

FROM LIBRARY SKILLS TO INFORMATION LITERACY

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Abstract: The application of new technologies and the acquisition of new sources and methods of information dissemination, as well as the provision of libraries services, requires the special education of the users in order to take advantage of these sources and services. In this paper, an investigation of the Greek academic libraries and their user education sessions is attempted. This research aims to explore the user education sessions offered by the libraries, with special regards to the education, the type of user education sessions and their contents. For the collection of the elements, the questionnaire method is selected. The current situation as much as it concerns the libraries and the applied teaching methods at the Greek education institutions, is presented.

Keywords: *Information literacy, Digital library, Teaching library, Collaborative learning, Computer literacy, Higher education*

1. THE SITUATION OF GREEK ACADEMIC LIBRARIES

The role, the position and the form of the library as an institution in the information society, is revised. New technologies in the production, distribution, publication, organization and provision of information, question the existing models of organization and function of the library. In this environment of innovative developments, libraries expand their role not only to the adoption on electronic material, but also to the development of new methods for the organization of new materials enhancing their services for the final receiver of information.

The need for a change is not accidental, but stems from the fact that information is of a vital importance for human beings, in educative, recreational and financial level. The last years, academic libraries in Greece try to keep pace with those developments by importing new organizational and functional structures that keep abreast of the needs of Information Society. In our days, all academic libraries have an Online

Public Access Catalogue (OPAC), while they provide their users with new forms of material (e-journals, databases, software -hardware).

The expenses made by the whole of Greek academic libraries, University and TEI (Technological Educational Institutes) confirm this situation. See tables 1 and 2. [9]

	Expense of e-journals	Expense of Databases	Expense of software- hardware
2000	14.537	573.1999	173.046
2001	84.560	437.107	94.232
2002	2.691.386	556.704	194.424
2003	1.604.085	814.604	346.703

Table 1: University expenses

	Expense of e-journals	Expense of Databases	Expense of software- hardware
2000	1.778	31.988	38.643
2001	13.9996	20.552	4.827
2002	535	21.800	66.832
2003	28.4000	79.823	25.528

Table 2: TEI expenses

The purchase of new forms of material that libraries collect, keeps pace with the purchase of traditional printed material. See tables 3 (monographs) and 4 (journals). [9]

	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
University	3.699.155 €	6.290.078 €	3.603.421 €	1.625.308 €	4.523.526 €	2.572.892 €
TEI	1.058.362 €	1.319.651 €	500.221 €	404.775 €	178.807 €	360.195 €
ΣΥΝΟΛΟ	4.757.517 €	7.609.729 €	4.103.642 €	2.030.083 €	4.702.330 €	2.933.087 €

Table 3 : Monographs purchases

	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
University	6.844.153 €	7.614.762 €	8.409.931 €	8.449.043 €	8.988.739 €	4.920.381€
TEI	474.418 €	638.260 €	277.968 €	398.243 €	325.224 €	238.392 €
ΣΥΝΟΛΟ	7.318.571 €	8.253.022 €	8.687.899 €	8.847.286 €	9.323.963 €	5.158.773 €

Table 4: Journals purchases

The great quantity of information that libraries produce and accumulate and their doubtful quality, create new challenges to their search, retrieval and efficiency. Information Literacy demands techniques and intellectual competencies that the final information receiver should possess for his proper and effective performance. Thus, the role of the library expands and should be pedagogical and complementary to the teaching process and to the knowledge diffusion. Information literacy that is provided by the library services in collaboration with the responsible instructor, intends to cover this need. Numerous are those who claim that the quality advancement of the third degree education depends on the integration of the library in the programs of study, bridging the gap between the classroom and the library.

1.1. TEACHING FORMS IN GREEK ACADEMIC INSTITUTIONS: TEACHING BASED ON LECTURING WITH A UNIQUE BOOK

This is most popular teaching model in the third degree education in Greece. The instructor in charge is the one who has the main role in the spreading of knowledge, while students owe to learn from the lecture, through devotion and memorization of the provided knowledge. Control of the taught material is realized through written examinations. The role of the library in this teaching model is absent.

1.2. TEACHING WITH MULTIPLE BIBLIOGRAPHIES

The scope of this teaching model is for the learner to develop his critical competency by creating knowledge from various sources. The role of the instructor is not only to provide knowledge but also to instill into the student the need to obtain searching competencies and to locate even predefined sources. Teaching with multiple bibliographies presupposes the use of the library in the teaching process. [2]

1.3. STUDENT-CENTERED MODEL

Many are those who deem that the upgrade of the quality of the third degree education depends on the integration of libraries in the programs of study contributing to the gap bridging between the classroom and the library. The traditional learning method through the memorization of notes or the lectures of instructors is getting outdated and gives its place to the education that supports critical competency and the student's perceptiveness for the acquisition of knowledge through independent learning supported by library use. Student-centered teaching model stresses on the experience and the absorption of knowledge rather than on memorization. The student chooses to divide information into cognitive issues related to each course. Evans Ira Farber states that librarians should discuss with instructors so as to know the aims and the content of each course and thus, to try to find ways to assist the learning process. [3, 10] In student-centered teaching model, information research is the rule, the solution of problems is the focal point and critical thinking is a part of the teaching process.

