‘Teacher Beliefs about Teaching Children with Dyslexia/Learning Difficulties in Mainstream Primary Schools in Greece’

A thesis submitted to the University of Manchester for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
in the Faculty of Humanities

2012

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Abstract

The study is designed to capture teacher knowledge, beliefs and attitudes towards the teaching and learning of children with dyslexia/learning difficulties within the Greek context. It provides insights into understanding about teachers’ attitudes towards inclusion, which can shape professional identity. The umbrella research question is: how can teachers’ experiences of, and beliefs and attitudes about, children with learning difficulties/dyslexia influence teachers’ attitudes towards inclusion, in the context of Greek mainstream primary school? The meaning of dyslexia is viewed from the point of view of mainstream and special primary school teachers’, which is in turn informed by the Greek government’s revised definitions. In practice in Greece ‘dyslexia’ is used as an umbrella term for learning difficulties. Despite the seeming contradiction, it is not uncommon for children with mild learning difficulties to be categorised as having dyslexia. The focus of this thesis is then on the teachers’ beliefs about teaching children with some kind of learning difficulty, who they would consider as dyslexic. Recent education policies encourage a search for pedagogical methods and teaching techniques, to respond to the diversity of the needs within mainstream classrooms. However, although the Greek government has introduced inclusion, many teachers believe that they do not have the skills or resources to manage the situation.

Multiple case study methodology is used and the unit of analysis is the individual teacher. This allows engagement with teachers’ beliefs about inclusion of children with dyslexia within the Greek context. Analysis was within the set of data connected with the individual teacher in order to show the existence of their beliefs and later themes were identified across the cases. The sample consists of 20 Greek primary teachers: 17 mainstream teachers and 3 special school teachers. It is purposive, not representing the wider population, for it is deliberately selected to capture a diversity of beliefs informed by known factors, according to international literature (age, teaching experience, severity of case etc). This provides evidence for the existence of identified beliefs rather than the inference of the prevalence of certain beliefs amongst the population. A number of research instruments have been used: interviews with concept maps, observations, narratives and review of documentation. Progressive focusing on the research question during initial analysis led to the identification of two of these cases for more in-depth study, including sustained classroom observation. These are referred to as the “in-depth cases”.

Thematic analysis reveals themes of beliefs and attitudes, encoding problems that participants are trying to resolve or to make sense of, and how certain beliefs about the inclusion of children with learning difficulties are mediated by deeply rooted cultural models of disability, compassion and learning. The diversity is illustrated amongst participants with a small number of examples. The study situates the individual accounts in the wider socio-cultural and political context. Prevalent teacher attitudes combine high performance- as historically established in Greece-transmission teaching and disability as limiting, a lack in some way. On the other hand, alternative inclusive practices come mainly from teachers who had received specific related professional development, which included opportunity for critical reflection on their teaching practices. These cases demonstrate the diversity of certain beliefs that influence attitudes, and give a pointer to how one might tackle change.
Declaration

No portion of the work referred to in the thesis has been submitted in support of an application for another degree or qualification of this or any other university or other institute of learning.

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‘We live in a sea of stories, and like the fish who will be the last to discover water, we have our own difficulties grasping what it is like to swim in stories’

(Bruner, 1996, p.147)
Acknowledgments

I would like to thank my supervisors, Prof. Olwen Macnamara and Dr. Pauline S. Davis, for supporting and believing in me.
Greek Acronyms

**ΕΑΕ**  
Special Education and Learning  
(Ειδική Αγωγή και Εκπαίδευση)

**ΕΚΚΕ**  
National Centre of Social Research  
(Εθνικό Κέντρο Κοινωνικών Ερευνών)

**ΕΠΕΑΕΚ**  
‘Education and Initial Professional Training’ Project  
(Επιχειρησιακό Πρόγραμμα  
‘Εκπαίδευση και Αρχική  
Επαγγελματική Κατάρτιση’)  

**ΚΔΑΥ**  
Identification, Assessment and Provision Centers  
(Κέντρα Διάγνωσης,  
Αξιολόγησης και Υποστήριξης)

**ΚΕΔΔΥ**  
Differential Diagnosis, Diagnosis and Provision Centers  
(Κέντρα Διαφοροδιάγνωσης,  
Διάγνωσης και Υποστήριξης)

**ΣΜΕΑΕ**  
Special Education and Learning School Units  
(Σχολικές Μονάδες  
Ειδικής Αγωγής και  
Εκπαίδευσης)

**ΥπΕΠΘ**  
Ministry of National Education and Religious Affairs  
(Υπουργείο Εθνικής Παιδείας  
και Θρησκευμάτων)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>CM</td>
<td>Cultural Model</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CPD</td>
<td>Continuing Professional Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICIDH</td>
<td>International Classification of Impairments, Disabilities and Handicaps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IEP</td>
<td>Individual Education Plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LSA</td>
<td>Learning Support Assistant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MCS</td>
<td>Multiple Case Study</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RQ</td>
<td>Research Question</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEN</td>
<td>Special Educational Needs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SpLD</td>
<td>Specific Learning Difficulties</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UPIAS</td>
<td>Union of the Physically Impaired Against Segregation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WHO</td>
<td>World Health Organisation</td>
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Glossary of Greek Terms

1. **dyslexia**: an umbrella category which largely includes children who would, in the UK, be classified also as dyslexic, but which also includes some children with other learning difficulties. Lately known in Greece as “special educational difficulty in writing and reading”, dyslexia is a special educational difficulty, which consists of pupils’ weakness to acquire linguistic skillfulness relative to reading, writing and spelling. This functional weakness manifests, despite the adequate mental intelligence, normal emotional development, appropriate teaching and rich in stimulants environment. It is also considered a deficiency in information processing’ (Circular 17-05-2000, p. 1).

2. **inclusion/integration**: within the Greek context, inclusion is about educating all children in mainstream schools that have all necessary standards for providing equal educational opportunities. This requires a flexible curriculum, accessible buildings, compulsory differentiation of teaching/assessment and mainly staff trained to implement inclusive practices. Because inclusive practices are not yet well established, discussions about inclusion in Greece have integration as a starting point. Integration means children adjusting to the mainstream school system, where changes are not made on the basis of curriculum or the teaching/learning process.

3. **learning difficulties/SEN**: ‘significant difficulties in learning due to physical, mental, emotional and developmental problems, psychological and neuropsychic disorders which, according to scientific assessment affect the process of adjustment and learning at school’ (Official Greek Government Gazette, 3699/2008, p.3500).

4. **lyceum**: a category of educational institution defined within the education system of many European countries. In Greece, lyceum includes the three grades of upper secondary education.

5. **withdrawal class**: ‘the Greek ‘special class’ is much closer to the US resource or pull out programmes, or to what the British describe as part-time withdrawal in a learning support base’ (Vlachou, 2006, p.41). ‘Support rooms operate within ordinary schools and enroll a small number (between 8 and 15) of pupils from other ordinary classes [...] Attendance in these classes is generally part-time, depending on each pupil’s learning difficulties. That is, a pupil may attend the special class, e.g. for language instruction, a few hours per day or week, during a short or long period of time [...] while also attending the ordinary class for the school subjects’ (Greek Ministry of National Education and Religious Affairs, C6/399/1.10.1984, p.1).
Mary Riga graduated from the Department of Primary Education of the National and Kapodistrian University (Athens) and obtained her first degree in Primary School Education (2002), including teacher training qualifications. She continued her studies at the University of Manchester (Faculty of Education) where she conducted research under the title ‘Case Studies of Children With Dyslexia in a British Primary School’ (2003), submitted for the degree of M. Ed. in Special and Inclusive Education. She was later placed as a mainstream teacher in primary schools (Santorini-Greece) for two years. In 2005 she accepted a placement as a permanent teacher seconded by the Greek Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs, through the Greek Embassy in London in Greek community schools at Liverpool, teaching Greek as a second/foreign language. She obtained the degree of M. Sc. in Educational Research at the University of Manchester under the title ‘Teacher Identities in Relation to Teaching Children with Dyslexia in Mainstream Primary Schools in Greece’ (2006) leading to the current PhD research. For the last seven years, she has been placed as a special teacher in withdrawal classrooms within mainstream schools in Athens.
Chapter One

OVERVIEW

1.1 Rationale
1.2 Research Questions and Research Design
1.3 Limitations of The Study
1.4 Academic Influences and Contribution to Knowledge
1.5 Introducing the Researcher
1.6 Outline of the Chapters

1.1 Rationale

The thesis looks at teacher beliefs in relation to teaching children with special educational needs (SEN) and learning difficulties in mainstream primary schools in Greece. More specifically in the Greek context these children are labelled as having dyslexia, but in Greece this group is broad and as well as including children with dyslexia, it also includes children with mild learning difficulties etc. Because of this I am interested in Greek policy that includes such children named as with dyslexia, and which demands more inclusive teaching practices. International literature on teacher beliefs has informed the development of socially inclusive policies for education (Avramidis and Norwich, 2002). Gradually, teachers’ attitudes have shifted to become more accepting of inclusion (Scruggs and Mastropieri, 1996). However, generally speaking, teachers’ efficacy is challenged in every vision of teaching sketched by successive reforms. Considering their sense of self-efficacy as an indicator for their ability to affect pupils’ learning positively (Ashton, 1985), the study links with teachers’ models of (i) themselves as teachers and (ii) their models of dyslexia/learning difficulties, as identified through teaching attitudes in mainstream classrooms.
The focus is on beliefs about children who in Greece are classed as having dyslexia, due to their high incidence in primary school classrooms. As yet typically children with other SEN/disabilities are under-represented in year statistics. In Greece, the latest law (Greek Government, 2008) bearing the title “Special Education and Learning of Individuals with Disabilities or Special Educational Needs” defines disabilities and SEN as:

“significant difficulties in learning due to physical, mental, emotional and developmental problems, psychological and neuropsychic disorders which, according to scientific assessment affect the process of adjustment and learning at school” (Greek Government, 2008, p.3500).

To date, in Greece, emphasis seems to be more on administrative arrangements rather than on instructional-curricular matters (Lampropoulou and Panteliadou, 2005). The following default term is the only official Greek government definition for dyslexia given by the Ministry of Education in 2000:

“Dyslexia, lately known as “special educational difficulty in writing and reading”, is a special educational difficulty, which consists of pupils’ weakness to acquire linguistic skillfulness relative to reading, writing and spelling. This functional weakness manifests, despite the adequate mental intelligence, normal emotional development, appropriate teaching and rich in stimulants environment. It is also considered a deficiency in information processing (Circular 17-05-2000, p. 1).

Greek inclusion policies and support for pupils with dyslexia/learning difficulties (for the purpose of this thesis as a default I am going to refer to such children as having learning difficulties) in mainstream primary schools will be covered in more detail in the documentary analysis in chapter two. In brief, the status of disability/impairment in society is related to the individual and social model with dyslexia/learning difficulties being at the focal point, difficult to remedy through normal teaching methods. Its high frequency in primary classrooms places dyslexia almost at the top of the list of educational needs in the Greek context, with inclusion remaining a challenging, under-researched issue.

The scientific viewpoint stresses the need to further inform research to achieve a more inclusive culture. International studies refer either to inclusion alone, or to
inclusion of SEN or dyslexia, or to inclusion in primary/ nursery education (Laviree and Cook, 1979; Salvia and Munson, 1986; Coates, 1989; Semmel et al, 1991; Vaughn et al, 1996). If the desirable inclusive culture is to be achieved for pupils and teachers who are already part of the inclusion process and for those who will follow in the future (Carrington, 1996), class teachers responsible for meeting SEN needs must be willing to provide for these pupils (Ellins and Porter, 2005). The study is then concerned with teachers’ espoused beliefs about their practices (rather than their actual practice), since beliefs influence their dispositions towards inclusion. Teachers interpret their worlds in diverse ways, using the filters of their own context-dependent beliefs in relation to background factors, cultural models (Gee, 1999) and espoused practices. Cultural models are visions of ‘the real world’ and what people perceive as ‘normal’ people, objects and events (p.60). Construction of different cultural models influences the way specific groups of people make sense of their lives and importantly also their actions. ‘Typical’ or ‘normal’ cultural models imply mediating teachers’ actions in terms of experiences (Davis, 2008). Cultural models constituted an important aspect of the approach to analysis, ie. a discourse analysis, along the lines of Gee (1999) seeks to identify cultural models that are taken up by people and used to shape their actions/attitudes. As well as identifying the cultural models, the thesis also postulates the strength of this theoretical framework.

1.2 Research Questions and Research Design

Epistemology attempts to provide answers to how and what we can know, and involves thinking about the nature of knowledge and the validity and reliability of claims to knowledge (Willig, 2001, p.2). Therefore, in relation to the research’s aim to ‘understand’, the associated epistemology is in essence interpretative, since concern is with meaning, moving towards understanding of their interpretation of the world (Cohen et al, 2000). The role of the theory is perceived as directing the researcher’s attention to what is to be examined within the study’s framework (Willig, 2001): what needs to be understood are teachers’ beliefs about with dyslexia/learning difficulties, and the way these attitudes relate to teaching and learning, or may even influence attitudes towards policies of inclusion in different educational contexts where, for instance, school level of organisation plays influential role.
**RQ:** How can teachers’ experiences of, and beliefs and attitudes about, children with learning difficulties/dyslexia influence teachers’ attitudes towards inclusion, in the context of Greek mainstream primary school?

**Sub-questions:**

(a) Who are the children that are considered as having dyslexia/learning difficulties in the context of modern day Greece?

(b) What are teacher beliefs and attitudes about the teaching and learning of children with dyslexia/learning difficulties in the context of modern day Greece?

(c) What are teacher beliefs and attitudes towards government policies of inclusion?

‘How can’ means that examples of how beliefs can influence actions are to be identified through narratives, that demonstrate the importance of certain (identified by the study) beliefs that influence disposition. The study can hence give a pointer to how one might tackle change. In essence, it is about understanding the process of change. How certain beliefs influence discourses, with dyslexia being situated in a high performance discourse of this teacher-centered education system. At a theoretical level, informed policy intends ultimately to change beliefs and to foster a more socially inclusive society in Greece.

The nature of the research and sub-questions suggests a research design to improve understanding of the complex processes of formation of teacher attitudes, in terms of ‘how’ and ‘why’ that Yin (1994, p.20) identifies as more appropriate questions for a case study strategy. Methodologically, in examining teacher discourses, there was a need to adopt a framework with a multi-layered analysis that would tap into beliefs and perceptions which inform teachers’ actions. A framework that would highlight evidence of cultural models (Gee, 1999) and that would unpack teachers’ attitudes regarding cultural models, to achieve methodological and substantial contribution. This research focused on qualitative case studies, enriched by narratives and concept maps - after Hoz and Gonik (2001) and Novak (1998) - to improve understanding of the complex processes of teacher experiences, attitudes and practices, and provide directions for more appropriate provision. Miles and Huberman (1984), Davies (2008)
and Willig (2001) provided a good methodological framework to work on structuring the research design, data collection and analysis/interpretation.

The study introduces 20 primary teachers (17 mainstream and 3 special teachers - 1 special teacher was in a special school) that agreed to participate in the study, from 12 (mainstream/special) primary schools around Greece. Schools were contacted in June/July 2006, to prepare the ground for fieldwork to start in October 2006, to allow time to select and inform the schools for the research, and to allocate the cases of teachers that would suit the needs of the study. The sample was chosen to include participants with variation in respect to the biographic factors: age, teaching experience, mainstream/special and urban/rural school context, subject specialism etc (Avramidis and Norwich, 2002). The 20 teachers were interviewed on two occasions: the actual round of interviews with concept maps started in Athens in September 2006, and research was completed in April 2007, with the second round of interviews.

The use of concept mapping and qualitative interviews is an unusual methodology for research about inclusion and special educational needs conducted in Greece, as most of the main studies are questionnaire based: through concept mapping – within the Novak (1998) tradition, the particular study brings a different methodological perspective to SEN and inclusion research, which tend to rely on questionnaire-based surveys and quantitative measures of attitudes. As a method of interviewing, concept mapping (Hoz and Gonik, 2001) can provide a way of capturing cultural models, and how teachers position themselves in relation to these in the discourse.

Two of the teachers participating in the study agreed to be involved in more in-depth case studies. Case studies were unique examples of real teachers in real situations throughout lessons with focus on their perceptions of dyslexia/learning difficulties, in order to provide a clearer picture of how teachers position themselves in the discourse with respect to teaching pedagogies towards children with dyslexia. Research took place in natural settings - Year 3 and Year 4 - and gave me the chance to change design and reconsider, whenever appearing unsatisfying, which justified a variety of approaches and choice of the most appropriate methods. For in-depth case studies a month in each school was needed. Each classroom observation included observation voice files (30 hrs of observation in each classroom) and field notes. Additionally, documentation provided by the Head Teacher and classroom teachers included SEN policy of primary schools, summaries of current performance of chosen children and brief reports formed by the
1.3 Limitations of the Study

It is useful to set the parameters, in terms of what this study intends to do and what it was never intended to do. Limitations are imposed by the context, the time frame within which this was worked and the design. The study is concerned with teachers’ self reports and espoused beliefs about their practices, since beliefs influence their attitudes towards inclusion. It is not intended to focus on teachers’ actual practice. Also, the sample was not claimed to be a representative, rather it was designed to capture a diversity of beliefs and provide an outcome of a set of teacher beliefs. Limitations and reflections on the study will be explicitly covered in methodology and discussion chapters.

1.4 Academic Influences and Contribution to Knowledge

There is limited knowledge regarding teachers’ beliefs toward inclusion of children with dyslexia in Greece -an under researched issue in this context- and even less regarding how they change in the event of different ways of inclusion. After an era of research inertia, a few innovative and insightful studies appeared recently ‘igniting’ questions regarding Greek special education and inclusion attitudes. Symeonidou and Phtiaka’s (2009) study on the development of in-service teacher education courses partly touches upon the significance of inclusion and the need to deconstruct the dominance of teachers’ oppressive assumptions about disability and to promote the centrality of their role. Examination of different kinds of teacher beliefs and attitudes is used as a means to analyse changing attitudes/practices and to create a link to the Greek pedagogic cultures of teaching and learning. Internationally, a few studies have looked at the reflexive relation between teacher’s identity as certain kinds of teachers, and at their teaching practices (Atkinson, 2004; Walkington, 2005; Woods and Jeffrey, 2002; Jones, 2004). Avramidis and Norwich (2002) argue that research should shift to studies carrying the potential of deepening our understanding, such as longitudinal qualitative case studies, narratives, storytelling etc.
This study carries the potential for deepening understanding (1) methodologically, by adopting an alternative research design to examine teacher attitudes towards inclusion; (2) theoretically, by contributing by improving understanding on teachers’ experience of teaching pupils with dyslexia; and (3) professionally, by informing policy intended ultimately to foster a more socially inclusive society in Greece and change attitudes towards pupils, currently marginalised. Here, the studies of Avramidis and Norwich (2002) and van den Berg (2002) on teachers’ inclusive beliefs towards the general philosophy of inclusion and factors interrelated provided major help. Any findings in Greek literature were examined in terms of how they fit in the broader international literature with regards to teachers’ perceptions towards inclusion through allocated established knowledge, categorised and searched in a broader framework. This evaluation remained context-specific, with focus on Greek inclusive education and formation of perceptions, and a more inclusive culture. The focus has also been on understanding the process of possible change, after Bruner (1996) through dyslexia- in part standing for disability (given that some teachers use this term to mean various things) - as situated in the high performance discourse of education.

1.5 Introducing the Researcher

At this point I have to consider where I stand as a teacher-researcher, in terms of beliefs, hopes and aspirations. Inevitably, perspectives and assumptions regarding the world, as well as how and where I position myself socially, have implications for these specific research interests, research questions, methodologies and methods etc. (Wellington et al, 2005). Undertaking an autobiographical account type of investigation is a productive way of achieving it, enabling critical insights regarding the influence my life experiences may have had upon my perspectives, orientations and assumptions. This provides a basis for a section where I make my ‘researcher positionality’ (Ibid, p.21) clear:

‘there is a crucial interactive relationship between individuals’ lives, perceptions, experiences, beliefs, values and the various identities they negotiate for themselves, and the social, cultural and historical contexts in which these lives are lived’ (Ibid, p.20).
According to Sikes and Goodson (2003, p.32) research cannot be disembodied: the researcher’s personality cannot be taken out of research process, and as reflected through life stories can enable readers to locate and make sense of the work. Therefore contextualisation is essential, since it can help counter bias, often levelled at qualitative research (Wellington et al., 2005) and reflexivity being an inherent part of the research endeavour (Hertz, 1997).

Within this academic journey and the personal one along with it (see Wellington et al., 2005, p.33) understanding the influences that have shaped me as a researcher and as a student, are illuminative, as particular aspects of my life have less to do with me and more with the consequence of social positioning and my awareness of theoretical and cultural models. Having undertaken this kind of exercise not only informed understanding about choosing appropriate methodologies but also my coming into terms with identity and behaviour patterns involving ideas, habits, expectations and responses that have been learnt and stored, often unquestionably. It is a process of learning and being, especially because of the professional settings I have been related to. For those working in education recognising the ‘implications of this process has provided valuable insights, through their own lived experiences, into the complexities of learning and of adopting and adapting to multiple roles and responsibilities’ (Ibid., p.35).

Besides the significant contribution of this reflective commentary to personal development and professional practice, I incorporate such insights, exposing and challenging my identity as a researcher and a teacher. The initial idea to incorporate an autobiography was related to the consideration of the effects of my past and fieldwork experience. The autobiography - generally used at several levels of involvement-related its significance to reflexivity, in terms of acknowledging that knowledge produced is partially a product of the my social situation. This important fact should be addressed not only during analysis, but even in reporting findings. Recalling the experience of producing a self-account, there was one thing strengthening my confidence: it constituted a reproduction of emotional responses to the participants’ positions and generally to themes emerging from the chosen topic. A way of seeing and recognising my reflexivity within these themes: seeing myself as a resource and showing my perspective. This is where autobiography becomes a more intimate part of the research process (Davies, 2008, p.228). From this interaction between researcher-as-self and researcher-as-other, social knowledge is produced, informed by theoretical positions of other social research, with access to knowledge and experience of the researcher as an
1.6 Outline of the Chapters

Within a narrowly described review of inclusion/integration and legislative reforms in the Greek educational system, children with SEN are often found in mainstream provision, with learning difficulties representing the most populated category of SEN. The second chapter investigates the children who are considered as having dyslexia/learning difficulties in the context of modern day Greece. The status of disability/impairment in society is related to the medical and social model, with learning disabilities being difficult to remedy through normal teaching methods. Teachers in Greece tend to think on the basis of a medical model and favour special schooling for special groups of pupils (Polychronopoulou, 1998). Recent education policies try to promote a search for pedagogical methods and teaching techniques so as to respond to the heterogeneity of the needs within mainstream classrooms. Practically, a minority of teachers, especially special teachers, are critically facing this educational reality and trying to innovate in teaching approaches. By reflecting on current thinking internationally, a socio-cultural perspective against labelling and a chaotic framework of terminologies provides me with the analytical tools to pursue a social model approach within the school context.

In chapter three, the focus of the research is outlined, the methodological choices made, the shape of the design of the study and the data gathering and analysis methods employed. It introduces the teachers that agreed to participate in the study by giving brief biographical data about them and it outlines the research process and timescale of their involvement. Finally, I reflect upon the parameters of the study, its limitations in respect of methodology and as a consequence what it is aspiring to achieve and what is beyond its scope. Importantly, I also reflect upon my role as researcher in undertaking the investigation and what impact that had upon the data gathered and its interpretation and presentation.

Progressive focusing on the research question during initial analysis leads to the identification of two in-depth cases, including sustained classroom observation. These cases are not conceptually different to the rest, but offered more extensive and diverse
data collection opportunities and both teachers, working in Athens, currently had dyslexia/learning difficulties pupils in their classrooms. Primarily, the forth chapter illustrates the two teachers’ stories and four additional narratives selected from the full data set to demonstrate the range in which significant cultural models were used.

Narrative accounts are expected to show how the teachers have positioned themselves using cultural models, based on in-depth thematic and discourse analysis of interview transcripts, written accounts, follow-up interviews, reports for children and field notes. Then analysis moves to other accounts, so as to demonstrate the diversity found: an account of the beliefs and cultural models drawn upon from the thematic analysis. ‘I’ statements are used according to Gee’s methods to identify the cultural models and show their positioning. For the purpose of this study, teachers’ profiles represent prior knowledge, attitudes and beliefs about inclusion as expressed in interviews.

Chapter five offers a discussion on the research questions posed and presents a general report of what can be claimed from data, and it shows how it is linked into the literature. It is structured around the three research questions such that section 5.2 explores the findings in relation to research question (c) ‘what are teacher beliefs and attitudes towards government policies on inclusion’. Section 5.3 explores the findings in relation to research question (a) ‘who are the children who are considered as having dyslexia/learning difficulties in the context of modern day Greece?’, and section 5.4 explores the findings in relation to research question (b) ‘what are teacher beliefs and attitudes about the teaching and learning of children with dyslexia in the context of modern day Greece?’. The chapter concludes with section 5.5 and 5.6 which explore two key overcharging themes that emerge from the Data pertaining to teacher beliefs and attitudes. Firstly how they frame teacher identity, and in particular special teacher identity, and secondly the importance of ‘compassion’ as a cultural model and as an orienting principle in the way teachers positioned themselves towards this and in the way this impacted on their attitudes to inclusion.

The last chapter summarises the work developed around the thesis argument and places it within the wider context, by outlining the conclusion and by setting out possible questions as subjects for further research. Additionally, a brief outline of ethical dilemmas is given about data access and manipulation, emerging while planning and conducting research fieldwork. Being a part of the same society and its cultural meanings, and most importantly, of the same professional caste, I perceive my
narrative/story as a more intimate part of the research process. The question of being an insider is nearly always problematic. My knowledge as an insider cannot be taken as either unquestionably complete or true, yet, undertaking an autobiographical account is a productive way of enabling critical insights regarding the influence my life experiences may have had upon my perspectives, orientations and assumptions. This kind of contextualisation is essential, since it can help counter bias, with reflexivity being an inherent part of the research endeavour.
Chapter Two

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction
2.2 SEN Legislative Milestones and Implications
2.3 Inclusive Education
2.4 Medical and Social Model
   2.4.1 Disability and Impairment in Disability Studies
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2.1 Introduction

Within a narrowly described review of inclusion/integration and legislative reforms in the Greek educational system, children with SEN are often found in mainstream provision, with learning difficulties representing the most populated category of SEN. This chapter investigates the children who are considered as having learning difficulties/dyslexia in the context of modern day Greece. The status of disability/impairment in society is related to the medical and social model, with learning
disabilities being difficult to remedy through normal teaching methods. Teachers in Greece tend to think on the basis of a medical model and favour special schooling for special groups of pupils (Polychronopoulou, 1998). Recent education policies try to promote a search for pedagogical methods and teaching techniques so as to respond to the heterogeneity of the needs within mainstream classrooms. Practically, a minority of teachers, especially special teachers, are critically facing this educational reality and trying to innovate in teaching approaches. By reflecting on current thinking internationally, a socio-cultural perspective against labelling and a chaotic framework of terminologies provides me with the analytical tools to pursue a social model approach within the school context.

2.2 SEN Legislative Milestones and Implications

At a time when integration of children with special needs into mainstream education became a matter of debate (1960-1970), charity and welfare institutions in Greece continued to employ practices of exclusion (Polychronopoulou, 1995). By the 1980s, more ‘democratic’ educational policy fortified legislation to develop more inclusive practices for pupils with special needs in mainstream schools (Polychronopoulou, 1998; Lampropoulou and Padiadou, 2005).

The first legislation regarding special education was introduced in Greece in 1972 (Decree 1222/72). This highlighted the importance of additional teacher training in special education, which was to take place for an extra year following general teacher training. In the light of a new-born democratic government in 1974, new legislation aimed to promote the equality of individuals with special needs (Kouroublis, 1994). Additionally, lobbying by the organisations with an interest in special education resulted in the introduction of a new law (Law 225/75), which increased the post-general teacher education training to become a special teacher to two years (Lampropoulou, 1989; Damasiotou et al, 1994). However, despite the emphasis on special education teacher training and the associated inference on special education as a distinct sector, a significant policy change was introduced in the Law 1143/81 that became part of a combined law regarding structural and operational matters in primary/secondary education (O’ Hanlon, 1993; Greek Ministry of National Education, 1994). In 1985, the
Act on the ‘Structure and Operation of Primary and Secondary Education’ (Law, 1566/85) made special schooling an integral part of general education and transferred responsibilities of special education to the Ministry of Education (Vlachou, 2006).

This first special education law (1143/1981) dealt with education and rehabilitation of individuals ‘deviating from normal’ (Official Greek Government Gazette, 1981), and resulted in an increase in the number of special schools specialising in different categories of disability (Stasinos, 1999). Pupils were categorised according to their special needs in ten categories of ‘handicap’ (Vlachou, 2006, p.41). Some argued that, at this time, labelling and segregation were inevitable, as having formal categories of special educational needs strengthened the medical-deficit approach (Vlachou-Balafouti, 1999; Zoniou-Sideri, 2000).

Preparatory actions for implementation of the integration of children classed as having special educational needs, were encouraged in the bill that was enacted in 1985 (Greek Government Official Gazette, 1985). This move began in 1983-84, and included the establishment of special schools within the grounds of mainstream schools, and, in 1988, led to the development of the ‘resource room’ (withdrawal/special classroom), special diagnostic and support services, and the first models of fully functional school integration, within the framework of the Community initiative HELIOS I and II. Through those programmes, the integration of children with special educational needs in mainstream school settings developed quickly in Greece.

It is important to clarify that special classes function quite differently from those in most countries. Researchers use different terms; indicatively, Vlachou (2006) elucidates that ‘the Greek ‘special class’ is much closer to the US resource or pull out programmes, or to what the British describe as part-time withdrawal in a learning support base’ (p.41) and advocates the use of the term ‘support room/class’ instead of ‘special class’ as a more accurate description of such provision in Greece. For the purpose of this study, and in order to avoid ambiguity, the language of the latest law (3699/2008) will be used: ‘Special Education and Learning Units’ and ‘Inclusion Classes’ (Greek Government Official Gazette, 3699/2008, p.3505), by which is meant support rooms and/or support classes.

1 HELIOS Programmes I and II were created by the Council of the European Community, to encourage promotion of inclusive approaches in school practice, through development of various activities. The movement towards integration was further highlighted through the participation of Greece in the European programme HELIOS I; as stated by O’Hanlon (1993), this was an action programme towards the social and economic integration of people with disabilities.

2 ‘Integration unit’ is the term used by Boutskou (2007,p.292)
The Greek educational community considered changes highlighted in the law in 1985, as ‘recycling’ of previous reforms and preserving the individualistic orientation for ‘individuals with special needs’. Enormous and rapid development of special classrooms took place (1984-1989) in an ad hoc manner to absorb children with learning difficulties (Lampropoulou and Padeliadou, 2005). However, although special classrooms were attended by children on a full-time basis, they did not employ specialised teaching methods and resources (Garnett, 1988), and acted as a bridge between a partition model and the perspective of mixed schooling, while embracing neither model fully.

The 1998 Bill for Education of children and adults with SEN (Polychronopoulou, 1998) supported school inclusion and, at the same time, recognised that this education in the mainstream might not be suitable for every child or for its entire educational journey. It suggested a series of alternative solutions including various types of educational placement and intervention. These types extended from full/partial inclusion in mainstream classrooms to everyday education in special schools (appendix 1, p.249). In the event of a child not benefitting from the teaching process in a mainstream classroom, it could be provided with education outside mainstream schools. Greek legislation did not highlight the need for teaching or support assistants within mainstream classrooms, so that kind of support was not provided. Parents represented a high percentage of supporters of full inclusion and rejected almost every educational model of intervention, which did not guarantee full inclusion in mainstream schools. According to them, schools should aim at improving children’s social sufficiency and at changing teachers’ and children’s attitudes towards children with SEN.

A later law (2817/2000) (Greek Government Official Gazette, 2000) that referred to the ‘Education of Individuals with SEN’, emphasised that only when the nature of the severity of a disability was such that education in regular classrooms could not be achieved to a satisfactory level, could children be removed from a mainstream educational environment and either attend special classrooms or be educated at home. It ruled diagnosis and education of pupils with SEN in primary and secondary levels, in combination to articles 32-36 of 2566/1985 law. Special education is now provided for pupils with “...specific difficulties in education, such as dyslexia, difficulties in numeracy, in reading...” (article 1,§2). It introduced the development of integrated Individual Educational Plans (IEPs) (2817/2000) for children with SEN, adjusted within the general curriculum (Polychronopoulou, 1998), and created diagnostic and
consultative centres at prefecture level (K.Δ.A.Y.)\(^3\) (2817/2000-FEK 78A) (Greek Government Official Gazette, 2000) available to the entire student population, estimated at 1,475,819 students (Koutrouba et al., 2006). In general terms, all K.Δ.A.Y. actions, efforts and proposals had an educational orientation (Ministerial Resolution- FEK 1503/τ. Β’/8-11-2001). They aimed at the development of the personality of individuals having SEN, and at their capabilities and skills improvement (Greek Government Official Gazette, 2001). Personnel consisted of educators specialised in special education and professionals (psychologists, physiotherapists, logopedics). The goal was to enable pupils with SEN inclusion and re-incorporation into the common educational system, professional training, participation in the productive process, acceptance by society, and equal social progress. An effort was made to meet Stasinos’ argument (1999) on necessary consideration of both medical and educational dimensions within dyslexia. ‘Special classes’ were re-defined as ‘integration units; however it was limited to a mere change of terminology. The 2002 reform (Greek Government Official Gazette, Law 2817/2002) offered additional assistance to teachers to eliminate lack of resources and administrative support, regarding formation of their perceptions on inclusion. In special classrooms (ΣΜΕΑ), within mainstream schools, educational programs were expected to develop based upon pupils’ IEP framework. It implies provision of one-to-one teaching or group teaching, depending upon pupils’ specific needs, in a particular within-school-area, and a daily school time-table. Such lessons aim at supporting pupils, so that continuity and connection with the daily plan within the mainstream classroom can be achieved. The total of hours of a pupil’s attendance in a special classroom (resource room), apart from extreme cases, cannot exceed 10hrs per week.

In 2005, 19,038 pupils with SEN (as mapped in appendix 2, p. 250) were officially recorded (1,28% of the total population) in correspondence to 1,354 special teachers (0,86% out of 156,069 teachers) working in special education at that time (Vlachou- Balafouti, 2001). To counterbalance problems faced by pupils with SEN, these pupils are examined orally (Decree 86/2001, Decree 26/2002, Decree 80/2003). In within-school examinations pupils are examined orally by each subject teacher, using the same tests that the rest of the pupils are expected to reply in writing (Circular

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\(^3\) Diagnostic, Assessment and Provision Centers started functioning officially in 2000, being directly dependent on the Ministry of Education. The aim is to offer service regarding identification, assessment and support/provision to pupils, especially to those with SpLD, as well support, information and ‘sensitisation’ to educators, parents and to society generally. Identification of SEN pupils/students in Greece ideally takes place during Year 1 of primary school, through the use of a special screen-test system implemented by these centers (Koutrouba et al., 2008).
Γ2/224/15-1-1993) in all levels of education. Markantonaki (2004) highlights the difficulties as regards assessment, -apart from a few cases with ‘attached’ assessment reports from K.Δ.Α.Υ.-, lack of time and resource books as patterns. The existing insufficient, knowledge-based, inflexible educational framework segregates pupils as ‘capable’ or ‘incapable’, since teachers are obliged to work in schools without withdrawal classes. Moreover, the teacher-centred education system leaves no space for IEPs (Padeliadou, 1995; Lampropoulou, 1997). Interestingly, a survey by Padeliadou and Lampropoulou (2005) showed the majority of primary school teachers (73.6%) using this *ex-cathedra* approach, facing all pupils as a unified team, thus precluding any possibility of individualisation and adjustment of their teaching. They concluded that teachers’ attitudes towards pupils with SEN are not positive: deficiencies showed in knowledge combined with lack of organised teacher-training courses constitute major factors of downgrading the special education provided. This was partially explained through an examination of initial teacher training: neither the number of courses in Pedagogic Departments at universities offered on special education was sufficient (only 1 course related to special education is compulsory (2%), out of 50 adequate for successful attendance) nor was the percentage of students attending them satisfactory.

The latest law (3699/2008) submitted and approved on 02/10/2008 bears the title “Special Education and Learning of Individuals with Disabilities or Special Educational Needs” (Official Greek Government Gazette, 3699/2008), clearly replacing the term ‘Special Education’. It includes general regulations regarding terms and goals, the organisation and aim of Special Education and Learning (EAE), the framework of disabilities and SEN identification, assessment and provision of services. EAE, as well as mainstream education, are mandatory and operate as inseparable parts of a unified public and gratis education. The state is bound to provide EAE in nursery/primary/secondary schools, through ΥπΕΠΘ. Terms are used with caution: there is a re-definition of the target-group ‘Pupils with Disabilities and SEN’, including gifted children. SEN are now identified and assessed by ΚΕΔΔΥ (formerly ΚΔΑΥ).

Koutrouba et al (2008) described the following options pupils are provided with through the reform. Children with mild difficulties are fully registered in mainstream schools (Koulaidis 2003): because they present no official assessment report, they are not recorded as pupils with SEN (their number estimated to exceed 130.000) (Eurostat,
For assessed pupils with SEN\(^4\), requiring extra support within mainstream schools, special units\(^5\) within the mainstream schools system are expected to cater for their inclusion. Children falling within the category of severe disabilities, require exclusive special education in a fully equipped school environment\(^6\). Boutskou (2007, p.289) states Greece has ‘low provision’ for such pupils, a low number of whom attend schools (OECD, 1999; Vislie, 2003). Statistical facts collected by the Ministry of Education yearly point to a decrease in provision for the transition from primary to secondary levels of education (Ministry of Education, 2005). The inefficiency of the system is such that in many cases students are forced to stay at home. As mentioned by Panteliadou and Botsas (2007), this does not imply that pupils with Learning Difficulties “disappear” after primary school\(^7\): within primary schools there exists a significant number of special classrooms, but this does not occur in secondary schools, where there is lack of special teachers and appropriate integration classrooms.

On the other hand, children with severe educational needs receive a lot of ‘therapy’ (Boutskou, 2007, p.289) through the private sector. By law, private centres are not authorised to provide education. The latter is deemed as a free right for all pupils/students. Any sort of therapy provided in such centres may be expensive, but expenses are subsidised by the state. Namely the Ministry of Health and Social Services provides families with funding, which is used to cover the medical centre expenses. In contrast to other countries, where the state provides some funding for special school units attended by children with SEN, here, by giving the funding to parents, it allows them to choose the kind of professional support they want their child to receive. Boutskou (2007) highlights that parents do not choose school:

> *The hidden implication is that morning public special school units (special schools and integration units) are not seen as places where ‘proper’ special education services can be delivered. The moment the Ministry of Education tries to escape the medical model of disability, the Ministry of Health*

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4 Estimated at 13,286, 72.62% of SEN pupils officially recorded.
5 During 2005, 705 special teachers (half of the percentage of special teachers) taught in 1610 special classrooms in mainstream schools (Koutrouba et al, 2008).
6 In Koutrouba et al (2008, p.414) report these were estimated to be 5212, 27.38% of the officially recorded SEN students.
7 Based upon a survey conducted in 2003 (Panteliadou and Botsas, 2007) there were 806 special classrooms working in primary education and only 32 in secondary levels. Within 4 years these numbers have altered, without, though, a significant overturning in this imbalance in primary and secondary education. As a result, pupils with Learning Difficulties attending secondary education do not receive special education and often give up school.
perpetuates the same model and the prosperous market of the medical and quasi-medical professionals’ (p.290).

Despite these implications, more recent education policies in Greece try to promote the search for pedagogical methods and teaching techniques so as to respond to the heterogeneity of the needs within mainstream classrooms. Practically, research indicated that only a minority of 5% amongst teachers were critically facing the educational reality and trying to innovate teaching approaches (Frederikou and Folerou, 1991). Boutskou (2007) argues that education reformers need to take into consideration the curriculum and method changes, as well as teachers’ fundamental beliefs and knowledge (Gerber, 1994).

Within a narrowly described review of inclusion/integration and legislative reforms, children with SEN are often found in mainstream provision, with learning difficulties representing the most populated category of SEN. But Greece still depends on special schools. It is only in the last couple of decades that education has been supported in the form of integration; the transition to inclusion that provides equal educational opportunities is expected to be a long process. As long as special schools exist, parents and specialists consider special education to be a “relief valve” (Drakos, 1998) permitting mainstream education to separate, stigmatise, and marginalise pupils. On the other hand, suppressing special schools will oblige the state to change the present education system. These changes include the adjustment of innovative educational and supportive programs (ex. need for support and teaching assistants, special equipment, curricula for special needs, informative seminars for teachers). No doubt, inclusion is also strongly related to the state’s financial development, and by the time the latter gives the green light in this direction, the state may promote inclusion. If this culture (Carrington, 1996) is to be achieved for those students and teachers who are already part of the inclusion experiment and for those who will follow in the future, then practical day-to-day educational concerns of the classroom teacher should be addressed.

2.3 Inclusive Education

Lately, different countries demonstrate stated intentions and written policies moving towards the achievement of inclusive education (Pijl et al, 1997; Booth and
Ainscow, 1998; Hegarty, 1988; Vislie, 2003). Vlachou (2006) presents stages that have influenced the current educational provision for children with SEN. Briefly, in the 1970’s, specialised programmes were used in special education, which were distinct from traditional education in terms of instructional approaches, curriculum content and student placement (Lipsky and Gartner, 1997). In the 1980’s, because of inadequate education provided to children with SEN, organisations and advocates supported integration, as this approach would improve school performance (Wang, 1998). In the early 1990’s inclusion called for ‘making these children truly a ‘part’ of the regular classroom experience’ (Vlachou, 2006, p.40). The value of education and the introduction of more inclusive forms of provision were promoted by the Salamanca Statement of the United Nations (UNESCO, 1994), which has been extremely powerful in terms of educational change. Changes in thinking about inclusion, in the broader sense of the term, have taken place, due to broader changes in the social climate and changes in the conceptualisation of difficulty:

‘...there seems far less willingness now to locate the difficulties which children may experience at school unproblematically in the children themselves- whether the ‘in-ness’ be about children’s learning or behaviour or about their social background, family income, gender or race’ (Thomas and Loxley, 2007, p.129).

The trend towards inclusion in developed countries has increased the likelihood that students with SpLD will be retained full time in mainstream classrooms (Burden and Burdett, 2004; Roberts and Mather, 1995). The current philosophy is that segregation, even for short periods of time for remedial teaching, causes damage to self-esteem, restricts social interaction with peers and diminishes motivation to learn (Yuen et al, 2004). In this respect, it is in the best interest of the pupils to keep them within mainstream classrooms and therefore promote opportunity and social justice (Allan, 1999; Lipsky and Gartner, 1996; Mittler, 2000):

‘inclusive education is a complex process that requires a social view of disability and a reconstruction of ‘special educational needs’ as well as the restructuring and reorganisation of each mainstream school and its curriculum and management structures in order to provide a culture and practice in which all barriers to participation can be identified and ultimately removed’ (Zoniou-Sideri and Vlachou, 2006, p.379).
It is necessary to define the frequently mixed terms of ‘integration’ and ‘inclusion’ (Pijl et al, 1997), and the way they are perceived in the Greek context, as these represent different philosophies bearing different stances on life in society and education. Integration means children adjusting to the mainstream school system, where changes are not made on the basis of curriculum or the teaching/learning process (Fuchs and Fuchs, 1994). It is about schools adapting to the needs of all their pupils, whereas having a broader context inclusion, tries to meet children’s needs. Accepting inclusion means moving from the ‘obsession with individual learning difficulties’ (Roaf, 1988, p.7) and disabilities to an agenda of rights. Farrell (2000) refers to a further step Ainscow (1999) takes by describing the way mainstream schools should cater for all pupils, by becoming inclusive schools for all, without specific reference to pupils with SEN (Ainscow et al, 1997). Sebba and Ainscow (1996) see the emergence of inclusive schooling as a new principle, by identifying key features of inclusion as the school attempts to respond to all pupils as individuals, given that it reconsiders its curricular organisation and provision.

Within the Greek context, inclusion is about educating all children in mainstream schools that have all necessary standards for providing equal educational opportunities. This requires a flexible curriculum, accessible buildings, compulsory differentiation of teaching/assessment and mainly staff trained to implement inclusive practices. Because inclusive practices are not yet well established, discussions about inclusion in Greece have integration as a starting point. This also proves to spring from schools’ lack of focus on children with SEN, or even from parental unawareness on how to be engaged in their children’s struggle to learn. Concerning children who fall within the category of SEN, the debate regards the inquiry whether or not they can experience successful inclusion, that…

‘within the field of education […] is reflected in the development of strategies that seek to bring about a genuine equalization of opportunities’ (UNESCO, 1994, p.11).

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8 The use of the term SEN also includes students with disabilities. There has been a number of key policies that recognised the development of educating students facing SEN in mainstream schools: the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child (1989), the UN Standard Rules on the Equalisation of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities (1993) and the UNESCO Salamanca Statement (1994). ‘The Salamanca Statement (1994) has particular relevance to the advancement of children with SEN moving into mainstream education as it recommended that governments enrol all children in regular schools where possible’ (Meagan and MacPhail, 2008, p.77).
Terzi (2005) uses the phrase ‘dilemma of difference’ (p.444) to refer to the tension characterising the debate in special and inclusive education. Drawing upon relevant literature on inclusion (Dyson, 2001; Lunt, 2002; Norwich, 1993), Terzi (2005) explains that:

‘The dilemma of difference consists in the seemingly unavoidable choice between, on the one hand, identifying children’s differences in order to provide for them differentially, with the risk of labelling and dividing, and, on the other hand, accentuating ‘sameness’ and offering common provision, with the risk of not making available what is relevant to, and needed by, individual children’ (p.444).

Within this scope, she tries to examine what counts for disability in education. For the capability approach, assessment of equality is related to ‘what people are actually able to be and to do’ (Nussbaum, 2000, p.40).

‘In the light of the specific role of education in expanding capabilities [...] the capability metric highlights disability as a vertical inequality when compared to non-disability, or as a kind of difference that, in limiting functionings, has to be addressed and provided for a matter of justice’ (p.456).

The debate between special and inclusive education includes positions that accept individual limitations and deficits as causes of disability and special needs, and also positions that see the limits and deficits of the education system to meet their needs, including classification in relation to disabled students.

‘Special needs are not the needs that arise in a child with disabilities with regard to a system that is fixed. Rather they are needs that arise between the child and the educational system [...] when the system fails to adopt itself to the characteristics of the child’ (Dyson, as cited in Norwich, 1993, p.50).

Influenced by the social model of disability, sociologists of education state that special needs in education are socially constructed: disability is the product of disabling barriers and of exclusionary and oppressive educational processes (Armstrong, et al, 2000; Barnes et al, 2002; Barton, 2003). Terzi (2005) argues that the above statement involves implications, by using the example of hearing impairment that has to be recognised if provision is to be made:

‘...stating that difficulties and disability in education are socially constructed betrays obvious and exaggerated
assumptions regarding socialisation and significantly overlooks the individual factors related to impairments’ (p.448).

Adding to the above statement, Westwood (2008, p.13) claims that this must be challenged, since no major breakthrough in teaching methods/resources has been identified through years of intensive study on SpLD. At this point, and given that teachers in Greece tend to think on the basis of a medical model and favour special schooling for special groups of pupils, it is necessary to introduce the medical and social perspectives, as evolved from the corresponding models.

2.4 Medical and Social Model

The status of disability/impairment in society and their implications is related to the medical and social model, with SpLD being at the focal point, difficult to remedy through normal teaching methods. This section sets the bounds of these conflicting models of disability and conceptualises the relation between impairment, disability and society, while acknowledging the existence of a problematic labelling practice. The rehabilitation perspective evolved from the social institution of medical care, described as a linear model moving within the framework of etiology-pathology manifestations (Minaire, 1992). Problems were located within the individual ‘caused by a person’s inabilities and impairments. It is therefore, the individual who needs changing.’ (Beaulaurier and Taylor, 2007, p.57).

Smart and Smart (1997, p.77) present the bio-medical model as the most well known, carrying also the power of the well-established medical profession. It stigmatises people with disabilities, placing them into categories (Nagi, 1969): ‘the blind’, ‘quads’ (individuals with quadriplegia), ‘the mentally ill’. The target of professionals is to focus on the disease process in order to cure it and allow ‘normal functioning’ of patients (Lutz and Bowers, 2007, p.13; Dejong, 1983, pp.15-20; Kailes, 1988; Zola, 1983a). Undoubtedly, the medical model prepared the ground for research, diagnostic practice and testing initial treatment stages of disease. As highlighted by

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9 ‘Because of the way the medical profession is organised and the mandate it received from society, decisions related to medical diagnoses and treatment are virtually controlled by the medical professions’ (Conrad, 2004, p.22).

10 ‘Scientific, technological, and clinical advances in the treatment of neuro-muscular diseases, mental illness, blindness and deafness, for example, have resulted from such efforts and have helped the public to
Myers (1965, p.38) individuals with disabilities are ‘obliged to try to become rehabilitated if possible’; otherwise they are ‘exempted from normal social responsibilities’ (p.38). Failure to regain full function places them in a ‘chronic role of dependency’ for care (Lutz and Bowers, 2007, p.12). Myers (1965) describes a person with disability, as ‘one who, because of his physical or mental handicap, cannot or is not permitted by community members to function in his social roles’ (p.35).

Similarly, Brandt and Pope (1997) in their study under the supervision of the Institute of Medicine define disability as:

‘a limitation in performing certain roles and tasks that society expects an individual to perform. Disability is the expression of the gap between a person’s capabilities and the demands of the environment-the interaction of a person’s limitations with social and physical environmental factors’ (p.25).

Despite the fact that this definition was developed 30 years later, and includes a concept of interaction between the individual and social environment, it carries similar assumptions to Myer’s. The medical model was transformed by Nagi (1965) into a broader and ‘mature’ framework, and was revised by other researchers and developed into the International Classification of Impairments, Disabilities, and Handicaps (WHO ICIDH) (WHO, 1980) by the World Health Organisation (WHO) in the ‘70s. Terzi (2004) presents this classification of distinctive terms of impairment, disability and handicap:

’an abnormality in the structure of the functioning of the body whether through disease or trauma; disability as referred to the restriction in the ability to perform tasks […] and handicap as referred to the social disadvantage that could be associated with either impairment and/or disability’ (Bury, 1996, p.22).

Such definitions conceive disability as an individual condition, hence the views they represent are labelled as ‘individual model’ by disabled people’s movements. Lutz and Bowers (2007,p.14) refer to other revisions (Jette, 1994; Verhrugge and Jette, 1994; Ebrahim, 1995; Pope and Tarlov, 1991) by health services researchers, concluding that this model locates disability in the person and focuses on functional limitations, also known as the individual model of disability. As a transitional stage, the rehabilitation

understand disability resulting from injuries and chronic illness’ (Tate and Pledger, in Orto and Power, 2007,p.22)
perspective focuses on the person’s physical disability, but tends to reduce it to a problem of individual dysfunction, requiring professional intervention. DeJong and Hughes (1982) argued that the problem is the environment, rather than the individual, including its physical and social characteristics.

In contrast, the social model - developed in the 1970s in the UK, and in the US to a lesser extent- has a significant influence on disability studies and educational perspectives on inclusion (Terzi, 2004, p.141). Emerging from the political activism of disabled people’s movements, in the Union of the Physically Impaired against Segregation (UPIAS, 1976), it was supported academically by Finkelstein (1980), Barnes (1991) and Oliver (1990, 1996). Shakespeare and Watson (2002) criticised this perspective in the British Disability movement, arguing that priority must be given to disintegrating any disabling barrier society uses to promote inclusion of individuals with impairments:

‘Rather than pursuing a strategy of medical cure, or rehabilitation, it is better to pursue a strategy of social change, perhaps even the total transformation of society […] Replacing a traditional, ‘medical model’ view of disability-in which the problems arose from deficits in the body-with a social model view-in which the problems arose from social oppression was and remains very liberating for disabled individuals. Suddenly, people were able to understand that they weren’t at fault; society was. They didn’t need to change; society needed to change’ (Ibid, p.5).

Oliver (1996) theorised principally the social model of disability, and presented a definition, as given in the UPIAS Fundamental Principles of Disability:

‘Disability is something imposed on top of our impairments by the way we are unnecessarily isolated and excluded from full participation in society. Disabled people are therefore an oppressive group in society’ (p.22).

The social model focuses on deconstructing the individual model of disability, guiding the perspective towards conceptualisation of disability by disabled people (Terzi, 2004, p.143). After Oliver (1996, p.32) this should not be considered a social theory, though it is attached to a sociological perspective. The latter emphasises full inclusion of disabled people in society, and their complete acceptance as citizens with equal entitlements, rights, responsibilities (Ibid, 1996,p.152). Oliver resumes: ‘a framework, which suggests that it (disability) is culturally produced and socially
constructed. Central to this framework is the mode of production’ (Oliver, 1990, p.22).

Goodley (2001) argues that social structures, practices and relationships still conceptualise people with learning difficulties ‘in terms of some a priori notion of ‘mental retardation’ (p.211):

‘The epistemological point being made is classically Cartesian: some elements of humanity are open to sociological investigation (‘mild learning difficulties’), while some are left in the realms of static, irreversible, individualized biology (‘severe learning difficulties’)’ (Ibid, p.212-213).

This notion is related to challenging epistemological foundations that Goodley (2001) tries to deconstruct. Preoccupations with levels of impairment, creates implications for an understanding of disability as a social phenomenon (Shakespeare and Watson, 1997). The study considers difference, ability and disability as socially constructed, since according to the patterns of the culture in which people are raised, they develop their views, their attitudes and internalise the social and cultural rules (Gollnick and Chinn, 2002). Peoples’ beliefs/attitudes are reflected in various economic and political arrangements and organisations in their communities, such as the education system (Carrington, 1999). Classroom contexts are ‘cultures’ that represent values, structures and systems, recognition of rules and responsibilities (Otis-Wilborn, 1995).

Of equal relevance is the critique of the category ‘normality’ in terms of any human average functioning: ‘normality is a construct imposed on a reality where there is only difference’ (Oliver, 1996, p.88). Normal functioning and able-bodiedness are ideologies controlled by capitalistic societies and their institutions (Terzi, 2004, p.153). Much criticism comes from disabled people and social model theorists; some reconsider biological differences which constitute causes of discrimination between people with and without disabilities. Terzi (2004) draws on disabled feminist scholars’ positions: Wendell (1996) and Morris (1991) reintroduce in their analysis elements of biological domain. Morris (1991) argues that terms like ‘normal’ are associated with the recognition of elements that are wrong, not admirable, undesirable and generally negative (Ibid, p.15), which according to Terzi (2004) ‘has led to the denial of difference in an attempt to overcome discrimination’ (p.154). Morris (1991) also states that:
'we are different. We reject the meanings that the non-disabled world attaches to disability but we do not reject the differences which are such an important part of our identities' (p.17).

Morris (1991) and Wendell (1996) support the significance of disability and illness as part of human experience, reclaiming the value of disability and celebration of difference (Morris, 1991, p.38). Terzi (2004) examines normality and difference, and argues that the total rejection of the first leads to untenable theoretical and practical conclusions: a) denning normality would cause implications in assessing disability and impairment b) automatically it would be blurring to define difference (different from what?) and c) 'the rejection of normality could indeed end up creating another category, that of difference, which, ultimately, appears more problematic and less coherent with the very aims of disabled people’s movement’ (Ibid,p.155). Shakespeare and Watson (2002) cite Sutherland’s (1981) suggestions that:

'A more radical approach is needed: we must demolish the false dividing line between ‘normal’ and ‘disabled’ [meaning impaired] and attack the whole concept of physical normality. We have to recognise that disablement [impairment] is not merely the physical state of a small minority of people. It is the normal condition of humanity’ (Ibid, p.18).

This strong debate encompasses a variety of perspectives. The very success of the social model is now its main weakness (Shakespeare and Watson, 2002): since it remains a powerful tool so central to the disability movement ‘it became a sacred cow, an ideology which could not easily be challenged’ (Ibid,p.5). Used as a strong version by activists, it produces a rigid dichotomy, and has become a problem that cannot be reformed. Amongst exponents of the social model French (1993) explored reasons for resistance to alternative perspectives:

'It is no doubt the case that activists who have worked tirelessly within the disability movement for many years have found it necessary to present disability in a straightforward, uncomplicated manner in order to convince a very skeptical world that disability can be reduced or eliminated by changing society, rather than by attempting to change disabled people themselves’ (p.24).
Concerning disability studies, post-modernist and feminist approaches highlight the important role of culture and cultural processes in the creation of disability (Corker, 1999; Thomas, 2002; Shakespeare, 1997).

‘the concept of difference is included in disabled people’s agenda, with reference not only to general cultural settings, but also to the specific culture of difference connected to gender, ethnicity, sexuality and type of impairment’ (Terzi, 2004, p.146).

A more extreme and radical critique can be found within post-modernists’ accounts: the social model should focus on cultural processes shaping impairment and disability, to build a model that can confront...

‘the disability-engendering role played by cultural ideas, always negative, about people with impairment’ (Thomas, 2002, p.49).

Currently, with respect to school provision, the most popular model for accommodating pupils/students with SpLD is ‘differentiation’ (Yuen et al, 2004, p.68); teachers adapt curriculum content, teaching methods, grouping strategies, instructional resources to meet pupils’ needs in their mixed ability groups (Allan, 1999; Davies, 2000; James and Brown, 1998), thus promoting this teaching approach as the best practice in some countries (Wragg et al, 2000). In describing differentiation Van den Berg et al (2001) point that:

‘Teachers accept that their students differ in capabilities and take these differences as the starting point for teaching and learning’ (p.68).

Teaching mixed-ability classes is difficult and constitutes a major challenge for all teachers.

‘The teaching methods and practices required for the provision of effective inclusion are easier to identify than they are to implement’ (Rose, 2001, p.147).

Yuen lists major obstacles to differentiation: limited preparation time, large class size, teachers’ heavy workload, lack of resources, teachers’ lack of skills in differentiation, and teachers’ lack of motivation to differentiate (Chan et al, 2002; Scott et al, 1998; Westwood, 2002). In traditional educational systems where emphasis is given to examinations results –including Greece- there is also reluctance to modify
curriculum content and the ways in which students are assessed, though such changes are strongly recommended (Education Department, 2001; Tomlinson, 2001). As they comment ‘the inclusive classroom will depend for its success on changes from within’ (Penrose et al, 2001, p.88).

2.4.1 Disability and Impairment in Disability Studies

Issues concerning definitions of ‘impairment’ and ‘disability‘-used as substitutes in place of the old term ‘handicapped‘- frequently appear in disability theory and inclusion, representing perspectives driven by differently oriented policies (Terzi, 2004, p.149). Taking the term ‘disability’ from doctors and social workers (Thomas, 2004, p.21) people with disabilities reconstructed its meaning in the framework of social exclusions (UPIAS, 1976). Traditional medical models of disability, together with people’s ‘personal tragedy’ (Thomas, 2004, p.21) were set aside. Disability is something imposed on people on top of their impairment by a discriminating society (Oliver, 1996). ‘Impairment’ is defined as:

‘lacking part or all of a limb, or having a defective limb, organ or mechanism of the body; and disability is the disadvantage or restriction of activity caused by a contemporary social organization which takes no or little account of people who have physical impairments and thus excludes them from participation in the mainstream of social activities’ (Ibid,p.22).

‘Disability therefore, is all that imposes restrictions on disabled people and as such, disablement is nothing to do with body’ (Ibid, p.35).

Amongst social model theorists, another definition is provided:

‘…it is not the individual’s impairment which causes disability (Impairment→ Disability), or which is the disability (Impairment=Disability), and it is not the difficulty of individual functioning with physical, sensory or intellectual impairment which generates the problem of disability’ (Thomas, 1999, p.11).

Social model theory in the UK (Shakespeare and Watson, 2002) plays on the distinction between ‘impairment’ and ‘disability’; a binary division established between the social and the biological (Oliver, 1996,p.30). Based on this rigid distinction
Shakespeare and Watson (2002) raise questions of a rigid nature such as ‘where does impairment end and disability start?’ (p.17). Terzi (2004) throws light on causality/responsibility and agency in terms of impairment and disability. Her answer to the above question adopts Bury (2000) and Thomas’ (2002, p.44) urge for further clarifications: there is a causal relation of disability and oppression, in cases where society excludes impaired people. However, there appears an ‘over-socialisation’ (Terzi, 2004, p.153) of the social model followed by a number of implications, as

a) ‘the social model overlooks the impairment effects, in terms of their restriction of activities or the possible disabilities to perform different actions’

b) ‘in asserting the total separation between impairment and disability, it opens up

the chance of a ‘proliferation’ of other terms, to denote inability or being unable to do things’

c) the society is not responsible for impairments as consequences of a person’s agency e.g. risky activities, congenital blindness etc.

Goodley (2001) highlights the ‘turn to impairment’ (p.208) as disability remains a social problem. Therefore questioning movements drawing attention on impairment (French, 1993; Crow, 1996; Hughes and Paterson, 1997) and post-modern critiques (Corker, 1998; Corker and French, 1998) take into account the discursively embodied nature of impairment, instead of ‘watering down’ (Goodley, 2001, p.208) the social model ‘more and more writers are arguing that a focus on impairment, alongside an alliance with the social model and disability movement re-socializes impairment’ (see Williams, 1998).

Shakespeare and Watson (2002) agree with Bailey’s and Hall’s statement; there is an element of inconsistency in their critique of the social model, which at the beginning of the 21st century seems no longer useful:

‘It is perfectly possible that what is politically progressive and opens up discursive opportunities in the 1970s and 1980s can become a form of closure- and have a repressive value- by the time it is installed as the dominant genre […] It will run out of steam; it will become a style; people will use it not because it opens up anything but because they are being spoken by it, and at that point you need another shift’ (1992, p.15).
Zola (1989) argues for real integration of the rehabilitation and social perspective: both models focus on people’s differentness and special needs, therefore tending to segregate people with disabilities. He calls for a ‘universal policy towards disability’ (Ibid, p.421), but acknowledges the fact that people with disabilities have special issues and needs that cannot be discounted. Furthermore, in an era of pluralism in democratic arrangements, of recognition of the fundamental importance of the fair values of political liberties, fairness of justice creates a framework to accommodate a concept of subject-centered justice (Terzi, 2004, p.148)…

‘to acknowledge the fundamental moral equality of persons is, first of all, to accord a certain kind of being full moral status’ (Buchanan, 1990,p.234).

Terzi (2004) comments on the above statement ‘we owe something to each person, even to the more incapacitated to reciprocate, in virtue of their moral equal worth’ (p.148). On these grounds justice as fairness allows a wider morality of inclusion; this implies a better theoretical framework to support the social model, a theory more open to inclusion of people in the social framework. The social model of disability is a powerful tool correcting our conceptualisation of disability and any oppressive social behaviour or arrangements:

‘this is the actual powerful core of the model, its constant reminder to face issues of inclusion as fundamental moral issues’ (Ibid,p.156).

2.5 The Status of Learning Disabilities/Difficulties and Implications

Within his concept of ‘the turn to impairment’ Goodley (2001,p.208) argues that the notion of impairment, in relation to learning difficulties \textsuperscript{11} and being part of the social model orientation requires further consideration, because of the distinct lack of focus on learning difficulties (p.209). Amongst key caveats the study builds on, Goodley (2001) mainly highlights that learning difficulties, as part of the disability

\textsuperscript{11} The term ‘learning difficulties’ has been chosen by Goodley instead of other terms such as ‘mental handicap’, ‘mental impairment’ and ‘learning disabilities’, as this is also preferred by many in the British advocacy movement; ‘If you put ‘people with learning difficulties’ then they know that people want to learn and to be taught how to do things’ (Sutcliffe and Simons, 1993, p.23).
social model should be considered as ‘a fundamentally social, cultural, political, historical, discursive and relational phenomenon’ (p.210). When reviewing notions of learning difficulties, it is necessary for people with learning difficulties to use their experiences and expertise (Dowse, 1999; Goodley, 2000). The general term ‘learning disabilities’ is used without much precision. Pupils/students with learning difficulties and SpLD exhibit more or less the same range of characteristics (Kavale et al, 2005). Westwood (2008) reviews literature (Sideridis, 2007; Zafiriadis et al, 2005; Margolis and McCabe, 2006) and provides a list of the most frequently identified problems. Specific learning disability is a controversial point because some argue that a severe reading disability is qualitatively different from any form of reading failure, whereas others consider this as ‘merely a different point on the same reading difficulty continuum’ (Westwood, 2008, Helen2).

‘There is a vast difference between a learning difficulty and a learning disability; an individual with learning difficulty can learn using conventional teaching techniques while LD requires specialised intervention which depends on the type of disability’ (Carlson, 2005, p.1).

In this chapter, the terms ‘learning difficulties’ and ‘learning disabilities’ are both used, as defined and used by each author/researcher, in an effort to maintain the authenticity of literature sources reviewed, and to highlight the ambiguity of defining these terms.

