

Disability in Greece: Social Perception and Educational Policies  
Stathis Balias, Ph.D. & Pandelis Kiprianos, Ph.D.  
University of Patras, Greece

**Abstract:** This work examines how the Greek state (under multiple types of governmental regimes) dealt with children with disabilities within the framework of educational and political reforms, and how social perceptions of disability have defined – to a lesser or greater degree - the aforementioned policies. This article covers three basic periods: 1) First steps, starting from the turn of the 20th century until the 1940s; 2) Minimal state intervention to deal with the issue (1948 – 1985), and 3) the most recent period, where children with a disability are dealt with in a more comprehensive way within the terms of a social welfare state (1985 – 2004).

**Keywords:** Greece, education, policy

In Western societies the history of state intervention for the protection of disabled children is almost identical with the efforts to provide public education for these children. The richer, industrial West began to provide services much earlier than did poorer, peripheral Western countries, such as Greece, where Western developments were adopted at a much slower pace. Although issues of provisions geared towards people with disabilities, and particularly the need for Special Education, arose at the turn of the 20th century, real measures began to appear only after Greece's return to democracy (1974, post junta era).

Greece's return to solid democratic foundations and proper membership in international organizations, particularly the European Union (1981), multiplied the number of communication channels and the voices of influence from Western societies. Progress and processes relative to human rights issues coming from European and international sources led to increased pressure on the social-political life of the country. Thus, ratification of the International Convention on the Rights of the Child by the Greek Parliament (1992), directives issued by the European Minister's Council and the European Commission (European Commission, 2001), and U.N. and UNESCO Resolutions, Declarations and Acts, helped in the development of a new public climate in Greece. Democratic freedoms allowed for the establishment and development of various organizations for people with disabilities and other institutions that were able to apply pressure on the system. This had a positive effect on government policy for the disabled population, including children, which gradually expanded to all levels of education.

In this article we shall examine perceptions of disability in Greece, and resulting educational policies, throughout the 20th century. According to these criteria we distinguish three historical periods. The first, from the beginning of the 20th century up until 1948, concerns initial rather ambitious, but not very successful, steps. The second period, from 1948 until 1980, is when disability was still perceived negatively, but the Greek State provided basic education to children with disabilities through a sparse elementary school network. And finally the period from 1985 up until the present, which is marked by the development of the social welfare state and the emergence of public sensitivity to disability issues, thanks to greater awareness about democratic and human values.

#### The First Steps (1906-1940)

Following the Greek War of Independence, fought against the Ottoman Empire, and the drafting of the Modern Greek State Constitution in 1828, educational policy was focused on two aims: a) establishment of elementary institutions for the provision of formal education and, b) care for the large number of orphaned children. In this context and, in contrast with many other European countries<sup>10</sup>, no public talks were held on the issue of disability and the education of people with disabilities.

In the beginning of the 20th Century, three major trends marked Greek education. Greece was strongly influenced by contemporary educational movements, particularly from Germany, and to a lesser - but growing degree - by developments in the United States. Many social reformers were trying to modernize Greek education and society. On the other hand, participation in two wars - within a decade - changed the country radically. After the victorious Balkans Wars in 1912-1913, the territory almost doubled and the population increased from 2.6 to 4.7 million people. Ten years later the Greek army was defeated severely by the Turks in Asia Minor. In addition to moral, ideological and economical collapse (Campbell & Sherrard, 1968), another 1.2 million refugees arrived from Asia Minor to settle in Greece proper. Thus the population of the country surpassed the 6.2 million mark. School was perceived as the best and the most powerful medium for the unification of the nation and restoration of state control. However, and while Greece was trying to restore its economy, the Great Depression of the 1930s arrived to drastically limit any possibility for educational reforms.

Under these circumstances it is clear why frequent - and persistent - attempts to reform education met with failure. The same holds true for measures related to disability and the education of disabled people. From the beginning of the 20th Century, one of the most widely discussed questions was that of the human body. The aim was to improve the strength of the human body, both through physical exercise (gymnastics), better personal health care, and through a set of hygienic rules (cleaning, medical care for pupils, the architecture of buildings, etc.) (Kiprianos, 2004).

