



## EFL Teacher Training on Multicultural Classroom Management in Elementary and Junior High School

### Επιμόρφωση Εκπαιδευτικών Αγγλικής Γλώσσας στη Διαχείριση Πολυπολιτισμικών Τάξεων σε Δημοτικό και Γυμνάσιο

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*Migration waves caused by the geopolitical and economic changes in Europe and the Balkan region over the last couple of decades have altered the synthesis of several traditionally monolingual and monocultural European countries, including Greece. Education was inevitably affected, as children of different cultural backgrounds registered in Greek schools, transforming them into multicultural schools. The development of intercultural competence is thus deemed necessary for all teachers to respond effectively to both their native and their immigrant students' needs and offer education of equal opportunities. This article focuses on a survey on English Language Teachers of Greek elementary and junior high schools that aimed to identify immigrant students' difficulties and EFL teacher training needs in intercultural education. Teachers stated that their immigrant students exhibit both behavioural and learning difficulties, with emphasis on the learning ones, that render their work more demanding. However, teachers' knowledge of intercultural education and their related skills proved quite limited, their feelings and attitudes towards their immigrant students often contradicting, and their teaching tools in line with intercultural values but insufficiently utilized. Within this scope, the article sheds light on EFL multicultural class management and makes suggestions for related teacher training.*

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*Τα μεταναστευτικά κύματα που προκλήθηκαν από τις γεωπολιτικές και οικονομικές αλλαγές στην Ευρώπη και την περιοχή των Βαλκανίων κατά τις τελευταίες δεκαετίες έχουν αλλάξει τη σύνθεση αρκετών παραδοσιακά μονογλωσσικών και μονοπολιτισμικών Ευρωπαϊκών χωρών, συμπεριλαμβανομένης και της Ελλάδας. Η εκπαίδευση επηρεάστηκε αναπόφευκτα καθώς παιδιά διαφορετικών εθνικοτήτων εγγράφηκαν στα σχολεία της χώρας, μετατρέποντας τα σε πολυπολιτισμικά. Η ανάπτυξη της διαπολιτισμικής ικανότητας όλων των εκπαιδευτικών κρίνεται επομένως αναγκαία προκειμένου να μπορούν να ανταποκριθούν αποτελεσματικά στις ανάγκες τόσο των γηγενών όσο και των μεταναστών*

μαθητών τους και να προσφέρουν εκπαίδευση ίσων ευκαιριών. Η έρευνα που παρουσιάζεται στο άρθρο εστιάζεται σε εκπαιδευτικούς Αγγλικής Γλώσσας Ελληνικών Δημοτικών Σχολείων και Γυμνασίων με στόχο να εντοπίσει τις δυσκολίες των μεταναστών μαθητών και να διαγνώσει τις επιμορφωτικές ανάγκες των εκπαιδευτικών στη διαπολιτισμική εκπαίδευση. Οι εκπαιδευτικοί δήλωσαν ότι οι μαθητές τους παρουσιάζουν προβλήματα συμπεριφοράς και μαθησιακές δυσκολίες, με έμφαση στις μαθησιακές, οι οποίες καθιστούν το έργο τους πιο απαιτητικό. Ωστόσο, οι γνώσεις των εκπαιδευτικών στη διαπολιτισμική εκπαίδευση και οι ικανότητές τους στο τομέα αυτό παρουσιάζονται ιδιαίτερα περιορισμένες, τα συναισθήματα και η στάση τους προς τους μετανάστες μαθητές συχνά αντιφατικά και τα εκπαιδευτικά εργαλεία διαποτισμένα με διαπολιτισμικές αξίες, ανεπαρκώς όμως αξιοποιημένα από τους ίδιους. Υπό το πρίσμα αυτό, το άρθρο αναδεικνύει διάφορες πτυχές διαχείρισης διαπολιτισμικών τάξεων Αγγλικής Γλώσσας και σχετικές προτάσεις επιμόρφωσης εκπαιδευτικών.

**Key words:** behavioural and learning difficulties, immigrant students, intercultural education, language-friendly school, linguistic and cultural diversity, multicultural classroom management, European and National education policies

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## Introduction

Language learning is vital for immigrant students' integration. However, host and foreign language learning can often be discouraging as immigrant students have to acquire several languages at the same time at school, the host language (Greek in our case) that is necessary for their survival and progress in Greece and the foreign languages (English & French/German) that would open-up their prospects in Europe, with the exclusion of their mother tongue. To facilitate this language learning, foreign language teachers could act as cultural mediators to interconnect diverse cultural and language elements and render their lessons relevant to all students.

