

Embedded Librarianship as a Strategy for Promotion to Library Services, the Experience of Federal University Gashua Library, Yobe State Nigeria

¹**Bukola Agboola**, ²**Aminu Manuwa** & ³**Baba S. Aduku**
^{1,2&3}*University Library, Federal University Gashu'a, Yobe State*

Abstract

The present library services among academic libraries especially with the population and current trends of information dissemination, an embedded librarianship tend to promote and enhance ways of information dissemination to library users through meeting their demands at their respective environment either virtually or traditionally. Embedded librarianship is to move librarians out of the traditional library setting, whether physically or virtually into a new framework for providing library services. Librarians move from a supporting role into partnerships with their users enabling librarians to develop stronger connections and relationships with those they serve. The study was guided by five (5) objectives and five recommendations. Survey research design was adopted to carry out this quantitative study. A total of twenty (20) respondents were selected purposively for the study because of their consistency with the use of the university library. Structured questionnaire that consisted of six (6) items were administered to the purposively selected librarians, students, academic staff and other members of the academic community.

Keywords: *Embedded librarianship, Strategy, Promotion, Library services, Experience*

Corresponding Author: Bukola Agboola

Background to the Study

An embedded librarian has not been popularly known across the world because the duties of librarians are best known as information manager to their respective users within the library. Embedded librarians are those librarians that struggle to meet the demand of their users at their respective organizations, departments, faculties, agencies and so on either traditionally or virtually. The Federal University Gashua Library with the directive of the University Librarian has assigned some team of librarian to serve and be called embedded librarian so as to work closely with teaching faculties in their courses providing library services to staff, researcher, students and community users throughout their course of study in order to achieve educational goals and objectives effectively and efficiently.

Potter, (2012) the term “embedded librarian” has been around for a while now, but it is still relatively new, and not well understood. Embedded means **rooted or planted within**, and most of us became familiar with something akin to embedded librarianship when the term “**embedded journalism**” **appeared during the 2003 invasion of Iran**. Dene, (2011) stated that embedded librarianship is a distinctive innovation that moves the librarians out of libraries and creates a new model of library and information work. It emphasizes the importance of forming a strong working relationship between the librarian and a group or team of people who need the librarian's information expertise. As the relationship develops, the librarian's knowledge and understanding of the group's work and objectives grow, which leads in turn to greater alertness to the information and knowledge needs of the group. The embedded librarian becomes just as engaged in the work of the team as any other team member. As the engagement grows, the embedded librarian develops highly customized, sophisticated, and value-added contributions to the team contributions that sometimes go far beyond the confines of traditional library reference work and that some might be surprised to find a librarian delivering. The librarian functions as a team member like any other and shares responsibility for team and organizational outcomes with all the other members of the team. MATC Website (2017) An embedded librarian establishes a close working relationship with a faculty member and students in a particular course and offers targeted research instruction, assistance, and resources. This program looks to create an integrated and sustained collaboration with teaching faculty instead of a parallel interaction through traditional and virtual library instruction.

Advantages of Embedded Librarianship

Traditionally, librarians are responsive. As a matter of fact, we are known for our responsiveness. That is fine, but “responsive” implies waiting to be asked an essentially passive model. Embedded librarians go a step further than responsiveness they anticipate. After recent Seminar that took place in Federal University Gashua Library on 4th August of 2017 with the mentoring and effort of the Present University Librarian Dr. Baba S. Aduku, the Professional librarians agreed to work collectively with the Faculties, Departments, Students and community users to effectively achieve the goals and objectives of teaching and learning process irrespective of user's destination.

Heinze and Kortash (2009) reported that embedded librarians use their close working relationships to identify needs and find solutions. The traditional model of library services is patrons getting help one at a time. The reality is that in government, the military, and the corporate world, people work in teams. In educational settings the Embedded Librarians are assigning team projects more and more often to help students prepare for the collaborative world of work awaiting them. The embedded librarian, too, most often works with and for a team a research group, a department, a student project team, or the students in a class. Embedded librarians are much more effective because they work for the whole team. The traditional library service model is standardized and a bit bureaucratic. There are guidelines, policies, and standards of service. In some ways, those are all good things. The intent is to ensure equitable treatment to all. However, different teams have different needs, and what one team needs might not be so helpful to another. Flexibility becomes essential. The embedded librarian uses the strong working relationship formed through participation in a team to understand the team's needs and address them in a customized way. Traditionally, transactions are the measure for reference work. With embedded librarianship, transactions still occur documents are requested, instructional sessions are held, or documents are added to a shared virtual workspace but the emphasis shifts from the transaction to the project.