This “body movement” is closely connected with early thoughts and the first steps related to disability and schooling for people with disabilities. Indeed, public debates in the turn of the 20th Century about disability resulted in the question of disability being raised in two major attempts at educational reforms in the first half of the century (1913 and 1929).

An early legislative draft (not debated in Parliament), fruit of the progressive educational movement of the time, represents the first official reference to disability and schooling for people with disabilities in Greece (Glinos, 1924). The draft distinguishes two forms of disability: “Students with purely pathological causes, requiring special institutions,” and pupils who, “Because of various reasons, including physiology, lag behind in development.” Without any other comments, the letter of the law deals only with the second group. The legislation aims to a) aid pupils in this category to graduate from school, and b) allow the other children to complete their schooling “without delays.” For this purpose, the draft suggests the establishment of special classes within schools, similar to what was going on in many German cities, with targeted teaching and lighter courses.

The question of disability was also dealt with – although briefly - in the law of 1929. Again, and despite the fact that liberals were in government - as in the previous occasion – the tone was anachronistic. While admitting that education for “healthy children” leaves much to be desired, the reformers argued that it is worthwhile to “take care of the disabled” because “the cost is not high and the number of these children is constantly increasing.”

With the term “disabled” the law described and formed two categories of children: the “dysfunctional children” and the “weak, prone to sickness” children. The former category concerned “children with physical and mental sickness prohibiting them from attending regular schools” and included “some children of alcoholic and prone to sickness parents who manifest psychical abnormalities” who are unable to attend “regular schools.” In addition to the above, there were “many sickness prone children” who did not “manifest any mental dysfunction... yet they bear within the seeds for hereditary disease or they have bodies with obvious inclination towards various diseases” (Bouzakis, 1994).

This law provided for the establishment of a limited number of schools, for “dysfunctional children,” and only in major cities. More attention was given to the children who were “weak and prone to sickness.” To assure their effective schooling and to avoid “contamination” of “healthy

children,” it was deemed necessary to set up “outdoor or open air schools.” Since implementation of such a proposal would be expensive it was decided to set-up one or two schools as “test beds” (Bouzakis, 1994).

There is no doubt that popular (and official) perceptions of disability and people with disabilities was, to say the least, very primitive. Despite dubious progress views were generalist and deeply anachronistic. The distinction between the two categories was not clear. Moreover, no clear distinction was made between biological, medical and social grounds for exclusion. In any case, nothing was done about the law until 1937, mostly for economic reasons.

In contrast to vain attempts by the state to deal with the disabled population and the education of children with disabilities, a large number of distinguished public figures, famous writers, educators, and institutions (i.e. Greece’s royal family, well known statesmen, and others including the Orthodox Church) were driven to stir up public awareness on the issue of persons with “physical” and “mental” disabilities and endeavored to take care of them either through state run programs or the establishment of appropriate institutions (Stasinou, 1991).

In this context and following the intervention of these noted figures, a group of people (the same group of people laboring to raise awareness about pre-school education) founded a philanthropic association aptly named “Home of The Blind” in Athens (1906). This was - and still is – a foundation oriented towards the protection, education and the overall care of blind children between 7 and 18 years of age. The following year (1907), the President of the foundation, Irene Laskaridou, provided her own residence to accommodate the “Home Of The Blind,” the first such institution in the Near East (Stasinou, 1991).

The Home of The Blind began its operation providing 2 years of pre-school care and 6 years of elementary education. As time went on, the school became very popular and attendance steadily grew. The number of attendees increased rapidly following the “national disaster”<sup>11</sup> of 1922 and the large influx of refugees from Asia Minor. The official records report 20 students in 1912, 33 in 1921, 56 in 1922 and 70 in 1931 (Stasinou, 1991).

