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**Postgraduate dissertation**

**Teachers' Intercultural Education: in-service training  
and lifelong training**

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Patras, Greece, January 2026



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# **Teachers' Intercultural Education: in-service training and lifelong training**

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### *Acknowledgments and Dedication*

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## Abstract

Cross-border educational reform and learner mobility across the globe have considerably shaped the nature of twenty-first century societies into multicultural, multilingual, and multiethnic environments. Greece, as was natural, given its geopolitical position, could not remain unaffected. These new multicultural school environments make Intercultural Education (IE) fundamental and non-negotiable. The current dissertation studies the intercultural education of Greek teachers before they served as teachers in the Greek education system and after they were hired and had to manage such diverse learning environments. The mandatory definitions and related studies focused on minorities in Greece are presented in Chapter 2. The core of this research is analyzed in the following chapter, including the research design, the research questions, the interviews and the data analysis. The next chapter, entitled “Findings” incorporates the data emerging for the participants’ insights coordinated under broader thematic sections and subsections. The current study ends with the summary and conclusions as well as some recommendations for future research.

**Keywords:** Intercultural education, multicultural environments, Greek educational system, in-service teachers

## Περίληψη

Ο εικοστός πρώτος αιώνας χαρακτηρίζεται από έντονα πολυπολιτισμικά, πολυγλωσσικά και πολυεθνικά περιβάλλοντα. Η διασυνοριακή εκπαιδευτική μεταρρύθμιση και κινητικότητα των εκπαιδευομένων σε όλο τον πλανήτη έχουν διαμορφώσει άρδην τη εικόνα της κοινωνίας μας σήμερα. Λόγω της γεωπολιτικής της θέσης, η χώρα μας, είναι μεταξύ των χωρών που έχουν επηρεαστεί σημαντικά. Για το λόγο αυτό, νέα πολυπολιτισμικά σχολικά περιβάλλοντα έχουν διαμορφωθεί, κάνοντας την Διαπολιτισμική Εκπαίδευση (ΔΕ) αναγκαία. Η παρούσα διπλωματική εργασία εξετάζει τη ΔΕ των Ελλήνων εκπαιδευτικών υπό το εξής πρίσμα: πριν αυτοί εργαστούν ως εκπαιδευτικοί και αφού προσληφθούν και θητεύσουν ως εκπαιδευτικοί σε τέτοιου είδους μαθησιακά περιβάλλοντα. Η μελέτη μας ξεκινά με τους βασικούς ορισμούς και ο αναγνώστης συναντά έρευνες που εστιάζουν σε μειονότητες στη χώρα μας στο Κεφάλαιο 2. Η εργασία συνεχίζει με το ερευνητικό κομμάτι, με τον πυρήνα της έρευνάς μας να παρουσιάζεται στο Κεφάλαιο 3, συμπεριλαμβάνοντας τον σχεδιασμό, τα ερευνητικά ερωτήματα, τις συνεντεύξεις και την ανάλυση δεδομένων. Στο κεφάλαιο που ακολουθεί παραθέτονται τα δεδομένα που προέκυψαν από τις συνεντεύξεις, χωρισμένα σε υποενότητες μαζί με μια συνοπτική κριτική. Η εργασία ολοκληρώνεται με τα συμπεράσματα και μια σύνοψη, καθώς και ορισμένες προτάσεις για μελλοντική έρευνα.

**Λέξεις-κλειδιά:** Διαπολιτισμική εκπαίδευση, πολυπολιτισμικά περιβάλλοντα, ελληνικό εκπαιδευτικό σύστημα, εν ενεργεία εκπαιδευτικοί

## Abbreviations and acronyms

<b>e.g.:</b>	<i>exempli gratia</i> , 'for example'
<b>i.e.:</b>	<i>id est</i> , 'that is'
<b>HOU:</b>	Hellenic Open University
<b>IC:</b>	Intercultural Competence
<b>IE:</b>	Intercultural Education
<b>L1:</b>	First Language
<b>L2:</b>	Second Language
<b>NGO:</b>	Non-Governmental Organization
<b>RQ:</b>	Research question

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## Chapter 1: Introduction

Globalization and social mobility all over the world has significantly changed the nature of modern societies into multicultural, multilingual and multiethnic environments. Exceptionally, Greece has experienced a huge wave of migrants, refugees and asylum seekers, with a big percentage of children, making Intercultural Education (IE) essential and required in these new multinational school environments. Teachers in the Greek context need now to cope with diverse students and cultural behaviors they are not familiar with and IE provides them with the required tools to create an inclusive, equal and respectful environment for all their students, regardless of their status and background (Bennett, 2004).

School groups have become culturally heterogeneous and IE supports democratic values such as elimination of discrimination, prejudices and taboos. Students learn to develop into critically active citizens and grow their openness and empathy towards their culturally diverse classmates or fellow citizens later. IE aims to encourage integration of this population and decrease marginalization or students' dropout of school environments. Education for all children from 6 to 15 years old is compulsory and an unalienable right and IE intends to ensure that all learners, regardless their status and background, have the opportunity to attend school.

This study aims to investigate aspects of IE in the Greek context and more particularly in-service teachers' experiences, challenges and practices in their everyday teaching process. The focus is on teachers as they play a key role in shaping students' learning experience and creating an inclusive school environment for all learners. While they are required

to follow a specific curriculum and institutional practices, they need to bring a balance between what is asked and what is applicable in everyday school routine.

Moreover, despite the fact that Greece has received the biggest amount of migrants and refugees over the last years, and the classrooms have become increasingly multicultural, the existing research on educational policies applied in these school environments is limited. This study aims to expand on the field of IC in the Greek context and how it is implemented and what are some future improvements.

### **1.1. Presentation of the context**

The Greek educational system is divided in formal education, consisted of five educational levels, first the preschool level, where children from 4-5 years old might attend, then is primary school, named as “Dimotiko scholeio”, and children 6-12 years old might attend. After that, children from 13-15 might attend middle school, named as “Gymnasio scholeio” and children from 16-18 might attend high school, named as “Lykeio scholeio” in Greek. Education from 4-15 is compulsory in Greece and an established right for all children, regardless their status.

After completing the lower secondary education, young people have the opportunity to continue their educational career in the higher educational level, the undergraduate studies and postgraduate studies. However, there is also non-formal education, such as vocational training or lifelong training, which play an important role in adults' professional development and integration in the working place.

As far as it is concerned the minorities and newcomers, educational system faces many challenges and limitations. In particular, in 2015, when the first migration flows arrived in Greece, Greek

government needed to take initiatives immediately without the required equipment and workforce. Teachers were asked to teach in multicultural environments without any previous specific education. Multicultural students were asked to perform academically in the Greek educational system without any previous knowledge of the Greek language.

At that period, reception classes, intensive language courses and NGO's additional support classes were formed in a short period of time as a means to fulfill these new necessities. Newly arrived students attend first a three-month intensive language course and then they are integrated in the school curriculum and receive additional training support. However, this does not always meet the reality, as many students attend school in the middle of the year or there is not enough teaching staff to cover the required needs.

Refugee students often face a big delay on their school enrollment due to their uncertain legal status. Other barriers that they may face before and after their enrollment might be the language, the displacement in the middle of the school year or post trauma experience. As their parents don't speak the mainstream language, they are not able to support them or communicate with their teachers and find the best possible practice in order to improve their academic process.

Despite the integrating process of this population is difficult and teachers face many difficulties with institutional support, they have found many ways to make these students part of their groups and encourage them to learn. While they try to orient them in their first day at school, they motivate their students to interact with the newcomer and bond with each other through body language activities. Furthermore, they support their new students to use their mother language (L1), teach new word through images and find ways to communicate with their parents.

## **1.2. Description of this study**

This study is a qualitative research aiming to investigate in-service teachers' perceptions and experiences coping with challenges in multicultural environments in addition to the practices they adopt to develop intercultural competence. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews with six participants, exploring their experiences and perspectives throughout their teaching career in Greek cultural diverse school environments. The analysis proceeded along a thematic approach, where reappearing patterns and themes were pinpointed across participants' responses.

The main topics of this study are teachers' prior literacy background, especially related with intercultural education, the challenges they face with heterogeneous multicultural groups, the practices they foster as a means to encourage intercultural competence among their students and their suggestions for prospective improvements. The focus of this investigation is on current intercultural education in Greece and possible opportunities for development on this field.

## **1.3. Description of this dissertation**

In addition to this introductory chapter, the dissertation is divided into four main chapters. In chapter 2, entitled "Literature Review", an illustration of related researches are presented. Firstly, definitions that are used in this study are elaborated, such as culture, multiculturalism, interculturalism, challenges to define those terms as well as similarities and differences. Later, intercultural competence and its connection to education are defined. Related studies globally and in Greece are discussed, while following the focus is on minority groups in Greece, such as Muslim, Roma, Palinostountes and refugees and migrants.

Chapter 3, entitled “Methodology”, the process of this study is analyzed step by step. After presenting the overview of the study, the research design and the research questions, the first subsection presents the data generation procedures including the interviews, the sample and the ethics. The second subsection presents the data analysis procedures divided into pre-analytical work and coding.

The following chapter, chapter 4, entitled “Findings”, includes the data emerging for the participants’ experiences organized under broader thematic sections and subsections. The three basic thematic sections are related to participants’ prior intercultural educational background, their in-service intercultural competence development and possible future personal intercultural development. Challenges and practices are additionally elaborated in subsections.

The last chapter, chapter 5, entitled “Conclusions and Discussions”, presents summarized the key findings of this study, implications and limitations and suggestions for future work. It synthesizes the findings gained from the data analysis and connects participants’ experiences with broader patterns in Greek intercultural education. Additionally, it addresses the limitations of this study, such as the small representative number of participants and the self-reported data reliance and recommends approaches for future researches about educators’ intercultural competence development in the years.

