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Training programs and the provision of individualized teaching are a prerequisite for the support of students with special educational needs in the general classroom

Abstract

Strengthening reflection on teacher training and the provision of individualized teaching as a prerequisite for supporting students with special educational needs in the general classroom will occupy our research process. The effort to diversify teaching in mixed-capacity classes, which concerns the educational community, has the appropriate theoretical background for dealing with and managing cases of special education and cases arising from this situation. The findings show that a fairly high percentage of teachers have not been trained in Special Education, yet through personal engagement they are trying to deal with individual cases in the context of general education and training. This is followed by a critical look at the attitude of teachers towards educational programs, as well as the position of teachers in identifying and personalizing the teaching of students with special educational needs (S.E.N.). Finally, the teachers' proposals are presented with the aim of professional development of teachers through training, alternative programs, provision of pedagogical techniques and application of good practices in the field of special education and training, as the design and implementation of teacher training programs are an important condition for providing quality education.

Keywords: Training, individualized teaching, support for students with S.E.N., general school

Περίληψη

Η ενίσχυση του προβληματισμού αναφορικά με την επιμόρφωση των εκπαιδευτικών και την παροχή εξατομικευμένων διδασκαλιών ως προϋπόθεση για την υποστήριξη μαθητών με ειδικές εκπαιδευτικές ανάγκες στη γενική τάξη θα απασχολήσει την ερευνητική μας διαδικασία. Η προσπάθεια διαφοροποιημένης διδασκαλίας σε τάξεις μικτής δυναμικότητας, προβληματίζει την εκπαιδευτική κοινότητα έχει το ανάλογο θεωρητικό υπόβαθρο για την αντιμετώπιση και διαχείριση περιπτώσεων ειδικής αγωγής και περιπτώσεων που πηγάζουν από αυτή την κατάσταση. Τα ευρήματα δείχνουν ότι σε ένα αρκετά υψηλό ποσοστό οι εκπαιδευτικοί δεν έχουν επιμορφωθεί σε θέματα Ειδικής Αγωγής, παρόλα αυτά μέσω προσωπικής ενασχόλησης προσπαθούν να αντιμετωπίσουν τις μεμονωμένες περιπτώσεις στο πλαίσιο της γενικής εκπαίδευσης και αγωγής. Στη συνέχεια, ακολουθεί μια κριτική θεώρηση για τη στάση των εκπαιδευτικών για τα επιμορφωτικά προγράμματα, καθώς και για τη θέση των εκπαιδευτικών για τον εντοπισμό και την εξατομικευμένη διδασκαλία μαθητών με Ειδικές Εκπαιδευτικές Ανάγκες (Ε.Ε.Α.). Τέλος, παρουσιάζονται οι προτάσεις των εκπαιδευτικών με στόχο την επαγγελματική ανάπτυξη των εκπαιδευτικών μέσω επιμορφώσεων, εναλλακτικών προγραμμάτων, παροχής παιδαγωγικών τεχνικών και εφαρμογής καλών πρακτικών στον τομέα της ειδικής αγωγής και εκπαίδευσης, καθώς ο σχεδιασμός και εφαρμογή προγραμμάτων επιμόρφωσης των εκπαιδευτικών αποτελούν σημαντική προϋπόθεση για την παροχή ποιοτικής εκπαίδευσης.

Λέξεις-κλειδιά: Επιμόρφωση, εξατομικευμένη διδασκαλία, υποστήριξη μαθητών με Ε.Ε.Α., γενικό σχολείο

1. Introduction

In the present work, an attempt is made to examine the issue of the training of general education teachers in their effort to support students with special educational needs (S.E.N.) in the general school. The support of students with E.E.A. in general school is really a challenge of modern educational policy in many countries of the world¹. The fact is that this support is needed by teachers who move within the framework of ethical and legal reasons.

According to Law 1143/81 “On special education, special vocational

1 Κουλιπαλίδου, Ι., (2013). Συγκριτική προσέγγιση της Νομοθεσίας – των Εκπαιδευτικών Δομών – των Αναλυτικών προγραμμάτων και της Εκπαίδευσης των Παιδαγωγών στην Ειδική Αγωγή σε χώρες της Νότιας Ευρώπης. (Διπλωματική εργασία). Πανεπιστήμιο Θεσσαλίας, Βόλος.

education, employment and social care for persons deviating from normal individuals”² shows that the state itself is beginning to take care of and formally take an interest in these individuals³.

Thus, the development of special education in Greece begins, recognizing equal opportunities for all individuals, such as in the school, the social and the professional contexts⁴. Then the state itself places special emphasis on school integration. The state itself is beginning to change its attitude and mentality towards these people. All citizens are given the opportunity to have the same rights and obligations. Equal opportunities, a school for all, is the duty of the state, which begins to be interested in and support the education of these individuals.

Slowly, the school is given the opportunity to apply the tactics of co-education and to have a school for all. This idea, presupposes corresponding practices and methods of co-education during the implementation process⁵. It presupposes knowledge and skills that will help the teacher in the process of identifying and providing individualized teaching. Many times the term “children with disabilities” affects the attitudes and perceptions of teachers in listening. For this reason special care is needed in the wording of the terms or in replacing the terms with other words. For example, the terms co-education, collaborative learning when used by a school should make every teacher aware of the importance, purpose and needs it serves⁶. Otherwise it is like accepting the separation of these people from other discrimination.

The research questions in this paper are:

- a) What is the attitude of teachers towards training programs?
- b) What is the position of teachers for the identification and individualized teaching of students with SEN?

2. Theoretical framework

2.1. Training in Special Education

Education is in constant dynamic interaction with society, therefore it must

2 Νόμος 1143/1981 - ΦΕΚ 80/Α/31-3-1981 Περί ειδικής αγωγής, ειδικής επαγγελματικής εκπαίδευσης, απασχολήσεως και κοινωνικής μερίμνης των αποκλινόντων εκ του φυσιολογικού ατόμων και άλλων τινών εκπαιδευτικών διατάξεων.

3 Κουλιπαλίδου, Ι., (2013). Συγκριτική προσέγγιση της Νομοθεσίας – των Εκπαιδευτικών Δομών – των Αναλυτικών προγραμμάτων και της Εκπαίδευσης των Παιδαγωγών στην Ειδική Αγωγή σε χώρες της Νότιας Ευρώπης. (Διπλωματική εργασία). Πανεπιστήμιο Θεσσαλίας, Βόλος.

4 Μπαγάκης, Γ., (2011). Θεσμοθετημένες και νέες μορφές επιμόρφωσης. Προς αναζήτηση συνέργειας και καλών πρακτικών. Αθήνα: Ο.Ε.Π.Ε.Κ.

5 Τσιμπιδάκη, Α., (2013). Ο ειδικός παιδαγωγός στο σύγχρονο ελληνικό σχολείο. Στο Γ. Κόκκινος & Μ. Μοσκοφόγλου-Χιονίδου (Επιμ.), *Επιστήμες της εκπαίδευσης: Από την ασθενή ταξινόμηση της παιδαγωγικής στη διεπιστημονικότητα και στον επιστημονικό υβριδισμό*. Παιδαγωγικό Τμήμα Δημοτικής Εκπαίδευσης Πανεπιστημίου Αιγαίου (σελ. 397-413). Αθήνα: Ταξιδευτής.

evolve and adapt to its requirements. In recent decades there has been a particular change in the composition of the general school population⁶. This is due to various factors, such as economic migration, as well as the growing tendency for more children with special educational needs to be included in general school classes. According to the above, teachers of all levels are called upon to meet the needs of the inhomogeneous school class, in order to contribute to the inclusion of all children in school⁷. This new challenge for teachers can be addressed through the implementation of differentiated teaching, with a design process throughout the teaching, in an organized and systematic way of implementation⁸. In this new challenge, in order for the teacher to respond to the different educational needs of each student, he is forced to adapt the teaching and the content of the curriculum to the needs of the student⁹.

The need for continuous training in the educational community has been particularly high in recent years and this is due to the continuous developments in all areas of knowledge and information, but also to the growing demands of the educational environment¹⁰. It is part of the continuous and professional and personal development and evolution of teachers. Therefore, teacher training is not limited to the initial, but to the continuous, complementary and in-service, which monitors the reshuffles and changing needs of the student population¹¹. On the other hand, in order for training to be effective, teachers must treat it as a tool for managing real-life situations and not as learning that results from theoretical processing of topics¹².

The increase in students with learning difficulties and in general those who are part of the wider context of special education is a statistical fact¹³. Teachers of all levels, however, are not specialized in addressing these needs and problems arise in dealing with and properly managing students, which are due to lack of training, as Watkins¹⁴ points out. As only 2% of students with special

6 Φιλιππάτου, Δ. & Βεντίστα, Ο.Μ. (2017). *Αντιλήψεις των εκπαιδευτικών δευτεροβάθμιας εκπαίδευσης για τη διαφοροποίηση της διδασκαλίας*, Το βήμα των κοινωνικών επιστημών, Τόμος ΙΖ, τεύχος 68.

7 Παντελιάδου, Σ., 2013. *Διαφοροποιημένη διδασκαλία και ειδική αγωγή: μια πρόκληση για την προετοιμασία των εκπαιδευτικών*. Στο Σ. Παντελιάδου και Δ. Φιλιππάτου (Επιμ.), *Διαφοροποιημένη διδασκαλία. Θεωρητικές προσεγγίσεις και εκπαιδευτικές πρακτικές*. Αθήνα: Πεδίο, σσ.149-183.

8 Tomlinson C.A. and Moon T. R., 2013. *Assessment and student success in a differentiated classroom*. Alexandria, VA: ASCD.

9 Tomlinson C.A. and Moon T. R., 2013. *Assessment and student success in a differentiated classroom*. Alexandria, VA: ASCD.

10 Φιλιππάτου, Δ. & Βεντίστα, Ο.Μ. (2017). *Αντιλήψεις των εκπαιδευτικών δευτεροβάθμιας εκπαίδευσης για τη διαφοροποίηση της διδασκαλίας*, Το βήμα των κοινωνικών επιστημών, Τόμος ΙΖ, τεύχος 68.

11 Φιλιππάτου, Δ. & Βεντίστα, Ο.Μ. (2017). *Αντιλήψεις των εκπαιδευτικών δευτεροβάθμιας εκπαίδευσης για τη διαφοροποίηση της διδασκαλίας*, Το βήμα των κοινωνικών επιστημών, Τόμος ΙΖ, τεύχος 68.

12 Σαμαρά, Α., (2011). *Διδάσκει αεί διδασκόμενος. Η δια βίου μάθηση και το επάγγελμα του εκπαιδευτικού*. Στο Ματθαίου, Δ., (επιμ.) *Η βασική και επαγγελματική κατάρτιση των εκπαιδευτικών δευτεροβάθμιας εκπαίδευσης. Κριτική και συγκριτική θεώρηση* (σελ. 133-149). Αθήνα: διά δράση.

13 European Agency for Development in S.N.E. (2003), *Inclusive Education and Effective Classroom Practices*, 8.

needs, according to the European Agency for Development in SNE, attend special education, it is expected that the teacher will work with students with disabilities. Therefore, the need for appropriate special teacher training and the enrichment of knowledge and skills is a necessity¹⁴.

The acquisition of knowledge on special education by teachers is a continuous and possibly long-term process, which in order to be included in the program and the obligations of teachers must propose alternative forms of training taking into account the principles of adult and distance education¹⁵ and using information and learning technologies. In addition, the investigation of training needs and the utilization of its results must take into account the perceptions of teachers as trained, so that the design and implementation of training programs is based on real training needs¹⁶.

Training is especially important for every teacher, because it contributes to the strengthening of his / her professional and personal development, but also to the whole educational potential, aiming to meet all the needs related to the improvement of the functionality of the educational system¹⁷. Using the definition of training, we include all institutionalized or non-institutionalized processes aimed at renewing or supplementing the teacher's initial training, with the purpose of personal development and improvement of the teacher's work, and consequently the creation of a quality education¹⁸.

2.2. Teachers' attitudes and perceptions about training programs:

It is clear that in order to have effective teaching regarding the heterogeneity of students in a classroom, it is necessary to systematically train teachers. This is achieved through training programs related to the issue of joint education of children with or without S.E.N.¹⁹ Despite recognizing their importance and value,

14 Σατίδου, Μ., (2012). Η επάρκεια της βασικής κατάρτισης των εκπαιδευτικών στην Ειδική Αγωγή: Απόψεις εκπαιδευτικών Ειδικής Αγωγής. (Διπλωματική εργασία). Αριστοτέλειο Πανεπιστήμιο Θεσσαλονίκης, Θεσσαλονίκη.

15 Γεωργούδης, Α., Διονυσίου, Ν., & Κούκος, Ι. (2014). Η επιμόρφωση των εκπαιδευτικών Πρωτοβάθμιας Εκπαίδευσης στην Ελλάδα και την Κύπρο- μια συγκριτική προσέγγιση. Πτυχιακή Εργασία. Δημοκρίτειο Πανεπιστήμιο Θράκης, Παιδαγωγικό Τμήμα Δημοτικής Εκπαίδευσης.

16 Δερμιτζάκης, Θ. (2017). Αντιλήψεις των εκπαιδευτικών ειδικής αγωγής πρωτοβάθμιας και δευτεροβάθμιας εκπαίδευσης του νομού Ηρακλείου Κρήτης για την επιμόρφωσή τους. Αδημοσίευτη Μεταπτυχιακή Εργασία. Ελληνικό Ανοικτό Πανεπιστήμιο, Αθήνα, Ελλάδα. Retrieved 5/1/2018 from: <https://apothesis.eap.gr/handle/repo/35534>

17 Τσιμπιδάκη, Α., (2018α). Εκπαίδευση εκπαιδευτικών ειδικής αγωγής: Κυριότερες τάσεις και προοπτικές. Εισήγηση στο Συνέδριο του ΠΤΔΕ του Πανεπιστημίου Αιγαίου: «Εκπαίδευση εκπαιδευτικών: Προκλήσεις και προοπτικές σε έναν κόσμο που αλλάζει», Ρόδος, 23-24 Ιουνίου 2018, Ρόδος.

18 Tomlinson C.A. and Moon T. R., 2013. *Assessment and student success in a differentiated classroom*. Alexandria, VA: ASCD.

19 Παπαδοπούλου, Κ., (2018). «Απόψεις και εμπειρίες εκπαιδευτικών Τμημάτων Ενταξης, της Δευτεροβάθμιας εκπαίδευσης, αναφορικά με την Ενταξιακή Εκπαίδευση κωφών και βαρήκων μαθητών». (Διπλωματική εργασία). Εθνικό & Καποδιστριακό Πανεπιστήμιο Αθηνών, Αθήνα.

these programs have been criticized for failing to make a decisive contribution to teachers' day-to-day practice²⁰. Of course, the failure of these programs is due to the difference between theory and practice due to insufficient coverage by the organizers, the structure, the content and the way in which the training programs are implemented. A training program according to many teachers should offer internships, because the direct experiences through practical applications give teachers opportunities to test experiential knowledge and skills²¹.

The differences and similarities between the various educational systems are explored through comparative and pedagogical research. According to Koulbalidou²², the field of general education has been the subject of comparative study several times. In contrast, the literature on special education and training, which has been of great interest to the research world in recent years, has been quite limited.

According to the research of Agaliotis²¹, which was conducted on teachers in eight prefectures of Greece, and which examined the importance of specialization and education of teachers of all levels, the need for specialization in the whole range of special educational needs was identified, as well as the need for teaching experience in special education structures. The need for training is considered necessary as it helps to address the difficulties arising from the daily execution of the educational project, the improvement of new methods and original approaches for the education of children with special educational needs.

The implementation of these support programs for people with disabilities it's really a challenge for teachers. This is explained by the fact that the knowledge and skills that teachers acquire in their basic undergraduate studies do not allow them to effectively teach children of different abilities²². Also, the attitudes of teachers in matters of S.E.N., the needs of daily teaching, but also the obligations at scientific and professional level are difficulties and obstacles in any possibility of supporting children with E.E.A. in the general classroom²³.

The training process in the field of education serves a variety of purposes. Specifically, the training of teachers aims at: a) the renewal or filling of gaps in primary education, b) the fullest and most substantial knowledge of the subject, c) the shift to lifelong learning and education, d) the change of attitude of teachers

20 Σαμαρά, Α., (2011). *Διδάσκω αεί διδασκόμενος. Η δια βίου μάθηση και το επάγγελμα του εκπαιδευτικού*. Στο Ματθαίου, Δ., (επιμ.) Η βασική και επαγγελματική κατάρτιση των εκπαιδευτικών δευτεροβάθμιας εκπαίδευσης. Κριτική και συγκριτική θεώρηση (σελ. 133-149). Αθήνα: διά δράση.

21 Αγαλιώτης, Ι., (2007). *Υποστήριξη μαθητών με ειδικές εκπαιδευτικές ανάγκες ή προβλήματα συμπεριφοράς*. Αθήνα: Παιδαγωγικό Ινστιτούτο.

