Information Literacy Instruction Programme for Primary School Children in the Public Library:

A coaching workshop for Public Librarians

Presented by
Flippie van der Walt (M.Tech LIS)
Senior Control Librarian, Primrose Library, Ekurhuleni Metropolitan Municipality, South Africa

Proposal

Librarians are no longer keepers of information, but teachers of information (Rebecca Albrecht and Sara Baron, 2002)
Introduction

Public libraries are facing a new role in service delivery the one of teaching children how to use information effectively. The mastering of information skills is seen by the *South African School Curriculum* (2002:11) as one of eight critical outcomes. However not much is done to address the skills needed to understand and use information successfully (De Beer 1993:16; Hart, 1998:36 and Crase, 1999:19).

The public library being the communal provider of information sources is therefore the substitute for school libraries and is facing the challenge to guide children in using information effectively (Hendrikz 1998:5).

The challenge is that public libraries must develop programmes that will guide and equip children in using information and information sources effectively for the advantage of the child’s educational and social development.

This coaching workshop addresses the new role that public libraries are facing. The workshop is in a coaching format that coaches the public librarians to present the programme to children.

The Information Literacy Instruction Programme for Primary School Children in the Public Library originate from a research dissertation conducted by Flippie van der Walt, with the title “The design of an Information Literacy Instruction Programme for Upper Elementary Children in the Public Library” at UNISA in 2006.
The concept Information Literacy

The concept of Information Literacy is an international acknowledged skill endorsed by UNESCO and IFLA. Information literacy is a vital skill in surviving the information age. The concept of information literacy as described by Flippie van der Walt (2006) “is the ability to access, retrieve, evaluate and use information from a variety of information sources to solve an issue or existing problem for personal or communal benefit” equips children and adults with the necessary skills to use and apply information effectively.

Educational role of the Public library

In the mentioned research dissertation Flippie van der Walt concludes that the public library must be involved in education. Specialist in the field (Hart 1998:36 and Zaaiman’s 1987; 16) concluded that the public library has accepted the educational role of becoming an information literacy training provider. Public libraries support education through basic literacy, cultural awareness, formal learning support, information literacy and life-long learning (Danley, 2003:98).

Zaaiman (1987:16) identify three types of educational roles that public libraries should fulfil: formal, non-formal and informal. An outline of the three educational types is given in Table 1.
Table 1 Three types of educational roles of the public library (adapted from Zaaiman, 1987: 16)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of education</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Formal</strong></td>
<td>Public libraries provide information sources that are related to the formal, educational curriculum (instrument of formal education). Prescribed and recommended sources are made available by public libraries to cater for the educational needs of primary, secondary and tertiary students. These students include distance education students of all ages.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Non-Formal</strong></td>
<td>Public libraries arrange lectures, exhibitions and make their facilities available to users of all ages. Book displays, career seminars and skills development workshops are just a few examples of how the public library contributes to education in a non-formal way.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Informal</strong></td>
<td>The public library is the intermediary between the user and the information source. It provides space, time and sources to meet the information needs of the public. Its contribution to education and life-long learning is an informal one.</td>
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</table>

Based on the above description of the different educational roles, information literacy could be regarded as a formal educational function of the public library.

The implication of this educational role is indicated in the *White Paper on Arts, Culture, Science and Technology* (1995:116) which states that public libraries should design programmes for user education that will address a lack of information skills. Hart (1998:36) supports the *White Paper* by encouraging public libraries to plan and present programmes that contribute to information literacy awareness, especially in children. One of the implications of the educational
function of the public library is that the public library plays a supportive role in the resource-based curriculum of South Africa (Asmal, 2000).

Target group
In order to cultivate a life long learning culture and to produce a future generation who is capable to face the demands of a technological global society, children are the ideal target group to learn the skills. The skills are also vital in mastering the educational outcomes of the OBE system.

The structure of the coaching workshop
The aim of the coaching workshop is to coach and to equip public librarians with the skills and knowledge to guide children in using the public libraries information sources effectively.

The coaching workshop is structured as follow:

**Core aim of the workshop**
To equip primary school children with information literacy skills to use the information sources in the public library effectively.

**Outcome of the workshop**

_A. Public librarian_
A. To coach public librarians to:
- Acknowledge the educational role of the public library
- Understand the concept of information literacy
- Master the information literacy activities specially designed for children
- Present an Information Literacy programme to children
B. Primary school child
To equip primary school children to:

- Empower themselves with the skills
- To use the information sources in the public library effectively
- Develop cognitively in performing better in school

C. Community
To develop the community through life long learning.

Phase 1 – The educational role of the public library in teaching information literacy skills

Phase 1 focuses on the educational role of the public library, the responsibility of the public librarian to educate and the information literacy concept.

The educational role of the public library
Aim: is to orientate the public librarian in understanding that the public library has a role in education

The responsibility of the public librarian to educate.
Aim: to orientate the public librarian towards the role of educating the users in using the sources in the library effectively.

The information literacy concept
Aim: is to familiarise the public librarian with the concept.

Duration: 2 Hour
Phase 2 Information literacy activities (skills)

Phase 2 focuses on the ten information literacy activities (skills), instruction principles and the profile of the target group.

Information literacy activities
Aim: is to teach the public librarian what the ten components of information literacy are and how to apply children in mastering the skills.

Instruction principles
Aim: to guide the public librarian in presenting a programme to children.

Profile of the target group
Aim; to guide the public librarian to understand the profile of the target group in respect of ability, cognitive development and response.

Duration: 6 Hours

Phase 3 Information Literacy Instruction Programme for Primary School Children in the Public Library

Phase 3 focuses on orientating the public librarian in understanding the workbook of the programme.

Structure of the programme
Aim: to familiarise the public librarian with the layout of the workbook.

Presenting of the programme
Aim: to coach the public librarian in preparing and presenting of the workbook.
The programme
Aim: to expose the public librarian to the actual programme

Phase 4 Planning and marketing of the programme

Phase 4 focuses on drafting a action plan in marketing and presenting of the programme.

Duration: 8 Hours

Total duration: 16 hours (2 days)

Who should attend the workshop?

The success of any programme lies in the commitment of the staff who must present it. For this coaching programme it will be recommended that the following levels of staff be exposed:

- Managers
- Programmes librarian
- Branch librarians
- Librarians / staff working in the reference sections of a library

Specifications in presenting the coaching workshop

Venue

The venue must accommodate tables where the attendees can sit and make notes in mastering the programme. Ventilation is important to control the breathing of the attendees in controlling their attention span.
Equipment
The presentation will be in PowerPoint format. A computer / laptop connected with a projector are required.

Stationary
The institution must reproduce the workshop material as provided by the presenter in good time. Attendees must be equipped with stationary and note books. Name tags are important and should be clear and typed on a white background.

Punctuality
Due to the importance of the programme and limited time to present it, it will be appreciated that attendees are ready in the venue 15 minutes before commencing of the programme. Tea times and lunch times must be strictly managed according to the schedule. If any lunch will be served, it is recommended that a light lunch consisting of salad or sandwich be served to prevent the well known “graveyard session” or fatigue. A 15 min library walk session after lunch is also recommended to revive the spirit of the attendees.

Credibility of the workshop
The workshop is compiled from the mentioned research dissertation, which was accepted by the Department Information Science, UNISA.. Flippie v.d. Walt is also a member of the COMLA/UNESCO Guidelines for Information Literacy Programmes in Jamaica. He is the country contact for the UNESCO/IFLA Information Literacy Database. In addition he also presented a paper on the design of information literacy instruction programmes at the 72nd WLIC in Seoul, South Korea.
Bibliography