In an effort to identify immigrant students' problems and teacher training needs in multicultural class management, a survey with elementary and junior high school EFL teachers was carried out. In particular, its objectives were a) to examine immigrant students' behavioural and/or learning difficulties in the EFL classes and their causes, b) to reveal EFL teachers' awareness of the European and National education policies on migration, linguistic & cultural diversity, c) to investigate their attitudes towards their immigrant students, d) to examine their skills in intercultural education and the adequacy of their teaching tools, and e) to detect their previous related training and training preferences. The results led to a training proposal for effective EFL multicultural classroom management.

To elaborate on the above issues, we will review literature on immigrant students' school integration difficulties, European and National education policies on migration as well as guidelines on multilingualism for the promotion of linguistic and cultural diversity, with emphasis on English Language Learning. Next, follows the research methodology and the teacher data analysis. The article ends with a brief reference to the training proposal and suggestions for further research.

## **Immigrant students' integration difficulties into the schools of their host country**

Immigrant students face psychosocial and learning difficulties at their host schools that impede their academic progress and social integration, and pose multicultural class management problems to teachers of all subjects.

The psychosocial difficulties initially spring from immigrants' resettlement that results in a "culture shock" involving feelings of curiosity, adventure and optimism for a new start on the one hand, and feelings of sadness for the loss of culture, family and social ties, on the other (Coehlo, 1998). This traumatic conflict is more intense for immigrant children that have no option but to conform to their parents' decisions. They feel anxiety and stress when they realize that their native language and socio-cultural values that once made them acceptable in their country of origin, turn into inhibiting factors marginalizing them into "immigrant minorities" in the host country (Nikolaou, 2000). Furthermore, these cultural values are often in conflict with those of school and society and immigrant students remain confused in their attempt to reconcile both (Coehlo, 1998).

Immigrants' resettlement also results in the fragmentation of their children's education and their placement usually into lower than their age and level classes due to their poor knowledge of Greek. This partial recognition of their educational capital causes immigrant students to doubt their self-worth and abilities and the age differences hinder friendships (Skourtou et al, 2004). In this process, children adapt easier than adolescents as their cognitive and social skills are more salient than their personality traits, rendering them more flexible and open to new situations. On the contrary, adolescents exert more cognitive effort to perceive concepts in a foreign culture and language, and as they formulate their personal identities, they are more vulnerable to offensive behaviour against their background (Nikolaou, 2000). This emotional load is increased with insecurity about the uncertain economic and mobility prospects of their parents that immediately affect their stay in the host country.

Upon their adjustment, immigrant students and their families become recipients of covert and overt xenophobic and racist behaviour by Greek parents, students and even teachers themselves. This behaviour is generally fostered by criminality incidents and illegal activities initiated by groups of immigrants in Greek society. It could also be caused by an inherent fear of otherness people tend to have against any perceived threat to their cultural identity (Fennes & Hapgood, 1997). As a result, the school community fails to approach immigrant students who in turn become introvert or socialize only with peers of their own ethnic group (Nikolaou, 2000), while in class there could be classroom tension and aggression on both sides.

Turning to school performance, according to European surveys (Commission of the European Communities, 2008), immigrant students tend to have lower achievement levels than their native peers in basic skills (i.e. literacy and maths) that inevitably restrain the overall class progress rate and the educational potential of all students. The survey examines if this is also the case for English language learning.

The affective factors mentioned above influence the cognitive domain but they are not the only ones. At the heart of the problem lies the issue of language. Immigrant students exhibit different levels of proficiency in the language of instruction that fall far behind those of their

native classmates and obstruct their understanding of the subject matter content. These students are loaded with the dual task of acquiring a second language while being taught through it, which becomes even more strenuous when the host language is not supported at home (Commission of the European Communities, 2008). Thus, there are often language shifts depending on the domain and the participants, with the first language being used at home and with members of the same ethnic group, and the second, at school and in the wider social environment with Greek natives (Georgogiannis, 1997).

