

Proceedings  
of the International  
Conference  
on Education,  
Reflection  
and Development



# Proceedings of the International Conference on Education, Reflection and Development

Edited by

Vasile Chis and Ion Albulescu

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Reflection and Development

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# CONTENTS

## **Part 1: Theoretical and Conceptual Reconsiderations in Educational Sciences: Focus on Contemporary Research**

|   |    |
|---|----|
| Chapter One.....  | 2  |
| Debates on the Educational Ideal in Contemporary Pedagogy<br>Vasile Chis, Olga Chis and Musata Bocos  |    |
| Chapter Two.....  | 7  |
| A Study on the Effects of Private Education: Institutes of Science<br>Education in Turkey<br>Omer Cakiroglu   |    |
| Chapter Three.....  | 16 |
| Investigating Human Rights in Contemporary Greek Language<br>Textbooks in Primary Education<br>Ioannis Fykaris, Eleni Pramantioti and Lito-Vera Fouki |    |
| Chapter Four.....   | 24 |
| Preparatory Classes in the Romanian Educational System:<br>Challenges and Syncopes<br>Ion Albulescu and Mirela Albulescu                              |    |
| Chapter Five.....   | 39 |
| The New Image and Presence of the Child in Contemporary Educational<br>Approaches (From Early Childhood throughout the School)<br>Sorin Tigareanu     |    |
| Chapter Six.....  | 50 |
| Excessive Tolerance, Verbal Violence and Lies: Or the Beginning<br>of Lack of Communication in the Teaching Act<br>Ramona Radut-Taciu                 |    |
| Chapter Seven.....  | 59 |
| Psychopedagogical Guidelines for Gender Education<br>Cornelia Stan  |    |

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| Chapter Eight.....  | 69  |
| “Courage to change”: Educational Reform as an Opportunity<br>and Leverage for Professional Development<br>Taub Ronit and Vasile Chis                                  |     |
| Chapter Nine.....   | 79  |
| Variations in Undergraduate Students’ Motivation: Mastery<br>and Performance Motivation and their Associated Emotional Costs<br>Catalin Glava and Ionut-Dorin Stanciu |     |
| Chapter Ten .....   | 88  |
| The Socio-Political Context and its Influences on Romanian Culture<br>in the Reign of Charles II<br>Niculae Cristea   |     |
| Chapter Eleven .....  | 94  |
| Early Communication Skills Assessment of Israeli Ethiopian Toddlers:<br>A Preliminary Stage of Implementing a Culture Sensitive Intervention<br>Noa Gouri Guberman    |     |
| Chapter Twelve .....  | 103 |
| Self-Efficacy and Well-Being Increase with Israeli Single Mothers<br>through Systems Coaching (SC)<br>Sunny Gordon Bar  |     |
| Chapter Thirteen.....   | 117 |
| Combating Violence in Schools: A Way to Improve the Quality<br>of the Educational Climate<br>Cristian Stan and Ioana Elena Beldean-Galea                              |     |
| Chapter Fourteen .....  | 126 |
| Mathematics: Processes – Results – Applications<br>Teodor Dumitru Valcan  |     |
| Chapter Fifteen.....  | 136 |
| School and Professional Orientation Factors during Adolescence<br>Maria Claudia Cuc and Simona Macarie  |     |
| Chapter Sixteen .....   | 148 |
| “Open Studio Model”: Process of Artist’s Creation for Developing<br>Learning Abilities in Primary School Children<br>Anat Heller                                      |     |

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| Chapter Seventeen.....  | 156 |
| The Influence of a Teacher Training Program on the Classroom Climate  |     |
| Ramona Iulia Herman   |     |
| Chapter Eighteen.....   | 168 |
| The Development of Role Perception in the Framework of an Aerobic Dance and Body Program                              |     |
| Michal Zaltsman   |     |
| Chapter Nineteen.....   | 178 |
| The Inclusive School: The School of the Third Millennium  |     |
| Adriana Denisa Manea and Cristian Stan  |     |
| Chapter Twenty.....   | 185 |
| How Flowers Drink Water: An Introduction to Scientific Inquiry in Early Childhood Classrooms                          |     |
| Diana Anghel  |     |
| Chapter Twenty One.....   | 195 |
| The Impact of the Programme “The Voice of the Other”  |     |
| Zahava Barkani and Musata Bocos   |     |
| Chapter Twenty Two.....   | 203 |
| Aspects Related to the Implementation of Sustainable Development Issues in Romanian Pre-primary and Primary Education |     |
| Gabriel Gorghiu, Ana-Maria Suduc and Mihai Bizoi  |     |
| Chapter Twenty Three.....   | 211 |
| Contextual Factors of Learning: The Influence of Music in Primary School Students’ Learning Process                   |     |
| Ionut-Dorin Stanciu and Anca-Georgiana Simion   |     |
| Chapter Twenty Four.....  | 221 |
| The Phenomenon of Migration: Social-Educational and Religious Dimensions  |     |
| Ramona Radut-Taciu and Ilie Radut-Taciu   |     |
| Chapter Twenty Five.....  | 227 |
| Internet Use: A Challenge for Education   |     |
| Ciprian Baciu and Cristina Baciu  |     |

