

Research on Special and Inclusive Education in the Context of Higher Education - Teachers' Views About Labeling

Vasiliki Ioannidi, PhD/Dr.phil.

Open University of Cyprus, Cyprus

E-mail: vasiliki.ioannidi@ouc.ac.cy

Received: June 9, 2023 Accepted: July 28, 2023 Published: August 5, 2023

doi:10.5296/ijld.v13i3.21211 URL: <https://doi.org/10.5296/ijld.v13i3.21211>

Abstract

Background and Research Question: Inclusive Education is an educational approach that has become a worldwide phenomenon (Ignacio & Allit, 2023). This article presents and analyses the issue of labeling of special educational needs, as it is a complex theme with potential benefits and disadvantages. The main idea of the present paper is an empirical investigation regarding methods to reduce the label of educational needs in the classroom.

Method: The research is based on the principles of qualitative methodological design without making generalizations (Willig, 2015). A focus group of postgraduate students-teachers with experience in different educational contexts took part in the context of Higher Education. The data were collected based on free-writing texts. The free-writing texts were subjected to content analysis. The free-writing texts were anonymous and the names of the postgraduate students are not referred.

Results and Conclusions: The analyses of the data show that labels in Special and Inclusive Education must be addressed with an emphasis on human rights (Clough & Corbett, 2000). Collaborative learning and inclusive teaching combined with teacher abilities and skills are useful to improve the inclusiveness of a school class and to help the school inclusion of all children. Inclusive education is a continuous process of transformation of the education system and it is both an approach to teaching and learning (Bethere et al., 2023).

Contribution: The practical significance of the research lies in the inclusiveness of Primary, High School and Higher education for persons with disabilities and the prospects for overcoming them (Akopova et al., 2023).

Keywords: inclusion, special and inclusive education, labeling, inclusive pedagogy, collaborative learning, teacher skills, higher education

1. Introduction

Inclusive Education is an educational approach that has become a worldwide phenomenon (Ignacio & Allit, 2023). In this international phenomenon and global challenge, University Pedagogy and University Teaching is a key element of active learning for inclusion in all educational contexts, because teachers, instructors, special educators and therapists are being trained for the future of inclusive education. Highlighting, *“Inclusive pedagogy is a student-centered approach to teaching that pays attention to the varied background, learning styles, and abilities of all the learners in front of you. It is a method of teaching in which instructors and students work together to create a supportive and open environment that fosters social justice and allows each individual to be fully present and feel equally valued”* (<https://www.salisbury.edu/administration/academic-affairs/cafes/articles/inclusive-pedagogy.a.spx>).

Especially, Mary Jacob (2023) asks *“How do we create a coherent model of active learning for use in both online and face-to-face teaching?”*. According to Brown et al. (2022) *“student engagement is consistently identified as a key predictor of learner outcomes within the online learning environment”*. In addition, research findings suggested that *“reference to an online engagement framework heightens the effectiveness of critical reflection by elucidating an awareness of learning about ways of supporting student learning and online engagement to improve student success”* (Redmond et al., 2023). Thus, students’ perceptions of online engagement will provide a more comprehensive understanding of the topic and should assist instructional designers to support academic staff to develop online courses that are more likely to engage their students. Such paper offers several practical implications for student learning (Redmond et al., 2023).

This paper reports on research that extends knowledge about higher education students’ perceptions of online engagement. The idea of the present research topic emerged out of my online teaching in the Master’s Module: “Special and Inclusive Education” at Open University of Cyprus. Moreover, it is worth noting that contemporary research and studies in Educational Sciences and Distance Education focuses on interpretation of students’ and teachers’ ideas, perceptions and practices, because education is a right-based issue (see e.g. Sakellariou, 2022; Nyame et al., 2023; Forlin, 2013, 2012; Engelbrecht, 2013).

Therefore, we focus on research topic of labelling in inclusive educational contexts, because we believe that if it is connected to an inclusive pedagogical framework, it can help teachers to improve their educational practice, enhancing reflection on teaching actions, identifying criteria in inclusive teaching for successful education for all (O'Donnell et al., 2021).

