

**THE KNOWLEDGE PROVIDED TO STUDENTS OF SECONDARY
SPECIAL EDUCATION THROUGH SCHOOL TEXTBOOKS: A
QUALITATIVE APPROACH**

Abstract

This article refers to the knowledge provided to Secondary Special Education students, through school textbooks, distributed free of charge to students by the Greek Ministry of Education. It is noted that in Greece books are distributed free of charge in primary and secondary education. In more detail, the results of a survey conducted in all (9) of the Unified Special Vocational High Schools (special vocational secondary schools) of the Prefecture of Attica, in Athens, which bring together students of all social classes, are presented. This survey concerns 89 semi-structured interviews, in which the principals and vice-principals, teachers and special educational staff (psychologists, social workers, occupational therapists, speech therapists) working in these school structures, participated. We proceeded the study and analysis of the opinions of the participants of our sample, who expressed their opinions on the knowledge provided through the school textbooks distributed in the special secondary schools.

Keywords: Secondary Special Education, special vocational secondary schools, School Textbooks, Knowledge Provided, Qualitative Approach.

1. Introduction

The Unified Special Vocational High Schools (special vocational secondary schools) were established in Greece by Article 48 of law 4415/16 (Government Gazette Issue 159 / V.A./ 6-9-16)¹. However, for this legislation there was no special provision and definition for the school textbooks that would be used, because these textbooks are exactly the same as those given in Junior High Schools and evening Vocational High Schools and do not take into account the peculiarities of these school structures. Students of special secondary schools, in accordance with

¹ They include grades A, B, C and D Junior High School and grades A, B, C, and D High School. Students with disabilities and special educational needs, who follow the schedules and curricula of this structure and receive a Junior High School Graduation Certificate and a Graduation Certificate equivalent to that of the Evening Vocational High Schools, are enrolled in Special Secondary Schools, following the opinion of Interdisciplinary Assessment, Counseling and Support Center.

the current legislation, have the right to participate in the national examinations in Greece for admission to higher education institutions, using as a basis the curriculum of these school textbooks.

2. Methodology

The present survey concerns the study of the operation of all special vocational secondary schools (9 schools) in Athens, which bring together students of all social classes. Our sample includes all the educational staff of these special structures, namely the principals, vice-principals, teachers, as well as special educational staff (psychologists, social workers, occupational therapists, speech therapists). Semi-structured interviews were conducted to collect the data. This survey was carried out, with our physical and daily presence in these special structures. In order to enter the schools, we received approval by the Greek Ministry of Education and specifically by the General Secretariat of Primary, Secondary Education and Special Education.

These special structures accept students with disabilities and there is no research data from the Hellenic Statistical Authority on the social origin of the students of these special structures. The data concerning the social origin of these students are obtained through the discussions that took place with the principals and vice-principals of the schools during our long-term stay in these structures, as well as through the interviews in which the principals and the vice-principals participated. We requested access to the school records in order to study the social origins of the students, but the principals and vice principals did not allow us access to these records, citing the protection of personal data. This attitude of school principals did not allow us to study the characteristics of students and their social origin. According to the principals and vice-principals, their students belong to the middle and mainly to the underprivileged social classes. As is well known, the complexity of the problem of social stratification has been of concern to many social scientists. Regarding the interests of this research, it goes without saying that we should not confuse the way in which the principals and vice-principals of our sample represent social stratification with social stratification, as a sociological concept (Gogou, 2019, P. 191).

The survey concerns a sample of 89 interviews (22 men and 67 women), in which 64 teachers (17 men and 47 women), 6 principals (3 men and 3 women), 7 Vice-

principals (2 men and 5 women) and 12 members of the special educational staff (0 men and 12 women) participated. The sample must be sufficiently limited to allow for as detailed an analysis as possible. The participation was voluntary, as provided by the approval decision and the interviews took place entirely on the school premises. Prior to conducting the interviews, it was preceded by acquaintance - familiarization with the teachers, the principals/ vice-principals and the members of the Special Educational Staff. Ethical and scientific ethical issues were observed, on a number of issues, such as the disclosure of the purpose and objective of the research, the permission from the Ministry of Education and the anonymity of the persons who took part in the interviews was ensured. The duration of the interviews was between fifty and sixty minutes, and in some cases exceeded one and a half hours.