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| Chapter Twenty Six.....  | 232 |
| Factors Influencing Teachers’ Attitudes regarding the Inclusion<br>of Children with Mild and Moderate Disabilities<br>Ana-Maria Baiescu                                |     |
| Chapter Twenty Seven.....  | 240 |
| Paradigms of Contemporary Education: Guidelines and Trends<br>Ioana-Aurelia Axentii and Victor Axentii   |     |
| Chapter Twenty Eight.....  | 248 |
| Inclusive Problems and Prospects in Education in the Republic<br>of Moldova<br>Maria Barbă   |     |
| <b>Part 2: Theoretical and Practical Developments in the School<br/>Curriculum</b>   |     |
| Chapter Twenty Nine .....  | 258 |
| Through the Path of Value “A Key to the Heart” and “Heart to Heart”:<br>Innovative Programmes in the Social-Value-Related Curriculum in Israel<br>Hinanit Loyfer Peled |     |
| Chapter Thirty .....   | 270 |
| Blogging: From a Personal Experience to a Space of Collaborative<br>Learning<br>Constantina Catalano   |     |
| Chapter Thirty One.....  | 277 |
| Curriculum in Greek Primary Schools: Ideological and Didactic<br>Dimensions<br>Ioannis Fykaris and Vassileios Zagkotas   |     |
| Chapter Thirty Two .....   | 284 |
| Contemporary Approaches to Competence-based Curriculum Design<br>Daniel Andronache   |     |
| Chapter Thirty Three .....   | 297 |
| Classroom Management Competences Based Programme<br>Alina Boja   |     |

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| Chapter Thirty Four .....   | 306 |
| Adapting the Educational Process to the Level of Public/Mainstream School Integration of the Children with Special Educational Needs (SEN)<br>Anca-Maria Mărginean          |     |
| Chapter Thirty Five .....   | 313 |
| Introducing a New Method of Developing Functional Communication in Children with Autism: Language and Communication Stimulation Method in Autism (LCSMA)<br>Claudia Crisan  |     |
| Chapter Thirty Six .....  | 323 |
| Curriculum Development in Preschool Education: A Comparative Perspective – Germany and Romania<br>Alexandra Bolboaca  |     |
| Chapter Thirty Seven.....   | 331 |
| Developing Literacy Skills in Kindergartens by Using Computer Programmes<br>Warda Sada Gerges   |     |
| Chapter Thirty Eight.....   | 343 |
| The Role of Mediation in Developing Students’ Motivation for Learning: Training Programs for Teachers<br>Delia Muste  |     |
| Chapter Thirty Nine.....  | 357 |
| How Can We Improve Body Posture and Quality of Life?<br>Iris Gil and Musata Bocos   |     |
| Chapter Forty.....  | 367 |
| The “Winning Couple” Program for Young Children in Israel: Body–Mind Coping Skills for Stress Reduction and Enhancing Resilience<br>Meirav Tal-Margalit and Judith Spanglet |     |
| Chapter Forty One.....  | 381 |
| Teaching Sex Education to Girls in Arab Society in Eastern Jerusalem<br>Rula Kurd Badarneh  |     |

### **Part 3: Contemporary Trends in Didactic Methodology**

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| Chapter Forty Two .....  | 394 |
| The Dynamic of Differentiated Teaching as a Contemporary Instructive Prospect  |     |
| Ioannis Fykaris and Polyxeni Mitsi   |     |
| Chapter Forty Three .....  | 401 |
| Approaching Differentiated Instruction via Alternative Teaching Applications through Fairytale and Information Communication Technology in Primary Education |     |
| Ioannis Fykaris, Ioanna Giannakou, Konstantina Kitsiou, Aikaterini Mitraki and Ioanna Paraskeva  |     |
| Chapter Forty Four .....   | 410 |
| Integrated Didactic Activities Design: An Operational Model  |     |
| Vasile Chis, Olga Chis and Musata Bocos  |     |
| Chapter Forty Five.....  | 427 |
| The Classroom Used as a Stage: Teaching Spanish Grammar through Drama Activities   |     |
| Alin Titi Calin  |     |
| Chapter Forty Six .....  | 434 |
| The Complementary Methodological Relation between Moral and Aesthetic Education  |     |
| Cristian Stan  |     |
| Chapter Forty Seven.....   | 443 |
| Investigation of Several Dimensions in Teaching and Learning: IWB  |     |
| Omer Cakiroglu   |     |
| Chapter Forty Eight .....  | 453 |
| Strategies for the Development of Mathematical Abilities (Conceptual Understanding, Procedural Knowledge and Solving Problems)                               |     |
| Maria-Cristina Truta   |     |
| Chapter Forty Nine.....  | 462 |
| Contribution of an Informational Platform to Optimizing of Teaching and Learning of Sciences   |     |
| Viorel Dragos  |     |