2.5.1 Learning Disabilities and Specific Learning Difficulties (SpLD): Terms and Implications

Scientific concern regarding unexpected difficulties in learning, which cannot be explained through pupils’ mental potential, was developed even before Samuel Kirk’s (1962) first reference to this term in a conference held for parents with children with problems in learning. Such weaknesses were initially studied by physicians and psychologists (biomedical model): it was then established that many children with learning disabilities manifest ‘specific’ deficits and not ‘generalised’ deficits (Ibid, 12). Padeliadou and Botsas (2007, p.6) use the term ‘Learning Difficulties’ as used by Kirk (1962) to describe a group of children having a disorder in language, speech, reading and skills related to social interaction. He clearly stated: ‘in this group I do not include children with sensory deficiencies, such as blindness or deafness (p.263). Furthermore, he excluded children with mental retardation.
The 20th century brought to light a set of observations defining a unique type of learning difficulty in children/adults, not associated with sensory handicaps or low intelligence (Broca, 1863, 1865; Kussmaul, 1877; Hinshelwood, 1895,1917). During the 1920s, Orton extended the study with clinical studies designed to test the hypothesis that reading deficits were a function of a delay or failure of the left cerebral hemisphere to establish dominance for language functions (Orton, 1925). According to Torgesen (1991), Orton’s theory and observation were highly influential in both stimulating research, and in current conceptualisations of learning difficulties, through his effort to classify motor and language disabilities as well as reading disabilities (Doris, 1993). A more general category of learning disabilities as a formally recognised field (Doris, 1993; Rutter, 1982; Torgesen, 1991) was established by Strauss and colleagues (Strauss and Werner, 1943; Strauss and Lehtinen, 1947). They observed patterns similar to those of children with mental retardation and brain injury with children with average intelligence, but with behavioural and learning difficulties.

Although heavily influenced by the trends in the US, most countries follow their criteria for identification of LD, as described in Sideridis’ (2007) international review. Carlson (2005) provides milestones in the US history of LD, as the federal government became involved during the 60s-70s (Hallahan and Mercer, 2001). The phenomenon of learning disabilities, the so called ‘invisible handicap’ (Carlson, 2005,p.4), was first noted by Goldstein in the ‘20s (Goldstein, 1936; 1939). Carlson names Orton, Fernald, Monroe and Kirk as four researchers in terms of understanding the most common forms of learning disabilities (2005, p.4). During the same decade in Europe, some researchers immigrated to the US and conducted research into the perceptual-motor and attention disabilities of adults with brain injuries (Hallahan and Mercer, 2001). Though researchers could not prove that learning disabilities were caused by neurological dysfunction, parents of children who were frequently described as dumb (Carlson, 2005, p.8) or mentally retarded (Duchan, 2001) welcomed this explanation of why children fail at school. Kirk is officially credited with coining the term learning disabilities (Carlson, 2005, pp.9-10). He identified groups of perceptually handicapped children and it became the most frequently used label in special education.

In 1975, the US Congress passed Public Law 94-142, the Education for All Handicapped Children Act (NIC, 1997), through which learning disabilities achieved official status as a category eligible for funding for direct services (Hallahan and
Meanwhile, in 1978, the publication of the Warnock Report (the Report of the Committee of Inquiry into the Education of Handicapped Children and Young People DES, 1978) established a new framework for special education in the UK. It stated that there are common educational needs for all children, regardless of abilities/inabilities and introduced the term ‘Special Educational Needs’ concerning difficulties pupils/students have at school. Highlighting additional support as a prerequisite, it recognised the right of disabled pupils/students to attend mainstream schools (Riddell, 2002, p.6; Warnock, 2005, p.18). Yet, as happens with perspectives in the model of disability similar considerations apply to the concept of special educational needs, which ‘not only remains inscribed in a ‘within-child model’, but also substantially introduces a new category, that of special needs’ (Terzi, 2005, p.447).

A category promoting the child’s individuality, as it de facto separated him/her from the rest of the children (Norwich, 1993, p.45); caused the automatic development of ideas on exceptional needs or notions of ‘individual needs’ (Ainscow and Muncey, 1989). Another definition appears in 1988 by the National Joint Committee on Learning Disabilities (quoted in Edwards, 1994):

“Learning disabilities” is a general term that refers to a heterogeneous group of disorders manifested by significant difficulties in the acquisition and use of listening, speaking, reading, writing, reasoning and mathematical abilities. These disorders are intrinsic to the individual, presumed to be due to central nervous system dysfunctions, and may occur across the life span” (p.11).

Between 1980 and 1985 a huge increase in the numbers of pupils identified as having learning disabilities resulted in scepticism as to whether these were being misdiagnosed (Carlson, 2005, p.13). Over one half of the disabilities recorded were due to learning disabilities (Hallahan and Mercer, 2001). During the second half of the decade, research proved that pupils/students with learning disabilities could succeed in school though appropriate strategies. In 1994, the World Conference on Special Needs Education in Salamanca (1994), with the adoption of the Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education set the policy agenda for inclusive education on a global basis (UNESCO, 1994; Vislie, 2003). Indeed, this Statement is arguably the most significant international document in special education. Attitudes and understanding of learning disabilities have changed dramatically as described by...
Carlson (2005). Different understandings of the relationship between children’s diversity and school systems are related to different educational approaches to definitions and causes of disability and special education (Terzi, 2005, p.445). Calling for a radical review of special education, Warnock (2005) states that one has to reconsider the assumptions that frame the current educational setting, as there are conflicting points between treating all learners the same and responding adequately to needs related to individual differences (Ibid,p.11).

The use of discrepancy, as an essential criterion for identification of SpLD creates a number of implications (Kavale et al, 2005). Westwood (2008) argues that in the UK, the path is open for ‘over-identification’ (p.12). The country is influenced by OECD current definitions and has adopted ‘learning difficulty’ and ‘learning disability’ to refer to intellectual disabilities (i.e. mental retardation), but maintaining at the same time the SpLD concept for other pupils/ students.

‘...the SLD population has increased by about 150% to the point where it represents over 50% of the special education population and over 5% of all students in school. These increases are unparallel and unwarranted, especially when viewed in relation to other high-incidence mild disabilities (i.e. mental retardation [MR] and emotional disturbance [ED])’ (Kavale et al, 2005, p.2).

Amongst issues that Kavale et al (2005) consider as associated with SpLD identification (different numbers of students with SLD across settings, confounding of SLD vs. low achievement, replacement of the discrepancy model with a responsiveness-to intervention model), they highlight the definition of SpLD as more fundamental than identification; ‘the present SLD definition has always been too broad to be wrong and too vague to be complete’ (Ibid, 2005, p.3). The Dyslexia Institute (1989) provided another definition for the “umbrella” term of SpLD, identifying the range of cognitive difficulties and learning deficiencies, restricting children’s competencies in information processing, in motor skills and working memory, which cause limitations in speech, reading, spelling, writing, numeracy and behaviour:

“Failure to learn which is specific is limited only to certain skills, particularly those in information processing. These children have deficiencies in narrow aspects which particularly relate to the delivery of learning” (Hales, 1996, p.37).
Similar seems to be Gulliford’s and Upton’s opinion (1992):

“SpLD referred to children with severe and long-term difficulties in reading, writing, and spelling but whose abilities are at least average and for whom distinctive arrangements are needed” (1992, p.42).

Karande et al (2005) provide a more detailed definition:

’Specific learning disability (SpLD) is a generic term that refers to a heterogeneous group of disorders manifested by significantly unexpected specific and persistent difficulties in the acquisition and use of efficient reading (dyslexia), writing (dysgraphia) or mathematical (dyscalculia) abilities despite conventional instruction, intact sense, normal intelligence, proper motivation, and adequate socio-cultural opportunity’ (p.1029).

Kavale et al (2005) support the reclaim of the SpLD position ‘as a legitimate category for students experiencing particular types of learning difficulties’ (p.4). A new formal definition is, therefore, needed, that will set the strict framework for the condition; simply tinkering with a new operational definition will not achieve this goal’ (Ibid, p.4).

2.5.2 Labelling

In this study a major issue concerns learning difficulties in Greece, given that the children in this category are those who are labelled as having dyslexia. This, however, is an umbrella category largely including children who would in the UK be classified also as having dyslexia, but which also includes some children with other learning difficulties. It is, therefore, important to clarify how the terms of learning disability/difficulty are used in this thesis, and where dyslexia fits within this framework.

Learning disability/difficulty is uniquely defined and conceptualised in different settings. Complex socio-cultural, economic and political factors influence how diverse cultures define and confront individuals with such difficulties/disabilities (Groce and Zola, 1993; Ingstad and White, 1995). As a sociological concept, labelling was introduced by Becker (1973 [1963]), in an attempt to identify ‘the construction of
deviance in social life’ (Solvang, 2007, p.81). Solvang (2007) identifies a focus of studies on the implications labelling has caused across disciplines, especially in sociology. Medical labelling equals stigmatisation: the social roles of individuals are characterised by their label, consequently affecting people’s stance regarding social prejudices (Goffman, 1968; Scheff, 1984). However, as presented by Solvang (2007), the theory of ‘the sick role’ has privileges too: ‘the exemption from obligations in social life and not being responsible for the state one is in’ (p.81).

Disability studies present the individual model influenced by medical thinking as problematic, since disability is constructed by discourse as a pathological entity (Longmore, 2003). Similarly, in the field of special education one can find critical perspectives on the widespread use of medical labelling with regards to learning problems (Tomlinson, 1988; Skrtic, 1991; Malacrida, 2003).

Using the term ‘the disabled’ or looking for a more accurate definition for specific types of impairment, may create implications regarding understanding amongst members of the community (UNICEF, 1999). Groce (2006) argues that the term ‘mental retardation’, though replaced by that of ‘intellectually challenged’, is still used by the general public. Similarly, it was not until recently that a number of educators believed there was no such thing as a learning disability; instead children were lazy or stupid (Carlson, 2005, p.14). Teachers, special education scholars and psychologists adopt the individual model to understand and study pupils’ problems in reading/writing. The entire chaotic framework of terminology has been reinforced by a wide range of symptoms that the disorder covers, and argument over labelling. One can come across diverse labels such as “retarded reader”, “slow reader”, “learning disability”, “learning difficulty”, “specific learning difficulty” and “dyslexia” (Pumfrey and Reason, 1991). Children are still labelled ‘…albeit with ‘gentler’ labels (as with emotional and behavioural difficulties (EBD) instead of ‘maladjusted’ or ‘disturbed’, ‘special needs’ instead of ‘educationally subnormal’)’ (Thomas and Loxley, 2007, p.44). Slee (1998) foresees the danger regarding the ‘obsession with individual learning difficulties’ (Roaf, 1988, p.7):

‘Terms such as “special educational needs”, “integration”, “normalization”, “mainstreaming”, “exceptional learners” and “inclusion” merge into a loose vocabulary’ (Ibid, p.7).
On the basis of empirical studies, especially in the field of dyslexia, as Riddick (2001) highlights, labels hold a significant role since ‘they can moderate between the individual and the cultural context’ (p.231) and prevent negative sanctions. Furthermore, Solvang (2007) recognises that in personal struggles, medical labels have helped people improve their lives and organisations to be clearly heard. This major problem of terminology use by different education systems is obvious in international texts, as…

‘finding an inclusive language- one that is non-discriminatory and which celebrates difference-is often an important step towards building an inclusive system’ (UNESCO, 2003,p.13).

Therefore, this study complies with UNESCO’s Open File decisions about terminology (Ibid, pp.13-14), by acknowledging the existence of this labelling practice (i.e. ‘disability’, ‘disabled people’, ‘people with disabilities’ etc), which is problematic. The same applies to the term ‘pupils with SEN’ used by UNESCO, considering though that in Greek and other languages pupils are identified as ‘having SEN’ or ‘facing SEN’.

Under this scope, international ambiguity around dyslexia’s terminology became part of the Greek context, creating misunderstandings regarding its nature, identification and provision. The following definition of dyslexia is the only official Greek government definition given by the Ministry of Education in 2000, which still applies in education system.

“Dyslexia, lately known as “special educational difficulty in writing and reading”, is a special educational difficulty, which consists of pupils’ weakness to acquire linguistic skilfulness relative to reading, writing and spelling. This functional weakness manifests, despite the adequate mental intelligence, normal emotional development, appropriate teaching and rich in stimulants environment. It is also considered a deficiency in information processing (Circular 17-05-2000, p. 1).

The latest law (Greek Government, 2008) bearing the title “Special Education and Learning of Individuals with Disabilities or Special Educational Needs” (Official Greek Government Gazette, 3699/2008), provides the following definition for disabilities and SEN:

“Pupils with disabilities and special educational needs are
the pupils who-for part or the whole period of their school life- show significant difficulties in learning due to physical, mental, emotional and developmental problems, psychological and neuropsychic disorders which, according to scientific assessment affect the process of adjustment and learning at school” (Ibid, p.3500).

The majority of children attending mainstream schools and inclusion classes that are identified as children with SEN, are those labeled as having learning difficulties. Dyslexia remains even more misunderstood in Greece because it gives the impression that it involves a general disorder of speech and wording restricted only to writing (Thomaidou, 2003), or it is confused with special needs (Polychronopoulou, 2003). Teachers have great difficulty in understanding, accepting and dealing with frequently labeled pupils as ‘lazy’, ‘stupid’, ‘disobedient’ and ‘uninterested’ in school education. Nowadays, due to lack of knowledge in each case, or knowledge in the area of dyslexia, some continue to perceive pupils with dyslexia in the same manner. Even in official documentation, the term includes ‘SpLD (dyslexia)’.

‘The prevalence of the label of ‘learning difficulties’ raises some concerns about the specific professional identity for the special education teachers who may be inflexible or negative to the inclusion of students with severe or profound disabilities’ (Boutskou, 2007,p.292).

Dyslexia is not yet considered a multi-dimensioned SpLD, demanding a variety of teaching approaches and provision. Rather, it is added to the current trend towards inclusion, where emphasis to date seems to be more on administrative arrangements than on instructional-curricular matters. Ambiguity in the use of terminology and gaps in Greek literature set obstacles in reviewing. Integration is used more frequently as if there is no due recognition of different cores of the two terms ‘inclusion-integration’. Most scientists-researchers (Zoniou-Sideri, 1998; Lampropoulou, 1999; Polychronopoulou, 1995, 1998, 1999; Drakos, 1998; Christakis, 1994) ideally view school integration as an organised effort towards inclusion of children with special needs in society (Polyzoi and Polychronopoulou, 2000). In Christakis’ (1996) statement the term ‘integration’ replaces ‘inclusion’: the best school to promote and effectively implement the concept of school integration is the ‘comprehensive school’ or ‘one school for everybody’ (Ibid, p.170). This common school for all, though, is the example of Salamanca’s ‘shift of policy focus’ towards inclusion (Vislie, 2003). Greece falls
within the category of countries not having yet recognised this shift to inclusion, not even linguistically. The challenge is for inclusion to set its own agenda (Ibid, 2003); special education and integration issues have continuously dominated relevant debates, allowing little space for new actions to be taken. Acknowledging all children’s rights to access the mainstream curriculum is undoubtedly a major inclusive development. However, there has been much critique regarding the introduction of new terminology not accompanied by substantial education reforms (Avramidis and Kalyva, 2007, p.370).

2.6 Greek Scientific Viewpoints

Theoretically, most Greek scientific opinions stress that awareness of the particularity of a case in the field of dyslexia/learning difficulties implies adoption of particular approaches for each child, pointing to Hollingworth’s (1923) conclusion on ideal differentiated teaching for pupils with dyslexia, with no single method being the only effective one. Effectiveness should be strongly related to the case’s particular nature and the way pupils work while learning and writing (Mavrommati, 1995). Mavrommati suggests that teachers have to set up a full IEP and ‘interpret’ each pupil’s behaviour towards every single cognitive object (Johnson and Myklebust, 1967), permitting effective intervention (Stasinos, 2003). Likewise, Kandarakis (2004) stresses that since ways in which human beings think and learn may vary, it is impossible to accept only one right way of learning and teaching accordingly, and given the lack of homogeneity in difficulties children have, he draws upon Dowling’s (1973) opinion that no particular method seems to surpass others. Based on previous research, Kandarakis (1997β) argues that experimental groups, taught with alternative methods, have proved more successful than control groups taught in the expected way through a school’s analytic daily plan.

Stasinos (1999) supports on both medical and psycho-pedagogical perspectives of SpLD/dyslexia and Miles’ and Miles’ statement (1990, p.102) that dyslexia may be considered a medical case regarding its origin but an educational issue regarding its treatment. He supports Snowling’s statement (1995), that whichever its pure sense might be, providing children with dyslexia with appropriate teaching support is very important, and that provision ‘should be strongly related to prior theoretical or research
approach, before transformed into proper practice’ (Stasinos, 1999, p.319). However, provision, whenever available, is not supported by prior research: for instance, there has been no research to estimate the percentage of pupils with dyslexia within the Greek school system, (Mavrommati, 1995; Polyzoi and Polychronopoulou, 2000; Stampoltzi and Polychronopoulou, 2002). This could provide a clear picture of the population, their needs and socio-economic background, so that interventions can be put in action (Tokas, 2004). Estimation of the number of pupils with special needs is based upon international data (10% of the total school population). In primary education, almost 65,000 of the 650,000 attending school are estimated to have special needs; only 10,000 receive special provision (Tokas, 2004). A pilot study (Stampoltzi and Polychronopoulou 2002) estimated the percentage of assessed pupils with dyslexia with the contribution of 54 lyceums out of 201 in Attica. However, the survey took place where most of the diagnostic centres exist, justifying to an extent the big percentage of assessed cases (2%).

In an international research reported by Vislie (2003) on whether inclusion has had any noticeable effect on school systems, data has been collected by the OECD (1995) and the European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education from 14 European countries, at two different periods during the 1990s. Concerning students with SEN identified by the system, Greece has the lowest percentage (below 2%), with Finland and Denmark dominating (17% and 15% respectively). During the first period of data collection (1990) no Greek data were available. The data regarding percentages of students in segregated provisions at both registration points revealed the lowest percentage (less than 1%) are noted for in Greece, while the highest reach 4%.

Especially for pupils with dyslexia, the scientific viewpoint turns to a variety of teaching approaches, based upon IEPs and stresses the need for constant improvement of such approaches through the use of research. No information gathering studies have been conducted, specifically on dyslexia in primary education and inclusion. The state holds no evidence, no knowledge of the population of pupils with dyslexia, so as to provide adequate assistance on a wider basis. A later study (Vislie, 2003) describing the proportion of students with dyslexia, shows discouraging percentages regarding assessment and segregated provision. Teachers are expected to develop inclusive approaches, but due to lack of assessment of cases, or lack or segregated provision (withdrawal teaching or extra provision within mainstream classrooms) pupils’ needs are not met. By re-framing the ‘dilemma of difference’ in terms of justice, Terzi
(2005,p.454) considers dyslexia as an example in an effort to apply the capability perspective on education. Dyslexia results in the limitation of functioning achievements and future capabilities.

‘Dyslexia is an individual disadvantage in certain aspects of education namely all those related to literacy where the individual may experience ‘learning difficulties’ [...] Is it absolute disadvantage? No, it is relational with respect to the design of educational systems [...] Moreover it is in terms not of assistance but of equality in the space of capability that differential resources are due (Terzi, 2005b,2005 c)’ (Terzi, 2005, p.454).

Development of policy and practice for pupils with SpLD is still required. Their placement in mainstream schools is not enough and cannot be considered synonymous to inclusion (Davis and Hopwood, 2001). Additionally, creating new curricula that promote flexible multi-directional objectives, namely cognitive, affective and social would facilitate teachers’ work today (Farrell et al, 2007). The educational community argues that a positive step in the direction of inclusion is the legislative definition of special education as obligatory (Koutrouba et al, 2008). Optional instead of compulsory, education transposes all responsibilities to the family, who may not be able to communicate and understand children’s needs (Tisdall and Riddell, 2006).

Concerning dyslexia, various factors should be examined in order to accomplish successful inclusion for children: school, staff, family, and even peers share similar responsibilities. Nowadays, according to Solvang (2007), on the one side parents, teachers and psychologists are eager to encourage the recognition of a dyslexia diagnosis and its relevance (Riddick, 2002, p.80); this side bears a promise of cure. On the other side, there are those protesting against the frequent use of diagnosis, due to ‘reluctance to pathologise childhood’ (Ibid, p.80) (Buhler-Niederberger, 1991; Davis, 1995). Diagnosis endorses a focus on the individual and may become an obstacle to integration (Skrctic, 1991; Aisncow et al, 2000).

2.6.1 Teacher Attitudes and Perspectives

Special education was part of the period in need of radical educational and social change, with inclusion being the “buzzword of the nineties” (Thomas et al, 1998; Stainback and Stainback, 1990; Fuchs and Fuchs, 1994). It triggered the argument that
teachers’ beliefs are critical in ensuring successful implementation of inclusive practices (Norwich, 1994). Many studies have sought to examine teachers’ attitudes towards the general philosophy of inclusion and other interrelated to it (Avramidis et al, 2000; van-Reusen et al, 2000; Hastings and Oakford, 2003, Gyimah et al, 2009). According to Bain and Rheams (2005), inclusion was not supported universally by educators (Alexander and Strain, 1978), and attitudes were influenced by perceptions of external variables such as children’s disabilities, availability of support services, administrative support, etc; (Laviree and Cook, 1979). Gradually, teacher attitudes have adjusted in a positive direction towards acceptance of inclusion (Struggs and Mastropieri, 1996). Yuen et al (2004) point out that not all educators are convinced of the merits of full inclusion for students with SpLD, because adequate support cannot be provided by busy mainstream teachers (Burden and Burdett, 2004; Kauffman et al, 2004; Roberts and Mather, 1995).

In an extensive review Avramidis and Norwich (2002) show that whilst teachers’ attitudes are generally positive, the nature and severity of children’s needs strongly influence their disposition towards inclusive practices. Early American studies on full inclusion were either not in favour (Coates, 1989; Semmel et al, 1991) or had strong, negative feelings about inclusion (Vaughn et al, 1996). In studies where teachers with active experience of inclusion participated (Villa et al, 1996; Leroy and Simpson, 1996) evidence indicated that negative or neutral attitudes at the beginning of such an innovation, could change over time as a working experience. Avramidis and Norwich (2002) highlight that research suggested teacher attitudes might be influenced by interrelated factors: child related variables, teacher-related variables and educational environment-related variables (Salvia and Munson, 1986). The following categories are enriched by other researchers as well:

*Child-related variables*: teachers’ concepts of children consist of types of disabilities, their prevalence and the educational needs they exhibit (Clough and Lindsay, 1991), thus teachers’ perceptions could be differentiated (Forlin, 1995; Ward et al, 1994; Bowman, 1986; Chazan, 1994). For instance, children with mild intellectual disabilities, physical disabilities and sensory impairments, require less management skills from teachers and are therefore viewed more positively compared to children with complex needs (Center and Ward, 1987). Teachers are more skeptical towards severe

Teacher-related variables: researchers have explored teacher characteristics to determine their relation to attitudes towards children with special needs: gender (Thomas, 1985; Harvey, 1985) age-teaching experience (Berryman, 1989; Forlin, 1995; Avramidis et al, 2000), grade level taught (Chalmers, 1991; Clough and Lindsay, 1991), experience of contact (Janney et al, 1995; Forlin, 1995), training (Shimman, 1990; Avramidis et al, 2000), teachers’ beliefs (Jordan et al, 1997) and socio-political views (Norwich, 1994; Thomas, 1985). Specifically, professional development courses result in less resistance to inclusive practices (Dickens-Smith, 1995; van-Reusen et al, 2000) and a reduction in stress when coping with demands of inclusion (Forlin, 2001).

Educational environment-related variables: availability of support services at the classroom level (Center and Ward, 1987; Clough and Lindsay, 1991; Myles and Simpson, 1989), encouragement from the head teacher (Janney et al, 1995; Chazan, 1994), support from specialists (Kauffman et al, 1989; Minke et al, 1996). In their survey, Koutrouba et al (2008) identify a remarkably high percentage of teachers claiming that the existing equipment and resources are highly insufficient; building modern school units, financing the old ones and training teachers who are asked to practise inclusion may facilitate the process and foster teachers’ willingness. Avramidis and Norwich (2000) stress that though teachers are positive towards the general philosophy of inclusive education nowadays, they do not share a ‘total inclusion’ approach to special educational provision; rather they hold differing attitudes about school placements, based mainly upon the nature of children’s disabilities. Despite any obvious lack of confidence and specialisation, the majority of teachers, motivated by humanistic ideals, tend to show partiality to all pupils/students with disability of any kind (Nilholm, 2006). However, creative educators and researchers are desperately needed to advance the knowledge necessary to serve children ‘without caring and inquisitive people willing to seek out new horizons, there can be no new intervention theories’ (Carlson, 2005, pp.16-17).

Efstathiou (2003) notes that despite no systematic evaluation of inclusion classes exists in the literature, tuition depends more or less on the guidelines provided by the Ministry of Education for children with SEN. This, however, leads to deprivation of
access to learning experiences children may enjoy within mainstream classrooms (Avramidis and Kalyva, 2007, p.369). In Greece, there is a tendency to ‘copy’ the structure of international education systems, without prior engagement with the actual needs of the country in school matters. Similarly ‘inclusion was imported from abroad without really emerging as a necessity after much dialogue and discussion within the country’ (Boutskou, 2007, p.296).

Further to the literature review (Avramidis and Norwich, 2002) of teachers’ attitudes towards inclusion of children with SEN, Avramidis and Kalyva (2007) conducted an attitudinal survey concerning teachers’ experiences and professional development towards inclusion. Overall Greek mainstream teachers in this survey held generally positive attitudes towards the concept of inclusion, showing contradictory perceptions though when responding to the severity of cases and extra resources. Evidently, due to recent arrangements mainstream teachers confront challenges regarding the various needs of this blend of pupils that must be met. Foremost amongst them being that pupils with SEN cannot be viewed as someone else’s responsibility (i.e. the special teacher’s) (Ibid, 2007, p.370).

As a sample of the least effort made towards inclusion, these inclusive developments seem to be well accepted by parents and the public (Tafa and Manolistis, 2003; Kalyva et al, 2007). Greek teachers on the other hand have traditionally been sceptical about children with severe learning difficulties in mainstream schools. Still attached to special education, the Greek education context draws distinctions, categorises pupils and allocates different programmes, which influence teachers’ perceptions. In a study conducted by Polychronopoulou (1996), a distinct feeling of uneasiness in teachers’ perceptions, reflected that the present educational system was not ready to incorporate children with special needs and special educational needs, since full inclusion was not, or, at least, not considered to be, positive for all children. Years later, with the educational community arguing that an inclusive teaching culture is not yet fully developed, the reasons for this may be examined through examination of the teachers’ uneasiness using a series of questions:

-Why is full inclusion not yet considered positive for all pupils?
-How is dyslexia perceived by primary school teachers?
-How are pupils with dyslexia included in mainstream schools with regards to teachers’ attitudes?
-How may teachers’ perceptions change with different experiences of inclusion?
With regards to teachers’ perceptions of the educational system, Polychronopoulou (1996) mentioned that they do not consider full inclusion positive for all pupils, implying that attendance of mainstream or special school depends on the severity of each case. Studies raise questions about the hierarchy of special needs (Cole, 2004; Zoniou-Sideri, 2005). Teachers have their reservations for different cases; but regarding dyslexia, one can assume their dilemma is simply whether withdrawal is required in severe cases, as they present severity of cases they experience as a factor influencing their inclusive attitudes. Throughout her co-operation with teachers (Polychronopoulou, 1996), data collected showed a distinct feeling of uneasiness, which translated into three points: the general education system is not ready to incorporate children with SEN, full integration is not positive for all children and the Ministry of Education is not showing the necessary continuity and stability regarding their educational integration. Additionally, unlike in other countries (Jacklin, 1998) transfer processes hardly ever occur, specially from special to mainstream schooling, as there is no connection between these two systems.

Concerning the problems teachers face in educating children with SEN, there is: (a) a lack of support services to help both the mainstream teachers and pupils (b) a lack of resources and equipment and (c) a lack of mainstream education teachers trained in special needs. The great percentage of Greek teachers ask for support services, resources, special education training (initial and in-service training), and the improvement and upgrading of general education. Another factor that is worth mentioning, in relation to support offered in special classrooms, is their allocation. As revealed by data of the same survey, 54% of special classrooms work in store rooms, corridors, or generally in confined spaces (N=487), against 37% which work in proper classrooms (N=325). Despite the fact that accommodation conditions do not comprise the prime quality indicator for special education, they do, however, reflect respect towards pupils’ needs and education.

Later, a study by Karakoidas and Dimas (1998) highlighted that mainstream teachers had negative attitudes towards the inclusion of children with serious behavioural problems, mild mental retardation, deafness and blindness. The sample emphasised that sufficient resources and training were indispensable for implementation of policies. Similar findings were reported by Zoniou-Sideri and Vlachou (2006) exploring teachers’ beliefs towards children with disabilities nationwide. Half of the informants believed that ‘special segregated schools are important as a means of
providing a secure and protective ‘shelter’ to disabled children’ (Ibid, p.388). Also children with multiple disabilities were the least likely to be accepted and teachers’ views were more or less related to prior teaching experiences with disabled pupils. In another survey, related to identification of the way things stand in education, and in a sample of 200 primary school teachers throughout Attica, Polychronopoulou (2003) classified answers to the question ‘Which factors hinder implementation of integration in Greek schools?’ into:

-attitudes (secure environment, acceptance and co-operation in society)
-policies (laws, resources, teacher training and services) and
-practices (curriculum, teaching methods and attitudes)

With focus on practices, teachers’ general belief was that implementation of integration presupposed self-assessment on their work and attitudes regarding differentiation; the main recommendation of the research team was creation of an inclusive culture in mainstream schools through dynamic interaction among these three dimensions. In view of these professional concerns with regards to teachers, and in the light of the establishment of more inclusive forms of provision, it appeared promising to focus on attitudinal research in the Greek context. Koutrouba et al (2008) recorded Greek teachers’ attitudes towards inclusion and determined factors that enhance positive and negative ones: specialised knowledge, further training and qualifications may strengthen their stance towards children with SEN. This was a study following a research on special education in Cyprus (Koutrouba et al, 2006) regarding factors correlated that influence teachers’ attitudes. Last but not least comes a recent survey by (Symeonidou and Phtiaka, 2009) which discusses the issue of contextualising teacher training courses to suit their prior knowledge, attitudes and beliefs about inclusion.

2.6.2 The Role of the Special/Support Teacher

Recent education policies try to promote the search for pedagogical methods and teaching techniques so as to respond to the heterogeneity of the needs within mainstream classrooms. In addition, a minority of teachers, especially special teachers, are critically facing this educational reality and trying to innovate in teaching
approaches. Lampropoulou and Padeliadou (1997) pointed at mainstream teachers’ neutral attitudes towards integration, which were surprisingly far more positive than special teachers’ attitudes towards integration. Below, the aim and role of inclusion classes is presented, according to the Circular (Greek Ministry of National Education and Religious Affairs, 1984):

‘Support rooms operate within ordinary schools and enroll a small number (between 8 and 15) of pupils from other ordinary classes […] Attendance in these classes is generally part-time, depending on each pupil’s learning difficulties. That is, a pupil may attend the special class, e.g. for language instruction, a few hours per day or week, during a short or long period of time […] while also attending the ordinary class for the school subjects’ (p.1).

The Circular (C6/399/1.10.1984) also refers to the group of pupils that may receive such support, under the term children with ‘learning difficulties’. This includes children who have limited access to the curriculum, due to problems in one or more areas of literacy, numeracy and learning processes. This target group does not necessarily include disabled children as these receive education at special schools. Though recent reforms anticipate and set the boundaries for organisation and responsibilities of K.E.Δ.Α.Υ., in the vast majority of cases, children withdrawn do not hold any diagnostic/assessment report. Vlachou (2006) argues that this questions criteria in determining support rooms admission (p.43). It is upon mainstream teachers’ judgment that enrolment in inclusion classes is likely to be decided; as highlighted by Floratou (1994) and Papadopoulos (1997), support teachers tend to confirm instead of challenge these judgments. The role of special/support teachers is not clearly defined in legislation but is quite broad and diverse. Expectations and requirements are restricted within the support room environment. As Vlachou (2006) simply puts it:

‘…there is not a clearly defined job description for special teachers. The special teacher is employed full-time for the support room, s/he does not have any additional teaching or administrative duties, is accountable to the head teacher and has the same work load and non-teaching duties as any other ordinary teacher’ (Ibid, pp.43-44).

The limited relevant Greek literature points at an ever-changing role of the special teacher throughout decades. According to Boutskou (2007, p.292), in the 80s one could see the special teacher confronting many difficulties, as he/she was the
irreplaceable servant of special education (Kalatzis, 1976). This group became a distinct professional category after 1985, when their qualifications were defined by law, and special schools/classes were created. Mainstream teachers’ belief was that they would benefit if the responsibility for teaching ‘difficult’ children was transferred to special teachers and special areas (Boutskou, 2007, p.290). Later on, the quality and availability of teachers’ special training was challenged by researchers. For example, 90% of special teachers in 1983 had no special training at all (Boutskou, 2007, p.292). This caused dissatisfaction and insecurity due to the ‘immature, unscientific, and low level education they offer’ (Barbas, 1983, p.35). As a response to this, special teachers had to attend courses in special education (Greek Ministry of Education, 2005): ‘their label of ‘special’ became a label of ‘expertism’ and they became ‘specialists’ in the field (Boutskou, 2007, p.290), and then from ‘missionaries’ (Kitsaras, 1994) to ‘open-minded’ and ‘distinguished’ (Zoniou-Sideri, 1997, p.256). Zoniou-Sideri (1996) stresses the need to balance what is legitimate and ethical with what is pedagogically correct, to allow development of children’s abilities.

Today, this professional group remains heterogeneous13: special teachers are primary school teachers, having been initially employed as mainstream teachers, and then moved to special education, though not always having planned to do this. Boutskou (2007) raises some interesting questions regarding power relations and the qualifications or the authority to decide about the best practice for children. There are a few educational psychologists within the Greek context with the majority working in special schools. Many teachers feel threatened by them (Nikolopoulou and Oakland, 1990).

2.7 The Analytical Conceptual Framework

The purpose of the analytical conceptual framework is justified by the need to examine how within a school culture, teaching experiences may be related to teachers’

13 Boutskou (2007, p.290) provides percentages of special staff qualifications:
-80% of them have a diploma of a two-year-in-service-teacher training programme on special education
-8% have a masters or Ph.D. degree in the field
-12% have no extra qualification but experience in the special education settings
dispositions towards inclusion, in the context of Greek mainstream primary school. As mentioned, no particular Greek literature supports research on teachers’ beliefs with reference to inclusion of learning dyslexia/learning difficulties in primary mainstream education. Symeonidou and Phtiaka's (2009) study of the development of inservice teacher education courses partly touches upon the significance of inclusion and the need to deconstruct the dominance of teachers’ oppressive assumptions about disability and to promote the centrality of their role. Although teachers are expected to experience some commonalities of shared beliefs and practices, it is important to look in depth and to know the person the teacher is. Through a repertoire of important beliefs informing teacher actions evidenced in teacher experiences that mediate classroom practices, the conceptual framework may achieve a connection between teacher attitudes and pedagogic practice.

2.7.1 The Culture of Education

A major reference in this study, in terms of classicality and significance, is ‘The Culture of Education’ after Bruner (1996). Bruner refers to increased interest in the culture of education in theory and classroom practice. Education, it is argued, is more than a procedure of information processing, or a matter of applying ‘learning theories’, instead ‘it is a complex pursuit of fitting a culture to the needs of its members and of fitting its members and their ways of knowing to the needs of the culture’ (Ibid., p.43). Cultures are defined as:

‘...not simply collections of people sharing a common language and historical tradition. They are composed of institutions that specify more concretely what roles people play and what status and respect these are accorded-though the culture at large expresses its way of life through institutions as well’ (Ibid., p.29).

Smyth and Hatton (2002) describe school culture as an elusive, shifting phenomenon, continually constructed and reconstructed by individuals or groups. This ‘situatedness’, a major educational tenet after Bruner, is that ‘school can never be considered as culturally ‘free standing’ (1996, p.28).

‘Culture is not indigenous clothing that covers the universal human; it infuses individuals, fundamentally shaping and
forming them and how they conceive of themselves and the world, how they see others how they engage in structures of mutual obligation, and how they make choices in the everyday world’ (Cushman, 1990, p.601).

Within this human exchange, Bruner (1996) views teaching, learning and thinking as situated in a cultural setting and involving a ‘subcommunity of interaction. At the minimum, it involves a ‘teacher’ and a ‘learner’ […] with the teacher orchestrating the proceedings’ (Ibid, pp.20-21). Teaching is based on notions about the nature of the learner’s mind:

‘beliefs and assumptions about teaching […] are a direct reflection of the beliefs and assumptions the teacher holds about the learner’ (Ibid, pp.46-47).

Throwing light on teaching processes implies looking closely at the teacher as individual. Goodson (1992) in ‘Studying Teachers’ Lives’ argues that ‘in understanding something so intensely personal as teaching, it is critical to know about the person the teacher is’ (p.69). That is what makes a person a teacher and that implies some common ways of being and believing across teachers, at least in certain localised areas, e.g those operating under certain governmental or local policies. Although this claim stands a little uneasy against the idea of school culture, where teachers are expected to experience some commonalities of shared beliefs and practices, it is important to look in depth at participant teachers. This can provide understanding of how their beliefs are shaped, as well as a valuable range of insights to reform schooling, through implementation of new policies (Ibid, p.11). If teachers are expected to implement inclusion, conceptualising their professional development profiles, as informed by prior knowledge, attitudes and beliefs, becomes important since they inform everyday practice and education culture (Symeonidoy and Phtiaka, 2009).

‘The exchange of beliefs, ideas and experiences will lead to the construction of the concept of inclusive education by all those involved in its implementation. Otherwise, inclusive education will remain a philosophy developed by academics in the West and imposed to teachers in Greece’ (Ibid, p.549).

Van den Berg (2002, p.579)) highlights the significance of beliefs, attitudes and emotions that teachers adhere to, by providing examples14 and concrete definitions for each of them:

14Beliefs: ‘These new processes of teaching and learning are in conflict with my opinions regarding the
Beliefs [...] reflect teachers’ opinions regarding the processes of teaching and learning. Beliefs are personally formulated but often culturally shared cognitive configurations’ [...] ‘Attitudes express the positions that people can adopt on the process of change’ [...] ‘Emotions are a product of the way systems of meaning are created and negotiated between people’ (Fineman, 2000, p.2).

The term ‘attitude’ vastly used in studies and causing ambiguity (Fishbein and Ajzen, 1975, p.1), is perceived as ‘a connotation of behaviour’ (Meagan and MacPhail, 2008, p.780). In their review on the attitude-behaviour relationship and Rizzo’s (1984) revised (Rizzo, 1986; 1993) survey concerning attitudes towards teaching students with disabilities, Meagan and MacPhail (2008) argue that until the 1960s attitude was viewed by social scientists as ‘behavioural disposition’ (p.80), providing insights in explaining human actions (Ajzen and Fishbein, 1980, p.13). Researchers (Goleman, 1996; Kennedy and Kennedy, 1996; Pajares, 1992) argue that teachers’ meanings, beliefs, attitudes and emotions determine the decisions they make during their teaching career. More importantly meanings are deeply rooted within the individual owing to their long history and are more or less a part of the individual’s personal identity’ (van den Berg, 2002, p.580).

Kofman and Senge (1995) state that differences in conceptions of work may result from differences in personal identities. Regarding changes, these have a strong impact on teachers, especially in terms of the way they perceive and they present themselves, and what they consider as more important, of their professional identity (van den Berg, 2002, p.582). Consequently, any interaction between beliefs-attitudes-emotions and the socio-cultural/institutional context in which teachers work affects their ’professionality’ (Ibid, p.582); ‘teachers also construct specific meanings with regard to themselves and their profession’ (Ibid, p.582). That is, changes within the educational reality activate a range of teachers’ behavioural responses. These changes are defined by differences in any kind (gender, race, age etc) and ‘one way of understanding difference [...] is by examining peoples’ emotional responses to change in relation to their own identity’ (Hargreaves, 2005, p.968).

quality of education
Attitudes: ‘It is nice to be informed about new forms of education’
Emotions: insecurity, fear, happiness, pride etc. (van den Berg, 2002, p.250)
2.7.2 Cultural Models

With reference to Gee (1999), understanding important beliefs that influence actions and shape cultural norms can be achieved through exploration of cultural models (D’Andrade and Strauss, 1992). According to Bakhtin (as cited in Holland et al, 1998) through our behaviour and actions we do not simply ‘send messages (to ourselves and others) but also place ‘our selves’ in social fields’ (p.271). Different social and cultural groups have different ‘explanatory theories’ or ‘storylines’ rooted in the practices of the socio-cultural groups to which the learner belongs. Because they are beliefs that are important as they inform actions, Gee (1999, p.43) and other researchers (D’Andrade, 1995; D’Andrade and Strauss, 1992; Holland and Quinn, 1987; Shore, 1996; Strauss and Quinn, 1997) refer to them as cultural models. According to Holland and Quinn (1987) cultural models:

‘...are presupposed, taken-for-granted models of the world that are widely shared (although not necessarily to the exclusion of other, alternative models) by the members of a society and that play an enormous role in their understanding of that world and their behaviour in it’ (p.4).

Gee (1999) argues that cultural models, as well as their texts and practices, are in constant change. They are related to each other in diverse ways and usually they form bigger storylines. Cultural models are visions of ‘the real world’ and what people perceive as ‘normal’ people, objects and events (p.60). These change with time, social changes and experiences:

‘Cultural models are not static [...] and they are not purely mental but are distributed in socio-culturally defined groups of people and their texts and practices’ (p.23).

Most of the time, however, people are not aware of using cultural models; this happens only when cultural models are challenged by other people or new experiences, where they do not appear to ‘fit’. Moreover, people can have allegiance to conflicting cultural models, when for instance, the values connected to them shape the way they behave in everyday life. It is the distinction Gee makes (Ibid, p.67) between ‘mere values and hard reality’. Considering that ‘everyday’ people understand the same words differently, one can identify a variety of meanings of specific words across different contexts or situations, between pedagogic cultures and their corresponding ‘discourses’;

66
a certain discourse (e.g. teachers) or across different discourses (specialists/mainstream teachers).

Cultural models may be complexly organised, as usually smaller models are included in bigger models, and each one is associated with others, in different ways, settings, and groups of people. Either way, they help shape and organise significant aspects of people’s experiences and discourses. Studying the linguistic representations of teacher experiences, as mapped through their interview transcripts, will reveal the way they use language as a tool, as well as how their language is shaped by social influences (Fairclough, 2003; Gee, 1999). Thus cultural models can be identified and this is expected to shed light on teachers’ beliefs about being a teacher and it will help with the process of data analysis. Regarding their identification, through discourse and narratives, Lakoff and Johnson (1980) argue that cultural models may be signalled by metaphors. Gee (1999, p.70) also stresses cultural models’ deep implication in politics. He perceives the latter as 'anything' and in 'any-place', such as texts, talk, actions etc., where power, status, positions are at stake. In this sense, cultural models do bear a political meaning, since they include assumptions about what is normal or typical. Gee gives an example (1999, p.74) about the way models emerge from experiences and social position in the world, because the basis is not people’s experiences, but also the ‘projection’ of certain experiences and viewpoints onto the world.

2.8 Conclusion

International educational changes inevitably created milestones for Greece, with reforms (Greek Government Official Gazette, 1981, 1985, 2000, 2008) deriving from socio-economic, political and legislative considerations and determining differences between special- as opposed to mainstream education and provision respectively. In essence, in a context where special education’s history involves consideration of social changes, Greece developed its current viewpoint of educational science, affecting attitudes, policy and practice. Children with learning difficulties are those who are labelled as children with dyslexia. However, this is an umbrella category which largely includes children who would, in the UK, be classified also as dyslexic, but which also includes some children with other learning difficulties. The only official Greek
government definition (Circular 17-05-2000, p. 1) since 2000 defines dyslexia as a special educational difficulty in writing and reading, and as a special educational difficulty which consists of pupils’ weakness in acquiring linguistic skillfulness relative to reading, writing and spelling. It is recognised as a functional weakness, despite the adequate mental intelligence, normal emotional development and appropriate teaching, and a deficiency in information processing (Circular 17-05-2000, p. 1). Its high frequency in primary classrooms places dyslexia almost at the top of SpLD in the Greek context, with inclusion remaining a challenging, under-researched issue. Throughout Greek studies, teachers have traditionally been sceptical about children with learning difficulties in mainstream schools. Still attached to special education, the Greek education context draws distinctions, categorises pupils and allocates different programmes, which influence teachers’ perceptions. School culture is described as a shifting phenomenon, continually constructed and reconstructed by individuals or groups. In understanding teaching, one has to know about the person the teacher is. This implies some common ways of being and believing across teachers in certain localised areas, e.g. those operating under certain governmental/local policies. Participant teachers are expected to experience some commonalities of shared beliefs and practices. However it is important to look in depth at each case. This can provide understanding of how their beliefs are shaped, as well as a valuable range of insights to reform schooling, through implementation of new policies. Cultural models, after Gee, are important beliefs as they inform teacher actions, and they help shape and organise significant aspects of people’s experiences and discourses.
3.1 Introduction
Research accounts require justification of the methodology chosen, upon which the credibility of findings, conclusions and any knowledge produced, depend. Any study involving ‘people in social settings inevitably implicates a range of potential contributory causal factors and multiple perspectives and interpretations’ (Wellington et al, 2005 p.96). In the process of this study’s data collection, analysis and interpretation, guidance was provided by a research design (Nachmias and Nachmias,
1981): a plan making, tracing the link between the beginning and end (Yin, 1993), between the research questions, the interpretation of information gathered and the conclusions drawn upon it. The framework for planning research began with identification of purposes and constraints, assisting to the formation of a strategy that could better answer the research questions imposed. My major responsibility here concerns operationalisation. Decisions about how general research purposes can be broken down into more concrete aims; what constitutes valid evidence, what kind of contact is developed with teachers, and which methods can be used to better collect and interpret it, are critical for effective research. In this chapter, the focus of the research is outlined, the methodological choices made, the shape of the design of the study and the data gathering and analysis methods employed. It introduces the teachers that agreed to participate in the study by giving brief biographical data about them and it outlines the research process and timescale of their involvement. Finally, I will reflect upon the parameters of the study, its limitations in respect of methodology and as a consequence what it is aspiring to achieve and what is beyond its scope. Importantly, I will also reflect upon my role as researcher in undertaking the investigation and what impact that had upon the data garnered and its interpretation and presentation.

3.2 The Focus of the Study

In restating the research aims and questions of the study, what needs to be understood are teachers’ beliefs about children with dyslexia/learning difficulties, and the way these dispositions relate to teaching and learning, or may influence dispositions towards policies of inclusion in different educational contexts. Methodologically, in examining teacher discourses, there was a need to adopt a framework with a multi-layered analysis that would tap into beliefs and perceptions which inform teachers’ actions. A framework that would highlight evidence of cultural models (Gee, 1999) and that would unpack teachers’ dispositions regarding cultural models.

**RQ:** How can teachers’ experiences of, and beliefs and attitudes about, children with dyslexia/learning difficulties influence teachers’ attitudes towards inclusion, in the context of Greek mainstream primary school?
Sub-questions:

(a) Who are the children that are considered as having dyslexia/learning difficulties in the context of modern day Greece?
(b) What are teacher beliefs about the teaching and learning of children with dyslexia/learning difficulties in the context of modern day Greece?
(c) What are teacher beliefs and attitudes towards government policies of inclusion?

The attempt to answer these questions was done through a research focused on qualitative case studies, enriched by narratives and concept-maps [after Hoz and Gonik (2001) and Novak (1998)] to aid understanding of the complex processes of teacher experiences, attitudes and practices, and to provide directions for more appropriate provision. Miles and Huberman (1984), Davies (2008) and Willig (2001) provided a useful methodological framework to structure the research design, data collection and analysis/interpretation. In asking ‘how can’, examples of how beliefs can influence actions are to be identified through narratives that demonstrate the importance of certain (identified by the study) beliefs that influence disposition. The study can hence give a pointer to how one might tackle change. In essence, it is about understanding the process of change and how certain beliefs influence discourses, with dyslexia being situated in a high performance discourse of this teacher-centered education system. At a theoretical level, informed policy intends ultimately to change beliefs and to foster a more socially inclusive society in Greece.

The aim of concept mapping is to map the individuals’ conceptual, declarative knowledge (concepts and concept-linkages). The advantages of this form of information presentation, over conventional interviewing, have been recognised by established researchers (Ausubel, 1968; Novak and Gowin, 1984; West and Pines, 1985). While achieving higher validity, as argued in a following section, of several dimensions of knowledge inferring from concept mapping, the latter (Hoz and Gonik, 2001) can provide a way of capturing cultural models and how teachers position themselves in the discourse. A multiple case study methodology is selected, involving thematic analysis of data using some of the analytical techniques suggested by Glaser and Strauss (1967), where concern is with principles of qualitative data analysis, such as emergence of themes. To this extent, interviews were semi-structured, and although a lot of room was given to informants, certain bases needed to be covered and investigated. This thesis has
an ethnographic nature, in the sense of Hammersley’s (1990) conception of ethnography as a set of methods used to make sense of everyday life.

The use of concept mapping and qualitative interviews is an unusual methodology for research conducted in Greece, as most of the main studies are questionnaire based. Through concept mapping this particular study brings a different methodological perspective to SEN and inclusion research, which in the past tended to rely on questionnaire-based surveys and quantitative measures of attitudes (Novak, 1998). As a method of interviewing, concept mapping can provide a way of capturing cultural models, and how teachers position themselves in relation to these in the discourse (Hoz and Gonik, 2001). As well as identifying the cultural models, the thesis also postulates the strength of this theoretical framework. This is still new in the context of Greece though it is widely known and is in fact amongst one of the more conservative socio-cultural theories.

Research took place in natural settings and this gave me the opportunity to revise the design and reconsider a variety of approaches and make an informed choice of the most appropriate methods. For in-depth case studies it was decided a month in each school would be needed. However, the plan was flexible, so that the period could extend as much as was required at interesting points. This fieldwork budget allowed for school closures and trouble shooting (bank holidays, educational excursions, strikes etc) and could realistically be completed in one academic year in Greece, with occasional return visits to the UK for supervision.

3.3 Case Study Methodology

It is important to begin by clarifying the relationship between methodology and methods with both terms often and erroneously used interchangeably in social research. It is to ‘the theory of acquiring knowledge’ that methodology refers to ‘and the activity of considering, reflecting upon and justifying the best methods’ (Wellington et al, 2005, p.97). It is about understanding the process itself, not the products of the inquiry. By methods, Cohen et al (2000) mean the range of approaches used to collect information, that offer the researcher a baseline for knowledge, construction and interpretation. Either as researchers or as research subjects, people taking part in research situations (as in this study, in relation to pedagogic culture of teaching and learning children with
dyslexia/learning difficulties in Greece, make their own interpretations affecting their behaviour in situations. Fundamental to methodology are the researcher’s assumptions on ontology, epistemology, human nature and agency. These terms will now be defined and clarified in the light of this study. Ontology, coming from theology, concerns the nature of the essence of things. Assumptions about social reality focus on issues around being human within the world (Ibid, p.100). By taking a social constructivist position, this study’s aim is:

‘to collect subjective accounts and perceptions that explain how the world is experienced and constructed by the people who live in it’ (Cohen et al, 2000, p.100).

Secondly, epistemology is concerned with ‘how we know, with the nature of knowledge, with what constitutes knowledge, with where knowledge comes from and whose knowledge it is’ (Ibid, p.101). Taking knowledge as experiential, personal, subjective and socially constructed, the study requires the use of methods engaging with and exploring teachers’ experiences. ‘Positivism’ and ‘interpretivism’, as major theoretical perspectives, create debates of a clearly philosophical nature (Hitchcock and Hudges, 1995) in the social research world. Reality is perceived differently in each case. In positivist paradigms, theory clarifies “how reality hangs together in society or how it might be changed so as to be more effective” (Cohen et al, 2000). In interpretive paradigms, as applied in this study, the concern is with the subjective world of human experience, by getting inside individuals and understanding from within. Because of their relevance only within particular settings, objective reality cannot be captured and research findings cannot be generalised. Getting closer to data, spending a long time at schools, presenting lived reality in the form of vignettes and reporting teachers’ written accounts, may guarantee validity of knowledge generated from an interpretive approach. Here, research questions appear sensitive to the theoretical perspectives underpinning the study. Within the critical realist scope, there exists a reality but it is mediated in different ways. As Davies (2008) argues, the interviewer and the interviewee start with some incomplete knowledge about the social level of reality ‘and through an analysis on the character of their interaction including, but not limited to, the content of verbal interaction, they may develop this knowledge’ (p.109). The third category concerns human nature and agency and requires that the researcher makes explicit his/her assumptions about the ways in which people are believed to be able to act within the
world: ‘if they are felt to make decisions about what to do, methods which seek explanations and understanding from their perspective will be needed’ (Wellington, 2005, p.103).

Robson (1993) classifies research into three categories: (i) experiment, by manipulating one variable or another, (ii) survey, by collecting information in standardised form from groups of people, and (iii) case studies, by developing detailed knowledge about cases. Qualitative and quantitative methods may derive from different philosophies, yet they can supplement each other and provide alternative insights into human behaviour (Burns, 2000). As previously mentioned, qualitative research offers understanding of social situations, through the perspective of a socially constructed nature of reality. Theory appears to be a starting point in qualitative studies and is followed by modification and confirmation in the context (Kuzel, 1992). According to Stake (1995), distinctions concern knowledge construction and discovery, explanation and understanding as the purpose of research, and the researcher’s personal and impersonal role. But contrast, quantitative research does not stress the relationship between the researcher and the study. It emphasises analysis and measurement between variables and their relationships to possible causes and effects (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994). Interpretive researchers begin with individuals, focusing on understanding their interpretations of the world around them. By using a qualitative-interpretive approach, it is possible to…

‘gain in-depth understanding of the situation and meaning for those involved. The interest is in process rather than outcomes, in context rather than in specific variable, in discovery rather than confirmation’ (Merriam, 1998, p.19).

A number of research instruments can be used to access teachers’ thought processes: semi-structured interviews, observations, informal interactions, review of documentation, biographical interviews or accounts. By reflecting on studies reviewed in his research, van den Berg (2002) recommends topics for further investigation using a qualitative-interpretive approach ‘the conduct of multiple case study in schools is a possibility. And with a multiple case study design, clearly comparative research can be undertaken’ (p.615).

Stake (1995) positions case study as ‘the study of the particularity and complexity of a single case, coming to understand its activity within important circumstances’ (p. xi). Bassey (1999) identifies ‘at least three categories of educational
case study; theory-seeking and theory-testing case study; story-telling and picture-drawing case study; and evaluative case study’ (p.12). This study undertakes picture drawing case study. Bassey says that the first two

"are both analytical accounts of educational events, projects, programmes or systems aimed at illuminating theory. Story-telling is predominantly a narrative account of the exploration and analysis of the case, with a strong sense of time line. Picture drawing is predominantly a descriptive account, drawing together the results of the exploration and analysis of the case. Both should give theoretical insights, expressed as a claim to knowledge” (page 62).

Bassey has a useful list for ensuring sufficient data are collected for the researcher to be able to:

‘(a) explore significant features of the case;
(b) create plausible interpretations of what is found;
(c) test for the trustworthiness of these interpretations;
(d) construct a worthwhile argument or story;
(e) relate the argument or story to any relevant research in the literature;
(f) convey convincingly to an audience this argument or story;
g) provide an audit trail by which other researchers may validate or challenge the findings, or construct alternative argument’ (p.65).

Because case studies catch the dynamics of unfolding situations, the study starts with a wide field of focus on teachers (multiple case study), although gradual focusing on two cases enabled establishment of a narrower field of focus, based on key areas for subsequent study and collection of information. In-depth case studies were not conceptually different to the rest, it was the case of some people being more willing or offering me something of greater interest, so I was able to go into more detail with them. Identified through practice (classroom observation, follow-up interviews/written accounts), they were expected to add to the relation between pedagogy and changing dispositions.

Case studies were unique examples (Adelman et al, 1980) of real teachers in real situations throughout lessons with focus on their perceptions of dyslexia/learning difficulties, in order to provide a clearer picture in the discourse of teacher dispositions with respect to teaching pedagogies towards children with dyslexia. A case study approach is considered as a useful way of conducting qualitative inquiries, providing enriched pieces of information (Robson, 1993) by allowing an in-depth investigation. It also allows a full analysis of events and their interrelation, requiring multi-dimensional
observation of either a person or a whole group. Nisbet and Watt (1984) give a number of advantages characterising case study research. Firstly, case studies were written in everyday language - in the form of “telling a story”- and that made them quite accessible. Furthermore, they manifested significant and unique characteristics which may not be found in a larger data scale. The examples in this study are teachers including real students with dyslexia in real situations. They may assist interpretation of other similar cases and they can embrace unanticipated events and uncontrolled variables. Thirdly, research was undertaken by me, as a single investigator, not a full research team, as data was manageable to gather.

3.4 Participants

Accepting that the quality of a piece of research is also based upon the suitability of the adopted sampling strategy, the next step is to define the population on which the study focuses. Participants came from a mixture of 12 different schools (11 mainstream and 1 special) around Greece. Sampling was purposive, on the basis of my judgement of their typicality. It was not supposed to be a representative sample, rather it was designed to capture a diversity of beliefs, and provide an outcome of a set of teacher beliefs. It was chosen to include participants with variation in respect to the biographic factors: age, teaching experience, mainstream/special and urban/rural school context, subject specialism etc (Avramidis and Norwich, 2002). Participants were categorised with respect to age, gender, placement (urban/rural regions) and qualifications as can be seen in table 1 (p.82).

In examining professional development, core subject teachers were classified in terms of their qualifications: two of them are younger in age (20-30yrs), therefore having less teaching experience and have graduated from the University Department of Primary Education (4 yrs full-time attendance), whereas fourteen teachers graduated from the 2-year Academy which was not equal to University studies, and they attended extra compulsory courses to make this qualification equal to the university degree. The Pedagogical Academies (PAs) were established in 1933 by Law 5802/33, and admitted their first students in the following year (1934-35). The two year non-university level higher educational institutions aimed at the theoretical and practical education of teachers of six-year elementary schools. The PAs admitted graduates of the six-year
classical secondary schools (gymnasia), after succeeding in the written examinations (Kazamias, 1985). Before the opening of the University Department, teachers’ training was provided by Pedagogical Academy, through a 3-year course. Most of these teachers recently attended additional training, as an upgrade of their qualification. As far as teachers-graduates of the University and Pedagogical Academy are concerned, primary school teachers in Greece have a one year pre-service training which, together with their previous studies, is equivalent to a Bachelor in Education.

Regarding placement in urban/rural regions, almost half of the mainstream teachers had a previous placement in rural regions. There exists a point-system according to which teachers collect adequate points to finally succeed in obtaining an urban placement. The amount of points varies from 1 to 10, with the former been given when the placement is in a city and the latter when someone is placed in mountainous villages or remote islands which are very difficult to access. Taking my case as an example, I was initially placed in Santorini for two years. The more distant villages on this island offered me 10 points yearly and a chance to apply for placement in the 2nd Primary Education Office of Athens.

Another point that has to be explained concerning sampling is the participation of two teachers (T1 and T1b) in one interview (interview with concept map 1). Initially, T1 was on the schedule, but a few minutes after I started the process of interviewing, T1b came into the room and started participating at the discussion. The two teachers developed a conversation and the first concept map was co-constructed. It did cross my mind to tell T1b that we would like some privacy while the interview takes place, but then T1 invited T1b to stay and urged her to participate. Therefore, the very first interview with concept map includes two interviewees. Pseudonyms were given only to the teachers who were involved in the case studies.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pseudonyms</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Experience</th>
<th>Special/Mainstream</th>
<th>Urban/Rural</th>
<th>Qualifications</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>T1</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>(40-50yrs)</td>
<td>13 yrs</td>
<td>mainstream</td>
<td>rural</td>
<td>-School of Domestic Tasks</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-Academy</td>
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<tr>
<td>T1b</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>(30-40yrs)</td>
<td>12 yrs</td>
<td>trainer</td>
<td>urban</td>
<td>-Athletic Academy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T2 (Dimitra)</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>(40-50yrs)</td>
<td>15 yrs</td>
<td>mainstream</td>
<td>rural</td>
<td>-Academy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T3</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>(50-60yrs)</td>
<td>20 yrs</td>
<td>mainstream</td>
<td>urban</td>
<td>-Academy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T4</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>(50-60yrs)</td>
<td>30+ yrs</td>
<td>head teacher</td>
<td>rural</td>
<td>-Academy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T5 (Michael)</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>(40-50yrs)</td>
<td>11 yrs</td>
<td>mainstream</td>
<td>urban</td>
<td>-School of Philosophy (BA)</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-Academy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T6</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>(20-30yrs)</td>
<td>3 yrs</td>
<td>special teacher</td>
<td>urban</td>
<td>-Department of Prim.Special Education (BA)</td>
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<td>T7</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>(30-40yrs)</td>
<td>15 yrs</td>
<td>drama teacher</td>
<td>urban</td>
<td>-Drama School (BA, Mphil)</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-several seminars on SpLD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T8</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>(50-60yrs)</td>
<td>30 yrs</td>
<td>mainstream</td>
<td>rural</td>
<td>-Academy</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-long-term counselling seminars</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T9 (Christos)</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>(50-60yrs)</td>
<td>30+ yrs</td>
<td>head of Educ.Office</td>
<td>rural</td>
<td>-Academy</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>T10 (Larry)</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>(40-50yrs)</td>
<td>20 yrs</td>
<td>mainstream</td>
<td>rural</td>
<td>-Academy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-long-term counselling seminars</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T11 (John)</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>(30-40yrs)</td>
<td>12 yrs</td>
<td>mainstream</td>
<td>urban</td>
<td>-Academy</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>T12</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>(50-60yrs)</td>
<td>29 yrs</td>
<td>special teacher</td>
<td>rural</td>
<td>-Academy</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-long-term counselling seminars</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T13 (Maria)</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>(40-50yrs)</td>
<td>22 yrs</td>
<td>mainstream</td>
<td>urban</td>
<td>-Academy</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-a few seminars on SpLD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T14</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>(50-60yrs)</td>
<td>25 yrs</td>
<td>special teacher</td>
<td>rural</td>
<td>-Academy</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-SEN seminars</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T15</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>(20-30yrs)</td>
<td>4 yrs</td>
<td>mainstream</td>
<td>rural</td>
<td>-Department of Primary Education (BA)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T16</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>(40-50yrs)</td>
<td>14 yrs</td>
<td>english teacher</td>
<td>urban</td>
<td>-Department of English Language (BA)</td>
</tr>
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<td>T17</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>(40-50yrs)</td>
<td>21 yrs</td>
<td>mainstream</td>
<td>urban</td>
<td>-School of Economics (BS)</td>
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<tr>
<td>T18</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>(30-40yrs)</td>
<td>10 yrs</td>
<td>mainstream</td>
<td>rural</td>
<td>-Ralleio School</td>
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<tr>
<td>T19</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>(50-60yrs)</td>
<td>24 yrs</td>
<td>mainstream</td>
<td>rural</td>
<td>-Academy -a few seminars on SpLD</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 1: Research Sample**
3.5 Research Design

On February 2006, I conducted a pilot study in Manchester, which informed the MSc dissertation in Educational Research. During fieldwork three teachers were interviewed in the UK and two teachers in Athens, during April 2006. The pilot tested the data collection and analysis methods and the following questions (appendix 3, p.251) oriented the pilot and were expected to contribute methodologically in adopting the process of interviews with concept maps to elicit teachers’ cultural models in relation to teaching children with dyslexia.

-How can concept mapping be adopted as an interview for eliciting teachers’ cultural models in relation to teaching children with dyslexia/learning difficulties?
-How can this process be ‘adopted’ in an analytical framework?

Given the limited time and the nature of the pilot study, the focus was methodological in developing an interview based around concept mapping (Novak, http://cmap.cognist.uwf.edu/info): a means to produce comparative data, capturing within it cultural models held by teachers in relation to teaching and learning of children with dyslexia/learning difficulties. It informed the construction of the case data set and the basic round of interviews with concept maps of the thesis, conducted in Athens on September 2006.

Schools were contacted in June/July 2006, to prepare the ground for fieldwork to start in October 2006, to allow time to select and inform the schools for the research, and to allocate the cases of teachers that would suit the needs of the study. The thesis research design was expanded into a multiple-case study of teachers with varying experience in teaching children with dyslexia/learning difficulties in mainstream/special classrooms (non-experienced to very experienced).

As mentioned above, the study introduced 20 primary teachers (17 mainstream and 3 special teachers) who agreed to participate in the study, from 12 primary schools around Greece. Schools were contacted in June/July 2006, to prepare the ground for fieldwork to start in October 2006, to allow time to select and inform the schools for the research, and to allocate the cases of teachers that would suit the needs of the study. Teachers were interviewed on two occasions: the actual round of interviews with concept-maps started in
Athens in September 2006, and research was completed in April 2007, with the second round of interviews (appendix 4, p. 252).

Two of the teachers participating in the study agreed to be involved in more in-depth case studies. Case studies were unique examples of real teachers in real situations throughout lessons with focus on their perceptions of dyslexia/learning difficulties, in order to provide a clearer picture of how teachers position themselves in the discourse with respect to teaching pedagogies towards children with dyslexia. For in-depth case studies a month in each school was needed. Each classroom observation included observation voice files (30 hrs of observation in each classroom) and field notes. Additionally, documentation provided by the Head Teacher and classroom teachers included SEN policy of primary schools, summaries of current performance of chosen children and brief reports formed by the classroom teachers, as well as assessment reports by hospitals and assessment centres.

