

Teaching Refugee Children: Challenges Teachers face¹

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Abstract *Educating refugee children is a demanding process, as teachers must have special knowledge, skills and attitudes. In Greece, many efforts have been made to educate refugee children by creating refugee reception and integration classes in schools and recruiting temporary staff. Still, teachers face various problems in language teaching and children's integration into the school environment. The purpose of this study is to identify the challenges and difficulties faced by teachers who teach refugee students and to explore their intercultural competence and readiness. Eight interviews were conducted for the research. The results show that participants face many problems due to a lack of training material, tools and resources. The characteristics of refugee children slow down the educational process, while the unpreparedness and inadequacy of teachers in intercultural education complicate the situation. However, the education of refugees can be improved, provided that the intercultural education of teachers is enriched and appropriate educational material (school books, guides, toolkits) is provided.*

Keywords: *refugee children's education, challenges, intercultural education, competence, readiness.*

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Theoretical Underpinning

Education and Refugees

Intense political strife and ongoing war in the Arab world have forced millions of people to flee their homes and seek refuge in other countries. Greece has been an important host country for refugees, as it is a crossroads of three continents and makes access to Europe easy both by land and by sea. Thus, from 2015, thousands of refugees began to arrive in Greece. Among them were many children who, in addition to their home and belongings, had lost their families and loved ones. These children, however, needed to overcome previous negative experiences, adapt to new circumstances and integrate into the new society. Their participation in the educational process was deemed necessary, on the one hand because education is an integral right of every child (*United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child*, 1989) and on the other hand because through it, it would be easier and smoother for them to integrate (Fazel et al., 2012).

From January 2016, the Ministry of Education of Greece undertook the admission of refugee students to the country's schools and their integration into specially designed classes (Zarampouka, 2018). Gradually, refugee integration zones and reception classes for children of all ages were created in schools. However, the difficulties were various, as the lack of a common communication code was evident and there was no uniform and well-designed educational material (Anagnostopoulos et al., 2016). At the same time, there was no staff specially trained in the education of refugee students, a fact that hindered the educational process (Kantzou et al., 2017).

To be more precise, the necessary element for the education of refugee students was the implementation of intercultural education, according to which all cultures and languages are recognised as equal, respect and acceptance of any cultural identity is promoted, and the main goal is the interaction of these different cultures with each other (Banks, 2004). According to Essinger (Essinger, 1991), four basic principles should direct both society and the school/educational environment, which at the same time are features of intercultural education: training for empathy, education for solidarity, education for intercultural respect, education against the nationalist way of thinking.

Teachers and Intercultural Education

In this intercultural educational model the teacher plays a very important role. He/She is the one who creates respect for the different, strengthens the feeling of acceptance and encourages interaction. In order for this intercultural educational model to work, we have to ask ourselves how ready teachers are to apply it. According to Portera, there is a growing need for intercultural skills at many levels (cognitive, emotional and relational) so that teachers can function in linguistically and culturally complex contexts (Porter, 2014). More specifically, a teacher should develop his/her knowledge of the socio-cultural background of his/her students, manage situations of stress, pressure, fear or violence, break down stereotypes, use a variety of learning methods, select appropriate teaching materials, identify problems, suggest solutions and ideas, create a welcoming environment for all students,

interact with students and other teachers, communicate with parents, organize activities that promote collaboration, teamwork and respect, be flexible and perceptive (Arvaniti, 2016; Chatzisotiriou & Angelidis, 2018; Chatzisotiriou & Xenophontos, 2014; Palaiologou & Zembylas, 2018). Thus, we are led to two terms: intercultural competence and intercultural readiness. The first term refers to the theoretical knowledge of the principles of intercultural education, to the knowledge of teaching methods, to the scientific perspective of the educational process. The latter relates to the practical application of all this knowledge within the classroom and to the immediate and efficient treatment of problems that may arise within the intercultural classroom. According to Dimitrov et al., intercultural teaching competence is the ability of instructors to interact with students in a way that supports the learning of students who are linguistically, culturally, socially or in other ways different from the instructor or from each other, across a very wide definition of perceived difference and group identity (Dimitrov, et. al, 2014). Educators who are interculturally competent are willing to apply diverse ways of knowing (Archibald, 2008; Haig-Brown, 2008), are reflective in their approaches to assessment and curriculum design (Paige, 1996) and promote several perspectives when they choose content, readings, and learning activities (Deardorff, 2011).