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| Chapter Fifty.....  | 471 |
| Methods and Techniques Used in the Activity of Forming<br>the Mathematical Representations at Preschool Age<br>Emilia Circeie                 |     |
| Chapter Fifty One.....  | 484 |
| Art Education as a Strategy for Developing Cognitive Abilities<br>in Young Children<br>Miki Kuffler Yair                                      |     |
| Chapter Fifty Two.....  | 491 |
| Individual Studying among High School Students: A Diagnostic Study<br>Dana Jucan  |     |
| Chapter Fifty Three.....  | 499 |
| Multiple Intervention as a Strategy for Promoting Preschool Children<br>Development<br>Yeshayahu Bick   |     |
| Chapter Fifty Four.....   | 508 |
| Memories Do Not Freeze: Autobiography Program – A Personal Journey<br>Empowering Arab Female Students<br>Dorit Dror Hadar                     |     |
| <b>Part 4: Systems, Projects and Practical Approaches to Didactic<br/>Evaluation</b>  |     |
| Chapter Fifty Five.....   | 516 |
| Integration of Dynamic Assessment Procedures in First Grade English<br>Elementary Classroom: An Action Research Case Study<br>Diana Cojocnean |     |
| Chapter Fifty Six.....  | 534 |
| Methods of Evaluation in Project-Based Learning<br>Adina Glava  |     |



**PART 1:**

**THEORETICAL AND CONCEPTUAL  
RECONSIDERATIONS IN EDUCATIONAL  
SCIENCES:  
FOCUS ON CONTEMPORARY RESEARCH**

# CHAPTER ONE

## DEBATES ON THE EDUCATIONAL IDEAL IN CONTEMPORARY PEDAGOGY

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**Abstract:** The educational ideal, the finality of the utmost generality and synthesis of the whole educational system in Romania, has been defined in the National Education law, in the following terms:

*“the educational ideal of the Romanian school consists of the development and formation of free, full and harmonious human individuality and personality in a system of values, that are necessary for the fulfilment and personal development, entrepreneurship development, for active citizenship, participation in society, social inclusion and employability on the labour market”* (National Education Law No. 1/2011 article 2.3).

**Keywords:** educational ideal, education system in Romania, principles governing the education system, lifelong learning

According to the text quoted above, the educational ideal can be synthesized by designing a desirable personality portrait of the contemporary Romanian citizen, namely:

- free, full and harmonious personality;
- autonomous personality, driven by a system of values, such as personal, civic, social and professional values.

Thus, the educational ideal defined by the National Education Law expects the future adult to be completely trained, to be prepared for a full psychosocial adaptation and social insertion. The educational ideal of the

Romanian school system does not only refer to the inner perfection of personality. It also takes into account ensuring the vocational educational process.

The National Education Law stipulates that it is the responsibility of society to provide the framework for the development of human personality, because individuals should be trained to engage in a creative manner in social development and to contribute actively to ensuring progress in the cultural, economic, scientific and technical fields.

The question that arises here is whether the content and the recently defined meanings of the educational ideal can provide guidance for access to education for disadvantaged groups and whether it proposes flexible structures of education and training, learning experiences adapted to the diversity of needs and educational opportunities.

In our opinion, the way the educational ideal is defined fails to overcome fully the spirit of maintaining traditional phrases (for example, full and harmonious personality). We believe that the educational ideal does not imply flexible approaches in the educational system or in contemporary pedagogy. Any list of traits attached to a *desirable personality* drives by default (but also explicitly) the trend of homogenization of educational society members and of the educational practices of exclusion and discrimination.

Recent works (such as Siegel, 1997) reconsider the concept of *an educational ideal*. Siegel switches to broader categories of educational philosophy: rationality, critical thinking and multiculturalism. The same perspective is met in the approaches of university pedagogy. For example, at the Danube Rectors' Conference, organized in Novi Sad, Heinrich Kern pointed out that the Humboldtian educational ideal is that universities should be "neutral", free from any ideological influences or private interests (<http://www.drc-danube.org/>).

