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FROM BELIEVING TO DOING: TEACHER OWNERSHIP OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION PRACTICES

A GROUNDED THEORY CASE STUDY

BY

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DISSERTATION

Submitted to the University of New Hampshire

in Partial Fulfillment of

the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in

Education & Teacher Preparation

May, 2020

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On May, 2020

Approval signatures are on file with the University of New Hampshire Graduate School.

DEDICATION

To Jonathon

To Hermano

To all my teachers past, present and future

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ABSTRACT

FROM BELIEVING TO DOING: TEACHER OWNERSHIP OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION PRACTICES

A GROUNDED THEORY CASE STUDY

by

Maria Agorastou

University of New Hampshire

The purpose of the current qualitative study was to explore the in-depth experiences of school teachers in an urban public elementary school in Greece, looking at 1) their role as change agents, as it pertains to inclusive education practices, and 2) their conception of ownership toward this change

This case study utilized a Straussian grounded-theory design to guide the collecting and coding of interview data in order to identify emerging categories and generate substantive theory. The researcher collected data through interviews with 15 teachers, administrators and parents of the school community.

Adhering to a constant comparative analysis of the data, along with a continuous refinement of the categories into concepts this study established a grounded theory around the notion of ownership of inclusion and inclusive education practice in the case study school. The emerging themes pointed to the beginning of a conceptualization of the development of ownership as a notion that is ridden with contrasts between what's right, ethical, moral and what individual teachers believed, reflected and perceived as capable of doing. At the core of

ownership, as evidenced from the data analysis, is the notion of ideology as a start and end point of inclusive education practices.

The study suggests further qualitative research in the field of Teacher preparation and Inclusion focusing on those aspects of ideology and beliefs that seem to be at the center of an ideological battle that has profound effects on the practice of inclusive education practices. The study also provides an extensive list of recommendations for teacher training and preparation of the educators if inclusive pedagogical practices are to be incorporated in the current status of inclusion.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The Context of the Problem

> When change is advocated or demanded by another person, we feel threatened, defensive, and perhaps rushed. We are then without the freedom and the time to understand and to affirm the new learning as something desirable, and as something of our own choosing. Pressure to change, without an opportunity for exploration and choice, seldom results in experiences of joy and excitement in learning. (Morimoto, 1973, p. 255)

The concept of teaching and learning has evolved in the last 30 years from an industrial model that was sterile, encouraging passive teaching, to a more complex, dynamic, interactive, and intellectual activity that aims to accommodate a changing and diverse student body, technological innovation and globalized interconnected economies. At the same time, teachers are pressured to teach specific content in an allocated time and to standardize processes and outcomes. Within this context the role of the teacher has become more demanding and accountable to specific standards and complex systems of service delivery. Consequently, teachers need to approach their work with a change orientation that suggests that constant reflection, evaluation, and experimentation are integral elements of the teaching role. Teachers are expected to reflect on and modify curricula when new knowledge demands it, to change styles of teacher-student interaction depending on unique needs of the student population, and to change methods when research indicates more effective practice (Richardson, 1998).

Multiple studies in the area of teacher professional development and change have pointed that educational change can be of two basic types: piecemeal change, which entails adjusting the current paradigm of education, and systemic change, which entails transforming the current paradigm into a different one (Banathy, 1996; Reigeluth, 1994). Opfer and Pedder (2011) have

pointed to three important, overlapping and recursive systems that are crucial to informing ownership towards change and are involved in professional and personal learning: the individual teacher, the school, and the activity. The individual teacher system includes their prior experience (both as students and teachers), their orientation to and beliefs about learning, their prior knowledge and how all these interact and are enacted in the classroom practice. School-level systems encompass the contexts of the school that support learning and teaching, the collective orientations and beliefs about learning, the collective practices and norms that exist in the school, and the collective capacity to realize shared learning goals. The learning activity includes those systems of internal or external learning activities, tasks and practices that teachers take part.

The point to be made here is that teacher change has many influences and is influenced by all three systems, and what hinders or assists learning and change, is the meaning that teachers give to those experiences and that knowledge emerges from the recursive actions of knowers and other learning system elements. Within the above framework, inclusive education (IE) as a systemic change initiative has become an integral part of daily teaching curriculum requiring the integration of special and general education and aiming to promote citizenship and the common values of human rights, freedom, tolerance and non-discrimination through education. In that sense IE, "builds on innovative approaches and practices developed for the education of people with disabilities to design effective and equitable education systems for all learners in a lifelong perspective covering all aspects of education" (European Agency, 2017, p. 7).

The Context of the Study

The European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education (IE) position paper states: “The ultimate vision for inclusive education systems is to ensure that all learners of any age are provided with meaningful, high-quality educational opportunities in their local community, alongside their friends and peers” (European Agency, 2017, p. 1). According to Laws 3699/2008 & 2817/2000, special education in Greece is provided from 4 to 22 years old, mainly in general education schools, where students with special educational needs study, alongside their peers, with parallel support provided by a special education teacher. “Parallel support” is a form of co-teaching and is the main inclusive instructional model in Greece, implemented with students with special educational needs within mainstream classrooms and structures. Specifically, according to co-teaching, general and special education teachers share the responsibility for the organization, instruction and evaluation of educational practices for all students (Murawski, 2001). The special education teacher, in collaboration with the general education teachers and the parents, form the student’s Individualized Education Plan, which takes place both in and outside the classroom. However, an accurate instructional time for both conditions is not clarified by the legislation (Padeliadu, Papanikolaou, & Giazitzidou, 2014). The model’s core goal is to ensure that students with disabilities have increased socialization opportunities in the general classroom activities and in the school community in general. Furthermore, according to the “alternative teaching” model, students are divided into two groups which consist of different numbers of students. One teacher instructs the group that comprises of 3 to 8 students, while the other teacher instructs all the students within the same classroom at the same time (Sileo & van Garderen, 2010). The goal of this method is for the bigger group to complete the scheduled lesson in order to proceed to more complicated and demanding activities,

while the smaller group works on the same lesson or an alternative activity either from the beginning, or through a different method, or in a different level and on a different purpose (Padeliadu et al., 2014, p. 1).

The Parallel support model is used by public schools in Greece, more intensely since 2008, but there are limited studies outlining the inclusive education change process in Greece and thus limited data reporting on school readiness and implementation, effectiveness, sense of efficacy, and student outcomes or inclusion in general.

Zoniou-Sideri, Deropoulou-Derou, Karagianni, and Spandagou (2006) explicate that the first law specifically devoted to special education passed in 1981 (Law 1143/81) and established the categories of students with disabilities and the types of special provision available to them, and although it is a quite significant legislation document for the history of special education in Greece, it was never fully implemented, since in the same year there was also a change in government. Subsequent laws (1566/85) aimed at restructuring general and special education into mainstream schools and introduced the term special needs but as Vlachou-Balafouti and Zoniou-Sideri (2000, p. 33) state in relation to the 1566/ 85 Law, “Special education became a popular area and a direct result of its popularity was the creation of more special schools and the enrolment of an increasing number of so called ‘students with special needs”.

Inclusion then meant an expansion of special education schools and services without the backup of formal assessment and evaluation, which resulted in the reinforcement of the existing categorization of able and disabled bodies and special categories. In 2000, the newly-founded Centers for Identification, Assessment and Support (KEDY) throughout Greece served as the official referral and diagnostic centers, and special classes are renamed into inclusion classes. The 2008 law is the most recent one, explicitly stating that students with disabilities should be

educated in general education classrooms with appropriate supports (parallel support) and that inclusion classrooms should exist in public schools in order to accommodate students with disabilities when parallel support is not available or if the severity of disability is not conducive to learning in the regular classroom.

Since 1985, the main educational policy in Greece talks about inclusion, but it is more of a fragmented attempt to fit students with disabilities in the general education classroom without significant accommodations in a system that is characterized by uniformity and content control. The law's stipulation that students with disabilities are to be educated along their peers in general education classroom with appropriate support, only materializes in some of the schools and depending on the resources and allocation of special education teachers. In this context:

inclusion is clearly a special education concern, rather than a conscious attempt to restructure education. The dominant model of inclusive classes regulates the management of the "difficulties" of the school population and at the same time avoids "contaminating" the mainstream educational praxis with "special education intervention or differentiation" (Zoniou-Sideri, 2004, p. 33).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to explore the in-depth experiences of school teachers in an urban public elementary school in Greece, looking at 1) their role as change agents, as it pertains to inclusive education practices, and 2) their conception of ownership toward this change. Taking ownership is about taking initiative when one believes that action is not someone else's responsibility. Taking ownership encompasses the belief that individuals are responsible and accountable for the quality and timeliness of an outcome, even when working with others as part of a larger system and organization. It does not necessarily mean that individuals have an

obligation to own the project or do it alone, but it does imply their awareness of the impact individual actions and roles can have on outcomes and that they can be trusted to act accordingly.

The particular school was selected mainly because it met specific criteria: a) the school board and the administration are committed in implementing inclusive education practices; b) the teachers –at least in their majority– are willing to implement the model and co-teaching is taking place in at least 3 classrooms; c) not only the school is a relatively small/medium size school located in a working-class neighborhood, whose students with disabilities have limited access to out-of-school services (such as private tutors, physical therapists, and occupational therapists), making the implementation of the model probably their only alternative, but also the school has accepted that responsibility; and d) the school is a site of hosting refugee students from Syria and some of these students have a disability diagnosis as well.

In other words, the school is representative of the Greek reality amidst a debilitating financial crisis, where education resources are scarce, and teachers are struggling to both adapt and accommodate an increasingly diverse body of students. The relatively small size of the school made it ideal for case study research, as it allowed for in-depth interviews of the school personnel and related constituents, such as parents and guardians.

As a side note, the researcher was invited to the school to give a lecture on Developmental Disabilities in 2016. The entire school and administration participated in the lecture, and in the subsequent evaluation, the majority of the teachers and staff declared that they were open to adopting inclusion and parallel support as a new change initiative. The discussion that followed the lecture revealed some anxiety about how to go about implementing inclusion, given the scarce resources but also the paradigm shift the entire school and community have to

go through. It is worth noting that the school is one of the few ones, in that particular area, that has accepted to promote inclusion through the inclusion classrooms and parallel support structure. The researcher was invited to participate in one of the staff meetings approximately one month after the lecture, where faculty and staff asked explanatory questions about the research.

The current study examined the relationships and meaning-making experiences that assist or inhibit the engagement of teachers to be effective agents of inclusion in their school. The current study was framed around two broad questions: What is the meaning of change, mainly from the perspective of teachers, when they are called to implement inclusive education practices in their classrooms? How do they go about "owning" the change, and what aspects (individual, organizational and activities) do they perceive as essential or negative in implementing inclusive education practices? The rationale of asking the questions in this way, is due to the need to understand in depth the complexity of the professional and personal context of the process that takes place, in order for public school teachers to feel that they can take ownership of that change and of how they give meaning to these experiences and processes. Additionally, it was important to explore personal aspects and characteristics that facilitate or inhibit ownership of the change process and how it evolved and was experienced. This process is similar to Donna Haraway's (1988) term **situated knowledge** that "accounts for both the agency of the knowledge producer and that of the object of study" (p. 576). The term "inhibit" also includes those teachers that are opposed to inclusive education either as a concept, a practice or as an approach to teaching. As a guiding framework, this inquiry was informed by the interaction between the 1) the individual teacher system, 2) the school system, and 3) the learning activity system. It was important to

investigate the interplay within and between the three systems and how these systems interact generatively for teacher change to emerge.

The study used a constructivist approach which involved interviews based on the Active Interviewing theory and a Grounded-Theory design to guide the collection and coding of interview data, in order to identify emerging categories and generate substantive theory. In constructivist inquiry, data collection and analysis occur simultaneously and the "research design should be a reflexive process operating through every stage of a project" (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995, p. 24). The concept of Emergent Design is an important aspect to be noted here, as it refers to the ability to adapt to new ideas, concepts, or findings that arise while conducting the study. An emergent design welcomes unanticipated information, often adding to the richness of the data, and fosters a more open-ended perspective as the process unfolds. The data collection that followed was in accordance with the Grounded Theory and the notion of Emergent Design, and the researcher collected data by doing the following:

- Interviewed 8 general education public teachers and 2 special education teachers;
- Interviewed other school teachers (Physical Education teacher);
- Interviewed school administrators;
- Interviewed other individuals that were identified as important informants, as the process unfolded and new data emerged (families and guardians);
- Examined documents such as meeting minutes and legal demands by the Department of Education pertaining to inclusion, training information, educational credentials and teacher experience;
- Conducted constant comparison analysis of the data;

- Let the data drive the process of generating categories and theory with the expectation that a definition of ownership or a new category altogether would emerge as a replacement.

In accordance with Lincoln and Guba's (1985) criteria of trustworthiness, the researcher incorporated in the design and execution of the study all five: Credibility, Transferability, Confirmability and Dependability. A detailed analysis of how these criteria were applied can be found in the Methodology chapter.

Selection of the participants was based on what Glaser and Strauss (1967) called "theoretical sampling"—a process of deciding what data to collect next while "jointly collecting, coding, and analyzing data" (p. 45). As the current study was a case study, the entire staff and faculty of the school was targeted. An initial meeting was held, during which all the school staff was invited to participate in the research project, where project description and consent forms were disseminated, and the participants were asked to contact the researcher if they agreed to participate. 100% of the school staff agreed to participate, which was 13 individuals, including the school administrator. In accordance with emergent design, coding and analysis begun immediately during the data collection (interviews), and further selections for sampling were guided by the data needs. As Glaser and Strauss noted ". . . further collection cannot be planned in advance of the emerging theory. The emerging theory points to the next steps" (p. 47). Throughout the interviews, parents repeatedly emerged as important agents of the inclusive process and the researcher requested information by the school staff to contact some parents and include them in the sample. In addition, the majority of the teachers noted that the procedures of deciding who to include and who to exclude from parallel support, which was well documented by the school principal, were deemed important documents for examination as the data collection

process was unfolding. The principal suggested that the District Superintendent should participate, whom the researcher contacted but was never able to interview due to his heavy work schedule.

While conducting the interviews, the researcher started coding right away and compared the initial codes with each additional transcript as the process was unfolding. Detailed analytical memos and a detailed journal enabled the development of an audit trail, which contributed to the confirmability of the research, and each transcript was reviewed by the evaluator enabling an open feedback loop where themes, codes, and follow-up questions were noted. Additionally, the constant comparison of existing and incoming data, and the journal entries and analytical memos reviewed by the evaluator, were important elements in reaching what Glaser and Strauss (1967) termed as "theoretical saturation" (p. 61), the point at which no additional data emerge that would enable the researcher to develop further properties. When themes and codes kept coming up repeatedly, it was time to move to the next group (for example, parents) and so on, until theoretical saturation was reached. In terms of sample saturation, Glaser and Strauss (1967) explained that adequacy of sample can be judged by how "widely and diversely" (p. 61) the researcher has sampled in order to reach the saturation point. The researcher conducted one interview with each participant, which lasted at least one hour and provided in-depth information and thick descriptions of the case and the processes. The participants covered the school in its entirety, and the parents provided a rich data source as well. However, given that the present case study mainly focused on teachers, participation of the entire school staff covered the issues of both sample and theoretical saturation.

The Problem

A review of the literature (see details on chapter 2) on teacher change, inclusion and school reform, the general notion expressed was that teachers do not change, that change hurts, and that teachers are uncooperative (Duffy, Roehler, & Rackliffe, 1986; Fullan, 1991). The literature suggests that teachers resist doing whatever is being proposed because they want to cling to their old ways. Change makes people feel uncomfortable, inadequate, and encourages a sense of lack of efficacy and effectiveness (Richardson, 1998).

Until the early 1990s, the view of change in teaching practice that dominated the educational literature focused on the failure of teachers to "adopt teaching activities, practices, and curricula that are suggested or mandated by those who are external to the setting in which the teaching is taking place: administrators, policy-makers, and staff developers" (Richardson, 1998). There was a top-down assumption by those who think they know what teachers should be doing in the classroom and are in a position to tell them what to do (Richardson, 1998). In that sense, it relates to issues of power (Wasley, 1992). From the "change hurts" perspective, "teachers do not change" really means "teachers are not doing something someone tells them to do" (Richardson, 1998). As pointed out by Klein (1969), "studies of change appear to be taken from the perspective of those who are the change agents seeking to bring about change rather than of the clients they are seeking to influence" (p. 499).

Rationale

Examining change from the perspective of teachers themselves may assist in understanding whether a personal change occurs, and if it does, why it occurred. Conversely, if personal change does not occur, what are some of the obstacles that teachers perceive to be fundamental in their "resistance" to change? Additionally, are there cultural elements of the

school that assist or hinder change? What meaning do teachers give to change when asked to implement inclusive education practices? The rationale aligns with Lincoln and Guba's (2000) ontological belief that reality is local, specifically constructed and context-related. Constructivist Grounded Theory acknowledges the subjectivist stance of researchers who "construct our grounded theories through our past and present involvements and interactions with people, perspectives and the research practices" (Charmaz, 2006, p. 10).

Several researchers have described the concept of *resistance to change*. However, an alternative interpretation is that teacher resistance in itself is not the barrier to change, but rather lack of institutional support, insufficient knowledge about how to pursue institutional change, and lack of understanding of the interdependency of those aspects, may be more significant barriers. Change inevitably brings a sense of loss and a journey to the unknown, and that notion could be a hindrance both in pursuing and accepting change. Conceptually speaking, the school is going through a paradigm shift that is informed by both the internal (teachers, students, administration) and external microsystems (resources, policy context, community etc.). This conceptualization is crucial in understanding the direction of the research questions, as they focus more on the interrelationships of those systems. What makes it interesting in the Greek reality is the fact that IE as a change initiative is a relatively new practice that is mandatory by law but still relying heavily on the readiness and willingness of the individual schools to go along with its full implementation.

To answer these questions and acquire a more in-depth knowledge of the intricacies of the change process, a qualitative case study of a medium sized public urban school in Athens, Greece was conducted. The qualitative case study can be defined as:

an intensive, holistic description and analysis of a single entity, phenomenon, or social unit. Case studies are particularistic, descriptive, and heuristic and rely heavily on inductive reasoning in handling multiple data sources. The nature of this particular research design is inextricably linked to certain philosophical assumptions regardless of the philosophical foundations of the case study being viewed from a pragmatic or historical perspective, or comparison with the qualitative paradigm (Merriam, 2006, p. 30).

Merriam also notes that this approach is not for everyone, since the researcher is the primary instrument for data collection and analysis. As a result, there has to be tolerance for ambiguity, good communication skills, sensitivity to context, data, and personal bias (reflexivity), and confidence regarding predisposition to this type of research.

The school served as the "case" of the inquiry, as it is in the process of adopting IE practices and it will be investigated in depth from multiple perspectives (the teachers, school context, and other stakeholder groups as they emerge). The school is located in a working-class neighborhood with a diverse population of students and has currently adopted an IE curriculum as strongly encouraged by the national Department of Education. The school has approximately 300 students, 8 general education teachers, two special education teachers, one PT teacher, the Principal and the Assistant Principal who is also the Special Education Director. The percentage of students with an official Special Education diagnosis is around 10%, mainly learning Disabilities and ASD.

The teachers, staff and parents served as the units of analysis, since they were the major players analyzed throughout the study within the context of the case (i.e. the school). The unit of analysis helps the researcher define what is being studied as well as what aspects are being studied.

Models of Inquiry

For the purposes of the current study, the researcher relied on two models for the design of the research methodology:

- The Grounded Theory model as developed by Glaser and Strauss (1967)
- The Active Interviewing model by Holstein and Gubrium (1995)

The methodology of Grounded Theory (GT), as developed by Glaser and Strauss in 1967, is used to describe a qualitative method that is adopted in order to investigate a topic of inquiry with no pre-conceived notions and hypotheses and that requires the continually comparative analysis of data that leads to emerging categories and concepts.

The main goal of GT is to generate a theory that has the possibility to explain how an aspect of the social world works, thus developing a theory that emerges from and is connected to the very reality the theory is developed to explain. Seeing a phenomenon from the perspective of the people involved in it and utilizing those narratives to create shared meaning offers a constructivist lens to the study, where both interviewer and interviewee construct meaning as the process unfolds. Classic GT theory works toward achieving a core or central category that conceptually represents what the study is all about. This core or central category becomes the foundation for generating a theory about the processes observed (Saldana, 2011, p. 7).

GT is particularly suited in the investigation of processes that little is known about, involving intricate behaviors and experiences that need to be understood in depth. Thus, the purpose of this study is a good fit for utilizing this type of research method. The purpose of a research design is to provide, within an appropriate mode of inquiry, the most valid and accurate answers possible to the research question (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000, p. 22; McMillan & Schumacher, 2001, p. 31).

The two primary characteristics of GT research design are: "1) the constant comparison of data with emerging categories, and 2) theoretical sampling of different groups to maximize the similarities and differences of information and to commence saturation of the information obtained" (Creswell, 2009, p. 13).

This study also used the Active Interviewing theory developed by Holstein and Gubrium (1995) as a method that calls for exploratory data collection through the active interview process, recognizing both interviewer and respondent as engaged in meaning-making. Holstein and Gubrium defended a research process exploring the reality of respondents and their unique experiences through respondents' narratives and rejected the view of the respondent as passive and simply a "vessel for answers". Through the interactions of the participants' narratives, theory emerges from the ground up, allowing for the case's complexities to emerge.

Dillard (1982, p. 47) argues that the interview is "not a mirror of the so-called external world, nor is it a window into the inner life of the person but is rather a simulacrum, a perfectly miniature and coherent world in its own right". From that perspective, the interview functions as a narrative device, which allows persons to tell stories about themselves (Denzin, 2009). In the moment of story-telling, teller and listener, performer and audience, share the goal of participating in an experience which reveals their shared same-ness (Porter, 2000). Every interview text then, selectively and unsystematically, reconstructs that world, tells and performs a story accordingly to its own version of narrative logic (Denzin, 2001).

Research Questions

The research questions evolved and were informed by the recursive and overlapping systems of the individual teacher, the school, and the activities they participate in and out of the school system. Although a GT approach does not allow for pre-conceived notions to play into the

design, it does suggest that an “open mind” does not mean “an empty head” (Giles, King & da Lacey., 2013), and, based on that assumption, the study commenced generally assuming that the notion of ownership is loosely framed around those three systems:

1. How do public school teachers describe their perceptions and beliefs of inclusive education in their classroom and school?
    a. How important do teachers perceive their prior experience both as teachers and as students as a factor in their success in or satisfaction with inclusive education practices?
    b. What experiences do teachers use to define inclusive education?
    c. What experiences related to inclusive education have teachers had that they would like to see repeated in their classrooms or the school as a whole?
    d. How do teachers define their orientation to and about learning and ability (theirs and their students’) and how do these manifest in their classroom practices? (e.g. who can learn and what?)
2. What aspects of a class and/or school organization including professional development do public school teachers perceive as essential to changing beliefs, attitudes and practices toward inclusive education?
    a. How important is the school’s facilitation of discourse and collaborative learning when it comes to inclusive education?
    b. How important are school norms and practices to the implementation of inclusive education?
    c. How important is internal and external professional learning in a teacher taking the initiative in implementing inclusive education practices?

3. What learning activities and practices do the teachers and staff participate in –external and internal– that inform their thinking and philosophy about inclusive education practices?
    a. How do learning activities, and the system they are informed by, influence the teacher and staff perceptions and experiences in inclusive education practices?
    b. How do teachers and school staff orient themselves as it pertains to learning when it comes to change through those activities?