22 Δροσινού, Μ. (2014). *Στοχευμένο Ατομικό Δομημένο Ενταξιακό Πρόγραμμα Ειδικής Αγωγής και Εκπαίδευσης (ΣΑΔΕΠΕΑΕ)*. Πανεπιστήμιο Πελοποννήσου Τμήμα Φιλολογίας Καλαμάτα. Ανάκτηση από <https://eclass.uop.gr/modules/document/document.php?course=LITD178>.

23 Παντελιάδου, Σ., 2013. Διαφοροποιημένη διδασκαλία και ειδική αγωγή: μια πρόκληση για την προετοιμασία των εκπαιδευτικών. Στο Σ. Παντελιάδου και Δ. Φύλιππου (Επιμ.), *Διαφοροποιημένη διδασκαλία. Θεωρητικές προσεγγίσεις και εκπαιδευτικές πρακτικές*. Αθήνα: Πεδίο, σσ.149-183.

for education, e) the familiarity with research methodology and f) the creation of teachers with strong personalities to deal with everyday problems²⁴.

In this context in which teachers come from and are accustomed to working, they should move to another context that is presented by education and that needs the support of children with SEN in a general school²⁵. In particular, when a teacher has learned for years to operate in an educational system with a well-structured teaching, with specific ages of children in a class, with the stress and pressure of the subject, these will make it difficult for the teacher when he comes in contact with people with different learning needs in the same classroom²⁶. This will be seen as an obstacle to achieving the educational goals²⁷. Therefore, teachers should be convinced that the acquisition of knowledge and skills to support students with SEN requires assessments, modifications and teaching adjustments that are useful for effective teaching for children with SEN, but also for all students²⁸.

Another important element is the method and means of training that can help teachers taking into account the time pressure that each teacher must manage, emphasizing the use of new technologies and their integration into the daily program for an effective educational process for children with SEN in the general classroom²⁹.

Undoubtedly, the main purpose of the training is to improve the quality of the educational process and the educational system, as well as the development of the teachers' work³⁰. Lifelong learning contributes to the professional and personal development of teachers³¹. Of course, in order for the training of teachers to be carried out properly, the emphasis must first be on their basic education.

24 Παντελιάδου, Σ., & Αντωνίου, Φ. (2008). Διδακτικές προσεγγίσεις και πρακτικές για μαθητές με μαθησιακές δυσκολίες. Πανεπιστήμιο Θεσσαλίας, Παιδαγωγικό Τμήμα Ειδικής Αγωγής, Βόλος.

25 Τσιμπιδάκη, Α., (2018β). Εκπαίδευση εκπαιδευτικών ειδικής αγωγής: Το παράδειγμα της Ελλάδας και της Ιταλίας. Εισήγηση στο 11ο Πανελλήνιο Συνέδριο της Παιδαγωγικής Εταιρείας Ελλάδος «Βασική και συνεχιζόμενη εκπαίδευση των εκπαιδευτικών σε ένα σύνθετο και μεταβαλλόμενο περιβάλλον», 23-25 Νοεμβρίου 2018, Πάτρα.

26 Παντελιάδου, Σ., & Πατσοδήμου, Α. (2007). Εφαρμογές Διδακτικής αξιολόγησης και μαθησιακές δυσκολίες. Πανεπιστήμιο Θεσσαλίας. Παιδαγωγικό Τμήμα Ειδικής Αγωγής, Βόλος.

27 Αγαλιώτης, Ι., (2007). Υποστήριξη μαθητών με ειδικές εκπαιδευτικές ανάγκες ή προβλήματα συμπεριφοράς. Αθήνα: Παιδαγωγικό Ινστιτούτο.

28 Σατιδου, Μ., (2012). Η επάρκεια της βασικής κατάρτισης των εκπαιδευτικών στην Ειδική Αγωγή: Απόψεις εκπαιδευτικών Ειδικής Αγωγής. (Διπλωματική εργασία). Αριστοτέλειο Πανεπιστήμιο Θεσσαλονίκης, Θεσσαλονίκη.

29 Καραγιαννίδου, Κ., (2018). Μελέτη ευρωπαϊκών συστημάτων για την μαθησιακή ένταξη των ΑμΕΑ: μια συγκριτική προσέγγιση Βορρά (Σουηδίας, Γερμανίας) και Νότου (Ελλάδας και Κύπρου). (Διπλωματική εργασία). Πανεπιστήμιο Μακεδονίας, Θεσσαλονίκη.

30 Μπαγάκης, Γ., (2011). Θεσμοθετημένες και νέες μορφές επιμόρφωσης. Προς αναζήτηση συνέργειας και καλών πρακτικών. Αθήνα: Ο.Ε.Π.Ε.Κ.

31 Τσιμπιδάκη, Α., (2018β). Εκπαίδευση εκπαιδευτικών ειδικής αγωγής: Το παράδειγμα της Ελλάδας και της Ιταλίας. Εισήγηση στο 11ο Πανελλήνιο Συνέδριο της Παιδαγωγικής Εταιρείας Ελλάδος «Βασική και συνεχιζόμενη εκπαίδευση των εκπαιδευτικών σε ένα σύνθετο και μεταβαλλόμενο περιβάλλον», 23-25 Νοεμβρίου 2018, Πάτρα.

In summary, we can see that the role of the special educator has changed a lot and is now much more specific. In Greek society, a large number of teachers have not graduated from a university special education department, nor do they have any specialization in the field of special education³². However, these teachers have the right to be in integration departments by attending special training programs. It has been observed that even teachers who have graduated from a university department in special education do not have the appropriate cognitive competence³³. Finally, an important problem is the cooperation between teachers, who find it difficult to work as a team and as a result their work becomes quite difficult. All these are problems that society has to deal with in order to improve the field of special education.

2.3. Identification and individualized teaching of students with E.E.A. in general school:

The support of students with S.E.N. in general school is indeed a difficult process. This is due to the fact that teachers feel unprepared and without knowledge and specialization in the subject, so they consider that it is not their responsibility to teach children with SEN³⁴. Also, the operation of the educational system in Greece aims at the completion of the teaching material, the issue of the absence of initial assessment of the students in order to make the appropriate adjustments in the teaching but also the ambition to achieve the same goals for all students in the class³⁵. Teacher training programs are ineffective. In these programs, the content of the term is important for people with special educational needs, but also for the identification and personalization of teaching by teachers³⁶.

The coexistence of a student with SEN with students in a general school classroom is considered a necessary condition for inclusion in the law

32 Σατίδου, Μ., (2012). Η επάρκεια της βασικής κατάρτισης των εκπαιδευτικών στην Ειδική Αγωγή: Απόψεις εκπαιδευτικών Ειδικής Αγωγής. (Διπλωματική εργασία). Αριστοτέλειο Πανεπιστήμιο Θεσσαλονίκης, Θεσσαλονίκη.

33 Τσιμπιδάκη, Α., (2018β). Εκπαίδευση εκπαιδευτικών ειδικής αγωγής: Το παράδειγμα της Ελλάδας και της Ιταλίας. Εισήγηση στο 11ο Πανελλήνιο Συνέδριο της Παιδαγωγικής Εταιρείας Ελλάδος «Βασική και συνεχιζόμενη εκπαίδευση των εκπαιδευτικών σε ένα σύνθετο και μεταβαλλόμενο περιβάλλον», 23-25 Νοεμβρίου 2018, Πάτρα.

34 Καραγιαννίδου, Κ., (2018). Μελέτη ευρωπαϊκών συστημάτων για την μαθησιακή ένταξη των ΑμΕΑ: μια συγκριτική προσέγγιση Βορρά (Σουηδίας, Γερμανίας) και Νότου (Ελλάδας και Κύπρου). (Διπλωματική εργασία). Πανεπιστήμιο Μακεδονίας, Θεσσαλονίκη.

35 Μουταβελής, Α. Γ. (2013). Συγκριτική μελέτη και αξιολόγηση σχετικά με τη δόμηση Προγραμμάτων Τμήματος Ένταξης. Υπό Δημοσίευση στα Πρακτικά του 3ου Πανελληνίου Συνεδρίου Ειδικής Εκπαίδευσης (11-14 Απριλίου 2013), «Διλήμματα και Προοπτικές στην Ειδική Εκπαίδευση», ΕΚΠΑ, Φ.Π.Ψ., Εταιρεία Ειδικής Παιδαγωγικής Ελλάδος. http://users.sch.gr/moutavelis/autosch/joomla15/images/tmimata_entaxis/3.synedrio.pdf.

36 Παπαδοπούλου, Κ., (2018). «Απόψεις και εμπειρίες εκπαιδευτικών Τμημάτων Ένταξης, της Δευτεροβάθμιας εκπαίδευσης, αναφορικά με την Ένταξιακή Εκπαίδευση κωφών και βαρήκων μαθητών». (Διπλωματική εργασία). Εθνικό & Καποδιστριακό Πανεπιστήμιο Αθηνών, Αθήνα.

3699/2008³⁷. It has been argued that students with SEN benefit from coexistence in heterogeneous groups³⁸. In this proposal, critics oppose the argument that coexistence does not benefit students who excel in their performance.

However, Tomlinson³⁹ argues that diversifying classroom work serves to meet the needs of all students, even those with outstanding performance. For the design of an intervention program in the general classroom, the necessary conditions are the combination of the individual with the general program⁴⁰. The differences concern the teaching objective, the teaching method, the organization of the class, the means and the materials of the teaching. The differentiation is mentioned as a necessary condition in the law 3699/2008⁴¹ for the special education and the coexistence of a student with SEN with students in a general school class. However, differentiation is needed for another reason⁴². It concerns the learning profile of each student which is hardly taken into account in a traditional teaching.

As Tomlinson⁴³ points out, differentiation concerns the teaching method, the goal, or the means and materials. The differentiation starts from the student level and not from the first page of the textbook. We can differentiate the process, the product of learning and the learning environment⁴⁴. The process, the product of learning and the environment of classroom are adapted to the student's learning readiness, interests and learning style which is hardly taken into account in a traditional teaching. Adapting this is not a simple process, especially when it comes to a student with S.E.N.

Specifically, the process of locating children with S.E.N. and their individualized teaching effort requires knowledge of the characteristics and category to which each individual belongs⁴⁵. Appropriate techniques, tools, teaching methods, and individualized assessment for a successful learning process

37 Νόμος 3699/2008. Ειδική αγωγή και εκπαίδευση ατόμων με αναπηρία ή με ειδικές εκπαιδευτικές ανάγκες. Εφημερίς της κυβερνήσεως, ΦΕΚ 199/02.10.2008 τ. Α'.

38 Συμεωνίδου, Σ., & Φτιάκα, Ε. (2012). Εκπαίδευση για την ένταξη: από την έρευνα στην πράξη. Αθήνα: Πεδίο.

39 Tomlinson, C. A. (2010). Διαφοροποίηση της εργασίας στην αίθουσα διδασκαλίας: Ανταπόκριση στις ανάγκες όλων των μαθητών. Αθήνα: Γρηγόρης.

40 Heacox, D. (2012). Differentiating instruction in the regular classroom: How to reach and teach all learners (Updated Anniversary Edition). Free Spirit Publishing.

41 Νόμος 3699/2008. Ειδική αγωγή και εκπαίδευση ατόμων με αναπηρία ή με ειδικές εκπαιδευτικές ανάγκες. Εφημερίς της κυβερνήσεως, ΦΕΚ 199/02.10.2008 τ. Α'.

42 Τσιμπιδάκη, Α., (2018β). Εκπαίδευση εκπαιδευτικών ειδικής αγωγής: Το παράδειγμα της Ελλάδας και της Ιταλίας. Εισήγηση στο 11ο Πανελλήνιο Συνέδριο της Παιδαγωγικής Εταιρείας Ελλάδος «Βασική και συνεχιζόμενη εκπαίδευση των εκπαιδευτικών σε ένα σύνθετο και μεταβαλλόμενο περιβάλλον», 23-25 Νοεμβρίου 2018, Πάτρα.

43 Tomlinson, C. A. (2010). Διαφοροποίηση της εργασίας στην αίθουσα διδασκαλίας: Ανταπόκριση στις ανάγκες όλων των μαθητών. Αθήνα: Γρηγόρης.

44 Tomlinson, C. A. (2010). Διαφοροποίηση της εργασίας στην αίθουσα διδασκαλίας: Ανταπόκριση στις ανάγκες όλων των μαθητών. Αθήνα: Γρηγόρης.

45 Alexiadou, N., & Essex, J. (2015). Teacher education for inclusive practice – Responding to policy. *European Journal of Teacher Education*, 39(1), 1-15.

should be used to highlight these characteristics⁴⁶.

In order for a teacher to acquire knowledge and skills in these cases, long-term training will be needed, which will create difficulties and reactions both in the educational work and in the obligations of the teachers. Therefore, the teaching methods needed by each specific person with SEN should be identified, as a more specialized evaluation is considered necessary⁴⁷. The emergence of the need for care and approach of children with SEN in a general school helps teachers get rid of the view that these individuals cannot be improved by appropriate means and teaching methods and are still in an incurable condition⁴⁸.

The teachers of the general school, by turning the identification into a diagnosis of special needs and the individualized teaching into a special education, can give a pedagogical character to the identification and the individualized teaching of children with SEN⁴⁹. Finally, the support of students in the general school helps for a more real and effective educational process as it offers those involved in education the opportunity to collaborate, communicate and exchange information that will essentially help the education of these children and will not be based on a single feature⁵⁰.

2.4. Purpose of research

The need for teacher training and the provision of individualized teaching as a prerequisite for supporting students with special educational needs in the general classroom will occupy our research process. The purpose of the research is to show what are the actions that teachers take when they find that there is a student in the general classroom who systematically fails in the learning process. Specifically, it will be examined whether the teachers will communicate with the parents or will turn to specialist scientists. Another element will be whether communication with the school counselor and his help will be a solution for teachers. It is also important to consider the main reason for the process of identifying the special educational needs for a student by the general school teacher, in relation to the individual teaching of the child in the general class or to accept the teaching of

46 Παπαδοπούλου, Κ., (2018). «Απόψεις και εμπειρίες εκπαιδευτικών Τμημάτων Ένταξης, της Δευτεροβάθμιας εκπαίδευσης, αναφορικά με την Ένταξιακή Εκπαίδευση κωφών και βαρήκοων μαθητών». (Διπλωματική εργασία). Εθνικό & Καποδιστριακό Πανεπιστήμιο Αθηνών, Αθήνα.

47 Αγαλιώτης, Ι., (2007). Υποστήριξη μαθητών με ειδικές εκπαιδευτικές ανάγκες ή προβλήματα συμπεριφοράς. Αθήνα: Παιδαγωγικό Ινστιτούτο.

48 Boyle, J., & Scalnon, D. (2010). *Methods and strategies for teaching students with mild disabilities. A case-based approach.* USA: Cengage Learning.

49 Barisone, M. (2015). Θεωρία της διαχείρισης των ομάδων στο πλαίσιο της ένταξης. Διάλεξη στο ΕΑΕ09 με θέμα "Intervenire nelle situazioni di difficoltà I gruppi come risorsa". Τορίνο. Ανάκτηση από "https://eclass.uop.gr/modules/document/document.php?course=LITD195"

50 Bradley, R. T., Galvin, P., Atkinson, M., & Tomasino, D. (2012). Efficacy of an emotion self-regulation program for promoting development in preschool children. *Global advances in health and medicine*, 1(1), 36-50.

the child in special units or to emphasize the support of the child by specialists outside the school and in the referral of the child to the counseling center.

Another point that is of great importance is the degree to which the teacher can identify the need for special education of students in the classroom. In addition to the degree of locating the student, it is important to look at the techniques of locating children with special educational needs. Specifically, these techniques are related to the different way of teaching, the evaluation of the learning process, behavior and study skills. Regarding a training program for the general education teacher, the duration of the program is emphasized, but also to include the whole framework of special education or some individual cases.

2.5. Hypothesis of research

The need for continuous training of teachers in recent years is important and is particularly high, which is due to the continuous developments in all areas of knowledge and information, but also to the growing demands of the educational program. For example, a teacher is called upon to manage and deal with students who have learning difficulties and need a teaching that meets their educational needs. Thus the teacher is called to identify these students in the general class who present such difficulties, to adapt and organize his teaching according to the needs of the students. However, teachers of all levels have not specialized in addressing these needs and problems arise in dealing with and properly managing students, which are due to the lack of training. For this reason, the need to investigate the positions of teachers regarding the training programs related to special education for children with special educational needs is considered important. Also important is the ability of teachers to investigate the identification and individualized teaching of students with SEN.

3. Methodology

Sample:

The sample consisted of teachers of secondary school general education in the area of Attica. 80 teachers, 50 men and 30 women with experience in special education, 40 teachers from all over took part. Teachers have a bachelor's degree, a smaller part has completed a postgraduate degree, and no one has a doctorate. Finally, in terms of attending training seminars, 20 teachers have attended a 400-hour seminar and 10 teachers have attended 7 months of seminar attendance.

Research collection tools:

Participants were asked to complete an anonymous questionnaire that included 6 closed-ended questions from which teachers were asked to choose one of the suggested options. The questionnaire refers to the ability of teachers regarding

the identification and individualized teaching of children with SEN. in the general classroom. The time required to complete it was 15 minutes and it was completed at the end of the course. The questionnaire is listed at the end of the text.

