Social Work & Education

Paraskevi Kaltsouni,
PhD student majoring in Special Education,
Ternopil Volodymyr Hnatiuk National Pedagogical University,
Ternopil, Ternopil region, Ukraine,
vivikaltsouni@hotmail.com

ORCID ID: https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8991-6039

INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN GREECE

Abstract. The educational system in Greece, in terms of inclusive education, has changed a lot the last decades in Greece, while disabled students had to follow all these reforms in educational and social context. In other words, along with the steps of other countries, Greece has been making attempts to adopt an institutional framework for integration, through a holistic approach that will provide sustainable social and educational environments to all children with disabilities. Therefore, the aim of this study is to describe the forms, models and practices of integration during the last decades in Greece.

Introduction

Special Education refers to the set of educational programs and services for children with special educational needs and / or disability that are created based on their special needs in landscaped and equipped spaces (Polychronopoulou, 2003). The main goal of Special Education is to provide equal opportunities in education with equal rights in education, social and professional development and in general participation in society (Article 1, Law 3699/2008).

Another definition for Special Education according to law 2817/2000 states that: people with special educational needs, ie people who have significant learning and adjustment difficulties due to physical, mental, psychological, emotional and social peculiarities, need a special enhanced form of educational assistance and special education at all stages of their life, in order to address the difficulties in the fields of school education and social integration.

An important development in the history of Special Education takes place after 1975 with the spread of the idea of providing special educational assistance and support for students with special educational needs and / or disability (McCartney, 1994). The social requirement for the integration of these students in general education schools is instituted by the Committee of Special Education with the aim of providing special educational services in all school districts of Special Education.

Literature Review

Special Education until 1950 in Greece, but also in the international arena has an institutional character with the aim of ensuring social control (Soulis, 2002), while a more institutionalized organization of Special Education aimed at the integration of children with special educational needs or / and disability begins in the 70's. Until then there is social and educational segregation and differentiation for people with disabilities, who are not part of the general education system and are marginalized in institutions outside society under the guise of different educational requirements and needs that these children have and protecting them from the abuse of society (Christakis, 2011). However, with the development of pedagogical sciences, a gradual change in people's perceptions of disability and Special Education and a shift from a medical to a social model is triggered. The philosophy of the medical model was based on the theory that disability is a disease that needs treatment and that the difficulties of everyday life for these people are a consequence of their own dysfunction without any reference to the social environment in order to find solutions for personal development (Degener, 1995). Children were treated as incompetent with the main concern of society their assimilation violating to the highest degree their otherness. In case such a thing was not possible, isolation and exclusion followed. Thus, this model, which for the most part created prejudices and stereotypes and was based on the fact that disability is rooted in the individual and needs to be rehabilitated, is being challenged and strongly criticized by experts and organizations of the disabled (Lambropoulou & Panteliadou, 2000).

On the contrary, the social model emphasizes the environmental, social and cultural factors, talking about the disability of society to understand the difficulties and needs of these people. The philosophy of this model is based on human rights, the

equality of people in society and equal opportunities, eliminating exclusion and recognizing the right of everyone to coexist, cooperate and interact. In addition, the interpretation and social dimension of disability is investigated, while at the same time more special schools are established either by private or state initiative, which, however, did not seek the inclusion of children with special educational needs and / or disability, but strengthened the separation between special and general education (Soulis, 2002).

In the 1970s and 1980s, alternative integration models were developed and research was conducted on the evaluation of these models, student progress, the effectiveness of various intervention programs, participatory learning, collaborative teaching, and recording attitudes for people with disabilities, special needs and integration through support services. In the early 70's the issue of education of people with special educational needs and / or disability became more intense and serious, as it was reinforced by the Warnock report which drastically changed social perceptions and transformed the problem from humanitarian to social - educational. The prevailing view is that there are no bad students and the position of equal opportunities in education for all children is strengthened, marking important changes in the position and education of children with special needs (Christakis, 2011). In this way, the separation gradually begins to be eliminated and the co-education of all children, regardless of personal peculiarities, enters the same learning environment, ie the same classroom.