Wijnad Mijnhardt (2010) explains that the Dutch society considers that the educational ideal is represented by the "new citizen". This ideal was founded by the US Declaration of Independence in 1776 ("the preservation of life, liberty and happiness of every citizen"). Soon, the newly defined ideal was propagated in all francophone cultures as well as in Britain and the USA.

The question addressed to the educational ideal analysts is: Were all citizens equal and able to ensure personal happiness? Or, in other words, who was included as a citizen and who was excluded? De Jong and Braster (in Waldorf and Pickering, 1998) noted that, until late in the eighteenth century, Dutch society made a distinction between *populus*,

meaning a privileged, important person, and *multitudo*, meaning an uncontrollable mass of people that had nothing to lose.

The decline of the Dutch Republic in the 1970s led to the conclusion that development of the country was possible, only if there was a certain level of intellectual and moral training provided for everyone. Thus, the population defined before as *multitude* should become an important category in society.

The concepts of *citizen* and *citizenship* had, for Dutch society and for other European communities of the eighteenth century, a strong inclusive meaning. Even if once they were considered unworthy of notice, individuals began to be educated; following objectives of the educational system which are still current:

- Every member of society is a human being and a citizen. The first important thing to know is the national language of the country.
- Everyone needs to know how to communicate his thoughts in writing.
- All citizens must be sufficiently prepared in arithmetic calculation, to manage their own affairs.
- Each person must be aware of their obligations towards the deity.
- Each person must be prepared regarding the laws governing society and act as a good citizen.

The document mentioned above reveals an inclusive educational concept for a very advanced world of the eighteenth century: it is the will of the people that Dutch education, in its civic, moral, scientific, artistic and various practical skills, is accessible to all.

Recent studies note that the focus on the educational ideal includes the heritage of the ancient world, then the influence of classic humanism. In modern society it seems impossible to apply the dynamics and diversity of modalities and values to the education levels and features of contemporary schools. On the basis of comparisons between educational systems, we believe that the educational ideal is a concept with limited applicability. For example, alternative education, inclusive or special structures all promote non-traditional educational methods, emphasizing a different educational ideal.

We find that the educational ideal is no longer part of the foreground in education. In Australia, the United States, England etc. the place of the ideal goals of education is taken by specific groups. For example, education in England is facing consolidation of values, meaning important values for optimal development of society and of the school. There are four groups of values that inspire the school curriculum and learning

experiences: *the self, the other, interpersonal relations, society and the environment* (National Curriculum, 2004).

These proposed values enrich the diversity of young generations, provide choices and respond to the needs and educational opportunities for all students. In our opinion, these values structure the background, which ensure opportunities for social inclusion and implementation of professional development, necessary for the rewording of the educational ideal.

This framework is complemented by the inclusion in the same document, under the set of principles governing the education system and of lifelong learning, of the following non-discriminative principles that facilitate school inclusion:

- the equity principle – under which access to learning is achieved without discrimination;
- the principle of guaranteeing all citizens' cultural identity and intercultural dialogue;
- the principle of recognition of the rights of persons belonging to national minorities, their right to preserve, develop and express their ethnic, cultural, linguistic and religious identity;
- the principle of ensuring equality of opportunity;
- the principle of school and social inclusion.

Principles and value commitments at the national level have been largely adopted through legislative documents and have been applied in educational establishments through programmes conducted to serve disadvantaged communities.

The reflections mentioned above suggest that the Romanian education system needs to be reconsidered by providing specific values that foster educational inclusion.

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# CHAPTER TWO

## A STUDY ON THE EFFECTS OF PRIVATE EDUCATION: INSTITUTES OF SCIENCE EDUCATION IN TURKEY

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**Abstract:** The present study is conducted at 2 primary public schools and 4 Private Education Institutes (PEI) in Istanbul, Turkey. The participants in this study were 300 students attending 8th grade. Students' attitudes are investigated during the science education classes held in the public schools and PEIs. The questionnaire administered to participants had 33 questions about overall assessment for the force topic in the science lesson. Qualitative data were also collected. The results are evaluated quantitatively using SPSS. Results indicated a Cronbach's Alpha coefficient ranging from 0.713 to 0.821. Contributions of the PIE in elementary science are examined.