Data analysis:

The analysis of the data was descriptive to see the frequency in the teachers' answers and the percentage in each answer.

4. Results analysis

Initially, the following tables give a picture of gender, studies, previous service in general and special school and the participation of teachers in training programs.

Table 1: Distribution of a sample based on gender and on the qualifications:

Questions	Sex	Men	Total	Women	Total	Total
			50	62,5%	30	37,5%
Higher Universities		50		30		100%
Technological Universities		0		0		0%

Specifically, the percentage of men is 62,5% and of women 37,5% (Table 1). The qualifications are 100% Higher Education Institutions and 0% Technological Institutions (Table 1).

Table 2: Sample distribution based on the master's degree and doctoral details:

Questions	Sex	Men	Women	Total
			50	30
Masters degrees		10	20	37,5%
PhD		0	0	100%

From the data we have gathered we can see that a large part of the sample has not done postgraduate studies. Specifically, the 37,5% of teachers hold a master's degree, while 62,5% have not done postgraduate studies (Table 2). Regarding the answer for obtaining a doctorate, we find that none of the respondents in the sample have a doctorate. According to the data we collected we find that 100% have not completed doctoral studies (Table 2).

Table 3: Distribution of a sample based on teaching experience in general schools:

Sex	Men	Women	Total
Questions			
From 5 to 10 years	10	0	12,5%
From 11 to 15 years	30	10	50%
From 16 to 20 years	5	5	12,5%
From 21 to 25 years	5	15	25%

Regarding the years of previous service in the general school, we can find that from 5 - 10 years the percentage is 12,5%, from 11 - 15 years the percentage is 50%, from 16 - 20 years 12,5% and from 21 - 25 25% (Table 3).

Table 4: Sample distribution based on teaching experience in special schools:

Sex	Men	Women	Total
Questions			
From 1 to 5 years	30	10	50%
0 years	20	20	50%

According to Table 4, we find that several teachers have worked in special schools. Thus, the percentage of experience in special education ranges from 1-5 years, ie 50% of the sample seems to have experience in special education, while another percentage of 50% has no experience at all (Table 4).

Table 5: Sample distribution based on special education training:

Sex	Men	Women	Total
Questions			
Yes	10	20	37,5%
No	40	10	62,5%

In this table we can see that the 37,5% have attended training seminars in special education, while 62,5% have not attended a training seminar (Table 5).

In this section, a descriptive analysis of the answers given to all teachers

will be presented for each question. Each question is given a table with the teachers' answers in descending order.

Table 6. Question 1: What is the first step you take when it is found that a student in your class is failing in the learning process systematically?

Questions	Sex	Men	Women	Total
Contact the parents and ask them To turn to a specialist		25	15	50%
Contact the School Counselor and You ask him for his help		20	10	37,5%
Contact scientists		5	5	12,5%
Wait for the family to act first		0	0	0%
Contact C.S.C.		0	0	0%

To the question 1 “What is the first step you take when it is found that a student in your class is failing systematically in the learning process?” (Table 6), we find that 50% of teachers agree to contact their parents and turn to specialists. In communication with the school counselor and his help, 37.5% respond, while in 12.5% of teachers they seem to want to communicate with scientists. There is no answer to the “wait for the family to act first and contact the C.S.C. Counseling Center” options. (0%).

Table 7. Question 2: What is the main reason for the process of identifying special educational needs for a student by a general school teacher?

Questions	Sex	Men	Women	Total
The individualized teaching of the child in the general classroom?		40	20	75%
Teaching the child in special units?		5	5	12,5%
Child support from outside experts school?.		5	5	12,5%
The referral of the child to C.S.C.?		0	0	0%

To the question 2 “What is the main reason for the process of identifying special educational needs for a student by a general school teacher?” (Table 7) most of the teachers in the sample at 75% want the individual teaching of the

child in the general class, 10 teachers with 12.5% accept the teaching of the child in special units, while 10 teachers accept the support of the child from specialists different from the school with a percentage of 12.5%, while no answer is given to the option that refers to the referral of the child to the CSC (percentage 0%).

Table 8. Question 3: To what extent can you identify the need for special education of students / three in your class?

Questions	Sex	Men	Women	Total
	very		30	10
moderate		20	10	37,5%
a little bit		0	10	12,5%
not at all		0	0	0%
very much		0	0	0%

To the question 3 “To what extent can you identify the need for special education of students in your class?” (Table 8), the choice “very” of 40 teachers at a rate of 50% prevails, followed by the option “moderate” with 30 teachers at a rate of 37.5% and 10 teachers answer “a little” at a rate of 12.5%. No answer is given to the options “not at all” and “too much” (0%).

Table 9. Question 4: Which of the following techniques effectively identifies the cases of children with special educational needs?

Questions	Sex	Men	Women	Total
	In a different way of teaching		30	20
Evaluation of the learning process		15	5	25%
Evaluation of behavior		5	5	12,5%
Evaluation of study skills		0	0	0%

To the question 4 “Which of the following techniques effectively identifies the cases of children with special educational needs?”, (Table 9), 62.5% of teachers 50 of the total prefer the different way of teaching, while 20 teachers prefer 25 % shows preference in evaluating the learning process. The answers of 10 teachers at a rate of 12.5% evaluate the behavior, while the evaluation of study skills is not found (0%).

Table 10. Question 5: How long do you think a training program is needed for a general education teacher?

Questions	Sex	Men	Women	Total
	12 months		30	20
6 months		20	10	37,5%
4 months		0	0	0%

To the question 5 “How long do you think a training program is needed for a general education teacher?” (Table 10), the preference of 50 teachers reaches 62.5% in the 12-month selection, while 6 months is preferred by 30 teachers in 37.5%. The 4 month option - shorter duration - is not selected (0%).

Table 11. Question 6: Do you think that a training program should include the whole framework of special education or some individual cases?

Questions	Sex	Men	Women	Total
	a) The whole range of special education:		25	25
b) Individual cases:		25	5	37,5%

To the question 6 “Do you think that a training program should include the whole framework of special education or some individual cases?” (Table 11), out of 80 teachers, 50 prefer a training program that covers the whole range of special education in percentage 62.5%, while 30 of the total prefer individual cases at a rate of 37.5%.

5. Conclusions

The result is that all teachers are trying to move into practices that support and treat children with special educational needs in a supportive way. It is worth noting that smaller percentages will move towards communication with the School Counselor or with scientists. The research shows practices such as communication with parents, the need to turn to a specialist, individualized teaching but also the attempt to apply a different way of teaching in the general classroom as an attempt to identify the special educational needs of the child effectively show interest of teachers in educational practice. Another element is to what extent the teacher can identify these cases of children. The prevailing view is “moderate” emphasizing the difficulty and skills they need to develop, while fewer consider that “too much” or even “too little” is able to identify the need for S.E.N. For this reason teachers believe that a 12-month training program covering a wide range of special education will respond to the cultivation of skills and will be more effective for children with S.E.N. in the general classroom.

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Pavlopoulou Aspasia

**Helen of Troy in the Theater
of Antiquity, Middle Ages and Modern Times:
Enriching School Lessons
through the Performing Arts**

Abstract

The mythos of Helen of Troy is one of the most beloved themes in world literature. Subject of this paper is to study the rework and transformation of mythos through each historic period within the framework of the performance arts and, specifically, ancient Greek and Renaissance tragedy, opera, and operetta, in a way that resonates the philosophy, the way of thinking and behaving, the anxieties and hopes of the people of each different era. The presentation of representative works from Classical Antiquity, the Middle Ages, the Renaissance, and Modern Times, permits the interdisciplinary approach of the subject, on which a brief proposal is developed for the creation of a related cultural program for students of the second or third grade of the General High School in Greek Secondary Education.

Keywords: Ancient mythos, Helen of Troy, performing arts, theater, opera, comparative analysis, interdisciplinary teaching, interlingual approach, cooperative learning

Η Ελένη της Τροίας στο Θέατρο της Αρχαιότητας, των Μέσων και των Νεότερων Χρόνων: Εμπλουτίζοντας το Σχολικό Μάθημα μέσω των Παραστατικών Τεχνών

Περίληψη

Ο μύθος της τρωικής Ελένης αποτελεί ένα από τα πλέον αγαπημένα θέματα της παγκόσμιας λογοτεχνίας. Αντικείμενο της παρούσας μελέτης αποτελεί η έρευνα της εκ νέου πραγμάτευσης και του μετασηματισμού του μύθου ανά ιστορική περίοδο στο πλαίσιο των παραστατικών τεχνών, συγκεκριμένα, της αρχαίας ελληνικής και αναγεννησιακής τραγωδίας, της όπερας και της οπερέτας, ούτως ώστε να απηχείται η φιλοσοφία, ο τρόπος σκέψης και συμπεριφοράς, οι αγωνίες και οι ελπίδες του ανθρώπου κάθε διαφορετικής εποχής. Η παρουσίαση αντιπροσωπευτικών έργων από την Κλασική Αρχαιότητα, τον Μεσαίωνα και την Αναγέννηση, τους Νεότερους Χρόνους, επιτρέπουν τη διαθεματική προσέγγιση του αντικειμένου, στη βάση της οποίας αναπτύσσεται μία σύντομη πρόταση για την εκπόνηση σχετικού πολιτιστικού προγράμματος για μαθητές της Β΄ ή Γ΄ τάξης Γενικού Λυκείου της Ελληνικής Δευτεροβάθμιας Εκπαίδευσης.

Λέξεις-κλειδιά: Αρχαίος μύθος, Ελένη της Τροίας, παραστατικές τέχνες, θέατρο, όπερα, συγκριτική ανάλυση, διαθεματική διδασκαλία, διαγλωσσική προσέγγιση, συνεργατική μάθηση

Introduction

Examining the profusion of ways in which the mythical persons of Ancient Greece have been transmitted, interpreted, adapted and used in arts, it is generally recognized that Helen is the one with the strongest influential power in art during the centuries. As Homer did not offer a precise description of Helen's beauty at any point of the epic text, countless artists from antiquity to modern times seem to have tried desperately to capture and convey the absolute beauty of the 'godlike woman' (3.423: *δῖα γυναικῶν*).¹ From this point of view, the depiction of

1 For the phrase '*δῖα γυναικῶν*' as descriptive of Helen and generally of special women in Homeric epos, s. Edmunds, L. (2019), *Toward of Characterization of Helen in Homer*. Berlin-Munich-Boston: Walter de Gruyter, p. 65ff. About the theory of Helen's divine origin, also about a recognition of Indo-european and Mycenaean cult elements in her later mythos, last on the *apotheosis* and cult of Helen, s. Edmunds, L. (2007), Helen's Divine Origins. In: *Electronic Antiquity* 10/2, 1-45, with a research overview and thorough bibliography; s. also Blondell R. (2013.1), *Helen of Troy: Beauty, Myth, Devastation*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, p. 142ff.; Edmunds, L. (2016), *Stealing Helen: The Myth of the Abducted Wife in Comparative Perspective*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, recognizes in the Helen's mythos a variant of an international tale-type, which he designates with the name '*The Abduction of the Beautiful Wife*'. The author undertakes to justify this designation through a comparative analysis of 40 tale-variants of different civilizations and historical periods; he goes so

Helen in art, as an equivalent to the depiction of “the Absolute”, remains always an unfulfilled approach, an eternal attempt to conceive the inconceivable, to configure the unconfigurable.² Innumerable versions of Helen’s idealized beauty can be found in pottery (Figures 1-5), sculptures, paintings, miniatures of manuscripts (Figures 6-7), tapestry (Figure 8), even in cartoons (Figure 10) and animations, and different descriptions are saved in epic, lyric, drama and comedy, satire, romance, novel, poetry, opera, cinema.³ Nonetheless, Helen remains a person without a face or -to put it better- with as many different faces, as the artists who tried to render it during the centuries. The objective beauty of Helen remains -and will always remain- mostly subjective. In this article our interest is focused on the image of Helen in the performing arts, mainly on the transformation of her image and role from the ancient theater to the Medieval and Renaissance theater and to the opera of Modern Times.⁴



Fig. 1. Attic Red-Figure Lekythos with Paris and Helen (420-400 B.C.). Attributed to the Painter of the Frankfort Acorn and Phintias. In J. Paul Getty Museum.

far as to argue that this tale-type is older than the Indo-European epic that was until now generally believed to have preceded the *Iliad*.

2 Παυλοπούλου, Α. (2014), Πορτραίτα της Ελένης στην επική και δραματική ποίηση: από το εγκώμιο στον ψόγο, από την υπεροχή στην ενοχή. In: *Υσπληξ* 1, 51.

3 An impressive inventory of art objects in Edmunds, L. (2016), *Stealing Helen: The Myth of the Abducted Wife in Comparative Perspective*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, pp. 303-312; s. also Pantelia, M. (1987), *Beauty Unblamed: a Study on Ancient Portrayals of Helen of Troy*. Diss. Ohio, p. 5, n. 1; Scherer, M. R. (1967), Helen of Troy. In: *The Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin* 25/10, 367-383. For a picture collection of artworks of different periods s. Μήττα, Δ., Μορφές και θέματα της αρχαίας ελληνικής μυθολογίας. In: http://www.greek-language.gr/digitalResources/ancient_greek/mythology/lexicon/atreides/page_014.html#toc012 (accessed on 20/9/2020).

4 This is the first part of a wider work about Helen’s mythos in performing arts, which will be followed by a



Fig. 2. Campanian Red-figure bell-krater (ca. 340 B.C.) The emergence of Helen from the egg. On the right and left Leda and Tyndareus are shown watching pensively. Naples. Museo Archaeologico Nazionale (147950).

1. Helen in Antiquity: from Epic Poetry to Ancient Theater

Homer's *Iliad* deals mainly with the struggles and passions of the warriors, whereas Helen fades into the depths of the narrative. The epos is 'a male affair', even if the ultimate reason (*ἡ αἰτία*) for this 'affair' is Helen. The poet tells little about her. Even the allusions of Homer to the earlier incidents of her life in Sparta, that form a kind of prehistory of the Trojan War, are short, obviously because these incidents were so familiar to his public of the 9th century B.C., that there was no need for a detailed narrative.⁵ But also during his narration of the war he rarely brings Helen to the foreground of the action. Her portrait in *Iliad* is not revealed through her own actions or words, as much as through what Olympian gods and epic heroes say about her.

second paper about Helen in cinema.

⁵ Edmunds, L. (2019), *Toward of Characterization of Helen in Homer*. Berlin-Munich-Boston: Walter de Gruyter, p. 49ff.; Edmunds, L. (2016), *Stealing Helen: The Myth of the Abducted Wife in Comparative Perspective*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, pp. 103-161; Pantelia, M. (1987), *Beauty Unblamed: a Study on Ancient Portrayals of Helen of Troy*. Diss. Ohio, pp. 6-30; Groten, F. G. (1968), Homer's Helen. In: *Greece & Rome* 15/1, 33-39.

In this Homeric portrait of Helen we see the woman that made the fateful decision to abandon her home and follow the handsome stranger to Troy (Figure 4), thus causing the suffering and death of so many Achaeans and Trojans; and yet the epic poet refrains from judging or blaming her. As Maronitis points out, it is characteristic that none of the ten references found in the epic about her face is abusive or disparaging.⁶ Helen abandons her lawful husband and follows Paris, not because she fell in love, but because Aphrodite instilled in her soul the demonic power of love. As the fate of the Homeric person is 'over-determined', Helen cannot be guilty, even if her acts are undoubtedly reprehensible.⁷

The tragedians of 5th century B.C. are making the Trojan War the most common theme in their tragedies. In this context Helen finds a new, and partly a different, treatment. Of course Aeschylus, as a representative of archaic wisdom, in the first play of his trilogy *Oresteia* (458 B.C.), namely *Agamemnon*, follows the standard Homeric version of Helen's mythos. In this context Helen is several times addressed through the chorus as the source of pain, the cause of death and destruction (*ἀρχή κακῶν*) (399ff.; 681ff.; 1455ff.). The culmination of this position is certainly the triply disparaging characterization given to her in the second choral passage (689-690) with the famous word play on her name; chorus supports that she was rightly named Eleni, as she is the destroyer of ships, men and cities (*ἐλένας, ἔλανδρος, ἐλέπολις*).⁸ Also many years later,



Fig. 3. Red Figure Pelike (ca. 360/350 B.C.) with the birth of Helen out of an egg. Attributed to the painter of Athens. Left: Leda runs away. Above: Eros with a wreath. Antikensammlung Kiel (B501).

6 Μαρονίτης, Δ. Ν. (1999), *Ομηρικά Μεγαθέματα. Πόλεμος, Ομιλία, Νόστος*. Athens: Κέδρος, pp. 189-197.

7 Παυλοπούλου, Α. (2014), Πορτραίτα της Ελένης στην επική και δραματική ποίηση: από το εγκώμιο στον ψόγο, από την υπεροχή στην ενοχή. In: *Υσπληξ* 1, 53.

