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Dealing with School Segregation

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Abstract:

The agencies of the state have the responsibility of providing equal opportunities to all students. However, the phenomenon of School Segregation hinders the opportunities and the potential of many students with special needs, violating fundamental educational and basic pedagogical principles. In our bibliographic study we examine the ways of dealing with this phenomenon through school integration by means of inclusion and co-taught support programs with an assistant teacher, inclusion classes, and special schools. The importance of co-education lies on the fact that it is deemed essential in limiting the negative social repercussions of School Segregation known to us as the social exclusion of the students with special educational needs (SEN) and disabilities. That being said, we will also propose measures that can be taken in order to optimize the efficiency of the aforementioned means as well as make suggestions on how the educational principles can be upheld.

Keywords: School segregation, inclusion and co-taught support programs with an assistant teacher, inclusion class, special school

1. Introduction

1.1. School Segregation and Integrative Education

The fundamental principles of policies of education define the content of inclusive education in an attempt to reduce the negative impact of school segregation on students¹. The right to be educated is viewed through the lens of a reinforced vision of education, one that reaches beyond mandatory and official education. Said vision aspires to provide access to preschool² education as well as higher education, extracurricular activities and unofficial, lifelong education. It is deemed essential that individuals who belong to vulnerable social groups are entitled to an educational experience that is on equal footing with that of everyone else's. The appropriate agencies of the state throughout all country-members of the European Union must mount an effort to limit social inequalities among children and provide suitably customized educational opportunities. The vulnerable groups of students consist of children that are raised on areas plagued by a multitude of factors; war (refugees, immigrants) environmental calamities (earthquakes, floods, fires) and the ensuing economic recession, unemployment and poverty. Children with disabilities and special educational needs constitute another significant portion of the aforementioned vulnerable groups. The origins of school segregation can be traced to the point where policies of education deal with these matters in a horizontal way by ensuring access to the children of the vulnerable groups³ to schools. Since the right to education is a multifarious sense, simply distributing these children to different schools will be inadequate if we do not

¹ Coutinho M. J., Oswald D. P. (2005). State variation in gender disproportionality in special education: Findings and recommendations. *Remedial & Special Education*, 26, 7-15.

Collier V. (2011). *Seven steps to separating difference from disability*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press

Capps R., Fix M., Murray J., Ost J., Passel J., Herwanto S. (2005). *The new demography of America's schools: Immigration and the No Child Left Behind Act*. Washington, DC: Urban Institute.

² Morgan P. L., Farkas G., Hillemeier M. M., Maczuga S. (2012). Are minority children disproportionately represented in early intervention and early childhood special education? *Educational Researcher*, 41, 339-351.

Samson J. F., Lesaux N. K. (2009). Language-minority learners in special education: Rates and predictors of identification for services. *Journal of Learning Disabilities*, 42, 148-162.

³ FXB Center for Health and Human Rights (2015) *Strategies and Tactics to Combat Segregation of Roma Children in Schools. Case studies from Romania, Croatia, Hungary, Czech Republic, Bulgaria, and Greece*, Harvard University

Strogilos, V. (2013). Inclusive and collaborative practices in co-taught classrooms: Roles and responsibilities for teachers and parents. *Teaching and Teacher Education*. 35. 81-91. 10.1016/j.tate.2013.06.001

take into consideration the fact that these schools have to be modified in such a way that they can serve their needs and offer high quality education according to the imperatives of special education.

Education is duty bound to deal with the phenomenon of school segregation because it cannot be effective unless it is considered a public service. That said, alternative forms of education, like education provided by private providers should be factored in. In several European countries private schools are funded under specific circumstances that usually include clauses that are free of discrimination⁴ be it economical, cultural, sexual or religious. The consolidation of the non speculative nature of the provision of education is also of paramount importance in order for school segregation to be dealt with and inclusive education to be promoted. And yet, the systems that are put into place to monitor the functionality of these private providers are not always proficient in doing so. This problem is further exacerbated by how limited public authorities often are when faced with dealing with situations that go against public interest and common good. So, co-teaching requires changes in roles and responsibilities of school personnel, planning and administrative⁵ support.

1.2. *The Problem of Students with Special Educational Needs*

The problem of school segregation and the proposition of a single inclusive education is focused on students with special educational needs and disabilities for the many difficulties they face in social and educational blending are heterogeneous and multi layered. The National Institute of Social Welfare, known as Institute of Social Solidarity is planning one of the most important steps that can be taken in order to facilitate social inclusion through the Disability Function Card (IDE) and the Functional Investigation Centre. The name of the individual as well as the kind and the gravity of the disability are noted on the card. By using it, he can gain access to all the services that he is entitled to (e.g. reduced ticket price for the means of public transportation) therefore eliminating the need for any other credentials from each and every government agency. The disability evaluation program relieves these individuals from the tribulations of multiple examinations and reexaminations, bureaucratic procedures and needless expenses due the periodic nature of its evaluation.

