

The Greek Co-teaching Model

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Introduction

The question of the placement of students with disabilities in some of the structures of Special Education is not an issue that has arisen now in the field of special education, but it has also been a concern for children, their parents and everyone else involved in their education. By the early 1990s, most special education services were provided with support programs where pupils with special educational needs attended general education classes but for some hours left their classroom to receive special education in special classes (Walther - Thomas & Carter, 1993). Research evidence shows that children in special classes may have problems such as: a) socially stigmatized; b) general education teachers were not responsible enough or the learning needs of pupils with special educational needs; c) there was often a lack of communication between general and special education teachers; d) students may not participate in school or class events because they were in the same class in the same class.

One way of providing educational services to children with special educational needs that are aimed at these problems is the implementation of co-teaching. Co-teaching is defined as an educational approach in which general and special education teachers collaborate, coordinate their efforts, co-ordinate, share classroom planning and management, in order to successfully achieve the goals set for all students, with or without special educational needs, who are in general education classes (Friend, & Bursuck, 2009; Friend & Cook, 2012). In particular, the aims of the co-teaching are: (a) Increasing educational choices for students; (b) Enhancing the social participation of disabled children; (c) Improving the school performance of students with disabilities (Mastropieri, Scruggs, Graetz, Norland, Gardizi & McDuffie, 2006).

According to Friend and Cook (2013), the features of co-teaching are as follows: (a) Classroom teaching is implemented by teachers with different specializations. In the realization of the co-teaching, the students are taught by two or more teachers with different specializations, where their roles during the implementation of the teaching are equal. One co-teacher is a general education instructor and has the responsibility of teaching academic courses in collaboration with a special education instructor or with a special education teacher who is specialized in a particular type of diagnosis (eg in teaching children with hearing or hearing impairment). (b) The co-teachers jointly share the responsibility of the teaching. Every teacher in a integration class where co-teaching takes place plays an important role, since he can coordinate and organize his teaching in such a way to enhance the learning choices of his pupils. In addition, Wilson

(2008) reports that co-teachers co-decide on the way of teaching and the teaching practices that will follow, ensuring their active participation in teaching and promoting the active participation of all pupils with and without special educational needs. The above could not be achieved if there was only one class teacher (Friend, Burrello, & Burrello, 2009 in Friend & Cook, 2013, p. 165). (c) In the general class, the student groups are heterogeneous According to Seglem and VanZant (2010), in the realization of the co-teaching, teachers provide teaching to heterogeneous groups of pupils consisting of children with special or non-special educational needs. This feature of co-teaching is also one of its advantages because it reduces the ratio of teacher / pupil and secondly there is a specialist teacher, enabling the co-teachers to respond to the diverse needs and demands of their students. (d) Teaching students with and without special educational needs is done in the same physical space. In the realization of the co-teaching, teachers work with all children in a specific room or in a particular room. This characteristic runs counter to past practices, where for example teachers grouped their students and each group was taught in a different room. (Friend & Cook, 2013).

Villa, Thousand and Nevin (2008) report what is not co-teaching. This is not considered a co-teaching when: (a) one teacher teaches and the other can prepare the educational material and the means that will be needed in the co-teaching, (b) when one teacher's opinion prevails in the decision making process, (c) (d) when one teacher teaches a subject or a unit and the next subject is taught by the other teacher (e) when one teacher teaches a lesson and the other can teach one another (f) when the ideas applied to what is to be taught and how to be taught come from only one teacher and (g) when the role of the supervisor is assigned to one educator.

Co-teaching in General Classes: Disadvantages - Advantages

The implementation of co- teaching is considered to be successful and offers high-quality services to pupils when they can receive immediate educational and social benefits (Sileo & Garderen, 2010). On the other hand, the full attendance of children with special educational needs in the general classes is not uninterrupted and without difficulties. These relate to issues relating to the development of the academic and socio-emotional skills of the child.

Academic Skills

The research has identified several reasons why students with disabilities encounter difficulties in general education, such as: a) understanding the content of texts in textbooks is difficult for children due to reduced reading ability (eg Cawley & Parmar , 2001; Horton, Lovitt, & Bergerud, 1990) b) most formal cognitive activities are difficult to understand by students with disabilities (eg Ormsbee & Finson, 2000) terminology in school textbooks also hampers students with disability (e.g., King-Sears, Mercer,

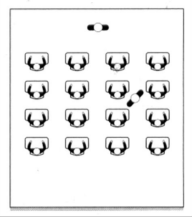
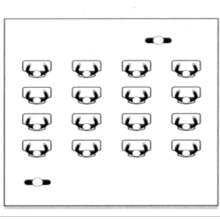
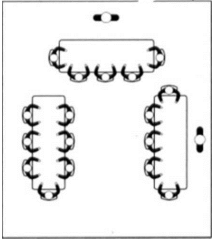
& Sindelar, 1992 · Scruggs & Mastropieri, 1993). But the physical presence of two teachers in the same classroom results in reducing the proportion of students per teacher. Students have the opportunity for better support, and there is the possibility of making the necessary changes to the classroom and the subject matter to help students understand new knowledge.

