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“Investigating students' sense of belonging; a case study on migrant
- teachers' integration perceptions and practices within formal
education context”

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Patras, Greece, June 2023

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- teachers' integration perceptions and practices within formal
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*“To my beloved husband Christos, for all the support during these years... I wouldn't
have made it without him...*

To my children, Natalia and George, who were deprived of playtime with their mother...

*To my parents and especially my mother, who is always there to support me and stands
beside me like a rock, supporting me in every choice I make...*

*To my girls from the Legendary LRM52, who brought us together through the end... You
will always have a special place in my heart girls...*

*Last but not least, to my supervisor Mrs Sylvia Karastathi, who was there for me,
providing guidance to have the best possible result...”*

Abstract

For the last 20 years now, Greece has become the pathway for migrants and refugees that seek for asylum. The Greek government has tried to accommodate and provide them the right for education. Especially children that arrive in our country, should be integrated as soon as possible, so as they could more easily follow the curriculum. During their stay, they face discrimination, bullying but also a lot of challenges. They are not aware of the language, the culture or the people. It is teachers who undertake the education and integration of refugees and migrants within the educational framework. From their perspective there are many challenges they have to face. The present research is an effort to investigate teachers' perceptions and practices on how they try to integrate refugees and migrants within the classroom, so as to enhance their sense of belonging. For the purpose of the research, 30 questionnaires were completed. The method of expert sampling was used for this particular research. In this method, the researcher was in the process of seeking the consent of some teachers that had specific characteristics. The teachers who responded to the questionnaire are teachers from the geographical area of Crete, or that have taught in Crete, in formal education contexts. They could teach in primary or secondary education, or both levels of education. Based on the responses of the participants, it seems that there is a great effort to support refugees' and migrants' sense of belonging. It could be said that a remarkable effort is also made to smoothly integrate refugees and migrants into the school environment. Great emphasis is placed on their psychology and the traumas they may carry with them since they left their home country. In addition, many teacher try to deal with each refugee and migrant as a separate entity.

It is worth mentioning the fact that the results of this research are perceptions of teachers within a specific timeframe. The results could possible change if a teacher for instance attends a seminar. This means that reliability could not be taken for granted. The sample consisted of teachers that teach or have taught in Crete. The results could not be generalized and further research is required.

Keywords

Sense of belonging, refugees, migrants, practices of integration, teachers, formal education

Περίληψη

Τα τελευταία 20 χρόνια, η Ελλάδα έχει γίνει μονοπάτι για τους μετανάστες και τους πρόσφυγες που ζητούν άσυλο. Η ελληνική κυβέρνηση προσπάθησε να τους φιλοξενήσει και να τους παράσχει το δικαίωμα στην εκπαίδευση. Ιδιαίτερα τα παιδιά που φτάνουν στη χώρα μας, θα πρέπει να ενσωματωθούν όσο πιο γρήγορα γίνεται, ώστε να μπορούν να παρακολουθήσουν πιο εύκολα το πρόγραμμα σπουδών. Κατά τη διάρκεια της παραμονής τους, αντιμετωπίζουν διακρίσεις, εκφοβισμό αλλά και πολλές προκλήσεις. Δεν γνωρίζουν τη γλώσσα, την κουλτούρα ή τους ανθρώπους. Οι εκπαιδευτικοί είναι αυτοί που αναλαμβάνουν την εκπαίδευση και την ένταξη των προσφύγων και των μεταναστών στο εκπαιδευτικό πλαίσιο. Από τη δική τους οπτική γωνία υπάρχουν πολλές προκλήσεις που έχουν να αντιμετωπίσουν. Η παρούσα έρευνα αποτελεί μια προσπάθεια διερεύνησης των αντιλήψεων και των πρακτικών των εκπαιδευτικών σχετικά με το πώς προσπαθούν να ενσωματώσουν τους πρόσφυγες και τους μετανάστες μέσα στην τάξη, ώστε να ενισχύσουν το αίσθημα του ανήκειν. Για τους σκοπούς της έρευνας συμπληρώθηκαν 30 ερωτηματολόγια. Για τη συγκεκριμένη έρευνα χρησιμοποιήθηκε η μέθοδος της δειγματοληψίας εμπειρογνομόνων. Με τη μέθοδο αυτή, η ερευνήτρια βρισκόταν στη διαδικασία να ζητήσει τη συγκατάθεση ορισμένων εκπαιδευτικών που είχαν συγκεκριμένα χαρακτηριστικά. Οι εκπαιδευτικοί που απάντησαν στο ερωτηματολόγιο είναι εκπαιδευτικοί από τη γεωγραφική περιοχή της Κρήτης, ή που έχουν διδάξει στην Κρήτη, σε πλαίσια τυπικής εκπαίδευσης. Θα μπορούσαν να διδάσκουν στην πρωτοβάθμια ή δευτεροβάθμια εκπαίδευση ή και στις δύο βαθμίδες της εκπαίδευσης. Με βάση τις απαντήσεις των συμμετεχόντων, φαίνεται ότι γίνεται μεγάλη προσπάθεια να υποστηριχθεί το αίσθημα του ανήκειν των προσφύγων και των μεταναστών. Θα μπορούσαμε να πούμε ότι καταβάλλεται επίσης αξιοσημείωτη προσπάθεια για την ομαλή ένταξη των προσφύγων και των μεταναστών στο σχολικό περιβάλλον. Δίνεται μεγάλη έμφαση στην ψυχολογία τους και στα τραύματα που μπορεί να κουβαλούν μαζί τους από τότε που εγκατέλειψαν την πατρίδα τους. Επιπλέον, πολλοί εκπαιδευτικοί προσπαθούν να αντιμετωπίσουν τον κάθε πρόσφυγα και μετανάστη ως ξεχωριστή οντότητα.

Αξίζει να αναφερθεί το γεγονός ότι τα αποτελέσματα αυτής της έρευνας είναι αντιλήψεις των εκπαιδευτικών μέσα σε ένα συγκεκριμένο χρονικό πλαίσιο. Τα αποτελέσματα θα μπορούσαν ενδεχομένως να αλλάξουν εάν ένας εκπαιδευτικός για παράδειγμα παρακολουθήσει ένα σεμινάριο. Αυτό σημαίνει ότι η αξιοπιστία δεν μπορεί να θεωρηθεί δεδομένη. Το δείγμα αποτελούνταν από εκπαιδευτικούς που διδάσκουν ή έχουν διδάξει

στην Κρήτη. Τα αποτελέσματα δεν θα μπορούσαν να γενικευτούν και απαιτείται περαιτέρω έρευνα.

Λέξεις – Κλειδιά

Αίσθηση του ανήκειν, πρόσφυγες, μετανάστες, πρακτικές ένταξης, εκπαιδευτικοί, τυπική εκπαίδευση

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1. Introduction

1.1 Migrant and refugee education – issues and challenge

During the last years, there is a great movement from Africa and Near East to Europe. The reason for this movement is the armed conflict and also the violence that exists right after the Arab Spring. Relevant demographic data has shown that this situation resulted in increasing the number of migrants that arrive in Greece (Dimitriadi, 2013). For twenty years now, Greece has become a pathway for refugees that seek for asylum and come from Africa and Asia (Dimitriadi, 2017). It is therefore easily understood that there is a vital need for actions and policies that could establish refugees' and/or migrants' unburdened inclusion within the mainstream school settings.

As it was mentioned above, throughout the last decades, there is a migration wave from Africa and Asia. They were forced to be uprooted from their countries as there was a extremely important need for better life conditions, a safer environment and a permanent home. These are some of the reason why migrants arrived in Greece (Papapostolou et al., 2020). To be more specific, 173.450 migrants and refugees travelled to Greece in 2016. 25% of these migrants and refugees were children (UNHCR, 2016). By the end of 2017, 60.000 migrants have remained in Greece, hoping for better life opportunities (Ministry of Migration Policy, 2017). Relevant data has shown that there are about 50.000 refugees that are still in the country. In Greece the people that seek for asylum are about 119.700. In the islands Lesbos, Chios and Samos that are on the Aegean Islands, there are hosted about 19.100 migrants and refugees (IRC, n.d.) It is therefore easily concluded that there is a vigorous need for multicultural education to be applied in mainstream classroom and settings. Children that come from different cultural and migrant backgrounds need to be integrated within Greece's educational system.

Many migrant children are experiencing exclusion and racism in Greek schools. During the last decades, migrant and refugee children have been enrolled in all levels of education. Based on legislation, reception classes were created that included foreign pupils. These reception classes were created only in areas that had a large number of migrants or refugees and sometimes were arbitrarily repealed (Kourkoulou, 2011).

Greece is the host country for many refugees, more than 1.000.000 people. After the collapse of socialist regimes in Eastern Europe, many economic migrants were driven to seek a better life. This is why they chose Greece. These people were mainly migrants coming from Bulgaria, Romania and Albania, while later on migrants from other African and Asian countries crossed the Greek borders (Kalofolias & Michali, 2011). In the following decade, Greece became a magnet for other nationalities, 146 in total. As a result, in the 2011 census the immigrant population reached 8.4% (911,929). Approximately 37% of this number are young children. Relevant data from UNICEF state that about 44.500 migrant and refugee children are at Greece's borders. UNHCR in 2019 reported that about 3.400.000 refugees had enrolled so as to attend school. It is unfortunate that Greece's educational system is not adequate to support the newcomers (Anderson et al., 2004). In 2011, 52.7% of the foreign population of Greece consisted of persons of Albanian origin amounting to 480,824 persons. This was followed by people from Bulgaria (8.3%) and Romania (5.1%). The accumulation of a huge number of immigrants in a country that was completely unprepared to welcome them was an unprecedented and unusual situation for the country. The issue of immigrants subsequently became a major political issue and a matter of concern to all political parties in Greece. The economic crisis that has affected our country and our economy in recent years has not reduced the number of migrants coming to Greece, which constitutes a gateway for their later movement to Central Europe (Kostenis, 2014).

As regards the learning procedure, all that are involved have an impact on refugees and migrants. This means that the peers, the school, the teacher and the environment in general, could contribute in shaping their character and affect their social and mental characteristics (Saha & Sikora, 2008). As Cummins had stated in 2001, if the L1 language of the refugees and migrants is lost, then the meaning of the education has also lost its significance. There is a vital need for a cooperation including both parts. In addition to this, relevant study has proved that when refugees reach the host country they should directly enrol to school. In this way, they are able to adapt more easily to the new reality. If they delay, there will also be a significant delay in the educational procedure as well (Wilkinson, 2002).

As far as Greece is concerned, it is extremely difficult to define the number of migrants and refugees that stay in Greece. This phenomenon occurs because they are continually in and out of Greece's borders. They are not in the position of defending themselves, are facing many difficult situations and are some categories of people that are vulnerable (Anderson et

al., 2004). Children might have faces death, traumas and bad conditions during their journey towards the host country. These issues reflect a constant struggle on their integration at the formal educational setting of the country that hosts them (Kaneva, 2012). Children are exposed to many alarming and challenging experiences, they were forced to become refugees and/or migrants and they were suddenly put in an environment that is completely new to them. They have to integrate, interact and get familiarized with the language and the culture. They are also supposed to be integrated in the educational setting of the host country. In a challenging situation like this, it is on teachers hands to assist them and make them feel comfortable, so they do not feel uncomfortable coming from a country with completely different customs and traditions compared to their country of origin. This issue could be easily justified because they are supposed to create their national identity, in a host country that they had never heard before, without evaluating or taking into consideration the discrimination, racist behaviors and bullying they might have experienced (Strekalova & Hoot, 2008).

1.2 Information about Greece and Crete

1.2.1 The Greek context

The principle of the Greek state, which is governed by the constitution, is to provide free education to all children and to all citizens at every level of education in state schools. The educational system in Greece is centralized and governed by legislation and legislative acts such as ministerial decisions and decrees.

The Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs is responsible for the administration of the education system in every sector, at every level and in every service. On the other hand, as far as the regional sector is concerned, the regional directorates of education have the supervision and responsibility. That is, they are responsible for the supervision of the national education policy. In addition, there is the local level, where the responsibility lies in the hands of the primary and secondary education directorates. The so called DDEs, have the supervision of all schools concerning the respective counties.

The compulsory education in Greece, has a duration of 11 years meaning that it starts from the age of 4 years old, to 15 years old. To be more specific, the Greek educational system is divides in three level of education (Eurydice, n.d.)

- ❖ **Primary education:** primary education included kindergartens and also primary schools. In Greece the preschool education is compulsory. It is attended by children from 4 years old to 5 years old. Primary schools have a duration of 6 years (6 to 12 years old). It is also included in the compulsory education.
- ❖ **Secondary education:** In the secondary education, are included two levels; a) the middle schools and b) the General High Schools and Vocational High Schools. The attendance at the middle school is compulsory and are attended from children that are from age 12 to 15. The General High Schools and Vocational High Schools, are included in the non-compulsory education
- ❖ **Higher education:** This is the last level of Greece's formal educational system.

It could be said that Greece's educational system has many educational inequalities due to the fact that there are many regions in Greece that are not at the same socio-economic condition (Panteri, Calmaestra & Marín-Díaz, 2021).