Embedded Librarian as a Promotion to Library Services

An embedded librarian play a vital role in promoting library services via attending to users at their respective destination especially in academic institution like Federal University Gashua where this research was conducted. The librarian tends to meet with lecturers and students at offices, lecture hall or within the campus to assist with information resources. Facebook group, whatsapp group, email and phone number were issued out to users for inquiries and via seminar is also another dimension where embedded librarian share and solve problems with students and researcher throughout the semester on various research, assignments and projects. Wayne (2017) comment that the embedded librarian tailors their information to users via the following means with stable internet facilities and constant power supply.

1. Based on your assignments and class needs, your librarian will post information and field questions on phone call, Facebook group, whatsapp group or forum to help your students throughout the course.
2. Tips are placed in a separate topic in the Forums so that they are independent of your course discussion board and materials - no extra work for you.
3. Students are also given contact information for the librarian (phone, email, etc) so that they can contact the librarian directly for personal assistance.

Embedded Librarians would need access to your course outlines. The most important thing that we need from lecturers is promotion of the library and its resources. Announcing that a librarian will be a part of the class and be available for questions is a great first step. If you see students struggling with research, remind them that a librarian is available to help. The more importance that is placed on library resources, the more students are likely to use them

Embedded Librarians in Research

Increasingly, librarians at research-based institutions are applying the embedded librarian's model in working directly with the faculty they serve as collaborators on research projects or as an integral part of a research team. As an embedded librarian in the research context, a librarian works with researchers more upstream in the research process rather than just with the products produced at the end of the research lifecycle: books and journal articles. The nature of these partnerships will be different according to the type of research being done and the needs of the researchers, but they will generally involve the application of the practices and principles of library science directly to the research being done. The collaboration and selection aids to promote research, teaching and learning process. Another way of promoting library service to users, is via attending to their problems at all-time such as dropping their request for assignment, research and other needs that has not been solve at circulating unit, would be referred to e-Library for proper solution via library database at a limited period of time.

Who Can Use an Embedded librarian?

Embedded librarians are librarians who work closely with teaching faculty in their courses, providing a library resource to students throughout the course of the entire semester. Librarians work with instructors to collaborate and create viable library assignments that utilize library resources and answer student questions regarding library materials. This study looks to create an integrated and sustained collaboration with teaching faculty instead of a parallel interaction through traditional library instruction.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study were to:

1. Determine the knowledge of trend in embedded librarianship
2. Identify the extent to which extension of library services has been recognize by librarians
3. Determine library users perception on embedded librarianship
4. Determine the requirement for embedded librarianship
5. Identify possible challenges to encounter

Survey of Related Literatures

William (2017) affirms that embedded librarians facilitate student research and use of library resources during the entire course or just when needed. We can work with you a little or a lot, whatever way best meets your needs, but here are some possibilities. The librarian can:

1. Offer individual attention to students during any stage of their research process
2. Serve as a contact regarding library or research questions
3. Work with students to quickly resolve access issues
4. Provide specially designed content for the course, including suggested resources, tutorials, search strategies and research guides

Landry-Hyde and Cantwell (2013) reported that collaborations between a librarian and a learning community are unique. The types of services provided are customized and based on

the needs of the particular group. A community can be a class, an academic department or program, a student organization, and so on. In higher education, embedded librarianship seems to have originated with liaison librarians working with and supporting subject- or discipline-specific students and faculty.