Further implications regarding the problem of school segregation lie in the differentiations of several laws between the years 2008-2017. The proposition of inclusive education and co-teaching is considered a means of improving the inclusion of students with disabilities in mainstream classrooms. Some of these laws include the conditions of the provision of special education. A supporting role must be taken up by an assistant teacher or a second teacher in the same classroom as the primary one for the students with diagnosed special educational needs or disabilities. We can see there is new wording " inclusive and collaborative teaching practices to co-taught classmates with an assistant teacher" that makes the necessity to mitigate the phenomenon of school segregation abundantly clear by recalling the term "coeducation", an echo of a terminology turned obsolete long ago. It refers to the one-seat primary schools where a single teacher provided a common educational experience to all students regardless of class. The legal frame of inclusion and co-taught support programs with an assistant teacher is presented at the start, all at once, in stark contrast with previous incarnations that, for the most part, mentioned it separately for each aspect. The procedure of request filling is now a responsibility of Multidisciplinary Diagnostic and Support Centers (in the greek language known as KEDDY) through completing tables and sending supporting documents to the respective Education Directorates in the case of new co-taught support programs with an assistant teacher, (in greek language known as parallel support) , in the cases of renewal and in the cases of an Associate Special Assistant Staff. In addition, a Pedagogic Report is provided by the school for the pupil, whether the approved co-taught support program with an assistant teacher was carried out or not. The last Circular's notice of the possibility of stopping parallel support during the academic year at the written request of the parent was also removed. Moreover, for the assignment of a Special Assistant the approval of the Multidisciplinary Diagnostic and Support Centers is now required whereas in the previous Circulars it was a responsibility that lied with the Public Hospitals. Another glaring omission of last year's Circular⁶ (2016-2017) was that in the Multidisciplinary Diagnostic and Support Centers, the timetable of the new co-taught support programs with assistant teachers as well as the fact that teaching should be carried out on a daily basis must be noted. On the same note, if a school requests Assistant support for two students, the Multidisciplinary Diagnostic and Support Centers can send a single Assistant to cover the needs of both of them. Finally, in the case of a private special educator hired by the family, his curriculum vitae as well as his criminal record are required.

⁴Oswald D. P., Coutinho M. J., Best A. M. (2002). Community and school predictors of overrepresentation of minority children in special education. In Losen D. J., Orfield G. (Eds.), *Racial inequality in special education* (pp. 1-15). Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

World Health Organization (2014). *The ICD-10 International Classification of Mental and Behavioral Disorders. Clinical Descriptions and Diagnostic Guidelines.* (K. Stefanis, K. Soldatos, & B. Mavreas, Transform) Athens: Center for Cooperation in Education and Research in Mental Health.

⁵ Hang, Q., & Rabren, K. (2009) An examination of co-teaching perspectives and efficacy indicators, *Remedial and Special Education*, 30(5), 259-268.

Florian, L. (2007). *The Sage Handbook of Special Education.* Sage, London

Thousand, J.S., Villa, R.A., & Nevin, A. I. (2006) *The many faces of collaborative planning and teaching, Theory into Practice*, 45(3), 239-248

⁶Minister for Education, Research and Religious Affairs (21 April 2017). Decisions N ° 65475 / D3. Invitation of candidates for the recruitment of temporary substitutes and hourly wages by the Special Educational Staff and substitutes from the Special Assistance staff for the structures of special education as well as for the specialized support of pupils attending school units of General Education) for the school year 2017-2018. newspaper of the government, issue second, No. Sheet 1369, Athens: National Printing Office

Special educators⁷ mention that inclusion classes suffer from a distinct lack of personnel. To make matters worse, in several occasions, they are dispatched from the inclusion classes to man regular school classes. At the same time we can safely deduce that no significant effort to list individuals with disabilities is being made nor is there any state providence for the living conditions and the employment of these individuals. Perhaps, the gravest problem of them all is the racist mentality of the legislator who deprives parents from the right to send their child to a regular school even if the educational environment opposes such course of action while at the same time making use of the term "gifted children". The promotion of these children raises claims that go against the constitution of the country and the international conventions regarding human rights, namely those of children and individuals with disabilities. Society as a whole has long kept a stance of prejudice against people with disabilities that has yet to be properly addressed, therefore trampling the equality of opportunities. The public nature of both general and special education may be officially recognized but as long as the state does not provide the necessary funding for the optimization of the infrastructure and does not mend to the lack of humanistic spirit that ought to be backing up the educational system, the vision of a school that can accommodate anyone and everyone will remain nothing but a fool's errand.⁸

1.3. Pedagogical Principles For School Segregation And Special Education

School segregation can be mitigated if we uphold the fundamental pedagogical principles of special education that support the provision of educational services to students with disabilities and special educational needs to promote inclusive education. It should be mentioned that the state has the obligation of fortifying and constantly upgrading the mandatory nature of special education as an integral part of public, free education. As such, it is expected to provide free, public special education to people with disabilities of all ages and educational levels. Furthermore, it is tasked with providing equal opportunities to these people to participate and contribute to society by offering them independent living and financial integrity and securing their rights to education, employment and social inclusion.⁹

Pedagogical principle: Sensitization regarding education in common classes

Education in common classes requires a reevaluation of our mentality on a societal level. These children should not be viewed as a problematic factor but rather, they should serve as a challenge for us to create an educational system that is capable of covering the needs of all students and offers the highest quality of educational experience possible. Society and the parties in charge must realize the need for this change of course and aspire to follow this new example.