For our better integration in the schools we tried to familiarize ourselves through our long-term stay in them and we were given the opportunity to discuss with the teachers during the breaks on various topics and in this way we got to know each other better. It is noted that all the participants who accepted to participate in the interviews, also accepted to have their speech recorded. We tried to make the interviewer and interviewee relationship as open as possible, even on issues that were not directly related to the interview guide. We found that they felt the need to express their opinions on the knowledge provided through the school textbooks distributed free of charge by the Greek Ministry of Education. We tried to record the teachers' discourse about their personal and professional experience, as it was attributed to all its subjectivity. As is well known in semi-directed interviews, the interviewer knows all the subjects for which he has to record the reactions of the interviewee, the order is determined by the interviewer himself, but the order and the way in which they will be introduced are left to the discretion of the interviewee (Ghiglione & Matalon, 1978). Referring to other types of probing processes, different from the questionnaire, such as semi-structured interviews is because we can undertake analyses that require an in-depth understanding, as we clearly describe the opinions of the participants we are interested in. The analysis of the discourse of the survey subjects aims at showing how teachers and all the staff of these special structures analyze the content of school textbooks and the perception of the knowledge provided on the part of students with disabilities.

We analyzed the semi-structured interviews of the participants in our sample, which constitute real dialogues that focus on our survey subjects, respecting the teachers' discourse in our sample. We tried to understand the subjects' way of thinking, their own logic, regarding the arguments they develop during the interviews. We analyze the discourse of our survey subjects not only as a stock of opinions and information, but an attempt was made on our part also to analyze discourse as a production of meaning. According to the ethnomethodological approach, the attribution of the term of subjects does not consist in revealing or clarifying a "hidden" meaning, but in capturing what people say, within a specific social context and at a specific time. In ethnomethodology, the discourse involves the status of a testimony, and the processing of analysis is also given to the reader. In presenting the survey, several interview excerpts are cited and we did not attempt any modification of the empirical material, considering that it is preferable to read these interviews in their original and authentic form.

According to R. Ghiglione and B. Matalon (1978),² it rarely happens that we work with a completely representative sample, because on the one hand some groups are poorly represented and on the other hand some relationships are difficult to reveal. The problem of representativeness refers to the satisfaction of a request that often turns out to be barren, so we must focus on the concept of sample adequacy. A survey ought to be distinguished for the multiplicity of its objectives, which, of course, in turn ought to refer to multiple types of analysis (Gogou, 2019).

3. The opinions of the principals and vice-principals of our sample

All principals-vice-principals refer to the knowledge provided, through the books they are required to use, according to the current legislation for the education of their students in these special structures of Secondary Education. Teachers are required to follow a specific curriculum, including school textbooks, which are exactly the same as those used in General Junior High Schools³. In High School (Lyceum) of the special vocational secondary schools, the same school

² Ghiglione, R. & Matalon, B. (1978), *Les enquêtes sociologiques: théories et pratique*, Paris: A. Colin.

³ In the Special Vocational Secondary Schools, the same school textbooks are distributed free of charge and are still used today as in the General Junior High School and the Evening Vocational High

textbooks are used as in the Evening Vocational High Schools and this is because the General Evening Vocational High Schools are four-year schools, in contrast to the morning Vocational High Schools, which are three years schools, due to the fewer hours in the schedule of the Evening Vocational High Schools.

The majority of principals and vice-principals (n=11 out of 13, 84.61%), point out, through the interviews, the difficulties faced by teachers regarding the use of school textbooks. They emphasize that students with disabilities cannot understand the content of these school textbooks, both during class lessons, despite the explanations given by teachers to their students, and in terms of school work that students are required to prepare at home.

They emphasize that there is a perception on the part of the special committees of the Ministry of Education that school textbooks should be the same as those of General Junior High Schools and Evening Vocational High Schools and students of Special Vocational Secondary Schools should receive a common diploma and have equal opportunities in terms of the knowledge provided and their subsequent social professional integration. However, in the opinion of the principals and vice-principals, students with disabilities present special educational needs, noting that the focus should be not so much on acquiring a wide range of knowledge and skills, but mainly on artistic activities. They emphasize that these students should have other types of knowledge for social and professional integration. They report that many teachers of the schools they run are forced to produce educational material, which they distribute in photocopies to their students, in order to facilitate the understanding of the content of school textbooks, which they consider to be not taking into account the educational needs of students with disabilities in special vocational secondary schools.

"They do not cover books in any case, because they are books for the General Junior High School, the Vocational High School, they are not adapted to the needs of the children. This is a serious problem and it is also a request of the educational community is difficult for everyone".