The smooth development of this bilingualism relies on the interdependence of languages as the acquisition level in the first language determines the proficiency level in the second or foreign language (Cummins, 1984). In Greece, mother tongue tuition for immigrant students has barely been activated and the acquisition process of the first language is disrupted before being adequately developed. Bilinguals carry a metalinguistic awareness (Cummins, 1984) manifested in instances of interference, positive when there is contingency between the two languages and negative when there is transfer of structures from the native language in the second /foreign language. This mechanism however, is not apparent to the monolingual Greek teachers who misinterpret it as a source of errors (Georgogiannis, 1997).

Family also plays a decisive role. The poor socio-economic conditions force parents to work hard and do not allow them to afford for private tuition or frontistiria (Foreign language tuition centres) provided by Greek parents. They rather retain low expectations, as they are interested in engaging their offspring in the low skill sectors to soon lift part of the family's financial burdens (Nikolaou, 2000). Their linguistic and cultural differences also lead to their disconnection from school (Council of the European Union, 2009). Finally, parents' beliefs on the value of each language are passed on their children. Priority is usually given to the second language, as a means to establish their position in the host country and next to the first language as the family communication code and the carrier of cultural heritage. Last, come the foreign languages as obligatory school subjects, since parents view no vital domain of immediate use (Georgogiannis, 1997).

The educational system has not yet created the conditions to improve the situation despite the dramatic changes in the composition of Greek classroom in the last ten years. Though the principles of intercultural education have been diffused in the curricula, there is still lack of appropriate teaching materials and teacher training. Moreover, the competitive climate in the class renders students individualistic and intensifies the low and high achievers gap (Coehlo, 1994). Teachers' low expectations could also lead to low academic performance (Carrasquillo & Rodriguez, 1996), while their often more lenient attitude could cover immigrant students' true achievement levels. Lastly, immigrant students' concentration in schools of areas with high immigrant population turns natives away and could lead to segregation (Commission of European Communities, 2008).

## **European and National education policies on migration**

Immigration is a stable structural feature, not only of Greece, but of most European countries and the successful integration of immigrant children becomes a pre-condition for the future "economic development, social cohesion and stabilization of democratic citizenship across Europe" (Heckmann, 2008). Within this framework, the European Union (E.U.) currently embraces the intercultural model of education that implies by its term a dialectic relation and a dynamic interaction amongst diverse cultures that could uplift them

to equal levels governed by the principles of *empathy, solidarity, respect and elimination of stereotypes and prejudice* (Essinger as cited in Georgogiannis, 1997).

Member States follow this model and integrate the intercultural component into their curricula, not as a separate subject, but either across the entire curriculum in the general aims, skills and values stated therein or in the content of specific school subjects that are liable to encompass intercultural values, such as history, geography and foreign languages, or combine both approaches (Eurydice, 2004). Each Member State, however, exhibits a different realization of the model while it often instils in it features from other previously applied ones, i.e. assimilation, integration, multicultural, antiracist models (Tzortzopoulou & Kotzamani, 2008).

In Greece, it was not until 2003 that the National educational policy linked the European policy with intercultural education in the New Cross-Thematic Curriculum (DP) that applies to all primary and secondary schools of the country. Some of its intercultural principles are “providing equal opportunities for learning for all pupils”, “reinforcing the pupils’ cultural and linguistic identity within the framework of a multicultural society” and “sensitising pupils to issues of human rights and world peace and preserving human dignity” (Pedagogical Institute, 2003). These principles penetrate the Individual Subject Curricula, as the DP is the basic frame of reference for their development.

The E.U., along with the intercultural model, has also devised a series of supporting guidelines. To start with, the acquisition of the host language is considered to be the key to immigrant students’ educational success as it is the prime, if not the sole, medium of school instruction. Reception classes could thus be organised for the recently arrived students to overcome initial language problems as well as intensive instruction for immigrant students who may not be newcomers, but whose low performance in the host language seriously impedes their progress (Heckmann, 2008). Early assessment of host language proficiency is suggested for students’ placement in the appropriate language levels and preschool language tuition for the prevention of language problems in compulsory education (Commission of the European Communities, 2008). The whole endeavour should ideally be supported by teacher training in the teaching of the host language as a second language (Heckmann, 2008).

Besides host language instruction, there are also provisions for heritage language tuition. Such a practice implies the recognition and acceptance of immigrants’ culture and increases their self-esteem and confidence (Eurydice, 2009). It could also enhance immigrant students’ progress, as second language acquisition is facilitated by and dependent on sufficient knowledge of the first language according to Cummins’ hypothesis (1984) for the interdependence of languages. Additional educational support in school subjects other than languages could be provided, usually after the regular school hours, in the form of extra tutorial classes or mentoring to diminish the low and high achiever gap (Council of the European Union, 2009).