Pedagogical principle: Securing the optimal level of educational quality¹⁰ in all schools

Schools with high concentration of students from vulnerable groups often end up being "bad" schools. Poverty and other hardships take a high toll on the performance of students, limiting the expectations of both the educators and the families of the students as far as the capabilities are concerned. Educators have no incentive to stay in such a school where the objective difficulties imposed by the nature of the students' problems make creating and carrying out a high quality educational program an arduous, if not at times impossible, task. The effort to provide high quality education to all schools is not always made by the appropriate agencies. In fact, it can sometimes be seen as beneficial to have these "ghetto" schools around in order to eliminate any possible tension that could originate from families that would disapprove of their children being educated alongside children from vulnerable groups. Pedagogical principle: Planning a common education for everyone

According to the guidance provided by international organizations, it is deemed necessary that schools should be shut down in order to deal with school segregation or students should be transferred to regular schools in order to avoid high levels of concentration of children from vulnerable groups. Decisions along these lines can be particularly popular. Efficient planning of the provision of education through a more sweeping lens can minimize or straight-up even eliminate conflicts that could arise from shutting down educational facilities or transferring students. If we factor in the pedagogical principles¹¹, the conditions imposed by the regulative frames and the current state of education we can easily deduce that we find ourselves in a most inconsistent situation. This inconsistency takes up the form of school segregation, by which term we refer to the differentiated attendance of children according to whether they have special needs or not. Children with special needs are sent off to special schools whereas the rest attend general school and thus two systems of education (general and special) are formed.

⁷Peske H., Haycock K. (2006). Teaching inequality: How poor and minority students are shortchanged on teacher quality: A report and recommendations by the Education Trust. Washington: DC: EducationTrust.

Reid D. K., Valle J. W. (2004). The discursive practice of learning disability: Implications for instruction and parent-school relations. *Journal of Learning Disabilities*, 37, 466-481

⁸Karvoulaki, N. (2009), Comparative view of the legislative framework for the school integration of people with special educational needs from 1985 to present. *Special Education Issues*, 44, pp. 68-72. In greek language

⁹ Law 3699 (2008) "Special education and training for people with disabilities or special educational needs", newspaper of the government, issue first Athens: National Printing Office

¹⁰Shaywitz S. E., Morris R., Shaywitz B. A. (2008). The education of dyslexic children from childhood to young adulthood. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 59, 451-475.

¹¹Drossinou - Korea, M., Matousi, D., Panopoulos, N., &Paraskevopoulou, A. (2016). School Inclusion Programmes (SIPS). *Journal of Research in Special Educational Needs*, 16(S1), 967-971.

2. Purposefulness of the Study

School segregation is one of the worst kinds of discrimination and a serious infringement to the rights of children since their opportunities to be educated are severely crippled by isolation and lack of integration to public schools. It is a clear case of injustice against minorities and other vulnerable groups, a fact that serves to perpetuate the marginalization of entire populations throughout Europe.

Inclusive education suggests that children with special needs should be educated in general schools under the condition that the schools can adequately support them and offer the appropriate attendance conditions required by respecting their special needs. In order to do so, they are expected to make drastic changes to their infrastructure as well as the very nature of the educational procedure itself. Inclusive education is not and should not be considered an utopian goal. It is a completely feasible endeavor with the potential to have an immensely beneficial impact on matters of social cohesion, intercultural affairs and educational opportunities of all children.

2.1. Research Questions-Hypotheses

2.1.1. First Hypothesis

Can school segregation be averted through inclusive education by means of inclusion classes?

This hypothesis examines the potential danger of school segregation that lurks in all of the school programs¹². In an attempt to even the odds by surpassing the boundaries placed by social inequalities, inclusive education supports the special needs of students with differentiated programs within the school. Inclusion classes are meant to replace special classes that functioned within general primary schools and were created with the aim to emphasize on the necessity of the functioning of inclusion within the weekly timetable in mind.

2.1.2. Second Hypothesis

Can school segregation be averted through inclusive education by means of inclusion and co-taught support programs with an assistant teacher?

