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Reference Librarian's training at School Librarian EBAD of Cheikh Anta Diop University of Dakar (Senegal)

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Introduction

Ladies and Gentlemen,

This presentation that I have the honour to make, is the fruit of personal and professional experience of more than 15 years devoted to research and teaching at Librarian, Archivist and Documentalist School , EBAD of Cheikh Anta Diop University of Dakar.

Firstly I will make a short presentation of EBAD(Library School), secondly I will deal with bibliography teaching issues before the advent of FORCIIR/EBAD Project and finally with the present situation of this teaching and future perspectives.

I PRESENTATION OF EBAD

In 1960's, independence days of most African countries, there was no school of documentary information science in French speaking countries in the South of Sahara.

Being aware of this deficiency, UNESCO decided to open at Dakar, Senegal since 1963 the first library school in French speaking black Africa called Regional Centre of Library education of French speaking black Africa.

In 1967, the centre was renamed Librarian, Archivist and Documentalist school and linked to Dakar University with a status of University Institute. In 1967, its creation date, only a librarian section was open; followed by in 1971 by Archivist section and then Documentalist section 1975.

Course of study and number

Since 1983, EBAD has two training levels of two years of duration each.

- First cycle, BAC level plus 2 years of training, which confers a diploma of qualification for librarian tasks(DAFB), or to be qualified for Archivist's tasks(DAFA), or to be qualified for tasks of documentalist.
- A second cycle, open in 1983, BAC level plus 3 years of training which confers a Higher degree in information and communication science(DSSIC) with three different options Archives, Library and Documentation.

From 2000, in partnership with FORCIIR project, EBAD has open a section of remote teaching which confers a DSSIC.

For the first cycle, training library technician, the Senegalese pupils of high schools at final year and BAC holders are recruited by competition.

But the non Senegalese are recruited after an examination of their school records.

In the second cycle, where the managers of library , Archives or Documentation centres are trained, the recruitment is by competition open to Senegalese and non Senegalese, licence holders in any domain or to professionals in documentary information science(Archivists, librarians, documentalists) for full three years of experience.

From 1963 to nowadays, EBAD contributed to the training of some 2000 archivists, documentalists in several black African countries of south of the Sahara.

In 2000/2001, EBAD has 191 students coming from Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Central Africa Republic, Gabon, Guinea Bissau , Chad... that gives the school its African vocation.

Among the eleven permanent teachers who teach at school, 4 are involved in bibliography teaching(or documentary search). How reference librarians were trained in the Bibliography class before the advent of the project?

2 Reference librarians' training before the project

EBAD has always given a place of choice to the teaching of bibliography and this, since 1969, creation date of the section of Library.

For instance the decree n° 69-618 of may 2nd 1969 fixing the duration of the studies and the programme of the teaching in the librarian section of EBAD specifies "general bibliography in first year 24 hours per

year and specialised bibliography and African bibliography in second year, 60 hours per year” and indicates the following contain” Definition and types of reference books”.

Initiation into research

a) General bibliography: bibliography of bibliographies.

International general bibliography, print catalogues of libraries and union catalogues, national bibliographies and their use in a library. Bibliography of periodicals, encyclopaedias. Bibliographies.

b) Specialised bibliographies and reference documents in historical sciences

c) African bibliography

Considering its importance, the bibliography class is taught as a common class to all students of all sections.

Since 1988 to nowadays, I teach the class to students of first year and second year of the first cycle of the three sections of EBAD.

The aim of this class is to initiate students into information search in a library.

The theoretical classes take place in the Amphitheatre .

In the other hand , the practical take place in the reference room of EBAD library and that of the university library of Dakar. They specially deal with information search through reference documents, card index and bibliographies.

From 1988 to 1996, the practical of documentary search were essentially manual but they allowed students to get acquainted with the different tools of reference librarian in order to better apprehend their future job. However, they faced the major problem of renewal of reference documents. The reference documents that are in the library of the school are very obsolete. Some of them are registering more than 10 years of late! As can illustrate the following table driven from the recollection done in February-March 2002 by students during their practical.

Titles	Publication date	The sites of titles
Les livres disponibles	1985	http://www.electre.com/
Africa books in print	1978	http://www.africabookscollective.com/
Books in print	1986	http://booksinprint.com
World guide to libraries	1987	http://saur.de/Titel/wgtl.htm http://www.kb.nl/kb/resources/frameset_kbhtml?/kb/sbo/bdien.html
The world of learning	1988	http://www.europublications.co.uk/titles/wol.html
Publisher's International directory with ISBN INDEX	1984	http://cyberguy.pricegrabber.com/search_attrib_books.php/bkcat2=1792/sort=pop/ut=d59a48a2add473ba/
The African Book World and press: A directory	1980	http://cyberguy.pricegrabber.com/search_attrib_books.php/bkcat2=1792/sort=pop/ut=d59a48a2add473ba/

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Face to this painful acknowledgement, we have to confess that the student of EBAD has a little bit handled update print search tools such as dictionaries, directories, directories of address , encyclopaedias, the bibliographies, catalogues, yearbooks. Then, this created feelings of dissatisfaction and frustration sometimes on behalf of some students who tell us” Sir ,I’ve done some searches in other libraries of Dakar but I did not find a recent directory.

Others ask themselves whether the address the library they checked, is still the same? Others tells us :we have checked the directory of 1985, is the book always available?”

This acknowledgement is above all valuable with statistic yearbooks, directors of address and tools of book acquisition.

Face to this situation, we make them feel at ease, explaining them that reference collections are very expensive and a library whatever rich it may be can not acquire them all.