Communication and Promotion

There was little or no uniformity in the methods used to communicate and promote embedded librarianship in the different faculties, department and unit of Federal University, Gashua. Shumaker and Makins (2011) stated that in academic environments, communication and promotion depended heavily on word of mouth and outreach through multiple channels to faculty. For example, at one site, the librarians mined library requests and reached out to professors teaching courses that generated heavy reference traffic. At another site, librarians sent e-mail messages to all faculty members at the beginning of each term, informing the faculty of the librarian's availability and services. How do you go about creating a successful embedded librarianship initiative? Shumaker (2012) identifies four keys to embedded librarianship:

1. Build strong relationships with members of a specific information user group.
2. Focus on understanding their work and information needs.
3. Share their goals and actively contribute to the achievement of those goals.
4. Become an integral and indispensable member of the group.

Each of these steps is important individually, but they are also interrelated and need to be addressed in precisely that order; skip one or leave it undeveloped, and embedded librarianship cannot flourish. One step not included on this list, but critical for success, is support from the organization's leadership. Embedding librarians should be seen as a strategy for strengthening and refocusing the library's presence within an organization and demonstrating librarians' added value. One way to do this is to frame and promote embedded librarianship as a method for championing the library's role as the sole provider of information resources and services.

Kvenild (2012) asserted that librarians should be embedding in departments as a liaison. Their efforts go beyond bibliographer duties. Many of these embedded librarians are physically housed within the department, whether it is an academic program or a dormitory. They are usually closely affiliated with the department (maybe even more so than with the libraries) and might be paid out of departmental funds. These librarians learn the ways and needs of their patrons in their natural environment. They often work as finders of information, organizers of information, and taxonomy creators. Embedding within departments provides in-depth knowledge of the users of library services, along with potential isolation from other librarians. It involves a high degree of specialization, co-location and shared responsibility. When developing the embedded project, it is a good idea to take a snapshot of your campus needs and goals. The academic mission and institutional priorities of your institution should guide your planning efforts. You may also implement formal needs assessments, surveys, and focus groups to learn more about what kind of embedded project will be most effective and best address the needs of students and faculty. Meeting with subject departments can expand existing partnerships into more formal embedded projects.

Skinner (2013) postulated that the embedded librarian's participation in the class varies depending on the instructor. Some instructors prefer a limited role, and so the librarian maintains the library tab and does nothing else. Other instructors give the librarian more latitude, and the librarian can participate in class discussions, suggest resources, approve or reject sources, help prevent plagiarism, and help students with evaluating sources or with formatting their bibliographies. The embedded librarian program offers a solution to the problem of students' short attention spans, as the librarian is present in the online class and can intervene precisely at the point of need, when learners are the most open to information literacy instruction. The embedded librarian can help students polish their work, and submit a higher quality product for grading. Many times instructors ask their students to submit annotated works cited or references lists prior to submitting essays. These lists are usually rife with errors, both of quality and of formatting. The embedded librarian can go through these lists and suggest better sources, and can help students format their citations by providing citation style materials or answering questions traditionally or virtually. The librarian can also prevent plagiarism by helping students understand how attribution works.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

Table 1: Respondents knowledge of trend in embedded librarianship

Embedded Knowledge	YES	NO
I have heard/knew about embedded librarianship	6 (30%)	14(70%)
If yes, from this current research	14 (70%)	6(30%)
From other journal article(s)	2 (10%)	18(90%)
From my surfing/browsing on the internet	4 (20%)	16 (80%)
I understood what it means to be an embedded librarian	6 (30%)	14 (70%)
I do not understand what it means to be an embedded librarian	14 (70%)	6 (30%)
I intend to be embedded to be current and relevant in my job	8 (40%)	12 (60%)
Total	54 (270%)	86 (430%)

Table 1 reveals that most of the respondents were not aware of embedded librarianship with total scores of 86 (430%) while those who claim to know and aware of this embedded librarianship were 54 (270%). Finding is closely related to Sharma, Kumar and Babbar (2014) librarians and library users may not be aware of embedded librarianship due to reluctant of librarians from research and providing a way to ease their users from accumulating libraries. Embedded librarianship is not a new term but a novel concept in the present era of librarianship. It is an expanding trend and a term used to cover a range of initiatives and service concepts in the present world of librarianship.