This hypothesis examines the probability of appearance of school segregation in the case of inclusion and co-taught support programs with an assistant teacher. In an attempt to facilitate¹³ students with special educational needs within the boundaries of the class, a special educator is effective when he utilizes certain pedagogical methods so as to aid the student with special educational needs in coping with the demands of his respective field of knowledge (which are obviously vastly different from the ones of the rest of the students). We therefore have to pose the question of whether the mere presence of this educator stigmatizes that student on the eyes of his fellow students, in the sense that he would be unable to keep up with them without his aid or not.

2.1.3. Third Hypothesis

Can school segregation be averted through inclusive education by means of programs in special schools?

This hypothesis examines whether the existence of special schools promotes the phenomenon of school segregation or not. Special schools are places especially modified to house students with severe educational difficulties. Even though their indispensability as well as their efficiency are beyond doubt, the attendance of students in a completely separate and differentiated educational system rightfully raises questions¹⁴ regarding instances of discrimination against them.

2.2. Tools of the Bibliographical Study

In this study we utilized texts from books and journals that refer to related subjects of school segregation, inclusive education, students with special educational needs or disabilities which are laid out in table 1.

¹²Kavale K. A., Kauffman J. M., Bachmeier R. J., LeFever G. B. (2008). Response-to-intervention: Separating the rhetoric of self-congratulation from the reality of specific learning disability identification. *LearningDisability Quarterly*, 31, 135-150

¹³Harry B., Arnaiz P., Klingner J., Sturges K. (2008). Schooling and the construction of identity among minority students in Spain and the United States. *Journal of Special Education*, 42, 15-25

¹⁴Fletcher J. M., Denton C., Francis D. J. (2005). Validity of alternative approaches for the identification of learning disabilities: Operationalizing unexpected underachievement. *Journal of Learning Disabilities*, 38, 545-552. Fuchs D., Fuchs L. S. (2006). Introduction to response to intervention: What, why, and how valid is it? *ReadingResearchQuarterly*, 41, 93-99.

Drossinou -Koreas, M. and Periferakis, Th, (2018). Targeted, Individual, Structured, Inclusion programs of pre-vocational readiness for students with Special Education Needs (TISIPSENs). *International Journal of Latest Research in Humanities and Social Science (IJLRHSS)*, vol. 1, no. 4, pp. 28-35,

A/A	Date	Authors	Issue Title	Journal, Issue, Pages
1	November 2003-January 2004	Kaliba, E	The circle of friends as a means of improvement of the communication between autistic children and their peers within school	Matters of Special Education,23,34-42
2	November 2003-January 2004	Albanopoulos, G., and Tozakides, A.	Hyperkinetic syndrome and ways of dealing with it	Matters of Special Education, 23,51-63
3	2004	Luciak M., Binder S.	Comparison of the reports on national strategies for minority schooling prepared by the national focal points of the Central and Eastern European Candidate Countries. Vienna, Austria:	European Monitoring Center on Racism and Xenophobia.
4	2005	Fletcher J. M., Denton C., Francis D. J.	Validity of alternative approaches for the identification of learning disabilities: Operationalizing unexpected underachievement.	Journal of Learning Disabilities, 38, 545-552
5	2005	Giovingo L., Proctor B. E. K., Prevatt F.	Use of grade-based norms versus age-based norms in psycho educational assessment for a college population.	Journal of Learning Disabilities, 38, 79-85
6	November-January2005	Goupos, T., and Bejelos, N.	Educational difficulties in reading and writing	Matters of Special Education, 27, 34-43
7	November-January 2005	Stekas, F.	Organization and function of an inclusion class-Belos primary school case study	Matters of Special Education, 27,44-57
8	2006	Thousand, J.S., Villa, R.A., &Nevin, A. I	The many faces of collaborative planning and teaching,	Theory into Practice.,45(3), 239-248
9	2007	Florian, L.	The Sage Handbook of Special Education.	London, Sage
10	2008	Kavale K. A., Kauffman J. M., Bachmeier R. J., LeFever G. B.	Response-to-intervention: Separating the rhetoric of self-congratulation from the reality of specific learning disability identification.	Learning Disability Quarterly, 31, 135-150.
11	February-April 2009	Karboulaki, N.	A comparative study of the legislative frame of school inclusion of people with special educational needs from 1985 to this day	Matters of Special Education, 44,65-74
12	2009	Hang, Q., &Rabren, K	An examination of co-teaching perspectives and efficacy indicators	Remedial and Special Education, 30(5), 259-268.
13	2010	Hibel J., Farkas G., Morgan P. L.	Who is placed into special education?	Sociology of Education, 83, 312-332.
14	2010	Hays D. G., Prosek E. A., McLeod A. L.	A mixed methodological analysis of the role of culture in the clinical decision-making process.	Journal of Counseling, 88, 114-121.
15	2010	Waber D. P.	Rethinking learning disabilities: Understanding children who struggle in school.	New York, NY: Guilford Press.
16	2011	Shifrer D., Muller C., Callahan R.	Disproportionality and learning disabilities: Parsing apart race, socioeconomic status, and language.	Journal of Learning Disabilities, 44, 246-
17	2011	Christakis, K.	Education of children with disabilities Introduction to Special Education	Books Volume A', B' .
18	2013	Strogilos, V.	Inclusive and collaborative practices in co-taught classrooms: Roles and responsibilities for teachers and parents.	Teaching and Teacher Education. 35. 81-91.
19	2015	FXB Center for Health and Human Rights	Strategies and Tactics to Combat Segregation of Roma Children in Schools. Case studies from Romania, Croatia, Hungary, Czech Republic, Bulgaria, and Greece	Harvard University

