



HELLENIC REPUBLIC
**National and Kapodistrian
University of Athens**
School of Education
Department of Early Childhood Education

MA Program “Special Education”

Name: Dimitrios Pantazopoulos

Supervisor: Vasilios Tsafos

Title of dissertation: Differentiated approach to educational practice in inclusive early childhood education: an investigation of the views of undergraduate students and graduate educators of a Department of Early Childhood Education regarding differentiated approaches and their implementation in the educational process

Abstract

The present research study aims to investigate the significance of differentiated instruction and its implementation within the context of the Greek educational reality. The researcher seeks to explore this contemporary pedagogical approach by focusing on the undeniable heterogeneity of the student population and the essential prerequisite of respecting the diverse needs, interests, learning backgrounds, and learning paces of each educational setting. The selection of five (5) pre-service teachers and five (5) in-service educators from the same Department of Early Childhood Education was considered by the researcher to be a suitable sample for gathering a range of perspectives—whether similar or differing—regarding the preferred interpretations of differentiated instruction, depending on each group's roles and responsibilities.

Grounded in the principles of inclusive education that advocate for equal and equitable access to learning for all students without exception, this study analyzes both the theoretical and practical dimensions of differentiated instruction. Special emphasis is placed on the supportive and limiting role of educational policy, particularly with regard to teacher training, school infrastructure, and curriculum design. The deeply personal views of the participants bring to the forefront the

challenges that educators believe they face within today's educational context, while also offering proposals for improving pedagogical practice and educational policy. These insights, perceptions, and experiences were captured through the researcher's use of a qualitative methodology, chosen to explore the multiple subjective meanings attributed to the social phenomenon under investigation. In a Greek society where the need for equality and justice is deemed non-negotiable and expected, this study sheds light on the notion of differentiation, the need for careful and multidimensional planning that embraces student diversity, and a range of reflections concerning its practical implementation within Greek educational settings.

Keywords: Differentiated instruction, Greek educational reality, pedagogical approach, heterogeneity of the student population, inclusive education, educational policy