2. INTRODUCTION TO INFORMATION LITERACY

The need of information is well defined with the coverage of informational needs (confrontation of uncertainty) that can be confronted with information. [5]

The confrontation of a problem through information use presupposes: a) the awareness of the problem, its outline, the search and allocation of new information and b) the learning of how to use information systems, meaning the technology that supports publication, recording, organization and access to information (powers of information technology). [1]

Information literacy is defined as the total of competencies that a student should have so as to be able to:

- Manipulate information systems of information management (software application).
- To be aware of financial, legal, social and ethical issues that surround information usage.
- To define the amount of needed information, so as to solve his problems.
- To have access to needed information actively and effectively.
- To evaluate information so as to be able to succeed in reaching a certain cause.

A) AIM OF THE RESEARCH

To record if there is provision of services on information literacy for academic libraries' users, the kind of these services and their content and to explore at the same time, the role and the limits of intervention of the library in the learning process.

B) SELECTION, ANALYSIS OF THE POPULATION, COMPILATION OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE

By taking into account the research topic, the selected case studies, the type of the adopted sample and the rising material and technical problems, it has been selected to send to the libraries of the academic institutions around Greece, an e-mail with a questionnaire based on the guidelines of ACRL (Association of College and Research Libraries) on information literacy.

The questionnaire contains 11 questions and its structure is formed so as to constitute a means not only for the collection, but also for the diffusion of information to those ignoring the existence of information literacy. The type of closed - ended questions has been chosen, for the easier coding and the better statistical analysis through Microsoft Excel. Research has been realized between January and March of the year 2004 with a total sample of 115 libraries. From those 84 have replied with a corresponding rate of 73% that reaches confidence interval of 95%. [8]

C) PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE

The majority of academic libraries in Greece include in their services information literacy projects, in a percentage of 58,3% against 41,7% of those that have not adapted their services to a similar training project. Information literacy lessons are mainly realized with the library's responsibility and they only include courses of teaching bibliographic abilities, since teaching of how to use PCs is covered by the

lessons included in the programs of study of their faculties. In a percentage of 53%, the library through a lecture provides sessions on bibliographic instruction, while a percentage of 43% of sessions are provided online by tutorials through the library's Website. Finally, just a 4% has incorporated information literacy lessons in the programs of study of their Faculty. The content of these sessions on bibliographic instruction include:

- a) Use of informational tools for information retrieval 53% (OPAC, electronic journal, data base, cd-server), 26,5% (OPAC, electronic journal, data base, web search), 16,3% (information organization, OPAC, electronic journal, data base, cd-server) 4,2% (OPAC, electronic journal, data base).
- b) Definition of the nature and the coverage of information. 68,75 % of the sessions provide information for the user on how to express his queries by defining (describing) his subject with keywords and by creating searching strategies after having chosen the proper informational source, while the 31,25% of the sessions do not include corresponding information
- c) Assessment and evaluation of information. A 75,3% of the sessions provide information on the criteria taken into consideration during assessment and evaluation of information, while a 24,7% of the sessions do not include a similar informational unit. Information literacy sessions take place in a percentage of 71,4% in a classroom equipped with PCs, while a 28,6 % in plain classrooms with the help of data display. The duration of these sessions is 1 hour in a percentage of 52% and 2 hours in a percentage of 48%.

3. CONCLUSIONS

It is commonly accepted that Greek academic libraries begin to adapt to the demands of a digital era by introducing Information literacy sessions to their services with a first aim to promote provision of independent library services. [4]

In Greece, third degree education goes through a reforming process towards flexible learning systems; so as to prepare students for the continually changed needs of the working market that technological development imposes. Acquisition of competencies through information Literacy multiplies the opportunities of self-conducted learning from the side of students, while they get involved in the use of a great variety of informational sources, which they use in order to expand their knowledge and to improve their critical thinking. [2]

Instructors and librarians have to cooperate and to develop sessions in the field of specific scientific sectors for the comprehension- recording of knowledge through information literacy.

Convergence of electronic with traditional sources is a complicated issue for libraries. Electronic informational environment should be presented as a supplement to traditional schemes. Students should learn to use even traditional information sources that will not extinct in the future. Efficient knowledge distribution is characterized as the key to the increase of productivity and the financial development. In this newly formed environment, adaptation to change emphasizes on knowledge and forms the need of lifelong learning by imposing changes to the educational system. [6]

In order all the above to come true, there should be some institutional adjustments that will provide libraries with the ability to participate to the configuration of the programs of study.

[7]

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