8 Edmunds, L. (2019), *Toward of Characterization of Helen in Homer*. Berlin-Munich-Boston: Walter de Gruyter, p. 52ff.



Fig. 4: Attic Red Figure Skyphos (ca. 490 B.C.) with the abduction of Helen. Detail: In the center Paris and Helen, on right Aphrodite, in the middle above the couple Eros. Attributed to Makron Painter. Museum of Fine Arts Boston.

in Euripides' *Troades* (415 B.C.), the victims of the war of both sides, Hecuba and Andromache, Orestes and Iphigeneia, accuse Helen for their tragic situation (914-965).⁹ In this play, Euripides follows the fates of the women of Troy after their city has been conquered, their husbands killed, and their remaining families taken away as slaves. Preparing to depart for the homeland Menelaus enters the stage to take Helen with him back to Sparta (Figure 5), where a death sentence awaits her. Helen begs and tries to seduce her husband into sparing her life. With a careful well-constructed presentation of arguments she tries to shift away every responsibility. Her apology in order to save her life (903-904, 914-968) is the first known attempt of the heroine in ancient literature to speak for herself. At the end of the play Euripides lets us understand that Helen is still alive; moreover, the audience knows from Telemachus' visit to Sparta in Homer's *Odyssey* that Menelaus continued to live with Helen as his wife. The heroine's argumentation about the division of responsibility among more persons, mortals and immortals, as possibly brought its fruits. But more than that, it was definitely her irresistible charm that mellowed the king and averted his vengeful plans.

⁹ Blondell R. (2013.1), *Helen of Troy: Beauty, Myth, Devastation*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 182-201.



Fig. 5. Red Figure Krater (ca. 360 B.C.) with scenes from the Trojan War.
Detail: Menelaus, Aphrodite and Helen. Attributed to Nazzano Painter Rome,
Museo Nazionale di Villa Giulia.

Despite the preservation of the Homeric myth of Helen in the classic period, it was as early as the 7th century B.C. that Stesichorus in his *Palinode*, probably preserving an even older tradition,¹⁰ introduced an alternative tale, which was adopted much later by Euripides.¹¹ The lyric poet denies emphatically that the heroine went to Troy. It was only a phantom (*ἐν εἰδωλον*) in the shape of Helen that followed Paris to Troy, while the real heroine was carried off to Egypt and settled in the palace of King Proteus, where she lived stubbornly refusing to marry the local king, desperately and yet eternally waiting for her husband.¹²

10 Edmunds, L. (2016), *Stealing Helen: The Myth of the Abducted Wife in Comparative Perspective*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, pp. 162-196.

11 Edmunds, L. (2019), *Toward of Characterization of Helen in Homer*. Berlin-Munich-Boston: Walter de Gruyter, p. 62ff.; Blondell R. (2013.1), *Helen of Troy: Beauty, Myth, Devastation*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, p. 202ff.

12 Herodotus 2.112-120 mentions also Helen's arrival and stay in Egypt, s. Blondell R. (2013.1), *Helen of Troy: Beauty, Myth, Devastation*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, p. 142ff.; Zagagi, N. (1985), Helen of Troy: Encomium and Apology. In: *Wiener Studien* 98, 65-69.

Hence, according to this version of the mythos, Helen is a paradigm not only of beauty, but also, not less than Penelope or Andromache, of female virtue.

Euripides adopts this alternative tale in his play *Helen* (412 B.C.), also enriching it obviously with more components of the ancient oral tradition. Specifically, it is the heroine herself, who in her self-presentation immediately in the first verses of the play (1-67), and later, in her lament after the revelations of Teukros (255-305), bemoaning desperately her fate, narrates the episodes of her tragic life: her unnatural conception of Leda (17-21), her monstrous birth from an egg (294-295: *τεῦχος νεοσσῶν λευκὸν ἐκλοχεύεται*) (Figures 2-3) and her paradoxical nature (244: *ἡ τεκοῦσά μ' ἔτεκεν ἀνθρώποις τέρας*),¹³ the catastrophic power of her beauty (27: *τοῦμόν δὲ κάλλος, εἰ καλὸν τὸ δυστυχές*; 261-264; 304-305),¹⁴ the terrible plan of the gods that led to a bloody war (31-59), her unfair incrimination (53-55; 264-266; 270-272), hence the destruction of her reputation (270: *ἄδικός εἰμι δυσκλήης*), the hatred of the Greeks towards her face (54: *κατάρατός εἰμι*), finally her confinement at the southern end of the world waiting desperately for a doubtful salvation.¹⁵

Both Euripidian dramas, *Troades* and *Helen* were produced and first performed during the Peloponnesian War; *Troades* after the capture of Milos (416 B.C.) and the subsequent slaughter and subjugation of its populace by the Athenians, *Helen* after the Sicilian Expedition (413 B.C.), in which Athens had suffered a massive defeat that brought rapidly the final decline of the glorious city-state.¹⁶ In both works research recognizes the poet's critical attitude towards this specific contemporary events. It is highly possible that the destruction of Troy, the massacre and the enslavement of women and children refer to the violent events of Milos. Also the idea that all that pain of the Trojan War was caused for the sake of a phantom, cannot be but an allusion to the futility of war. By underling the tragic fate of mortals to possess limited knowledge, consequently to

13 About Helen's descent from Zeus, indicated as 'Ἐλένη Διὸς ἐκγεγαυῖα' or 'εὐπατέρεια' s. Edmunds, L. (2019), *Toward of Characterization of Helen in Homer*. Berlin-Munich-Boston: Walter de Gruyter, p. 114ff., 125ff. ; s. also Blondell R. (2013.1), *Helen of Troy: Beauty, Myth, Devastation*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, p. 27ff.; Edmunds, L. (2016), *Stealing Helen: The Myth of the Abducted Wife in Comparative Perspective*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, pp. 1-45.

14 For a detailed approach of the thematic, s. Blondell R. (2013.1), *Helen of Troy: Beauty, Myth, Devastation*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 1-26 (ch.1: *The problem of female beauty*).

15 Blondell R. (2013.1), *Helen of Troy: Beauty, Myth, Devastation*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 202-221; Roisman, H. M. (2006), Helen in the Iliad: Causa Belli and Victim of War – From Silent Waver to Public Speaker. In: *American Journal of Philology* 127, 1-36; Zagagi, N. (1985), Helen of Troy: Encomium and Apology. In: *Wiener Studien* 98, 82-87. Blondell R. (2013.1), *Helen of Troy: Beauty, Myth, Devastation*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, p. 193, recognizes in this self-defense of Helen the influence of the 5th century sophistic and sees in Helen's rhetoric a thinking person, an idea that contradicts the age-old believe about the women's use of seductive speech as a weapon to men's deception.

16 Pucci, P. (2012), Helen's Many Faces: Euripides in the Cultural Crisis at the End of the Vth Century. In: *Quaderni Urbinati di Cultura Classica* 100/1, 49-65; Skouroumouni, A. (2011), *Staging the Female Studies in Female Space in Euripides*. Ph. D. thesis, University of London, pp. 29-83.

act under the danger of ignorance, the author seems to send a didactic message to his audience: the most precious and tempting things in the world, for the conquest of which wars are unleashed on humanity resulting in endless pain and bloodshed, are false like clouds of ether (36: *κενή δόκησις*). The plays, which were staged at the Athenian theater during the last years of the Peloponnesian War, conveyed messages that must probably have deeply touched the Athenian public.

2. Survival and Change: Helen from Medieval Romance to Renaissance Drama

From all this wealth of ancient legend Greek and Latin authors of Late Antiquity and Early Middle Ages have drawn for centuries a variety of themes for epic and lyric poetry, drama, and satire, following, on the whole, the established outline of events.¹⁷ But as Europe entered its long transition from Paganism to Christianity, and from the Roman Empire to the European feudal monarchies, the shape of the Trojan story changed. As typical agents of this change appear the *Diary of the Trojan War* by Dictys of Crete, probably written in the 4th century, and *The History of the Destruction of Troy* by Dares of Phrygia, composed around the 6th century. Both these works, written in Latin, purported to rely on eyewitness accounts by warriors. Although this claim could not be true, and originated much more from the classicists' desire to substantiate the Homeric narrative, the books have been especially popular, even more, they constituted the main sources of the medieval romances of Troy.

During the following centuries, as many noble Roman families were fond of



Fig. 6. The abduction of Helen from Paris. Miniature from R. Lefevre, *Recueil des Histories de Troye* (1464).

17 Scherer, M. R. (1967), Helen of Troy. In: *The Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin* 25/10, 367-383.



Fig. 7. Priam sending Paris to Sparta, the abduction of Helen, and the siege of Troy.
Miniature from *Chroniques de Saint-Denis* (1332-1350).

tracing their descent from the Trojans who founded Latium after Aeneas fled from Troy, the literary occupation with the Trojan War became particularly attractive for writers and painters. Especially in the medieval romances Trojans, instead of Achaeans, became the heroes of Trojan War. And, as expected, these heroes were transformed into medieval knights, respectively Helen to an honorable chatelaine, depicted in visual arts in full costume, armor, and backgrounds of contemporary life (Figure 6-8). In this context medieval romances changed radically the story of Helen's abduction. To the Middle Ages the Trojans were so emphatically the heroes, that Paris cannot be the thief of his host's wife. According to the French prose romance of Raoul Lefevre, *Recueil des Histories de Troye* (1464), Paris when he meets Helen in the sanctuary of Venus, although inevitably -because of her beauty- falls in love with her, he does not express his feelings, on the contrary he behaves formally like a real gentleman, while it is Helen who takes the initiative to express her erotic interest in Paris. The two heroes withdraw from the others and talk together of their love. Next day in common decision they flee for Troy.¹⁸

The Renaissance artists, being influenced by both traditions, ancient Greek and Medieval, have produced new special versions of Helen's tale, whose number and variety makes their presentation in this work impossible.¹⁹ As early

18 Edmunds, L. (2016), *Stealing Helen: The Myth of the Abducted Wife in Comparative Perspective*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, pp. 197-235 (ch. 5: *Helen in the fifth century and after*).

19 Raducanu, Adr. (2014), The Ghost Tradition: Helen of Troy in the Elizabethan Era. In: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/276511707_The_Ghost_Tradition_Helen_Of_Troy_In_The_Elizabethan_Era (accessed on 20/9/2020); Solomon, J. (2007), The Vacillations of the Trojan Myth: Popularization &



Fig. 8. The marriage of Paris and Helen (detail). Flemish (Tournai and Brussels), ca. 1500. Wool and silk tapestry. The Norton Simon Foundation F.1965.1.129.2.T.

as at the beginning of 17th century Helen was combined with the most important Medieval and Renaissance hero, specifically she emerged on stage as a part of Faust's tale. Thus on 1604 she appeared in Elizabethan theater in new adventures in Christopher Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus* and ca. 1602 in Shakespeare's *Troilus and Cressida*.²⁰

It was a development, which reached its most representative and highest literary expression in the early 19th century in Part II of Goethe's *Faust*.²¹ Faust brought Helen back from the kingdom of dead and let her become part of his life. He meets Helen three times in three different scenes of the play, the first time in front of Menelaus' palace in Sparta, the second in a Frankish castle from the time of the Crusades, and the third in the mythical Arcadia, the earthly paradise of poets. The return of Helen means the reappearance of the ancient classical beauty in the historical space of the western world. Faust meets Helen in her space, classical Greece, and Helen meets Faust in his time, the Middle Ages, the time of romantic poetry. Their union takes place in Arcadia as the "golden age" of humanity, the harmony of man and nature in blissful happiness. The marriage of Helen and Faust suggests the idea of a blood-union between two spiritual worlds, Greek classicism and German romanticism.²² Helen of Troy becomes a new mythos and a new theatrical presence.

Classicization, Variation & Codification. In: *International Journal of the Classical Tradition* 14.3/4, 482-534; Landa, J. A. G. (2004), Homer in the Renaissance: The Troy Stories. In: <https://hcommons.org/deposits/item/hc:17985/> (accessed on 20/9/2020).

20 Godwin, L. G. (2009), "There is nothing like a dame": Christopher Marlowe's Helen of Troy at the Royal Shakespeare Company. In: *Shakespeare Bulletin* 27/1, 69-79.

21 Bennett, B. (1980), The Classical, the Romantic, and the Tragic in Part Two of Goethe's 'Faust'. In: *Studies in Romanticism* 19/4, 529-550.

22 Unterberger, G. (2013), *Die Begegnung von Faust und Helena in "Faust II"*. Grin Verlag; Curran, J. V. (2000), Goethe's Helen: A Play within a Play. In: *International Journal of the Classical Tradition* 7/2, 165-176.

3. Reconstruction and Rationalization in Modern Times: Helen in Variety Theater and Opera

Helen's mythos also continued to be revived in modern times. Notable performances of Euripides' *Helen* and *Troades*, as well as Goethe's *Faust* took place throughout the 19th and 20th century (Figure 9) and keep on taking place all over the world to this day. But already after the middle of the 19th century, the tale of Helen gained a place in the art of opera, indeed in both its genres, *opera buffa* and *opera seria*; and with the arrival of the 20th century the immediate adoption of Helen's mythos from the new art of cinema was impressive.

The treatment of Helen's mythos in opera began with the French operetta *La belle Hélène*, with music by Jacques Offenbach and words by Henri Meilhac and Ludovic Halévy, which premiered at the *Théâtre des Variétés Parisiens* in December 17, 1864 with José Dupuis as Paris and Hortense Schneider as Helen (Figures 10-11).²³ *La belle Hélène* is a key work in Offenbach's output and for the genre of operetta as a whole. The first performance in German



Fig. 9. Goethe's *Faust II* in Deutsches Theater (1911).

Directed by Max Reinhardt, with Friedrich Kayßler (Faust) and Else Heims (Helen).

Photo: In front of Menelaus' Palace in Sparta. In the middle E. Heims as Helen.

23 For the audio file Offenbach, J. (1864), *La belle Hélène*. Act 1 Finale. In: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aWyhjuR6SjA> (accessed on 20/9/2020).



Fig. 10. Contemporary drawing of first production of the French operetta *La belle Hélène* (1864).

(Vienna, Theater an der Wien, 17 March 1865) gave the definitive stimulus for the development of Viennese operetta by Franz von Suppé, Johann Strauss and Carl Millöcker. The piece parodies the story of Helen's elopement with Paris. The action takes place in the palace of King Menelaus in Sparta, where Paris arrives with the purpose of winning with the help of the soothsayer Calchas the heart of the beautiful Helen, as Aphrodite's reward to him because of her victory in the judgment of the three goddesses.



Fig. 11. Hortense Schneider as Helen in the premiere of *La belle Hélène* (1864).

The conquest of the heroine will be achieved through a line of comic incidents, such as the predominance of Paris in an intelligence-struggle (including outrageously silly wordgames), the sending of Menelaus to Crete through an untrue oracle given by cunning Calchas, the bending of Helen's resistance to his amorous advances, achieved by Paris entering secretly at night in her bedroom and convincing



Fig. 12: Edy Darclea (Helen) and Vladimir Gajdarov (Paris) in German silent film *Helena* by Manfred Noa (1924).

her that she is only dreaming, the arrest of the lovers *in flagrante delicto* by Menelaus, who returns unexpectedly from Crete, whereas Helen rebukes him for bad timing. The parody culminates in a scene, where the adulterous wife, exclaiming ‘*la fatalité, la fatalité*’, tells him that it is all his fault, as a good husband knows when to come and when to stay away. The librettist parodies obviously not only the classic story, but even more the centuries-old issue of Helen’s guiltiness-innocence.

Written at the time of Second French Empire, this operetta was using the ancient mythos as an allegory to make a scathing critique of the French society, its lack of morality and rampant thirst for pleasure. The main characteristics of the mythic couple are endless lightness, infidelity, untruth, untrustworthiness, lack of limits and commitments, life for the moment, lack of any seriousness and morality, constant change and transformation. The protagonists, dominated by instinctive nature and totally unable to resist their impulses and desires, form a symbol for the elusiveness of existence.

With the arrival of the 20th century the immediate adoption of Helen’s mythos from the new art of cinema is impressive; in particular, Helen makes her appearance in the silent film era, first in June 6, 1924 with the German film *Helena. Der Untergang Trojas* by Manfred Noa, starring Edy Darclea (Helen), Vladimir Gajdarov (Paris) and Albert Steinrück (Menelaos) (Figure 12), followed, three years later, by *The Private Life of Helen of Troy* by Carey Wilson (Figure 13), based on John Erskine’s novel by the same name and Robert Sherwood’s play

The Road to home, directed by Alexander Corda, starring Maria Corda (Helen) and Ricardo Cortez (Paris).²⁴

At this point of our study it is important to mention the introduction of Helen's legend into the modern art of cinema, which characteristically takes place almost at the same time as the birth of the silver screen and gives a new, less poetic version of the mythos, as it mainly obeys the requirements of mass entertainment and the commercialization of the performing arts in post-industrial times. However, as Helen's glamorous 'career' in cinema is an extensive topic that requires a separate thorough study, it will be presented in a future article.



Fig. 13: Maria Corda (Helen) and Lewis Stone (Menelaus) in American silent film *The Private Life of Helen of Troy* by Carey Wilson (1927).