"They do not meet the needs of our students , an example is all the books that are the same as those of Vocational High Schools, they make it very difficult for the children".

Schools. In some cases, school textbooks of the Morning Vocational High Schools are also used in specialty courses.

"Children have a hard time with books and teachers have a hard time."

Some of the Principals and Vice-Principals (n=3 out of 13, 23.07%) point out that they are obliged to follow the school curriculum, that is, to use the textbooks as they are, as the students of the 4th grade of High School of the Special Vocational Secondary Schools have the right to participate in the national examinations for admission to higher education, as many of them as they wish, such as the students of the Evening Vocational High Schools. For this reason, these Principals and Vice-principals refuse to override the textbook curriculum, based on the current legislation, which aims to achieve the parity between the knowledge provided by the Special Vocational Secondary Schools and the Evening Vocational High Schools. However, the principals and vice-principals themselves, who follow the knowledge provided in these school textbooks to the letter, emphasize that their students face many difficulties in understanding these school textbooks.

"Of course, of course, because I am also obliged to follow the curriculum. When they also go to the 4th grade of High School, then they will take national examinations, any of them they want. So I wonder that if I can't get away from the curriculum, and I shouldn't get away from the curriculum, and indeed I have to follow it on a par with the General Vocational High Schools curriculum, but it is difficult for the students to respond."

"The High School Certificate they get from here, is equal to the other schools, so in terms of curriculum, you have to do what the others do, so you have the same rights, afterwards. Now, if the curriculum that the General High School does should be perhaps more adapted to another book we would agree. Saying I don't follow the curriculum, the other will tell you and how you are equal. So, what we are forced to do, my colleagues and I, is more to use, to follow the curriculum, that we are obliged to do, but in an adapted way. I believe, there is a need for special education books, with a different way of writing. Not to have so many details, to be a little more friendly, because here still the General High School books, even the General High School students do not like the way they are structured. Hey! especially to us, who in many cases can not even touch them".

One of the principals and vice-principals (n=3 out of 13, 23.07%) interviewed, points out that it is necessary to conduct a nationwide survey in the Special Vocational Secondary Schools, in order to identify the deficiencies, in order to address them in the best possible way for the benefit of

students with disabilities in these special vocational secondary education structures. He emphasizes that there is a "heterogeneity" in special secondary schools, as the separation of students into sections is not based on the students' disabilities, but in alphabetical order.

"There is such heterogeneity in special secondary schools. If the state wanted to devote money and effort to Special Education, there should be a very serious nationwide survey, for every form or at least for every form of difficulty. The aim would be to adapt the curriculum and each subject to the difficulty the child presents. That is, literature for children with autism, physics for children with autism, mathematics for children with autism. It is a very large portion of the student population that currently has autism and is in our schools. Language for children who have intellectual disabilities, language for children who have down syndrome or something else. The categorization could be done in such a way that if there are experts who know exactly what this learning difficulty consists of, we will make the books accordingly and if not a whole book at least a textbook. There is not even that."

From the statements of the principals and vice-principals say (n=8 out of 13, 61,53%), it appears that these school textbooks have been written for General Junior High Schools and Evening Vocational High Schools students without taking into account the educational needs of students with disabilities attending the Special Vocational Secondary Schools, following assessment and orientation through the Interdisciplinary Assessment, Counseling & Support Centers. Through their discourse, it emerges that the teachers of the Special Vocational Secondary Schools, seek to adapt the content of these textbooks, producing their own educational materials, to the educational needs of their students. They stress the necessity of adapting the content of these books to the needs of their students, pointing out the unsuitability of these textbooks for their students. In this way, they emphasize the importance of a differentiated pedagogy, pointing out that the majority of teachers in Special Vocational Secondary Schools do not use these books, which they replace by producing their own educational material distributed in photocopies to students with disabilities. The principals and vice-principals are confronted by the parents of their students, who are asking whether their children will receive the school textbooks in time, through the free distribution by the Greek Ministry of Education. The principals and vice-principals try to reassure parents about the timely distribution of school textbooks, emphasizing that these books are for individual cases, that is, to one or two children in each school class, who may be able to understand certain subjects, but stressing that under no circumstances are the students able to understand the entire content of these books.