Once research began, it was estimated that 1.5-2 hrs would be needed to allow time for introducing participants to the particular method and for interviewing. For every school: 1 day fieldwork for two teacher interviews (about 10 hrs of fieldwork) and 4 interviews x 6hrs=24 hrs of transcription, plus analysis time [2 teachers x 2 interviews] x 10 hrs per interview= 40 hrs research work in total per school, spread over the year. This was about 60 hrs of fieldwork for the MCS part, and in a total of 10 schools about 3 months were needed. This was sorted out once selection of schools was made, and it was also depending on time needed to reach different locations, school timetables etc (appendix 4, p. 252).

3.6 Data Gathering Methods

3.6.1 Documentary Content Analysis

A major danger in using documents as secondary data sources is ‘the tendency to be less critical in their application’ (Davies, 2008, p.198). Documentary sources included official statistics (smaller scale surveys and national census) commissioned by governmental or European/International organisations, official governmental records, other non-governmental associations, including parent-teacher associations. Of critical importance, was to familiarise myself with the specialised literature given in the Greek
context chapter, through such documentary evidence, regarding its interpretation. Additionally, documentation provided by the Head Teacher and classroom teachers included SEN policies of primary schools involved, summaries of current performance of chosen children by the classroom teachers, as well as assessment reports by hospitals and assessment centres. These documents provided significant information about specialised provision for the children’s effective inclusion.

3.6.2 Interviews with Concept Maps

The definition of interview used in this study is “a conversation between two or more people where one of the participants takes the responsibility for reporting the substance of what is said” (Powey and Watts, 1984, p.2). Interviewing is probably the most widely used method of investigating the social world: it is used as a means of gathering information directly related to the research objectives, sometimes in conjunction with other methods (Cohen and Manion, 1994). In general, a research interview as defined by Cannel and Kahn (1968) is:

’a two-person conversation initiated by the interviewer for the specific purpose of obtaining research-relevant information, and focused by him/her on content specified by research objectives of systematic description, prediction or explanation’ (Cohen and Manion, 1994,p.271).

A variety of classifications of interviews can be found in research literature. Three categories of interviews are identified by Fielding (1993); structured, semi-structured and non-structured. Structured interviews (Stenhouse, 1984) appear useful only when the researcher is totally aware of what he/she does not know and can frame questions that will offer the required knowledge. Non-structured interviewing is a useful tool for broader explorations of a topic (Trochim, 2002). Even when this is used, however, researchers always have in mind the topic they wish to explore; ‘points made during the interview are usually with reference to both a shared history of a relationship and with awareness of a future connection’ (Davies, 2008,p.105). Semi-structured interviews were used in this study as they allow depth by providing the interviewer with the chance to probe and expand the respondent’s responses. For the purpose of this study, the choice of the flexible
version of the interview helped expand interviewees’ responses. Concept mapping was used to enhance the face to face narrative style interviews. Though I had constructed a set of themes to discuss (appendix 5, p.253) some questions emerged from the immediate context. Careful planning and consideration were required, regarding the use of language and the order, in which questions had to be posed. This enabled interviewees to form their answers freely. There were a number of practical difficulties with this model, explicitly given below. In brief, these difficulties had to do with the cases of participants holding back and not expressing any opinions or achieving poor interaction (Davies, 2008, p.107). Twenty narrative style interviews with concept maps were conducted at the beginning and towards the end of the academic year.

Concept maps are two or more dimensional spatial or graphic displays that make use of labelled nodes to represent concepts and lines or arcs to represent relationships between two pairs of concepts. They are a form of representing organised knowledge in sets of concepts, propositions or context dependent. The first two groups may be structured and labelled through symbols, words and related to events or objects. It has been suggested that their structure parallels the human cognitive structure, as they show how the interviewees organise concepts (Harlen et al, 1990; Wandersee, 1990; Margulies, 1994). As an important feature of the study context, interview with concept maps seemed to shift the equilibrium of power relations between the interviewee and interviewer towards the interviewee.

The aim of concept mapping is to map the individuals’ conceptual, declarative knowledge. The advantages of this form of information presentation, over conventional interviewing, have been recognised by established researchers (Ausubel, 1968; Novak and Gowin, 1984; West and Pines, 1985). Several dimensions of knowledge inferred from concept mapping (Hoz and Gonik, 2001) can provide a way of capturing cultural models and how teachers position themselves in the discourse. Interviews with concept maps have an advantage over conventional interviews in that by working collaboratively with participants, the researcher is provided with a considerable degree of reflexivity in the interviews co-construction. The resultant concept maps, as in-depth interviews exploring teachers’ dispositions, were themselves used as a preliminary analysis of the phenomena under examination. Therefore, concept mapping externalises representation of ‘the knowledge possessed by a single person in a given field, of his/her unique conception of a concrete or abstract entity’ (Hoz et al, 2003, p.251). Extended interviews based on concept
mapping are a means to produce rich comparative data: ‘...a creative process, designed to tap into a person’s cognitive structure, and externalize propositions and concepts’ (Novak, http://cmap.cognist.uwf.edu/info).

Data gathered was examined in terms of cultural models held by teachers in relation to the teaching and learning of children with dyslexia. Novak’s work stressed the importance of prior knowledge in learning about new concepts. An example describing the structure of concept maps and illustrating the above characteristics is provided by Novak (http://cmap.cognist.uwf.edu/info) below (Figure 1):

![Concept Map Example](http://cmap.cognist.uwf.edu/info)

**Figure 1: Concept Map Example**

Respondents, in this study, were given the chance to express and reflect on their points of view. As Cohen et al (2000, p.267) demonstrate the process of interviewing “is not simply concerned with data about life, it is part of life itself, its human embeddedness is inescapable”. The choice of this flexible version of interviewing helped to expand their responses. Because the process of constructing a concept map with the interviewee needed to be designed in a way that it externalises propositions, concepts, and patterns of ‘regularities’ in events or objects effortlessly, this interaction had to be developed in terms of a free-floating interview based on specific relevant instances. The concept maps did produce themselves a preliminary analysis of the phenomena under examination (Novak, http://cmap.cognist.uwf.edu/info).
3.6.3 Observations

Observations are unique in their directness, as they permit recording of events and certain situations to be made at the moment they are actually taking place. They include both oral and visual data. Observation provides understanding of the context. Patton (1990) (in Cohen et al, 2000) claims that observation gives the opportunity to look at what is taking place in situ rather than in second hand. Observation enables the researcher to gather data on: the physical setting, the human setting, the interactional setting and the programme setting (Morrison, 1983).

Two of the teachers participating in the study agreed to be involved in more in-depth case studies. These teachers were observed for 30 hours. Observation took two different forms: participant and non-participant or direct observation. The former may sound ‘warning bells of subjectivity’ (Robson, 1993, p.314), but from a social perspective, participation with those involved is considered necessary for interpretation (Manis and Meltzer, 1967; Kirk and Miller, 1986). Non-participant or direct observation appears more objective, more distant, but this would not necessarily provide sufficient information. It provides information about the way the classroom works as a whole, and the teaching baselines upon which the classroom teachers organise their daily work. On the other hand, in participant observation, the hallmark is long term personal involvement with teachers, to the extent that the researcher engages with participants’ culture as an insider (Davies, 2008, p.81). There is always the criticism of participant-observations being described as more subjective and biased, yet it is a means of facilitating observation of behaviours, events and discussions with informants. Additionally, life stories (accounts) can be collected, photographs and videos can be taken. Out of these ways of collecting data, only the first could be used, as the rest were rejected by the head teacher before the beginning of classroom observations.

Each classroom observation includes observation voice files (30 hrs of observation in each classroom) and field notes. Data springing from observation were gathered in the classrooms, during breaks and lunch time as well. During the first day of school placement, though research questions had already been conceived as ideas and conducted so as to be used as guidelines, things appeared quite confusing. The amount of information coming in was huge, causing a slight disorientation, which was initially expected to happen, and lost its power as time went by. Additionally, audio recording offered much more and video-
recording would be ideal, but that would possibly go against the school’s rules, so it was rejected. Field notes during or immediately after observation together with transcription of whole incidents with the two cases of children involved in the study, provided the greater part of information needed, and after Foster (1996) it was surprising how much data would come again so lively in mind, immediately after. Non-participant observation was used during the first days of visits, so as to have a full and balanced picture of the way the classroom worked, and not to disturb children, who had already started realising the presence of a stranger during every lesson, which would be

“the case of the researcher sitting at the back of the classroom coding up every three seconds the verbal exchanges between teacher and pupils by means of a structured set of observational categories” (Cohen et al, 2000).

Yet, time was allowed so that classroom teachers could get used to this idea, and did not feel as objects under observation. Participant observation began after the first week. From the second week of school placement and onwards, ‘diving’ into the field allowed engagement in all activities, by simply being one of the group (Cohen et al, 2000). As a participant-as observer I was striving to keep the balance between involvement (teaching) and detachment (observing), by constantly trying to suspend my ways of viewing the world, and to capture and jot pupils’ exact quotes, so as to provide the clearest and most complete narrative of what was going on, in as raw a form, and on as wide a front, as feasible (Hammersley, 1990).

For the purpose of the multi-method case study approach used here, triangulation is perceived in the sense of Cohen et al (2000) as methodological, that is ‘between methods (that) involve the use of more than one method in the pursuit of a given objective’ (p.114). By using a variety of methods for data collection, it is easier to explain analytically the complexity of human behaviour (Cohen et al, 2000). For instance, concept maps supplied information about teachers’ ways of thinking or feeling about their experiences while teaching children with dyslexia, and through analysis of transcripts, they provided access to cultural models, offering deeper understanding about the way teachers position themselves with respect to these models. This between-methods approach is demonstrated later in the chapter as a check on validity.
3.7 Research Process

3.7.1 Main Study Data Collection Process

The main multiple-case study was, as noted above, of teachers with varying experience in teaching children with dyslexia in mainstream/special classrooms. It was designed to capture a diversity of beliefs. Allocation of participants was achieved through the local Education Office. The Head of which, provided information on the number of mainstream schools including resource classrooms, and then informed selected schools and participants. Regarding access needed for observation, my experience as both a mainstream teacher in mainstream schools and as a specialist teacher of children with SEN in mainstream schools provided me with the ‘know-how’ to build good research relationships with teachers. It also offered a clear basis from which to make sense of the pedagogic cultures and teaching practices. Schools were contacted in June/July 2006, to prepare the ground for fieldwork to start in October 2006, to allow time to select and inform the schools for the research, and to allocate the cases of teachers that would suit the needs of the study.

The 20 teachers were interviewed on two occasions. The first round of interviews with concept maps started in Athens in September 2006, and research was completed in April 2007, with the second round of interviews. No doubt, some informants fully agreed to participate for altruistic reasons, as a way of helping the discipline and supporting me as a researcher. Others viewed this as a way of expressing their opinions, a means to be heard. Either way, they were assured at every step of the research that confidentiality, anonymity as well as their ability to withdraw would be preserved. Their informed consent was given (appendix 6, p. 254).

The interview process felt somewhat awkward at first, especially with interviewees who were expressing confusion as to how to map their thoughts. Through the aid of conversation, though, there was a sense that concept maps were being used as a tool to stimulate thinking and the interview became more of a collaboration between the interviewer and the interviewee to construct a personal conceptual framework in relation to teaching students with dyslexia (Riga, 2006). Yet, the price of introducing such an innovative method was the production of a number of narrow and ‘poor’ in data concept maps (i.e. concept maps 1,3,5,19,2a,17a), and contrary to an initial thought of promoting
this to the prime collection method, transcribing the corresponding interviews became indispensable. This tendency to construct descriptive instead of explanatory concept maps is identified by Novak and Cañas (2006) amongst pervasive difficulties in the use of the tool 'individuals are not able simply to provide uncontested knowledge about their social world [...] interviews contain apparent contradictions, probing suggestions' (Davies, 2008, p.107).

Even these elements constitute data. Respondents’ sayings and writings were representations of social and cultural realities. Therefore a difficult task was to adopt a neutral position and to avoid expressing opinions or assisting them with interpretation. At first, it also occurred that circumstances made it impossible to exclude others from this interaction. For instance in interview 1, the presence of another teacher (T1b), who eventually became a participant unavoidably affected the conversation. T1b started making comments and eventually engaged in a way that it had a positive effect on the first participant’s tendency to hold back.

To avoid leading questions, terms such as ‘attitudes, ‘experiences’ were replaced by phrases focusing on the specific areas indirectly. Interviewees were asked to explore how they think, especially while teaching children/ adults with dyslexia. Similarly, ‘behaviour’ was avoided as a word, mainly because of its possible connotations. Therefore, ‘views about teaching children with dyslexia’ was the motive power for the conduction of concept map interviews and their analysis. Due to the nature of the interviews, an interview guide was essential so as to direct discussion and ensure that specific, significant issues would be raised and discussed. For this reason, a standard procedure in terms of questions/areas (appendix 5, p. 253) covered was followed: its main components were background information, thinking about dyslexia/ learning difficulties, previous experiences, current cases, significant incidences, self-portrait etc. The first couple of interviews provided a useful analytical framework for the following ones, constituting a refinement for the study, so that this framework becomes more coherent with the conceptual framework.

Follow-up discussions were mainly summarising discussions and a critical consideration of the process. Tape recording was compulsory not to miss any important statements: it allowed engagement in close analysis through transcription of the interviews, so data collection was based upon both the concept maps and the interviews’ transcripts. The numbering of interviews with concept maps taken during the first round (i.e. 1, 15 etc) do not correspond to the second round numbering (i.e. 3a, 8a etc), as interviews were not
taken in the same order. However, because of the quantity of data, I have chosen not to change numbering during analysis, as this would imply change of coding in all other sets of data. Later, voice files and interview transcripts were added, to support case studies. These were also enriched by the two teachers’ and the researcher’s transcribed and tape-recorded accounts.

3.7.2 Translation of Language

As there are also ‘limitations caused by assumptions underlying the terms used [...] so that they may have been understood differently by respondents’ (Pavey, 2005), interviews were fully recorded and some notes were taken simultaneously to make the transcription easier. A next step was to transcribe interviews, to translate from one set of rule systems to another, from oral and interpersonal to written language (Cohen et al, 2000). Despite an effort made to transcribe each one on the day these were taken, as time moved on, this proved impossible due to practical reasons i.e. change of appointments, lack of time to complete transcription on the day. Many hours of full-transcription and translation into English, of tapes (approximately 7-8 hrs. for each interview) provided an enormous number of words but enabled deeper focus on interviewees’ sayings through fully reproduced interviews.

Translation from Greek to English involved interpretation, despite the fact that Greek is my mother tongue and any prior experience I may have within the educational system and the target population (i.e. Greek teachers). The latter was expected to increase the cultural sensitivity required on the part of the researcher to effectively capture and interpret data (Irvine et al, 2008, p.35). My professional and personal perspective inevitably influenced translation (Overing, 1987). Becoming an ‘insider’ by sharing the culture and language of the researched (Esposito, 2001; Culley et al, 2007; Shklarov, 2007) was the easy part, considering that a major threat to rigour in research is failure to reflect reality because of the researcher’s unfamiliarity with the research setting (Laverack and Brown, 2003). More difficult was the question of English language awareness and thereby, of presenting a ‘culturally competent research’ (Irvine et al, 2008, p.37). The researchers’ responsibility, as argued by Papadopoulos and Lees (2002), is to consider concept equivalence and maintain the same meaning in Greek and English.
Issues concerning cultural understanding and the battle between my role as a researcher and the position of an insider are analytically discussed in the section on personal involvement in the research. In brief, Spradley (1979) highlights that there is always the fear of a false assumption of congruence of meanings, under the excitement of sharing a language with interviewees. It also occurs that much of what is taken for granted by native speakers is omitted or explained so superficially that it may appear meaningless (Davies, 2008, p.87). On the other hand, besides concentrating on the content, important communications such as ‘meaningless phrases, repetitions, sublinguistic verbalizations, pauses and silences may all be significant in adding to [...] the purely semantic content of what is said’ (Ibid, p.126).

With one eye on such problems emerging while in the field, transcription has to be kept as rich as possible, through discussion with other Greek researchers and negotiations with academics. Another consideration with respect to recording texts concerned reporting, and its use in the final product of analysis in the reporting of research results. This was yet another level of selectivity, discussed in analysis.

3.7.3 Recording and Transcribing Data

Recording and transcribing in field became a frequent source of concern, since both processes could lose data from the original encounter. The main issue was whether, to what extent, and how transcription could be useful for this particular research. In order to produce decontextualised transcriptions, they had to be abstracted from time and space, from the dynamics of classroom situations. I had to produce ‘frozen’ texts. Several problems are addressed in the following chapters, but the main one concerning the amount of transcription, was the risk of becoming solely a record of data rather than a record of social encounter. Undoubtedly, it was frequently the non-verbal communication that provided more information than the verbal one. On other occasions, a series of events would occur so quickly that there was time only to make cursory notes which I then had to supplement with fuller accounts. Replacing audio recording with video recording might have made for richer data, but this would then become very time consuming.

Thanks to teachers’ understanding of the study’s needs, there was no barrier on working alongside children. They would need assistance to distribute work sheets, to help pupils with writing and reading, or even to ask my advice on their performance in mini
Gradually, engagement in all activities combined with various teaching methods, was dominant and during the last two days of school placement, there was no time at all for keeping notes during lessons. Accounts were quite detailed, however, and recording turned out to be a highly ‘personal’ process. Though the idea was to note concrete instances of what was said/done, using ‘flat’ descriptions (Silverman, 1993), sometimes I was writing as if keeping a diary and observing and interpreting as well. Concerning preliminary analysis, it proved suitable to distinguish interpretive phrases (right hand column) from descriptive ones (left hand column) (Brown and Dowling, 1998), and to identify parts where these categories would become confounded.

3.7.4 In-depth Case Study Data Collection Process

Case studies “catch the dynamics of unfolding situations” (Ibid,p.72) so suited a wide field of focus on multiple case studies (20), although more in-depth study of two of the cases enabled the establishment of a narrower and more detailed field of focus. The two cases were selected because of their unique nature and representativeness within the main group of teachers. They both had children with dyslexia/learning difficulties in their classrooms at the time the study was conducted. Identified through practice (classroom observation, follow-up interviews/written accounts), they were expected to add to the understanding of the relation between pedagogy and changing dispositions. Analysis here involved cross case thematic analysis and narrative analysis, to provide good triangulation opportunities (focus on observation) and evidence of validity.

Case studies were unique examples (Adelman et al, 1980) of real teachers in real situations throughout lessons with the focus on their perceptions of dyslexia/learning difficulties, in order to provide a clearer picture of how teachers position themselves in the discourse with respect to teaching pedagogies towards children with dyslexia. A case study approach is considered a useful way of conducting qualitative inquiries, providing enriched pieces of information (Robson, 1993) by allowing an in-depth investigation, and emphasis on a full analysis of events and their interrelation. Nisbet and Watt (1984) give a number of advantages characterising this case study research. Firstly, they were written in everyday language - in the form of “telling a story”- and that made them quite accessible. Furthermore, they manifested significant and unique characteristics which may not be found in a larger data scale: as mentioned above, the examples in this study are teachers
including real students with dyslexia in real situations. They may assist interpretation of other similar cases and they can embrace unanticipated events and uncontrolled variables. Thirdly, research was held by me, as a single investigator, not a full research team, as data was manageable to gather.

Research took place in natural settings, Year 3 and Year 4 classrooms. For the in-depth case studies a month in each school would be needed with the focus on RQ2 (appendix 3, p. 251). However, the plan was flexible, so that the period would extend as much as required at interesting points. This fieldwork budget allowed for school closures and trouble shooting (bank holidays, educational excursions, strikes etc) and could realistically be completed in one academic year in Greece, with occasional return visits to the UK for supervision.

3.8 Data analysis

Data analysis on this qualitative piece was interpretive. The process involved identification of themes through ‘careful reading and re-reading of the data’ (Rice and Ezzy, 1999,p.258), collected on the basis of the primary objective, that is to represent the subjective viewpoints of teachers about teaching children with dyslexia. Details of speech, together with body language, gaze, or writing (Mishler, 1991) that were considered relevant in specific situations, were analysed with respect to my arguments as a researcher. In Gee’s (1999) sense, transcripts were perceived not as parts standing outside the analysis, rather as ‘theoretical entities’ (p.88). Because of its length, part of the preparatory phase, including the two major fieldwork reports and relevant summaries/reports, are attached as appendices (appendices 7-10, pp: 257-267).

3.8.1 Analytical Methods

I conducted two methods of analysis, cross case thematic analysis and narrative analysis. Analysis here was of the pedagogic culture and teaching practice in relation to teacher dispositions, and perhaps changing dispositions. A focus of observation also needed to be developed during the research to achieve triangulation. The intention was to code data and identify emergent themes, thus, analysis was not a separate process, rather ongoing and embedded within fieldwork. It moves back and forth amongst data, with
gradual advancement from coding to conceptual categories and hence to theory development. The aim was to extract new meanings by deconstructing and reconstructing data (Lincoln and Cuba, 1985), through the process of rethinking and reflecting on meanings (Coffey and Atkinson 1996). Figure 2 below illustrates generalised stages of this process based upon Miles and Huberman (1994) and Hycner’s (1985) theory as presented by Cohen et al (2000, pp.283-285).

Therefore, it was important to develop a method for analysis that would fit tightly with the theoretical framework. Regarding the analysis framework, this had to be developed on the discourse, through the use of thematic and discourse analysis, and it needed to be coherent with the conceptual framework. In the framework of serial analysis, drawing upon key themes was achieved through processes of coding and interpreting data, as it is the researcher’s need: “to be able to organize, manage and retrieve the most meaningful bits of data” (Coffey and Atkinson, 1996). Creating categories based on common points and coding appeared to be a mixture of data reduction. Initially, data was broken up into simpler and general categories, allowing interpretation afterwards; notes, diaries and brief memos reinforced daily revision and criticism of incidents and choice of those requiring further examination. The process of summarising each piece of data entered involves reading, listening to and summarising raw data. Transcripts were summarised separately and key points made by participants in response to questions asked were outlined, providing the opportunity to sense and take note of potential themes in the raw data.

In raising the issue of the use of specific words in specific situations (Gee, 1999,p.82) people perceive situations as ‘mundane encounters’ and choose the ‘appropriate’ words to use in each situation. The reciprocity identified between language and reality- since it is difficult to clarify whether situation or language comes first- is what Gee calls reflexivity (Duranti and Goodwin, 1992; Hanks, 1996; Heritage, 1984; Gumperz and Levinson, 1996). Cues or clues in language people use provide assembly of specific situated meanings, which in turn activate specific cultural models. Related to the wider framework social languages, situated meanings and cultural models allow people to enact and recognise diverse discourses (Gee, 1999). One way to extract people’s cultural models is by asking ‘what must I assume this person (consciously or unconsciously) believes in order to make deep sense of what they are saying?’ (Ibid, p.73).
While interviewing, the interest was in themes (Miles and Huberman, 1984) or units of information (Lincoln and Guba, 1985; Strauss and Corbin, 1998) developed and the relationship between them, in the building of a concept map. Especially for concept maps, these were initially analysed through the method introduced by Hoz et al (2003): complex phrases (concepts) were decomposed, where necessary, into simple relations. The links as well as important concepts of a given concept map were identified and checked.

Figure 2: Deconstruction and Reconstruction of Data
separately. Moreover, working on transcripts and school documents involved isolation of important elements, conflicting points or sensitive data answering the research questions.

While coding, I systematically revised data several times and descriptively coded each piece of transcription. Having performed this first round, I was able to detect patterns, to count frequencies and to create code families. Units of relevant meaning were clustered together. Clusters were examined in terms of central themes that express their essence and a summary (general analysis for both interviews of each informant) was prepared, incorporating themes that have been elicited from data. Themes are given in appendices 9 and 10 (pp: 261-267), as identified before refinement of data. As natural units of meaning, these were highlighted on the English interview transcripts (example provided in appendix 11, p. 268) in different colours. Themes were then classified, categorised and linked to other relevant units of meanings emerging from the particular theoretical framework, the cultural models (appendix 12, p. 276). Cultural models were ordered into different tables linked to separate code families (appendix 13, p. 277). It occurred that codes and themes identified in advance had to be refined in light of codes that were used later. Then a general report of code families of transcripts was produced (appendix 14, p. 278). A number of key-words (given in table 2, p. 103) was identified, as being more popular, in transcripts and classified in four major groups: disability-dyslexia-transmission teaching-performance. The choice of these categories depended very much upon the need to identify teachers’ beliefs as associated with different ways of talking and thinking about dyslexia/learning difficulties.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>KEY-WORDS</th>
<th>40 INTERVIEWS WITH CONCEPT MAPS</th>
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<tr>
<td>-able</td>
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<td>-anomaly</td>
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<td>-attention deficit disorder</td>
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<td>-bad</td>
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<td>-brilliant</td>
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<td>-clever/smart</td>
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<td>-differentiate</td>
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<td>-discriminated/discrimination</td>
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<td>-dyslexics</td>
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<td>Learning Difficulties</td>
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<td>-immature</td>
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<td>-don’t adore</td>
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<td>-laziness</td>
<td>-kind-heartedness</td>
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<td>-less able/inability</td>
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<td>-pity</td>
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<td>-mental retardation/mentally handicapped</td>
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<td>-save our soul</td>
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</table>
### Table 2: Themes’ Key-Words

| Anxiety | -anxiety  
|         | -ashamed  
|         | -avoided  
|         | -bit  
|         | -Calvary  
|         | -disappointed  
|         | -feel helpless  
|         | -feel low  
|         | -freaked out  
|         | -frightened  
|         | -get tired  
|         | -go crazy  
|         | -panic  
|         | -reached my limits  
|         | -restricted  
|         | -shocked  
|         | -slammed  
|         | -slap  
|         | -smack /smacking  
|         | -soul-destroying  
|         | -stressed/distressed  
|         | -touch wood!  
|         | -unhappy  
|         | -worried  
|         | -would die!  

| Treatment | -anomaly  
|           | -complaint  
|           | -disease  
|           | -disorder  
|           | -infection  
|           | -lack  
|           | -malfunctions  
|           | -sickness  
|           | -treatment  

| Help | -help/helpless/ helpful  
|      | -provision  
|      | -support  

Analysis used ‘I’ statements in relation to connections made with or against cultural models about education and dyslexia/learning difficulties. The study looked at self-references by speaking in the first person as ‘I’, named after Gee (1999, p. 124) ‘I’ statements. The type of predicate that accompanies ‘I’, determines the specific group of ‘I’
statement. Such examples were given in groups, and emphasis was given especially on strong statements. More or less, all interviewees contributed to all ‘I’ statement groups. They were closely examined as facets of the profile of each case study. The study enriched Gee’s (Ibid, p.124) list of ‘I’ statements:

- **cognitive statements** (e.g. I think, I know, I guess, I believe, I remember, I imagine, I see, I mean, I say to myself, (as far as ) I am concerned);
- **affective statements** (e.g. I want, I like, I need, I feel, I don’t like, I disagree, I am not interested);
- **state/action statements** (e.g. I am free, I am good, I lack, I listen, I disagree, I expect);
- **ability/constraint statements** (e.g. I can/cannot, I have/haven’t to);
- **achievement statements** (e.g. I try, I want to, I move on, I can do more, I achieve, I manage).

Emphasis was given to the nature and quantity of these language aspects. This section briefly provides an insight into teachers’ perceptions about themselves and the context within which they work; an example of ‘I’ statements is given in appendix 16 (p. 282).

A next stage was to make summaries of how these teachers position themselves with respect to various cultural models and also about how they use them to tell their story and justify the things they say. Furthermore, separate reports (example in appendix 17, p. 284), displayed in detail through analyses chapters, allowed gathering and comparison of opinions on themes/cultural models, which were expected to apply in various stages of the analysis-discussion. After coding interviews and analysing concept maps, the picture became clearer. Because of the amount of data collected, refinement was necessary after each step of analysis.

### 3.8.2 Narrative Stories

Throughout literature (Barsalou, 1992), situated meanings according to Gee (1999, p.46) are ‘assembled out of diverse features, as we speak, listen, and act’. Thus, within a specific context, people assemble the features that constitute situated meanings that a word has in this context; such situated meanings are based on the way people construct the context and on past experiences (Agar, 1994; Kress, 1985; Levinson, 1983). Narratives are
stories told in an effort to make sense of how people experience themselves and how they would like to be understood in order to bring structure to their lives (Søreide, 2006). With interviewing (interviews with concept maps and follow-up interviews) being the principal method of research, informants were often encouraged to describe particular aspects of their life stories. The study recalls Bruner’s ‘storied texts’ (1996): beginning, trouble, resolved, end (pp.130-149). Such stories have a legitimate place in educational research, as they are ‘worth telling and worth construing [...] typically born in trouble’ (Ibid, p.142). They ‘have the potential to make a far-reaching contribution to the problem of understanding the links between ‘personal troubles’ and ‘public issues’ (Goodson, 1983, in Cohen et al, 2000, p.165).

The individual teacher case studies are important to read and express by voicing the participants’ own ways of talking as ‘teachers continually, most often unsolicited, import life history data into their accounts of classroom events’ (Ibid, p.165). In this respect, teachers’ stories have their place alongside other sources of primary and secondary documentary evidence. Being rich in the subjective involvement of informants, they offered the opportunity to gather more authentic data. In their attempt to enable teachers to construct personal and professional autobiographies, Butt et al (1992) worked through the following activities: they seek for information on the context of their current working reality (p.62), of their current pedagogy in use, of their reflections on their past personal and professional lives so far, and of their thoughts about their preferred personal/professional future. Teacher biographies are needed as there is little knowledge of how early teaching experiences affect their career and strategies (Woods, 1986). Teacher’s biographies (Crow, 1987) refer to experiences that form the basis for teacher role identity. The latter is defined as the image one has of oneself as teacher (Knowles, 1992,p.99). Knowles (1992) uses a figure (appendix 4.6,p.336)- in a study for pre-service teachers, a model linking stages of development of teacher role identity with phases of the Biographical Transformation Model (provided in Goodson, 1992,p.137). Briefly, experiences of family, school and teacher are interpreted and are assigned meanings. Their collective meanings are modified and generalised to family role models, positive/ negative teacher role models or personal education philosophies. These are then transformed into ideas, and enacted as classroom practices.
3.9 Scope, Trustworthiness, Reflexivity and Limitations of the Study

A major risk when undertaking qualitative research, especially through participant observation, is the extent to which it satisfies the three criteria of reliability, validity and generalisability. As a method, it has been judged for its deficiency regarding its reliability and generalisability of findings. In brief, reliability, clearly related but not identical to validity, refers to ‘the repeatability of research findings and their accessibility to other researchers’ (Davies, 2008, p.96). Against arguments about reliability in qualitative studies, Davies (2008) collates that in its strictest version reliability is hardly applicable, since, even if the researcher remains the same, a different identity of this person appears in different field contexts. Another important key for effective research, validity, deals ‘with the notion that what you say you have observed is, in fact, what really happened. In the final analysis validity is always about truth’ (Shank, 2002, p.92). Therefore, as Davies (2008) argues, validity ‘would depend on how (results) were interpreted and hence refers to the correctness of the theory developed to explain them’ (p.96). Validity is more likely when diverse methods are used, including participant observation, a multi-method by nature. Yet, there is the danger of ignoring the situational and contextual dependence of findings, and being left with an incomplete multi-facted situation.

The sort of generalisation that can be achieved from a critical-realist perspective differs in that ‘in social research it can be explanatory but not predictive’ (Ibid, p.102). It relies upon a case study method, though not as a representative of a class of cases. Analysis, as described in the analysis chapters, and theorising thereafter, proceeds by ‘constant comparison’ (Glaser and Strauss, 1967) and seeks to reveal differences and variations. By explaining these, refinement can be achieved and explanations developed which constitute valid generalisation (Baszanger and Dodier, 1997). Against these implications, Anfara et al (2002), present ways of publicly disclosing methods and research processes for establishing validity. They provide a set of strategies (Ibid, p.30) that once employed can achieve higher internal and external validity: credibility and transferability are the equivalent qualitative terms. From these the following can be identified through this study’s fieldwork: prolonged engagement in field (almost 2 years, and still in contact with some participants), triangulation (observation, concept maps, and accounts), member checking after each round of fieldwork, purposive sampling and thick description of facts.
Here, transcribing interviews allowed engagement in close analysis of the cultural models emerging in the data. ‘The validity of an analysis is not a matter of how detailed one’s transcript is’ (Gee, 1999, pp. 88-89); it has more to do with the trustworthiness of the analysis that can be created by transcripts together with elements of analysis, in this case, the concept maps. Interviews with concept maps in connection with the case study approach made research more valid, more authentic, considering the amount of bias in single approaches. Indeed, for the case of interviewing “interviewers and interviewees alike bring their own, often unconscious experiential and biographical baggage with them into the interview situation” (Cohen et al, 2000, p.121).

Sampling also considered accessibility and willingness to assist in ‘a mutual search for understanding that bridges, or mediates, between the social worlds of informant’ and researcher’ (Davies, 2008, p.89). To sensitively interpret this interaction, a reflexive understanding had to be developed. Data became a ‘distillation’ of both the positions of the interviewer and interviewees, within their own social worlds. Some of the interactions with participants were very brief, superficial, as the type of relationship was highly focused in research only. Others, though, became more diffuse, more intimate, covering a broader range of interests and activities. Selection of informants was of critical significance, and these cases could not be avoided or excluded; after all, it was all part of the process. Because to some point, there was personal connection to the object under research, this self-consciousness introduced complexities, making reflexivity -or reactivity as explained below- an issue of importance. Considering reflexivity after Davies (2008) ‘a turning back on oneself, a process of self-reference […] it refers to the ways in which the products of research are affected by the personnel and process of doing research’ (p.4).

There was a necessity to connect to research situations that emerged, and hence to their effects upon it, but there was also my fear of complete ‘self absorption’ (Ibid, p.26). Against such complexities, methodologies and methods were chosen to reduce reactivity,15 always under the scope of acceptance of research’s dual nature: ‘it depends both on some connection with that being researched and on some degree of separation from it’ (Ibid, p.11). For participant observation, and especially neutral settings, Becker (1970, pp.45-48) argues that participants’ behaviour is not influenced that much by an observer. Hammersley and Atkinson (1995) recognise and collate the powerful and inescapable

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15 Maxwell (2005) defines reactivity as ‘the influence of the researcher on the setting or individuals studied’ (p.108).
influence of reactivity, the so called ‘reflexivity’. Indeed, instead of trying to minimise the researcher’s effect in a qualitative research (Maxwell, 2005), the importance is ‘to understand how you are influencing what the informants say, and how this affects the validity of the inferences you can draw from the interview’ (Ibid, p.109). Differently posed, ‘the disinterestedness or objectivity of the researcher’ (Cohen et al, 2000, p.105) together with ‘the extent of triangulation’ (p.105) constitute criteria through which validity, an important key to effective research, can be addressed in qualitative data.

In qualitative research, the use of computers while formalising analysis is promoted by many researchers, to better manage and organise vast amount of data. Various software applications allow for coding text-based data sets. Searches are conducted quicker and more efficiently. This form of analysis, as examined by Davies (2008), has positive and negative aspects. The use of data analysis package Atlas-ti, probably the most widely used software application in building/creating categories (codes) and linking them to an index (Ibid,p.245), was seriously considered for analysis. When coming to terms with the enormous amount of codes after completion of reports, the idea of taking advantage of this facility, its time and labour-saving potential was striking. This still remained an option, even after case studies were conducted and a great part of analysis was achieved. In the end, though, it was abandoned, partly because on-time access to the software material was not facilitated. Surprisingly, it could easily transform an interview transcript into a concept map (Novak and Capas, 2006). Yet, the prospect of producing another set of maps to compare with forty prototypes appeared problematic as it could create a chaotic situation. No doubt, the most important part of analysis took place while in fieldwork and while rereading data, and definitely, inside the researcher’s mind. The only use of Atlas-ti was that of creating networks, in order to properly present the original quote maps in English, for the reader’s convenience, and additionally, of expanding them with original quotes to allow for thematic and discourse analysis.
4.1 Introduction

Progressive focusing on the research question during initial analysis led to the identification of two in-depth cases, including sustained classroom observation. These cases are not conceptually different from the rest, but offered more extensive and diverse data collection opportunities and both teachers, working in Athens, currently had dyslexia/learning difficulties pupils in their classrooms. Primarily, the chapter illustrates the two teachers’ stories and four additional narratives selected from the full data set demonstrate the range in which significant cultural models were used. Narrative accounts are expected to show how the teachers have positioned themselves using cultural models, based on in-depth thematic and discourse analysis of interview transcripts, written accounts, follow-up interviews, reports for children and field notes. Then analysis moves to other accounts, so as to demonstrate the diversity found: an account of the beliefs and cultural models drawn upon from the thematic analysis. ‘I’ statements are used according to Gee’s methods to identify the cultural models and show their positioning. For the purpose of this study, the
teachers’ profiles represent prior knowledge, attitudes and beliefs about inclusion as expressed in interviews.

Two children are involved in the study: Helen and George, attending Year 3 (Maria’s class) and Year 4 (John’s class) correspondingly. They have both been assessed as pupils with SpLD. They come from different backgrounds, and have different abilities and needs. The profiles of the children are constructed through the use of brief teachers’ reports, assessment reports and the researcher’s preliminary analysis/comments on field notes (appendices 19-23, pp: 290-297). Standing as motives for the formation or expression of teacher attitudes, they contribute to the revelation of teachers’ stories.

The schools involved in the in-depth case studies are mainstream primary schools, regulated by a large Education Office in Athens. They accommodate pupils, coming mostly from the local area. The data collection visits to each school lasted a month on average and thanks to the friendly environment, reinforced by the staff’s enthusiasm, regarding the aim of this study, and willingness to contribute in the best way possible, school placement was developed into a pleasant experience. The data gathering was focused on the classrooms of John and Maria. There are many similarities between the classrooms (appendix 24, p. 298): they are large, with many desks, where children sit in pairs at times though children work in groups. This way of grouping is used to support the development of communication between the children and the teacher. The classrooms have a big blackboard and a teachers’ desk in the corner, but no IT support. A CD player is available for all classrooms. There are drawings and posters (letters-maps-problem solving-nouns-phonemes etc) on the walls. Children do not have personal lockers/drawers to store their books, but there is an area which includes teacher’s books, extra student books, games etc. Both schools have a place for a special/support teacher, but no qualified teacher was working there at the time of the research. Therefore the children in these two classrooms did not receive extra support at school.

4.2 John’s Story (appendices 11 and 25, pp: 268 and 299)

John’s story begins in Athens, where he was born and raised. He is a 42 year-old mainstream primary school teacher and he has a 7 year-old daughter. He is currently
working at the 36th Primary School of Peristeri. He has 12 years of teaching experience and considers himself lucky, as he did not have to work in the provinces. Instead, he was placed in a school in Athens, after 10 years on a waiting list. Teaching was his second choice. He wanted to become a trainer but did not make it to the Athletic Academy. He was disappointed, as he was left with the only choice to enrol in the Pedagogic Academy. He graduated from the Academy in 1987, and received additional training.

“I just liked to be a trainer…I felt that it is very important to teach things to children…generally, I am in this mood…you know, to help…but there were other things that played a role in this choice…I remember my parents saying to me that it would be great to become a teacher […] I think they perceived this profession as something very decent…very considerable…as if my status would change. But you know, my parents expected other things from me, but anyway…I do not regret…I would wish for a higher salary […] the only thing that I have in my mind as a negative stimulant was that my father was totally illiterate, he didn’t know to read or write…that would make me feel weird…I would feel sorry for him, I also wanted to help him…I don’t know…but he was very good at his job. He was a carpenter. There were times he had problems at work, so I would try to sort things out. He was very happy, he was smiling at me. I couldn’t believe it…that he was so illiterate…” (John’s 2nd interview, 109-141).

Because of the long waiting list in the public sector (a system for school placement that was used before the current exam system) he would offer private lessons to children to earn his living. In addition, he would work with his father, an illiterate carpenter. This, he admits, has made him feel compassionate and made him realise the importance of professional status in life. It was in 1993 that John started working as a substitute teacher. Five years later, in 1998, he got a permanent placement. He is currently working in a mainstream school in Athens (Year 4), including George with SpLD and hyperactivity disorder. John uses the term ‘learning difficulties’, as commonly used within the Greek context and often confused with ‘SpLD’:

“I believe that this is essential for all children in the classroom…the child with the learning difficulty may be the ‘receiver’, but I think that in this way you also help somehow the normal child as well, this relationship…being in need of others, because the child recognises the problems he/she faces, and peers are also recognised as assistants, not as leaders” (John’s 1st interview, 87-92).
He is not that descriptive about disability/learning difficulties. ‘Normal’ children are distinguished from children with learning difficulties: “I mean that a normal child...may...well, by normal I mean a child without learning difficulties...because all children are normal...so, this child may need 10 minutes...so as to show the difference for instance between ‘φ’ and ‘θ’ [...]” (John’s 1st interview, 189-194). Dyslexia is defined as a condition-disease related to pathological factors that children will never overcome. It differentiates these children from the rest, but it is not necessarily a barrier for future career opportunities.

“It is something that needs treatment. That it is something that your child will never overcome, and that this will eventually mean something really bad for the child’s future. And this may be true, since the child may never...may never stop being dyslexic, and then...that doesn’t mean that it will be a barrier for the rest of his/her life, vocational life” (John’s 1st interview, 167-174).

He introduces the term ‘unfortunate’ to refer to dyslexia. Children with dyslexia, to him, are unfortunate children, and that makes him feel stressed and frightened. At another point, he talks about dysfunction of specific brain activities.

“I call them ‘unfortunate’ because I feel that they have everything, but they need a more special approach [...] I mean this is not the child’s fault, this may be my fault because I don’t know...that’s why they are ‘unfortunate’. Not because they have me as their teacher, right? (laughing)”(John’s 1st interview, 21-32).

As far as his relationship with children is concerned, he states he likes working with children, but there are times he feels inefficient and he cannot help: “I feel sorry for these children, I want to help them as much as I can, right?...I believe that even wheedling or smiling is a lot of support from their teacher. (John’s 1st interview,42-45). There are strong signs of compassion for children with SpLD. Overall he wants to help and learn, to be close to George through activities and team-working, in order to develop a stronger relationship.

“What I tried to do this year was to make him (George) feel more important within the classroom, for his own sake and for the rest of the classroom. I would try to help him more and to make the others include him in their team” (John’s 1st interview, 66-70).
His anxiety regarding teaching children with dyslexia/learning difficulties in mainstream classrooms is spread out throughout his interviews. The initial idea he has about dyslexia causes him feelings of stress, anxiety and fear:

“Dyslexia: dysfunction of specific brain activities…. What else?...when I used to hear about dyslexia in the past, I would get stressed and frightened. Now, I need to write a bit more…this is because I didn’t know the child’s condition, and because I didn’t know how to help the child” (John’s 2nd interview, 24-29).

John still recognises his difficulty in reconciling his early anxieties about dyslexia, especially in the event of having a child with dyslexia in his class. He also sees a positive perspective, but always separating special from mainstream education. He argues that attending special classrooms is helpful to these children:

“as long as there is the right person there, the specialist, who has plenty of knowledge…it also needs a lot of resources, as far as I know, which we lack as a school. It’s a huge problem” (John’s 1st interview, 259-263).

While attending primary school in the 1970’s, he recalls a peer of his, who was a very good pupil but whose problem was not identified. Her handwriting was very nice, but it was as if she did not exist at all. She would not speak at all; she was described as ‘wild’. He would not talk to her; though she was not aggressive, because he was afraid of her. Children laughed at her. There were also pupils who made a lot of mistakes and were labelled the ‘bad pupils’. It was much later that he heard about children who could not read or write and it sounded so incredible to him.

He identifies himself as trying to support children with difficulties, and this is where he locates himself culturally as a teacher. This teaching model is far from transmission teaching. He identifies three different types of teachers:

“As far as their behaviour is concerned…there are those who show an interest…a lot actually (writing), there are some others who are uninterested, they just cannot be bothered, and those who wish they knew more to help, but they lack experience” (John’s 1st interview, 98-104).

“It needs imagination, and I believe that I do have imagination, but in this area, I sometimes feel I’m blocked […] It also needs longing…artistry…dignity…you need to love your job” (John’s 1st interview, 223-228).
John makes only one reference regarding these children with difficulties and the way they perform compared to the rest of the classroom: “I have come across children who have learning difficulties, and I see that though they try… they don’t understand it, they cannot follow the pace of the rest of the classroom” (John’s 1st interview, 14-17). He is interested in special education, though he did not have the chance to attend Marazlio. Throughout life, he argues, that there have been obstacles that have not allowed him to attempt specialisation or extra training:

“...there were some obstacles in my career, and you may see these as excuses...you get married...you have children...you need to get money and work extra hours...so things need to fall into place...now that I think of that, there is something else that needs to be done...if I ever sit for exams at Marazlio, it will definitely be for special education” (John’s 1st interview, 119-129).

His first concept map (as seen in Figure 3, p. 117), is based upon the concept ‘unfortunate children’, as to what problems this group of children have while learning and socialising (writing-they need help to do well etc). At a second phase, he places groups of teachers in relation to their attitude towards these children. For these children to be included, he highlights steps that have to be taken from the teachers’ side. Overall the profile of these children is framed by their problems. Therefore the first concept-map gives a deficit side of dyslexia (SpLD). John does not refer directly or indirectly to exclusion of such pupils to the withdrawal classroom, or one-to-one teaching. The second concept map (as seen in Figure 4, p. 118) is less detailed. Dyslexia, as a ‘difficulty in writing and reading’ is the main concept, used in relation to his knowledge around this, through reading and experience. Viewed in relation to the first map, it appears as an illustration of the change in his attitude.

The extensive lists of ‘I’ statements, included in the interviews with concept maps and the follow-up interviews, are provided in appendices 26 and 29 (pp: 302 and 312). In the interviews, ‘cognitive and action/state statements are the most populated groups; additionally, affective statements form a lengthy list. Amongst the phrases repeated (in other words) he identifies a positive perspective regarding dyslexia (“I also believe that if anyone knows how to help this child, this condition may be improved” (2nd interview, 11-12) “because I realised that there are ways to help a child overcome a learning difficulty” (2nd interview, 121) He uses ‘I feel’ to all his affective statements. He repeats the same
motive ‘I feel sorry...I want to help’ for children at school and for his father illiteracy (“I feel sorry for these children, I want to help them as much as I can, right?” (2nd interview, 42-43) “I would feel sorry for him, I also wanted to help him” (2nd interview, 136)). Action/state statements give a flavour of his thoughts on his self-picture; he repeats that has had no special training (“I am not specialised” (1st interview 11, 48) “I am not a specialist...I may discuss these things, but I have this repression...” (2nd interview, 165-166)). He also allocates himself in the scale of teachers: “I would...I would be within this mean of people who do not give up...” (1st interview,192). Achievement statements include positive thinking regarding the teaching approaches she uses in the classroom for such cases. Trying to help is the main quote (“I try to help as much as possible” (1st interview, 112) “I would try to help him more and to make the others include him in their team” (2nd interview, 69-70)), and only one statement referring to professional development (“I am of those who are interested and who try to read through” (1st interview, 105-106)). There is a positive aspect regarding helping these pupils given in phrases repeated [“I think that in this way you help in a way the normal child as well” (1st interview, 89-90)- “I also believe that if anyone knows how to help this child, this condition may be improved” (2nd interview, 11-12)- “because I realised that there are ways to help a child overcome a learning difficulty” (2nd interview, 121)]. This quote is also dominant in the third group [“...generally, I am in this mood...you know, to help” (2nd interview, 108) “I will take the child, I will help the child, I will give a kiss, a hug...children need their mum and dad...”(2nd interview, 150-151)]. There appears a contradiction at the beginning of interview 11 regarding the difficulty in including children with difficulties in learning [“I say to myself that this is not my fault” (1st interview, 28)-“I mean this is not the child’s fault, this may be my fault” (1st interview, 29-30)] whether it is the teacher’s fault. Another point is that of swinging between desire to support more and restraint, identified in both interviews [“I feel I don’t help that much” (1st interview, 113)- “I sometimes feel I’m blocked...” (1st interview, 225)- “I feel better as a parent now” (2nd interview 162)- “I can help them” (1st interview, 27)- “I try to help as much as possible” (1st interview, 112)].

Similarly, in the follow-up interview the list is extensive (appendix 29, p. 312). Cognitive statements concern his beliefs about his teaching. He is mostly concerned with the fact that he gets tired (“[...]I don’t know why, but for me it was too tiring this year.
Though there were times that I knew something was about to happen” (John’s F-up Interview, 82-85)-“I mean a rest is always good...” (John’s F-up Interview 11, 88-89)- “I don’t think I have any weapons left to fight for [...]” (John’s F-up Int. 143-145)). The swing between willingness and restraint to support children is spread out in these transcripts as well. The second group shows a contradiction of feelings, as he wants to continue to strive for the best, but at the same time he feels a holding back, which- he fears- starts to consolidate: “I feel very strongly a ‘holding back’ as far as my mood concerns” (John’s Account Interview, 17-18)-“I feel I still have things to give to children, and strength, in order to get over such difficulties and setbacks” (John’s Account Interview, 25-26). He calls this phase a crisis, as he stops resisting to hoping that he will take action soon. Action statements consist of many statements, including a self description, and his teaching. Again this swing as described above is confirmed [“I start letting things go...unfortunately, my priorities have changed” (John’s F-up Interview, 150-151)-“But I am sure, that even after all this delay, I am confident as far as I am concerned...though I have a problem with my self-esteem...I am sure that I will find the way out...that I will keep the balance” (John’s F-up Interview, 156-159)- “but I’m afraid that this will gradually start to consolidate” (John’s Account Interview, 31)- “I myself have stopped resisting” (John’s Account Interview, 34)]. Ability statements show his constraint to change his attitude, as he realises he is losing his enthusiasm. Achievement statements show that he is setting limits to his effort, because he gets no support from the environment.

In his follow-up interview (appendix 28, p. 307), John makes a general reference to the pupil with learning difficulties. He uses both terms ‘learning difficulties’ and ‘SpLD’. The first are considered as difficult cases, SpLD are less severe cases:

“I would like to work with children with learning difficulties...not severe cases, you know, dyslexia, specific learning difficulties etc. But in one-to-one teaching, to get to know problems. I need to learn things...new things...to help such cases...I’ve already asked Ph.’ s mum to bring him some afternoons to my place and spend time with him, to see how he reads, how he realises things...to learn Maths through games, through a pc, not as a private lesson though, rather as a friend”(John’s Follow-up interview,110-117).
Figure 3: Concept Map 11

Figure 4: Concept Map 6a
Indirectly, he positions himself against transmission teaching. He describes himself as showing understanding concerning mistakes and improper behaviours.

“even if a child has done something improper...has committed an offence... I will not exclude easily...I will give them a chance to try again...to correct their mistakes” (John’s Follow-up interview, 12-22).

“It’s not in my disposition to work with children without involving feelings [...] because I have shown that I am far too open as a person, and I have said things and I mean them, but in the end this was badly used...from many people... this has disappointed me” (John’s Follow-up interview, 61-68).

Feelings are considered an important ingredient in teaching. In this sense he is not the kind of teacher who in the name of professionalism sets limits to his work:

“Some people consider professionalism as...”ok, look...I’m a professional, I do what I have to do, and this is where I have to stop”. In our work this is somewhat weird. I don’t think you can work in this area without feelings” (John’s Follow-up interview, 12-22).

Speaking of change in his interviews, John sounds disappointed in the picture he shows as a teacher. He feels he has changed a lot as a teacher since he started working:

“I believe I have become worse in many things...I see the way you react with children sometimes, and I remember myself when I was young...I would play with them, I would spend time with them during the breaks” (John’s 2nd Interview, 152-156).

It is a matter of individual and social perspective, but additionally through the interviews he looks deeper at his professional development through the years. Tiredness, he says, sets barriers to inclusive practices. A change in his way of teaching and thinking might have occurred after further reading, and especially after having his daughter:

“I believe that only experience comes with time...but you get more and more tired...and this makes you worse...and experience comes as a compensation for this. Our job is very soul-destroying...I feel better as a parent now...or at least as far as knowledge is concerned. This is included in experience. But I don’t feel I know much...I am not a specialist...I may discuss these things, but I have this repression” (John’s 2nd Interview, 157-166).

No other critical incidents influenced his way of thinking apart from the fact that his father was illiterate. In the written account and follow-up interview, John argues he
cannot change his attitude towards others, referring to parents; instead he should be more
moderate:

“Well, there is a general response from children, but there is no
response from the rest of people...sometimes, and this bothers
me a lot, but I cannot change it...I cannot change my attitude...I
don’t like explaining all the time, and I start thinking that I
should be more temperate sometimes” (John’s Follow-up
interview, 27-32).

As a teacher he feels he remains the same, though he used to be more ‘open’
outside the classroom. Now it appears he has lost his enthusiasm:

“As far as teaching is concerned I remain the same. Now...I
used to go out with children in the yard and play, have fun and
do things together, in order to build a better relationship outside
the classroom...more open, but I see that this starts to fade”
(John’s Follow-up interview, 36-41).

He was influenced by the incident (with George as described above) that occurred
during this school year, with an abandoned pupil with very low performance, who,
according to him and to the head teacher had no SpLD; instead he should repeat Year 2 to
cover major knowledge gaps (considering that the boy started writing and reading in Year
2). The way his parents handled the situation has disappointed and deprived John,
influenced his mood and his enthusiasm, as he cannot ignore all comments. Such
situations cause him tiredness, and if not change, a reason for changing the way he thinks:
“At the moment what I feel is a sort of tiredness I have never felt before” (John’s Follow-
up interview, 75-78). “They (such incidents) definitely provide you with a good reason to
stop seeing things like you used to in the past” (John’s Follow-up interview, 105-107).
There are other priorities in his life also, and he finds himself keeping a distance:

“...one thing that I want to say is that I start letting things
go...unfortunately, my priorities have changed. There has been
a phase in my life that financial issues were the priority. I don’t
think it is such a priority anymore” (John’s Follow-up
interview, 150-153).

Assessment report states that George went through developmental assessment due
to ‘learning difficulties in writing […] He hasn’t received any rehabilitation provision.
Hereditary background report father facing learning difficulties’ (appendix 22, p. 296).
Interestingly, assessment of pupil’s learning abilities illustrates that regarding comprehensive ability (through CaHell Weib Test) ‘Intelligence (is) within lowest normal levels!’? Specialists put a question mark and an exclamation mark to note a particular case that requires further research. Diagnosis reports ‘General learning difficulties within the framework of particularities of the child from birth’ (appendix 22, p. 296). According to John’s report:

“George […] is a boy immature as far as his behaviour and his reactions, towards adults and other children. Because he cannot make it to the lessons, he is insecure and withdrawn, and as a result he becomes shy for no particular reason […] he is conscientious, prompt and ready to do any errand I ask him to. Of course, this willingness is not that stable, intense and constant regarding his homework, unless he has someone to help him. Even so, he doesn’t accept easily to have someone by his side to work together during the lessons, and he reacts negatively, therefore he becomes incredibly naughty. During the lesson, I can tell he gets tired, bored, or he cannot stand it anymore. Maybe, that’s why he usually asks me to go out (to the loo or to drink water)” (appendix 23, p. 297).

At times John becomes upset and disappointed with pupils. He sometimes turns to me, showing his concern and need to prove his sayings:

“John then turns to me. He looks at me in despair. He is very disappointed.

J:’ I’m talking about exercise which takes about 5’ each, to do…they just had to solve this and prepare the reverse problem…they do nothing…nothing at all’ (Field notes).

In the following incident (appendix 30, p. 315), he asks to check George’s homework, but foresees that this is not done properly. He starts raising his voice and makes critical comments to George:

“J:’ …the Maths’ workbook’, frowning on him. ‘Did you do the exercises?’
No reply from George.
J: ‘I’m asking you, young man! Did you do the exercises? Yes or no?’
G: ‘I brought you the rough draft…because I forgot the workbook at home…’
A few seconds pause…the teacher staring at him…"
J: ‘Would it be unfair now, if I slapped you face?...would it be my fault?
G:’ ......no....
J: ‘You have the audacity to come to my desk and give me the same old excuse?...you brought me your rough draft...I reckon you didn’t even copy the exercises to the workbook!’.
G: ‘I did’
J: ‘You did...ok, George sit down please, and leave me your rough draft’ (Field notes).

While checking on George, later that hour, he shows his disappointment through body language and verbally:

“Silence. John then looks at me. The teacher is having a quick look at his test. He nods his head negatively”

“He is very disappointed, he says...murmuring:
J: ‘Imagine...I wanted them to move to the next section...’
(Field notes).

John has placed an extra desk next to his, to achieve better contact, for example with Isabella, who is described as slow reader/learner (not assessed). He also invites George to sit at this desk, so that he can keep an eye on him.

“The teacher turns to Isabella. He places her at a desk next to his desk and says:
J: ‘Isabella! Come on Isabella!’ (Field notes).

Whenever he feels she needs no extra help from him, he lets her move back to her initial seat next to her friend:

“In the meantime, the teacher turning to Isabella:
J: ‘It’s ok Isabella, go back to your seat now’ (Field notes).

On several occasions John tries to be funny and to make jokes.

“A boy on the front desk is playing with his pencil, pretending it’s a gun...
J: ‘And! Can you stop doing that? Since we started the lesson you must have ‘killed’ more than 20! That’s enough for today!’ Children laugh’ (Field notes).

Whenever pupils exceed limits, he brings them into line:
“Ok, we agreed to make jokes from time to time, to avoid monotony...but this is too much now! And, please...calm down, and sit properly, my boy...Vassili., can you please turn to your front?”

“Dimitris is still playing with his pencil. The teacher interrupts him:
J: ‘Stop it now!...you know what? Why don’t we produce ‘Rambo 4’? We’ll get good money for this! Concentrate young man!’ (Field notes).

While marking their tests, he keeps changing attitude depending on the case: “One by one, children form a queue in front of him, waiting for his comment. He either smiles at them, or hugs them, or makes remarks, depending on the case” (Field notes). John reports that George’s low performance is a barrier for progress: “His school performance is very low, and I would say that it is unsure whether this helps him move to upper Years normally, like the rest of children” (appendix 23, p. 297). He argues that re-attending nursery or Year 1, could improve his performance. However, this was never suggested by his colleagues in previous years, plus George’s parents never aimed at this ‘not so much because they didn’t want this, rather because they didn’t know’ as he writes in brackets (appendix 23, p. 297).

“The teacher asks George if he solved the problem. I move towards his desk. George hasn’t even noted the numbers for this exercise. In the meantime a boy, who has not done the sum, is asked to go through the exercise on the board. The teacher makes a comment to me about George, saying that he sort of expected that.
J: ‘I had this ‘dream’ again. We talk about these issues on a daily basis’
The teacher turns to George:
J: ‘I don’t know how to begin with...it’s always your ‘vitrine’, your ‘image’...you don’t care about the ‘essence’. It’s just the clothes you wear...it’s just these things, ok, but...as far as the practical issues are concerned, and our performance as pupils...’(Field notes).

In the following incident George does not follow previous advice in writing bigger readable letters. He is taciturn, while the teacher makes remarks:

“In the meantime, George gives him his test. Children are noisy. George is standing on the side, staring at the teacher. The rest of the children nudging behind him.
J: ‘May I ask you something? How many times did I tell to all of you earlier this morning to write bigger letters? Why do you write like that? Why?’

George keeps staring at him. He nods positively.

J: ‘Then why don’t you improve your writing? Please try to write better…but on the other hand, I guess you don’t want to do it, right? But apart from that, whether you write small or big letter, your mistakes remain.’

A child disturbs their conversation. Turning to him again…

J: ‘Why do you keep writing so small letters? I cannot make out what you write...Please, please write bigger letter...please, so that I can understand’.

George staring at him, speechless.

J: ‘But, on the other hand, I guess you don’t feel like writing bigger letters, right?...You don’t want to?’ (Field notes).

Children are having a quick test, as the teacher wants to examine if they understood the reasoning in some problems. He talks about performance and grading. “The teacher informs them they will get the grade they deserve; he will not be favourable this time” (Field notes).

“Needless to say that this will be taken seriously into consideration as far as the 3rd semester’s grade is concerned. No one should dare come to me and apologise for running out of time” (Field notes).

The extracts below constitute representative examples of monologues while making remarks to the classroom.

“I am so curious though....how do you spend the whole day at home? ....the only thing you had to do today was Maths, you had no homework in Literature...you’ve got Music...nothing...training...which is nothing again...say you also had a bit of Religion...for me the most important is Maths. And I face now 6-7 pupils who haven’t worked on their homework. I mean...you forgot what? The most important thing for today?’ (Field notes).

John is disappointed because many pupils did not prepare homework:

“The only way you can work is through threatening and bugbears! You just cannot understand some things, right? We’ve reached the end of school year, and still this is the picture of your performance, no improvement!’ (Field notes).

John clarifies the role he wants to play in the classroom. His responsibility is to check children’s progress, following the model of the teacher as a guide and helper, not to
be the ‘bad guy’: “…this means that I have to be the ‘bad’ guy, the ‘hunter’, the ‘gendarme’. But, you know...this is not my role...I don’t want to take part in this process...I just check your workbooks, to be aware...and to let parents know” (Field notes). Yet, he realises that pupils continue to have the same behaviour, and that he should take action to change this:

“I wish I had realised some things about some of you earlier in the year, so that I could have taken them in hand...but it doesn’t matter...there’s always time. I have a feeling that most of this homework is prepared by others at home...let’s see if this is true” (Field notes).

John relates George’s SpLD to immaturity, as written in the assessment report, and allocates the problem in daily practice (a pupil who needs support and gets bored easily, who has problems in socialising). The sense of anxiety, described in interviews with concept-maps, is obvious in the classroom. He raises his voice and makes critical comments to pupils. He gets disappointed when George cannot follow his advice. This is also related to lack of time and to his demands concerning their performance. John considers performance as important, even for George. His efforts and persistence to support pupils who have difficulties (placing Isabella or George at a desk next to his, to supervise and help them) confirms his initial belief that he is not an uninterested teacher. George does not receive special support at school or any sort of differentiated work from John; he is treated equally and expected to cope with all lesson demands. Throughout observation John appears to change his attitudes from strict and in control, to being a funny and caring teacher. Whenever pupils exceed limits, he tries to bring them into line; occasionally their inconsistency makes him upset. Considering how emotionally charged are his monologues are during lesson, he allows feelings to show in the teaching process, therefore giving a sense of connecting with children. He reports that an incident with George’s parents, with whom he used to be more connected, made him reconsider the limits in this relationship.

John’s profile reflects the type of teacher who is aware of the diversity of needs and the provision needed. The emotional component in his relationship with his pupils seems important. He is a caring and kind teacher who feels close to pupils. Compassionate feelings, transmuted into willingness to achieve for pupils through service, demonstrate that the need for better working conditions is not the one and only motivation for his
professional choice. Yet, in practice, he still lacks training and an inclusive pedagogy which holds him from supporting such pupils. He repeatedly refers to his inability to offer these children as much as they need. Any need for further education and training, however, is overshadowed by other priorities and personal choices.

Having covered one third of his teaching career, John admits this job is suitable for him. Though he is still young, he identifies lack of experience and professional development. He expresses his hesitation at times, either feeling inadequate or unable to help. There appears the old cultural model of dyslexia, around which he drapes his past/present views. These children are in need of help, and he clearly states that he is available, if ever given the chance in the future. Special support is important, and he is for inclusion in the mainstream classroom by specialised personnel. He allocates himself amongst different kinds of teachers and their attitudes towards children with learning problems, clearly stating that he is within the average, but amongst those who struggle to learn more and show a concern. He shows this feeling of anxiety and willingness to help. His teacher identity is linked to a deficit view, but has got a sense of connecting with children. It is not deficit in the sense that there is nothing that can be done, proving that there are different ways of being deficit. He shows though that he is quite an in control teacher, and that there are ways to help a child.

In his written account and follow-up interview he still uses ‘learning difficulties’ and ‘SpLD’ interchangeably as in the wider Greek linguistic context. This time however, the first term is used for severe cases whereas the second for less difficult, though, not referring to the model of dyslexia as a condition-disease related to pathological factors. He confirms his view, as expressed in the concept-map interviews, and as opposed to transmission teaching, while describing himself as being understanding, providing pupils with second chances and not setting limits to his feelings. Through discourse analysis of ‘I’ statements there appears a swing between striving for children’s best and holding back, because of losing his enthusiasm. He considers this a temporary crisis, which he will soon overcome. Therefore, it is not a matter of tiredness. As a teacher he remains the same, yet, incidences with parents that disappoint him, influence his mood. John has some of the necessary dispositions towards dyslexia/learning difficulties and reform practices, but may need leadership and a lot of practical help, in terms of training and in-service supervision, to divert compassion and need to offer love and help, into inclusive methodology.
4.3 Maria’s Story (appendices 31 and 32, pp: 325 and 329)

Maria is a 50 year-old mainstream primary teacher, currently working at the 18th Primary School of Kifissia. She was born and raised in Volos (city). Her father was a trader and her mother stayed at home to raise the children. Recalling her experiences as a pupil, she makes an argument as to the different kinds of confrontation children with difficulties had in the past. In a teacher centered system, pupils had to memorise lessons and any difficulty in learning was explained as ‘bad performance’. Looking through the past/present perspective, she gives an example of one of her peers in primary school, labelled as a lazy, bad pupil. This, she argues, should not be a matter of compassion; instead, help is what teachers should offer:

“Well, you don’t feel sorry for them. You just try to help. It’s not that they lack things. But you cannot achieve anything unless parents are willing to support you as well […] I would like to add some things…well, imagine in 1965…my parents loved having children…but we didn’t have any such examples within our family…reading and writing was a different process then…if you were not a good pupil, you would choose something else” (Maria’s 2nd interview, 134-144).