## Chapter 2: Literature Review

This chapter presents a concise literature review of intercultural competence within the field of education. It aims to provide conceptual clarity by offering definitions of key terms, including *interculturality*, *minorities*, and the broader notion of *culture*, which are essential for a comprehensive understanding of the topic.

### 2.1 Key terms

This section establishes a conceptual framework by presenting foundational definitions to clarify essential terminology. It emphasizes the complexities and challenges inherent in defining culture. Subsequently, the concepts of multiculturalism and interculturalism are introduced, with a focus on their key distinctions. These concepts are then contextualised within educational settings to demonstrate their relevance to the discourse on intercultural competence in education.

#### 2.1.1 *What is culture (definitions, challenges in defining culture)*

Many researchers have tried to define the concept of culture over the decades, but it remains a challenging and multidimensional term. Generally, culture is shaped by people's ethics, traditions, values, languages, views, and rules within a group, community, or country.

Tylor (1871) initially described culture as a complex term to define, with many aspects, but he ultimately defined it as a combination of beliefs, values, traditions, and so on, as described already, and additionally, art and knowledge of the members of society. Later, Geertz (1973) related culture to government and its efforts to control people's behaviour through plans, recipes, rules, and instructions.

Bourdieu (1979) introduced the concept of culture's social identity, explaining that people's behaviours are shaped by social structures. Later, Triandis (2002) presented the dual nature of culture, comprising the material aspects, such as clothes, food, buildings, roads, machines, and tools, and the subjective elements, which consisted of people's perceptions about their environment. He also stated that culture is a human-made and essential thing that people pass to future generations, like religion, education, and language.

Ogay and Edelman (2016) claim that the differences among groups or societies are not genetic but environmental. People shape their opinions, language, practices, and everyday life in a specific environment and share the same ideas with the rest of the members of the same group. Additionally, they reported that culture is complicated to define, with Kroeber and Kluckhohn naming 160 definitions, while Baldwin et al. named 300. Culture is not static, but an ever-changing concept that continually adapts to new societies, just as its members strive to adapt within their societies. The members define their identity through culture and satisfy their need for inclusion, belonging, acceptance, and security. However, culture can limit people's horizons, but also provide them with guidance on how to interact with the rest of the group's members.

Lu and Wan (2018) believe that culture influences group members' beliefs, values, and the way they interact and belong within a social group, without their being consciously aware of it. Only when society's focus is on culture can people recognize the impact on themselves and their lives. They also refer to the interconnection between culture and identity, and conclude that people shape, maintain, and develop their identity through culture.

Sisson, Whittington and Shin (2020) describe the way culture 1. shapes individuals' beliefs, values and practices shared in a group, 2. is passed on the next generation through language, social interaction and symbols in their everyday life and 3. defines their identity, the way they see themselves and interact with the rest of their group.

Defining culture has been described as a complex task by researchers over the decades. As mentioned, Taylor (1871) depicted it as a very complex term to define. Williams (1976) explained that the word "culture" is comprehensive and is used in many ways in various contexts, making it a complex concept.

Culture is both visible and invisible. As Triandis (2006) mentioned, it consists of things that can be seen (such as clothes) and others that are difficult to define (like values). Furthermore, culture is dynamic—a living, changing concept that adapts to new generations and societies.

### ***2.1.2 What is multiculturalism/interculturalism (definitions, differences)***

Multiculturalism refers to the inclusion of multiple cultures within a group, society, or country. Different people with diverse backgrounds interact with one another in various ways and influence each other. Raz (1998) argues that multiculturalism is neither a new term nor a new situation. Societies have been multicultural for many years, specifically referring to “The coexistence of cultural, ethnic and religious communities within one political society, within one state, has been the condition of European countries long before they knew of themselves as European” (p. 194). He suggests reassessing people's issues and needs in today's societies from a political perspective. Multiculturalism is not only the coexistence of different cultural groups, ethnicities, nationalities, and

religions in a society, but also the respect and maintenance of individuals' dignity and well-being within that society.

Song (2022) associates multiculturalism with cultural diversity in a society, referring to differences in nationality, ethnicity, and religion. He focuses on the political challenges that this diversity may cause and the ways to understand and act effectively. Furthermore, members of minority groups are not forced to adjust to society's culture but instead, they can maintain their own culture, language, identity, and practices in a society that supports liberty and equality. Finally, he states that multiculturalism has become a part of a broader effort for inclusion of marginalized groups through decades, such as African Americans, women, LGBTQ people, and people with disabilities. He defines four categories of modern multiculturalism: minorities related to ethnicity, religion, nationality, and indigenous people.

Bouchard (2011) presents the basic principles of interculturalism that have been misinterpreted in previous years. First of all, he supports the idea that cohesion does not mean an official language, an official system of laws, and an official national territory, but rather a system that promotes the maintenance of identity, group memory, acceptance, recognition, and a sense of belonging. National and cultural diversity are accepted and respected, and all forms of discrimination are prohibited within this system. All kinds of minorities are respected and treated with equal dignity and respect, promoting integration and protection of human rights.

Zapata-Barrero (2021) defines intraculturalism as the interaction and communication among people with different cultural backgrounds. Interculturalism focuses more on similarities among individuals than on differences. Diversity is a valuable feature that people should maintain

and cultivate, fostering a new multicultural culture that promotes cohesion in society.

In summary, multiculturalism emphasizes the presence of diverse cultures within a society, while interculturalism stresses the integration and cohesion achieved through interaction and mutual understanding. Despite this, interculturalism may recognize the existence of a dominant culture, whereas multiculturalism promotes equity among all cultural groups. Therefore, multiculturalism often involves the passive coexistence of distinct groups, while interculturalism encourages active communication, cultural exchange, and cooperation.

### ***2.1.3 Building on these insights, the discussion now addresses the concept of intercultural competence and examines its connections to education.***

Intercultural competence refers to the ability of individuals to understand and respect the cultures, perspectives, beliefs, religions, and backgrounds of others, enabling them to communicate and interact effectively without conflicts or misunderstandings (Chang et. al, 2022). Bennett (2004) states that individuals who develop intercultural communication skills more successfully are those who respect others' complexity and view them as equals, taking into account their different cultural perspectives. He refers to this as intercultural sensitivity and highlights it as a key element of intercultural competence. Terms such as intercultural adaptation and intercultural worldview are considered the basis for intercultural competence. People have learned to see the world from their ethnocentric perspective without being able to understand other people's cultural differences. To understand people in different cultural

environments, individuals need to adjust their perspective and develop their knowledge, attitudes, and skills.

Deardorff (2011) presents many terms used in this field (multiculturalism, cross-cultural adaptation, intercultural sensitivity, cultural intelligence, international communication, transcultural communication, global competence, cross-cultural awareness and global citizenship) but she supports that “intercultural competence” embodies all the above and refers to any individual who interacts with people with different backgrounds despite their location. After many scholars and efforts to conclude in one term, she finally arrives at “*effective and appropriate behaviour and communication in intercultural situations*”, which requires further explanation of appropriate behaviour. (Deardorff, 2011, p. 66). Moreover, she supports the idea that intercultural competence is a developing process that requires mostly individual effort, where individuals have the opportunity to develop their ability at their own pace through reflection and self-assessment. Critical thinking, along with attitudes such as respect, openness, curiosity, and the ability to see the world from others' viewpoints, are vital key elements in improving intercultural competence.

According to Hamaniuk et al. (2024), numerous researchers have presented various elements related to intercultural competence. Firstly, cultural awareness involves understanding not only your own culture's beliefs, values, and preconceptions, but also the characteristics of other cultures. Communication is another aspect of intercultural competence, which explains how language, body language, and interaction styles vary across different cultural environments. It also explores how people from different cultural backgrounds can misunderstand each other, the reasons for this, and how they can avert any potential conflict. Additionally,

adaptability refers to an individual's ability to adjust their behavior and expectations according to their interlocutor's cultural background, thereby avoiding any possible misconceptions. Empathy aims to eliminate misunderstandings and conflicts, fostering openness and respect for others' cultures. All features encourage the development of healthy, friendly, and cooperative relationships among individuals with diverse cultural backgrounds.

Education plays a crucial role in preparing students for multicultural and multilingual environments, whether in society or the workplace. Interacting with people from diverse backgrounds can be challenging, and misconceptions may arise as a result. Students have the opportunity to learn about other cultures, languages, values, and behavioral patterns of different societies through language learning, to avoid inconvenient situations. They are also able to navigate multicultural interactions and cultivate skills to coexist in conflict-free environments, as well as communicate effectively with diverse individuals. Moreover, education can promote critical thinking and critical understanding, two key elements of intercultural interaction. Students need to realise others' rights and differences, broadening their openness and horizons as a means to foster respect and acceptance for all people, regardless of their origin (Hamaniuk, Karpiuk, Shumilina, & Ustinova, 2024).

## **2.2 Recent studies about intercultural competence in education**

This subsection presents the core content of the chapter, specifically the bibliographic review and an examination of how the aforementioned concepts intersect with the field of education, particularly within the Greek context. It begins with an introductory overview outlining the

international landscape, followed by a focused discussion on the Greek context.

### ***2.2.1 Internationally***

Recent international research has focused on the increasing attention to intercultural competence in education, as globalization is a significant factor driving the migration of more people, and most school environments have become multicultural. Diversity has established intercultural competence as a fundamental and crucial educational goal, developing the ability to interact and communicate effectively with people from diverse backgrounds and fostering openness, respect, and acceptance. Barrett (2020) presents the new approach offered by the Council of Europe, promoting an educational system that aims to foster democratic citizenship and respect human rights.

The Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture (RFCDC) was designed for use at all school levels, from a very young age, as well as in higher education, adult education, and professional education. The Framework not only describes the suggested competences that learners should possess to interact and communicate equally and democratically with diverse individuals, but also offers guidance to educators on how to implement this framework in their teaching process. It aims to prepare learners for the multicultural labor market, to act as citizens democratically and critically, to develop themselves, and to broaden their horizons and knowledge.

Respecting individuals and human rights, the RFCDC views education as a medium that enables learners to interact meaningfully with others, promoting both personal growth and social equality. This is the reason why it elaborates on the meanings of identity and cultural groups,

explaining that identity is the way people see and define themselves in a meaningful and important way to them. Identity is divided into three parts: personal identity encompasses personal features, roles, and behaviors; social identity involves belonging to various social groups; and cultural identity involves affiliation with different cultural groups.

Cultural groups, on the other hand, are heterogeneous, have ambiguous boundaries, and are dynamic, continually evolving entities. Competence has two meanings according to the Framework: a broad meaning, describing the ability to utilize the appropriate skills, values, attitudes, and knowledge to communicate effectively in specific contexts, and a more specific meaning, referring to the actual skills, attitudes, values, and knowledge that a person actually employs. As a consequence, being competent means combining these competences to perform effectively in diverse situations.

For teachers to cultivate a democratic culture in their teaching process, the Framework suggests that they develop democratic competencies independently. Review and assessment are necessary for the existing courses in teacher education. Meanwhile, teaching methods, content, and assignments should be modified or added as needed to develop democratic competencies for both teachers and learners. The Framework describes how teachers should design activities so that their students are involved in the learning process as active agents, with opportunities to gain experience, analyze, reflect, compare, and decide on their unique learning path. Educational activities could be planned by both teachers and students together, as a team.

### **2.2.2 In Greece**

The primary focus of this section is Greece, reflecting both the professional and geographical context of the study. This emphasis is informed not only by the structure of the Greek educational system but also by the country's geopolitical position, which has historically made it a point of entry for significant numbers of immigrants, refugees, and returnees.

#### **2.2.2.a Minorities (*Muslims / Roma*)**

In Greece, specifically in the region of Thrace, there is a minority of Muslims. Approximately 130,000 Muslim people live there and cope with many difficulties related to their education. Their needs were neglected for many years, and as a consequence, many students failed academically or dropped out early. Poor cooperation between majority and minority educators, limited interaction between minority and mainstream schools, and the absence of intercultural education training for teachers contributed to this situation for many years. Students are taught half of the curriculum in their native language, Turkish, and the other half in the mainstream language, Greek. Minority students attend different schools from the natives, and they do not have the opportunity to interact with each other, exchange cultural characteristics, communicate, and coexist, causing fear and anxiety and maintaining prejudices. Parents and teachers often share similar preconceptions, making it more challenging for social and educational interaction between the two groups. In 1997, the Muslim Minority Education Project served as a significant example of promoting intercultural competence through formal and non-formal educational initiatives. Students, teachers, and parents participated in the project,

demonstrating that all prejudices and stereotypes can be overcome, making way for understanding, equality, and respect (Magos, 2007).

The Greek Roma have their origins in India and first appeared in Greece during the Byzantine era. Their community is not homogeneous and differs in several ways. Their location: some live permanently in a place, while others move from one place to another. Their religion: some are Christian Orthodox, and some are Muslim. Their language: they speak two varieties, Vlach and Non-Vlach. Until 1955, Roma were stateless, but by 1978, they were granted Greek citizenship, and as a result, all of them now have a legal status. For an extended period, Roma did not have the right to attend school, and this is the reason why most of them are illiterate, primarily women who are taking care of their home and children. They face many problems with the language and math, and therefore, there is a high rate of school dropouts among young Roma. There are several reasons for Roma's dropouts and failure. Even though their parents wish for their children to attend school, Roma's classmates state that they lack hygiene, interest, and motivation. Additionally, many students and teachers are not very welcoming to Roma (Nikolaou, 2009).

Another reason for Roma's not enrolling in school is the Greek bureaucracy and their lack of documentation. Since 1997, the Greek government has implemented many policies in order for Roma to integrate into Greek schools and society, such as special classes, remedial schooling, and Roma student cards, but without a successful result. In 1997 and 2004, two programs aimed at integrating Roma resulted in a reduction of dropouts from 75% to 24%. Another goal of these programs was to develop teachers' cultural awareness through their training and to develop their educational materials. Recent researches claim that there is still a high rate of Roma school dropouts. Teachers state that there is

deficient knowledge about the Roma's culture and history, and this makes their teaching process difficult. Many Roma students attend special schools, where they rarely interact with non-Roma students, or they attend mainstream schools, spending their entire morning without interacting with their non-Roma classmates. As a conclusion, school environments need to be more *Roma-friendly* (Nikolaou, 2009).

### ***2.2.2.b Palinostountes (returnees), 1990s***

The increasing interconnectedness of the modern world has transformed the academic landscape, with Intercultural Competence (IC) emerging as a key pedagogical **priority**. Since the early 1990s, with significant waves of return migration such as the "Palinostountes" (returnees) in Greece, educational systems have been challenged to adapt to greater cultural diversity within classrooms. Intercultural competence, defined as the ability to communicate effectively and appropriately in intercultural contexts based on one's intercultural learning, skills, and attitudes (Deardorff, 2006), has emerged as central to teaching approaches and practices. This subsection reviews five up-to-date and significant studies on IC development within educational contexts and discusses their importance for both scholars and educators.

In a foundational study on return migration, Christou (2006) examines how second-generation Greek Americans construct their identity and negotiate notions of "home" upon returning to Greece. Through ethnographic methods and narrative interviews, the article illustrates how familial legacies, collective memory, and emotional geographies shape the experience of return. Christou challenges essentialist interpretations of homeland belonging, instead emphasizing the fluidity of diasporic identities. This research offers a critical lens

through which to understand how return migration can act as a site of both cultural affirmation and personal transformation.

King and Christou (2014) examine the phenomenon of second-generation return migration to Greece, focusing on the formation of transnational identity and the integration processes of returnees. Drawing on qualitative interviews, the authors explore how individuals who were raised abroad, particularly in Germany and the United States, navigate the complexities of belonging and adaptation upon their return. Their findings reveal a nuanced interplay between transnational experiences and local sociocultural realities, highlighting how returnees often grapple with hybrid identities. This work makes a significant contribution to the literature by framing return migration as a dynamic and negotiated process, rather than merely a reversal of emigration.

Parthenis (2016) discusses a large-scale educational initiative aimed at supporting the academic and social integration of returnee and migrant students in Greece. The program, developed by the University of Athens, included intercultural teaching materials, teacher training, and support networks designed to reduce school dropout and marginalization. Although not a traditional journal article, the study offers an important applied perspective on intercultural education policy. It also foregrounds the specific needs of returnee students (*Palinostountes*), emphasising the necessity of culturally responsive frameworks in both curriculum and school culture.

Mylonas and Žilović (2019) explore the intersection of foreign policy and ethnic return migration through a comparative analysis of Greece and Serbia. Their article investigates how group-level variations influence state policies toward returnees, particularly in contexts where ethnic affiliation is politically instrumentalised. In the case of Greece, the

study reveals how policy frameworks have selectively supported the return of ethnic Greeks—such as the Pontians from the former USSR—based on broader national and geopolitical considerations. This work offers a valuable political science perspective on migration studies, highlighting the strategic underpinnings of repatriation policy.

Kaurinkoski (2021) focuses on the return migration of ethnic Greeks from the former Soviet Union and their reintegration into Greek society. Using longitudinal fieldwork conducted in Greece, Cyprus, and Ukraine, the study delves into issues of belonging, state repatriation policies, and intergroup differentiation. The author highlights the marginalisation and symbolic boundary-making that often characterise the reception of these returnees, despite their legal recognition as co-ethnics. This research underscores the discrepancies between official repatriation narratives and the lived experiences of return migrants, shedding light on the challenges of cultural reintegration.

The 'Palinostountes' in Greece, or return migrant scholars, benefit from intercultural competence (IC) agendas that provide platforms for affirmation and inclusion, thereby reducing the risks of marginalisation. This case exemplifies the importance and impact of IC development in educational contexts. Furthermore, IC is a dynamic and ongoing process that requires continuous support, feedback, and cultural reflection.

Key themes emerging from this literature include the centrality of experiential understanding, the importance of integrating IC into mainstream curricula, and the significance of considering both cognitive and affective outcomes. The role of faculty training and institutional support seems necessary. Similarly, the data suggest that IC contributes positively to resilience, engagement, and long-term educational outcomes.

As education continues to evolve in response to global and local demographic shifts, promoting intercultural competence is not only relevant but also crucial. The reviewed analyses provide a roadmap for embedding IC meaningfully within academic programs. For Greece, and especially for populations such as the Palinostountes, supporting IC education holds promise for cultivating inclusion, mutual respect, and academic growth.

### ***2.2.2.c Recent: Relating to the refugee and migrant population.***

Greece has become the most populous refugee centre in the West since the 1990s, but has also been a significant source of refugees in recent years and the largest refugee destination since 2015. In 2020, 112,300 refugees arrived in Greece, including 42,500 children who require school attendance. This is why the government has reactivated past structures, such as the Zones of Educational Priority (ZEP) and Reception classes, and created new ones in line with the new rules, including Reception facilities, primarily for children living in camps. ZEP classes were designed for students with little or no previous knowledge of the mainstream language, Greek. Students with any prior knowledge of Greek attend a pull-out reception class for three hours per day, and they spend the rest of the teaching process with their classmates. Students with a basic knowledge of Greek attend either pull-out reception classes or the mainstream class, receiving support from the educator.