The example set by the Home of The Blind was soon followed by others. In 1907, Charalabos and Helen Spiliopoulos founded the “Home of The Deaf-Mute,” which remained dormant. In 1923, right after the “national disaster,” the American humanitarian organization “Near East Relief,” (which was founded in 1919 and had been very active in the area) established in Athens the first school for 10 deaf-mute children from 7 to 15 years of age, refugees from Asia Minor (Stasinou, 1991).

During the 1930s, initiatives for the support of children with special educational needs increased and intensified, coming both from the state as well as from the private sector. This was due in part to the fact that the population of people with disabilities was increasing and because of influences coming from abroad. Governments in Europe and the United States were adopting measures and implementing programs for people with disabilities. So, despite the fact that the provisions of the law passed in 1929 were largely inactive, the Greek government, in cooperation with the Near East Foundation, went ahead to establish the “National Home of Deaf-Mute” in 1932.

A major breakthrough for the development of Special Education in Greece came during the dictatorship of Metaxas (1930 – 1940). During favorable economic conditions the dictatorship decided to appeal to the “weaker” segments of the population through a series of measures. Three major breakthroughs were made in this period:

- 1) In 1936 Metaxas decided to accept the proposal submitted by a renowned educator, Roza Invrioti, student of Spranger in Germany,<sup>12</sup> to create a school, the first in Greece, for

“retarded children” (Kalatzis, 1985). Thus, in 1937, the “Special School for Dysfunctional and Retarded Children,” the first public school in Greece for children with special educational needs was founded. Thanks to Imvrioti’s insistence, a few months later the school was officially renamed the “Model Special School of Athens.” The operation of the school was very successful for three years. It was forced to close down when Greece was invaded by Italy under Mussolini, in October 1940. According to Roza Imvrioti’s documentation, the school was attended by 94 students during the school year 1938-1939, and showed remarkable activity (Imvrioti, 1983).

Although the Model Special School of Athens was equivalent to similar schools established at the same period in developed countries, it is of note that it quickly deteriorated after Imvrioti’s removal. Roza Imvrioti was the inspiration, the heart and soul of the entire effort. Despite this the Model Special School of Athens left a strong legacy for generations to come. It promoted Special Education in Greece, creating all sorts of repercussions and more importantly so, managing to reach deep into the state bureaucracy and its services. In fact, the Model Special School of Athens was a historic breakthrough for Greek society. For the first time the public became aware of the enormous humanitarian issue presented by the problem of children with mental illnesses. For educators involved in the project it had been a thrilling experience, an “initiation” not only into Special Education but also into “humanity” (Kalatzis, 1985).

2) Also, in 1937 and again thanks to governmental intervention, the Spiliopoulos-founded “Home of The Deaf-Mute,” which had been dormant since its establishment in 1907, became active as “The National Home of the Deaf Mute.” The new foundation was organized according to Anglo-French patterns. The foundation was under the control and supervision of the Ministry of Social Affairs and its scope was to promote the education of concerned people through the establishment of specialized appropriate institutions (Stasinou, 1991).

3) Two more institutions were established in 1937. In Athens, Asklepeion Hospital of Voula set up an elementary school for its patients. Financing and supervision of the project was under the Ministry of Education, although the initiative for its creation was undertaken by a group of prominent personalities and the support of an Athenian society club, “Rotarianos Omilos Athinon.” The other was an initiative by the “Near East Relief” which founded the “Greek Association for the Protection and the Rehabilitation of Handicapped Children.” The scope of this institute was to provide care for “handicapped children” from infancy up until their 16th year of age.

#### State Policy Between Segregation and Integration (1948-1985)

The 1940s were a troubled and trying time for Greece. Following the war against the Italian and German invasion (1940 – 1941), the Axis occupation (1941 – 1944), and liberation (1944), the country continued its suffering through a three year long civil war (1946 – 1949). The armed conflicts and the resulting hunger - in addition to the collapse of the entire infrastructure – were very destructive throughout the territory. Hundreds of thousands of children were orphaned and untold scores were disfigured with multitudes of physical and psychological problems. The educational and care systems were also destroyed to a great extent.