In terms of performance, she argues that these difficulties have been identified by her as gaps in knowledge while children move to Upper Years. Pupils with learning problems may not have reached higher education, but could become fine people, according to her.

Her brother, who now runs the family business, studied in the necessary field in order to work there. Maria wanted to do the same studies to contribute. In this sense, she would have no problem in finding a job, but her dream was to become a doctor. In the event, she failed at both and eventually became a teacher. She graduated from the Academy, and attended the additional compulsory training and a couple of seminars on SpLD. As she never forgot her dream, she then enrolled in the Athens Business School but never graduated.

Maria has a son (17 yrs). She has 22 years of experience. Currently, she teaches Year 2 which includes a girl, Helen with severe dyslexia (assessed) and two boys with SpLD (not assessed). She likes her job, but she finds it a bit tiring as years go by. There are many factors interrelated every...
“It’s just that it has become a bit tiring. And I guess it depends on the year…and the classroom…the recent classroom, well…they are very naughty, but they are clever…they come to school happy. Last year I didn’t like working, because children couldn’t be bothered…” (Maria’s 2nd interview, 63-67).

Maria does not have much experience of children with dyslexia. She used to locate dyslexia within learning difficulties, but this was rather blurred. Helen, with whom she is currently working with in her classroom, is the most severe case of dyslexia in her teaching career. She recalls cases she has come across:

“I do remember…yes…learning difficulties. Which were not diagnosed though. There were some problems, but that doesn’t mean that there might have been due to dyslexia or whatever. More or less I had identified them as gaps, and especially in Year 3, where they were much more obvious” (Maria’s 1st interview, 21-28).

Her initial views about dyslexia are related to learning difficulties and behavioural problems. Pupils with dyslexia may be clever, but there is a problem concerning the brain...

“I would generally say learning difficulties… (writing) this is what I understood of this term…but I don’t remember having related this to mental retardation…I related it to something that was wrong regarding their brain…but that was a blur to me…because these children may be good at Maths, so that doesn’t mean they are not clever…I first heard about learning difficulties after 1985. I was working in a private school then. I started…my update through Pavlidis, you know…this was the first seminar I attended, and then there was another seminar with Miller, you know the ambassador’s wife” (Maria’s 2nd interview, 4-20).

Dyslexia is still named as a learning difficulty, but now perceived as a difficulty in writing and reading, under the terms ‘particularities’ and ‘special abilities’, or ‘the problem’, through a less individual perspective. “I’d say they are children with particularities […] I mean children with special abilities...(writing)...they have their own way of thinking, they have their own pace, slower, and naturally they need some help.” (Maria’s 1st interview, 2-9). There appears a swing between the individual and social model, with the label of ‘learning difficulties’ used instead of ‘SpLD’. No extended reference is made, yet there are many chunks including this term:
“I believe that regarding my experiences, Helen is the most severe case I have come across so far….in the past years…I had come across learning difficulties…in Upper Years these were not identified as learning difficulties, rather as gaps of knowledge. Because when the child grows up, you cannot identify the problem easily…only in reading” (Maria’s 1st interview,104-110).

In her second interview dyslexia is placed under the umbrella term ‘learning difficulties’:

“I would say that the general part is ‘learning difficulties’…the more specific one is that…there is one type of learning difficulties, which is dyslexia. We generally identify these problems as learning difficulties and it is through the assessment process that the problem becomes more specific […]” (Maria’s 2nd interview 13a,21-34).

She recalls such cases when she was a pupil. Dyslexia is linked to ‘laziness’, but not much detail is provided, and again the label of ‘learning difficulties’ is used instead of ‘SpLD’.

“All these things were hidden behind the label ‘lazy’. He is lazy, he doesn’t read, he is a bad pupil…but this may not have been laziness…it may have been dyslexia or learning difficulties. It just wasn’t diagnosed; people had no idea then about dyslexia or learning difficulties” (Maria’s 1st interview,198-210).

This discourse focuses on a particular type of teacher who does the job well, but does not make specific efforts to include children with dyslexia/learning difficulties. As in other participants’ discourse, she focuses on ‘the problem’ and expects specialised staff’s assistance, which is superior to her own pedagogical skills. She believes that special teachers can help such children:

“Sure! Because it is one-to-one teaching. The mainstream teacher may want to help, but this is difficult, because it is also the rest of children that need…I cannot offer what the special teacher offers to Helen….they need to organise their time, right? (writing) one-to-one teaching approach…it also helps them in their behaviour” (Maria’s 1st interview, 151-161).

Maria argues she would not want to become a special teacher, as this is very demanding. The choice of job is perceived as suitable, considering the energy participants transmit through teaching. Extra profit constitutes strong motivation for this choice.
Against this perspective, her father persuaded her not to work in special education as he would give her the extra money instead, should this be the only motivation.

“I was thinking of taking the exams for Marazlio, 3-4 years ago…because I had a lot of children with learning difficulties […] Yes, because the benefits were quite a motive. No…I think it was even before that…I think my son was still in primary school…so the problem was where we would leave my son, if I had to go down town daily. My father said that this was not a good idea; instead he would give me the ‘bonus’! So I quit…plus I had to study for the exams…” (Maria’s 2nd interview,110-122).

She would not do that anyway, since this job requires extra patience and strength.

The following chunk carries a number of ‘I don’t know’ statements and transfers this dynamic of negative ‘I statements’ into imperative ‘you statements’:

“This was in a way a financial motive, right? Well, apart from that…I would…you know…after those further studies, I don’t know if I would do that anyway…I mean to walk into a classroom and teach children with special needs. I might do that…I don’t know…honestly…though this kind of work needs extra patience, strength…you have to confront parents…parents who simply do not want to accept their problem…it is the daily kind of attrition…where you need to be patient…” (Maria’s 2nd interview,123-132).

In examining how concept maps facilitate and align with discourse, the first concept map (as seen in Figure 5, p. 131) is based upon the main concept ‘children with particularities’, as to what problems this group of children has while learning and socialising (reading-writing-tiredness-loneliness etc). At a secondary level Maria places ‘the teacher’ in relation to children’s feelings, behaviour and one-to-one teaching. Overall the profile of these children is framed by their problems. Therefore the first concept-map gives the individual perspective of dyslexia. The interviewee does not agree with full inclusion of such pupils in the mainstream classroom, and supports one-to-one teaching. The second concept map (as seen in Figure 6, p. 131) is even less detailed. Dyslexia, defined as ‘difficulty in writing and reading’ is the main concept, used in relation to her knowledge through seminars and experience. This is just one aspect of the areas under research, adding to her personal account about professional development. Viewed in
relation to the first map, it appears as its extension and the attitudinal change is described in detail.

Figure 5: Concept Map 13

Figure 6: Concept Map 11a
The extensive lists of ‘I’ statements included in the interviews with concept maps are provided in appendix 33 (p. 332). In the interviews with concept maps, the teacher uses more cognitive statements and less ‘I’ statements of the other categories: the less populated group is that of ‘affective statements’. The interviewee uses limited number of action statements and talks a little about things she has achieved so far. This last category is enriched with ‘I’ statements concerning teaching approaches she uses in the classroom for such cases. Generally these statements include positive thinking ‘I try to’, but only one statement “I managed to learn a lot…because we used to do a lot of things there” (Maria’s 1st interview, 75-76) refers to professional development. What emerges from the second interview is a sense of tiredness that sets limits to her work production [“I see myself doing less things” (Maria’s 2nd interview, 91)- “I start feeling more complete as a teacher, but at the same time I start feeling more tired” (Maria’s 2nd interview, 89-90)- “I get tired easier” (Maria’s 2nd interview, 90)]. Ability and constrain statements include positive but mostly negative forms of the verb ‘could’, and in total a lot of negative forms of verbs are identified throughout the transcripts.

In the follow-up interview, the teacher uses more cognitive and action/state statements and less ‘I’ statements of the other categories (i.e. ‘achievement statements’). The first group mainly refers to recall of past experiences from studies and teaching. A phrase that is repeated twice concerns her lack of knowledge regarding cases of problems in learning: I think I learnt a lot of things. Many things I didn’t know…” (Maria’s F-up Interview, 11-14)- “I didn’t know much” (Maria’s F-up Interview, 58)-“I didn’t know the way plus there were a lot of children in the classroom […]” (Maria’s F-up Interview, 69-74). Within affective statements, a strong one expresses her clear desire to feel she has worked adequately for her pupils: “I want them to get as much sentiment as possible, and I want to do as much as I can” (Maria’s F-up Interview, 94-96)-“I don’t want to feel that I haven’t done anything for a specific kid’ (Maria’s F-up Interview, 96), as well as that teaching was the right professional choice for her: “I didn’t want to continue, because I wasn’t really interested” (Maria’s F-up Interview, 21-22)-“and I was satisfied ever since I started working…” (Maria’s F-up Interview, 24-25)-“There is nothing else I want to do…” (Maria’s F-up Interview, 36). The third group consists of references to past/present experiences. Maria describes herself as new, young and inexperienced teacher (“I was totally inexperienced. I was at the age of 22 then” (Maria’s F-up Interview, 58-59) - “I was inexperienced” (Maria’s F-up Interview, 68)) and as more tolerant, less absolute
teacher now. The interviewee uses limited number of achievement statements, where she expresses her willingness at least to try for her pupils: “I believe I try. I always make an effort for the best” (Maria’s F-up Interview, 92) -“or that I haven’t tried at least” (Maria’s F-up Interview, 97). Two main points emerge from this interview: the awareness that this profession is totally suitable for her [“There is nothing else I want to do...” (Maria’s F-up Interview, 36)- “I cannot imagine doing anything else...” (Maria’s F-up Interview, 23-24)-“[...] it is a way of life, I couldn’t do otherwise” (Maria’s F-up Interview, 79-81)” and that she has changed as a teacher [“I believe I have watered down my claims a lot! Now that I know the children’s needs” (Maria’s F-up Interview, 89-90)- “I am much more tolerant with children” (Maria’s F-up Interview 85)-“I am no longer the kind of ‘absolute’ teacher, who is just this or that” (Maria’s F-up Interview, 87-89)]

To her follow-up interview, Maria claimed she lacked time, therefore she did not prepare a written account. Instead she asked me to arrange this interview (appendix 34, p. 334) at the beginning of which she would try to incorporate data she was thinking of including in the written account. The first part constituted a reflection on professional choices. Reference was made to the disadvantages of working as a teacher (difficulties with children’s/parents’ behaviour, tiredness, low salary). Having in mind the topic of conversation, she made a general reference to pupils with special needs. This time she did not use the term ‘learning difficulties’, or ‘SpLD’. These are cases Maria considers as difficult, where children’s problems are huge:

“I remember that the most difficult time I had was in the private school with pupils with special needs. There was one with Down syndrome, and another one with Autism. The latter would come and simply stay in the classroom [...] I believe that throughout those 5 years in the private school, I faced the most difficult cases regarding special needs” (Maria’s Follow-up interview, 52-73).

What she tried to do for these children then was to give them love, as she had the courage and patience. Because of her young age and patience, she clarifies that this was not compassion.

“I don’t think he managed to learn anything from me. He just received love...that’s all. And I don’t think I felt any compassion then, because I was very young, I had more patience then and courage...” (Maria’s Follow-up interview, 63-67).
Giving them as much sentiment as possible is important to her, as this makes her feel that she is doing her best:

“I want them to get as much sentiment as possible, and I want to do as much as I can. I don’t want to feel that I haven’t done anything for a specific child or that I haven’t tried at least” (Maria’s Follow-up interview, 94-97).

She positions herself against transmission teaching, arguing that she now accepts ‘difference’, and she is not authoritarian in the classroom.

“I am much more tolerant with children, and it is not just ‘black and white’ anymore...it’s also grey in-between, I mean it is also ‘different’. I think I have changed a lot, I am no longer the kind of ‘absolute’ teacher, who is just this or that...I believe I have watered down my claims a lot!” (Maria’s Follow-up interview, 85-89).

Children’s high performance is a motivation for the teacher to give and to receive more while teaching. It makes her feel complete as a teacher:

“It isn’t that cool...or easy all the time...these last couple of years though, the level of my pupils in Year 2 and 3 was very high...this is where you give more, but you also get more. This ‘covers’ my needs in a way”(Maria’s Follow-up interview, 50-53).

No particular incidents are reported in Maria re-storying. With reference to her “concept-mapping interviews”, change in her attitudes is linked to awareness though seminars and experience.

“I would say that the general part is ‘learning difficulties’...the more specific one is that...there is one type of learning difficulties, which is dyslexia. We generally identify these problems as learning difficulties, and it is through an assessment process that the problem becomes more specific. [...] Well...I presume that these were some experiences...(writing) it has more to do with getting to know such children. Also...it’s the improvement in several things...also the seminars we mentioned above”(Maria’s 2nd interview, 21-34).

Analytically, most of the change in her attitude occurred due to a couple of seminars she attended in the past: “...my update through Pavlidis, you know...this was the first
seminar I attended, and then there was another seminar with Miller, you know the ambassador’s wife” (Interview 13a, 19-20). However, the more complete she feels now, the more tired she becomes after all these years:

“I think it is after working for 15 years, that you actually realise what kind of work you do and how you do it. I now see that I start feeling more complete as a teacher, but at the same time I start feeling more tired...or I get tired easier...that’s why there are times I see myself doing less things. When I was younger I lacked experience I guess.” (Maria’s 2nd interview, 84-92).

In the follow-up interview, she adds that having a child of her own made her see things differently regarding transmission teaching. She believes she has changed a lot, in the sense that she perceives children’s needs differently:

“I think I have changed a lot, I am no longer the kind of ‘absolute’ teacher, who is just this or that...I believe I have watered down my claims a lot! Now that I know the children’s needs, while I see my child’s needs as well. Your child is always the rule” (Maria’s Follow-up interview, 87-91).

According to Helen’s assessment reports the girl ‘encounters severe learning difficulties and lack of concentration, and hyperactivity disorder’ (appendix 19, p. 290). In this first report ‘severe learning difficulties’ is used to describe severe dyslexia/learning difficulties. In detail, the second report highlights that ‘Helen encounters Unintentional Attention Deficit, which is intensified due to her Impulsiveness. Furthermore, she encounters Severe Dyslexia to the extent that understanding from family and school is necessary’.

With reference to Helen’s socialising, Maria’s opinion meets reports’ suggestions: ‘The above difficulties are a burden to the child, causing stress and low self-esteem’. Her major problem is making friends and maintaining friendships, but there are a few girls in her classroom and they are very competitive, good pupils and always against her. Most of the incidences recorded during fieldwork involve her girlfriends. She argues: ‘As far as her behaviour is concerned during the breaks, she plays with her girl friend. However, usually she complains for many and unimportant things. Consequently she loses part of the game” (appendix 20, p. 293). Maria’s report is short, and no further reference is made to her work with Helen or other pupils facing difficulties:
“Maria looks at me, and then she goes back to her desk”

“Petros didn’t bring his pencil case again. I asked him why...the teacher approaches us...she says to me:

\[M:\text{‘You have to spend a lot of time in this classroom in order to see that my claims about his case are so true!’} \text{ (Field notes).}\]

The teacher has the child-centered model in mind, and tries to make pupils work in groups. She likes changing the classroom arrangement at times. Every Monday pupils change seats and mix. However, this is not approved by all children. As a rule, she brings them into line:

‘A boy is requested to sit with Philippe. The boy refuses:
\[E:\text{‘Mam, not with him, please!’} \]
\[M:\text{‘What do you mean ‘him’? First of all he’s got a name, his name is Philippe.’} \]
\[The\ \text{boy prefers sitting alone. The teacher argues:} \]
\[M:\text{‘It’s no good being alone. Come on’} \text{ (Field notes).}\]

Pupils do not want to sit next to Helen; amongst them are Nefeli and Evangelia, whom she considers her best friends (appendix 36, p. 339).

“Helen is sitting at the back again, behind Petros and in front of Christos. She is sitting alone. Nefeli sits behind her alone. I ask her if she would like to sit together with Helen. She refuses. The teacher is asking Nefeli the reason. She says she doesn’t want to.” (Field notes).

“Evangelia enters the classroom. The teacher greets her mother. Evangelia is late; she bypasses Helen, who is staring at her, and sits next to Nefeli.” (Field notes).

“A couple of minutes later Gerasimos enters the classroom; walking slowly, pulling his school-bag. He is asking the teacher whether there is a spare seat for him. The teacher asks him to sit next to Helen. Gerasimos refuses. The teacher asks him why. She smiles at him. Children are noisy. The teacher isn’t heard. \textbf{08:30} Finally Helen sits alone again” (Field notes).

Maria encourages peer-teaching, especially for the case of Helen, where it seems pupils have the freedom to help her, whenever they feel like doing it.
“The teacher finally asks Helen to read. Evangelia stands up and approaches her; he seems willing to help. Evangelia starts reading the lines and Helen repeats.” (Field notes).

“A child sitting in front of Helen makes an effort to help her, but there’s no time left” (Field notes).

She is checking on Helen and Petros, who is also considered as having SpLD, but he is not assessed.

“Petros is absent minded, he is looking outside the window.
M: ‘Petros! Have you written down the date? Petros?’” (Field notes).

For the latter she argues: ‘You have to spend a lot of time in this classroom in order to see that my claims about his case are so true!’ She briefly describes her teaching attitude towards Helen as follows: ‘I sit next to her in the same team and most of the times that I can, I help her individually. Often she needs my support psychologically and cognitively’ (appendix 20, p. 293). In the classroom she repeats many times dictation for Helen and others:

“Maria repeats the lines 2-3 times. She teacher moves to Helen's desk. She wants to make sure everyone has written the proper words. She is walking around the classroom”

“In the meantime the teacher helps children who are left behind, by repeating words”

“The teacher starts reading the lines. At times she breaks words into syllables for Helen. She approaches her. Petros is sitting in front of Helen,, next to another boy. Noise. She repeats the words for Helen”

“The teacher repeats the words over and over again. Helen has done several errors. The teacher asks her to correct them” (Field notes).

Maria helps Helen with reading, by whispering syllables and words:

“The teacher takes her dictation book, and turns to children:
M: ‘Could you please pay attention and listen to how beautifully Helen will read to us now?’
Helen starts reading very slowly. The teacher whispers her syllables:
M: ‘It is April now...’
H: ‘It... is... April now...’
She goes on whispering words. Children are noisy. Petros turns back and watches Helen. The teacher is sitting next to her, on the desk” (Field notes).

“M: ‘Do it alone, please, Helen!’ She approaches Helen. Helen is whispering words…then she looks at the door, a child enters the classroom. The teacher asks her to speak louder; she comes to her desk and asks her to start again. Helen is still whispering” (Field notes).

Maria argues that Helen can improve her performance. She examines her spelling errors daily, and her speed and performance in reading. Helen is not given differentiated work/exercises at school.

“Helen […] has a lot of potential, but she doesn’t make this productive. Often, due to her stress and in the event of failure, her performance is probably lower that her actual abilities. She encounters difficulties in reading, and has to improve her performance on this as far as speed is concerned, as well as difficulties in spelling, since most of the times she omits letters and syllables. She still mixes ‘ε’ with ‘3’. Often, her attention is drawn on other irrelevant things and she doesn’t finish the work that has to be done […] Her cognitive development shows a slight improvement which, however, is not the expected one” (appendix 20, p. 293).

This contradicts the assessment reports, highlighting that: “Her spelling errors should not be taken into account, and there should be understanding regarding her typically very slow reading” (appendix 19, p. 290). In the classroom Helen cannot respond successfully to reading:

“M: ‘You don’t have to look at the door…be coherent.’
Gerasimos makes a remark while Helen reads aloud:
G: ‘Helen used to read better and faster’ (Field notes).

The teacher agrees. She asks Helen whether she managed to read the text at all at home:

M: ‘Did you have time to read the text at home?’
Helen doesn’t reply, just staring at the teacher.
M: ‘How many times? One?…Tell me…one or more than one? You need to study more, you know? I am not telling you off now, I just want to know the truth. Yes or no?’ (Field notes).

The teacher looks at me, and then she goes back to her desk. She gives Helen a napkin, because in the meantime Helen has
started crying. The teacher tries to calm her down” (Field notes).

Comparison of cultural models used in reviewing field notes, written accounts, pupil reports and documentation, adds to Maria discourse summary. She relates Helen’s dyslexia to difficulties in reading and spelling, and approaches the issue from a daily practice (a pupil who needs support, who gets bored easily and has problems in socialising). During observation, whenever she identifies a difficulty a child has, she turns and looks at me, to get my attention on this. In the classroom, Maria keeps an eye on Helen, making remarks to check her progress, as the pupil is expected to prepare the same work. Often the teacher uses peer-teaching as an approach. Helen has difficulty in socialising, because especially her girlfriends do not want to sit next to her. There is a lot of rivalry. The teacher encourages team-work, but in Helen’s case, she doesn’t press her to mix, unless she really wants to. Maria stays close to the daily plan, where all pupils are expected to go through the same learning process. Performance is significant. She expects Helen to progress, and identifies her gaps in writing and reading. As assessment reports highlight, these should not be taken into consideration. It is the oral part that the child has to work on.

Maria became a teacher as a third best choice, but appears to be committed to this vocation. Here, she seems to be working out a professional identity of a teacher who tries to fulfil her obligations and do the job well. Her teaching experience increases but it competes with tiredness and lack of patience, factors that block inclusive efforts. She presents the picture of a professional. Her attempt is to be typical, but there is no sign in her interviews regarding further education and training of any kind. Her perception that SpLD/dyslexia is an individual problem followed by gaps of knowledge, maintains the swing between the individual and social model. There appears to be an old cultural model of dyslexia, but she does not explain much about it, and the label of ‘learning difficulties’ is used instead of ‘SpLD’. Though she recognises the need of these children to be helped, she clearly states that she could not work with them, because it needs extra patience and strength. She holds positive attitudes towards special support, but she cannot tell for sure whether supporting a child in the mainstream classroom is feasible. This depends on the type and severity of the difficulty that seriously influences its feasibility. Interestingly, most of the change in her attitude was due to a couple of seminars she attended in the past. For her, working in special education would be more or less a financial issue, and not a
choice of attitude. She refers to her father’s attempt to offer her the monthly benefit in order not to work as a special teacher. Special needs are used in the follow-up interview, instead of ‘learning difficulties’-‘SpLD’, or given in other words (huge problems-difficult cases). Help is needed instead of compassion; this time she argues that providing children with love and sentimental support is significant. By stating that she is more tolerant towards ‘difference’, Maria positions against transmission teaching. Pupils’ performance is a good and appreciable motivation for her, but those who face problems can progress and become fine people as well. In this interview she related change to maternity, which made her become less absolute as a teacher.

4.4 Michael’s Account

Michael is a 46 year-old mainstream primary teacher. He is single and has 11 years of teaching experience, but has never had working experience in the provinces. He was born and brought up in a city (Thessaloniki). He wants to do the job well, but has not made specific efforts to include children with dyslexia/learning difficulties. He keeps distance from special education, as he considers this beyond his strength. He touches upon the issue of compassion, but highlights the importance of equal treatment and love, rather than pity. He has chosen primary education to achieve better working conditions and reported limited attendance of seminars and classroom experiences. Michael graduated from the Academy, Marazlio, and the School of Philosophy. Family expectations pressed him to join the Academy, although he wanted a simpler job. Once he enrolled, he started searching for further studies:

“Well…I actually jointed the army first, and then I followed those studies…I didn’t want to go to the university at first. I was the eldest…they didn’t let me…you know, they kind of pressed me to go to the Academy. I wanted simple things (laughing) you know…to work at a garage…things like that, but because I had no problems at school, they forced me to go further […] Then, when I took my decision to study, I wanted to become a trainer […] then the other choice was the Academy, where things were easier. And this seemed more right with respect to my age…but, ok…and then I really loved my job, that I wanted to do further studies” (Michael’s 2nd Interview, 55-69).

He is currently working in Athens, at the 25th Primary School of Psychico, and generally shows a preference for upper year students. In terms of professional
development, he has completed additional teacher training, but nothing specific on special education. Due to his limited experience of teaching children with SpLD, he makes no reference to his teaching approaches. Generally he identifies a problem he faces with programming activities, therefore he sometimes improvises:

“Yes, but I believed that I had a lot of energy to give to children [...] this kind of job has helped me a lot as a person...I have a sort of problem with programming activities...I can do more by improvising...if I have things to do, or my friends ask me to go out, I will cancel what I have to prepare for school, and next day I will probably improvise. I have difficulty in putting things into order. I cannot be strict” (Michael’s 2nd interview, 71-78, 81-87).

This is what he calls a combination of his difficulty in putting things into order and being strict, unlike the old-fashioned way of teaching he recalls, while he was a pupil. He briefly describes the situation in past times, and the cultural model of old-fashioned teachers who used to smack pupils:

“I remember a teacher of mine in Year 4...he was the only one who would not smack. He was a very good person...I really loved him. The rest...I used to respect and I would be afraid of them” (Michael’s 2nd interview, 87-90).

“It works very positively on children, and I see that.... they feel that you care, that whatever they do, you will not react badly, like in the past times that we were used to be beaten” (Michael’s 1st interview 5,255-258).

A swing between the individual and social model is noted in interviews, but individual is noted in practice. Definitions linked to labels of ‘laziness’, ‘learning difficulty’ and ‘handicapped’ are attached to the old cultural model of dyslexia. In this discourse, dyslexia was related to mental retardation and learning difficulties, though, through his teaching experience he now perceives it as a condition that makes it hard for some children to get to learn things the way other children do. Regarding change in his attitude he mentions:

“Well, I think this was developed before I became a teacher. That is, from what I used to hear, dyslexic children had problems in their thinking, their perception (writing: that is children mentally handicapped)” (Michael’s 1st interview, 31-37).

Participants in this group keep their distance from special education, as they consider this beyond their strength. Some touch upon the issue of compassion, but
highlight the importance of equal treatment and love, rather than pity. He has never considered working as a special teacher.

“No, and I think I told you why. Even if I had to do it, I would be really pressed to do it […] I don’t think my parents would have a problem with such a choice…on the contrary, my mum is very compassionate […] I think that a lot of teachers follow this domain out of compassion…but I don’t think I could do that. I feel this is a mistake…it is a mistake, because you must not feel sorry for them […] You must love them as much as the rest of children…the normal children, ok?” (Michael’s 2nd interview, 93-96, 99-106).

There is a clear need for these children to be helped, motivated by compassionate feelings, but little can be done, because it needs extra patience and knowledge/work. Special support is considered important, but its feasibility within mainstream classrooms is under question. Most of the interviewees do not have much experience with children with dyslexia, and clearly state they have not understood yet what dyslexia is. Dyslexia is presented as a ‘problem’, and any change in thinking about children with dyslexia results from experience of learning difficulties:

“I do have experience of learning difficulties, but that’s not necessarily the same. And I should also mention that I still find difficulty, I haven’t understood the issue of ‘dyslexia’, I mean, I cannot clearly make out […] I don’t know, I’m confused a bit…I cannot clarify that…” (Michael’s 1st interview, 53-57, 63-64).

A contradiction regarding Michael’s positioning towards the individual and social model of dyslexia is obvious in the use of the word ‘stupid’, in both his interviews. A child with such difficulties should not be considered as stupid, but there is always the notion of silliness related to immaturity:

“And I repeat, as a mainstream teacher, I feel love for this child, I will make the child understand that he/she is not stupid, it’s just that I will have to give extra help to the child” (Michael’s 1st interview, 176-179).

“I would try to learn more and to understand what’s wrong. I would read books, I would go…yes, I would take my child…though worried or upset…and with the fear that my child may be stupid” (Michael’s 1st interview 5,197-200).
The only stimulant/influence Michael had was the case of a friend’s son, given at the beginning of the sub-section, who, he believes, was mentally retarded. Compassion is what he felt in the first place. He tries to stay out of the individual model attitude, by clearly stating that he just mentions this, without agreeing with it. This attitude still exists nowadays, and it is very obvious in parents’ reactions, once the teacher identifies a possible difficulty their child may have. It causes a lot of pressure, since schools are of a high level, and there is huge competition, with pupils struggling to get higher grades. Michael’s concept maps are provided in appendix 37 (p.345).

4.5 Larry’s Account

Larry is a 48 year-old mainstream primary teacher and has 20 years of teaching experience. Larry is currently placed at the 14th Primary School of Agios Stefanos. He was born and brought up in the provinces. He graduated from the Academy, attended the additional training and long-term seminars. He is father of 3 children (3-18 yrs). His beliefs are more ‘inclusive’, but the latter implies more of a policy disposition than a practical issue. He is more aware of the diversity of needs with compassionate feelings transmuted into willingness to achieve for such pupils through service. Increased attendance of seminars and classroom experiences is reported, demonstrating that the need for better working conditions is not the one and only motivation for his suitable professional choice. Larry is a specialised teacher with inclusion beliefs who finds no relevance in the severity of cases. The profession is appealing, but many barriers show up due to the bad educational system.

Against any approach or attitude incited by compassionate or protective feelings, this interviewee has many experiences as far as working with children with dyslexia, while offering private lessons at home. Change is obvious and considerable in the early stages (dyslexia was related to mental retardation/stupidity), as he now considers himself to be a professional. Supporting children with difficulties sounds challenging, but is not applicable in a totally disgraceful system. Teachers and parents are held responsible for this situation, especially the significance of teachers’ role being placed above assessment centers and psychologists. Success of school and the effectiveness of approaches is more or less based
upon management, professionalism and resources, which schools lack. Ideally, special education should not be distinguished from mainstream.

Larry talks about social racism and anti-professionalism, today’s society biggest ‘wounds’. Changes are considered as all these improvements are related to knowledge, awareness, and experience in or outside school context. In terms of professional development, he is one out of three interviewees who has attended long-term counselling seminars. The nature of his work places him towards a social route. He positions himself against the cultural model of dyslexia as a deficit, or related to mental retardation. His methods are far from teacher-centered. Rather he encourages team-working to better include children with difficulties as well. Larry presents the cultural model of learning difficulties as developed in rural regions, where this was related to social disgrace. He has worked for three years in the provinces, but he could not stand people’s attitudes towards these children. The kind of protection he identified there was related to compassion and pity:

“I couldn’t stand it, I already had 7-8 years of experience. But I couldn’t stand it...I couldn’t be included...I was unadaptable! (laughing) plus they considered learning difficulties as social disgrace. The rarely help them, if they help them at all. Not open-minded. They would protect them in their way, but they would not help them; they would feel sorry for them’ (Larry’s 1st interview,233-241).

Currently he is working in a school in Athens (Year 5), including a child with SpLD. Larry also offers private lessons to children with SpLD. He may be even more experienced than some special teachers, involved in research, in the area of dyslexia. Working at a special institute at the beginning of his career, while attending university, was the first strong stimulant that helped him establish a more social identity.

“I did 7 years...well, I have never worked in a special classroom [...] So I just didn’t want to take part in this bloody procedure. I did for 7 years family counselling, for personal use actually, at a centre in Athens called ‘Antistixi’, in teams organised by psychiatrists. So, through that I met a professor at the Medical School of the University of Athens, who was interested in dyslexia, and through long-term seminars, I learned a lot. All these helped me a lot in the classroom as well
as at a personal level. A lot of reading and great effort. But nothing official though” (Larry’s 1st interview, 120-134).

He soon became aware of its notion, and stopped confusing it to mental retardation. He believed that dyslexia was related to oral speech. Obviously he was within the individual model himself and he used to use terms such as ‘stupid’, ‘idiot’, ‘mentally retarded’:

“Well, I could do the same mistakes that an unaware teacher would do. I mean someone not familiar with dyslexia...who would characterise children as stupid, as idiots. Who would perceive things superficially. That would happen in my first years of teaching. Though I knew I hadn’t learned a lot, I hadn’t seen the other side. Now, I try to improve myself on a daily basis, because we all do mistakes. I try to see things from a different angle. Everything” (Larry’s 1st interview, 135-145).

The term he is now using to characterise these children is ‘sensitive’…

“I would characterise those children as...sensitive...children who don’t need pity, but who are special...I mean, we need to find a way so that they can communicate with their environment and progress as much as possible. That’s why these children...(writing) special abilities...need for help not for compassion…” (Larry’s 1st interview, 4-9).

He is very careful when using terms and labelling. ‘Individuality’ is another sub-concept he often uses:

“I mean that every child may have difficulty in communicating with the environment, the way we mean it today. This may be Maths at school, or whatever in any area [...] In other words, individuality is number one that should characterise all people. We cannot talk generally about people...every child must be special...then there must be identification and then assessment, so as to find ways to include the child in an environment like the school, in the best way possible” (Larry’s 1st interview, 10-24).

The use of labels is something teachers need to be careful of. Dyslexia is a label and many parents take advantage of the legislation in Greece (concerning oral examination) and go to the extremes, by illegally labelling their children.

“Look...what happens in Greece is very simple...whichever the problem is, say a mild case...or even a sort of retardation...or a sort of special abilities, as I mentioned before, parents tend to
characterise them all as dyslexic. That’s the first thing...another thing is that they forget that this is a new trend, and that there are no specialised centres for dyslexia’ (Larry’s 1st interview, 27-37).

“Definitely, and a lot of people seek for this label (laughing) I had foreseen some years ago...that if you read carefully the new legislation, all children would wish to be dyslexic. I told you, this label helps some people cover their child’s inabilities, as they don’t want to recognise the specific problem, and some others who happen to have dyslexic children are offended by this label. It depends on the case if the label is convenient or not.” (Larry’s 1st interview, 89-98)

Yet, in his second interview, there appears a contradiction regarding identities in rural places (his village for example). Despite the fact that he now feels people protect these cases out of compassion, in the past there was respect and no exclusion:

“As far as those people with special needs are concerned, the whole village stayed close to them...they received a lot of help...I honestly believe that there was no exclusion...there were however those children who used to mock them, but those were the exception...and you know every village has a lunatic...but if children were mocking the lunatic, parents were there to put things into order...so there was some sort of respect indeed. I am absolute as far as this is concerned...” (Larry’s 2nd interview, 43-54).

The feeling of anxiety is described from parents’ perspective, when they cannot clearly see the learning problem, as they see in their child’s eyes their personal failure:

“It’s because parents are reflected through their children and they believe that their child’s failure is their failure as well. This is how a child receives this shame ‘Why did you do that? I am ashamed...I cannot face the teacher!’ This is my opinion.” (Larry’s 1st interview, 72-77).

Then Larry lists major changes that should take place in order to achieve better inclusion of children with SpLD: professionalism, well-equipped teachers, less children in each classroom etc. He talks about good relations between teacher-pupil that should aim at education beyond transmission teaching:

“What we lack is professionalism. All children will eventually learn to read, or to write, but to be professional, and to do things the right way, with pleasure, and to give children all these things that cannot be transmitted through books, this is
what makes you a teacher. This makes you a teacher. Those things that can’t be found in books. So, money and management is needed” (Larry’s 1st interview, 225-232).

Having a special teacher in the mainstream classroom is something he has not thought about yet. This could be relaxing for him, but dynamics is something under question, as to where the barriers of each teacher are established. Power dynamics may be indirectly linked to the profile of an authoritative transmission teacher.

“It would be more relaxing for me, anyway. But a couple of adjusting factors...co-operation is the key-word. There must be determination of barriers or... (writing) teacher co-operation...I mean we must not set limits...in terms of power. Learning should be on-going. I must learn from you, and you must learn from me” (Larry’s 1st interview, 191-198).

Attendance of a mainstream classroom may be more healing through co-operation with other pupils and team building. Larry argues that a multi-sided approach is needed to work on a more social-perspective. Teachers should accept that these children may perform better in secondary subjects, and their performance should be evaluated in total:

“I believe there must be one-to-one teaching, but they should be included in teams as well. For instance, there is a very simple, though significant thing. Every child has particular abilities; he/she may not perform that well in Literature. Instead, the child may be very good at painting...or in Geography [...] I think that this is the best sort of co-operation, of humanity, and of abilities that children have in order to progress inside the team, without suppression of their individuality and their personality. And this is how they are included successfully. And they bond with the other children, they are so close together [...] I don’t fully support one-to-one approach. I do believe it is necessary to a great extent, but we must combine things...ecumenism, my friend” (Larry’s 1st interview, 164-188).

Being against laid back teachers, he highlights that the way things are today and the way society is functioning, these do not allow him to take part in special education. He is totally against special education, and he argues that change should be related to respect towards teachers and to respect towards children and people with SEN:

“I do not want to take part in this kind of system...plus I believe that it is totally disgraceful, the way this method is applied in Greek schools. Financially, I don’t have the need to work as a special teacher...what would attract me would bethe human dignity...I mean that we cannot take everything for granted...and in order to change our society, we
should not disregard teachers...and we should not disregard people with special needs. But you can get a lot of happiness from these children and you can turn society into a much more civilised society” (Larry’s 2nd interview, 101-109).

Larry’s concept maps are provided in appendix 38 (p. 347).

4.6 Christos’s Account

Christos is a 60 year-old mainstream primary teacher. He was born and brought up in the provinces. He graduated from the Academy and Marazlio. He has a daughter (23 years). He has 36 years of experience, currently occupying a higher administrative position (Head of Education Office of a Prefecture in Athens) and reaching the end of his career. He sees little reason for change and has his eye on senior positions. He speaks through another perspective, that of advising for reforms in the system. Mainstream and special education are separated in his mind, and he sees strong relevance between inclusive attitudes and the severity of SEN cases: teachers must withdraw children with difficulties, in order to build stronger relationships, given that the role of the teacher in the child’s life is considered as important as that of parents.

Christos has deliberately chosen this profession out of love for children. He is not that experienced in children with difficulties, but highlights the significance of qualifications for teachers working with such pupils. The role of teachers today should be far from the teacher-centred model of education, instead, the teachers should achieve high contact and help children with SpLD, out of pure love and sensitivity. Changes in social history seem relevant to identities as well; changing times involves changing beliefs. The use of terms like ‘sensitivity’ and ‘love’ is different in Greece. ‘Sensitivity’ seems to be thought of positively: stating that ‘I am very sensitive’ is more complex as a phrase than it sounds, passing to ‘compassion’ an even more important role. Christos, for instance, considers love and kind-heartedness as necessary components for children’s progress, which he does not exactly distinguish from compassion, rather they are complementary:

“I simply like teaching, despite my 37 years of experience. That doesn’t mean I don’t lose my temper…I am a human being after all. I used to be the strictest teacher at school, I remember...I would shout...but children would understand why I was shouting. They understand what is right or wrong. They learn to
distinguish that. I made quite an effort with difficulties...to give them extra work...different...”(Christos’s 1\textsuperscript{st} interview, 159-163).

“No, it’s not just about compassion. You need a lot of kind-heartedness...a lot...”(Christos’s 2\textsuperscript{nd} interview, 110-111)

Teachers as old as him have limited experience with children with SpLD. While describing incidences from their past experience, it’s within learning difficulties that they identify dyslexia:

“I would simply put the title learning difficulties...because dyslexia has a variety of forms. A child may mix letters...so this mixing is dyslexia, which I would come across pretty often. I would correct it, but these symptoms persisted...maybe it was something having to do with intelligence? [...] They would laugh and then we would go on. I would describe them a personal experience, or a mischief, so as to give them the chance to escape a bit.”(Christos’s 1\textsuperscript{st} interview 9,4-16).

Christos first heard about dyslexia while he was attending Marazlio. In the past he perceived children who usually stammer as being dyslexic, now his opinion about dyslexia has slightly changed:

“Well...in the past, I remember that they used to say about dyslexic children...that they were children who could not pronounce words correctly [...] But these children mix letters, they may also have attention deficit disorder...they forget easily...and all these are considered as factors leading to dyslexia...this is, well this was my first opinion...when I was still a student in high-school...though this term wasn’t known then...this is what we used to call as 'stammerers'...but now things are different. Specific learning difficulties are not just dyslexia, or stammering...there are a number of other cases as well” (Christos’s 2\textsuperscript{nd} interview,4-18).

Though dark ages did not encourage special needs, lunacy etc, he remembers how all children used to play together in his village and there was no exclusion. This picture contradicts, however, other teachers’ sayings about the old strong cultural model of dyslexia- as-a disease.

“Well, we didn’t have a problem...we used to play with them as well. We would play with every child. Altogether. We used to live in a small society. We didn’t exclude them...we used to take
Christos also admits that he was a strict teacher. He confesses that he smacked a naughty boy in his office 7 years ago-described as an extreme but effective approach. He refers to this effortlessly, despite his status. It is interesting to see how the situation as far as education is concerned in the past, was. His description of the transmission model of teaching is quite vivid:

“When you first started working as a teacher did you come across such cases?...no, I didn’t…I might have had learning difficulties, you know...they couldn’t learn several things...but things were different then in villages. The teacher was really strict...the teacher was ‘Cerberus’\textsuperscript{16}. Children reacted the way they did because they were afraid of the teacher, rather than because of their need to learn. When I was placed at a school in a village, I would go for a ride on my bike...so, whenever they would see me, they would disappear...they were afraid of me.”(Christos’s 1\textsuperscript{st} interview,41-53).

When asked about the possibility of becoming a special teacher, he sounds negative, because he has conscious of the qualifications needed for this placement, including using different approaches for each child.

“Well there was no such thing then...I did some things on special education at Marazlio [...] Most teachers then would follow this sector in order to get more money...but teachers should not become special teachers just for the money. This sector has specific demands...you need to know more things, you need to follow specific approaches...each child is different and needs a different approach. It also needs a lot of patience...it needs joy, cheerfulness...smile...there are severe cases...difficult cases...but once you choose to do this job, you have to do it properly.”(Christos’ 2\textsuperscript{nd} interview, 94-106).

Speaking of teaching approaches, withdrawing the child is more effective in cases of dyslexia, in his opinion. A different kind of relation has to be developed anyway, between teacher and pupil:

\textsuperscript{16}*Cerberus* (Greek: Κέρβερος, Kérberos) in Greek and Roman mythology, was a multi-headed dog which guards the gates of Hades, to prevent those who have crossed the river Styx from ever escaping. In slang meaning meaning "angry", "irritated".
“Do you think that the special classroom is helpful? Of course it is! But when you develop a specific relation with the child, it’s not about going to teach the child. It’s not just that. The child needs to see the teacher as a different person, because the child might have also problems with his/ her parents […]’ (Christos’ s 1st interview, 119-123).

Regarding mainstream provision for pupils with dyslexia, he suggests teachers should take into consideration pupils’ overall performance. This may come into conflict with the current educational system, where achievement in exams defines the pupils’ profile at school.

“Well, differentiated work I would say…easier work. Regarding their tests, I would categorise children into three levels. I would choose the hardest for the good ones, the less hard for the mean and the easiest for the less able. So, they would all feel the joy that they did it. There were times I would hear the good pupils complaining about me being unfair. But it was necessary for the less able children to cheer up a bit. After all, it was just a test…teachers judge their overall performance…the child’s offer in the classroom, the way he/ she talks or behaves…if you have a child with fantastic behaviour, you feel comfortable towards him/ her as well.”(Christos’s 1st interview, 165-177).

Christos’s concept maps are provided in appendix 39 (p. 348).

4.7 Dimitra’s Account

Dimitra is a 39 year-old mainstream primary teacher, born and raised in Lamia (rural capital). Though coming from a teacher family background, teaching was not at all in her plans. Instead she wanted to study English Language or Law:

“There was no way I could combine English language and law. Plus I graduated from high school very early, I was only 17 years. I was left behind; I mean it was very tiring for me to graduate. I would learn whole pages by heart, but could not understand the meaning […] I was so left behind even in the Academy…the first year I passed 3 courses out of 18! I was begging my brother to highlight for me the most important sections” (Dimitra’s 2nd interview, 65-75).

There is an inconsistency to the point where she described that when she was a child, she was left behind in school, and there was a time her family thought she had
dyslexia. She characterises herself as being a very strict mainstream teacher and appears stressed but not laid back. She wants pupils to show high performance, as long as children with any sort of SEN or SpLD are taught separately. A slight unidentified change in her way of teaching might have occurred after having her own children, but no major critical incidences had a dramatic change in her way of thinking about teaching. She is mother of two children (4 and 5 yrs); she mentions that she did not want to have children in the first place: “Because…well…ok, I don’t adore children. I didn’t want to have children myself” (Dimitra’s 2nd interview, 84-85)

Further to other interviewees’ reference to the cultural model of the laid back teacher, working as a permanent teacher in state schools makes her feel more secure. But after having fulfilled half of her career, Dimitra feels unsuitable for this profession and restricted in the classroom [“Do you think this profession is suitable for you? No, not at all!” (Dimitra’s 2nd interview, 83-84)]

“...you need to be always on alert...you need to have a lot of energy...you may have many problems at home, but you need to be 100% there. Plus you need to have solved many of these problems in advance. Namely, whenever I had problems with boyfriends, I would take a day off school, because I wasn’t in the mood for work. Therefore this profession doesn’t suit me at all. I would prefer owning a store...to be more social, to have contact with people...such things...I cannot stand being locked into a classroom, and doing the same things over and over again...I prefer being in a movement. I would prefer being a translator...because as a teacher I feel I am too restricted...I go crazy.” (Dimitra’s 2nd interview, 94-107).

She does not feel she succeeds in teaching, and especially with children with difficulties. Because she became a teacher as a last resort, she may never have been fully committed to teaching as a vocation. She shows signs of low self-esteem. It is not clear why she chooses to be so in-control during the teaching process. From the perspective of working in special education, Dimitra identifies daily program flexibility and working with fewer pupils as advantages against mainstream teaching.

“Actually it did...but I don’t know if I could stand it...in the sense that I would have a more flexible program...that I would have just a couple of children to work with...[...].”(Dimitra’s 2nd interview, 110-113).
While in the Academy, she attended one seminar on dyslexia, and after graduating, she continued on additional training: “I also attended some seminars, when I graduated from the Academy, then I did the seminar on dyslexia, after the basic seminars, this was also included in our exams” (Interview 2,184-187). Dimitra has 15 years of experience, some experience in rural regions near Lamia (Karpenisi), and limited experience with children with SpLD. She is currently working in Athens (Year 3); she has two children in her classroom identified as having dyslexia, plus one child with mobility problems and learning difficulties. She links special teaching with learning difficulties/mental retardation, and she considers this approach unsuitable for SpLD/dyslexia, whereas speech therapy is needed:

“I wouldn’t recommend the special classroom, because this is for severe cases. I mean, they don’t have a mental problem…I believe…speech therapy…if teaching included that…yes…so, I should also write co-operation with speech therapist (writing)” (Dimitra’s 1st interview,222-226).

Her first contact with children with learning difficulties was at the university while practising. Her thoughts on the first visual contact with such children in a special classroom are followed by a grimace of repugnance on her face. This impulsive expression of body language strengthens the individual model.

“Firstly, the initial knowledge came from uni […] The most important for me was the seminar we had while teaching. We were in the team of a crazy professor, and we did a workshop in a special classroom…children had mobility problems…and mentally retarded…(grimace) we were attending the teacher’s lesson, we were observing. But these were severe cases” (Dimitra’s 2nd interview,137-146).

The term dyslexia is not clearly determined in her mind. These are special children as they’ve got something differentiating them from the rest of children. They are ‘clever’ though. It is quite unclear whether she distinguishes dyslexia from mental retardation; she may perceive dyslexia as a very mild difficulty, milder that it actually appears to be:

*I mean, this year I have those two kids…basically I just see one of them having problems, I don’t see why the other is identified as such…emm…I mean, Chris, who talks nonsense. Otherwise, I think he is very clever. I was also informed about Miltos, where…again, I don’t see any problems, and about Nick…but I on’t see any problems either” (Dimitra’s 1st interview,11-17).
Speaking of special teaching and the possibility of working in this sector, Dimitra examines advantages/disadvantages. She argues that compassion is a prerequisites to approach these children.

“Generally, I am compassionate. I am sentimental. And it is through sentiments that you can approach those children. Otherwise you cannot make head nor tail out of it…it is a complex issue. Their approach is multi-sided. You also need to be strict. You need a lot more strength for special classroom […]” (Dimitra’s 2nd interview, 117-122).

Her reaction to the question of the possibility of having a child with dyslexia is very impulsive:

“Ok…say you had a kid…say one of your kids had dyslexia…what would be your reaction? Touch wood! First of all, I would seek for support from a speech therapist. Definitely. And with my support at home, since I’m a teacher, and I can evaluate this condition. I would, right…I think speech-therapy is really effective” (Dimitra’s 1st interview 2, 172-179).

Dimitra identifies herself as teacher, there is this cultural model of teachers being very restrictive:

“I try to reach different levels of knowledge. I may not work up to an excellent level, but I try to fill in every gap. My idea is to work spherically. I may not be the best teacher; there are other colleagues who do a lot more workshops…but I try to introduce them to everything” (Dimitra’s 2nd interview, 181-186).

Dimitra does not seem to think it is her job to connect with children, but to teach and impart knowledge, while being very much in control. It is an effort to show she is a professional teacher. She feels a teacher should be strict, and she feels stressed at work:

“They are naughty, as well…yes. In a classroom that lacks coordination. Everyone does whatever he/ she likes […] look, many teachers think ‘I don’t want to distress myself’...last year, I had Year 1, I ended up with colitis nervosa, I became sick. But throughout the year, everything was settled, 15 children out of 15 could read...reading comprehension...but I worked a lot with them...I would wake up and sleep with this in mind. But generally I get stressed easily” (Dimitra’s 1st interview 2, 374-383).
In her mind, it is all about achievement. Later on, while comparing two different cases of children (SpLD and learning/mobility difficulties), with respect to performance she sounds disappointed by one of them this year:

“But I worked with this child all year through, he had no gaps...on basic knowledge, I mean [...] he had a sort of relation, whereas now, with B...he cannot do anything... So, do you feel they can be included in the classroom? Well, for me...they are integrated, or they are just there. Now, psychologically, this may help, but in terms of learning, definitely not” (Dimitra’s 1st interview, 277-285).

Her approach may not allow space to connect with pupils. What is important to her is the level they get in their tests. As far as her relationship with children is concerned, she probably draws upon the nature of knowledge and learning in terms of transmissionist approaches. On two quick visits in her classroom, pupils seemed to be afraid of her. Dimitra’s concept maps are provided in appendix 40 (p. 350).

4.8 Conclusion

The case studies analysed in this chapter involve mainstream primary schools. Participants have been chosen based upon current dyslexia/learning difficulties cases included in their classrooms. These cases played a role in the research, standing as motives for the formation or expression of teacher attitudes. Viewed as distinct-within-context cases, John and Maria hold a potential value for further research as far as policy/practice is concerned. In their interviews and accounts, both teachers use some of the same models in different ways. The presence of Helen and George contributes as a secondary factor to the revelation of teachers’ narratives. John’s and Maria’s beliefs are linked to a deficit view, but have got a sense of connecting with children. They both identify a kind of tiredness as counterbalancing teaching experience and age. For the typical and responsible Maria a swing between the medical and social model is revealed; there, appears the old cultural model of dyslexia and the label of ‘learning difficulties’ used instead of ‘SpLD’. Working as a special teacher is more or less a financial issue, and not just a choice of attitude. On the other hand, John sounds more positive as a teacher; he likes his job a lot and he shows this feeling of anxiety mixed with willingness to help. At times he feels very disappointed because he finds no response from colleagues, parents
and other environment related factors. His view is not deficit in the sense that there is nothing that can be done. They both have some of the dispositions to learning difficulties/dyslexia necessary for reform practices. Yet, Maria is more reserved in expressing feelings, whereas John transmits his difficulty in effectively responding to these children through love and compassion, sentiments which could be used productively towards the development of inclusion. In conclusion, the process of interviewing with concept maps was adopted for eliciting teachers’ cultural models in relation to teaching children with dyslexia/learning difficulties. This chapter reports how teachers talk about their dispositions towards teaching children with dyslexia/learning difficulties. It intends to show the diversity of beliefs and attitudes in the sample. Differences in beliefs and practices would be expected, but it appears that the practices are less varied than the reported beliefs. The organisational factor plays a significant role, since espoused beliefs (in interviews) and actions are related, but the actual (observed) actions are more constrained by the system. This is a point worth pursuing in the following chapter using data from all six of the case studies.
Chapter Five

DISCUSSION

5.1 Introduction

This chapter offers a discussion on the research questions posed and presents a general report of what can be claimed from the data, and it shows how it is linked into the literature. It is structured around the three research questions such that section 5.2 explores the findings in relation to research question (c) ‘what are teacher beliefs and attitudes towards government policies on inclusion’. Section 5.3 explores the findings in relation to research question (a) ‘who are the children who are considered as having dyslexia/learning difficulties in the context of modern day Greece?’, and section 5.4 explores the findings in relation to research question (b) ‘what are teacher beliefs and attitudes about the teaching and learning of children with dyslexia in the context of modern day Greece?’. The chapter concludes with section 5.5 and 5.6 which explore two key overcharging themes that emerge from the Data pertaining to teacher beliefs and attitudes. Firstly how they frame teacher identity, and in particular special teacher identity, and secondly the importance of 'compassion' as a cultural model and as an orienting principle in the way teachers
positioned themselves towards this and in the way this impacted on their attitudes to inclusion.

**RQ**: How can teachers’ experiences of, and beliefs and attitudes about, children with learning difficulties/dyslexia influence teachers’ attitudes towards inclusion, in the context of Greek mainstream primary school?

**Sub-questions**:

(a) Who are the children who are considered as having dyslexia/learning difficulties in the context of modern day Greece?

(b) What are teacher beliefs and attitudes about the teaching and learning of children with dyslexia in the context of modern day Greece?

(c) What are teacher beliefs and attitudes towards government policies on inclusion?

5.2 Teacher Attitudes towards the Mainstream School System in Relation to Current Government Policy of Inclusion in Greece

School performance is defined as the assessment of a pupil’s performance in relation to the educational process (Tsikoudi, 2009), and is affected by a variety of factors related to educational practice, as well as by the general formation of a child’s personality. As one interviewee observed, chasing good grades stigmatises Greek pupils’ endeavours:

“We should cope to reach the average. Though theory says to work with strong pupils, and help the rest as well. The test you will prepare should cover all pupils’ needs, you should include 2 questions which will be answered only by the good ones and will get the A*, the rest will get A- or B. When there in just one teacher in the classroom, it’s difficult, ‘cause you cannot have a single person for all levels, it’s a problem” (Interview 1,402-411).

In their course from primary school up to lyceum, pupils’ performance is constantly related to grades. This results in constituting an end in itself, detaching the strain to learn, to enjoy the educational process, to broaden their minds. The educational system is described as an arena of chasing grades to achieve higher performance. Closely related to
transmission, performance is of high significance for teachers and parents as well, as another interviewee described it:

“You cannot stand by the child, no matter how much you want to. You know every child’s particularity. You may work with a specific child for up to 5 minutes, but no more. Otherwise the good pupils are condemned to wait for you” (Interview 17,142-146).

The same interviewee goes on to say that this kind of attitude causes a lot of pressure. Schools aim at high level education, in the form of high grades, triggering huge competition and pupils struggle to get these higher grades, to attend university, to learn foreign languages etc:

“There was the attitude that whoever didn’t like school would get occupied with arts. Now, this is a huge problem, because all children want to attend university. Their parents want them to follow this pace. We didn’t have to learn two foreign languages at school then...and now all pupils want to do the same things. It is difficult for a parent to accept that the child may not be able to follow this pace. So, somehow children freak out” (Interview 17,184-199).

Pupils face rote learning, anxiety, pressure and heavy expenses. Indicatively, parents press children to obtain higher grades. According to a research project conducted by the National Center of Social Research (EKKE) (Lakasas, 2008), nine out of ten pupils attending gymnasium (92% is the accurate percentage) state that they are very much interested in grades and that they wish to obtain good grades at all times. The proportion is higher in lyceum students. From the same research, it was found that, 59% of teachers state that though the current educational system fosters grade psychosis in primary children, it leads to excellent pupils’ advancement, the performance of which, however, is not confirmed during the crucial exams for their induction to tertiary education. The importance of getting higher grades is partly an outcome of mass ‘production’ of excellent pupils in primary schools, 75% of whom are marked with ‘excellent’, (9 or 10/10), wanting to maintain good performance in gymnasium. Of course, primary teachers are far less strict in their marking, in order to encourage pupils, and that explains grade inflation in primary education. On the contrary, 10% of pupils attending gymnasium have an excellent performance, whereas 22% have very good grades (all marked 17 and above out of 20) (Ibid, 2008).
Based on the above study, good pupils are consistent and clever, developing a sense of duty. They are accredited with such characteristics by teachers in primary education, whose dominant measures are primarily the interest and participation in learning (91%), and at a secondary level pupils’ effort of self-improvement (82%) (Ibid, 2008). Teachers also assess how clever a pupil is (49%), the sense of fulfilling an obligation (36%) and the level of compliance with their suggestions (10%). Also, 93% of teachers have as a criterion for pupils’ assessment their indifference during the lesson. In such a school system very pressurised in terms of the standards agenda, children having lower performances are characterised by their family as lazy or generally weak pupils (Tsikoudi, 2009). These factors have an even higher impact on children with dyslexia/learning difficulties, according to teachers in this present study:

“Firstly, I would need time. Time. I couldn’t help, because I see that the mainstream teachers cannot help anyway, not even slow readers. Because they don’t have time to do that. It’s impossible...when you have a classroom of at least 25 children, you cannot confront such issues, and you cannot be responsive to that. Therefore, you work with the ‘average’. No, there’s no solution for these children. Moreover, another problem, I would say, as a school, is that I don’t get any help from Education Consultants. The ideal would be...first of all, I cannot diagnose. When I ask a child to be diagnosed, I expect diagnosis to come to me immediately. My job is not to diagnose in any way. And I try with my own tests, to see the child’s difficulties, and to test the child, and therefore I lose my time” (Interview 6, 196-211).

The potential of grading and marking to improve or inhibit a child’s learning and development has been the theme of long debates in Greece (Kassotakis, 1981; Chiotakis, 1993) and elsewhere (Satterly, 1989; Airasian, 1991) which in turn reflects the importance of the issue. The importance of continuous assessment that includes not only academic but also affective qualities, efforts, skills, attitudes, behaviour and the pupil's background was stressed by the Education Act (Law, 1566/1985), as well as by the Decree (390/1990). In addition, teachers had to concentrate on curriculum objectives and finally to take the appropriate remedial measures to aid children's learning and to inform parents. Finally, the Education Act (Law, 1566/1985) stressed that a series of Decrees would follow with detailed instructions regarding the application of progressive teaching approaches and descriptive assessment (Mavrommatis, 1997).
Moreover, the pace at which a considerable number of drafts and Decrees regarding assessment have been published or withdrawn during a rather short period of time (1977-1991) is revealing. The frequent changes of assessment regulations (Chiotakis, 1993) indicate the importance the government places on assessment. They are also indicative of the ways the state attempted to control the education system during this time, and the ways and agencies used to implement and police its educational policies. The Education Act (Law,1566/1985) provided for presidential Decrees in order to specify the implementation of descriptive assessment which could provide for a more 'progressive' pedagogy method. (Mavrommatis, 1997).

High school grades are one of the most important determinants of admission to higher education in Greece. Twelfth grade point average and national test scores at the end of the senior year weigh more academic achievement for entering college or university (Katsillis and Rubinson, 1990, p.272):

‘Educational systems not only promote social reproduction and achievement, but social reproduction through achievement, to the extent that the latter is determined by the social background of the student’ (Ibid, 1990, p.278).

The induction into tertiary education in Greece is based on the underlying principle of the so-called Procrustean method17, by restricting the number of students who make it up to the final class via stricter examinations. Because of the limited entry, the annual examination, held between May and June receives high attention from the press. Yearly, the whole nation is mobilised around this event (Psacharopoulos and Tassoulas, 2004, p.241).

Many interviewees position against the system which does not allow children to work more freely:

“in order to see changes in the educational system, in the private and state sector...it will take years...the problem is that teachers are not professionals...you may be professional only if you spend time studying, attending seminars etc...you need to put aside your feelings, otherwise you will have good and bad days [...]”(Larry’s 2nd interview, 95-99).

17According to an ancient Greek legend, Procrustes was a famous robber in Attica. He had an iron bed on which he compelled his victims to lie. If the victim was shorter than the bed, Procrustes stretched him by hammering or racking his body to fit the bed. If the victim was taller than the bed, the robber mutilated the body to the bed’s dimensions.
Some teachers (T1, T1b) compare the current system to other systems. Others (T1b, T5) present the cultural model of an educational system chasing grades. They argue that in cases where a child is identified with a possible difficulty, this causes a lot more pressure nowadays, since there is huge competition with pupils struggling to get higher grades:

“…my father had this teacher attitude at the beginning…I imagine he must have come across such cases, but I think he would react differently…you know…smacking all the time! He retired at the age of 55…but I can tell you that he changed a lot as a person. The last few years of his teaching career, the change in his attitude was huge” (Interview 19a,55-61).

The interviewees also identify this attitude in old teachers that they describe as being very strict and using transmission methods demanding higher performance. Interviewees consider that in a still highly grade-oriented educational system, difficulties in learning are therefore related to transmission teaching and performance as interdependent factors. In addition, some of their teachers used to use physical methods (such as smacking):

“I remember a teacher of mine in Year 4…he was the only one who would not smack. He was a very good person…I really loved him. The rest…I used to respect and I would be afraid of them” (Michael, 2nd interview, 87-90).

As sketched out in interviews, the educational system used to be very teacher-centered, having major impacts on pupils with dyslexia/learning difficulties and SEN generally. Participants compare the current teacher’s profile with that of old teachers, placing themselves against teacher-centered schools and teachers being very restrictive:

“Teachers were very strict then…actually he would do private lessons to all of us…you know one-by-one at his house, in order to graduate from primary school! The whole classroom! So generally the impression we got from those teachers was in one word ‘disheartening’! It was awful! And I believe that there were children then that had difficulties in writing and reading, definitely. I don’t know…the issue was that we all had difficulties in Maths. Though I proved to be successful as a pupil, because I ended up at the Academy. And at the Academy, I found very difficult the courses based on Educational Psychology. I was very good at didactic approaches. But I couldn’t cope with the above.” (Interview 3a,162-176).

Some interviewees argue that in this sector most people cannot be bothered:
“Many schools are lucky in that they have a good head teacher, asking specific things from the education office...others don’t...There are various reactions...we need to go through a whole process...some don’t know, some don’t even bother...some do care about these children’ (Interview 7, 148-152).

“As far as the new teachers are concerned, what I see at seminars is that they don’t know the right way to work, in teams...especially young women...who cannot even think...cannot speak, cannot co-operate...and they are already 19! It seems their mind is stuck...'I don’t care about this, I want that!’ [...] that’s why the choice of the teaching work is important” (Interview 7, 500-508).

Some interviewees feel they lack things such as efficiency and readiness, springing from knowledge and resources. The way things stand today, they argue, and the way society is functioning do not allow them to work harder for children with SEN. Larry, for example, is against special education, and he argues that change should be related to respect towards teachers and respect towards children people with SEN:

“Let me tell you something...there were school years I found difficulty, but it was because I didn’t like the way specific schools functioned. This year I feel happy, indeed. I enjoy it. There were times I felt there was a gap...I mean I would prefer more readiness...in our environment no-one can be bothered...so I think ‘Why should I be bothered?’ [...] this may modify your efficiency...if you feel efficient, you feel well [...] we should work more, but we should have time for seminars, training...we should have our own desk, our pc...because I feel I lack things, I need a lot of things...” (Interview 18a, 84-96).

“I do not want to take part in this kind of system...plus I believe that it is totally disgraceful, the way this method is applied in Greek schools. Financially, I don’t have the need to work as a special teacher...what would attract me would me the human dignity...I mean that we cannot take everything for granted...and in order to change our society, we should not disregard teachers...and we should not disregard people with special needs. But you can get a lot of happiness from these children and you can turn the society into a much more civilised society’ (Larry’s 2nd interview, 101-109).
It is interesting to explore teachers’ beliefs towards government education policies on inclusion through the data. One interviewee makes a remark that the educational system is generally corrupted. She observes that very few people care about professional development, and thinks that teachers should not demand higher salaries, as they lack sufficient qualification and professionalism. The language she is using is quite sharp:

“why should the teacher, who works 21 hours per week, get such an amount? I am the only one who attended Marazlio in our school…I was a head teacher and I quit, I said I couldn’t stand my colleagues any more…and most of all, I haven’t come across male colleagues who are…well, they are quite a few, I don’t know… I think I’ve met 5 remarkable men throughout my 30 years of experience…they are lazy-bones (Interview 8, 4-12).

Some of them, she continues, disregard children with difficulties, and they refer to them using labels. The system itself and the teachers’ attitudes towards it have a significant impact upon such children’s learning, because the culture of this school system, as well as the teaching and learning methods, are not conducive to their learning needs. Knowledge is what she thinks is needed for a change in attitudes:

“in our offices we talk about those children with disregard. You hear teachers saying ‘oh! This stupid cow!’ And the head teacher is present. I don’t know…you the young teachers have to do something about that. You need to change the system, because it is corrupted.” (Interview 8, 320-325).

She argues that the educational system is corrupted and not very professional. Most of the special teachers currently working in this sector have a financial motivation:

“There are a few special teachers though…most of them don’t do their job…you see them talking on the phone all day…they don’t have a standard program. They are always late[…]I think more or less a teacher becomes a special teacher in order to get extra 150€” (Interview 8, 188-203).

“You cannot become a special teacher just to get extra money. They should be well educated as well. Special teachers should be responsible” (Interview 8, 232-245).