From another point of view concerning the educational system in Greece, there is a big difference in the educational indicators of the prefectures and the regions. In particular, there are very high drop-out rates in regions that make their living primarily from tourism and rural life. These areas have a higher drop-out rate than urban areas (IEP, 2019).

Crete is the most populous and largest island in Greece, with over 620,000 inhabitants. Tourism and agriculture mainly support the economy of Crete. According to data from the Institute of Educational Policy, Crete has a high rate of school drop-outs compared to the rest of the country (IEP, 2019).

1.2.2 **Studies and cases in Crete**

In Greece, it is easy to identify that the pedagogical relations, rely on the hands of the educators at all levels of education (Thoma, 2010, as cited in Vassiliadi, 2018). In rural schools in general but more specific in Crete, these schools do not have the same opportunities such as county capital schools (Magka, 2015 as cited in Vassiliadi, 2018). Many teachers consider the diversity of students, as a wheel barrier and this perspective is imposed by a majority of school and government practices. The outcome of this practice is for migrant and refugee children to remain without a voice. Many teachers do not have any

qualification at all in teaching in multicultural environments. In this point of view, migrants and refugees cannot be integrated in the mainstream setting and consequently they become marginalized (Thoma, 2010 as cited in Vassiliadi, 2018).

Generally, there are many difficulties that are reported from teachers regarding the behavior of students. From time to time there have been several incidents of violence between students and teachers. Many times there have been reports of teachers being beaten by students or students' parents outside the school premises or even inside the school (alfavita). Educational activities are also often carried out by psychologists and social workers. Regarding the inclusion of all children in the learning framework, these seminars are mainly for teachers and attend them so as to provide them with self-improvement (efsyn). There is also the opposite side. In a prefecture of Crete, a group of students attacked a minor student from a vocational high school and in order to separate them a teacher got in the way. As a result, the teacher tried to help the student and separate the group that had gone to beat him and ended up with minor injuries in hospital (newspedia). Although these sources might be online newspapers or educational sites, it consists the trigger for a social cultural context as represented in the local press. They entail a motivation to activate the community.

There is a study though that explored the consumption of alcohol in a rural area of Crete, in relation with the school progress and achievement. The results of this study, demonstrated that many students that were suspended from school, they consume alcohol more often than the rest of the students. It should be noted that caution is needed regarding the attitude of the teachers, who sometimes characterize these students as 'troublemakers'. By labeling them, students end up feeling isolated and not welcome in the school community. The majority of the sample of students, stated that they have consumed alcohol in public, even though they were under aged (under 17 years old). Half of the sample (around 180 students) replied that they drink alcohol on a weekly basis (Koutra, et al., 2012). Unfortunately Greece is a country in which students drink alcohol frequently, but not in large quantities. Nevertheless, relevant data has shown that the tendency of drinking is increasing (EKTEPN, 2004). One more disturbing issue is the fact that they tend to drink so as to have fun, enjoy themselves and feel good with their peers. So, they might try to integrate using a wrong path and try to get over their personal concerns and problems (Koutra, et al., 2012).

It has been stated that teachers tend not to behave appropriately in different cultures of the world (Weisz et al., 1995). In Greece, it could be said that there is a lack of research as far as the behavior of teachers towards misbehaved students is concerned. The operation of

schools is on the hands of the organs of Greece which have a highly centralized function. As a result, there is no particular room for initiative on behalf of teachers and principals (Damanakis, 1998).

1.2.2.1 Challenges in a multilingual classroom

Following the migration wave, there is an increasing number of multicultural classrooms. In multicultural classrooms students are able to work, learn and most importantly are able to cooperate (Zhu, 2019). Despite the fact that this phenomenon is very important, there are also many challenges that take place in multicultural and multilingual classrooms. The most important one is the participation of students. Duff (2002) states that students that are non-native, sometimes tend to be more introverted, provide responses that are monosyllabic and brief.

There are many studies that have dealt with the perceptions that teachers have on the topic of pupils' behavior in the classroom, using a variety of methodological tools (Didaskalou & Millward, 2001; Manolitsis & Tafa, 2005; Poulou & Norwitch, 2002). What is more, relevant evidence has shown the lack of expertise concerning teachers' abilities, strategies and knowledge of handling emotional, behavioural and social issues (Thanos et al., 2006).

What is more, the language that the teacher uses in order to give the instructions to students could also be a barrier in a multicultural school setting. For example, students might not be able to participate as they would wish, due to the fact that they are not familiarized with the language. Another very important factor is that countries have specific guidelines for the educational system. This means that refugees and migrants might come up against many forms of education, as each country has to follow specific rules on the teaching language. Last but not least, if the teacher follows a teacher-centered approach, students would not benefit from this tutoring. This kind of tutoring/educational way, is not easy for migrants and refugees, as the teacher does not have empathy for their needs and surely they could not integrate with the rest of the classroom, as they do not have the same language level proficiency (Dryden-Peterson, 2015).

1.3 Factors that contribute to students performance at school

According to relevant researches and findings, students' sense of belonging in school, consists a factor that significantly contributes to students emotional and behavioral wellbeing.

It was noted that these factors enhance even more the learning experience of students (Osterman, 2000). A fundamental psychological need is the will and desire for being related (relatedness). Students' demands for relatedness are fulfilled in some ways that have an influence on their attitudes and conduct when they sense like they belong in the school community. They are eager to learn and they truly enjoy going at school. They tend to be more inclined to interrelate with their peers in enjoyable and inspiring ways as they tend to have more positive attitudes regarding others and themselves. They are more tolerant of authority and more understanding and have empathy on other people as well. In contrast, the feeling of being rejected is connected to a wider range that include social, behavioral, emotional and also academic issues. Students' sense of belonging is linked to the experience they have at the school settings. This consists a key finding for educators. It was supported that in order for students to be characterized as highly motivated in the classroom environment, they are supposed to be psychologically satisfied. It is also stated that teachers tend to have the major and most significant and direct influence on students' emotional and psychological experiences they perceive within the classroom. Moreover, peer interactions have a great influence on students' attitudes towards themselves and school. Osterman (2010) claims that educators have a straight influence on students' sense of belonging through relational and interpersonal support, instructional strategies and independence support that promote the positive interaction between their peers. It was also concluded by the same researcher that teachers also influence students' sense of belonging by shaping the way that students behave and act with their peers in the classroom (Osterman, 2010).

2. Defining sense of belonging

In this chapter, the characteristics of sense of belonging will be presented. A literature review will be conducted on what is the sense of belonging and whether it can be measured. Also two concepts that are often overlapped - and not unfairly so - relatedness and sense of belonging, and are going to be will be discussed. Following, there will be mentioned the elements of sense of belonging according to Strayhorn. In addition, a reference will be made to the KIPP program which demonstrated that sense of belonging contributes decisively to the learning process of refugees and immigrants. Then academic belonging, school belonging and school connectedness will be analyzed. All these feelings play a crucial role in the integration of refugees in an educational environment. At the end of the chapter, the social process of the school belonging will be presented. Last but not least there will be presented the role of the teachers. To be more specific, are going to be highlighted a) the role of the teachers in their school life, b) the role that school plays and also c) the role of their peers. All these factors affect the sense of belonging of refugees and migrants in the educational settings. In the final part of chapter 2, there will be presented the challenges and the inclusive practices that teachers follow so as to integrate refugees and migrants within the mainstream education.

To begin with, the feeling of alienation and insecurity is present for people and especially migrant students that lose their home country. It is therefore easily assumed that the sense of belonging is considered to be one of the prior concerns of migrant and refugee people that arrive in the host countries. The issue of refugees is a global phenomenon and it is widely accepted that many intensive changes occur in the world.

As it was mentioned above, refugee people are moving from one country to another during the last decades. This is due to economic reasons, wars and any kind of conflicts that end up scaling up the numbers of migration. Refugees and migrants are in a constant hunt for a safer and better home for their families (McAuliffe & Koser, 2017).

2.1. Are we able to measure sense of belonging?

Relevant research has shown that in general, only two or three items are involved so as to form the idea of sense of belonging. Measuring only a few items is not considered to be the best practice, due to the fact that it provides a restricted understanding of the construct. The sense of belonging embraces many fields like the feeling of being respected, accepted and also to perceive social support. It has been suggested by theorists such as Ainsworth (1989),

Axelrod & Hamilton (1981), Barash (1977), Baumeister & Leary (1995), Bowlby (1969), Buss (1990) and Moreland (1987), that all kinds of social relationships, the forming of social bonds, are vital and crucial for peoples' survival (as cited in Lambert et al., 2013). They tend to use the phrase "need to belong", as a more general term for peoples' need to create friendships and relationships in general. The difference is that despite someone's relationships and friendships, this is not enough. There is a deeper need for the person to feel accepted. This means that even if a student is included in a group of other students - in our case a classroom - this does not mean that their need for belonging is fulfilled and satisfied (Lambert et al., 2013).

2.2. The Feeling of Social Belonging

When a person is included and integrated in social groups, is making him/her have the idea, the feeling and the emotion that they have stability in their lives. It also helps them create a social identity with which they could develop more relationships and friendships. What is more, they are given the opportunity to pursue collective goals that are of higher order (Haslam et al., 2009).

Regardless, satisfying a person's need so that they feel that belongs somewhere is meaningful and important. It makes them feel that life is worth living experience, full of meanings (Lambert et al., 2013).

2.2.1. Relatedness and sense of belonging

According to relevant researches and findings, students' sense of belonging in school, consists a factor that significantly contributes to students emotional and behavioral wellbeing. It was noted that these factors enhance even more the learning experience of students (Osterman, 2000). A fundamental psychological need is the will and desire for being related (relatedness). Students' demands for relatedness are fulfilled in some ways that have an influence on their attitudes and conduct when they sense like they belong in the school community. They are eager to learn and they truly enjoy going at school. They tend to be more inclined to interrelate with their peers in enjoyable and inspiring ways as they tend to have more positive attitudes regarding others and themselves. They are more tolerant of authority and more understanding and have empathy on other people as well. In contrast, the feeling of being rejected is connected to a wider range that include social, behavioral, emotional and also academic issues. Students' sense of belonging is linked to the experience

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It is extremely valuable for a person to belong somewhere. A person is closely connected to a group that has specific characteristics and identities. These could be the religion, the history, the ideology, the status and most importantly the language. What is more, the sense of belonging could be defined as an experience that is able to mold, create and reproduce idealized perceptions of a specific place (Lovell, 1998).

It has been stated by many prominent thinkers, that the human life is a life without meaning and they characterize it as absurd. Additionally many efforts have been conducted so as to better understand and identify what are the values and principles that give meaning to people's lives. Evidence has shown that social relationships is the number one factor that provides people with a meaning in their lives (Lambert et al., 2010; Stillman et al., 2009).

2.2.2. The concept of place attachment and sense of belonging

Firstly, place attachment is a spatial bonding process that affects their emotional development, their social interactions, the bonds with their peers and their sense of belonging (Scannell & Gifford, 2010). In general, the connotation of belonging mostly refers to the aspect of inclusion and the terms "sense of belonging" and also "belongingness" could be used.

2.2.3. Linguistic identity and sense of belonging

The language of the newcomers is part of their identity, of who they really are. Teachers might not be very well aware of their presence. It is on teachers' hand to acknowledge their linguistic identity and engage students by asking them to identify the language they hear. In this way, they could possibly start a constructive discussion about how important

is the knowledge of more than one language. Activities like these, make students understand the differences that exist between the cultures and how these diversities could be brought in the classrooms (Dressler, 2014). In this way, a stronger relationship and bond is created between school and home learning. For example, when a child enters school, is separated from their parents and they begin to consider themselves separated from their parents (Eccles, 1999). Part of that separate identity is their language diversity as a speaker of one or several languages (Block, 2014). In classrooms that are characterized as multilingual, it could be said that teachers have the opportunity to investigate the meaning of language identity for migrant and refugee students (Cummins & Early, 2011). This particular investigation, initiates a discourse, a conversation that is able to enhance the relationship between teachers and students but also native students with non native students. It has been noted that when learners are having difficulties or are discouraged with their learning experience, teachers could demonstrate others who have been persistent in language learning and emphasize the importance of a lifelong language learning approach. The understanding and validation of linguistic identity would prove to be beneficial for young learners' social, educational and emotional development. It is a way to have a space in schools for their home language and this procedure enhances and cultivates their sense of belonging. They feel accepted, they feel that they belong in the new environment and school is open for them and their differences (Dressler, 2014).

2.3. Core elements of sense of belonging

Strayhorn (2019) stated that there are seven core elements as regards sense of belonging. First of all, it consists of a human need, it is a motive that promotes people to act and increase their sense of belonging, as it drives their behavior. What is more, specific factors, time and of course specific context are of great importance in a particular setting such as that of a secondary education school. The sense of belonging is closely associated with the feeling of being appreciated and be taken into account by other peers or relatives. This sense could lead to many optimistic results, many good and positive outcomes including people being happy, motivated and engaged in the activities. Another point to add is that the sense of belonging is affected by peoples' personal characteristics. The seventh and last core element of the sense of belonging, is the fact that it should be fulfilled all the time and is vital that it changes as the conditions and contexts change.

2.3.1. Maslow's model

Maslow in 1962, presented a model of basic human needs. These needs arise with the circumstances and the context that each time a person has to live and interact. First of all, there are the physiological needs that include shelter, food and the need for sleep. If those needs are satisfied, then other needs such as self-esteem and sense of belonging emerge (Maslow, 1962, as cited in McLeod, 2007). The human need that is on the top is actualization; this term includes innovation, morality and the ability to being creative.