At the same time, Helen's mythos is presented in various ways on the theatrical stage. In the atmosphere of the reigning from the end of the 19th century artistic movement of classical modernism and its blooming interest about the authentic texts of the classical heritage, Richard Strauss composes in 1928 the German opera *Die ägyptische Helena* (The Egyptian Helena), based on a German libretto by Hugo von Hofmannsthal, which premiered at the Dresden Semperoper. Strauss had written the title role with Maria Jeritza (Figure 15) in mind but the Dresden opera management refused to pay Jeritza's large fee and cast Elisabeth Rethberg (Figure 14) instead as Helen of Troy. In the first production with Elisabeth Rethberg as Helen of Troy, Curt Taucher played Menelaus.²⁵ Jeritza eventually performed the role some years later (1928) in the productions of Vienna and New York City.

24 Michelakis, P., Wyke, M. (2013), Introduction: Silent Cinema, Antiquity and 'the Exhaustless Urn of Time'. In: P. Michelakis, M. Wyke (eds.). *The Ancient World in Silent Cinema*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 1-24; Michelakis, P. (2013), Homer in silent cinema. In: P. Michelakis, M. Wyke (eds.), *The Ancient World in Silent Cinema*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 145-156; Malamud, M. (2013), Consuming Passions: Helen of Troy in the Jazz Age. In: P. Michelakis, M. Wyke (eds.), *The Ancient World in Silent Cinema*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 330-345.

25 For the audio file Strauss, R. (1924), *Die ägyptische Helena*. Op. 75 (UA 1928). In: https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=110&v=P7Fcm2u8Tjc&feature=emb_title (accessed on 20/9/2020).



Fig. 14. Elisabeth Rethberg in the premiere of *Die ägyptische Helena* in Dresden (1924).

The play deals with the adventures of Helen and Menelaus during their return from Troy in the Mediterranean island palace of sorceress Aithra. Hofmannsthal uses Stesichorus' and Euripides' version of the mythos about a real and a false Helen, therefore has to address once more the old question regarding Helen's guilt or innocence; but according to his perception, the infidel Helen of Troy is the only real Helen, the gods have not plotted against mortals by constructing an *eidolon*; on the contrary, the innocent, faithful Egyptian Helen appears as a contrivance of the beneficent Egyptian sorceress Aithra, who presents it to Menelaus to protect Helen from his murderous intentions and, in conclusion, to save their marriage. The numerous subplots of the narrative, have a successful outcome not only through Helen's charm or Aithra's resourcefulness, but also through the use of magic filters (of memory and forgetfulness) and the miraculous activity of magic creatures (like the omniscient seashell), reveal Hofmannsthal's influences of medieval romances and fairy tales. After more adventurous episodes the hard truth is revealed to Menelaus and the only way for the restoration of their

relationship is through his forgiveness of her actions. A happy ending is reserved for the audience, as Menelaos returns to Sparta hand in hand with his beloved wife and their small daughter Cassandra to live a life of eternal blissfulness.

What is obvious in this modern turn of the tale, despite the classist background and the use of medieval narrative instruments, is the librettist's strong tendency to a rationalization of the ancient mythos. In his conversation with Strauss, which is appended to his essay, we hear him explain: "*No gods at all appear. In fact, take everything as if it has happened two or three years ago, somewhere between Moscow and New York*".²⁶



Fig. 15. Maria Jeritza in the American premiere of *The Egyptian Helen* (1928).

And truly, it is the absence of gods' intervention, the attachment of the heroes to the truth, the revelation of which is the only way to a problem's solution, the optimistic ending with the salvage of wedding and family that reflect the values and way of thought of Hofmannsthal's contemporary world. The declaration of faith in life and a renewed belief in Western traditional values, as law, personal responsibility and social dignity, marriage and paternity, are representative for the post-World War I period; a time when man desperately seeks support and confidence in the chaos of existence, and faith in the ability to transcend dissolution and create a new world.²⁷ Once more Helen appears with a new face.

26 Hofmannsthal, H. von (1956), *The Egyptian Helen*. In: *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 15/2, 209.

27 Αντωνοπούλου, Α. (1993), Ούγκο φον Χόφμανσταλ: Η Αιγύπτια Ελένη. In: *Κύκλος Ελένη*. Αθήνα: Εκδόσεις Μεγάλου Μουσικής Αθηνών, pp. 42-45; s. also Baxter, R. (2002), Die ägyptische Helena. Richard Strauss. In: *The Opera Quarterly*, 18/4, 643-647.



Fig. 16. From the digital channel of the Onassis Foundation (in live u-tube) the performance of Goethe's *Faust* directed by M. Marmarinos.

4. Utilizing the theater in educational process

The person and mythos of Helen are encountered four times in the Analytical Program of Studies in Greek Secondary Education. Specifically, within the framework of the following lessons:

- Ancient Greek Literature (translation) for the second grade of Middle School: Homer's *Iliad*.
- Ancient Greek Literature (original text) for the third grade of Middle School: Euripides' *Helen*.
- Ancient Greek Literature (translation) for the third grade of Middle School: Euripides' *Helen*.
- Modern Greek Literature texts for the second grade of High School: G. Seferis' *Eleni*.

Approaching the versions of Helen's mythos in different school grades allows a gradual immersion in the subject on behalf of the students. In addition, it allows them to perceive the ability of the mythos to be regenerate and transformed during different eras and within the framework of different cultures, in order to express the way of thought and behavior, the mores, perceptions, anxieties and the reality of each different era. In this regard, the mythos of Helen is a subject of exceptional breadth of meanings of timeless and global importance, which can be developed more widely into a cultural program outside the formal schedule of school lessons. This program should be addressed to High School students of the second of third grade, who have already been taught the above subjects.



Fig. 17. Contemporary performance of Goethe's *Faust* directed by K. Evaggelotou (Piraeus Municipal Theater 2016).

The character of the program should be interdisciplinary, cross-curricular and interlingual, as its implementation requires the collaboration of teachers of several disciplines related to cultural objects -letters and fine arts- namely philologists in Greek, English, French, and German philology, art and music teachers. The students will have to work collaboratively, divided into groups, with each group undertaking tasks and activities corresponding to the knowledge and particular interests of its members.

Participants in this program will approach representative works of different eras and cultural cycles, as they have been presented in the previous subsections. Study of these works will rely initially on the study of the text (original or translated as the case may be) and then on watching historic theatrical performances, which have been preserved recorded on archived digital material (Figure 16). A valuable experience for the students would also be to attend a contemporary theater or opera performance, enabling an experiential acquisition of knowledge. (Figure 17-18).

The groups will be formed regarding the following play

- (1) Euripides' *Helen* and *Troades*
- (2) Goethe's *Faust*
- (3) *La belle Hélène* of Offenbach-Meilhac
- (4) *The Egyptian Helena* of Strauss-Hofmannsthal (from the English text)



Fig. 18. A contemporary performance of *La belle Hélène* of Offenbach-Meilhac Music direction by M. Oikonomou and F. Michalakis, direction by I. Sideris (Maria Callas Municipal Musical Theater «Olympia» 1019) [Photo: Studio Cominis].

Requirements:

Students must have, depending on each team,

- a more than average level of knowledge of
 - (1) the Ancient Greek,
 - (2) German,
 - (3) French, or
 - (4) English language,
- an interest in the theater and fine arts
 - (1) of antiquity (pottery painting, sculpture, coins),
 - (2) the Middle Ages and the Renaissance (visual arts, sculpture, miniatures, music),
 - (3, 4) of modern times (visual arts, music, dance, costume, photography, poster).
- a good knowledge of digital technology.

Objectives:

Students, depending on their group, must understand and present:

- the importance of theater, and performance arts in general through history:
 - (1) the role of theater during the time of its birth within the framework of the ancient Greek city-state,
 - (2) the importance of theater in the courts of empires during the Middle Ages and
 - (3) in the western monarchies during the Renaissance,
 - (3, 4) the importance of opera in general and, in particular, the art form of operetta in the European countries during Modern Times.
 - (1-4) the historic framework of each work and the transformation of the mythos of Helen, so that it expresses the new ideas, needs and anxieties of each era,

- the message of the work and the particular symbolic of Helen in each case:
 - (1) the humanistic message of *Trojan Women* and the anti-war message of *Helen* within the framework of the generalized crisis of Athenian society and the collapse of the Athenian city-state in late 5th century,
 - (2) Goethe's reborn Helen as a symbol of the renewal of life and hope within the framework of exiting the religious world of the Middle Ages and entering the new world of the Renaissance,
 - (3) Meihac's cheerful Helen of light morals, as a means of sarcasm on the promiscuity of French society of the second Colonial Period, and of challenging ostensible morality, lying and fraud,
 - (4) Hoffmannsthal's sincere and repentant Helen, as a symbol of optimism about a new configuration of the world based on traditional institutions (marriage, fatherhood) and constant principles (truth, justice, logic, mutual respect), after the traumatic experience of the second World War.
- the means of presentation and dramatization:
 - stage presence of the heroes,
 - use of narrative means (prose and poetic speech),
 - use of means of expression (movement, music, dance),
 - scenery,
 - costumes.

The groups of students can complete their work by handing in corresponding small studies, which will be used to compose a larger study that will be posted on the school's web site. In addition, they can dramatize representative excerpts from the work that they have studied and present them in the classroom or in a special school event or an open to the public event.



Fig. 19. Scene from the student performance *Teen Faust* of the 5th High School of Galatsi.

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Alexandratos Giorgos

Effective educational leadership as catalyst to educational change

Abstract

Nowadays, teachers are constantly called upon to implement educational changes in response to demands raised by the contemporary, dynamic and rapid scientific, technological and social developments, in order to make schooling more effective and open to society. The successful introduction and implementation of changes depends on many factors, passes through innovations, reforms and the cultivation of the appropriate culture and ensures educational effectiveness. This essay seeks to approach and elaborate on the issue of educational change, to explore implementation obstacles, to indicate means, methods and parameters for successful implementation and, finally, to associate change with the role of the head teacher. According to the literature review conducted a) leadership constitutes a key factor to effective educational change and b) our education system has underestimated the gravity of introduction and implementation of educational changes.

Keywords: educational change, innovation, education reform, effective leadership

Περίληψη

Στην εποχή μας οι εκπαιδευτικοί καλούνται διαρκώς να υλοποιήσουν εκπαιδευτικές αλλαγές, ανταποκρινόμενοι στις σύγχρονες απαιτήσεις των δυναμικών και ραγδαίων επιστημονικών, τεχνολογικών και κοινωνικών εξελίξεων, προκειμένου το σχολείο να γίνει πιο αποτελεσματικό και ανοικτό στην κοινωνία. Η επιτυχής εισαγωγή και υλοποίηση των αλλαγών εξαρτάται από πολλούς παράγοντες, είναι εφικτή μέσω καινοτομιών, μεταρρυθμίσεων, καλλιέργειας σχετικής κουλτούρας και διασφαλίζει την αποτελεσματικότητα στην εκπαίδευση. Σκοπός της εργασίας είναι να προσεγγίσουμε και να εξειδικεύσουμε το θέμα της εκπαιδευτικής αλλαγής, να διερευνήσουμε τις δυσκολίες εφαρμογής της, να αναδείξουμε τρόπους, μεθόδους και παραμέτρους επιτυχούς εφαρμογής της και εν τέλει να την συσχετίσουμε με την αποτελεσματική λειτουργία του Διευθυντή της σχολικής μονάδας. Από την βιβλιογραφική επισκόπηση που πραγματοποιήσαμε προέκυψε, μεταξύ άλλων, ότι η ηγεσία αποτελεί καθοριστικό παράγοντα αποτελεσματικότητας της εκπαιδευτικής αλλαγής και ότι το εκπαιδευτικό μας σύστημα δεν έχει προσδώσει ακόμη την οφειλόμενη βαρύτητα στην εισαγωγή και εφαρμογή των εκπαιδευτικών αλλαγών.

Λέξεις-κλειδιά: εκπαιδευτική αλλαγή, καινοτομία, εκπαιδευτική μεταρρύθμιση, αποτελεσματική ηγεσία

1. Introduction

The literature review indicates that, more often than not, central authorities initiate changes in a rapid, unorganized and incomplete way. Usually, the changes are offhandedly introduced, more formally than substantially, as the “Research-Development-Dissemination-Adoption-Implementation-Evaluation” model is either followed in a fragmented manner or sidelined completely¹. Moreover, schools struggle to cope with changes since teachers tend to perceive them as new demands that overburden their already heavy workload².

According to Altrichter and Elliot, change is ubiquitous and so is talk about change. “Change” and its family of “change-words”, such as “progress”, “improvement”, “evolution” and “development” are among the key concepts of modernity³.

Theorists are divided over whether the notion of “change” has lost its meaning or we see an intensification, a speeding up, an increased complexity of change processes. This is nowhere more true than in education. Everywhere we see “innovation”, “reform”, “development”, “improvement” etc. with respect to school governance, teacher education, teaching methods, school inspection,

school financing and evaluation⁴.

Drawing upon international and Greek literature, we have chosen to study this particular issue as teachers are constantly called upon to implement changes. Especially nowadays, when due to the covid-19 pandemic, school, both in Greece and abroad, are, suddenly, asked to implement considerable changes in the teaching-learning process and their overall operation.

This essay initially seeks to clarify terms such as “educational change”, “innovation”, “reform”, “school effectiveness”. Its main part, approaches education change as a theoretical object focusing in particular on its relation with the role of the head teacher in the implementation phase and the effectiveness of educational leadership. The paper ends with some conclusions reached from the literature review and submits concrete proposals.

2. The research aim

The aim of this research is, on the one hand, to explore the introduction of changes in schools, their preconditions and the internal and external factors that facilitate them as well as the resistances that often supervene during the implementation phase by means of concrete examples and proposals. On the other hand, it seeks to bring out the relation between the initiation and implementation of changes at the school level and the head teacher’s role by acknowledging educational change as the key parameter of effective school management and, by extension, of school improvement and education quality.

3. Clarification of basic terms

3.1. Educational change

Education and change are interrelated since “change is an ever-present reality for all those working in education”⁵. Educational change is the transformation of the educational process by means of interventions less ambitious than an overall reform, which are not necessarily institutionalized or have a deep impact on the content and rationale of the system; while educational “innovation” is the contemporary manifestation of educational change, it primarily addresses a school and the active teacher and is not imposed⁶. The terms change and innovation although related are not identical. While every innovation qualifies as a kind of

4 *ibid.*

5 Lumby, J. (1998), “Understanding strategic change” in Middlewood, D. and Lumby, J. (eds.) *Strategic Management in Schools and Colleges*, London: Paul Chapman Publishing, 191-203, p. 191.

6 Siakoveli, P. (2011), *Issues in School Organization and Management*, Patra: Private Edition, https://blogs.sch.gr/notasiako/files/2011/04/book_3_administration.pdf, [in Greek].

change, not every change counts as innovation⁷.

Education change includes a variety of terms that do not constitute a unified whole. For example, change may increase the degree of school autonomy or self-management or, on the contrary, may bring about stricter central control and evaluation or both⁸. With this in mind and taking into consideration the use of the term educational change by many researchers, and apart from the consistent and constant implementation of innovation, in this article I define educational change as the whole spectrum of laws, presidential decrees, ministerial decisions and circulars that teachers are called upon to implement in schools in order to improve education quality and the results and operation of schooling.

3.2. Educational innovation

Educational innovation is every new idea, philosophy or method that introduces change in the attitudes and practices of the official and hidden curriculum⁹. Innovation involves the conception of new ideas by the members of an organization and must come from within an organization¹⁰. Quite often the terms “innovation” and “change” are used interchangeably, which is wrong given that the term change is broader and includes both innovation and growth. Conceptually speaking, innovation is closer to “novelty”, to what is new, that deviates from the established or traditional ways of doing things and facilitates progress and growth in school organizations¹¹.

The term educational innovation, in the broader sense, describes the deliberate and systematic actions, activities, attempts as well as integrated projects that promote, develop and utilize improvements, changes and new educational ideas over concrete aspects of school life¹².

3.3. Reform

According to a synthetic approach and on the basis of an overall and holistic perspective, education reform is the change in educational orientation, the deep

7 Kesting, P., Ulhvi, J. P., Song, L. J. and Niu, H. (2015), “The impact of leadership styles on innovation - a review”, *Journal of Innovation Management*, 3(4), 22-41, p. 24-25.

8 Ifanti, A. A. (2004), “The rationale of education reforms and the trends enhancing schooling: a critical approach” in *Proceedings of the 3rd History of Education Conference*, <http://www.elemedu.upatras.gr/eriande/index.htm>, [in Greek].

9 Kouloubaritsi, Ch. A. (2006), “Education ‘change and continuity’: Legislative imperative or institutionalized choice?” in Bagakis, G. (ed.) *Educational Changes, the Educator’s and School Contribution*, Athens: Metaichmio, 66-73, [in Greek].

10 Beladakis, E. (2010), “The contribution of education leadership in the successful implementation of educational innovation” *Administration Briefing*, 53, 103-111, [in Greek].

