

Programs of Teaching Information Literacy in Croatian School Libraries

Jasmina Lovrinčević
Architectural-geodetic school
Dravska 16a, Osijek, Croatia
jlovrincevic@net.hr

Dinka Kovačević
OŠ “Antun Mihanović” Slavonski Brod
Mihanovićeva 35, Slavonski Brod, Croatia
dinka.kovacevic@sb.htnet.hr

Summary

This paper talks about the beginnings, development and currently used models of teaching information literacy in school libraries.

The foundations of information literacy in Croatia have been set in early eighties of the 20th century by the general transformation of classic school libraries into multimedia centers. The program orientation of activities was focused on, in those days, innovative forms of learning with a clear focus on individual choice of methods and the most appropriate media. Teaching information science has developed with individually developed programs, that came out of the users needs and the models have been executed through group teaching.

In middle 90's of the 20th century, the merge of new technologies and the change of users needs, result with a completely new model of teaching information science, which actually makes the base of the educational program of school libraries and school librarians.

Key words: school library, information literacy, programs, pupils, learning

Introduction

The strategy of development in Croatia called “Croatia in the 21st century” (2000), especially in the first part of this project goal, speaks about education which starting foundation is the concept of lifelong learning (that way it systemizes 3 major forms of education: formal education, informal education of adults and self education – the concept of a “society that learns”). These two complementary concepts are recommend, as the basis for leading a modern educational policy and the reform of education systems, by UNESCO, OECD, ILO and other international organizations that are concerned about education

and are aware that there is an increasing need for individual, independent and technologically supported learning.

Today, in the Croatian educational system, the school library has a law debiting place¹, professionally verified work programs, highly educated school librarian² with in many cases the widest and the longest education from all of the employees in their school. Its work is based on the Standard for school libraries functioning (2000), and it is financed by the states Ministry of education and sport. With this clear attributes Croatia has insured a right on information and additional possibilities of learning in school, for all students and all places under equal conditions.

The libraries activities are the backbone of the school's curriculum, and often its creators. Librarians are, for number of years, offered regular professional upgrading on several levels, organized by the Ministry and The Agency for education. At this moment Croatian school libraries are the strongest potential for the change of educational system, although they are still inadequately recognized.

1. The beginnings of information literacy teaching

The school library in its traditional sense (a rich collection and borrowing function) exists in Croatia since 1982. But, the year 1982 was, for Croatian librarianship, a turning point in a sense of a complete transformation of the school library into a center of learning on information sources. The transformation was guided as a extensive republic project which offered, besides the idea, and a clearly set concept that was executed through several fazes. The education of library staff was also carefully organized.

The need for user-student education on the field of working and the usage of the school library came for several reasons. Human knowledge is wider, and the rapid development of the technology for information processing in libraries is demanding an educated user-student. The library holdings have also changed. As information carriers, besides the book fund, the number of periodic publications for students, teachers and parents, has risen. With the entry of film, video, educational programs, CD's, DVD's, computer programs, data bases and the Internet, the perfection of education technology has advanced, but it also imposed the need for education in these new information sources.

Today, we can say that that happened because of the stagnation of tuition and the simultaneous need for changes in the educational process, with which easy going, but sure, changes within the library were caused. The awareness of the

¹ In the law of schooling, it is distinctively stated that "Every school has a library".

² School librarians in Croatia are educated on a diploma level on Philosophical colleges, but the majority of have a diploma as a two-subject teacher with a additionally finished diploma study of librarianship.

need for creating a strong backup for tuition and general education took shape in the 80's of the past century, and the school library, definitely got a new place and role inside a school. Already then it got an information function³. The suggested terminology is "Library-information center" or "Multimedia center" which was equally good, because it contained the additional message that the school library wants to expand on different Medias. The basic idea was learning through collecting different information from various media. That new library could take over the role of cooperators in the education of their users, teachers and students.

The first, basic forms of learning in the modern school library were:

- Individual learning
- Learning in small groups
- Pair learning

Although, in pedagogy already known forms of working, most commonly used in tuition, those forms are now promoted in the school library. It was a time of intensive development of the school library as a library-information center. The tendency was to leave the traditional activities and move forward towards a new goal of active participation in the education process.