The desires that are higher of order, including invention, creativity, or the quest for knowledge, could be hindered by a lack of a sense of belonging. Therefore, it is crucial to satisfy the demand for a sense of belonging before any interest in participating arises. This is the reason why this need of sense of belonging requires to be satisfied before the development of the involvement (Strayhorn, 2019).

2.3.2. The KIPP program

Recently, a program named “Knowledge is Power Program (KIPP), made a survey, asking over 3.000 alumni. The 72% were enrolled in Historic Black Colleges and Universities called HBCUs and about 61% were enrolled in non-HBCU KIPP facilities. The first percentage and therefore the first category of students, claimed that they were feeling like they belong in that school. These findings ended up gathering attention in many publications such as Chronicle of Higher Education, Education Week and Inside HigherEd. There were many questions that arose wondering how this was conceivable, if it was actually true and also what was the root for this issue/problem. In order for someone to understand the relevance of the findings of the survey and the issues they bring up, a knowledge of the KIPP charter school should be provided to them.

The national KIPP network, consists of more than two hundred (200) schools. Approximately 90.000 kids attend school from pre-K to grade 12. There is a percentage of 90% of students that have the right for reduced-priced or even free meals, because they fall under the federal poverty guidelines. 95% of these students are Latino or African – American. Many HBCUs, PWIs and other minority-serving Institutions, represent a home to more than 11.000 KIPP graduates who are college students. Relevant research showed that the college graduation rate from the KIPP students, are about four times typically higher that kids that have attended non-KIPP K-12 schools (Angrist, Dynarski, Kane, Pathak, & Walters, 2012).

2.4. Students' sense of belonging

Students' sense of belonging is defined as a sensation or a feeling being connected as well as the feeling of being cared, valued and most of all being accepted by other members of the community; these members include their peers, family, friends and teaching staff. According to Astin (1984), the definition of involvement is the psychological and physical energy that each and every student put in their academic reality and experience. It is stated that when a student invests their energy and time to educational acts, such as becoming teaching assistants, or offering their contribution in a research lab, become more active in their studies (Knekta, et al., 2020).

2.4.1. Academic belonging

Another important field, is the academic belonging that include the self-efficacy, their performance and their academic motivation (Allen et al., 2018; Pendergast et al., 2018). This is common for migrant or refugee students that tend to have high academic ambitions when they arrive in the host country. It could be said that as far as migrant students are concerned, the school community represent their hopes and new opportunities that include friendships and social relations in general, safety and of course learning ambitions (De Jacolyn et al., 2021; Van Caudenberg et al., 2020).

2.5. What is School Belonging?

The term school belonging has been used with many other terms, many times referring to a different meaning. The definition of school belonging is more consistent in the literature review than the words/terminology that is used in order to describe it. Many terms, including engagement, connectedness, bonding, attachment and of course belonging, have been widely used. On the other hand, students who actually do not feel that they belong to school, tend to be described as disengaged, alienated and socially isolated (Willms, 2003).

More specifically, the term school belonging has been widely used and the most accurate definition has been stated from Goodenow and Grady (1993);

'the extent to which students feel personally accepted, respected, included, and supported by others in the school social environment' (Goodenow and Grady, p. 80).

2.5.1. School Connectedness

The term school connectedness, is another term that has been also used widely and with different ways. It is a term that has been described as school bonding, engagement, school climate, school attachment, membership, acceptance, social identity, orientation to school, school belonging and the presence of the teacher so as to support students (e.g., Finn, 1993; O'Farrell, 2004; Osterman, 2000; Ryan & Patrick, 2001; Tajfel, 1972, as cited in Allen and Kern, 2017). What is more, there is a tendency of describing school connectedness according to what is not (such as alienation, social isolation and loneliness) rather than what it actually is. Libbey (2007) has stated that the school connectedness is a student's emotional experience and suggested that it represents the way that a student feels within the school setting. It was Karcher and Lee (2002; as cited in Allen and Kern, 2017), who stated that school connectedness includes affective but also behavioural aspects. In the affective way, it mirrors a feeling of being related to other groups and activities. In the behavioural way, it entails and involves an interest of being part of an activity or group. According to Brown and Evans (2002) the connectedness of students include their being autonomic, committed and belong to school and most importantly to follow the rules that govern the school.

It was suggested by Barber and Schluterman in 2008 that connectedness has four components. The first is how they like the relationship or the environment, for example how they like the school environment. The second is the quality that a relationship has, for instance the bonding of a family. The third is the perceptions of conditions that are antecedent, like the sense of feeling close to other people, and last but not least the attitude, meaning the sense of belonging they have.

School connectedness is described as a belief that students are interested in their learning experience and also have high expectations, as far as their academic future is concerned (Blum and Libbey, 2004).

2.5.2. Teacher-student relationship

Allen and Kern (2017), claimed that when school connectedness occurs, their relationships are more than positive and a safe environment for all is created. It was stated that when students have this feeling of closeness, they are happy in the school environment, they feel like they are part of the school community and that their teachers treat them with care, in a fair and affectionate way, creating them the sense that they are in a protected and safe environment (McNeely, Nonnemaker and Blum, 2002).

2.5.3. The social process of school belonging

There are some vital and crucial factors that affect migrant students' sense of belonging. The **social process of the school belonging** is one of them; students connect and interact with other students at the school (Halse, 2018; Kovač & Vaala, 2021; Pincton & Banfield, 2019; Puroila et al., 2021). When the term school belonging is mentioned, it includes the interactions that take place between teachers and students, in values, norms, in families and the whole school culture (Allen et al., 2018).

Only a few studies have been conducted that investigate the role that mental health plays in the school belonging, although mental health issues have a negative influence in their school sense of belonging (Allen & Kern, 2017; Allen et al., 2018). According to research, this sense is actually a very complex experience for migrant students where the formal norms of belonging and their personal feelings are in a constant conflict with each other (Puroila et al., 2021, Ambrose, 2020, Souto-Manning, 2021).

The concept of school belonging, consists of many other concepts as well. These include the following factors: social (received support from peers, parents and teachers) demographic (age, gender, ethnicity), individual (their mental health and their own personal characteristics) and environmental factors such as the school climate (Allen & Kern, 2017). According to Bronfenbrenner (1994) – bioecological model - , the concept of school belonging is consisted from interactions that take place between the student and the more multifaceted environment including peers and/or teachers, schools, values, families, norms and of course the school policies (Allen et al., 2018).

Migrant students need to feel that they are accepted in the school community. They are separated from their families and friends and they are found in a completely foreign country that possibly have many cultural differenced and find it very difficult to develop this particular sense of belonging (Nakeyar, Esses and Reid, 2017) What is more, it is extremely challenging when a child loses their friends and is urged to make new friends (McMichael, Gifford and Correa-Velez, 2011; Sleijpen et al., 2016). Relevant research has shown that this lack has proved to be a very important barrier for the integration process (Correa-Velez, Gifford and McMichael, 2015).

2.5.4. School Engagement

There are also some research that have a focus on the field of school engagement. School engagement, consists of multiple dimensional factors including cognitive, behavioural and psychological aspects (Brewster and Bowen, 2004; Appleton et al., 2008). The affective / psychological aspect, includes the acceptance of the values of the school community. The participation in the school activities, is the behavioural aspect and lastly the interest that one has, as regards their learning process and ability, refers to the cognitive factor.

When a student is engaged and participates in the activities (behavioural aspect), then the student has this sense of belonging (Finn, 1989, 1993). On the contrary, when students are disengaged, they tend to get bored in the classroom and withdraw from school activities (Willms, 2000).

2.6. Teachers' role in migrant and refugees' lives

2.6.1. On the teachers' level

Another factor to be considered is that teachers could play one of the most important roles in refugee's lives. They could be encouraging, have empathy, and understand students' needs and insecurities, their need to feel safe and included in mainstream settings. These actions rely on the expertise, skills and support that teachers have, in order to efficiently teach students from other countries. According to Cerna (2019), teachers are not qualified enough so as to overcome any possible difficulties derive from students that come from different countries. They are unable to recognize possible traumas and/or at the majority have not participated at any workshop related to second language teaching. Based on relevant research, these children most of the times had to deal with many stressful situations, even life changing ones. They might had to deal with violence, death, hunger and a long journey along with extremely bad weather condition (UNICEF; Anderson et al., 2004).

All efforts to integrate children with an immigrant and refugee background depend on well-skilled and well-supported teachers who take into account the diversity of their student populations in their instructional approaches and who can help all students to achieve. Teachers are often ill-prepared in pedagogical approaches for second language learning or in recognising and helping children overcome the effects of trauma that many immigrant children endure (Cerna, 2019).

2.6.2. On a school level

Students interact and connect with other members of the school community and the whole context that consists a part of their school belonging, which is a relational and active social process (Szelei, et al., 2022). The concept of school belonging comprises of many layers that are influenced by many factors. To be more specific, are influenced by individual factors like mental health and personal characteristics, demographic factors like age, ethnicity, gender and the location of the school. What is more, environmental factors like the climate and social factors including the support students get from their peers and parents (Allen & Kern, 2017).

2.6.3. Peer support

Another very important factor is the support that students have as regards their relationships in general, including their interaction between their classmates and friends. Relationships between male and female students in every combination, are very dynamic during the period of adolescence. These relationships provide students an assistance of exploring and establishing their sense of identity. Relevant studies have shown that the support that students receive from their peers, plays an extremely valuable role in their sense of belonging. This is supported with the studies from Goodenow & Grady, 1993; Hamm & Faircloth, 2005; Libbey, 2004; Reschly et al., 2009 and Osterman, 2000.

There are many ways that peers could provide support to their classmates. Some of them are the academic and the social support (Wentzel, 1998), the trust between them (Garcia-Reid, Reid, & Peterson, 2005) and of course to be offered the acceptance they seek for (Wang & Eccles, 2012). It was noted that the period of adolescence is a fragile and sensitive period in the life of students that has been connected with negative pressure from their peers. Their being surrounded by positive peers, result in positive decisions and influence them in the best possible way (Eccles & Gootman, 2002). Another positive outcome is that this positive attitude enhances their coping abilities and skills (Frydenberg, Care, Freeman, and Chan, 2009). Positive decisions and coping skills, are both closely associated with school belonging. In a research that was conducted (Hamm and Faircloth, 2005), it was found that friendships that have a strong base, contribute in creating a sense of community, prevent possible feelings of alienation and also generate and produce the sense of belongingness in the school environment.

On the other hand, it was noted that friendships did not contribute in the connectedness within the school. This might be due to the quality of the friendship. More specifically, students that claimed they did not have the sense of school belonging, could have friends that were disengaged from school. As a result, students that reported that they had this sense of belonging in the school, could possibly have friends who were also positive inclined towards the school. There is a vital need for a friendship that is characterized by reciprocation. It was shown that students that had a reciprocated friendship, had higher levels of school belonging. This actually shows the importance of high quality friendships and not just a high number of friends in their lives (Vaquera and Kao, 2008).

Relevant research has shown that the relationship between migrant students and their teacher, plays a very important role as far as creating a positive sense of belonging is concerned (DeNicolo et al., 2017). To be more specific, when a child received the necessary social support and friendship from their peers the sense of wellbeing and belonging is fostered (Allen et al., 2018). The school facility is able to enhance this sense, when this boost of social relationship is built (Schweitzer et al., 2021).

According to Pendergast et al. (2018), the pedagogical practices that teachers follow, play an extremely valuable role in defining belongingness. This is the reason why Edgeworth and Santoro in 2015 recommended that there is a need for developing the so-called pedagogies of belonging, meaning the pedagogies that are created for all students to promote their sense of belonging.

It was noted by Van Caudenberg et al. (2020) that when migrant students felt alienated, they expressed the wish to attend other schools that made them feel more welcome.

2.7. Motivation and class belonging

Relevant studies have shown that unsuccessful interpersonal relationships are associated with many psychological disorders such as anxiety, depression, suicidal tendencies and criminality (Hoyle & Crawford, 1994). Many researchers have conducted studies that proved the association between students' sense of belonging and sense of class and their becoming motivated (Anderman & Anderman, 1999; Solomon et al., 1996). According to Goodenow and Grady, positive relations were noted as regards the perceptions of belonging and the academic motivation of students that followed the secondary education (as cited in Freeman, Anderman, & Jensen, 2007). More specific, Anderman & Anderman stated that

the students' sense of belonging who were transitioned to middle school education, was closely associated with a rise in task goal orientation of students (Anderman & Anderman, 1999).

2.8. Challenges and inclusive practices in a multilingual classroom

2.8.1. Challenges

Following the migration flows all around the world, multicultural classrooms have been created (Zhu, 2019). As mentioned, despite the fact that it consists of a very important phenomenon, there are many challenges that need to be overcome. First of all, there is the participation of students. Students that are not native speakers of the country, they tend to be introverted, express themselves briefly and provide their teachers monosyllabic responses (Duff, 2002).

Another challenge that migrant students face, is the fact that the teacher provides **instruction and guidelines only in the official language of the country**. In this way, migrant students are not able to efficiently participate, as they could not be familiarized with the language. In addition, according to Dryden – Peterson (2015), the guidelines that are provided on the language of instruction in the host countries of migrants, have a great effect on the educational path of refugee students.