The purpose of the present research topic is an empirical investigation regarding methods to reduce prejudice in the classroom against educational needs. We adopt the hermeneutic paradigm, which is based on micro-scale research through a qualitative analysis wanting to explore in depth the meanings that teachers attribute to social and educational events, without

generalizations, but strictly aiming at a detailed analysis of how teachers perceive educational situations and pedagogical meanings (Bartlett & Button, 2019, p. 76/ Willig, 2015).

Undoubtedly, the issue of labeling was considered interesting, because it is one of the research topic of special and inclusive education that have not been particularly researched (Stasinou, 2020, p. 502). A discussion on this research topic is wide (see e.g. “The Conflict Between “Special” and “Inclusive” Education», Anderson et al., 2022).

2. Theoretical Background

Generally, labeling is related to the attribution of negative characteristics to the personality of a young person, with the result that the person himself embraces these characteristics and limits efforts at school and wider socialization by generalizing experiences of failure through the attribution of a category (Ioannidi, 2001; Ioannidi & Malafantis, 2022c, 2022a).

In particular, focusing on symbols in social interactions, which are common to all as individuals interpret the actions, meanings, and intentions of others (Bartlett & Burton, 2019, p. 49), labeling is called “the process by which the diagnosis of a disability becomes the primary characteristic that defines a person, effectively limiting the person to that diagnosis. Labeling is linked to the medical model of disability and to the provision of services only when a formal diagnostic 'label' has been assigned to an individual. Labeling contributes to negative treatment and exclusion and should not be confused with a person's positive and conscious decision to identify as disabled” (Hodapp, 2003, p. 235).

On this basis, “*every characterization can, under certain conditions, be the starting point for the establishment of a negatively determined communication relationship between teacher and student, with decisively burdensome effects on the school, and possibly on the professional career of the young person*” (Dimou, 2003, pp. 197-198).

Certainly, by looking at specific aspects of the labeling phenomenon, we are oriented towards potential benefits and disadvantages, such as (Heward, 2011, pp. 10-12):

- On the one hand that labeling recognizes essential differences in learning or behavior and is a first step in responding responsibly to learning differences,
- On the other hand, those labels can negatively affect the child's self-esteem. Accordingly, teachers may have low expectations for a labeled student, which can lead to the self-fulfilling prophecy effect for children with educational needs.

Overall, neither the conceptual arguments nor the research have led to a final decision for the total acceptance or rejection of labeling practices, as there are often contradictory indications and methodological weaknesses in any approaches (Heward, 2011). Nevertheless, there has been always an emphasis on inclusion and equal access of every child and respecting all its rights according to international declarations (UNESCO, Salamanca, etc.).

3. The Methodological Approach of the Research

In total, the research has an educational character. Focusing on pedagogical practice in the context of Higher Education, an empirical research is conducted, which aims to investigate

free-writing written texts of postgraduate students-teachers, regarding possible methods to reduce labeling/stigma.

The research is based on the interpretative epistemological approach, because it is guided by a research question, which is based on social and educational meanings (Willig, 2015). Thus, the research question that follow develop the research aim: *“If 'labels' are necessary for categorizing and classifying educational needs, how can teachers reduce the stigma attached to labels?”*. The research questions guided the study. The researcher explained to the students (focus group) that there is not correct answer to be given and encouraged them to express free their opinion.

The research took place online in the Module “Special and Inclusive Education: Contemporary theoretical trends and approaches” of the “Educational Sciences” Master’s Program in the innovative and digital environment of the Open University of Cyprus, in the year 2022-2023. The sample is not the total statistical population (all students), but one focus group. The research was based on the principles of qualitative methodological design without generalizing. Emphasis was placed on focus group with a small number of participants, because everyone's expression had to be encouraged (Willig, 2015). So, a focus group from thirteen postgraduate students -teachers with experience in different educational contexts in Primary and High School at Cyprus and Greece- 11 women and 2 men took part. Participants ranged in age from 23 to 45 with the majority being from 25 to 35 years old. It was given attention by the researcher to the personal data of the participants.

The free-writing texts were subjected to content analysis. This method is considered suitable for small-scale studies and is carried out for the analysis of information mainly written documents. In addition, it can be applied to any form of communication and ultimately constitutes an attractive tool for educational research (Verma & Mallick, 2004/ Cohen et al., 2008). The research material consists entirely of teachers' perceptions as basic reference texts. The limitations of the present research are that it has a delimited space-time character. We focus on teacher thinking but we do not generalize conclusions.