In this new library, learning in a different way is in first place.

The starting point was a new environment, for learning that is based on the program of education of students for individual work on information and knowledge sources in the school and other kinds of libraries in their later education. For those reasons it was thought that education in twelve steps should be executed from the first grade of primary school to the fourth grade of high school. Table 1 shows the basic guidelines of this Program.

Learning from sources of information and knowledge was in the first place. Students become active in the educational process at the moment when they use a large number of various materials in order to explore the subject material proscribed in their class curriculum. Librarians have become animators and leaders in the process of learning and they secured the first class motivation that leads student towards information search and creative problem solving. The final result was a animating of "a learning culture" as an environment of all activities; especially productive learning that is animated in the whole school.

The independence increases when students can recognize what they know about the topic and what else they should know, where to search for the information, how to mark it as a message, how to evaluate and how to determine their success in the process of information research. The first successfully finished information goal encourages students, animates further learning, information research and develops their self-confidence.

³ Quote from the book "School library-a step further" (2004) authors D.Kovačević, J. Lasić-Lazić and J. Lovrinčević

Table 1. Basic guidelines

<p>ORGANIZING OF LIBRARY FUNCTIONING (space, library holdings, working hours, working plan-program, information and knowledge sources usage, lending, library holdings protection)</p>	<p>SCHOOL LIBRARY GOALS -educational goal -library-informational and -documentation goal -cultural and public goal</p>
<p>THE PLACEMENT OF LIBRARY HOLDINGS -According to the age of students (from 1st to 8th grade – student holdings) -According to the universal and decimal classification –UDK (teachers library holdings)</p>	<p>INFORMATION AND KNOWLEDGE SOURCES -books -periodicals -AV material -Electronic information sources -catalogs -bibliographies -the referential collection</p>
<p>USER EDUCATION -text papers (written) -notes -term papers -seminar -reading journal -final paper compilation</p>	<p>DATA BASE SEARCH -The renewing of basic information (computer) literacy knowledge (needed in librarianship) -Defining instructions -Skills needed for the search -Skills needed for monitoring the constant changes in the field of research.</p>

2. Information literacy tuition guidelines

The beginnings of learning in the school library are connected to individual learning for classes. The most frequent was making of a seminar, term paper, but also solving a problem produced in a class, in the “classroom”. Individually a student studies what he missed, something that he didn’t understand, and what he wants to extend or add to his knowledge.

Pair learning (learning in pairs) or a small group is usually in relation to a bigger and more complex seminar. This type of learning has developed usage of various media. That animation came from the school librarian, with a purpose of including teachers also. With a teacher’s demand and in cooperation with the librarian, usage of several media could have been inveterate. The next step in promoting the quality of learning was a suggestion and inserting written seminar work through exploring, insisting on a more creative, imaginative work, which had a goal to show the way how did they get to the information.

So, learning from various media (books, pictures, audio, video, class films...) was actually a process of research learning. The result is a written paper, in a similar way prepared presentation⁴, also creative, multi-medial.

⁴ ibidem

We can see that this form of the school librarian's work with students, (individually, in pairs, in small groups) in base consists of tuition and information literacy skill development. It was very quickly recognized that the librarian's efforts on this forms of learning are easier if the student are initially shown the ways of using the school library resources.

In early 80's of the 20th century an obligation group tutoring of all students was inserted in high school libraries to educate them in various usage possibilities of the school library like:

- Tuition for library and material usage
- Introducing students in seminar making
- Introducing students in final paper making

Through tuition in library usage students were informed in the library materials, resources and the choice of activities. They were taught how knowledge sources were organized from catalogs to shelf-placing, and also in what order knowledge sources are used. The tuition on seminars was used as a general preparation for seminar making, planning work and what phases of work to expect. Tuition on final paper making is a specific tuition for making a distinctive kind or form of final paper, like a graphic paper, film or models. In that phase at the end of education information literate students are taught.