Socio-emotional skills

In a study by Koster, Pijl, Nakken and Van Houten (2010), it is stated that placing a disability pupil in general education does not automatically ensure its social participation in the environment. The child may have difficulty with limited friendships and lack of acceptance by his classmates. However, children with disabilities who study in their general classes are given the opportunity to interact with their peers without disabilities, to collaborate and share during their learning experiences. They also offer various opportunities for social integration through activities and events. Finally, according to a study by Dahlberg and Hoover (2003), a coaching class enables a student who may have a personal conflict with an educator to seek emotional or academic support from the other teacher.

Types of co-teaching model

There are several types of interactions design to maximize the effectiveness of co-teaching (Croteau, 2000; Friend, & Bursuck, 2009; Friend & Cook, 2012, 2013):

Types / Arrangements in the classroom	Description
<p>One teach – one assist</p> 	<p>One teacher, usually GED assumes responsibility for instruction; the other assists students</p>
<p>One Teach, One Observe</p> 	<p>One instructs, one observes & collects data.</p>
<p>Station Teaching</p> 	<p>Students in small groups rotate around from the stations</p>

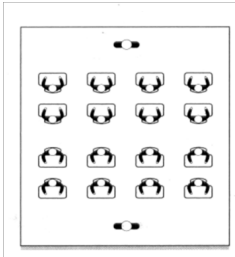
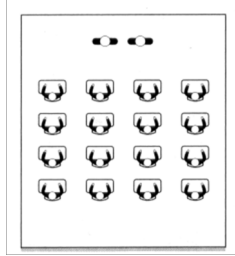
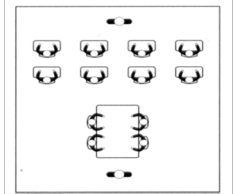
<p>Parallel Teaching</p> 	<p>The class has two heterogeneous groups (diversity in both groups receiving the same instruction).</p>
<p>Teaming</p> 	<p>Teachers share responsibilities equally. They co-plan and share instruction</p>
<p>Alternative teaching</p> 	<p>One teacher leads the larger group while another teacher provides additional or separate instruction to a small group of students</p>

Figure 1. Types of Co-teaching Model

Parallel Support: The Greek Co-Teaching Model

Over the last decade, a large number of pupils with special educational needs attend general schools (Special Education Directorate, 2007). This is related to the adoption of the last two laws 2817/2000 and 3699/2008 on special education.

Also for the school year 2018 - 2019, 5913 special education teachers and 1,592 nurses and special auxiliaries were hired for the parallel support program (Ministry of Education, November 2018)

In particular, the recent and applicable law on Special Needs Education (SNE) (3699/2008 - Government Gazette 199 / A, article 6) enables children with special educational needs to attend general school classes, taking supportive services from special education and training teachers, which are related to the type and severity of children's diagnosis. This way of providing educational services for children with disabilities is a type of co-teaching model, called "Parallel Support" in Greece.

Parallel support (PS) involves children with special educational needs when it is considered the most appropriate placement for them based on the Center for Diagnosis, Differential Diagnosis, and Support (KEDDY) report. They also participate

in the PS. pupils, when there is no other special education school), such as “special school” , “special class”, etc. in the area where the child’s family lives. In any case, in order for a student to participate in a parallel support program, he / she must have a written notice of approval from the relevant KEDDY, which specifies the times of parallel support the child will receive. If the child attends a part of integration, then the KEDDY should justify the reasons for not proposing the child’s attendance to the integration section but its participation in the parallel support. Parents’ application for the provision of parallel support to their child, together with the relevant report by the KEDDY, is submitted to the school head, which is communicated to the Ministry of Education through the Education Directorates (Law 3699/2008). In case of children with autism, a family requirement and with the approval of the Teachers’ Association, may be a special assistant in the classroom.