Table 1: Study Papers

2.3. Procedure of Analyzing the Issues of the Study

The issues of the study were organized on two axis regarding the language and the content of the texts we read on regulatory texts as well as Greek and English bibliographical sources. For that same reason we created three thematic units related to inclusive education regarding the danger of school segregation in inclusion classes, inclusion and co-taught support programs with an assistant teacher, and special schools.

2.3.1. Inclusion Classes

According to present legislation, inclusion classes are specially organized and staffed units. They function within schools of general and vocational education either as common and specialized (for students with more mild educational needs, which is why in these classes children are allowed to join without consulting any agency and the only necessary requirement is the agreement of the school counselor of special education¹⁵) or as specialized team or individual programs of expanded hours which are defined by the Multidisciplinary Diagnostic and Support Centers (for students with more serious educational needs). In these classes the number of students should be reduced and they should be distributed equally among the classes.¹⁶

The infrastructural upgrade of inclusion classes is of outmost importance in regards to the aid of students with special needs (particularly those with Attention Deficit with or without Hyperkinetic Syndrome). According to the gravity of each case, children can spend the respective amount of school hours therein on a daily basis. It is worth noting however that complete stay of these children in the inclusion classes is not advised since the interaction with the rest of their classmates is far more beneficial than any kind of isolation.¹⁷

The approach of the educator himself is also a fundamental factor. Generally speaking, the educator should be more conciliatory towards the reactions of the child. Indicatively, he should learn to ignore the non serious undesirable behavior of the child and encourage the desirable one when it shows up, discuss with it any matters that bother it even if they are personal, support its attempts to interact with its classmates, look for opportunities to assign duties to it within the frame of the class that will make it feel instrumental in the educational process, modify the homework as well as corresponding exercises/questions at tests while at the same time being lenient with providing time, grading etc.¹⁸

2.3.2. The Inclusion and Co-Taught Support Programs with an Assistant Teacher (Parallel Support)

Regarding the attendance of individuals with special educational needs current legislation states that the inclusion and co-taught support programs with an assistant teacher (parallel support) is to be provided by educators of special education when the kind and the gravity of the special educational needs calls for it. Inclusion and co-taught support programs with an assistant teacher are provided to students who, through the appropriate individual support can keep up with the Analytic Educational Program of the class as well as students with more serious educational needs when there is no other special education frame (special school, inclusion class) available or when inclusion and co-taught support programs with an assistant teacher are made necessary (the decision for this rests with the Multidisciplinary Diagnostic and Support Centers) due to their special educational needs. In the latter case, the support of the special educator can be provided on a permanent and programmed basis. The inclusion and co-taught support programs with an assistant teacher are recommended only from the Multidisciplinary Diagnostic and Support Centers which, define, in written form, the appropriate hours of inclusion and co-taught support programs with an assistant teacher according to each case.¹⁹

A few simple, practical steps that are mentioned in bibliography which could be carried out so that schools would be better suited to deal with the educational needs of the students are noted below:

- Reduced number of students(approximately thirteen children per class)
- The educator should choose a seat for the child were, according to the nature of its special needs , it will be far away from undesirable stimuli (e.g. A seat on a front desk in case of a student that suffers from loss of concentration)
- The educator should choose a suitable student to be seated next to the child with special educational needs, who will be patient, quiet and will be tasked-after being given the necessary instructions-to answer any questions of his classmate associated with class subjects
- Increase of space between desks so that it will be less likely for these children to be distracted by random stimuli
- Use of visual-acoustic means (new technologies can greatly facilitate the task of the educator where traditional teaching does not suffice e.g. Peaking the interest of students for the subject)

¹⁵Christakis, K. (2011). Adaptations to the learning environment. InThe education of children with difficulties. Introduction to Special Needs Education. Zephyri: Interaction pp. 215-216, in greek

Christakis, K. (2013). The model of the modules. InProgrammes and teaching strategies for people with special educational needs and serious learning difficulties Zephyri: Interaction, p. 148, in greek.

