

# CHAPTER ONE

## BIBLIOTHERAPY AS AN INSTRUMENT FOR CHANGING THE ATTITUDES OF PERSONS WITH DYSLEXIA TOWARDS READING

**Happy Ezekiel PhD**

**Tochukwu OnochieAdimoraM.Sc**

*Department of Educational Foundations, (Special Education Unit),  
University of Nigeria, Nsukka.*

### **Introduction**

Persons with disabilities are among the most marginalized groups in human societies. They are vulnerable or predisposed to human rights encroachments by reason of their disabilities as well as inaccessibility of the built environment and programme. However, their rights as human beings are now receiving more legal and policy attention globally. A disability is any condition of the body or mind that makes it more difficult for the person with the condition to do certain activities and interact with the world around them (Bernard, Weiss, Stein, Ulin, D'Souza, Salgat, & Ehrlich, 2020). Persons with disabilities include those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others (Szmukler, Daw, & Callard, 2014). Such persons with reading difficulties are called persons with dyslexia. According to this paper, persons with dyslexia will include persons who have negative attitude or face challenges in reading.

Dyslexia is a disorder which affects one's ability to read effectively. Washburn, Binks-Cantrell, and Joshi (2014) defined dyslexia as a language deficit condition believed to be affecting persons with learning difficulties despite effective instruction and high intelligence of some learners. Kelly and Phillips (2018) defines dyslexia as a cluster of symptoms, which result in people having difficulties with specific language skills, particularly reading. This means that dyslexia is a specific learning disability that is neurological in origin and can affect learners' ability to read fluently. Operationally, dyslexia referred to as an inability of some persons to read properly.

Dyslexia is characterized by difficulties with accurate and/or fluent word recognition and by poor reading and decoding abilities. These difficulties typically result from a deficit in the phonological component of language that is often unexpected in relation to other cognitive abilities and the provision of effective classroom instruction (Yvette, 2020). In actual classroom scenario, students with dyslexia cannot cope or respond to the complex literacy demand of school subjects. It is also difficult for them to recognize words in the text and to comprehend them (Nadelson, Beavers, Eppes, Rogers, Sergeant, Turner & Van

Winkle, 2019). This is a major concern to researchers because no child is expected to be left behind in the teaching and learning process which might go a long way to change their attitude toward reading. However, psychologists believe that attitudes are learned and can be unlearned if a proper intervention strategy like the effective use of bibliotherapy is put in place.

Bibliotherapy is an educational intervention strategy aimed at getting persons with dyslexia actively involved in reading activities. Eftimova (2021) defined Bibliotherapy as an interventional strategy that parents and professionals can adopt to manage reading problems faced by persons with dyslexia specifically in reading. A more educational-oriented definition was giving by De Vries, Brennan, Lankin, Morse, Rix and Beck (2017) defined Bibliotherapy as a technique that uses literature to help persons with disabilities develop self-awareness and to better understand their problems. It is the use of rich instructional opportunities created by the fruitful intersection or reading, social-emotional programming and group work in classroom. This paper uses bibliotherapy as a therapeutic intervention strategy that uses materials such as books to enhance the reading skills of persons with dyslexia.

Bibliotherapy is a good intervention for persons with dyslexia most especially in the classroom. Lucas and Soares (2013) claimed that Bibliotherapy uses reading materials to help persons with dyslexia with reading problems. The rationale for reading books or the use of Bibliotherapy among learners is to teach effective coping strategies for the individual to conquer their problem in order to solve and be able to restructure, change their negative thoughts, beliefs, towards their academic works especially reading (Ekwelundu & Obi, 2021). Bibliotherapy can assist persons in understanding the complexity of human by exposing them to a multitude of characters which may also promote the development of attitude outside of them by exposing them to different patterns of living (Rivers, 2016). Bibliotherapy can serve as an intervention strategy that teachers and other professionals can use to enhance reading skill of persons with dyslexia (Akinola, 2014). Despite these reports on the effectiveness of Bibliotherapy, research on its effect on attitude of persons with dyslexia specifically reading is scarce. This means that research is needed on the effect of Bibliotherapy on the attitude of persons with dyslexia.