School year	Special educ. population (Eurydice)	Number of Students in PS settings	PS settings as % of special educ. population	Growth trends (% yearly difference)
2003 – 04	18,585	5	0.03	
2004 – 05	19,146	113	0.59	0.56
2005 – 06	22,249	207	0.93	0.54
2006 – 07	22,813	330	1.45	0.52
2007 – 08	23,470	402	1.71	0.26
2008 – 09	23,599	253	1.07	-0.64
2009 – 10	29,954	578	1.93	0.86
2010 – 11	32,861	1,054	3.21	1.28
2011 – 12	36,011	1,634	4.54	1.33
2012 – 13	35,412	2,322	6,56	2,02
2013 – 14	-	3,276	-	-
2014 – 15	-	4,564	-	-

Source. Mavropalias & Anastasiou, 2016, p. 226

Special Education Teachers in Parallel Support Certification Requirements: (a) They hold postgraduate degrees in special education or have a bachelor’s degree in special education (b) 4-year degree in special education (c) 400 hours of training in special education. (d) They are general education teachers who have 10 months of training in special education structures. (e) As far as the education of children with hearing impairments is concerned, the candidate teachers should have a specialization in the Greek Sign Language. Respectively, children with visual impairments must have Braille specialization.

Implementation of the Model of Parallel Support

In Greece, in the program of parallel support - as defined by law 2018/2000 - only children with specific educational needs are involved, while in other countries there are also children with low school performance. Additionally, the parallel support program extends to high school, while other countries may also attend students attending high school. Parallel support as implemented in Greece does not correspond to any of the six types of co-teaching, as recorded in the international literature. It seems to be closer to the type of co-teaching “ One Teach-One Assist” (Friend & Bursuck, 2009; Friend & Cook, 2012). In most cases, the general education teacher had a leading and leading role in the classroom and was responsible for teaching the content. The Special Education Teacher was the assistant who supports a disabled child and rarely two, always in the general classroom. In parallel support the special education teacher is responsible for one or two disabled children does not support the other students. Also, the role of Special Education Teacher seems to be more static, focusing on the child with special educational needs. In contrast, the type of co-taught “ One Teach-One Assist “, the Special Education Teacher wandering in the classroom to help students who need further assistance or to answer questions related to the lesson (Mavropalias & Anastasiou, 2016).

Assigning roles to teachers in the context of parallel support indicates a complex social and organizational relationship that is relatively new to most of them. It is important for teachers to understand their role in providing educational services, according to the particular needs of the pupils they support. First of all, teachers generally perceive the parallel teaching as providing assistance and support to pupils with special educational needs within the general class of educational special education. Similar definitions have been given by researchers (eg Scruggs, Mastropieri, & McDuffie, 2007). is the provision of educational services in inclusive classes by teachers working together and aimed at children with special educational needs.

From research data (Kidas, 2017; Pavlou, 2016; Mavropalias & Anastasiou, 2016), it appears that parallel support has a positive impact on children participating in it. In particular, parallel support helps to develop the cognitive, social and emotional and individual skills of children with disabilities. Similarly, from research data from international surveys, co-teachers is associated with increased cognitive performance, with improved social skills, additional classroom assistance, and benefits in the psycho-emotional area of the supported child (eg Austin, 2001; Pugach & Wesson, 1995 · Walther-Thomas, 1997.).

As far as cooperation between teachers is concerned, the level of cooperation for most teachers is unsatisfactory. The co-design of teaching was focused on one or two children

with special educational needs rather than a larger group of students. Also in co-teaching the co-teachers were “cut off” among themselves. The general education teacher was primarily responsible for the teaching of content on the basis of the curriculum, and the special education teacher supported the disabled child. But all this is inconsistent with the characteristics that successful co-teaching should have, according to international literature.

The conversation often focuses on interpersonal communication issues and on the compatibility of teachers involved in the coaching program. The Mostert (1998,) emphasizes that co-teachers should have a problem-solving orientation showing mutual respect, exemplary communication skills and open information exchange. The creation of a positive atmosphere, the willingness to constructively resolve conflicts and good interpersonal relationships, favor a positive cooperative environment. Problems in co-operating with co-teachers may also be due to their communication with the school administration and club staff working. For example, when communication with the school principal is exhausted only in service matters or when due to the traditional organization of the school there is no critical dialogue, cooperative mood, exchange of pedagogical experiences, etc., then co-teachers can also have a negative impact on the creation of the co-operation environment between them during the implementation of the PS.

From research data (Kidas, 2017; Pavlou, 2016), co-teachers want a satisfactory communication framework with the administrators of the PS program. such as KEDDY and school counselors. Teachers want to be able to communicate with them so they can feel confident about the educational work they perform, can cope with a difficult event, etc. Considering that the majority of teachers participating in Parallel Support have little experience in parallel support and limited training, it is imperative to create a framework for communication with bodies and individuals more skilled and experienced than them.

The importance of educating teachers to implement integration practices is increasingly recognized. Directions and practices for success require a systemic approach that will result from the cooperation of all actors and the adoption of a common policy among them (Dyson, 2005). One of the parameters that will probably lead to better performance of students with disabilities is to improve the education and training of teachers. This enables them to respond to the diversity and the endeavor of integrating children with special educational needs into general education (OECD, 2005).