Under these trying conditions, the State, because of limited financial resources and in the absence of public pressure for corrective measures, did little towards the protection and education of people with disabilities. Despite major developments taking place in many Western societies, particularly the United States (Winzer, 1993), nothing was really done in Greece. Even educational reforms labeled as progressive (those taking place in 1964 and 1976) made no mention of people with special educational needs. The only worthwhile mention was made in the report of a “think tank” (so called

“wise men”), the “Educational Committee” that had been formed in 1957 to study the situation in the educational system and explore various solutions (Kiprianos, 2004).

The conclusions of the Committee were two-pronged. First, it concluded that “geniuses” were being lost because of social trends and second, that educational care for the estimated 10,000 children with “mental and physical disorders” was lacking. Yet, it stopped short of making specific proposals but rather proposed the Ministry of Education hire a special consultant whose responsibility would be to “coordinate the activities of the Ministry in this sector and to promote closer cooperation between the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Social Policy”(Bouzakis, 1994).

The vague proposals of the Committee do not allow us to form any substantial conclusions relative to people with disabilities and their education. It should be noted here though that there was a change in the terminology that was used. The negative remarks of the past were mostly absent and new, less derogatory terms were coming into effect (“physically disabled” and “mentally lacking”). This change in attitude, is also present in the majority of writings of that period (Kalatzis, 1985). This could be explained by the general assumption that special education was becoming the domain of experts.

As a matter of fact, the number of private institutions catering to people with special educational needs had increased since the end of WWII, and many of these were funded with public funds. In many cases these institutions were created through initiatives undertaken by specialists, physicians or psychologists, and more often than not they were based inside a hospital. An exception to this rule was the Stoupation Center For Therapeutic Education, founded in Athens, 1962, by the “Parent Association of Dysfunctional Children.” K. Kalatzis, (who had been an associate of Roza Imvrioti) was appointed principal of the school. Kalatzis worked to achieve the integration of children with special education needs into the mainstream and to avoid the segregation that was the norm in the past (Stasinou, 1991).

Unfortunately, Kalatzis’s endeavours were not immediately successful. Yet, the social and economic changes taking place in Greece, as well as abroad, and the increasing number of children with special educational needs, forced the Dictatorship of the Colonels (1967 – 1974) to take into consideration and implement some of the measures proposed by the “Educational Committee” of 1957. Thus in 1969, the Ministry of Education formed the “Special Education Bureau” along the lines proposed by the Educational Committee. This act was followed by two more measures. In 1971, the curriculum in higher education institutes for Elementary and Kindergarten Teachers included a course for the “education of dysfunctional children” and in 1970 the Athens Pedagogical Academy (Teacher School) offered postgraduate classes on special education (Kalatzis, 1985).

These measures mark some notable changes at the organizational level, but by no means in the general perception of disability. Indeed, in 1971, the Dictatorship formed a new Educational Committee to explore the educational system. The report submitted by the Committee, made public in 1971, made extensive mention of children with special educational needs but the language remained pointedly vague. Children were divided into the “socially maladapted” and “mentally retarded.” This distinction was also the measure for the proposed “solutions.” The propositions included measures that underscored the need for greater involvement with these children and improvements in public awareness. The basic issues, however, those concerning the education and social integration of these children, remained vague and alternated constantly from integration to segregation (Kiprianos, 2004). Basically what the Committee did was return to the Law of 1929, proposing the establishment of special schools or the creation of special classes inside “regular” schools.

The fall of the military junta and the return to democracy in 1974 is a turning point and marks the

beginning of important steps taken towards improved education for people with special needs and their integration into mainstream society. Yet, these steps are still exploratory and slow and seem to vary between segregation and integration.

The first important law concerning the provision of educational services to children with disabilities was law 227/1975, directing educators into postgraduates studies in special education to cover the most elementary of needs. Following the formation of the Directorate of Special Education, under the Ministry of Education (Pr.De.147/1976), procedures in the area of Special Education took a more cohesive shape and things began to move a lot faster.