These educational situations are used in further tuition in:

- Individual work
- Small groups work
- Pair work

As the students have basic knowledge, the librarian leads them further through research learning, problem solving, animating creative personal solutions and various media usage. During the making of seminars, the librarian takes over the obligation of tuition and presenting the work (paper).

Learning on assignment in pairs is easily used for "learning of learning" although these skills are actually taught through all forms of work in a library. At the end of the 80's of the 20th century, working in small groups refers on school project work, which is literally and only affirmed through the work of the school library. It is in order with the ALA's (American Library Association, 1989) presidential committee on information literacy, concise in the form of this manifesto:

"Informational literate people are those who are learning how to learn. They know how to learn because they know how knowledge is organized, how to find information, and how to use it in a way that others can learn from it. They are prepared for lifelong learning, because they always find the information needed for usage."

Although a new phrase "information literacy"⁵ in all its definitions and content, involves a logic cycle of methods which are carried out in the school library, where students are guided through various forms and processes of learning.

"Information literacy" at the same time means:

- Ability to recognize the necessary information for problem solving and idea development
- Crucial question placing
- Various information usage
- Locating of relevant and responsible information
- The ability to use practical and conceptual tools and informational skills
- Research process
- Making and publishing in textual and multimedia formats and the adjustment to technologies which appear

Ross Todd's definition (1998) marks information technology and describes the process of acquiring skill as:

"The ability of using information; with purpose and effectively. It is an interactive process of learning that encloses defining, locating, selecting, organizing, presenting and evaluating information from sources, including books and other media, experiences and people. That means to be "up to date" with new knowledge, adding them to earlier knowledge. It also means the application of knowledge, adequate and reliable for solving problems."

In all definitions, in "The big 6" (Eisenberg & Berkowitz, 1990) models or the Kuhlthau (2002) model of "Guided research learning", which are newer, we can recognize the same logic and non avoidable element to which we should teach our students. The shown starting ways of teaching information literacy in Croatian schools and libraries, as we have shown, contained the same, still demanded elements.

3. Development concept of tuition programs

We have developed a well made base in high school libraries spreading content towards new users and the development of new technologies that came to our schools. The school library is again, taking a key place adapting computer and information literacy to each other, so they would insert the usage of new media into old schools.

With the arrival of computers as an individual tool that because of its possibilities, represses other media, and the process of learning is more and more individual. Even tuition of information literacy is now going towards the individual approach. On the other side, new learning affirms research learning, creative work, learning through school and other projects, which is connected with al-

⁵ Ken Heycock speaks amply on the phrase information literacy and also incorporating the program of acquiring information literacy skills.

ready known ways of working of the school library. With that, more opportunities are offered for systematic tuition and gaining information literacy skills. That is the reason that high school libraries decide on informal and different ways of tuition, in all of their functions, always and in every place and with every encounter with a student. Although the tuition of information literacy is in the “program and plan” (similar to a curriculum) of the school library, in high school libraries firmly set class themes are advocated because of the variety of the curriculum. Different from primary and secondary schools, high schools don’t have average but above average students, with defined needs and it is not appropriate to firmly set themes on when and how we should train the needed skills. That is why same goals are achieved in all school libraries, but they are adapted to the student, the school and to the curriculum.

The development of information literacy programs in primary school library are based on the Croatian National Education Standard (CNES/HNOS) that has been implemented in all primary schools in 2006/2007 school year. Goals and tasks of education based on CNES are guided on raising the level of the Croatian primary school system in order to increase the competitiveness of the whole society, based on knowledge and usage of knowledge. The education of motivated young people with developed academic, technical and social abilities is set as the final goal. The motivation and competition influence on the result of education. The result is: the ability of a young person to analyze the situation, planning achieving a goal, evaluate its plans, achieve the set goal and evaluate the results.

The task of modern primary school library according to CNES is; to be a support to all educational goals and tasks of the tuition “plan and program” of the school, through communication-informational work. The priority is to ensure access to sources of knowledge which will animate students on various ideas in experience learning and ensure them gaining of creative experience in using and creating information. These are strong enough reasons for starting changes in primary school librarianship that resulted with a unique program called “Librarianship education-Animating reading and information literacy”. The program has become a vital part of the new tuition “plan and program” for primary schools.