The majority of teachers report that deficiencies in resources, resources and infrastructures negatively affect the quality of the educational work produced by parallel support. The availability of resources and appropriate teaching tools are of paramount

importance for the success of co-teaching. In other international surveys, one of the components contributing to effective co-teaching is also the support of co-teachers with the appropriate educational tools and materials (eg Bixler, 1998; Dieker, 2001). In Greece, the building infrastructure of general schools has many deficiencies. These deficiencies relate to the size of the teaching spaces, accessibility of the school premises, the configuration of the toilets to serve children with disabilities and so on. According to data from the Center for Educational Research - CER (2013) shows that only one out of seven schools in Greece meet the standards so that students with special educational needs have access to it. These deficiencies in schools make it difficult for research teachers, particularly children with mobility impairments and vision problems involved in parallel support. The lack of sufficient teaching space to allow general and special education teachers to cooperate, as well as pupils with and without special educational needs, inhibit the work of teachers. Children are also negatively affected, since noise is easily generated, distractions are favored, and so on. Similarly, Keefe and Moore (2004) report that small classrooms make it difficult for special education teachers to make the necessary spatial interventions aimed at more effective co-teaching.

Conclusion

Parallel Support is an important institution for the Greek educational system, it helps socially and schoolly integrate children with special educational needs, has a positive impact on the child's emotional field and at the same time offers significant help to the families of children with special educational needs participating in PC program

Teachers believe that parallel support is needed at school, it is an effective program for children with special educational needs and gives them the possibility of equal opportunities. Other international researchers, such as Murawski and Hughes (2009), who consider that pupils with special educational needs in a co-teaching setting benefit from behavior, social skills and self-esteem in relation to the importance of co-teaching with children taught in self-contained structures of special education. Similarly, Keefe and Moore (2004) emphasize the importance of co-teaching because students with special educational needs are less likely to be stigmatized due to their disability than they were in separate special education units. Parallel support enables students with disabilities to interact, share and collaborate during their learning experiences. They also offer a variety of opportunities for social inclusion through activities and events in the field of general education.

Theoharis (2007) reports that attending pupils in general classes is also a matter of social justice, since it enables children with disabilities - who have been excluded from general education - to co-exist and attend curricula with their peers. In addition, many parents of children with special educational needs consider co-teaching to be of great

importance since they believe that their children benefit greatly when most of their education is in the context of general education coexisting with other children without special educational needs (Cardona, 2009).

Parallel support is beneficial for children with and without special educational needs. Karagiannis Stainback and Stainback (1996) report that from inclusive education students with disabilities learn to respect the individual's right to the dispute. At the same time, the opportunities for building social relations between students coexisting in the same general class are also given. Also, from the interaction of children with each other, typical peers often support and help children with special educational needs, thus developing the feeling of social sensitivity.

Suggestions

Parallel support was recognized by research educators as a viable type of co-teaching for the education of children with disabilities in the least restrictive environment. Many schools implement cooperative programs, enabling students with special educational needs to be trained in general classes. The parallel support program is implemented in a number of schools, which are a fraction of the total number of schools in Greece. Taking into account that only primary schools are about 12,000 (Greek Ministry of Education, 2012) and in almost every school there is a pupil who needs support in a Bachelor's degree, then it is necessary to extend the program. Also, not to stop at middle school, but to continue at high school.

A key issue for a better implementation of the PS model. is to ensure the equivalence of teachers. As a first step, the special education teacher could be defined in one class rather than individual pupils. Also, teachers who implement parallel support have a lack of specific knowledge and skills related to special education issues and with parallel support. The state must, with flexible and modern forms of training, be able to train both introductions and during the PS program. special and general education teachers in order to be effective in the tasks entrusted to them. In addition, curricula that address inclusion and inclusion issues should be re-examined at undergraduate level so that future teachers are prepared to teach in a collaborative environment. In a training program that aims, among other things, in the integration of pupils with disabilities, not only is the will to offer services to its students. Improving infrastructure and enhancing schools where parallel support for materials, resources and resources is being implemented is seen as imperative. Enhancement in materials and media should be accurately related to the diagnosis of the child being supported.

As for the roles of co-teachers who implement parallel support, it has emerged that in many cases teachers do not equally share their roles and responsibilities. The role of special education teacher is complementary to that of colleague of general

education teacher. In co-teaching, the role of each teacher should be distinct and equal. Collaboration among co-teachers is recognized as a key component of co-teaching. In the literature, co-teaching is considered successful when it involves (a) co-design, (b) co-teaching, (c) co-evaluation, and (c) classroom management. -Training and needs training for co-workers in collaborative practices.

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