¹⁶Law 3699 (2008) "Special education and training for people with disabilities or special educational needs", newspaper of the government, issue first Athens: National Printing Office

¹⁷Alvanopoulos, G. Tosakidis, A. (2003-2004) Hyperactivity Syndrome and its treatment. Special Education Issues, 23, p.59 and pp. 60-61, in greek

¹⁹Law 3699 (2008) "Special education and training for people with disabilities or special educational needs", newspaper of the government, issue first Athens: National Printing Office

- Adjustment of factors like intensity of light, sound etc. Since the attention of these children can be very easily distracted.²⁰

2.3.3. Special School

The attendance of children with special educational needs is covered by the creation of School Units of Special Education. These school units each have their own ordinances and age and diagnostic criteria for an individual to be included according to the educational level. They aim to offer a suitable environment for these individuals, one that is vastly differentiated from that of the general school.²¹

Students who are sent to special primary or high schools are usually children with serious educational needs that underperform in standard schools, which, more often than not, are unable to handle the situation. There are several reasons for this occurrence. There is a time period that is completely wasted between the diagnosis of the problem and the assignment of a special educator. There is also the important implication that sometimes parents refuse to accept the reality of the situation, a denial which results in even more loss of critical time. In regards to the school environment itself, the problems can mainly be traced to the daily exposure of these children to academic failure, a fact that leads them to want to avoid it and, as such, their performance deteriorates (theory of learning motives) and to the insufficient information and training a lot of educators suffer from when it comes to dealing with students with special educational needs.²²

Changes must also be carried out in the Analytic Educational Programs²³ that are in effect in general schools since their present form is wanting. The Analytical Program Frame of Special Education is a solid basis for further development of flexible and "smart" programs of inclusive education. More specifically, the use of micro-cooperative teaching methods is warranted. The goal is to improve the mentality of the child through the way the class functions so as to make it change its impression of itself and rise to face its difficulties.

2.4. Texts of the European Union

The texts of the European Union²⁴ regarding education clearly aspire to be democratic. The responsibility of the state to provide opportunities to all of its members to be included in an educational system with the highest credentials that transcends the boundaries of the class is stressed. According to these texts, school segregation must be dealt with through sensitizing the public since not only does it oppose the aforementioned democratic view of education but it also corrodes the cohesion of the society by undermining the integrity of its entirety. Thus, the legal frame must define the educational system in such a way that the pedagogical ideals that are deemed essential for the continued existence of society as a functional whole are upheld.

2.5. Limitations of the Study²⁵

This study was not based on experiential data, it was a bibliographical research. Moreover, the needs of the parents and the way they are expressed has yet to be recorded in regards to their interpretation through their cultural and ideological system. The limitation lies in the fact that parents are not always fully aware of the repercussions their consent for their child to attend a special school, an inclusion class or inclusion and co-taught support programs with an assistant teacher, will bring about which are tied to social exclusion due to school segregation.

3. Results

After an in-depth and focused research on the research questions we can safely deduce that school segregation makes its presence felt in all programs of inclusive education for students with special educational needs or disabilities. Each one of them will be thoroughly discussed below.

3.1. School Segregation and Inclusion Class

School segregation is dealt with through inclusion class by means of the Targeted Individual Structured Inclusion Programs of Special Education. Students seem to find the activities they perform within the frame of inclusion classes more enjoyable due to the playful nature that the educational experience takes up therein (extensive use of supervisory material like geometric shapes or numerators). As such, they are encouraged to participate more actively during class. It is only natural that, before long, they show clear signs of improvement in their regular class as well²⁶.

²⁰Alvanopoulos, G. Tosakidis, A. (2003-2004) Hyperactivity Syndrome and its treatment. *Special Education Issues*, 23, p.59 and pp. 60-61, in greek

²¹Law 3699 (2008) "Special education and training for people with disabilities or special educational needs", newspaper of the government, issue first Athens: National Printing Office

²²Goupos, Th. Begetos, N. (2005) Learning Difficulties of Reading and Writing. *Special Education Issues*, Issue 27, pp. 34-43

²³Jordan, R. - Powell, S. (2001). The National Curriculum. In *The Special Educational Needs of Children with Autism, Learning and Thought Skills* Athens: Seeking Ariadne's Mite. pp. 62-66.

²⁴European Agency for Special Needs in Education, Position Paper on inclusive education (2016); Development of a set of indicators for inclusive education in Europe (2014).

European Network of Ombudpersons for Children (ENOC, 2016) Equal Opportunities for All Children in Education, Position Statement.

²⁵Avramidis, H., & Kalyva, E. (2006). *Methods of Research in Special Needs Education*. Athens: Papazisis.