Attitude of persons with dyslexia has to be improve upon in order to enhance their ability to succeed academically. Ozoji (2008) observed that while people make statements that portray integration of persons with dyslexia in the society, actions and practices depict living in the hostile and protective attitude era in dealing with them. There are barriers of sorts but the most disability intractable in society is attitude towards persons with dyslexia. Helen Keller the deaf blind genius's assertion that attitudes are the greatest burden to bear, not blindness, remains the ever-prevailing truth. Muller (2011) insist that if we want to know how society treats persons with dyslexia, then we must understand the attitudes that underlie society's actions and treatments toward them.

The concept of attitudes change toward persons with dyslexia needs can be changed either from positive to negative or negative to positive or of an existing attitude (Lu, Webber, Romero, &Chirino, 2018). Attitude change according to Kingsley (2016) is the acquisition, reversal or intensification of an attitude. Formation of an attitude is also integral to change in attitudes, as individuals acquire new experiences and information. Attitudes undergo continual change which have necessitated theories and techniques used in planned attitude change towards persons with dyslexia which the researcher tries to explore through the use of bibliotherapy.

The thesis statement of this discussion clearly stated the following; Characteristics of Bibliotherapy in addressing the reading challenges of persons with dyslexia, the strategies for the use of Bibliotherapy in attitude change toward reading improvement of persons with dyslexia, How emerging teachers can develop good Bibliotherapy material for changing the reading attitude of persons with dyslexia, challenges in the use of Bibliotherapy in schools, Summary, Conclusion, Implications, Suggestions and References.

### **Characteristics of Bibliotherapy in addressing the reading challenges of persons with dyslexia according to Magaji(2016) are:**

The following are characteristics of bibliotherapy in addressing the challenges of persons with dyslexia. Competence; for a teacher to effectively change the attitude of persons with dyslexia, he/she must or should master and know how to use the skill or skills effectively. Secondly, teachers should equally possess the capacity to wait and endure for a long period for the learner to acquire skills. Furthermore, the teacher's ability to control anger and emotion over a happening that may be problematic is equally an essential attribute. Emotional stability; a condition where emotions do not change and do remain steady, there will be a positive effect on the learner concern. Effective communication;correct exchange information especially between two person and groups. Advocacy;a kind of support from a bibliotherapist to his persons with dyslexia. Willing listener;pay attention while someone is speaking to you to enable you understands what the speaker is saying. Possession of these characteristics and many others and the ability to apply them in the treatment of persons with dyslexia to possess the rightful attitude toward reading is a virtue for both the teacher and the learner.

### **The strategies for the use of Bibliotherapy in attitude change toward reading improvement of persons with dyslexia**

Bibliotherapy can serve as an intervention strategy that teachers and other professionals can use to enhance reading skill challenges of persons with dyslexia. Bibliotherapy is an educational intervention strategy aimed at getting persons actively involved in reading activities. Akinola (2014) defined Bibliotherapy as an interventional strategy that parents and professionals can adopt to manage

reading problems faced by persons with dyslexia especially in reading. Bibliotherapy uses reading materials to help persons with dyslexia cope with reading problems. The rationale for reading books or the use of Bibliotherapy among learners is to teach the persons effective coping strategies to conquer their problem in order to solve and be able to restructure, change their negative thoughts, beliefs, towards their academic works (Ekwelundu& Obi, 2021). Bibliotherapy can assist persons with dyslexia in understanding the complexity of human by exposing them to a multitude of characters which may also promote the development of their attitude by exposing them to different patterns of living (Rivers, 2016).

Persons identified as dyslexia should be carefully observed using the four major steps in preparing for a Bibliotherapy as explained by Sanders, and Mathis, (2013), outlined these steps. First, the therapist must identify the person's needs. This can be done through the observation of the persons or the examination of school records. Both of these can reveal patterns in attitude and the person's strengths and weaknesses. A school record may also show their reading needs and extracurricular activities. A conference with the persons who are concerned may help pinpoint their needs. Lastly, person's reading, such as autobiographies, if available, can provide good profiles of their thinking processes.

The second step is to use the information gained from step number one to match the persons with the appropriate materials. It is much harder than just picking up a book about divorce because the person just experienced it. The book, as discussed in the previous section, should try to reflect how the person is feeling about it and most importantly, be a high qualified book for bibliotherapeutic use. One of the reasons why bibliotherapy can be effective is the use of carefully selected materials that can be helpfully based on the problem identified.