**Keywords:** Private Education Institutes, qualitative, science education

### Introduction

Originally Private Education began as a tutoring activity (*Private Schooling*; Carpenter & Kafer, 2012). This system has gradually evolved into the concept of a special classroom (Kennedy, 2011). The system has evolved in time and formed the Private Education Institution (PEI) (Buyukbas, 1997). Turkey places great emphasis on the idea that education may improve peoples' lives. The current context (the examination system, the rapid population growth, the unemployment rate) sustains this approach. Because high schools and universities started to

accept students through a central examination system, these contributed to PEI's rapid growth (Tansel & Bircan 2005; meb.gov, 2012). In Turkey, PEIs function as an additional component of schools. PEIs are official institutions. However, they are not authorized to offer diplomas. They are very common in the Far East, as in Japan, Taiwan and South Korea. PEI has different names in different countries. The most widely known are “yobiko” in Japan (Tsukada, 1988), “cram school” in Taiwan and South Korea (Yang, 2012; Basturk & Dogan, 2011), “shadow school” in the USA (Ozoglu, 2011). The goals of these schools are to help students to pass high school or university examinations. The common feature of all PEIs is that they rank students better. Turkey is one of the countries that needs PEIs (Gok, 2006; Ozoglu, 2011). The numbers of students and PEIs have increased gradually in the last years (see Figs 2-1 and 2-2). The PEIs prepare students for high school and university entrance exams and provide support for common lessons and vocational courses.

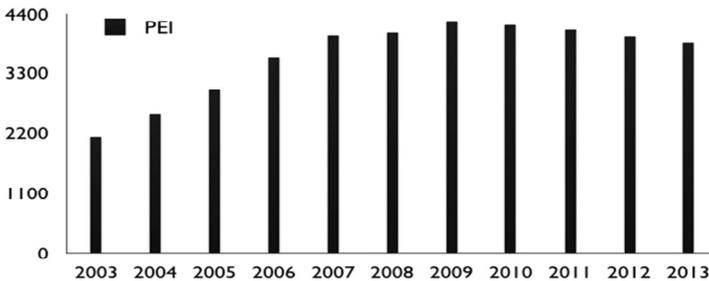


Fig. 2-1. Number of PEIs in Turkey (egitimekrani.com).

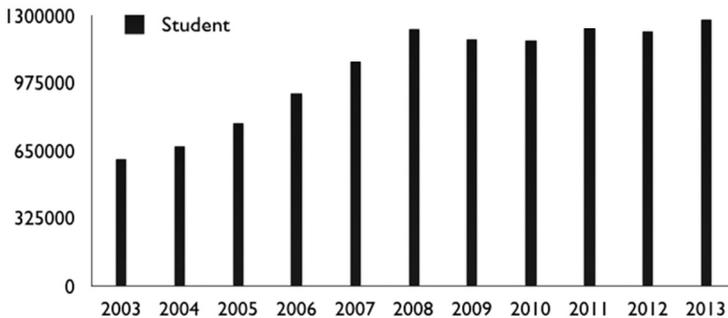


Fig. 2-2. The number of students in PEIs (egitimekrani.com).

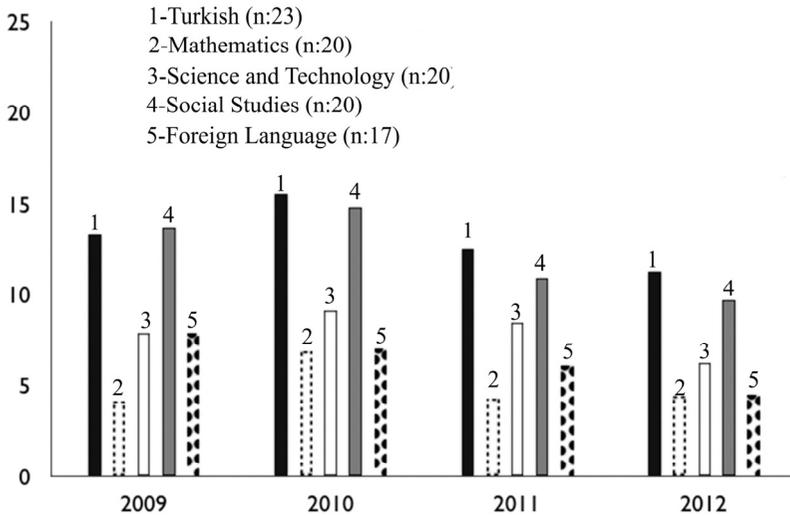


Fig. 2-3. Disciplines in the SBS exams in Turkey (meb, 2012).

Among them, the most prominent ones are university and high school entrance preparation courses (Basturk & Dogan, 2010, Figs 1 & 2). The common feature of these two examinations is that they contain multiple-choice tests. Since the curriculum and the education system are not conducive to learning, PEIs compensate for the lack of preparation for the examination process. PEIs are also available in other countries with nearly similar characteristics (Ozoglu, 2011; Turkay, 2013). In the last four years, according to the results of the SBS exam, Mathematics and Science scores have been inadequate in Turkey (see Fig. 2-3). Students' attitude towards science education can be found in the available literature on the comparison of science education in schools and PEIs (Chin & Brown, 2000; Tsai & Kuo, 2008).