Within this school system culture, teachers express their beliefs about the way Greek government policy on inclusion is and how it should be. There was a strong belief
that children with SEN require special provision and are not part of a mainstream teacher's role. As one interviewee explained:

“I don’t know if I could stand it (teaching children with SEN)...in the sense that I would have a more flexible program...that I would have just a couple of children to work with...but I don’t know how much I could give to those children. Generally I am compassionate. I am sentimental. And it is through sentiments that you can approach those children. Otherwise you cannot make head or tail out of it...it is a complex issue. Their approach is multi-sided. You also need to be strict. You need a lot more strength for the special classroom. But you just have to deal with one case, not with many, because the mainstream classroom is more or less impersonal” (Dmitra’s 2nd interview, 110-122).

“Dyslexic children must attend the special classroom. Because this is the purpose of the special classroom, to deal with these children” (Interview 6, 96-100).

This belief was recognised by the majority of the interviewees, although there was variation in the way they positioned themselves against this dominant belief. As a conclusion, the culture of the Greek school system and teaching and learning methods are not conducive to the learning needs of children with dyslexia/learning difficulties:

“Well, for me...these children are integrated, or they are just there. Now, psychologically, this may help. But in terms of learning, definitely not” (Dimitra’s 1st interview, 277-285).

For most teachers, in the study, this belief/cultural model, that special support is not part of a mainstream teacher’s role, provided a rationale to justify their existing practice. Such teachers revealed they were not so inclined to change their usually more traditional practices. There are also those who do not seem to like their job and who actually find themselves unsuitable for this profession. However, working as permanent teachers in state schools makes them feel more ‘secure’:

‘No, not at all, I don’t like my job! Because...well...ok, I don’t adore children. I didn’t want to have children myself. In a way it is difficult for me. It was extremely difficult for me, especially before having my own children. Now that it is a direct contact, I perceive it differently. Especially with your own children, you need to be very charismatic person. You need to be very conscious. Then it is also the maternal instinct. You need to be
very strong to work as a teacher. This profession is a tall order” (Dimitra’s 2nd interview, 83-93).

A few teachers, especially those having experience with such children, positioned themselves as people who believe in inclusion. As one interviewee explained:

“Look, what I think is that you need to have studied a lot of theory…I believe that special teachers who work in mainstream classrooms are similar to mainstream teachers…I mean that a normal teacher supports everyone in his/her classroom. This is what I actually was as a mainstream teacher…I mean there was no need to be something different […] I have studied on my own through the years. Then I try to put all these into practice through my lessons. […] And you also need to have attended a lot of seminars in order to have a sort of adequate experience. Because at first, you walk into the classroom and you get shocked, because you feel completely unfamiliar” (Interview 14a, 94-115).

Here there appeared a tension between their attitude to inclusion and belief about special provision, and this could be resolved through a willingness to undertake professional development and training:

“I would expect a more specific training in SEN. Because as I said during the first years of my career I was really inexperienced. I see I have some gaps in this…I just had the help from the private school I used to work. And thought private schools are considered to be very difficult for teachers, because of the demands…it was really helpful…I had a special teacher I could work with every Friday…I learnt a lot there. So, because I see a number of different teaching attitudes nowadays…some of them are not appropriate according to me, I would suggest that all teachers get experience in a private school, before starting working in education” (Interview 17a, 54-68).

The teachers of the sample describe a corrupted education system, and express their views about what they think inclusion is or what it should be. Because inclusive practices are not yet established, any discussion about inclusion in Greece has integration as a starting point. The way things stand today, teachers lack professionalism and the system lacks the substructure to deliver governmental plans. Such constraining organisational factors in combination with teachers’ beliefs and perceptions about disability and inclusion are points worth pursuing. The process of teaching and learning in Greece is determined by a traditionally didactic, teacher-centred education system, as described by interviewees. In such traditional educational systems where emphasis is given to examination results there is
also reluctance to modify curriculum content and the ways in which pupils are assessed, though such changes are strongly recommended. Within the Greek context, the teachers claim that inclusion should be about educating all children in mainstream schools that have all necessary standards for providing equal educational opportunities. This requires a flexible curriculum, accessible buildings, compulsory differentiation of teaching/assessment and mainly staff trained to implement inclusive practices. Many interviewees argue that Greece appears far behind not just in curricular and administrative issues, but also in the prevalent way of thinking about dyslexia/learning difficulties, which is examined in the following section.

5.3 Teacher Beliefs about and Attitudes towards Dyslexia/Learning Difficulties

In this study, teachers varied in their beliefs and attitudes towards children with dyslexia. The very long list of words referring to or defining the cultural model of ‘learning difficulties’ as well as relevant passages required many hours of re-analysis. Often, the meaning of words is straightforward: ‘able’, ‘individuality’, ‘intelligence’ illuminates a positive, more social perspective of the cultural model, whereas ‘idiot’, ‘mentally retarded’, ‘unfortunate’, ‘lunatic’ are negative by definition (appendix 41, p. 352). Learning difficulties bear a different meaning for every interviewee. Aside from special teachers, most of the informants imply that:

“Children that have learning difficulties are a lot luckier than those mentally handicapped. The first ones have more chances to succeed if they get appropriate support” (Interview 7, 256-259).

The actual concept and true meaning of learning difficulties is sometimes related to mental retardation. Or, interviewees often clarify that they do not refer to severe cases, such as mental retardation when talking about learning difficulties. Many express ignorance or confusion when dealing with such terms, covered by more general, vague terms such as ‘particularity’. The term bears the notion of difference related to inferiority or to the concept of problem-difficulty. However, in Greek teachers’ language ‘particularity’ constitutes a light, diplomatic version of describing something that is
different, as a replacement of ‘special needs’, ‘learning difficulties’ etc. The term is used by relatively few informants, and one would argue that in a way it helps them to fill their gap of knowledge, when talking about these issues (appendix 41, p. 352). Additionally, the use of the word ‘normal’ varies, moving either within the individual model or between the individual and social one. ‘Normal’ performance is what interviewees name the average performance, corresponding to the majority of pupils. ‘Normal’ children are those children who do not face learning difficulties (appendix 41, p. 352).

The focus on dyslexia is justified as this SpLD is mostly common in Greek primary schools, where the shift towards teaching children with SEN in mainstream educational contexts is relatively new. It provides motive for further research: the need to foster a more socially and educationally inclusive pedagogic culture. Being a multi-dimensional condition that manifests in diverse types, dyslexia can be a strong barrier towards academic progress and social development. Yet, reality proves that a number of children with dyslexia, through persistent school and parental support, manage to overcome most of the difficulties they experience. Considering cultural models as teachers’ assumptions about what is ‘normal’ or ‘typical’, as emerged from experiences in the world, dyslexia remains a dominant medical model.

“When I tell people I am a special teacher, they show some kind of pity…or when I tell them about the way I teach, they ask me whether these children are stupid, whether they have problems…so most people don’t know that dyslexia is located within special education. That’s why they perceive it as an infection within the family that has a child with special needs or dyslexia…mixing dyslexia with mental retardation” (Interview 6a, 139-147).

In the minds of the Greek teachers in the sample, the latter (mental retardation) causes confusion and contrasts with the social model of inclusion, manifested as polyphony, despite the fact that some teachers are generally careful while using language. Greek language associated to dyslexia/learning difficulties, reflecting –for some informants- the ‘abnormal’ cultural model, consists of terms used frequently, such as ‘the dyslexics’, ‘children with dyslexia’, ‘anomaly’, ‘particularity’, ‘complaint’, ‘normal/ordinary children’, ‘stupid’, ‘problem’, ‘lazy’ etc.:

‘what I was saying is that children with special abilities may perform better in some sectors that the other ‘ordinary’ children […] I’ve put it in quotes…right…by ordinary children I
mean…what should I say now? Let’s say…the normal children? Mmm…ah!…the majority of children?” (Interview 1,73-75,81-83).

“At the end of the day, dyslexia isn’t that bad as a problem, because there are many types of it, as far as I know. But it’s not a problem, you know…what they say about the way of thinking…it’s not that the child is stupid…it’s not a mental problem” (Interview 18, 210-213).

The ‘disability/learning difficulties’ code family is examined in terms of perceptions and personal definitions used for dyslexia/learning difficulties:

“I would not choose a specific title, other than particularity...(writing) What do you mean by particularity? It’s not about distinguishing them from the rest of children…it’s simple; they have a difficulty that creates problems even to their behaviour…and to their performance. That’s the difference. The way I see it…I believe, regarding my subject, children who have particularities, difficulties…most of the times, they are a bit more aggressive while expressing feelings…a bit more aggressive than the rest of children who do not have these difficulties” (Interview 7, 12-21).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>left behind mentally/mental retardation (deficit model)</th>
<th>T1a</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“Indeed I believed that these children have a problem…that they have a huge problem […] I believed that there was no way these children could be included in a classroom […] I probably did…yes. At first I believed that these children were left behind mentally. They were left behind…that’s all” (Int. 1a, 25-36)</td>
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| MICHAEL | T15 |
| “Well, I think my attitude was developed before I became a teacher. That is, from what I used to hear, dyslexic children had problems in their thinking, their perception (writing; that is children mentally handicapped)” (Michael’s 1st interview, 31-37) |
| “I believed that dyslexia was related to mental retardation and to learning difficulties” (Michael’s 2nd interview, 14-16) |

| T19 |
| “Well at first we didn’t have any idea. We could observe specific things, but we didn’t know…I imagine…I would see that there was a problem, because the child wouldn’t write for instance…occasionally, it did cross my mind that this could be related to mental retardation…or I thought that this was a neurological problem…a birth problem…but I don’t know what is actually wrong in a child’s brain…” (Int. 19a, 17-21) |

<p>| hyperactivity/behavioural problem | T1a |
| “Look, I always include in this category children who are hyperactive, or who have behavioural problems as well...children who have specifically dyslexia” (Int. 1a, 8-10) |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Quote</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>T1b</td>
<td>“...they are neither children with Down syndrome...nor...and apart from that, not only in the way they look, and communicate, which is easy, not like in other cases. These children have an excellent communication, they are just fine, so, in their behaviour, and their communication...so, why shouldn’t they be in the classroom? On the contrary, they are just fine...now, they do differentiate sometimes in learning...they should go with the special teacher for a couple of hours, who will tell them a couple of different things...because they do have some problems, don’t they?” (Int. 1, 157-167)</td>
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<tr>
<td>T3</td>
<td>“By particularities I mean...mmm....they’ve got something that...that makes them differ from others. I mean [....] In terms of...apart from their behaviour...in writing...and in oral, right? That’s it...(writing)” (Int. 3, 39-44)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T15</td>
<td>“(writing) A different child [...] right...when I say different, I mean that they do not perceive the world like the rest of children [...] (writing) different perception of the world. Or...that they have difficulty...well...they need a special approach in order to learn something that other children can learn easily. It is a special approach (writing) special teaching approach. (Int. 15, 8-17)</td>
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<tr>
<td>T18</td>
<td>“In the past times, people didn’t confront the problem as a different situation...every person is different...so, ‘different’ applies to every child. We used to talk about ‘special needs’, about ‘stupid children who didn’t understand a thing’. There’s no such thing...only when it is a problem from birth, we can talk about severe cases. We talk about children who can make it to school, right? None of the children I talked to you about has a problem that prevents them from going to school.” (Int. 18, 138-144)</td>
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<tr>
<td>T1b</td>
<td>“Gradually, you could tell the difference. It improves; it’s something that can be dealt. And I see that they are clever, and they are fine as far as their behaviour concerns...I mean, it is clearly a part of their brain that malfunctions” (Int. 1, 341-345)</td>
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<tr>
<td>DIMITRA</td>
<td>“Right...I haven’t. I mean, this year I have those two kids...basically I just see one of them having problems, I don’t see why the other is identified as such...emmm...I mean, X., who talks nonsense. Otherwise, I think he is very clever. I was also informed about M., where...again, I don’t see any problems, and about N...but I don’t see any problems either.” (Dimitra’s 1st interview, 11-17)</td>
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<tr>
<td>T3</td>
<td>‘And I think that they happen to have higher IQ compared to other children. They seem to have a...to be more intelligent. That’s my opinion...I’m not a specialist...”’ (Int. 3, 120-132)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T8</td>
<td>“In Maths...they are good, but they are bored...they write everything based on trial and error...they write very fast, say the kid that I had last year P. would answer to a question of history on the causes of the French Revolution...he would write just four words. But those four words were the essence. That’s why they are so good in oral.” (Int. 8, 57-61)</td>
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<tr>
<td>T12</td>
<td>“I believe that they are clever...they are very clever, and that they can be helped...and they are helped indeed, but I feel that from a point and on they go back to the same...I mean that we may do some specific things for...punctuation, they may improve...but there comes a time again that they will do the same mistakes...so, I believe that they are clever children, [...]” (Int. 12a, 264-273)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T3</td>
<td>“I believe that dyslexia is a sort of complaint...that is created during the development of the brain...I guess is has to do with a malfunction of a hemisphere...I don’t remember which one...where we can find an anomaly...this is my opinion.” (Int. 3a, 8-12)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>complaint/malfunction/pathological factors</strong> (deficit model)</td>
<td><strong>JOHN</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>MARI A</strong></td>
<td>“I don’t remember having related this to mental retardation…I related it to something that was wrong regarding their brain…but that was blur to me…because these children may be good at Maths, so that doesn’t mean they are not clever…I first heard about learning difficulties after 1985. I was working in a private school then. I started??”(Maria’s 1st interview, 65-72)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>gaps of knowledge/bad pupils/weakness</strong> (deficit model)</td>
<td><strong>MARI A</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>T14</strong></td>
<td>“I would write…weakness in terms of learning to read and write within usual rules…instead children do that in a different way…slower…this is the opinion I have for many years…it’s been 5-6 years that I have stopped having contact with children with specific learning difficulties […]” (Int. 14a, 2-10)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>T15</strong></td>
<td>“[…] No, never…I simply believed that dyslexia was a mind’s weakness…you know…a weakness to distinguish words, letters…these things were confused in the child’s brain…but I never related dyslexia to mental retardation” (Int. 15a, 42-29)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>T16</strong></td>
<td>“[…] that these children have a particular problem, which well…you cannot identify that, but I could understand that this was a problem that had to do with their understanding of the construction of the English language.” (Int. 16a, 4-16)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>T17</strong></td>
<td>“...but then it becomes very clear…especially working in Year I is a bit weird, and at first, because the problem of dyslexia started being so popular in the last few years…I mean, in the past whenever we heard about that, we believed that those pupils were lazy, not hard-working […]” (Int. 17, 23-28)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>special abilities</strong> (social model)</td>
<td><strong>MARI A</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>sensitive</strong> (social model)</td>
<td><strong>LARRY</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **unfortunate** (deficit model) | **JOHN** | “And I call them ‘unfortunate’ because I feel that they have everything, but they need a more special approach…often I do not know this way to approach them myself…I feel I just don’t know, but there are times that there is a result and I am really happy, and I feel very satisfied that I can help them…there are also times that there’s no progress, and from that point and on I say to myself that this is not my fault…I mean this is not the child’s fault, this may be my fault because I don’t know…that’s why they
The ‘dyslexia’ codes scattered in interviews as seen in table 3 above (p. 173) are related to causes, symptoms or learning characteristics of children with dyslexia/learning difficulties. Interviewees use different discourses to express different ways of thinking. Categories relating dyslexia to mental retardation, to cleverness and intelligence, to gaps of knowledge (bad pupils) are very frequent. Yet, a number of participants put forward pathological factors and malfunction of the brain. To a lesser extent they mention ‘sensitiveness’ and ‘special abilities’, as well as hyperactivity disorder.

“Well, I think this attitude was developed before I became a teacher. That is, from what I used to hear, dyslexic children had problems in their thinking, their perception (writing: that is, children mentally handicapped)” (Michael’s 1st interview, 31-37).

“I think I got an idea of the problem…but to tell you the truth I believe some things aren’t made that clear to me. I feel things are complicated…woolly” (Michael’s 2nd interview, 23-25).

Teachers in the sample needed to feel equipped to handle the situation they face in order to have positive views/attitudes towards such cases. They lack time, resources, experience, support from parents, colleagues and administration. Availability of support services in the classroom (Center and Ward, 1987; Clough and Lindsay, 1991; Myles and Simpson, 1989) and support from specialists (Kauffman et al, 1989; Minke et al, 1996) go hand in hand with context. But whichever the situation, teachers remain persistent and feel responsible, to a certain extent, for these children. More or less, they follow a certain way of thinking, pointing to the fact that in the end, concerning the purpose of education, what they really want is to keep pupils happy while helping them to improve their performance as the following quotes show:

“From the very first day I remember that my aim was to approach children from you know…the psychological side…I
wasn’t that interested in the actual teaching aims…I mean, if they really wish to play football, they are allowed to…as long as this keeps them happy…I will not be that strict…there’s no point…I want them to be free, to move freely…especially those children who have problems…” (Interview 1b, 123-131).

“My intention is to have a good time…and to work in a good environment…” (Interview 14a, 54).

“You will start from what the child likes. And you will try within 2-3 lessons, you will make sure you make the child feel better” (Interview 14, 292-293).

5.4 Teacher Attitudes towards Teaching and Learning of Children with Dyslexia/Learning Difficulties

Teachers in this sample varied in their beliefs and attitudes towards children with dyslexia/learning difficulties, and therefore, this impacts in various ways upon their teaching of children with dyslexia/learning difficulties. Some interviewees had a strong belief that children with SEN required special provision and this was not part of a mainstream teacher's role:

‘Look, these cases are very tiring. Very very tiring. Every single year I have to work with difficult cases. And I never had the appropriate support…nor do I have now. I see that I cannot give anything else to children who have these difficulties. I wish I had the knowledge, as well as the ability…the resources…but since the state cannot afford this, I cannot give anything more’ (Interview 3a, 196-204).

‘Dyslexic children must attend the special classroom. Because this is the purpose of the special classroom, to deal with these children” (Interview 6, 96-100).

This belief is attached by the interviewees to the belief that in such cases mainstream teachers do other people’s jobs (assistants, specialists etc), since mainstream and special education are two different concepts in their mind:

“Look, time is a significant factor for me…there is no time…moreover, I believe that especially dyslexic children must be taught one-to-one…they must be supported by another teacher as well…and such teachers are…placed in several schools to help. I believe that, to the extent that this support is provided; these children can be helped within the special
classroom. But now, I am alone in the classroom, and I try to give those children something to keep them busy” (Interview 16, 148-160).

“Firstly, I should not spend all hours with those children. Children should get extra support, together with all children…I don’t know…it has to do with a lot of factors…of the whole school, parents, specialists […] Or, the special teacher could withdraw the child together with other children. Because I don’t think we are all experts (writing) at co-operation with specialists. I also agree with co-operation with psychologists, not only for pupils, but for teachers as well. Psychologists…speech-therapists” (Interview 7, 108-134).

For some teachers in this sample this belief/cultural model that children with SEN require special provision that is not within a mainstream teacher’s role, provided a rationale to justify their existing practice and not look outside and seek change. Consequently such teachers revealed they were not so inclined to change their, usually, more traditional practices.

“What I cannot do is to give differentiated work to those children, special exercises…you know…I cannot do it. I mean, I might do that once in a day, but this needs every day planning” (Interview 18, 231-234).

‘I believe that everyone has gaps as a person. I would say that through the last years, I haven’t seen much change in me. I don’t think there are a lot of things in me I need to change. Though I am trying to improve myself […] I believe that teachers are a lot more relaxed today. But we should not exceed the limits, because we will reach the other end. You have to be strict at times” (Interview 1a, 133-149).

‘I think I have changed a lot…I believe I have become worse in many things…I see the way you react with children sometimes, and I remember myself when I was young…I would play with them, I would spend time with them during the breaks” (John’s 2nd interview, 152-156).

This belief was recognised by the majority of the interviewees, although there was variation in the way they positioned themselves against this dominant belief. For others it was essential to avoid situations in which children with learning difficulties/dyslexia became peripheral participants, while learning experiences should be shared between children of all abilities.
“Withdrawing a child means picking the child out. And once you pick the child out, it will have the opposite results” (Interview 4, 113-115).

“In my opinion we shouldn’t have special classrooms. I believe this is a false system, I do not take part, and I do not put myself in this. I wish they were abolished. In the way this works today, and due to racism, I don’t believe they do any good” (Larry’s 1st interview, 200-203).

“Look, when the teacher is willing…a different relationship can be developed with the child…the child always gets what you give him/her…and becomes a better person. In every kind of dyslexia, whichever way this manifests, one-to-one teaching proves more helpful” (Christos’s 1st interview, 11-117).

On the other hand, the interviewees felt that “one-to-one” teaching is not a magic formula that will solve all problems. Interviewees identify the potential danger of isolation, stigmatisation and loss of the link with in-class achieved work.

“I’ll tell you what...there’s one specific disadvantage with the special classroom. A friend of mine has a son, who was in Year 1 last year. I heard comments like ‘he is mentally retarded, that’s why he goes there’…another thing…it’s not proper to call the teacher a ‘special teacher’, or to say ‘special classroom’. We should not label children” (Interview 8, 232-240).

Teachers moving towards a more inclusive discourse argued that regarding dyslexia, every teacher could be a specialist in working with people that are special, and could have expectations of learning about teaching the children they come into contact with.

“I believe that special teachers who work in mainstream classrooms are similar to mainstream teachers…I mean that a normal teacher supports everyone in his/her classroom. This is what I actually was as a mainstream teacher…I mean there was no need to be something different...[...] I have studied on my own through the years. Then I try to put all these into practice through my lessons” (Interview 14a, 95-110).

“If the teacher doesn’t have the strength and patience, then why becoming a teacher? I am very strict in several things. You have to be patient with a dyslexic child. Children have a range of reactions...besides, if you don’t teach the rest of the classroom
to encourage them all the time, you will lose the game’ (Interview 8, 286-299).

Others also positioned themselves as a person who believes in inclusion.

‘About children with dyslexia…I think that…it’s not necessary to withdraw them. Well…well…(writing) parallel teaching! I believe that initially such a teacher would work with those children, right, who have this learning difficulty…and I would work with the rest of the children…I mean, and the other teacher would be there basically for the child who has a sort of particularity” (Interview 3, 85-96).

‘It’s not about distinguishing them from the rest of children…it’s simple; they have a difficulty that creates problems even to their behaviour…and to their performance. That’s the difference. The way I see it…I believe, in my subject, children who have particularities, difficulties…most of the times, they are a bit more aggressive while expressing feelings…a bit more aggressive than the rest of children who do not have these difficulties’ (Interview 7, 12-21).

“I believe that inclusion is essential for all children in the classroom…the child with the learning difficulty may be the ‘receiver’, but I think that in this way you help in a way the normal child as well, this relationship…being in need of others, because the child recognises the problems he/she faces, and peers are also recognised as assistants, not as leaders” (Interview 11, 87-92).

“I disagree with respect to the way special classrooms work here. If it was different, it would offer a lot more. It would be ideal…to (writing) individual plan in special classroom…differentiated work. Because there was a special teacher who used to go through my work, my copies” (Interview 17, 131-137).

Here there appeared a tension between teachers’ attitude to inclusion and belief about special provision for pupils with dyslexia/learning difficulties. This could be resolved through a willingness to undertake professional development and training. They describe the profile of a teacher as detached from the model of an expert importing knowledge. Practically, the general idea is that teachers have to get over that model, and concentrate on methods and co-operation. It depends on the relationship they develop with pupils and on how they think about teaching.

“Well, we should not forget that school succeeds family. By the time some things changed within the family model…I mean
when the bonds have become looser... so things became easier at school as well... we try to behave in a similar way. But we don't remember such things in the past; when I was a pupil, teachers were very strict. And when I became a teacher... well, look... what I can say for sure is that I feel I am an acrobat... I may be very funny, or very strict... there are times I will pull... a wisp!” (Interview 19a, 62-73).

Interviewees argue that teachers’ status was differently determined in the past. They could not handle difficulties in learning; instead they would link pupils’ low performance to laziness and insufficient study. Parents’ attitude was similar, especially towards children with difficulties:

“Maybe because they didn’t come across a case in their close environment, well... we never talked about these things, it’s just that whenever we would meet a child with special needs on the street, I would feel their pity ‘God, stay away from those bad things!’ But this attitude was something that I saw in a lot of people; even nowadays... it was so frequent in my parents, since they grew up having different ideas” (Interview 6a, 124-131).

Some interviewees argue this role has changed now, due to changes in society. Teachers are guides, present to offer help to children when needed:

“So, teachers didn’t know then (writing) teachers were unaware, they couldn’t handle these problems... the teachers were in a higher position then... things have changed now... the teacher is in a lower position, not in the centre of the world. What I try to do now is to help... to guide... to offer my experience... I cannot do anything else, apart from being there and offering what they need” (Interview 16, 123-138).

Another point, brought out by this research, is the child’s character affecting the process of teaching and learning. A couple of interviewees refer to within-child factors, which they strongly relate to family attitudes they adopt:

“It’s because parents are reflected through their children and they believe that their child’s failure is their failure as well. This is how a child receives this shame ‘Why did you do that? I am ashamed... I cannot face the teacher!’. This is my opinion” (Larry, 1st interview, 72-77)

“Children are racists, aren’t they? And this has its roots in their home. They haven’t discussed with their parents the fact that there are children who might not be good pupils or that good in reading. They aren’t told that we have to accept them as well.
There are parents who haven’t realised the problem, because they haven’t learned to think in this way. They haven’t faced the problem in order to accept it. So this problem is an unfamiliar situation’ (Interview 13, 51-85).

Participants confirm that the more experienced they are, the more positive attitudes they adopt towards children with dyslexia. Age-teaching experience (Berryman, 1989; Forlin, 1995; Avramidis et al, 2000) is identified as a significant factor, strongly related to availability of support services and support from specialists. Teacher beliefs and practices vary, not just from case to case, but also as they become more experienced in SEN. In every interview the distinction between ‘now’ and ‘then’ is an inseparable point. The more experienced teachers get, the more confident they feel when they come across such cases, and their reactions are restrained and less anguish ed:

“Even older teachers, who were stricter, have changed. Experience gives you the chance to do a lot of things, and change your attitude towards the others, towards children” (Interview 4, 254-257).

“Most of all, it’s the teaching experience. Then it is also...knowledge. But the thing is that all these specialists don’t have a clue, because they never spent time in a classroom to see the real thing. I think that the teaching experience is subversive...but for me, I think the experience I had with P. was essential as well. Personal contact with a child from a friend’s environment” (Interview 8a, 83-92).

“I think that there is a sort of change...and that happened by the time I started reading about...that...I started spending a bit more time about that...because I had to understand the problem, in order to confront it...what I felt was that these children need a different approach (writing) updating...experience...as time went by, I realised that there were a lot of these cases within the classrooms I would teach. I tried to see what I should do about it” (Interview 16a, 25-35).

Because I have identified a few cultural models/ beliefs that are dominant amongst the interviewees, and in the literature and historically these appear to be reflective of society more generally, and because this study explored how the teachers think about them, teachers’ positioning is important. There was variation in the way they positioned themselves against the dominant belief about children with SEN requiring special provision but not being part of a mainstream teacher’s role. Here there appeared a tension
between their attitude to inclusion and belief about special provision, and this could be resolved through a willingness to undertake professional development and training. Therefore, of significant importance are both researching and engaging with teachers' professional identities when concern is with bringing about change.

5.5 How Teacher Beliefs and Attitudes Frame their Professional Identity

In the previous sections teacher beliefs related to cultural models, that are dominant and reflective of society more generally, have been identified. However, while exploring how teachers position themselves towards these cultural models, it is important to explore how teacher beliefs and attitudes relate to their professional identities. A teacher identity is based on the core beliefs one has about teaching and being a teacher (Mayer, 1999, p.6-7), continuously formed and reformed through experience. Van den Berg (2002, p. 579) highlights the significance of beliefs, attitudes and emotions that teachers adhere to, by providing examples and concrete definitions for each of them:

- Beliefs: ‘These new processes of teaching and learning are in conflict with my opinions regarding the quality of education’;
- Attitudes: ‘It is nice to be informed about new forms of education’;

Within its socio-cultural framework, this study focuses on teachers’ sense of self as it is constructed through their knowledge, beliefs, personal values and philosophies, and emotions within school contexts that is teachers’ professional identity (Day et al, 2005; Enyedy et al, 2005). ‘Teacher identity is continually being informed, formed and reformed as individuals develop over time and through interaction with others’ (Cooper and Olson, 1996,cited by Day,2002,p.607). An example from this study follows:

‘I think it was my contact…but not just at school…it was also knowledge that changed me…because I learnt some things about that…and experience…it was the contact with people who have this particularity” (Interview 7a, 24-29).

The formation of beliefs goes through a ‘personal filter’, as quoted, through which current perceptions are refined:
“Then, I would say, it is my personal judgement, my personal filter, where I filter whatever people say, and this is how I created my picture of dyslexia (writing)...analysis of views and ideas and formation of my ‘definition’” (Interview 6a, 54-58).

“Well...more or less it has to do with the knowledge I got around these. It has also to do with the fact that every person has different stimulants in his/her life...thus gains different pictures of life...for instance, no-one has a clear picture of what the airplane is like, unless he/she sees it. There is huge difference between seeing it flying and observing it in a museum. We have to read about it, to see pictures...thus our opinions change constantly...so this is how my opinion on stammering and dyslexia changed...there might be a connection between them, but they are not the same thing. So knowledge was one factor” (Christos’s 2nd interview, 22-33).

In his extended review of studies with reference to educational practice, van den Berg (2002) focuses on teacher professional identities that are often at issue due to new methods of working, expectations and objectives conflicting with teachers’ personal experiences. There is evidence, in this study, supporting this view:

“I think my beliefs changed...when starting my teaching career, I remember myself as being very bad...I was just trying to be typical, to follow the curriculum...I believe each year I would get influenced by other colleagues...I would do what they were doing...all this within an era full of changes...now, I cannot blame myself for that, but I want to say that I always wanted to do some sort of search...now, I feel very very happy, I really like my job, this is what I want to do. I believe that I am good at that now, I am a professional. I do believe that and I try to offer as much as I can” (Larry’s 2nd interview, 88-99).

The term ‘professional identity’ after Sleegers and Kelchtermans (1999) is the result of:

‘the interaction between the personal experiences of teachers, and the social, cultural, and institutional environment in which they function on a daily basis’ (van den Berg, 2002,p.579).

Mayer (1999) distinguishes teacher identity from teacher’s functional roles:

‘A teaching role encapsulates the things the teacher does in performing the functions required of him/her as a teacher, whereas a teaching identity is a more personal thing and
indicates how one identifies being a teacher and how one feels as a teacher’ (p.6-7).

This is illustrated by the following:

‘Working with pupils who struggle makes me happy, it gives me much more satisfaction, because I feel I offer something very small but very important to their way through life. I have always been supporting the weak pupils. And I believe that those problematic cases are the ones I love the most...as I said before, you change all the time. You are strict when you begin your career, but it’s the kind of job we are doing, that we need to change all the time. Otherwise, there is no meaning in being stable all the time...you get bogged down. You cannot do the same things all the time. Now, that the books have changed, I believe my mood changed as well. We have been teaching the previous books for over 20 years...that was too much! Or the fact that no training takes place...you know, like a seminar...a conference...and you need that...you need to hear new ideas, to talk to other people...to change views...this is how you check yourself, your mistakes...otherwise, it is very boring...it is a very creative job, if you have the potential” (Interview 19a, 92-119).

Construction of different cultural models justifies to an extent, the way specific groups of people make sense of their lives; put differently, the networks of cultural models allow organisation of thinking and social practices of such groups. In this case, cultural models are ‘tools’ for doing teacher identity work, in two ways: (i) in pedagogic practice and (ii) in interview/reflective work (eg. espoused beliefs or ‘theories’). The ‘typical’ or ‘normal’ cultural models imply mediating teachers actions in terms of experiences (Davis, 2008).

Challenges in the arena of education also mean that modern day Greek teachers need to have the capacity to change. According to Schwarzer and Greenglass (1999) successful change implies a good level of teacher efficacy. Self-efficacy encompasses a variety of attitudes, beliefs and emotions which guide teachers work.

Interviewees confirm that professional development is influenced by knowledge, awareness, and experience. T6 talks about considering undertaking a Masters’ degree in her field. T7 is the only interviewee to have obtained an MPhil in drama, and is very ‘active’ with presentations at conferences/seminars. T16 regrets not having undertaken a
PhD degree on English language. T8, T10 and T12 have attended long-term counselling seminars and feel that they are in a constant change and open to every stimulant daily:

“Counselling was one thing…it helped me not to hold others responsible and to examine closely each person...when there is a problem, I try to examine it deeper, to see if I am able to help” (Interview 12a, 31-44).

T7 described new teachers as uninterested, and does not hesitate to show her concern due to their unawareness:

“I didn’t have the opportunities I have wished for...so awareness is a main thing...as far as the new teachers are concerned, what I see in seminars is that they don’t know the right way to work, in teams...especially young women...who cannot even think...cannot speak, cannot co-operate...and they are already 19! It seems their mind is stuck...’ I don’t care about this, I want that!’ [...] that’s why the choice of the teaching-work is important” (Interview 7, 500-508).

Teachers’ had difficulty in handling difficulties in learning in the past. Instead they would link pupils’ low performance to laziness and insufficient study. Parents’ attitude was similar, especially towards children with disabilities. Some participants argue the role of the teacher has changed now due to social changes. The meaning of being a good teacher is linked to setting the level of demands and professionalism. Teachers are described as guides, present to offer help to children when needed:

“so, then teachers didn’t know (writing) teachers were unaware, they couldn’t handle these problems...the teachers were in a higher position then...things have changed now...the teacher is in a lower position, not in the centre of the world. What I try to do now is to help...to guide...to offer my experience...I cannot do anything else, apart from be there and offer what they need” (Interview 16, 123-138).

As opposed to a teacher-centered system, participants approve team-work and allow children to work more freely, by making an effort to approach daily issues from a psychological stand:

“...but from the very first day I remember that my aim was to approach children from you know...the psychological side...I wasn’t that interested in the actual teaching aims...I mean, if they really wish to play football, they are allowed to...as long as this keeps them happy...I will not be that strict...there’s no
point...I want them to be free, to move freely...especially those children who have problems” (Interview 1b, 123-131).

Experience is identified as a significant factor towards change, and this is a result of a broader change in the social framework. Parental awareness and development of science research are also highlighted by interviewees:

“Even older teachers, who were stricter, have changed. Experience gives you the chance to do a lot of things, and change your attitude towards others, towards children” (Interview 4, 254-257).

School is the most important educational body internationally expected to supply all children with adequate provision. Inclusive education, as supported by many governmental documents and a number of practitioners in education, is a process by which:

“a school attempts to respond to all pupils as individuals by reconsidering its curricular organization and provision. Through this process, the school builds its capacity to accept all pupils from the local community who wish to attend and, in doing so, reduces the need to exclude pupils” (Sebba and Ainscow, 1996).

While exploring where there can be spaces that may create a more positive teacher attitude toward the development of more inclusive teaching practices, it is interesting to look at types of teachers that make the career choice to become special teachers. Interviewees stress that teachers must have the appropriate sensitivity to work in special education and must be suitable for this job:

“I must learn a lot of things to become a special teacher. Because there are a lot more responsibilities. You must be more flexible, you must know how you will work. This is important in my view. It’s not just about offering knowledge to a child with special needs...you must help the child with its life and daily needs as well. I don’t think I am adequately prepared for this. And you definitely have to have a lot more strength...definitely...you must be stronger and you must have more patience” (Interview 1a, 85-97).

‘Look...I don’t think I would want that...there is a specific reason for that. It’s because I am very sensitive as a person, and it would hurt me...it is not that easy for me. I mean, I love children very much...but you know...these children are like
separate units...I may see them during the break, but that’s it...I couldn’t make it with more severe cases. This is how I see it, and you know I don’t have the knowledge...if I had the knowledge, it might have been different. But because I am also very sensitive, I don’t think I could stand that” (Interview 1b, 159-170).

The choice to becoming a teacher is partly based upon working conditions. Possible considerations of applying for special education are due to the even more flexible daily program of special teachers. Mainstream teachers who did not make the choice of special education but end up with SEN cases in their class express their opposition. Such influential factors, according to interviewees, may act negatively in teachers’ effectiveness and professional response to special education’s needs.

“There are a few special teachers though...most of them don’t do their job...you see them talking on the phone all day...they don’t have a standard program. They are always late...I think more or less a teacher becomes a special teacher in order to get extra 150 euros” (Interview 8, 188-203).

As argued, many teachers choose a two-year off their work while attending training at Marazlio, and extra financial benefits. As reported, John admits that he wants to be good and efficient in the classroom, even when dealing with such children. He identifies lack of experience and knowledge, which make him feel uncomfortable as a professional:

“...there were some obstacles in my career, and you may see these as excuses...you get married...you have children...you need to get money an work extra hours...so things need to fall into place...now that I think of that, there is something else that needs to be done...if I ever take the exams at Marazlio, it will definitely be for special education” (John’s 2nd interview, 119-129).

“No. Well there was no such thing then...I did some things on special education at Marazlio [...] Most of teachers then would follow this sector in order to get more money...but teachers should not become special teachers just for the money. This sector has specific demands...you need to know more things, you need to follow specific approaches...each child is different and needs a different approach. It also needs a lot of patience...it needs joy, cheerfulness...smile...there are severe cases...difficult cases...but once you choose to do this job, you have to do it properly” (Christos’s 2nd interview, 94-106)
The role of the teacher is very significant, placed above assessment centers and psychologists. Yet, in a highly grade-oriented educational system, difficulties in learning are related to transmission teaching and performance as interdependent factors. Larry lists major changes that should take place in order to achieve better inclusion of children with SEN: professionalism, well-equipped teachers, resources, less children in each classroom etc. Ideally, a good special education teacher requires more qualifications than a mainstream teacher’s higher degree. Words and phrases that are often repeated by interviewees are ‘patience’, ‘strength’, ‘professionalism’, ‘good relations’ etc. Focusing on special teachers’ discourse the profile of a mainstream and a special teacher coincide. Teachers should confront every situation:

“I believe that special teachers who work in mainstream classrooms are similar to mainstream teachers…I mean that a normal teacher supports everyone in his/her classroom. This is what I actually was as a mainstream teacher…I mean there was no need to be something different” (Interview 14a, 95-101)

Professional inefficiency is also thought common within special education, as a number of mainstream teachers see no practical and particular professional superiority. Some participants (T1b, T7, T8, T19) raise the issue of teachers choosing special education for financial reasons. This is frequently met throughout many interviews, since working in primary education provides professional stability, and specifically working in special education provides an extra bonus:

“The benefits were quite a motive. No…I think it was even before that…I think my son was still in primary school…so the problem was where we would leave my son, if I had to go down town daily. My father said that this was not a good idea; instead he would give me the bonus! So I quit…plus I had to study for the exams” (Maria’s 2nd interview, 110-122).

“There are a few special teachers though…most of them don’t do their job…you see them talking on the phone all day…they don’t have a standard program. They are always late[…]I think more or less a teacher becomes a special teacher to get an extra 150 €”(Interview 8, 188-203).

Other teachers stigmatise the profile of those, who, for the sake of their peace of mind and status, remain idle. There may be teachers who lack the skills to carry out such work, therefore when their profile of being good teachers is at stake, it turns into a
professional failure. This is described as the issue of how efficient primary teachers are against these challenges:

“within our field, most teachers don’t want them. First of all, it’s difficult for them. They want to have a good time at work; they want to have their peace of mind…whereas, such a child needs hard work in the classroom. And they don’t want that. Besides, some teachers want to keep their status, as good teachers…they take this as a personal failure […] but for the special teacher it’s more…it’s loose” (Interview 1, 477-485).

Within the sample, all specialised teachers are of the same opinion. Instead of setting other colleagues responsible for a pupil’s low performance, they take all responsibility, and try to show their good profile and work, by filling the gaps. The best one can do is to simply ignore the main teacher’s unwillingness to co-operate. Still, it is a war of dynamics. Discretion is the rule for good co-operation with everyone. It appears her interviews are orientated towards good relationship building and diplomatic confrontation of issues that arise:

“You have to identify all the good work previous teachers did, and you simply add to that…craftiness…to be able to fill the previous gaps, if you think you are a ‘good’ teacher. You need to show you work. If the mainstream teacher doesn’t accept you, because there are also some exceptions…you… may end up with a very awkward teacher. I mean every person is good, one way or another. This may happen as well…then it’s ok, act like you don’t see that. But act nicely, because no one rejects good emotion. First of all, do not show you are trying to surpass. Let the teacher believe he/she is the master in the classroom (laughing) and that you expect his/her orders. I mean a nice co-operation is the perfect thing” (Interview 14,314-330).

Since reality is different in practice, a special teacher should not spend too much time on the problem itself, rather to try to find a positive thing in every pupil’s personality. For instance T14 sounds very patient and develops positive thinking:

“If I spend time thinking why children don’t get along with me, I feel that I spend too much time on this. I don’t know, I may be wrong, I do not accept that though. I do accept, however, to try to find a positive thing. I may like nothing in you, but I will be forced to think and identify something good in you […] I feel that teams are essential…the classroom must be a team and thus achieve more” (Interview 14, 61-74).
Withdrawning children should be up to children themselves actually. Interestingly, some teachers talk through the children’s perspective, as if they are displaying the children’s point of view:

“I believe a lot in silence, in calmness, it is better for the child to get this help in the special classroom, because such classrooms are smaller than the mainstream ones. But if the child refuses, you will not go there [...] though it will be different this way. It is ok if you spend 4-5 lessons on this...you will see impairment later. Children feel the fear of not being good enough. They cannot stand being rejected, no one can stand that. If I feel lost, then whoever helps me I will see as rescuer. A child may look at you and show you that he/she needs help. Another one may show it in a different way. You have to identify this way, and make a start” (Interview 14,285-310).

Special or mainstream teachers who promote inclusion are the most trained, still claiming unpretentiously that they demand more and they try harder to be more efficient. Larry talks about social racism and anti-professionalism, which today are society’s biggest wounds:

“I came across children who were obliged to attend special classrooms during English lessons. Well, this causes a lot of problems to these children. All of a sudden, they feel different and children discriminate them. The issue is not to discriminate children, rather to include them. In my opinion we shouldn’t have special classrooms. I believe this is a false system, I do not take part, and I do not put myself in this. I wish they were abolished. In the way this works today, and due to racism, I don’t believe they do any good” (Larry’s 1st interview, 195-202).

Having the right attitude or having the knowledge isn’t enough, as a special teacher should have both in order to be self-efficient.

“I’ll tell you what...when I first heard that, I wished that teachers who would work in this sector would be very well-equipped. I wished they had the knowledge and the strain to work hard. You need both...you cannot just be in the mood, you must have the knowledge as well...I had a few small books, and I knew a few things then...but it’s so different to work with 25 children and 2-3 children who face such problems” (Interview 14, 261-270).
5.6 Teacher Emotional Responses and Compassion

Compassion is another cultural model/belief noted in the literature, but also with a more specific meaning in the Greek context, where religion penetrates customs, education, national celebrations and cultural activities, rites of passage, cuisine etc. on a daily basis. Far more than a faith and religious tradition, Orthodoxy is a way of life, a culture. Within the Christian perspective, it is perceived as ‘full immersion in the condition of being human’ (Nouwen et al, 1983, p.4). In connection to religion, challenging this compassion discourse implies confronting –amongst others- the role of Christianity in developing such a discourse, which, as entangled with teachers’ beliefs, promotes this issue into a deep social change. Because of the diverse meanings that compassion takes in every person’s common-sense morality through its intellectual/cultural history, one should be suspicious of its reliability regarding its ethical claims (Crisp, 2008). In English, for instance, the same word is used for both the feeling and the corresponding virtue (Ibid, 2008,p.233), frequently related to pity, empathy and sympathy. Crisp (2008) provides an example to define the difference between ‘pity’ and ‘compassion’:

‘The person who feels sorry for the beggars but passes them by is more to be said to feel pity, while the person who stops to help feels compassion’ (p.233-234).

Greek society has started considering disabled people as individuals who need to be taken care of and loved, and treating them with compassion as synonymous to sympathy. It is what Symeonidou and Phtiaka (2009) introduced as the ‘charity’ model, representing ‘beliefs about the promotion of charitable feelings, actions and discourse towards disabled people’ (p.548). Yet, Greece is still attached to this individual model, where charity work through national and private fund-raising efforts expresses society’s steps to respect and care for people with disabilities (Symeonidou, 2002,p.220). Prejudice exists in everyday interactions, encountered in inappropriate, deficit language: ‘it is in some of those people’s minds who seek to make an individual fit a pattern that is considered to be ‘normal’’ (Ibid,p.220).

Compassion towards ‘unfortunates’ arises because this is a dominant belief/cultural model that the teachers drew upon when constructing their part in the interview text. This
model seems important as how the interviewees positioned themselves in relation to it then shapes how they view inclusion.

Appendices 42 and 43 (pp: 356-358) include teachers’ quotes on the profile of a good teacher and a good special teacher, since education tends to remain separated into special and mainstream. Good teaching…

‘is charged with positive emotion\(^\text{18}\)[…] (good teachers) are emotional, passionate beings who connect with their students and fill their work and their classes with pleasure, creativity, challenge and joy’ (Hargreaves, 1998,p.835).

Apart from teacher self-efficacy in subject knowledge and skillfulness, the profession of teaching has an ‘emotional part’. To help teachers develop their skillfulness, it is necessary to address:

‘their emotional responses to the events around them and the attitudes, values and beliefs that underlie these responses’ (van den Berg, 2002,p.586).

Primary teachers often express strong affection or even love towards their pupils (Nias, 1989; Hargreaves, 1994) and this is supported by data from this study.

“I believe that they need a lot more love and affection. I wouldn’t say compassion…I see it through affection […] if you have been through a lot in your life…well, I remember that my attitude was quite the same from the beginning…I don’t know…that’s why this job was the right choice for me. I like my job…I like it because even for a while I can be in the position to help those children. I feel generally help them” (Interview 1b, 132-142).

The fact that pupils respond by similar emotional expression to their teachers is a kind of ‘psychic rewards’ (Lotrie, 1975) through establishment of emotional bonds and understanding (Hargreaves, 2000,p.817). An example of this from the data follows:

“The teacher’s influence is massive, from the first time the child comes to us, we are the guides. We will guide them…I say that, because I was guided by my teacher, whom I want to thank so much. He was my model, and he still remains, though he passed away. But as I said, the models change once the child comes to school, so, if we are good, the child will be good, if we are not,”

\(^{18}\)The word’s Latin root is ‘emovere’ and means to move out, to stir up (Hargreaves, 1998,p.835). Emotions are ‘mental states accompanied by intense feeling and (which involve) bodily changes of a widespread character’ (Koestler, 1967,p.226).
However, within a changing educational reality, teachers experience emotions in reaction to challenges, pressures and specific working conditions. These emotions can be explained as indicators of their underlying beliefs and knowledge of their own functioning (Kyriacou, 1987), as they constitute determinants of human behaviour. In the event of educational changes, teachers’ relationships with students, parents and their colleagues are likely to be affected as make ‘heavily emotional investment’ in these relationships (Hargreaves 1998, p.838). The present study highlights this argument:

“I could never work in Special Education...mmm...I get very emotional, and I know that these children develop a strong bond with you...the way I see them hugging me and kissing me...” (Michael’s 1st interview, 237-241).

“I believe...well, I speak for myself...it is not about compassion...it’s about sensitivity and love towards these children...it’s generally love about humans...the thing is that we could talk about that for days...but not in this way, you know...just chatting...it is better if you feel free” (Interview 4a, 99-104).

“I used to be very strict because other children might be in a worse condition...there was no excuse. I never felt pity for these children...but I definitely feel compassion for those parents who are heroes...I believe that. These difficulties within a family may be very soul-destroying” (Interview 8a, 191-200).

In one of his studies regarding the emotional practice of teaching, Hargreaves addresses interrelated points on emotions, such as teaching being an emotional labour or involving emotional understanding. Within inclusive practice, a number of attributes defining empathetic behaviour are described (McAllister and Irvine, 2002): sensitivity, respect, tolerance, understanding, patience, humility etc:

“here in mainstream state schools, severe cases aren’t that many [...] and in state schools this is a huge issue, because there are no...no resources [...] like X. says ‘to save our soul’. Because helping these children, makes you feel proud, right? See how they react themselves? They are happy” (Interview 1,490-496)

“I feel that I must not press them...I must let them a bit more loosely...and I feel I must walk into their world. I must me sensitive and see things through their eyes. And in my view this
Terms like ‘sensitivity’ and ‘love’ are used differently in Greece. Sensitivity seems to be thought of positively with respect to teaching children. This is a more complex group than it seems, and ‘compassion’ culturally plays a more important role as analysis deepens. Compassion is another cultural model/belief noted with a more specific meaning in the Greek context. This seems important, as how the interviewees positioned themselves in relation to compassion shapes how they view inclusion. This model of compassion towards children with SEN together with a strong separatist special educational model points to a view that children labelled with dyslexia/learning difficulties require special teachers and so can provide an attitude that is not so supportive of their developing more inclusive teaching practices.

Feelings that teachers experience (compassion-pity-sorry or love-affection) are related to or deriving from anxiety. Overall they describe reactions, as synonyms to panic, helplessness, soul-destroying, disappointment (appendix 17, p. 284). Some teachers express feelings which show a general disappointment, stress and avoidance. John argues:

“I see things from the opposite side, because I think that if I was in their shoes, I would probably react the same way. I would be shocked... I would freak out, I would be very unhappy, very disappointed, but I would not give up. I mean that a normal child...may...well, by normal I mean a child without learning difficulties...because all children are normal...so, this child may need 10 minutes...so as to show the difference for instance between ‘φ’ and ‘θ’. If this was my child, I believe that I would...I would be within this group of people that do not give up...I would try, I would read a lot...I would try as much as I could” (John’s 1st interview, 178-194)

Compassion is related to the virtues of kindness and beneficence, with kindness being broader that can be solely found in actions, motivated by duty to assist others. In Fien’s (2007,p.200) review of Noddings’ books (1984,1992,2002) compassion is presented as deep caring, not mere pity or sympathy. McAllister and Irvine (2002,p.433) comment on Noddings’ term of ‘feeling with’ as a type of empathy and altruism, implying action in service to other’s needs (Goodman, 2000). One interviewee had strong beliefs about the nature and usefulness of compassion:
“Compassion?! You have failed as a teacher then. No way! You don’t go there to feel sorry for them. I don’t even want to listen to that. No...no...what you have to do is what most of people want...to love and to care for people, and to accept them as they are...and not to try to change them at once...to try to see which steps you can take in order to make them better as persons. Because if I feel sorry for a person, I cannot definitely help this person, but I don’t believe that people accept compassion from others anyway. If you really care and respect this person...this is what everyone wants. I don’t know though if people have the same opinion of compassion...it depends what kind of meaning they give to this word...they may consider this as care...but it is different to care and respect at the same time. I don’t like the word ‘compassion’ anyway” (Interview 14a,125-142).

Compassion needs strong cognition and a profound understanding for its exercise to be well judged, for it has a complex balance:

‘Feeling compassionate towards children and caring for their plights and predicaments is not necessarily well manifested by giving up on the standards required for their work’ (Sockett, 2009, p.299).

A list of terms related to compassion are provided in (appendix 17, p. 284). There is a variety of reactions towards children with difficulties. Michael argues:

“And I repeat, as a mainstream teacher, I feel love for this child, I will make the child understand that he/ she is not stupid, it’s just that I will have to give extra help to the child” (Michael’s 1st interview, 176-179).

Teachers express feelings of pity, of dislike for pity, or of enormous love–affection and respect. Some, because of their sensitiveness, cannot stand working with such children. For others this sentimentality can result in confidence that they can make it. One interviewee is not sure whether it is compassion that she feels, and another one disagrees with the concept of ‘love’, as love is not enough to help these children:

“To make this work you need co-operation with parents. The consultant used to say that we have to face it with love. You cannot face all problems with love (laughing). You do love children. But when there is a problem, I need to know the exact steps I have to take. ‘Love’ for me is something very general” (Interview 17, 158-172).

Sometimes teachers express more intense reactions while teaching children with difficulties in learning, for instance:
“I mean, at first I would be shocked. I don’t know if I could accept it easily, but I would definitely want to help my child. Because I happen to know cases of children who reached university and became doctors, and are dyslexic. And I happen to know some other artists…anyway, the father of A. was urged by the teacher, who didn’t know what else to do…so, it was a bit of a tiring case. Sometime, I feel helpless” (Interview 7, 161-168).

Interestingly, there are also violent reactions against pupils (slammed/slap/smack).

“there were school years I found difficult, but it was because I didn’t like the way specific schools functioned [...] There were times I felt there was a gap…I mean I would prefer more readiness…in our environment no-one can be bothered…so I think ‘Why should I be bothered?’ [...] this may modify your efficiency…if you feel efficient, you feel well” (Interview 18a, 84-93).

As referenced in Fien (2007,p.199), Huckle argues (1983) that at the very opposite of committed teachers stand neutral teachers as the two quotes below testify:

“They want to have a good time at work; they want to have their peace of mind…whereas, such a child (with difficulties) needs hard work in the classroom. And they don’t want that. Besides, some teachers want to keep their status, as good teachers…they take this as a personal failure” (Interview 1b, 477-481).

“as far as the new teachers are concerned, what I see at seminars is that they don’t know the right way to work, in teams…especially young women…who cannot even think…cannot speak, cannot co-operate…and they are already 19! It seems their mind is stuck…’I don’t care about this, I want that!’ [...] that’s why the choice of teaching work is important” (Interview 7,502-508).

5.7 Summary

The question about investigating teachers’ beliefs is framed around a description summarising the beliefs revealed. Teachers varied in their beliefs and attitudes towards children with dyslexia and indeed towards teaching children with special educational needs. There was a strong belief that children with special educational needs require special provision and are not part of a mainstream teacher's role. This was recognised by
the majority of interviewees, although there was variation in the way they positioned themselves against this dominant belief. Emerging from the data is the evidence that the teachers’ professional identities are shaping their resistance to change and also the ways in which they sometimes embrace change. Such teachers revealed they were not so inclined to change their usually more traditional practices. Others also positioned themselves as people who believe in inclusion. Here there appeared a tension between their attitude to inclusion and belief about special provision, and this could be resolved through a willingness to undertake professional development and training. Through relevant bodies of literature, emotional responses and compassion as significant elements framing teacher’s professional identities are also connected to special teachers’ professional identity, as there are types of teachers that make this career choice.

Looking at how teaching is conceptualised and examining how compassion (to be understood within the Greek Orthodox religious context) and performance are related within the education culture, provides a way of understanding the context in which different teacher discourses developed. Compassion towards ‘unfortunates’ arises because this is a dominant belief/cultural model that the teachers drew upon when constructing their part in the interview text. How teachers positioned themselves towards this cultural model then impacted on their attitudes to inclusion. Within this school system culture, teachers express their beliefs about the way Greek government policy on inclusion is and how it should be. From this point of view there are definite implications for professional development policy, arising from the revealing of these significant cultural models.

I have identified a few cultural models/beliefs (disability, dyslexia, compassion and learning) that are dominant amongst the interviewees and in the literature and historically these appear to be reflective of society more generally. Because this study explored how the teachers position themselves towards them, teachers’ positioning is important. Of significant importance are both researching and engaging with teachers' professional identities when concern is with bringing about change.
Chapter Six

CONCLUSION AND REFLECTIONS ON THE THESIS

6.1 Introduction
6.2 Contribution to Knowledge
6.3 Validity, Ethical Considerations, Data Access and Limitations
6.4 Researcher’s Reflections and Reflexivity
6.5 Recommendations and Further Reflections

6.1 Introduction

This study has contributed towards the deeper understanding of teachers’ experiences of, and beliefs and attitudes about, children with learning difficulties/dyslexia and how these influence teacher attitudes towards inclusion. In the discourse there have been identified two major subject positions: compassion has been used as a discursive tool to justify segregation and a deficit model. Some teachers express feelings which show a general disappointment, stress and avoidance towards children with dyslexia/learning difficulties. However, it has also been identified how it can be used by positioning towards it in an alternative way to justify embracing inclusion. This study has contributed in three ways: methodologically, by adopting an alternative research design to examine teacher attitudes towards inclusion; theoretically, by contributing towards improving understanding of teachers beliefs of teaching children with dyslexia/learning difficulties; and professionally, by informing policy intended ultimately to foster a more socially inclusive society in Greece and change attitudes towards pupils currently marginalised.

This last chapter summarises the work developed around the thesis argument and places it within the wider context, by outlining the conclusion and by setting out possible questions as subjects for further research. Additionally, a brief outline of ethical dilemmas is given about data access and manipulation, emerging while planning and conducting research fieldwork. Being a part of the same society and its cultural meanings, and most importantly, of the same professional caste, I perceive my narrative/story as a more
intimate part of the research process. The question of being an insider is nearly always problematic. My knowledge as an insider cannot be taken as either unquestionably complete or true, yet, undertaking an autobiographical account is a productive way of enabling critical insights regarding the influence my life experiences may have had upon my perspectives, orientations and assumptions. This kind of contextualisation is essential, since it can help counter bias, with reflexivity being an inherent part of the research endeavour.

6.2 Contribution to Knowledge

This study carries the potential for deepening understanding (1) methodologically, by adopting an alternative research design to examine teacher attitudes towards inclusion; (2) theoretically, by contributing by improving understanding on teachers’ beliefs of teaching pupils with dyslexia/learning difficulties and (3) professionally, by informing policy intended ultimately to foster a more socially inclusive society in Greece and change attitudes towards pupils, currently marginalised.

In terms of contribution to knowledge, it is important to make explicit not only the cultural models that the research has revealed through teachers’ narratives, but also how different positioning towards these cultural models have shaped different ways of being and becoming a teacher.

The study set the bounds of two main conflicting models of disability (medical/individual and social) and conceptualised the relation between impairment, disability and society, while acknowledging the existence of a problematic labelling practice. The actual concept and true meaning of learning difficulties is sometimes related to mental retardation, and interviewees often clarify that they do not refer to severe cases, such as mental retardation, when talking about learning difficulties. Many express ignorance or confusion when dealing with such terms and ‘cover’ them with more general, vague terms.

Teacher self-reported actions and beliefs were closely connected, yet in the field informants in different discourses were in reality much closer to each other regardless of their beliefs. This implied examination of background and organisational factors in relation to cultural models of disability/dyslexia-in-society and leaning, and to the
historical/cultural emergence of compassion as a significant mediating belief reflected in the Greek context and culture. Teacher beliefs about disability are influenced and shaped by compassion which implicates another deficit model, associated with the medical model. With Orthodoxy penetrating many aspects of daily life and culture, education reflects a traditionalist curriculum and the role of Christianity contributes by developing a strong compassion discourse reflecting the individual/charity model. Entangled with teachers’ discourses, this promotes the issue into a deeply rooted social phenomenon. Prejudice is encountered in inappropriate deficit language for people deviating from ‘normal’ patterns.

Given a more local practice orientation, that a context-specific view of knowledge provides, it was vital to capture and examine specific Greek viewpoints (i.e. terminology). Additionally, given that Greek literature adopted international knowledge on dyslexia, integration and inclusion- mirroring the broader international framework- filled in a way such gaps. Also, focus through progressive re-contextualisation in Greek reality proved crucial in synthesis, since both Greek and international contexts played a strategic role in production of new knowledge for special education. There was a strong belief that children with SEN require special provision and should not be part of a mainstream teacher's role. This was recognised by the majority of interviewees, although there was variation in the way they positioned themselves against this dominant belief. Such teachers revealed they were not so inclined to change their usually more traditional practices, whereas some also positioned themselves as persons who believe in inclusion. With respect to teaching and performance, the potential of grading and marking to improve or inhibit a child's learning and development has been the theme of long debates in Greece, which in turn reflects the importance of the issue of inclusion.

Here there appeared a tension between their attitude to inclusion and belief about special provision, and this could be resolved through a willingness to undertake professional development and training. Emerging from the data is the evidence that the teachers’ professional identities are shaping their resistance to change and also the ways in which they sometimes embrace change. Through relevant bodies of literature, emotional responses and compassion, as significant elements framing teachers’ professional identities, are also connected to special teacher’s professional identity. I have identified cultural models/ beliefs that are dominant amongst the interviewees, and in the literature, and historically these appear to be reflective of society more generally, and because this study explored how the teachers position themselves towards the cultural models, teachers’
positioning is also important. Of significant importance are both researching and engaging with teachers' professional identities when concern is with bringing about change.

Dyslexia is at the centre of attention, as the high numbers of children with dyslexia/learning difficulties in primary school classrooms justify the focus: as yet typically children with other special educational needs/disabilities are under-represented. Although the study focused on dyslexia, it is located in the wider socio-cultural context, where the latter is related to other SEN and their link to teachers and inclusion. Within the educational context, this is not a medical condition requiring diagnosis and treatment. Yet, in Greece, it is not considered as a multi-dimensioned SpLD, rather it is added to the pool of the current trend towards inclusion, where still emphasis to date seems to be more on administrative arrangements than on instructional-curricular matters (Lampropoulou and Panteliadou, 2005). The study groups together in a certain way the different variables that affect implementation of inclusion in the classroom, as well as teachers’ beliefs, since they serve as the main ‘instruments’ to achieve inclusive practices. The dimension ‘practices’ informs the study directly, whereas ‘policies’ contribute indirectly in formation of teachers’ perceptions of inclusion; some of these, such as severity of cases, teacher training, assessment, resources, etc. that have been located as factors related to teachers’ perceptions towards inclusion generally, also apply in cases of dyslexia/learning difficulties.

Scant knowledge has been evident regarding teachers’ beliefs toward inclusion of dyslexia in Greece – an under researched issue in this context – and even less regarding their change in the event of different practices of inclusion. Some solitary studies separately refer either to inclusion, or to inclusion of SEN or dyslexia, or to inclusion in primary/nursery education– This was an under researched issue in the Greek context, providing a gap for research to fill, since understanding about the latter is expected in turn to create knowledge of more effective approaches regarding dyslexia. After an era of research inertness, a few innovative and insightful studies appeared recently ‘igniting’ questions regarding Greek special education and inclusion attitudes (Papadopoulou et al, 2004; Nikolaraizi et al, 2005; Zoniou-Sideri and Vlachou, 2006; Boutskou, 2007; Vlachou, 2007; Avramidis and Kalyva, 2007; Koutrouba et al, 2008). Reviewing this international literature was necessary in order to provide theoretical support on significant areas of the disability and special education model, by locating established knowledge, categorised and re-searched in a broader framework. Additionally, it helped fill the gaps of the existing
Greek literature, regarding teachers’ perceptions towards inclusion. The focus so far has been more on initial teacher education alone (Atkinson, 2002; Walkington, 2005), on the teaching practice generally (Woods and Jeffrey, 2002), on inclusion, in primary education or in areas of special education e.g. profound multiple learning difficulties (Jones, 2004).

Within the Greek and international framework, the scientific viewpoint also stresses the need to further inform research to achieve a more inclusive culture. To their extended review of teacher attitudes towards inclusion, Avramidis and Norwich (2002) stress the need for more profound research, in terms of methodological approaches. They argue research should shift towards studies carrying the potential of deepening our understanding, such as longitudinal qualitative case studies, narratives, story-telling etc.

The complexity of this analytical framework lay in the necessity of simultaneous analysis at all stages of the research: preliminary analysis (coding), as carried out in fieldwork reports, was expanded and blended with concept-maps and triangulated with discourse. While achieving higher validity of several dimensions of knowledge deriving from concept mapping, concept maps supplied information about teachers’ way of thinking or feeling about their experiences while teaching children with dyslexia, and through analysis of transcripts, they provided access to cultural models, offering a deeper understanding about the way teachers position themselves with respect to these models.

Therefore, at a secondary level, the study contributed in terms of the analytical framework developed. The process of concept mapping interviews was adopted for eliciting teachers’ cultural models in relation to teaching children with dyslexia/learning difficulties. The analysis process moved from a general report on the MCS data provided by concept mapping interviews to a selection of representative discourses and an in-depth analysis of two cases of mainstream teachers, as examined in subsequent chapters. Discourses were associated with other background factors: teaching experience (age), location (urban/rural) and severity of SEN cases.

Concept maps have been used by mathematics educators as a way of teaching subject matter to students and prospective teachers (Bolte, 1999), as a means of identifying misconceptions (Huerta et al, 2003) and as an assessment instrument (Bolte, 1999). They have been used extensively by science educators as a tool for formative student assessment, for identifying student knowledge prior to instruction and for looking at change in knowledge as a result of instruction (Novak, 1998; Novak and Msonda, 1991). Researchers have introduced concept mapping either as an evaluation tool for trainee
teachers (Ferry et al, 1997; Adamczyk and Willson, http://www.iop.org/EJ; Buitink, 2009), for evaluation of prior-knowledge (Mason, 1992; Hoz and Gonik, 2001), or as a tool for data analysis on teachers’ perceptions, but not for data collection (Angelides et al, 2007); rarely, however, to map views e.g. educational reforms in teachers’ college (Hoz et al, 2003) and student teachers’ views on learning to teach (Buitink, 2009). Concept mapping has yet to be applied to any major Greek research. Internationally, although it has been applied as a tool for assessment and evaluation of knowledge, it has not been used within the socio-cultural context to map teachers’ beliefs to elicit teachers’ identities. Within this scope, narratives add to this contribution, as they provide distinctive new accounts. Because of the Greek context and prior emphasis on quantitative studies, these become even more distinctive.

6.3 Validity, Ethical Considerations, Data Access and Limitations

Concerning validity, it was crucial to organise the study’s analysis in such a way that the material developed –in terms of the answers in relation to the selected questions for the analysis - argues for the main issues or questions chosen for the study to address. Along with increasing reflexivity and validity in the conduct of the research, it inevitably creates greater awareness of ethical dilemmas in this section, in terms of informed consent and confidentiality.