The third step is to decide on the time, setting, introductory and follow-up activities to be used. For example, if the book is lengthy, perhaps the sessions should be broken up into fifteen to twenty minutes segments. It is important to discriminate between which book(s) will lose their intensity if broken up and which one will stimulate the reader's thoughts when broken up.

The final step is to prepare all the materials for Bibliotherapy, such as the book that is going to be used and any materials needed for the introductory and follow-up activities. The four parts processes of Bibliotherapy are: identification, projection, catharsis and insight have gone relatively undisputed for a greater part of a half of a century. Persons with disabilities needs, wishes and desires are important to the process. Venia, (2013), believes that the needs of the reader are expressed through the reading. The reader's wishes and desires are made evident through the processes of identification, catharsis and insight.

For those instructors who are considering the use of Bibliotherapy for the first time, it is best that they integrate the practice into their courses on a gradual basis. Concentrating on one course and selecting only shorter works to read aloud

at specific times throughout its duration would be one way of initiating the process. Assigning a short story as part of a unit on a particular topic such as giftedness would be another means by which Bibliotherapy could be incorporated into a course on a smaller scale. Providing time for observation and active reflection would be essential, especially for refining and expanding the usage of Bibliotherapy in the teacher education classroom. The analysis of various outcomes, including a teacher's unfavorable reaction to a story or the large amount of debate that can be sparked by a poem, would provide invaluable material for the revision of future implementations such as the guided independent readings of autobiographies and the use of picture books.

### **How emerging teachers can develop good Bibliotherapy material for changing the reading attitude of persons with dyslexia**

A trusting bond between the bibliotherapist and persons with dyslexia is critical for Bibliotherapy to be effective (Pardeck, 2014). It is critical that the bibliotherapist read and know the book prior to its use. An important step when using Bibliotherapy in treatment of persons with dyslexia is to match the appropriate book with the person's experiencing problems. The person must be able to see similarities between himself/herself and the character in the book. When reading aloud, many different kinds of responses may be observed. Some will respond in a spontaneous fashion to the story and are likely to become emotionally involved in the story. This application will be seen in three categories; reading aloud, instructor-initiated reading, and teacher's-initiated reading.

**Reading aloud:** For many years, recognition has been given to the importance of reading aloud to persons with disabilities (McCue, 2021). More recently, the value of reading aloud to adults, particularly teachers, has been acknowledged (Richards, & Rodgers, 2014). Various aspects of teachers' ongoing literacy development, such as awareness of textual rhythm and knowledge of symbolic meaning, can be enriched by listening to different kinds of fictional and non-fictional pieces. In particular, when a written work is shared aloud, it begins to live in persons with dyslexia and extends beyond the bounds of the book. Routine oral reading of relevant works to teachers, then, would be an important practice for involving them in the three stages of Bibliotherapy.

**Instructor-initiated readings:** In order to facilitate self-actualization, instructor-initiated readings need to be pertinent, consistent and efficient. Selected works, related directly to the topics of study, should be included at specific times on a regular basis. In general, reading by the instructor should be limited to one or two brief selections such as persons' picture book on sibling relationships or an individual's early memories of learning to read. It is crucial that works represent a variety of perspectives. Instructor-initiated reading should be a time for quiet reflection and critical discussion. Teachers need to be provided with different options for responding to the material and sharing their thoughts

and feelings. These options can take such forms as active listening, journal writing, and discussions. For example, at the conclusion of each reading, teachers can write about their reactions in a journal, which they maintain throughout the course. These responses can be used as the working material for periodic small-group discussions. At other times, simply listening to a moving piece is sufficient. More structured practices such as the reader as problem-maker and student-made questions can assist teachers to develop further their repertoire of Instructor-initiated reading, especially effective for introducing teachers to the bibliotherapeutic process (Morawski, Hayden, Nutt, Pasic, Rogers, Zawada, 2014 &Hudley, Mallinson, 2015). During the early stages, the instructor can act as a role-model, sharing the reasons for selecting a work as well as conveying her or his own related responses.

