

The Role, the Function and the Organization of School Libraries in Greece

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Abstract

The article analyzes the concept of “library” and after a general historical retrospection of the creation, organization and operation of libraries, concluding that the development of libraries is determined by the social, economic, cultural and educational needs of each age. By observing the field of education we see that the modern education addresses the challenges of the new multidimensional world. In Greece the first remarkable efforts to create school libraries began, at the end of the 18th century and this process continues up to this day. An important moment is the school year 1994-1995, when the program for the modernization of school libraries that concerned 500 schools started. In 2006 the network was expanded with 266 new libraries of EPEAEK (Operational Program of Education and Initial Vocational Training) and in 2018 a new framework for the establishment of a system of school libraries network in primary education was applied.

Keywords: school libraries management, educational system.

1. Introduction

The history of libraries is part of the history of culture and it is clear that libraries are developing in conditions of social, political and cultural maturity. School libraries in particular, are institutions which were mainly developed in the 20th century and are closely related to the design and implementation of each country’s training program. *The School Library Manifesto* for school libraries states “that they are an integral part of the educational process” (IFLA/UNESCO, n.d.).

The use of the book in its context is often indicated by the personal motivation of the student or teacher who reads it and consists in the collective and individual search of printed or digital texts. “Escaping the monotony and compulsion of school class, the library is offered to promote reading and reading improves the student's relationship with the book” (Dressman, 1997: 161).

Modern education addresses the challenges of the new multidimensional world. And many new educational programs give perspectives for exploiting the functions of a school library. The student's usual relationship with the book in the school’s curriculum has the mark of obligatory and utilitarian use of knowledge that ignores the age specificity, individual interests and personal needs of each student (Ποσλανιέκ, 1990; Κατσιίκη-Γκιβαλου, 2008).

A school library through a systematic pedagogical act of acquiring the student with the book and reading, may overcome the mandatory nature of the use of the school manual and the knowledge-based to the curriculum and the goal of each school to become a media center and a self-training center (Κοψιδά-Βρεττού, 2011).

At national level, as an applied educational policy, school libraries are very recent in our country. Following Greece's international trends, with the Article 43 of the Law 1566/1985 provided the establishment of a library in each school. In fact, this issue is more relevant to the implementation of the Ministry of Education establishment of 500 school libraries in secondary education, under the 2nd CSF (1st Operational Program of Education and Initial Vocational Training – ΕΠΕΑΕΚ). Their establishment started with 50 libraries in 1999, expanded to 450 in 2000, and another 266 five years ago.

But also at an international level, the use of information sources from the library – where they existed – has not been satisfactory, at least until the last decade of the previous century, as demonstrated by an EFA study (*Education For All*) (UNESCO, 2000).

Globally, however, there is a gradual change. It is recognized the contribution of the *school library*, or “information center” as it is called in some European countries, to the implementation of an effective education policy, particularly in the face of the challenges facing our modern digital age. Indicative the international organizations International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA), International Association of School Librarianship (IASL), and European Network for School Libraries and Information Literacy (ENSIL), with their joint declaration in April 2010, they called for a “library for each school”.

Finally, conclusions are drawn. The library is not a regional, complementary element of the school institution. It is no luxury or gem or pretext for progress. It is a necessary element and indicator of high educational policy.

2. The concept of the library

2.1 *Library's definition*

“Library is the collection of books with a certain classification for the purpose of preservation and dissemination of recorded knowledge and information in general” (Μπριτάνικα, 1996: 187). Or, according to another definition, it is “the collection of printed and audiovisual material, concentrated in a space for study, research and entertainment. Most important is its contribution to information, scientific research, education, training and entertainment of a population” (*Παιδαγωγική Ψυχολογική Εγκυκλοπαίδεια*, 1989: 972).

Already in the 14th century, according to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, the word “library” meant the place where books are kept for reading, study and reference. However, it also means the building, the hall, containing the collection of books for public use, for the members of a society or part thereof. The concept of handling and managing the collection exists since the 19th century. It is the only service devoted exclusively to the collection, preservation, distribution, transmission and securing of the most effective use of the records of a culture from the society of which it is part (Gates, 1990).

2.2 *Historical review*

The development of libraries determines the social, economic, cultural and educational needs of each age. They seem to be prosperous in societies with political and cultural maturity, in times when individuals have the time and resources to develop cultural and intellectual activities.