Main Idea and its Elements

Open, focused and in vivo coding (see details on chapter about Methodology) are particular features of GT, with the latter tentatively exploring the properties and dimensions of a major category followed by the focusing of these codes and categories into even tighter and more conceptual categories, from which one central or core category is identified for the development of a theory (Saldaña, 2011).

In the current study, open, focused and in-vivo coding was used throughout the interviews and was debated and analyzed in the memo/journal entry that followed each interview. The detailed memos provided insight into how the process was evolving for each informant/respondent and the researcher's subsequent reflexivity and development of the narrative as it was unfolding. The core category of the current study was developed through in vivo coding, based on the frequency and context of a particular phrase emerging in all interviews.

In Saldaña's words (2011, p. 116), classic Grounded Theory works toward achieving a central or core category that conceptually represents what the study is all about by holding all the major categories in place. This central or core category becomes the foundation for generating a

theory about the processes observed — a theory grounded in the data or constructed "from the ground up."

Limitations

Qualitative research offers "limited generalizability of findings" (Creswell, 2014, p. 158) making verification difficult. This study focused on a public primary school in a specific area in Athens and interviewed in total 15 individuals, school staff and parents of children with disabilities. A similar study involving more than one case (the school used in this study) might yield new information and new emergent categories that would better explain the main idea and its constitutive elements. Furthermore, all in-depth interviews are inherently biased and that aspect might account for some of the explanations given and assertions made. Replicating this study would be challenging since it involved a particular context with interrelated networks and conceptions that represent that unique set of individuals and case.

Significance of the Study

The current study explores how inclusive education practices are implemented in a public school in Athens, Greece and how the conception of ownership is developed. The study's findings provide a significant contribution of research into inclusion in general and in Greece in particular. There are limited qualitative studies in Greece that investigate the issue in depth and some of the elements and fundamental themes that emerged are unique to the existing body of research. The study's themes and findings will be shared with the school in order to initiate and facilitate a much-needed discussion about inclusive education practices in the school, about norms and practices that assist or hinder the process, and will provide a sounding board of how each individual member of the school community stands towards the topic and practice of inclusion and how their practices inform and are informed by the dominant discourse.

Furthermore, the study calls for more parental involvement and more work towards the ideology of inclusion itself and what inclusive pedagogy means for all. The conception of ownership as developed through the data calls for an alignment between ideology and practice as well as better reflective practices, which are a practical tool for teacher educators to gain insight into teachers' perceptions, beliefs and practices, as well as to give attention to the power of the individual voice and narrative of each prospective teacher. Finally, this research may aid those in higher education and policy makers in engaging in a discussion about their biases and practices and how they manifest in literary and policy forms.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

This chapter reviews the literature on inclusion and specifically on systemic educational change as it pertains to inclusion. Additionally, this review examines a series of National and International legislative frameworks and practices. Finally, the notion of teacher change related to change in attitudes and practices within the context of inclusion is examined.

Inclusion

In the last few decades, as including students with disabilities in regular schools has become an important goal in many countries, education systems have changed drastically. The process, practice, and philosophy of supporting students with disabilities in regular education settings instead of referring them to special schools is best described with the term "inclusion". According to Rafferty, Boettcher, and Griffin (2001), inclusion refers to "the process of educating children with disabilities in the regular education classrooms of their neighborhood schools – the schools they would attend if they did not have a disability – and providing them with the necessary services and support" (266).

Although inclusion is a contested term (Baglieri, Bejoian, Broderick, Connor, & Valle, 2011; Brantlinger, 1997), it has gained grounds internationally since the United Nations Salamanca Statement (1994), signed by 92 member countries, which argued for schools with an inclusive orientation as being "the most effective means of combating discriminatory attitudes, creating welcoming communities, building an inclusive society and achieving education for all".

Since then, the term has undergone considerable scrutiny, with a variety of definitions used by different discourses (Brantlinger, 1997).

Several authors (Opertti, Walker, & Zhang, 2013) argue for the existence of four core ideas internationally that relate to the continually evolving journey towards inclusion: 1) the human rights-based perspective, 2) a response to children with special needs, 3) a response to marginalized groups, and lastly the newest perspective 4) *transforming education systems*. The last perspective seems to align best with the Salamanca statement, as it places at the center of the debate the creation and transformation of educational settings that are responsive to the needs of all students as opposed to students transforming to meet the needs of an established environment. Undoubtedly, many countries are still far from effectively implementing the concept of inclusive education and transforming the education system at large. A number of countries are still focusing on either special needs and other marginalized groups, or on expanding special education with more separate schools and specialized services.

Ainscow, Booth, and Dyson (2006) reviewing the international trends about inclusion have identified a typology of six ways of thinking about inclusion and its conceptualization. These are as follows (paraphrased from Messiou, 2017). First, inclusion as concerned with disability and "special educational needs": this is seen as the most common approach, seeing inclusion only as concerned with disability and "special educational needs", which can act as a barrier to the development of the broader view of inclusion. This typology encourages the deficient model to draw categories rather than addressing wider contextual factors (p. 147).

Second, inclusion as a response to disciplinary exclusions: here, inclusion is associated with children with challenging behavior, who might be, therefore, excluded from school (Brantlinger, 1997). Here, the authors again draw attention to the contextual factors that might

lead or at least encourage these exclusions. Third, inclusion as about all groups vulnerable to exclusion: similar to the first perspective, this conceptualization focuses on certain categories of students, such as travelers, immigrants and ethnic minorities, who, due to their circumstances, are seen as vulnerable to exclusion. Fourth, inclusion as the promotion of the school for all: this approach refers to the development of a school for all, rather than allocating children in different kinds of schools based on their attainment and abilities, as it used to happen in the past.

Fifth, inclusion as "Education for All": this refers to UNESCO's "Education for All" agenda, with its focus on increasing access to and participation within education internationally, by setting certain goals. The United Nations adopted a set of international goals to be achieved by 2030, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which encompass and strengthen the notion of equity and human rights (Fehling, Nelson & Venkatapuram, 2013). SDG 4 on education aims to "ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all". As the authors highlight, setting global targets can be challenging, since there are differences at the local level.

Finally, inclusion as a principled approach to education and society: here, the articulation of inclusive values, such as equity, participation, community, and respect for diversity, is seen as important in guiding overall policies and practices. Specifically, for Ainscow et al. (2006), an improved school is an inclusive school that "seeks to put into practice, and so contribute to the development of a society more fully based on, inclusive values" (p. 2). In addition, the authors highlight that "an exploration of inclusion requires us to make explicit the particular values, their meanings and implications, that we wish to see enacted through education. It starts from the belief that education is a basic human right and the foundation for a more just society" (p. 2).

Hence, one can look at inclusion from a variety of perspectives that signal different starting points and a variety of processes. For the purposes of the current study, the researcher adheres to a notion of a principled approach, as it deals with the explication and consideration of inclusive values as a guiding post, which in turn align greatly with the research questions. Although the literature on school effectiveness and inclusion assumes that agreement about what constitutes a good inclusive school is possible and does not require discussion of fundamental questions of value (Morley & Rassool, 1999; Slee, 2010), the current study's assumption is that value neutrality should be relinquished and re-examined in depth. Dimensions such as attitudes, ownership, and values are imperative factors to incorporate into school reform and systemic change, indicating that schools are concerned with how people learn together, how they treat one another, and how they learn to live within a common world.

Thus, school improvement through inclusion becomes far more than a technical process of raising the capacity of schools to generate particular measurable outcomes. It also involves dialogue about ethical principles and how these can be related to curricula, approaches to teaching and learning, and the building of relationships within and beyond schools (Messiou, 2017). Discussions about school improvement must make explicit the values that underlie the changes seen to "improve" them. Similarly, Allan (2005) referred to inclusion as an ethical project, something that starts from us and we must do to ourselves, rather than as something that we do to a discrete population of others. Therefore, the issue of values and ethics is central to inclusion (Messiou, 2017). Partaking in a principled approach orientation moves away from exclusion of certain groups and opens up a potential for inclusion for all students regardless of their abilities. In addition, the inclusive values of a school should reflect the inclusive values of

the community, making the process of inclusion an interconnected project based on equity for all learners rather than something separate that is done to the school.

Within this framework, inclusion and school reform, as well as the teacher's role in the continuum of an inclusive pedagogy, take a central and interconnected role. Placing an inclusive pedagogy at the center of the school reform efforts encourages the participation of all within their communities and recognizes that schools have a role to play in the education of communities, rather than as the sole source of educational opportunity. As Ainscow, Booth & Dyson (2006) go on to suggest, "inclusion is concerned with all children and young people in schools; it is focused on presence, participation, and achievement" (p. 25) and with that aspect in mind the following section will explore more in depth the notion of inclusive education as a term that encompasses presence, participation, and achievement.

Inclusive Education

Inclusive education can be a difficult concept to define and has been greatly contested indicating a lack of understanding about what "inclusive education" means, which in turn is a barrier to inclusion in and of itself (Baglieri et al., 2011). A common misperception is that inclusive education requires a child (who is being included) to change or adjust to fit within a setting—as in a notion of assimilation rather than inclusion (Cologon, 2013). Being physically present in a mainstream setting does not automatically result in inclusion, and although mainstreaming is a necessary starting point to inclusive education, it is only a starting point. As Cologon (2013) notes, this misunderstanding results in a "question mark" perpetually placed over whether a child has a right to be "included", leading to a dehumanization and devaluating of the individual and to a limited understanding of inclusive education. As opposed to conditional assimilation, inclusive education requires recognizing the right of every child (without

exception) to be included and adapting the environment and teaching approaches in order to ensure the valued participation of all children in all aspects of school life (Avramidis & Norwich, 2002; Cologon, 2013). This principled approach to inclusive education is also emphasized in the Incheon Declaration: "Education 2030" (World Bank, 2015) where it is stated that inclusive education "is rights-based and inspired by a humanistic vision of education and development, based on the principles of human rights and dignity, social justice, peace, inclusion and protection, as well as cultural, linguistic and ethnic diversity and shared responsibility and accountability" (p. 24).

In addition, whereas the term "integration" means "the systematic placement of someone in something else and the completion of the subject as an independent, integral part of a larger whole" (Zoniou-Sideri, 2011, p. 159), the term "inclusive education" is seen as the result of academics' efforts to broaden the term "integration", which is no longer a goal, but a means of changing social data, since it aims not to restrict the boundaries of educational institutions, but to involve and transform wider social structures (Kofidou, Mantzikos, Chatzitheodorou, Kyparissos, & Karali, 2017). Or as Walker and Shobana (2016) point out, "inclusive societies are built when institutional barriers, such as the dual education system, and cultural barriers, such as beliefs and attitudes, are overcome by thoughtful, deliberate planning" (p. 34).

In that sense, the presence and participation of students with disabilities in the classroom is seen as a natural part of human diversity and their achievement follows their strengths and capabilities, and not some prescribed notions of success that rely merely on test scores and fitting in with the rest of their classmates. This very notion of transforming the system and creating responsive educational environments for all students is at the core of the pedagogical debate of the current study, in that it is assumed that a sense of ownership, based primarily on values and

then its corresponding practices, is needed for a principled approach to inclusion to start taking form and shape. As expected, the role of the teacher in this issue is central and the following section will explore it further.

The Role of the Teacher: Perceptions, Attitudes, and Practices

Around the world teachers are seen as key persons to implement inclusive education practices and policies. Teachers are increasingly called onto becoming "agents of change", often linked to social justice agendas (Pantić & Florian, 2015). However, the competencies needed for teachers to combat educational inequalities, as well as the desire to raise educational attainment and improve outcomes for all learners (Ballard, 2012; Florian, 2009), are unclear. The strategic idea of teachers as change agents in reducing educational inequalities is linked to research showing that teachers are the most significant in-school factor influencing student achievement (Hattie, 2009; OECD, 2005). The work teachers do to mitigate educational inequalities, is a part of the largest inclusive pedagogy framework that follows the operational principles guiding the implementation of structures and procedures within inclusive education systems (European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education, 2017).

From a program of research in the United Kingdom (Black-Hawkins, Florian 2012), it was shown that inclusive pedagogy is a complex endeavor that requires teachers to adjust their existing curricula and practices in order to include everyone, rather than doing something "in addition" to what already exists. Black-Hawkins and Florian (2012) emphasized the notion that this type of inclusive pedagogy implies a knowledge base for teacher education that "views classroom teachers as competent agents whose beliefs about students' capacity to learn, pedagogical choices, and ways of working with others influence student outcomes" (p. 334).

Inclusive pedagogy requires teachers to take a leadership role where they actively work in their classrooms and their schools to align their values with their practices and to constantly try to reduce or diminish barriers that lead to inequality and exclusion. In this context, teacher leadership demands specific skills and knowledge related to building trust with colleagues, understanding organizational context and dynamics, managing change processes, supporting adult learning, designing curricula, and participating in action research (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2009). Teacher leadership is understood to be the process by which teachers provide direction and exert influence on their colleagues, principals, and other members of school communities to improve teaching and learning practices with the aim of increased student learning and achievement and sense of belonging (Snoek, 2014). However, placing teachers at the forefront of inclusive pedagogy and preparing them to act as agents of change for inclusion and social justice challenges some of the well-established ways of thinking about teaching as an individualistic teacher-classroom activity. This type of approach requires teachers to work collaboratively with others, to exhibit reflexivity about their own practices, and to think systematically about the ways of transforming practices, schools, and systems (Pantić & Florian, 2015).

However, with studies pointing at different individual and systemic characteristics, the question about the factors that lead teachers to take a more active role in the formation and implementation of an inclusive pedagogy has not been effectively addressed. One of the characteristics most widely researched as a reliable predictor toward inclusion is that of teacher attitudes and beliefs. According to Sherrill (2004), attitude is the key to changing behaviors toward people who are different. Attitudes indicate one's fitness or predisposition to either approach or to avoid something. Approaching or avoiding behaviors, in turn, evoke new attitudes about self and environment. The attitude-behavior relationship can be conceptualized as a

continuous circle, with change occurring in both directions, with positive attitudes greatly influencing a positive approach toward sharing space and activities of children with and without disabilities (Sherrill, 2004; Slininger, Sherrill, & Jankowski, 2000).

Since teachers are regarded as key persons in the development and implementation of inclusive education and several studies have tried to establish what attitude teachers hold towards inclusive education. Some of these studies found that teachers are positive towards the general philosophy of inclusive education (Avramidis, Bayliss, & Burden, 2000), whereas other research has established that teachers have serious reservations about inclusive education in practice (Florian, 1998; Ring, 2005). Teacher attitudes are more likely to be positive for those teachers who have more academic preparation (Folsom-Meek & Rizzo, 2002; Kowalski & Rizzo, 1996), more experience in teaching students with disabilities (Block & Rizzo, 1995; Kozub & Porretta, 1998), and higher perceived competence in teaching students with disabilities (Block & Rizzo, 1995). Teacher gender and age play an important role in the attitude of promoting inclusion, with female teachers holding a more positive stance (Papadopoulou et al., 2004) and younger teachers being more favorably predisposed toward an inclusive pedagogy.

In Greece, a 2015 study (Fyssa & Vlachou) explored through questionnaires and observation the quality of inclusive practices in 52 mainstream preschool classrooms by assessing: a) the extent to which teachers' practices encouraged access and participation in the academic and social activities of the classroom for children with disabilities; and b) whether specific context and teacher characteristics were related to the quality of these program practices. The study found the existence of low to minimal quality practices. Features such as the model of special education provision, the group size, and the number of children with disabilities (context-related), as well as the teachers' training in special education and their teaching experience in

years (teacher-related), were found to not have a statistically significant effect on the level of quality employed for young children with disabilities. In digging further, researchers investigated justifications for the low-quality practices used by the participating teachers, and found that "conflicting and restrictive" beliefs about inclusive education were a possible explanation, which became apparent through the semi-structured interviews that were conducted in an attempt to cross-validate and corroborate the observational records (Fyssa, Vlachou, & Avramidis, 2014). The analysis revealed that most teachers assumed an "integrationist" standpoint claiming that the success of inclusion was largely dependent on the disabled student's individual characteristics and, by extension, on their ability to assimilate into a largely undifferentiated classroom environment.

Teachers' positive attitudes towards people with disabilities and their willingness to deal with children's individual differences positively and effectively in the Greek educational system were also investigated in a 2017 literature review study by Kofidou and Mantzikos on the inclusion policies, practices and beliefs in several countries, which concluded that, in Greece, inclusion, although being the most accepted ideology, is not implemented in alignment with the legislative frameworks. The authors looked into different factors that might affect teacher attitudes and found that: a) teachers with extensive education were considerably more positive toward statements regarding the general philosophy of inclusion, compared to those who had received no training in special education (Avramidis & Kalyva, 2007); b) female teachers (69.5%) were more supportive towards the integration of such students compared to male teachers (59%) c) teachers who had between one and five years of teaching experience had considerably more positive attitudes towards the integration of students with special educational needs compared to those who had six to eleven years of teaching experience and those who had

twelve or more years of experience (Alghazo & Naggar Gaad, 2004); d) teachers with extended experience had considerably more positive attitudes towards inclusive education compared to those who had fewer years of experience or no teaching experience (Avramidis & Kalyva, 2007); e) teachers with extensive education were considerably more positive towards statements regarding the general philosophy of inclusion, compared to those who had received no training in special education (Avramidis & Kalyva, 2007); and f) the results of the study by Alghazo and Naggar Gaad (2004) showed that teachers were more positive towards students with physical disabilities, specific learning difficulties, and visual impairments. However, teachers were more negative regarding the inclusion of students with labels of intellectual disabilities, behavioral challenges, and hearing impairments.

In terms of the teachers' beliefs, several studies (Clarebout, Elen, Luyten, & Bamps, 2001; Jordan, Schwartz, & McGhie-Richmond, 2009; Schommer-Aikins, 2004) have argued that their beliefs and attitudes (negative or positive) also influence their teaching strategies.

Mavropoulou and Padeliadou (2000) studied with the use of questionnaires the perceptions in Greece of 35 general education and 29 special education teachers about autism and its impact on educational practice. Their results showed that teachers were aware of autistic spectrum disorders and that autism was not always associated with intellectual disabilities. However, it appeared that teachers were confused about the causes of autism as well as about the appropriate educational practices.

Athanasoglou (2014) examined the attitudes in Greece of 167 teachers using a 28-quetion two-part questionnaire and concluded that in addition to training on autism spectrum disorders, the interpersonal experience of teachers with these students, may affect their attitudes in a positive way. In addition, statistical significance between training and its impact on teachers'

attitudes was found for all the three groups of teachers (general and special education teachers in general schools, special education teachers in special schools). On the other hand, experience seems to generate statistical significance for general and special education teachers working in general education schools (Kofidou et al., 2017). Syriopoulou-Delli, Cassimos, Tripsianis, and Polychronopoulou (2011) examined the perceptions of 228 (116 females and 62 males) teachers in Greece using questionnaires to identify the explanatory power of critical independent variables related to the nature and management of autistic children. The findings of their research support that teachers' specialized training and working experience are critical inputs to improve teachers' perceptions and efficient serving of learners with autism (Kofidou et al., 2017). Generally, experts agree that complete inclusion and acceptance of students with disabilities into the regular education classroom will happen only after there is a long-term change in attitude and epistemological beliefs.

As one can see, there are several aspects and dimensions that affect inclusive practices and all of them are interrelated and interdependent: a) specialized training, b) working experience, c) exposure to both general and special education settings, d) beliefs and perceptions about inclusive education, e) type of disability, f) contextual barriers, and g) beliefs about ability and access. However, it is imperative that those aspects be examined though a systemic framework which will be analyzed next. The conceptualization of systemic change has at its core the recognition of these interrelated aspects as vital elements of an effective educational inclusive experience.

Systemic Educational Change

Individual schools and entire districts are engaged in reflective processes about student outcomes, achievement, participation, teacher efficacy and so on, aiming to creating a better

educational environment for everyone involved. The process and purpose of systemic change is to create a better educational system than what currently exists. Jenlink, Reigeluth, Carr, and Nelson (1995) define systemic change as an approach that:

- recognizes the interrelationships and interdependencies among **the parts** of the educational system, with the consequence that desired changes in one part of the system are accompanied by changes in other parts that are necessary to support those desired changes, and
- recognizes the **interrelationships** and **interdependencies** between the educational system and its community, including parents, employers, social service agencies, religious organizations, and much more, with the consequence that all those stakeholders are given active ownership over the change effort. (p. 3)

Putting ideas into practice is a far more complex process than people realize and inclusive education as a systemic effort involves an ongoing process of "putting inclusive values into action". Along those lines, the legislative context informs the backdrop of where inclusive education takes shape and provides the guiding post to its implementation. Examination of the legislation pertaining to inclusion and its historical context will be presented in the next section.

Legislative Context

The World Health Organization (2011) declared that access by all children to a quality education is "key" to human capital formation and their participation in social and economic life.

To date, there have been numerous acts of legislation that have supported the mandate of educating students with disabilities outside of isolated separate educational environments and in regular classrooms alongside their same age peers. For the EU, the UNESCO (1994) Salamanca Statement inclusive education has been the guiding principle:

> Regular schools with this inclusive orientation are the most effective means of combating discriminatory attitudes, creating welcoming communities, building an inclusive society and achieving education for all; moreover, they provide an effective education to the majority of children and improve the efficiency and ultimately the cost-effectiveness of the entire education system. (p. 8)

The historical framework of special education in Greece originates at the beginning of the 20th century when a number of private and religious charitable institutions for specific categories of disability were founded. From the middle of the 20th century the involvement of the State in special education gradually increased. The first law specifically devoted to special education passed in 1981 (Law 1143/81). This law, introduced by the Conservative Party "New Democracy", established the categories of students with disabilities and the types of special provision available to them. The 1143/81 Law is a quite significant legislation document for the history of Greek special education despite the fact that it was never fully implemented, since the same year there was a change in government (Zoniou-Sideri et al., 2006). The socialist party "PASOK" came to power for the first time ever in 1981 and stayed there (with a two-year interruption in 1992– 93) until March 2004. The party introduced two major educational reforms (1983-85 and 1998), aiming at the overall restructuring of primary and secondary education, and incorporated special education in the framework of general education. At the same time, the 1566/85 Law introduced the concept of "special needs" but it did not abandon the categories of disabilities that pre-existed. Special education remained a separate system within the general education system with various implications across all areas of the access, participation and inclusion of students with disabilities (Zoniou-Sideri et al., 2006).

Special classes (pull-out or resource in US terms) were introduced on a pilot basis in 1982 but very fast –and without the backup of formal assessment and evaluation– became the dominant model of special needs provision. This practice encouraged the further segregation of the students of disabilities, as having a special class was the modus operandi for inclusive practices and the "easy way out" for teachers when students were interruptive or non-compliant. In general, and to this day, the special or inclusion classes remain a popular place for students

with or without an official diagnosis. Sometimes, these places become the holding space for students with behavioral and emotional needs that cannot be successfully included in the general education classroom.

Law 2817/2000 for special education stated that children with special needs should be normally educated in mainstream schools, unless the type and severity of their 'difficulties' do not make that possible. Amongst a series of measures, the law introduced the Centers for Identification, Assessment and Support (KEEDY) that were founded throughout Greece and renamed special classes into inclusive classes.

The passage of the new PL.3699/2008-09 (Greek Government Gazette, 2008) mandated school inclusion of all children in regular classes with the offer of support services from a teacher of special education, who is guided by scientists working at Diagnosis and Support Centers (KEEDY), or in special, organized and properly staffed inclusion classes in general schools. Only if the attendance is difficult or impossible due to the student's type of disability, then the special education classes would be considered as an appropriate placement for the student with a disability. Although the general intention of the Ministry's educational policy is an effort to make a school responsive to the needs of all students, inclusion in this context is seen as the accommodation of children with special needs or disabilities in an educational system that is characterized by uniformity at a structural, organization, and curriculum level. Undoubtedly, in this context "inclusion" is mainly a special education concern, rather than a conscious attempt to restructure education. The dominant model of inclusive classes regulates the management of the "difficulties" of the school population and at the same time avoids "contaminating" the mainstream educational praxis with 'special education intervention or differentiation' (Zoniou-Sideri, 1996, 2004).