Reception facilities for education were another story; the Greek government has indeed established facilities to support refugee children in attending the Greek school. Students were required to attend school in the morning or afternoon to receive the opportunity to learn the language and transition into the regular educational system. Nevertheless, many

refugee students were marginalised in that way as they did not interact with Greek students, and they did not integrate into the system. On the other hand, Greek teachers educated to teach the Greek curriculum in Greek were expected to teach Greek to diverse refugee students from various ethnic, mother tongue, and cultural backgrounds, who had little or no prior knowledge of Greek.

Giavrimis and Dimitriadou (2023) investigate how interculturality is implemented in Greek educational settings, particularly in schools with a high concentration of migrant and refugee students. Their study reveals significant discrepancies between policy rhetoric and classroom practices, with teachers frequently lacking the necessary training and institutional support to foster genuine intercultural engagement. The authors highlight that, although intercultural education is officially endorsed, its implementation remains fragmented and inconsistent. This research provides valuable insights into the systemic challenges that hinder the effective development of intercultural competence in the Greek educational system.

Katsara (2024) presents a case study on the intercultural sensitivity profiles of Greek university students, highlighting the varying degrees of awareness and openness toward cultural diversity among future professionals. Utilizing a validated measurement scale, the study reveals that while students demonstrate moderate intercultural sensitivity, critical dimensions such as empathy and interaction confidence remain underdeveloped. The author suggests targeted interventions in higher education curricula to foster deeper intercultural competence. This work is particularly relevant for understanding how Greek tertiary institutions can serve as catalysts for intercultural development.

Maniatis and Panagiotidou (2025) examine the intercultural sensitivity of primary education teachers in Greece and their connection to their teaching practices. Based on empirical data collected from over 200 educators, the study finds a moderate to high level of sensitivity, particularly in teachers who have undergone specialized training or have direct experience working with culturally diverse students. However, gaps remain in translating sensitivity into practical classroom strategies. The authors call for sustained professional development to support teachers in adopting inclusive, culturally responsive pedagogies—an essential component in building intercultural competence at the foundational level of education.

## **Chapter 3: Methodology**

This chapter outlines the methodological construction of this study aiming to explore the perceptions of Greek teachers regarding intercultural education. The research design consists of the illustration of the study, the data generation procedures and the data analysis procedures, allowing the reader to follow and understand the way this study was conducted and analyzed and findings were generated afterwards.

The chapter is divided into three main sections. The first section (3.1.) presents an overview of the study, including its aims and research questions. Following that, Section 3.2 illustrates the data generation procedures, elaborating the process of the semi-structured interviews, the characteristics of the participants, and the ethical principles followed strictly by the researcher during the entire research process. The last section, Section 3.3, presents the data analysis procedure, consisting of the pre-analytical work and the coding process, including the analytical strategies employed to identify patterns and themes within the data.

### **3.1. Overview of this study**

This study is an exploratory qualitative investigation, aiming to understand in-service teachers' experiences, perceptions, and practices related to the development of intercultural competence during their teaching careers. A qualitative research design was deemed the most suitable orientation for the purposes of this study, as it has the potential to offer insights into the challenging and developing nature of intercultural competence within real educational contexts. Qualitative research experienced a significant growth and transformation in the 1980s and researchers started to investigate issues related to different social groups such as minority groups and their marginalization. Generally, qualitative

research design has been used in explaining social or human problems leading to patterns, theories and generalizations about individuals or groups (Creswell, 2009).

This study was geared toward in-service teachers across all levels of education in Greece. It aimed to investigate the intercultural competence of teachers in Greece and to illustrate the development of all levels of education in-service teachers' intercultural competence in time. The challenges they faced at the beginning of their teaching career and the practices they implemented in order to eliminate these challenges and develop an inclusive environment for their students according to Intercultural Competence's principles are elaborated. Ultimately, teachers' further education and professional development in the field of intercultural education whether they are planning so, are explored.

Based on these aims, the study addresses the following **research questions**:

1. Do Greek teachers have prior literacy in Intercultural Competence?
2. How did they develop their Intercultural Competence and their practices over the years of teaching in order to overcome the challenges of multicultural environments?
3. How do they intend to develop their Intercultural Competence?

### **3.2. Data generation procedures**

In this section, I will provide information about the procedures used to gather detailed knowledge about Greek teachers' lived experiences in multicultural school environments and the intercultural practices they apply in their teaching processes so as their students be able to participate and understand the context. The procedure and the steps taken in this

study, the selection of the participants and the ethics taken into consideration will be presented thoroughly as a means to ensure transparency and reflect the authentic perspectives of those involved.

### ***3.2.1. Interviews***

In order to elicit data for this study, **six interviews** were conducted. The number of interviews had not been predefined, but was considered sufficient as it generated rich, in-depth information for this study's purpose, while remaining controllable for detailed qualitative analysis under the researcher's timetable and barriers.

Specifically, **in-service teachers** teaching at different levels of education in Greece were approached, as it was believed that they could provide insights into how educational challenges and needs are being handled by specific and appropriate educational practices across diverse school settings and how these factors relate with intercultural education.

As regards the design of the interviews, a **semi-structured** format was selected. Semi-structured interviews are interviews where the researcher has already organised a set of open-ended questions before the interview, while other questions emerging during the discussion (Dicicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006). This method was selected as it provides both structure and flexibility, allowing the researcher to address predefined topics, while the participants have the opportunity to expand on their experiences and perspectives further. This was important in the context of this study because its aim was to allow the interviewees to explore deeply their social and personal experiences and express themselves into their own time.

The interviews were conducted **online** between December 2024 and January 2025, using the Zoom platform. This was done to ensure

maximum flexibility, and respect of the participants' availability and the researchers' schedule. Online interviews have been criticised for not supporting trust and proximity among the researcher and the interviewees, leading to less comfortable environment and less self-expression. However, they are less time consuming as the interviewees have the opportunity to participate from their preferred location, home or work (Brown, 2022), and this was considered helpful because of the different location of the involved parties.

Each interview lasted approximately **40 minutes** (see Table 1, below). The interviews were video recorded with the participants' consent, in compliance with the HOU ethics requirements. To record consent, each participant was asked to fill out a consent form (Appendix A) before the interview, after the topic and purpose of the interview and the procedural details were explained in detail, and they were given the opportunity to ask questions. During the informed consent preparation, it was also clarified to participants that their personal information would be kept confidential and not shared with others, and that any information presented in the context of this study and subsequent publications would be published anonymously.

The interviews took place in **Modern Greek** because that was both participants' and researcher's first language and participants had the opportunity to articulate their thinking more clearly and provide more detailed information about the subject under investigation. However, the interview extracts that are presented in this dissertation have been translated post-analysis, for reasons of data transparency.

Following each interview, the researcher filled out a **reflective note** in her research journal. In this, salient points of the interview were noted

in summary form, as well as any immediate insights that were captured during the interview from the observation of paralinguistic features (gestures, facial expressions, tone). These notes also recorded meta-commentary on the interview process that was used as a reflective tool to help guide future iterations of the interview process.

### *3.2.2. The sample*

The participants were selected using the researcher's personal network, and they were contacted via email or direct communication. This convenience sampling strategy was necessary for pragmatic reasons: The researcher's current location abroad made the search of participants difficult and her personal network was the only option. Convenience sampling is usually selected because the participants are easily accessible and available (Etikan et al., 2016). Additionally, snowball sampling techniques were used for additional recruitment: in this procedure, some of the first participants proposed their colleagues for participating and that is how the number of the participants reached the expected (Parker et al., 2019).

Four out of six participants are teachers in a primary multicultural school in the centre of Athens, where one of them is a supporting parallel special teacher to the first participant. All of them are colleagues, two of them with few years of teaching and two of them with a high level of experience. One participant has been teaching for the last four years in a second chance school with multicultural adult students with criminal background and the last participant is a kindergarten teacher in a multicultural school in the centre of Athens with a few years' experience there. Three participants were interviewed in December of 2024 and the other three in January of 2025. Most of the interviews lasted for

approximately half an hour, one lasted fifteen minutes and one lasted almost an hour (Table 1).

**Table 1**

*Overview of the interviews*

<i>Pseudonym</i>	<i>Profession</i>	<i>Interview date</i>	<i>Duration</i>
Participant 1	Primary teacher	01/12/2024	00:36:31
Participant 2	Special educator	08/12/2024	00:25:14
Participant 3	Primary teacher	19/01/2025	00:27:37
Participant 4	Teacher in second chance school	18/01/2025	00:34:16
Participant 5	Kindergarten teacher	07/12/2024	00:58:44
Participant 6	Primary teacher	19/01/2025	00:15:47

### **3.2.3. Ethics**

The interviews and data analysis were conducted based on the fundamental principles of research ethics. First of all, the safety and well-being of the participants were protected by an established oversight procedure of Hellenic Open University. Secondly, before the collection of data, all participants were informed about the research's aim, the way the interview would be conducted, the estimated duration, the recording process, and the types of questions they could expect and they sent their written informed consent via mail. And lastly, all participants' data were kept confidential. The participants' personal data shared in the interviews

were not published. The subjects' anonymity is very important and was respected by the researcher in order to avoid any potential harm or bias (Starnes et al., 2021).

### **3.3. Data analysis procedures**

The interviews were first transcribed and later organised in themes, using procedures loosely informed by Grounded Theory (Corbin & Strauss, 2014). Coding was implemented in two levels, initially all answers were described by open codes which later were organised in categories that same patterns were identified across participants. All these themes were analysed and associated with larger theoretical perspectives, presented in Chapter 4.

#### ***3.3.1. Pre-analytical work***

As previously mentioned, all the interviews were video-recorded with the participants' consent. Although the video was useful for the affective and behavioural framing of the interview content, only the audio from the interview was subjected to analysis. The audio stream from the interview was extracted from the video file in the meantime the file was downloaded and saved after each interview automatically from the Zoom application.