Finally, teachers tend to use **the teacher-centered** way of teaching which does not enhance students' performance. This is due to the fact that the tutoring is based on lessons that migrant students are not able to integrate with the rest of the classroom and participate in the educational process (Dryden-Peterson, 2015).

2.8.2. Practices

Migrant students and refugees are in the need of special way as regards their education, which has to be different from the education that native students receive. There is a need for many strategies and practices so as to be integrated in a successful way in the mainstream setting (Hamilton & Moore, 2004).

It could not be mentioned the fact that there is a **need of cooperation** between teachers and specialists, so as to meet the differentiated needs of the newcomers. Sadly, there are no

sufficient specialists in Greece's formal education and unfortunately these services are not offered from the beginning of the school year.

There are many **practices** that could be applied in order to integrate migrant students in mainstream settings. One of these practices that are generally applied, is the **translanguaging**. Translanguaging is a teaching practice in which a language is used in such a way that the reinforcement of the target language is achieved. As a result, students better understand the activities and are totally engaged in the process of learning (Williams, 2002). It consists of a method that provided students a deep understanding and enables them to work with the language of the country that hosts refugees and migrants (Williams, 1996). Another practice that is also very beneficial for students, is the **cooperative learning**. With this practice, students are allowed to provide help to each other during the learning process. This practice makes the native students extremely skillful, as they become teachers themselves (Jacobs & Renandya, 2019). This method is widely used at all levels of education the past years, from preschool to colleges and universities. It is a practice that thousands of teachers follow (Slavin, 2014).

Another practice is **the peer collaboration**. Relevant research has showed that the peer collaboration technique is possible to enhance students' performance. Using this specific technique, students were able to work in groups and help refugees and migrants understand the purpose of each task or exercise. A way to perform this, is to explain them in any possible and creative way, every unknown word (Kaldi et al., 2014). What is more, the **whole-school attitude** could be also analyzed. This practice, makes migrants and refugees have confidence in themselves and not be afraid of expressing their beliefs or that they come from another country. This acceptance plays a key role in students' interaction and completion of activities and tasks (Hek, 2005).

Another practice that is worth mentioning are the so called **identity texts**. With the identity texts, the newcomers are able to express their feelings, their fears, their thoughts, any emotion that they cannot verbally express. A way of expressing themselves is the childrens' drawing/painting. It consists of a psychometric and diagnostic tool that was developed and used by many scientists. Deligianni in 2016 stated that the painting of child, is actually a mirror in their psychic world, it represents their experiences and their feelings. How the child is drawing, signifies a lot to the specialists. For example, if there is a student that makes pressed and very strong lines means that the student has anger issues or is nervous.

Moreover, if he or she uses the black color more frequently than the other colors, this could represent the child's feeling of being afraid and introverted (Mavrakis, 2020).

It is true that every teacher and every student, have their unique characteristics, their specific experiences and needs (Lewis, 1992). Despite the fact that sometime the learning objectives could be the same, however the tasks the stimuli, the teaching methods and the approaches followed, are different. The most important thing is the equality in education and equality could not be performed if all students are taught and treated in the same way (Hart, 1996).

Through this chapter, there was an effort to present the basic characteristics of the social belonging, the core elements of sense of belonging as far as the students are concerned. In addition, the school belonging was also highlighted and most of all how could each factor contribute in refugees' and migrants' sense of belonging; the teacher, the school and also the peers that play a very important role in this process. Last but not least, there was an effort to demonstrate the challenges and the practices that teachers face and follow as regards the inclusion of the newcomers.

3. Introduction of the research

In this chapter there will be a presentation of the present research. The purpose of the study the scope, the research questions and also the methodology used for this research will be demonstrated. The present research consists of a quantitative research and therefore a quantitative data analysis, the research method and the data collection tools that were used for the research that was conducted will be highlighted. In the next part of the chapter, a presentation of researcher's background will be provided. The researcher will provide a presentation on her work experience and the reasons that inspired her to carry out this research. Lastly, there will be a presentation of the questionnaire design along with the sample and the participants that contributed in this research.

3.1. Purpose of the study - Scope and research questions

As it was already mentioned above, refugees that come to Greece have to leave their homes and families and be integrated within the educational system of Greece. This means that they have to acquire the Greek language and communicate with each other at their early steps of inclusion. The challenging part is that in order to follow the specific educational system, they have to learn the language, a language that they might not ever heard in their lives. In order to learn the language, they need to be motivated (Gardner, 2001).

For the purpose of the study some research questions were taken into consideration so as to form the questionnaire.

These are the following:

1. To what extend are teachers' techniques and practices modified so as to accommodate the integration process of migrant students?
2. Are there any strategies that are used so as to foster sense of belonging through peer collaboration and interaction between migrant students and their classmates?

3.2. Methodology

3.2.1. Worldview – Positivism – post- positivism

The assumptions of the post positivism worldview have represented a form of research that is considered traditional and are mostly applicable in the quantitative research. There are

many terms that are used for this worldview; scientific method, science research, positivism/post positivism, empirical science. Post positivism represents the process of thinking after the positivism, questioning the traditional concept of the absolute truth of knowledge (Phillips & Burbules, 2000). It is recognized that one could not be positive as regards our knowledge claims when the actions and the behavior of humans are studied. The knowledge that is developed through post-positivist approach, consists a measurement and observation of everyday reality.

To be more specific, in the scientific method, the researcher initiates with a theory and proceeds to the collection of the data that refutes or support his/her theory. The positivism paradigm, is considered to be a science research, or a scientific method. It has its basis on the empirical, rational, philosophy that has its roots from Aristotle, Emmanuel Kant, John Locke and Francis Bacon (Mertens, 2005). Positivism is also closely related to many schools of thought like naturalism, determinism, behaviourism, empiricism and reductionism. Additionally, according to Creswell, it is a reflection of the determinist philosophy in which the causes define the results, the effects or the outcomes (2003).

Accordingly, social science positivists use scientific methods, which are used in the natural sciences, so as to study a phenomenon that is considered social, claiming that it is valueless and open to scientific explanation. In this way, researchers pursue the social world in an objective way (Mertens, 2005). They also adopt approaches that could synchronize the scientific methods in relation to the affairs of human beings (Grix, 2010).

During the 20th century, post-positivism arose that has its grounds on positivism. For example, in a scientific paradigm, a derived truth only means a common, a shared belief based on a hypothesis (Popper, 1959). According to Ernest (1994), the principle of falsification, the scientific theories are extremely difficult to be proven as true. Therefore, they could only be accepted as being true, only when all attempts that have been done to disprove them as true have failed. In order to better understand these scientific theories, researchers claim that they should not be restricted to data that is collected empirically, but they need to further proceed if they wish to reduce the element of vagueness and uncertainty (Ernest, 1994).

3.2.2. Qualitative Research - Qualitative data analysis

The qualitative research mainly focuses on exploring and understanding experiences of people, social phenomena and practices in general. One of the main goals of qualitative research is to explore the feelings, thoughts and also motivation of people and/or groups, taking into consideration their cultural context. It explores the beliefs of people, their interactions and attitudes. It is a research that gathers data that are characterized as non-numeric (Creswell, 2012).

The qualitative research gathers the necessary information through observation or focus groups so as to gather the required data about the participants. In general, the design of the qualitative research is considered to be flexible and able to adapt. Last but not least, the analysis of the data plays a very important role in the research. Data could be analyzed by collecting, organizing and interpreting the collected data so as to analyze them using specific methods. These methods include the content analysis - this method was followed in this particular research -, the grounded theory and narrative analysis (Creswell, 2012).

The qualitative research is used in many fields, including education. It is mostly used in researches that have a **small sized sample** and therefore their results **could not be generalized**. This kind of research focuses on the in-depth understanding of the issues rather than the generalization. (Creswell, 2012).

In this research, **questionnaires** were used as a tool that generally are used in quantitative research but due to some open-ended questions, is categorized in the qualitative research. There are questions in Likert scale that are used in quantitative research, but also there are some questions where the participants have a box to express their opinions and points of view, through the aforementioned open-ended questions.

3.2.2.1. Research method, data collection and tools

At this point is worth mentioning that positivist methodology is actually explaining the relationships between many different phenomena. The advocates of positivism, follow the principles of verification, demonstration and fundamental links of the information that has been used (Dash, 2005, as cited in Shah, S. R., & Al-Bargi, 2013). This makes them, as Creswell states, to identify the causes that makes them influence the results and the outcomes (2009).

3.2.2.2. Researcher's background and inspiration

The researcher is working a special education teacher for the past 7 years. First a non-formal observation of the participants was performed, as being a teacher in schools of Crete and is going to perform the research using the content analysis method.

Krippendorff (1980), claims that there are six questions that should be addressed in a content analysis. To be more specific these are:

“1) Which data are analyzed? 2) How are they defined? 3) What is the population from which they are drawn? 4) What is the context relative to which the data are analyzed? 5) What are the boundaries of the analysis? 6) What is the target of the inferences?”

The data collection was performed through close-ended questionnaires and will be analyzed using the quantitative research. According to Creswell (2016), the quantitative research is the procedure in which data is collected through questionnaires, surveys or experiments. It is of great importance the clear defining of the research questions so as the study to be well structured. Ethical implications are taken into consideration.

3.3. Questionnaire design

The design of the questionnaire was based on other surveys that used the same method for data collection. For instance, relevant research was conducted so as to identify the relationship between students' learning environment and how they activate them in the learning process. Research also investigated students' sense of belonging, interaction and their study process. This particular research was tested for both native and non-native students. For this research the tool that was used was the questionnaire. Findings showed that migrants felt more comfortable within the learning environment when they had a smooth, formal relationship with their co-students and teachers (Meeuwisse et al., 2010). There were also many other researches that were carried out using questionnaires as a tool and provided accurate and valid results, despite the fact that they had a small number of participants. For instance, Ftara (2022) and Diamantouli (2022) in their research, had 6 and 13 participants. What is more, in another research there were 10 responses to the questionnaire that was provided (Polychrou, 2023). 24 was the sample of participants on Papapostolou's research (2018). Lastly, another research that was conducted, included 50 participants (Sofianopoulou, 2023). This means that despite the fact that a large sample could obviously be more accurate, this does not mean that these studies are not accurate.

Sometimes the research needs to be conducted using a small sample of participants, as it is on the scope and the nature of each study.

In the beginning, a first draft of questions was made on Google Forms and then enriched by deleting or better formulated questions that were not clear enough. There was an attempt to be as understandable and simple as possible. The design of the questionnaire started in mid-April and was completed in early May.

Since the writing of the questions was done through google Forms it was very easy for the researcher to promote the link through group chats of teachers from social media. Before sending the final questionnaire in the form of a link to the participants, a pilot application of the questionnaire was carried out by a colleague who found that the questionnaire works properly. Then the researcher proceeded to send the questionnaire to continue the research process.

The survey developer left a margin of about two weeks until she had received the necessary number of responses to make the survey credible to a certain extent. If one or two days passed without any response to the questionnaire, a kind message reminder was sent so as to complete the questionnaire. After two weeks the responses received by the survey developer were thirty (30).

3.3.1. Sample and participants

For the sample selection of the specific research, the method of expert sampling was used. In this particular method, the researcher was in the process of seeking the consent of some teachers that had specific characteristics. They have teaching experience in the formal education context and the researcher searched for them individually, or through groups in the social media. They are individuals that are specialized in teaching in a particular area of Greece, in Crete. The expert sampling was used so as to be able to better construct teachers' views and provide validity in the specific research (Etikan & Bala, 2017).

At this point the characteristics of the sample and the participants in the survey will be mentioned. The teachers who answered the questionnaire are in the number of 30. Their approach was through group discussions in social networking groups, by posting on pages of teachers of primary and secondary education, but also in groups concerning groups of teachers in certain schools individually. The age of the participants ranges from 28 to 45 and their nationality is Greek. The participants are from primary and secondary education

who teach in the wider area of the island of Crete. Therefore we could say that the sample is distinguished by a homogeneity. Their level of education is University or equivalent technological educational institutions, the so-called TEI.

As a non-formal participant of the research, some suggestions could be provided for further research. To begin with, this research could be the basis for further actions. This means that there are some steps that could be followed. For instance, there is a need of training teachers in enhancing students' sense of belonging through inclusive practices. Another suggestion could be to conduct interviews with the children with specific research questions:

- If they have noticed any improvement in the educational process after the teachers' sense of belonging training

The last step could be:

- A follow-up by the researcher concerned with both parties; teachers and students as well.

This step would concern both teacher's ability to enhance students' sense of belonging, but also from the children's side whether they show improvement in their sense of belonging, learning process, psychology and social life.