The principle of the existence of libraries is located in the first steps in the history of humanity. The first materials used (plates, papyrus) did not allow easy retrieval, followed by codes during the first Christian years and books after the 15th century and the discovery of typography. The first collections were purely archival in character, political and commercial documents in palaces and sacred texts in temples. Later they were enriched with works of literature and philosophy. In the Middle Ages, they included scriptures (sacred religious texts) and commentaries (detailed annotations of texts), while during the Renaissance they were enriched with the classical works of Greek and Latin literature. “In the 19th century, with the expansion of university education in Europe and America we saw the creation of public libraries, and in the 20th century, the research libraries. The explosion of knowledge has created the need for special libraries. The technological developments of the 20th century provided libraries with audiovisual media, electronic databases, networking with other libraries and information sources” (Τόγια, 1997: 2).

The Sumerians, the Babylonians and the Egyptians in Antiquity used to keep libraries in temples and palaces. In the Hellenistic period, the library of Alexandria dominates, while in the Roman, the generals used to transport whole Greek libraries as war loot (Gates, 1990; Τόγια, 1997).

During the Byzantine period many libraries were operating in churches and monasteries. The same is true in Western Europe with the spread of monasticism and the art of handwritten books copied in scriptoria. In the Arab world, at this time, large libraries are provided by Baghdad, Tripoli and Cordoba. In the period of the Renaissance (14th-15th century) gradual control of education and books passes from monasteries to universities. With Gutenberg’s discovery of typography many libraries are being developed. The printed book breaks the monopoly of the education of the few and opens the way for Enlightenment.

The 17th and 18th century is the era of the development of scientific methodology and the systematization and organization of human knowledge. Many collections and systems are created to classify them. The Library of the British Museum (1759) and several national libraries were established.

Folk and thematic libraries appear with the industrial revolution in the 19th century. In 1877 the Library Association was established in England, and in America many academic and special libraries were founded. In 1800 the Library of Congress was founded (Gates, 1990; Τόγια, 1997).

In Greece, the first government of Kapodistrias founded the first public library in Aegina in 1829, then moved to Athens and became the National Library, the largest in the country. In 1834, libraries were set up in the capital cities and provinces and in 1835 in all primary schools.

2.3 Role and library functions

The purpose of the library is to monitor the course of knowledge, protect it, develop it and transmit it. Of course, its role varies in time, but its main features are the following:

- Preserving the accumulated memory by collecting the written monuments;
- Dissemination of the information contained in its collections;
- Contribution to education.

With regard to its last role, which includes both the other two, we could add that in countries with librarian development the spiritual center of each educational organization, from primary up to tertiary education, is the library. Often it is at the center of the educational institution. Libraries “collecting spiritual resources that illuminate the practical work” (Dewey, 1982).

The activities that the library develops depend from its goals, the number of the population it covers, its financial resources, etc. Depending on its type, its functions are also defined. Although for all libraries the following functions remain:

- *Library Directorate*: It concerns the setting of objectives, policy planning, budgeting, maintenance of logistical equipment, settlement problems, collection of statistics, promotion of services, etc.;
- *Development of the collection*: Refers to the choice of material depending on the species and the library's objectives (public, academic, special...);
- *Organization of material*: It concerns classification and cataloging. This is mainly the thematic classification (Dewey system, congressional library system, etc.);
- *Services to users*: It concerns the service of the users and mainly the lending and the information services. A lending library offers most of its collection besides informative, rare and precious books and magazines.

2.4 Library classification and automation systems

The most common taxonomic system is the Dewey decimal classification. The first version was made in 1876 by the American librarian Melvil Dewey. Classifies the book according to its content, its subject and draws its philosophy from the classification of species and the Aristotelian model. It divides human knowledge into ten main classes (1-General, 2-Philosophy and Related Industries, 3-Religion, 4-Social Sciences, 5-Language, 6-Natural Sciences, 7-Applied Sciences, Technology, 8-Fine Arts, 9-Literature and Rhetoric, and 10-Geography and History), divided into ten divisions (table of 100 categories), each of which in ten subdivisions (table of 1000 categories), etc. Every item, according to its thematic gets the number that represents the specific topic in the taxonomic table of the system. The integer numbers are subdivided and hence the “decimal”. The system is hierarchical.

The congressional library's taxonomy is also another one very much known library system (Library of Congress Classification System). It includes 26 main classes divided into divisions and subdivisions. In his depiction he uses a combination of Latin capital letters and non-capital letters, Arabic numerals (Ντελόπουλος, Η λογοτεχνία στο σχολείο και η σχολική βιβλιοθήκη: η βιβλιοθηκονομική άποψη, 1999, in Τόγια, 1997).