Following that, the file was **transcribed** using a combination of machine-supported and manual transcription. Initially, the files were uploaded to the Cockatoo transcription software, which ensures that data are not retained in the server, in compliance with best practices in data security. The transcript that was produced was then re-heard several times by the researcher, with a view to ensuring accuracy.

As a next step during the pre-analytical work, the data were **anonymised**. All personally identifying information, such as names,

references to places of work etc., were redacted from the transcript or replaced by pseudonymical information. The transcripts were saved using a coding convention (e.g., Participant1\_InterviewTranscript) which did not reveal the participants' identity. All the transcripts were read and used only by the researcher for the purpose of the study, and their supervisor for reasons of mentoring and quality assurance.

### ***3.3.2. Coding***

This study adopted a qualitative research approach, as it allows for the exploration of teachers' lived experiences, perceptions, and practices regarding intercultural competence in depth. A qualitative orientation was considered appropriate in order to present the complex and evolving nature of intercultural competence and to document teachers' personal development on Intercultural Education field.

The transcribed data were connected then to thematic analysis. Drawing loosely on methods from Grounded Theory (Corbin & Strauss, 2014), there were two waves of coding: an open-ended code phase, which identified patterns and themes relevant to the research questions; an axial (or 'categorical') phase, where data were grouped into categories informed by the literature. These were supplemented by analytical writing (Miles et al., 2014).

During the first wave of coding (open-ended), **marginal comments** were made on the transcript while listening to the audio. These summarised, in the form of key words, the salient content of each section, as shown in Table 2, below. In this phase, a total of 111 codes were made, by responding inductively to the interview content.

**Table 2**

*Example of marginal comments*

<p>In 2003 we had many children from Albania. Now most of the children in Albania are not considered immigrants, they are considered Greeks. Back then we had many children from Albania, we had many children from Russia, Romania, Bulgaria, we had from those countries. Now we have many from the Middle East, Pakistan, Syria.</p>	<p>Immigrant students' background</p>
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In the second wave of coding, 92 codes were added and in the third wave, all the codes were merged into **21 categories**. These categories combined inductively generated codes and codes dictated by the research questions, in order to ensure maximum analytical flexibility. For example, students who don't speak Greek, communication with parents, interpreter, bureaucracy, socialization and difficulties with multicultural students were grouped into a broader category, named *Challenges*. The data under each category were tabulated in data analysis matrices, as shown in Table 3.

**Table 3**

*Extract of data analysis matrix*

<i>Challenges</i>	<i>P1</i>	<i>P2</i>	<i>P3</i>	<i>P4</i>	<i>P5</i>	<i>P6</i>
Students who don't	Big challenge.	-	They don't know basic	Different level of Greek.	-	They don't understand simple

speaking Greek			words in Greek.			instructions.
Communication with parents	Parents don't speak Greek or English.	Parents don't speak Greek or English.	Parents don't speak Greek or English.	Language barrier, students misunderstand.	-	Difficulty to arrange meetings with parents.
Interpreter	School doesn't provide one.	Ask other parents who speak the same language to translate.	-	-	Using parents as interpreter.	Using students as interpreter.

Finally, the information shown in each data analysis were summarised in the form of an **analytical memo**. These memos synthesised the information about each category, and related it to the informing theory. Doing so, enabled the emergence of the findings that are presented in Chapter 4.

## Chapter 4: Findings

This chapter presents the findings that emerged from the data coding procedure (see Section 3.3.2 above). This discussion is structured into thematic sections and subsections that present the most common identified patterns across participants' experiences. Each section introduces one of the main themes, analysed further in subsections by illustrating examples and elaborates the connection of each theme with the research questions.

### 4.1. Prior Intercultural Competence Literacy

The first set of findings relates to the prior intercultural competence literacy of the participants, and corresponds to Research Question 1 (see Section 3.1., above). The findings were grouped into two major and three subsequent themes, as shown in Table 4 (below). These suggest that, according to the participants, intercultural competence literacy skills are developed either in teacher education (undergraduate and postgraduate studies or professional development seminars) or through working experience.

**Table 4**

*Prior Intercultural Literacy codes*

<i>Code</i>	<i>Profession</i>	<i>Participants</i>
IC-Ta	Teacher Education (undergraduate)	
IC-Tb	Teacher Education (postgraduate)	P4
IC-Tc	Teacher Education (seminars)	P1, P2, P3

IC-W	Working experience	P3
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#### ***4.1.1 Developing intercultural education in undergraduate studies***

Almost all of the participants had completed their undergraduate studies in education or education-adjacent fields. The one exception was P4, who reported having a bachelor's degree in Business Administration and Organisation. However, no data were available regarding how the participants perceived the effectiveness and value of these studies.

#### ***4.1.2 Developing intercultural education in postgraduate studies***

Four out of six participants are postgraduate degree holders, in cognitive psychology, in computer science in education, in diversified education, in theatre and Participant 4 has, among others, been attending the Learning Language for Immigrants and Refugees in Hellenic Open University. Participant 5 has found very helpful her studies in Diversified Education to her teaching experience all these years but especially the last years in multicultural environments. As she mentions, *“This new analytical program puts a lot of emphasis on the framework of the class, it does not set such general goals, as it was before, but mainly it focuses on each child individually”*. She explains later in her interview that her goal is to respect every student’s individuality and all students bring their culture in the class.

#### ***4.1.3 Developing intercultural education in professional development seminars***

Three participants, who are colleagues in the same multicultural school, have attended a 400 hours’ seminar about education in immigrants and refugees and describe that their awareness about this population grew

after this seminar and they were taught practices about approaching these students through theatre or other activities that they might do with their groups. Despite the fact that Participant 4 has her first degree in irrelevant to education field, she has attended many four seminars relevant to cultural education and she supports that these seminars have contributed to her personal cultivation in intercultural education.

#### ***4.1.4 Developing intercultural education through professional experience***

Four out of six participants have a minor experience with multicultural students, 2, 3 and 4 years, while participant 1 has 10 years' experience in multicultural environments and Participant 3 is the most experienced with 22 years. He was the only one who shared:

I had already adopted in my teaching process most of the practices that I had been taught in the intercultural education seminar, because I am teaching in multicultural environments for many years.

The above comment reveals something very important. Despite the fact that all participants could be considered sufficiently qualified (undergraduate or postgraduate studies, training seminars or a combination of the above), only one explicitly states that he has applied the techniques taught in their entirety. The above testifies that it takes time, experience, observation and adaptability, something that comes with the passage of time and teaching many and different students over many years.

## 4.2. Intercultural competence development

The second set of codes, which roughly corresponds to Research Question 2, focuses on the intercultural competence development trajectory of the participants, the challenges they faced and the practices that they developed. The structure of the categories used in this set is presented in Table 5.

**Table 5**

*Intercultural Competence Development codes*

<i>Code</i>	<i>Challenge/Practice</i>	<i>Participants</i>
IC-Ca	No prior Greek knowledge	P1,P3,P4,P6
IC-Cb	Communication with parents	P1,P2,P3,P5,P6
IC-Cc	Interpreter	P1, P2, P5,P6
IC-Cd	Institutional factors	P1,P2,P4,P5,P6
IC-Ce	Students' Multicultural background	P1,P2,P3,P4
IC-Pa	Inclusive teaching practices	P1,P4,P6
IC-Pb	Nonverbal activities	P1,P3,P4,P6
IC-Pc	Bonding Activities	ALL

### 4.2.1. Challenges in developing intercultural competence

This section presents the main challenges that participants coped with during their teaching process aiming to develop intercultural competence. Although most participants were eager to cultivate their

personal intercultural competence and attended diverse postgraduate intercultural education, several obstacles limited their way to this goal. These challenges ranged from the heterogeneity their groups have and the difficulties this may cause, to language barriers and to constraints imposed by institutional factors. The following subsections illustrate these challenges verified by the participants' personal experiences.

#### ***4.2.1.a. No prior Greek proficiency***

Most participants state that students who are not familiar with the Greek language face difficulties in their learning process as they are not able to understand basic words. Some of them refer as a challenge the different level of their students' Greek language proficiency. Some of them are reasonably competent in the language quite enough, some of them have very limited proficiency and some others have minimal lexical range. Therefore, teachers need to follow the pace of the third category while the students of the first category get bored of the lesson and stay behind.

Participant 5, who is a kindergarten teacher, shares that she faces a significant difficulty as in her words: *"I am not a teacher of the Greek language, I am a kindergarten teacher, I am a teacher, I haven't attended seminars, studying or exchanging views with colleagues about that."*

The above comment reveals a common pathology. The needs that arise due to the inherent heterogeneity of these populations or due to problems that exist in our educational system, such as understaffing, make teachers feel that the demands are excessive and not aligned with what has been taught.

#### ***4.2.1.b. Communication with parents***

Another important challenge related to the first one is communication with parents. Most parents don't speak or read neither English or Greek and teachers are not able to communicate with them. From the very beginning of the school year, the lack of sharing a common language arise many difficulties, as when they need to explain to parents about school's program, documentation, their students' needs or need to know more personal information about their students and advise parents on how to support and develop their students' learning styles:

Many times parents may know English but there are parents who don't speak English and this creates a difficulty in the process. I will give you a very practical example. When students need to register, they must bring a specific document from their pediatrician in order to participate in physical education. When there is a difficulty in communication with parents, registration may be delayed...] [...and as a consequence, the students will miss two weeks of physical education, which is important when you want all the children to follow the same pace. (Participant 2).

This specific problem, which was without exception mentioned by the participants, reveals the significant lack of infrastructure and institutions and is also significantly related to understaffing in important positions. For example, the presence of interpreters would provide significant assistance to this specific problem. Or even, the simplification of the procedures for enrolling these students in school with simpler forms.