In short, the teacher needs to have theoretical knowledge, but also knowledge of direct management of children, which is related to both educational tactics and self-management. Therefore, we observe that the intercultural competence and readiness of the teacher include theoretical and scientific knowledge, special attitudes and psychological and social skills.

The Importance of Intercultural Competence and Readiness

But why does a teacher need all this? The answer lies in all the research and studies related to the education of refugee children and the challenges that educators face when trying to teach refugee students. Refugee populations do not all speak the same language (Fragkoulis et al., 2019), do not have the same religion or cultural habits, they do not share common political or social opinions. Moreover, refugee children often feel stressed, depressed or insecure (Sirin & Rogers-Sirin, 2015). Some have abandoned school for years, while other have never attended school before and know nothing about school rules and manners in class (Karanikola & Pitsou, 2015; Koehler et al., 2018).

In addition to the above, the educational materials provided by the school, the facilities, the educational means are sometimes inappropriate or inefficient. To be more precise, schools were not provided with the correct amount of books for refugee children, while the books used to teach Greek to teenage refugee children were not in line with their age. Most teachers did not have other educational material provided by the school, but they had to make their own notes to teach Greek to the children. Three of the schools did not have an extra classroom to provide. They adapted other spaces in the school for refugee classes (a warehouse, a loft above the gym and a detached building). Moreover, in some cases there was no computer or laptop in class, so teachers and students had to use their smartphones to watch a video, translate words or show pictures. And of course we cannot ignore the fact that, unlike other countries, e.g. Sweden (Koehler & Schneider, 2019),

teachers hired in our country to teach refugee students have little or no training in teaching students with different languages and from different cultures (Angelopoulou & Manesis, 2017; Kipouropoulou, 2019).

This study was designed and conducted in order to shed light on major issues which are associated with the context of global competences as an umbrella term, which arose during the researchers' participation in an Erasmus+ European project.

Methodology of Research

Research Aims

The purposes of our research are twofold: 1) to identify the challenges and difficulties educators faced while undertaking refugee classes for adolescents and 2) to investigate their views about their intercultural competence and readiness for refugee teaching. We mostly observe the teachers' perspective on how well-prepared they were to undertake refugee classes. Yet, we can come to safe conclusions through their interviews about intercultural competence in general, since we are given the chance to compare and contrast other studies on this issue with what is really happening in a refugee class.

Research Sample

The participants were eight women, aged between 26 and 54 and originating from Greece. Their years of service in education range from four to twenty-two, but they have all been involved in refugee education for the last 2-4 years or so. Seven of the eight teachers work in state education, while one works in non-formal education. Seven out of eight teach Greek, while one teaches Information and Communications Technology (ICT). One teacher holds two degrees, three hold a master's degree and one holds a doctorate. Finally, all teachers speak English, while five can speak at least one more language. They were chosen in accordance with the purpose of the research (teaching refugee children), informed about the research aims and contacted the researcher in person or via online conversation.

The small size of the sample is due to many reasons: 1) The region where the research took place is not big, since the researcher lives in a small town and transportation was not an option; 2) There was a limited period of time to conduct the research, as it had to be conducted within the time limit set for the researcher's dissertation in the context of the postgraduate program; 3) There were not many teachers who teach refugee classes in this region, while most of them work in primary education and not secondary education (this is why it was more important to study the latter); 4) Some teachers were unwilling to take part in the research, while others could not participate due to their strict schedule or due to other personal reasons; 5) the Covid-19 pandemic broke out in Greece at the time the research was being conducted, which greatly limited both travel and contact with other teachers who were to participate in the research. The place where the research was conducted is in a region of Central Macedonia.

Research Method and Methodological Tools

For the completion of the present research the qualitative method was chosen as the most suitable. Despite the small sample and the limited area of research, the qualitative method allows for an extensive list of interpretations and perspectives in the light of multiple concepts of exploration (Creswell, 2014). We can listen to the in-depth interpretation of the participants themselves, proceed to further questions and clarifications if needed, and even interpret body movements, tone of voice, feelings of excitement, anger or hesitation.

The research tool was the interview, and the language used was the Greek language so that the teachers could more easily and freely express their opinions and perspectives (Patton, 2002). The information extracted from the interviews provides a lot of detail about the experiences of individuals as told through their own stories. However, the interview questions were direct and clear in order to have a guideline and not to elicit unnecessary information. Still, when this information revealed important data about the difficulties in refugee education or the readiness of the teachers, the researcher did not interrupt the flow of speech to extract even more useful information.