The use of computers and new technology in the libraries' management and control, led to automation (library automation).

So, the system MARC (Machine Reading Cataloging) was developed, which is also the international standard cataloging in a machine-readable format. Later, efforts were made to create “schemes” for international exchanges such as UNIMARC (developed by IFLA), INTERMARC (in Western European countries), or EUDISED (for information exchange in the field of education).

International standardization of bibliographic data content was reinforced by the presumptions of the International Standard Bibliographic Description (ISBD). This facilitates the exchange of bibliographic data based on a standard, such as the Anglo-American Cataloging Rules, 2nd ed. (AACR2), which use English-speaking states (*Παιδαγωγική Ψυχολογική Εγκυκλοπαίδεια*, 1989).

2.5 Kinds of libraries

In addition to the school libraries, other types of libraries are national, public, university and special libraries.

(A) *National libraries* have as their primary function the acquisition and maintenance of all national production of printed material or audio material that is related to the country. They are also responsible for the bibliographic services of their country and the support of other libraries with their know-how. Maybe the most famous is the American Library of Congress with a large collection of materials. Also known is the British National Library. The Greek National Library was founded in 1829 by the first Greek Government Ioannis Kapodistrias. In our time they are supervised by the Ministry of Education (Τόγια, 1997).

(B) *Public libraries*, or people's libraries, are partially or totally preserved from public resources and accessible to all members of the community. They collect material of local interest, finance cultural programs, and develop educational and cultural activities. Their material is of a general nature to cover the interests and needs of all readers. Special care is taken of the particular circumstances of each region (for example, whether it is urban or rural). There is usually a special section for children.

(C) *University libraries* seek to support and promote production, preservation and transmission of knowledge, research and teaching. The general objectives and the policy of the educational institution determine how it is organized and managed. Its services concern teachers and students. The institution may have a central library with full thematic coverage that serves the whole academic community, or department or school libraries with specialized collections or a mixed organization system, where the two previous forms work together (e.g. the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki).

(D) *Special libraries* mainly refer to specialized collections of private institutions or to sections of popular or university libraries with thematic specialization (e.g. the Library of the Society of Macedonian Studies). They serve a specialized group of people. The collection of such libraries is quite specialized and covers the need for quick information in a field of science. Some include a specific format of material (e.g. map library).

3. School libraries

3.1 *School Libraries: Philosophy, role, goals and relationship with the curriculum*

The school library is the organized collection of books, magazines and audiovisual material in school, for students and teachers. Its goal is to provide the student and the educational staff with access to its material, support the educational process, serve the curriculum and provide learning incentives.

Depending on the services and benefits it can be distinguished by the following "types":

- As a way of supporting the teaching process;
- As an entertaining reading center;
- As a school-folk library. This type of school library with a dual role (school-folk) was proposed for Greece in the 1980s (Νταή, 1979);
- As an academic library that supports the spiritual elite;
- As a monument (Clyde, 1999).

"A traditional school library contains mainly books. But to build an efficient modern school library, it is necessary the use of information technology. In some countries, the term "school library" has changed to: "media center" for the English-speaking world and "center de documentation et d'information" for the French-speaking world" (Σίβα, 1998: 120).

The philosophy of the modern school library reflects, therefore, different perceptions about the education system and teacher-student relationships. For the teacher-centered model

that judged the performance of the student based on his/her ability to learn the lessons uncritically, the library was not so necessary and in fact was used as an apothecary for books. But as we go to the student-centered model, the teacher is coordinator of learning process and ending the monarchy of one school book. The student is encouraged to visit the school library, choose his sources of information and develop a critical research thought-process. Knowledge is being built progressively and throughout life (Αρβανίτη, 2008).

School libraries need to function as a reading room, as a meeting room, as a classroom, as an alternative cultural space. Their working space must be comfortable, neat, bright, easily accessible. And it needs to have a functional architectural design and distinct spaces, for bookstores, reading rooms, where students, teachers and staff are willing to enter it (King, 1989; Γερμανός, 2002; Αρβανίτη, 2008).

In Sweden, a scientific research was organized by Limberg and Alexandersson in 2001-2002, aiming at studying the students' conceptions of school libraries as learning spaces, from a socio-cultural and phenomenological point of view. Research has shown that students perceive the library as a physical space with books, rather than as a virtual space which gives them access to information and their perception is more dependent on their individual use than the group. Students also handle the contents of a school library, depending on how they experience the space. The library is described as a place where knowledge is not organized in classes and school hours, but as a place where everyone (teachers and students) has access and at the same time a space that allows anonymity and independence. While classes are often associated with monotony and lack of autonomy, libraries appear to be places where someone is able to look for quality work, peace and quiet (Limberg, 2003).