For the processing of the qualitative data, we chose thematic analysis, which consists in the systematic identification, organization and understanding of repeated common patterns from all the research material. In this way, the researcher gains cognitive access to collective ways of making sense and experiences (Tsiolis, 2018), which in the present case concern ways of making sense of the postgraduate students themselves as education professionals. It is a flexible method of analysis, which assumes the active and creative role of the researchers, who compile the research data (Tsiolis, 2016). It should be noted that qualitative research is not tied to a specific sample, as quantitative research is, as what is of interest is information from which “one can learn a great deal about issues central to the purpose of the research”. In qualitative approaches that adopt an “internal point of reference”, the participants are perceived as research collaborators and not as “objects” from which research data is “extracted” with the appropriate techniques (Isari & Pourkos, 2015, p. 80). Thus, given that the research question acts as a guide during the processing of the qualitative data according to the purpose of the research, we created a system of autonomous conceptual units, the

so-called themes, and classified the versions of the responses of the postgraduate students, as categories based on its semantic content (Tsiolis, 2018).

At this point, one key concept related with methodology should be mentioned: ethical consideration and respect for all participants in the research. The free-writing texts were anonymous and the names of the postgraduate students are not referred. The scope of the research is clear.

3. Results

On a research-practical level, given that qualitative analysis is important to illuminate individuals' perspectives, the collection of data is useful in a context of discussing and highlighting teaching strategies in inclusive education, as well as further emphasizing the improvement of teachers' skills.

Although the small number of participants cannot generalize, the research provides a valuable approach to data interpretation in the educational reality (Schunk, 2010, pp. 5-6). Also, the sample is a focus group and the discussion was organized under the rationale that focus groups provide qualitative information about experiences, opinions, etc. that arouse interest in a scientific field (Nikonanou, 2015, p. 163).

After coding the phrases with the same meaning were characterized by key words and the thematic analysis of the collected empirical material is analyzed in the basic following themes – categories, namely: (1) Emphasis on collaborative teaching and collaborative learning, (2) Emphasis on uniqueness and personality of all children, (3) Emphasis on teacher abilities and skills. However, more findings that have been mentioned are not described in the present research. At this point, three key concepts related with inclusion and the reduction of stigma should be mentioned.

- (1) The value of cooperation in the classroom, the cooperative game and the collaborative teaching and learning are a factor in reducing stigma and promoting equal and creativity access for all students with and without special educational needs (Pun, 2012). Especially, the role of teacher is increasingly related to designing and arranging collaborative learning situations in which fruitful and creative group work may occur (Haemaelainen & Vaehaesantanen, 2011). Eight key phrases with the concept of collaborative learning. Indicatively: *“Teachers should include children in group activities and promote cooperative learning in the classroom”*. *“Cooperation is everywhere among all the children”*. *“Cooperation is very important in the classroom for all”*. *“Teachers should engage children in group activities”*. *“With group-centered teaching, the self-confidence and self-esteem of the child are built”*.

According to Ignacio & Allit (2023), the benefits of including students with special needs in regular classes are widely recognized and students without special needs who are in inclusive classes have gained greater appreciation for differences and increased levels of academic engagement. Also, the bibliography indicated that most teachers recommended the use of interactive and cooperative online teaching strategies (Hsieh, 2023).

- (2) The value of uniqueness, the capabilities of personality and the respect for every child is a factor in reducing stigma. Indicatively, there are eight mentions: *“Teachers must emphasize the potential of all children and provide them equal access to education”.* *“The teacher must believe in every child. All children should have the same opportunities”.* *“Teachers should have expectations according to children's interests and abilities”.* *“Teachers should focus on the deeper characteristics of individuals and not on their disability”.*

Overall, it is stated, *“Inclusive Education continues to be an exciting but challenging component of the everyday life of the classroom teacher. Whist there is no recipe for successful inclusion, meaningful inclusion involves engaging in a flexible process in which educators work in partnership with parents, students, and other professionals in order to meet the needs of all children”* (Deppeler et al., 2011).