«The answer is no, not in any case, because these are books for the General Junior High School, the General High School, they are not adapted to the needs of children. This is a serious problem, and it is also a request of the educational community to adapt the books to the children's capabilities. This is also the big problem that teachers face, because they are obliged to adapt the material they have in their hands that comes from books to the needs of children and to convert it into photocopies, into leaflets, is a special effort. A serious study and a record of the special characteristics of children should be made. When, on the other hand, we say that in Special Vocational Secondary Schools there are children with completely different characteristics than children who only have behavioural problems and function well on a cognitive level, and we have children who have intellectual disabilities, who cannot respond, there is a very great difficulty in producing books, which meet the needs of all».

«We don't use the school textbooks. School textbooks are extremely difficult for our children. I calm the parents, who ask: will the children get school textbooks? That's the question. Okay, I say, the children will get school textbooks, as soon as the school textbooks come, we will definitely distribute them. But think about what the children can do through these books, they will have the book to look at the picture, to maybe see some things or in the best of cases to read a little bit. We use them in some cases, not all, they are individual so, in each class there may be one or two children, who can make use of the school textbook, but not to the full extent of course».

Through the interviews of the principals and vice-principals (n=8 out of 13, 61.53%), the necessity of writing school textbooks on Special Education in Secondary Vocational Education, with certain conditions concerning the content of the knowledge provided for students with disabilities, is emphasized. They point out the importance of introducing legislation on the content of school textbooks to be given to the students in these special structures. They consider it necessary to provide continuous training for teachers on the content of school textbooks, considering that the structure of a school textbook must meet the educational needs of students with disabilities and that the books given to students in the Evening Vocational High Schools, in their opinion, do not meet the needs of students of these special school structures. In their opinion, the content of a school textbook should present the material, adapted to the needs of the students. The discourse of the principals and vice-principals demonstrates that teachers in the classrooms adapt the curriculum, through the production of educational material, and this educational practice

constitutes a topic of daily discussion with their colleagues, who consider that the adaptation of the curriculum on the part of teachers is deemed necessary.

"I believe there should have been books on Special Education. We teachers devote a lot of time to making our notes, we always adapt the curriculum and I believe and we have discussed it in the association and we always discuss it with the colleagues that our books should be adapted. Less curriculum, more simplified with a lot of graphs".

"School textbooks should be rewritten for Vocational High Schools, for Special Education. Not all children can follow a book of the Vocational High School, because their cognitive level sometimes yes, they have it, they can, but too many cannot follow, so the teacher is forced to come up with his own curriculum. But his own curriculum should be exactly in accordance with the general education, because that is how it is defined, so the law provides."

"I look at the curriculum, and in each chapter I take out my own notes and adapt them accordingly to each class, because the potential of the students from class to class varies quite a lot. Yes, it is about time, after all these years of Special Education, to finally create books on Special Education. They should be simply written, there should be exercises, and mainly by experienced people, who work in Special Education and know the level of Special Education students. With pictures, colors, very important, large letters".

The discourse of the principals and vice-principals shows that the free distribution of school textbooks in all subjects is necessary for students of Special Vocational Secondary Schools, but these books should be adapted to the educational needs of students with disabilities. The project of writing appropriate books, in their opinion, requires a systematic nationwide survey by a specialized team, including Special Education teachers, as well as researchers working on the subject, in order to write appropriate school textbooks, adapted to the needs of students with disabilities. It is also underlined the need to reinforce school textbooks with audiovisual material that will make knowledge more accessible to students, so that teachers can easily integrate it into the educational process.

4. The opinions of Teachers of our sample

The majority of teachers (n=45 out of 57, 79%) believes that their students are unable to understand certain specialties, such as technology, for example, considering that certain subjects should not be in the curriculum of Special Vocational Secondary Schools. They consider that school textbooks, because they are exactly the same as those used by students of Evening Vocational High Schools, are difficult to understand for students with disabilities and the teachers are therefore obliged to override the existing school textbooks and write their own educational material based on the subjects of these school textbooks. They emphasize the heterogeneity of students with disabilities in Special Vocational Secondary Schools, pointing out that there are students with disabilities, who should be in other structures, such as Special Vocational Education and Training Schools⁴, which makes their educational work more difficult. They note that is very difficult for their students to understand the content of thw school textbooks and express the opinion that there is a risk that their students will resign from the learning process. For the above reasons, they consider that school textbooks relating to the subjects of Mathematics, Language, Geography, Biology, Physical Education, are often not used by teachers, but are based on the production of their own educational material. The teachers also stress that because their students cannot understand the theoretical content of the books, they place special emphasis on artistic activities in the classroom, as well as on the production of educational material with images and pictures, thus encouraging their students to understand these subjects.