The interview model used consists of three parts. The questions posed were semi-structured open-ended questions. More precisely, twenty-four (24) questions were asked. Part one consists of twelve (12) questions which concern demographic data and the profile of teachers. Part two consists of six (6) questions referring to the challenges of teaching refugee students, while part three consists of six (6) questions which give each teacher the opportunity to present successful learning activities and teaching practices in the refugee class. Although the questions are guided, there is still a certain degree of flexibility.

Ethical considerations were taken into account, so that there is protection from any possible physical or mental harm and of course anonymity was maintained (Traianou, 2014).

Data Analysis

The findings were analyzed using the coding method and presented using figures and tables. The coding method was used in order to categorize individual data items, which were taken from the answers of the respondents in the interview. The coded information was generated based on the terminology used by the participants during the interviews. The analysis of the data collected from the field of research was structured based on the research questions, so as to lead to general conclusions that emerge from the research work. The researcher coded the data taking into account key words and notions derived from the teachers' answers to each question of the interview. The codes were determined based on the cooperative reflection of researchers, and a consensus was developed regarding the meaning of the answers given. Then the researcher created figures to better present the data. The numeric data represent the eight teachers. The data analysis process was experienced as continuous and reflective (Erlingsson & Brysiewicz, 2017), as the emphasis was placed on words which reveal the feelings and thoughts of the respondents.

Results

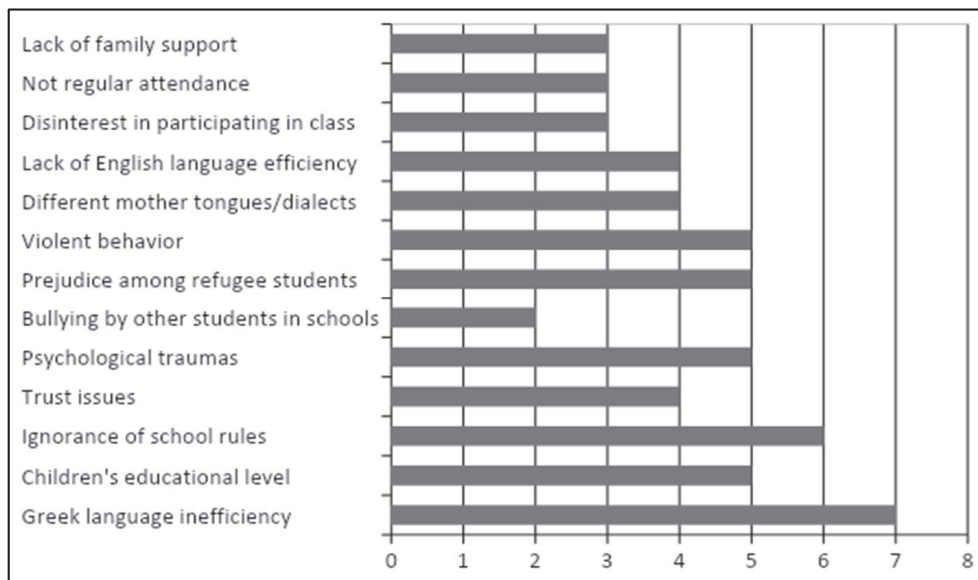
Challenges and Difficulties

During the interviews, the teachers made it clear that at first attempts to teach refugee students ended in failure due to a lack of previous experience with a corresponding student population, while their knowledge of refugee education was minimal to non-existent. Only one teacher reported that because she had been working in an intercultural school for 22 years, she was able to help students integrate much more effectively into the new environment, although language was a major obstacle. It is worth noting that their students are between 12 and 20 years old, while the average number of students in each class is 6-7 students. This number often varies due to the frequent absence and alternation of students, which made it difficult to maintain the smooth and uniform course of the educational process.