#### ***4.2.1.c. Interpreter***

All participants refer as a huge problem the absence of interpreters in the schools. Some of them explain the difficulties they face when

children need special support and need to pass this very important information to the parents as well as help them cope with the stress and the process of getting their children to the right public services. They explain the way they use other parents or students as interpreters:

This year, a new student came to class, from Poland. He came to Greece last year, so he learned Greek last year. It is very difficult for him to speak and understand simple instructions. Fortunately, I have a student who is from Poland, and his level in Greek is better. I use him as interpreter but when he is not here, it is very difficult to communicate with him. (Participant 6).

As it is mentioned in the previous subsection, the lack of specialists contributes significantly to the perpetuation of the problem of poor, incomplete, inadequate or failed communication with both students and their families. The use of other children as translators or interpreters could not be described as a success. On the contrary, it is a problematic situation. Let us consider the psychological condition of a person who is trying to communicate and express his\her needs but is not understood. Now, let us put in the place of this person a small child who has just left his\her country and feels completely out of his\her depth. The situation that we described above becomes an even greater problem when there is no mental health specialist in the school to help him and give specific instructions and advice to his\her family. Could the integration of such a child be considered smooth?

#### ***4.2.1.d. Institutional factors***

Bureaucracy in Greece is infamously challenging for residents and even more difficult for the immigrants and refugees. Participants share the

challenges they face in relation to that, as their students' parents need to fill out registration documents on Greek or English and they can't help them as they don't speak the same language and there is any interpreter in the school. Because of this situation, student enrolment is delayed and they struggle with the lack of the first lessons and the lack of extra help later.

The teachers need to follow a curriculum prespecified by the Ministry of Education, and these students are often not able to follow the syllabus. Participant 5 expresses new teachers' difficulty in teaching these students as they are asked to follow the curriculum without taking into consideration their difficulties and special cultural features. In addition, new teachers in a school have to follow established practice, in the form of rules and practices to which other teachers adhere. Despite the fact that many teachers are eager to teach new intercultural practices in their classrooms, they are not allowed to do so because of "*the old that doesn't change*", as Participant 5 shares. Difficulties with colleagues or the procedures often come in the way of teachers to teach their students in an inclusive way:

In the practical part, what I do is that I come across an already existing framework in the educational field. In other words, the new is different and the old defines the rules. So, when I have my own beliefs and my own worldviews, I can suggest something that may sound too much to them (my colleagues). For example, I want to meet the parents once a month. When my colleagues heard that, they were so unhappy. (Participant 5)

Bureaucracy has been a huge obstacle in our country since the post-colonial era. Flexibility is not one of its characteristics, while at the same time it is slow and oriented towards a specific model, the exclusion of

which makes it ineffective in cases such as those mentioned above. Unfortunately, the comments of the teachers who participated in the research show us that, instead of a quick result being the goal, there is an obsession with the process every time. Therefore, the system is considered rigid with little hope of adapting to the needs of these children and their families. A clear goal should be the creation of innovative intercultural school structures, where the teacher will have the autonomy to act at will for the good of his students and not simply be bound by specific instructions.

The comments we received from Participant 5 raise important questions regarding the nature of the modern teacher. Many teachers are willing to take initiatives and thus, implement personal inclusion tactics. At the same time, however, they are faced with harsh criticism or even discouragement from the institutions, thus unable to bring about the change they are asked to bring about.

The consequence of the above is a conflicting situation for the teacher. On the one hand, they are called upon to do the best for their students but at the same time they are responsible for adhering to the rules and instructions of the Ministry of Education, the principals or older colleagues who "lead" and should "approve" new ideas.

#### ***4.2.1.e. Challenges with multicultural students***

All participants describe as a struggle the heterogeneity of their groups, not in a cultural way but in a literal and social way. Some of these students have any prior school experience and they are not able to understand how the school system works. As Participant 1 eloquently mentions "*they feel lost, they react negatively or have many absences*".

Some of them have prior school experience but a long time ago. They have missed school for years because of the long journey to Greece. Some of them leave Greece and the group in the middle of the school year or come in the middle of the school year. These factors generate group homogeneity problems as well as challenges in the teaching process. Unfortunately, some students stay behind without additional support. Participant 4 faces the difficulty of mixed age groups and the different programs they have or many missing lessons because of their legal obligations. Some of these students are eager to participate while other have any desire for the lesson, so in the second school year:

we [i.e., teachers] ask them [i.e., the students] to participate in a project, at least those who didn't in the previous year and the rest of the team doesn't want them in the project. Not only Albanians can participate in the project or those who participated last year, all students must participate. (Participant 4)

Due to the fact that these students cope with legal issues, they have a lot of psychological fluctuations, so they miss a lot of lessons or if they are present physically, they are not mentally. Other challenges that contribute to group's disharmony include language barriers, cultural differences as well as individual differences, such as rebelliousness, introversion or trauma. Institutional difficulties regarding multiculturalism were largely absent from the data: Only Participants 4 and 6 reported dealing with racism and cultural problems amongst their students.

Despite the fact that only two of the 6 participants reported incidents of racism and problems with accepting different cultures, this percentage in a wider sample cannot be considered negligible or passed over without reflection. The ambivalence of both teachers and students reveals

something very important for our educational system. The existence of intercultural or minority students is treated in many cases as a "necessary evil". Even those who are not negatively inclined, treat it more with tolerance than with acceptance, which makes the inclusion of these populations even more difficult. The teacher who has fresh ideas and is truly innovative faces direct or indirect resistance from colleagues or parents of students in many cases.

#### ***4.2.2. Practices***

This section presents the practices that participants have adopted as means of stimulating an inclusive learning environment for their students. These practices included both personal behavior towards their diverse students and group activities aiming to improve bonding among the group members. Their basic goal was revealed as integrating all students in the teaching process and make them feel to belong in their groups. The following subsections illustrate these practices and how they contributed to their students' development.

##### ***4.2.2.a. Inclusive teaching practices***

All participants have adopted some inclusive practices in their teaching environment to encourage their students to engage with their peers and the process. First of all, they try to make them feel welcomed and accepted from themselves (i.e., teachers) and then from the group.

*“I think it is more important to try to use the language of the child as much as possible, so that you can explain him the sentences”*, Participant 1 said. Using their students' L1s or translating words in them is a practice that most participants follow. Some of them use mechanical translation or rely on other students as interpreters; others have already

translated all the words in every language before the lesson. Participant 1 states that “*The point is to approach the students with any way*”.

#### ***4.2.2.b. Non-verbal activities***

Almost all participants use images, maps, videos or PowerPoint presentations as a means for all their students to understand and participate. Participant 3 presents a very unique experience for the multicultural students, where everyone has the opportunity to share something from their country with their classmates, creating a “world museum”, as it is called. This could be a book, a coin or whatever they have brought with them from their country. Another very interesting thing is that students who are not proficient in the target language and are not able to express themselves or feel uncomfortable and weak, can share something else, like a transitional food or sing a song from their country. Bringing students' parents in the classroom, sharing information about a related profession of them and being part of the learning process is a very effective inclusive strategy. The teachers reportedly find it very important to boost these students' confidence so that language learning happens.

Other activities to integrate their students and encourage bonding between them are games like pantomime, where body language is used, paint the flags of their countries and displaying them on the wall in order to create inclusive schoolscapes, singing songs from their countries, talking about their countries, sharing their history, the population and all the important information, showing their country on the map and their favourite place in their countries, as means of bonding with each other:

I [i.e., the teacher] have done a presentation on tourism professions. So, I collected data for everyone's country and on the first page there was every country's data. Simple data. Area, population, flag and

where is on the map. What language is spoken there and some photos from important places in the country. On that moment, I ask the children who come from this country, let's say Algeria, to tell us some things about the photos that I have chosen. I also ask them if there is another important place that they would like to show us or to search information on internet and tell us about. I choose to present everything in the whole group, whether they are related to or not. It's not just about us, it's about the team. So, they learn little by little [about their classmates] and that changes until the end of the year. To accept the other person next to them and their story. A very important story. (Participant 4).

#### ***4.2.2.c. Bonding activities***

Participant 6 encourage students to play together during the daily break and to discuss their differences and find ways to improve their relationship. All rules of the class are translated in every language and students are able to understand and navigate themselves in the classroom. The aim of the teachers is to make their students welcomed, accepted, unique and part of a group, belonging to a community.

Another very common practice aiming to encourage students to associate with their peers is working in pairs or small groups:

I [i.e., the teacher] was in the skills workshop where the students were invited to do various group projects. From drawing something altogether, to write a story, to complete something. I was not telling them to take a photo and do it themselves. You (the students) should work with your partner in the beginning. Then, you four should work together. Decide on something, for example, about the name of your team. Discuss it together, agree on something. Or I would give them

a responsibility. You will be responsible for the drawings, for the writing. You will be responsible for something else. I would divide them into small groups and give each member a responsibility so they know their role. And of course, I was encouraging them, I was telling them 'Bravo' and we did it again and again. (Participant 6).

Other participants encourage their students to work with different classmates in different projects or decide their students in groups sharing the same language. A very interesting and useful practice that teachers could borrow in the future is first participant's learning experience where students find their similarities and share them with the rest of the group. The fifth participant has not yet applied intercultural activities but intends to visit the neighbourhood's multicultural library and ask the parents to participate and read books in their language to the group.

As can be easily seen from the previous sections of Chapter 4, the teacher is very often called to manage a series of contradictions and conflicts. Many teachers resist, making small changes or trying to remain in the dark, helping in any way they can, avoiding going through the complexities of their fellow teachers or the administrations. Although the dilemma posed is great, they prefer to "agree" rather than "conciliate" and although it may seem morally wrong, they modify the curriculum, use material outside the textbook, etc.