They point out that these books are "unacceptable" for their students and teachers should prepare an educational material, devoting many hours preparing this material, proposing an audiovisual material, which also provides access to the computer in each school classroom, so that students with disabilities can come into contact with images and a simpler vocabulary than that used in the

⁴ The Special Vocational Education and Training Schools are Vocational Schools in Greece, which are addressed to people with disabilities. In order to enroll in the Special Vocational Education and Training School, students must have completed Primary General or Special Education and have severe learning difficulties that have been identified by the competent Interdisciplinary Assessment, Counseling and Support Center. Attendance in these structures lasts from 5 to 8 years and has compulsory attendance. Students are taught General Education subjects (such as Language, Mathematics, Gymnastics, Music) while acquiring social skills, independent living skills, vocational skills. In addition, they also attend laboratory courses, such as Gardening, Cooking - Confectionery, Handicrafts, Plumbing, Pottery). By graduating, students obtain a Certificate equal to the Junior High School Graduation Certificate, which, however, does not allow them to continue the studies in High School.

school textbooks distributed to them and are the same as those of the Evening Vocational High Schools, which are, in their opinion, obsolete and inadequate.

First of all, sometimes you can't have lesson. So half of the time we negotiate for a lesson, it is not possible! In other words, I have prepared eleven chapters of food processing principles here. Half of the subjects out, because they don't understand technology. For children with special educational needs basically I don't think there should be these specialties, we start from there".

"There is the Junior High School Physical Education book but we have not used it so far because we have not had to, fortunately, be in classroom! I consider, both because of our living conditions and because of the childrens' peculiarities, there is a much greater need for them, those two hours a week, which I really consider that they are very few, not only me, all of us and not only in Special Education, for the children to be in the yard. Better to get them moving than to stay in the classroom and do something theoretical."

"Based on the school textbook I make my own notes, that is, I think that school textbooks especially in the specialties are very difficult, in almost all subjects we have our own notes. It is difficult for the children to respond, because specialty courses cannot be completely separated from General Education courses, because they are scientific knowledge, but they can be given in a simpler way and not with unnecessary information. So, maybe it would be better, more slowly. I would like it to be accompanied by a lot of laboratory activities that we can do in schools, the theory to be simple with blueprints with a lot of pictures and with references, to be able to get into the computer, to see things. So that's what I would like"

Through the interviews of some teachers (n=12 out of 57, 21.05%), dissatisfaction with the school textbooks is evident, considering that the state allows the problem to be solved by teachers, through the writing of educational material (which is not provided by the current legislation, but is considered necessary by teachers, for students with disabilities) in order to highlight the inclusion, that is, educational policies do not separate students from each other between General and Special Secondary Schools. Such a perception and practice on the part of the Ministry of Education is not related to differentiated pedagogy, which takes into account the peculiarities and different rates of development of all students.

"They are unacceptable (the books). And we need school textbooks, write it down! Every day you come and bring something new or use something from the book, its pictures mostly, which are nice. OK this does not exist, it is unacceptable! It needs a lot of visual material, of course it needs computer access in every classroom that we have several classrooms with interactive boards, I can not say, it needs internet access, it needs lots of images and simple vocabulary. So all the things that they say should be addressed to people with comprehension difficulties and so on. It needs a different philosophy. I also use my own notes, and worksheets and the school textbook. Some books not at all, some books a little bit."

"They are obsolete. I have only used it in one or two lessons, only in the basic programming subjects I have not used it, I have used my own notes. I'm sure that in programming, they can't respond except that it was an obsolete book. It would be good if there were books, some material based on the peculiarity of each student or at least one material that suits all students".

"Completely appropriate. Because they have not taken into account the peculiarities and special educational needs of children, so they are not actually used, they are not used, we make material from the beginning. Simpler than what already exist, more understandable and more weighted to their needs".

One teacher in our sample (n=1 in 57, 1.75%) uses a new book coming from Cyprus, which he considers that it is written in a simple way and students can understand the content of the subjects it deals with.

"Well, this year they changed and gave us another book from Cyprus, which so far I like very much, it is written more simply and it is more practical, it talks about components, about machines and does not start with theories, energies, forces and such that the children, you understand here, do not understand very much. But they do understand them because I use the book in the lesson, but I simplify it a lot for them, so that it is simply and clearly written, so that there are not a lot of the terms that uses or the vocabulary is not very, scientific, so to speak. To be in the everyday language, for the children to understand it, to be understandable. Over here, what we are doing is taking the books, which are for General Education, and using those same books, which are for another level of children, we are making them for Special Education children, who

don't have the same level. Yes, in the one I use, I step on it a lot, because what it says is really useful and the children need it, but I also try to make it even more understandable. I write on the board, explain what we say and give examples. So far we have no problems, what it is written is very understandable, that's it."