This study investigated eighth grade students' attitudes towards science education in public schools and PEIs in Istanbul Province, Turkey.

### Purpose of the study

Different studies about PEIs are available in the literature (Bray, 2010; Basturk & Dogan, 2010; Claudia, Condon, & Roscigno, 2010; Yang, 2012; Turkay, 2013). Research on Science education and contributions in the PEIs could not be found. This study has targeted a) the function and

purpose of PEIs, b) the attitude of the participants towards formal school teaching and PEIs, c) the perception of the participants concerning formal science education in schools and PEIs, d) the attitude of students towards science education in the formal secondary schools as opposed to PEIs.

## **Methodology**

The qualitative study was based on a survey. The study targeted different stages: the development of an attitude scale, data collection and data analysis.

## **Participants**

The questionnaires were administered to 150 eighth grade students from three state schools and to 150 students from four PEIs. Schools and PEIs were randomly selected. The number of male and female participants is almost the same.

## **Data Collection**

The participants answered several questions: five questions targeted the students' reasons for attending PEIs, eleven questions targeted the catalytic effects in science education as opposed to PEIs, ten questions reflected on the students' social and personal development within PEIs, and seven questions targeted the general science education in PEIs. The used language was Turkish.

## **Instrument Development**

Initially, the survey questions aimed to investigate the students' attitudes on science education in schools and PEIs. The questionnaires were applied after getting an expert opinion. The questions were applied to participants from schools in the same conditions and at the same time intervals. At PEI the questions were applied after explaining the subjects for 12 hours. After the data were collected, the results were converted to five level Likert scales and grouped as: Strongly Disagree + Disagree=DA, Agree+ Strongly Agree=A.

## Data Analysis

SPSS 16 was used for analysing the data. Standard deviation, frequency, arithmetic mean and percentages were calculated for each question.

## Results

Students had to answer 33 questions that are indicated in Table 2-1 below. These questions targeted 1) the students' reasons for attending PEIs, 2) the contribution of science education to students attending PEIs, 3) the contribution of schools to the personal development of the students, and 4) the comparison of science education delivered in schools as opposed to PEIs. Students reported that it is a tradition to go to PEIs in order to obtain higher scores at the central test exams. PEIs improve students' personal and social skills. Participants responded that science education in PEIs is perceived better than in formal schools (Ministry of Education, 2006; Tansel & Bircan, 2008; Tsai, & Kuo, 2008).

**Table 2-1. Students' attitudes about PEIs**

| $\alpha=.821$ N=300 % of students Agreeing/Disagreeing with each statement |   |      |     |      |      |
|--|---|------|-----|------|------|
| Q  | Statements  | M    | SD  | A    | DA   |
|  | <b>Students' reasons for going to PEIs</b>  |      |     |      |      |
| 1  | It is a tradition to go to PEI in Turkey  | 1.37 | .48 | 63.0 | 36.9 |
| 2  | I started with my parents' force to PEI   | 1.40 | .49 | 60.3 | 39.7 |
| 3  | Since my school is inadequate for preparing the test exam, so I attend to PEI                                   | 1.11 | .31 | 89.1 | 10.8 |
| 4  | If a student does not attend to PEI, it is very difficult to be successful in test exams in the existing system | 1.26 | .43 | 74.3 | 25.6 |
| 5  | As long as the current education system exists in Turkey, PEI will maintain the importance.                     | 1.18 | .38 | 82.3 | 17.7 |
|  | <b><math>\alpha=.71</math> PEI ..... in science courses</b>   |      |     |      |      |
| 6  | increases my motivation, and willing  | 1.10 | .39 | 89.7 | 10.2 |
| 7  | makes lesson more interesting   | 1.19 | .39 | 80.7 | 19.2 |
| 8  | helps me grasp concepts of topics   | 1.42 | .47 | 58.3 | 41.6 |
| 9  | makes me more contribute, competitor, argumentative and participant   | 1.34 | .47 | 66.3 | 33.6 |
| 10   | makes me creative and generate  | 1.38 | .48 | 62.3 | 37.6 |
| 11   | makes me more concentrate on lesson   | 1.21 | .40 | 79.0 | 20.9 |
| 12   | makes teacher and student more interactive  | 1.10 | .39 | 86.3 | 13.6 |
| 13   | makes lesson more enjoyable, fun and game-like  | 1.19 | .39 | 90.7 | 09.2 |
| 14   | makes instant feedback between student and teacher  | 1.19 | .39 | 88.3 | 11.6 |
| 15   | makes learning easier and without stress  | 1.20 | .40 | 80.0 | 19.9 |
| 16   | makes reviewing the past subjects   | 1.19 | .39 | 80.7 | 19.2 |