From this point, and until the closing years of the 20th Century, legislative activity proliferates. The new laws deal mostly with concerns for the training of educators, admittance of disabled people in higher education institutions, initiating reforms of Analytical Programs and, to a lesser degree, with a systematic and long term confrontation with the “heart of the problem.”

It is true that from the early 1970s a growing number of countries began to follow the example of Scandinavian countries, which were the first to adopt “the principle of normalization” (i.e. of the disabled population) with its attendant concept of integration (Mazurek & Winzer, 1994). This principle enacted in the United States in November of 1975, by the enacting of the Education of All Handicapped Children, required “a free, appropriate education for every child with a disability” (Hallenbeck & Kauffman, 1994). Integration was also the principle of the report of the Warnock Committee in the United Kingdom and the ensuing 1981 Education Act.13.

Under the strong influence of the aforementioned developments, the trend towards integration became stronger and stronger in Greece, particularly after 1981. From 1983 onwards the Ministry of Education formed special classes for children with disabilities within schools, particularly for those children with learning difficulties, instead of the establishment of special schools that had been normal in the past, aiming towards the integration of these children into the mainstream and to develop a more acceptable climate of “social approval.”

Law 1143 was approved in March of 1981, with the eloquent title, “About Special Education, Special Vocational Training, Employment and Social Care of Persons Deviating from Normal and Similar Educational Provisions.” The law received intense criticism for discrimination, e.g. separating “normal people” from “abnormal people” (Xiromeriti – Tsaklaganou, 1986). On the other hand, and despite the justifiable criticism, the law was in fact the first comprehensive approach to the issue of Special Education in Greece. For the first time Special Education fell into the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Education. Additionally, the law mandated obligatory education for children 6 to 17 years of age.

#### Children With Disabilities During the Development of the Social Welfare State (1985-2004)

Law 1566/1985 made a breakthrough in policy for the education of children with disabilities. For the first time, a law had a separate chapter for Special Education and introduced the internationally-accepted term “children with special educational needs” instead of the anachronistic “abnormal,” “retarded,” etc. This demonstrated a shift in the overall perceptions about disability towards a socially sincere and more humane treatment people with disabilities.

In fact, the law recognized as disabled all those children who “show delays, disabilities or disorders in their overall physical or mental condition or in particular functions to a degree that hinders or seriously disrupts their ability to follow through with general or vocational education, their ability to enter into the production process and their acceptance into mainstream society”(Law 1566/1985). Even a simple glance at the above text shows that the overall government philosophy on the education of people with disabilities had shifted towards the realization of their human rights,

rights that were recognized mainly due to international obligations undertaken by the country.

It is also true that under the influence of European social policies, pressure exercised on the government by organizations for people with disabilities, and a more sensitive public opinion, the state was forced to promote measures for children with disabilities in a more organized way. On the practical side, more decisive measures were taken through law 2817/2000, which regulated various education issues for children with special education needs and set up 54 Diagnosis Evaluation and Support Centers (KDAY in Greek). Also, in November 2003, the Greek Parliament regulated the establishment of 4 more such centers in major cities of the country to cover additional needs and specified that preference should be given to appoint or hire staff with specialization in the area of special education. The same law stipulated the terms for the establishment and operation of special education schools in the primary and secondary education levels, and the creation of a Special Education Department in the Pedagogical Institute, proof that the political will of the government has turned towards a more coordinated intervention into the issues of special education.

In regards to higher education, from 1980 (law 1035/1980) people with disabilities were accepted into higher education institutions, Universities and Higher Technical Institutes, without prior admission examination. Another law introduced in 1998 specified that greater numbers of people with disabilities be admitted into these schools, lifting to a greater degree the social isolation suffered by this segment of the population. Many higher education institutions have gone further by introducing measures to improve higher education for schooling for students with disabilities (Psilla et. al, 2003). Also, due to the fact that enrollment of students with disabilities grew disproportionately for the supporting infrastructures in higher education institutions, another regulation was legislated in 2000 specifying the admission of disabled students to 3% of the total number of students admitted in each university department.