Some teachers (n=4 out of 57, 7.01%) suggest not to change the school textbooks, but to limit the curriculum, considering that these school textbooks should be used as they are for reasons of parity with General Secondary Schools. In their opinion, these school textbooks are also valuable for students of Vocational Secondary Special Education, emphasizing that they are in tune with modern reality, especially with the use of new technologies. They suggest reducing the curriculum, and adding more illustrations for the school text books intended for the Special Vocational Secondary Schools.

"In my opinion, no, there need for additional books for teaching. From these, the teacher is able to draw his lesson, because in formal education it is always like that. In Vocational High Schools I have always taken the most basic things, because a book is always written complete. The scientists who write it they will write it so that it will always be complete. Well, I would change them, I would suggest less curriculum. Always, of course, scientific. More pictures."

"I use school textbooks in an abstract way. In the school textbook, the part we are supposed to read, they look for it, they find the pages, they number it, they figure it out where to find it. Some others, most of the colleagues don't use them."

"Look, the teacher is in charge and adjusts them accordingly. There are no special books for the Special School, there are General Education books, which the teacher as a responsible and professional person has to adapt to the needs and capabilities and skills of the children at any given time. No, separate books should not be created for Special Education, because I believe it would limit the field. There are difficulties in understanding the material of the book, so we select certain sections".

The majority of teachers, through the interviews, point out that Special Vocational Secondary Schools, should have their own school textbooks, whose content should be adapted to the growth rates of their students. These special school structures, according to the teachers, are differentiated from Formal Secondary Schools, taking into account the fact that students with disabilities attend

them, following assessment and orientation of the Interdisciplinary Assessment, Counseling and Support Center. They consider these textbooks inappropriate for their students and are in the habit of creating educational material for this purpose, taking into account the educational needs of their students.

Some teachers in our sample refer to the parity between the Formal and Special Secondary Schools, based on the content of the current legislation and the instructions of the Ministry of Education, arguing that students of Special Vocational Secondary Education have the right to participate in the national examinations for their admission to Higher Education.

5. The opinions of Special Educational Staff members of our sample

The majority (n=10 out of 13, 77%) of the Special Educational Staff members (psychologists, occupational therapists, social workers, speech therapists) point out the unsuitability of these school textbooks for students of Special Vocational Secondary Schools, which, in their opinion, are a burden on teachers, who feel a moral obligation to help their students by creating from the beginning an educational material adapted to the needs of these students. Thus, according to the Special Educational Staff members, teachers in Special Vocational Secondary Schools devote a lot of time to writing educational material, while they could devote this time to other important school activities, such as artistic activities, through which they can provide significant cognitive development for students with disabilities. According to them, the education of students of Special Vocational Secondary Schools should be more experiential, through appropriate and equipped laboratories and not so much through school textbooks, which are oriented to a purely theoretical knowledge.

"There are no school textbooks for Special Education. All the material given to children is a personal work of each teacher. So yes, these people are completely, if you like, unsupported. They are required to individualize, of course, but also to create material that is appropriate and adapted to our school. It could not be in a book (material) because the book can never be personalized".

"Teachers are struggling to produce material for the needs of children. I mean, the teachers I feel like they need to decompress a little bit, they have so many things to manage, okay the teaching is their main part, but not to have to produce the teaching material almost from the beginning, because they devote a lot of time there that they could devote to other things".

One member of the Special Educational Staff (n=1 in 13, 7.7%), who took part in the interviews, expresses the opinion that the school textbooks of the Special Vocational Secondary Schools should be the same for both Formal and Special Education, according to the current legislation of the Ministry of education, but teachers should explain the content of these school textbooks, with many of their own notes, adapted to the needs of students with disabilities.

"I think this has nothing to do with the special or the Unified High School. But, specifically, here the teachers separate the curriculum and give too many photocopies with explanation, so that helps a lot. Since we make the curriculum of the Unified High School, I do not think our books should be any different."