This study achieved higher validity of several dimensions of knowledge inferring from concept mapping. Internal validity or ‘credibility’ (Anfara et al, 2002) was achieved with triangulation of prototype concept maps with quote maps produced through thematic analysis and discourse analysis of concept mapping interview transcripts, field notes and in-depth interviews/written accounts to minimise biases. Narratives and case studies included interviewees’ opinions, whereas analysis and discussion included the interviewer’s expectations, a tendency to seek for ‘suitable’ answers, and misunderstandings from both sides. Regarding interviews, there is always the issue of leading questions: making assumptions about the interviewees or ‘putting words into their mouths’. ‘We need to recognize that the interview is a shared, negotiated and dynamic social moment’ (Cohen et al, 2000, p.122).
To sensitively interpret the interaction with interviewees, a reflexive understanding had to be developed: data became a ‘distillation’ of both the positions of the interviewer and interviewees, within their own social worlds. Some of the interactions with participants were very brief, superficial, as the type of relationship was highly focused in research only. Others became more diffuse, more intimate, covering a broader range of interests and activities. In connection to the concept-mapping method used, there were practical difficulties with this model, having to do with the case of participants holding back, not expressing any opinions or achieving poor interaction. The interview process felt somewhat awkward at first, especially with interviewees who expressed confusion as to how to map their thoughts. Concept maps could ideally produce themselves a preliminary analysis of the phenomena under examination, as they would not necessarily need to be transcribed, since they were themselves a fully negotiated and agreed analysis. Yet, the price of introducing such an innovative method was the production of a number of narrow and ‘poor’ in data concept-maps, and contrary to that initial thought of promoting this to the prime collection method, transcribing the corresponding interviews became indispensable. This tendency to construct descriptive, instead of explanatory concept maps is identified by researchers (Novak in Cañas, 2006) amongst pervasive difficulties in the use of the tool. Under this scope, concept maps were used as a tool to stimulate thinking, with the interviews becoming more a sort of collaboration between the interviewer and the interviewee to construct a personal conceptual framework in relation to teaching pupils with dyslexia. The focus was also methodological in developing an interview based on concept mapping as a means to produce comparative data. This tool seemed to shift the equilibrium of power relations between the interviewee and interviewer towards the interviewee. Furthermore, working collaboratively with the participants, provided for a considerable degree of reflexivity in the interviews’ co-construction.

Authenticity of initial concept mapping interviews was reinforced with the second round of interviews over the maps (time sampling) and classroom observations, to secure trustworthiness of the evidence and to increase reliability or ‘dependability’ (Anfara et al, 2002), as an important part of engagement with the research. Furthermore, with respect to propositions emerging from literature review that informed the sample, purposive sampling contributed to external validity or ‘transferability’ (Anfara et al, 2002). Either way, presentation of the means to process, and analysis/interpretation of the data were crucial in the process of judging the authenticity and quality of the research.
As a piece of social research, the study was expected to involve relationships amongst a variety of individuals and assemblages (Davies, 2008, p.54): between researcher and gatekeepers/administrators (secretariats, head teachers, Head of Education Offices); researcher and research participants (teachers) (Barnes, 1979; Association of Social Anthropologists, 1987). Attention was given to BERA Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research (http://www.bera.ac.uk/files/2008/09/ethical.pdf). Informed consent is linked to ‘the interactions that constitute the research encounter-and the ethical standard of informed consent is the one that is most relevant for this relationship’ (Davies, 2008,p.54).

Davies (2008) also highlights that it is necessary for a researcher to move within the ethical code following a professional association/discipline. It is the principle that informs the basis of an implicit relationship between the researcher and participants, which serves as a foundation for subsequent ethical considerations to be structured.

Considering the relevance of informed consent at the initial stage of the research project after Cohen et al (2000), access to institutions/organisations where research is to be conducted is highlighted as ‘it offers best opportunity for researchers to present their credentials as serious investigators and establish their own ethical position with respect to their proposed research’ (Ibid,p.53). Building good research relationships with participants was especially important since the proposed study extended over a period of time, unlike one-off surveys. Additionally, it provided a better basis from which to make sense of, not only of the essence of pedagogic cultures and teaching practices, but of implications and difficulties arising in everyday practice.

Research had to be presented to informants in a meaningful way. It occurred that some of the participants were more familiar with research processes and theoretical debates, mainly because of postgraduate studies they undertook earlier in their career or their willingness to engage with professional development opportunities. For the rest, a simpler language was needed so that consent could be understood. Because of the nature of this study, where pertinent aspects started emerging during the fieldwork process, it was impossible to consult participants at an everyday level about the variety of developing theoretical perspectives (Davies, 2008). Of course, they were given a clear picture of the process in terms of constant discovery, so as to maintain the freedom to always renegotiate their consent (Association of Social Anthropologists, 1987, p.3). As an example, Maria, Helen’s teacher, though positive on the outset, was unwilling to provide a written account; instead, through renegotiation, she agreed to have a single interview, at the beginning of
which she took her time to give information she would include in the account. No doubt, some informants fully agreed to participate for altruistic reasons, as a way of helping the discipline and supporting me as a researcher. Others viewed this as a way of expressing their opinions, a means to be heard.

Another issue that was taken into consideration was ‘the reflexivity inherent in the process of informing participants about the research’ (Davies, 2008, p.57). It is not the case of deliberately trying to reduce the ethical procedure of informed consent, rather it is to be taken into consideration and included in the research process and analysis (Ibid, p.57). Participants may comprehend and interpret the presented research in different ways, affecting their behaviour and ideas. In this case, the topic had to be described and not presented in terms of questions, as this would give them the impression that they had to provide straight answers. Instead they had to be encouraged to develop free thinking in the creation of concept maps.

Regarding the second phase of fieldwork (case studies), my presence in teachers’ lessons implied obtaining permission from the head teacher and teachers within each school, and this presupposed communication amongst them; occasionally, head teachers were willing, but teachers had their reservations. Normally informants would view this as an invasion into their personal privacy; therefore they had to be reassured that any kind of information provided would be treated with confidentiality- that is, considerations of privacy and assurance of anonymity in any publication (Sieber, 1992, pp.44-63). Privacy (De Vaus, 2002) is a principle underlined in the principles of voluntary participation and confidentiality. The first implies that participants should not be obliged to participate in a study, given that they should receive sufficient explanation. It was clarified in advance though that their individuality would inevitably be preserved in quotations, making them recognisable at least to themselves (Davies, 2008, p.60). There was also the opposite case of participants who wanted to be identified in this ensemble (Crick, 1992), but this would threaten the nature of this collective research.

During classroom observation, where children were involved, parents were consulted and their consent was ascertained. Participants were involved in the research to the extent that was possible. The interest and focus was on teachers, the active subjects of this process and not on children; no child was on the spot. In any case, I was constantly knowledgeable of the research subjects. Throughout the research process, participants were presented with the researcher’s analyses allowing for their validation and ensuring that the
emerging analysis was grounded in their reality. They were also provided with copies of any reports/publications arising from this research.

Concerning limitations, there are a few points that have to be addressed and some insights pertaining directly to the research design. Apart from the two in-depth cases all other cases were self-reports in terms of their practices, attitudes and beliefs. Participants came from 12 different schools around Greece. There was sufficient number of teachers (13) that actually currently had cases of Dyslexia/learning difficulties in their classes, covering the mild to severe range.

Also there was the interviewer’s opinions and expectations, a tendency to seek for “suitable” answers and misunderstandings from both sides. There was also the issue of leading questions, that is, of making assumptions about interviewees or “putting words into their mouths”. Leading questions are powerful when an interviewee may hide interesting elements, but often they may influence the answer, perhaps illegitimately. Occasionally, leading questions weren’t avoided; actually, in the flow of discussion and due to the interviewer’s enthusiasm, the interviewee would go on agreeing with an interviewer’s comment, despite having doubts, as a way of empowering and encouraging him/her. Authenticity of interviews was also reinforced by additional interviews/ written accounts over interviewees’ sayings. Strongly related to authenticity, trustworthiness of the evidence is an important part of engagement with the research. Presentation of the means to process and analyse-interpret the data was crucial for judging the authenticity and quality of the research.

Finally, while in the field, video-recording would be ideal but that would possibly go against the school’s rules, so it was rejected by head teachers. On the other hand, replacing audio recording with video recording might have produced ‘richer’ data, but then, this would have become very time-consuming.

6.4 Researcher’s Reflexivity and Reflections

The initial idea to reflect on my biography was related to the consideration of the effects of my past and fieldwork experience. The autobiography - generally used at several levels of involvement- related its significance to reflexivity, in terms of acknowledging that knowledge produced is partially a product of the my social situation. This important fact
should be addressed not only during analysis, but even in reporting findings. Recalling the experience of producing a self-account, there was one thing strengthening my confidence: it constituted a reproduction of emotional responses to the participants’ positions and generally to themes emerging from the chosen topic. A way of seeing and recognising my reflexivity within these themes: seeing myself as a resource and showing my perspective. This is where autobiography becomes a more intimate part of the research process (Davies, 2008, p.228). From this interaction between researcher-as-self and researcher-as-other, social knowledge is produced, informed by theoretical positions of other social research, with access to knowledge and experience of the researcher as an insider (Ibid, p.228).

The basic information of my life history was collected through interviewing - conducted by my main supervisor- which followed the written account. As with the representatives’ profiles- the stories of whom are unique and cannot be said to be representative in their entirety-, generalisations cannot be made (Davies, 2008). ‘The more effective use of life histories is [...] to challenge them or to provide material about the process behind established generalizations’ (Ibid, p.207).

The use of the autobiography helped me consider the effects of the experience of the fieldwork upon me. It raised issues about the nature of having an insider’s perspective, as I shared language, social and cultural context and similar professional identity with the informants. However, as these experiences make clear, the question of being an insider is nearly always problematic, simply because my knowledge as an insider cannot be taken as either unquestionably complete or true. I am part of the same society and its cultural meanings, and most importantly of the same professional caste, and in this collectivity I am my own key informant, which makes my story a more intimate part of the research process. About autobiographies Davies (2008) highlights:

‘it is precisely in this process of interaction between ethnographer-as-self and ethnographer-as-other that social knowledge of general interest and significance is produced. The interaction of the ethnographer-as-researcher, informed by the theoretical positions of other social research and in a dialogue with a social scientific community, with the ethnographer-as-informant, with access to the knowledge and experience of an insider differs in degree but not in kind to

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19^the crucial focus for life history is to locate the teacher’s own life story alongside a broader contextual analysis, to tell in Stenhouse’s words ‘a story of action within a theory of context’. The distinction between the life story and the life history is therefore absolutely basic. The life story is the ‘story we tell about our life’...The life history is the life story located within its historical context’ (Goodson, 1992,p.6)
other manifestations of the research relationship through which generalizable knowledge about social and cultural realities is produced’ (p.228).

While choosing to engage myself in this research process, I can see two journeys. The first one is the academic, taking me ‘through an ever-changing landscape of ideas, theories and concepts’ (Wellington et al, 2005, p.33), seeing it more as an intellectual stimulus:

“I started looking for a re-engagement with knowledge. I considered the possibility of undertaking a PhD, but this had to be combined with my teaching career, which at that time was limited [...] I considered this as a great challenge, as on the island I felt I lost a bit the contact with ‘civilisation’ (seminars, additional training, conferences etc)” (biography 197-199).

Along with this, comes the personal journey down paths of self understanding and of understanding my challenged or changed identity, within a variety of roles I have to play daily through a personal and professional aspect.

‘Working on the PhD and investigating teachers’ attitudes, is sort of a personal ‘travel’ in diverse contexts. Despite the fact that I have only 5 years of experience, engaging with case studies as well as with the rest of the interviewees’ experiences, is indirectly adding to the pool of my teaching career. Inevitably, I become part of the process, part of their teaching, part of their life, part of their family...I do expect some sort of practical use, in terms of how things can be improved so that both the teacher and the child can be benefited under the inclusive perspective, because this is something I encounter daily and need my answers...but, I strongly believe that this kind of studies are mainly chosen to contribute to your self-fulfilment through your life journey’ (biography, 304-316).

The fact that I work in education, gives me the advantage of recognising the implications of this process and of providing insights through my personal experiences. Wellington et al (2005, p.35) recognise the contribution of such insights mainly to personal development and to the information of professional practice, plus to their incorporation into a reflective commentary within a thesis (see Hunt, 2001, pp.357-360).

‘The M. Ed. helped me become more open-minded, and this is where I remember myself consciously experiencing a sort of ‘regression’ between the individual and the social model of disabilities in society. Having taken into consideration the
fact that I didn’t have any teaching experience yet, I was trying to figure out whether this was simple curiosity for this specific area, or need for support, or something else. I saw the different perspectives in mainstream and special education. This was when I had my first contact with special schools, and severe disabilities. I recall this sense of mixed feelings; my sense of compassion was gradually covered up by hopefulness for pupils who were struggling to achieve higher, despite the severity of their cases. I saw teachers and teaching assistants encouraging them, talking about them all the time, and most of all, helping them to move on. So, I guess this is where my picture of the homogeneous, teacher-centred classroom, of which I had been part as a pupil, faded. Individual planning was something new to our educational system, and it has been recently implemented in special classroom, in which I work at the moment. All this new different reality, made me wonder about my unawareness and my lack of training in Special Education. If this was an area I had to follow, then I should be well equipped’ (biography, 109-133).

6.5 Recommendations and Further Reflections

One outcome of this study is the expression of teacher beliefs about the way Greek government policy on inclusion is, and how it should be. From this point of view there are definite implications for professional development policy which could be a focus for further research. Further professional development could explore these important beliefs such as beliefs about compassion and then break them down by facilitating discussion about their socio-historical context in Greek society.

In their course from primary school up to lyceum, pupils’ performance is constantly related to grades. This results in constituting an end in itself, detaching the strain to learn, to enjoy the educational process, to broaden their minds. The Greek educational system is described as an arena of chasing grades to achieve higher performance. Pupils remain passive receivers of knowledge transmitted, and limited opportunities are given for interaction, reflection and experiential learning. Pupils’ lower performance is characterised by family as ‘lazy’ or generally weak pupils (Tsikoudi, 2009). Looking at how teaching is conceptualised and how compassion (within the Greek Orthodox religious context) and performance are related within the education culture, provides a way of understanding the context in which different teacher discourses develop. Compassion towards ‘unfortunates’
arises because this is a dominant belief/cultural model that the teachers drew upon when constructing their part in the interview text. How teachers positioned themselves towards this cultural model then impacted on their attitudes to inclusion. This is an area for further study as revealing teachers’ positioning with regard to cultural models could inform an approach to professional development.

Another recommendation concerns further study that is shown to be needed regarding teachers’ beliefs toward inclusion of dyslexia in Greece. There is confusion among teachers about where inclusion should rest. This is a major under researched area in the Greek context.

Also concept mapping, as a research tool, should be used alongside longitudinal, qualitative case study research to further investigate teachers’ ways of thinking and feeling about their experience while teaching children with dyslexia.

Continuing Professional Development (CPD) of teachers’ skills and knowledge would appear to be another area for research with a special emphasis on dyslexia/learning difficulties. It has been noted that teachers exposed to difficulties in classroom teaching, tend to fall back on well-known practices and reproduce familiar methods, despite expressing espousal to progressive methods. CPD could support their desire to practice in a more learner-centered way.

Special and support teachers/assistants have a central role, together with class teachers in working towards effective lesson planning and consequently, effective learning. This professional relationship is another area for further research.

In the framework of problematic conceptualisation of inclusion, teachers tend to think on the basis of a medical model and favour special schooling for special groups of pupils. Recent education policies try to promote search for pedagogical methods and teaching techniques so as to respond to the heterogeneity of the needs within mainstream classrooms. Teachers exposed to difficulties in classroom teaching, tend to fall back to well-known practices and reproduce familiar methods, despite of progressive espoused beliefs expressed. Learning determined by a traditionally didactic, teacher-centred education system, developed under the regime of a religious legislative body. In traditional educational systems where emphasis is given on examinations-including Greece- there is also reluctance to modify curriculum content and the ways in which students are assessed, though such changes are strongly recommended. Greece appears far behind not just in
curricular and administrative issues, but also in the prevalent way of thinking about dyslexia/learning difficulties:

“Definitely, and a lot of people seek for this label (laughing) I had foreseen some years ago...that if you read carefully the new legislation, all children would wish to be dyslexic. I told you, this label helps some people cover their child’s inabilities, as they don’t want to recognise the specific problem, and some others who happen to have dyslexic children are offended by this label. It depends on the case if the label is convenient or not.” (Larry’s 1st interview, 89-98)

Additionally, after Fullan (1991), the nature of change includes perceived need and relevance, clarity, quality and practicality. Apart from attitudinal change, school improvement is necessary for more effective schooling that will manage to overcome such difficulties and promote children’s learning (Ainscow et al, 1994). Failure of schools to ensure provision of adequate learning experiences to children generates academic failure and socio-emotional problems. The school’s aims, issues of equal opportunities, provision for individual needs, responsibilities, assessment and recording, additional resources, cooperation with parents and support services need to be addressed. One way or another, all participants introduce the cultural model of inclusion, described diversely within the Greek context, mainly because an inclusive teaching culture isn’t yet developed satisfactorily for bolder action to be undertaken. Practically, a minority of teachers is critically facing this educational reality and trying to innovate in teaching approaches, as the system suffers stagnation and severe financial problems.

Initial steps for inclusion should be improvement in the school’s internal process, in teaching methods, in structures and frameworks developed for curriculum and staff development, collaboration, in other words the school’s ethos (Hopkins, 1997).

“I came across children who were obliged to attend special classrooms during English lessons. Well, this causes a lot of problems to these children. All of a sudden, they feel different and children discriminate them. The issue is not to discriminate children, rather to include them. In my opinion we shouldn’t have special classrooms. I believe this is a false system, I do not take part, and I do not put myself in this. I wish they were abolished. In the way this works today, and due to racism, I don’t believe they do any good” (Larry’s 1st interview, 195-202)
Special and support teachers/assistants have a central role in managing together with class teachers and working towards effective lesson planning and consequently, effective learning. A characteristic of good classroom managers is that they engender an atmosphere of “purposefulness” (Docking, 1990). It is the environment where children feel challenged, know what is expected of them and are given the means to achieve these expectations that will provide a solid ground in the learning process. Learning is successful when pupils are engaged in activities with others. After Ainscow (1994), it is not just the intellectual stimulation that this can provide; it is also the confidence that comes from having other people to provide support and help while working. Creation of an atmosphere in which effective learning can take place is the responsibility of all staff and should be reflected in school policies. The environment reflects beliefs and values of those who work within it, and unfortunately this represents an immature culture:

“I think as a culture we are pretty immature. And we are immature as parents as well...I mean, I don’t know how easy it would be for me, being a mother, to accept something like that...I mean, at first I would be shocked. I don’t know if I could accept it easily, but I would definitely want to help my child. Cause I happen to know cases of children who reached university and became doctors, and are dyslexic. And I happen to know some other artists...anyway, the father of A. was urged by the teacher, who didn’t know what else to do...so, it was a bit of a tiring case. Sometimes, I feel helpless myself” (Interview 7, 150-168)

Changes in thinking about inclusion have occurred due to broader changes in the social climate and in the conceptualisation of difficulty. A part of the sample supports change of beliefs, approaches and generally professional status, as a prerequisite towards a social and educational change:

“Well...there’s no good...how can I say that?...no communication...emm...we’ve all become isolated, and we just need to work more to cover a mass of needs. In the past times, we had fewer needs...now we have more, and we want to provide our children with everything, without letting them try, and somehow we don’t do them any good. I believe that this attitude must change...people should be more human.” (Interview 4, 182-190) “Right....more or less all of these played an important role...the environment we live in...it was different then, when we first got into the School...most of the
parents then were not aware of these difficulties...we finished high school and we had no idea of dyslexia...so, it was parental awareness...another factor that influenced this change...the development of science I mentioned above...plus the fact that everyday now phenomena arise to be examined...so all these things helped the situation”
(Interview 4a, 25-36)

But when it comes to practice, actions are less varied that beliefs reported. Within the Greek context, inclusion is about educating all children in mainstream schools that have all necessary standards for providing equal educational opportunities. This requires a flexible curriculum, accessible buildings, compulsory differentiation of teaching/assessment and mainly staff trained to implement inclusive practices. I conclude with several remarks made by Larry summarising the essence of pedagogic culture:

“...evaluation is necessary...objective evaluation and not partisan evaluation. But that would be possible in an ideal country; I don’t know where this is applied...less children, but very well-equipped teachers, professionals. What we lack is professionalism. All children will eventually learn to read, or to write, but to be professional, and to do things the right way, with pleasure, and to give children all these things that cannot be transmitted through books, this is what makes you a teacher. This makes you a teacher. Those things that can’t be found in books. So, money and management is needed”
(Larry’s 1st interview, 225-232)

Because inclusive practices are not yet established, any discussion about inclusion in Greece has integration as a starting point. The way things stand today, teachers lack professionalism and the system lacks the substructure to deliver governmental plans. Such constraining organisational factors in combination with teachers’ beliefs and perceptions about disability and inclusion are points worth pursuing. This research has only begun to scratch the surface of teacher identity. Given that cultural models shared by teachers (as well as their texts and practices) are in a constant change, teacher identities, in their continual state of flux and re-construction, can be used as a means to create a link to the Greek pedagogic cultures of teaching and learning. Therefore, teacher professional identities could be practically useful to policy makers, by providing an ideal conceptual framework to understand teacher beliefs and attitudes for further research to follow on from this thesis.
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1. Scale of Inclusion

Compared to the present situation in Greek schools, stages 1 and 2 of the following scale of inclusion reflect reality, as far as inclusion is concerned. The concept of special classrooms within mainstream schools is now gaining its pure shape. Other educational systems have achieved more progress, and have already reached stages 3 and 4, leaving Greek system far behind. Stage 4 -a crucial stage- reveals the passage to, at least, a more inclusive prospect to education.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Children with Special Needs included in mainstream classroom with or without help of supportive services</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attendance at mainstream classroom with provision support from special teacher, specialist etc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partial attendance (only for a few hours weekly) in mainstream school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attendance at special classroom and inclusion (for a few hours weekly) in mainstream classroom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attendance at special school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education at home</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education at hospital, health center, nursing-home or special care’s institute</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 4: Scale of Inclusion* (Polychronopoulou, 1998)
2. Mapping Special Education

In Greece, a great percentage of children with special needs is found within mainstream classrooms. Learning Difficulties represent the most populated category of SpLD; according to literature—both international and Greek—50% of pupils attending special classrooms has been assessed as having learning difficulties. Actually, 80% of them refer to difficulties in reading (Kavale and Forness, 2000; Padeliadou, 2004). According to ΕΠΕΑΕΚ “Analytical Projects-Mapping Special Education” (2004) the total population of pupils supported by Special Education based on the study’s data analysis was 15,850 individuals. 56.2% of them correspond with Learning Difficulties (N=8899), 14.9% with mental retardation (N=2360), 7.4% with Neurological and other difficulties (N=1174), 7.2% with Complex Cognitive, Emotional and Social difficulties (N=1135), 4.2% with hearing problems (N=672), 4.1% with Autism (N=657), 2.7% with multiple disabilities (N=431), 2.6% with speech and language difficulties (N=417), whereas 0.7% with sight problems (N=105) (Padeliadou and Botsas, 2007, p.54).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Special Needs</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Learning Difficulties</td>
<td>8899</td>
<td>6.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sight Problems</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hearing Problems</td>
<td>672</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mental Retardiation</td>
<td>2360</td>
<td>14.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Autism</td>
<td>657</td>
<td>4.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neurological &amp; other difficulties</td>
<td>1174</td>
<td>7.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complex Cognit. Emot. &amp; Soc. difficulties</td>
<td>1135</td>
<td>7.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiple disabilities</td>
<td>431</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speech &amp; language problems</td>
<td>417</td>
<td>2.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>15850</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 5: Pupils Attending Inclusion Classes per Category of SpLD* (Padeliadou and Botsas, 2007, p.54)
### 3. Analytic Research Frame

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Question 1</th>
<th>Sub-research Question</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How do mainstream teachers identify as teachers of children with dyslexia?</td>
<td>How do teacher identities-in relation to teaching children with dyslexia-relate to teaching and learning?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Strategy</strong></td>
<td><strong>Strategy</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiple Case-Studies (MCS)s</td>
<td>In-depth qualitative case study</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Methods</strong></td>
<td><strong>Methods</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviews with concept-maps</td>
<td>Observation/interviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School documentation and also information about teachers experience/training</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 6: Analytic Research Frame**
## 4. Fieldwork Timetable

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Stage 1 [MCS]</th>
<th>Research Stage 2 [Case Studies]</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>observation</strong></td>
<td><strong>in-depth interviews</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>and accounts</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>fieldwork</strong></td>
<td><strong>Fieldwork</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 day fieldwork for 2 teacher</td>
<td>6 hrs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviews with concept maps</td>
<td>(2 schools per week)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2 teachers x 2 interviews) x 5 hrs = 20 hrs</td>
<td>6 x 5 = 30 hrs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>transcription</strong></td>
<td><strong>transcription</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 interviews x 10 hrs = 40 hrs</td>
<td>40 hrs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total per school 20 hrs + 40 hrs = 60 hrs or approx 2 weeks</td>
<td><strong>per school</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 ½ weeks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total for Stage</strong></td>
<td>= 2 weeks x 10 = 20 weeks or approx. 6 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total for stage for 2 cases</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TOTAL 8 months**

| Table 7: Fieldwork Timetable |
5. Interview Guide

Considering that social positioning and critical incidences form particular aspects of interviewees’ life, the sort of information that a time line was based on, after Wellington et al (2005, p.23) included the following:

- **Place and date of birth**
- **Family background**
  - Parents’ occupation and level of formal education (may also include character and interests)
  - Siblings-occupation and level of formal education (may also include character and interests)
- **Extended family** (same applies as above)
- **Childhood-in relation to family and discussion on experiences**
  - Educational experience (from pre-schooling to higher education) including school experience, teacher and peer relations, good and bad incidences
  - Higher education and professional preparation
  - Post graduate studies and research experience-if any
  - Occupation-work history, interests, successes and failures, teaching experiences with pupils with dyslexia/learning difficulties or SEN, critical incidences
- **Personal relationships (partners, children)**
- **Interests, dreams, wishes on professional development**
6. Consent Forms

RESEARCH INFORMATION SHEET: Head teachers

Miss…………………………………….under the supervision of Dr. Pauline S. Davis and Pr. Julian Williams from the University of Manchester, UK is researching how teachers think about teaching children with dyslexia/SpLD in mainstream primary schools in Greece.

We would like to use audio tape to collect these interviews so that we can analyse how teacher’s perceptions about teaching children with dyslexia/SpLD relate to their pedagogic cultures of teaching and learning. The audio tape recordings will be used for research purposes and will be treated with full confidentiality. We thus seek your permission to allow your teachers to participate in this research.

Please return the slip below to………………………………………..by……………………

HEAD TEACHER CONSENT FORM

I agree to Miss………………………………… conducting the research in this school and will facilitate her access where I can.

HEAD TEACHER…………………………………………………………

SIGNATURE

SCHOOL…………………………………………………………

Date……………………
RESEARCH PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET: Teachers

Miss…………………………………………under the supervision of Dr. Pauline S. Davis and Pr. Julian Williams from the University of Manchester, UK is researching how teachers think about teaching children with dyslexia/SpLD in mainstream primary schools in Greece.

We would like to use audio tape to collect these interviews so that we can analyse how teacher’s perceptions about teaching children with dyslexia/SpLD relate to their pedagogic cultures of teaching and learning. The audio tape recordings will be used for research purposes and will be treated with full confidentiality. We thus wish for your participation in this research.

Please return the slip below to…………………………………………………..by……………………

TEACHER PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

I have read and understood the nature of the research outlined above.
I wish to take part as a participant and I understand that I am free to withdraw this consent at any time without giving any reason and without detriment to myself.

TEACHER NAME……………………………………………………………………………………

SIGNATURE

SCHOOL ……………………………………………
Date…………………………………………
RESEARCH PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET: Children/Parents

Miss……………………………………..under the supervision of Dr. Pauline S. Davis and Pr. Julian Williams from the University of Manchester, UK is researching how teachers think about teaching children with dyslexia/SpLD in mainstream primary schools in Greece.

We would like to observe classroom lessons and to use audio tape to collect interviews so that we can analyse how teachers’ perceptions about teaching children with dyslexia/SpLD relate to their pedagogic cultures of teaching and learning. The audio tape recordings will be used for research purposes and will be treated with full confidentiality.

We seek your permission to allow your child to participate in this research.

Please return the slip below to………………………………………..by…………………………

PARENT/GUARDIAN PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

I have read and understood the nature of the research outlined above.
I give consent for my child to take part as a participant and I understand that I am free to withdraw this consent at any time without giving any reason and without detriment to myself.

PUPIL NAME ………………………………………………………………………………………
PARENT/GUARDIAN NAME………………………………………………………………

SIGNATURE
Date…………………………..
7. 1st Fieldwork Report (September-December 2006)

- Nature of the sample: 20 primary teachers
- Undergraduate studies (qualifications)
  University: 6 (4 yrs of attendance)
  Academy: 14 (2 yrs of attendance-not equal to university studies)
- Urban/rural regions
  Previous placement: 10 mainstream teachers
  Now working there: 2 (1 mainstream+1 special teacher)
- Currently having children with dyslexia in their classroom
  9 mainstream teachers (possible in-depth case studies)
  1 special teacher
- Interviews with concept maps (main concepts):
  1. children with special abilities
  2. special children
  3. children with particularities
  4. children with learning difficulties
  5. dyslexic children aren’t mentally retarded
  6. dyslexia
  7. particularity
  8. dyslexic children-very clever children
  9. learning difficulties
  10. individuality
  11. unfortunate children
  12. sensitive
  13. children with particularities
  14. children who need a different approach
  15. a different child
  16. dyslexia
  17. learning difficulties
  18. different
  19. children with learning disorders

Groups of main concepts:
SPECIAL
PARTICULAR-PARTICULARITY-INDIVIDUALITY
DIFFERENT
DYSLEXIA-LEARNING DIFFICULTIES
other

Frequently used sub-concepts (Groups):
-symptoms and other related issues (aggressiveness, behaviour, attention deficit disorder)
-family environment/parental awareness
special teaching approaches (story-telling, parallel teaching, one-to-one teaching, individual planning, differentiated work)
teacher’s attitudes (interested, uninterested, helpless=co-operation)
psychological support as part of the above two concepts
resources-school

Concepts related to cultural models: (examples)
a child that is not necessarily mentally retarded
a child with dyslexia was perceived as stupid
unfortunate children, that need help to do well
old times: the model of the ‘good pupil’ and the ‘bad pupil’
trying to find a positive thing, not to make them feel useless
‘lazy’, ‘stupid’, ‘careless’
need for help, love, care, be nice
children are cruel (families) they perceive the unusual and different as of lower level
‘ordinary children’ is the majority of children
Then→ unaware teachers Now→ teachers help, support

Groups of attitudes:

• ‘normal concept-map’: dyslexia-difficulties-approaches-family-resources-special support (maps: 1-6,8,9,13,15-19)
• ‘particularities’: maps 7+11 (they may be approaching the following maps, concepts included appear more ‘optimistic’
• ‘unusual concept maps’: with unusual perceptions, all three interviewees happen to have qualifications or are more aware) maps 10, 12, 14

…in an attempt to list the concept maps in levels of interest

(there are specific concept maps, where concepts that are used present the optimistic side of dyslexia, and interviewees talk and use words that show a positive side of these children)

(Thinking of it more as a problem) ≠ (Showing a positive aspect)
maps 1,3-5,9,17,19 6,8,13,15 2,16,18
(middle)
8. 2nd Fieldwork Report (January-April 2007)

- Interviews with concept maps (main concepts):

  1. children with special abilities
  2. dyslexia
  3. dyslexia-they are not mentally retarded
  4. dyslexia as sort of complaint
  5. there was a mental problem
  6. dyslexia: dysfunction of specific brain activities
  7. dyslexia is the difficulty children face in writing a text clearly
  8. different approach of knowledge
  9. when a child cannot code the oral speech
 10. children who cannot put in order letters or syllables
 11. a difficulty in writing and reading
 12. a child who faces learning problems
 13. a difficulty in reading, writing and in dictation
 14. gap in the way some children communicate
 15. dyslexia is a condition that makes it hard to some children to get to know things the way other children do
 16. clever children
 17. they don’t need special treatment generally…just for the particular problem they face
 18. children with speech disorder
 19. weakness in terms of learning to read and write within usual rules
 20. learning difficulty-disorder and understanding of oral speech

Groups of main concepts:

SPECIAL
MENTAL PROBLEM
DIFFERENT
DYSLEXIA-LEARNING DIFFICULTIES
other

Frequently used sub-concepts (Groups):

- perceptions/personal definitions of dyslexia/learning difficulties (personal filter)
- mental retardation (problem/left behind mentally/sort of ‘infection’/outside the social norms/oral speech/problem in conception/neurological problem)
- knowledge: university/Academy (Marazlio) -training-seminars (SEN, counselling etc)/scientific development-specialists/updating
-experiences:
  - teaching: at school, in private lessons
  - and/or personal: within family environment (kids, siblings, cousins etc)/friends/stimulants through interviewees’ childhood
  - social changes-media
  - family environment/parental awareness
  - teacher’s attitudes (interested, uninterested, helpless, out of personal choice to help, out of love, out of compassion, out of respect)
  - special teaching approaches (constant supervision)

**Analysis of teacher’s cultural models about:**

A  Social model -  Deficit model

**Cultural models**

B  
  disability-in-society (personal definition of dyslexia/personal experience-change)
  macro discourses
  local eg family and friends

  dyslexic in society
  macro-discourses
  local practices e.g colleagues, friends and family

  purpose of education (including special teaching)
  policy and provision (government/local government)
  school/classroom level (eg colleagues and use of teaching assistants)

Other

C  positioning, contradictions
9. 1st Fieldwork Summary

Upon completion of the first round of interviews, a brief summary of key points was necessary. This included a list of the main concepts written by the interviewees on the maps, around which other concepts or sub-concepts were draped, as given in the following table. The first step was to pick the first piece of data, the first transcribed concept mapping interview, and pick key words and phrases in the data, or related families; knowing the overall text in which the data occurred and the RQs of the study, enables allocation of situated meanings (Gee, 1999, p. 97) and possible CMs that these meanings implicate. At a following stage, thinking about relevant social languages and Discourses supports discourse analysis, through a variety of linguistic details and different building tasks (Gee, 1999, p. 92-93).

| SPECIAL                  | -children with special abilities  
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>-special children</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| PARTICULARITY            | -children with particularities  
| INDIVIDUALITY           | -particularity                   |
|                          | -individuality                  |
|                          | -children with particularities  |
| DIFFERENT                | -children who need a different approach  
|                          | -a different child               |
|                          | -different                       |
| DYSLEXIA LEARNING        | -children with learning difficulties  
| DIFFICULTIES            | -dyslexic children aren’t mentally retarded  
|                          | -dyslexia                        |
|                          | -dyslexic children-very clever children  
|                          | -learning difficulties           |
|                          | -dyslexia                        |
|                          | -learning difficulties           |
|                          | -children with learning disorders |
| other                    | -unfortunate children            |
|                          | -sensitive                       |

Table 8: 1st Fieldwork Report-Groups of Main Concepts

Other frequently used sub-concepts were also arranged in groups and listed in the report as follows:
Table 9: 1st Fieldwork Report-Frequently Used Sub-Concepts

The initial attempt to group teachers’ beliefs/attitudes towards children with dyslexia/learning difficulties differs from the latest version of teachers’ profiles, completed after the second round of interviews, the second fieldwork report and teacher identities’ and cultural models’ analysis. However, it is worth exposing the first impression given by the participants, in order to identify how profound engagement throughout the process of fieldwork ensures deepening of understanding and possible change and ‘consolidation’ of their profiles. At a glance, the majority of concept maps (1-6, 8, 9, 13, 15-19) were placed within the ‘normal’ concept map limits, if allowed to use this term, in order to define the mean including groups of concepts such as dyslexia/difficulties/approaches/family/resources/special support. A couple of maps (7, 11) were marked by the term ‘particularities’. These may appear approaching the following category consisting of the remaining more unusual concept maps (10, 12, 14), in terms of perceptions described. All three interviewees happen to be of superior status, with reference to their qualifications or awareness regarding dyslexia. Working on this first report, upon an imaginary line consisting of levels of teachers’ interest regarding children with dyslexia, one can identify specific concept maps, where participants, by the use of words that show a more positive side of these children, present an optimistic side of dyslexia:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>symptoms and other related issues</th>
<th>(aggressiveness, behaviour, attention deficit disorder)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>family environment/ parental awareness</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>special teaching approaches</td>
<td>(story-telling, parallel teaching, one-to-one teaching, individual planning, differentiated work)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>teacher’s attitudes</td>
<td>(interested, uninterested, helpless-co-operation)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>psychological support</td>
<td>(as part of the above two concepts)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>resources-school</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1,3-5,9,17,19 | 6,8,13,15 | 2,16,18
(middle)
thinking of it more as a problem ≠ showing a positive aspect

**Figure 7: 1st Fieldwork Report-Teachers’ Interest towards Children with SpLD**

This phase included translation and transcription of interviews; also thematical analysis in relation to the teachers’ cultural models about teaching children with dyslexia:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Coding Themes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>disability-in-society (through time and regions)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>purpose of education (including special teaching)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>teacher status</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>family attitudes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>children’s attitudes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 10: 1st Fieldwork Report-Coding Themes**

In general terms, a number of concepts related to cultural models were frequently used by participants; some examples- gathering common beliefs/attitudes-are given in the list below:

- a child with dyslexia is **not necessarily mentally retarded**
- a child with dyslexia was perceived as **stupid**
- **unfortunate children**, that need help to do well
- past times: the model of the ‘**good pupil**’, and the ‘**bad pupil**’.
- trying to find a positive thing, **not to make them feel useless**
- ‘lazy’, ‘stupid’, ‘careless’
- need for help, love, care, be nice
- **children are cruel** (families) they perceive the ‘unusual’ and ‘different’ as of lower level
- ‘**ordinary children**’ is the **majority** of children
- Then— unaware teachers ≠ Now—teachers help, support
10. 2nd Fieldwork Summary

By adopting the same method of coding analysis, key points of the second round of concept-mapping interviews (January-April 2007) were briefly summarised into a list of main concepts, and then classified into more general groups.

| SPECIAL          | -children with special abilities  
|                 | -they don’t need special treatment generally…just for the particular problem they face |
| MENTAL PROBLEM   | -dyslexia-they are not mentally retarded  
|                 | -there was a mental problem |
| DIFFERENT        | -different approach of knowledge  
|                 | -dyslexia is a condition that makes it hard to some children to get to know things the way other children do |
| DYSLEXIA LEARNING DIFFICULTIES | -dyslexia  
|                 | -dyslexia as sort of complaint  
|                 | -dyslexia: dysfunction of specific brain activities  
|                 | -dyslexia is the difficulty children face in writing a text clearly  
|                 | -when a child cannot code the oral speech  
|                 | -children who cannot put in order letters or syllables  
|                 | -a difficulty in writing and reading  
|                 | -a child who faces learning problems  
|                 | -a difficulty in reading, writing and in dictation  
|                 | -gap in the way some children communicate  
|                 | -children with speech disorder  
|                 | -weakness in terms of learning to read and write within usual rules  
|                 | -learning difficulty-disorder and understanding of oral speech |
| other            | -clever children |

Table 11: 2nd Fieldwork Report-Groups of Main Concepts

Similarly, this second fieldwork includes translation and transcription of interviews. In terms of thematical analysis in relation to the teachers’ cultural models about teaching children with dyslexia/learning difficulties, coding was based upon the points given below:

A. Macro discourses: Social model - Individual model  
B. Cultural models
Through thematic analysis of this round of interviews, there appeared the need for introduction of additional codes; specifically for cultural models (CM), in terms of teaching experiences, and teachers’ positioning against these models, with focus on their professional status and detailed critical incidences that had an impact on their perceptions.

Table 12: 2nd Fieldwork report-Coding Themes and Cultural Models

| Perception/Personal Definitions of Dyslexia/Learning Difficulties | (Personal Filter) |
| Mental Retardation | (Problem/left behind mentally/sort of ‘infection’/outside the social norms/oral speech/problem in conception/neurological problem) |
| Knowledge | University/Academy (Marazlio) -training-seminars (SEN, counselling etc)/scientific development-specialists/updating |
| Experiences | Teaching: at school, in private lessons and/or personal: within family environment (kids, siblings, cousins etc)/friends/stimulants trough interviewees’ childhood |
| Social Changes-Media | |
| Family Environment/Parental Awareness | |
| Teacher’s Attitudes | (Interested, uninterested, helpless, out of personal choice to help, out of love, out of compassion, out of respect) |
| Special Teaching Approaches | (Constant supervision) |

Table 13: 2nd Fieldwork Report-Frequently Used Sub-Concepts
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Disability-in-society (DiS)</th>
<th>Dyslexia-in-society (DyS)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1. anomalies (DiSan) (CM)</td>
<td>1. attention deficit disorder (DySadd) (CM)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. bad (DiSb) (CM)</td>
<td>2. bad (DySb) (CM)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. clever (DiScl) (CM)</td>
<td>3. clever (DyScl) (CM)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4. compassion (DiSc) (CM)</td>
<td>4. compassion (DySc) (CM)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5. disease (DiSd) (CM)</td>
<td>5. disease (DySdis) (CM)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6. epileptic (DiSep) (CM)</td>
<td>6. dyslexic (DySd) (CM)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7. good (DiSg) (CM)</td>
<td>7. good (DySg) (CM)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8. handicapped (DiSh) (CM)</td>
<td>8. immature (DySim) (CM)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9. immature (DiSim) (CM)</td>
<td>9. inability (DySina) (CM)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10. learning difficulties (DiSld) (CM)</td>
<td>10. individuality (DySind) (CM)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>11. less able (DiSla) (CM)</td>
<td>11. lazy (DySlz) (CM)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>12. mental retardation (DiSmr) (CM)</td>
<td>12. learning difficulties (DySld) (CM)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>13. normal (DiSn) (CM)</td>
<td>13. lunatic (DySlu) (CM)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>14. particularity (DiSp) (CM)</td>
<td>14. mental retardation (DySmr) (CM)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>15. racism (DiSr) (CM)</td>
<td>15. normal (DySn) (CM)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>16. sly (DySsl) (CM)</td>
<td>16. particularity (DySp) (CM)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>17. special needs (DiSsn) (CM)</td>
<td>17. racism (DySr) (CM)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>18. stupid (DiSs) (CM)</td>
<td>18. sensitive (DySsen) (CM)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>19. unfortunate (DiSun) (CM)</td>
<td>19. slow readers/learners (DySsa) (CM)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>20. special abilities (DySsa) (CM)</td>
<td>20. special abilities (DySsa) (CM)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>21. special needs (DySsn) (CM)</td>
<td>21. special needs (DySsn) (CM)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>22. specific (learning) difficulties (DySsd) (CM)</td>
<td>22. specific (learning) difficulties (DySsd) (CM)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>23. speech disorder (DySspd) (CM)</td>
<td>23. speech disorder (DySspd) (CM)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>24. stammerer (DySst) (CM)</td>
<td>24. stammerer (DySst) (CM)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>25. stupid (DySs) (CM)</td>
<td>25. stupid (DySs) (CM)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>26. tiring (DySt) (CM)</td>
<td>26. tiring (DySt) (CM)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Practice of Education (PoE) | 1. teaching approaches/practices (PoEtap, PoEtp)  
|                           | 2. teaching experiences (PoEtex)  
|                           | 3. institution/curriculum (PoEin, PoEc)  
|                           | 4. assessment (PoEas)  
|                           | 5. identification (PoEid) |
| Professional Status (PS)   | 1. training (PSt)  
|                           | 2. professional identity (PSpri) |
| ‘I’ statements             | 1. ‘I’ statement  
|                           | 2. ‘I’ statement (child)  
|                           | 3. ‘you’ statement  
|                           | 4. ‘we’ statement  
|                           | 5. ‘they’ statement |
| free codes                 | 1. purpose of education (PoEpe) |

Table 14: 2nd Fieldwork Report-Code Families
11. John’s 1st Interview Transcript with Concept map - Wednesday, 15th November 2006

M: ...How do you think about children with dyslexia?
J: (writing) **unfortunate children... and though they have everything, they need help to do well.**

M: What do you mean by ‘unfortunate children’?
J: ...well, they lack some thing. They have some difficulties. On a daily basis...in all this learning skill which they need in a way...well, they show you a good picture of themselves as pupils...they understand, they learn, they move on, they progress...

M: I guess you have specific ‘pictures’ in your mind at the moment.
J: Yes, a lot of things come to my mind...a lot of children I have come across, who have learning difficulties, and I see that though they try, then don’t...though they don’t understand it, they cannot follow the pace of the rest of the classroom. Not all the time, and not so obviously...often they may hide behind situations and you cannot identify them easily, but if you have a second, closer look, and if you are really interested, you see the problem that tortures them. And I call them ‘unfortunate’ because I feel that they have everything, but they need a more special approach...often I do not know this way to approach them myself...I feel I just don’t know, but there are times that there is a result and I am really happy, and I feel very satisfied that I can help them...there are also times that there’s no progress, and from that point and on I say to myself that that this is not my fault...I mean this is not the child’s fault, this may be my fault because I don’t know...that’s why they are ‘unfortunate’. Not because they have me as their teacher, right? (laughing)...but because they don’t have, you know...

M: Do you include dyslexia into SpLD?
J: ...yes, sure...this is the greater part, I guess.

M: Have you come across cases of dyslexia so far? How many years of experience do you have?
J: 12 years. Do you want me to name symptoms, or what?

M: Describe me a bit a couple of cases.
J: ...bad handwriting (writing)...emm...’missing letters’ within words...mixing letters, basically ‘φ’ with ‘θ’...‘δ’ with ‘θ’... ‘φ’ with ‘β’...this is very frequent...what we call mirror writing...mixing ‘3’ with ‘ε’...there are...I believe that there are some children who
have dyslexia, but I don’t know and I am not that sure whether dyslexia is combined to difficulties in Maths…I mean that though their performance is low in Literature, in Maths they perform better. Or the opposite. But there are also cases were performance is low in both subjects. And I have come across a child that…though I am not specialised, but I feel that as an experience, well…it’s quite a severe case. A child that has dyslexia with various problems in Literature…with learning difficulties…and problems in Maths. Despite the fact that she doesn’t attend the special classroom, due to her parents’ opinion…

**M: What about those children’s behaviour?**

J: Usually these children are not the kind of children that make a name in the classroom, but good or bad reasons. However their performance ‘scars’ them in a way…in terms of their peers’ behaviour. Their peers and we, their teachers…and I should start from teachers first…I mean children are cruel with respect to how they call each other and how they relate. Now…the word ‘cruel’ may mean that they are also very frank, or that they just say what they see. I mean they don’t have the discretion to confront situations more…but, sometimes teachers also…you know…they incite it, and it gets worse.

**M: In what ways?**

J: By neglecting the child, by not being close to the child. By not staying a bit longer with the child, in the classroom, during the lesson. It’s ok if the others have to wait. It’s no big deal; other children can work on their own.

**M: Is this feasible?**

J: Sometimes yes, it is. It is not easy, and it’s tiring and you may also have the impression that this doesn’t work this way…and I get stressed most of the times. But I feel I have to do it, for conscience sake. I don’t do that all the time, but there are times I think that it is necessary to do it and I give a message this way…that other people should help as well. I mean, it’s not just me to help the pupil who struggles and it shouldn’t be just me. Peers may also help, more than me actually. But if they realise that this particular child needs help, and that this help can be provided with the right way, you know…not like ‘I know better, let me do it for you!’…I believe that this is essential for all children in the classroom…the child with the learning difficulty may be the ‘receiver’, but I think that in this way you help in a way the normal child as well, this relationship…being in need of others, because the child recognises the problems he/she faces, and peers are also recognised as assistants, not as leaders…I believe that if I talk and explain to peers some things, they will realise that their place is not to be leaders, or to be the best, but to be
simply assistants. So that they can behave as assistants, rather than as the ‘I know better’. What should I write about teachers? As far as their behaviour concerns…there are those who show an interest…a lot actually (writing), there are some others who are uninterested, they just cannot be bothered, and those who wish they knew more to help, but they lack experience.

_M: Where would you put yourself?_

J: I am of those who are interested and who try to read through…you know…references, as much as I can. And through some seminars I have attended in the past, so as to have a sort of contact with what is going on, to be able at least to do a sort of diagnosis…well, not diagnosis…I mean, a sort of identification, so as to inform parents. Now…from this point and on, I believe that I try to help as much as possible, but a lot of times I feel I don’t help that much. This, however, might also have to do with me as a person…I mean, with my anxiety about this issue.

_M: When did you first hear about dyslexia?_

J: …at the uni… I had no idea before. My first experience…now I have to recall…I have come across cases a lot more…well, cases that might have been dyslexia…almost at every Year I have taught. Now…if this was not pure dyslexia or it had to do with attention disorder…or if it was another sort of learning difficulty, I am not that sure. But you could find such cases almost in every Year. I don’t remember how long ago though.

_M: What about your first year at the job?_

J: No, I didn’t have any cases then…

_M: Where were you then?_

J: You know! It was here at Maroussi…don’t count it (laughing)…

_M: You worked in the provinces?_

J: No, no…then I worked at Peristeri…yes, the 2nd year I did have.

_M: Which Year?_

J: Year 6. I had a child with learning difficulties probably. But generally it’s not that simple, and not that easy. At first you do a lot of mistakes. I mean, you begin, you correct your mistakes, you realise that this thing happens again…and you wonder ‘Bloody hell, again?’ (laughing) I tell the child that there is an error there, and he/ she keeps doing that his/ her way…I mean, you see thing that are not that…and you think that there is a problem here. You think that something is wrong, that I cannot go on this way. _An then, you need to know how to keep the balance, because some in the upper Years… pupils may…_
complaint ‘Sir, he has 20 mistakes, why haven’t you marked them?’. And then you need to
find ways…and to be honest with everyone, and to support and help as well the child in
need as much as possible, because from a point and on, there’s no use in correcting
mistakes, since the child does the same mistakes all the time. Also a pupil who struggles to
learn something by heart, or who cannot write something on the paper, may have a great
difficulty. This is where you need to show huge tolerance. Sometimes I would choose a
text for this child to write, a simpler one.

**M: What about parents?**

J: I would invite them, I would talk to them…I would inform them. I always tell my
opinion. In these matters you have to be kind of tactful, because parents often react against
us. Either they don’t accept it, or they know it and they don’t…it’s because they believe
this discriminates their child. They think that…most of them have the impression that
dyslexia, well…when I first heard about it, there was an impression that it was a sort of
disease, you know…which, as far as I am concerned it is not.

**M: You mean in your opinion it's not a disease?**

J: Well, that’s it is something that needed treatment. That it is something that your child
will never overcome, and that this will eventually mean something really bad for the
child’s future. And this may be true, since the child may never…may never stop being
dyslexic, and then…that doesn’t mean that it will be a barrier for the rest of his/her life,
vocational life. So, these are the thing you discuss with them, and despite you do so, most
parents by the time they get this message…there’s lot of questioning, and disappointment
and pessimism. Plus, now I see things from the other side, because I think that if I was in
their shoes, I would probably react the same way. I would be shocked…I would freak out,
I would be very unhappy, very disappointed, but I would not give up. I mean, I believe that
the child needs support, a lot of support…because this child may be very tiring. They can
draw a lot of your energy that you could use elsewhere…I mean in my work, in my life
and my family…and myself as well. I feel that these children need a much slower pace.
You have to be close to them, in a different way…I mean that a normal child…may…well,
by normal I mean a child with learning difficulties…because all children are normal…so,
this child may need 10 minutes…so as to show the difference for instance between ‘φ’ and
‘0’. If this was my child, I believe that I would…I would be within this mean of people
who do not give up…I would try, I would read a lot…I would try as much as I could. But
you know what? It’s not the mean…you may do that, but not everyone does it. From that
point and on there are a lot of other factors. You need to be lucky to have good teachers as well. It is bloody necessary to have (writing) co-operation, understanding, awareness, patience…parents…teachers…child…this triangle…and specialists…square I guess (laughing).

M: You said you have attended seminars on…?
J: Yes! And some courses at the uni, but please do not ask me now about this, I don’t think I remember…I mean, I have attended some seminars for about 2-3 months…the lecturer was a special teacher, who was also Consultant […] we were in a different phase then, I had chosen to go after school. And actually it was the first time that things were said…in detail…and I understood a lot more about what is going on. I mean, there were some stimulants, a lot I would say…but you know…I didn’t know how to value them, I had no idea…and sometimes when you don’t have all these you cannot help. I mean that no matter how big was my effort, it was in vain, as far as the child concerns, and of the kind of help he/she would need. In other words, you need to think in order to understand…I mean, you may be lucky to read, to learn, or to attend some seminars. Otherwise, if you are completely unaware, then you have to seek for answers, and to find various different ways to help the child to learn.

M: Do you have this potential?
J: It needs imagination, and I believe that I do have imagination, but in this area, I sometimes feel I’m blocked…

M: Is it just imagination that it is needed?
J: It also needs longing…artistry…dignity…you need to love your job.

M: The way things are today, do you come across such cases in your classroom?
J: What do you mean by that? (laughing) Well, I cannot be that sure what kind of cases they are…it must be…I cannot tell you about the rest. G. is one case. And quite recently it was also N…in another Year.

M: Do you feel you could support him if there was no special teaching?
J: No way! For a number of reasons…

M: …and these are?
J: Look…it’s not that simple for a teacher to have imagination. I mean, you do have imagination, but the situation may not be suitable. In a classroom with all these daily problems…

M: What problems?
J: Well it’s a chaos. Children cannot understand what you are trying to show them, or to show to this particular child. And the child him/herself may not accept that as well. Within this environment. For instance, G. May show me that ‘Ok, I understand that!’, but in essence he may have understood nothing. Not that he cannot be bothered with me; it’s just that he is so negative. Only a few times, and only through some other sort of activities, that he will show an interest to learn a bit. Only if he takes part himself, and especially if he does something that gives him joy, satisfaction. And this may also be combined to a cognitive subject, so that he can understand without consciously knowing why. But this is very difficult sometimes in the classroom; it doesn’t happen for the rest of children anyway.

_M: Special classrooms help such children?_

J: Yes, as long as there is the right person there, the specialist, who has plenty of knowledge…it also needs a lot of resources, as far as I know, which we lack as a school. It’s a huge problem.

_M: Would it be better if the specialist stayed with you in the classroom?_

J: I have heard about this option, that’s why I didn’t mention that. It would be interesting, I guess, to try it sometime. Well, to try a combination…to consider the presence of the special teacher in my classroom.

_M: Is it feasible?_

J: I don’t thing it is due to the attitude we have as mainstream teachers.

_M: What about this attitude?_

J: That…I walk into the classroom, the door closes, no one can enter…I mean that the teachers doesn’t want anyone to interfere, to know what is going on in the classroom. And possibly I would have similar difficulties, and I would not feel comfortable each time the specialist would come in…but if the aim is to help this child, you have to accept this in order to ‘save’ the child. Well, to help the child more And little by little, I believe that this is a matter of habit. Because I don’t know if this is the best from those three things…whether the child would stay in, or whether we should withdraw the child, or whether we should combine those two. I don’t know which one is the best. But I believe that the last two may benefit the child. Though the child may not realize that. And parents may not realiSe that, and they may tell you that they don’t want their child to be withdrawn. For a number of reasons. And this is reasonable. I can understand them to a certain point. Because the parents have to sit with their child and convince him/her, and
convince themselves that this happens for the sake of their child’s good. That the child is in need of something different. The specialist will teach the child the same thing in a different way. Perhaps in a different environment. All this requires a sort of different level of communication and understanding, and a lot of discussion between parents and teachers.

**M:** *Can you explain a bit about this level?*

J: It occurs to me this year to have parents who have this level, and others who don’t accept a think…who are of a very low level….you talk to them, and the only thing that they know is to bit their children, saying ‘You are useless! You are a bad pupil!’ . There are however people who are very concerned. They are completely different. I have met people who are interested, others who cannot be bothered, or who just happen to know the problem, but cannot accept it. There are also those who always search for answers…

**M:** *That’s why I asked you if you have worked in rural regions…*

J: I’ll tell you what… I haven’t worked in the provinces, but I see different attitudes and I also see people who have done a lot of search and try to confront this in a positive way, by convincing themselves and their child that they have to follow a specific approach. And through this entire search, they found that they were lost and confused. And they cannot make head or tail of it. There is no social welfare. And these state centers…I hear that it takes months. So, this is meaningless. You waste your time, and time is precious for children…what?

**M:** …nothing (laughing)...go on!

J: You need to find what is wrong with the child in a very early stage, to be able to take action. But when they tell you that it needs so much time for assessment…another thing regarding the special classroom. Often I see children attending the special classroom…well some very severe cases, not cases of learning difficulties. And since there’s this attitude to include them in the mainstream school, then there should be another special classroom, for children with learning difficulties, because these are different from children with mental retardation.