²⁶Fokion, S. (2005) Organization and Operation of the Department of Integration - The Case of the Element Primary School. *Special Education Issues*, 27, pp. 48-50

Targeted Individual Structured Inclusion Programs of Special Education support inclusive education and reduce the danger of exclusion. They set long term and short term teaching goals, aimed at a spherical evaluation of the potential of the student with special educational needs. That way, their high skills as well as their weaknesses can be pointed out in order for gradual behavioral shaping to occur so that the weaknesses can be addressed. The Targeted Structured Inclusion Programs of Special Education use optical and conceptual facilitators to a wide extent within the frame of individual teaching because they deal with the difficulties these students face in an experiential way, striving to pinpoint the best suited pedagogical and teaching methodology according to the particularities of every case. It clearly is an inclusion tool since it can offer stability and predictability regarding the behavior of students and younglings. Therefore, they can assist both the educator by offering class adjustment parameters according to the individual characteristics of each student with special educational needs and the students themselves as far as their psychological, physical and mental development as well as a more complete formation of their character are concerned.²⁷

Since inclusion classes are specifically modified to address the special educational needs of these students it comes as no surprise that their performance is considerably higher within that frame. The plan is for these students to be able to join their peers in the regular class, after the beneficial effect of spending several hours in the inclusion class, without major issues thereby eliminating the threat of school segregation.

3.2. School Segregation and Inclusion and Co-Taught Support Programs with an Assistant Teacher

School segregation is dealt through inclusion and co-taught support programs with an assistant teacher in general schools by means of some techniques that, if properly applied, can vastly improve the situation of children with special educational needs within the classroom. One such technique is the "Circle of friends", which was used to improve the communication of autistic individuals with their peers. Given the limited social skills of said individuals, this approach aimed to create an environment within which the child can focus on developing its social skills while being affected by the beneficial impact of the company of his peers.

The children that participated in the research attended very cooperative nursery schools. The governesses were interested in taking part and being sufficiently briefed so that they would be able to perform. Additionally, the parents were very compliant about their children's involvement. Lastly, the non autistic children chosen to participate were of similar age with the children whose social skills the educators wanted to improve and agreed to help after being instructed on what they should do. The scale which was used served to note the kinds of behavior that were the subject of the research. The first such behavior was the response of these children to communication attempts initiated by their peers. The second was their own initiation to interact with their peers (through notion, calling them by name etc.). In both instances it was noted if the governess played any part in the interaction or not. Both of these kinds of behavior have been deemed essential for the consolidation and continuation of a successful communication between the autistic child and other individuals. The intervention consisted of twelve meetings with duration of thirty minutes that took place after the end of the class. The children sat down in a circle and had several objects placed before them which they used to engage in activities or play verbal games. A governess took up the role of "leader" and guided the actions of the children. The therapist that accompanied the autistic child sat further back and intervened only in cases when a serious issue came up (when, for instance, the autistic child was distracted and did not pay attention to the circle). The rest of the children were praised for their contribution to the intervention.

Before the commencement of the intervention each one of the autistic children was monitored twice for half an hour during spare time in order to amass data regarding the frequency of the appearance of the kinds of behavior that were under the scope of the investigation. After the intervention, the children were monitored anew for the same amount of time under similar circumstances as before. In order for the agreement of the observators to be evaluated, a psychologist was tasked with assisting. The level of agreement turned out to be very high. Finally, the observation showed that both the response of the autistic children as well as their own assumption of initiation was increased (regardless of whether the governess intervened or not).

Before, as well as after, the intervention the desirable kinds of behavior were more incited than spontaneous. This is only natural, considering the inability of these children to focus and use speech in order to engage in a conversation with someone, even if their verbal skills are on a high level. Proportionally, their initiated attempts of communicating were less than their responses to the respective attempts of their peers. However, even if the induced changes were not significant on a statistical level the practical value of the intervention on the social skills of the children cannot be denied. In special education even the slightest improvement can bring about dramatic results on the daily life of both the children and their surroundings.

It is interesting to note that some of the children that were not initially a part of the circle expressed dissatisfaction about that very same fact and a desire to participate in it. This occurrence was dealt with by creating a second circle which functioned within school hours and in which no autistic children were included. This led researcher Kalyva²⁸ to alternate the children participating in the circle so that they would all be given a chance to come in more intimate contact with the autistic

²⁷Drossinou - Korea, M. (2017). Special education and training. The special education proposal for children and young people with special needs. PATRA: Oportuna. pp. 295-317

²⁸Kalyva, E. (2003-2004), The circle of friends as a means of improving the communication of children with autism and their peers in the school environment. Issues of Special Pedagogy, issue 23, pp. 34-42

children²⁹. After all, this is one of the purposes of the circle. It has been shown that the interaction with disabled children can be beneficial for the rest of the children as well since they learn to accept and support them. In the instance of this intervention, the children without disabilities could indeed communicate more efficiently with them after it was over. We should also note that despite the implications of its naming, the "Circle of friends does not aim to create friendly bonds among the participants but, in a more general approach, intends to improve the communicational skills of the autistic child, a fact which may in turn lead to the creation of friendship.