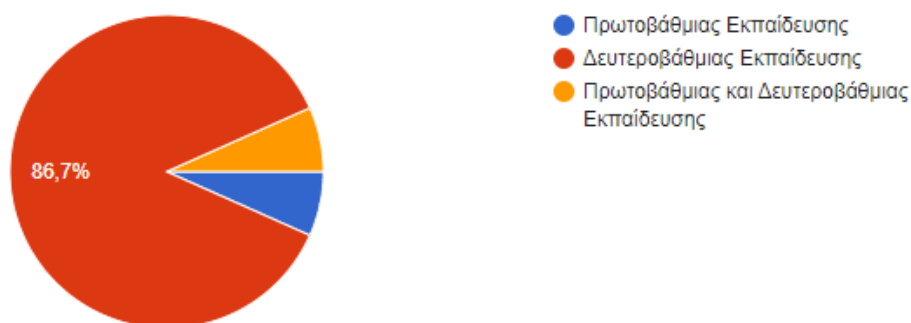
In this chapter the purpose of the study and the research questions were presented. There was also a reference at the methodology that was followed, the worldview, the research method, data collection and also the tools that were applied. The design of the questionnaire was also reported, demonstrating the sample and the participants of the research. This research could be the starting point for further studies, including further actions to be observed, as there were mentioned above.

4. Results

In the fourth chapter of this dissertation, the results of the research will be presented thoroughly, without any falsification of the results and with the sole purpose and objective of simply presenting the findings. The findings of this particular research are depicted using pies and charts, mentioning at each question, what the majority and/or the minority of the participants have responded.

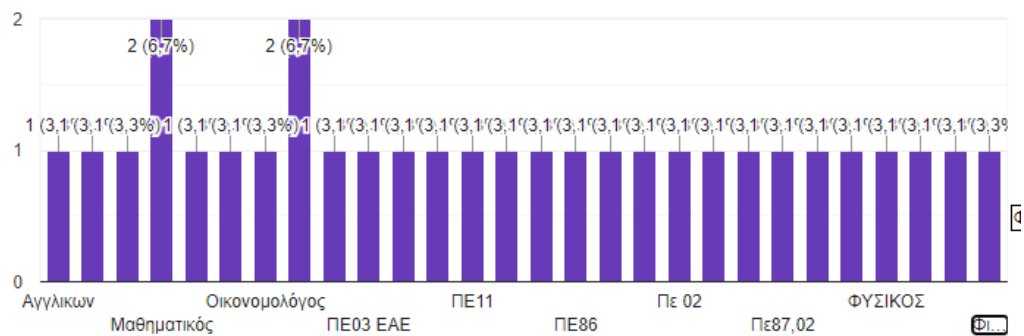
As it was mentioned beforehand, the participants were 30 and had to respond to 20 questions. The first two questions provided some personal information about the teachers. The next 10 (3-12) questions had to do with the practices that teachers follow in their classroom. In the questions 13-18 the perceptions and abilities of teachers were investigated. The last two questions, examined if teachers have received any specialization in education of refugees and migrants, as well as their intentions on attending a seminar or a relevant workshop in the future.

- 1) The first question concerned the status of the respondents, specifically whether they teach in primary or secondary education. 26 of the respondents teach in secondary education, 2 in primary and 2 in both levels of education



It seems that most of the participants come from the secondary education rather than the primary education.

2) The second question was related to the specific field of teaching. The 30 participants provided the following answers.



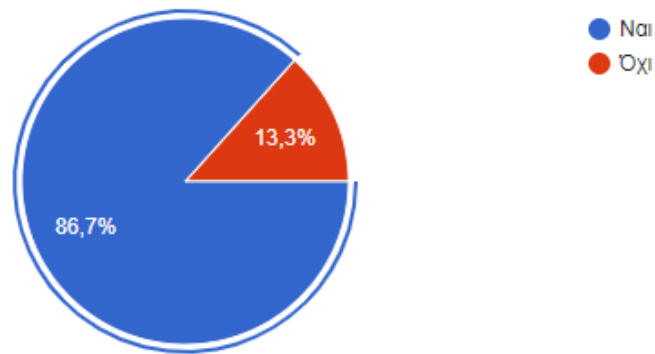
The difficulty that arose in the answers of this particular question is that in Greece there is an abbreviation that indicates the branch that the teacher teaches and refers to a specific number / number. The second way refers to the status of each teacher. For example the philologist has the code PE02 (ΠΕ02). In this the question one answered as philologist, others answered as PE02 and others answered as philologist PE02 special education but this belongs to the branch of philologists. The same with the mathematicians (PE03).

Taking this difficulty into consideration, from the 30 participants:

English teachers (ΠΕ06) were 2, Theologian (ΠΕ01) was 1, 8 Philologists (ΠΕ02, ΠΕ02 ΕΑΕ), 4 Mathematicians (ΠΕ03, ΠΕ03 ΕΑΕ), 1 Economist (ΠΕ80), 1 Physical education teacher (ΠΕ11), 5 Computer teachers (ΠΕ86), 1 Physic teacher (ΠΕ04.01), 1 teacher of engineering (ΠΕ82), 1 Kindergarten teacher (ΠΕ60), Chemist teacher (ΠΕ04.02), 1 Social sciences teacher (ΠΕ78), 1 Civil engineering – architect (ΠΕ81) and 2 Nursing teachers (ΠΕ87.02).

3) The third question was the following:

“I have students in my class whose language ability does not correspond to their educational level”



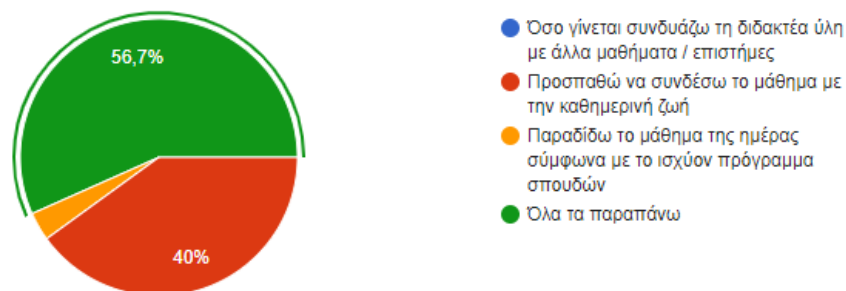
86,7% (26 participants) replied yes and a 13,3% (4 participants), replied that they have not. It is interesting the fact that most teachers claim that not all students correspond to the educational level of the classroom.

4) In this question, the participants had to answer to the following question

“During the course

- a) I try to combine the curriculum with other courses / sciences*
- b) I try to link the course with everyday life*
- c) I deliver the lesson of the day according to the current curriculum*
- d) All of the above”*

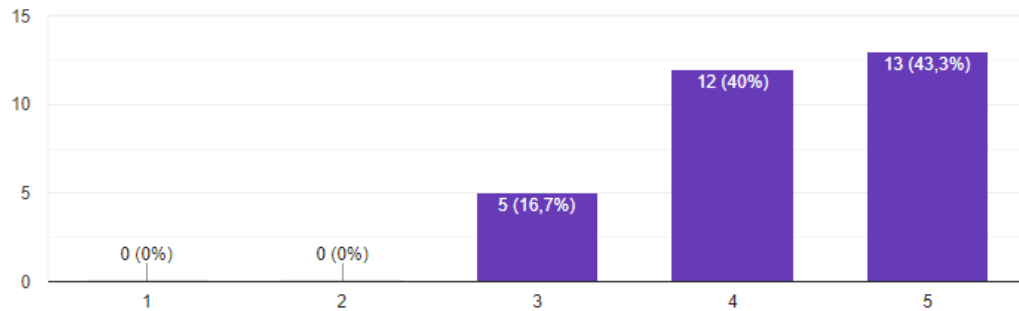
17 teachers replied the d) All of the above, 12 replied b) and 1 replied c).



It seems that the majority of teachers try to combine the school curriculum with everyday life and other courses, so as to make the lesson more interesting.

5) *“When I assess students I try to take into account each child and their potential.”*

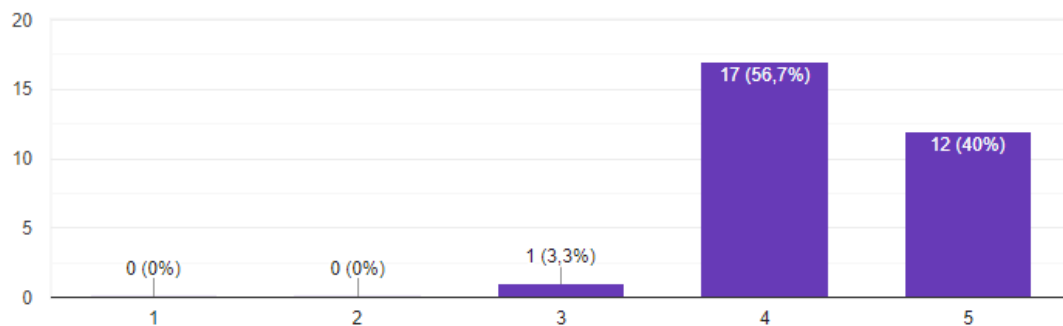
This was the fifth question that the participants had to respond. It was formed in Likert scale from “very little” to “very much”



From a scale 1 to 5 where 1 is “very little” and 5 stands for “very much”, 5 teachers replied the 3rd scale, 12 teachers replied using the 4th scale and 13 teachers replied “very much”. So, it seems that the majority of teachers try to take into account the personality of each child and their potential. It is a form of respect and empathy on each and every student separately.

- 6) In Likert scale was also formed the 6th question, with responses varying from “very little” to “very much”:

“I try to teach in a different way depending on the level of the class”



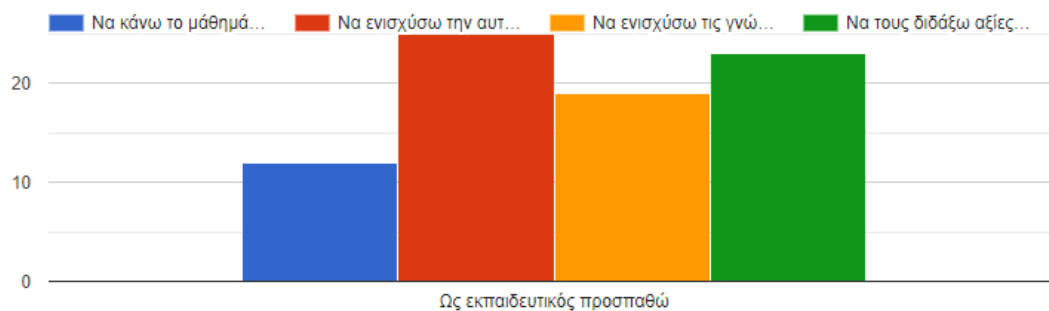
1 teacher replied selecting the 3rd scale, 17 teachers replied with the 4th scale and 12 using the 5th scale. It seems that the majority of teachers take under serious consideration the abilities of the students in the classroom and teach them accordingly.

- 7) The 7th question was the following:

“As a teacher I try

- a) To do my job*
- b) To boost my students' self-confidence,*
- c) To enhance my students' knowledge,*
- d) To teach them values (such as acceptance of others, diversity, etc.)”*

Teachers could provide more than one answers and these are represented as follows:



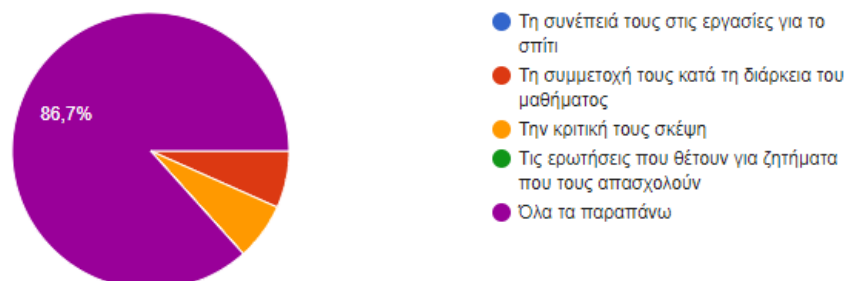
The total number of teachers was 30, so their responses are demonstrated as following:

12 teachers responded a) *“to do my job”*, 25 teachers responded b) *To boost my students' self-confidence*, 19 teachers replied selecting c) *To enhance my students' knowledge* and 23 teachers responded d) *To teach them values (such as acceptance of others, diversity, etc.)”*

So, it seems that most of teachers do not just do their jobs, but they are interested in teaching them values, boost their confidence and self-esteem along with their being educated.

8) As regards the next question, “In addition to the exams, my goal is to evaluate”, the responses provided were the following:

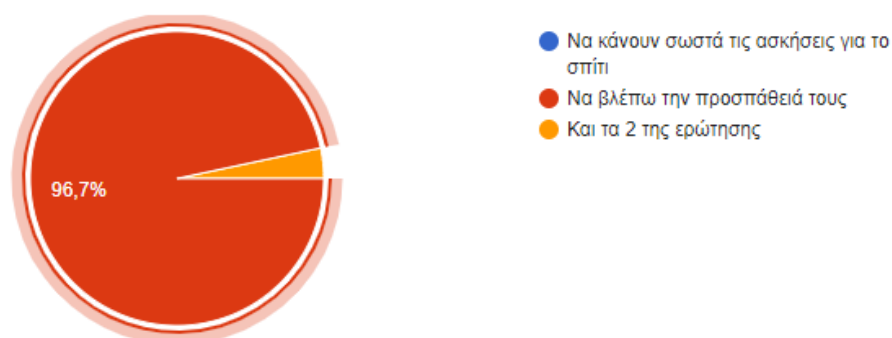
- a) Their effort on the homework
- b) Their participation during the class
- c) Their critical thinking
- d) The questions they ask about issues that concern them
- e) All of the above



It was a percentage of 86,7% (26 teachers) that provided the response of e) *all of the above*. 2 teacher responded that they also evaluate their critical thinking and 2 teachers replied that they evaluate their participation during class.

