User Education in Libraries

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Abstract

The term 'User education' have been often used inter changeable. The activities in these three categories are inter related & influence each other. The aim or orientation programs is to familarise the user with finding information within a particular library information system & to help them through their course. This a short term objective.

User education on the other hand should consist not only of 'orientation' of user in the practices methods & situations prevailing with in a specific library system he may be using during his stay within a particular institution, but also of the knowledge regarding the structure of learned. Specialist subject literature its ramification information resources peculiar to its literature & development awareness and understanding of the principles and practices of learned communication. Patterns of information transfer within a given subject area from user studies in specific disciplines. Searching & using information in a way which should enable them to tackle research problems in any situation.

Libraries, through experiences & observation are pretty certain that for the most part library user make ineffective use or misuse of library resources. When they work without assistance from librarians. In instructing library users it is usually best regardless or their level Freshman, doctoral candidates faculty members to start at the fundamentals in library use.

Introducing a user in this situation is a delicate & difficult task particularly when teaching faculty members of the institution are involved. It is difficult to teach those who assume they don't need to learn what is being taught.

We need to consider the behavioral pattern of the user before planning an user instruction programs. They study includes"

- The user's background of the library use
- The user's self appraisal of their library skills and knowledge
- The user's awareness of library facilities and but not least significant
- The attitude of the teaching faculty towards library use and knowledge from the student's point of view.
- A Confidence bridge will have to be built between the teaching community & the librarian in chalking out programs for the greater use of library resources. If education is to be library oriented or knowledge based, greater time will have to be spend by students in libraries, pursuing relevant materials in addition to classroom teaching. Training of schools students in the use of printed materials and promotion of reading habit by the use of library have now assumed more importance than ever before with the introduction of audio visual aids educational TV programs and computer education. A beginning has to be made in the schools in initiating the students in to the arts of using printed materials.

The terms 'user education' user orientation' and 'user assistance' have been often used interchangeable. The activities in these three categories are inter related and influence each. The aim or 'orientation' programmes is to familarise the users with finding information within a particular library/ information system and to help them through their course. This is a short term objective. User education on the other hand should consist not only of 'orientation' of the user in the practices methods and situation prevailing within a specific library system he may be using during his stay within a particular institution, but also of the knowledge regarding the structure of learned, specialist subject literature, its ramification, information resources peculiar to its literature and development, awareness and understanding of the principles and practices of learned communication, patterns of information transfer within a given subject area from user studies in specific disciplines, searching and using information in a way which should enable them to tackle research problems in any situation.

Librarians and teachers generally agreed that library-user education is necessary for students at all levels. There may be some difference of opinion on the best approach of instruction, and what the goals of such instruction should be but the need for library use instruction in some form or another is not questioned. Librarians, who have developed courses of instruction, have usually based the content on the assumption that introduction is necessary, and that a variety of library skills needs to be taught and developed by students.

Librarians, through experiences and observation are pretty certain that for the most part library user make ineffective use or misuse of library resources, when they work without assistance from librarians. In instructing library users, it is usually best, regardless or their level-freshman, doctoral candidates, faculty members – to start at the fundamentals in library use. Introducing a user in this situation is a delicate and difficult task, particularly when teaching faculty members of the institution are involved. It is difficult to teach those who assume they don't need to learn what is being taught.

We need to consider the behavioral pattern of the user before planning an user instruction program. They study includes: (1) The user's background of the library use: (2) The user's self appraisal of their library skills and knowledge: (3) the user's awareness of library facilities, and but not least significant is (4) the attitude of the teaching faculty towards library use and knowledge from the student's point of view.

I. Categories of Users

1. **Teachers:** The group will include (a)Members of university faculties, scientists, and research workers familiar with bibliographical research (b) Those who know scientific literature and its scope thoroughly but are unfamiliar with bibliographic tools; (c) Young research workers engaged in their first original problems, who have not hand access to a library for a long time.
2. **Students:** The group will consist of (1) Post graduate students (2) Graduate students
3. **Non Teaching staff:** This group will comprise (1) Laboratory technicians (2) other teaching supporting staff
4. The students themselves have been foremost in indicating their demands and observations. In order to enlarge the outlook and interest In community activities it is also necessary that libraries should also cre to provide reading materials for relaxation and recreational reading.

II. Services in Libraries

Library services in technical libraries are measured to provide complete lack-up-support for the teaching and research. Gradually the librarian becomes an active member of the research team. In certain libraries, the reference librarian is initially consulted, when a book or article is contemplated, and then expected to supply bibliographic references, abstracts, editorial and translation services, and to be involved with the project until publication. Teaching of bibliography is of great value both to the students, who afterwards would become able to use the library with more skill and understanding and to the library staff whose time could be conserved for higher levels of service.