Table 2: To what extend is your extension of library services as a librarian

Extension services, I am aware of and engage in:	SA	A	D	SD	N
Community information services	1 (5%)	2 (10%)	13(65%)	4(20%)	-
Reference services outside the library	1 (5%)	4 (20%)	12(60%)	3(15%)	-
Collaborate with faculty officers for research	-	6 (30%)	13(65%)	1 (5%)	
Meet with students at class area for library assist.	4 (20%)	12 (60%)	2 (10%)	2(10%)	-
Social trust and social capital awareness creation	-	3 (15%)	16(80%)	1 (5%)	-
Offer individual assistant to staff, researchers	7 (35%)	11 (55%)	1 (5%)	1 (5%)	-
Total	13(65%)	38(190%)	57(285%)	12(60%)	-

Key: SA =Strongly Agree, A =Agree, D =Disagree, SD =Strongly Disagree, N=Neutral

Table 2 indicated that most of the librarians captured have not been involve in most of the activities as this research reveals that 57(285%) disagreed and top the list of other respondents, followed by 38(190%) agreed, 13(65%) strongly agreed, the least 12(60%) strongly disagreed and finally none of the respondents ticked neutral. This study reveals that most of the librarians only offer services in their respective library than going out of the library to feed their users with information resources. Finding is relatively opposite to the research of Shumaker and Makins (2012) a majority of the embedded librarians' engagements were tactical rather than strategic in nature. The librarians were embedded within their libraries as a means of solving a specific problem or complication, not as part of a concerted effort to enhance the overall level of service at library and outside the library. That is not to say, however, that these librarians are not moving toward a more strategic form of engagement.

Table 3: Library user perception on embedded librarianship

Options	SA	A	D	SD
Relevant	16 (80%)	3(15%)	1 (5%)	-
Very relevant	13 (65%)	6 (30%)	1(5%)	-
Irrelevant	3(15%)	2(10%)	4(20%)	11(55%)
Very irrelevant	2(10%)	1(5%)	12(60%)	5(25%)

Key: SA =Strongly Agree, A =Agree, D =Disagree, SD =Strongly Disagree

Table 3 shows that majority of the users strongly agreed 16 (80%) that embedded librarianship is relevant, while 13(65%) strongly agreed that embedded librarianship is very relevant and few among the respondents agreed and strongly agreed that embedded librarianship is irrelevant and very irrelevant.

Table 4: Requirement for embedded librarianship

S/N	Basic requirement for embedded librarianship
1	Basic computer application/appreciation skill
2	Skill in online information searching
3	Skill for search strategies, e.g. Keyword, Truncation Author/Title/Subject search etc.
4	Search information through databases
5	Skill to navigate through websites on the internet
6	Skills for academic publication

Table 4 listed some basic needs and requirement before one can embarked on embedded librarianship in institutions, organizations, schools, agencies and any higher educational level. Embedded librarians form strong working relationships with specific teams of information users. Having table 4 requirements, embedded librarians as they gain deep knowledge of the team's work, they become partners in the work of the group. They are able to take on new roles, share responsibility for the achievement of team goals, and deliver essential contributions that enable the team to achieve its objectives.

Table 5: Possible challenges to encounter

S/N	Challenges
1	Lack of stable network/internet
2	unstable electricity supply
3	Lack of support from user's
4	Inadequate and qualified staff for embedded librarianship
5	Lack of enough fund to support the team
6	Lateness to work by embedded librarians
7	Lack of proper planning for next day services
8	Not ready to work under pressure

Table 5 reveals some likely challenges to be faced by embedded librarians as they embark on the journey. Revise is the cases if really embedded librarian's wishes to succeed in the current trend of service delivery. Sharma (2014) embedded librarians have to meet future challenges. They should be proactive in making relationships with the faculties and users and in building new partnerships with academic departments and providing important services to users.