What is important is to know your tools of search , their classification, their mode of use, the kind of information you can find in it and to advise the user the most recent tool

We emphasise on their role of adviser and of orientation of users towards other documentary institutions where they can find the information.

For us their motto as future reference librarian must be “if we don’t find the information, we know where you can find it”

In second year of the first cycle, the bibliography class, common again to all sections, comprises an annual volume of 50 hours.

It deals with the teaching of specialised bibliography and African bibliography. Like the first year class, its aim is to initiate students into search tools in specialised bibliography medical bibliography, social and human science bibliography, bibliographies of the exact sciences, economic and law since bibliography, African bibliography.

This theoretical class takes place in the amphitheatre of the school and practical at the reference room of the main library Dakar University. At this level, the students encounters the same problems than the first year: old collections, absence of computers for online search.

The problem of updating information contained in those reference collections, remains until 1996, date when EBAD became SYFED point and got a minitel.

This technology constituted a real revolution for us , for it stopped isolation of EBAD teachers, thanks to the E-mail.

It has contributed to the improvement of documentary search class with the remote inquiry of databases, the cost of which was paid by AUPELF-URF.

In 1997, thanks to AUPELF-URF, the school got a connection to Internet for one computer.

This has enabled the students to surf the Web and to make literature search, to get E-mail address.

But, owing to the number of the students(between170 and 200) and the lack of computer equipment, the impact of new technologies in the bibliography class is very weak or non-existent.

We had to wait until the academic year of 2000/2001, with the advent of FORCIIR project(Continuous Training in computerised Information in Network) to see the real contribution of the new technologies in bibliography teaching at EBAD.

3 Training of reference librarian during FORCIIR PROJECT

3-1- Computer equipment

Nowadays, library education and information sciences needs schools equipped with enough online computers the only guarantee of success for our future graduate in a world of new emerging job (referencers, webmasters, searchers, current awarenssers) which strongly compete with the traditional jobs of Archivists , librarians, and documentalists.

EBAD has very soon understood this problem. Thus, with the support of FORCIIR project and of community Aid, the school has two labs(of 10 computers) for the students, a computer for every teacher(11), a connection with a specialised line.

The policy of modernising the school has allowed to put students in good conditions of study and search because they have access to the labs and the library from 8h to 10h in evening every working day .

3-2- Documentary search teaching

The advent of FORCIIR project at EBAD coincide with the implementation(2000/2001) of the new programmes of the school. With these new programmes, our contents and method of teaching have radically evolved. Thus the title of bibliography class has changed to become documentary search and dissemination for we think that the concept is wider and covers all types of documents whereas that of bibliography refers to books only. As far as the contents are concerned , we also note an evolution thanks to the introduction of new technologies in almost all teachings of the school. Then the new programmes include an instruction into office automation for two weeks for every newly registered student of EBAD.

In this class of documentary search and dissemination of information, which move from 50 to 54 hours for all sections of the first and second cycle, the focus is put on computerised search in CD ROM(data bases, dictionaries, encyclopaedias, directories, etc...) and online base reference (electronic mail, net surfing, search engines, software aid ,current awareness, mailing lists, news groups).

As for the methods, theoretical classes take place in the amphitheatre. But practical on documentary search take place in the labs. Then, we note a transfer of the role of the traditional reference room to the labs. The lab becomes more and more a reference room open to whole world in which students can check dictionaries, directories, yearbooks, libraries, online catalogue of libraries (OPAC) and online databases.

The introduction of these new technologies in search and dissemination of information class contributed a lot to the training at EBAD, of a reference librarian of new type characterised by his aperture towards the world because fully using the possibility given by Internet. From now on, the student at EBAD works with the same tools of documentary search than his counterpart of ENSSIB at Lyon (France), of EBSI at Montreal, of ESI at Maroco of the Department of Loughborough University.

In fact, within the school, every online computer is a kind of virtual library with its reference room and virtual circulation librarians to answer regularly the user's questions. The introduction of these new technologies of information and communication in our teachings has allowed us to catch up gap in the field of information between the students of library school of Dakar and those of similar schools of North African countries.

Hence we witness more and more the globalisation of the training of our future reference librarian which results in :

- The use of news groups through which, the students exchange on all questions dealing the profession and other subjects;
- The speed of communication thanks to the electronic mail which allow them to send mails corespondents throughout the world;
- the use of mailing list;

- Access of online catalogues of big libraries with the possibility of consulting primary documents in full text(mainly thesis and dissertations);
- The use of FAQ or FAQ(frequently answered questions or frequently asked questions);
- Access to online documents and electronic journals;
- Access online information kits (webliography on a subject)
- Access to search engines, metasearch engines for all search in Internet

Thus the teacher is no longer the single knowledge holder to whom, the student has to refer. He becomes an advisor, a supervisor and an co-ordinator of a group of learners

Conclusion

Before the introduction of new technologies of information (particularly CD ROM and Internet) into our teachings, EBAD had certainly trained competent professionals of documentary information liable to answer needs of users in the libraries, Archives and documentation centres of Africa. However, we have to acknowledge that our library education suffered from a lack of master of the computer by our students as the 2000 enquiry of FORCIIR team highlights it.

Now EBAD had filled the gap in technology vis-à-vis of schools of library education of North Africa and is a pioneer in developing an experience remote teaching in Africa south of Sahara. However, to perpetuate this experience, the school has to rely first on its own human resources, before calling for foreign aid.

Face to the globalisation today, characterised by a diversity and the increasing production of information and tools of search in Internet, it is necessary to create networks of teachers of search and dissemination of information which will be frameworks of discussion and exchange in order to better answer the actual information needs of our reference librarians.

It is the famous "appointment of giving and receiving" cherished by late President poet of Senegal, Mr Leopold Sedar Senghor./.

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