Children’s Personal Characteristics

Teachers claim that a large role in the course of the educational process was played by certain characteristics of the refugee students, which, coming to the surface, made it difficult for both the teachers and the students themselves. Figure 1 indicates the results of the interview answers in the form of a diagram. Specifically, thirteen challenges arose as shown in the vertical column. The main challenges faced by teachers seem to be (1) the inability of students to speak the Greek language and (2) their ignorance of school

Figure 1
Challenges and difficulties due to children’s characteristics



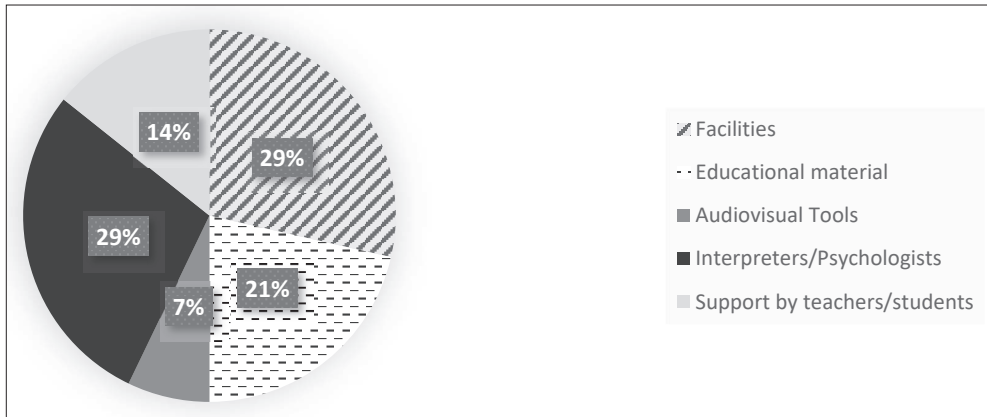
rules. (3) Psychological traumas, (4) violent behavior, (5) a low educational level and (6) the prejudices of refugee students towards other refugee students follow with the same percentage. Seven more difficulties/challenges faced by teachers were reported by a smaller but equally significant percentage of participants. The numbers on the horizontal line of the figure represent the eight participants.

External Factors

Teachers claim that the external factors also affected the educational process in a negative way (Figure 2). The main ones were the lack of organized and student-friendly facilities and the lack of psychologists and interpreters who could certainly facilitate both the communication in the classroom and the mental health of students and teachers, providing psychological support and behavioral interpretations and suggestions.

Figure 2

Challenges due to external factors



Teachers' Competence and Readiness

According to the educators, these challenges could be overcome more easily if teachers were better prepared to teach refugee students. The educators were not asked about possible ways of overcoming these challenges. Yet, they were asked if they thought they could face the difficulties if they were better prepared to. Since they had the chance to express themselves at length, some of them not only answered yes or no, but they also provided some examples of competences that they thought would have been appropriate to have in advance. However, they stressed that as time goes on and as they interact with students, their relationships improve, classroom management becomes easier, teaching methods are enriched and the educational process runs more smoothly. Still, they need to have a wealth of knowledge and skills and abilities to a greater extent than in any other

class, and they need to pay attention to their movements, dress code, attitude, and even the way they speak, look or point. In addition, behavioral, social, emotional and cognitive skills are all required, as well as a great sense of empathy. What is more important is that teachers should be armed with psychological skills in order to handle the range of traumas that refugee students carry and the behaviors they exhibit.

Among other things, reference was made to the possibility of the teacher having to reject possible prejudices of their own. 62% of the sample cited the challenge of overcoming personal prejudices, although most agreed that a teacher should not have any prejudice towards their students. If educators have any, then they should not teach refugee students, in order to ensure that children will not be harmed in any possible way. Prejudice and xenophobia are presented as the main reasons that may lead a teacher to refuse teaching in a refugee class. Still, the main reason - as noted earlier - is the unpreparedness of teachers.