- (3) In addition, teaching skills and the profile of inclusive teachers (https://www.european-agency.org/sites/default/files/profile_of_inclusive_teachers_en.pdf) are a factor in reducing stigma. Seven teacher meanings focus on the emphasis that should be placed on managing within the classroom and making decisions for the benefit of all children. Indicatively, *“The role of a teacher is to be able to consciously make decisions about the content of teaching, its structure and the way it is managed, so that all children benefit without exception”.*

It is appropriate to note some other data that are mentioned by teachers as important, e.g. *“coordinated actions through lifelong learning will help the school community to function creatively and in a process of interaction of all students”.*

At the same time, it is noteworthy that *“if labels are necessary to identify children who need an individualized program, teachers can use some alternative approaches to reduce the stigma”.*

Finally, spirituality is seen as a value in the profile of the inclusive teacher, *“the teacher with distinction and confidentiality tries to promote an inclusive school group with respect, support, work and continuous professional development”.*

Above all, Inclusive Pedagogy and Inclusive Education support *“inclusion by providing an inviting environment to all students, allowing them to feel that their experiences, abilities and forms of meaning making are important to the classroom community. Inclusive pedagogy moves beyond voicing a belief of inclusivity to fostering a true environment of belonging. Inclusion indicates that space has been made for the varied identities and abilities that each student carries with them as part of their identity”.* At last, *“belonging is the feeling of being part of something where you matter to others, which is fostered through inclusion, but that relies on intentional acts of providing student voice and honoring the student as a whole. When students feel that they matter, their engagement and motivation to succeed and contribute as a positive member of the community increases, increasing a multi-cultural, multi-faceted community of shared learning experiences. In short, inclusion and belonging benefit everyone”*

(<https://www.salisbury.edu/administration/academic-affairs/cafe/articles/inclusive-pedagogy.aspx>).

Finally, inclusion of difference improves historically marginalized students' aspirations, self-confidence, and performance in the classroom. It also promotes effective interaction among all students creating opportunities for students to learn to work productively with difference

(https://docs.google.com/document/d/1x5CFbdSJGdUXAjKa98W6SBqvopgFn9LV_OCAWKDfwuM/edit).

4. Discussion

The qualitative analysis highlighted thematic categories for ways of inclusion and learning integration (Reid, 2019), regarding the teacher's attitude and acceptance towards the diversity and uniqueness of each child with their potential, abilities and inclinations (http://prosvasimo.iep.edu.gr/docs/pdf/odhgos_paramythia_apodoxh_diaforetikothtas/Odigos_Apodoxi_Diaforetikotitas.pdf).

Above all, the importance of classroom management in the light of teachers' scientific and pedagogical skills was highlighted (Paraskeva & Papagianni, 2008). However, emphasis was placed on cooperative learning and teaching, which is a form of cooperation, applied in inclusive contexts (Smith & Tyler, 2019), and at the same time ensures on the one hand respect for all members of the group, and highlights on the other hand the key role of the teacher. Thus, according to Olweus (2009), cooperative learning has beneficial effects in cognitive and social domains. Students work on a joint task in small groups. Also, communication in cooperative learning environments is considered to be of crucial importance, since the skills of participating in group discussion are important and fundamental not only *“as technical skills that give a certain turn to the discussion and aim to draw conclusions, but also as processes that contribute to construction of students' knowledge”* (Korre, 2010, p. 114).

In reality, although the implementation of inclusive practices is considered a difficult undertaking (Nanou et al., 2013, p. 65), teachers seem aware of their importance in educational practice. Here, it is important to underline that the Special Education and Inclusive Education is an instruction-based intervention (Heward, 2011, p. 18). Consequently, in this light, “labeling” is called the process by which the diagnosis of a disability becomes the primary characteristic that defines a person, effectively limiting the person to that diagnosis. Labeling is associated with the medical model of disability and its emphasis on accurate diagnosis and continued specialization of diagnostic categories, but also on providing services only when an official diagnostic “label” has been assigned to an individual. Labeling contributes to negative treatment and exclusion and should not be confused with a person's positive and conscious decision to identify as disabled (Hodapp, 2003, p. 235).

Finally, labels in Special and Inclusive Education must be addressed with an emphasis on human rights (Clough & Corbett, 2000). Therefore, a challenge will be to reduce both school and community stigma through inclusive practices. By reducing stigma through Inclusive

Education, we include all students without excluding anyone (see e.g. Hove & Phasha, 2023).

In conclusion, inclusive education is a continuous process of transformation of the education system and it is both an approach to teaching and learning, as well as a different organization of the educational process that welcomes all students regardless of their social skills and physical and intellectual abilities (Bethere et al., 2023).

