-year course - College of Technology, Owerri - introduced the programme in 1979.

Entry Qualifications:

Table 1 has attempted a breakdown of the minimum entry qualifications for the five institutions offering the

under-graduate 2-year diploma in librarianship. The West African School Certificate or its equivalent is the minimum academic requirement common to all the schools. Beyond this broad statement, however, many variations in entry demand can be noticed.

Ibadan, for example, requires five West African School Certificate credits (including English) Kano and Owerri insist only on four credits (including English), whereas Zaria and Maiduguri appear silent on the minimum number of credit grades acceptable.

Owerri demands that the four WASC credits (GCE passes) must have been obtained at only one sitting. The alternative in six credits in WASC obtained at two sittings. On the other hand, neither Ibadan nor Kano has indicated the prescribed number of credits. Thus the rather awkward possibility of an applicant whose 4 or 5 WASC credits (or GCE passes) have been collected over three or even four examination attempts does exist; this to the writer is anomalous.

All library schools, it would seem, require a credit grade in English. Kano, however, makes a concession to the effect that "a candidate who does not possess a credit grade in English Language and who is otherwise qualified for admission to the course may be offered admission provided he obtains a pass in Remedial English of the School of General Studies prior to the beginning of Part II of the course.⁷ The implication is obvious - candidates could be admitted without English and provided university facilities for one year to make good their deficiency.

Owerri appears to be the only one with an additional subject demand: it insists on a minimum of WASC pass in Mathematics. The argument is that in a technological institution (Owerri) the minimum level of mathematics acceptable is a WASC pass.

Ibadan which stipulated a minimum of one year library work experience is the only library school demanding such practical experience from their prospective students. Ibadan and Owerri employ entrance examination as the main screening device for admission of students. Although no specific mention was made of this issue in the prospectuses of the other three (Zaria, Kano, Maiduguri) the indications are that they do not require students to sit an entrance examination.

In summary, while the broad outlines of the admission policies of the five schools appear identical, several disparities still exist. The number of WASC credits required, the number of examination attempts acceptable, desirability (and if so, duration) of pre-entry library experience are among issues that need to be uniform across the country.

Curricula

There does exist a sizeable amount of professional literature on the general topic of library education in Nigeria and, in particular, on the curricula of sub-professional library science courses in existence. Ogunshye,⁸ Akinyotu⁹ Dean¹⁰ are only three of several writers who have made useful contributions to the topic. It would be tedious and unnecessary to repeat grounds already ably covered.

Mention must, however, be made of three works because they have concerned themselves specifically or dwelt at great length, on the subject of the curricula of the 2-year undergraduate diploma programme in Nigeria. Aiyepoku¹¹, undertook an elaborate comparison of the curricula of several

Table 1

Entry Qualifications Into The 2-Year Undergraduate Diploma In Library Science Course

Institution	Academic Qualification	Concession	Pre-entry Experience	Screening Method
Ibadan	WASC with 5 credits, incl. English GCE 'O' level with 5 passes incl. English; Grade Two Teachers Certificate, with 5 Merit passes incl. English; Equivalent of any of the above	In the absence of prescribed academic qualification: Long Library experience, Sponsorship from Employer, Credit grade in either English or Maths. (WASC)	Minimum of 1 year pre-entry library work experience	By Common Entrance Examination
Zaria	WASC with Credit in English; GCE 'O' level with English; Grade Two Teachers Certificate with Merit in English; Equivalent of any of the above.	Not specified	None	Not specified
Kano	GCE 'O' with 4 passes incl. English; WASC with 4 Credits incl. English; Grade Two Teachers Certificate with 4 Credits or Merits, incl. English; Equivalent of any of the above.	Candidate without Credit in English but otherwise qualified, eligible for provisional admission provided he obtains pass in Remedial English offered by Institution, before the second year of study.	None	Not specified
Owerri	WASC with 4 Credits at 1 sitting, or 6 credits at 2 sittings, including English and Pass in Mathematics; GCE 'O' level and Grade Two Teachers Certificate equivalents	None	None	By Common Entrance Examination

library schools including Ibadan and Zaria which were in existence at that time (1970) catering for sub-professional library education in Nigeria. Similarly Mohammed & Afolabi¹² and Nzotta¹³ writing more recently made brilliant expositions and analyses of the situation.