The KDAYs, however are faced with important problems, primarily having to do with infrastructure. In addition to shortages in specialized staff and technical infrastructure, what has become quite obvious is that there is no comprehensive scientific approach into the various shapes and forms of childhood disabilities, one that could combine and coordinate the knowledge of various scientific sectors towards a common problem and offer a case by case solution (Drosinou, 2004). Also, in light of the fact that scientific research undertaken by the Pedagogical Departments on such issues is relatively recent, and that it does not relate to the practical operation of KDAYs, the result is a huge gap separating research from the application of theoretical conclusions. This creates an important obstacle in their effectiveness.

Beyond the KDAYs, it appears that the overall legislative framework of special education is less capable of dealing with the variety and additional needs of students and that there are substantial indications for a crisis in the education of students with disabilities. This becomes apparent from the flawed organization of Special Education Schools, shortcomings in the advanced training of educators, and the deficiencies of law 2817/2000, which can be described as vague and generic, since it assumes an all around similar treatment of all children with disabilities (e.g. enrollment of deaf, physically disabled and autistic children in common schools).

The most obvious example of such glitches is the program for the deaf, which – despite the fact that it is considered a full program starting from kindergarten all the way to special high school and Special Technical Training, produces students with low reading efficiency. Of course the current policy of the state is to improve – at least - the existing infrastructures, but educational efficiency is a combination of the work and the ethics of the teachers themselves, who, in many cases, are bringing with them antiquated ideas and prejudices.

We should mention the important role played by the movement of people with disabilities, which has developed rapidly over the last ten years and forced the state to enter more actively into the

issues of children with disabilities. The successes scored by the movement are particularly notable in the measures taken by the state for deaf children. Special Schools for the education of the deaf have multiplied all over Greece (7 kindergartens with 45 pupils, 12 elementary schools with 145 students, 3 junior/high schools with approximately 240 students), while the movement of the deaf managed to gain recognition for Greek sign language (Law 2817/2000) as the “language of the deaf” and make it a required skill for teachers appointed in schools for the deaf (Lampropoulou, 2001).

The major success of the movement of the deaf is that it managed to alleviate public discrimination to a degree where being deaf is no longer considered a “handicap” by Greek society, at least not as much as it used to be in the recent past, and that society has an obligation to deal with deafness with positive measures. A disability is no longer an excuse for social segregation, but it may be soon seen as a reason for reverse discrimination, something that is quite apparent in all levels of education where Special Education is gaining ground at an accelerated pace (Psilla et. al, 2003).

### Conclusions

It may be true that state education policy for children with disabilities in Greece has been, and remains to a large degree vague, uncoordinated and patchy, because of historical and cultural reasons as well as limited financial resources. Indeed, the Greek state of more than twenty years ago was not in a position to set into place the necessary infrastructures for special education. The institutions founded by the state prior to 1974 were more of an attempt to “pacify” the social consciousness and much less an effort to provide a comprehensive solution to huge social and humanitarian issues. During the last few years the state has embarked on an unprecedented effort in terms of educating children with disabilities. However, the structures put into place are still lacking, given that the number of children who need some type of special education number more than 200,000 throughout Greece. Furthermore, educational schemes for people with disabilities suffer from deficiencies, having to do mostly with the vast organizational problems of the state itself.

The most important issue though, is that for people with disabilities within the framework of a developed, democratic society, removal of the barriers prohibiting their full and unhindered integration into the social fabric has yet to be achieved. This, of course, is not restricted to Greece alone, and may well be considered as a European phenomenon. Although the number of people with disabilities enrolled in higher education institutions at the European level has risen substantially over the last few years, there is no corresponding rise of these numbers in employment (Svalfors, 2000). The education of children with disabilities in Greece does not compare well with the more advanced European nations. Despite breakthroughs achieved recently, there is still a great distance to cover towards a more comprehensive, better organized and socially efficient system of Special Education.

**Stathis Balias, Ph.D.** is a Lecturer at the Department of Early Childhood Education, University of Patras, Greece. He teaches Political Theory. His research interests include theories of Democracy and Human Rights.