School and family communication is also a priority. Incentives to mobilize immigrant parents include the publication of information on the school system in the immigrants’ native language, school activities for their active participation, interpreters and mediators to facilitate communication (Eurydice, 2009).

Education for teachers of all subjects that includes initial training, induction and continuing professional development is essential for the development of intercultural competence. Teacher education curricula should address cultural diversity, especially in its European dimension, and include activities that combine theory, practice and reflection based on interaction with students, colleagues, teacher trainers and education specialists.

Teachers should also be offered a teaching practicum abroad, especially foreign language teachers to refresh their language skills, as well as the access to web networks for the easy flow of practices and information (European Commission, 2007). The utilization of teachers from migrant backgrounds as classroom assistants is also encouraged, and could, to a limited extent, reflect the student population diversity (Heckmann, 2008).

Educational institutions specialized in intercultural education could offer useful guidance to all the parties interested. Additional financial support is also recommended for schools with high immigrant concentration. To avoid such high concentration, schools could be networked to achieve a balanced spread of native and immigrant students, while some countries have tried out the "magnet schools" that is, schools in areas with increased migrant population that have enriched their curricula to attract more native students (Commission of European Communities, 2008).

Greece has implemented some of the key European guidelines while it still falls behind others. The most widely applied ones, are the reception and support classes established in 1980's<sup>1</sup>, systematically organised in 1990's<sup>2</sup> and revived nowadays<sup>3</sup> for both primary and secondary education. However, though there are also provisions for immigrants' heritage language tuition, these have not been actually activated.

Another important regulation is the establishment of Intercultural Schools in primary and secondary education<sup>4</sup>. In particular, there are twenty-six (26) Intercultural Schools that aim at the education of pupils with special educational, social and cultural particularities and, for this purpose, apply the curriculum of their counterpart state schools adapted to their students' specific needs. Intercultural schools focus on Greek language learning and integration activities, on heritage language and culture activities and parent involving school events. However, their small number cannot cater for the needs of all the immigrant students that are dispersed in the mainstream classes across Greece.

Related to the above is the Institute for the Education of Co-Ethnic Returnees and Intercultural Education (IPODE)<sup>5</sup>. Its main objective is to conduct research and studies for Greek education abroad, organise teacher training, development of educational materials for Intercultural Schools etc.

Lastly, nowadays, two also large scales programmes are implemented within the National Strategic Reference Framework, one by the Implementation Authority of Educational Acts (EYE) under the Ministry of Education & Lifelong Learning and the other by Aristotle University of Thessaloniki<sup>6</sup>. These programmes include interventions on reception & tutorial classes, intercultural projects amongst Greek schools and schools of the immigrant students' country of origin, family & school connection activities, school networking, psychological support, teacher training etc.

### **European & National education policies on linguistic and cultural diversity**

The European guidelines on migration are embedded within the wider policy of promoting linguistic and cultural diversity in Europe as the Union itself “is built out of many diverse nations, communities, cultures and language groups ... and founded upon the mutual acceptance of peoples with different histories but a common future” (European Commission, 2003, p.3). To safeguard this diversity but also promote cross-cultural understanding, the E.U. has established multilingualism with the focus on language learning (European Commission, 2005).

Within this policy, it is a priority for the Member States that mother tongue plus two other languages are taught from an early age as it is “at the early age that key attitudes towards languages and cultures are formed and the foundations for later language learning are established” (European Commission, 2003, p.7). Language learning is also promoted through Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) that is the teaching of a school subject through the medium of a foreign language. Language skills are exercised in daily school life and students develop confidence both in the vehicular language and the subject being taught (European Commission, 2003).

The continuing enlargement of the European Union further dictates the teaching of the widest possible range of languages in all grades of education. Foreign language options should include both large and small European languages as well as regional, minority and migrant languages (European Commission, 2008). This broadening of the foreign language spectrum is related to the creation of a language friendly school in which language teaching is facilitated with the establishment of appropriate connections amongst the existing languages in a society. These languages are *the mother tongue, the foreign languages, the language of instruction and the languages of migrant communities* (European Commission, 2003). This teaching enables learners to identify language differences and similarities. Language teaching materials with intercultural values and diverse cultural elements could also motivate all students to relate and participate.