Summary

The literature review revealed an extensive list of characteristics that are crucial in the implementation of inclusion. The findings cover a spectrum of individual, cultural and organizational characteristics that facilitate or hinder the implementation of the inclusive model. Especially the studies that were conducted in the Greek education system are congruent with international findings about lack of specialized training, exposure to inclusive settings, types of disability and limited organizational support. It seems that the aspect of teachers' beliefs and attitudes play a significant role in the implementation of inclusion, although most of the studies did not provide conclusive results about how beliefs and attitudes develop and change and how in turn they inform inclusive practices. Since most of the studies were quantitative and conducted through the use of questionnaires, it is important to take into consideration issues of inflexibility and social desirability. Although the use of a questionnaire as a data instrument is cost-effective and generalizable, it stills misses the in-depth information of understanding a phenomenon within the context as it evolves. The Athanasglou (2014) and Fyssa and Vlachou (2015) studies have a representative sample of participants and settings and their findings revealed statistical significance between their critical variables such as training and level of accommodation. They do not however reveal *how* this process is constructed and most importantly they do not answer the question of how the individual, organizational/cultural and professional development systems interact in order to produce a more inclusive environment for all students. For instance, it is evident that students with EBD are the least accommodated and the most likely population of students to be placed in a segregated setting. But what is it about EBD that makes their inclusion so difficult? If one accepts the lack of support for these teachers, why are there teachers who manage to include all students with minimal support even though they all work in the same

educational system? But most importantly, none of the studies addresses the way people define inclusion and what *meaning* they give to its implementation. Inclusion remains a contested term in that not one definition exists and, even within the same setting, different conceptualizations of inclusion take place. Certain questions still remain unexamined in depth: Why is the pull-out classroom considered an inclusive practice? Why does inclusion exclude certain groups of students? Why do some teachers, regardless of the support they receive, still have bias against students with disabilities?

It seems that inclusion remains a special education concern, rather than a conscious effort to reconceptualize and restructure the manner with which all students are accepted and accommodated. In the existing literature, although teacher beliefs are strong indicators of how inclusion is implemented, limited studies have addressed this issue in depth. The fact that certain legislative frameworks are in place does not ensure that inclusion will actually be occurring or that teachers have changed their beliefs about it.

The current study will attempt an exploration of those aspects that are indicative and significant, yet so elusive.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Restatement of Purpose

The purpose of this study was to explore in depth the experiences of school teachers as change agents and their conception of ownership toward change as it pertains to inclusive education practices. This qualitative case study used a constructivist approach, which involved interviews based on the Active Interviewing theory and followed the Strauss Grounded-Theory design, as a guide to collecting and coding interview data, identifying emerging categories and generating a substantive theory. In this qualitative study, data collection and analysis occur simultaneously in constructivist inquiry, ensuring the context-relevant emergence of concepts and categories.

Although teacher change has been investigated through different lenses (Hannah & Pliner, 1983; Kilanowski-Press, 2010; Sherrill, 2002) and while schools are valued for the services they provide for humans, such as education, learning, socialization skills, principles, and values, little attention has been paid to the mental demands that teachers face especially when dealing with change. Almost no attention has been devoted to why teachers change, or not, and how they themselves become change agents through the conception of ownership – which is the central theme of this study. At an initial stage, the researcher tried to frame the inquiry and decision-making around methodology by asking these two broad conceptual questions:

1. What do I want to better understand? and
2. How do I best frame my research questions to ensure I am gathering data that will inform this main concern?

In answering these questions, it was evident that the phenomenon of inclusion of students with disabilities in their neighborhood schools in the context of systemic change, given its complexity and contextuality, was an issue that required a qualitative constructivist approach. An initial literature review had pointed towards systems, learning, meaning-making, values, and the dynamics of contextual construction of knowledge. Choosing a Straussian Grounded-Theory approach allowed the researcher to the use of a literature review that provided some initial concepts to emerge and better frame the research questions. Corbin and Strauss (1990) themselves acknowledged that an initial literature review may be needed and can be used without precluding the researcher's open approach to data collection and theory generating.

The approach that came to be known as Straussian Gounded-Theory research (see Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Strauss, 1987) actually called for use of a literature review because of its ability to a) stimulate theoretical sensitivity, b) provide secondary data, c) raise questions, d) provide a guide to the theoretical sampling process, and e) provide supplementary vitality (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; McGhee et al., 2007, Dunne, 2011). McGhee et al. (2007) argued that the use of a literature review is congruent with the notion of reflexivity, which is a "consciously reflective process" that allows the researchers to be open-minded during the inductive process and their role and experience to be acknowledged, and even "shared with the readers" (p. 335).

The researcher of the current study was informed by her experience as a teacher educator in inclusive education practices and systemic reform implementation in public schools both in the US and in Greece. Before embarking to the study, the questions and main concerns of the inquiry were somehow conceptually framed as aspects to be investigated in depth. Through her readings and experience in the field for over 10 years, she concluded that the issue of ownership is probably one of the most important and significant aspects of inclusive education practices and

of school reform in general. The literature review assisted in placing the questions in context, making them specific and connected to a more holistic picture, while, at the same time, it reinforced the need for a grounded case study constructivist approach, as limited studies have looked at this specific phenomenon from such a detailed and bounded perspective.

Rationale for a Constructivist Approach

Taking ownership is about taking initiative, when we believe that taking action is not someone else's responsibility. We take ownership when we, as individuals, believe that we are responsible and accountable for the quality and timeliness of an outcome, even when we work with others and we belong to a larger system and organization. It does not necessarily mean that we have an obligation to own the project, or do it ourselves, but it does mean that we are aware how our actions and role would impact the outcomes and we can be trusted that our conceptions and actions align to produce a successful outcome – in our case, inclusive education practices. The researcher believes that the notion of ownership is the key ingredient that is missing from the right and rightful implementation of inclusion in general and in Greece in particular.

Promoting, adapting, and supporting inclusion is about acceptance of a condition that puts one in a position to have to challenge one's own conceptions about ability and disability, difference, diversity, identity, and efficacy. Teachers, in particular, are in the first line of this ideological battle of education and learning of students with disabilities that need to (and must) be integrated in their regular classrooms, along with their typically developing peers in order for all students to achieve improved academic, social, behavioral outcomes (Cosier, Causton-Theoharis, & Theoharis, 2013). Teachers' assumptions that children's approaches are fixed and acting as if these approaches are due to differences in neurological, maturational, or cultural levels have been distracting teachers from thinking of students as sense-making individuals

regarding learning in different subject matter areas. Grouping by ability is used for classification purposes –under the assumption that this grouping assures effectiveness in the delivery of instruction– rather than for understanding how students are making sense of instruction and what supports they need to be included in the class and the school. As a result, this approach leads to the achievement gap, the stratification of educational opportunities, and detrimental psychosocial outcomes, such as lowered self-concept or self-esteem, particularly for disadvantaged or lower achieving students (Belfi, Goos, De Fraine, & Van Damme, 2012; Prawat, 1992).

Equally, grouping by ability, in separate inclusion classrooms, also reinforces that notion of separateness and not acknowledging each student's capacity to learn in the general education classroom. This notion of separate but equal, which has been going on for decades –and in looking from a close view of the educational system– in Greece, is the basic understanding educators have when it comes to inclusion: more specialized classrooms, expansion of special education, and students being accepted in the general education classes only if they are "deserving" of those services, meaning if they are able to better assimilate in the system as is. Inclusion classrooms, as they are called, are nothing more than the pull-out classrooms, where students with disabilities spend a part of their day learning how to better "assimilate" in the regular education classroom.

Taking ownership of inclusion is assumed by the researcher as the bedrock of a systemic change process that aims at an educational paradigm shift rather than an improvement in existing services, such as the expansion of special education. A paradigm shift involves restructuring the existing system through a common understanding of the desired goal (i.e. inclusion). From a process perspective, the researcher perceives change not as something linear that has stages and clear steps to be achieved at a specific timeline, but a rather cyclical process that involves

negotiation of roles, professional identity, personal boundaries and philosophies, orientation towards learning and ability, as well as one's own experiences with past incidents of change (either enforced or voluntary). The conception of ownership is both the outcome and starting point of that continuous cyclical process that ensures that change is steady and involves an ongoing understanding, reflection, and commitment to the phenomenon under investigation (i.e. inclusive education).

A review of the change process in the field of education and professional development has yielded disappointing results (Hanushek, 2005; Opfer & Pedder, 2011) in that teacher professional activities seem to be ineffective and fail to consider how learning is embedded in professional lives and working conditions and how knowledge and meaning is constructed within those bounds.

In the dominant approaches of teacher learning (Opfer & Pedder, 2011; Hanushek, 2005), there is a move from a transmission view toward a more constructivist orientation emphasizing the understanding of teaching and learning in their multifaceted dimensions, as aspects of a process that informs and is informed by the environment it takes place in. Both the knower and the known are interrelated, and notions of change take a local, situated, contextual character. However, a gap remains between these theories and how they are implemented in teacher education and school classrooms (Cohen, 1988). Attempts at closing this gap can be found in the new wave of educational reform, which is in large part characterized by constructivist tendencies toward both teaching and learning placing at the center of systemic change issues of culture, context, literacy, language, learners' interests and needs, personal experiences, interpretation of reality, as well as application of knowledge, which the researcher can analyze to determine their impact on teaching and learning policies (Mogashoa, 2014).

Hein (2007) mentions that constructivism refers to the idea that learners construct knowledge for themselves; learners individually and socially construct meaning, as they learn. It maintains that individuals create or construct their own new understandings or knowledge through the interaction of what they already know and believe, and the ideas, events, and activities with which they come in contact (Mogashoa, 2014). In addition, Opfer and Pedder (2011) argue that:

> although there have been significant calls for a more complex conceptualization of teacher professional learning, our analysis of the extant literature suggests that the majority of writings on the topic continue to focus on specific activities, processes, or programs in isolation from the complex teaching and learning environments in which teachers live. (p. 377)

Opfer and Pedder (2011) then suggest that in order to develop this complex conceptualization of teacher learning and change, multiple fragmented strands of literature from teacher professional development, teaching and learning, organizational learning, and teacher change –that have tended to remain separate– need to be brought together. The authors see this conceptualization through a complexity orientation that helps to identify systems both within and across these different strands of research and the ways these systems intersect and recursively interact, resulting in the emergence of teacher professional learning. In terms of the current study, bringing these elements together will provide an explanatory, descriptive causality on why inclusion fails in the research setting and what are the reciprocal influences of the subsystems that inform ownership over inclusion.

The researcher, adhering epistemologically to a constructivist and complexity view of viewing change, frames the investigation around three important, overlapping and recursive systems that are crucial to informing ownership towards change and are involved in professional and personal learning: *the individual teacher, the school, and the activity* (Opfer and Pedder, 2011). The individual teacher system includes their prior experience (both as students and

teachers), their orientation to and beliefs about learning, their prior knowledge, and how all these interact and are enacted in the classroom practice. School-level systems encompass the contexts of the school that support learning and teaching, the collective orientations and beliefs about learning, the collective practices and norms that exist in the school, and the collective capacity to realize shared learning goals. The learning activity includes those systems of internal or external learning activities, tasks and practices that teachers take part.

The research questions were then loosely developed around these systems, giving a general guidance, but also leaving room for flexibility and reflexivity as the process was unfolding and new data was emerging:

1. How do public school teachers describe their perceptions and beliefs of inclusive education in their classroom and school?
    a. How important do teachers perceive their prior experience both as teachers and as students as a factor in their success in or satisfaction with inclusive education practices?
    b. What experiences do teachers use to define inclusive education?
    c. What experiences related to inclusive education have teachers had that they would like to see repeated in their classrooms or the school as a whole?
    d. How do teachers define their orientation to and about learning and ability (theirs and their students') and how do these manifest in their classroom practices? (e.g. who can learn and what?)
2. What aspects of a class and/or school organization including professional development do public school teachers perceive as essential to changing beliefs, attitudes and practices toward inclusion?

a. How important is the school's facilitation of discourse and collaborative learning when it comes to inclusion?
b. How important are school norms and practices to the implementation of inclusion?
c. How important is internal and external professional learning in a teacher taking the initiative in implementing inclusive practices?

3. What learning activities and practices do the teachers and staff participate in –external and internal– that inform their thinking and philosophy about inclusive education practices?
    c. How do the learning activities, as well as the system they are informed by, influence the teacher and staff perceptions and experiences in inclusive practices?
    d. How do teachers and school staff orient themselves as it pertains to learning when it comes to change through those activities?

Rationale for Grounded Theory Case Study

The current qualitative study used a Straussian Grounded-Theory design to generate a substantive grounded theory of teachers' ownership toward inclusive education practices. Qualitative research is particularly suited for the exploration of an area of study where research is lacking or where much of the research work has been derived from concepts and theory from another area. That is, the qualitative researcher is looking for emergent knowledge rather than preconceived notions and ideas that restrict and possibly guide the inquiry.

Qualitative research involves work in the natural world, in the context where the phenomenon under investigation is taking place and recognizes that the researcher is at times studying the subjective reality of others and that the researcher's own life experiences and the act of research itself must be taken into consideration as part of the study at hand (Feeler, 2012).

Marshall and Rossman (1999) noted that qualitative research is complex – both inductive and deductive, but Grounded-Theory research is primarily inductive. The qualitative researcher, instead of attempting to record external reality objectively, acts as an interpreter and sees the act of interpretation as one of the factors determining the shape of the reality that emerges (Creswell, 2014; Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Marshall & Rossman, 1999).

In its original conception, Grounded Theory sought to build explanations and connections of social phenomena by going "backward", from data to theory (Marshall & Rossman, 1999). The term "Grounded Theory" was intended to build theory from the ground up and not based on some pre-conceived ideas or theoretical insights. However, critiques from several methodologists who argued that no researcher should enter the field without some working hypotheses or sensitizing concepts to serve as working ideas, led Strauss to implore some modification of the approach. In 1990, Corbin and Strauss, argued for the development of constructivist grounded theory approaches, stipulating that theory and data are constructed by the researcher in interaction with and interpretation of the phenomenon being investigated (Marshall & Rossman, 1999). Thus, the social phenomena are not discovered but rather interpreted utilizing different analytical methods, particularly open and axial coding (Charmaz, 2014). The section that follows will explicate further how a constructivist approach within a grounded theory framework takes shape through the careful planning of a methodological design that considers all aspects of the issue under investigation.

Constructivist Inquiry Design

Site Selection

Although many different definitions of the term "case study" can be found in the literature, for the purposes of the current study, Yin's (1994) definition of "an empirical inquiry

that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomena and context are not clearly evident and in which multiple sources of evidence are used" (p. 13) seems particularly appropriate. Mariano (2000) suggested that four key elements should characterize all case studies: "context, boundaries, time and intensity" (p. 313). Placing into the center of inquiry these four elements the researcher decided to investigate the inquiry topic within a bounded context, a public school in this case, where all four elements would be met. Given the lack of research in the particular area in Greece, a public school in a working-class neighborhood was deemed a reliable context of a beginning inquiry.

The particular school was selected because it met specific criteria: a) the school board and the administration are committed in implementing inclusive education practices; b) the majority of teachers are willing to implement the model and co-teaching is taking place in at least 3 classrooms; c) the school is a relatively small/medium-size school that is located in a working-class neighborhood and students with disabilities have limited access to out of school services (i.e., private tutors, Physical Therapists, Occupational Therapists) making the implementation of the model probably the only alternative they have, and the school has accepted that responsibility; and d) the school hosts refugee students from Syria and some of these students have diagnosed disabilities as well.

The small size of the school made it an ideal site for case study research as it allowed for in-depth interviewing of the school personnel and related constituents, such as parents and guardians. Due to the researcher's familiarity with the neighborhood and the school, accessibility was not an issue, which allowed for the initial informational session and invitation to participate in the research project.

Sampling

The sampling method chosen was based on what Glaser and Strauss (1967) called non-probability "theoretical sampling", a process where the decision on what data to collect next emerges from the interviews and the new knowledge added to the inquiry framework. The emergent design of Grounded Theory guided the mode of sampling, as it allows for maximum flexibility following the maxim that further collection cannot be planned in advance as the "emerging theory suggests the next steps" (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p. 47). At the initial stages of the research, the entire school staff were identified as possible participants or key stakeholders, and a relevant informational session took place where the project description and the informed consent forms were disseminated. The interview process started within the next two weeks of the initial invitation and data analysis began from the first interview. The first round of interviews assisted in determining the context of inclusion in the school and helped to identify stakeholder groups that were not targeted at the beginning of the process, such as parents and guardians. By the end of the first month, all school personnel were interviewed and other constituents were identified to participate as well (parents and guardians).

Instrumentation

Table 1

Interview Schedule

Date /Place/Mode/ Participant	Conceptual framework	Questions
13/6/2019/School classroom/face to face interview/ SpEd Director, 25 years of experience	Perceptions & Beliefs	a. How important do teachers perceive their prior experience both as teachers and as students as a factor in their success in or satisfaction with inclusive education practices? b. What experiences do teachers use to define inclusive education? c. What experiences related to inclusive education have teachers had that they would like to see repeated in their classrooms or the school as a whole? d. How do teachers define their orientation to and about learning and ability (theirs and their students') and how do these manifest in their classroom practices? (e.g. who can learn and what?)
	School and Organizational systems	How important is the school's facilitation of discourse and collaborative learning when it comes to inclusive education? b. How important are school norms and practices to the implementation of inclusive? c. How important is internal and external professional learning in a teacher taking the initiative in implementing inclusive education practices?
	Learning Activities	e. How do learning activities, as well as the system they are informed by, influence the teacher and staff perceptions and experiences in inclusive education practices? f. How do teachers and school staff orient themselves as it pertains to learning when it comes to change through those activities? Notes:

The Active Interview

The Active Interview theory developed by Holstein and Gubrium (1995) is a method that calls for exploratory data collection through the active interview process, recognizing both interviewer and respondent as engaged in meaning-making. The authors argue for a transformation of how researchers conceive of respondent and interview roles, the nature of interview information, and the relationship of the information to society. The interview as a "systematic method for obtaining experiential knowledge, is the product of a mere century of development" (Platt, 2002, p. 28). Undergirding the emergence of the interview was a new understanding that the individual person –each and every one of them– is an important source of knowledge (Holstein & Gubrium, 2012). Epistemologically, the interview is seen as an active process between the interviewer and the respondent and aims to give voice to a person with a story to tell, that is worthwhile and provides information in depth. As familiar as it seems today, the interview, as a procedure for securing knowledge, is relatively new.

Indeed, individuals have not always been viewed as important sources of knowledge about their own experience (Holstein & Gubrium, 2012). As Pertti Alasuutari (1998) explained, it was not so long ago that when one wanted to know something important about society or daily life, one asked those allegedly "in the know", be it tribe chiefs, educated classes, or high-status commentators who spoke for all. Along these lines then, interviews are not neutral spaces or sources of distortion, but a social encounter "in which knowledge is actively formed and shaped" (Gubrium et al., 2012, p. 32).

In order to gain a strong sense of inclusion at this school, the data collection strategy for this research investigation consisted of in-depth interviews of key stakeholders starting with eight general education teachers –since general education teachers were the main focus– and was

expanded to include other key stakeholders, as identified in the process, in particular two special education teachers, two school administrators, a physical education teacher and two parents. The participants comprised the entire school's teaching and administrative faculty and staff, providing to the researcher an almost complete picture of the case with its constitutive elements and perceived dimensions. During the course of the interviews, several staff mentioned the need for the parents' input as they seem to be "resistant" to inclusion, or may have a different perspective with the school's implementation practices, and the school staff spends a significant amount of time trying to "convince" them of the benefits of inclusion. In accordance with Grounded Theory emergent design, two parents were included in the sample allowing for what Glaser and Strauss (1967) called "theoretical saturation" (p. 61), the point at which no additional data are emerging to enable the researcher to develop further properties. The point of saturation of data was decided along with the external auditor, as the emergent concepts revealed no new themes or additional categories. Glaser and Strauss (1967) explained that adequacy of sample can be judged by how "widely and diversely" (p. 61) the researcher has sampled in order to reach the saturation point. If the developed theory is not "thick" or leaves room for exceptions and a sense of a simplistic view of the phenomenon, then the sample can be judged too small. To account for this drawback, Holstein and Gubrium (1995) found the possibility of depth of information if respondents are activated and respected as "people, in their capacities as competent narrators of their lives" (p. 29). This view reconceptualizes interviews in terms of narrative practice. It suggests the need to concertedly attend to the meaning-making work and communicative conditions of interviewing (Gubrium & Holstein, 2009). The authors stress that the understanding of "*how* the narrative process constructively unfolds in the interview is as critical as appreciating *what* is selectively composed and preferred which in turn, prompts a

reimagining of the subjects behind interview participants" (Holstein & Gubrium, 2012, p. 32). The subjects behind the respondents are then seen as active, purposefully, dynamic participants that construct versions of reality interactionally rather than merely purvey data (Holstein & Gubrium, 1995). The active respondent can hardly "spoil" what he or she is, in effect, subjectively constructing in the interview process. Rather, "the activated subject pieces experiences together before, during, and after occupying the respondent role" (Holstein & Gubrium, 2012, p. 13). This subject is always making meaning, regardless of whether is being interviewed and is also implicated in the production of knowledge. The participation in the process is not viewed in terms of standardization or constraint: "neutrality is not figured to be necessary or achievable" (Holstein & Gubrium, 2012, p. 13).

Data Collection

Data collection took place in a variety of settings depending on the participants' availability and convenience. Most (11) of the interviews were conducted in a classroom or a school office. The rest were conducted in cafés and two in the participants' houses. All interviews were recorded in a tape recorder and transcribed within the next forty-eight hours.

Specifically, and following a Grounded-Theory methodology, the researcher collected data by doing the following:

- Interviewed 8 general education public teachers and 2 special education teachers and a Physical education teacher.
- Interviewed the 2 school administrators (Principal and Assistant Principal).
- Examined documents such meeting minutes and legal demands by the Department of Education pertaining to inclusion. These documents were chosen as part of the data collection process since they pointed out to a systemic view of the school and its

limitations and guiding framework pertaining to the implementation of inclusion and the dynamics in the school about resources, willingness, perceptions and practices. Although the documents were not detailed or explicit, they nevertheless provided an initial framework to guide research questions about organizational aspects that might otherwise not be noticed.

- Conducted constant comparison analysis of the data by analyzing the data after each interview, identifying emerging themes, adding new participants in the interview schedule, and adding or refining questions for the subsequent interviews.
- Interviewed two parents of students with a disability diagnosis.
- Let the data drive the process of generating categories and theory with the expectation that a definition of ownership or a new category altogether would emerge as a replacement.

Including the school administrators in the inquiry sample provided a better understanding of the context the change initiative is taking place, as well as the legal and administrative restrictions that might be in place and could be a possible obstacle in a smooth transition from a public general school where students with disabilities were excluded or spend part of their days in the inclusion classroom to an inclusive school that now includes, supports, and embraces students with and without disabilities in typical general education classes .

Data Analysis

Data was transcribed and translated into English and entered into ATLAS.ti 8 for processing and detailed analysis. A detailed description of how data was handled, coded and analyzed is presented in the next section.

The Constant Comparative Method

The constant comparative method is a method for analyzing data in order to develop a grounded theory. Glaser and Strauss (1967) suggest that when used to generate a theory, the comparative analytical method they describe can be applied to social units of any size.