Through this question, it seems that there are also other factors that contribute to students' being evaluated by their teachers. It is important to see other factors like their critical thinking, cooperation, participation and their posing of questions.

- 9) *“I am more interested:*
a) *To do their homework*
b) *To see their effort”*



In this question, 29 teachers replied b) *“To see their effort”*. One teacher provided a different answer using the “other” field and replied “Both”.

This question could be connected with the previous one and provide us important information. It seems that teachers are interested in seeing their effort rather than only seeing having done their homework.

- 10) *“During the course, I try to:*
a) *I use different teaching models*
b) *I use handouts, notes, etc.*
c) *I use differentiated material for specific categories of students (bilinguals, refugees or immigrants)*
d) *I adapt the lesson according to the needs of the target group and the teaching unit*
e) *I follow the textbook*
f) *All of the above”*



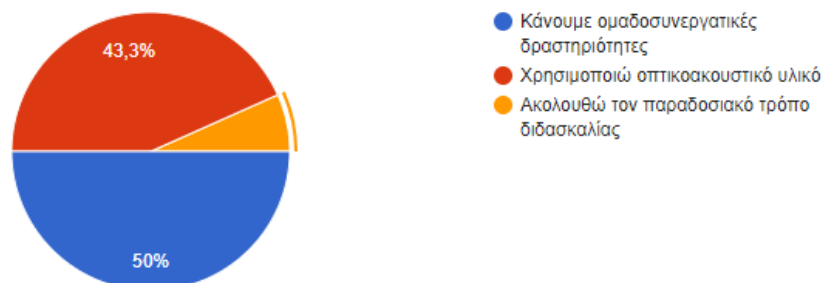
40% of the teachers (12 teachers) replied “all of the above”. 9 teachers, that represent the 30% replied that “*I use different teaching models*”, 5 teachers out of 30 replied d) *I adapt the lesson according to the needs of the target group and the teaching unit*, 3 teachers replied b) *I use handouts, notes, etc* and only 1 teacher replied that he/she uses differentiated material for specific categories of students, bilinguals, refugees or immigrants.

This is a question that analyses all different types of delivering courses. It is very important to see differentiated methods and approaches being used, despite the fact that only one teacher uses differentiated material for refugees and migrants.

11) In this question, teachers had to answer the following question:

“When this is possible, with my students I try to:

- a) *We perform teamwork activities*
- b) *Use audio-visual material*
- c) *I follow the traditional way of teaching”*

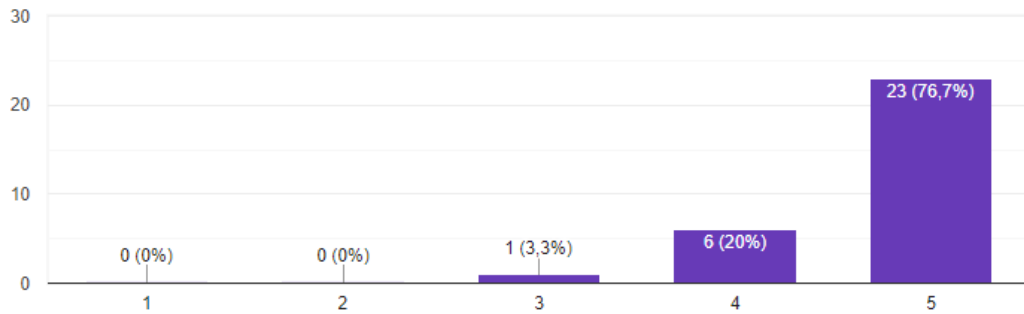


15 out of 30 teachers, replied that they perform teamwork activities, 13 teachers use relevant audio-visual material and 2 teachers follow the traditional way of teaching.

It seems that nowadays teachers tend not to follow the traditional way of teaching and perform teamwork activities using audio-visual material when this is possible.

12) This question, was formed in Likert scale and was the following.

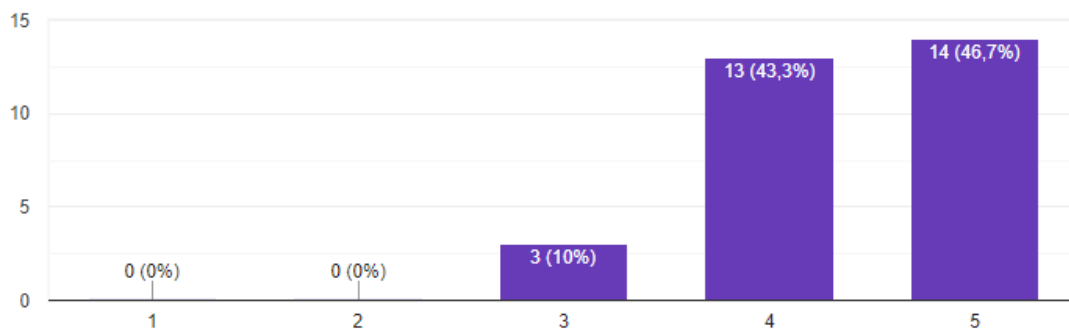
“I believe that the teacher should be interested in the psychology of his/her students”



From a scale 1 to 5 where 1 is “very little” and 5 stands for “very much”, 23 teachers replied using the 5th scale, 6 teachers used the 4th scale and only 1 used the 3rd scale. So, it seems that the vast majority of teachers believe that students’ psychology status play a very important role in the learning procedure.

13) *“I would describe myself as an approachable teacher”*

This question was also formed in Likert scale. From a scale 1 to 5 where 1 is “very little” and 5 stands for “very much”, 14 teachers replied “very much”, 13 replied using the 4th scale and 3 using the 3rd scale.

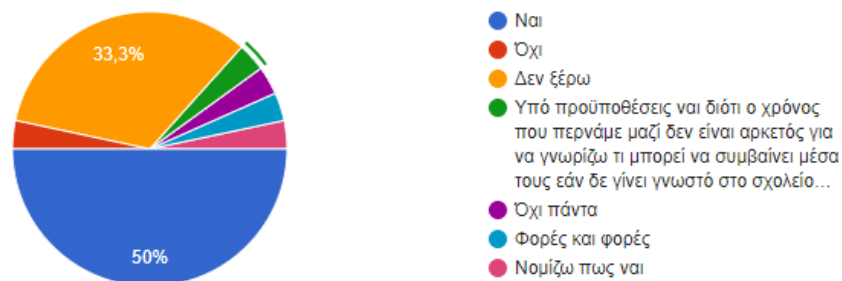


It is interesting that most of teachers describe themselves as “approachable”. It consists a great progress through the passage of time, when students were afraid of their teachers.

14) This question explore teachers’ abilities of identifying if a student is experiencing a traumatic event. In this question, teachers were able to type another answer that was not provided. Accordingly, the responses provided were the following:

In this question, many different responses were provided. These are demonstrated as following:

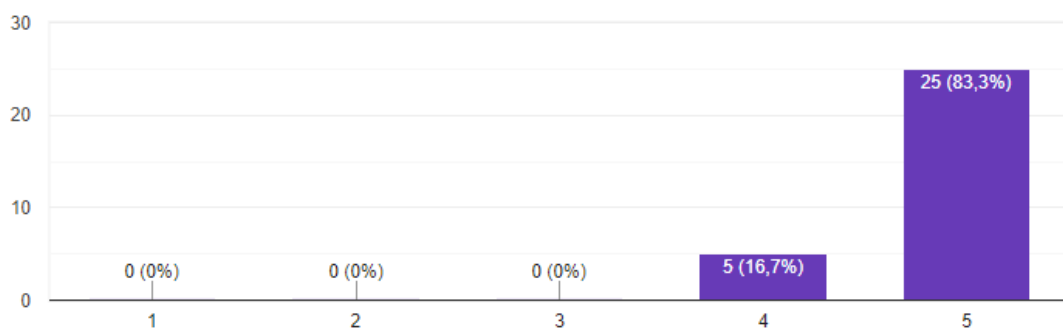
15 teachers replied “yes”, 10 teachers replied “I don’t know”, 1 teacher replied “no”, 1 not always, 1 some yes some no, 1 I think yes and 1 teacher provided the following answer “*under circumstances yes, because the time that we spend at school is not enough to know what is happening inside them, if something is not mentioned at school*”.



This question was one of the most interesting ones. It showed that teachers have not been adequately trained or educated so as to be able to identify whether a child faces a traumatic event.

15) “*It is my priority that students trust me and feel safe*”

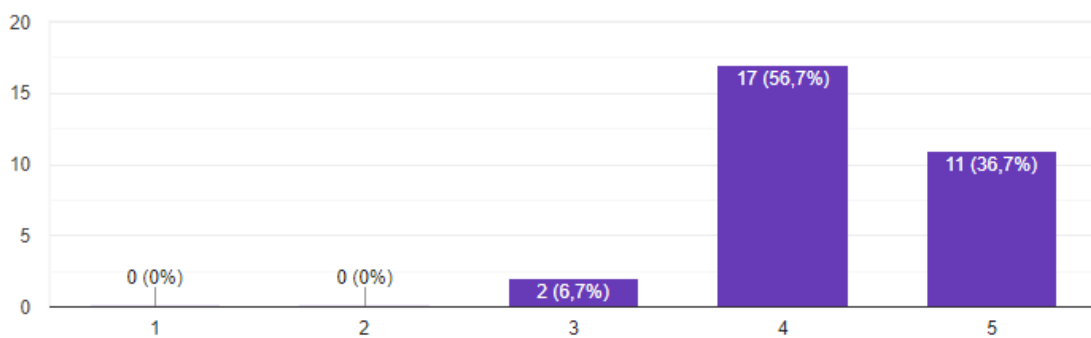
This was the 15th question that teachers had to respond. Their responses are the following: From a scale 1 to 5 where 1 is “very little” and 5 stands for “very much”, 25 teachers replied that it actually is their priority and the rest 4 teachers replied using the 4th scale.



This means that the vast majority of teachers consider that trust and safety comes above all other things. It is vital that children feel safe and trust the person that educates them.

16) This question aims to identify whether teachers try to deal with all students the same way.

This is also a question that was formed using the Likert scale. From a scale 1 to 5 where 1 is “very little” and 5 stands for “very much”, 11 teachers replied that they try very much to deal with all students the same way. 17 teachers responded using the 4th scale and 2 using the 3rd scale.

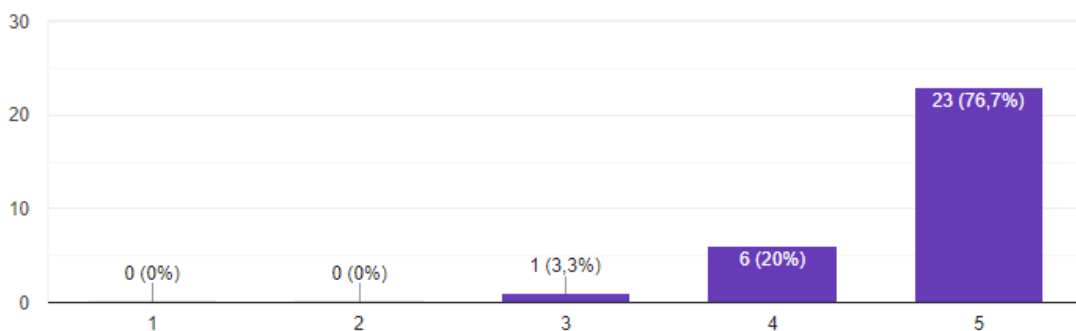


In general it seems that there is an effort on dealing all students in the same way. This could not be enhancing for refugee and migrant students or students with special educational needs.

17) Another question using the Likert scale was the 17th question.

“My goal is for my students to feel comfortable in the classroom”

From a scale 1 to 5 where 1 is “very little” and 5 stands for “very much”, the vast majority of teachers, 76.7% (23 teachers) replied “very much”, 6 replied using the 4th scale and only 1 responded using the 3rd scale.

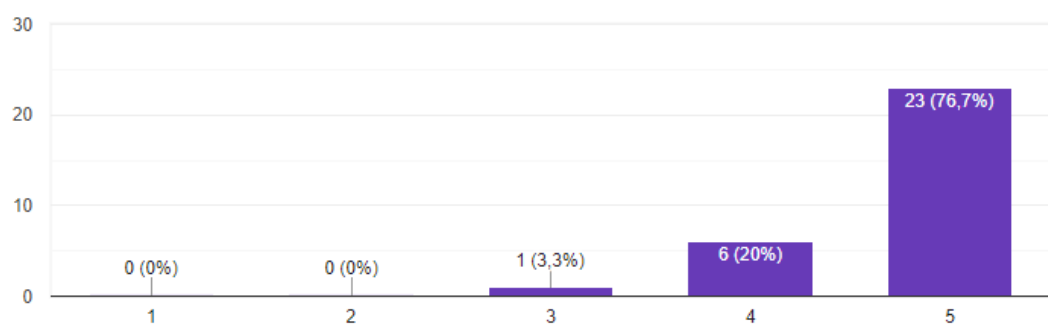


The responses on this question, show that teachers' goal is to make students feel comfortable in the classroom. This is very important for them as they would be in a safe environment.

