

# Effective School Library Applications As A Transformative Force for Change in School Community

*Sevgi Arioğlu*

*sevgi.arioglu@fmvisik.k12.tr*

FMV Erenköy Işık High School, İstanbul, TURKEY.

**Keywords:** *School Library, Information Literacy Program, Technology in Library Program, IB DP, Reading Projects.*

## **Abstract**

*The Guiding Principles of Feyziye Schools Foundation (FMV) is to 'raise good citizens'. The mission is to strengthen and promote our students within knowledge of and self-expression in both their mother tongue and foreign languages, academic mindset and analytical social skills, internalization of a set of ethical values, consciousness of the need for lifelong learning in an ever-changing world. Principals, teachers, support staff, parents and students are working collaboratively to prepare students for university education and as a qualified 21<sup>st</sup> century employees. The services and training programs implemented in our school library are structured to reach the school's mission. School library provides services to the school community through activities such as reading projects, symposiums, extended essay studies with International Baccalaureate Diploma Program (IB DP) students and information literacy program with 9-science 1 class students.*

*Information Literacy Program includes 4 different sessions and based on Big6 skills. Literacy skills and digital citizenship, research steps, academic honesty and reporting processes provide students with the opportunity to improve their knowledge of literacy skills, which is one of the most important elements of 21<sup>st</sup> century competencies. Evaluation of the program was carried out by implementation some technological applications (QR code, kahoot), pre-test and post-test surveys.*

## **Introduction**

In 2014-2015 academic year, FMV Erenköy Işık High School was accredited by the International Baccalaureate Diploma Program (IBDP) which is accepted as the assertive and world-wide prestigious program. The school librarian works in cooperation with the teachers for the planning, setting- up and running the diploma program. As emphasized on International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) School Library Guidelines, "School librarians recognize the importance of having a systematic framework for the teaching of media and information skills, and they contribute to the enhancement of students' skills through collaborative work with teachers" (IFLA, 2015, p. 40). In order to achieve our mission that directly corresponds with the mission and objectives in the school librarians guide published by IFLA, FMV Erenköy Işık High School-Science School library as a modern learning center works collaboratively with the whole school community.

School library provides services to the school community through activities such as book conversations, symposiums, extended essay studies, information literacy program. We believe that everything starts with reading. School library leads reading projects that establish effective communication between kindergarten, elementary school, middle school and high school employees, parents and high school students. The school community is being offered the opportunity to read books of various genres, think critically and have discussions, communicate, improve presentation and public speaking skills not only in their native language but also in foreign languages.

Teachers and the librarian have created a curriculum in order to access accurate information sources via educational technologies, analyze correctly, and improve information literacy skills involved in the 21<sup>st</sup> century competencies. Information Literacy, use of technology, critical thinking, ethical decision making skills and actualization in the behaviors that student exhibit-from seeking diverse perspectives, to evaluating information, to using technology appropriately, to applying information literacy skill, to use multiple formats (American Association of School Librarians, 2009). Library information literacy program is mainly needed because of IB students' difficulties in writing extended essay (EE) which is one component of the IB DP core and mandatory for all students. The information literacy program was applied for not only IB DP students but also to new students who are starting our high schools because they have to do a term project on their lessons. Program is including 4 different sessions and based on Big6 skills. Through the focus on video and text interpretations, discovery of different research tools and methods, access and analysis of the resources, and how to cite sources studies, we endeavor to achieve the desired learner profile. With the help of digital applications, teaching and assessment studies are carried out.

The success of the training program is evaluated by conducting pre-test and post-test surveys to the students with the aim of assessing the achievement of the objectives of the training program. After examining the survey results, the program is constructed and necessary changes and adaptations are made. The reading culture program of our school library, information literacy education program and some interdisciplinary activities are the contents of the article.

### ***Effective Library on the Social, Cultural and Academic Improvement***

The school library is located on the first floor of our high school building with a capacity of 70 people using individually, as a class or in smaller groups on the area of 250 meter square. There are 7 computers with Internet access, and a technology area where the presentations for trainings take place. The resources required to follow the school curricula, publications in different languages and areas needed by the individuals for their social, cultural and personal improvements are provided as based on The School Libraries Regulation and Standard Instruction published by the Ministry of National Education. All the printed, visual and audio publications are recorded on the atomization system according to the Dewey Decimal Classification System and exhibited through the open shelf system for the users. The library collection continuously expands with the reference books, novels, periodicals, newspapers, e-books, e-magazines, audio-visual materials and sources for the IB Diploma program in our high school. The publications included recently in our collection and the library activities are communicated to our staff and parents by emails. The library collection aiming at the access of all users for the sources of all kinds of printed and electronic sources and involves over 17000 printed publications and up to 2000 visual-audio publications. As the part of printed publications, we have subscriptions to 42 periodicals in different disciplines and languages. The library holds 763 active members including 502 students, 120 teaching staff, and 141 parents.