As Glaser and Strauss (1967) describe it, this process involves:

- Identifying a phenomenon, object, event or setting of interest.
- Identifying a few local concepts, principles, structural, or process features of the experience or phenomenon of interest.
- Making decisions regarding initial collection of data based one's initial understanding of the phenomenon. Further data collection cannot be planned in advance of analysis and the emergence of theory.
- Engaging in theoretical sampling – the key question is what group or subgroups does the researcher turn to next to collect data? Subsequent sampling decisions should be purposeful and relevant.
- The rationale for selecting comparison groups is their theoretical relevance for fostering the development of emergent categories. (pp. 28-52)

The method incorporates four stages: "(1) comparing incidents applicable to each category, (2) integrating categories and their properties, (3) delimiting the theory, and (4) writing the theory" (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p. 105). Throughout the stages, the researcher collects, analyzes, and codes the information, and reinforces theory generation through the process of theoretical sampling. The benefit of using this method is that the research begins with raw data; through constant comparisons a substantive theory will emerge (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p. 105). The method is analytical in that it requires that the researcher even at the outset of data collection begins closely analyzing data into minute units or indicators (Strauss, 1987). The comparison element involves the systematic comparison of units of study, incidents, indicators to each other, and then to data collected in the next phase of data collection.

In the current study, the researcher started coding and analyzing from the first interview through the use of analytic memos and by subjecting each piece of information to analysis

aiming for an initial development of categories and constant comparison with the second interview data and so on. The process was analytic, comparative, and constant in that the researcher would always go back to the initial point of analysis, would constantly compare and analyze statements, incidents, and so on, and through this process new categories or more refined one would emerge. The relationship with the data remained active throughout the process allowing for what Glaser and Strauss (1967) called the "cumulative nature of knowledge and theory" (p. 35). Each respondent's statement would be used as the constitutive pieces of a dimension of a certain emergent category. These statements would then be compared to similar statements within the same interview or with different interviews and new questions would be developed to be utilized in subsequent interviews to reflect the dimensions of the emergent categories.

Coding in Grounded Theory

Incidents articulated in the data are analyzed and coded, using the constant comparative method, to generate initially substantive, and later theoretical, categories. Coding means categorizing short segments of data with a short name or phrase that simultaneously summarizes and accounts for each piece of data. The essential relationship between data and theory is a conceptual code (Glaser, 2004). Coding conceptualizes the underlying pattern of a set of empirical indicators within the data and gets the analyst off the empirical level by fracturing the data, then conceptually grouping it into codes that then become the theory that explains what is happening in the data (Glaser, 2004). Through coding, the researcher obtains a better idea of the cohesion of otherwise seemingly disparate phenomena, naming segments of data with a label that simultaneously categorizes, summarizes, and accounts each piece of data. (Charmaz, 2006). As one codes, asks: which theoretical categories might these statements indicate?

Grounded-Theory coding consists of at least two main phases: 1) an initial phase involving naming each word, line, or segment of data, followed by 2) a focused, selective phase that uses the most significant or frequent initial codes to sort, synthesize, integrate, and organize large amounts of data (Charmaz, 2006).

Open Coding

Open coding or **substantive coding** or **line by line** is conceptualizing on the first level of abstraction (Charmaz, 2006). Written data from field notes or transcripts are conceptualized line by line. In transcript 1 of the current study, the following lines are an example of open coding line by line: "I don't like to admit it (1), but teachers are almost blindfolded (2). They refuse to see the reality of our society (3). The needs of the children (4). It's disappointing and it makes me very angry." (5). (General education Teacher 1: Transcript 1, 6:30'')

Doing line by line coding assists in understanding and participating in the lives of the participants. What we hear, feel, and sense could be important indicators on how to proceed. While engaged in initial coding, the researcher mines early data for analytic ideas to pursue in further data collection and analysis (Charmaz, 2006). Initial coding entails a close reading of the data as indicated by the categories of the above quote where the entire statement was open coded as an important lead to significant conceptual categories: the role of the teacher, issues of teacher agency, and the emotions that result from the perception that one is not fulfilling his role. Here one sees a clear positioning of the specific teacher, that asks for explanatory comments and can serve as an indicator on what to ask in subsequent interviews. Not surprisingly, the concept of teacher positioning and agency was mentioned in almost all interviews. It is important to note that the codes stick closely to the data, show actions, and indicate how dilemmas surrounding disclosure arise. The data and codes from the teacher's interview were compared with each next

participant. This constant comparison allowed the analytic grasp of the data to take form (Charmaz, 2014). The concept of agency and emotional disclosure came up also as follows: "We must go with the flow. We must adapt to this new reality by not excluding anyone. But, we are doing exactly the opposite [I am angry and frustrated] …" (Assistant Principal & SpEd Director: Transcript 3, 30')

During initial coding, the goal is to remain open to all possible theoretical directions indicated by the researcher's readings of the data, keeping in mind that theoretical integration begins with focused coding. Coding line by line might seem counterintuitive for some novice researchers as not all sentences can be a code or a complete sentence or even a meaningful one. In the current process, the line-by-line coding yielded hundreds of codes that were later condensed to a more concise manner. The initial line-by-line coding, however, gave the researcher a sense of the *what* the participants were explicating, as their personal stories were unfolding and data was emerging. As Charmaz (2006) points out, "this type of coding can help you to identify implicit concerns as well as explicit statements […] especially when one analyzes interviews" (p. 50). Engaging in line-by-line coding helps to refocus later interviews by engaging in an initial understanding of the nuances and the struggles participants are going through.

In addition, Charmaz (2006) suggests some strategies that could assist in initial coding:

- Breaking the data up into their component parts or properties;
- Defining the actions on which they rest;
- Looking for tacit assumptions;
- Explicating implicit actions and meanings;
- Crystallizing the significance of the points;
- Comparing data with data;
- Identifying gaps in the data. (p. 75)

Glaser (1978) suggested that in order to detect processes and stick to the data at the initial coding stage, it is better if your code uses gerunds, instead of a simple word, such as "experience" for example, as it adds little value on the actual experience of the participant and it

gives the reader an outsider view of the statement being analyzed. There is a difference in imagery between the following gerunds and their noun forms: describing versus description, stating versus statement, and leading versus leader (Charmaz, 2006). There is a strong sense of action and sequence with gerunds. The following example of the initial line-by-line coding uses gerunds to identify the initial codes, define actions and next steps, hypothesize in assumptions and meanings, identify gaps and follow the data closely.

Table 2

Example of Line-by-Line Coding

Example of line-by-line coding following a spell-out approach	Excerpt
Going with the flow *(being open and open minded? what does it mean to this teacher not to go with the flow? what struggles does it represent?)* Adapting to a new reality *(looks like there is a sense that the practices are not in alignment with current societal needs. Repeated theme as in transcript 1)* Not excluding *(language of exclusion… who gets excluded and why? How is this decision made? Need to check the documents of these meetings where such decisions are made)* Doing the opposite (of what one believes/ issues of cognitive dissonance/ conflict) *Issues of cognitive dissonance between values and implementation. Use this example in subsequent interviews to get a sense of how this motive is manifested in other teachers as well)* Being angry & frustrated *(what role does anger play in this respondent's discourse? Is it a force of change or disappointment leads to giving up the process? Anger as an emotion was identified in other interviews as well. How do these statements compare? Are they referring to the same context? – constant comparative analysis)*	*"We must go with the flow. We must adapt to this new reality by not excluding anyone. But, we are doing exactly the opposite [I am angry and frustrated] …"*

There is a strong sense of action and sequence with gerunds. The nouns turn these actions into topics and categories, but to stay close to the initial data, also affirms that the interpretation is based on a line-by-line approach rather the researcher's own preconceived notions and theorizing. As Charmaz (2006) eloquently states, "outsiders often import an alien professional language to describe the phenomenon" (p. 49), whereas line-by-line coding stays close to the

insider's perspective, which is a Grounded-Theory method that reduces the likelihood that researchers merely superimpose their preconceived notions on the data. Line-by-line coding provides an early corrective of this type (Charmaz, 2006). Whether one does line-by-line coding, word-by-word or incident-by-incident, the principle remains the same: to look at the data anew, to discover new themes and their relationship with the entire narrative, to separate data into categories and to see processes, and to look at the data critically and analytically. Being critical of the data does not necessarily mean being critical of the research participants (Charmaz, 2006). Instead, it forces the researcher to ask questions about the data, to see actions, and to identify processes. Some such questions can include (paraphrased from Charmaz, 2006, p. 51):

- What process(es) is/are at issue here?
- How can I define it? Can it be defined in operational terms (how it actually looks)?
- How does this process develop and what is the interactive discourse?
- What does the research participant(s) profess to think and feel while involved in this process?
- What might her, his or their observed behavior indicate?
- When, why, and how does the process change?
- What are the consequences of the process? Do the consequences act as a reinforcement to the establishment and repetition of the process(es)?

In summary, coding line-by-line at the initial coding phase provides the researcher with leads on what to pursue next while staying close to the data at hand and facilitates the discovery of new themes and processes that could allow for an honest interpretation of the data.

In Vivo Coding

In Vivo's root meaning is “in that which is alive”, and as a code refers to a word or short phrase of the actual language found in the qualitative data record: “the terms used by [participants] themselves” (Strauss, 1987, p. 33). In vivo coding can be used in any stage of the data coding process as it adheres to the epistemological approach of constructivist grounded theory since it represents the voices of the participants as an entity. Saldana (2009) notes that In Vivo coding is appropriate for virtually all qualitative studies, but particularly for “beginning qualitative researchers learning how to code data, and studies that prioritize and honor the participant's voice” (p. 74). In vivo codes help us to preserve participants' meanings of their views and actions in the coding itself and as Charmaz (2006) points out, it is important to pay attention to language while coding, as in vivo codes can “serve as symbolic markers of participants' speech and meanings” (p. 74). Usually, in vivo codes do not stand out on their own as core categories but make sense within the context they occur. Strauss (1987, p. 160) also recommends that researchers examine in vivo codes not just as themes but as possible dimensions of categories - i.e., continuum or range of a property. In vivo codes can use imagery, symbols, and metaphors for rich category, theme, and concept development. Take for example the following in vivo codes on the dimensions of inclusion, from the current study:

Table 3

Example of In Vivo Coding

In Vivo Codes	Excerpt Dimensions of inclusion implementation
One-size-fits-all	*"We can't have one size fits all approach to all students especially the special education students" (transcript 1, General Education teacher 1, 20:47'')*
They come, teach, and go	*"Some colleagues, unfortunately, are just government workers. They come, teach and go" (General education teacher 1, transcript 1, 32:44'')*
Doing the right thing is the moral thing to do	*"Doing the right thing is the moral thing to do" (General education teacher 1, transcript 1, 38')*
To have Filotimo	*[Inclusion] has to do with one's willingness to have "filotimo" (to be a friend of honour) (General education teacher 1, transcript 1, 47')*
Inclusion is a taboo	*"Inclusion is a complex issue, a taboo" (Principal, transcript 2, 35')*
Inclusion not worth it	*"They (the teachers) feel all this extra work is not worth their time" (Principal, transcript 2, 42:32')*
Something is better than nothing (parents' attitude toward inclusion implementation)	*"That (inclusive classroom) something is better than nothing" (Assistant Principal & SpEd Director, transcript 3, 15:16'')*

Charmaz (2006, p. 54) identifies three kinds of in vivo codes that prove to be useful:

- Those general terms everyone 'knows' that flag condensed but significant meanings.
- A participant's innovative term that captures meanings or experience.
- Insider shorthand terms specific to a particular group that reflect their perspective**.**

In Table 3, one can observe all three types of in vivo codes: the general term – *Filotimo*, the innovative term that captures the participant's experience –*one size fits all*– and the insider term specific to a particular group – *they come, teach, and go*. Each of these codes is loaded with

implicit meaning and cultural implications. The term “Filotimo”, used by several participants, is a Greek word that means doing something because it is honorable: it literally means “I am a friend of honor/love of honor/ I have filotimo”. The Public Center for the Greek Language (2019) has the following explanation: “*Philotimo* (also spelled *filotimo*; Greek: φιλότιμο) is a Greek noun that translates as having increased sensitivity towards duty and diligence. However, *filotimo* is almost impossible to translate sufficiently as it describes a complex array of virtues”. The word is used in early writings sometimes with negative connotations: Plato's *Republic* uses ***philotimon*** (φιλότιμον) ironically, for someone “covetous of honor”, while other writers use *philotimeomai* (φιλοτιμέομαι) in the sense of “lavishing upon”.

In modern Greek society the word reflects one of the highest virtues one can exhibit. In its simplest form, the term means “doing good actions” that ensure that a man's behavior be exemplary and demonstrate his personality and the manner in which he was raised. *Filotimo* to a Greek is essentially a way of life. It can be manifested in displays of unconditional love and respect towards parents, grandparents and friends, even through small actions such as expressions of gratitude for small gifts or random acts of kindness. It extends to include appreciation and admiration for heritage and ancestors. Sometimes it is also used to reflect someone’s only choice of action, even when it goes against the grain or when the consequences might be dire or negative. It is said that someone will do something because he has *filotimo*, meaning that he will do the right thing because that is how this person is and he cannot do otherwise. He is driven by an internal love of honor of doing the right thing no matter what. Philosopher Thales of Miletus said that *filotimo* to the Greek is like breathing. In the context of its use, it means to all Greek speakers a specific virtue that leaves no room to doubt one’s virtue and willingness to do the right thing when needed. In general education teacher’s 1 case, *filotimo*

is a packed with meaning term when she refers to inclusion. She adheres to a way of living and teaching that is embedded in *filotimo* and she sees no other way around inclusion but to do it since it is the right thing to do. However, such claim raises several questions such as: does the Greek education system rely on its teachers' sense of duty to include all students in the classroom? Does this aspect reproduce a fragmented system that will do little to change its structure and *filotimo* will be seen as its last resort? Should *filotimo* be a dimension of inclusion? As one sees, the implications of such a culturally condensed term can be significant both analytically, in terms of coding, but also theoretically in terms of how one goes about theorizing and utilizing the term in a rightful manner that exposes both sides of the issue at hand.

In vivo codes can also be characteristic of social worlds and organizational settings and cultures (Charmaz, 2006) as they can reflect terms that are specific to that context. The in vivo codes *they come, teach, and go* and *it's not worth their time,* both refer to terms that the school personnel and Greek society use to characterize individuals that work for the government. Teachers are employees of the Department of Education and most of them are tenured for life. There are no evaluations that could be a cause of removal from the educational system unless there is a felony involved. The financial crisis in Greece has brought into the light several economic scandals that are related to government employees and involve cases of embezzlement, power abuse and money laundering. These scandals seem to have had a general negative impact on all government employees, including public-school teachers. Teachers are seen as lazy, not involved, not willing to teach all students, not interested in the welfare of their students, not worth their time to deal with inclusion, and this sentiment is expresses as "they come, teach, and go". The term refers to anyone who is indifferent, does not go the extra mile, is just there for the pay check, and does the bare minimum. These individuals are seen as the opposite of the

individuals with *filotimo*. In the general education teacher's 1 case, it is interesting to see that she as a teacher characterizes some of her colleagues in such way, and so does the Principal. These in vivo codes, coming *from the government workers themselves,* reveal another dimension of inclusion and of the school culture as well. Analytically, this aspect points to an approach that needs to include both sides in a category, in other words both teachers that *come, teach and go* and those who have *filotimo*. There are different parts of the same coin and they are both important in understanding the dimensions of what transition to a fully inclusive school encompasses. Such codes anchor the analysis in the participants' worlds. They offer clues about the relative congruence between the participants' interpretation of meanings and actions and their overt statements and actions. As Charmaz (2006) says, "in vivo codes can provide a crucial check on whether you have grasped what is significant" (p. 57).

Focused Coding

The second phase of grounded-theory coding is focused coding. The primary goal during focused coding is to develop a sense of categorical, thematic, conceptual, and/or theoretical organization from the array of the first phase codes (Saldana, 2009). Basically, first-phase codes are reorganized and reconfigured to eventually develop a smaller and more select list of broader categories themes and/ or concepts. Focused coding means using the most significant and frequent earlier codes to make decisions about which initial codes make the most analytic sense to start forming more succinct categories and themes (Charmaz, 2006). Focused coding is appropriate for virtually all qualitative studies, but particular for studies employing Grounded-Theory methodology. The development of major categories or themes from the data can be seen as a streamlined adaptation of classic Grounded-Theory's Axial Coding, which is the process of

relating codes (categories and concepts) to each other, via a combination of inductive and deductive thinking (Charmaz, 2006; Saldana, 2009).

In Table 4, there is an example of focused coding that revolves around the category of law implementation on the inclusion of students with disabilities. It is only a partial code, and it is placed here just as an example, but it gives the reader the sense of how coding in Grounded Theory stays close to the data, how the researcher is acting upon it as opposed to being a passive receiver of information, and a sense of the data taking a different form so that the researcher has a better handle on it. As with open coding, focused coding is an emergent process, where new ideas arise and codes that fit one category could fit another one, or different dimensions might be illuminated through the constant comparison of codes within and across the interview data for example.

Table 4

Example of Focused Coding

Code	Category: Law implementation
Pointing discrepancies between theory and practice Acceptance of inclusion doesn't lead to implementation or doing it the right way	Excerpt 1 *"What the law says and what we do, is a long way [in vivo]. Of course, the school has accepted inclusion and of course there are definite steps that are taken but we are not even close to having a model that looks like what the law describes [in vivo]"* *(SpEd director & Assistant Principal, transcript 3, 5:00')*
Pointing discrepancies between theory and practice Acceptance of Inclusion doesn't lead to implementation or doing it the right way Experimenting till something works Cognitive dissonance	Excerpt 2 *"I have seen very few schools so far doing it the right way, well maybe I haven't seen any school doing it the right way [in vivo] […] Ok, I can identify some disabilities and I can assist some students in using adaptive equipment or giving them some extra time and so on, but does this make it a "school for all" as the law mentions? I am not sure [in vivo]. I think we are just experimenting with stuff and what works we keep on doing it, what doesn't we stop it" (PE teacher, transcript 4, 8:00')*

Assessment of Rigor

Memo Writing

Memo writing is an essential element of rigor in qualitative research and especially in open coding as it allows the researcher to reflect and record on "coding processes and code choices; how the process of inquiry is taking shape; and the emergent patterns, categories and subcategories, themes, and concepts in your data…possibly leading toward theory" (Saldaña, 2016, p. 44). Strauss (1987) called for frequent interruption of the coding process in order to write self-memos that move the researcher toward the theoretical realm and the generating of concepts and theories. It is important that the researcher avoids becoming committed to codes or

concepts too quickly and cautions against finding significance in "face sheets"—factors like age, race, gender, or social class. These, he posited, must become part of theory only if and when they are demonstrated to be relevant (Feeler, 2012). Charmaz (2014) challenges researchers to write what comes to mind, title it at the end, and decide the importance of the memo at a later date. Analytic memos become data, and researchers are able to use the coding process to code and categorize each memo. It is important to date each memo and write a descriptive title that helps with classifying the memo (Rogers, 2018). Analytic memos are not summaries of the data but help with "future directions, unanswered questions, frustrations with the analysis, insightful connections…" (Saldaña, 2016, p. 45). For the purposes of the current study, analytic memos were written throughout the interview transcript and served as a precursor to coding, next questions to ask, possible codes, connections with other transcripts, and so on. The memos were reviewed by the evaluator and feedback was provided weekly. An example of an analytic memo follows:

Table 5

Example of Analytic Memo

Memo# 19 Transcript 4	*Beliefs shaped though conflicting thoughts. Fighting what comes naturally and what the school experts claimed/ implemented. Throughout the process, the issue of cognitive dissonance comes up again and again either through daily or school experiences, people feel a conflict between what they feel/believe and what is implemented/happening. Piaget believed that this disequilibrium is a necessary step for change. I am unsure how it relates here exactly but somewhere in this negotiation people decided to follow a certain path. How easy was for teachers for example, to follow what they believed in when the system didn't encourage them? (connection with transcript 1 where the teacher noted similar themes) (20/6/2018-Beliefs and Cognitive dissonance)*

Trustworthiness

Another important aspect of keeping analytic memos, is the issue of trustworthiness. Lincoln and Guba (1985) posit that trustworthiness of a research study is important to evaluating its worth. Trustworthiness involves establishing:

- Credibility (internal validity) – confidence in the 'truth' of the findings.
- Transferability (external validity) – showing that the findings have applicability in other contexts.
- Dependability (reliability) – showing that the findings are consistent and could be repeated.
- Confirmability (objectivity) – a degree of neutrality or the extent to which the findings of a study are shaped by the respondents and not researcher bias, motivation, or interest.

These techniques for establishing the trustworthiness of the study are recommended by Lincoln and Guba (1985) to "guide the field activities and to impose checks to be certain that the proposed procedures are in fact being followed" (p. 330). Lincoln and Guba also provided a practical caveat: "(i)t is dubious whether 'perfect' criteria will ever emerge" (p. 331). This is aligned to the constructivist paradigm in that all knowledge is constructed; constructed knowledge is never "perfect" (Loh, 2013). Thus, the constructivist nature of the criteria and the techniques are implied. As such, the criteria are merely to be used as a guide – a map of sorts to aid the constructivist researcher to navigate the terrain of understanding and ensuring the study's quality and hence acceptance by the research community.

Credibility for the current study was achieved through the specific techniques of prolonged engagement, persistent observation, triangulation, peer debriefing and member-checking (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In accordance with the techniques, the researcher spent

sufficient time in the school to learn or understand the culture and phenomenon of interest by attending staff meetings and school events and introducing the research project. The process also involved some previous observation of the dynamics in those meetings so as to become oriented to the situation and so as the context is appreciated and understood. Lincoln and Guba (1985) encourage this prolonged engagement as it might count for distortions that might be in the data (e.g. researcher begins to blend in; respondents feel comfortable disclosing information that no longer 'tows the party-line'). The researcher can rise above his or her own preconception and build trust. Triangulation involved using multiple data sources to produce understanding by also examining school documents pertaining to the phenomenon and ensuring that data is rich, robust, and well-developed. The authors define peer debriefing as a "a process of exposing oneself to a disinterested peer in a manner paralleling an analytical session and for the purpose of exploring aspects of the inquiry that might otherwise remain only implicit within the inquirer's mind" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 308).

In the beginning of the current study, an external auditor was involved in order to reflect on the findings, content, coding and general collection of data, and analyses decision. Dr Leigh Rhode of Salem University served as the external auditor reviewing each transcribed interview and its corresponding data-generated concepts, as well as the reflexivity journal on a weekly basis, providing feedback related to the refinement of the current categories, asking questions about the processes and probing for alternative explanations and assumptions. The peer debriefing accounted for analytical probing that helped the researcher uncover taken-for-granted biases, perspectives, and assumptions on the researcher's part and accounted for part of the audit trail necessary for establishing confirmability. An audit trail is a transparent description of the research steps taken from the start of a research project to the development and reporting of

findings. These are records that are kept regarding what was done in an investigation (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

- **Raw data** – including all raw data, written field notes, unobtrusive measures (documents).
- **Data reduction and analysis products** – including summaries such as condensed notes, unitized information, quantitative summaries, and theoretical notes.
- **Data reconstruction and synthesis products** – including structure of categories (themes, definitions, and relationships), findings and conclusions and a final report including connections to existing literatures and an integration of concepts, relationships, and interpretations.
- **Process notes** – including methodological notes (procedures, designs, strategies, rationales), trustworthiness notes (relating to credibility, dependability and confirmability) and audit trail notes.
- **Materials relating to intentions and dispositions** – including inquiry proposal, personal notes (reflexive notes and motivations), and expectations (predictions and intentions).
- **Instrument development information** – including pilot forms, preliminary schedules, observation formats. (p. 308)

In addition, credibility and confirmability were further established by member checks which is "when data, analytic categories, interpretations and conclusions are tested with members of those groups from whom the data were originally obtained" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 308). This can be done both formally and informally as opportunities for member checks may arise during the normal course of observation and conversation. Typically, member checking is viewed as a technique for establishing the validity of an account. Member checking in the current study took place informally during the interview process, where the researcher was 1) rephrasing the answers and asking if the meaning is valid, and 2) asking for further validation of a statement by pointing to assumptions. These member checks took the format of probes such as:

- Tell me what you mean by that…
- Following your statement, I assume that you mean…. Is that right?