11 Ibid.

12 Hargreaves, D. (2003), *Education epidemic: Transforming secondary schools through innovation networks*, London: Demos.

and wide transformation by means of extensive institutional regulations¹³. Reform is the change of pace, mode of operation and organization of a system for the achievement of a better result¹⁴. Education reform -a phenomenon that takes place in a historically determined political, social and cultural framework- is assessed on the basis of the targets set in the context of the particular education policy. For this reason, most researchers approach each education reform in its historical and socio-political context in order to understand problems related to the meaning, effectiveness and viability of educational changes¹⁵.

3.4. Effectiveness

Academic research associates the term “school effectiveness” with the term “desired outcome” as the former is determined on the basis of the latter. Traditionally, this process was correlated with students’ performance in nationwide university entrance exams. Effectiveness indicators related to teaching and/or the knowledge acquired or students’ skills other than the ones derived from these exams were often suppressed¹⁶. In this respect, Pamouktsoglou’s perspective is innovative since it approaches school effectiveness not on the basis of individual student’s academic achievements but of education responsiveness to their needs in terms of targets clearly set by the curriculum¹⁷.

In any case, the concept of effectiveness is hard to pin down due to its multidimensionality and variegated conceptualizations. The conceptual clarification of school or educational effectiveness becomes even more difficult as those engaged in the education process, namely students, teachers, guardians and political and social actors, adopt different conceptualizations¹⁸.

In contemporary literature the concept of effectiveness is often linked with the concept of change that has direct impact on school organizations. This is the perspective adopted here. The ability of an organization to adjust to change defines its degree of effectiveness and indicates an evolving and dynamic process on the basis

13 Siakoveli, P. (2011), *Issues in School Organization and Management*, Patra: Private Edition, https://blogs.sch.gr/notasiako/files/2011/04/book_3_administration.pdf, [in Greek].

14 Ifanti, A. A. (2004), “The rationale of education reforms and the trends enhancing schooling: a critical approach” in *Proceedings of the 3rd History of Education Conference*, <http://www.elemedu.upatras.gr/eriande/index.htm>, [in Greek].

15 Hargreaves, A. and Goodson, I. (2006), “Educational change over time? The sustainability and nonsustainability of three decades of secondary school change and continuity”, *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 42(1), 3-41.

16 Pashiardis, P. (2004), *Educational Leadership: From the Era of Benevolent Neglect to the Current Era*. Athens: Metaichmio, [in Greek].

17 Pamouktsoglou, A. (2001). “Towards an evaluative perspective on the ‘born’ or ‘effective’ teacher” in Ouzounis, K. and Karafyllis, A. (eds.) *The Teacher of the 21st century in the European Union*, Xanthi, Spanidis Publications, 75- 82, [in Greek].

18 Darra, M. (2002). “Quality improvement: new challenge and prospect for education in the 21st century” in Matthaiou, D. (ed.), *Education and the 21st century Challenges*, Athens: Livanis, 275-285, [in Greek].

of which the organization manages change to accomplish its desired outcomes¹⁹.

4. Theoretical part

4.1. Theoretical approaches to educational change

As Fullan points out, educational change can historically be traced to reforms that primarily sought to make administrative improvements. The second phase that followed adopted a systemic approach characterized by professionalization and the recognition that knowledge plays a key role in the constant improvement of the system²⁰. The contemporary third phase emphasizes learning outcomes and social diversity²¹, focusing primarily on students' diversity²². It acknowledges that leadership is the driving force of educational change and the key to its success²³. School leadership is linked with change, in contrast to school administration which is often described as a conservative process²⁴. The role of leaders is to lead schools towards positive change, to mediate between policy and practice by implementing transformative programs and, in this way, to balance internal and external expectations, demands and needs²⁵.

In contemporary research, the concept of school improvement, as a factor of effective schooling, is linked with the concept of change in educational organizations. As Van Velzen, puts it, school improvement is systematic, sustained effort aimed at change in learning conditions and other related internal conditions in one or more schools, with the ultimate aim of accomplishing educational goals more effectively²⁶.

This aim may be achieved by the adoption of a particular strategy that seeks educational change, the improvement of education outcomes and the enhancement of the school organization's ability to manage change. In this sense, school improvement -promoted through educational change- is contingent upon the following assumptions²⁷:

19 Pasiardi, G. (2005) "School climate through students' eyes", KOED Bulletin, n. 17, November, 11-13, <http://www.koed.org.cy/myfiles/deltia/no17.pdf>, [in Greek].

20 Fullan, M. (2009), "Large-scale reform comes of age", *Journal of Educational Change*, 10(2), 101-113.

21 Potter, D., Reynolds, D. and Chapman, C. (2002) "School improvement for schools facing challenging circumstances: A review of research and practice", *School Leadership and Management*, 22(3), 243-256.

22 Levin, B. (2010). "The challenge of large-scale literacy improvement", *School Effectiveness and School Improvement*, 21(4), 359-376.

23 Earley, P. and Weindling, D. (2004), *Understanding School Leadership*, London: Paul Chapman Publishing.

24 Bush, T. (2008), *Leadership and Management Development in Education*, London: SAGE.

25 Fullan, M. (2003), *The Moral Imperative of School Leadership*. Thousand Oaks. CA: Corwin Press.

26 van Velzen, W.G., Miles, M., Elholm, M., Hameyer, U., and Robin, D., (1985), *Making School Improvement Work*. Leuven, Belgium: ACCO, p. 48, cited in Reynolds, D., Hopkins, D. and Stoll, L., (1993), "Linking School Effectiveness Knowledge and School Improvement Practice: Towards a Synergy", *School Effectiveness and School Improvement*, Vol. 4, No. 1, 37-58, p. 41.

27 Creemers B. P. M. and Kyriakides, L. (2008), *The dynamics of educational effectiveness: a contribution to policy, practice and theory in contemporary schools*. London: Routledge.

- The school is the locus of change and, since not all schools are alike, external agencies must approach them with caution and sensitivity.
- School improvement presupposes a systematic approach to education process aimed at change which demands a carefully designed intervention that is implemented and completed in the long run.
- Οι συνθήκες που επικρατούν στο σχολείο, καθώς και οι δραστηριότητες και οι διαδικασίες που λαμβάνουν χώρα εντός του σχολικού περιβάλλοντος, συνιστούν κρίσιμους παράγοντες για την υλοποίηση μίας αλλαγής.
- The internal conditions of the school as well as its external environment are critical factors for the implementation of change.
- Educational change must develop a multi-layered perspective, since school, as the center of change, is an organization in which school administration, teachers, parents-guardians and students act as well as interact with various leadership levels (agencies of administrative and scientific supervision) including the local authorities. As a result, school improvement should engage all the concerned parts.
- The institutionalization of change succeeds to the extent it becomes part of the overall culture and systematic practice of the teachers in the context of a particular school.

Change is not necessarily good or bad in its own right; it can be planned or unintentional, narrow or wide, internal or external, overall or partial, voluntary or imposed²⁸. Broadly speaking, there are four modes of educational change²⁹:

- *Imposition*: the initiative comes from someone else and teachers have to alter their ways to comply with the new requirements (curriculum, school textbooks etc).
- *Adaptation*: teachers are shown means and ways to gradually modify their working behavior and learn new attitudes at someone's else instigation.
- *Growth*: teachers may still be responding to the demands of others but the desired change presupposes the gradual growth of teachers themselves and, thus, this mode may be more attractive than the previous ones.
- *Creativity*: teachers personally instigate and control the process of innovation/change bringing into being what they have envisaged.

It has been reported that teachers usually resist the first mode of introducing change, appear uncertain and have reservations about the second, are satisfied with the third and enthusiastic with the fourth³⁰.

Be that as it may, the success of any attempted change presupposes, on the one hand, its embracement by the school community and, on the other, the

28 Dean, J. (1993), *Managing the Secondary School* (2nd), London: Routledge, p. 85.

29 Torrington, D. and Weightman, J. (1989), *The Reality of School Management*, Oxford: Blackwell.

30 Iordanidis, G. (2006), "School leadership and the management of change" in Bagakis, G. (ed.) *Educational Changes, the Educator's and School Contribution*, Athens: Metaichmio, 90-97, p. 91, [in Greek].

coincidence of a series of internal/official and external/unofficial factors. However, it is the head teacher and teachers that play the catalytic role for they are the ones who will implement any change. In particular, the head teacher's leadership style, the social and organizational atmosphere of school, the features of the change, infrastructure and financial resources and the degree of teachers' responsiveness are some of the elements that condition the implementation of change³¹.

Educational management is primarily and directly implicated in the effective implementation of change. Currently, the role of the head teachers has become more complex as, apart from their administrative tasks, they have to assume a leadership role, namely to inspire and guide teachers. In other words, head teachers have to mobilize their colleagues by setting new visions and new targets for the school, introducing and implementing changes, seeking new ways to overcome obstacles and contributing to the development of all, students and teachers, to their full potential³².

Among the basic prerequisites for the successful implementation of changes, apart from eagerness and teachers' in-service development and training, is the emergence and cultivation, by the head teacher along with the teachers' association, of collegial culture. The school culture must be open to change and facilitate mutual support, collaboration and teachers' trust³³.

Schools, qua open social systems, in order to meet the changes in and the challenges of their environment and develop in line with them, ought not to work in isolation but be in constant interaction with the broader context. At the same time, of course, schools, in order to implement substantive educational changes, should operate in an autonomous and decentralized manner to ensure the flexibility required by educational organizations³⁴.

The diffusion of changes and the sustainability of their successful implementation is not a given in school communities³⁵. To ensure the viability and institutionalization of change attention must be paid to schools' external and internal factors such as parents, education policies, financial forces and local authorities. Support must be constant as well as substantive and achieved through a permanent mechanism for the preservation of changes aiming at their

31 Fullan, M. (2007), *The new meaning of educational change* (4th), New York: Teachers College Press.

32 Katsaros, G. (2008), *Organization and Management of Education*, Athens: Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs - Pedagogical Institute, http://www.pi-schools.gr/programs/epim_stelexoi/epim_vliko/book3.pdf, [in Greek].

33 Hoy, W. K. and Miskel, C. (2013), *Educational Administration: Theory, research and practice*. New York: Lane Akers.

34 Votsi, E. (2016). "Educational innovation in the Greek school reality and the autonomy of the school unit", *Education, Life-long Learning, Research, Innovation, Technological Growth and Economy*, 1, 517-523, <https://eproceedings.epublishing.ekt.gr/index.php/inoek/article/view/814/846>, [in Greek].

35 Psarras, Ch. (2016), *Management of innovation and leadership in primary education in Greece: the case of the introduction of book - reading advancement activities (filanagnosia) in elementary schools*, PhD dissertation, Rhodes: University of Aegean <http://thesis.ekt.gr/thesisBookReader/id/38081#page/1/mode/2u>, [in Greek].

incorporation and institutionalization³⁶.

To wind up, the aforementioned factors and preconditions that can support and sustain change are internally linked with the cultivation of a climate of acceptance and realization of the need for change as well as the development of shared perceptions, attitudes and values.

According to research findings, the introduction of change often causes insecurity to the teachers involved. In particular, when established patterns, practices and attitudes are redefined, resistance may often rise and can assume various forms ranging from mere hesitation and/or hostility to attempts to undermine change itself³⁷. As far as teachers' psychology is concerned, change may lead to anxiety or even fear over outcomes and eventually to conflict³⁸. Generally speaking, the majority of teachers appear to be uncertain about and resistant to change while only a minority adopts it in an easy going and unproblematic manner³⁹.

Quite often, the introduction of change may fail due to teachers' resistance and the inability of school leadership to handle with the issue. The commitment required and the potential stigmatization discourages head teachers from implementing changes. Indeed and to the extent they feel their tranquility jeopardized, they opt for leaving things as they are⁴⁰. On the contrary, in case leadership appears dynamic and ready to confront and reverse negative climate, to debunk doubts and address reservations, then it can play a key role in minimizing resistance before it grows and blocks the development of change⁴¹. The head teacher, in order to confront the expected resistance to change, seeks to motivate teachers, satisfy their needs, cultivate interpersonal relations, address their emotional needs and effectively resolve potential conflicts⁴².

There are three types of change: a) change in the structure of the school organization, power relations, coordination mechanisms, ways of working and structural variables; b) change in technology, management and teaching and c) change in people's attitudes, skills, expectations, perceptions and behaviours.

36 Hofman, R. H., Jansen, E. and Spijkerboer, A. (2011), "Innovations: Perceptions of teachers and school leaders on bottlenecks and outcomes", *Education as Change*, 15(1), 149-160.

37 Saiti, A. (2015), "Conflicts in schools, conflict management styles and the role of the school leader: A study of Greek primary school educators", *Educational Management Administration & Leadership*, 43(4), 582-609.

38 Siakoveli, P. (2011), *Issues in School Organization and Management*, Patra: Private Edition, https://blogs.sch.gr/notasiako/files/2011/04/book_3_administration.pdf, [in Greek].

39 Sarafidou, J. O. and Nikolaidis, D. (2009), "School Leadership and Teachers' Attitudes towards School Change: The Case of High Schools in Greece", *The International Journal of Learning*, 16(8), 431-440.

40 Raptis, N. (2006), "The management of innovation by school leadership", *Scientific Tribune*, 6, 32-42, <https://eclass.uoa.gr/modules/document/file.php/PPP445/raptis.pdf>, [in Greek].

41 Psarras, Ch. (2016), *Management of innovation and leadership in primary education in Greece: the case of the introduction of book - reading advancement activities (filanagnosia) in elementary schools*, PhD dissertation, Rhodes: University of Aegean <http://thesis.ekt.gr/thesisBookReader/id/38081#page/1/mode/2u>, [in Greek].

42 Hall, G. E. and Hord, S. M. (2001), *Implementing change: Patterns, principles, and potholes*, Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

There are primarily three level of change: the individual, the group and the total⁴³. Most researchers suggest that change involves three stages: initiation, implementation and incorporation⁴⁴.

Examples of changes taking place in school are⁴⁵:

- The improvement of the quality of school leadership or management
- The introduction of appraisal systems
- The opening of the school to the world and the forging of tighter bonds with society.
- The use of ICT in curriculum development and school management.
- The merging of schools.
- The implementation of innovations in vocational and professional training.

Recently the following changes in the Greek education system have been institutionalized or proposed: the university admission system, the subjects examined in junior and higher secondary education, the primary and secondary education curriculum, the supportive structures of teachers' work, the teachers' in-service system, professional and vocation training, the acquisition of new skills, the use of ICT, the self-evaluation of the school, and, finally, changes in the curriculum, issues of school life and the organization and operation of schools. Moreover, a recent important change suddenly introduced to schools across the country, due to the covid-19 pandemic, is the use of synchronous and asynchronous distance teaching.

The changes in the education field are introduced either by legislation or as a result of initiatives and actions undertaken by head teachers and teachers on the basis of experience. In the latter case, each school may implement small or large changes according to its ideographic characteristics and unique context⁴⁶.

4.2. Educational effectiveness and change

Educational effectiveness and educational improvement are complementary terms⁴⁷. After all, the European Union, as part of the targets set for 2010, has foregrounded the quality and effectiveness of education and training systems and has treated them as complementary⁴⁸. A prerequisite for creating effective schools is the constant improvement of the services provided, curricula and

43 Burke, W. W. (2002), *Organization change: Theory and practice*, Los Angeles: Sage.

44 Fullan, M. (1991), *The new meaning of educational change*. London: Cassel, p. 48.

45 Iordanidis, G. (2006), "School leadership and the management of change" in Bagakis, G. (ed.) *Educational Changes, the Educator's and School Contribution*, Athens: Metaichmio, 90-97, p. 91, [in Greek].

46 Bagakis, G. (1999), *Educational Changes, Mobility Programmes and Community Support Framework*, Athens: Metaichmio, [in Greek].

47 Pashiardis, P. (2004), *Educational Leadership: From the Era of Benevolent Neglect to the Current Era*. Athens: Metaichmio, [in Greek].

48 Athanasoula-Reppa, A. (2008), *Educational Management and Organizational Behavior*, Athens: Ion, [in Greek].

the relations among teachers, students and parents. To the extent that education quality constantly improves, it is possible for schools to produce citizens capable of meeting the needs of contemporary complex reality.

Given the rapidly changing political, economic and cultural environment, effective schooling requires that all students are treated as capable of learning under conditions of equal opportunities⁴⁹. In this context, educational achievement is contingent upon the education process and not the socio-economic background of students. Moreover, it needs to be stressed that an important parameter of school effectiveness is to ensure consistency in teaching and the teaching process. Finally, according to literature⁵⁰, school effectiveness consists of a complex of characteristics including safe, collaborative and organized working climate, the development of expectations of success for all students by means of appropriate supervisory/teaching material, the acknowledgement, by the school community as a whole, of the responsibility to use the curriculum, objective evaluation, the promotion of education as a good, the achievement of socio-pedagogical targets and, primarily, the development of a vision for the future⁵¹.

School effectiveness cannot but be related with effective management which is condensed to three leadership competencies: to establish a vision, to commit colleagues to its realization and to create a school climate characterized by collaboration and trust⁵². Effective leadership has been associated with students' academic performance, teachers' professional development, creation of a vision for the school, teaching and learning, students' and teachers' achievement to their full potential as well as school organization to create collaborative conditions both internally and externally⁵³.