III. Use of the Library

The user should know all about the library, its location and layout, system or organization and knowledge but to use (books, and information available in them) methods and techniques evolved by libraries and adopted when libraries assume gigantic stature, on account of knowledge when libraries assume gigantic stature, on account of knowledge and information explosion, the task becomes quite complex.

To find a way and locate a book/periodical, information in a library collection of several millions of volumes is indeed a challenges, but for a sound book classification system being applied for evolving an orderly helpful arrangement and display of the books. The user should know the structure of such a scheme of book classification, if he should obtain quickly the best results, e.g., Dewey Decimal Classification Scheme (10 major classes, followed by 100 sub-division of classes).

In order to directly locate desired book (s) among the hundreds of the same subjects and their facets, the device 'Catalogue on Cards' is compiled. A simple description of the matter and its grouping and order, and subject analysis done in the process of cataloguing will indicate the usefulness of this technique in libraries.

For easy expeditious and efficient service mechanical and self explanatory guide on the book shelves are to be provided in addition to usual personal service. Reader Advisory Service – Reference Material Circulation of Books, Abstracting, Documentation, Translation, Indexing etc.

IV. Cooperation between the Libraries and User

Considering that the demand and supply position in library services is fairly satisfactory, in order that the library resources and facilities and obtain fruitful results, certain pre-requisite- intimate cooperation, understanding, realism on the part of the library and the faculty, not excluding students – are absolutely necessary. The procedure will demand that the use has a fair idea of the material that he requires, for it is only then that the gaps in the library resources could be located and made good. To educate the student, and to some extent the junior or new members of the teaching staff in the art of library usage in order that they are helped to assess quickly and precisely, qualitatively and quantitatively, if the library collection and services are adequate or otherwise, and suggest improvements, is now well recognized and appreciated by that library users, specially in academic and professional libraries (medical, engineering, industrial, business, etc.) The librarian and the faculty, working together, can help create conditions for learning library skills motivation and service.

V. Parameters to be Considered

1. The book and document collection in most of the libraries pose as a formidable problem of use to the uninitiated motive and hence they are generally not consulted, but nibbled at, only by a few.

2. The literature in most of the disciplines is increasing exponentially and the user is ignorant of relevant information sources and how to use them effectively.

3. The utility of any program will depend on the importance given by the policy makers, planners and administrators at the national and institutional level to library and information work and to the development of information services in their own organization.

4. The text-oriented teaching in schools, colleges and academic institutions inhibit the students at an early age in their formative years from effective library use and the grossly inadequate book stock and information resources in the schools and college libraries have not instilled good reading habits amongst the students. This is continued further in the higher education level also, even if adequate library resources exist.

5. The stimulus for most user education program is the information needs of students as perceived by librarians, rather than a detailed understanding of the information seeking behavior, habits, or individual information problems. The need to apply the findings from various use/user studies is paramount here.

6. Differences in student attitudes and abilities towards and information seeking seem to be greatly influenced by past experience rather than contact with the library within the institution. This is an area which needs further study.

7. It is realized that development of information skills i.e., acquiring ability to handle textual, visual and electronic sources, is more important than technology per se.

V. Present Situation

A categorization of the users in an academic environment is obviously necessary designing and developing appropriate training courses to suit different levels, such as schools students, undergraduates, postgraduates, researchers and professionals.

Looking at the present education scene, particularly at the school and college levels, and what is envisaged at the beginning of the twenty first century, with a 'learned society', we may ask ourselves the fundamental question whether the wide gap between what is expected and what is actually happening could be bridged with imaginative, practically implementable education programs.

At present, the students are able to finish their education without ever visiting the libraries the libraries or using library resources. It is not fully realized that libraries are an integral and essential part of the educational system and in the learning process. The purpose of education is to equip the students with knowledge and skills. The teaching and instructional methods should lay emphasis on wider reading and reference by the student community and more library centered.

The importance of library support informal, non formal and distance education programmes has not been fully realized and exploited both by the education administrators and academic community. The tendency of teachers or academicians to look down upon or belittle the role of librarians in the learning process will have to be removed, if user education programmes re to make headway. A confidence bridge will have to be built between the teaching community and the librarians in chalking out prorammes for the greater use of library resources. If education is to be library oriented or knowledge based, greater time will have to be spend by students in libraries, pursuing relevant materials in addition

to classroom teaching. Training of schools students in the use of printed materials and promotion of reading habit by the use of library have now assumed more importance than ever before with the introduction of audio visual aids educational TV programs and computer education. A beginning has to be made in the schools in initiating the students into the art of using printed materials.

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