**Pandelis Kiprianos, Ph.D.** is an Assistant Professor at the Department of Early Childhood Education, University of Patras, Greece. He teaches Comparative History of Education. His research and publications of books and articles focus on Education and Social Policy.

Address for correspondence: Stathis Balias, Department of Early Childhood Education, University of Patras, Greece. E-mail: [Balias@upatras.gr](mailto:Balias@upatras.gr)

### References

Bouzakis S. (1994). Education reforms in Greece, Vol. A. Athens: Gutenberg (in Greek).



- Campbell, J., & Sherrard, P.H. (1968). *Modern Greece*. New York: Washington, Frederick A. Praeger.
- Copeland, I. (2002). Special educational needs. In R. Aldrich (Ed.), *A century of education* (pp. 165-184). London and New York: Routledge Falmer.
- Descoedres, A. (1948). *L' éducation des enfants anormaux*. Neushatel – Paris: Delachaux et Niestle.
- Drosinou, M. (2004, Jan-Mar). Special education: Legislative framework and practical applications. *Synaxi*, 89, 12-27 (in Greek).
- European Commission. (2001). *Standard rules on the equalisation of opportunities for persons with disabilities*.
- Glinos D. (1925). *An unburied dead: Studies in our educational system*. Athens: A. I. Rallis Publications (in Greek).
- Hallenbeck B. A., & Kauffman J. M. (1994). United States. In K. Mazurek & M. A. Winzer (Eds.), *Comparative studies in special education* (pp. 403-419). Washington DC: Gallaudet University Press.
- Imvrioti R. (1983). *Education and society: Greek educational problems*. Athens: Sigxroni Epohi (in Greek).
- Kalatzis, G. K. (1985). *In the constellation of D. Glinos*. Athens: Diptyho (in Greek).
- Kiprianos, P. (2004). *Comparative history of Greek education*. Athens: Vivliorama (in Greek).
- Lampropoulou, V. (2001). *Cultural and educational need of a deaf child*. University of Patras – Special Education Department PTDE, Patras. (in Greek).
- Mazurek, K., & Winzer, M. A. (Eds.). (1994). *Comparative studies in special education*. Washington DC: Gallaudet University Press.
- Psilla, M., Mavrigiannaki, K., et. al (2003). *Persons with disabilities in higher education*. Athens: Kritiki Press (in Greek).
- Stasinos, D. P. (1991). *Special education in Greece*. Athens: Gutenberg (in Greek).
- Svalfors, M. (Ed.). (2000). *The New Millenium: A skills challenge for higher education, the counsellor's responsibility for facilitating equality and diversity in a European society*. Stochholm: Fedora.
- Xiromeriti-Tsaklaganou, A. (1986). Pedagogical research and special education. *Modern Education*, 30, 61-67 (in Greek).
- Winzer, M. A. (1993). *The history of special education: From isolation to integration*. Washington DC: Gallaudet University Press.

(Footnotes)

1 The first schools for people with disabilities in Europe were established in France, 1784 and 1790; and later

in Britain, 1846 (Winzer, 1993). The first special education classes in schools were founded in Halle, Germany, in 1863 and some years later, 1881, in Switzerland (Descoedres, 1948).

2 Following the defeat and withdrawal of the Greek army from Asia Minor the entire Greek population of the area was forced to abandon their homes and sought refuge in Greece. For more information see C. M. Woodhouse, *A Short History of Greece*, pp 187 - 211.

3 It is of note here that Roza Imvrioti was a prominent personality with strong communist affiliations. Despite this fact and given that the dictatorship was hard at work persecuting communists, it is surprising that Metaxas agreed to her proposal. Perhaps he acted so due to the fact that he had become an avid admirer of Spranger while following postgraduate studies in Germany where he had enrolled in his classes.

13 “The Committee recommended that the term ‘children with learning difficulties’ should replace the term ‘educationally sub-normal’ which had been introduced in the 1944 Education Act” (Copeland, 2002).