

Chapter 3

Differentiated Teaching Practices of Physics in Inclusion Classes for Students With Learning Disabilities

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ABSTRACT

In this chapter the authors present the educational framework that they believe the lower secondary school teacher of an inclusion class in Greece should know in order to help his/her students integrate into the physics class. This chapter will describe the legislative framework concerning the operation of the inclusion classes, the principles of differentiated pedagogy that can be exploited when teaching students with learning difficulties, the current and pilot physics curriculum, and present differentiated teaching practices in physics.

FUNCTIONING FRAMEWORK OF THE INCLUSION CLASSES

The World Congress on Special Education held in Salamanca, Spain (UNESCO 1994) gave a major international impetus to inclusive education and set the goal for schools in the future to be able to serve

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all children, especially those with special educational needs. In Dakar, at the World Education Forum (UNESCO 1994), it was declared that ‘Education for All’ should take into account the diversity and different needs of people with disabilities and special educational needs, poor children and children and those in disadvantaged situations, including children of ethnic and linguistic minorities. Following the international agenda for inclusion, in Greece, students with mild educational needs, emotional disabilities and behavioral problems are allowed to participate in Inclusion Classes that operate within general schools.

According to the Greek Law 3699/2008, students with disabilities and students with special educational needs can attend Inclusion Classes, which have specialized teachers and special structures operating within general schools and vocational schools. Two types of curricula may be implemented in these cases: a) common and special programs for students with less severe special educational needs, b) special group or Individualized Education Program (IEP) of extended hours for students with more severe special educational needs, as defined by the Centres for Screening, Diagnosis and Support for Special Educational Needs [Kentra Diaforodiagnosis, Diagnosis kai Ypostirixis Eidikon Ekpaideytikon Anagkon (KEDDY)].

After the implementation of Law 3699 according to Law 4368/2016, Inclusion Classes’ aim is the full integration of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities into the school environment through targeted educational interventions. Teachers in the Inclusion Classes (Ministerial Decision 27922/C6, 2007) collaborate with general classroom teachers to support students in the classroom environment, differentiate activities and teaching practices and adapt the teaching materials and the educational environment appropriately. When required, support is also provided in a face-to-face environment.

The Special Education teacher who teaches Physics in the Inclusion Class of Lower Secondary School should study the individual files of the students, should parents approve the attendance of their child in the Inclusion Class, and implement the IEP. The individual files of the students should contain the opinions-reports of the agencies competent for the diagnosis of the students’ special needs, initially operating from 2008 and evolving later on. The relevant legislative framework for the operation of the Inclusion Classes and the agencies that published the reports is outlined in Ministerial Decision 27922/C6 (2007) and after a series of amendments up to the current Law 4823/2021.

Opinions-Reports for Students’ Disabilities and IEP Design

Issued by KEDDY

According to Law 3699/2008, the special educational needs of students with disabilities and special educational needs were investigated and identified by the KEDDY, the Special Diagnostic Assessment Committee and last by pedagogical centers of other ministries authorized by the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs (YPEPTH).

KEDDY had the mandate to cooperate with other health services to identify the educational needs of students with visual and/or hearing disability, chronic diseases and mental disorders, autism spectrum disorders and those on medication that may affect their ability to learn, and to design the IEPs. The assessment of students with disabilities and special educational needs in KEDDY was carried out by a scientific team of five experts: special education and training teachers (pre-school, primary and secondary), a paediatric psychiatrist or paediatric neurologist specialized in paediatric neurology, or a paediatric neurologist specialized in neurology, a social worker, a psychologist, and a speech therapist. Parents of students with disabilities and special educational needs could also be involved in the formulation of IEP,

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