### **4.3. Potential improvements for intercultural competence**

To answer the third research question "How they intend to develop their Intercultural Competence?", has been changed to "What do they think that future educators could do to improve their intercultural competence?", as almost all participants have been trained to be able to demonstrate intercultural education. The findings were grouped into two

major sections, regarding the already vested knowledge and the future possible improvement of teachers' intercultural competence, as shown in Table 6 (below).

**Table 6**

*Intercultural Competence Potential Improvements codes*

<i>Code</i>	<i>Vested knowledge/Potential Improvement</i>	<i>Participants</i>
IC-VK	Students' approach/bonding	P1,P2,P3
IC-Pia	Free IE seminars	P1,P2,P4,P5
IC-PIb	Personal development	P1,P2,P4,P5
IC-Pic	Institutional changes	P3

**4.3.1. Vested knowledge**

Primarily, it should be pointed out what the additional training (seminars) related to intercultural education have been on offer to the participants. Some of them have become more aware of this population and their special features concerning to make them feel important and present. Moreover, these educational programs have offered practices to approach multicultural students and enhance bonding and interaction among them.

**4.3.2. Potential improvements**

Participant 1 has expressed many ways that intercultural education has helped her and could help other teacher to improve their personal intercultural competence:

What helps in intercultural education as well as in special education, as I would say, is that you can do a lesson that takes into account all the students in a way, and find different ways for them to get the information, to express themselves. It's not just one way (for them to get the information), for example write something or read a text. So, I think this would be ideal for everyone, for all the teachers, for all the students, not only for those who are refugee. I think that they (the teachers) don't dare to use a new practice if they don't know this practice. So, it certainly helps to have such an education as a teacher, in order to unlock those fears and use different practices. Or they don't know how to do it. They have learnt one thing and it's difficult for them to do something else. There are difficulties there. Many people in this profession learn a way and struggle to escape from it. Or we pay great attention to the fact that we have to teach a specific curriculum. I am not saying that this is not a big obstacle. But ok, we, specifically in the elementary school, have the ability to be more flexible with that. So that you can try other things. [...] And of course, in all this, because it's not just about how to learn. It's about teachers' approach, the stereotypes, and what they have in mind about their students. I don't know if it's enough to have an intercultural education to break those taboos. It certainly helps to know more about those students.

Other participants, like Participant 2, suggests that intercultural education should be provided by the state and for free, so all the teachers can have it. Participant 3 believes that teachers already do whatever they can and the state should provide schools with new books with more images and simple words, technological equipment such as projector and computers and interpreters. Additional to that, Participant 2 proposes

some institutional changes, such as the mandatory daily morning Greek Christian prayer ritual because there are students of different religious beliefs. Almost all participants support that personal growth and openness is the key element for intercultural competence development. Participant 4 expresses that intercultural competence should be a way of living, a self-cultivation and everyone should spread intercultural competence in their environment. Society's openness and development in that field is an additional key element in intercultural education.

#### **4.4. Concluding remarks**

This Chapter presented the findings of the study regarding participants' prior educational background with focus on intercultural education, working experience as well as the challenges they encountered and the practices they applied in their teaching process through their career in multicultural environments. Through thematic analysis, the findings aimed to answer the three research questions and to show participants' intercultural competence development before and during their working experience. The findings show that intercultural competence is a dynamic and ongoing process shaped by educational background, professional experience, institutional factors and personal growth.

As expected and as has been proven in many cases, theory is far from practice. Often, despite the fact that we have all the theoretical tools and skills, it is difficult or impossible to apply them in practice. The reasons are many and varied. Through discussions with the 6 participants in this research, we found that applying many of these theoretical tools was very difficult, if not impossible. However, being flexible and knowing when to set aside the syllabus, for example, or use external resources or in many cases, improvise, plays a crucial role.

All the teachers who participated in the research more or less admitted that they jointly implemented the Deardorff's (2006) process model of intercultural competence or Bennett's (2004) developmental framework, since on the one hand, they admitted that they gave particular importance to the development of some children's skills, such as basic communication about mandatory things using the Greek language. On the other hand, they seemed to recognize the enormous importance of the Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity, since they tried to involve their students in activities or projects where they share basic differences of their culture and civilization. The last fact helped their students mature and identify their cultural differences from their classmates, what they have in common, what they share and what they ultimately differ in.

We can make the following observation with confidence. All teachers seemed to agree that the model they adopted was “attitudes - skills - knowledge - internal & external results (Deardorff's (2006)) sometimes with less and sometimes more success, mainly due to lack of tools, interpreters, translators, frequent absences of their students, etc. It is safe to conclude that they jointly addressed effective and appropriate intercultural communication and behavior as well as the progressive development of intercultural sensitivity (according to Bennett's (2004) developmental framework).

Teachers highlighted that they placed particular importance on respecting diverse cultural identities, making their students feel comfortable and open within their classroom, so that they could enhance openness, but also their students' skills. Often, there were problems of adaptation and integration, with the causes being analyzed in the above

sections, which confirms some of the stages given by Bennett (2004) (Causes: Denial, Defense, Minimization, Results: Acceptance, Adaptation, Integration).

Closing this chapter, we would like to focus on one of the most important points of our research and findings. We believe that it could not be considered a coincidence that several teachers mentioned outdated textbooks, obstacles due to the curriculum and its restrictive nature, lack of resources both in terms of human resources and logistical needs (something that is aligned with Giavrimis and Dimitriadou (2023)), and many others. The goal setting of an educational system should be free access for all and embrace dialogue, be positive in the formulation of strategies and policies for intercultural education, as well as be fruitful in identifying levels of sensitivity in teachers and students. This is because this is not only the best but perhaps also the only solution for integrating these people into our society and not feeling like foreign bodies.

Our country is a country that, in recent years, has welcomed more and more people from different countries and different cultures. Nevertheless, is considered (according to the educators of this research) unprepared to provide adequate and substantial assistance to teachers who have taken on this very difficult role of intercultural education, raising walls due to a lack of flexibility, adhering to an outdated path of earlier years. Providing teachers with the freedom to apply the theoretical and practical methods they have been trained in would be the first step. However, if we stop there, we fear that it will not be enough. Broad dialogue with educators and coping with as many needs as possible will be the next step that will bring us closer to a better, more efficient and more flexible intercultural education system.

## Chapter 5: Conclusions & Discussion

This study was conducted to explore Greek in-service teachers' experiences, perceptions and practices in their multicultural school environments and how they were developed through their teaching career based on intercultural education. The main aim of the research was to examine the challenges that the teachers faced in the beginning of their career and the different practices they adopted after their intercultural education in order to eliminate these challenges. Teacher's personal intercultural competence development in future was an additional goal of this study.

Based on these aims, three research questions were formulated, which examined teachers' prior literacy in intercultural competence, the way that teachers developed their intercultural competence and their practices over the years of teaching in order to overcome the challenges of multicultural environments and the ways they intended to develop their intercultural competence over the next years.

### 5.1. Summary of key findings

The first research question, namely “*Do Greek teachers have prior literacy in Intercultural Competence?*”, was answered by examining the participants' professional background in general as well as their teaching experience. In the Greek context, in-service teachers were tasked with performing their duties in multicultural environments without intercultural education being a requirement. This is a finding consistent with existing descriptions of the Greek educational context, where the lack of formal training in intercultural education is often presented as a common concern leading to stereotypical views on intercultural education (Strychnou, 2020). Most of them had specialized in pedagogy in

undergraduate studies but developed their intercultural competence in postgraduate studies and professional career.

Some of them have achieved to become more aware of their diverse students' needs because of master-level studies or year-long professional development seminars on this field, while others succeeded in implementing intercultural practices through practical experience. This finding underscores the importance of remaining active in terms of continuing professional development, as this will enable teachers to supplement possible gaps in their training (Richards & Farrell, 2005). The importance of reflective practice (Farrell, 2022), which can help teachers to transform experiential knowledge into professional strengths is also hinted at by this finding.

The second research question (RQ2: “*How did they develop their Intercultural Competence and their practices over the years of teaching in order to overcome the challenges of multicultural environments?*”) was divided in two parts. In the first part, the participants presented the challenges they coped with during their teaching career and in the second part the practices they applied before and after their intercultural education to eliminate. A frequently observed challenge was the language barrier as the participants stated that they faced difficulty in communicate either with their students or their parents about basic learning procedures, such as daily program or documentation. Institutional difficulties, such as the lack of interpreter, colleagues' noncooperation, a fit-to-all sizes curriculum are also some very important and most reported by the participants. Participants, lastly, frame as a challenge the heterogeneity of their groups either in Greek language knowledge or in means of cultural background. These students might have experienced things that teachers do not know about or have missed school for a long time and they feel

disoriented. These students may struggle to fit in the group and their teachers struggle to help them as they do not speak a common language and are stressed to follow the Greek curriculum.

The second part of this research question points to the practices the teachers have adopted so they could overcome or eliminate these challenges and create an inclusive school environment for all their students. Teachers try to make their students feel welcomed and part of their group and they include their culture and their language in their teaching process. Most words of their daily lessons are translated in every language or they use images to explain the meaning of each word. Teachers and students participate in non-verbal and bonding activities to get to know each other and their stories. Working in pairs or small groups offers the opportunity to students to share experiences and become a team.

The third question, entitled “*How do they intend to develop their Intercultural Competence?*”, examined the potential improvements in intercultural competence and participants provided some suggestions about both institutional and individual improvements in the future. Most of them agreed that intercultural competence requires self-development and personal cultivation. Adopting an inclusive lifestyle is a personal choice and plays a crucial role in integrating multicultural population in our societies. Some other participants addressed technical improvements, such as technological equipment, interpreter support, simpler books with richer, culturally appropriate imagery (Moustakas & Kostoulas, 2025) and religion-free daily routines.