The majority of the members of the Special Educational Staff, due to the daily friction and employment in the Special Vocational Secondary Schools, argue through their interviews that school textbooks are not appropriate for students with special educational needs, but often not even for general education students. Teachers, according to the Special Educational Staff, are forced to write a individualized educational material for their students from the beginning, which is time-consuming and acts as a barrier to students' participation in other important classroom-level activities that contribute to their intellectual development. It is clear from their interviews that they consider it necessary to cover the same material as the General School students, but adapted to the situation of the students of the Special Vocational Secondary Schools, so that they can integrate smoothly and equally in the labour market. In their opinion the school textbooks distributed by the Ministry of Education are incomprehensible to students with disabilities. A minority of members of the Special Education Staff refer to the parity between students of General and Special Secondary Schools, considering that the school textbooks should be exactly the same as the school textbooks of General Junior High Schools and Evening Vocational High schools, according to the current legislation of the Ministry of Education.

6. Some concerns highlighted by our research data

We note the use of the term parity in relation to the rights of all students in education, both in the current legislation, which concerns all students, and by some teachers. In this context, the school textbooks must be the same for students of Secondary General Education and Secondary Special Education.

It is noted that the Special Vocational Secondary Schools, according to the current legislation, accept students with disabilities following assessment and orientation by the Interdisciplinary Assessment, Counseling and Support Centers to these special school structures. We wonder why students with disabilities are assessed and oriented from the General High Schools and Vocational High Schools to the Special Vocational Secondary Schools, when the same school textbooks are used for all the subjects taught in the General Junior High Schools and Evening Vocational High Schools, without taking into account the peculiarities and educational needs of the students in the Special Vocational Secondary Schools. In terms of understanding, the content of school textbooks we note that the differences between students of General Junior High Schools and Evening Vocational High Schools are not taken into account, as They are assessed and oriented through the Interdisciplinary Assessment, Counseling and Support Centers towards Secondary Special Vocational Education.

Is it a "disregard for differences?". We refer to P. Bourdieu's well-known formulation according to which "indifference to differences" produces inequalities, since this indifference presupposes an equality of opportunities and abilities that does not really exist. Such a formulation, according to Ph. Meirieu, dangerously feeds a possible homogeneity that constitutes a condition of school effectiveness and the survival of society (Meirieu, 1996). According to Ph. Meirieu, school continues to produce social exclusion and creates a gap between 'normal' children and children with disabilities or children in a situation of school failure, while it should aim at the social and school integration of all children. The school must therefore provide teachers with the appropriate means to understand these students through their initial education and training, encouraging mainly artistic activities, which contribute to the intellectual and cognitive development of students, despite their differences.

Today, the right to difference, according to Ph. Meirieu, is constructive only when we relate it to the right to similarity, accepting the differences between all human beings, and this makes necessary a learning that must be linked to artistic creation. According to Ph. Meirieu, difference is not a given that refers to nature, in which the subject is enclosed, and refers to a difference that

expresses the uniqueness of the subject, through which the subject incorporates the elements of his personal history and the realization of his actions. The consideration of difference should not, according to Ph. Meirieu, lead to a taxonomic stance, but should favour the expansion of the possibilities of all human beings. According to Ph. Meirieu (1989), we should not refer to a differentiated pedagogy as a new pedagogical system, but to a dynamic that will be included in every pedagogical act, in the educational process. Differentiated pedagogy is a way of pedagogical organisation, where students work in an individualised way and the teacher intervenes through supportive explanations and appropriate advice, taking into account the acquired knowledge and their particular needs.⁵

Research data, through semi-structured interviews with all teachers and Special Education Staff, demonstrate the unsuitability of these school textbooks for students in Special Vocational Secondary Schools. We relied on the principals and vice-principals regarding the social origin of the Special Secondary Education students. In their opinion, the majority of students with disabilities in these special school structures belong to the middle and mainly to the underprivileged social classes and it was not acceptable, from the principals' point of view, to have access to the schools' records in order to study the socio-economic and socio-cultural origin of students' families, while a study by the Hellenic Statistical Authority on this subject is non-existent.

P. Bourdieu and J.C. Passeron in their books "Les Héritiers" (1964) and "La Reproduction" (1970) explain that school reproduces social inequalities through teaching methods and contents that implicitly favour a form of culture, that of the dominant social classes. According to the theory of P. Bourdieu and J. C. Passeron, students of privileged social classes succeed in school and in life because the values and norms they have adopted from their family environment are identical to those imposed by the school as legitimate.

This theory refers us to the concepts of class habitus and cultural arbitrariness of P. Bourdieu and J. C. Passeron, when the habitus of different social classes differs according to the socio-economic and socio-cultural origins of the students' families.