Lastly, the E.U. through its funding enables Member States to implement joint projects that promote mobility, dissemination of practice, e-twinning initiatives, networking, etc. and regularly organises awareness-raising events on multilingualism. Our National strategy has responded to the European policy on multilingualism. “Mother tongue plus two other languages from an early age” is realized in primary and secondary education. In 1993, the English language was introduced as an obligatory subject at a lower age, the third grade of elementary school instead of the fourth and, nowadays, it is further implemented in the first and second grades of elementary schools.

In addition to English, from the school year 2005-2006 onwards up to our days, a second foreign language (French or German) is taught in the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grades of elementary school. The same language range is provided in secondary education, where students continue their study for the mastery of two foreign languages, English as a first foreign language and French or German as a second, depending on the students’ choice and previous attendance in primary school. Moreover, a few pilot programmes have been applied to a restricted number of high schools for the teaching of less widely spoken foreign languages such as Italian, Spanish, etc. (European Commission, 2006).

Foreign languages as school subjects are the most liable to intercultural values. Thus, the Cross-Thematic Curriculum for Modern Foreign Languages explicitly sets as the main aim of teaching “to facilitate the development of language skills that will enable pupils to communicate effectively in different linguistic and cultural contexts” (Pedagogical Institute, 2003). Accordingly, *foreign language literacy, multilingualism and multiculturalism* are its content guiding principles, each of which analyzed into general goals, in terms of skills, knowledge, attitudes and values, and run through cross-thematic concepts such as communication, culture, similarity-difference, equality, immigration and others. Cross-thematic projects could be viewed as a variation of CLIL since they engage students in language activities with content from separate school subjects. All these principles are further elaborated in the Programme of Study of each foreign language for primary and secondary education.

Foreign language classes are mixed-ability classes and their division into two levels, beginners and advanced, in English in junior high school, enables all students to follow. Currently, unified school textbooks are provided by the Ministry for the 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grades of elementary school, and the 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> of junior high school, retaining the language level division. A review of the teacher guides<sup>7</sup> reveals that these textbooks are based on the Common European Framework of Reference and the Cross-Curricular Unified Framework, with a consideration of the students’ needs, interests and abilities at different ages and grades. These books further incorporate cross-cultural and cross-curricular notions and projects for co-operative learning. However, the adequacy of these textbooks to promote intercultural dialogue remains to be decided by the English Language teachers in practice.

## Research Methodology

The review of the above literature informed the content of the survey questionnaire which was designed to investigate immigrant students’ difficulties in the EFL classes and EFL teacher training needs in intercultural education. The questionnaire had been selected as a convenient, inexpensive and timesaving survey tool to collect massive data more amenable to quantification than interviews, journals, etc. (Nunan, 1992) and anonymous as well, so that respondents felt secure to provide feedback on sensitive issues, such as that of “immigration – multicultural classrooms”.

The questionnaire was common for EFL teachers of both elementary and junior high school. It was distributed hand in hand, by e-mail and fax, both to urban and regional areas to produce reliable and representative results, following the snowball sampling technique (Dörnyei, 2003) in which acquaintances who met the survey criteria recommended others who also fitted the study. The aim was to collect the same number of questionnaires from primary and secondary education to enable data comparison.

The questionnaire was mainly built on closed-ended questions of different types (list, category, table-like etc) occasionally including the option “Other” for the respondents to add their own points. This type of question is easier to standardize, analyze and interpret than open-ended ones that require more time to be recorded and clustered, while there is always the risk of misinterpretation. However, there were also a few open-ended ones for more individual points of view.



The questionnaire consisted of five (5) parts with forty-four (44) questions in total. In Part 1, there were nine (9) questions on teachers' general profile that concerned gender, age, nationality, studies, foreign languages, teaching experience and professional status, level of teaching and school region. The question on the educational level of teaching was the reference criterion for the grouping of teachers into primary or secondary education in the data analysis.

Part 2 included eleven (11) questions that examined immigrant students' difficulties in the EFL classes and their causes. In particular, there were questions on the presence and size of immigrant students in the respondents' classrooms, on the students' behavioral problems, their nature and causes, and questions on students' performance level compared to that of their Greek peers, their learning difficulties and their causes. There were also questions on the way immigrant students' problems affect teachers' work and which of the problems teachers identify as the most prominent. The causes of the problems listed in the options were by no means exhaustive and could be enriched by the participants' responses.