18) In this question, teachers were posed the following:

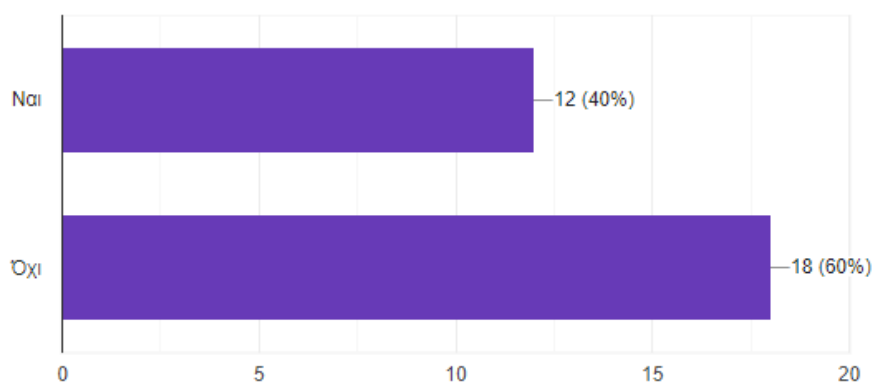
“My students can freely express themselves in my classroom”.

From a scale 1 to 5 where 1 is “very little” and 5 stands for “very much”, the vast majority of teachers meaning the 76.7% replied that students are able to freely express themselves in the classroom, 6 teachers replied using the 4th scale on the Likert scale and one teacher replied using the third scale. This is very important for students as they could freely express themselves, without the fear of being stigmatized or bullied.

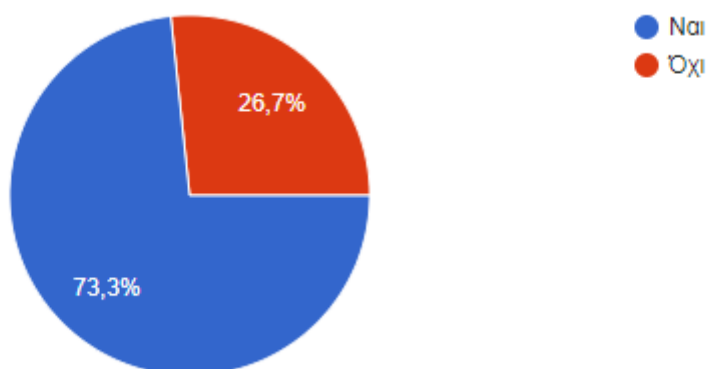


19) This question identified whether the participants have received education or any kind of training on the education of refugees and/or migrants, so as to adequately support them.

It was the majority of teachers that responded that they have not received education or training as regards refugees and migrants (18 teachers out of 30) and the minority (12 teachers) replied that they have received education on refugees and/or migrants so as to support them. It seems that teachers are not trained so as to meet the diverse needs of refugees and migrants in formal mainstream settings.



20) Last but not least was the question that the researcher posed as regards their intentions on receiving training or attending a seminar in intercultural education. The responses are depicted in the following pie



From the 30 teachers, the minority replied in a negative way. The majority of the teachers responded that they would like to receive training or attending a related seminar in intercultural education. This is very encouraging that teachers become more interested in expanding their horizons and be trained to educate better refugees and migrants.

These were the results of the research. The participants had to reply to 20 obligatory questions that were close-ended. In some questions, extra options were offered so as to be able to type their answer if the provided answers did not match their preferences. The results were illustrated using relevant pies and charts.

5. Discussion

The research was conducted at the geographical area of Crete and 30 participants responded to the questionnaire. For the purpose of the study there were two research questions that the researcher took into consideration in order for the questionnaire to be formed. As it was mentioned beforehand, the questions were:

1. To what extent are teachers' techniques and practices modified so as to accommodate the integration process of migrant students?
2. Are there any strategies that are used so as to foster sense of belonging through peer collaboration and interaction between migrant students and their classmates?

Refugees and migrants that lose their home country have a feeling of insecurity and alienation within the country that hosts them. This is the reason why the sense of belonging is considered one of the most important issues for people who enter a host country. The refugee flows over the last decades, consist of a global phenomenon and responsible for many alterations occur. Wars, conflicts and of course economic reasons contribute to scaling up the migration numbers. This means that migrants and refugees are in a constant pursuit of a more secure and prosperous homeland for themselves and their families (McAuliffe & Koser, 2017).

5.1. The concept of sense of belonging

The concept of sense of belonging embraces many separate fields that altogether contribute to students' wellbeing. These fields require the feeling of being accepted in the host country and consequently at school, to be respected and to be able to receive social support. Many theorists have stated that the bonds that people from when they interact with each other, are extremely crucial and vital for their survival (Ainsworth, 1989; Axelrod & Hamilton, 1981; Barash, 1977; Baumeister & Leary, 1995; Bowlby, 1969; Buss, 1990 and Moreland, 1987, as cited in Lambert et al., 2013).

The meaning of sense of belonging, has a greater value than that of the friendship. There is a deeper need for being accepted and be integrated in the community. It is therefore easily concluded that when a student is included in a group with other students of the community, it does not necessarily mean that their need for belonging is satisfied (Lambert et al., 2013).

There is also the need of being cared, connected, valued and mostly being accepted from every member of the community, either the society in general or the members of a school environment, family, friends, classmates, teachers and peers. According to Knekta et al., (2020) when for example a student becomes a teaching assistant, or contributed in the research lab, he/she become more engaged and active in their studies. Teachers have to acknowledge the linguistic identity of refugees and migrants and try to integrate them in the classroom environment. A way of achieving this, is by discussing the importance of being able to speak more than one languages. These kind of activities engage students and make them understand all the differences that exist between the cultures (Dressler, 2014). In classrooms that are considered as multilinguals, teachers are able to investigate the actual meaning of language identity for refugees and/or migrant students (Cummins & Early, 2011). Linguistic identity is beneficial for their development a all levels; the social, emotional, educational and of course their sense of belonging is enhancing as they feel that they are accepted in the new environment and their differences are embraced (Dressler, 2014).

5.2. Research questions

As regards the first research question *“To what extend are teachers’ techniques and practices modified so as to accommodate the integration process of migrant students?”* teachers’ responses could be summarized as follows:

The majority of the participants replied that in their classroom there are many students that do not correspond to the educational level. It was also stated that each student is taken into consideration. This is one of the most important this in a multicultural classroom. In classrooms like these, there is a vigorous need for equality for all students. In this way the equality is performed, if every teacher aims to identify each student’s needs (Hart, 1996).

What is more, it was noted that again the majority of teachers deliver the course combining the curriculum with other sciences and / or course and also linking the course with everyday life, not only following the curriculum. In addition, each student’s potentials are explored and not only their performance in the classroom. Only a minority of teachers do not apply different ways of teaching, depending on the level of the classroom. It is the teacher-centered approach that student do not have any benefit from. This way of teaching is not enhancing

their educational process as the teacher does not have empathy for their educational needs and therefore, they could not be integrated in the classroom (Dryden-Peterson, 2015).

The vast majority of teachers replied that they most of all try to boost students' confidence and teach them values like acceptance of others and diversity and enhance their knowledge. None of the participants replied that they "do their job". 26 out of 30 teacher replied that along with the exams, they also evaluate their effort on the homework, their participation in the classroom, their critical thinking and the questions they ask. Almost all teachers replied that they are interested in seeing their effort, except one who responded that he/she is interested in seeing their effort along with their homework. At this point it is useful to mention that the sense of belonging could prove to be very beneficial for students and lead to many optimistic results. If students are motivated, happy and have confidence in themselves there is a remarkable increase in class participation (Strayhorn, 2019).

What is more, the majority of teachers replied that in their lessons they use differentiated teaching models as well as handouts and notes. They also responded that they use differentiated material for specific categories of students such as refugees, migrants and bilinguals. The majority also responded that the lesson is adapted in the needs of the target group as well as the teaching unit that needs to be taught. These differentiations have to be relevant with students' experiences (Lewis, 1992; Weston, 1992). Relevant study has presented that only a few teachers use a student-centered approach. This approach includes many teaching techniques, mostly inspired from the students' interests (Adami, 2004).

Regarding the second research question "***Are there any strategies that are used so as to foster sense of belonging through peer collaboration and interaction between migrant students and their classmates?***" the results of the research could be summarized as following:

Half of the participants responded that they perform teamwork activities and also less than half responded that they use audio – visual material that is relevant to each lesson. Williams (2002), has stated that there are many practices that could be applied for the integration of migrants and refugees in mainstream schools. For example with the teamwork activities the cooperative learning is promoted. This particular practice is used worldwide and is used by thousands of teachers at all levels of education (Slavin, 2014). Additionally, with the technique of peer collaboration, students are able to work in groups and assist their refugee

and migrant classmates understand and perform the tasks that have been assigned to them (Kaldi et al., 2014).

Also, the majority of teachers believe that the educator should be interested in the psychological status of their students. Approximately all of the participants could describe themselves as rather approachable teachers. The sense of belonging is very closely linked to the experience that students have within the school environments. In order for the students to be motivated and inspired, there is a vital need for their psychological satisfaction. Osterman (2000) stated that it is teachers who have a direct and significant influence on learners' psychological and emotional experiences, as they have an interaction in the classroom.

Moreover, the teachers' abilities of identifying whether a child faces a traumatic event were explored. Half of the teachers responded in a positive way while other claimed that they are not trained for this ability, especially if the school has not mentioned it beforehand. It was also expressed the view that teachers are not able to identify possible traumas. Teachers usually do not have any expertise as regards pedagogical approaches for a target language or in recognising and aiding students to overcome possible effects of trauma (Cerna, 2019).

Also, the majority replied that it consists their priority that students trust and feel safe with them. In another question, teachers responded that they usually try to deal with all students in the same way and the majority replied that they try to make students feel comfortable in the classroom. According to Osterman (2010), the educators have an influence on students in many aspects. For example the interpersonal and relational support they receive, the strategies that are applied in order for students to feel comfortable in the school environment and peacefully interact with their classmates. Relevant studies have shown that the sense of belonging enhance the learning experience of students, as it contributes to students behavioral and also emotional wellbeing. In addition, the practice of the whole-school attitude make refugee and migrant students feel safe within the school environment. They are not anxious or afraid to communicate that they come from another country. It consists of a key-role as regards their sense of belonging, to be able to interact with their peers and complete any tasks or activities (Hek, 2005).

5.3. Teachers' education on refugees and migrants

The next questions were focused on teachers and their views of being further educated at some point in their lives. To be more specific, the 60% of the teachers have not received any

kind of education or training regarding refugees and migrants, but the majority expressed the wish to be trained. Cerna (2019) has also stated this fact; teachers tend to not be trained or qualified enough to be able to cope with any kind of difficulties derive from students that come from other countries.

Based on the responses of the participants, it seems that there is a great effort to support refugees' and migrants' sense of belonging. It could be said that a remarkable effort is also made to smoothly integrate refugees and migrants into the school environment. Great emphasis is placed on their psychology and the traumas they may carry with them since they left their home country. It is also worth mentioning the fact that many teacher try to deal with each refugee and migrant as a separate entity

6. Validity and Reliability

With the term validity is defined a notion, a concept that is measured with accuracy in a quantitative research (Heale and Twycross, 2015). The validity measures if the research measures what was supposed to measure and therefore if the results are true or not. Generally, the validity is determined by requesting answers to some questions and these answers will be searched in other researchers' studies (Joppe, 2000).

Another measure that is used for quality reasons is the accuracy or the reliability of an instrument. This means that to what extend we would receive the same results for the same occasions or situations (Heale and Twycross, 2015). It was Kirk and Miller back in 1986 who identified three different types of reliability that referred to the quantitative research. These related to:

- 1) the extent to which a measure, when repeatedly given, remains the same
- 2) how stable is the measurement over time
- 3) how similar are the measurements in the same period of time

At this point it should be mentioned the fact that there is a constraint from the current timeframe. This constraint has its basis on teachers' training. For instance, this period of time teachers might not attend any educational seminar. There is no guarantee though for the next months or years, when a teacher might decide to be further educated. So, in this point of view the reliability could not be taken for granted.

The sample is characterized by homogeneity, as the participants had to meet certain specifications. For example, they had to teach or have taught in Crete during by the time they were asked to complete the questionnaire.

The timeframe was allocated due to the restriction of the specific program. In addition, during the period the questionnaires were sent through mails or in the social media groups, the researcher came up with the unwillingness of many people to collaborate in order to respond to the questionnaire. What is more, the participants were informed about the process of completing the questionnaire. Their answers were characterized by confidentiality and the responses that they provided through the questionnaires, would only be used for the purpose of the study.

7. Challenges and Limitations

In this chapter there will be presented the challenges and the limitations that the researcher had to deal with during the research period. There were several challenges that had to be faced and the limitations are very important to be taken into consideration.

To begin with, the first challenge was to decide the data collection tool. The initial thought of the researcher, was to perform interviews, as all these years of working in the public sector, many different perspectives, challenges and practices were noticed. Unfortunately, the environment was not mature to perform the research with this tool. Due to not having an environment that is characterized by trust, the selection of the anonymous questionnaire was chosen.