| <b><math>\alpha=.801</math>; PEI improves my.....better than school</b>  |  |      |     |      |      |
|--|--|------|-----|------|------|
| 17   | personal skills  | 1.24 | .43 | 75.7 | 24.3 |
| 18   | critical skills  | 1.21 | .40 | 79.3 | 20.7 |
| 19   | social skills  | 1.32 | .47 | 68.3 | 31.7 |
| 20   | presentation skills  | 1.29 | .45 | 70.7 | 29.3 |
| 21   | practical thinking   | 1.35 | .47 | 64.7 | 35.3 |
| 22   | different teaching/learning styles   | 1.26 | .43 | 74.0 | 26.0 |
| 23   | test experiences   | 1.14 | .35 | 88.3 | 11.6 |
| 24   | test technique   | 1.19 | 3.7 | 86.7 | 13.2 |
| 25   | accelerates my learning  | 1.23 | .42 | 76.7 | 23.2 |
| 26   | increase my exam scores  | 1.23 | .42 | 77.8 | 22.1 |
| <b><math>\alpha=.79</math>; General overview of education in the PEI</b> |  |      |     |      |      |
| 27   | Science teaching in PEI is more qualified than school  | 1.29 | .45 | 74.3 | 25.6 |
| 28   | Science teachers in PEI are more experienced than schools  | 1.22 | .41 | 77.8 | 22.1 |
| 29   | Test documents in PEI are more various and useful than in school   | 1.33 | .47 | 67.1 | 32.8 |
| 30   | The topics in the curriculum are explained in more details at PEI than schools.                          | 1.71 | .45 | 70.6 | 29.3 |
| 31   | Science teaching in school based on memorizations, whereas in PEI, it is based on the concepts and logic | 1.39 | .48 | 61.1 | 38.8 |
| 32   | Since freedom of speech is much better in private course school, I have better chance to express myself. | 1.34 | .47 | 69.3 | 30.6 |
| 33   | There is no difference in the education between schools and PEI  | 1.21 | .40 | 78.8 | 21.1 |

## Findings and discussions

PEIs are an alternative solution for reinforcing and preparing students for exams in order to improve their success. The perceptions of students about PEIs were investigated according to several aspects. The first area of interest targets the students' general attitudes towards PEIs (questions 1 to 5 ( $\alpha=0.821$ )). These attitudes are strongly positive as seen in Table 2-1 (especially Q3, which has the highest average (A: 89.1%)). According to the responses provided by the participants, PEIs have various positive effects on the education of students. In Mathematics and Science participants provided the lowest number of correct answers as compared to other main core disciplines such as Turkish and Social Studies. PEIs play an important role in increasing knowledge about Science. In the second area of interest, the positive scores were very high, especially for Q13 (90.7%) that had the highest value. The findings are presented in Table 2-1. PEIs had positive roles in improving the students' personality and their social development. According to participants' responses, the highest score is obtained for Q23 (88.3%). According to the findings, we acknowledge that the most important goal of PEIs is to prepare students

for test examinations such as high school entrance exams. Therefore, the teacher's role in education has been proven to be extremely important.

In our opinion, the establishment of PEIs represents an evidence of the poor quality of education in formal schools. Several factor can accounted for this influence: intensive curriculums, examination systems, fear of the future. Likewise, PEIs are complementary to formal schools.

## Conclusion

The purpose of this study resided in investigating education and science education in schools and in PEIs. The survey questions intended to examine the PEI contribution to science education, while analysing the pool data. The findings demonstrate that PEIs have contributed significantly to improving education and Science courses, and high school entrance exams rates. According to participants, education and Science courses in schools are inadequate for high school entrance exams. It has become a necessity to attend PEIs if students intend to be familiarized with different testing techniques and to improve their chances for entrance exams. According to the participants, PEIs positively affects students' social and personal development skills. Participants claim that teachers are more experienced in PEIs as opposed to formal schools. PEIs are complementary to formal schools in Turkey.

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## CHAPTER THREE

# INVESTIGATING HUMAN RIGHTS IN CONTEMPORARY GREEK LANGUAGE TEXTBOOKS IN PRIMARY EDUCATION

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**Abstract:** The European Parliament, the European Council and the European Commission solemnly proclaimed the “Charter of fundamental rights” of the European Union. These rights were made for every living human in the European Union to follow and obey. The textbooks for Contemporary Greek Language embody this set of values and attempt indirectly to promote them. The main purpose of this research is to investigate the textbooks used to teach Contemporary Greek Language in Elementary School in order to assess their contribution to the education and promotion of human rights.