- Based on our interview, it seems that several themes of X came up. Is that a valid representation of your intentions?
- Let me rephrase what we just discussed and tell me if that is what you meant/intended to say/state/mean.

In addition to the above process, a second round of interviews with a representative group from the original sample took place in the month of July 2019. The group consisted of two teachers (one general education and one special education teacher), the Principal and two parents. The purpose of the second round was to ensure that the themes, categories and emerging theory were resonating with the participants' thoughts. Each interview lasted less than half an hour and it confirmed the research findings in terms of the basis of the grounded theory that was developed. There were not any divergent views but a realization of how complex the issue of inclusion is. The second round of interviews served as "a-ha" moments of the inclusion process with no diverged views expressed. In particular, the conceptual model (Figure 1) was shared with the participants and explained in terms of concepts and categories and their feedback was requested. The participants noted that the model depicted an accurate account of their lived experience of inclusion in Greece either as educators or parents. They particularly liked the dynamic interactions of the relationship of processes-context-phenomenon and the fact that the conceptual framework gave them a systematic way to think about inclusion. The second round of interviews confirmed that the data collection had indeed theoretical saturation and that the emergent theory accurately depicted the experience of the case study, fulfilling an important requirement of the validation process.

In terms of the criterion of transferability, Lincoln and Guba (1985) adhered to the notion of a "thick" description as a way of achieving a type of external validity. By describing a

phenomenon in sufficient detail one can begin to evaluate the extent to which the conclusions drawn are transferable to other times, settings, situations, and people. Since the current study is a case study, the school as the bounded case was investigated and described in detail, taking into account all dimensions as they are bounded and immersed in the research questions (the activity, the organization, and the learner). Having stated the questions in such a way, ensured that both individual and organizational, cultural aspects of the phenomenon will be covered. The same applies for conducting extensive interviews with a broad and diverse theoretical sample.

Dependability involves the process of external auditing, by having a researcher not involved in the research process examine both the process and the product of the research study. For the purposes of the current study, the external auditor served both as a member debriefer and as the individual who was asking questions about the decisions made, through the use of a journal that accompanied each transcript and analytic memo. The journal served as a feedback loop where issues of bias, not following the research questions, or other issues that the researcher was not certain about, were negotiated. The use of the journal also assisted in accounting for the technique method of reflexivity which is an "attitude of attending systematically to the context of knowledge construction, especially to the effect of the researcher, at every step of the research process" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 327). The researcher, through the reflexivity journal, was frequently questioning the methods and flow of the interviews, the coding process, the probe used and also raised issues of her background as a clinical mental health professional and how was this affecting the manner with which the interviews were conducted.

Malterud (2001) states that "a researcher's background and position will affect what they choose to investigate, the angle of investigation, the methods judged most adequate for this purpose, the findings considered most appropriate, and the framing and communication of

conclusions" (p. 483-484). As Malterud (2001) writes, "preconceptions are not the same as bias, unless the researcher fails to mention them" (p. 484). Different researchers will approach a study situation from different positions or perspectives. This might lead to the development of different, although equally valid, understandings of a particular situation under study. While some may see these different ways of knowing as a reliability problem, others feel that these different ways of seeing provide a richer, more developed understanding of complex phenomena. Understanding something about the position, perspective, beliefs and values of the researcher is an issue in all research, but particularly in qualitative research where the researcher is often constructed as the "human research instrument" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

> Constructivists develop our analyses…we offer an interpretation contingent on our knowledge of our participants and their situations. Constructivists view data as constructed rather than discovered, and we see our analyses as interpretive renderings not as objective reports or the only viewpoint on the topic. (Charmaz, 2009, p. 131)

Constructivist Grounded Theory provided the framework used to guide the analysis process of the current study. The steps and coding steps were presented in Chapter Three. In this chapter, the researcher will focus on presenting the findings, subsequent analysis, and resulting concepts and categories.

The study began with a broad set of questions reflecting the researcher's initial guiding framework of the concept of ownership of inclusive education practices and a set of sub-questions offering a more structured guide that could be addressed within a flexible manner. The three systems around which the issue of ownership of inclusion was conceptualized were: the teacher, the activity (learning activities and practices internal and external), and the organization. In accordance to the constructivist Grounded-Theory method selected, all interviews were conducted utilizing a flexible and shared meaning-making approach, offering reflexivity and room for data to emerge. The intention of the interview was what Holstein and Gubrium (1995) call "active interviews" – conversations in which both researcher and respondent are engaged in the process of creating meaning. All interviews were conducted face to face and lasted 50-70 minutes. The interviews were recorded and transcribed within 48 hours. The initial coding and memo writing began as soon as the transcription was complete, thus offering an initial set of working hypotheses and sensitizing concepts. In conjunction to open coding line by line,

segment by segment, and in vivo coding, the comparative data analysis began with the second interview. This analytic process allowed the researcher to be very close to the data and to begin developing codes early on the process. The interviews were conducted during the months of June, July, and August, 2018. Table 6 includes a list of the interview participants.

Table 6

List of Interview Participants

Participants/names used in the analysis	Age	Years of teaching experience	Position	Experience with Inclusion?
General Education Teacher 1	35-50	18	General Education teacher	Yes /parallel support & inclusion classroom
Assistant Principal	35-50	25	Assistant Principal/ Special Education Director	Yes /parallel support & inclusion classroom
Principal	50-65	34	Principal	Yes /parallel support & inclusion classroom
PE teacher	20-35	5	Physical Education teacher	Yes /parallel support & inclusion classroom
Special Education Teacher 1	20-35	8	Special Education teacher	Yes /parallel support & inclusion classroom
Special Education Teacher 2	35-50	20	Special Education teacher	Yes /parallel support & inclusion classroom
General Education Teacher 2	20-35	10	General Education teacher	Yes /parallel support & inclusion classroom
General Education Teacher 3	20-35	8	General Education teacher	Yes /parallel support & inclusion classroom
General Education Teacher 4	35-50	15	General Education teacher	Yes /parallel support & inclusion classroom
General Education Teacher 5	35-50	16	General Education teacher	Yes /parallel support & inclusion classroom
General Education Teacher 6	20-35	8	General Education teacher	Yes /parallel support & inclusion classroom
General Education Teacher 7	35-50	17	General Education teacher	Yes /parallel support & inclusion classroom
General Education Teacher 8	20-35	5	General Education teacher	Yes /parallel support & inclusion classroom
Parent 1	35-40	n/a	Parent of a child with a disability	Yes /parallel support & inclusion classroom
Parent 2	35-50	n/a	Parent of a child with a disability	Yes /parallel support & inclusion classroom/ Institutionalized care

Summary of Inclusion in Greece

In Greece, Laws 3699/2008 and 4368/2016 introduced the provision of compulsory education for students with disabilities in the general education classroom under the framework

of parallel teaching, where the general and special education teacher co-teach all students, including those with disabilities. In addition, for students that are deemed to need additional support, an inclusion classroom is available (former special education classroom) where students with more intense needs spend part or most of the day. The national Diagnostic Assessment and Support Centers (KEDDYs) decide which placement is appropriate for each student depending on the severity of their disability. In general, learning disabilities are included in the general education classes whereas emotional and behavioral are usually referred to the inclusion classroom or a special school. Inclusion classes provide two types of educational programs:

- common and specialized program up to 15 hours per week;
- specialized team or personalized program of extended timetable for learners with more severe disabilities.

Initial Indicators

Open coding, according to Corbin and Strauss (2008) entails close examination of the data, breaking it down into parts, making comparisons, and questioning. The indicators, then, are both identified bits of data collected and data that results from the process of breaking down the data (Feeler, 2012). The process of collecting indicators for the concept of ownership started from the second interview, although a theoretical saturation was more evident around the 12th interview. Table 7 presents an extensive list of indicators that were later used through focused coding to create concepts and categories.

Table 7

Indicators of Ownership of Inclusive Education Practices

The right thing to do
The moral thing to do
Teaching is moral
Taking the initiative
Seeing inclusion in practice
Seeing kids engage in activities all together
Ideology in social justice
Believe in everyone's capacity to learn
Have support from the administration
Wanted more specialized courses
Collaborating with other teachers
The parents should work with us and not against us
Nobody reinforces the law on inclusion
Confidence in myself and teaching
My role is to fill the gap of the parent
Stigmatizing is unethical /charity discourse
Inclusion is a mirror on everyone
I don't like a young special education teacher telling me what to do
Behavioral issues difficult to include
I don't know if what I do, works
Growing up with inclusive ideals
My personal story as a student with a disability
School acting as the big brother
Bad boy orientation
Interconnectedness
Flexibility
Courage to challenge your own bias
Exposure
Learning, philosophy and practices are interconnected
Against all odds
If I had more training…
Some parents push for a diagnosis to get their kids to escape work
The inclusive classroom contradicts inclusion
Us vs. them (parents, students)
Cognitive dissonance (I am believing one thing and asked/allowed to do another)
Hitting my head against a wall.
Filotimo
I feel inadequate to teach them
It's not my job they need a specialized place

Being human all too human (being willing to risk, be exposed, be challenged) (a drive to overcome what is *human, all too human* through understanding it, through philosophy. A phrase by Nietzsche, aphorism 35)
Difference between moral judgement and moral behavior
Change though conflict
Inclusion as a democratic ideal
I am a communist who am I to segregate?
Training helps but it will not change your ideology
Conflicting messages from the Principal
We can't keep everyone happy… someone needs to fight and push
Ownership is something that is in me, I am part of and it's part of me

The concept of ownership was hypothesized to be an abstract conception that entails both practical and philosophical dimensions in that it is a starting and end point of how inclusive education practices are conceptualized and implemented. Ownership goes beyond simple implementation of inclusive education practices, i.e. a sterile adherence to the law, and extends to a way of how educators see ability, learning, and access to the school curriculum. It is an all-encompassing notion of ideology, philosophy, and practices. Because ownership is something "invisible" a Grounded-Theory analytical process was deemed an appropriate way to conceptualize it in a more systematic way. As part of the presentation of findings, excerpts from interviews, stories, the researcher's own observations, and the literature are provided. The findings of the study are clearly grounded in the data and provide a context-specific interpretation of what Charmaz (2009) called "situated knowledges" (p. 136). Table 7 provides a set of initial indicators that are in vivo codes, phrases and segments of data that both the researcher and the interviewee constructed during the interviews:

> ownership of inclusive education practices is something that is in me, I am part of, and it's part of me (PE teacher, Physical education teacher)
>
> taking ownership of inclusion is about reflecting on your values and beliefs, challenging yourself, and adjusting your curriculum including all and not in addition to (GenEd teacher 4)

> for me inclusion is the notion that everything is interconnected. It's all or nothing. We [teachers] represent society and we ought to be role models (GenEd teacher1)
>
> I will keep on pushing and trying for full inclusion because it's the right, the moral thing to do. Teaching is an ethical process (GenEd teacher 6)

Staying close to the data allowed the researcher to have a better idea of the lived experience of ownership but also of the lack thereof:

> I don't think all students can be included. Some of them need a specialized place (GenEd teacher 5)
>
> Yes, the new teachers are more supportive of full inclusion, but I have been teaching for many years and I know that some kids just cannot be included. I will not have a younger teacher telling me what to do (GenEd teacher 6)
>
> I, personally, believe that inclusion is the right thing to do, but NOT for all students. For example, for students with extreme behavioral issues, inclusion is not the right thing to do (Principal)

Throughout the analytical process the researcher tried to frame the phenomenon by asking two essential questions:

- What are the interviewees telling me?
- Does my analysis reflect the lived experience efficiently and effectively?

In asking these questions and reflecting on the data through coding and memo writing, a conceptual diagram-based frequency of content was developed that reflected the studied phenomenon as accurately as possible. All three elements of the phenomenon, the process and the context describe the process of inclusion within the frame of the specific bounded case study. The process is a dynamic interplay between the elements where each dimension informs and is informed by the other. Figure 1 presents the framework:

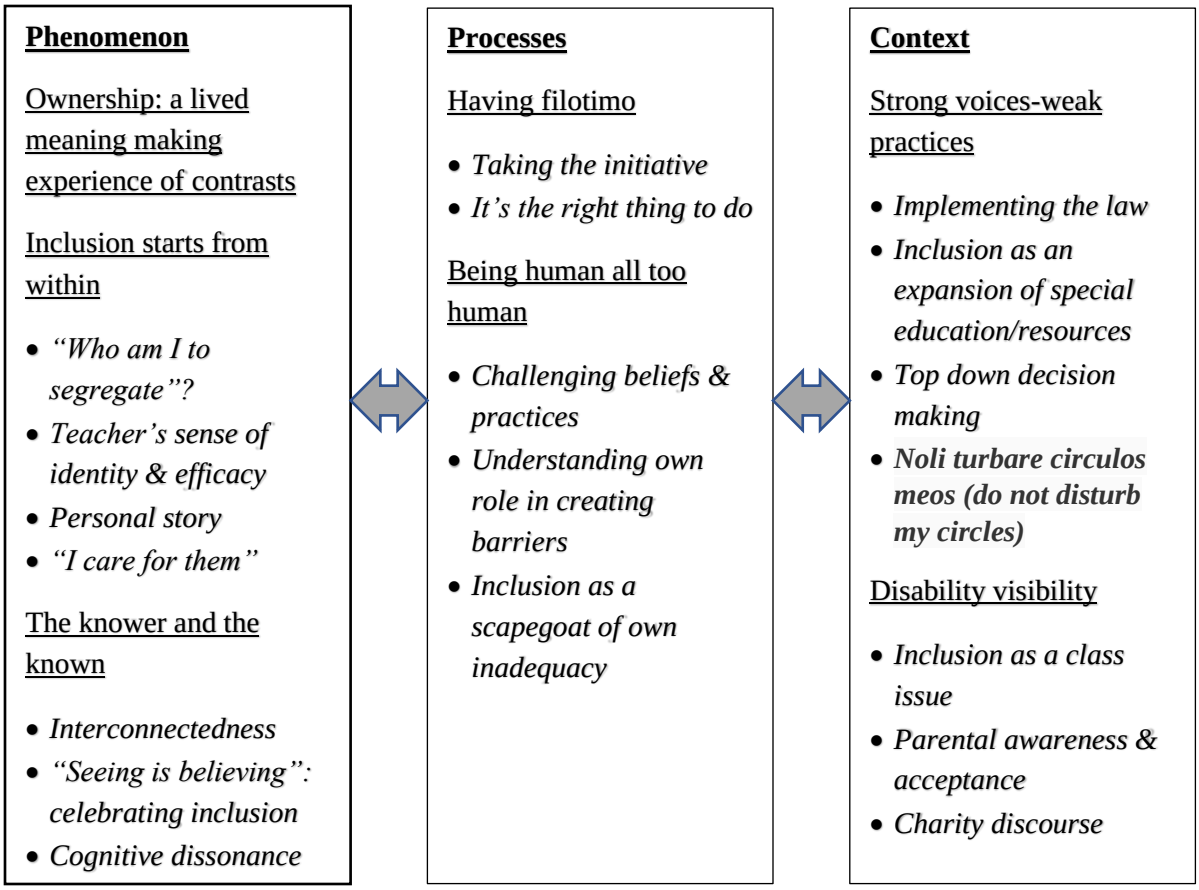

Figure 1. A conceptual framework.

The concepts were developed from the analytical process and were found to constitute the phenomenon of ownership from the teachers' perspective. These concepts constitute part of the framework of the theorizing that resulted.

Ownership: A Lived Meaning Making Experience of Contrasts

The phenomenon of ownership was embedded within two main categories*: Inclusion starts from within* and the *knower and the known*. Both categories have several dimensions/conceptual properties that adhere to a more axial orientation of grounded theory. The phenomenon itself included contrasts of perceptions, beliefs, and practices which resulted to a sense of ownership. The two categories were reached through focused coding and the analytical process, based on constant comparative analysis and theoretical saturation. The concepts seemed

to pass the tests put forward by Glaser and Strauss (1967), that they have to be both analytic and sensitizing. A concept is analytic if it is abstract enough to be analyzed into properties or characteristics, and it is sensitizing if it produces a picture that facilitates an understanding accessible through personal experience. The following section will elaborate the content of both.

Inclusion Starts from Within

Inclusion is a matter of a paradigm shift in the existing system and not something that one does in addition to what already exists. As a concept, it is quite difficult to grasp as it entails notions of belief, perception, value, practice, and competence. In the current study, the concept was perceived by the participants in multiple and different ways:

> […] the child needs personal contact, we can't have kids to be taken away from the regular classrooms, even if it is some hours of the day, and expect them to be able to collaborate when they return (General Education teacher1)

> So, yes, training is important, and resources are important, but none of these is going to change unless we all have a common conception about what inclusion is. […] Inclusion is, above all, what you believe about the ability of others to learn. That everyone has the right to learn in the general education classroom. (Special Education Director)

> Full inclusion is my life philosophy. I cannot marginalize or segregate any one. Who am I to segregate? A teacher's mission is to embrace students as a whole. When I am trying to connect with a student that faces a difficulty, disability or otherwise, I try to talk to the parents to help understand the child better. But, most importantly I see everything connected. A student is connected to an entire environment (General Education teacher)

> You know… that those students will benefit from being in the general education school than anywhere else. Even being part of the inclusion/pull out classroom is better than somewhere separate all together. So, understanding those layers and aspects of human capacity and doing something about it, either by changing beliefs or practices or both is what ownership looks like to me. (PE teacher)

Taking into account the excerpts of the interviews, it is clear that there exists a constitutive relationship between theory and practice. General education teacher 1 had made it clear throughout the interview ("Who am I to segregate"?) that she believed in equality and

social justice even before she became a teacher. She emphasizes aspects of political, social and personal dimensions all of which define her as an agent of social justice, a political being that is following her principles both in her personal and professional life. She seems to understand that an "inclusion" classroom is counterintuitive to the conception of inclusion and she feels conflicted about the practices taking place in the school. She asks an essential question: "How can we expect students to learn how to collaborate and feel a sense of belonging when we take them out of their classroom for part of the day?". Her comments strike a sensitive chord of how society conceptualizes inclusion both in philosophy and in practices. She brings up issues of values, integrity, and the interconnectedness of the person in the environment. She talks about collaboration and a pedagogical approach that sees teaching not as an isolated classroom activity but a coherent process that aims at removing structural barriers (for example the inclusion classroom) that prevent full inclusion to be actualized. She emphasizes her role as a teacher pointing out that she has a responsibility to be a "better", more caring person, both a teacher and a parent.

The special education director takes a human rights approach where all students have the right to learn in the general education classroom, echoing a global framework of the need to rethink how we think about inclusion. The PE teacher, as a young teacher, discusses the need to challenge how one thinks about capacity and learning and actually "doing something about it". Both situate their pedagogy in common understandings of inclusion and of the practical aspects of implementing it. They both adhere to the notion that the integration of theoretical and practical knowledge and skills are central to an inclusive pedagogy and that the general education classroom is the best place for students with and without disabilities. The strategic idea of teachers as change agents in reducing educational inequalities is linked to research showing

teachers are the most significant in-school factor influencing student achievement (Hattie, 2009; OECD, 2005).

On the other hand, full inclusion for all does not seem to be a philosophy for several other teachers, including the administrator of the school: "I, personally, believe that inclusion is the right thing to do, but NOT for all students" (Principal). Students with emotional and behavioral disabilities seem to be the "low-hanging fruit" when it comes to exclusion. The interviews and the examination of the school records on how decisions about inclusion are made, have revealed that students with behavioral issues are the ones least likely to be included and most likely to be sent to a separate school altogether:

> M: Do you believe that this student wouldn't be successful in school with the proper support?
>
> P1: Absolutely not. This kid was moved from school to school due to his behavioral issues. In the last school he was attending, the Principal broke his leg in his effort to chase him down from being violent to another student. In my school, we offered him parallel support for one hour per day, but he needed more, and we couldn't offer more because other students needed support as well. He was a bully. Plus, no one in the school is specialized in behavioral issues. Most teachers don't believe it's their job either. (Principal)

The practice of transferring students with behavioral issues to a special school, reinforces the perception that the school is not responsible for an appropriate response. This practice enables the teachers to give up on finding ways to deal with behavioral issues or change their beliefs about this group of students. Another teacher echoes that notion as well:

> I don't think all students can be included. Some of them need a specialized place (General Education teacher 3)
>
> I guess the law's a school for all notion suggests that all students should be part of the curriculum. But, till we manage to do it the right way, it's better for them to be in an alternative placement (PE teacher)

A review of the literature on the topic of behavioral and emotional disabilities (Lee & Connolly, 2016) reveals that some practitioners, guided by an inclusive approach, expressed

concerns about challenging behaviors. They worried that individuals formerly accustomed to institutionalized settings might display culturally abnormal behaviors when engaging in learning and social environments (Lee & Connolly, 2016). It is a valid question as to why practitioners, whose work appears grounded in principles of inclusion, assume that learners need to be managed in learning and social environments and this management requires of a specific group of students to adapt in the existing model or they will have to change their ways to accommodate them. This aspect raises questions about teacher agency and whether teaching appropriate student behavior is part of their responsibility. Lee and Connolly (2016) argue that the practice of objectifying learners could potentially discount their sense of behaviors deemed to be challenging.

Drewery and Winslade (2000) argue that challenging behavior could potentially be a rational response to practices that place a premium on essentialism and limited access to power and resources. Along the same lines, Lee and Connolly (2016), in a study of focus groups of individuals with challenging behavior, concluded that individuals with challenging behaviors viewed "their challenging behaviors either as acting responsibly or as resistance to traditional learning disability practice that does not purposefully increase their awareness of the adverse effects of diagnosing, labeling, stigmatization, and an unequal power distribution" (p. 428). This aspect of a non-inclusive practice seems to be reinforced by what the popular disability discourse called "learned helplessness", which is a phenomenon where both individuals and animals, after being continuously exposed to an aversive stimulus that they cannot escape or avoid, they internalize the notion that they are unable to escape or improve their situation. In students with disabilities, the phenomenon results in loss of motivation, sense of an external locus of control, low self-esteem and repeated failure (Catapano, n.d.). In other words, the more aversive the

behavior of the learning environment, the more aversive and oppositional the subject's behavior becomes as a response. The following question was asked during the interview with the Principal, regarding the removal of students with challenging behaviors:

> M: It seems that the student you are referring to, had internalized what we call a learned helplessness. This internal notion that no matter what someone does, he is bound to fail… Do you believe that teachers are responsible for teaching behavior?
>
> P1: I never heard of that term before. Maybe you are right. He was a victimized child with an absent father and a resistant mother, and he was in the care of a stranger (baby sitter). Maybe he needed a different approach, but certainly we didn't have the means to do it. As for the teachers and if it's their responsibility to correct behavior, this issue is something that I have pondered with for quite some time. Some teachers believe that it's the parents' job. That since a student enters primary school, he is old enough to know right from wrong. That the parents should have taught some basic manners to their child. In my opinion, I believe that a teachers' job is to connect and through that connection to correct some behaviors. But as I said before, these students are not very pleasant, and their behaviors have an impact in the entire school. So, the decision to remove them, is solely based on the grounds of the majority's benefit. I know, this goes against the inclusion model we are trying to implement, but it's simply too soon for us to have this type of capacity.