The education of users has all the elements of information literacy with an accent on library usage and information available in the library. This territory involves understanding and usage of information from modern technologies and modern computer communication sources. The goals and themes of information-librarian knowledge’s come from basic goals of education.

General Program goals:

- Students adapt to the library space and environment
- They take a positive stand towards the library and it’s holdings

- They develop different skills and abilities (communicational, research, informational) by using knowledge sources and information in the school library. They see problems and learn how to make effective strategies in dealing with them.
- Special attention is given to education for books, reading motivation and esthetic experiencing

Special Program goals:

- Students acquaint library holdings and other sources of information in the school library
- Student are acquainted with bibliographic data on library holdings that they can recognize
- Students get acquainted with primary and secondary information sources and know how to use them for their own information
- Students get acquainted with terms; quote, quotation, reference, note and summary for needs of research project work.

Animation of reading:

From the first grade, skills of reading and writing are animated. Priority for activities in working with students in and with the school library is given to animation of reading as a lingual activity and the base of education. Not so long ago, very little was known on "The psychology of reading", meaning processes of gaining and developing that skill. A new approach in which learning and reading are understood as information processing (opposite to a computer model) has made new data in this process possible.

The educational environment has a basic role in developing learning, because the need for skills and abilities of orientation and selection, in this fast flow of information and new media growth, are good reasons for animating student, even in first grade, to accept work methods and new forms of learning centered on lifelong learning.

Developing reader literacy animates oral and in written expression of students, gives new knowledge's to students, enriches their vocabulary, and helps them in building a value system and accepting ethic norms that are basic preconditions for successful learning of all classes in all levels of learning. With an approach like that, the library becomes an irreplaceable member of the educational team of the school.

Information literacy:

The school library leads students into the world of information in the fourth grade, teaching them in independent usage of information and knowledge. That doesn't mean that it stops with animating reading. Students are taught to individual usage of various information sources, research skills, evaluating and

processing information for individual research needs. Beside the techniques of primary source research, at this point, they are taught the classic and on-line techniques of secondary source research (book catalogues, registries and bibliographies). The modern information technology, here and in other countries, enables successful library fund research. In order for students to be successful in that, they need knowledge's on data saving and research, and these knowledge's are acquired with tuition through this program. These knowledge's and skills that students acquire from tuition in the school library are basic for successful independent and lifelong learning.

An effective program of tuition in school libraries is based on the best research in practice in a particular area. In that way the program:

- Shows how cooperative tuition, points out information literacy, backs up active and independent learning in schools
- Involves students in learning that will help them in their development of lifelong student that are searching for knowledge outside the formal curriculum
- Shapes a live, cooperative culture of learning and promotes complete action of the whole society

Conclusion

The approach to knowledge and the multicultural wealth of the world, just like lifelong learning and literacy, have become the main goal of our information society and the knowledge society.

According to these standards, the goal of the school library changes:

- To qualify all students for critical thinking
- Enable all students to become active users of information and a part of a wider librarian and information network
- To offer various sources of knowledge and quality services to all users

The orientation of the modern school on research and problem tuition, on team cooperative learning, on larger independence of students in acquiring of knowledge and on the transformation of students from an object to a subject of the educational process, gives the school library a role of a core of information and ability for learning and progress. The school library is available for students in time of their most intensive acquiring of knowledge and learning, developing attitudes and behavior, important for their lives. With its effect, the school library is not only a support for the education; it also opens doors of personal creative development of each student that develops a constant need for lifelong learning.

That is why the basic goal of modern school, together with the school library, is to animate the need for written sources and other forms of library holdings, to develop reading skills and habits and basics of information literacy and informational skills that are the predisposition for effective information research.

With emphasizing of basic school library goals that follows the student from his first steps into information literacy and maturing of students-active participator of the new Croatian school, it's unavoidable role in preparing the student for life and work in the 21st century.

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