5. Conclusions and Future Studies

Summarizing, inclusive education is one of the most frequently addressed research topics of the last century (Schwab & Alnahdi, 2023). So, the issue of labeling of special needs emerges as complex (Stasinou, 2020, p. 483), as it is a complex issue with potential benefits and disadvantages. Also, the connection of labeling with the medical model of diagnosis (Hodapp, 2003), which is differentiated by an inclusive culture and inclusive pedagogical approach, is clear. Furthermore, the importance of attention to any categorization of educational needs, which should only exist for intervention purposes, is underlined and at the same time the need for individualization is emphasized always under an inclusive philosophy and inclusive pedagogical practice (Ioannidi & Malafantis, 2022a, 2022b, 2022c; Moutavelis 2014-2020).

In short, from the research results and the discussion, the qualitative analysis highlighted thematic categories for ways of inclusion (Reid, 2019), with a focus on collaborative learning and inclusive teaching combined with teacher abilities and skills. Without making any generalization of conclusions, we express the opinion that this particular empirical investigation has highlighted a very serious perspective of Inclusive Education in the direction of collaborative pedagogical practice, because in this way various synergies can be achieved for the benefit of all students (Mitchell & Sutherland, 2022, p. 251-252; Piticari, 2023) and for educational justice (Seitz et al., 2023).

The practical significance of the research lies in the inclusiveness of Primary, High School and Higher education for persons with disabilities and the prospects for overcoming them (see e.g. Akopova et al., 2023). In the future, we believe that it will be interesting to repeat the same research question in another sample of postgraduate students for comparative conclusions and suggestions.

Acknowledgments

The author would like to acknowledge the excellent support of Professor M. Zembylas, Commonwealth of Learning (COL) Chair and Academic Coordinator of the “Educational Sciences” Master's Program at the Open University of Cyprus.

References

Akopova, E., Zabaznova, D., Tarasova, I., & Bolokova, M. (2023). Best Practices for Inclusiveness by Top Universities and Their Openness to Persons with Disabilities in the More Developed Countries. In: *Social Mobility, Social Inequality, and the Role of Higher Education. Series: Studies in Critical Social Sciences, 254*, 169-179. Brill. https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004540019_013

- Anderson, J., Page, A., & Christopher, B. (2022). At the Nexus of Schooling: The Conflict Between "Special" and "Inclusive" Education. In book: K.-A. Allen & C. Boyle (eds), *Research for Inclusive Quality Education*. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-16-5908-9_20
- Bartlett, S., & Burton, D. (2019). *Introduction to Educational Sciences*. Athens: Gutenberg [in Greek].
- Bethere, D., Kasiliauskiene, R., Pavitola, L., & Usca, S. (2023). Teachers' Attitude towards Inclusive Education: Latvian and Lithuanian Experiences. *Soc. Sci.*, 12, 365. <https://doi.org/10.3390/socsci12070365>
- Brown, A., Lawrence, J., Basson, M. & Redmond, P. (2022). A conceptual framework to enhance student online learning and engagement in higher education. *Higher Education Research & Development*, 41(2), 284-299. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07294360.2020.1860912>
- Clough, P., & Corbett, J. (2000). *Theories of Inclusive Education. A student's Guide*. London: P.C.P. Sage Publications. <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781446220436>
- Cohen, M., Manion, L., & Morrison, K. (2008). *Educational research methodology*. Athens: Metaichmio [in Greek].
- Deppeler, J., Harvey, D., & Loreman, T. (2011). *Inclusive Education A Practical Guide to Supporting Diversity in the Classroom*. Routledge.
- Dimou, G. H. (2003). *Deviation. Stigmatization. Assimilative Theoretical Approach of Deviance in School*. Athens: Gutenberg. (in Greek)
- Donnell, A. M., Reeve, J., & Smith, J. (2021). *Educational Psychology. Reflection for Action*. G. Manolitsis & F. Antoniou (eds). Athens: Gutenberg. (in Greek)
- Engelbrecht, P. (2013). Teacher education for inclusion, international perspectives. *European Journal of Special Needs Education*, 28(2), 115-118. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08856257.2013.778110>
- Forlin, C. (2012). *Future Directions for Inclusive Teacher Education An International Perspective*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203113585>
- Forlin, C. (2013). Changing Paradigms and Future Directions for Implementing Inclusive Education in Developing Countries. *AJIE Asian Journal of Inclusive Education*, 1(2), 19-31. <https://doi.org/10.59595/ajie.01.2.3>
- Haemaelaenen, R., & Vaehaesantanen, K. (2011). Theoretical and pedagogical perspectives on orchestrating creativity and collaborative learning. *Educational Research Review*, 6(3), 169-184. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.edurev.2011.08.001>
- Heward, W. L. (2011). *Children with special needs. An Introduction to Special Education*. Athens: Topos. (in Greek)
- Hodapp, R. M. (2003). *Developmental theories and disability*. Athens: Metaixmio. (in Greek)
- Hove, N., & Phasha, N. T. (2023). Inclusion of learners with learning disabilities in the Vaal