Organization development in the field of education is a coherent, systematically-planned, sustained effort at system self-study and improvement, focusing explicitly on change in formal and informal procedures, processes, norms or structures, using behavioral science concepts. The goals of OD include improving both the quality of life of individuals as well as organizational functioning and performance with a direct or indirect focus on educational issues⁵⁴.

Organization development can be described as a complex of theories of behavioral sciences, values, strategies and techniques that aim at a planned change of work settings for the purpose of improving individual development

49 Pashiardis, P. and Pashiardis, G. (2000), *Effective Schools: Reality or Utopia?* Athens: Gutenberg Publications, [in Greek].

50 Matsagouras, E. (2000), *The Classroom*, Athens: Ellinika Grammata Publications, [in Greek].

51 Kapsalis, A. (1999), "A Greek model of micro-teaching and its implementation in teachers' education", *Macedon*, 3, 23-31, [in Greek].

52 Koyzes, J. M. and Posner, B. J. (2002), *Leadership challenge*, (3rd), San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

53 Leithwood, K. A. and Riehl, C. (2003), *What we know about successful school leadership*, Philadelphia, PA: Laboratory for Student Success, Temple University.

54 Fullan, M., Miles, M.B. and Taylor, B. (1980), "Organization development in schools: the state of the art", *Review of Educational Research*, 50, 121-184, p. 135.

and organizational functioning through modifications in the working patterns of its members⁵⁵. Thus nowadays, school management is not confined to effective administration of the current state of affairs but primarily refers to the ability of head teachers to handle conflict situations and pursue improving changes⁵⁶.

Effective educational management also depends upon the head teacher of the school who contributes to change and the development of the educational organization⁵⁷. A school leader is effective when s/he implements innovations and changes. Conversely, any educational change or reform is devoid of content if it does not aim at school effectiveness⁵⁸.

Leaders persuade teachers about the necessity of change and the benefits accruing both to the school and themselves. The leader creates a vision over the outcomes of change, sets targets and seeks to transform teachers' motivation from external, such as financial benefits, to internal such as moral and psychological satisfaction⁵⁹.

It is important for head teachers not only to develop ideas and proposals for changes and innovation but also to fully understand the whole change process in order to manage and implement it in schools. In essence, they must have a firm grasp of both the current state of affairs and the long-term targets of change in order to plan advisedly and determinedly the future⁶⁰. The key carrier of innovation and change in a school is the head teacher who intervenes in the introduction of innovation and supervises the implementation process. Success or failure is directly linked with the role of the head teacher⁶¹.

5. Conclusion – suggestions

The introduction, implementation, support and institutionalization of educational change is a demanding and particularly important process, the realization of which requires reformulating the structure and content of education systems.

The role of human power in education and, primarily, of the head teacher is critical for it is the head teacher who, by means of knowledge, competencies,

55 Porras, J. I. and Robertson, P. J. (1992), "Organizational development: Theory, practice, and research" in Dunnette M. D. & Hough. L. M. (eds.), *Handbook of industrial and organizational psychology, 2nd ed., vol. 3.*, Palo Alto, CA: Consulting Psychologists Press, 719-822, p 721.

56 Everard, K.B., Morris, G. and Wilson, I. (2004), *Effective School Management, 4th ed.*, London: Chapman Publishing.

57 Inglehart, R. and Baker, W. E. (2000), "Modernisation, cultural change, and the persistence of traditional values", *American Sociological Review*, 65, 19-51.

58 Fullan, M. (2003), *The Moral Imperative of School Leadership*, Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

59 Everard, K., B. and Morris, G. (1996), *Effecting school management*, (3rd). London: Paul Chapman Publishing Ltd.

60 Raptis, N. (2006), "The management of innovation by school leadership", *Scientific Tribune*, 6, 32-42, <https://eclass.uoa.gr/modules/document/file.php/PPP445/raptis.pdf>. [in Greek].

61 Hall, G. E. and Hord, S. M. (1987), *Change in schools: Facilitating the process*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.

skills and values, promotes and facilitates the initiation and implementation of educational change and, at the same time, inspires the teachers who, in their turn, can, having received the appropriate in-service training and developed a transformative culture, contribute catalytically in effective implementation.

The aim of any educational change is twofold: on the one hand, to improve students' achievement and, on the other, teachers' effectiveness. Teachers lie at the center of schools as they are a rich and endless source of action and the carrier of change at this level⁶².

The present study suggests that it is critical for educational change to be recognized by education agencies, political leadership and educational community as a whole as a constantly dynamic process with explicitly stated, short and long-term targets.

After all, the success of a governmental program and education restructuring depends upon the effective introduction and implementation of the proposed (and not only) changes.

Finally, it is urgent need the instigators of education change to acknowledge educational leadership as a key part of any education reform and, more broadly, of the education services provided.

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62 Athanasoula-Reppa, A., Dakopoulou, A., Koutouzis, M., Mavrogiorgos, G., and Halkiotis, D. (2008), *Management of Educational Units: Educational Management and Politics*. v. A, Patras, HOP, (2nd), p. 194, https://www.eap.gr/images/stories/pdf/EKP62_A_Ekpaideftiki_Dioikisi_kai_Politiki_F8611.pdf, [in Greek].

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**Scientific Knowledge and Social Skills
Development in Higher Education: A Study
in the Implementation of Student-Centred-
Learning Approach in “Experimental Soil
Mechanics” Course**

Abstract

This paper presents the teaching framework of the “Experimental Soil Mechanics” course, which has been applied at the University of Thessaly (UTh) during the last six academic years and aims to combine the acquisition of scientific knowledge with the development of social skills of students. The latter reflects the needs of post-modern societies, induced by high competition and changing conditions derived from globalisation. For this purpose, the “Student-Centred-Learning” (SCL) approach has been adopted by means of various teaching techniques: questionnaires, diagnostic assessment, experiential learning, laboratory experiments, team work, presentations, writing technical reports, role playing. The results presented show that the SCL approach provides an effective learning environment for the development of the social skills of students, e.g. communication, responsibility, collaboration, critical thinking, self-confidence.

Keywords: social skills, Student-Centred-Learning approach

Επιστημονική γνώση και ανάπτυξη κοινωνικών δεξιοτήτων στην ανώτατη εκπαίδευση: Μελέτη της μαθητοκεντρικής εκπαιδευτικής προσέγγισης στη διδασκαλία του μαθήματος «Πειραματική Εδαφομηχανική»

Περίληψη

Το άρθρο παρουσιάζει το πλαίσιο διδασκαλίας του μαθήματος “Πειραματική Εδαφομηχανική”, το οποίο εφαρμόζεται τα τελευταία έξι ακαδημαϊκά έτη στο Πανεπιστήμιο Θεσσαλίας, και αποσκοπεί στο συνδυασμό της απόκτησης της επιστημονικής γνώσης με την ανάπτυξη των κοινωνικών δεξιοτήτων των φοιτητών. Το τελευταίο προκύπτει ως αναγκαιότητα στη σύγχρονη μεταβιομηχανική εποχή, καθώς οι συνθήκες ανταγωνισμού και συνεχών αλλαγών εξαιτίας της παγκοσμιοποίησης απαιτούν την ανάπτυξη ικανοτήτων κοινωνικού χαρακτήρα. Για το σκοπό αυτό, στα πλαίσια του συγκεκριμένου μαθήματος, εφαρμόστηκε η μαθητοκεντρική προσέγγιση υιοθετώντας διάφορες τεχνικές διδασκαλίας: ερωτηματολόγια, διαγνωστική αξιολόγηση, βιωματική μάθηση, εργαστηριακά πειράματα, ομαδικές εργασίες, παρουσιάσεις, τεχνικές εκθέσεις, παιχνίδια ρόλων. Τα αποτελέσματα της μελέτης δείχνουν πως το μαθησιακό περιβάλλον που δημιουργείται μέσω της μαθητοκεντρικής προσέγγισης υποστηρίζει την καλλιέργεια των κοινωνικών δεξιοτήτων των φοιτητών, που περιλαμβάνουν μεταξύ άλλων την επικοινωνία, την υπευθυνότητα, τη συνεργασία, την κριτική σκέψη και την αυτοπεποίθηση.

Λέξεις-κλειδιά: κοινωνικές δεξιότητες, μαθητοκεντρική προσέγγιση

1. Introduction

In the history of education research worldwide, the connection of teaching practice with learning theories was initially focused on the subject-based teaching and learning approach, which comprises three questions: What - how - why a certain content of a subject is taught? The evaluation of the results of this approach is quite easy, as it is related only to the level of students' knowledge in a given subject.

Then, a new concept transferring the interest from teacher-Centred to student-Centred learning (SCL) approach was developed, as a result of the social conditions improvement. The European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in Higher Education¹ present the SCL approach to institution programmes in a way that encourages students to take an active role in creating the learning process. However, due to the fact that: (a) the recognition of benefits of the implementation of SCL or other modern educational approaches in teaching practice of Higher Education are not widely known by the academic community, and also (b) many academic teachers are not familiar with learning theories, the evolution in teaching procedure is mostly based on teachers' personal experience

and therefore the quality of teaching practice and results remains uneven². More recently, Case³ has advocated for reconciling the two approaches (teacher-Centred and student-Centred) and she also highlighted the significance of the scientific knowledge in the engineering classrooms, in the sense that the curriculum should be taught with the simultaneous students' engagement with it.

In this paper, the design and the conclusions of the implementation of the SCL approach in the "Experimental Soil Mechanics" course, taught in the context of the five-year undergraduate study programme of the Civil Engineering Department of UTh, are presented and discussed, with emphasis in the development of social skills of students.

2. The "Student-Centred-Learning" (SCL) approach

The term "Student-Centred-Learning" (SCL) has been widely used in literature⁴ and is linked to a range of related perspectives, such as flexible learning, experiential learning, self-regulated learning etc. Historically, SCL has been credited to Hayward⁵ as early as 1905 and later to Dewey's work⁶, but it was Carl Rogers, in the 1980s, with whom the SCL concept was expanded into a learning approach⁷. The SCL approach is broadly based on constructivist learning theory, which is built on the idea that knowledge is not acquired by the students, but constructed based on their personal experiences and learning environment. Students bring past experiences and cultural factors to the learning environment and thus each of them has a different interpretation and construction of the knowledge process. The following definition of SCL in Higher Education is given by ESU⁷:

"Student-Centred-Learning represents both a mindset and a culture within a given higher education institution and is a learning approach which is broadly related to, and supported by, constructivist theories of learning. It is characterized by innovative methods of teaching which aim to promote learning in communication with teachers and other learners and which take students seriously as active participants in their own learning, fostering transferable skills such as problem-solving, critical thinking and reflective thinking."

Over the last decade, the concept of SCL has gained political recognition on the European level, as well as in national plans for higher education and

2 Kind, V. (2009). Pedagogical content knowledge in science education: perspectives and potential for progress. In: *Studies in Science Education* journal 45(2), p.p. 169-204.

3 Case, J. M. (2019). A third approach beyond the false dichotomy between teacher- and student-centred approaches in the engineering classroom. In: *European Journal of Engineering Education*, 44(5), p.p. 644-649.

4 Damşa, C., de Lange, T. (2019). Student-centred-learning environments in higher education. From conceptualization to design. In: *UNIPED journal*, Vol. 42, DOI: 10.18261/issn.1893-8981-2019-01-02.

5 Hayward, F.H. (1905). *The educational ideas of Pestalozzi and Froebal*. London: Ralph, Holland and Co.

6 Dewey, J. (1956). *The Child and the Curriculum & The School and Society*. Chicago: University Press.

7 ESU (European Students' Union) (2010). *Student-Centred-Learning—Toolkit for students, staff and higher education institutions*. In Brussels: European Students' Union (ESU).

institutional strategies, e.g. Bologna Process agreements⁸.

3. Social Dimension of Education Procedure – Social Skills in the SCL approach

The education procedure in the SCL approach is determined by both the teacher and the students, as well as the learning environment, which reflects the contemporary social conditions. In this context, teaching practice is formed as a continuous negotiation between the teacher and students, during which the learning environment evolves according to the evaluation of the teaching procedure, e.g. more team projects are assigned to students after the detection of cooperation problems among them in the classroom. The social dimension of education procedure is reflected in the above features, as well as in the simultaneous development of social skills of students. The latter corresponds to the needs of post-modern societies, induced by high competition and changing conditions derived from globalisation, facts that require employees with initiative, creativity and teamwork attitude⁹.

The importance of social skills has been officially recognized by the European Commission in the White Paper on Education and Training¹⁰, in which the need for the combination of fundamental knowledge and technical knowledge with social skills is underlined. The latter concerns interpersonal skills, e.g. behaviour at work, and a whole range of skills corresponding to the level of responsibility held, such as the ability to cooperate and work as part of a team, creativeness and the quest for quality. The Lisbon Summit¹¹ - in which the strategy for the economic growth of EU country members was presented - introduced the concept of “new basic skills”, which includes social skills of employees, as a basic requirement for the economic development, with more and better jobs and mostly greater social cohesion. In this context, social skills include self-confidence, self-direction and risk-taking. Moreover, individuals should be able to adapt to changes, new challenges and situations, as well as learn and acquire new skills rapidly.

4. The SCL Approach in the “Experimental Soil Mechanics” course

8 EHEA (European Higher Education Area) (2009). *Bologna Process: Communiqué of the Conference of European Ministers Responsible for Higher Education*, Leuven and Louvain-la-Neuve, April 28-29. Available at: <http://chea.info/cid101040/ministerial-conference-leuven-louvain-la-neuve-2009.html> (accessed on 30/8/2020).

9 Goleman, D. (1999). *Working with emotional intelligence*, 1st ed.. London: Bloomsbury Publishing PLC, pp. 30, 34, 60.

10 European Commission (1995). *White paper on education and training – Teaching and learning – Towards the learning society*. Brussels: E.U. Publications.

11 CEC (Commission of the European Communities) (2000). *A Memorandum on lifelong learning*, Brussels, Belgium: European Commission.

4.1. The teaching framework

The teaching practice of the SCL approach is not limited to a certain methodology, but involves various techniques forming the teaching framework of any scientific subject, adapted to students' experiences and needs, towards the development of their social skills. Thus, the teaching framework is initially introduced in the curriculum of the course and gradually reconstructed, changed or abandoned in the interactive teaching environment¹².

In this section, the teaching framework of the “Experimental Soil Mechanics” mandatory course offered to students who choose the Geotechnical and Geoenvironmental Engineering Division is presented. The maximum number of students attending the course during the last six academic years is 25. The course is designed and coordinated by the teacher. There are no teaching assistants or technicians supporting the teaching procedure. The teaching framework consists of three levels:

- (a) the course is organised in fourteen lessons with four hours duration, and the learning goals are stated. The teaching model used is based on the four pillars of education proposed by UNESCO^{13, 14}, which are inextricably linked: (i) learning to know, (ii) learning to do, (iii) learning to live together, and (iv) learning to be.
- (b) the roles of teacher and students are activated and the learning goals are communicated. The teaching and learning process is implemented by various teaching techniques, in which the teacher acts as a guide and the students are active participants in their own learning (they perform - not watch - laboratory tests). The latter aims to develop their social skills, e.g. communication, responsibility.
- (c) the assessment of the educational process and of the learning goals is performed at the end of each lesson and is used as a feedback for the next lesson (formative assessment). The presentation given by each students' team after conducting an experiment is evaluated by the other teams of students (team-evaluation). A final evaluation of the course is performed by the students at the end of the semester.

4.2. The content of the “Experimental Soil Mechanics” course

The course introduces the students to the experimental tests used for the assessment of physical and mechanical soil properties, which determine the soil behaviour in technical works. It includes two parts: (a) laboratory tests and (b) in-situ tests

12 Clark, C., Peterson, P. (1990). Teacher's thought processes, In: Wittrock, M (Eds.), *Handbook of Research on Teaching*. New York: Macmillan Co, pp.255-298.

13 Delors, J., Al Mufti, I., Amagi, I., Carneiro, R., Chung, F., Geremek, B., Gorham, W., Kornhauser, A., Manley, M., Padr on Quero, M., Savane, M-A., Singh, K., Stavenhagen, R., Myong, W., Zhou Nanzhao, Z. (1996). Learning: the treasure within. In: *Report to UNESCO of the International Commission on Education for the Twenty-first century*. Paris: UNESCO publishing.

14 Delors, J. (2013). The treasure within: Learning to know, learning to do, learning to live together and learning to be. What is the value of that treasure 15 years after its publication? In: *International Review of Education*, 59(3), p.p. 319-330.

(Table 1). The course offers the opportunity to students for a deeper understanding of the basic concepts related to mechanical soil behaviour (e.g. shear strength), which have been taught earlier in the context of “Soil Mechanics” course.

4.3. The learning goal and targets of the course

The learning goal of the course is that students acquire the knowledge: (a) to choose the appropriate soil tests among a variety of experimental methods, and also (b) to perform these experiments, in the context of planning and conducting a geotechnical investigation for a technical project, as well as (c) to evaluate the results of a geotechnical investigation. The purpose of the geotechnical investigation is the determination of the design values of soil parameters needed for the geotechnical study of technical projects.