As far as the limitations of the research are concerned, there was a targeted sampling only from teachers that are teaching or have taught in the geographical area of Crete. This means that the sample of 30 participants could not be generalized and further research is required. However, there are some researches that were conducted which included a small number of participants. For example, Polychrou (2023), had 10 responses in the questionnaire that was provided. In addition, 6 and 13 participants were the sample of Ftara, (2022) and Diamantouli (2022). Another researcher had 24 participants to fulfil their questionnaires (Papapostolou, 2018). There is also a research that was conducted which included 50 participants (Sofianopoulou, 2023). Taking these researches into consideration it seems that although a large sample might provide more accuracy, sometimes it is on the nature of the

study or the scope that each researcher has, to conduct research with a small sample of participants.

8. Conclusion

In Greece there are about 119.700 people that seek for asylum. This means that there is an energetic need for multicultural education that has to be applied in mainstream school settings. Approximately 19.100 refugees and migrants are hosted on the Aegean Islands and specifically in Chios, Samos and Lesbos (IRC, n.d.). Migrant and refugee students have to **be integrated in the formal education of Greece**. In Greece the education has a duration of 11 years and is divided in compulsory and non-compulsory. The compulsory starts from the age of 4 till the age of 15. The non-compulsory education, is the attendance in General High Schools and/or Vocational High Schools (Eurydice, n.d.)

It has been proved that when students have this **sense of belonging in school**, it promotes their behavioral and emotional wellbeing. As a result, their learning experience is enhancing even more (Osterman, 2000). But there are many challenges for their educational progress. As there are non-native speakers of the language, this could make them be introverted or hesitating in expressing their points of view, or even provide only monosyllabic responses (Duff, 2002). They could also not be able to participate as they would not be familiar with the language of the host country. If the instructions are provided only in the language of the country that hosts them, it is extremely difficult for them to interact, if they do not understand what are they supposed to do. In this sense, their involvement in the classroom does not even exist (Dryden – Peterson, 2015).

In general, **many practices** are followed by that teachers regarding the delivering of the daily courses. The majority of teachers combines the curriculum with other sciences and link the daily courses with everyday life. In this way the lesson becomes more interesting and makes students be fully engaged with the process. After all, the teacher-centered teaching does not enhance the educational process (Dryden-Peterson, 2015).

The present study is an **effort to investigate students' sense of belonging**. Specifically, the researcher conducted a research on teachers' integration perception and practices within formal education contexts in the island of **Crete**. The participants that could respond to the questionnaire, were only be teachers who are teaching or have taught in the past, at any part of the Cretan island. 30 teachers successfully completed the questionnaire, responding to all questions that were posed.

Many practices could be successfully applied in multicultural classrooms, some of which were mentioned in the specific research. The participants responded that during their lessons they use the **cooperative learning practice** in which students are able to provide assistance to each other during the lesson. In this particular way, students assume the role of the teacher (Jacobs & Renandya, 2019) and constitutes a practice that thousands of teachers follow (Slavin, 2014).

Another practice that is followed by the sample of the research is that of the teamwork activities. **The peer collaboration and the whole school attitude** practices are two more of the practices that the teachers responded that they follow. With the first practice students are able to work in groups and native students explain non-native students the tasks that they need to do (Kaldi et al., 2014). With the second practice, the whole-school attitude, migrant and refugees are not afraid to express that they come from another country and have confidence in themselves. When they feel that they are accepted it promotes their educational pathway (Hek, 2005).

Another practice that teachers responded that they use in their **teaching, differentiated material** (like handouts and notes) and that they adapt to the needs of the students as well as the daily course. They also use audio-visual material, relevant to the course that is delivered. The differentiations that are used are crucial and are relevant to students' experiences (Lewis, 1992; Weston, 1992). Some teachers even mentioned that they used differentiated material designed especially for migrants, refugees and bilinguals. The

combination of **the curriculum with other sciences or everyday life** when delivering the course, is another practice that was responded by the participants of the research. Only a small number of the participants replied that no differentiated teaching is applied. Unfortunately, when the teachers' way of teaching is following the **teacher-centered** approach, is not beneficial for students. This approach is not described with empathy, nor following the educational needs of migrants and refugees and therefore integration could not be succeeded (Dryden-Peterson, 2015).

In this research most of the participants responded that there are many students in their classrooms that they do not correspond their level of education. They also try to take into consideration each student separately and this consists one of the most important factors. Through this procedure, equality for all is achieved and the needs of each student are identified and addressed (Hart, 1996).

What is more, teachers need to **boost students' self-confidence**, being interested in keeping track with their effort; if students are motivated and happy in the classroom, their participation in the class will be increased (Strayhorn, 2019). The psychological status of their students should always be taken into consideration; there is this need of psychological satisfaction that affects students in many ways. As Osterman (2000) stated, teachers play a very important role to students' emotional and psychological experience, due to the fact that they interact in the classroom and spend half of their day at school. It is also important the fact that most teachers replied that they evaluate students 'critical thinking, effort and the questions they ask in the classroom.

Moreover, teachers should be trained **to identify possible traumas** of refugee and/or migrant children and learn the way to pedagogically approach the newcomers. Usually, they do not have this kind of training or expertise, but it is vital they identify traumas or psychological issues that children might have to deal with (Cerna, 2019). From the research that was conducted, it was shown that its teachers' priority to make refugee and migrant **students feel safe** in the classroom. When students are not afraid to communicate and express themselves, their sense of belonging makes them freely interact with their peers and are able to successfully complete any kind of activities or tasks (Hek, 2005).

This research was conducted in a small geographical area of Greece, in Crete. Therefore, this means that is vital that the research be conducted in the wider area of Greece, in order

to have a better perspective on the practices that teachers follow, so as to promote students' sense of belonging within a formal education context.

60% of the participants have not received any education on migrants or refugees, but most of them expressed the wish to be trained. It is a fact that teachers tend to not be qualified enough nor trained to teach students that Greece is not their home country (Cerna, 2019).

As a general comment, it seems that there is an effort of inclusion as regards migrants and refugees, within the formal educational context of Greece. Their psychology and traumas are taken into account and there is also an effort to deal with each student separately.

This research was conducted with a constraint as far as the timeframe is concerned. This means that at the period that this research was conducted, the results were demonstrated in a specific way (see chapter 4). However, if a teacher decides to attend a seminar or a workshop as regards the inclusion and the sense of belonging of migrants and refugees, the results are possible to change. It could be said that the reliability is not taken for granted.

Homogeneity characterizes the sample due to the fact that all participants are teaching or had taught in formal education schools in Crete. The questionnaires were sent through social media and groups that are consisted from teachers, however there were many that did not wish to complete the questionnaires, despite the kind reminder that was sent to them. The provided answers are characterized by confidentiality and they were used only serving the purpose of the study. The **researcher** had to deal some **challenges** during this period. The first was to decide if interviews were going to be conducted or not. It is unfortunate to say that the environment of the schools were not mature enough to carry out interviews. This is the reason why the anonymous questionnaires were selected. The present research has a targeted sample, an expert sample of 30 participants in the geographical area of Crete, within a specific timeframe. It is therefore easily understood that the results of this research could not be generalized for all teachers of Greece. It could be a stepping stone though, to conduct further research with more and different actions, such as observations and interviews from teachers and students.

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Appendix Questionnaire

Το αίσθημα του ανήκειν των μαθητών. Μια μελέτη περίπτωσης για τις αντιλήψεις και τις πρακτικές ένταξης μεταναστών στο πλαίσιο της Γενικής εκπαίδευσης

Ελληνικό Ανοικτό Πανεπιστήμιο - Γλωσσική Εκπαίδευση για Πρόσφυγες και Μετανάστες (LRM)

Ονομάζομαι Σωτηρία - Δέσποινα Δεσποτάκη και στα πλαίσια εκπόνησης διπλωματικής εργασίας, το ερωτηματολόγιο που ακολουθεί απευθύνεται σε εκπαιδευτικούς Πρωτοβάθμιας ή/και Δευτεροβάθμιας Εκπαίδευσης, Γενικής ή Ειδικής Εκπαίδευσης. Η συμμετοχή σας είναι ανώνυμη και πολύ σημαντική. Σας ευχαριστώ πολύ.

1. Είμαι εκπαιδευτικός *

- Πρωτοβάθμιας Εκπαίδευσης
- Δευτεροβάθμιας Εκπαίδευσης
- Πρωτοβάθμιας και Δευτεροβάθμιας Εκπαίδευσης

2. Η ειδικότητά μου είναι *

Η απάντησή σας

3. Έχω στην τάξη μου μαθητές όπου η γλωσσική τους ικανότητα δεν αντιστοιχεί στην εκπαιδευτική βαθμίδα τους *

- Ναι
- Όχι

4. Κατά τη διάρκεια του μαθήματος *

- Όσο γίνεται συνδυάζω τη διδακτέα ύλη με άλλα μαθήματα / επιστήμες
- Προσπαθώ να συνδέσω το μάθημα με την καθημερινή ζωή
- Παραδίδω το μάθημα της ημέρας σύμφωνα με το ισχύον πρόγραμμα σπουδών
- Όλα τα παραπάνω
- Άλλο: _____

5. Όταν αξιολογώ τους μαθητές προσπαθώ να λάβω υπόψη μου το κάθε παιδί και τις δυνατότητες του *

	1	2	3	4	5	
Πολύ λίγο	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Πάρα πολύ

6. Προσπαθώ να διδάξω με διαφορετικό τρόπο ανάλογα με το επίπεδο της τάξης *

	1	2	3	4	5	
Πολύ λίγο	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Πάρα πολύ

7. *

	Να κάνω το μάθημά μου	Να ενισχύσω την αυτοπεποίθηση των μαθητών μου	Να ενισχύσω τις γνώσεις των μαθητών μου	Να τους διδάξω αξίες (όπως αποδοχή του άλλου, διαφορετικότητα κ.ά.)
Ως εκπαιδευτικός προσπαθώ	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

8. Εκτός από τα διαγωνίσματα, στόχος μου είναι να αξιολογώ *

- Τη συνέπειά τους στις εργασίες για το σπίτι
- Τη συμμετοχή τους κατά τη διάρκεια του μαθήματος
- Την κριτική τους σκέψη
- Τις ερωτήσεις που θέτουν για ζητήματα που τους απασχολούν
- Όλα τα παραπάνω
- Άλλο: _____

9. Με ενδιαφέρει περισσότερο *

- Να κάνουν σωστά τις ασκήσεις για το σπίτι
- Να βλέπω την προσπάθειά τους
- Άλλο: _____

10. Κατά τη διάρκεια του μαθήματος, προσπαθώ να *

- Χρησιμοποιώ διάφορα μοντέλα διδασκαλίας
- Χρησιμοποιώ φυλλάδια, σημειώσεις κ.ά.
- Χρησιμοποιώ διαφοροποιημένο υλικό για ειδικές κατηγορίες μαθητών (δίγλωσσους, πρόσφυγες ή μετανάστες)
- Προσαρμόζω το μάθημα ανάλογα με τη διδακτική ενότητα
- Ακολουθώ το βιβλίο
- Όλα τα παραπάνω

11. Όταν είναι αυτό δυνατό, προσπαθώ με τους μαθητές μου να *

- Κάνουμε ομαδοσυνεργατικές δραστηριότητες
- Χρησιμοποιώ οπτικοακουστικό υλικό
- Ακολουθώ τον παραδοσιακό τρόπο διδασκαλίας
- Άλλο: _____

12. Πιστεύω ότι ο καθηγητής/καθηγήτρια πρέπει να ενδιαφέρεται για την ψυχολογία των μαθητών του *

	1	2	3	4	5	
Πολύ λίγο	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Πάρα πολύ

13. Θα χαρακτήριζα τον εαυτό μου ως καθηγητή /καθηγήτρια προσιτό/ή *

	1	2	3	4	5	
Λίγο	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	Πάρα πολύ

14. Μπορώ να αναγνωρίσω εάν κάποιος μαθητής μου βιώνει κάποιο τραυματικό γεγονός *

Ναι

Όχι

Δεν ξέρω

Άλλο: _____

15. Είναι προτεραιότητα μου οι μαθητές να με εμπιστεύονται και να νιώθουν ασφάλεια *

	1	2	3	4	5	
Πολύ λίγο	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Πάρα πολύ

16. Προσπαθώ να ασχολούμαι το ίδιο με όλους τους μαθητές *

	1	2	3	4	5	
Πολύ λίγο	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Πάρα πολύ

17. Στόχος μου είναι οι μαθητές μου νιώθουν άνετα μέσα στην τάξη *

	1	2	3	4	5	
Πολύ λίγο	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Πάρα πολύ

18. Οι μαθητές μου μπορούν να εκφραστούν ελεύθερα στην τάξη μου *

	1	2	3	4	5	
Πολύ λίγο	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Πάρα πολύ

19. Έχω λάβει εκπαίδευση / επιμόρφωση πάνω στην εκπαίδευση προσφύγων ή / και μεταναστών *

Ναι

Όχι

20. Με ενδιαφέρει να λάβω επιμόρφωση ή να παρακολουθήσω σεμινάριο στη διαπολιτισμική εκπαίδευση *

Ναι

Όχι

Υποβολή

Σελίδα 1 από 1

Εκκαθάριση φόρμας

Author's Statement:

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