In Part 3, there were four (4) questions on EFL teachers' familiarity with the European and National education policies on migration, linguistic & cultural diversity. There was a list of the related European policies afore cited in a table for the respondents to indicate the ones they knew. This list indicatively included mother tongue tuition, reception & extra tutorial classes, CLIL programmes, appointment of classroom assistants and teachers from migrant backgrounds, use of interpreters, mediators, resource persons, foreign language teaching inclusive of migrant languages etc. Subsequently, the respondents were asked to indicate which of these policies were currently applied in Greece according to their experience. In this way, we examined teachers' awareness and experience of these measures both in their European and National context. The last two questions left space for extra guidelines and policies to be added by the respondents.

Part 4 consisted of twelve (12) questions that concerned teacher attitudes, materials and practices in multicultural classrooms. These questions investigated teacher feelings towards the presence of immigrant students in Greek schools, towards their teaching in highly multicultural contexts and on the positive aspects of multicultural classes. They also elicited teachers' expectations and tolerance towards their immigrant students. Questions on their skills examined teachers' utilization of the immigrant students' cultural elements in their lessons and their familiarity with their immigrant students' background. Lastly, there were questions on teachers' knowledge and application of the principles of Multilingualism and Multiculturalism and on their evaluation of the coursebooks in these aspects.

In Part 5, there were eight (8) questions that sought to determine teachers' previous training in multicultural issues and to collect information about the organization of a teacher-training proposal. In this respect, we asked teachers for previous attendance at multicultural class management courses, the effectiveness of these courses and teachers' participation in related European or National programmes. Next, four thematic units were proposed for the training, *Immigrant students psychosocial and learning difficulties*, *European Policies on Immigrant Student Integration*, *Linguistic and Cultural Diversity in Education*, *National Policies on Immigrant Student Integration*, *Linguistic and Cultural Diversity in Education and Subject-Specific Guidelines on Multilingualism & Multiculturalism (DEPPS and Coursebooks)*, for our participants to prioritize them accordingly and enrich them with their own suggestions. The last questions examined preferences on the content, process and delivery time of the course.

## **Research Results**

The research data analysis showed that EFL teachers of elementary and junior high school yielded more or less the same results probably due to their similar training and work conditions in Greek education. Thus, a summary of the main findings for both groups of EFL teachers as a whole follows, in line with the five parts of our questionnaire, while the full set of results is provided in my dissertation.

### **a. Teachers' educational and professional profile**

In total, 54 EFL teachers participated with an equal number of respondents from primary and secondary education, being in their vast majority female indicating that EFL teaching in Greece is dominated by women. All of them were Greek in nationality, forming a monocultural teaching context as opposed to the multicultural classroom. The sample was drawn from most of the Greek prefectures, with the majority coming from Attica and Central Macedonia that exhibit the highest percentages of immigrant student population, and thus, enables us to generalize about EFL teacher training needs in intercultural issues. The respondents were mostly permanent teachers, bachelor holders, over thirty, with more than a decade of teaching experience, speaking more than one foreign language but none of the migrant ones.

### **b. Immigrant students' difficulties in the EFL classes**

All respondents had immigrant students typically amounting to about 1/5 of their classes that is probably the most common for a mainstream classroom, if one considers that immigrant student population amounts to about 11% of the overall student population in elementary education and to about 9.7% in junior high school according to data from the National Statistical Service of Greece<sup>8</sup>. Most of them (63%) stated that these students face behavioural problems with aggressiveness being first, followed by low self-esteem and insecurity. These problems were attributed to a series of factors whose degree of effect was determined by teachers' personal observations in their specific school contexts. The factors with the greatest effect on the students' psychology were a) students' adjustment to the foreign culture and language of the host country, b) their family's poor economic conditions, and c) their placement into lower than their age and level classes due their poor knowledge of Greek. The factors with a more limited effect in descending order were a) the conflict between the culture of the country of origin and that of the host country, b) the xenophobic/racist attitude by Greek students, c) the insecurity for a new future resettlement, d) the xenophobic/racist attitude by Greek parents, e) the loss of culture of origin and f) the separation from the family members and friends in the country of origin. Lastly, the factor with the minimum effect was the xenophobic attitude by school administration and teachers.