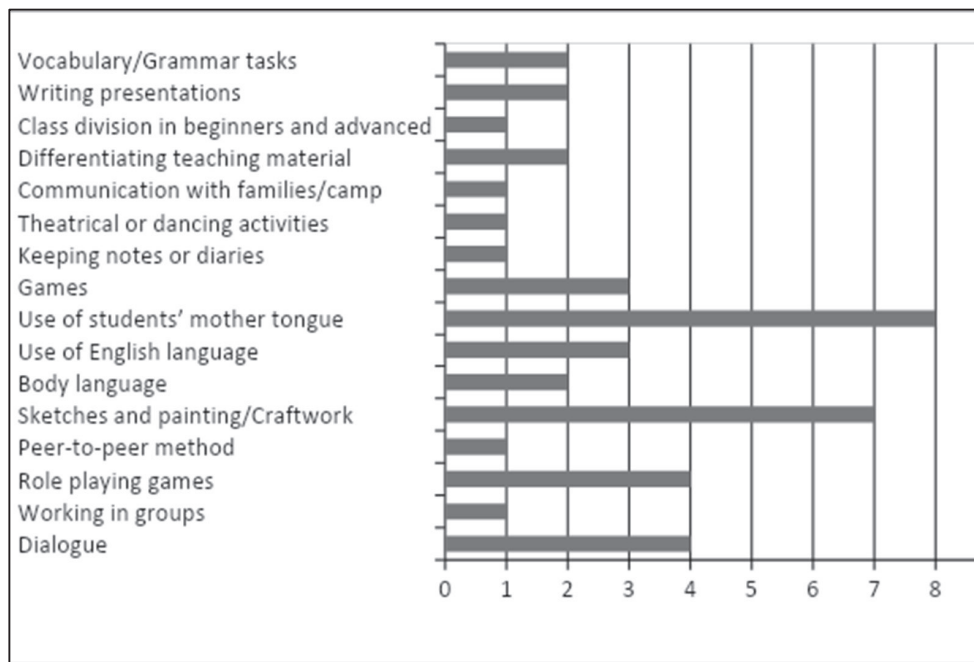
Teaching Practices

In addition to the above, the third part of the interview elicited answers about the practices that teachers had to follow. The third part of the interview is relevant for two reasons: 1) it shows the difficulties that teachers had to face in order to teach refugee children the Greek language, since most of the practices and methods used were not easy to apply as long as they were not part of language teaching in secondary school classes (playing games, doing sketches and paintings, using theatrical or dancing activities etc.) and 2) it highlights the level of competence they had, as we can see how well prepared they were to teach Greek to refugee students and as a consequence how to treat them (some had to use English to teach Greek, while others had to learn a totally new language).

Respondents made it clear that although there was valuable assistance from the ministry, from relevant organizations and from seminars they had attended in the past, the personal work to be done was enormous. They had to produce their own training material and use all the possible means at their disposal to achieve the best possible result, without always having the level of success they were aiming for. More precisely, most of them had to create their own educational material (make working sheets, print documents, bring photos and objects to class etc.) in order to help children learn Greek. Unfortunately, Greek educational material for teaching Greek to refugee children is limited. External sources were necessary to organize their classes (Internet research, discussion with other teachers from other schools or from refugee camps, foreign toolkits and guidebooks). They used multiple approaches, among which are the use of children's mother tongue, sketches and painting, role playing, games and dialogue. More details are given in Figure 2.

Figure 3 shows methods and practices that teachers used in class to teach Greek to refugee students. The horizontal scale once again represents the eight (8) participants. For example, one (1) out of eight teachers divided the class into beginners and advanced

Figure 3
Teaching practices



students, three (3) out of eight played games, eight (8) out of eight, which is all participants, used the mother tongue of their students as a teaching tool.

Regarding the use of children's mother tongue in the classroom, it is worth noting that, although it has been used by all teachers, their views on its helpfulness differ. On the one hand, there were strong supporters of the use of the mother tongue, since it allows creating a more welcoming and warm atmosphere in the classroom and promotes the active participation of children. On the other hand, some argued that its use is difficult for both teachers and children, due to the diversity of languages and dialects spoken by refugee students. The mother tongue of the children was used mainly in the form of words and phrases from everyday life but also in group communication, where the older students taught the younger ones Greek using Arabic, Urdu, Farsi, etc. (peer-to-peer translation). It was also used as a pronunciation facilitator, whereas its written form was used only a little, since many children did not know how to write in their mother tongue.

Apart from the methods and techniques mentioned, teachers used a variety of tools (pictures, images, Google translate, maps, projectors, computers) and training materials from many different sources (audiovisual material, books, online sources, dictionaries, textbooks), in order to help students understand, communicate and feel that learning is not only necessary but also pleasant.

Discussion

Challenges in Teaching Refugee Students

The first and foremost challenge that teachers face is the lack of a common communication code. The refugee children do not speak Greek, rarely speak English and the teachers do not speak the children's mother tongue. Thus, communication becomes difficult and in some cases impossible, as also noted by Batsalia and Sella (Batasalia & Sella, 2016). To compound this difficulty, children's mother tongue may vary, and even children from the same country may speak a different dialect of the same language. This further complicates the communication and consequently the educational process.

In addition to linguistic diversity, there is diversity in cultural, social, political and even religious issues. The teacher must know the manners and habits of his/her students, respect them and promote their respect by all. He/She also needs to manage problems that may arise due to such differences.