In general, in Greece, but also around the world, the opinion has prevailed that the most appropriate educational process is inclusive education. Nevertheless, while there have been many changes, there are differences in the degree of achievement of the goal and the implementation of this perception between the countries (Kypriotakis, 2001). Lambropoulou & Panteliadou (2000) typically state that in Greece no clear steps have been taken yet in the field of Special Education, while Zoniou-Sideri (2012) argues that school integration is an active process aimed at removing obstacles to an education system that makes it difficult for children with disabilities to participate. Thus, the issue of removing barriers has created many dilemmas regarding inclusive education and needs to reconsider the theoretical principles of integration.

From Integration to Inclusion

Regarding the common education of children with or without special educational needs and / or disability, the literature both Greek and international uses terms such as: integration and inclusive education (Vlachou, 2000). The term integration refers to the placement of individuals, who have distinct and different social, biological and psychological characteristics, within the wider group - class acquiring and playing a role within it. This placement takes place in the general schools attended by their peers with the same curriculum (Tilstone, 2000). The theoretical framework of integration values is democracy, respect for human rights, equal opportunities, but also acceptance, each being an important and separate member of society (Wrigley, 2003).

According to Tony Booth & Mel Ainscow (2011) the integration process is related to increasing participation and equal opportunities for students, while providing appropriate support to schools in order to respond most effectively to diversity, interests and the skills of children with special educational needs and / or disabilities. Also,

Sebba & Ainscow (1996) report that the integration process is an attempt by schools to respond to all students individually by reviewing the organization and delivery of the curriculum and increasing its capacity to accommodate as many children as they wish to attend. In a study by Bennet et al. (1999) integration was defined as the education of individuals with a variety of abilities and special needs in general education classes through appropriate support, while Tsinarelis (1993) refers to integration as the acceptance of an individual or a group of individuals with different biological, psychological and economic characteristics within a working group with its own physical and social structures by providing external assistance to maintain this position and acquire roles within it.

The term integration refers to the mission of all members of the educational community in order to educate people with disabilities, so that they integrate and do not differ from the general population of the school, ensuring their dynamic participation in educational and social activities. According to Tsinarelis (1993), integration concerns the mutual acceptance by a group with the development of socio-dynamic relations without providing any external assistance with the complete absorption of the individual while maintaining the distinct characteristics of his personality. The inclusion of students with special educational needs and / or disabilities in the general classroom shows that these children have not reached the appropriate level to be able to coexist, build relationships and interact with other children as opposed to integration where students they have the proper supplies to do this. When the child is integrated, the special education teacher continues to provide assistance to the student not directly, but in collaboration with the class teacher provides appropriate information to help him succeed (Kompos, 1992). In this way it is understood that there is a sequence between these two concepts and that in order for inclusion to take place, integration precedes.

The inclusion refers to the modification of the school institution as an institution and organizational structure with the aim of co-education of all children with the implementation of interventions within the school itself and not individual (Zoniou - Sideri, 2004). The philosophy of inclusion is based on equality, parity, democracy. According to Imellou (2004), inclusion refers to support processes for students with special educational needs and / or disability in order to participate in the common school curriculum, while equal co-education implies the reconstruction of the school curriculum due to the diversity of students. It is a continuous struggle for the creation of a better school that will be based on parity, responding to the rights of every child, regardless of gender, mental or physical ability, nationality, socio-economic level. In an inclusive school, inclusion is not considered an end in itself, but it is these educational practices that go beyond the standard teaching and learning processes (UNESCO, 1994). More generally, it is a school strategy that confronts the diversity and marginalization of specific students or groups of students in school communities (Ainscow, 2004). In this way all children study together developing their social relationships and people who have been marginalized until now are led to school integration which will result in their increase in social and cultural life (Siozou, 2008). The provision of equal opportunities and democratization in education is achieved through joint education without discrimination and prejudices against the different until these individuals integrate smoothly into society (Kypriotaki, 2001). Inclusive

education is inextricably linked to justice and states that the specific characteristics of each individual, such as gender, race, socio-cultural background and economic background, cannot affect the right of every child to free quality education (Zoniou-Sideri, 2000). Such learning is oriented towards the individual value of each individual and the acceptance of diversity, providing equal educational opportunities for all, saying that a person is considered complete only by direct contact and meeting with different people (Zoniou-Sideri, 2000; Kypriotakis, 2001). Finally, according to Len Barton (2003) inclusive education is not an end in itself, but a means of creating an inclusive society based above all on human rights and equal opportunities.