It is therefore my intention to update aspects of Aiyepoku's study by extending the scope of his comparison of the curricula of the two schools then in Nigeria to accommodate the newer ones. In the process, I hope to highlight the major views, findings in his, as well as other related, works.

Table II presents a comparison of core subjects taught at the sub-professional level in four library schools, Ibadan, Zaria, Kano and Owerri. Although the 2-year undergraduate diploma programme exists in Maiduguri, I have excluded it from my analysis because of my inability to lay hand on the programme prospectus.

The following comments emerge from an examination of the Table.

- (i) Whereas on the surface it would appear that the range of subjects taught at the sub-professional level is too wide, on closer examination, however, one would confirm Aiyepoku's observation that

"the most striking aspect is the bewildering range of nomenclature for more or less the same subjects"¹⁴. The subject range could in fact be narrowed down considerably if one cared to look beyond mere course titles to the actual content of such course. For instance *Library & Society* might seem a subject peculiar to Ibadan.

Its subject content when broken down however reveals that it encapsulates the following among others: Introduction to Librarianship; History of Libraries; Functions of libraries in Society; Inter-relationship of libraries with other agencies in the community; Social problems & trends affecting libraries. Similarly the broad subject heading, *Library Routines* becomes a rather imprecise term when its content is ex-rayed for it will be found to embrace the following sub-courses among others: Acquisitions/Ordering procedures; Gifts & exchanges; Book processing; Circulation and control; Reference; Statistics; Publicity & Display; A/V equipment; Reprography; Book preservation & preparation, etc.

There is therefore a strong need for some breaking down of the content of the subjects, especially as presently constituted at Ibadan and Zaria. This would reduce the ambiguity prevalent in the exercise of comparing courses/subjects on the basis of titles only. Kano and Owerri appear to have made appreciable progress in this direction.

There is additionally, need for some general agreement on course/subject nomenclature that could be adopted nationwide. This would stem the present inevitable confusion in comparing courses taught across the various library schools as well as enhance mobility of students, through possibility of crediting students, with course/s already passed in other school.

Table II

Comparison of Core-Subjects for Sub professional Courses

Subject	Ibadan	Zaria	Kano	Owerri
Library & Society	x			
Knowledge & Use of Library Resources	x			
Classification & Cataloguing	x	x	x	x
Library Routines	x	x		
Office Routines			x	
Organization & Management of Lib.		x		
Bibliography & Documentation		x		
Intro. to Librarianship			x	
Acquisition of Library Materials			x	
Reference Procedures			x	
Preventive Maintenance of Lib. materials			x	
Repairs & Binding of lib. materials			x	
Non-book materials			x	
Intro. to library publicity			x	
Circulation procedures			x	
Foundations of library & Information Sciences				x
History of Libraries				x
Book Production				x
Information & Society				x
Library Administration				x
Collections Development				x
Serial & Govt. Publications				x
Reference & Bibliographica Resources				x

Table III

Comparison of Ancillary Courses

Subject	Ibadan	Zaria	Kano	Owerri
Either English Literature, or Social Sciences			x	
Use of English				x
Functional French				x
Sociology/Psychology			x	x
Typewriting				

Table IV

Comparison of Practical Work/Field Practice

Subject	Ibadan	Zaria	Kano	Owerri
Study tours of libraries	x	x	x	x
Compilation of Bibliography	x			x
Field Practice (supervised routine work in recognized library during study session)	x		x	
Supervised Attachment to recognized library during long vacation			-	x

Ancillary Subjects:

Table III presents a summary of ancillary subjects which the 2-year undergraduate diploma students are required to do as part of their training. An ancillary course should be understood as that which strictly does not belong to library science, but which is nevertheless deemed essential in producing a more confident and efficient practitioner. Owerri has the highest number of such courses and they include English language, French and Typewriting. Kano features Typewriting and either English Literature or Social Sciences. None of the other schools appears to have found sufficient need for these courses.