**Keywords:** human rights, Greek language textbooks, primary school

### 1. Human Rights Education in Primary Schools

It is a historical fact that consistent denial of human rights<sup>1</sup> leads to socio-political conflicts that damage relationships between members of the same society and of the wider community (United Nations, 1980). The same consequences can be seen in educational practice. It is evident that teaching Human Rights (HR) can be the benchmark of education. We believe that adults will be able to understand HR only if children develop HR awareness of each individual’s rights. Human Rights Education<sup>2</sup> should be part of the school’s culture and curriculum. EHR can constitute

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<sup>1</sup> From now on, human rights will be referred to as HR.

<sup>2</sup> From now on, Human Rights Education will be referred to as EHR.

a fundamental core which will create a conscious society, as its principles are based on dignity, tolerance and peace (Flowers, 2004).

Its goal is “*to develop understanding of mutual responsibility in making HR a reality in every community at large. It contributes to long-term prevention of HR violations, promotion of equality and sustainable development and to increase participation in processes of making decisions in a democratic system*” (United Nations, 2005).

The new social reality raises major theoretical shifts and leads to changes within the educational systems, which can be described as follows: **I.** School’s functional relationship within the community in the way “*people can stand towards life*”. **II.** Formation and cultivation of national identity via an ethnocentric perspective. However, education is called to fulfil a diametrically opposite goal: to reduce, if not to eliminate nationalism and ethnocentrism and promote respect for difference.

Owing to the fact that circumstances are different in each country and region, teachers have used many different tactics to integrate HR into their curriculum. The formation and implementation of educational programs as well as continuous development represent basic criteria of EHR.

An educational programme needs to target the following objectives: **I.** HR knowledge, based on information and understanding of HR categories, international legal texts, democratic function and the role of the citizen. Students do not learn concepts out of context and their knowledge is associated with their life experiences. In other words, the school enables the transmission of knowledge through HR. **II.** Skills for action development in order to protect and promote HR, such as expression, resistance to peer and group pressure, refusing guilty of silence and eventually a “*culture of silence*” (Mayo, 2008). **III.** Building HR culture that reflects the values in teaching and learning methods, in teachers’ and students’ relationships.

To achieve Teaching Human Rights<sup>3</sup> in primary education the following methods can be used. The most appropriate teaching method involves the use of debate, acting, singing, dance, writing and talking and generally whatever helps individuals to develop. Another method is the project, in which students have the opportunity to take the initiative and develop freedom of action, cultivate critical ability, develop an independent personality and the ability to intervene efficiently. An alternative method is role play, in which students can either take on roles or operate in simulated environments in order to “develop and practice their ability of action and decision-making in situations which are

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<sup>3</sup>From now on Teaching Human Rights will be referred to as THR.

discharged of tension despite being similar to those in real life” (Flechsig, 1996, pp. 200–212). Finally, the method of the argument can be applied to school learning processes. This method refers to the classic academic verbal confrontation.

In Articles 26 and 28 of the Declaration of HR, EHR is the first right which leads to individual development. According to EHR, creating attitudes is the most important knowledge. EHR is not a panacea for human sufferings. However, EHR provides tools for conflict resolution and support so as to achieve peace among nations and people.

A basic element of EHR that needs to be examined is represented by textbooks. One of their main functions is to present students with reality, to activate learning motivation and socialization. They contribute to ameliorating the presentation of reality, offering educational assistance in order to implement projects, augmenting the mobilization of student learning and evaluating educational process (Kapsalis-Charalambous, 1995, pp. 127–147).

HR can be taught within each course, as EHR needs to introduce a new dimension in education that should be present in each course. Among the courses offered for THR is the Contemporary Greek Language<sup>4</sup> course which covers nearly 50% of the total teaching hours (more in first and second grades). CGL’s main purpose is to help students absorb CGL’s wealth and mechanisms so as to facilitate both their spiritual formation and effective communication with the environment. Through the study of texts found in textbooks, students’ perception of cultural evolution and respect for other people is strengthened. Finally, it is noted that the History course, the Religious Education course, “Emeis kai o kosmos (Physical Education)” course and Social and Political Education course contribute to THR, as they provide information which sustains EHR and children’s rights.

## **2. Area of investigation, Methodology, Aim and Bias of research**

The main purpose of this research is to investigate CGL textbooks from Primary Education. We intend to approach the issue of HR and theoretical evaluation of HR’s contribution in education. Furthermore, a correspondence of HR references in textbooks and in Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union it is expected to be identified. The main objective is to investigate the contribution of textbooks in

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<sup>4</sup>From now on, Contemporary Greek Language will be referred to as CGL.