As to the immigrant students' performance, half of the teachers stated that they are more or less at the same level with their Greek peers, while the majority (69%) acknowledged that they face learning difficulties in the EFL lessons. Once again these difficulties were attributed to a series of factors prioritized in terms of effect by our respondents' feedback. The ones with the greatest effect were a) the load of languages to be learnt at the same time, b) the family disconnection from school, and c) the disruption of school instruction due to the immigrant students' resettlement to the host country. The factors with a more limited effect in descending percentages were a) the competitive school climate, b) the teachers' more

tolerant attitude towards their immigrant students' performance, c) the immigrant students' psychological difficulties, d) the teachers' ineffective teaching, due to their lack of training on multicultural class management issues, e) the insufficiency of current coursebooks to cater for the needs of multicultural classrooms – the inadequate development of immigrant students' mother tongue - the family low expectations of their children's progress, all at the same position, f) the immigrant students' indifference to the subject of English language and g) the family's low opinion of foreign language learning.

Half of the teachers (50%) answered that their immigrant students face both behavioural and learning difficulties, while most seemed more concerned with the learning ones, as 28% on top of the respondents stated that their students face only learning difficulties. The majority of teachers (85%) agreed that both behavioural and learning problems complicate their work.

#### c. Teachers' knowledge of European & National guidelines

Only a limited number of EFL teachers displayed knowledge of the European guidelines on immigrant student integration, linguistic and cultural diversity. The most widely known guidelines to almost half the respondents were the reception classes (50%) and the extra tutorial classes (44%) that have operated in Greek schools, the coursebook adaptation/development (46%) which is quite recent with the distribution of the newly issued English coursebooks in primary and secondary Greek education, the European Programmes and Actions implemented from time to time (44%), and the resource persons in reception classes (33%). All the other guidelines were only known to a restricted number of teachers (below 33%).

As to their application in Greece, teachers answered positively for few of the aforementioned guidelines they were most familiar with (reception classes 51%, tutorial classes 50%, coursebook adaptation 51%, resource persons 51%), being uncertain for most of the others. That result was quite expected since if the respondents do not know the underlying philosophy and content of the European guidelines, they cannot always identify their application in the Greek context. Most teachers, agreed that the guidelines not applied in Greece are a) the use of interpreters or mediators (61%), b) the publication of written info on the school system in the native language of the immigrant families (57%), c) the appointment of resource persons (51%), d) foreign language teaching inclusive of minority languages (51%), e) the appointment of classroom assistants (50%) and f) the temporary appointment of teachers from migrant backgrounds (48%), which is true for mainstream classrooms.

Teachers did not know whether the 9 in a total of 17 guidelines were applied or not, when some of these were directly connected with their teaching subject. For example, the tuition of the students' mother tongue plus two foreign languages is the basis for the teaching of English and French/German in Greek schools, and Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) is a widespread method for foreign language teaching. Teachers might have implemented some of these guidelines but not recognize them in the specific phraseology/terminology.

d. Teachers' intercultural skills, attitude & practice in multicultural classrooms

With respect to their attitude, teachers retain a neutral stance (62%) to the presence of immigrant students in Greek schools only at a superficial level since most of them (54%) would not teach in a multicultural school if they could, especially the junior high school EFL teachers, mainly deterred by the immigrant students' behavioural and learning problems. In theory, however, the vast majority (81%) acknowledges the advantages of multicultural classrooms (81%) – tolerance, respect, familiarity with other cultures -, yet only a few (13%) referred to its essence, that is intercultural interaction to negotiate meanings on equal terms and reach mutual understanding.

Teachers keep modest expectations (67%) as to their immigrant students' progress. However, teachers seem unaware of their attitudes' impact as in the question on the negative factors on students' performance; half of the teachers who answered stated that teachers' low expectations do not exert negative influence. Moreover, teachers admit being more tolerant with their immigrant students' performance (57%) which clouds the validity of the results that showed immigrant students' performance more or less at the same level with their Greek peers. Nonetheless, in this case, most teachers acknowledged that their tolerant attitude negatively affects to some extent their students' performance.