3.2 History of school libraries

Dealing with school libraries was rudimentary because they were regarded as secondary in importance in the area of librarianship and in the field of education. The recording of their history had the same character, as in the thought of many researchers the definition of its concept the school library was very limited. In the bibliography, the history of school libraries are studied in relation to the supposed evolution from the two shelves with books to the corner to modern information center. We can recognize five stages:

- Little collection of books in the classes;
- “The Stone Age” with some books locked in a closet and a responsible teacher;
- A library space without a responsible person;
- A library space with a responsible person;
- A library as part of the teaching and learning process in schools.

Of course some schools start from the fourth stage, others co-exist in the first and fourth stages and others do not at all seek the fifth stage. This lack of a single standard has an impact on the approach of the history of school libraries (Clyde, 1999).

The dominant concept wants school libraries to be a rather recent phenomenon of the 20th century. A tedious start was already existent from the beginning of 19th century, in the western world (Europe, America), but after 1900 school libraries in the present sense were generalized.

In Australia we can talk about this institution after the Second World War. The researcher Clyde, however, argues that the phenomenon is older. In her work she shows that in England and some other European countries already had school libraries since the 8th century, like the school libraries in Episcopal schools of the medieval age. In the US they can be found from the 18th century and in Australia since the first half of the 19th century (Clyde, 1999).

In the 19th century and at the beginning of the 20th century in America, the dominant educational goal was to consolidate knowledge material and the main used instruments were the school book and memorization. Library material was not considered necessary that is why the first school libraries were not used yet when schools became public. In 1940, the changes to the curriculum and the adoption of the project method further enhanced libraries. Public and mobile libraries come to assist in the work of the school library. In 1945, the American Library Association first published national standards for school libraries (ALA, *School Libraries for Today and Tomorrow*). Already since 1914 ALA has formed a special field for school libraries which in 1951 became a separate department (American Association of School Library Section, AASL). A new age for school libraries was launched with the publication (in the US by AASL) of the *Standards for School Library Programs* in 1960, of the *Standards for School Media Programs* in 1969. Elizabeth King believes that the educational changes which affect the role of the school library are, apart from institutional and administrative changes, changes in the timetable program and the influence of technology (King, 1989).

In England the interest in libraries is also growing. In 1935 the first training for librarians was organized, in 1937 the School Library Association (SLA) was founded and *The School Librarian* magazine was published. In the mid-1950s, the program of public schools was disputed. They returned to the idea of the main courses and intellectual development. Emphasis was also placed on reading ability, in individualized teaching, autonomous study and development of gifted students' special abilities. Science, mathematics and modern foreign languages gained a leap. In 1960, there were libraries in 94.2% of American secondary schools and in 31.2% of primary schools (King, 1989).

The new era begins in England in the 1980s. The LA is upgrading its standards in 1973. The SLA gives instructions that take into account new educational trends, the single school movement, individual learning, new educational methods and the use of multimedia. The library is now central to the school program (King, 1989).

In the European Union, the first common text on the role of libraries is in 1998 (European Parliament, *The role of libraries in modern societies*). Some years ago in 1990, on a council of its ministers, the EU characterized libraries as a treasury of material, valuable both in the cultural field and in scientific, technical and economic development (Σκανδάλη, 1990). They acknowledged that this treasure needs to be improved, such as in America and Canada and that there are great differences between North and South Europe. At the same time, UNESCO in cooperation with IFLA is active around the issue of school libraries. In 1998 the School Manifesto Libraries was formed and validated the following year (Κοψιδά-Βρεττού, 2011).

3.3 Experiences of other countries

The institution of school libraries has become established worldwide. It's got different institutions: the school, the public library, the municipality or the community. "Most of them belong to the public education system and are funded by the state. In general, the teaching staff with the collaboration of representatives of the student community, assumes the libraries' administration. The libraries are housed in the school, led by librarians working closely with the teachers" (Οικονόμου, 1998: 80). Differences and parallel paths can be noted in different countries.

Since 1968, the year in which the education system was changed in France, the word "library" was replaced by the expression "*centre de documentation et d'information*". All documents used by students and teachers are kept here. In the curriculum of the school one or two hours are free and devoted to the work that the students must do in the library (Σακελλαρίου, 1998).