- Triangle mainstream classrooms. *African Journal of Disability*, 12(0), a1163. <https://doi.org/10.4102/ajod.v12i0.1163>
- Hsieh, C.-Y. (2023) Research on online inclusive education in Taiwan in the era of COVID-19. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13603116.2023.2216230>
- Ignacio, T.D. & Allit, K.J.N. (2023). Attitudes of university faculty toward inclusion of students with special education needs. *Erudio. Journal of Educational Innovation*, 10(1), 1-11.
- Ioannidi, V. (2001). *The Institution of the Treatment Institutions in Greece. Pedagogical foundation and practice* (Doctoral Thesis). Athens: Ant. N. Sakkoula. (in Greek)
- Ioannidi, V., & Malafantis, K. D. (2022a). Inclusive Education and Pedagogy: a practice for all students. *European Journal of Education Studies*, 9(10), 1-13. <https://doi.org/10.46827/ejes.v9i10.4476>
- Ioannidi, V., & Malafantis, K. D. (2022b). Inclusive Education and Inclusive School Development: a key-area for sustainability and teacher skills. *European Journal of Social Sciences Studies*, 8(1), 87-97. <https://doi.org/10.46827/ejsss.v8i1.1335>
- Ioannidi, V., & Malafantis, K.D. (2022c). Inclusive education and special topics: reducing labeling with guides to design and realize inclusive teaching. *European Journal of Alternative Education Studies*, 7(2), 13-24. <https://doi.org/10.46827/ejae.v7i2.4488>
- Isari, F., & Pourkos, M. (2015). *Qualitative research methodology*. Kallipos, Open Academic Publications. Retrieved from <https://hdl.handle.net/11419/5826> (in Greek)
- Jacob, M. (2023). Active Cognitive Tasks: Synthesising frameworks for active learning online. In: W. Garnham, & I. Gowers (Eds.), *Active Learning in Higher Education: Theoretical Considerations and Perspectives* (SEDA Focus Series). Taylor & Francis. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003360032-6>
- Korre, E. (2010). *Topics of Teaching Methodology*. Athens: Grigori [in greek].
- Iweus, D. (2009). *Bullying and violence at school. what we know and what we can do*. Athens: E.P.S.Y.P.E. (in Greek)
- Mitchell, D., & Sutherland, D. (2022). *Teaching Strategies in Special and Inclusive Education*. A. Vlachou (ed.). Athens: Pedio [in greek].
- Moutavelis, A. (2014-2020). *Tools for pedagogical evaluation of students by teachers in order to draw up the personalized training program*. Institute of Educational Policy. Retrieved from <http://www.prosvasimo.iep.edu.gr/Books/2021/Moutavelis.%CE%A03.10.1.platforma21.9.2021.pdf> (in Greek)
- Nanou, A., Patsidou-Iliadou, M., Garanis, A., & Hariopolitou, A. (2013). *From Special Education to Inclusive Education. From school to a society for all*. Athens: Graphima. (in

Greek)

Nikonanou, N. (ed.) (2015). *Museum Learning and Experience in the 21st Century*. Retrieved from https://repository.kallipos.gr/pdfviewer/web/viewer.html?file=/bitstream/11419/712/8/NIKO_NANOY.pdf (in Greek)

Nyame, I., Kwesi Nyatsikor, M., & Kofi Ntim, E. (2023). Teachers' Perception and Promotion of Social Justice for Learners with Special Educational Needs in Inclusive Classrooms. *Universal Journal of Educational Research*, 11(5), 95-106. <https://doi.org/10.13189/ujer.2023.110501>