⁵ Meirieu, Ph. (2017). *Apprendre...oui, mais comment*, ESF Editeur

⁶As is well known, according to the ideology of social inequality, it is the school that should be the social space that should undertake to ensure equality for all students and to eliminate inequalities outside the school. According to the theory of P. Bourdieu and J.C. Passeron, cultural privilege lies at the root of school inequalities and allows the dominant classes, who are the main users of the educational system, to see their success as the affirmation of their natural and personal gifts. According to these authors in their book *Les Héritiers* (1964), we observe that there is a congruence between university teaching and the habitus of the privileged social classes, which allows students to integrate philological or philosophical teaching into their pre-existing cultural acquis. More generally, habitus denotes the ability socially acquired by an individual that allows him or her to make the right move, at the right time and spontaneously. Once acquired in the form of habitus, this ability seems completely natural and allows one to make the right choices in all circumstances. These are choices that are consistent with the culture of the social group. According to P. Bourdieu, cultural capital is a set of knowledge and information that is considered natural for students, and its lack is a disadvantage for the studies of those born in an underprivileged social environment. Moreover, this cultural capital can be "legitimized", that is, it can be formalized, by obtaining a school diploma (Gogo, 2019).

P. Bourdieu and J. C. Passeron in their book *La Reproduction* (1970) speak of symbolic violence and the cultural arbitrariness of the school, arguing also that the dominant culture is imposed on the school as the legitimate culture. These authors consider the educational system, not as a place of transmission of scientific knowledge - which would be socially neutral, but as a place of transmission of the legitimate culture. The examination of the educational system will therefore lead to the study of a space that is pre-eminently a space of cultural establishment, the imposition of cultural arbitrariness, as well as the production of unequal cultural provisions and, therefore, the reproduction of the established order.

For P. Bourdieu and J.C. Passeron, linguistic capital differs according to social classes and a positive choice will be exercised in favour of those who possess the linguistic means imposed by the school, which are those of the language of the privileged social classes. According to these authors, the social conditions of acquisition and use of language are removed from the social rules of the school. This is a form of violence that is not overt and which P. Bourdieu therefore calls symbolic violence. The educational system selects meanings, eliminates others, according to the

⁶ Bourdieu, P & Passeron, J. C. (1964), *Les Héritiers: les étudiants et la culture*, Paris: Les Éditions de Minuit.

culture of the dominant social classes and thus, through this symbolic violence, reinforces existing antagonistic relations. According to P. Bourdieu, any pedagogical action is objectively a symbolic violence, since it constitutes an imposition of a cultural arbitrariness. At the same time as the domination of the cultural arbitrary is perpetuated, the antagonistic relations that have placed it in a dominant position are reproduced. Pedagogical action, whose right to impose this cultural arbitrariness is in accordance with the cultural regime of the dominant social order. Pedagogical power, for P. Bourdieu, is necessarily implicit in pedagogical action and appears as a principle of symbolic violence, in the form of a right of legitimate enforcement. According to P. Bourdieu, the ideology which affirms the independence of pedagogical power in relation to social order is in accordance with the functional requirements of the educational system. Pedagogical authority must appear as independent and possessing, at least, an autonomy (Gogou, 2019).

The critical sociology of education, of which P. Bourdieu is one of the main authors, sees the school as the organ of production/reproduction of antagonistic relations, i.e. of society itself. L. Althusser had already demonstrated the mechanisms which ensure that the function of legitimation in schools. According to L. Althusser, school reproduces the internalisation of the rules of good behaviour, the correct use of language, morality, political and professional conscience, which means that school transmits the respect for the division of labour and the rules of order imposed by class domination. Through language and culture, a choice is made, based on the official language and writing and writing skills. In L. Althusser's view the school is a state ideological machine and a symbolic violence is sufficient and leads to the internalization of the relation of domination, as it has excluded all critical knowledge.

The school textbooks, according to the legislation of the Ministry of Education, are distributed free of charge in General Secondary Education and Special Vocational Secondary Education and are exactly the same for all subjects included in the curricula of General Secondary Education and Special Secondary Education. The majority of the teachers of our sample and the Special Educational Staff (psychologists, occupational therapists, speech therapists, social workers), through the semi-structured interviews, declare the unsuitability of these books because their theoretical content does not meet the educational needs of students with disabilities and through the production of their own educational material, adapted to the needs of their students. They point out the need for a differentiated pedagogy aimed at designing a personalised programme that takes into account the specificities and development rates of pupils with disabilities.

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