Conclusion

Embedded librarianship is a relatively new term but an old concept in academic libraries. Specialized services have existed in academic branch libraries since their inception. Branch libraries are examples for embedding services. Today, many libraries use technology to embed services, in particular for undergraduate students, in order to serve large populations. As collaboration becomes more prominent in academia, and services change with new technologies affiliated with modern communication and scholarship, embedded librarianship will grow. Supportive faculties and library administration will ensure embedded librarians will continue their various collaborations and subject-specialized functions. Key concepts for successful programs include location, communication, services, flexibility of librarians, and collaborations among librarians and faculty, staff, researchers, and students. These concepts, combined with nontraditional socialization opportunities, encourage librarians to provide specialized programs for their subject-focused user groups.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made for librarians and University Management who are seeking to implement and improve embedded services:

1. Embedded librarian must be a computer literate in order to carryout his/her job effectively

2. Librarian must be connected to internet at all time, to receive and to send information resources to user
3. Embedded librarian must also understand simple local languages of their community users to fulfill their demand informatively
4. They should make available their time to students, faculties, departments, units and other academic community members either through team, groups or individual for research, teaching and learning process.
5. The University Management should provide to the embedded librarians, official mobile phone, stable internet facilities and constant electricity to meet with the demand of their users.

References

- Bobrovitz, J. & Griebel, R. (2001). *Still mousy after all these years: The image of the librarian in the 21st century. Feliciter* 47 (5) 260–263.
- Covone, N., & Lamm, M. (2010). *Just be there: Campus, department, classroom and kitchen? Public Services Quarterly* 6, 198–207.
- Dano, R., & McNeely, G. (2010). *Embedded librarianship in the field. New Orleans, LA: Special Libraries Association.*
- Dano, R. (2010). *Personal communication.* November 16, 2010.
- Dene, J. (2011). *Embedded librarianship at the claremont colleges. In embedded librarians: Moving beyond one-shot instruction*, eds. C. Kvenild and K. Calkins, 219–228. Chicago, IL: Association of College and Research Libraries.
- Heinze, J. S., & K. Kortash. (2009). Navigating through turbulent times: How the corporate special library and brand communications work together to forge a path to the future. Paper presented at Special Libraries Association annual conference, Washington, DC. Available from www.sla.org/pdfs/sla2009/navigating_turbulenttimes_heinze.pdf. (Accessed April 4, 2012.)
- Heinze, J. S. (2010). Leveraging internal partnerships for library success. *Information Outlook* 14(1) 13–15.
- Holly, M. R. & Myers, L. L. P. (2012). *The new librarian, embedded librarianship: The Library As a Service, Not a Space*
- Kathy, D. & Nadine, H. (2010). *Academic embedded librarianship: An introduction: Libraries and Cultural Resources*, University of Calgary, Calgary, Alberta, Canada

- Kvenild, C. (2012). The future of embedded librarianship: Best practices and opportunities
Presented at California Conference on Library Instruction, 2012
- Landry-Hyde, D. & Cantwell, L. P. (2013). Virtually yours: Online embedded librarianship in higher education, *Internet Learning*, 2 (2), Article 3.
Available at: <http://digitalcommons.apus.edu/internetlearning/vol2/iss2/3>
- Milwaukee Area Technical College (or MATC) website (2017). available at <http://guides.matc.edu/facultyresources>
- Potter, H. (2012). A new kind of librarian: Posted on July 15, 2012.
- Sharma, P., Kumar, K. & Babbar, P. (2014). Embedded Librarianship: Librarian Faculty Collaboration: *DESIDOC Journal of Library & Information Technology*, 34, (6), November 2014, Delhi. pp. 455-460
- Shumaker, D. & Makins, A. (2012). Lessons from successful embedded librarianship: the most recent phase of an SLA-Funded research project on embedded librarianship offers some new insights and five bottom line recommendations for success: catholic University of America
- Shumaker, D. (2012). *Embedded librarian: Innovative strategies for taking knowledge where it's needed*. Catholic University of America's School of Library.
- Skinner, L. C. (2013). Librarians in your midst: The embedded librarian program at PVCC. *Inquiry: The Journal of the Virginia Community Colleges*, 18 (1). Retrieved from <http://commons.vccs.edu/inquiry/vol18/iss1/2>
- Wayne State College website (2017). Available at: https://www.wsc.edu/info/20051/library/154/conn_library_services/9United States.
- William Rainey Harper College library website (2017). Palatine, Illinois Available at: <http://dept.harpercollege.edu/library/instructservices/embeddedlibrarian.html>