Paraskeva, F., & Papagianni, A. (2008). Scientific & pedagogical skills for education executives. Athens: Pedagogical Institute. Retrieved March 25, 2023, from http://www.pi-schools.gr/programs/epim_stelexoi/epim_yliko/book4.pdf (in Greek)

Piticari, P. (2023). Universal Design for Learning, Teachers' Self-Efficacy, and School Performance in Inclusive Classrooms. *Studia Doctoralia. Psychology and Educational Science*, 14(1), 46-58. <https://doi.org/10.47040/sdpsych.v14i1.160>

Pun, S. K. (2012). Collaborative Learning: a means to Creative Thinking in Design. *International Journal of Education and Information Technologies*, 6(1), 33-43.

Redmond, P., Alexsen, M., Maloney, S., Turner, J., Brown, A., Basson, M., ... & Henderson, R. (2023). Student perceptions of online engagement. *Online Learning*, 27 (1), 383-403. <https://doi.org/10.24059/olj.v27i1.3320>

Redmond, P., Foote, S.M., Brown, A., Mixson-Brookshire, D., Adawi, L-A. & Henderson, R. (2022). Adopting a framework to support the process of critical reflection and understanding of online engagement. *J Comput High Educ*, 34, 109-131. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12528-021-09281-3>

Reid, G. (2019). *Learning styles and Inclusion*. D. Stasinou (ed.). Athens: Parisianou. (in Greek)

Retrieved July 1, 2023, from https://docs.google.com/document/d/1x5CFbdSJGdUXAjKa98W6SBqvopgFn9LV_OCAWKDfwuM/edit

Retrieved June 1, 2023, from http://prosvasimo.iep.edu.gr/docs/pdf/odhgos_paramythia_apodoxh_diaforetikothtas/Odigos_Apodoxi_Diaforetikothtas.pdf

Retrieved May 30, 2023, from https://www.european-agency.org/sites/default/files/profile_of_inclusive_teachers_en.pdf

Retrieved May 30, 2023, from <https://www.salisbury.edu/administration/academic-affairs/cafes/articles/inclusive-pedagogy.aspx>

- Sakellariou, M. (2022). *Synchronous and Asynchronous Distance Teaching and Learning*. Athens: Pedio. (in Greek)
- Schunk, D.H. (2010). *Learning Theories. An educational perspective*. Athens: Metaichmio. (in Greek)
- Schwab, S., & Alnahdi, G. H. (2023). Does the same teacher's attitude fit all students? Uncovering student-specific variance of teachers' attitudes towards all of their students. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13603116.2023.2221235>
- Seitz, S., Auer, P., & Bellacicco, R. (2023). International Perspectives on Inclusive Education. In the *Light of Educational Justice*. Opladen, Berlin, Toronto: Verlag Barbara Budrich. <https://doi.org/10.3224/84742698>
- Smith, D. D., & Tyler, N. C. (2019). *Introduction to Special Education. Making a difference*. A.-St. Antoniou (ed.). Athens: Gutenberg. (in Greek)
- Stasinou, D. (2020). *The Special Inclusive Education 2027*. Athens: Papazisi.
- Tsiolis, G. (2016). Qualitative data analysis: dilemmas, possibilities, processes. In: G. Pyrgiotakis & C. Theofilidis (Eds.), *Research methodology in the social sciences and education. Contribution to epistemological theory and research practice* (pp. 473-498). Athens: Pedio. (in Greek)
- Tsiolis, G. (2018). Thematic analysis of qualitative data. In: G. Zaimakis (Ed.), *Research Pathways in the Social Sciences. Theoretical - Methodological Contributions and Case Studies*. University of Crete: Laboratory of Social Analysis & Applied Social Research. (in Greek)
- Verma, G., & Mallick, K. (2004). *Educational research. Theoretical approaches and techniques*. A. Papastamatis (eds.). Athens: Typothito - G. Dardanos. (in Greek)
- Willig, C. (2015). *Introducing qualitative research in psychology*. Athens: Gutenberg. (in Greek)

Copyright Disclaimer

Copyright for this article is retained by the author(s), with first publication rights granted to the journal.

This is an open-access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).