**M:** *When you were a pupil, do you remember any of your peers having such problems?*

J: Yes, I do. I remember a friend of mine in the primary school. She was very good, but I don’t know what kind of problem she had. I remember that she had nice handwriting, but it was as if she didn’t exist at all. She wouldn’t speak at all, she was wild. I personally couldn’t talk to her…she wasn’t aggressive. They all laughed at her. There were also children who did a lot of mistakes; these were the ‘bad pupils’. That was in the 1970’s. It
was later that I heard about children who could not read or write and it sounded so incredible. I was thinking: ‘What does it mean they cannot write?’ And they went through examinations orally, having a paper from a state centre. Just that. So, this might have been it, but even if I asked my parents, there was no way they would know. I received my answers about this many many years later.
12. Dimitra’s Cultural Models’ Tables (1st Round)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>disability-in-society (DiS)</th>
<th>‘Because they’ve got something that differentiates them from the rest...from the rest of the children’</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>‘I wouldn’t recommend the special classroom, because this is for severe cases’</td>
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<td></td>
<td>‘I never ever had a normal classroom all these years’</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>‘But this case was not...not that severe, like here. He had some behaviour problems, he was aggressive etc, but he could write [...]It’s just that he also had psychological problems, he was wearing special shoes, but he could go up and down the stairs on his own...so, it has nothing to do with this one, now’</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>‘Now, psychologically, this may help. But in terms of learning, definitely not’</td>
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<td></td>
<td>‘They couldn’t, they couldn’t accept that. He lived opposite to the school, his mum wasn’t working, and she would bring the child to school wearing slippers’</td>
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<td></td>
<td>‘Don’t you ever call me again! This child is a monster!’ ...you see? Eventually this boy calmed down...but I never ever had a good year again. All children were difficult cases, children with attitude, they would run wild’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>dyslexia-in-society (DyS)</th>
<th>‘I mean, Ch., who talks nonsense. Otherwise, I think he is very clever’.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>‘they told me at this private education centre that they work with dyslexics, as well. This may be a sort of misinterpretation.’</td>
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<td>‘they are very clever children...in oral speech...emm...what else...and often they like drawing a lot. Right, they draw, they’ve got this thing with colours and...very well [...]very good expression through drawing’</td>
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<td></td>
<td>‘...he performs well orally. He is clever as well.’</td>
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<td>‘That goes for the children I have now also...no, I don’t see how they differ.’</td>
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<td>‘Touch wood! First of all, I would seek for support from a speech therapist. Definitely. And with my support at home, since’</td>
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<td>‘I mean, they don’t have a mental problem’</td>
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<td>‘That goes for the children I have now also...no, I don’t see how they differ’</td>
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<td>‘I mean basically it’s the letters that he omits’</td>
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<td></td>
<td>‘It may also be the change from left hand to right hand writing. At least, that’s what they used to teach us, that’s why we don’t insist...on that change, you see, parents may also tie the left hand and’</td>
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<td></td>
<td>‘I mean, they don’t have a mental problem’</td>
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<td></td>
<td>‘In other subjects, look...in no-core subjects, he copes when asked to tell the story; I mean he will just say a couple of phrases for the whole lesson. He really copes. However, I imagine this is because of the fact that he has difficulty in reading.’</td>
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</tbody>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>purpose of education (PoE)</th>
<th>‘I think that’s difficult...it’s difficult (to work with him)’</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>‘They have to achieve a sort of co-ordination as a classroom, to realise that they are in the same area of learning. They are so absent-minded, they do not follow orders at all’</td>
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<td></td>
<td>‘That’s why I’m talking about speech therapist and such, because she will be specialized. A teacher, for instance, because he/she has a whole classroom it’s not possible to be left behind, due to specific cases’</td>
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<td></td>
<td>‘First of all, we lack time. This is essential. And...well, resources’ ‘Well, for me...they are integrated, or they are just there’</td>
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<td></td>
<td>‘I believe...speech therapy...if teaching included that...yes...so, I should also write co-operation with speech therapist’</td>
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<td></td>
<td>‘in the old days the rule was...the Education Consultant used to advise us never to tell something straight in the face. Because parents wouldn’t accept anything. You should first talk about the positive things, that their child can manage this and that...and then, that the child has difficulty in this and that...and that this part is important’</td>
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<td></td>
<td>‘Many teachers think ‘I don’t want to distress myself’...last year, I had Year 1, I ended up with colitis nervosa, I became sick’</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Table 15: Dimitra’s Cultural Models (int.2)
### 13. Christos – Code Families’ Table

#### Themes

**Disability-in-society (DiS):**
1. compassion (DiSc) (CM)  
2. learning difficulties (DiSld) (CM)  
3. less able (DiSla) (CM)  
4. mental retardation (DiSmr) (CM)  
5. normal (DiSn) (CM)  
6. handicapped (DiSh) (CM)  
7. epileptic (DiSep) (CM)  
8. anomalies (DiSan) (CM)

**Dyslexia-in-society (DyS):**
1. attention deficit disorder (DySadd)  
2. specific learning difficulties (DySld) (CM)  
3. mental retardation (DySmr) (CM)  
4. racism (DySr) (CM)  
5. stammerer (DySst) (CM)

**Practice of Education (PoE):**
1. teaching approaches/practices (PoEtap, PoEtp)  
2. teaching experiences (PoEtex)  
3. institution/curriculum (PoEin, PoEc)  
4. assessment (PoEas)  
5. identification (PoEid)

**Professional Status (PS):**
1. training (PSt)  
2. professional identity (PSpri)

- ‘I’ statement
- ‘you’ statement
- ‘we’ statement  
  free code: purpose of education (PoEpe)

Themes

Disability-in-society (DiS):  
1. bad (DiSb) (CM)  
2. clever (DiScI) (CM)  
3. compassion (DiSc) (CM)  
4. disease (DiSd) (CM)  
5. good (DiSg) (CM)  
6. handicapped (DiSh) (CM)  
7. immature (DiSim) (CM)  
8. learning difficulties (DiSld) (CM)  
9. less able (DiSla) (CM)  
10. mental retardation (DiSmr) (CM)  
11. normal (DiSn) (CM)  
12. particularity (DiSp) (CM)  
13. racism (DiSr) (CM)  
14. sly (DySsl) (CM)  
15. special needs (DiSsn) (CM)  
16. stupid (DiSs) (CM)  
17. unfortunate (DiSun) (CM)  
18. epileptic (DiSep) (CM)  
19. anomalies (DiSan) (CM)

Dyslexia-in-society (DyS):  
1. attention deficit disorder (DySadd) (CM)  
2. bad (DySb) (CM)  
3. clever (DyScI) (CM)  
4. compassion (DySc) (CM)  
5. disease (DySdis) (CM)  
6. dyslexic (DySd) (CM)  
7. good (DySg) (CM)  
8. immature(DySim) (CM)  
9. inability (DySina) (CM)  
10. individuality (DySind) (CM)  
11. lazy (DySlz) (CM)  
12. learning difficulties (DySld) (CM)  
13. lunatic (DySlu) (CM)  
14. mental retardation (DySmr) (CM)  
15. normal (DySn) (CM)  
16. particularity (DySp) (CM)  
17. racism (DySr) (CM)  
18. sensitive (DySsen) (CM)  
19. slow readers/learners (DySsa) (CM)  
20. special abilities (DySsa) (CM)  
21. special needs (DySsn) (CM)  
22. specific (learning) difficulties (DySsd) (CM)  
23. speech disorder (DySspd) (CM)  
24. stammerer (DySst) (CM)
25. stupid (DySs) (CM)
26. tiring (DySt) (CM)
27. unfortunate (DySun) (CM)
28. weakness (DySw) (CM)

Practice of Education (PoE):
1. teaching approaches/practices (PoEtap, PoEtp)
2. teaching experiences (PoEtex)
3. institution/curriculum (PoEin, PoEc)
4. assessment (PoEas)
5. identification (PoEid)

Professional Status (PS):
1. training (PSt)
2. professional identity (PSpri)

‘I’ statement
‘I statement’ (child)
‘you’ statement
‘we’ statement
‘they’ statement

free code: purpose of education (PoEpe)
15. Key-Words’ List

Frequently used **KEY-WORDS** in the discourse:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>KEY-WORDS</th>
<th>40 INTERVIEWS WITH CONCEPT MAPS</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>-able</td>
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<tr>
<td>-anomaly</td>
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<td>-attention deficit disorder</td>
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<td>-bad</td>
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<td>-brilliant</td>
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<td>-clever/smart</td>
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<td>-differentiate</td>
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<td>-discriminated/discrimination</td>
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<td>-dyslexics</td>
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<td>-exclusion</td>
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<td>-good</td>
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<td>-idiot</td>
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<td>-immature</td>
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<td>-inability</td>
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<td>-individuality</td>
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<td>-intelligence</td>
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<td>-in the margins</td>
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<td>-label</td>
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<td>-laziness</td>
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<td>-less able/ inability</td>
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<td>-lunatic</td>
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<td>-mental retardation/ mentally handicapped</td>
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<td>-mockery</td>
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<td>-monster</td>
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<td>-nonsense</td>
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<td>-normal/norms</td>
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<td>-ordinary</td>
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<td>-particularity</td>
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<td>-scape goat</td>
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<td>-sensitive</td>
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<td>-slow readers/learners</td>
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<td>-slyness</td>
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<td>-special abilities/ special</td>
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<td>-special needs</td>
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<tr>
<td>-(specific) learning difficulties</td>
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<tr>
<td>-speech disorder</td>
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<td>-stammerer</td>
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<td>-stigmatised</td>
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<td>-stupid</td>
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<td>-tiring</td>
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<td>-unfortunate</td>
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<td>-weak/weakness</td>
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<tr>
<td>Compassion</td>
<td>Anxiety</td>
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<td>----------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>-affection</td>
<td>-anxiety</td>
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<td>-bit</td>
<td>-ashamed</td>
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<td>-care/caring</td>
<td>-avoided</td>
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<tr>
<td>-compassion/compassionate</td>
<td>-bit</td>
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<td>-don’t adore</td>
<td>-Calvary</td>
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<td>-hurt</td>
<td>-disappointed</td>
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<tr>
<td>-kind-heartedness</td>
<td>-feel helpless</td>
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<tr>
<td>-love/adore</td>
<td>-feel low</td>
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<tr>
<td>-pity</td>
<td>-freaked out</td>
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<tr>
<td>-respect</td>
<td>-frightened</td>
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<tr>
<td>-rescuer</td>
<td>-get tired</td>
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<tr>
<td>-save our soul</td>
<td>-go crazy</td>
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<tr>
<td>-sensitive</td>
<td>-panic</td>
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<tr>
<td>-sentimental /emotional</td>
<td>-reached my limits</td>
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<tr>
<td>-sorry</td>
<td>-restricted</td>
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<tr>
<td>-stand</td>
<td>-shocked</td>
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<tr>
<td>-strong bond</td>
<td>-slammed</td>
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<td></td>
<td>-slap</td>
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<td></td>
<td>-smack /smacking</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-soul-destroying</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-stressed/distressed</td>
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<td></td>
<td>-touch wood!</td>
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<td></td>
<td>-unhappy</td>
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<td></td>
<td>-worried</td>
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<td>-would die!</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

- anomaly
- complaint
- disease
- disorder
- infection
- lack
- malfunctions
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 16: Themes’ Key-Words</th>
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</table>

### 16. Dimitra’s ‘I’ Statements and Key-Words

#### cognitive statements

- “I just see one of them having problems, I don’t see why the other is identified as such” (Int. 2, 12-14)
- “Otherwise, I think he is very clever” (Int. 2, 15)
- “And he was, I mean, he was quite successful in that.” (Int. 2, 75)
- “I saw that he spells incorrectly, he doesn’t...” (Int. 2, 86)
- “I think that’s difficult...” (Int. 2, 88)
- “I don’t know if something changed last year with this child” (Int. 2, 166)
- “I think speech-therapy is really effective.” (Int. 2, 179)
- “...I mean, my colleagues would always tell me ‘Ah! This is the Year you finally got?!’” (Int. 2, 243)
- “I perceive it differently” (Int. 2a, 89)

#### affective statements PSpri

- “I wouldn’t want to write something like that ever, for anyone” (Int. 2, 306)
- “Actually I didn’t want to become a teacher. I wanted to study English language” (Int. 2a, 58)
- “I don’t adore children. I didn’t want to have children myself.” (Int. 2a, 84-85)
- “I would prefer owning a store...to be more social” (Int. 2a, 101)
- “I prefer being in a movement. I would prefer being a translator” (Int. 2a, 105-106)
- “I felt excluded then” (Int. 2a, 171)

#### state and action statements PSpri

- “I was also informed about M.” (Int. 2, 15)
- “I don’t happen to have too much experience” (Int. 2a, 5-6)
- “I would suggest one-to-one teaching? [...] I would tell him «What exactly do you hear? [...] I would ask him «How does this word sound?” (Int. 2, 109-117)
- “I change the colour, therefore the colour changes as well, I’ll use red chock.” (Int. 2, 146-148)
- “I’m aware myself” (Int. 2, 156)
- “I also attended some seminars, when I graduated from the Academy, then I did the seminar on dyslexia” (Int. 2, 183-184)
- “I wouldn’t recommend the special classroom, because this is for severe cases” (Int. 2, 222)
- “I took four years off to raise my kids, so, basically I’ve been working 11 years” (Int. 2, 230)
- “...I never ever had a normal classroom all these years...not even one” (Int. 2, 234)
“I simply told him ‘B, come on now, we are friends, you know the others, you play with them” (Int. 2, 262)
“I won him over” (Int. 2, 272)
“I worked a lot at rural regions.” (Int. 2, 318)
“Every morning I was on the edge” (Int. 2, 327)
“I was looking for him, afraid that he would leave school...” (Int. 2, 330)
“but I never ever had a good year again” (Int. 2, 366)
“I ended up with colitis nervosa, I became sick” (Int. 2, 380)
“But generally I get stressed easily.” (Int. 2, 383)
“I haven’t come across many cases, apart from Ch. this year. So I don’t have great experience with dyslexic children” (Int. 2a, 12-13)
“But I didn’t come across any dyslexic children since then. It was just here that I came across such cases practically.” (Int. 2a, 30-33)
“I am too restricted...I go crazy.” (Int. 2a, 107)
“Generally I am compassionate. I am sentimental” (Int. 2a, 115)
“I have become more mature as far as the teaching process concerns” (Int. 2a, 188)
“I am not humorous” (Int. 2a, 199)

“...I can evaluate this condition” (Int. 2, 179)
“...I have to repeat 100 times what I say” (Int. 2, 95)
“I have to be persistent on specific gaps that each child may have” (Int. 2, 101)
“I could work on some...I could make some cards” (Int. 2, 214)
“...I cannot think of any other classroom” (Int. 2, 240)
“I cannot bombard him” (Int. 2, 310)
“So, I was obliged to punish him” (Int. 2, 339)
“...there was no way I could manage to graduate from law school, since it was so difficult for me to study” (Int. 2a, 69)
“I cannot stand being locked into a classroom” (Int. 2a, 104)
“I had to press myself” (Int. 2a, 171-172)
“I could not set specific aims” (Int. 2a, 190)
“But I had to see the specific steps I had to make to reach a particular knowledge” (Int. 2a, 192-193)
“I cannot let them loose.” (Int. 2a, 199)

“Well, I always try to ‘disturb’ him” (Int. 2, 151)
“but I try to improve that throughout the year” (Int. 2, 312)
“I was trying to discipline this child” (Int. 2, 328)
“I try to explain him and to help him improve his listening...” (Int. 2a, 26)
“I try to reach different levels of knowledge” (Int. 2a, 182)
“but I try to introduce them to everything.” (Int. 2a, 186)
“I try to distinguish what is important for the child” (Int. 2a, 188)

Table 17: Dimitra’s ‘I’ statements
17. Compassion Concepts

- pity/sorry/compassion (T1a, T7, T9, T11):
  “...here in mainstream state schools, severe cases aren’t that many [...] and in state schools this is a huge issue, because there’s no...no resources [...] like X. says ‘to save our soul’. Because helping these children, makes you feel proud, right? See how they react themselves? They are happy”  (Int. 1, 490-496)

  “I feel that I must not press them...I must let them a bit more loosely...and I feel I must walk into their world. I must me sensitive and see things through their eyes. And in my view this is the difficult part. I might have felt pity sometimes...I might have...”  (Int. 1a, 104-110)

  “I guess there is compassion for all children there. What about the child who faces psychological problems? Or what about the child who is rather withdrawn? But the issue is that I don’t know if I could help them. But I have thought about it very seriously. “(Int. 7a, 102-107)

  “No, it’s not just about compassion. You need a lot of kindheartedness...a lot...”  (Int. 9a, 110-111)

  “I feel sorry for these children, I want to help them as much as I can, right?...I believe that even wheedling or smiling is a lot of support from their teacher. (John’s 2nd int., 42-45)

- no pity (T6, T10, T14, T15):
  “Because, in order to get into a classroom with children with problems, you must be very strong and you must not show pity or compassion; because they can receive that. You must behave like you do with everyone else...you cannot react like ‘Oh! Poor child...huge problem’...and cry, and show pity...you must show vigour, and get on well with the child, with parents, with the rest of children, with your colleagues...with doctors, or specialists...so that you can cope”  (Int. 6a, 83-93)

  “I would characterise those children as...sensitive...children who don’t need pity, but who are special...I mean, we need to find a way so that they can communicate with their environment and progress as much as possible. That’s why these children...(writing) special abilities...need for help not for compassion...”  (Larry’s 1st int.10, 4-9)

  “Compassion?! You have failed as a teacher then. No way! You don’t go there to feel sorry for them. I don’t even want to listen to that. No...no...what you have to do is what most of people want...to love and to care for people, and to accept them as they are...and not to try to change them suddenly...to try to see which steps you can take in order to make them better as persons. Because if I feel sorry for a person, I cannot definitely help this person, but I don’t believe that people accept
compassion of others anyway. If you really care and respect this person...this is what everyone wants. I don’t know though if people have the same opinion of compassion...it depends what kind of mining they give to this word...they may mean this as care...but it is different to care and respect at the same time. I don’t like the word ‘compassion’ anyway...” (Int. 14a, 125-142)

“I don’t know...I cannot tell...I feel I don’t have the inner strength to do this...I don’t think I would be a good special teacher...and I don’t think compassion is what these children need...we must not feel sorry for them...” (Int. 15a, 80-106)

• mixed feelings (T12):

“You mean, to feel compassion for their problems? I don’t know...I am not that...I just want to help them, to have the knowledge to see how to support them...but I couldn’t work as a special teacher before, because I had my children to look after...I couldn’t do it. Now, I feel I have changed a lot as a teacher. I have also changed my behaviour towards children...even towards good pupils...I always wanted to help the weak pupils...even those with special needs...I don’t know if this is a sort of compassion...or, because these children cannot find justice...but you know, once I walk out school, I never carry these problems at home...I don’t spend all day thinking about that. I will speak for myself: I have always been like that as a person...that is, my rule was not to blame all the time and to hold others responsible for whatever is wrong. We have to treat them differently.” (Int. 12α, 117-135)

• love/affection/respect (T1b, T4, T5, T8, T9, T14):

“I believe that they need a lot more love and affection. [...] I wouldn’t say compassion...I see it through affection [...] if you have been through a lot in your life...well, I remember that my attitude was quite the same from the beginning...I don’t know...that’s why this job was the right choice for me. I like my job...I like it because even for a while I can be in the position to help those children. I feel generally help them” (Int. 1b, 132-142)

“Towards children? No, no, no! I always love children, and I don’t care whether they have learning difficulties, or mobility problems. Besides, we give more to them than to the rest. Maybe it’s my character; I don’t know [...]”(Int. 4, 225-231)

“And I repeat, as a mainstream teacher, I feel love for this child, I will make the child understand that he/ she is not stupid, it’s just that I will have to give extra help to the child” (Michael’s 1st int, 176-179)

“But whatever the problems are, these children need a different approach. If you don’t give them extra love and support...I guess it’s
more problematic a case where you need to be by the child’s side all the time…” (Int. 8, 123-127)

“I feel very well when I teach in my classroom. I never had problems with my pupils…actually recently most of them are getting married…every weekend I am invited to another weeding (laughing) I am running out of time! I just cannot communicate with my colleagues. But I adore children…otherwise I could have left this job.” (Int. 8a, 146-153)

“Often these children are a bit withdrawn. And often they are rejected by others. But when they see their teacher’s love, they try to socialise a bit more. […]Ah, yes! Often, because they have problems in learning, they try to cause trouble to draw your attention…what I said is love…only with love and willingness can we achieve more […]” (Christos’s 1st int., 186-201)

• love is not enough (T17):

“[…] To make this work you need co-operation with parents. The consultant used to say that we have to face it with love. You cannot face all problems with love (laughing). You do love children. But when there is a problem, I need to know the exact steps I have to follow. ‘Love’ for me is something very general.” (Int. 17, 158-172)

• too sensitive therefore cannot stand (T1b, T2, T5, T7):

“Look…I don’t think I would want that…there is a specific reason for that. It’s because I am very sensitive as a person, and it would hurt me…it is not that easy for me. I mean, I love children very much…but you know…these children are like separate units…I may see them during the break, but that’s it…I couldn’t make it with more severe cases. This is how I see it, and you know I don’t have the knowledge…if I had the knowledge, it might have been different. But because I am also very sensitive, I don’t think I could stand that.” (Int. 1b, 159-170)

“Actually it did…but I don’t know if I could stand it…in the sense that I would have a more flexible program…that I would have just a couple of children to work with…but I don’t know how much I could give to those children. Generally I am compassionate. I am sentimental. And it is through sentiments that you can approach those children. Otherwise you cannot make head or tail out of it…it is a complex issue. Their approach is multi-sided. You also need to be strict. You need a lot more strength for the special classroom. But you just have to deal with one case, not with many. Because the mainstream classroom is more or less impersonal.” (Dimitra’s 2nd int., 110-122)
“Well, it was tough, very tough indeed. I mean, that was when I said I could never work in Special Education…mmm…I get very emotional, and I know that these children develop a strong bond with you…the way I see them hugging me and kissing me…” (Michael’s 1st int., 237-241)

“The good thing is that I have worked at all three sectors…but, it was mainly in state schools that I came across such cases. Actually special education was in my mind…I had considered that as a second degree…but, because generally I am very sensitive, I don’t think I could not keep distance in order to help […]the distant…mind, I would say…because I create a bond with my pupils, this is a bit difficult to achieve. “ (Int. 7a, 91-101)

- too sensitive therefore can stand (T2, T4):

  “Actually it did…but I don’t know if I could stand it…in the sense that I would have a more flexible program…that I would have just a couple of children to work with…but I don’t know how much I could give to those children. Generally I am compassionate. I am sentimental. And it is through sentiments that you can approach those children. Otherwise you cannot make head or tail out of it…it is a complex issue. Their approach is multi-sided. You also need to be strict. You need a lot more strength for the special classroom. But you just have to deal with one case, not with many. Because the mainstream classroom is more or less impersonal.” (Dimitra’s 2nd int., 110-122)

  “Because of the sensitivity I have, I had a weakness for special education…and when I considered working in special education, it was too late…because now I am about to retire. I am very very sensitive…and I guess that my experience would make it possible…I think I could make it a special teacher…I think I would put something more to it.” (Int. 4a, 66-75)
18. Helen’s Profile

Maria has been working with Helen since September 2006 (8 mths). Helen assessment reports state that the child ‘encounters severe learning difficulties and lack of concentration, and hyperactivity disorder’. In detail ‘she encounters Severe Dyslexia to the extent that understanding from family and school is necessary. Her spelling errors should not be taken into account, and there should be understanding regarding her typically very slow reading’. According to her teacher’s brief report:

‘Helen […] has a lot of potential, but she doesn’t make this productive. Often, due to her stress and in the event of failure, her performance is probably lower than her actual abilities. She encounters difficulties in reading, and has to improve her performance to this as far as speed concerns, as well as difficulties in spelling, since most of the times she omits letters and syllables. She still mixes ‘e’ with ‘3’. Often, her attention is drawn on other irrelevant things and she doesn’t finish the work to be done. She occupies herself with her pencils, her markers, her stickers and whatever else can be found in her pencil case. As far as her behaviour concerns during the breaks, she plays with her girl friends, however, usually she complains for many and unimportant things; consequently she loses part of the game. Her cognitive development shows a slight improvement which, however, is not the expected one”

With reference to Helen’s socialising, the teacher’s opinion meets reports’ suggestions: ‘The above difficulties are a burden to the child, causing stress and low self-esteem’. Her major problem is making friends and maintaining friendships, but she is not that lucky with her mates, as there are a few girls in her classroom; they are very competitive, good pupils and always against her. Most of the incidences recorded during fieldwork involve her girlfriends. The teacher has been working with Helen since September. The girl completed Year 1 in another school: it was a private school (Hellenic-German School), but it was really difficult for her, so this year her mum brought her to the state school. In a chat during a break, the teacher mentions that Helen is having private lessons at home with a mainstream teacher, as her mum informed her. She is the younger child of a family facing many problems. Her dad is old, around 70, and her only brother is 34. Her mum never married her dad, but they live under the same roof. The last couple of months her mum faces serious health problems. Occasionally Helen pretends to feel sick. The teacher mentioned the other day that she sort of imitates her mum, who is seriously ill and is currently at the hospital. Helen is complaining frequently that she feels pain at specific parts of her body. The teacher cannot tell for sure if this is real or if there is a psychological cause. Always having this vacant look, as her teacher says: “I sit next to her
in the same team and most of the times that I can, I help her individually. Often she needs my support psychologically and cognitively […] I believe that this is due to her maturity because of her growing”. Below are grouped the comments/notes of preliminary analysis of the total of field notes in Maria’s classroom. There appear issues of lack of concentration, boredom, lack of understanding and enthusiasm, knowledge gaps, disapproval and conflict with peers etc.

- She needs extra support/ She needs me to spell her all the words/ Helen needs extra help; it is difficult for her to write these words/ I don’t think she can follow, because these are advanced for her level/ Still impossible for her to understand.
- She seems being lost/ She seems very absent minded today/ Very absent minded at the moment/ I don’t think Helen is concentrated/ Helen seems being blocked/ As if she lost all of her interest/ I think she cannot be bothered/ She seems totally confused/ Helen is a bit absent minded/ Giving me the impression she is blocked/ She seems confused to me though/ Does this imply she hasn’t listened to the text at all?
- Helen seems being in her own world. She lacks the sense of time/ Helen cannot participate, as this happens very fast/ Once again Helen, is left behind…still writing/ Helen is absent- minded, but she has to hurry because there’s no time.
- I wonder whether it should be better to do these exercises orally/ Helen faces pure severe dyslexia; this exempts her from writing. I don’t know if she can manage to write today’s exercise.
- Her reply is ‘flat’
- From the look she gives me, I see she is really bored/ Is she thinking though, or is she just being lazy/? This must be very stressful for her/ I don’t quite understand Helen relationship with those two girls, Evangelia and Nefeli. They are snobbish, always avoiding her/ She is disappointed/ Helen has this look again as if she is miserable/ It is a bit sad because Helen is trying to make girl friends, and this doesn’t help the situation/ Helen is always willing to offer everything to her, in order to bribe her friendship/ Usually, when addressed such questions, Helen turns to see her friend’s reactions.
- She is impatient/ She is impatient/ As if she wants to get rid of it.
- Trying to show me she is concentrated/ She seems more concentrated at the moment…maybe because this is a different workshop?/ She is more careful today
- I guess she likes what she is doing. This is for her mum/ Helen’s smiling in the classroom today/ This is easy for her…as if she is awakened. This might have raised her self-esteem/ Is it because she likes working with patterns and shapes?
- It’s just copy-paste! She doesn’t spend time thinking at all/ She doesn’t read the words at all. She just copies them from the board.
- She is not curious though to ask me openly.
- She gives me this weird look again…she curls her lips…she knits her brows……as if she is ashamed.
- Helen and Christos are both very negative. Is it because she feels being disadvantaged?
- I see she is moving her left leg under the chair.
19. Helen’s Assessment Reports

HELLENIC REPUBLIC
B’ HEALTH PERIPHERY OF ATTICA
P.N.A
PAEDOPSYCHIATRIC HOSPITAL OF ATTICA
D’ PAEDOPSYCHIATRIC DEPARTMENT
MEDICAL CENTER OF ATHENS 4th Oct. 2006

Reg. Number:…….

CERTIFICATION

Helen, born in 18/3/99, is under observation at the Medical Center of Athens. With reference to the health background and the examination, it is concluded that she encounters severe learning difficulties and lack of concentration, and hyperactivity disorder. The above difficulties are a burden to the child, causing stress and low self-esteem.

Due to the above difficulties it is recommended that this child is included in special rehabilitation program for a year which will include per month:

1. 20 Sessions of Special Education
2. 20 Sessions of Speech therapy
3. 20 Sessions of Ergotherapy
4. 20 Session of Behaviour Therapy
5. 8 Sessions of Individual Psychotherapy

The present certification is provided after the relevant application for use to parent Funds.

COUNTER-SIGNED DIRECTOR OF THE D’
PAEDOPSYCHIATRIST PEDOPSYCHIATRIC CLINICS

THE ADMINISTRATIVE MANAGER DOCTOR

Reg. Number:……..
Helen was assessed on 11-7-2006. Her multisided and extended examination consists of detail review, 16 psycho-pedagogic and biological tests, such as the objective test of eye movement.

**SUMMARY OF EXAMINATION RESULTS**

**INTELLIGENCE:** tested through the well-known internationally WISC-III and identified within the average levels. Because of her increased stress, her performance might have been lower with respect to her actual abilities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PERFORMANCE</th>
<th>VOCABULARY</th>
<th>SHORT-TERM MEMORY (WISC III)</th>
<th>NUMERACY</th>
<th>WRITING</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NORMAL</td>
<td>LOW</td>
<td>LOW</td>
<td>LOW</td>
<td>VERY LOW</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**READING:** Read aloud 1 text  

**SPELLING:** A) dictation and B) Wr. comprehension

Her performance is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>READING</th>
<th>Text from her book</th>
<th>SPELLING</th>
<th>Dictation</th>
<th>Wr. Comprehension</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Speed</td>
<td>Very Slow</td>
<td>Writing Speed</td>
<td>Slightly Slow</td>
<td>No Normal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comprehension</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Sum of Errors</td>
<td>Very Low</td>
<td>Very Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sum of Errors</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Punctuation</td>
<td>Very Low</td>
<td>Very Low</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Conclusion (reading): Needs great improvement in her speed and her ability to recognise words (codification), and to comprehend texts.

Conclusion (spelling): Great difficulty in punctuation and generally in dictation.

Eye movement-Attention Deficit and Severe dyslexia: Results from PAVLIDIS TEST, which remarkably reflect any dysfunction of the brain, showed that first-born unintentional ability to concentrate is low. That is, she cannot concentrate for long to a specific work, in order to complete it. As a result, her school performance, especially in writing is low. Moreover, she has the typical eye movements that severe dyslexic children have. Examination results, their significance and my conclusions, were analytically explained to family and to the child.

DIAGNOSIS

Further to the above report, I certify that Helen encounters Unintentional Attention Deficit, which is intensified due to her Impulsiveness. Furthermore, she encounters Severe Dyslexia to the extent that understanding from family and school is necessary. Her spelling errors should not be taken into account, and there should be understanding regarding her typically very slow reading. For a more equitable confrontation of children facing dyslexia Presidential Enactments 465/1981, 86/2001 and 26/2002 impose oral examination (when asked) including questions-answers. One-to-one confrontation of her learning problem will allow Helen to successfully cover her knowledge gaps, especially in reading, punctuation, dictation and transfer from oral speech to writing.

GENERAL CONFRONTATION GUIDELINES (See our info brochure)

Please do not hesitate to contact me for further information.

Regards

Pr. G. Th. Pavlidis
20. Maria’s Report for Helen

Helen attending Year 3, has a lot of potential, but she doesn’t make this productive.

Often, due to her stress and in the event of failure, her performance is probably lower than her actual abilities.

She encounters difficulties in reading, and has to improve her performance to this as far as speed concerns, as well as difficulties in spelling, since most of the times she omits letters and syllables.

She still mixes ‘ε’ with ‘3’. Often, her attention is drawn on other irrelevant things and she doesn’t finish the work to be done. She occupies herself with her pencils, her markers, her stickers and whatever else can be found in her pencil case.

I sit next to her in the same team and most of the times that I can, I help her individually. Often she needs my support psychologically and cognitively.

As far as her behaviour concerns during the breaks, she plays with her girl friends, however, usually she complains for many and unimportant things; consequently she loses part of the game.

Helen’s cognitive development shows a slight improvement which, however, is not the expected one.

I believe that this is due to her maturity because of her growing.

Regards

The classroom teacher
21. George’s Profile

George’s assessment report states that the child went through developmental assessment due to ‘learning difficulties in writing [...] He hasn’t received any rehabilitation provision. Hereditary background report father facing learning difficulties’. Interestingly, assessment of pupil’s learning abilities shows that regarding comprehensive ability (through CAHelleib Test) ‘Intelligence (is) within lowest normal levels!’ and specialists put a question mark and an exclamation mark, as an particular case that requires further research. Diagnosis reports ‘General learning difficulties within the framework of particularities of the child from birth’. According to his teacher’s report:

“George is of short stature and skinny compared to other children of the same age. He is a boy immature as far as his behaviour and his reactions, towards adults and other children. Because he cannot make it to the lessons, he is insecure and withdrawn, and as a result he becomes shy for no particular reason. Often, when socialising with other children of the same age, he becomes a little annoying in order to draw their attention. He may be in a bad mood, when he expresses his anger very violently (though visually he doesn’t give this impression) and maybe this shows that he hides a lot of anger inside him (either for himself, as he realises that he is weak in comparison to other children, or for the disregardful behavior of others). In his effort to ‘open up’ in relationships, with girls, he usually follows the route of teasing and naming, which turns against him. He is the third and youngest child of the family, and that was due to an unexpected and undesirable pregnancy (according to his mother’s sayings)”

With reference to this last comment, the teacher’s judgment is that unconsciously this ‘rejection’ has passed to George, and even if it doesn’t relate to the rest of difficulties, he believes that it affects him- and maybe he doesn’t realise that either- a lot. However, as he continues:

‘...he is conscientious, prompt and ready to do any errand I ask him to. Of course, this willingness is not that stable, intense and constant regarding his homework, unless he has someone to help him. Even so, he doesn’t accept easily to have someone by his side to work together during the lessons, and he reacts negatively, therefore he becomes incredibly naughty. During the lesson, I can tell he gets tired, bored, or he cannot stand it any more. Maybe, that’s why he usually asks me to go out (to the loo or to drink water). His school performance is very low, and I would say that it is unsure whether this helps him move to upper Years evenly, like the rest of children”

His teacher argues that re-attending nursery or Year 1, could improve his performance; however, this was never suggested by his colleagues in previous years, plus his parents never aimed at this ‘not so much because they didn’t want this, rather because they didn’t know’ as he writes in brackets.
George is the 3\textsuperscript{rd} and younger child in the family. His mum isn’t working. He has a sister and a brother, all three at the same school. George seems very different. His parents are young, and the teacher is a bit annoyed, because they used to be friends; now they are withdrawn. Maybe because of George’s problem, as his teacher confides: they lost contact when the teacher realised that George’s mum was hiding the hospital report from George’s assessment, because it mentioned ‘immaturity’. The teacher received this action as lack of honesty.

Preliminary analysis of field notes includes commenting on research issues, and because children included in these classrooms are considered, it is worth gathering and grouping these comments which may add to their picture. There appear issues of lack of concentration, hyperactivity, lack of understanding and enthusiasm, knowledge gaps etc.

- George’s report includes ‘hyperactivity’ and ‘immaturity’
- I am not sure whether he is listening to what the teacher says/ George’s seems very absent minded at the moment.
- Either he got nervous in Maths, or he felt uncomfortable because I was present as well
- He doesn’t appear that confident
- As if the glasses give him a more sophisticated look. I wonder whether this would make him feel more aware of his responsibilities regarding his performance at school/ Acting as if he is trying to make an impression with his new glasses
- The teacher tells me it’s tricky: you can never tell whether he understands the meaning of the text he reads/ It seems George doesn’t understand at all/ Still not sure whether he understands the meaning of the text he reads /Right before the morning prayer, the teacher asked me if I had time to have a look at George’s test. George’s performance is very low; it seems he hadn’t understood the rationale of each exercise. The teacher showed me a couple of examples, at times, the teacher couldn’t help it; he would laugh.
- I get the feeling he is trying to hide something from me
- He whispers to me ‘watch this now!’; the teacher guesses that George hasn’t done homework/ I guess he has to apologise for not preparing homework once again.
- He simply cannot be bothered/…from now on it’s like he cannot be bothered about anything/ He cannot be bothered.
- Interestingly, whenever George sits next to someone else, he appears getting influenced by him/her
- As if he doesn’t know how to behave as a pupil; how to sit properly.
- Preparing himself for the break/ Once again waiting for the break
- As if he is trying to mock me.
- The teacher looks puzzled, thinking what I was thinking? How did George’s find the answer since he wasn’t paying attention?
- As if he wants to prove me he is working hard/ As if he does it on purpose not to be heard
- I realise he has a lot of knowledge gaps
- I don’t think George can concentrate with such noise. And I don’t see the teacher approaching us at all/ I think George is quieter in this position. H. is not that communicative/ -George seems to be more concentrated, because An. was very noisy.
- I think he is very comfortable with the idea of just being there and doing nothing
- Probably he wants to be the first one to read aloud the text
I inform you that the above child, who came to the office for developmental assessment due to learning difficulties in writing.

Assessment cause: ..see above....

Short report: George attends Year 2 of Mainstream Primary School. He hasn’t received any rehabilitation provision. Hereditary background report father facing learning difficulties

Assessment of the pupil’s leaning abilities showed:

- Comprehensive ability (CaHell weib Test) -Intelligence within lowest normal levels!?
  - Memory satisfactory
- Writing Many spelling errors
- Reading Stammering, difficulty
- Reading Comprehension Satisfactory
- Sequence Normal up to days and seasons
- Orientation (Space-Time) Good
- Maths Difficulty in practice
- Behaviour (Concentration, Hyperactivity etc) Stress and weakness in concentration

Diagnosis
Comment:......General learning difficulties within the framework.................................
......................of particularities of the child from birth.................................
Check: ......normal ophthalmological (Psychometric quotient IQ through WISK –R is necessary)

Recommendations Provision Treatment psychotherapy learning practice therapy
X Observation X Mainstream school X Special teaching
Special education Speech therapy Individual
Special school Behaviour Logopaedics
Parent counseling Behaviour
George is of short stature and skinny compared to other children of the same age. He is a boy immature as far as his behaviour and his reactions concerns, towards adults and other children. Because he cannot make it to the lessons, he is insecure and withdrawn, and as a result he becomes shy for no particular reason. Often, when socialising with other children of the same age, he becomes a little annoying in order to draw their attention. George may be in a bad mood, when he expresses his anger very violently (though visually he doesn’t give this impression) and maybe this shows that he hides a lot of anger inside him (either for himself, as he realises that he is weak in comparison to other children, or for the disregardful behavior of others).

In his effort to ‘open up’ in relationships, with girls, he usually follows the route of teasing and naming, which turns against him. He is the third and youngest child of the family, and that was due to an unexpected and undesirable pregnancy (according to his mother’s sayings).

My judgment is that unconsciously this ‘rejection’ has passed to George, and even if it doesn’t relate to the rest of difficulties, I believe that it affects him (and maybe he doesn’t realise that either) a lot.

However, he is conscientious, prompt and ready to do any errand I ask him to. Of course, this willingness is not that stable, intense and constant regarding his homework, unless he has someone to help him. Even so, he doesn’t accept easily to have someone by his side to work together during the lessons, and he reacts negatively, therefore he becomes incredibly naughty.

During the lesson, I can tell he gets tired, bored, or he cannot stand it anymore. Maybe, that’s why he usually asks me to go out (to the loo or to drink water). His school performance is very low, and I would say that it is unsure whether this helps him move to upper Years evenly, like the rest of children. I believe that, what could improve the situation in some aspects would be to re-attend nursery or even Year 1. This, however, never happened, either because it wasn’t suggested by colleagues who used to work with those Years, or because parents never aimed at this (not so much because they didn’t want this, rather because they didn’t know)
24. Classroom Arrangement

**Figure 8: Typical Classroom Arrangement**

Typical classroom arrangement of Greek primary school

**Figure 9: Alternative Classroom Arrangement**

Alternative team-work classroom arrangement
1. Team-work area  2. Lounge area  3. Teacher’s desk
Can you give me once again your personal definition of dyslexia?
J: Well… I have read that it is difficult to give a definition of dyslexia. So, I believe I am much more humble than scientists… (laughing).

Fair enough, but how do you perceive dyslexia?
J: I believe that is has to do with pathological factors, which I don’t happen to know… also with respect to how the child perceives things… some stimulants… and that this child has learning difficulties… I also believe that if anyone knows how to help this child, this condition may be improved. To tell you the truth when I first heard about dyslexia, it would be frightening… regarding my contact with this child within the classroom. But…

Can you explain why?
J: Well… because I was younger and less experienced, so I used to hear things through a negative perspective… and because the whole environment was negative, this is what I used to receive. Generally, I think that when you have a child facing dyslexia, you need to see the problem in order to understand it. It needs a bit of extra care…

So, can you write a few words about that?
J: Well… (writing) dyslexia: dysfunction of specific brain activities…. What else?... when I used to hear about dyslexia in the past, I would get stressed and frightened. Now, I need to write a bit more… this is because I didn’t know the child’s condition, and because I didn’t know how to help the child.

Can you identify the factors that caused this change in your opinion?
J: This has to do with the kind of job I am doing… the fact that I help these children as well, and not just to help the good ones. This is easy.

Does it have to do with experience then?
J: No, I don’t think it’s just about experience… no. Well, apart from that it is also your choice to help them, because I have come across people who are not interested at all, though they have many years of experience. They don’t like to spend time with them… or they may be for that theoretically, but in practice… it is difficult. I believe that a child who faces dyslexia has very low self-esteem, is very stressed… they child is aware of this condition… and all this may cause weird behaviour… but it’s not the child’s fault… because the whole thing is very difficult for the child to understand… let alone for the others… therefore, this child is either withdrawn, or other children isolate him/her. Sometimes, the child becomes aggressive… and the reason may not be that obvious, or easy to understand, but I see that this child has a lot of anger… and you know, I feel
sorry for these children, I want to help them as much as I can, right?...I believe that even wheedling or smiling is a lot of support from their teacher. Now, there may be times that this child may compare grades with peers, and realise that this isn’t that fair…but I feel I want to say ‘bravo’ to this child because I mean it…for instance, this incident with George. earlier today […] I see a lot of improvement in his performance in comparison to last year. When we did this test, he was the only one to remember the actual order in grammar exercises. Did you see how well he did it? This is what I call progress…

If you had George when you first started working, how would you react?
J: What I tried to do this year was to make him feel more important within the classroom, for his own sake and for the rest of the classroom. I would try to help him more and to make the others include him in their team…this classroom has a specific characteristic…there is a tendency for mockery…you know, and this is the worst thing that can happen to these children. His behaviour has changed, it has improved a lot. But what I see now is that he brings out a lot of anger…I believe that I would be a lot more supportive towards him…but I have told you again, for instance, last year he started taking advantage of this…that can hide behind that…this may sound a bit contradictory, but I think that I would be more sensitive and more strict with him at the same time. Because you cannot offer special support all the time, because it is about a child, a young man who may become spoilt, if the teacher is there for him/her all the time…

What about knowledge?
J: Right…well, I don’t know much, and apart from a couple of seminars some years ago…the fact that there is something out there, but we don’t know much about it…it bugs me. No one knew what that was, and how we could help children overcome this. When I realised that there are a couple of solutions…when I was first placed as a teacher at N…there was a colleague there, who helped me a lot…this is when I realised that there are ways to help a child…but I never spend more time on this, because I never had the chance…but I saw that there is light…and I gradually started to get informed, as much as possible…I read a couple of books…now, I have also the possibility to find things through the net…but I am not that good at English…I speak English, but this is an advanced level…you know, the texts are difficult…

Why did you become a teacher?
J: …by chance! This was my second choice, I wanted to become a trainer…but I haven’t regretted that. I mean…I don’t know if I would manage to graduate from the Athletic school…my wife who is a trainer, says it would be too difficult for me…secondly, because there was a great chance not to be able to get a placement as a trainer at school. I just liked to be a trainer…I felt that it is very important to teach things to children…generally, I am in this mood…you know, to help […] but there were other things that played a role in this choice of mine…I remember my parents saving to me that it would be great to become a teacher.
In what sense?
J: …I don’t know…I think they perceived this profession as something very descent…very considerable…as if my status would change. But you know, my parents expected other things from me, but anyway…I do not regret…I would wish for a higher salary […] Did you ever consider becoming a special teacher?
J: Actually, I think of that all the time, the last 4-5 years…because I realised that there are ways to help a child overcome a learning difficulty. I feel that in this sense special education may be very effective…there were some obstacles in my career, and you may see these as excuses…you get married…you have children…you need to get money an work extra hours…so things need to fall into place…now that I think of that, there is something else that needs to be done…if I ever sit for exams at Marazlio, it will definitely be for special education. Have you ever felt pity for these children?
J: Yes, of course, and I remember having said that before…and to tell you the truth there was no such stimulant within my family environment…the only thing that I have in my mind as a negative stimulant was that my father was totally illiterate, he didn’t know to read or write…that would make me feel weird…I would feel sorry for him, I also wanted to help him…I don’t know…but he was very good at his job. He was a carpenter. There were times he had problems at work, so I would try to sort things out. He was very happy, he was smiling at me. I couldn’t believe it…that he was so illiterate…my mum used to tell me that her father liked reading and writing a lot. She also wanted to become a teacher…you see…but when I saw the results, that I got in the Academy, I was very disappointed […] what I find weird in me is…for instance, I see a child having an accident, and I see that other colleagues may not give a damn about it…if I was a child, I would really want someone to take care of me…but you see that other teachers don’t think this way. I will take the child, I will help the child, I will give a kiss, a hug…children need their mum and dad… Do you think you have changed as a teacher since you started working?
J: I think a lot…I believe I have become worse in many things…I see the way you react with children sometimes, and I remember myself when I was young…I would play with them, I would spend time with them during the breaks […] but there was respect and balance within the classroom…I believe that only experience comes with time…but you get more and more tired…and this makes you worse…and experience comes as a compensation for this. Our job is very soul-destroying…I feel better as a parent now…or as far as knowledge is concerned. This is included in experience. But I don’t feel I know much…I am not a specialist…I may discuss these things, but I have this repression…
26. John’s ‘I’ Statements and Key-Words

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cognitive Statements</th>
<th>Affective Statements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“I see that though they try...” (Int. 11, 15)</td>
<td>“I feel that they have everything, but they need a more special approach...” (Int. 11, 22)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“often I do not know this way to approach them myself...” (Int. 11, 23-24)</td>
<td>“I feel very satisfied” (Int. 11, 26)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I say to myself that this is not my fault” (Int. 11, 28)</td>
<td>“I feel that as an experience” (Int. 11, 49)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I mean this is not the child’s fault, this may be my fault” (Int. 11, 29-30)</td>
<td>“But I feel I have to do it, for conscience sake” (Int. 11, 79-80)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I believe that there are some children, who have dyslexia” (Int. 11, 44)</td>
<td>“I feel I don’t help that much” (Int. 11, 113)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I don’t know” (Int. 11, 26)</td>
<td>“I sometimes feel I’m blocked...” (Int. 11, 225)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I mean they don’t have the discretion to confront situations more” (Int. 11, 65-66)</td>
<td>“I would not feel comfortable each time the specialist would come in” (Int. 11, 279-280)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I think that it is necessary to do it” (Int. 11, 80)</td>
<td>“I feel sorry for these children, I want to help them as much as I can, right?” (Int. 11a, 42-43)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I believe that this is essential for all children in the classroom...” (Int. 11, 87-88)</td>
<td>“I feel I want to say ‘bravo’ to this child because...” (Int. 11a, 43-44)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I think that in this way you help in a way the normal child as well” (Int. 11, 89-90)</td>
<td>“I just liked to be a trainer...I felt that it is very important to teach things to children”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“which, as far as I am concerned it is not” (Int. 11, 166)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>“I see things from the other side, because I think that if...” (Int. 11, 178)</td>
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<tr>
<td>“I mean that a normal child...may...well, by normal I mean a child without learning difficulties...” (Int. 11, 189-190)</td>
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<tr>
<td>“I mean, you may be lucky to read, to learn, or to attend some seminars” (Int. 11, 217-218)</td>
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<tr>
<td>“it also needs a lot of resources, as far as I know, which we lack as a school [...]” (Int. 11, 259-263)</td>
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<tr>
<td>“It would be interesting, I guess, to try it sometime” (Int. 11, 266)</td>
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<tr>
<td>“I believe that this is a matter of habit. Because I don’t know if this is the best from those three things...” (Int. 11, 210)</td>
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<tr>
<td>“I don’t know which one is the best. But I believe that the last two may benefit the child” (Int. 11, 285-286)</td>
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<tr>
<td>“Often I see children attending the special classroom...” (Int. 11, 328-329)</td>
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<tr>
<td>“I remember a friend of mine in the primary school” (Int. 11, 366)</td>
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<tr>
<td>“but I don’t know what kind of problem she had. I remember that she had nice handwriting” (Int. 11, 337-338)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>“I was thinking: ‘What does it mean they cannot write?’” (Int. 11, 347)</td>
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<tr>
<td>“I believe that is has to do with pathological factors, which I don’t happen to know...” (Int. 11a, 8-9)</td>
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<tr>
<td>“I also believe that if anyone knows how to help this child, this condition may be improved” (Int. 11a, 11-12)</td>
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<tr>
<td>“I think that when you have a child facing dyslexia, you need to see the problem in order to understand it” (Int. 11a, 20-21)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>“I didn’t know the child’s condition, and because I didn’t know how to help the child”(Int. 11a, 28-29)</td>
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<tr>
<td>“I believe that a child who faces dyslexia has very low self-esteem” (Int. 11a, 42-43)</td>
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<tr>
<td>“but I see that this child has a lot of anger...”(Int. 11a, 52)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>“but I think that I would be more sensitive and more strict with him” (Int. 11a, 79)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>“I don’t know much” (Int. 11a, 85)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>“I remember my parents saying to me that it would be great to become a teacher” (Int. 11a,110-111)</td>
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<tr>
<td>“because I realised that there are ways to help a child overcome a learning difficulty” (Int. 11a, 121)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>“I believe that only experience comes with time” (Int. 11a, 158)</td>
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<tr>
<td>State and Action Statements</td>
<td>PSpri</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>“I feel that in this sense special education may be very effective”</td>
<td>(Int. 11a, 107)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I would wish for a higher salary”</td>
<td>(Int. 11a, 118)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I would feel sorry for him, I also wanted to help him”</td>
<td>(Int. 11a, 136)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I would really want someone to take care of me”</td>
<td>(Int. 11a, 148)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I feel better as a parent now”</td>
<td>(Int. 11a, 162)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I don’t feel I know much…”</td>
<td>(Int. 11a, 163)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State and Action Statements</th>
<th>PSpri</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“I have come across children who have learning difficulties”</td>
<td>(Int. 11, 14-15)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“And I call them ‘unfortunate’”</td>
<td>(Int. 11, 21)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“but there are times that there is a result and I am really happy”</td>
<td>(Int. 11, 25-26)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I am not that sure whether dyslexia is combined to difficulties in Maths”</td>
<td>(Int. 11, 46-47)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I have come across a child that…”</td>
<td>(Int. 11, 47)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I am not specialised”</td>
<td>(Int. 11, 48)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I get stressed most of the times”</td>
<td>(Int. 11, 78)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I am of those who are interested and who try to read through”</td>
<td>(Int. 11, 105-106)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“through some seminars I have attended in the past”</td>
<td>(Int. 11, 107)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I am not that sure”</td>
<td>(Int. 11, 123)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I had a child with learning difficulties probably”</td>
<td>(Int. 11, 134-135)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I tell the child that there is an error there”</td>
<td>(Int. 11, 138-139)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I would invite them, I would talk to them…I would inform them. I always tell my opinion”</td>
<td>(Int. 11, 157-159)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I would be shocked… I would freak out, I would be very unhappy, very disappointed, but I would not give up”</td>
<td>(Int. 11, 180-181)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I would… I would be within this mean of people who do not give up…”</td>
<td>(Int. 11, 192)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I believe that I do have imagination”</td>
<td>(Int. 11, 223-224)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I received my answers about this many many years later”</td>
<td>(Int. 11, 350)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I was younger and less experienced, so I used to hear things through a negative perspective…”</td>
<td>(Int. 11a, 17-18)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“when I used to hear about dyslexia in the past, I would get stressed and frightened”</td>
<td>(Int. 11a, 25-26)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“This has to do with the kind of job I am doing…the fact that I help these children as well, and not just to help the good ones. This is easy”</td>
<td>(Int. 11a, 32-34)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I see a lot of improvement in his performance in comparison to last year”</td>
<td>(Int. 11a, 49)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“but I think that I would be more sensitive and more strict with him”</td>
<td>(Int. 11a, 79)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“but I never spend more time on this, because I never had the chance”</td>
<td>(Int. 11a, 91)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“but I am not that good at English…I speak English, but this is an advanced level”</td>
<td>(Int. 11a, 98-99)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“….generally, I am in this mood…you know, to help”</td>
<td>(Int. 11a, 108)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I will take the child, I will help the child, I will give a kiss, a hug…children need their mum and dad…”</td>
<td>(Int. 11a, 150-151)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I am not a specialist…I may discuss these things, but I have this repression’</td>
<td>(Int. 11a, 165-166)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ability and Constraint Statements</th>
<th>PSpri</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“I can help them”</td>
<td>(Int. 11, 27)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“But I feel I have to do it, for conscience sake”</td>
<td>(Int. 11, 79-80)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“that I cannot go on this way”</td>
<td>(Int. 11, 143)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I cannot be that sure what kind of cases they are…it must be…I cannot tell you about the rest”</td>
<td>(Int. 11, 232)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I personally couldn’t talk to her…she wasn’t aggressive”</td>
<td>(Int. 11, 339-340)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I couldn’t believe it…that he was so illiterate…”</td>
<td>(Int. 11a, 141)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Achievement Statements</th>
<th>PST</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“I am of those who are interested and who try to read through”</td>
<td>(Int. 11, 105-106)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I try to help as much as possible”</td>
<td>(Int. 11, 112)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I would try […] I would try as much as I could”</td>
<td>(Int. 11, 193-194)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“What I tried to do this year was to make him feel more important within the classroom”</td>
<td>(Int. 11a, 66-67)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I would try to help him more and to make the others include him in their team”</td>
<td>(Int. 11a, 69-70)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“so I would try to sort things out”</td>
<td>(Int. 11a, 139)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 18: John’s ‘I’ Statements (a)**
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>KEY-WORDS</th>
<th>INTERVIEWS with concept maps</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>JOHN</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Learning Difficulties</strong></td>
<td>-normal/norms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-(specific) learning difficulties</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-unfortunate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Compassion</strong></td>
<td>-sorry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Anxiety</strong></td>
<td>-anxiety</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-disappointed</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-frightened</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-shocked</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-stressed/distressed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-unhappy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Treatment</strong></td>
<td>-disease</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-lack</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-treatment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Help</strong></td>
<td>-help/helpless/helpful</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 19: John's Themes’ Key-Words (a)**
27. John’s Written Account

[Thursday, 15th May 2008]

When I finally realised that I didn’t make it to the Athletic Academy, but I could just enrol to the Pedagogic Academy, I was disappointed. I graduated from the Academy, and then after 10 whole years of patience and persistence, I was asked to work as a teacher at a school for three months at Maroussi.

That first contact, the very first day, the first moment I entered the classroom, not as a pupil but as a teacher, was for me, maybe one of the strongest things I have felt so far in my life. Though I had kept myself busy with sports and this was an area where I had felt quite strong emotions; however, what I felt when I first taught...this is something I do not swap, and I cannot forget. Fear and joy, enthusiasm and stress, anxiety but also an incredible confidence that this area suits me, fills me, this is what I like.

Now, 14 years later, 14 years of contacting children and while I am already a father, my interest to learn, to hear, to get interested, to help, remains unchangeable...though there are times that I feel very strongly a ‘holding back’ as far as my mood concerns...a disappointment with regards to what happens around me, within our sector, not because of children, rather because of work conditions, because of the ways in which the administration of education works in our country...and also because of parents’ attitude towards issues that concern their children...though they are aware, they ignore them, or they try to transfer responsibilities, and to find guilt within other areas, within us for instance.

I feel I still have things to give to children, and strength, in order to get over such difficulties and setbacks. But something inside me starts freezing gradually, as if there is a voice telling me: “Careful! Stop being so impulsive, so open-handed, so sentimental, so good listener”.

I know that what this voice is telling me, is against my disposition, but I’m afraid that this will gradually start to consolidate, and there will come a time that I will be nothing but a rusty gear of this obsolete machine that is called primary education.
I think, however, that I myself have stopped resisting, and maybe I need to reconsider some methods, some reactions and behaviours of mine, mainly towards children and their parents as well! I wish to continue to strive as much as I can, to leave the school at noon and to think of how many things I could have done during the previous hours, while they would say 'good bye' to me running to the door.

Indeed, this gives me a lot of joy and satisfaction, because I feel that they give me true love, and their smile always revitalises me. I would very much like to start spending time in the yard with children, as I did all the previous years (this year, it happened less than any other year!)

I might be going through a crisis this time, with regards to my work, but I will not let this happen, I will not let this win, and I will find my way again...in other words, I will be back ☺
28. John’s Follow-up Interview [Thursday, 29th May 2008]

You wrote in your account that after graduating, you had to wait for 10 years until you finally started working as a teacher...I didn't know that...what did you do in the meantime?

I didn’t work at all as a teacher...I just did some private lessons to children, and then I worked together with my father—who was a carpenter— at his work...I graduated in 1987, I then started working as a substitute teacher in 1993, and it was in...in 1998 that I was placed as a permanent teacher, it was then that I started working...after 10 years.

Why do you believe that this area suits you?

Because I frequently find myself thinking as a child, with all the pros and cons that this may include...because I believe that I give...a lot of times...not exactly the help that I give to other children...I mean I can easily forgive a person, and I can easily understand mistakes...and provide them with a second chance, as you have to do with children, because they need it...this is what I believe...and this doesn't bother me...I mean I don't press myself to do it...I do it with pleasure...I mean, even if a child has done something improper...has committed an offence...I will not...I will not exclude easily...I will give them a chance to try again...to correct their mistakes.

There is a point where you talk about this voice in you...and this holds you back...can you explain this to me?

Right...well, can you pass me the paper to have a second look? (reading)...well, yes...there are times that I see that I try to achieve with children...though...well, there is a general response from children, but there is no response from the rest of people...sometimes, and this bothers me a lot, but I cannot change it...I cannot change my attitude...I don't like explaining all the time, and I start thinking that I should be more temperate sometimes...

Do you feel that these issues are kept within this area, or do they affect your teaching?

It is not...I believe I have to press myself a lot, so that these issues can affect my teaching. In other words...generally...as far as teaching concerns I remain the same. Now...I used to go out with children in the yard and play, have fun and do things together, in order to build a better relation outside the classroom...more open, but I see that this starts to fade.
Was there an incident that changed your attitude as far as this concern?

You know...what happened these last couple of weeks with that child I was telling you about, who has to repeat Year 2...this really influenced me. I'm no longer in the mood...but generally, I sometimes feel that I will make an effort to a certain extent, but I cannot foresee whether this will have the same strength and enthusiasm as before...my conclusion from all this incident this year is that I have to...well I keep saying that so many years...that it would be good for me to ignore all comments...to do the right thing for conscience sake...other than that...unfortunately this is impossible...most of the times, this affects me a lot...though I can find ways to deal with it...but always late.

Have you ever thought of it as a matter of professionalism?

Some people consider professionalism as..."ok, look...I'm professional, I do what I have to do, and this is where I have to stop". In our work this is somewhat weird. I don't think you can work in this area without feelings. It is impossible...ok, some people may make it...I cannot always achieve this. I have to...I mean I would like to try it...but I tell you what...I know in advance that I will not make it. It's not in my disposition to work with children without involving feelings. It can't be done...it's just...what I might want to do, and haven't done, is to keep parents in bigger distance. To be able to control them, and set the limits, because I have shown that I am far too open as a person, and I have said things and I mean them, but in the end this was badly used...from many people...bad use...this has disappointed me. Now, professionalism, as far as I'm concerned...it's totally the opposite from what the colleague stated. You have to have feelings, it can't be otherwise. I can imagine a doctor that after a couple of times will eventually stop thinking in this way, when going back home in the evening. Well, that's not how it works for me...even at home, when I become emotionally 'charged' with some cases at school.

So...you feel you change as a person because of these conditions?

At the moment what I feel is a sort of tiredness I have never felt before.

This is something that you started feeling lately?

Yes. It is the first time that I say that and I realise that. It might have to do with other things as well, but I don't know for
sure...I think it has to do with...the whole chemistry in the classroom...I don't know why, but for me it was too tiring this year. Though there were times that I knew something was about to happen...something would occur...and there you go again, it was destroyed. It's not that I have given up, but...

What would be more revitalising for you at this point?
Well...there's always the summer, I mean a rest is always good...but what would be truly revitalising, is to find the strength to say a few things straight out to parents and all the rest involve in this case. Because things happen...and this is my big mistake, but to be honest I am afraid of disputes. This causes me tension...it causes me huge emotional chaos...even when I am right. I don't know whether this is something that will happen this year...but it is urgent. In case I work with the same classroom next year, I will definitely open my mouth...things need to fall into place.

Have you ever been through something similar before?
No, no such thing, it's the first time. There are times I have done mistakes, like everyone...

Were there any incidents because of your mistakes?
No, nothing serious...some sort of complaints from parents, but nothing of great importance. I have been through such cases of SpLD, but no other case exceeded the limits.

Do you think that such incidences change you as a teacher?
They definitely provide you with a good reason to stop seeing things like you used to in the past.

If you had the chance to do more things for you, what would you choose now?
I would like to work with children facing learning difficulties...not severe cases, you know, dyslexia, specific learning difficulties etc. But in one-to-one teaching, to get to know problems. I need to learn things...new things...to help such cases...I've already asked Ph.'s mum to take him some afternoons at my place and spend time with him, to see how he reads, how he realises things...to learn Maths through games, through pc, not as a private lesson though, rather as a friend.

Have you ever done that before?
I have, but in private lessons, and this is a totally different thing. Unfortunately, with those children in private lessons, the first thing that is of high importance is to finish their study within...
time limits. Unfortunately, there is no time. I believe that within the classroom, things are a lot better. This is my opinion. It might sound irrational.

**How do you feel these days after this?** Look...after the discussion I had with the counsellor of special education my thoughts and decisions that I took before Easter were more or less confirmed. I mean that I should stop worrying about him, because even those holding higher positions are unable to deal with the issue. I should let it go...I will no longer fight for that...because there is no intention for help, from whoever is responsible...from his parents mainly. Even the state itself...I mean its representatives...who showed lack of organisation...who are stating: “Forget what the papers say...forget legislation, and go on...let him pass, to get rid of him.”.

**What do you think would be best for the child?**

The best would be...for this specific case...whether he should repeat or not Year 2...well, definitely yes! He has to repeat Year 2. I remember telling this to his father, the very first moment I met him...I would say the same thing, even if he was holding a pistol at my head...but since superiors stress the opposite, and he takes advantage of that. I don't think I have any weapons left to fight for...I think it would be irrational on my behalf to do the opposite now. People might end up thinking that this is between me and him..., but honestly nothing personal. He might end up saying that I don't want the child to move on at school...I mean it is that misinterpretable.

**Ok...is there anything you would like to add?**

I want to say...one thing that I want to say is that I start letting things go...unfortunately, my priorities have changed. There has been a phase in my life that financial issues were the priority. I don't think it is such a priority anymore. It's just that it is stuck into my mind...to the point that I start wondering about what I do. To the point that I might start missing other things. That might be more essential...more important. But I am sure, that even after all this delay, I am confident as far as I am concerned...though I have a problem with my self-esteem...I am sure that I will find the way out...that I will keep the balance. But you know what? You have to go through many things...to sweat blood, until you come to the surface again. Whatever other people say...we shouldn't have been involved that mush in this case, me, the head teacher, the
counselors...there is always the perspective for something better...but...there's nothing much to be done...we were exposed as a school, as professionals...
29. John’s ‘I’ Statements and Key-Words (Written Account/Follow-up Interview)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cognitive Statements</th>
<th>Affective Statements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“When I finally realised that I didn’t make it to the Athletic Academy, but I could just enrol to the Pedagogic Academy, I was disappointed” (Acc. Int.11, 1-3)</td>
<td>“...maybe one of the strongest things I have felt so far in my life. Though I had kept myself busy with sports and this was an area where I had felt quite strong emotions; however, what I felt when I first taught...[...] this is something I do not swap, and I cannot forget” (Acc. Int.11, 8-11)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I know that what this voice is telling me is against my disposition” (Acc. Int.11, 30)</td>
<td>“Fear and joy, enthusiasm and stress, anxiety but also an incredible confidence that this area suits me, fills me, this is what I like” (Acc. Int.11, 12-13)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“because I believe that I give...a lot of times...not exactly the help that I give to other children...” (F-up Int.11, 13-15)</td>
<td>“I feel very strongly a ‘holding back’ as far as my mood concerns” (Acc. Int.11, 17-18)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I mean I can easily forgive a person, and I can easily understand mistakes...and provide them with a second chance” (F-up Int.11, 15-16)</td>
<td>“I feel I still have things to give to children, and strength, in order to get over such difficulties and setbacks” (Acc. Int.11, 25-26)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I mean I don’t press myself to do it...I do it with pleasure...I mean, even if a child has done something improper [...]” (F-up Int.11, 18-22)</td>
<td>“but I’m afraid that this will gradually start to consolidate” (Acc. Int.11, 31)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“and I start thinking that I should be more temperate sometimes...” (F-up Int.11, 31-32)</td>
<td>“I wish to continue to strive as much as I can, to leave the school at noon” (Acc. Int.11, 37-38)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“but see that this starts to fade” (F-up Int.11, 40)</td>
<td>“I feel that they give me true love, and their smile always revitalises me. I would very much like to start spending time in the yard with children [...]” (Acc. Int.11, 41-44)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I don’t think you can work in this area without feelings” (F-up Int.11, 57-58)</td>
<td>“I don’t like explaining all the time” (F-up Int.11, 30)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I know in advance that I will not make it” (F-up Int.11, 60-61)</td>
<td>“I’m no longer in the mood...but generally, I sometimes feel that I will make an effort to a certain extent” (F-up Int.11, 45-46)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“as far as I’m concerned...” (F-up Int.11, 68-69)</td>
<td>“I would like to try it...” (F-up Int.11, 60)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I can imagine a doctor that after a couple of times will eventually stop thinking in this way” (F-up Int.11, 70-72)</td>
<td>“...what I might want to do” (F-up Int.11, 60)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I think it has to do with...the whole chemistry in the classroom...I don’t know why, but for me it was too tiring this year. Though there were times that I knew something was about to happen” (F-up Int.11, 82-85)</td>
<td>“At the moment what I feel is a sort of tiredness I have never felt before” (F-up Int.11, 77-78)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I mean a rest is always good...” (F-up Int.11, 88-89)</td>
<td>“but to be honest I am afraid of disputes” (F-up Int.11, 92)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I don’t know whether this is something that will happen this year...but it is urgent” (F-up Int.11, 94-95)</td>
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</table>
“I would like to work with children facing learning difficulties” (F-up Int.11, 110)

“I didn’t make it to the Athletic Academy […] I was disappointed” (Acc. Int.11, 1-3)
“I was asked to work as a teacher at a school for three months at Maroussi” (Acc. Int.11, 4-5)
“this is something I do not swap” (Acc. Int.11, 11)
“I am already a father” (Acc. Int.11, 15)
“and there will come a time that I will be nothing but a rusty gear of this obsolete machine that is called primary education” (Acc. Int.11, 32-33)
“I myself have stopped resisting” (Acc. Int.11, 34)
“I might be going through a crisis this time, with regards to my work, but I will not let this happen, I will not let this win, and I will find my way again…in other words, I will be back” (Acc. Int.11, 46-48)

“I didn’t work at all as a teacher…I just did some private lessons to children, and then I worked together with my father […] I graduated in 1987, I then started working as a substitute teacher in 1993, and it was in…in 1998 that I was placed as a permanent teacher, it was then that I started working…after 10 years” (F-up Int.11, 5-10)
“because I believe that I give…a lot of times…not exactly the help that I give to other children…” (F-up Int.11, 13-15)
“I will not…I will not exclude easily…I will give them a chance to try again…to correct their mistakes” (F-up Int.11, 20-22)
“and I start thinking that I should be more temperate sometimes…” (F-up Int.11, 31-32)
“as far as teaching concerns I remain the same. Now…I used to go out with children in the yard and play, have fun and do things together” (F-up Int.11, 37-39)
“I am far too open as a person, and I have said things and I mean them” (F-up Int.11, 65-66)
“when I become emotionally ‘charged’ with some cases at school” (F-up Int.11, 73-74)
“In case I work with the same classroom next year, I will definitely open my mouth…things need to fall into place” (F-up Int.11, 95-97)
“There are times I have done mistakes, like everyone…” (F-up Int.11, 99-100)
“I have been through such cases of SpLDs, but no other case exceeded the limits” (F-up Int.11, 103-104)
“after the discussion I had with the counsellor of special education my thoughts and decisions that I took before Easter were more or less confirmed” (F-up Int.11, 127-129)
“He might end up saying that I don’t want the child to move on at school…” (F-up Int.11, 146-147)
“I start letting things go…unfortunately, my priorities have changed” (F-up Int.11, 150-151)
“…to the point that I start wondering about what I do. To the point that I might start missing other things” (F-up Int.11, 154-155)
“But I am sure, that even after all this delay, I am confident as far as I am concerned…though I have a problem with my self-esteem…I am sure that I will find the way out…that I will keep the balance” (F-up Int.11, 156-159)

“but I could just enrol to the Pedagogic Academy” (Acc. Int.11, 2)
“and I cannot forget” (Acc. Int.11, 11)
“I need to reconsider some methods, some reactions and behaviours of mine” (Acc. Int.11, 35-36)
“and to think of how many things I could have done during the previous hour” (Acc. Int.11, 39)

“I can easily forgive a person, and I can easily understand mistakes…and provide them with a second chance” (F-up Int.11, 15-16)
“I cannot change it… I cannot change my attitude…” (F-up Int.11, 29-30)
“I have to press myself a lot so that these issues can affect my teaching” (F-up Int.11, 35-36)
“I cannot foresee whether this will have the same strength and enthusiasm as before” (F-up Int.11, 47-48)
“my conclusion from all this incident this year is that I have to” (F-up Int.11, 48-49)
“though I can find ways to deal with it…but always late” (F-up Int.11, 52-53)
“…I cannot always achieve this” (F-up Int.11, 59)
“I need to learn things…new things…to help such cases…” (F-up Int.11, 112-113)
“I should stop worrying about him, because even those holding higher positions are unable to deal with the issue. I should let it go...” (F-up Int.11, 129-131)

“I will make an effort to a certain extent” (F-up Int.11,46)  
“I will not make it” (F-up Int.11, 61)  
“It’s not that I have given up, but...” (F-up Int.11, 86)  
“I will no longer fight for that...because there is no intention for help, from whoever is responsible...” (F-up Int.11, 131-133)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>KEY-WORDS</th>
<th>ACCOUNT/FOLLOW-UP INTERVIEW</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Learning Difficulties</td>
<td>-(specific) learning difficulties</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compassion</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Anxiety</td>
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<tr>
<td>Treatment</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Help</td>
<td>-help</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 20: John’s ‘I’ Statements (b)

Table 21: John’s Themes’ Key-Words (b)
30. Observation Field Notes (John)

**Field notes (Monday 7th May 2007)**  
2nd hr-Literature  
(place: mainstream primary school in Athens)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Codes-CMs</th>
<th>Preliminary Analysis (shortly after observation)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PoEtap</td>
<td>To achieve better contact?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PoEtap</td>
<td>Is. is described as slow reader/learner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I leave the voice recorder on the teacher’s desk. It captures his conversation with Is.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>And., as teacher claims, is hyperactive, but not assessed.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**09:00** Test in vocabulary. The teacher is reading words and children write them down on a piece of paper. Georg is sitting alone in the front desk. Writing down words starting with the letter ‘τ’ (=$\tau$). The teacher pronounces a word starting with ‘τ’. Children write this down; I hear some of them pronouncing it again and again. The teacher informs me that it may not be useful to spend time with them now, as this will take about 10-15 minutes. A pupil asks:

Zina: ‘Τ’?  
J: ‘Yes, let’s move to ‘τ’…’  
Another pupil asks him again…

Vassilis: ‘Is it a word that…’  
J: ‘Well…whatever this is, you know better…next word is…’

He pronounces another word starting with ‘τ’. Then another…children are whispering…The teacher turns to Is. he places her at a desk next to his desk and says:

J: ‘Isabella! Come on Isabella!’  
The girl is staring at him.

J: ‘Did you make any revision in vocabulary?’  
Isabella: ‘Yes’  
The teacher browses his book. Silence. George is quiet. He listens and writes. The teacher tells them another word. A pupil asks him to repeat. A couple of children in the front rush to repeat the word loudly. He moves to another word and then…

J: ‘Let’s move to the next letter…which is ’υ’.

A pupil complains because he may have to write on another page, since there is so much to write. Some children say they are reaching the last letters of the alphabet….