Seen as a whole, the findings of this study frame intercultural competence not as an outcome of initial teacher education, but as a gradually constructed professional capacity. Seen in this light, intercultural competence is shaped through professional experience in

language classrooms, further study and research engagement (Blume et al., 2025), and reflective engagement with practice (Edge, 2011). The lack of intercultural education as a compulsory component in the initial training of the participants can be seen as a structural constraint in the system, because it effectively shifts the responsibility for the development of such competences onto the teachers themselves.

Another noteworthy finding is the prominence of experiential learning in participants' accounts. This could indicate that professional growth is reactive, not planned. In other words, teachers may be developing intercultural practices as a response to immediate classroom challenges, a finding that echoes the observations of Motsiou and Kostoulas (2025; see also Kostoulas, 2025, for an accessible summary) regarding what they term 'Emergency Language Policy' – the reactive growth of inclusive practices. This provisional finding would seem to underscore the importance of continuing professional development as a compensatory mechanism for shortcomings of initial teacher education. Such professional development, including strong elements of research engagement (Borg, 2010; Kostoulas et al., 2025), would be of paramount importance for teachers who need to formalise and extend insights gained through practice, and transform them into meaningful pedagogical action.

The challenges that were outlined in RQ2 (above) suggest that intercultural teaching is 'soft-assembled' by a multitude of factors. These are not limited to the existence of cultural diversity in the teachers' classrooms. Some of the shaping influences that are salient in this process include intersecting linguistic, institutional, and emotional pressures. The responses suggested by the participating teachers, including translation, visual mediation, collaborative work, and relationship-building, are indicative of what might be a shift from

curriculum <https://www.mcafee.com/content/dam/msgclld/global/icons/icon-close-x-grey.png>-driven instruction toward inclusive, student-centred practices. The emergence of such responses, a restrictive institutional framework, suggests how normative pressures can be challenged in language education (Kostoulas, 2024; Stelma & Kostoulas, 2021).

Moving to the last set of findings, the responses to RQ3 point to what appears to be ongoing tensions between the individual agency of language teachers and systemic responsibility that is diffuse across the context. While the teachers who participated in the study tended to frame intercultural competence as something that requires personal commitment and self-cultivation, they also appear very conscious of limits to individual effort when institutional support is not readily available. What this suggests is that sustainable development of intercultural competence depends at least in part on structural conditions that legitimise, resource, and normalise intercultural practice within the education system.

Overall, the study positions intercultural competence as an evolving professional trajectory, shaped by reflective engagement, ongoing development, and the interplay between personal dispositions and institutional affordances. In the next subsections broader patterns, conclusions and implications are revealed challenging existing literature and highlighting how the study contributed in current theoretical assumptions. Lastly, limitations of the study on hand and suggestions for future work are introduced including researcher's personal benefit from this process.

## **5.2. Discussion of findings**

This subsection shifts the focus of the discussion to connection among the study's findings and the research objectives, research questions

and relevant literature. After discussing each research question and the outcomes individually, now the focus is on positioning them within a broader theoretical context by presenting the implications, limitations and suggestions for future work.

### ***5.2.1. Implications***

In this study, Greek teachers with a significant experience in multicultural school environments suggest very helpful and valuable teaching practices that might help teachers with less relevant experience to overcome possible challenges in their professional context. A very important practice is integrating these students in the group, support them, make them feel important and member of the group, encourage them to use their language and bring their own culture in the group. This practice increases student's self-confidence and sense of belonging and motivates them to comprehend and learn better L2.

The study also suggests that teachers in multicultural environments need additional support and guidance as they cope with students with diverse backgrounds and, in some occasions, trauma. It is expected that interpreters, psychologists and counselors would add a useful layer of support in the education of refugees and migrants, by complementing the skills that teachers deploy. Moreover, technical equipment, such as projectors, and simpler books with richer –and culturally appropriate– images would make a big difference. Teachers already use images as a medium to teach L2 but, on the other hand, they are asked to follow a specific curriculum which it does not apply to these students.

Prior intercultural education, as a requisite to recruitment could also help teachers faced with the challenges of teaching learners with diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds. The competences and background knowledge acquired through such studies might facilitate deeper

understanding more about these populations and their cultures. In turn, this would make it easier to manage potential challenges and create a more inclusive environment for their students.

An overarching implication of this study is that language education for migrants and refugees in Greece is still a challenging process for both teachers and students. The study highlights the linguistic dimension of these challenges, as well as coping strategies. For instance, some teachers reportedly find success in using the students' first languages (L1s) in order to teach them the socially dominant target language (L2) – in this context, Modern Greek. Notably, this was a practice learnt through experience and by means of trial and error, rather than an intentional outcome from some educational program. This is a problem compounded by the fact that many teachers are required to teach the Greek language as part of their professional duties, while they are not language teachers and do not have relevant expertise. The importance of specialized educational programmes, which are open to teaching professionals from diverse fields who face similar challenges, such as the one MA in *Language Education for Refugees and Migrants*, a postgraduate program specializing in practices for multicultural environments with a view to supporting all teachers in Language Education, is paramount in this setting.

### ***5.2.2. Limitations and suggestions for future work***

As briefly mentioned in Chapter 3, one of the most challenging parts of this dissertation at hand was the selection of a research participants with expertise relevant to the research goals of the study. The initial goal for a quantitative and large scale sample consisted of about 60-100 participants proved unrealistic due to inflexible pragmatic considerations (the researcher's relocation abroad). After discussion and suggestions made by researcher's supervisor, a qualitative research design was selected as a

forced choice imposed by pragmatic constraints. While a qualitative design would by default involve reduced generalizability, it was expected to yield in-depth insights into the participants' lived experiences (Creswell & Poth, 2016). As a consequence, the original idea of a questionnaire was recast into a semi-structured live/personal interview with six participants.

The selection of the participants from researcher's personal network can face some criticism for not generating samples that meet the criteria of random samples and therefore, not resulting in generalization, representativeness and external validity (Parker et al, 2019). This study relied on individuals' self-reported data, which means that while the findings might not be highly reliable, in an 'objective' sense, they provide strong insights into the lived reality as perceived by the participants (Fielding & Thomas, 2008) – and it should be judged through this lens. As it is very common in small samples like the one in this study, the diversity of views was not particularly note-worthy, as many participants reported overlapping experiences (e.g., difficulties in communication).

While such criticism is not without merit, it should be pointed out that a qualitative study such as this, does not intend to produce generalizable data, which renders considerations about representativeness relatively moot. Rather, the criterion by which such a study should be appraised is its trustworthiness (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), and—in particular—the transferability of the findings. Transferability in the context of qualitative studies is attained by providing a thick description of the lived reality of the participants, through their perspective, which enables readers to judge the relevance of the findings to their own settings.

That said, a window for further research studies is widely open and a suggestion could be a larger random sample from different school

environments and diverse grade levels. The researcher may include observation of the teaching process and interviews with the students for a complete, precise and more accurate data generation. A hybrid model of both quantitative and qualitative research design would be a helpful alternative suggestive method.

Conducting a postgraduate study in intercultural education in the Greek context was a long, interesting and informative journey. As an educator, this study provided me with very useful practices and ideas for inclusive activities in order to integrate my diverse students in the future. In addition, practices for teaching Greek as a second language to these students that were mentioned by the participants will be a very helpful in my startup career. As a researcher, this very first study of my own navigated me in the process of conducting a survey, predetermining the process and the tools needed, organizing the timeline and the structure of interviews, interviewing the participants, coding and analyzing the findings and finally, reaching to larger conclusions. As a person and a strong supporter of social justice and equality, this study fulfilled me with optimism and hope for the future of this world, because I realized that teachers already do more than what they are capable of in order to include these students in their groups and make them feel equal and important.

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## Appendices

### APPENDIX 1: Informed Consent Form



Language Education  
for Refugees and Migrants  
LRM64 (Dissertation)

#### Participant Information and Consent Form

##### About this study

*I am Georgia Koumoutsou and I am a student of Language Learning in Refugees and Migrants in Hellenic Open University. You are kindly being invited to participate in a research study titled “**Teachers’ Intercultural Education: in-service training and lifelong training**”. I am conducting this research at the framework of my dissertation.*

*The purpose of this research study is to collect information about multiculturalism, intercultural competence and intercultural education in Greece, as well as teachers’ challenges and intercultural practices. Your participation will provide me with important information about the survey and have an impact on the results.*

*Your personal data are completely confidential and nobody will have access to them. Your participation is voluntary and you have the right to not answer all the questions. If you agree to the term and participate in the study you will be asked to complete a questionnaire.*

##### Where can I find additional information

Georgia Koumoutsou

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##### Informed consent

Please tick a box (YES or NO) next to each of the statements below:

The researcher has explained to me everything I needed to know about this study, and has answered all my questions.	<input type="radio"/> YES	<input type="radio"/> NO
I understand that some of the information I give will be printed in research documents, but my name will not be used, and that the researcher will not share any information that makes me unsafe.	<input type="radio"/> YES	<input type="radio"/> NO
I understand that I can stop helping with this project whenever I want, and that I don't have to explain why.	<input type="radio"/> YES	<input type="radio"/> NO
I agree to take part in this study.	<input type="radio"/> YES	<input type="radio"/> NO

##### Date & Signatures

\_\_\_\_\_  
(research participant)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(researcher)

Author's Statement:

In accordance to article 8 of Law 1559/1986, I hereby expressly declare that this dissertation is solely the product of my personal work; that it does not infringe on any intellectual property, personality and personal data rights of third parties; that it does not contain works/contributions from third parties for which the permission of the authors/beneficiaries is required; that it is not the product of partial or total plagiarism; and that the sources used are limited to the literature references alone and follow the rules of scientific citation.