Through the technology, all the users can easily access the library sources. Thanks to the online library catalogue and electronic sources on the school website all members have 24/7 access to reach scientific, reliable and accurate information on the electronic database during and after the school days. The school library also subscribes to EBSCO, Encyclopedia Britannica, ARTstor Image Database, Springer and Palgrave e-Books, Wiley e-Books and periodicals in the electronic resource collection included in the library of Işık University by FMV are open for the access of our users. As library has the subscription of TumbleBooks Library, our students have the opportunity to access various e-books, videos and documentaries in English, French and German.

### ***Reading Culture Creates Strong Bond***

The library and librarian play a significant role for the students in the interaction with the books throughout their school life. As a requirement of the education system in Turkey, students need to take a compulsory exam to study in the high school, and therefore they spend their time for learning the topics and solving tests. Besides, OECD's Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) tests 15-year-old students from all over the world in reading, mathematics and science. In PISA research, the reading skills are defined as to understand, use and reflect on written texts in order for the individual to achieve goals, develop knowledge and potential, and participate in society. Turkish students are ranked 50th among 72 countries in their understanding of reading in their mother tongue. (PISA 2015 National Report, p.31). That result shows us that we have to promote reading of our students. Our library organizes book talks where the school community has the chance to share what they have read with the book lovers, improve their communication and critical thinking skills.

### ***Be Light With Books (Adult Book Conversation Club)***

The environmental factors have an important role for developing a personality and habits. Since the educators should be a role model for students as to encourage them to read, we have developed a reading project of "Be The Light With Books". The school librarian emails every month, 3 different book suggestions and a survey to select the book of the month to teachers, administrators, staff and parents. The selected book at the end of the survey and the talk time are announced to the whole school community through the posters. The participants of the reading activity including teachers from various subjects such as history, geography, philosophy, math, science, literature and the parents from different professions discuss the characters, plot and the impressions on the readers.

As we are involved in the dense and busy working schedules in the big cities, we need a motivation for reading books. Therefore some authors of the books we read are invited to the school. This project has been active for three years and, in total 27 books were read and 10 prestigious Turkish authors were invited. This has been accepted as a successful project since it strengthens the communication among parents, teachers and school staff, and enables the consistency of the participation.

### ***Işık Student's Book Conversation Club***

Our book talk project that we launched to become a role model for our students drew the interest of our students and they wanted to join these talks where the authors are invited. We created a series of talks "Işık Student's Book Conversation Club" that involves the volunteer students sharing their book suggestions and the article presentations. When the students decide about the topic or the book, the time of the talk, presenter student and the publication are communicated to the whole school community. Students make a presentation to an audience consisting of teachers, administrators, and students from other classes, and therefore have the chance to speak to the public, express themselves using their mother language effectively, and interact with other members of the school. Within this project supported by the school administration, 16 students made book presentations and awarded by the school principal. When

the activity reports are shared on the school's media accounts with the approval of the presenter students, and those students are recognized, it provides great motivation for all learners.

### ***Today a Reader Tomorrow a Leader (Book Conversation in Foreign Language)***

FMV Erenköy Işık High School teaches in a foreign language. Therefore, the school's resource development program and system are structured in a way to support the foreign language progress of our students. IFLA School Library Guide emphasizes that "Students learning a second language improve fluency and comprehension when they have access to quality books in their second language." (2005, p.39). Within this context, the foreign language teachers and the school librarian engage in collaboration to support the language development of our prep and science school students and organize book talks. There is a reading class for one period per week in these grade levels. In the second term, the students make a presentation of the book they choose in the second foreign language, thus they improve their reading, self-expression, research and presentation skills. The students have the opportunity to overcome the anxiety for making mistakes during public speaking, and develop the chance to express themselves in another language. They made presentations of 42 books in 2017, 53 books in 2018 and 40 books in 2019, and introduced total 135 books to the school community. Throughout this process, the audience had a common outcome which is to have information about hundreds of books written in different languages, and to criticize and present their opinions.