In order to make this possible, it is important to make a complete overhaul of the school units, in terms of their operation, but also of the educational system by extension, in order to meet the educational needs of all children. The areas that need to change for the inclusive education of all children are: educational policy, educational programs, teaching methods and social attitudes and perceptions about disability and uniqueness of each person (Patsidou - Iliadou, 2011).

Jordan & Stanovich (2002) report that teachers who took responsibility for inclusion increased the quality and effectiveness of their teaching compared to those with different beliefs. A teacher's attitudes can greatly influence the success of an inclusion program, ie whether his / her intervention teaching will be successful and will achieve his / her teaching objectives (Mavropoulou, & Panteliadou, 2000). Thus, through their perceptions and actions, they can pass messages of acceptance or rejection that contribute respectively to the success or failure of the interventions, as well as to the acceptance of diversity in the school context (Horrocks et al., 2008).

Also, another way of achieving equal opportunities, as the teachers emphasize, is the active participation of children in learning through alternative forms of teaching (eg excursions, projects), where they work together to achieve a goal and not the constant attachment to the traditional sterile learning. Such an effort is also a very effective inclusive practice, since through educational trips and visits the participation of children in learning is increased, the activities are based on their experiences, interests and skills, discovering and strengthening the knowledge, the collaborative method flourishes as groups are created, where children go through roles and all acquire an object, thus stimulating their self-feeling, their self-confidence, socializing without being marginalized and becoming autonomous. In this way we understand that learning takes place outside of school in informal learning environments, where teaching can be made more direct and fun for children by using multiple sources giving them opportunities to express their views and participate actively, something they probably could not do in the classroom (Angelidis, 2011).

To provide equal opportunities, collaborations take place between teachers or even with their students and parents (Ainscow et al., 2006). Teachers separate roles and through a responsible collaboration a co-education program can be successfully implemented (Tafa, 1998). Creating a collaborative culture inspired by respect, shared planning, reflection and feedback leads to more effective education (Hargreaves, 1995). Thus, the cooperation of teachers is essential for the promotion of inclusive education by understanding the concepts of compromise, cooperation to solve a problem and group teaching (Udvari - Solner & Thousand, 1995). We could mention that this peer

interaction can have many positive results that will lead to the improvement of the school. Also, in order to promote inclusive education, it is important for teachers to discuss the issue of diversity with their students, so that there is no segregation due to cognitive, behavioral or even external differences, while the teacher should reward the achievements of children with special needs, thus creating a positive atmosphere in the classroom that will result in trust (Soulis, 2008). For a more effective school, the substantial involvement of parents in their children's learning is also considered important. Various practices include principal and teacher meetings with parents about children's progress, setting up support groups with parents to discuss children's educational needs, informing parents of any changes to the curriculum, and collaborating with each other on solving any problem that arises within the school, can only have a positive impact on the educational process (Tikly, 2004). According to Dfes (2004) the best schools are those that promote active participation and dialogue with parents.

Basic principles and goals of integration

Integration is a process that promotes the learning of all children regardless of abilities and skills without social exclusion by establishing a general child-centered pedagogy (Soulis, 2002). Mutual understanding, acceptance of the different and respect for all people, thus ensuring harmonious coexistence are the main pillars of integration (Tzouriadou, 1995).

Integration to be achieved must be based on some basic principles and conditions. An integration program, but also the pace of the learning process in it, is always determined by the needs and adaptability of these children which will be done in a gradual and systematic way and will not be based on schedules. A necessary principle for the promotion of an inclusive educational policy is the object of learning, which should not be limited to the transmission of knowledge and coverage of the curriculum, but through activities to enable all students to be led to social learning (Zoniou - Sideri, 1998). The curriculum must have specific and individualized goals for each child, while in addition to the assessment carried out at the beginning by the former KEDDY now KESY it is necessary to make a formative assessment during integration, in order to check if progress and whether there is a need to modify the short-term and long-term goals set at the beginning of the year. This evaluation should not be limited only to the cognitive part, but also to the development of the socio-emotional sector (Tafa, 2008).