A common challenge for teachers is tackling the attitude of indigenous students towards refugee students. Of course, the present research has shown that refugee students are not treated particularly violently by Greek students, especially given what is happening in other countries with a migrant population. For example, Campos-Saborio et al. examine the problems and difficulties faced by Nicaraguan immigrant students in the Costa Rican education system, while contrasting their psychosocial and sociocultural well-being with that of their Costa Rican counterparts (Campos-Saborio et al., 2018). The findings not only reveal differences in educational outcomes between these groups, but also reveal the prevalence of psychosocial risk behaviors related to violence, bullying, suicidal thoughts and self-harm suffered by Nicaraguan students.

The many mental traumas and phobias that children carry, the feeling of anxiety and insecurity, the aggressive or reactionary behaviors are also issues that come to the surface in the classroom. The teacher must identify them, understand the children, advise them and calm their emotional outbursts. As Choleva mentions, it is important for the teacher to suggest creative activities that relieve children of negative emotions and evoke feelings of joy and optimism (Choleva, 2017).

Managing the educational level of students is also a challenge (Denessen et al., 2005; Luciak, 2004). Refugee children have been absent from school for some time, while others have never been to school. They must learn not only to write and read, but also to properly behave in the school environment. It is important that they understand and follow the basic rules of the school.

As far as the organizational part of the training is concerned, it is obvious that there is lack of organized facilities, suitable educational material and sufficient tools (Asimaki et al., 2018; Mogli et al., 2020). That is why it is a challenge for teachers to create an environment as hospitable as possible considering what they are provided with. In Greece, the educational material for refugee students does not cover multicultural content. Even in the core of education we see that multiculturalism is not promoted as it should be. This is reminiscent of educational material from other countries, such as Georgia, where textbooks do not cover

multicultural content (Tabatadze et al., 2020). This research revealed significant weaknesses and highlighted the urgent need to restructure national curricula and textbooks in Georgia.

Similarly, teachers in Greece need to produce educational material tailored to the needs of their students and use a wide variety of methods and approaches. In addition to textbooks, they search for information on the internet, get instruction from seminars, view a wealth of video material, pictures and songs, they draw, sketch, use body movements, and even use their children's mother tongue. Of course, doing all this requires many skills, strong will and a positive attitude towards diversity. This is how we get to the second part of the discussion.

Teachers' Intercultural Competence and Readiness

The results that derive from the specific study are in line with similar results reported in the international literature. Most teachers admit that they are not well prepared for intercultural education. The few informative seminars that they attended or were offered by the school do not make them sufficiently able to teach refugee students. Many times they feel unprepared or even inadequate to take on their duties, so being interculturally competent is truly important. Through intercultural education they develop criticism and empathy for social justice, especially in relation to humanitarian choices and how individuals can neutralize exclusion (Borhaug & Weyringer, 2019). In 2020, Borhaug and Harnes's survey in Norway confirms that intercultural education „prevents stereotypes” and „opens the eyes”, thus the role of the teacher is crucial in relation to the objectives of the intercultural value of education (Borhaug & Harnes, 2020).

Their little to no previous experience with refugee students makes it difficult to manage the multilingual and multicultural classroom. Having only a vague idea of what intercultural education is, they try to create a suitable educational environment for children based on mutual respect and a sense of acceptance and security, but without using intercultural tactics (Angelopoulou & Manesis, 2017). In this endeavor they are confronted with the problem of language and the inability to teach Greek as a foreign language. In this regard, it is worth mentioning the study of KRC Genc (2018) at a state university in Turkey, where teachers of English as a foreign language are expected to raise the level of awareness of students' intercultural communication skills, helping them to relate their own culture to foreign cultures, to understand the perspectives of foreign cultures and to tolerate ambiguities or differences. Proportionally, teachers who deal with Greek in this way will have greater tolerance and empathy when teaching foreign language students.

On the contrary, teachers usually choose a monolingual approach, which is justified by the fact that a large part of the sample has a negative attitude towards the use of the children's mother tongue in the classroom (Gkaintartzi et al., 2014; Haukas, 2016). Simultaneously, Hajisoteriou and Angelides's research in ten schools in Cyprus shows that two ideological positions coexisted in the teachers' discussions: the monocultural approach (perspective of cultural inadequacy) and the multicultural approach (cultural-festive perspective). The ambiguities and contradictions in teachers' ideologies have affected their

teaching and practices. In their daily routines, teachers seemed to adopt a teaching as usual attitude, occasionally engaging in „intercultural moments” that included their rare attempts to diversify or add cultural content to their teaching (Hajisoteriou & Angelides, 2020).