This aspect/question as to whether a teacher's job is to teach behavior, was emphasized by a general education teacher raising aspects of teacher identity and agency: "Teaching is an ethical process" (General Education 7 teacher). In this excerpt, the teacher positions herself as a professional who is responsible for all aspects of learning, including the moral development of the students. She situates her sense of identity in a continuum of philosophy and practice that serve as a moral compass of her stance as a teacher. Although she notes that "I don't know if what I do works", raising issues of efficacy and lack of documentation of student outcomes, she does nevertheless insist to serve her ideology to the best of her capacities.

So far, the phenomenon of ownership has been described in terms of personal values and philosophy as important aspects of the formation of an inclusive pedagogy. Another important and supplementary dimension that resulted from the interviews and the data analysis, is that of

the personal story. The narratives that surfaced from each educator are important elements that have shaped their ideology toward inclusion and teaching, and their orientation toward learning and capacity. The Principal offers a poignant account on how his personal life has affected his position and identity as an educator:

> My childhood was not particularly easy, my father was an authoritarian military officer, with a lot of personal issues that were creating tension inside the entire family. As a result, all those years, I was trying to be a peacemaker and control the tension and anger all those moments were creating to me […] This feeling of offering and love helped me resolve my own problems. Inclusion is a form of compassion and understanding. (Principal)

The Principal, in his detailed account about his childhood, emphasized repeatedly his need to create a peaceful and compassionate environment both at his personal life and at school. He mentioned that he learned how to put himself in other peoples' shoes in order to have a better understanding of the situation at hand especially when it comes to the parents. His need for adopting inclusion in the school is rooted in his own need to feel a sense of belonging and purpose, also aiming to prevent any other child from going through what he did as a child. His position has several dimensions in terms of both the phenomenon and the context, but in this section emphasis will be placed in his understanding and conceptualization of inclusion.

The PE teacher talked about himself "being a child that learned differently" and general education teacher 3 talked about a cousin with cerebral palsy who "was isolated for the better part of his life". General education teacher 1 talked about her parents being immigrants, seeking a sense of belonging and inclusion, and general education teacher 7 referred to her own learning as an "uphill" road, where she wouldn't have made it if her teachers hadn't been supportive with her ADHD diagnosis. The personal narrative that each and every one of them presented, was one that shaped their philosophy about inclusion and about taking ownership in supporting it. It seems that their sense of identity was shaped early on, either personally or within their circle,

where they were witnesses of how exclusion works. General education teacher 1, due to her experience, in order to fight more actively social injustice, joined the Communist Party; The PE teacher swore that he will do everything he can to assist students with disabilities in having a sense of belonging and achievement by adapting physical education activities so everyone can be included; General education teacher 7 is struggling to collaborate with other teachers to provide appropriate accommodations for students who are undiagnosed but seem to struggle with the curriculum; and general education teacher 2 is a proponent for making all school spaces more accessible to everyone. The above aspects are aligned with a caring philosophy or what Noddings (1984) describes: care as an attitude or state of being, a relational approach to teaching through engagement with the students by exemplifying caring relationships. The relationship then becomes an important focal point for teachers to come to understand their practice. The manner with which the teachers conceptualized their practice, was evident in the second category of *the knower and the known,* which will be analyzed in the next section.

The Knower and the Known

The knower and the known is a title borrowed from Constructivism, which is, "the philosophical belief that people construct their own understanding of reality" (Oxford, 1997, p.36). "Rather than assimilate a body of knowledge about one's world and environment, constructivists believe individuals 'construct' meaning based upon our interactions with our surroundings" (Warrick, 2002, p. 2). Dewey and, later, Vygotsky, recognized that the construction of knowledge was rooted in a group context and social interactions. Vygotsky perceived that thought evolved from both the experiences and maturation process of an individual (Manus, 1996).

> I would say that the parallel support model, whenever possible, has assisted in increasing all students' awareness of diversity and ability/disability issues. It has helped me change my own perceptions and beliefs (Principal)

> Because I developed my beliefs about inclusion on the job and through practices, I believe that the 'normal' students will change too, through such exposure. (PE teacher)

The teachers' experience with inclusion in practice was another dimension that has assisted in developing a sense of ownership. Besides the ideology and previous experiences, several teachers stressed how "seeing" inclusion in practice made them rethink their perceptions and practices. School celebrations and end-of-year events where all students were included to produce a joint outcome was an image that teachers noted as a turning point in their practices. Some of them noted that *"parents were happy too"* (General Education teacher 1), pointing another positive aspect of inclusion, where the parents seemed to appreciate both the job of the teachers in making the event take place and their children's' ability to participate equally. The notion of the child in the environment and the understanding of the interconnectedness of all aspects of inclusion was noted in the interviews. In that aspect "learning is emergent from the reciprocal interaction of the generative mechanisms of knowledge" (Opfer and Pedder, 2011):

> I would suggest the triangle Parent-Child-School.

> We are connected and depend on each other. We all need to be part of the decision-making process. The child is not an island. It comes from a specific family environment with specific norms and culture. So is the school. How do we make sure that there is a balance in all three aspects? The parent needs to understand us and we need to understand him. The child needs to be part of that process. To tailor our services and support both at school and at home. It's the only way to convince the parents to be part of it. We all take ownership when we feel in control or part of something (General Education teacher1)

Through the dimension of "seeing is believing", teachers also started feeling that the parents were on their side and not opposite them. That they understood and appreciated their efforts and that the inclusion that a child experiences in its own family is also reflected in the

school practices. In addition, this aspect assisted teachers to understand that when parents are on their side, it gave them a sense of efficacy and worthiness: “Sometimes parents treat us like we are inadequate. During school celebrations they smile and they come and thank us” (General Education teacher 7).

In other words, the conception of inclusion was formed as the educators interacted with the environment through those joint experiences. It seems that the knower and the known are interconnected in a dynamic fluid process where meaning is assigned depending on the outcome of those experiences. It almost seems like an operant conditioning process where the consequences reinforce one’s willingness and probability to act the same way again. The parents’ and the students’ attitude, inclusion, and joy seems to be reinforcing elements toward ownership. Foucault’s (1977) framework of ethics focuses on the “forms and relations with the self, on the methods and techniques by which he works them out, on the exercises by which he makes of himself and object to be known, and on the practices that enable him to transform his own mode of being” […]. Faucoult’s ethics serve as an invitation to individuals to see themselves as the main source of transformation, rather than as passive subjects waiting for more substantial structural or material change. As Veyne (1997) observes, “the self is the new strategic possibility” (p. 231). The knower and the known seem to share that same strategic possibility where both sides are interrelated and inform each other by producing a dynamic discourse of conceptions and knowledge unique to the context that they occur.

Another dimension of the phenomenon, however, revealed a contradictory and conflicting aspect, that of cognitive dissonance. Cognitive dissonance refers to a situation involving conflicting attitudes, beliefs or behaviors, producing “a feeling of mental discomfort leading to an alteration in one of the attitudes, beliefs or behaviors to reduce the discomfort and

restore balance" (McLeod, 2018, par. 1). Although this dimension could also be an aspect of the process in the conceptual framework of the current study, the researcher decided to include it as a dimension of the phenomenon because it reflected a side of people's decision to embrace inclusion or not. In some cases, teachers noted that although they do not believe in full inclusion, they were required to do it, while in other cases, the opposite was true. This notion of holding two contradictory elements simultaneously resulted in a certain perception of inclusive education practices:

> I am asked to do something I disagree with (deal with students with emotional disabilities)
>
> I am trying to reinforce full inclusion, but the inclusion classroom cancels out my ideology and it's counterintuitive in the inclusion model
>
> I am expected to split the support among students. So, as a school, we enter this process where due to lack of special education personnel and limited budget, we must make a decision to have the inclusion teacher "shared". And unfortunately, we do it.

For some teachers, taking ownership goes against their beliefs as teachers, namely that inclusion of behavioral and emotional disabilities is their job; for other teachers, what one sees is the exact opposite, that it is their responsibility to include all students regardless of ability. It seems that the conceptualization of inclusion the way it is implemented produces more or less conflicting emotions and a meaning-making experience of contrasts. The manner with which the process related to ownership is negotiated will be analyzed in the following section.

The Processes

Processes is the second category related to the ownership of inclusion and an interrelated aspect that informs and is informed by the phenomenon. The question that led to this category was: *How does the conception of ownership develops in that particular context? What is the relationship between the processes and the phenomenon?*

Filotimo

In this category, the aspects of *filotimo* and being *human all too human* were deemed the best sensitizing categories to describe analytically how ownership develops or is reinforced within the specific context. The notion of *filotimo* was briefly analyzed in the methodology section as well, as a cultural aspect that is unique to the Greek reality of inclusion. *Filotimo* refers to the love that one feels toward the virtue of honor. It is a concept that has multiple aspects and dimensions and in this particular context it referred to an internal motivation to do the right thing:

> Well, besides teaching the play, developing and devoting time, it has to do with one's willingness to have "filotimo" (to be a friend of honor). To do the right thing because it's good for the person next to him […] And filotimo is necessary. It's about caring and empathy. A Greek teacher who is getting paid half of what they used to be, in buildings that are falling apart, with not even minimum support by the Department of Education and the District, that teacher, needs something else to motivate him. That's where this idea of filotimo comes into play (General Education teacher 1)

> I am trying to be the peacemaker, to ask for their extra collegial step, their patience, and I try to offer some trainings and PD whenever possible. But, it is compartmentalized and not systematic and the momentum is lost in the way. And that leaves us with our good will, our filotimo, and a train and hope attitude (Principal)

> when everything falls apart and I feel disappointed about the reality of my daily job I always think that I have filotimo and I will not give up. I will support those students no matter what. (General Education teacher 7)

Filotimo as a motivation to do the right thing is connected to the Greek psyche as doing an honor to their ancient predecessors. It is an aspect that, during the current financial crisis, Greeks seem to rely more and more on. The surge of immigrants and refugees and the integration of minorities in schools, as well as the rise of the fascist party, have produced to the average Greek individual a fear of loss of their national identity's integrity, as if their national identity will be compromised due to those changes and the "spoilers of our civilization", as immigrants

are called. In that sense, *filotimo* is used as a distinguishable virtue that exemplifies honor, values, and uniqueness.

In addition, *filotimo* seems to be a lasting resort of motivation even though nothing else seems to be reinforcing inclusion, for example professional development or administrative support and resources. It is a call from the conscience that the situation demands something more than what was readily available. Is however *filotimo* enough? The memos and comments of that aspect read:

> It is very interesting that this notion of filotimo comes up as an element of last resort. As, when we have nothing, filotimo will kick in and we will do it
>
> Cultural reference. What's the equivalent in the US? So, this question comes to mind: In Greece, will we depend on some individual's filotimo to take the extra step to do this right, lawful thing?
>
> Memo #4: As a Greek I never thought that filotimo will come up as a form of motivation for such important issues such as the inclusion of all students in the general education classroom! What if someone doesn't believe in filotimo, what does this mean? That students will be left on their own to figure out inclusion? What is the discourse that is reinforced here? Legal implementation is not that important and that schools will rely on their teachers' filotimo? It is such a complex notion and quite frustrating in that context. Does this aspect reproduce a fragmented system that will do little to change its structure and filotimo will be seen as the last resort? Should filotimo be a dimension of Inclusion?"

It does however seem that filotimo is an important process of taking ownership of inclusive education practices. Even though it doesn't seem like a systematic and sound way of developing and practicing an inclusive pedagogy, it is an important concept to be taken into account and be a conceptual category. Its context and analysis showed a moral dimension, as it is considered a means to morality and doing the right thing, a connection between moral judgement and moral behavior that exemplifies one's virtue of being a person of value. Connected with the *filotimo* category, is the next process aspect, being *human all too human* which will be analyzed in the following section.

Being Human All Too Human

The phrase being human all too human is a phrase that belonged to one of the participants: “trying to be an inclusive teacher forces me to see my faults, my limits, and my biases. I feel way too human when I do it. It is almost demoralizing sometimes, thinking how my beliefs are not aligned with what inclusion means, with who I am” (General Education teacher 2).

In its original format, it is coined to Friedrich Nietzsche (1878) from the book *Human, All Too Human*, a collection of aphorisms. The author emphasizes that in order for a human to overcome what is all *too human*, for example difficult and contradictory beliefs and attitudes, the need to belong to a religion to feel spiritualism, fears and dependencies, one has to achieve it through understanding it, through philosophy, through what Nietzsche calls reflection on the human, all-too-human, or psychological observation. In modern literary terms, the aphorism represents an argument for bringing philosophical reflection and vulnerability in one’s life as a means by which one may lighten the burden of life, “that exercise in this art produces presence of mind in difficult circumstances, in the midst of tiresome surroundings, even that from the most thorny and unpleasant periods of one's own life one may gather maxims and thereby feel a little better” (aphorism 35).

In the context of the current study, and through the analytical process and the constant comparison of the data, the category *of human all too human*, seems to have several dimensions:

- Challenging own beliefs and practices.
- Understanding own role in creating barriers.
- Inclusion as a scapegoat for own inadequacy.

The following excerpt from the interview with the PE teacher sheds light in this category:

M: What would you suggest to improve the situation?

C: To all be on the same page. Beliefs, practices, system, district, the works. If inclusion is done in such a bizarre way where people are confused or not taking any responsibilities, then the notion itself becomes negative.

M: Wow, so you are saying that the association with inclusive practices, is negative because people through that process become confused, feel less confident and feel incompetent? Fascinating…

C: Yes, inclusion turns a mirror on everyone.

Another teacher echoes that aspect as well: "for many teachers, trying to implement inclusion and not being successful makes them resent it" (General Education teacher2).

And so does the special education director:

I am going back to doing it poorly because we lack the philosophical foundations to understand it. When we agree on the common conceptions then things will move on better. […] we need to challenge ourselves. Do we all believe that inclusion is a right for all students? […] . When parallel support is done in a compartmentalized manner, and the general education teacher is experiencing it in his classroom then for sure this experience will negatively affect his attitude towards inclusion and the ability for learning. Frustration will develop and everyone will pay the price. But, if we do it the right way, following the rules, having the necessary discussions and providing adequate support, all pieces will start to follow into place.

Other teachers used phrases such as: "I don't feel competent in doing it so I am not, it reminds me that I am lacking knowledge" (General Education teacher 3).

It seems that inclusion, turns a mirror on everyone. When something is done poorly, it is expected that the association will be negative. This aspect was fascinating for a couple of reasons. First, given the school's effort of systemic change, it was surprising to hear that some teachers will *just not do it.* The researcher's assumption is that this aspect is also connected to school readiness and professional support, which will be further explicated in the next category; but apart from this, it revealed an unwillingness on the part of some teachers to use this type of insecurity and a lack of knowledge as a motivation for change. However, it did not work this

way and they remained in the all-too-human dimension, desperate and absent. Secondly, in the current national financial crisis, with teacher salaries being cut and professional development reduced to minimal standards, educators feel the need to not put any additional effort to what they already do. As the special education director mentioned: “Inclusion shouldn’t be an add-on but something we do for all students.”

For other teachers, being all too human was their core essence of being a teacher:

> I make mistakes, I am not some authority. I feel better doing activities with them. I connect, communicate, hug. When I admitted for the first time in the classroom “this, I don’t know”, I felt so good, I felt free.
>
> M: In other words, you resist patriarchal models, is that the notion you are telling me?
>
> T1: Yes, I admit my mistakes on purpose. I want them to know I am not an expert, I want them to critically think about this relationship between knowledge and the knower. And I come back to inclusion again. I see colleagues entering the classroom expecting the students to be totally disciplined in their presence, to listen to his lecture and to NOT [emphasis] question his knowledge. I refuse that notion. We need to be open to question our beliefs, to change our practices. This conflict helps me become a better teacher (General Education teacher 1).

As opposed to other teachers, the teacher above uses herself as a subject that is humble about learning and the example she gives to her students, but beyond that, she is not afraid to be *human, all too human*, which she uses as a starting point to her transformation and improvement as a teacher. The PE teacher and the special education director also see this aspect as something that will help them rethink their own conceptions about inclusion and the ability to learn. They see it in themselves and they see it in their students. They are not claiming to be experts, nor are they waiting for a government initiative to save them. They rely on reflecting on their practices and improving over time. It seems that they have escaped a mentality that most government employees in Greece adhere to, namely that the government and the Department of Education should save them from any conflict that arises in their profession. This reliance on governmental

resources reproduces a model that relies on a central authority to assume the sole responsibility of inclusion. It is an unrealistic and almost catastrophic way to improve education and develop an inclusive pedagogy. Along those lines, another aspect of the human-all-too-human category emerges, and that is how teachers create barriers to inclusion. This aspect is interweaved with the challenging of own beliefs and attitudes and treats inclusion as a scapegoat to blame. All dimensions feed each other and inform an increased or decreased notion of ownership of disability practices. The following excerpt from the interview with the special education director is notable:

> […] And we also recognize that we as educators are part of the problem.
>
> M: In what way do you believe you are part of the problem?
>
> SD: By not engaging in a discussion that will bring forward our own conceptions about ability and inclusion though which we might limit our students. Even subconsciously.
>
> M: What an interesting thought! When you say limit, I guess you mean barriers, right? Contextual? What type of barriers?
>
> SD: Are, we, for example adapting our curriculum? Are we using assistive technology? Are we all collaborating? At the District level is it a priority for, I repeat, all students? Are funds allocated towards that direction or are we getting what's left? Austerity, alright, but why kids with disabilities always pay the price?
>
> M: So, both contextual and systemic barriers.
>
> SD: Both, as well as this constant degradation of the teaching profession in general. It reflects our society. It's a survival mode, the survival of the fittest. But above all is that we, as a society are not ready to accept difference

It is interesting to see that the reflection one engages in, regarding their own role in creating barriers to learning, is a process that is likely to lead to different practices. The PE teacher notes that "some colleagues really need a kick in the butt to do their job properly. Teachers that refuse to collaborate with others, to include students, to take the initiative in some things. But there are no consequences", which emphasizes how some teachers create barriers to

inclusion by not adhering to basic inclusive practices, such as collaboration. The special education director notes that the barriers that teachers create, "even subconsciously", reflect a society that is not ready to accept difference and diversity. general education teacher 1 mentions another barrier, that of the curriculum access: "When you have three or four special education students, you need to re-assess how you are going to teach. How can you make sure that all students reach a good level of progress without watering down the curriculum and without compromising the support the special education students need? So, I try to keep a high level for everyone", and two other general education teachers (4 & 5) both identified their limiting beliefs as barriers: "I am unsure how to deal with disabilities in my classroom, sometimes I have thought to give up on some students. I don't know…" but the PE teacher tries to remove his knowledge barriers: "I go online and watch YouTube videos on how to build better activities, I read studies and so on. It's creative but I am not sure I am doing things right. I mean I am only certain that the kids enjoy them and that the special education kids become more social". Most of the teachers, including one special education teacher, noted that the existence of an inclusion classroom is a significant barrier to conceptualizing inclusion as a practice that is beneficial to all students: "the existence of the inclusion classroom cancels out inclusion itself" (General Education teacher 1). In a 2013 study on the teacher's perceptions of Greek educational policies and practices it is argued that:

> Greek special and general education teachers need to try to seek information on the education of students with disabilities even when coursework or professional development is not available for whatever reason. There was only one teacher in this group that mentioned finding information on her own about educating students with disabilities and special education law. This does not diminish the need for formalized coursework and professional development to be made available to current and future special and general education teachers, but teachers and related service providers cannot become complacent and just wait for the Greek Ministry of Education to do something. (Miller, Morfidi & Soulis., 2013, p. 53)

In conclusion, political and personal dimensions are heavily intertwined in creating beliefs and attitudes that act as barriers to inclusion as it is meant to be, providing minimal to low quality services, which seem to rest on their "conflicting and restrictive" beliefs and attitudes about inclusive education" (Fyssa et al., 2014). Sherrill (2004) notes that attitude is the key to changing behaviors toward people who are different. Furthermore, attitude is an indicator as to whether one will approach or avoid something which, in turn, produces new attitudes about self and environment. "The attitude-behavior relationship can be conceptualized as a continuous circle with change occurring in both directions" (Doulgeridou et al., 2011, p. 3). In the next section, the connection between the phenomenon and the process and their interrelated nature will be elaborated.

The Context

The concept of the context is the third and final dimension of the conceptual framework of the notion of ownership of inclusive education practices. The analytic process produced two main categories: *Strong Voices-Weak practices* and *Disability Visibility* with several dimensions in each category. To code and analyze this concept, the following questions were asked:

- How are contextual elements related to the conception of ownership?
- How does the context (case, culture and discourse) increase or decrease the presence of ownership in inclusive education practices?

Strong Voices-Weak Practices

Throughout the interviews, the researcher met individual educators that were proponents of inclusion and its practices. There were individuals who elaborately explained why it is important for them to include all students in the classroom. Some conceptualized inclusion as a means to provide socialization to students with disabilities, others because it is the law, others

because they believe in social justice, others because they had a personal story, and so on. These are strong voices for the rights of all students to have equal access to the general curriculum and the learning process. Some of the educators, as the reader has seen so far, have taken extra steps to ensure that their classrooms are welcoming places, that activities are adapted, and that the child is seen as part of the environment, in which it affects and is affected by its dynamics. When one looks at the practices either of the strong-voiced teachers, or the entire educational and service-related staff, one sees a compartmentalized system, where inclusive education practices are not always consistent and law implementation is not taking place as it should be. Based on these types of data, the researcher arrived at the category of *Strong Voices-Weak Practices*, which will be presented in detail next.

In this category the following concepts were deemed important analytical dimensions to effectively describe *Strong Voices-Weak Practices*:

- Implementing the law
- Inclusion as an expansion of special education/resources
- Top-down decision making
- Noli turbare circulos meos (do not disturb my circles)

The Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education adopted in 1994 by 92 countries and 25 international organizations, was intended as a radical alternative to integration. Inclusion required schools and teachers not only to increase the participation of children with special needs in mainstream schools, but also to remove the exclusionary barriers from within schools and classrooms. The Salamanca Statement is the main legislative context that the Greek educational system relies on for inclusionary policies. Furthermore, based on the current Greek legislation, inclusive education is implemented widely in Greece through a variety of models. The most prominent model, though, is “parallel support”.

According to Law 3699/2008, students with special educational needs have the right to study in mainstream schools with parallel support provided by a special education teacher.

"Parallel support" is a form of co-teaching, which is also found in anglophone literature, as "alternative teaching" (Padeliadou et al., 2014). In this model, the general education teacher instructs all the students, while a special education teacher supports only the student with disabilities within the same classroom at the same time. According to legislation, the procedures of parallel support implementation are systematic and address the students' educational needs based on inclusive principles (Padeliadou et al., 2014). However, the reality about the implementation of parallel support in the context of general classroom often deviates from the stated goals, reproducing the drawbacks of the separated educational systems (Symeonidou & Phtiaka, 2014). Specifically, the model of parallel support is applied fragmentarily, without the necessary organization and schedule, while the deficiencies in legislation, in the school infrastructure and in special and appropriate trained school staff do not produce a fertile ground for the adoption and successful implementation of inclusive education in Greece.

The parallel support model aims at the socialization and education of students with disabilities in the regular education classroom alongside their peers and the deinstitutionalization of students from inclusion classrooms and special education schools.