It is therefore evident that effective application of the inclusion and co-taught support programs with an assistant teacher in the spectrum of inclusive special education can have a very positive impact by reducing the extent of school segregation and familiarizing students with the special characteristics of their classmates with disabilities, facilitating communication with them and sensitizing them. The most interesting finding of this research was that not only can interventions be carried out without hindering the teaching process for the rest of the students (after all, as we mentioned, this method was performed after the end of the class) but the students themselves can be eager to join. This way, school segregation is dealt with in a very efficient way and at a very early stage.

3.3. School Segregation and Special School

School segregation can be dealt with through special school to a limited degree because the difficulties of most attending students are often severe while at the same time there are no resources that could support an inclusive education program suited for them and no Targeted Individual Inclusion Programs of Special Education³⁰ are applied. This has the all too frequent result of futile class sessions since these children can barely cope with the demands of the subjects they are meant to be taught. According to Christakis³¹, educators must relinquish the notion that the class is an ensemble of children with varying levels of skill, a mentality which totally justifies the fact that some of the students can be left struggling to catch up with the rest. Rather, he should think of the class as an amalgamation of individuals with different skills as well as needs so that all children can assimilate the educational material if the teacher can provide the appropriate learning environment. By altering³²teaching methodology through prevention and timely intervention we can efficiently deal with the phenomenon of academic failure that plagues children with special educational needs. For optimal use of the time these children spend in school we ought to

- Focus on dealing with the problem instead of seeking its cause
- Intervene in time,
- Analyze the problem,
- Keep in mind that each student has his own pace and way of learning and
- Devote ourselves to creating a proper teaching environment within the class.

Special school may indeed be necessary for the handling of cases that cannot be dealt with in general school but at the same time we should be weary of the fact that it is this very aspect of it that carries along a concealed danger of systemizing school segregation, regardless of the severity of the various student cases.

4. Conclusion-Suggestion

As a closing statement we deem it necessary to mention four conclusive points that also serve as suggestions for future research on matters of school segregation and inclusive education of students with special educational needs³³or disabilities.

The first point regards the regulation and overseeing of school introduction of students with special educational needs or disabilities. The more lenient the rules of said introduction are, the higher the chances of cases of school discrimination become. Moreover, the directions of the European Union to its members state that they must exercise their authority over the rules of school introduction while bearing in mind the principles of inclusive education.

The second point regards the evaluation of the needs of the students which ought to be carried out by using certified and objective indicators that are derived directly from the educational needs of the students. They include, among others, linguistic difficulties, especially as far as the language of school education is concerned, and any learning difficulties or

²⁹ Hickok, G. (2008). Eight Problems for the Mirror Neuron Theory of Action Understanding in Monkeys and Humans. *Journal of Cognitive Neuroscience*, 21(7), 1229–1243.

³⁰Drossinou - Korea, M. (2017). Conceptual delimitation of Targeted, Individual, Structured, Inclusion programs for students with Special Education Needs (TISIPSENs). In the Special education and training. The special education proposal for children and young people with special needs. PATRA: Opportuna,σσ. 320-322, in greek language

³¹Pedagogical Institute (2009). *Activities of Learning Readiness. Book for the Teachers of Special education and training*. Athens: Organization for Publication of Textbooks, in greek language

Kalyva, E. (2003-2004), *The circle of friends as a means of improving the communication of children with autism and their peers in the school environment*. *Issues of Special Pedagogy*, issue 23, pp. 34-42, in greek language

³²Drossinou - Korea, M. (2017). Teaching objectives, differentiated pedagogical materials and instruments: cognitive machines, shoe-boxes, binders and visual conceptual facilitators, Chapter Six. In *Special Education and training. The special education proposal for children and young people with special needs*. PATRA: Opportuna, pp. 503-507, in greek language

³³Shifrer D., Muller C., Callahan R. (2011). Disproportionality and learning disabilities: Parsing apart race, socioeconomic status, and language. *Journal of Learning Disabilities*, 44, 246-257.

disabilities and isolated circumstances that can set back the education of the child and deny it the opportunity to learn on equal terms with others. It should be pointed out that national origin, citizenship or the social and economic background of the children should under no circumstances be used as objective indicators and the assignment of children to schools based on these factors is a violation of the paradigm against discrimination.

The third one refers to balancing out the distribution of students from vulnerable groups. The evaluation of the needs of the students originating from these groups will not suffice by itself if there is no planning about how they will be distributed across schools. A complete and transparent evaluation system can turn out to be inadequate if no measures for the distribution of students with special educational needs are taken. Lack of such measures perpetuates the unequal systems in which some schools have a high count of children from vulnerable groups whereas others are significantly more homogenous socially and academically wise.

The fourth and final point has to do with the definition of socially balanced school areas through defining alternative school areas that incorporate neighborhoods with different social characteristics. In order to realize the aforementioned distribution efficiently it is deemed necessary to define school areas through a prism that takes into consideration more complicated factors than just demographic delimitation. The formation of alternative school areas that combine neighborhoods with varied social characteristics can facilitate a more balanced distribution of students from vulnerable groups and lead to a more content educational system.

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