In addition to the hard work, the production of appropriate and sufficient material and the use of multiple methods and tools mentioned above, teachers need to have a range of skills and attitudes. Let us dwell for a moment on the answer of a teacher who mentions the term „mum-teacher”. Teachers play the role of parent, mentor and protector for these children. Not only do they teach the language (oral and written form), but they also teach rules and ways of living and behaving. They support children psychologically, understand their anxieties and fears, solve problems and contribute to the formation of their personality. Dimitrov and Haque group 20 skills that intercultural classroom teachers must possess into three categories: fundamental skills, facilitation skills, and curriculum development skills for intercultural learning (Dimitrov & Haque, 2016).

That is why teachers must be spiritually strong and psychologically stable. In her study, Jokikokko emphasizes that emotions are a vital part of any change and therefore play an important role in the process of teachers’ intercultural learning. That is why he points out that in order to facilitate the changes needed to support greater equality in schools, the role of emotions in teachers’ intercultural learning must be recognized (Jokikokko, 2016).

Teachers should be in a good mood, approach children with compassion and care for them. At the same time, they must be free from prejudice and racist perceptions, respect children and their socio-cultural and linguistic background, accept this background and use it in class in a productive way. And of course, they should be able to directly manage any stimulus that may exist within the intercultural class (European Commission, Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture, 2017).

In general, teachers did their best to transmit feelings of confidence and encouragement, despite their personal difficulties or incomplete and inadequate intercultural competence. We would say that they successfully try to follow the three discourses that, according to Rutter and Pickles, define the good practice literature. First of all, it is the creation of a welcoming environment, free of racism (Rutter & Pickles, 2016). Next, it is the need to meet psychosocial needs, especially in cases of traumatic experiences. Last, it is the linguistic needs of students. All these three discourses are confirmed through the answers to the last question of the present research’s interview. Besides, teacher education in matters of multicultural/intercultural education is a central field in the education of future teachers in Greece (to be inserted after review). Therefore, there is a vital need to better prepare teachers to teach refugee students both on a theoretical and on a practical level, so that teachers feel ready and confident to help refugee students integrate and participate in all kinds of social practices.

Conclusions

As the number of refugee students increases in our country, the need for studies and research on the education of refugee children is great. The present study has a dual purpose. It aims at presenting the various challenges that teachers face in educating refugee

students in secondary education and at exploring the educational competence and readiness of teachers when educating children with a multilingual and multicultural background.

Through the completion of this research, methodological limitations came to the surface. The participants were willing to take part in the interviews, though one refused to have his answers recorded and asked the researcher to take notes of her answers instead. In addition, some educators admitted to the researcher that they tried to present their opinions in a more detached way, in order not to offend the school or the Ministry of Education. Another limitation is the existence of subjective assessments or inaccuracies on the part of the teachers. Relevant to this, there is always the danger of the researcher himself producing a subjective analysis and conclusions, while interpreting the data. Lastly, factors that may limit the breadth and universality of the current study are the place and time the research was carried out. As long as the research took place in a specific region of Greece and at a specific period of time, it is shaped by these two factors. Another factor to be taken into consideration is the small sample of participants in the research.

Despite the above, the eight participants interviewed gave valuable information about both research questions, expressing their views and perspectives. According to them, the challenges teachers face and their relative inadequacy in relation to the education of refugee populations have been confirmed. Unfortunately, the training of teachers in handling refugee students is limited or even nonexistent. They are not confident enough about how to teach refugee students or how to create an environment free of prejudice, because in some cases they even have personal fears or doubts themselves. What is more, they are not provided by national governments with learning materials for newcomers who “do not speak the language, lack identification documents or academic transcripts needed to transfer to a new institution and it is difficult for them to evaluate their educational background” (Karanikola & Palaiologou, 2021, p. 58).

However, all respondents point to their effort to create a welcoming environment based on trust and interest, mutual aid and security. Love, acceptance, and equal opportunities for all students are the main prerequisites. Nevertheless, there is an urgent need for additional training in intercultural education, so that teachers, native students and refugee students can productively interact in and out of the classroom. After all, according to Toyoda’s research in Japan (2016), intercultural education is of high importance, since when a suitable learning environment is provided, components of intercultural competence will be developed.