Teacher-initiated reading:After they have experienced the benefits of Bibliotherapy, teachers can be invited to take more responsibility for its implementation in the course. It is important to note that many teachers approach reading tasks with confidence while others may not feel comfortable participating in the process (Sadiku, 2015). Therefore, teachers should be provided with a variety of possible activities to encourage their active involvement in the bibliotherapeutic component of the course. Examples of such activities can be reading of an essay to the compilation of an annotated bibliography of relevant works. Even showing an animated version of a person's classic or sharing a self-made or commercial audio cassette of a story would be appropriate choices, especially for a reluctant reader.

### **Challenges in the use of Bibliotherapy in schools**

Since there will always be one form of issues and challenges or the other, it is expected that teachers, as a major stakeholder in the school settings demonstrates vast knowledge of various approaches to tackle students' challenges. Caring about persons with dyslexia goes beyond schooling alone, school librarian is charged with the responsibilities to initiate the collection and study of data relating to student needs and differences and use such data to improve the instruction and services provided by the school. Under the guidance of the school librarian, students should create their own tool to either directly or indirectly evaluate themselves in terms of mood, emotions, psychological and mental health.

Moreover, the researcher is of the opinion, that not all students' problems require medical attention, the teacher needs to be equipped with vast knowledge of student challenges and various therapeutic strategies such as bibliotherapy to be used to ameliorate these challenges. When teachers are armed with the knowledge of various challenges facing students' progress in their academics and private lives, they will be able to proffer plausible solution through the help of bibliotherapy as a strategy.

. The view of teachers has a lot to do with students' development. But when such vital personnel in school system are not alert to students' needs and challenges, this negatively contributes to poor school practices that may result in some students being ill-served by the school. Some school make decisions and recommendations based on self-serving interests, while some does not comply with school and government regulations on determine the extent of knowledge which they intend to acquire about bibliotherapy.

There are situations whereby school librarian exhibits poor or bad attitude to bibliotherapy as a strategy, then students will continue to languish in problems of different causes which will apparently truncate their learning processes. They often need models to aid them in processing scary and difficult feelings since school librarians' attitude is instrumental to their overall growth and development, hence bibliotherapy is useful not only as a technique for treating reading problems but also as an aid in fostering growth and adjustment.

### **Summary**

Summarily, the discussion on this paper is improving the reading attitude of persons with dyslexia towards reading using bibliotherapy through the following sub-heading; Characteristics of Bibliotherapy in addressing the reading challenges with persons with dyslexia. The strategies for the use of Bibliotherapy in attitude change toward reading improvement of persons with dyslexia, how imagine teachers can develop good Bibliotherapy material for changing the reading attitude of persons with dyslexia and the challenges in the use of Bibliotherapy in schools

### **Conclusion**

Finally, it is concluded that in order to improve the reading ability of persons with dyslexia, appropriate intervention strategies should be taken to help them adjustment to their disability through the use of bibliotherapy as a facilitating approach toward changing their attitude by identifying the person's needs, and the right approach to use in order to bring about a gradual change using appropriate reading materials. Furthermore, building a meaningful rapport with that individual all require a deeper level of knowledge and cooperation between teachers and the person with the disability. Therefore, Bibliotherapy is an effective intervention strategy in changing the attitude of persons with disabilities (learning disability/ dyslexia) toward reading.

### **Implications**

This discussion showed that Bibliotherapy is effective in improving persons with dyslexia in reading. The implication of this paperis that if Bibliotherapy is adopted by teachers in teaching persons with learning disabilities (dyslexia), it will help improve their attitude toward reading. Another implication of the study is that adopting the Bibliotherapy in teaching persons with

disabilities, it will lead to the development of attitude in reading which may in turn lead to an improvement

### **Suggestions**

1. Stakeholders such as education authorities and parent's association should ensure that the needed resources (books) to adequately practice bibliotherapy are provided during collection development.
2. Authors and publishers whose goal is to provide books that can be used for bibliotherapy practices should also create notes or workbooks that will make it easier for the librarian to recommend books to the right patrons
3. Space for bibliotherapy sessions should be created in the physical arrangement of school libraries.
4. Effort should be made to sustain and improved upon by awareness of bibliotherapy services in schools through seminars, conferences, workshops among others.

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