In the early 1970s in the Federal Republic of Germany was developed the first regulations for school libraries and began experimenting on the collaboration of school and public libraries.

In Denmark school libraries have been organized by the authorities since 1920. Great growth occurred in the 1970s, when it was legally prescribed to have a school library in each school. Students and parents participate in the selection of the material granted by the central offices of the country (*Παιδαγωγική Ψυχολογική Εγκυκλοπαίδεια, Λεξικό, λήμμα σχολική βιβλιοθήκη*: 4665, 1989). Libraries operate in all schools, which are called “pedagogical service centers” and students and teachers visit them on a daily basis. 75% of students visit them at least once a week. They are the center of school life. The school librarian is a teacher with postgraduate education in the librarianship. He teaches knowledge management and develops cultural actions (Espholm, 1998).

Portugal has developed a program similar to Greece, 15 years earlier, since 1980, funded by the European Union and changed its legislative framework.

With the introduction of the unified lyceum in 2000-2001, Cyprus attempts upgrading her school libraries in order to serve the lifelong acquisition of knowledge and skills. A plan for the operation of the library, for the training of existing curators was drawn, in order to take on the responsibilities of librarians and for the training of teachers for the use of the school library in didactic practice (Ερωτοκρίτου-Σταύρου, 2007).

In the rest of the world, providing manuals and creating schools libraries is mainly based on external funding from international organizations, governments and civil organizations (non-governmental, religious, commercial, youth organizations, etc.) (Montagnes, 2000).

3.4 *School libraries in Greece*

At the end of the 18th century and before the Greek revolution in 1821, valuable school libraries (in Dimitsana, Zagora, Ioannina, Ambelakia, Chios, etc.) were founded. They contained small collections of manuscripts and printed texts and were often donations of former students who excelled abroad. Larger libraries were operating in schools, academies, museums and monasteries and were supported by Greek rich people of the time (Χαραμής, 1998; Αρβανίτη, 2008).

With the establishment of the Greek state, the Government tried to strengthen the institution (relevant laws are: the Royal Orders: “Βασιλικά Διατάγματα. 8/20-11-1835, 8-11/1836, 28-10/1855, 28-3/1869”), but without a consistent and stable political line. Some state book dispatches began from the warehouses of the Aegina Island, House for Orphans, but libraries were enriched with offerings of affluent citizens, grants from the municipality and donations by writers or publishers (Ματθαίου, 1989).

In particular, the Royal Order from 1835 signed by King Othon provided the creation of libraries in all public schools and their management was temporarily assigned to schoolmasters and schoolchildren. Unfortunately, this Order was not implemented. Mainly because usually there were not enough buildings, the books were non-renewal, the absence of a specialist staff was present and the new institution of school libraries met serious economic problems. But most of all, planning by the State for the development of one network of school libraries that would connect their function with teaching was nonexistent (Μπουζάκης, 1998; Ντελόπουλος, 1998; ΥΠ.Ε.Π.Θ., 2003).

In general, in the majority of the legal acts the school’s headmaster appointed a teacher as the head of the library, a committee was recommended to approve the appropriate books and to operate a different library for pupils and teachers (Αρβανίτη, 2008).

In the 20th century the Royal Order from 30 November 1901 and the decision of the Ministry of Education from 22 December 1901, for the school libraries, set out their enrichment with “appropriate books” from a list drawn up by the Society for the dissemination of beneficial books defined the rules of operation. The Law 4397/1929 referred to their annual credit, while the Law 5045/1931 established the way of their financing. The books they would include would be of two categories: didactics aids and for free reading. In 1933 the Law 5911/1933 was issued which states that a student library will be operated under the responsibility of the Teachers’ Association.

One hundred and fifty years after the first Royal Order with the Presidential Order 1566/85 attempted to upgrade the institution. The Article 43 again sets out: “In each primary and secondary school a library will operate and a teacher will be appointed as responsible. The library’s material will be approved and supplied by the school committee” (Νόμος 1566, 1985). At a national level, the Ministry of Education, with a special committee, is responsible for compiling lists from which books will be selected (*Παιδαγωγική Ψυχολογική Εγκυκλοπαίδεια*, 1989). In both orders from 1835 and 1985 a lack of design realism is present and there is no provision for regulation, role, purpose and objectives.

Many legislative texts follow to fill this gap in the period 1994-1999, when the Ministry of Education with funding of the 2nd European Community Support Framework makes more effective intervention implements the first, about 500 school libraries, in the secondary education.