Though most teachers (70%) stated that they utilize their immigrant students' cultural and language elements in their lessons, they admitted that they knew little about their background (57%). Teachers also had limited knowledge of Multilingualism and Multiculturalism in the New Cross-Thematic Curriculum, and thus, declared limited extent of application. With respect to the teaching tools, coursebooks seem to sufficiently promote the principles of Multilingualism and Multiculturalism and include adequate information about different cultures and languages. Teachers, however, were divided between the ones who base their entire lessons on the textbooks and the other half who improvise.

e. Teachers' previous training & training preferences in intercultural education

On the whole, EFL teachers have undergone no training in intercultural issues and identify this as a cause of ineffective teaching and also a reason for avoiding multicultural classes. Moreover, they have neither participated in any related European or National Programmes. They show interest for all four proposed units of training and put more emphasis on the thematic units that refer to the immigrant students' difficulties (40%) and to subject-specific guidelines on Multilingualism and Multiculturalism (30%) that could ease their work, and less on the National policies (16%) and European guidelines (14%) that constitute the overall framework from which measures are derived.

More than half of them opt for balance of theory and practice while 43% of them were only interested in practice that reveals their need for immediate support rather than for theoretical lectures disconnected from the class. As to the modes of work, workshops were mostly preferred that contain the element of task-based work in which all members contribute something to its completion, and then group work that is more general and once again entails co-operation. They showed poor interest for computer technology and prefer training first within school hours. Teachers also prefer training within the school hours (44%), which is to be avoided since students miss classes and next after school-hours (26%).

## Implementation – Conclusion

The survey findings revealed EFL teacher-training needs in intercultural education. EFL teachers, forming a mono-cultural group, with barely any related training often have difficulty in effectively dealing with mainstream multicultural classrooms. Their immigrant students exhibit behavioral and learning problems caused by several factors attributed to culture, family, education system, teachers etc that teachers need to understand and resolve to improve their lessons. To that purpose, they should become aware of the existing European and National framework that has developed to respond to the immigrant students' needs and employ its principles into their practice. In this perspective, the survey findings gave rise to an in-service training proposal to develop EFL teachers' intercultural competence in terms of knowledge, skills, attitude and awareness in all these respects.

The main points of the training proposal, which is described in detail in my dissertation, are the following:

- The proposal was unified for EFL teachers of both elementary and secondary education and diversified only in matters of their own education level.
- It included 20 training hours on the four thematic units, *Immigrant students psychosocial and learning difficulties*, *European Policies on Immigrant Student Integration*, *Linguistic and Cultural Diversity in Education*, *National Policies on Immigrant Student Integration*, *Linguistic and Cultural Diversity in Education* and *Subject-Specific Guidelines on Multilingualism & Multiculturalism (DEPPS and Coursebooks)*, each taking up a number of hours proportionally determined by the degree of EFL teachers' interest.
- There was linkage and cross-referencing amongst the thematic units and often content overlapping as all of them approached immigrant students' problems from different perspectives.
- The proposal was based on the Reflective Model of Teacher Education (Wallace, 1991) in which teachers utilize both their own experience of *being taught*, *observing teaching and teaching* and the course input they receive from members of their profession.
- It followed the Art/Craft conception of teaching (Freeman & Richards, 1993) with the teachers being involved in observation, description, analysis and classification processes to develop the most suitable methods for their own teaching context.
- There was a balance of theory and practice with theory consisting of guidelines and suggestions for testing and modification to be accepted or rejected by the trainees and practice of experiential and awareness raising activities for trainees to construct their own theory.

The syllabus and the activities for each thematic unit can be traced in the dissertation and could be utilized by teacher training institutions and school advisors modified to fit their training contexts. The entire article could offer useful insights to EFL teachers about their work in multicultural classrooms and could also be used as reference for further investigation of the issue to other European countries or by teachers of other faculties for their teaching subjects. It could also generate teachers for inter-disciplinary co-operation for the implementation of multicultural projects within the school curriculum.

## Notes

1. Law 1404/1983.
2. Law 1894/1990 & Ministerial Act Φ10/20/Γ1/708/07-09-1999. (Government Gazette Issue: 1789/B/1999)
3. Ministerial Acts ΑΦ.821/3412P/157476/Ζ1/13-12-2010 (Government Gazette Issue: 2142/B/2010) & Α.Φ.1ΤΥ/809/101455/Γ1/07-09-2011 (Government Gazette Issue: 2197/B/2011)..
4. Law 2413/1996.
5. Law 2413/1996.
6. Related info is found at [http://www.edulll.gr/?page\\_id=11](http://www.edulll.gr/?page_id=11) along with other programmes on intercultural education.
7. The review concerns the teacher guides of the school textbooks of the newly-issued textbooks.
8. Related info was drawn from the site <http://www.statistics.gr> (data tables that concern native and immigrant school population for the school years 2007-2008).

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