In the context of the current case study, the school implemented a mixed method inclusion practice, where both inclusion rooms and parallel teaching takes place. Although the purpose of the inclusion classroom was to be utilized as a transitional step to full inclusion with parallel support, that is not the case in the school. There are two special education teachers that are overseeing the inclusion classrooms and, on a case-to-case basis, special education teachers for the parallel support model. The decision of the number of the parallel support teachers that

will be appointed and employed at the school annually, is taken by the Regional Directorate and the District council, at the request of the school, and depending on the number of students that are diagnosed with a disability. The request of the school is usually not fulfilled and only a limited number of parallel support teachers are assigned every year to provide parallel support only to a limited number of students. The teachers and the parents have limited, if any, part in the decision-making of the Directorate and the District. During the interviews, the law on inclusion and its implementation and effect on teaching practices, came up several times:

"You know that it's up to the school to decide whether they "want" inclusion in the school? Do you know that some schools (principals and educators) refuse to have inclusion classrooms and parallel support at their schools? This is unacceptable. Unacceptable. It's against the law, but no one is doing anything about it. No consequences" (General Education teacher 1). In this statement we see a frustrated teacher that is trying to grasp the notion that in some cases the practices are not only weak but even non-existent. She provides a reflection of the society at large where inclusion in education is seen as an add-on or something separate from the general education process. In addition, she is also critical of the practices that take place in school:

> The content in the inclusion classroom is created by the teacher who oversees the inclusion classroom and unfortunately those teachers are not trained enough in special education. What I am saying is that, even I, who have no training in special education, I could if I wanted to teach an inclusion classroom just based on my 16 years of experience as a general education teacher. But there are some general education teachers, that have attended some brief seminars on special education and then they oversee and teach inclusion classrooms.

A similar sentiment is reflected on the following excerpt of the interview with the special education director:

> M: It seems that you are implementing inclusion on a case by case base. More services for individual students. You and the Principal going back and forth with the district and the regional directorate. I get the sense that inclusion equals an expansion of specialized services (!). Isn't this a mismatch with the legislative imperative of a "school for all"?

> SD: [….] the way you put it, yes. I understand what you are telling me. Inclusion is a matter of all or nothing. I get it. And it is. But, in our reality, school, neighborhood is more on square 1 or 2. Let's get some special education teachers first, create an inclusion classroom, offer parallel support services, slowly involve the parents, persist with the district and state, and as we move along those lines, we will build a school for all.

The Salamanca Statement talks about a radical restructure of the entire school system where the existing system will be deemed obsolete and a new, more inclusive one will take its place. What one sees in the context concept of the current study, is a piecemeal approach where inclusion equals an expansion of special education services, namely the segregation of more and more students with disabilities in the inclusion classroom, and not the expansion of the parallel support model as one of the best and most efficient ways to support full inclusion. The decision-making process is top-down: both the special education director and the Principal are "negotiating" about the number of parallel support teachers that they will hire per year, regardless of the needs of the students. Some students with disabilities will remain in the inclusion classrooms more than they should and some students will not receive any supports at all. It is interesting to see the promotion of the Salamanca Statement by the Ministry of Education and the school Districts but not its implementation to the schools.

On the other hand, within the school, it seems that even the educational faculty is not fully aware of the legislation and its implementation directive as shown in several parts of the interviews: "I am unsure what the law mandates. I know that we must have inclusion classrooms and if needed a parallel support teacher. But no, I can't say that I am familiar with it nor that it has affected my job" (General Education teacher 3).

A 2013 study of teachers' perceptions of Greek Special Education practices and policies revealed that "a majority of these teachers and related service providers were either unfamiliar with Greek law addressing the education of students with disabilities or they commented that

these laws did not impact their jobs" (Miller, Morfidi & Soulis, p.60). In comparison, it is difficult to imagine special education teachers, related service providers, or even general education teachers in the United States being unaware of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (2004) or its impact upon their jobs. It would be difficult to promote inclusionary practices when a significant number of special education teachers and related service providers were unaware of laws that promote these practices or do not see how these laws apply to their work.

From all the participants, only one mentioned that he was familiar with the law and it had indeed affected his job: "The law has affected my job in the sense that I MUST find a way to teach the entire classroom" (PE teacher).

The PE teacher connects the law mandates with his perceptions of learning and the way they affected the way he works. Partially, this is a successful implementation, but it does not seem to have affected much others in the way they work. But how does the school administration reinforce the law's implementation?

That's where the dimension of *Noli turbare circulos meos* (do not disturb my circles), comes in. The phrase was uttered by the ancient Greek mathematician and astronomer Archimedes. It is said that after the siege of Syracuse, Archimedes was killed by a soldier after he failed to identify himself and just answered *Noli turbare circulos meos*, as he was studying a geometry outline that had drawn in front of him on the sand (Weisstein, n.d.). This phrase is used to reflect the attitude of the school Principal towards inclusion and the practices that need to be implemented. He is a mellow person, a "peacemaker" as he calls himself. He tries to solve everything though countless hours of discussion either with the staff or the parents and the students. His main goal is to convince everyone of the benefit of several educational issues,

sometimes about inclusion too. He takes charge, locks himself in his office and will not leave until a solution has been found. As he mentions himself: “I am trying to be the peacemaker, to ask for the extra collegial mile, their patience, and I try to offer some trainings and professional development whenever possible. But it is compartmentalized and not systematic and the momentum is lost in the way. And that leaves us with our good will, our filotimo, and a train and hope attitude”.

In general, he will not ask of anything “extra” (e.g. inclusive education practices) from his staff because he does not want to add anything else on their already heavy schedule. This means that he will not be adamant about the law implementation nor the negotiation with the district for more specialized personnel. Several of his staff members raised questions about the efficacy of his approach and whether his practices are conducive to reinforcing inclusion in the school:

> Let’s say that the intentions are there but in practice we fail. The Principal is a mellow guy who truly cares about the students and spends a lot of time with the parents. But I don’t know if he has the knowledge to support a systemic change, to inspire everyone. He is too compromising sometimes, even when he doesn’t need to (PE teacher)

> The Principal believes in a collaborative, peaceful atmosphere where everything is solved in a civilized manner and sometimes things have to be a little more …raw you know… (General Education teacher 2)

> Sometimes conflict is necessary for change, but the Principal’s stance doesn’t help (General Education teacher 7)

The topic of conflict was brought during the interview with the Principal himself. Here is what he said:

> M: You know from my experience, change usually requires some conflict…

> P1: I am trying to solve issues through discussion and collaboration. But maybe you are right, change requires conflict and I am trying to be more assertive in what I am asking my teachers to do, it is very uncomfortable though. It’s

> becoming a moral battle. I get frustrated because inclusion is the right thing to do but the way to reinforce it goes against my values.

As one can see, the discourse that is reinforced by the Principal in terms of the law implementation, the teachers' responsibilities, and the supports that the school needs in order to achieve the systemic change it set out to do, is probably not working. It is significant to note that as he mentions "the way to reinforce it goes against my values", and although this aspect could be a matter of cognitive dissonance as well, it also says a lot about his personal limitations to be an effective leader and to address problems in a timely and just manner. As one teacher pointed out, "change is hard but staying the same is harder". On the same topic, the PE teacher emphasized that "inclusion is messy and change requires conflict". Along those lines, the Principal of the school needs to rethink the way with which he conceptualizes both inclusion and its implementation. The phrase *Do not disturb my circles* best represents the narrative of his leadership, where he tries to keep everyone happy but at the same time he exerts power in an overly fatherly attitude that leaves people frustrated and disempowered. And he does this even to his own disadvantage, just like Archimedes did.

Disability Visibility

The final analytic category that describes the concept of the context is that of the Disability Visibility. The following three aspects will be analyzed as important indicative factors of how the visibility (or absence) of disability is presented in both the school and the wider culture.

- Inclusion as a class issue
- Parental awareness and acceptance
- Charity discourse

In this category, the role of the parents will be analyzed based on the interviews and the literature. In addition, inclusion as a class issue is an aspect that was brought up by both the parents and the educators, as well as the general societal discourse that reinforces the notions of class and power though a charity discourse.

As Goggin and Newell (2004, p. 48) argue, there is a dialectic between the visibility and invisibility of disability. There are dominant ways of "seeing" disability and making it "visible" to the social gaze, and dominant ways of making disability "invisible". Physical and sensory disabilities are the dominant representations of disability in the Greek discourse. On the other hand, the dramatic expansion of special/inclusive education with the identification of large numbers of children and young people with learning disabilities, autistic spectrum disorders, emotional and behavioral difficulties, and so on, is absent of the wider disability discourse. As already presented in the phenomenon dimension of the current study, students with emotional and behavioral disabilities are absent in the wider disability discourse. As the special education director noted, "they are a nuisance to everyone, so we prefer to send them to a separate placement". This aspect of the disability discourse in Greece raises questions about the criteria that schools place on the students in order to be "worthy of inclusion". The PE teacher notes that "maybe some students do need a separate place, you know those with severe disabilities like MR or serious behavioral issues. What is certain, is that we, as a school, cannot accommodate them. Maybe we don't have the expertise I don't know…", and general education teacher 1, frustrated, states: "This year, there are five requests for parallel support from the school and the District sent one (!) person for all five students. Apparently, the budget didn't allow for more teachers. And now, as a school, we have to decide whether all five students will have support, or we will leave some students out. Most likely, the ones with behavioral issues will be placed somewhere else".

It is imperative to note that words such as “nuisance”, “disrupting”, and so on, are fundamental to the exclusion of certain groups of students. In that aspect, inclusion then becomes an “invisibility” issue where the inability of the institution to accommodate them is hidden under exclusionary practices. Those sentiments were also expressed in the interviews with the parents of two students diagnosed with physical and sensory disabilities and learning and behavioral issues. The parent of the child with learning and behavioral issues provided a disheartening statement:

> I know my son has issues and that he acts weird some times, but I cannot afford to send him to a private school and although I am not satisfied with the services provided in the school as he spends most of his time in a segregated classroom, I still don’t say anything because I am afraid that they will kick him out. I am grateful that at least he gets some education in the neighborhood school. (parent 1)

The special education director corroborates Parent 1’s statement as shown in the following interview excerpt:

> SD: So, the law talks about “students educated equally in their neighbor schools” but in reality, they are educated where they are accepted. It could be a school in the next neighborhood or another district altogether. Parents need to adjust their schedules or move in order to be close to their kids’ school. And we are talking about parents that might be working-class people that cannot afford to move and they come to our school begging us to accept their kids because it’s closer than another school that has inclusion classrooms or parallel support.
>
> M: That sounds like a dreadful process both for the parents and for you.
>
> SD: It’s disheartening. Seeing those people thinking that we are doing them a favor. And they are grateful. They have no idea about their rights, and when they do they still can’t do anything about it.

The memo for this concept reads:

> Memo #5: School norms and what type of discourse facilitation is encouraged/practiced in the school as a system. Again, issues of power imbalances, who owns the means and the middle person (i.e. the SpEd Director) who is in the role of breaking the news to the parents. How do you as a human being balance this inside you? How do you get to accept those limitations that you

> know will have a significant impact on your child's life? Inclusion by available resources to a selected few.

It is evident then that making certain types of disability invisible is also a class issue, since one can notice major power imbalances in who gets access and who gets excluded in the inclusive education process. Parents feel grateful just for their children to be included even if it means that the quality of education they will get is of a minimal standard in a society where students with disabilities are seen through a charity discourse: as individuals that are to be pitied and therefore deserve *some* services and not as valuable citizens that have a right to have equal access to education. In addition, the Principal's fatherly approach increases this power imbalance by having the parents see him as the expert:

> M: This stance of protection or a fatherly approach with the parents, does it help?
>
> SD: Yes and No. Sometimes they need someone to take charge. But most of them don't even know their rights. But they also feel tired to pursue their rights through all this paperwork and bureaucracy. Some of them seem indifferent but I don't think that's the case. I believe they are just lost. As a school, we are not doing the best we can to open the lines of communication with them. The Principal has taken up that role but sometimes the time he spends trying to "convince" them is not the most effective way of doing it. He is seen as the expert and they just comply even though they don't like the solution.

In other words, the context perpetuates segregated structures and simplifies the process of inclusion and hinders the development of alternative practices. The context is ridden with epistemological assumptions about the conceptualization of inclusion and how the disability discourse has been developed in Greece within the broader cultural, social and political context. These aspects of theorizing will be discussed in detail in the next and final chapter of the current study.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION AND THEORIZING

> Our work culminates in a 'grounded theory' or an abstract theoretical understanding of the studied experience. (Charmaz, 2006, p. 4)

In the current Grounded-Theory study, theorizing involved developing abstract concepts and specifying the relations between them (Bryant & Charmaz, 2007, p. 126). Doing so, required the engagement in the world of the participants and developing abstract understandings and interpretations about it and within it (Charmaz, 2006, p. 128). The qualitative study's design relied upon the Straussian Grounded-Theory model and the Active Interviewing model. Grounded-Theory research entails that the theory developed comes from the data itself rather than being forced to fit an existing theory or theories. At the same time, however, it is important to place the work and its theorizing within the work of other theories and to show how the work goes beyond or adds to what is already known (Stern & Porr, 2011, p. 114). In the current study, several aspects align with the constructivist theory of Vygotsky and Piaget as well the tenets of the theory of operant conditioning by B.F Skinner. For the purposes of the present study however, the researcher will expand the existing findings to a more grounded theory that reflects the true nature of the data and the construction of meaning between interviewer and interviewees.

Understanding how teachers as professionals can individually and collectively affect the conditions for schooling and learning of all might involve teachers' broader political awareness as well as a micro-political competence of finding allies to change their schools better to meet their commitments (Blase, 1991). Slee (2010) has argued that one of the most relevant areas of competence for promoting inclusive practice to be developed in teacher education is student-

teachers' understanding of how broader social forces influence exclusion and disadvantage. In that sense, the current study shed light on an important element of teachers' limited understanding of how their own misconceptions about the broader cultural and political forces in the current state of affairs in Greece are shaping the perpetual exclusion and disadvantage of certain groups of students.

Throughout the analytical process of the study, the researcher has had the opportunity to take part in the lived experience of the school both at a macro and a micro perspective. Both sides represented a different lens of seeing the phenomenon of ownership of inclusion. It seems that each school and individual have different qualitative and quantitative characteristics that affect how Educational for all is meant, understood and implemented.

The macro perspective of the current case is described in the context category "strong voices-weak practices" within the broader cultural reference of a charity discourse. What one sees, is an overly protective system that does not allow for the dynamic interaction of inclusion to take place in a sustainable and efficient manner. The administration, although well-intended, does not bring the change that an inclusion initiative entails. The Salamanca Statement, as an international directive where the Greek legislation was based on, suggests the deconstruction of the existing system into a more equity-based approach for *all students* regardless of abilities. Devoid of deconstruction, the promise of inclusion became an add-on to the schedule of the teachers and school staff. The intention to make the previous system obsolete and to replace it with a more equity-based one, never actualized. Indeed, inclusion became a burden, something that needed to be done without the coherence that a systemic change initiative aims at.

Although this is the 8th year of its implementation, one sees that within the context of the school, a significant number of contextual barriers still exist. The on-site support through the

form of parallel teaching is limited and the inclusion classroom is getting more overcrowded day by day. Staff and faculty have had limited training and opportunities to reflect on what inclusion means and looks like. For some of the teachers, the premise of *education for all* had not even been thought out, discussed or challenged. The discourse of charity that is prevalent in the Greek culture informs the manner with which the teachers view students with disabilities. The pity approach or the disability as a medical challenge to be overcome is a prevalent perspective amongst a significant percentage of the school staff. Inclusion works only when certain elements in the classroom and the school environment are in place. If a vision of an inclusive school and society it to be realized, then the offensiveness of the injustices must be challenged. It is imperative that those responsible for instilling such a vision are to collaborate to create it.

In the case of the current study, the administration fails to recognize the importance of effective partnerships that aim at a systemic restructuring of the existing status quo, and that will help eliminate prejudice and discrimination. The context and its dynamics are paternalistic and conflict-free. Thus, a different kind of leadership is required if the school is to achieve its goal of an all-inclusive environment. At the heart of that different leadership lies the need to challenge the assumptions and low expectations about the ability to learn, competence and access to the general education curriculum. Low expectations about certain groups of children with behavioral issues need to be challenged as well. Resistance to ableism and a continuous commitment to the ongoing process of becoming an inclusive environment needs to be reinforced and adhered to. In other words, the lack of understanding of inclusive education, the lack of understanding of the social construction of disability and the lack of awareness of ableism are all issues that are at the core of an ineffective school leadership. A different response is needed. One that will promote the engagement with disability studies and the efforts to raise awareness and remove ableist

underpinnings to policy and practice at all levels of the education system. This requires a paradigm shift away from special education and deficit thinking, towards genuine embracing of diversity and welcoming diversity as a strength to enhance education for all children. Within the same context of the school, the analytic process also showed a lack of recognition of people who experience disability as key players in bringing about inclusive education. In the current study, the parents as the sole advocates of students with disabilities were excluded and placed in a position to have to accept whatever the school suggested, even though, in several cases, they would not agree. This approach has created an "us vs. them" reality where the parents are seen as the enemies and vice versa. Furthermore, parents are unaware of their rights under the legislation and if an inclusive environment is to be fully developed, then those partnerships need to be on equal terms.

In addition, inclusive education in practice became an expansion of special education services with limited resources and support, resulting in the continuation of a different model than what was originally intended, and perpetuating ongoing segregated practices and attitudes. Several key staff members noted that "something is better than nothing" and this aspect raises questions about expectations and access, and how low expectations are actualized in practice. The fact that not all students have the opportunity to be included revealed another dimension of the context: class and inclusion as a power issue. It seems that the lack of collaboration and validation of the parents' voices, the exclusion of students with behavioral disabilities, the low-quality support in the inclusion classroom is an issue only for those students whose parents cannot afford supplementary after-school private tutoring. The rage and disappointment of the services their children receive was evident in the interview with the parents that have limited socioeconomic resources.

The context then revealed a vicious cycle of low expectations and lack of opportunities which reflect the need for improved teacher education, improved ongoing professional development, more research documenting student outcomes and experiences pertaining to the benefits of inclusion, improved parent/student participation and, last but not least, leadership development on inclusion.

The micro perspective in the current study was analyzed through the phenomenon and its processes. In that aspect, teachers' perceptions, attitudes, beliefs, experiences and practices were explored. Several themes were noted during the interview and the analytic process: sense of purpose, commitment and motivation, teachers' perceptions of their moral roles, sense of identity and motivation as agents of social justice, teachers' own understanding of social justice, teachers' understanding of broader social forces that influence schooling and (micro-)political competence. Other themes included aspects of autonomy and reflexivity, such as teachers' beliefs about individual and collective efficacy, levels of confidence, control and resilience, collaboration and collective agency for social justice, levels of power and trust in teachers' relationships, perceptions of school cultures and the Principal's leadership, perceptions of teachers' roles as school and system developers and participation in decision-making, broader education policy and socio-cultural contexts, teachers' capacity to articulate practical professional knowledge and justify actions, teachers' meaning-making of the structures and cultures in their schools as sites for social transformation, critical and open reflection on their assumptions, and practices and exploration of alternatives. These themes pointed to the beginning of a conceptualization of the development of ownership as a notion that is ridden with contrasts between what's right, ethical, moral and what individual teachers believed, reflected and perceived as capable of doing. It is almost like a spectrum where full ownership is on one

side and limited or deficient ownership on the other. At the core of ownership, as evidenced from the interviews, is the notion of ideology or as Ellen Brantlinger advised: “It is dangerous to design or engage in inclusive practice without an understanding of its ideological roots” (Brantlinger, 1997, p. 11). The ideological roots of inclusion seem to be the main area where ownership starts and ends. A sound ideological base about inclusion is essential for ownership to develop and be actualized in practice. Feldam (1982) claims that the biggest barrier teachers face, derives from their own “passion for ignorance” (p. 30). Therefore, teaching has to deal not so much with lack of knowledge as with resistance to knowledge. Eagleton (1994) reminds us of the murky, devious nature of ideology even though, of course, he also guides us away from seeking to know ideology in its essence: “Ideology is a realm of contestation and negotiation, in which there is a constant busy traffic: meaning and values are stolen, transformed, appropriated across the frontiers of different classes and groups, surrendered, repossessed, reinflected” (p. 187).

Brantlinger understood ideology as systems of representation (1997, p.438) which unconsciously mediate people’s understanding of the world and which are intertwined with other discourses, such as religion and science, in ways that make them seem respectable. Claiming that inclusion and inclusive education practices are ideology-neutral or at least that teachers’ ideology is benign with regards to children, is irresponsible and dangerous. Ideology points to a system of beliefs and practices that have a direct effect on how one views the world and its constitutive parts and how one goes about from ideology to practice. The current research has unveiled an ideological poverty when it comes to the development of an inclusive pedagogy and a lack of understanding of the philosophical roots of inclusion as a means to deconstruct its existing shape and form. Ideological poverty is obvious through the admission and realization of the majority of

the teachers that they could not place themselves in the context of how they are being barriers to full inclusion for example. These teachers exhibit a non reflexive ideological orientation towards special education and inclusive education practices, assuming an expertise knowledge where a label not only is not contested as a means of discrimination but also encouraged as a means of management and control.

Therefore, if there is a concrete theoretical framework to be taken from the results of the current study, it is that ideology toward inclusive education needs to be taken seriously at all levels of teacher training. The concept of ownership as framed by the findings, points at a term ridden with contrasts between what is right and wrong, between ethical and pragmatical considerations and an internal ideological conflict about ability and access to education. In that sense, inclusive education –both practice and training– needs to become more strategic in that the epistemology of its knowledge in all levels needs to be reconsidered and reflected in its practices. Inclusive education thus needs to signal the possibility of "thinking otherwise" and to avoid re-runs of old theatre where ideology is just a utopia to be studied in teacher training, often just for the sake of it. Throughout the study, individual teachers pointed at their own inability to *think otherwise*, to question their own conceptions about the epistemology of their practices and to reflect on essential issues of equity and equal access to education. Although they positioned themselves within the political and cultural continuum of the Greek reality, they had a difficult time connecting their ideology with their practices and beliefs.

Based on the study's findings and their implications on teacher training, a more detailed account of teacher training recommendations is presented in the section that follows.

Recommendations for Teacher Training

The Salamanca Statement, and several international calls for action, encourage an ambitious vision for educational reform around inclusion and there has been important progress made in the last quarter of the century, at policy level, regarding inclusive education. Over 177 countries have ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD), and especially article 24, which states that parties have a responsibility to "ensure an inclusive educational system at all levels" (UN, 2006-2007). At national level, several governments have started to develop inclusive education policies that aim to align with the UN goals, but national policies, to a large extent, remain special education initiatives with some specifications around terminology revisions, and/or remain isolated policies while core educational policies remain unchanged. Moreover, although there is increased interest in inclusion and budgets increase to reflect that focus, it is estimated that 33 million children with disabilities remain out of school (UN, 2006-2007). And although NGOs, UN agencies and governments are developing inclusive education training programs for both pre-service and in-service teachers, teacher preparation programs fail to explicitly recognize the inherent connections between teacher training, inclusive teaching and pedagogy, and the assumptions that underpin and hinder effective action in that area.

The systemic changes that are required to bring changes in inclusive education cannot be achieved through a narrow lens of project-based initiatives, restrictive timescales, pilot projects and a "train and hope attitude" after a standalone five-day course or just one teacher training offered on inclusion. This misalignment between theory and practice is at the core of the ineffective pedagogy that permeates national initiatives on inclusive education and the current study aimed to shed some light on. The recommendations that resulted from this study are

applicable to the Greek educational system but also to other educational teacher training programs, as several aspects can be found across cultures and contexts:

1. There is an urgent need to redefine what inclusion and inclusive education is and means in the realm of both theory and practice. It seems that there is a distorted view of inclusion, namely as an expansion of special education, with more special resource rooms (inclusion classrooms) and greater segregation within the general education setting. A lack of understanding leads to a fragmented spectrum of practices, focus, ideology, assumptions and beliefs. By not articulating those elements, false assumptions can go unchallenged for years.