### ***Organizations with Interdisciplinary Collaborations***

TEDxYOUTH organizations have been taking place that will enable students to improve their thinking, imagination, entrepreneurship and communication skills. The activity was organized with the leadership of foreign language teacher and the school librarian, open to the participation of students from other high schools. The event hosted the experts that made a difference in their areas, and the topic was "Think Outside of the Box".

The Culture and Literature Symposium addressing the educators, administrators, librarians and literature lovers in İstanbul and neighborhood cities has been organized together with the library and the literature department since 2015. The topic of the first symposium with the support of the school administration was "Literature and the Writing Process", the second was "Literature and Movie", third was "Literature and its relation with the History", and the last one in the recent year was "Literature and Theater". The sharing of the academicians, directors, performers, movie actors and authors being invited as guest speakers to the symposium is a community project that contributes to the social, cultural, personal and professional improvement.

### ***Library Orientations with Digital Natives***

"School librarians often provide orientations to inform students as to the organization and scope of the school library's resources. This is a significant aspect of reference service for school librarians" (Riedling et al., 2013, p.5). Within the library orientation, our students are informed about the library resources, classification system, online library catalogue, and then they seek answers to the questions on the screen by scanning the QR codes on their mobile devices. The questions regarding the genres of literature, ISBN, classification numbers, periodicals, electronic resources and resources based on DEWEY are researched in the library and on the school's web page. The students that we call as digital natives enjoy learning the skills of library and technology literacy via their mobile devices. The QR codes of the questions prepared by the librarian can be created with free of charge from many web pages and can become more interesting for students with different designs.

### ***Library Information Literacy Program***

The school libraries play an important role in developing the information literacy required to access the source of the information with the education technologies, to analyze correctly and transform it into a new product. When our high school was accredited as an IB School in 2014, the requirement for the IB students to write an EE to complete the diploma program increased the responsibility of the library and the librarian. We came together with the teachers, discussed the areas that students have difficulty in the academic process and engaged in a common work on research skills, citation, scientific reporting and project writing. Besides the IB DP students, all other students in high school can take a homework project and raise their average with the score of this project. The teachers have already presented to the school administration that it is required to complete the homework project in accordance with its purpose, and in compliance with scientific, authentic and academic honesty rather than with a copy-paste information. The school administration then decided for the requirement for an information literacy program that will support the readiness of our students to join the IB DP program in the future and created a curriculum in collaboration with the school librarian and the teachers. The curriculum is based on The Big6 Information Problem Solving Model which was developed by information literacy educators Mike Eisenberg, Bob Berkowitz and AASL Standards for the 21st Century Learner. The Big6 is the most widely known and used information literacy approach to teaching information and technology skills in the world. Define the information problem and identify information needed (task definition), determine all possible source and select the best source (information seeking strategies), learning locate and access digital- printed source and the reliability and credibility of web-based resources (location and access), extract relevant information (use of information), organize from multiple source and present the information (synthesis) and judge the product and process effectiveness (evaluation) are steps of the library literacy program (Eisenberg et al., 2016). Media literacy, digital citizenship, reporting, academic honesty and citation rules are other subtitles of training program.

During this process, brainstorming activities are carried out by the videos and questions in order to improve the critical thinking skills of students. For instance, when they were shown the video of Fresh Guacamole by PES, the sounds and images were just a reflection of the process of preparing a salad sauce for them (PES, 2013). However, when they were told that each ingredient of the sauce was a symbol including a separate message, they made surprising comments on the world economy and the leaders. As we consider the interest of young students in social media phenomena and youtubers, the videos of Barış Özcan, as one of the top 12 youtubers influencing the society positively are admired by students. He produces and broadcasts YouTube videos about art, design, technology and literature. “How do I make videos for YouTube?” video of him is one of the media we used to show students the steps of research techniques (Özcan, 2017).

The examples of good and bad articles prepared by the students are used anonymously in the instructions. The quality of the research question, the scope of the topic, the legibility of the information resources being used, the strengths while supporting the hypothesis, the selection of the research method and the citations are reviewed by students. While students are examining other projects, they have an idea of what is expected of them.

We continue to develop some work so that students can question the accuracy, currency and objectivity of information they have through web searches, and to use the databases, digital encyclopedias and the collection of printed publications in the library to reach the information with a scientific content.