3.5 *School libraries of EPEAEK (Operational Program of Education and Initial Vocational Training)*

The school year 1994-1995 started the program for the modernization of school libraries, funded by the 2nd Community Support Framework, and concerned 500 schools. The choice of these 500 schools was based on anthropogenic, spatial, and social criteria. The study design and development of the school libraries network was made by national counseling. It referred to international standards for space, collections and staff, and related to the program for the period 1995-1999.

The project was implemented in two phases: (a) pilot implementation with the creation of 50 libraries, and (b) the creation of the other 450 libraries.

In 2003, with a new decision of the Ministry of Education (ΥΠ.Ε.Π.Θ., 2003), containing the new operating framework for 500 new school libraries. The network belongs to the Office of School Libraries, a service in the structure of the Ministry of Education, which supervises their operation. In 2006 the network was expanded with 266 new libraries of EPEAEK (Operational Program of Education and Initial Vocational Training). From 13,480 book titles, the teachers in each school had to select 5,000 titles with a quota per topic for staffing the library.

A new framework for the establishment of a system of school libraries network in primary education was applied in 2018. Each school library, as defined by the ministerial decision (Υ.Π.Ε.Θ., 2018), is among others:

- (a) An area of asset management and lending;
- (b) An alternative environment for learning, socializing and promoting reading;
- (c) An information unit and center of cognitive resources;
- (d) A supporting tool for the organization of teaching;
- (e) An Internet access center and an open information world;
- (f) A field of aid and development of critical and informative literacy.

The development of the school libraries network system of primary education is based on the already existing and operating school libraries, which are housed in an autonomous space of the school unit and have a sufficient number of books. The school libraries network system

remains open and is expanded with the registration of new members, following a relevant invitation to schools, by the Ministry of Education.

3.6 *The school library in the 21st century*

Educational needs in the 21st century are not simply confined to the student's ability to read and write, but to their ability to convert the information they receive from their school, the books, and the environment in general into knowledge. This synthetic ability is the basis of education and the library is called upon to play a decisive role in this process. So libraries must be fully integrated into the educational process and be an integral part of the school and work for the service of the student community (ΥΠ.Ε.Π.Θ., 2003).

According to the *Report of the International Commission on Education in the 21st Century* there will be four educational pillars for students: *to learn how to get knowledge* (apprendre a connaitre), *to learn to act* (apprendre a faire) (competence), *to learn to live with others* (apprendre a vivre ensemble), and *to learn to "co-exist"* (apprendre a etre). More important is the fourth pillar, as the 21st century requires from everyone more spiritual independence, criticism capacity, harmonized with a strong sense of personal responsibility for the achievement of common goals (UNESCO, 1999).

It is not enough, therefore, only to link the school class to the Internet for a modern school in the 21st century. A new way of learning is needed for students who will live and work in a complex informational environment, to distinguish what is valid, reliable and important, what is lasting and what is ephemeral. The main consideration is that in the 21st century, an illiterate will not be the one who does not know to read or to write, but to the one who does not know how to learn, to forget and learn again.

In these schools of the future, essential parts are the school libraries, because teachers cannot achieve this new assignment alone. It is an excellent opportunity for school libraries to teach students how to appreciate any information critically and competently. Thus, libraries seem to be at the beginning of a "renaissance" (Mondloch, 2011).

When it comes to Greece, school libraries will play an even greater role in particular after the implementation of the "all days schools", the new curriculum and the introduction of new lessons such as: visual arts, theatrical education, music, computer science, etc., (Κυζυκис, 2015), but also by developing lifelong learning structures such as the alternative schools (Debrenlieva-Koutsouki, 2017).

The global interconnectivity (Internet) provided by information technology requires new skills and techniques that prepare students to live and work in the 21st century. School librarians are vital partners in creating schools which will prepare their students to learn through a wide variety of sources and communication channels. Libraries become dynamic learning centers for schools of the "information age". Using the "guided research" method students with skills and competences are facing the challenges of an uncertain, changing world. That is why the role of school libraries in research learning is essential. Their role has evolved and follows the changes in education. Studies in the United States and Sweden over the past decade have shown the importance of collaborating with librarians and teachers to implement research learning, for the passage from the simple exploration of a subject to deep understanding and have demonstrated the positive correlation between school performance and the existence of a school library (Kuhlthau, 2010).

In conclusion, we can say that fondness for reading is not inherent or obligatory, it is acquired through education and not in a short time. It battles illiteracy and prepares students who

can help for the cultural evolution of their society. School libraries can really play their part in educating the future citizens.

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