2. The paradigm shift towards inclusion continues to evolve as inclusion has been broadened to include not only students with disabilities but other disenfranchised groups as well. Teacher preparation, therefore, should provide an infusion approach to both special and general education teachers where modifications of curriculum approaches should be impeded across the curriculum within and across all areas. Within that framework, all teacher training models should prepare teachers for diversity as other studies (Richards & Clough, 2004) have pointed out as well. The limited empirical data suggests that teachers feel inadequately prepared to address diversity and inclusion in their classrooms. Pre-service teachers report that a combination of both a dedicated unit of study on diversity and inclusion across all curricular areas is what they value the most in feeling prepared to teach in inclusive settings. In the current study, the school, like a significant percentage of public schools in Greece and in Europe in general, has accepted a number of refugee and immigrant students that will need to be more effectively included. The cultural differences are interlaced, and teachers could learn the benefit of valuing and exploring the role of culture and identity to increase awareness of the students' diverse educational needs.

3. The majority of the teachers interviewed in the current study, reported no previous experience in teaching students with disabilities prior to their current experience in the school, which resulted in them feeling ill-prepared, anxious and lacking a sense of efficacy in their teaching strategies. These findings are corroborated by a 2010 study by Lancaster and Bain, where pre-service teachers reported higher levels of self-efficacy after teaching a diverse group of students as part of their teacher training curriculum. Since Greece is promoting a parallel teaching model where both the special and general education teachers work together in a classroom, it is only logical that such teacher training experiences should be imbedded in the teacher training programs.

4. The issue of ideology and attitudes towards inclusion should be addressed in all service training programs, as it seems that direct experience with students with disabilities might heighten self-efficacy but does not improve the attitudes and individual ideology toward inclusion. Teacher training programs have taken for granted the mandates for inclusion without investigating the philosophical, moral and psychological aspects of what it takes for people to be inclusive. Throughout the current study, aspects of fear of the Other, intolerance to diversity and the belief that inclusion is not for everyone were prevalent. There has to be a coherent and systematic effort between universities and educational systems to ensure that pre-service and graduate teachers along with experienced general and special education teachers have opportunities to address those issues in depth. Unlike most educational reform efforts, preparing teachers for inclusion requires a direct challenge on the individual's belief system about what they consider is right and just. Without a sound and relevant knowledge base and positive predispositions towards inclusion, it is unlikely that teachers will be fully engaged in the development of inclusive education communities.

5. Through the findings of the current study, teachers express the need to collaborate with other teachers and organizations forming Communities of Practice that aim at the exchange of experiences, ideas, practices and provide an opportunity for problem-solving skills to develop and for reflective discussions to take place. The current weak commitments to collaboration and exchange fuel the continuation of teacher development and preparation based on refuted and ineffective assumptions. The promotion of the establishment of Communities of Practice is especially beneficial for resource-restricted contexts, such as the Greek system, where effective and evidence-based practices can be shared and explored but also scaled up and facilitated at a broader level of practice.

6. Teacher preparation should not be an isolated endeavor, as several stakeholders are involved in the development and implementation of inclusive education practices. Multi-stakeholder inclusion teams involving teachers, administrators, learners, parents, community members and others, should be promoted to assist in the betterment of inclusive schools and communities, to assist in all voices be heard, and to help teachers identify the needs of the learners' and their own needs for further training and support. These types of multi-stakeholder groups at the teacher-training level can also challenge assumptions and bring about a more holistic picture about disabilities and inclusion from multiple perspectives. In other words, teacher training should not be isolated from real-life circumstances.

7. As the paradigm shift towards inclusive education continues to evolve, so should be the connection between research and practice. Several teachers in the current study expressed their concern and skepticism when it comes to being consumers of the current research on inclusive education, as it is deemed somehow inaccessible and sterile from their daily practices. To address that issue, an action-research orientation is encouraged, where teachers from their

pre-service experiences to well into their teaching practices are involved actively in developing their own strategies. The learning modules of the teacher training programs should expand beyond the standard methods of research used, to a more active and participatory module if change, reform and ownership is to be achieved. Academic researchers and pre- or in-service teachers will benefit mutually from collaborating, exchanging ideas, taking responsibility from joint learning that aims at bridging the gap between academic and field experiences.

Implications for Future Research

In offering a delineation of the process of the development of ownership of inclusive education in Greece, the study provides something new in the scholarship of inclusive education, particularly a new explanation of how ownership as a means to an inclusive pedagogy originates conceptually, how it is established and sustained, and how the teacher preparation processes ought to address those needs in a manner that allows teachers and stakeholders to reflect, exchange, discuss, develop and implement better pedagogical practices.

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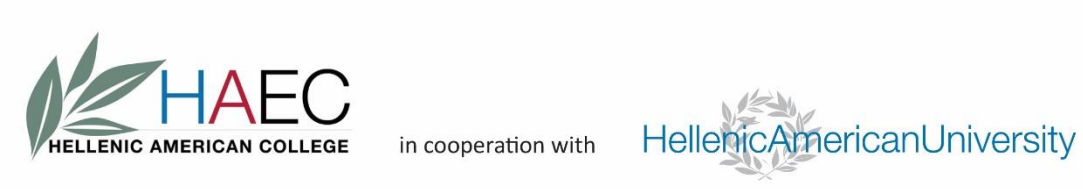
APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

IRB PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM



INFORMED CONSENT

Title: Teacher Ownership of Inclusive Education Practices (Change & Inclusion): A qualitative study
Principal Investigator: Maria Agorastou

My name is *Maria Agorastou*, and I am a *graduate student at the University of New Hampshire and adjunct faculty member* at the Hellenic American University. I am inviting you to participate in a research study. Involvement in the study is voluntary, so you may choose to participate or not. I am now going to explain the study to you. Please feel free to ask any questions that you may have about the research; I will be happy to explain anything in greater detail.

I am interested in learning more about *how teachers and school staff make meaning of change and adjust/modify their education practices in order to include a diverse body of students in their classrooms*. You will be asked to *answer some questions regarding the topic (e.g.:* How do public school teachers describe their perceptions and beliefs of inclusive education in their classroom and school?). This will take approximately *2 hours* of your time in two separate sessions. All information will be kept *confidential*. I will assign a number to your responses, and only I will have the key to indicate which number belongs to which participant. Names will not be utilized, just your occupation and years of experience. In any articles I write or any presentations that I make, I will use a made-up name for you, and I will not reveal details or I will change details about where you work, where you live, any personal information about you, and so forth.

The benefit of this research is that you will be helping us to understand *the change process and your needs in order to include diverse students in their classrooms.* This information should help us to *better understand teacher change and inclusion and assist us in helping you design more responsive school environments for you and your students.* The basic themes of the study will be shared back with you and the school staff in order to help you better understand the meaning making processes of inclusion and the aspects that assist or inhibit the process. There are no risks associated with this type of research. If you do not wish to continue, you have the right to withdraw from the study, without penalty, at any time.

You may contact *Maria Agorastou* at *6980637426 or/and at magorastou@hauniv.edu* any time you have questions about the research.

Participant - All of my questions and concerns about this study have been addressed. I choose, voluntarily, to participate in this research project. I certify that I am at least 18 years of age.

_____

print name of participant

_____ _____

signature of participant date

_____

print name of investigator

_____ _____

signature of investigator date

Return completed application to the IRB Chair for review or the Office of the Provost.

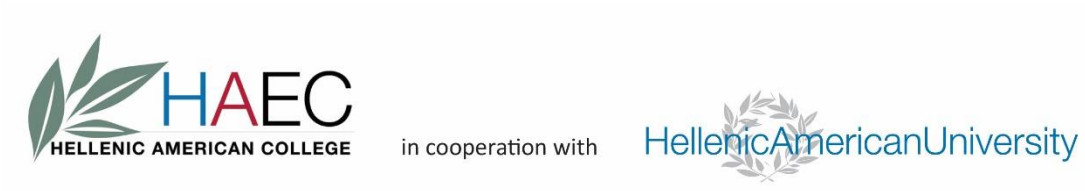
****

For IRB staff use only:

date received _____ IRB reviewer _____

APPENDIX B

IRB PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM IN GREEK



Έντυπο συναίνεσης σε Ερευνητική Εργασία

Τίτλος: Ο Εκπαιδευτικός και η διαδικασία οικειοποίησης πρακτικών Ένταξης στην τάξη: (Αλλαγή και Ένταξη): Μία ποιοτική μελέτη
Ερευνήτρια: Μαρία Αγοραστού

Ονομάζομαι Μαρία Αγοραστού, και είμαι τελειόφοιτος διδακτορική φοιτήτρια στο *University of New Hampshire (Τμήμα Εκπαίδευσης- Durham, NH, USA) και επίκουρη καθηγήτρια στο* Hellenic American University (Τμήμα Κλινικής Ψυχολογίας-Αθήνα, Ελλάδα). Σας προσκαλώ να συμμετάσχετε σε μια ερευνητική εργασία. Η συμμετοχή σας είναι εθελοντική, και μπορείτε να επιλέξετε αν θέλετε να συμμετέχετε. Παρακάτω θα σας εξηγήσω την έρευνα. Είστε ελεύθερη/ος να κάνετε ό,τι ερωτήσεις επιθυμείτε για την έρευνα και θα σας απαντήσω ευχαρίστως.

Το ερευνητικό μου ενδιαφέρον σχετίζεται με την εις βάθος εξερεύνηση της διαδικασίας της οικειοποίησης των πρακτικών ένταξης μαθητών με ποικίλες ανάγκες στην τάξη. Η διαδικασία σκοπεύει τόσο στην κατανόηση της διαδικασίας όσο και στην ανάπτυξη κοινού νοήματος της εμπειρίας μεταξύ εκπαιδευτικού και ερευνητή. Θα σας ζητηθεί να απαντήσετε σε κάποιες ερωτήσεις σχετικά με το θέμα, όπως για παράδειγμα: Πώς θα περιγράφατε την αντίληψη σας και τις πεποιθήσεις σας σχετικά με το θέμα της Ένταξης τόσο στην τάξη σας όσο και το σχολείο;. Η διαδικασία θα ηχογραφηθεί και θα πάρει περίπου 2 ώρες σε δύο ξεχωριστές συναντήσεις (η αρχική συνέντευξη και μια συμπληρωματική όπου θα μοιραστώ τις θεματικές ενότητες της πρώτης).

Η συμμετοχή σας στην έρευνα είναι εμπιστευτική και συνεπάγεται ότι συμφωνείτε με την μελλοντική δημοσίευση των αποτελεσμάτων της, με την προϋπόθεση ότι οι πληροφορίες θα είναι ανώνυμες και δε θα αποκαλυφθούν τα ονόματα των συμμετεχόντων απλώς η ιδιότητα σας και τα χρόνια εμπειρίαςσας. Τα δεδομένα που θα συγκεντρωθούν θα κωδικοποιηθούν με αριθμό, ώστε το όνομα σας δε θα φαίνεται πουθενά

Οι προσδοκώμενες ωφέλειες της συμμετοχής σας είναι, ότι θα με βοηθήσετε να κατανοήσω εις βάθος την εμπειρία σας αλλά και τις ανάγκες σας στον τομέα της Ένταξης. Αυτές οι πληροφορίες θα με βοηθήσουν να καταλάβω καλύτερα τη διαδικασία της αλλαγής και οικειοποίησης Ένταξιακών πρακτικών όπως επίσης και των εμποδίων που αντιμετωπίζετε. Οι βασικές θεματικές ενότητες όλων των συνεντεύξεων θα μοιραστούν (η ανωνυμία θα τηρηθεί) με την διοίκηση και το προσωπικό του σχολείου σας έτσι ώστε να ξεκινήσει ένας διάλογος με σκοπό την βελτίωση των πρακτικών σας και του σχολικού κλίματος γενικότερα. Δεν υπάρχει

κίνδυνος με την συμμετοχής σας σ' αυτού του τύπου έρευνας. Εάν δεν επιθυμείτε να συμμετάσχετε, μπορείτε να διακόψετε, χωρίς επιπτώσεις, όποτε το θελήσετε.

Μπορείτε να επικοινωνήσετε μαζί μου *στο 6980637426 ή/και στο magorastou@hauniv.edu* όποια στιγμή έχετε ερωτήσεις σχετικά με την έρευνα.

Συμμετέχων – Όλες μου οι απορίες σχετικά με την παρούσα έρευνα έχουν απαντηθεί. Επιθυμώ, εθελοντικά, να συμμετάσχω στην μελέτη. Επιβεβαιώνω ότι είμαι τουλάχιστον 18 ετών.

_____

Ονοματεπώνυμο του συμμετέχοντα

_____ _____

Υπογραφή του συμμετέχοντα Ημ/νια

_____

Ονοματεπώνυμο του ερευνητή

_____ _____

Υπογραφή του ερευνητή Ημ/νία

Return completed application to the IRB Chair for review or the Office of the Provost.

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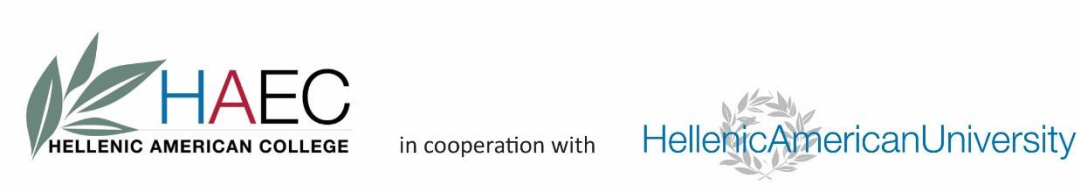
For IRB staff use only: date received _____ IRB reviewer _____

APPENDIX C

IRB PROPOSAL AND APPROVAL



Institutional Review Board for Hellenic American University

Application for **IRB Review** for Research Involving the Use of Human Subjects

TITLE OF PROPOSAL: **Teacher Change & ownership of Inclusive education practices: a qualitative study in a public school in Greece**

Principal Investigator: Maria Agorastou
Department: Psychology (HAU) & Education (University of New Hampshire)
Campus Mailing Address: magorastou@hauniv.edu **Campus phone**: 6980637427

If this is a student proposal, name of faculty advisor:

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Requested Review: **_____ Expedited Review** X **Full Board Review**
Does this project involve minors, pregnant women, prisoners, or other special populations?
__ Yes _X_ No

Request for Approval from Institutional Review Board

1. Description of Project (attach additional information as needed) See attached detailed proposal.

a. Briefly describe the population of human subjects involved (e.g., university students, community members, school children, prisoners, pregnant women, etc.). Indicate if participation is voluntary or not.
Public school teachers and staff. Based on emerging data might involve other stakeholders such as parents and school aides. No students involved at any stage. Voluntary participation

Briefly describe research procedures and data collection techniques (e.g., interview, questionnaire, observation, survey, etc.).
Qualitative inquiry based on Grounded theory and action interviewing/ review of relevant educational documents on teacher development and training/review of state requirements as they pertain o inclusive education practices. Exploratory data collection through the active interview process

b. Briefly present the objectives of the research (e.g., present hypothesis to be tested in lay terms).
The purpose of this study is to explore in depth the experiences of school teachers as change agents and their conception of ownership toward this change as it pertains to inclusive education practices. Specifically, the study will use a constructivist method to examine, the relationships and meaning making experiences <u>that assist or inhibit</u> the engagement of teachers to be effective agents of inclusion in their school. The current study is framed around two broad questions: What is the meaning of change, mainly from the perspective of the teachers, when they are called to implement inclusive education practices in their classrooms and how do they go about "owning" the change, and what aspects (individual, organizational and activity) they perceive as essential or negative in implementing inclusive education practices?

c. Attach a copy of informed consent form (attached)

2. Subject recruitment (in addition to the information requested below, submit verbatim copies of all letters, notices, advertisements, etc., with an outline of all oral presentations to be used):

a. Direct person-to-person solicitation **X**
b. Telephone solicitation ____
c. Newspaper solicitation ____
d. Letters of solicitation ____
e. Posted notices of solicitation ____
f. Other (explain) **X presentation to staff and school meeting and inviting people to participate if desired.**

g. List below all criteria for including subjects:
Teachers and school staff employed in a public school in Athens. Parents and other stakeholders involved in the school (if emerged through the teacher interviews). Criteria for choosing the specific "site/case" are: a) The school board and the administration are committed in implementing IE practices., b) The teachers -at least the majority- are willing to implement the model., c), The school is a relatively small/medium size school that is located in a working-class neighborhood and students with disabilities have limited access to out of school services (private tutors, PT, OT etc) making the implementation of the model probably the only alternative they have and the school has accepted that responsibility., d), The school is a site of hosting refugee students from Syria and some of these students have a disability diagnosis as well.

List below all criteria for excluding subjects:
_____
Individuals not involved in the school.
_____

3. Benefits and costs to subjects:

a. Indicate what, if any, benefits may accrue to each of the following (note: financial payment to subjects is considered a benefit):

i. Benefits to human subjects involved:
Teachers and school staff will benefit from the process as it encompasses a shared meaning making experience that will assist all subjects involved in better dealing with change as it pertains to Inclusive education practices. Parents will have an opportunity to reflect on their childrens' inclusion in the school and have an opportunity to discuss their issues with the teachers and staff. The findings (Themes) will be shared with all subjects involved for action planning and development.

ii. Benefits to individuals who are not subjects and generalized benefits to society
It is expected that after the completion of the research, the findings that will be shared with the teachers, school staff and parents will assist in improving inclusive education practices and collaboration between teachers and stakeholders involved.

If subjects are to be paid, present financial details (amount, method of disbursement, payment schedule, financial effect on subjects who withdraw from participation):
_____n/a_____

b. Estimated participation costs to each subject:

i. Time (total time commitment to each subject)
Approximately 2 hours (in two separate sessions: initial interview and follow up)

ii. Money n/a

4. Basis of claim for expedited review (if selected)

Review pp. 11-13 of the Manual of Policies and Procedures for the Institutional Review Board at Hellenic American University

This is to certify that the procedures utilized in this study are appropriate for minimizing risks to the subjects and I take full responsibility for the conduct of the research. I certify that I and, if applicable, the students whom I am supervising, are qualified to conduct this research. *(If this study is being conducted by a student only, a faculty sponsor **must** sign in the space provided.)*

Maria Agorastou 4/4/2018

Principal Investigator(s) Date

Faculty Sponsor (if the research is carried out by students) Date

Return completed application to the IRB Chair for review or the Office of the Provost.

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For IRB staff use only:

Date received 3/13/2018 IRB reviewer Dr. Kaniklidou/Hellenic American University

Date approved 3/27/2019

APPENDIX D

SAMPLE OF RESEARCH JOURNAL

Research Journal

Journal purpose:

1. Am I interviewing the right people, 2) are my questions working, 3) am I interpreting information objectively, 4) when can I stop interviewing (redundancy), 5) is my coding structure and analysis sound, 5) am I accurately representing stakeholders voices, and 6) are my findings reasonable/rational?
2. Record each meeting and record specific methods decisions as part of the emergent research design. This is critical for establishing trustworthiness (reliability) and will be part of the final audit.
3. The peer reviewer (Dr. Leigh Rhode) will provide feedback both at the transcript & journal entry

Research Questions

1. **How do public school teachers describe their perceptions and beliefs of inclusive education in their classroom and school?**
   a. How important do teachers perceive their prior experience both as teachers and as students as a factor in their success in or satisfaction with IE practices?
   b. What experiences do teachers use to define Inclusion?
   c. What experiences related to IE have teachers had that they would like to see repeated in their classrooms or the school as a whole?
   d. How do teachers define their orientation to and about learning (theirs and their students') and how do those manifest in their classroom practices?

2. **What aspects of a class or school organization including professional development do public school teachers perceive as essential to changing beliefs, attitudes and practices toward IE?**
   a. How important is the school's facilitation of discourse and collaborative learning when it comes to IE?
   b. How important are school norms and practices to the implementation of IE?
   c. How important is internal and external professional learning in a teacher taking the initiative in implementing IE practices?

3. **What learning activities and practices the teachers and staff participate -external and internal- that inform their thinking and philosophy about IE practices?**
   a. How are the learning activities and the system they are informed by, influence the teacher and staff perceptions and experiences in IE practices?
   b. How are teachers and school staff orient themselves as it pertains to learning when it comes to change through those activities?

Entry #1
28/6/2018. Interview with a general education teacher. Female, 16yrs of teaching experience. Refer to transcript #1

This was my first interview and I was quite nervous. My main concern was to balance between covering all my questions and at the same time, listen to the interviewee, make meaning of what she was saying. My clinical background tends to interfere through overanalyses, but I believe for the purposes of the research I have asked the right follow-up or meaning-making questions. In terms of coding, I went through the entire transcript explicating where each research question was covered and started asking some questions to be examined more. Since, this is the first transcript, I am using my comments as precursors for coding before I enter the data into ATLSAS.ti. Roughly, the following codes/categories came up:

- **Inclusion as an interconnected process**
- **Teaching is moral by nature. Post-conventional thinking is related to a democratic view of the process (school, parents, students, peers). Connection between moral judgment & moral behavior.**
- **Legislation and law implementation**
- **Financial crisis and budget adjustments**
- **School norms**
- **Teacher's sense of efficacy, identity, agency. Family history, past experiences as essential to IE practices. Narratives of justice and segregation**
- **Dissonance between teacher expectations and practices: self-reflection and motivation to change**
- **Resource Availability ** you might want to break this down into availability of special educators and availability of other supports (e.g., training, materials)**
- **Interaction of teacher learning systems**
- **Knowledge emerges from the recursive actions of knowers and other learning systems**
- **Simultaneity of the knower and the known.**

In terms of my sample, I would have to include the district administrator and examine the specific documents that refer to the meeting about the decision to include some students and not others. Are there other notions in there, besides the budget cuts, that perpetuate or hinder the process?

August 5, 2018
Hi Maria,

This is wonderful! What an amazing interview, the teacher really got into the process. Overall, I think you did a great job of leading the interview with good follow up questions. The teacher had strong philosophical reasons for inclusion, that came through really well.

I think the second question is really important (really the basis for your whole study) so in future interviews, you might want to ask some very specific questions about changing practices. The sub question about school norms is really interesting and worth asking specifically.

Leigh, it will be part of my follow up questions. You are right. I focused on that aspect on the interview with the Principal.

What else can I do to help with this process? I can give more detailed comments in the transcript or offer more here in the journal – or both! Let me know what will be most helpful.

Leigh

APPENDIX E

AUDITOR'S REPORT

May 14, 2019 Dear Dr. Shannon,

I am writing today to share with you my thoughts of Maria Agorastou's dissertation entitled "Teacher Change and Ownership of Inclusive Education Practices: A Qualitative Study in a Public School in Greece." Agorastou's study and paper about inclusion in Greece is remarkable. Primarily, it speaks to the heart of inclusion for students with disabilities by asking teachers not only about their practices but about their beliefs – why children with disabilities should be part of their classrooms, schools, and communities. Her description of "filotimo" or being a "friend of honor" is critical to true inclusion, that teachers see inclusive practices as honorable and just. I believe that Maria has captured the beliefs and practices of the teachers and administrators through her thoughtful questions, careful data collection, and insightful analysis. She provides a window into public schools that is valuable not only in Greece but here in the United States as well. It was a sincere privilege to support Maria during her journey from the initial ideas for her work through the many interviews and transcripts to her final paper. I look forward to hearing her present her work on Friday, May 17, 2019 at the University of New Hampshire.

Kind regards, Leigh Rohde, Ph.D.

School of Education Salem State University

Salem, MA 01970