Also, for an effective integration process, it is important to have early intervention in infants and toddlers who are lagging behind in various fields, since the earlier the integration takes place, the more effective it will be. According to Buysse & Bailey (1993) early integration intervention is particularly important for three reasons. The first concerns stereotypes and prejudices, since younger children are more likely to accept their classmates with special educational needs and / or disabilities without marginalizing and expressing negative emotions. The second deals with acceptance, where the timely interaction of these students with children of normal development within the general classroom is more likely to be achieved. Finally, the third reason is that the early integration education process more effectively prepares children with

special educational needs and / or disabilities to be more autonomous in the future in a formal environment.

A necessary condition and principle for a successful integration process is the ability of the school to meet the needs of these students both in terms of teaching staff and buildings. The differentiation of the curriculum from the general class teacher with the support of a special educator, but also the existence of appropriate building infrastructure with support equipment and designed rooms are areas that contribute to the smooth integration (Vlachou & Papadimitriou, 2004).

The main goal of integration is reconciliation with diversity and mutual acceptance that will overcome the dividing lines by democratizing education and teaching (Kypriotakis, 2001). With the social integration of children with special educational needs and / or disabilities, the chances of social and educational exclusion are reduced, achieving an equal education. In addition, another goal of integration is to reduce prejudices and stereotypes towards people with disabilities by increasing the social interaction of students with special educational needs and / or disability with other children (Avramidis, 2010) giving everyone the opportunity to participate equal in political, social and educational development. Each individual is unique and complete with his own unique profile, his own particularities and possibilities and with the right to equal participation in all sectors of society (Zoniou - Sideri, 1996). It also provides people with special educational needs and / or disability with substantial access to educational goods and common life (Soulis, 2002). In general, the goals of integration are the socialization of people with special educational needs and / or disability, their psycho-emotional and cognitive development, their equal participation in groups and finally their social and professional integration later (Zoniou - Sideri, 1998).

Conclusion

In conclusion, the integration programs are individualized for each student and aim at the development of their autonomy within the general school, his socialization, but also at the improvement of his knowledge and talents in an environment of recognition and acceptance feeling emotional security which will act catalysts for his active participation in the activities (Gena, 2001). Thus, in a positive environment of encouragement, affirmation and acceptance that will enhance self-esteem and self-perception, students with special educational needs and / or disability will feel happy and will be active members of the school community (Matsagouras, 1999).

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ІНКЛЮЗИВНА ОСВІТА У ГРЕЦІЇ

Параскеві Кальцуні, аспірантка за спеціальністю Спеціальна Освіта Тернопільський національний педагогічний університет ім. Володимира Гнатюка, м. Тернопіль, Тернопільська обл., Україна; vivikaltsouni@hotmail.com

Анотація. Система освіти в Греції, з точки зору інклюзивної освіти, сильно змінилася за останні десятиліття в Греції, в той час як студенти, що мають обмежені можливості повинні були слідувати всім цим реформам в освітньому та соціальному контексті. Іншими словами, поряд з кроками інших країн, Греція робить спроби прийняти інституційні рамки для інтеграції, за допомогою цілісного підходу, який забезпечить стійке соціальне та освітнє середовище для всіх дітей з обмеженими можливостями. Тому метою цього дослідження є опис форм, моделей і практик інтеграції протягом останніх десятиліть в Греції.

У контексті дослідження з'ясовано, що інтеграційні програми індивідуалізовані для кожного учня і спрямовані на розвиток його самостійності в загальноосвітній школі, його соціалізацію, а також на вдосконалення його знань і талантів в середовищі визнання та прийняття, почуття емоційної безпеки, яке буде діяти. каталізаторами його активної участі в діяльності. Таким чином, у позитивному середовищі заохочення, ствердження та прийняття, що підвищить самооцінку та самосприйняття, учні з особливими освітніми потребами та/або інвалідністю почуватимуться щасливими та будуть активними членами шкільної спільноти.

Ключові слова: спеціальна освіта; інклюзивна освіта; грецька система освіти.