### ***Digital Citizenship***

With the development of technology, education, production, social communication, official transactions and trade have quickly become digitized. Digital Citizenship can be defined as individuals having the skill

to use information technologies properly and correctly in those areas. FMV Işık Schools has developed a “Digital Citizenship Policy” in order to improve the skills of our students in the digital world and contribute to the improvement of fundamental values and citizenship rules in the classroom and daily life. The curriculum for the Information Technologies courses for all grades from kindergarten to high school has been structured in accordance with this policy, which is regularly updated and enriched. Information and Educational Technologies Coordinators, IT Teachers and school librarians work collaboratively to contribute Digital Citizenship Curriculum for all grades. Digital citizenship training program is based on nine elements which created by Mike Ribble and Dr. Gerald Bailey. Digital access, digital commerce, digital communication, digital literacy, digital etiquette, digital security, digital rights and responsibilities, digital health, digital law are explained to students with practical tools (Ribble & Bailey, 2007). Students are learning generating, acquiring and sharing information accurately while ensuring that technology is also used in the process of teaching and learning. Respecting the rights of other individuals in the digital environment and being aware of when and how communication devices should be used is important goal of this training process. Digital right and responsibilities is another important elements for students to knowing ensure how is important know having the right to free speech while using digital devices acting responsibly online.

Computers, tablets, and smartphones are a huge part of many children’s everyday lives. They are using them at home for gaming and school as a part of educational programs. When parents come to use the library for any reason they ask to guide them to prevent their children from becoming addicted to technology. Some of the students have sleep disorders and come to school late or sleepy during school day. Sitting in front of a computer for too many hours can be a health hazard which can lead to weight gain which causes cardiovascular disease and diabetes. It has been another factor why we address this issue in library trainings. Explaining and showing some real life case to students and discussing on the way to be a conscious technology user is very effective.

### ***Academic Honesty***

Respect for all forms of intellectual and creative expression as well as for the work of others lies at the heart of academic honesty. Staff, students and parents want an environment where students can be proud of their work which is authentic and reflects their growing abilities and knowledge. Academic honesty must be seen as a set of values and skills that promote personal integrity and good practice in teaching, learning and assessment. It is influenced and shaped by a variety of factors including peer pressure, culture, parental expectations, role modeling and taught skills. The importance of integrity in the academic field and the impropriety of academic cheating should be explained to the students, parents and school public in terms of the benefits of academic studies that have been carried out properly and honestly. Whole school community aims to exhibit the proper behavior of academic honesty policy which is written with school decision maker, teachers, school librarian, parents and students.

The second week of February is celebrated as “Academic Honesty Week” and the school library organizes some activities regarding ethics, copyrights to be followed in the communities of culture, art, literature and academics. Students are shown some films adapted in different countries and very similar music videos of some singers and asked about their opinions. We create a critical environment for brainstorming regarding ethics, copyrights and consumer rights, and ask questions such as what sanctions should be implemented or what situations do not require any legal problems. We go through the MLA citation rules, and the citation guide prepared for students are put on the web page of the school library.

The quiz showed including the questions on the topic and prepared by Kahoot application is a part of the education program. The students get connected to the Kahoot application on their phones and

tablets, and answer the questions correctly and quickly during a given time period therefore reflect on their outcomes. Kahoot application has been used for the last four years by 17 separate classes and with the participation of 341 students. The students check their scores, discuss their wrong answers with their classmates and find the right information through peer learning. The success of the work done regarding academic honesty can be observed on the IB DP EE students who included mostly 15% citation in their work without any plagiarism.

### ***Project Writing and Presentation***

School Project Writing Booklet and EE Writing Process are two guides prepared for students including the rules of project writing and presentation. These guides are shared online with the students and together with these guides, the cover, introduction, development and conclusion, bibliography, citation are taught using the good examples during two lesson periods. As for the students making presentations, we explain about items such as choosing keywords they need to use, avoiding long explanatory text, using many tables, graphics and including citation.

The projects of students are assessed through rubrics. Since they include the criteria of citation, writing format, usage of the printed and online resources in the library, it increased their usage of the library.