In conclusion, over time and as refugee education is becoming an integral part of our lives, the present research provides a different perspective on the issue of refugee children’s education. It highlights the challenges faced by teachers who teach refugee students, and provides a useful guide for those involved in the organization and planning of refugee education. More specifically, we are given the opportunity to learn about the challenges and problems of teachers through their own eyes and to be mobilised in order to find the most appropriate and efficient methods of teaching and educating refugee students based on their needs. More books and toolkits could be produced, so that teachers and students can easily perform in class. At the same time, emphasis should be given to the importance of appropriate training in intercultural education. Through it, teachers can improve and

enrich the educational material, as well as strengthen their educational preparation and competence. Teaching educators the mother tongue of their refugee students in advance or providing them seminars, psychological support and training in extra skills (e.g. communication skills, listening skills, time management, empathy) are useful practices that may help the rapid and effective integration of these children into the school environment.

In other words, we raise the awareness of both teachers and students of the principles of interculturalism and cultivate tolerance and respect for students with different cultural values. Besides, both educators and students should be prepared for living in a multicultural model, while they also have to become skillful negotiators in intercultural work situations (Tran, 2017).

In addition, the appropriate training of teachers allows them to meet the requirements of intercultural policy, the smooth integration of different cultural groups in education and later in the social context and finally the correct learning of the Greek language, in order for these students to participate in all kinds of social practices. Gradually, the concept and values of interculturalism go beyond the boundaries of the school space and constitute a mentality for every new student. Therefore, diversity is understood as an element that helps the individual evolve and allows a harmonious coexistence in modern multicultural societies.

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Izazovi nastavnika u radu sa decom migrantima

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Apstrakt

Obrazovanje dece migranata je izazovan proces, budući da nastavnici moraju imati specifična znanja, veštine i stavove. Mnogo napora u Grčkoj je načinjeno da se deca migranti obrazuju, kroz razvoj odeljenja za prijem i integraciju dece izbeglica u školu i kroz angažovanje posebnog privremenog nastavnog osoblja. Međutim, nastavnici se još susreću sa raznim problemima u učenju jezika i u integraciji dece u školsko okruženje. Cilj ovog istraživanja je da se identifikuju izazovi i teškoće sa kojima se nastavnici susreću u radu sa decom migrantima, kao i da se istraže nastavničke interkulturalne kompetencije i njihova spremnost za delovanje. Istraživanje je realizovano kroz osam intervjua. Rezultati istraživanja pokazuju da se nastavnici suočavaju sa nedostatkom materijala, alata i sredstava koji bi predstavljali podršku za učenje. Migrantska kriza utiče na to da u radu sa decom koja su se u njoj našla dolazi do usporavanja u procesu obrazovanja, a dodatno otežavajući faktori su nespremnost nastavnika za rad sa njima i nedovoljni nivo nastavničkog interkulturalnog obrazovanja. Međutim, obrazovanje dece migranata se može unaprediti kroz razvijanje interkulturalnog obrazovanja nastavnika, korišćenjem adekvatnih obrazovnih materijala (udžbenika, priručnika i alata za rad)

Ključne reči: *obrazovanje dece migranata, izazovi u radu, interkulturalno obrazovanje, kompetencije, spremnost za delovanje u nastavi.*

Сложности учителей в работе с детьми-мигрантами

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Резюме Обучение детей-мигрантов представляет собой сложный процесс, так как учителя должны обладать специфическими знаниями, навыками и установками. В Греции было предпринято много усилий для обучения детей-мигрантов путем создания отделений по приему и интеграции детей-беженцев в школы, а также путем найма специального временно-го преподавательского состава. Однако, учителя по-прежнему сталкиваются с различными проблемами в изучении языка и интеграции детей в школьную среду. Цель данного исследования - выявление проблем и трудностей с которыми сталкиваются учителя в работе с детьми-мигрантами, а также изучение межкультурных компетенций учителей и их готовность к действию. Исследование проводилось посредством восьми интервью. Результаты исследования показали, что учителя сталкиваются со сложностями, связанными с отсутствием материалов, инструментов и ресурсов для поддержания обучения. Миграционный кризис сказывается на замедлении образовательного процесса в работе с детьми, оказавшимися в нем, а недостаточная подготовленность педагогов к работе с ними, включая недостаточный уровень педагогического межкультурного образования является дополнительным осложняющим фактором. Однако, образование детей-мигрантов можно улучшить за счет развития межкультурного педагогического образования с использованием соответствующих учебных материалов (учебников, пособий и рабочих инструментов).

Ключевые слова: образование детей-мигрантов, сложности в работе, межкультурное образование, компетенции, готовность действовать в обучении.