J: ‘…so…you might not need it actually…you’ll see why. Come on, children! Let’s finish this now.’
He continues pronouncing words for them…gradually children start talking louder. The teacher is browsing again. A boy at the front desk is playing with his pencil, pretending it’s a gun…

_ J: ‘And! Can you stop doing that? Since we started the lesson you must have killed more than 20! That’s enough for today!’ _

Children laugh. They are noisy now. The teacher raises his voice:

_ J: ‘Can I ask you something? Now, you are concentrated to the vocabulary test, right? I hear And. shooting…you over there…you are talking to Zina…some of you are still asking about ‘f’…I don’t understand…I mean, what do you think you are doing now? …ok, we agreed to make jokes from time to times, to avoid monotony…but this is too much now! And. please…calm down, and sit properly, my boy…Vassilis, can you please turn in front?’ _

Charis approaches to show him his test and whispers to him:

_ Charis: ‘You still have the pen I bought you as a present?’ _

_ J: ‘Yes’ _

A few seconds later…

_ J: ‘It was broken, but I fixed it. It’s ok now’. _

The teacher continues with letter ‘φ’. George raises his hand. In the meantime the teacher is making a remark, so he cannot interrupt him. He wants to go to the loo. The teacher gives him permission, so the classroom has to wait until George is back. Children start talking louder again. He raises his voice:

_ J: ‘…you see? I’ve been telling this for days now…you see that you are running wild again?! It’s incredible…it truly is…’ _

**09:15** George is back. Children have to be quick now. The teacher reads the last couple of words. Diam. is chatting with Th. Th. is about to ask the teacher a question. The teacher is in a hurry, he moves to letter ‘χ’. He gives them two words and stops. Time is over. George is murmuring…tossing and turning.
The teacher asks them to check their papers again:

J: ‘Do you want to have a second look at your paper?’
Children: Yees! (altogether)

A pupil asks him whether it is possible to work in pairs.

J: ‘No. You will work alone. Do not open your books…Fotis, please concentrate on your paper’.

The teacher highlights the importance of having a second look at their test:

J: ‘I asked you to double check the words that you have written down. Read them again one by one, and see whether you’ve made any spelling errors. This is your work. And checking is a serious work…you cannot imagine, Fotis, how serious this work is…for children at your age. It’s not just for fun.’

Silence. Children are working. In the meantime the teacher is tidying up his desk, arranging things…opening drawers…He then stands up. He reaches the other end of the classroom, leans against the wall, next to the door. Some pupils go to his desk to leave their papers. He asks them to bring them to him. He collects the papers; in the meantime he has a quick look at some of them and comments. One by one, children form a queue in front of him, waiting for his comments; he either smiles at them, or hugs them, or makes remarks, depending on the case.

J: ‘…right…(having a quick look at each paper)...did you write your name on top?... oh! Nic.! what do I see here...why, Nic.?...did you do any revision at all to our vocabulary?’

Nic. nods.

J: ‘I don’t understand. Is this a positive or negative nod? Did you do a good revision or just a bit of revision?’

The teacher receives no reply. Still collecting papers from pupils. He then raises his voice and turns to And.:

J: ‘And. stop it please!’
The teacher keeps making remarks to pupils for errors he has identified. In the meantime, George gives him his test. Children are noisy. George is standing on the side, starring at the teacher. The rest of the children nudging behind him.

J: ‘May I ask you something? How many times did I tell to all of you earlier this morning to write bigger letters? Why do you write like that? Why?’

George keeps starring at him. He nods positively.

J: ‘Then why don’t you improve your writing? Please try to write better…but on the other hand, I guess you don’t want to do it, right? But apart from that, whether you write small or big letter, your mistakes remain.’

A child disturbs their conversation. Turning to him again…

J: ‘Why do you keep writing so small letters? I cannot make out what you write…Please, please write bigger letter…please, so that I can understand’.

George is starring at him, speechless.

J: ‘But, on the other hand, I guess you don’t feel like writing bigger letters, right?...You don’t want to?..’.

No answer from George The teacher asks him to sit down. He then asks children if there’s anyone who hasn’t given him the paper.

09:25 George goes back to his desk. He tries to put his things in order again. Then Is. gives the teacher her test. The teacher is disappointed, because she has made a lot of mistakes. He moves to his desk again, and raises his voice. He starts talking about the classroom’s performance:

J: ‘You just cannot take something seriously enough…and to be honest, I don’t know what this keeps happening. Nick I remember asking you something… I still wait for your reply…did you study enough? Or did you study just a bit? Did you make any revision at all?’

In the meantime turning to Isabella:
J: ‘It’s ok Isabella, go and sit down now’

Nick replies that he forgot to make a revision.

J: ‘So, you didn’t…why?’

Nick doesn’t reply. The teacher gets angry.

J: ‘Don’t make me raise my voice! Why didn’t you do any revision at all? Give me a reason?’
Nadia: ‘I had forgotten to do it’
J: ‘Did you?...I see. Tomorrow...for those who might have forgotten it....I hope you remember that we had arranged a revision in all the previous issue. Now open your books…’

09:27 The classroom moves to the next text. The teacher asks children to read the following poem one by one. He asks them to read two verses each. In the meantime he starts marking the tests. Children read fast, one by one. During their reading, the teacher doesn’t intervene. George is the last one to read; he reads clearly and fast.

This is the last text of the book. No exercises are attached. The teacher reads the text as well; he explains that they will just read it through and try to do something different this time. The teacher reads loudly, clearly, while walking around in the classroom. Children are quiet. George is looking at his bag; he pushes the desk closer to his body. He is not reading the text, just looking and listening to the teacher. He then looks at the time. He yawns...George is tiny. Very short for his age and skinny. Very fast in his moves; his moves are quite jerky. The teacher asks children to read the text one more time.

Silence. The teacher is sitting at his desk; he is busy, arranging things, papers, copies etc. He is reading the teacher’s book. George stops reading. The text is about a page and a half. A boy opposite him asks him if he managed to read it all. George nods positively, but soon after that he starts re-reading the text.

09:35 Nick raises his hand.
J: ‘Tell me…’
Nic.: ‘What does the word ‘nerves’ mean, sir?’
J: ‘You must wait; your mates haven’t finished reading yet’.

A boy starts laughing at him. He looks at me. I smile
back at him. In a few minutes the teacher asks them:
J: ‘Did you read it?’
Classroom: ‘Yes!’ (altogether)
J: ‘Now, tell me Nic.’
Nick isn’t heard, he pronounces the word, as if he is bored.
Nick: ‘…nerves’
J: ‘I don’t understand...read me the whole line, please...tell me where this is’
Nick: ‘...their flying-lines made of thin nerves of animals’
J: ‘So, you don’t know what the word ‘nerves’ mean?’
Nick: ‘No’
The teacher starts explaining where these are allocated in the human body, how they are related to irritants (pain, tickling) etc. He compares it to thin threads that transfer such messages to the brain. And. still playing with his pencil. The teacher interrupts him:

J: ‘Stop it now!...you know what? Why don’t we produce ‘Rambo 4’? Will get good money of this! Concentrate young man!’

Children have a lot of unknown words (pegs, bend, unspeakable etc). The teacher tries to explain them all. George isn’t paying attention: playing with his rubber, then checking the time.

**09:37** The teacher asks questions on the text, based on the differences between the way people used to leave in prehistoric ages and now. He asks pupils by their names. He asks them if they can recall previous texts they had read, referring to this age. Children raise their hands, some of them calling ‘Sir, Sir!’ all the time, waiting for him to pick them. The bell rings. George takes off his glasses. Children start taking their snack out of their bags. He has to speak louder, because of the noise outside. He starts asking questions very fast, and children reply altogether. George is looking outside the window. He pushes his chair and makes a lot of noise. The teacher lets them go. By the time he gives his permission, George is the first to rush out of the classroom. The teacher is still in the middle of asking questions, but George has already disappeared. Some children ask him things about how people used to construct huts, or how they used to fish etc.

[voice file D036-D077]
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Codes-CMs</th>
<th>Preliminary Analysis</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PoEtap</td>
<td>Th. is a child staying at the orphanage.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PoEtap</td>
<td>To check whether they have understood the process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PoEtap</td>
<td>The teacher is very upset with George</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PoEtap</td>
<td>He has no time maybe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PoEtap</td>
<td>I get the feeling he is trying to hide something from me.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PoEtap</td>
<td>It seems George doesn’t</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Field notes (Thursday 10th May 2007)**  
1st hr-Maths  
(place: mainstream primary school in Athens)

**08:20** Walking into the classroom. A couple of parents are waiting for the teacher. 5’ conversation. The teacher walks outside the classroom with them. The classroom is silent. George is sitting at the front desk with a peer of his. Children are talking about the exercise they had to prepare at home. The teacher asks Th. to explain the rationale. George is observing the teacher. A couple of children approach him to give him the test in Maths signed by his parents. The teacher makes a comment on the test as well. He asks them not to raise hands

J: ‘What I see is that on a daily basis...lately on a daily basis, we discuss these issues. And what you want to achieve is the opposite. In other words, the more I talk to you and try to draw your attention, the more uninterested you become’.

Children have to prepare exercise 3 in their exercise books. A pupil is reading aloud the first one. George is looking in his book. The teacher asks questions regarding the process of doing sums.

**08:30** The teacher asks George if he solved the problem. I move towards his desk. George hasn’t even noted the numbers for this exercise. In the meantime a boy—who hasn’t done the sum—is asked to go through the exercise on the board. The teacher makes a comment to me about George, saying that he sort of expected that.

J: ‘I had this ‘dream’ again. We talk about these issues on a daily basis’

The teacher turns to George:

T: ‘I don’t know how to begin with...it’s always your ‘vitrine’, your ‘image’...you don’t care about the ‘essence’. It’s just the clothes you wear...it’s just these things, ok, but...as far as the practical issues concerns, and our performance as pupils...’

George is looking at him. He doesn’t seem to react. The teacher stops talking to him; he has to move on. He turns to Th. again, who tells him that he has made a mistake, because he cannot understand how to do the sum. The teacher asks Th. to erase and correct mistakes. I reach George again; he is watching me with the corner of his eye. As soon as I approach him, he realises that and he closes
his book. He hasn’t copied the exercise, now that children are solving it altogether. The teacher asks N. and congratulates him for his correct effort. In the meantime he moves from desk to desk to check whether they prepared homework. A couple of boys say they didn’t understand. The teacher is trying to explain again, but he mentions that they should have asked him the previous day, or at least they should have given a thought at home. Another girl wants to have a try with phrasing the opposite problem. The teacher replies:

J: ‘Tell me Z...what do you want to say?’
Z: ‘Can I say mine in N.’s way?’
J: ‘There is no other way, we discussed both. We cannot waste our time, repeating things in other words...come on then...I’m listening...’

Z. reads her text, but she does the same mistake as the two boys. The teacher asks her to correct it, and advice the rest to pay attention.

08:40 The teacher asks George to give him the blue exercise book with his homework.

J: ‘George, did you prepare homework?’
George nods positively.
J: ‘Bring me your homework then now.’

He tells him that in the meantime he should copy the problem from A.’s exercise book. The teacher gets angry. He asks him to copy the text from the boy sitting next to him. Then he asks him to give him the other book with the rest of the exercises. George asks him:

G: ‘Which exercise book?’
J: ‘...the Maths’ workbook’, frowning on him. ‘Did you do the exercises?...’

No reply from George.

J: ‘I’m asking you, young man! Did you do the exercises? Yes or no?’
G: ‘I brought you the rough draft...because I forgot the workbook at home...’
A few seconds pause...the teacher starring at him...

J: ‘Would it be unfair now, if I slapped you face?...would it be my fault?’
G: ‘...no....’
J: ‘You have the audacity to come to my desk and give me the same old excuse?...you brought me your rough draft...I reckon you didn’t even copied the exercises to the workbook!’. G: ‘I did’

understand at all.
He tries to save time, but in the end listens to her.

J whispers to me ‘watch this now!’; he guesses that GEORGE. hasn’t done homework.

He simply cannot be bothered.

They seem
J: ‘You did…ok, George sit down please, and leave me your rough draft’

The teacher asks other pupils one by one to show them their exercises. He asks them to pass him their books, and starts making remarks. He starts raising his voice. Silence.

J: “The only way you can work is through threatening and bugbears! You just cannot understand some things, right? We’ve reached the end of school year, and still this is the picture of your performance, no improvement…this means that I have to be the ‘bad’ guy, the ‘hunter’, the ‘gendarme’. But, you know…this is not my role…I don’t want to take part in this process…I just check your workbooks, to be aware…and to let parents know. I am so curious though….how do you spend the whole day at home? …the only thing you had to do today was Maths, you had no homework in Literature…you’ve got Music…nothing…training…which is nothing again…say you also had a bit of Religion…for me the most important is Maths. And I face now 6-7 pupils who haven’t worked on their homework. I mean…you forgot what? The most important thing for today?”

The teacher calms down. He then asks those pupils (5) by their names to stay in during the break and have a word with him privately. He then turns to me:

J: ‘I’m talking about exercise which takes about 5’ each to do…they just had to solve this and prepare the reverse problem…they do nothing…nothing at all…’

08:45 Moving to exercise 2. George is quiet, copying from his friend. Another boy is asked to do the exercise on the board. The teacher moves from desk to desk, to check. He stands in front of George and An.’s desk. George is absent-minded again; he has turned his back to the teacher. The teacher co-operates with a couple of children. He is very disappointed, he says…murmuring:

J: ’Imagine…I wanted them to move to the next section…’

08:50 The teacher asks them to close their books. Children are whispering and murmuring. The teacher asks them to get a piece of paper with their name and date on top. This is a test on sums. George goes to the dust bin to sharpen his pencil. (648 pupils were divided into groups, into 9 train wagons. How many pupils got into each wagon?). Children are supposed to do the sum and provide the reverse problem as well. The teacher informs them they will get the grade they deserve; he will not be favourable this time.

08:55 Silence. They’ve got 5 minutes left. George hasn’t written a word. He gives his paper to the teacher.
J: “I wish I had realised some things about some of you earlier in the year, so that I can take them in hand…but it doesn’t matter…there’s always time. I have a feeling that most of this homework is prepared by others at home…let’s see if this is true. Needless to say that this will be taken seriously into consideration as far as the 3rd semester’s grade concerns. No one should dare come to me and apologise for running out of time”

Silence. He then looks at me. The teacher is having a quick look at his test. He nods his head negatively

J: ‘There you go again…you are doing the same mistakes…why?’

The teacher moves back to his desk, some children have gathered around and wait for him to mark their test.

George asks if he can leave. The teacher informs pupils to give him their test and go to music classroom. George takes his things and leaves the classroom for music lesson.

[voice file A148-A 197]

PoEtap

Talking loudly, he doesn’t care whether they can hear him.

Just a threat?
31. Maria’s 1st Interview with Concept map-Thursday, 16th November 2006

...how do you think about children with SpLD, especially dyslexia?
M: I’d say they are children with particularities...

...and how do you perceive these particularities?
M:...I mean children with special abilities...(writing)...they have their own way of thinking, they have their own pace, slower, and naturally they need some help.

How many years of teaching experience do you have?
M: I have 22 years.

Where you first placed in Athens or in the provinces?
M: I was first placed in West Attica…Mantra. I was never placed in the provinces. The first year I had Year 3, and then I went to Peristeri, where I had Year 2, then Heraklion, N. Ionia and Maroussi…

During those first years…
M: …we are going 20 years back…

Yes…do you remember having in your classroom children with specific learning difficulties?
M: I do remember…yes…learning difficulties. Which were not diagnosed though. There were some problems, but that doesn’t mean that there might have been due to dyslexia or whatever. More or less I had identified them as gaps, and especially in Year 3, where they were much more obvious.

Which was your first reaction to this?
M: I called the girl’s mum to tell her that something was wrong.

Based on your experience, what made you think that this might have been dyslexia?
M: Such children have a difficulty in reading…in writing…in Maths…they cannot concentrate easily…they get tired easily…and as far as their behaviour is concerned, they are isolated.

According to you, which is the most important of these?
M: Their behaviour and their feelings. They have low self-esteem. I think this is the way they feel inside. Low self-esteem…which is caused by the social environment. It is caused by their problem, which is naturally obvious in the classroom. The fact that he/ she is different from the rest of children…isn’t it obvious? For instance, Helen. And she tries to show something positive…like a drawing…something that she can do better. The ship she brought the other day…well we showed that to the other children and that made her happy.

Do you remember Helen first steps?
M: When she came to my classroom, she was a very shy girl, she didn’t know where she was. She couldn’t put out any feelings, nothing. The other children accepted her as Helen. Little by little,
however, the whole thing was unfolded. Helen started to read and she couldn’t read that well, so the rest said ‘She can’t read!’. Helen received that and understood that as if they mock her.

**Why do you think children do that?**

M: Children are racists, aren’t they? And this has its roots in their home. They haven’t discussed with their parents the fact that there are children who might not be good pupils or that good in reading. They aren’t told that we have to accept them as well. There are parents who haven’t realised the problem, because they haven’t learned to think in this way. They haven’t faced the problem in order to accept it. So this problem is an unfamiliar situation. Now, as far as Helen mum is concerned, or generally as far as all mothers of such children are concerned, they try in a way to identify the problem, to accept that something is wrong with their child. Once this is achieved, mums can help their children. On the other hand, there are also parents who cannot accept it. There is a mother who cannot accept that her child has a sort of learning difficulty or dyslexia, she doesn’t take her boy for assessment, because she thinks he is just immature. And she does have a measure…a standard…because her other boy is very good. So, she can compare…but she deludes herself. I made quite an effort, and last year he used to attend the special classroom. Meanwhile, because the special teacher used to withdraw him from Maths, the mother said that the child could not receive more from the special classroom, so she wouldn’t let him attend it from Easter and on.

**If your son had dyslexia, what would you do?**

M: I would try to find out what is wrong. Therefore I would take him for assessment in a private centre. If the teacher had informed me to do so, I would start searching straight away. I would get informed about learning difficulties, about dyslexia, and I would try to send him to a centre in order to confront the problem…in the bud. I don’t think I could offer much if I realised that in Year 3 for instance, it would be too late.

**What kind of info…of advising did you get for dyslexia?**

M: I graduated from the Academy, and then I attended some seminars on dyslexia, where the lecturer was G. Pavlidis, in Maroussi, based on attention deficit disorder…we paid for these. This was more or less based on parents’ experiences. Because parents were lecturing…on the way they confronted the problem, and the sort of solutions they were seeking. I believe that regarding my experiences, Helen is the most severe case I have come across so far…in the past years…I had come across learning difficulties…in upper Years these were not identified as learning difficulties, rather as gaps of knowledge. Because when the child grows up, you cannot identify easily the problem…only in reading.

**When did you first hear about dyslexia?**

M: Well, I don’t remember…from Pavlidis, I guess…before attending the seminars. And from that point and on we started identifying dyslexia, even in cases where the problem was just in dictation. This may be a type of dyslexia, but we categorise them and we more or less characterise them as
dyslexic. Once we become suspicious. In the classroom, there may be some elements which permit me to identify the problem. But this depends much on time as well as on the number of pupils. On the other hand, I cannot say for sure whether this is dyslexia or learning difficulties. I can just state that something is wrong, and from this point and on, I inform parents, so that they can take their child for assessment. I cannot diagnose.

*For how long have you been teaching in this school?*

M: I think it’s been 10 years, maybe 12…

*Was there a special classroom when you first came here?*

M: No. I just remember another classroom for parallel teaching that children from the orphanage used to attend. This gradually became a special classroom. We had a lot of children from this orphanage…and we still do. We don’t have foreigners nor home-coming children…there was a time that this school was working only in the morning, to assist these children from every side of Maroussi. When I first came here, I had 33 children in Year 1, and Year 1 had three levels in total…imagine 100 children in Year 1. It was one of the biggest schools. Especially those children attending the special classroom come from this orphanage…this is supposed to help them improve their behaviour, their learning, some have learning difficulties…some don’t. M…for instance he doesn’t have learning difficulties, he has some gaps. But it’s ok, because he gets help, because I don’t think they get that from where they come from. I don’t know how organised are things there…we don’t know their program in lessons…

*Do you think the special classroom helps children with specific learning difficulties?*

M: Sure! Because it is one-to-one teaching. The mainstream teacher may want to help, but this is difficult, because it is also the rest of children that need…I cannot offer what the special teacher offers to HELEN…they need to organise their time, right?

*Right, go on…*

M: (writing) **one-to-one teaching approach**…it also helps them in their behaviour, did you notice Helen feelings now?

*How do you handle the situation in the classroom?*

M: …rewards…you know…I try to show how happy I am when she does things that she likes, you see her smiling all the time. So I say ‘Well done, Helen! Did you see what she achieved?’ and I say that so that the rest can listen. Not that she is excellent. I try to encourage her, so that the rest accept her as well. I don’t let her sit on her own. Not that she likes it. She is lonely, she wants to be lonely. And she doesn’t like sitting in the front desk. This is important. If she did that, she might have been more concentrated during the lesson. Because dyslexic children lack concentration. But she doesn’t want that…is it because she feels she will be in the front and everyone will be staring at her? I do believe it is good for her to sit near me, and to have a peer next to her. For instance, E. always helps her when they sit together. Helen is stuck on E. now.
Can you imagine a special teacher working with you in your classroom?
M: Yes, and I have done that actually with a lady, when we had a child from the orphanage here. She would stay in the back though…

Was that easy?
M: It was. Because we had a child with learning difficulty but also with behavioural problems. And she would help him in the classroom. And it proved good; it was effective, because he would stay in the classroom.

How did you feel about this approach?
M: To tell you the truth I don’t know. I don’t know…I don’t know how effective this is for a child with attention deficit disorder. Is it because he listened to her voice as well? I might be it. In Helen case, because Helen…I don’t know…she must be lacking concentration, so it’s a complicated thing, right? Imagine…I also have P. and Ch. In there as well…

One last thing…do you remember such cases, when you were a pupil?
M: Yes, and all these things were hidden behind the label ‘lazy’. He is lazy, he doesn’t read, he is a bad pupil…but this may not have been laziness…it may have been dyslexia or learning difficulties. It just…it wasn’t diagnosed; people had no idea then about dyslexia or learning difficulties…all children had to learn lessons by heart and reach the classroom’s level. But these children managed to progress, they definitely did. These children are not lost…they may have not reached the uni, but they did become fine people…I have a number of such cases.
Maria’s 2nd Interview with Concept map-Thursday, 8th March 2007

I would like you to give me your opinion about dyslexia, your perception…

M: For me it is more or less a difficulty in writing and reading… I would say that this is attached to a number of learning difficulties… within the classroom environment… also attached to their behaviour…

And which was your initial idea of dyslexia?

M: I would generally say learning difficulties… (writing) this is what I understood of this term… but I don’t remember having related this to mental retardation… I related it to something that was wrong regarding their brain… but that was blur to me… because these children may be good at Maths, so that doesn’t mean they are not clever… I first heard about learning difficulties after 1985. I was working in a private school then. I started my update through Pavlidis, you know… this was the first seminar I attended, and then there was another seminar with Miller, you know the ambassador’s wife […]

Do you see any differences between these two views?

M: I would say that the general part is ‘learning difficulties’… the more specific one is that… there is one type of learning difficulties, which is dyslexia. We generally identify these problems as learning difficulties, and it is the through assessment process that the problem becomes more specific.

Were there any factors that influenced this change in your opinion?

M: Well… I guess these were some experiences… (writing) it has more to do with getting to know such children. Also… it’s the improvement in several things… also the seminars we mentioned above…

Were there any such cases within your family environment that made you reflect on that?

M: I’m afraid not… but I had several experiences from schools… I believe that every year I happen to come across such cases.

…but no such stimulant while you were young?

M: Well it’s been years… I can say for sure that there was no such case within my family environment. But not even among friends… especially when talking about dyslexia, even if you meet such a child, it is still difficult to say things, because you need to see the child at school, through the learning process.

…you grew up?

M: We lived with my parents at Volos. In the city of Volos. This is were I finished high school, and then I came to Athens to attend the Academy… apart from that I had also succeeded in the business school, but I never graduated. My father was a trader… my brother was studied something similar
then, and I wanted to do the same thing. The thing was that we had something for sure...I mean there was no problem in finding a job, because my father had the store, so we could work there. This was a family business...my brother is working there...but I would have done the same thing. Though my first choice in the application form was the medical school...but I failed...so I became a teacher!

Do you have any regrets?
M: No, I haven’t. It’s just that it has become a bit tiring. And I guess it depends of the year...and the classroom...the recent classroom, well...they are very naughty, but they are clever...they come to school happy. Last year I didn’t like working, because children couldn’t be bothered...

...so you got into the Academy...
M: And my parents were not that thrilled...I started working before even graduating, in a private school [...] I worked there for five years...it was difficult, because we had to spend many hours a days there, and accompany children back to their homes...plus there was quite a control...we had cameras in every single classroom. (interruption) ...but in the private school, I managed to learn a lot...because we used to do a lot of things there...but I couldn’t stand any more, so I left 5 years later...I guess a number of experiences and knowledge came from this school [...] 

...so have you seen a lot of changes throughout your teaching career?
M: Yes, of course. And I think it is after working for 15 years, that you actually realise what kind of work you do and how you do it. I now see that I start feeling more complete as a teacher, but at the same time I start feeling more tired...or I get tired easier...that’s why there are times I see myself doing less things. When I was younger I lacked experience I guess.

You said your father was a trader...what about your mother?
M: My mother was an accountant in a drugstore. And I forgot to mention that I grew up in a city...with mixed schools...I attended high school only for girls [...] 

Do you remember any peers facing learning problems?
M: There was a girl, who couldn’t read well...the teacher used to punish her all the time...this might have been dyslexia, but this was unknown then...I remember that quite vividly.

How did you react as children towards such children?
M: Well, normally we were all friends. And I still am a good friend of her. She graduated high school, but she didn’t manage to go to the uni. She works at the municipality’s offices.

Have you ever thought of working as a special teacher?
M: I was thinking of sitting for the exams at Marazlio, 3-4 years ago...because I had a lot of children with learning difficulties...

That was recently, right?
M: Yes, because the benefits were quite a motive. No...I think it was even before that...I think my son was still in primary school...so the problem was where we would leave my son, if I had to go
down town daily. My father said that this was not a good idea; instead he would give me the ‘benefit’! So I quit…plus I had to study for the exams…

_So…this was in a way a financial motive, right?_

M: Well, apart from that…I would…you know…after those further studies, I don’t know if I would do that anyway…I mean to walk into a classroom and teach children with special needs. I might do that…I don’t know…honestly…though this kind of work needs extra patience, strength…you have to confront parents…parents who simply do not want to accept their problem…it is the daily kind of attrition…where you need to be patient…

_Do you think that compassion may be confused with patience sometimes?_

M: Well, you don’t feel sorry for them. You just try to help. It’s not that they lack things. But you cannot achieve anything unless parents are willing to support you as well […] I would like to add some things…well, imagine in 1965…my parents loved having children…but we didn’t have within our family any such examples…reading and writing was a different process then…if you were not a good pupil, you would choose something else. Also the years that followed…you know ’73-’74 were very difficult years…
### 33. Maria’s ‘I’ Statements and Key-Words

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Statement</th>
<th>Example Statements</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>cognitive statements</strong></td>
<td>“I mean children with special abilities” (Int. 13, 7)</td>
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<td>“I think this is the way they feel inside” (Int. 13, 40)</td>
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<td>“I believe that regarding my experiences, HELEN is the most severe case” (Int. 13, 104)</td>
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<td>“I guess...before attending the seminars” (Int. 13, 113)</td>
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<td>“I don’t know how organised are things there...” (Int. 13, 149)</td>
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<td>“I do believe it is good for her to sit near me, and to have a peer next to her” (Int. 13, 177-178)</td>
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<td>“I don’t know. I don’t know...I don’t know how effective this is for a child with attention deficit disorder” (Int. 13, 192-193)</td>
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<td>“I don’t remember having related this to mental retardation” (Int. 13a, 10-11)</td>
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<td>“I guess these were some experiences...” (Int. 13a,32)</td>
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<td>“I guess a number of experiences and knowledge came from this school [...]” (Int. 13a, 82-83)</td>
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<td>“I see myself doing less things” (Int. 13a, 91)</td>
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<td>“I remember that quite vividly” (Int. 13a, 103)</td>
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<td>“I was thinking of sitting for the exams at Marazlio” (Int. 13a, 111)</td>
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<td>“I think it was even before that...I think my son was still in primary school...” (Int. 13a, 118-119)</td>
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<td>“I don’t know if I would do that anyway [...] I don’t know...honestly” (Int. 13a, 127-128)</td>
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<td><strong>affective statements</strong></td>
<td>“I wanted to do the same thing” (Int. 13a,53)</td>
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<td><strong>PSpri</strong></td>
<td>“Last year I didn’t like working, because children couldn’t be bothered...” (Int. 13a, 66-67)</td>
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<td>“I start feeling more complete as a teacher, but at the same time I start feeling more tired” (Int. 13a, 89-90)</td>
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<td><strong>state and action statements</strong></td>
<td>“I do remember...yes” (Int. 13, 23)</td>
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<td><strong>PSpri</strong></td>
<td>“I would take him for assessment in a private centre. If the teacher had informed me to do so, I would start searching straight away. I would get informed about learning difficulties, about dyslexia” (Int. 13, 88-92)</td>
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<td>“I don’t let her sit on her own” (Int. 13, 168)</td>
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<td>“I related it to something that was wrong regarding their brain...” (Int. 13a,12)</td>
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<td>“so I became a teacher!” (Int. 13a,61)</td>
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<td>“I get tired easier” (Int. 13a,90)</td>
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<td>“When I was younger I lacked experience” (Int. 13a, 92)</td>
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<td><strong>ability and constraint statements</strong></td>
<td>“I could offer much” (Int. 13, 94)</td>
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<td><strong>PSpri</strong></td>
<td>“I cannot say for sure whether this is dyslexia or learning difficulties. I can just state that something is wrong” (Int. 13, 124-125)”</td>
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<td>“I cannot offer what the special teacher offers to HELEN...” (Int. 13, 159)</td>
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<td>“but I couldn’t stand any more” (Int. 13a,81)</td>
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<td>“I had to study for the exams...” (Int. 13a, 122)</td>
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<td><strong>achievement statements</strong></td>
<td>“I would try to find out what is wrong” (Int. 13, 87)</td>
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<td><strong>PSi</strong></td>
<td>“I try to show how happy I am when she does things that she likes” (Int. 13, 164)</td>
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<td>“I try to encourage her, so that the rest accept her as well” (Int. 13, 166-167)</td>
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<td>“I managed to learn a lot...because we used to do a lot of things there” (Int. 13, 75-76)</td>
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Table 22: Maria’s ‘I’ Statements (a)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learning Difficulties</th>
<th>INTERVIEWS with concept maps MARIA</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>-clever</td>
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<td>-good</td>
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<td>-immature</td>
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<td>-laziness</td>
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<td>-learning difficulties</td>
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<td>-mental retardation</td>
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<td>-particularity</td>
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<td>-special needs</td>
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| Compassion                                | -sorry                            |
| Anxiety                                   |                                   |
| Treatment                                 |                                   |
| Help                                      | -help/helpless/helpful            |
|                                           | -support                          |

Table 23: Maria’s Themes’ Key-Words (a)
34. Maria’s Follow-up Interview [Friday, 20th June 2008]

You didn’t have time to do this in writing, so instead we’ll do it orally again...
Right, it doesn’t matter anyway......so...generally, can I say a few things about how I started?
Yes, whatever you chose to say...
Generally I started working too early, even before...well, I remember that the last course I undertook at the Academy was Music...I started working at a private school. For five whole years. I worked there with children...difficult children...and there were a lot of children actually...I am talking about 36 children in a single classroom. Well, ok...what I believe is that the very first years at work are basically determinants. I think I learnt a lot of things. Many things I didn’t know...because there are a lot of things that are not taught at the Academy. There were a lot of areas to be covered. Though if you ask me now...well, at the very beginning my priority was to attend the Medicine School, I had to re-sit for the exams...I failed again. It was at that second time that I enrolled at the Industrial Studies’ University in Athens. I just attended the first year, I am still registered there...but never finished my studies. I didn’t want to continue, because I wasn’t really interested. This profession is satisfying for me now, I mean being a teacher...I cannot imagine doing anything else...and I was satisfied ever since I started working...because, you know being also a doctor is something that has to do with human beings...so it was ok...whereas Industrial Studies was totally different, totally...impersonal...so, I never tried again. Those were the two times...I mean the first time that I enrolled as a teacher...actually the mean of my grades was the second best mean throughout Greece, so then I enrolled in Industrial Studies...
Do you imagine yourself having a different professional career?
Now?...no. I have already realised that I will retire from this job. There is nothing else I want to do...you mean what I will do after I retire? I don’t know...I will probably attend a charity institution...I don’t know...to attend specific programs...disinterestedly...that depends whether I have spare time...whether I have the abilities...whether I am healthy...but
again something child-centred...but yes...right after the Medical School the option would be teaching anyway. Though the circumstances become difficult to cope with...children's behaviour is very complicated nowadays...parents' behaviour as well...their demands generally...because the teacher is the one that has to do everything. You can't get help from anyone. Money is not enough...and you know, there are times that you find yourself being in a difficult position, you end up being very tired...but it also has to do with the pupils you have each time. It isn't that cool...or easy all the time...these last couple of years though, the level of my pupils in Year 2 and 3 was very high...this is where you give more, but you also get more. This 'covers' my needs in a way...I remember the most difficult time I had was in the private school with pupils with special needs. There was one with Down syndrome, and another one with Autism. The latter would come and simply stay in the classroom...I had no information from parents...then...also...I didn't know much, I was totally inexperienced. I was at the age of 22 then. The child with Autism was integrated in my classroom, I had 36 children in my classroom then...and there was another child, A. who had Down syndrome...I don't actually know his progress at the moment. I had some difficult times with him, and I didn't have the knowledge to face this. I don't think he managed to learn anything from me; he just received love...that's all. And I don't think I felt any compassion then, because I was very young, I had more patience then and courage...I did have the strain to help him...I simply didn't have...I was inexperienced. I couldn't do anything more to help, something different. I didn't know the way plus there were a lot of children in the classroom. I believe that having 36 children in Year 1 and 2 is too much. I believe that throughout those 5 years in the private school, I faced the more difficult cases regarding special needs. Then I remember in state schools...there was a year that I had Year 1, here, in this school actually, I had 33 children in my classroom. That was very very difficult. You just cannot face it. The rest of the years were easier I think. I am planning to retire within 8-9 years. And I know I will miss working. Because I am not to stay in the house all the time. I could come later this morning, but something inside me was telling me to follow the same schedule...it is a way
of life, I couldn't do otherwise. Even if I retire, I will find something else.

Do you think you have changed as a teacher after you became mother?

Yes, of course! I am much more tolerant with children, and it is not just 'black and white' anymore...it's also grey in between, I mean it is also the 'different'. I think I have changed a lot, I am no longer the kind of 'absolute' teacher, who is just this or that...I believe I have watered down my claims a lot! Now that I know the children's needs, while I see my child's needs as well. Your kid is always the rule. I would characterise myself as...well, I believe I try. I always make an effort for the best. I would always like to know the progress of children I had in my classroom, I mean their progress afterwards. I want them to get as much sentiment as possible, and I want to do as much as I can. I don't want to feel that I haven't done anything for a specific kid, or that I haven't tried at least. And you know...it's been 10 years that I started working in mainstream schools with withdrawal classrooms. It's been 10 years now...it might have crossed my mind to work in special education, but I wouldn't do that now, because children's problems are huge...I wouldn't even consider doing it. That's all. I have nothing more to say.
### 35. Maria’s ‘I’ Statements and Key-Words (Follow-up Interview)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cognitive Statements</th>
<th>Affective Statements</th>
<th>State and Action Statements</th>
<th>Ability and Constraint Statements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“I remember that the last course I undertook at the Academy was Music.” (F-up Int.13, 7-8)</td>
<td>“I didn’t want to continue, because I wasn’t really interested” (F-up Int.13, 21-22)</td>
<td>“I worked there with children...difficult children...and there were a lot of children actually...” (F-up Int.13, 9-10)</td>
<td>“well, at the very beginning my priority was to attend the Medicine School, I had to retake the exams...” (F-up Int.13, 16-18)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I believe is that the very first years at work are basically determinants. I think I learnt a lot of things. Many things I didn’t know...” (F-up Int.13, 11-14)</td>
<td>“and I was satisfied ever since I started working...” (F-up Int.13, 24-25)</td>
<td>“I failed again. It was at that second time that I enrolled at the Industrial Studies’ University in Athens. I just attended the first year, I am still registered there...but never finished my studies” (F-up Int.13, 18-21)</td>
<td>“I cannot imagine doing anything else...” (F-up Int.13, 23-24)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I have already realised that I will retire from this job” (F-up Int.13, 35-36)</td>
<td>“And I don’t think I felt any compassion then” (F-up Int.13, 65)</td>
<td>“the first time that I enrolled as a teacher...actually the mean of my grades was the second best mean throughout Greece, so then I enrolled in Industrial Studies...” (F-up Int.13, 18-21)</td>
<td>“I couldn’t do anything more to help, something different” (F-up Int.13, 23-24)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“...I remember the most difficult time I had was in the private school with pupils with Special Needs” (F-up Int.13, 53-54)</td>
<td>“I didn’t know much” (F-up Int.13, 58)</td>
<td>“I would always like to know the progress of children I had in my classroom” (F-up Int.13, 93-94)</td>
<td>“I could come later this morning, but something inside was telling me to follow the same” (F-up Int.13, 88-89)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I didn’t know the way plus there were a lot of children in the classroom. I believe that having 36 children in Year 1 and 2 is too much. I believe that throughout those 5 years in the private school [...] Then I remember in state schools...” (F-up Int.13, 69-74)</td>
<td>“I didn’t actually know his progress at the moment” (F-up Int.13, 61-62)</td>
<td>“I mean it is also the ‘different’. I think I have changed a lot” (F-up Int.13, 86-87)</td>
<td>“I wouldn’t even consider doing it” (F-up Int.13, 102)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“And I know I will miss working.” (F-up Int.13, 78)</td>
<td>“And I don’t think I felt any compassion then” (F-up Int.13, 65)</td>
<td>“I believe I have watered down my claims a lot! Now that I know the children’s needs” (F-up Int.13, 89-90)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
schedule...it is a way of life. I couldn’t do otherwise” (F-up Int.13, 79-81)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>achievement statements</th>
<th>PSit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“…so, I never tried again” (F-up Int.13, 28)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I believe I try, I always make an effort for the best” (F-up Int.13, 92)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“or that I haven’t tried at least” (F-up Int.13, 97)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 24: Maria’s ‘I’ Statements (b)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>KEY-WORDS</th>
<th>ACCOUNT/FOLLOW-UP INTERVIEW TEACHER 13</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Learning Difficulties | -difficult cases  
-shuge problems  
-special needs |
| Compassion | -compassion  
-love  
-sentiment |
| Anxiety | |
| Treatment | |
| Help | -help |

Table 25: Maria’s Themes’ Key-Words (b)
### 36. Observation Field Notes (Maria)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Field notes (Monday 30th April 2007)</th>
<th>Codes-CMs</th>
<th>Preliminary Analysis (shortly after observation)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1st hr—Literature (place: mainstream primary school in Athens)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>08:20 Walking into the classroom. Children try to find a new sit. The teacher makes the arrangements. Helen is sitting at the back again, behind P. and in front of Ch. She is sitting alone. Once settled, children rush at the teacher’s desk and leave their homework. They have different colours for each exercise book. The teacher asks them to write the date on their dictation book. Then the teacher starts a brief conversation about next day’s bank holiday. She takes the opportunity to talk about May Day, and ask them about the reason of having such a bank holiday. Children start a conversation, asking her about the global meaning of the day. Also about the benefits and claim of rights of workers against the amount of working hours in the past. She mentions that they will devote their last hour of today’s lesson to make garlands of flowers for the first day of spring.</td>
<td>PoEtap</td>
<td>Every first day of the week they are expected to change sits.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>08:25 While she is talking, Helen is writing down the date in her dictation book. P. is absent minded, he is looking outside the window. T: ‘P. I have you written down the date?...P.? ’</td>
<td>PoEtap</td>
<td>The teacher talks loudly, because children are noisy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Silence. Children are ready. I ask Ch., to open his book. The teacher is reading the lines for dictation. Children ask her constantly, and she repeats the words. She moves around the classroom and checks upon children. P. didn’t bring his pencil case again. I ask him why...the teacher approaches us...she says to me: M: ‘You have to spend a lot of time in this classroom in order to see that my claims about his case are so true!’</td>
<td>PoEtap</td>
<td>HELEN writes slowly, copying letter by letter from the board</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P. is starring at me without saying a word.</td>
<td></td>
<td>She is checking on P. who, she claims has SpLD, but is not assessed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>08:30 The teacher repeats 2-3 times the lines. She teacher moves to Helen desk. She wants to make sure everyone has written the proper words. She is walking around the classroom. Ch. hasn’t opened his book yet. Helen writes down a few words. The rest of the classroom moves on.</td>
<td>PoEtap</td>
<td>She repeats the sentences over 10 times.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>If a peer was sitting next to her today, she could probably be more</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Another boy is asking the teacher how to spell a specific word. The teacher gives him extra info. G. sitting next to him is a bit disturbed:

G: *Don’t tell him, Mam...*

M: *...what?*

G: *Oh, Mam, you shouldn’t tell him! (turning to the boy) Haven’t you studied at home?*

A couple of others, indignant, ask her not to help them. The teacher repeats the words. I hear a voice ‘Hey, we know that’. Helen writing the initial words. The teacher sits at her desk. The teacher asks children to write down the past tenses of a couple of verbs. G. still complaining about the teacher’s attitude to help some of his peers. Children continue to work. Most of the children have finished. Helen is left behind. Children make noise.

08:40 The teacher asks children to read the following text. There are two poems about spring; some of the children already know it by heart. The teacher asks them to read a poem each. Children read. In the meantime the teacher helps children who are left behind, by repeating words. A child sitting in front of Helen makes an effort to help her, but there’s no time left. She holds the pencil, she looks at the words...then she stares at other children around her. Here comes her turn to read aloud. Children are noisy again.

08:45 The teacher takes her dictation book, and turns to children:

M: ‘Could you please pay attention and listen to how beautifully Helen will read us now?’

Helen starts reading very slowly. The teacher whispers her syllables:

M: ‘It is April now...’

Helen: ‘It is April now...’

She goes on whispering words. Children are noisy. P. has turned back and watches Helen. The teacher is sitting next to her, on the desk. P. is asking the teacher:
P: ‘Why doesn’t she read the whole text?’

The teacher doesn’t reply. She asks Ch. to move on...

08:50 P. has turned back to Helen again. I hear them chatting again. I approach them in an effort to listen to their conversation.

P: ‘Did you have time to study on Sunday?’

Helen: ‘Look... a friend came to help me fix a broken toy...’

P: ‘And that’s why you didn’t study enough, ha?’

And then turning to me...

P: ‘I studied a lot on Sunday!’

08:55 The teacher has to move on. She starts reading the following text. She asks children about the picture in this section: a teacher with his pupils, watching outside the classroom’s window, where there is a bird singing on a tree. Children raise their hands. First I., then. Ef. Helen doesn’t raise her hand. Then the teacher reads the poem again and she takes 2-3 minutes to read the following text. She is asking for unknown words. Children reply. Children start a conversation with her about the author of the text. Then to compare the text with the poem. Ch. sucks his finger. Helen is playing with her hands underneath the desk. She has a book on the desk and a pencil case full of pens and pencils. It is very untidy; none of the pencils are sharpened. I walk towards her. She turns to me and back to her work. (voice files C097-C0113)
**Field notes (Monday 7th May 2007) - T13**

1st hr - Literature

(Place: mainstream primary school in Athens)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Codes-CMs</th>
<th>Preliminary Analysis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PoEtap</td>
<td>The teacher is trying to make them work into groups.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PoEtap</td>
<td>She doesn’t approve if children sit alone.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PoEtap</td>
<td>G. is always 10-15’ late in the morning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PoEtap</td>
<td>As if she tries to persuade him</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PoEtap</td>
<td>There’s no-one there to help her with dictation.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**08:20** I enter the classroom together with the teacher. She has to collect the money for Wednesday’s excursion to the zoo. She calls the names of children who brought the amount for the tickets. She says:

M: ‘Well, look at this, Helen’s mum was very thoughtful…she even wrote her name on the envelope! If only you were that tidy and thoughtful, Helen….will you make this effort please?’

(smiling at her). Helen nods positively and goes happily to her sit.

First day of the week again, children have to find new sits. A boy is requested to sit with Ph. The boy refuses:

E: ‘Mam, not with him, please!’

The teacher gets a serious look.

M: ‘What do you mean ‘him’? First of all he’s got a name, his name is Ph.’

The boy prefers sitting alone. The teacher argues:

M: ‘It’s no good being alone. Come on’.

The teacher repeats if someone has forgotten to give her the amount for the excursion. Helen is still sitting at the same desk, alone. N. sits behind her alone. I ask her if she would like to sit together with Helen. She refuses. The teacher is asking N. the reason. She says she doesn’t want to. The teacher takes a few minutes to collect money. A couple of minutes later G. enters the classroom; walking slowly, pulling his schoolbag. He is asking the teacher whether there is a spare sit for him. The teacher asks him to sit next to Helen. G refuses. The teacher asks him why. She smiles at him. Children are noisy. The teacher isn’t heard.

**08:30** Finally Helen sits alone again. The teacher starts reading the lines. At times she breaks words into syllables for Helen. She approaches her. P. is sitting in front of Helen next to another boy. Noise. She repeats the words for Helen. P. turns back to Helen and asks for rubber. The teacher becomes upset; she starts yelling:

M: ‘Why? Can’t you just be responsible for once in your life?! Have you ever seen a soldier without a gun?! Let Helen alone, please. I’ll give you mine.’

She goes to her desk and brings a rubber to P. Moving on...Ev. enters the classroom. The teacher greets her mother. Ev. is late; she bypasses Helen, who is starring at her, and sits next to N. and asks the teacher:
Ev: ‘What am I gonna write, Mam?’
M: ‘Well, wait for N. to repeat the words for you. Actually…leave a couple of lines for that, and write underneath the words I am reading now’.

08:30 The teacher repeats the words over and over again. Helen has done several errors. The teacher asks her to correct them. She asks N. to repeat the words for Ev. as well. The teacher walks around the classroom. I approach Helen. The teacher moves towards P.

M: ‘What are you doing there P.?’

He is not concentrated at all today, she says. She raises her voice.

08:37 Finally she asks children to check their dictation. She then asks three pupils to collect dictation books from each row. Then once again they leave their books on her desk. They are chatting loudly. Noise. Helen hasn’t finished yet; she turns back to E. and N. The girls don’t even talk to her. Helen is annoyed. She asks N. not to kick her chair. N. mocks her, I see her. In the meantime, the teacher asks children to get ready to do the reading. All children read aloud 2-3 sentences. This time the teacher chooses children randomly.

08:45 Though Helen is still writing, I approach her, because the teacher asks me to prepare her for reading. Soon it will be her turn to read aloud the lines we had chosen last Friday. Children start reading one by one. I cannot hear; too much noise. The teacher finally asks Helen to read. Ev. stands up and approaches her; she seems willing to help. E. starts reading the lines, and Helen repeats. Helen looks at me. The teacher asks Ev. to sit down.

M: ‘Do it alone, please, Helen!’
She comes to Helen. Helen is whispering words…then she looks at the door, a child enters the classroom. The teacher asks her to speak louder; she comes to her desk and asks her to start again. Helen still whispering. A pupil enters the classroom.

M: ‘You don’t have to look at the door…be coherent.’
G. makes a remark while Helen reads aloud:
G: ‘Helen used to read better and faster’
The teacher agrees. She asks Helen whether she managed to read the text at all at home:

M: ‘Did you have time to read the text at home?’
Helen doesn’t reply, just staring at the teacher.
M: ‘How many times? One?...Tell me…one or more that one? You need to study more, you know? I am not telling
you off now, I just want to know the truth. Yes or no?’

The teacher looks at me, and then she goes back to her desk. She gives Helen a napkin, because in the meantime Helen has started crying. The teacher tries to calm her down.

08:50 Once this incident with Helen is over, she goes back to her desk. This time she isn’t concentrated. She turns back to N. and asks her again not to kick her chair. Ev. is trying to defend N. They are mocking Helen. I stand up and approach them. As soon as Helen turns in the front, E. pushes harder her chair with her feet. I lose my temper a bit and yell at her ‘Stop it, Ev.!’ Ev. tries to cover the incident. The teacher asks them to move their desk back.

08:55 The teacher moves to the next text. She read it loudly. She then asks children to say in a few words what they have understood of the text. She asks questions to all of them. The girls are quiet now. Helen is scratching her head…then she is playing with her pencil…The teacher is asking her a couple of questions, but she doesn’t seem to follow…the bell rings

(voice files D021-D035)
37. Michael’s Concept Maps

**Figure 10: Concept Map 5**

**Figure 11: Concept Map 15a**
His concept maps - enriched with quotes, draped around main concepts- are very narrowly constructed. The first one, viewed irrespective of the interview transcript, is based upon the main concept ‘dyslexic children aren’t mentally retarded’, as a change in previous beliefs (children mentally handicapped), as to how this group of children is perceived by him. At a secondary level he places ‘they face no other problem but in writing and reading’ as associated to identification of ‘children with learning difficulties/dyslexia’, where the term ‘learning difficulties’ is used instead of specific learning difficulties. Michael briefly gives examples of mixing letters for pupils with dyslexia. The second concept map is even less detailed: ‘dyslexia’ as a condition that makes the learning process difficult is again related to his previous conception of dyslexia linked to mental retardation, and to a couple of other sub-concepts that are responsible for his attitudinal change. It is an extension of the first concept map. Both maps viewed in relation to the interview transcripts, appear poor with regards to the interviewee’s effort to focus on the main issues.
Figure 12: Concept Map 10

Figure 13: Concept Map 10a

The first map viewed irrespectively of the interview transcript, is based upon the main concept ‘sensitivity’ and ‘individuality’, as to how this group of children is
perceived by him at the moment (related to special abilities, teachers, learning processes etc). The concepts used have a social nature, and by examining them alone one can predict the content and nature of the interviews; more or less they summarise the transcripts. He disapproves with the withdrawal of pupils and supports inclusive methods. The second concept map is more of a picture of his initial perceptions and the change that has occurred due to a number of factors mentioned; therefore, it seems as if the teacher provides maps of present and past beliefs, which go hand in hand with interview transcripts.

39. Christos’s Concept Maps

![Concept Map](image-url)

Figure 14: Concept Map 9
THERE WAS A MENTAL PROBLEM

is associated with

Specific learning difficulties are not just dyslexia, or stammering...there are a number of other cases as well...

Figure 15: Concept Map 5a

The first concept map is more enriched with sub-concepts draped around main concepts- than the second narrower map. It is based upon the main concept ‘learning difficulties’, associated to ‘reading’, ‘mixing letters’ and ‘attention disorder’. At a secondary level he places ‘the teacher’ as associated to factors that play a significant role in the inclusion of such children. The second concept-map is even less detailed: he clarifies his change of beliefs. In the past dyslexia was perceived as a mental problem. Due to family and knowledge Christos managed to get a clearer idea of SpLD. Unlike to other concept maps, this second map is not an extention of the first, rather it introduces only the past-present attitudes. Both maps viewed in relation to the interview transcripts, appear ‘thin’ with regards to the interviewee’s to focus on the main issues.
Her concept maps are very narrowly constructed. The first viewed irrespective of the interview transcript, is based upon the main concept ‘special children’, as to how
this group of children is perceived by her (they think fast/they have good expression but difficulty in writing) and at a secondary level she places ‘the teacher’ in relation to resources, time and speech therapists. The concepts used have a social nature, and by examining them alone, one cannot predict the content and nature of interviews. The interviewee disapproves inclusion of such pupils in the mainstream classroom, and supports one-to-one teaching. The second concept map is even less detailed: ‘dyslexia’ is the main concept, used in relation to her knowledge around this through ‘university’, ‘postgraduate studies’, ‘seminars’ and experience. This is just one aspect of the areas under research. This particular map viewed in relation to the interview transcript, shows lack of the interviewee to focus on the main issues. It is an extension of the previous concept ‘special children’ or ‘teacher’. However, the interview transcripts, include important data on issues under research, as examined above.
41. Learning Difficulties’ Key-Words

- **Normal/Norms/Ordinary**

  The use of the word ‘normal’ as referred by T1, T3 and John varies. It moves either within the deficit model or between the individual and the social. ‘Normal’ performance is what interviewees call the average performance, the majority; ‘normal’ children those children who don’t have learning difficulties. The medical explanation given by T3, relates the term to deficit, whereas John tries to ‘escape’ this trap and rushes to clarify that all children are normal:

  - ”...what I was saying is that children with special abilities may perform better in some sectors that the other ‘ordinary’ children […] I’ve put it in quotes...right...by ordinary children I mean...what should I say now? Let’s say...the normal children? Mmm...ah!...the majority of children?” (Int. 1, 73-75, 81-83) DySn-Deficit Model-present
  - “...now, tell me...can a teacher, a mainstream teacher with a classroom at a level of normal performance, without a specific problem, have 2-3 cases inside as well? How can the teacher deal with these when there’s no training and no time? There’s no time, I mean you cannot say there’s time, and consequently you simply let them be. Because, in the meantime you’ve got the parents of normal children, who press you all the time ‘move on with them’, ‘they are left behind’, ‘why do other children do more progress’ etc. […]” (Int. 1, 383-399) DySn-Deficit Model-present
  - “[...] I don’t know whether it comes from the brain, I mean, if there is a difference, let’s say, in the way the brain develops, if there is malfunction of neurones...but I think these persons are normal [...]” (Int. 3, 120-132) Deficit Model-DySn present
  - “I mean that a normal child...may...well, by normal I mean a child without learning difficulties...because all children are normal...so, this child may need 10 minutes...so as to show the difference for instance between ‘φ’ and ‘θ’. If this was my child, I believe that I would...I would be within this mean of people who do not give up...I would try, I would read a lot...I would try as much as I could” (John’s 1st interview, 189-194) Deficit Model+Social Model-DySn present

- **Particularity**

  This term causes ambiguity as well, as it sort of bears the concept of difference related to inferiority, the concept of problem, difficulty. However, in Greek teachers’ language ‘particularity’ is a light, diplomatic version of describing something that is different, as a replacement of ‘special needs’, ‘learning difficulties’ etc. The term is used by a few participants (T3, T7, T16), and it kind of helps them to fill their gap of
knowledge, when asked to define dyslexia or learning difficulties. Therefore it has a
deficit nature as a word, but it is used within social perspectives:

- “[...]I think that...it’s not necessary to withdraw them. Any alternative? How
doyouthinkateachercouldworkbetter?Isthere anything missing? Well...well...(writing) parallel teaching! I believe that initially
suchateacherwouldworkwiththosechildren,right,whohavethis
learning difficulty...and I would work with the rest of the children...I mean,and
the other teacher would be there basically for the child who has a sort of
particularity.” (Int. 3, 85-96) Social Model-DySp present

- “[...] Because I understand now that these children have particularities.
But, apart from that, the causes....the nature of the problem...that’s what
I don’t know.[...]” (Int. 3, 120-132) DySp present- Social Model- Deficit
Model

- “I would not choose a specific title, other than particularity... (writing)
What do you mean by particularity? It’s not about distinguishing them
from the rest of children...it’s simple; they have a difficulty that creates
problems even to their behaviour...and to their performance. That’s the
difference. The way I see it...I believe, in my subject, children who have
particularities, difficulties...most of the times, they are a bit more
aggressive while expressing feelings...a bit more aggressive than the rest
of children who do not have these difficulties.” (Int. 7, 12-21) DySp-
present/Social Model- DySp- present

- “That’s why I insist on co-operation...so that the child can also be aware
of his particularity, not in the sense of a particularity as a problem,
rather as a difficulty...ok, some children may have a talent in this, some in
that...” (Int. 7, 436-440) DiSp-present -Social Model

- “I think it was my contact...but not just at school...it was also
knowledge...because I learnt some things about that...and experience...it
was the contact with people who have this...I wouldn’t phrase it as a
particularity...I would say this difficulty.” (Int. 7a, 24-29) DySp- Social
Model-present

- “[...]....that these children have a particular problem, which well...you
cannot identify that, but I could understand that this was a problem that
had to do with their understanding of the construction of the English
language.” (Int. 16a, 4-16) DySp-present-Social Model

- **(Specific) (Learning) Difficulties/ Dyslexia**

  Most of the sample (T1, T1b, Dimitra, T3, T4, Michael, T7, Christos, John,
María, T6, T17 and T19) uses the term ‘learning difficulties’ to refer to SpLD, which
lends a deficit perspective to dyslexia/learning difficulties. In their mind the actual
concept and true meaning of learning difficulties is related to mental retardation;
therefore most of the time they clarify that they don’t refer to severe cases, such as
mental retardation when talking about learning difficulties. A lot of teachers express
ignorance or confusion when dealing with such terms, which is covered—as mentioned above—by more general, vague terms such as ‘particularity’:

- “About children with dyslexia? I think that…it’s not necessary to withdraw them. Any alternative? How do you think a teacher could work better? Is there anything missing? Well...well...writing parallel teaching! I believe that initially such a teacher would work with those children, right, who have this learning difficulty...and I would work with the rest of the children...I mean, and the other teacher would be there basically for the child who has a sort of particularity.” (Int. 3, 85-96) DySld present-Deficit Model

- “So, say we need a title for these children... Children with learning difficulties [...] Mmm...no, it doesn’t, I would have written ‘helping children with special...with learning difficulties’.” (Int. 4, 26-32) DySld present-Deficit Model

- “I do have experience on learning difficulties, but that’s not necessarily the same. And I should also mention that I still find difficulty, I haven’t understood the issue of ‘dyslexia’, I mean, I cannot clearly make out [...] I don’t know, I’m confused a bit...I cannot clarify that...” (Michael’s 1st interview, 53-57, 63-64) DiSld-present-Deficit Model

- “What I think is that children that have learning difficulties are a lot luckier than those mentally handicapped. The first ones have more chances to succeed if they get appropriate support.” (Int. 7, 256-259) DiSld-present-Deficit Model

- “I would simply put the title learning difficulties...because dyslexia has a variety of forms. A child may mix letters...so this mixing is dyslexia, which I would come across pretty often [...]” (Christos’ 1st interview, 4-16) DySld-present-Deficit Model

- “My first experience...now I have to recall...I have come across cases a lot more...well, cases that might have been dyslexia...almost at every Year I have taught. Now...if this was not pure dyslexia or it had to do with attention disorder...or if it was another sort of learning difficulty, I am not that sure. But you could find such cases almost in every Year” (John’s 1st interview, 117-124) DySld-Deficit Model-present

- “Often I see children attending the special classroom...well some very severe cases, not cases of learning difficulties. And since there’s this attitude to include them in the mainstream school, then there should be another special classroom, for children with learning difficulties, because these are different from children with mental retardation” (John’s 1st interview, 324-333) DySld-Deficit Model-present

- “Actually, I think of that all the time, the last 4-5 years...because I realised that there are ways to help a child overcome a learning difficulty” (John’s 2nd interview, 119-129) DiSld-present-Deficit Model/Social Model

- “do you remember having in your classroom children with specific learning difficulties? I do remember...yes...learning difficulties. Which were not diagnosed though. There were some problems, but that doesn’t mean that there might have been due to dyslexia or whatever. More or less I had identified them as gaps, and especially in Year 3, where they were much more obvious.” (Maria’s 1st interview, 21-28) DySld-past/Deficit Model

- “Look...I don’t like...I don’t want to generalise. I could write...shall I write it here?...I would simply write dyslexia. Right... Ah! And I am talking about dyslexia which is diagnosed, because there is a variety of
learning difficulties, from what I have seen so far in my career…” (Int. 16, 9-16) DySld-present-Social Model

“I would write...learning difficulty...or let me rephrase that...I would say...disorders and understanding of oral speech. But this is my opinion I have now...because at the beginning of my career I didn’t know. I didn’t know exactly what it was about. I just thought that the child facing this problem, especially attending lower Years, was actually coming at school not well prepared to everyday lessons. This is how I understood that... (Int. 17a, 4-13) DySld-present-Deficit Model

“I would simply write...children with learning disorder [...] I mean children who have difficulty in reading, who aren’t concentrated generally, who are...who have difficulty in reading generally, in the synthesis of syllables...in recognising letters...whatever has to do with reading and writing (writing) recognising letters, for instance G. cannot recognise letters...I also said...difficulty in reading generally and I will also write somewhere here attention disorder [...] Dyslexia is a special case. When we talk about learning difficulties, we mean something general, whereas dyslexia is something specific. A learning difficulty may be light...mild...whereas I think dyslexia is more severe” (Int. 19, 3-19) DySld-present-Deficit Model
| **‘You must achieve a good relation (with children)’** | T1a | ‘[…] I believe that you have to manage to make children to come to you…so that they can talk to you about their problems…you must stay close to them. And you must give them as much as you can. But they must perceive you as their friend…as someone they can trust. You must achieve a good relation. In the past […] there was no contact with teachers […] I believe that teachers are a lot more relaxed today. But we should not exceed the limits, because we will reach the other end. You have to be strict at times’ (Int. 1a, 133-149) |
| **‘I want them (children) to be free (happy)’** | T1b | ‘…but from the very first day I remember that my aim was to approach children from you know…the psychological side…I wasn’t that interested in the actual teaching aims…I mean, if they really wish to play football, they are allowed to…as long as this keeps them happy…I will not be that strict…there’s no point…I want them to be free, to move freely…especially those children who have problems…” (Int. 1b, 123-131) |
| **‘you need to be always in alert…you need to have a lot of energy[…] you need to have solved many of these problems solved in advance’** | DIMITRA | ‘…you need to be always in alert…you need to have a lot of energy…you may have many problems at home, but you need to be 100% there. Plus you need to have solved many of these problems solved in advance […]’ (Dimitra’s 2nd interview, 94-107) |
| **‘creating’ human beings’** | T4 | ‘[…] it was my first and only choice! And the reason was my teacher in primary school…I was so influenced by his personality… I still remember him […] is there anything better that ‘creating’ human beings? There’s no such thing, I guess…”(Int. 4a, 60-66) |
| **‘It needs imagination[…] longing…artistry…dignity…you need to love your job’** | JOHN | “It needs imagination, and I believe that I do have imagination, but in this area, I sometimes feel I’m blocked […] longing…artistry…dignity…you need to love your job” (John’s 1st interview, 223-228) |
| **‘the teacher is in a lower position, not in the centre of the world. What I try to do now is to help…to guide’** | T16 | “[…] the teacher is in a lower position, not in the centre of the world. What I try to do now is to help…to guide…to offer my experience…I cannot do anything else, apart from being there and offering what they need.” (Int. 16, 123-138) |

Table 26: Profile of a ‘Good’ Mainstream Teacher
## Profile of ‘Good’ Special Teacher

### T1a

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>‘You must be more flexible [...] you must help the child with it’s life and daily needs as well [...] have a lot more strength [...] you must be stronger and you must have more patience’</th>
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<tr>
<th>“…I must learn a lot of things to become a special teacher. Because there are a lot more responsibilities. You must be more flexible, you must know how you will work. This is important in my view. It’s not just about offering knowledge to a child with special needs...you must help the child with it’s life and daily needs as well [...] And you definitely have to have a lot more strength...definitely...you must be stronger and you must have more patience” (Int. 1a, 85-97)</th>
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### T4

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<th>‘...I believe...to a large extend...a special teacher must be very sensitive...this profession is very very demanding...that’s why the teachers should always search, in order to meet these needs. Because the aim of the teacher is to help the children...”</th>
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<table>
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<th>“…a special teacher must be very sensitive [...] the teachers should always search [...] the aim of the teacher is to help the children...”</th>
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### T6

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<th>‘...manage to earn the child’s trust straightaway [...] who will be more of a friend [...] To set levels of demands’</th>
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<tr>
<th>“…a good teacher is the teacher who will manage to earn the child’s trust straightaway. Who will make the child feel comfortable; who will behave differently [...] who will be more of a friend, than a teacher to the child’s eyes, but who will also set the limits subconsciously. These lessons must be sort of a game with this teacher. To set levels of demands...because [...] in this case they struggle [...] I must be less demanding and give more time” (Int. 6a, 225-245)</th>
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### T8

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<th>‘...have the strength and patience’</th>
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<th>“[...] They should be well educated as well. Special teachers should be responsible” (Int. 8, 232-245)</th>
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### (special teachers) should be well educated [...] should be responsible’

<table>
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<tr>
<th>“...you need to know more things [...] each child needs a different approach. It also needs a lot of patience...it needs joy...cheerfulness...smile...”</th>
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<tr>
<th>“…you need to know more things, you need to follow specific approaches...each child is different and needs a different approach. It also needs a lot of patience...it needs joy, cheerfulness...smile...” (Christos’s 2nd interview, 94-106)</th>
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### C H R I S T O S

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<tr>
<th>“[...] I believe the number one responsible who must work with such children, apart from psychiatrists, or psychologists...regarding provision, is the teacher. A teacher who has studied a lot, who has aims, who is aware.” (Larry’s 1st interview, 27-37)</th>
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<tr>
<th>“A teacher who has studied a lot, who has aims, who is aware.’</th>
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<th>“...the problem is that teachers are not professionals...you may be professional only if you spend time studying, attending seminars etc...you need to put aside your feelings, otherwise you will have good and bad days [...]” (Larry’s 2nd interview, 95-99)</th>
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<th>‘...be professional [...] you need to put aside your feelings’</th>
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<tr>
<th>“I always try to built good relations with my children...when the child feels safe with you, even if he/she...”</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>‘...good relations’</td>
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<tr>
<td>‘Discretion. You don’t tell secrets […]Only ask for things you need to hear’</td>
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<tr>
<td>‘have peace of mind, you need to have solved most of your personal problems’</td>
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<tr>
<td>‘you need to hear new ideas, to talk to other people…to change views…this is how you check yourself”</td>
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**Table 27: Profile of a ‘Good’ Special Teacher**