### ***Assessment and Developing an Information Literacy Program***

“Evaluation is an important step of an ongoing cycle of continuous improvement and demonstrates to students and teachers, to library staff, and to the wider educational community the benefits derived from the school library programs and services” (IFLA School Library Guidelines, 2015, p. 49). Although the student’s studies are carefully examined by the teachers on the basis of students’ performances on projects, homework assignments and extended essay studies, library should know tests results to assessment weak and strong part of program.

In order to find out statically whether the information literacy program made a difference in the learning of the students, pre-test and post-test have been implemented during the two years when the program was put into practice. After these tests, the learning level and significance of the level difference of the same students are seen on the Table1.

Table 1. Information Literacy Program – Pre-test and Post-test Data Analysis Table

	2018			2019		
	Number of Participants	Percentage of Success	Value for Significance	Number of Participants	Percentage of Success	Value for Significance
Pre Test	67	47%	0,89	86	52%	0,91
Post Test		60%			74%	

As we interpret the statistics on the table, we can say that the learning of students has been significantly changed in two years. An “action plan” within the framework of the program was prepared at the end of

the first year. In this action plan, the work to be done on the areas where the learning level got changed in particular that was found out after examining the results of the test was included. In 2019 school year, the decisions taken in this action plan was put into practice. As a result of this, it was observed that the change and significance in the learning level got increased.

This program taking place in our high school since 2018 has been provided to total 153 students: 67 students in the first year and 86 students in the second year. Students have the chance to implement the skills they learned during the preparation of the homework and projects and the outcomes are assessed by teachers. For the last four years, the EE process of our students was supported with the contribution of 10 hour EE classes for total 63 IB DP students. No plagiarism was seen on the student work and they achieved passing grades, and completed the diploma program with success.

### **Conclusion**

The school library is a learning center that enables the improvement of all individuals in the school community in social and academic wise without discriminating their religions, races and genders. On the path taking the school to its goal in education and instruction, the reflections of the training program and the services of the school library strengthen the collaboration. By the launch of the information literacy program, the positive development of the content and the quality of the work by both high school and IB DP students proved the necessity to continue the program. The school library is seen as an asset for the school administration with the activities creating an interaction among students, teachers and parents, establishing an environment for change and improvement, and reflecting the school's vision and mission to the individuals outside the school. The school library, open for the students as the architects of our future to become critically thinking, caring, open-minded, communicating and inquiring world citizens, should be the bridge cooperating with and taking the school community further. Through all this work, it is our goal not only to raise the academic achievement of students but to develop their life learning skills.

### **REFERENCES**

- American Association of School Librarians. (2009). *Empowering learners: Guidelines for school library programs*. Chicago, IL: American Library Association.
- Eisenberg, M. B., Murray, J. R., & Bartow, C. (2016). *The Big6 curriculum: Comprehensive information and communication technology (ICT) literacy for all students*. Santa Barbara, CA: Libraries Unlimited, an imprint of ABC-CLIO, LLC.
- International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (2015) *IFLA School Library Guidelines* (2nd rev. ed.). Netherland: IFLA
- Millî Eğitim Bakanlığı. (2016). *Uluslararası öğrenci değerlendirme programı: PISA 2015 ulusal raporu*. Millî Eğitim Bakanlığı, Ölçme, Değerlendirme ve Sınav Hizmetleri Genel Müdürlüğü, Ankara.
- Özcan, B. (2017, November 09). *YouTube için nasıl video hazırlıyorum?* [Online video]. Retrieved from 17 December, 2017 from YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8ywsjyr-fow>
- PES. (2013, March 07). *Fresh Guacamole* [Online video]. Retrieved July 26, 2016, from [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dNJdJIwCF\\_Y](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dNJdJIwCF_Y)
- Ribble, M., & Bailey, G. D. (2007). *Digital citizenship in schools*. Eugene, Or.: International Society for Technology in Education.



Riedling, A. M., Shake, L., & Houston, C. (2013). *Reference skills for the school librarian: Tools and tips*. Santa Barbara, CA: Linworth, an imprint of ABC-CLIO, LLC.

**Biography**

Sevgi Arioğlu studied Information & Record Management at Marmara University. Working as a librarians and IB DP extended essay coordinator at FMV Erenköy Isik High School, she and Ayşe Yüksel-Durukan translated IFLA *School Library Guidelines*. A chapter about her works published in “Effective School Librarianship”. She is acting as director of the Middle East & North Africa of IASL since May, 2018.

[sevgi.arioglu@fmvisik.k12.tr](mailto:sevgi.arioglu@fmvisik.k12.tr)