The learning goal is analysed - based on the four pillars of education (i to iv) proposed by UNESCO - to the following targets, which foster the social skills development of students:

- (i) the students acquire the knowledge to
 - identify the soil parameters required for the determination of soil behaviour in technical projects.
 - describe the experimental methods for the determination of the above parameters.
- (ii) the students learn to act and investigate for
 - the suggestion of the most appropriate experimental methods used for the determination of geotechnical parameters.
 - the design of a testing programme of a geotechnical investigation, based on the requirements of the technical project.
 - the writing and evaluation of the technical reports presenting the results of the testing programme.
- (iii) the students communicate and accept their colleagues in order to work together as members of a team
 - under the supervision and the guidance of a student - leader for fast results and high productivity, and simultaneous development of communication, collaboration, responsibility etc.
 - for the presentation of their test results to the other teams. The evaluation made by the other teams is used to improve their learning process and their judgement.
- (iv) the students transfer their knowledge to the real world
 - by performing a self-evaluation based on the learning process, e.g. recognition of the importance of knowledge acquired.
 - by participating in a role game. The students play the role of professional geotechnical engineers, who design and conduct a geotechnical testing programme and also write the technical report, which is used for the design of

a technical project.

Table 1. Tests included in the “Experimental Soil Mechanics” course

Test	Soil parameters	Soils
Diagnostic exercises performed by the students for the identification/description of	colour, size and shape of soil grains, water content, soil structure, organic matter and strength	15 natural soils (gravelly, sandy and clayey samples stored in the laboratory in dry condition) The soil specimens used are artificially prepared
Laboratory soil tests performed by the students for the determination of	water content * density * specific gravity grading curve (sieving and hydrometer tests) organic content calcareous content Atterberg limits undrained shear strength (unconfined compression test)* compressibility parameters (one-dimensional loading test)*	Natural clayey soil (samples provided to the Department by a geotechnical engineering company) The samples are covered with paraffin, enclosed in plastic bag and stored in the laboratory * specimens from boreholes
	specific gravity † grading curve †+ coefficient of permeability (constant head permeability test)† minimum density † compaction curve (Proctor test)† strength parameters (direct shear tests)†	Natural sandy soils (stored in the laboratory in dry condition) † uniform clean sand + well graded clean sand

Laboratory soil tests performed by the teacher and demonstrated to the students for the determination of	strength parameters (triaxial compression tests) ¹ (The data records are given to the students for the determination of strength parameters)	Natural sandy soils (stored in the laboratory in dry condition) ¹ uniform clean sand
In-situ tests presented in the classroom (videos). In-situ technical visits of students for watching SPT and/or Plate test. Exercises are given to the students for the evaluation of	D_r , ϕ' , c_u , E , G , V_s based on the results of: SPT CPT Plate load test PMT (pressuremeter test) Vane test Geophysical seismic tests	

4.4. The teaching techniques, activities and formative evaluation

Several teachers of Geotechnical Engineering science support the aspect that the course of “Experimental Soil Mechanics” should be taught virtually, as the main goal of the course is not the knowledge of performing the tests but rather the design of a testing programme and the evaluation of the data derived¹⁵. The large number of students, the lack of experimental infrastructure, scientific and technical staff, as well as the limited time available are factors that reinforce this point of view. On the other hand, the teaching in an experimental laboratory offers the students real experience and opportunities for active participation. They acquire knowledge and perceive concepts through experiential learning using their mind, body and senses, and they can alternate focus between theory and practice, developing in this way the transfer of knowledge to a simulation of real life.

The applied teaching techniques and the types of supporting teaching and learning activities of the “Experimental Soil Mechanics” course at UTH are the following: questionnaires, diagnostic assessment, experiential learning, laboratory experiments, individual and team work, presentations, writing reports, role playing, formative evaluation and differentiated teaching. In this framework, the teacher has mainly the role of a guide. The students, on the other hand, are active participants in their own learning (they perform - not watch - laboratory tests) and develop social skills.

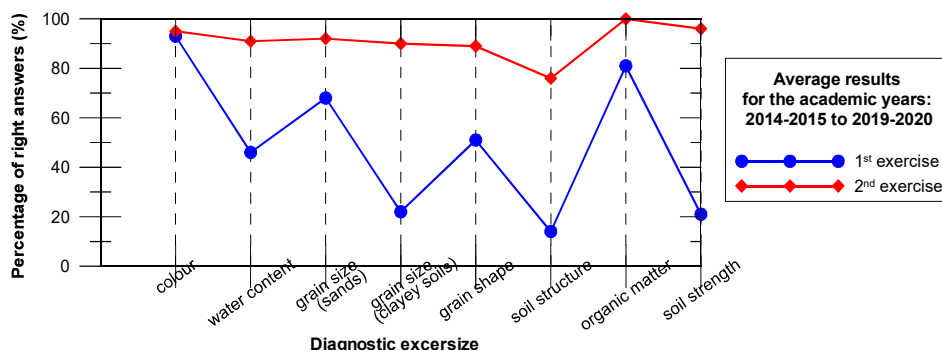
For the implementation of differentiated teaching in the course, in the beginning of the semester (first lesson) the students fill out a questionnaire which includes: their name, age, marital status, place of origin, diplomas and foreign language certificates, professional experience, technology use, personal interests, interests in their studies in the Department, preference between theory and laboratory exercises, preference between individual and team work, expectations and learning goals of the course, and learning difficulties. The questionnaire information is confidential and helps the teacher in organizing the lessons in a way that all students are involved in the educational process. It is also very useful especially in the formation of the working teams, which must consist of students with different abilities / disabilities, gender, social background and culture (criteria of students' team formation).

At the first lesson of the course, an assessment of the students' knowledge level takes place by means of a diagnostic exercise, which includes the identification/description of a number of different soils given to the students (Table 1). In this exercise, the students do not conduct experiments but use only basic tools (vernier, magnifying glass etc.), their senses (vision, smell and touch), and their pre-existing knowledge and past experience for the soils' description. A similar exercise, which however included the conduction of soil mechanics tests by the students without having first attended the lectures, has been presented by Hachich¹⁶. The results of the exercise presented herein reveal the capability (or not) of students to understand the descriptions of soil types given in books or presented in the classroom in previous courses. Most of the students exhibit insecurity and difficulty in describing the soils, but the teacher instead of discussing their performance or presenting the right answers in the classroom, gives the same exercise to the students again by the end of the semester. As shown in Figure 1, at the first lesson the students exhibit difficulties in identifying (among others) the presence of water in soils (54% of students detect water in dry soil samples) and the type of soil grains (78% of students describe the pieces of a dry clayey sample as gravel grains). The first exercise allows the formative feedback of the course and is very useful to the teacher, whereas the second exercise is a useful tool for the self-evaluation of students, who appreciate the knowledge gained and develop critical thinking.

Figure 1. Average results of the diagnostic exercise¹⁷

16 Hachich, W. (2012). Soil mechanics laboratory classes as an integral part of the learning process. In: B. McCabe, M. Pantazidou, & D. Phillips, (Eds), *Shaking the Foundations of Geo-Engineering Education*, Proceedings of the ISSMGE International Conference. (Galway, July 4-6), p.p. 121-129.

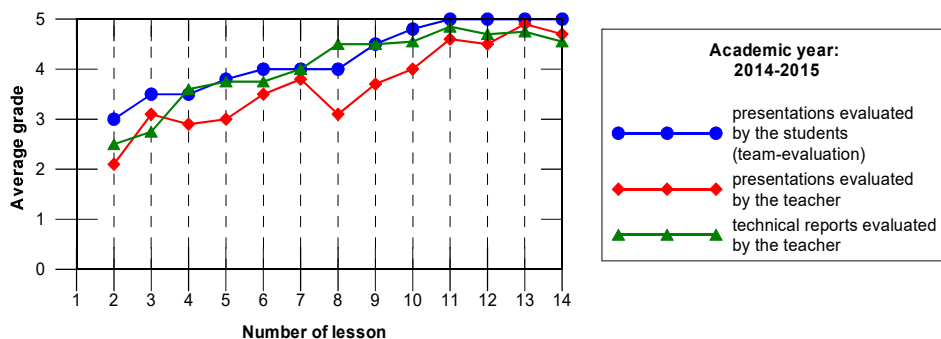
17 Kallioglou, P., Vairamidou, S. (2020). Student Centred Learning - Approach in the Development of Social Skills: Implementation in an Experimental Soil Mechanics Course. In: M. Pantazidou, M. Calvello, & M. Lopez, (Eds). *Geotechnical Engineering Education*, Proceedings of the ISSMGE online International Conference, (Athens, June 23-25).



At every lesson in laboratory testing, the students have to perform a soil experiment. Initially the teacher presents the testing procedure and the expected test results. Then, the students conduct the test (on their own or in teams) under their teacher's supervision. Natural soil samples are used for the tests, which are retrieved from boreholes for the site investigation of technical projects. In this way, the students understand the importance of the knowledge they acquire during the lessons and the connection with geotechnical practice. After each lesson, the students have to write a technical report (which describes the testing procedure, the results and the evaluation of the parameters estimated).

Detailed instructions for the technical report are given to the students, who work together without supervision in order to deliver the report to the teacher at the next lesson and present it to their classmates. All the classes during the last six years have expressed their enthusiasm for the presentation activity. The evaluation of the presentations is made by the other students or teams (team-evaluation) - based on the following criteria: content and organization, speakers' comfort, clarity of figures and overall presentation, using a grading scale from 1 (weak) to 5 (strong) - and is followed by a discussion. Figure 2 presents indicative evaluation results of presentations and reports. There is an improvement in student performance in both presentations and reports as the course progresses and, hence, in the associated social skills. The fact that the results of the team-evaluation follow the same trend as the presentations' evaluation made by the teacher shows that the students exhibit responsibility.

Figure 2. Indicative results of the evaluation of presentations and technical reports¹⁷



The assignment of experiments to individuals or teams of students is made by the teacher. In the first experiments, due to their simplicity, each student performs the tests alone. This is very useful for the detection of any students' learning difficulties. In subsequent lessons, when the students become more familiar with the laboratory equipment, they are assigned to perform more complex experiments in small groups of two to five members. The composition of the teams is not constant in all experiments, but varies. At the first experiment it is the students' decision, which ends up systematically in only-boys and only-girls teams. Then, the teacher based on the criteria mentioned above decides on the composition of the teams, which is changed in every lesson, so that every student will have the opportunity to cooperate with the maximum number of the other students. The teacher includes in every team a student with preference for teamwork, which usually acts as the team leader. The usual students' reaction to the team changes is initially negative; they insist to form teams only with their friends. Nevertheless, this learning environment prepares the students for the challenges they are going to meet later on their professional work and also fosters their skills of communication, collaboration, self-confidence and leadership.

During the lessons on field testing, one or two educational visits are planned for the students to watch in-situ geotechnical experiments and investigations. The students are invited to keep notes for the testing procedure in the field, which they have to deliver to the teacher at the end of the visit.

Upon completion of every lesson, the students proceed to a formative evaluation by answering the following questions: (a) what is the most important thing you have learned today, (b) what did you do easily, (c) what was difficult for you, (d) what do you propose to do in order to overcome your difficulty, and (e) what is the implementation in practice of the things you have learned today. This evaluation helps the students to sum up the benefits of the learning process and also contributes to the formative assessment of each lesson.

By the end of the semester, when the students' knowledge and experience in laboratory tests is adequate, they are assigned by a technical company to conduct a

soil testing programme for a technical project. The communication for the assigned study is usually done via skype, during which the company representative describes the project and asks the students to play the role of the engineer, who will design and conduct the testing programme on soil samples from the project site. Students must submit the technical report to their “client” within a specified time. With this role playing game, the students have the opportunity to cultivate their responsibility, self-confidence, critical judgment, communication and organisational skills. The report is reviewed by the company and returned to the students. Although the evaluation of this report does not contribute to the final mark on the course, the students participate in it with enthusiasm and responsibility.

4.5. The overall evaluation and main findings of the education procedure

The benefits of the diagnostic tests conducted in the first lesson and by the end of the semester, the formative evaluation in every lesson, the team-evaluation of the presentations and the evaluation on the project assigned by the technical company were presented in the previous section, since they are inextricably linked to the evolution of education procedure. Their results are used by (a) the teacher, to improve the teaching techniques while the course is ongoing, so that all students are active participants of it, and (b) the students, to assess their knowledge level and progress, identify their abilities and weaknesses, and improve the learning process.

An evaluation at the end of the semester (final evaluation) is also conducted, using the course evaluation system of the Department and by means of a questionnaire. The questionnaire consists of 25 questions, using a scale from 1(low) to 5(high) with space available for comments. The results are made accessible to the teacher no earlier than two months after the completion of the semester and are used by the teacher to improve the education procedure of the course for the next academic year. The number of the students who participate in this evaluation is generally low for all courses, because - as the student state - it does not give a feedback to their learning environment, and also because they find the number of questions big. Nevertheless, based on the results of the final evaluation of the course for the last six academic years, the students’ perception on the way that the course is organised, the teacher and themselves is reflected on the value of 4.3/5.0, 4.3/5.0 and 4.5/5.0 respectively.

Whereas the assessment on the knowledge targets’ achievement is easy, the evaluation of the social skills is mainly qualitative in the context of this course. This is because, the social skills are not included in the final evaluation and also in the formative evaluation there are only text answers (without scale grade). For this reason, the general picture of (a) the students participating in the learning activities, and (b) the communication level among them and also with the teacher during the lessons is used for the evaluation of the social skills development.

The main findings of the six years implementation of SCL approach to the course are presented below:

- The students express their satisfaction for the power given to them by the teacher to influence their own learning experience.
- The results of the diagnostic exercise (first test) show the students' weaknesses to answer right. This percentage of right answers is significantly increased to 90-100% in the second test, showing that the education procedure gives the students the opportunity to mature as learners. This self-evaluation of students is a useful tool for the development of their self-confidence, which is a social skill which reinforces the social cohesion¹¹.
- Based on the answers given in the formative evaluations at every lesson, it is shown that the students:
 - (a) successfully participate in the experiential learning activities, in order to acquire the knowledge subject of the course. 90% of the students understand the importance of the lessons and 85% find the experimental procedures easy.
 - (b) develop social skills like communication, negotiation, collaboration etc. Although almost 50% of the students are negative to the composition of the working teams, they act with responsibility, exhibit adaptability to changes, realise that first of all they are part of a team, and therefore conduct the experiments with success, write the technical reports and make the presentations.
 - (c) engage actively with the domain knowledge and practices. 70% of the students can see the implementation of the knowledge in practice, and 15% who face difficulties during the experimental procedure, exhibit self-confidence to overcome their difficulties with more practice and work.
- The team-evaluation of the presentations among student teams shows that students act with responsibility, and make their review with critical thinking and judgment, by applying specific evaluation criteria and accepting others' opinion.
- The evaluation on the project assigned by the technical company shows that the students exhibit a variety of social skills e.g. communication, responsibility, organizational skills, self-confidence, through the collaboration within the working team and the company as well.
- The final evaluation provides an indication of students' perception on the course, but there is no assessment on the development of social skills of students.
- In addition to the formative evaluation, team-evaluation and project evaluation, a qualitative assessment of the development of social skills of students is made by the teacher based on the conversations with the students and the observation of students' classroom behaviour. The general picture - which is improved during the course - is that the students exhibit high responsibility and enthusiasm during the experiments, communicate easily, see the implementation of knowledge in practice, try to overcome the difficulties, behave with respect to their colleagues and exhibit a teamwork attitude even

with persons they don't like.

5. General conclusions

In the context of the “Experimental Soil Mechanics” course, the SCL approach provides an effective learning environment for the development of social skills of students, as the educational procedure itself is a social experience. For the implementation of the SCL approach, a variety of teaching techniques is used in order to activate the role of students in the learning procedure. The main conclusions of this study are presented below:

Diagnostic exercises are considered as a useful tool for the development of self-confidence, critical thinking and self-knowledge of students. Furthermore, the combination of their results with those of the questionnaires is considered very important for the implementation of differentiated teaching in the course, as well as the composition criteria for the working teams of students.

The experiential learning and the role playing game are the most favourable learning activities of the students. The use of natural soil materials retrieved from sites of technical projects used for the conduction of soil experiments by the students, as well as the latter's communication with a professional geotechnical engineer contribute to the improvement of their self-confidence, responsibility, communication skills and collaboration. Another learning activity which students love is the oral presentations. Their least favourable learning activity is the cooperative working within teams of persons they are not fond of. Despite this, they exhibit responsibility and adaptability to conduct their team experiments and deliver the team projects.

The assessment of the development of social skills of students is possible and is mainly based on the team-evaluation, the formative evaluation of every lesson, as well as the general behaviour which the students have in the laboratory. This assessment shows that the students develop a variety of social skills, among which are the communication, collaboration, responsibility, organizational skills and self-confidence. The final evaluation of the course conducted at the end of the semester using the course evaluation system of the Department and by means of a questionnaire does not contribute to the assessment of the development of social skills of students.

Since the benefits of the SCL approach in social skills development are not generally measured or automatically identifiable and so far are based mainly on a qualitative assessment, an evaluation performed with former students - who have participated in SCL approach and now are professional geotechnical engineers - is suggested.

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