This writer is aware that many library educators are opposed to the idea of exposing budding sub-professionals to an array of disciplines outside professional courses, principally on the ground that on graduation, they are not expected to practice in anything but sub-professional, non-intellectual capacity. They equally contend that the programme time-frame of two-years is not enough to allow for subject branch-off without jeopardizing the quality of training in librarianship.

Those in favour argue that since an increasing number of graduates of this programme are finding themselves in charge of libraries, that the confidence deriveable from exposure to academic subjects during their training could come in handy. Furthermore, the inter-actional forum provided by these general study courses (to which ancillary courses belong) is also considered healthy. In the final analysis the answer might lie somewhere in the middle of these two assertions.

Practical work/Field Practice:

Table IV attempts to analyse the nature of practical work/field practice in the various programmes. Study tours which are essentially day return visits to libraries and which in this writer's view are only of marginal benefit to students are undertaken by all the library schools. Depending on the scope of a project and the number of libraries covered during data gathering, Bibliography Compilation could be quite helpful in exposing students to libraries and library resources.

Field practice or supervised routine work in recognized libraries is undertaken by Ibadan and Kano. This programme like the Supervised Attachment programme of Owerri, has immense potential but actual benefit is often times eroded by lack of commitment to the scheme by both student and work supervisors.

Summary:

It is unquestionable that the quality of products from this programme, as indeed from any other field of study, is in the final analysis heavily dependent on several variables of which course content is but one. Others include quantity and quality of staffing, mode of instruction, range and depth of practical work, quality of physical facilities. One can certainly not provide solutions to all the numerous problems that exist in these areas here and now, but it is expected that positive steps could, and need, be initiated towards their solution at a conference such as this.

Some of these problems and issues are:

- (1) That of harmonizing the various programmes currently run by the five library schools, in particular their entry requirements, course nomenclature and content,

- (2) That of re-structuring the entire programme in order to make it more relevant to the needs and demands of employers and the community.
- (3) Accreditation of existing programmes. This implies critical examination and consequently maintenance of minimum acceptable standards.
- (4) Lastly and perhaps most importantly, establishment of a formal system of mobility from this level of training to another such that the sub-professional staff could eventually rise to full professional position. Nzotta in the article already cited proposed that exceptionally bright Diploma graduates be allowed to proceed to the BLS programme, a practice which I gather has already been adopted by Zaria and Kano.

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Certificate and Diploma Courses

In states where the government has embarked on the production of reading materials and other teaching aids for both primary and secondary schools, such materials should be channelled through the proposed Secondary School Library Unit to various secondary school libraries.

Building

The building of special blocks for the school library should be a condition of approval for eligibility to conduct the WASC or G.C.E. for every school. This building should be provided with good library furniture and enough space for library related activities.

Provision should be made in the school time-table for library reading period during when reading skills and the rudiment skills in the use of the library should be taught to students by the school librarian.

Conclusion

In Nigeria, the considerable social change of the last ten years are naturally reflected in education. Teachers and librarians are part of the service industry demanding to accommodate these social changes. The emphasis is on changing teaching and learning methods as well as methods of assessment. This accounts for why the continuous assessment is being tried.

The greater use of the school library, especially in the secondary school, as an **innovative** role in the continuous assessment should not wait for teaching methods to change. The school library should seek actively to bring about the change by the involvement of the school support services, both staff and material, with the child in the classroom⁹.

In conclusion, it is desirable to point out that this attempt at discussing the place of the school library in continuous assessment in secondary schools in Nigeria has not in itself established the role and definition of the place of school library in continuous assessment, but I hope it has contributed to it.

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