

**SECONDARY TEACHERS' UNDERSTANDINGS  
OF DYSLEXIA IN ENGLAND AND GREECE**

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## **Abstract**

This is a comparative study about secondary teachers' understandings of dyslexia in England and Greece. Specifically the study focused on English and Greek teachers' professional training related to dyslexia, the influence of politics and cultural context, the history of dyslexia in England and Greece, the different definitions (meanings) of dyslexia and the legislation related to dyslexia. The main goals of the study were to find out how dyslexia is conceptualised in the Greek and English educational systems and the implications of these understandings for training and professional development in both countries. The sample consisted of ten teachers of secondary schools (five English and five Greek) who had experience of dyslexic students in their classrooms. An illuminative approach was used to compile and explore these two fields, teachers and dyslexia in England and Greece. Narrative analyses were undertaken culminating in individual portraits and an analysis of the role of the teacher in both countries, the influence of the educational system and the social and cultural habits and outcomes.

The findings showed that English and Greek teachers had similarities and differences in their understanding about dyslexia. However, they had more similarities than differences, even if they were educated, trained and worked in two different educational systems. Both English and Greek secondary teachers were feeling unprepared to define, diagnose and support dyslexic students in their classroom, as both lacked power, autonomy and a clear picture of their role in relation to supporting students with learning difficulties.

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## **Chapter 1**

### **Introduction**

My interest in learning difficulties and especially in dyslexia started with the case of two children with whom I have had some professional involvement. Maria was a student in the state secondary school where I was training for six months in Greece, as part of my first degree. She was one of the twenty-five students in the class that I was observing; she was twelve years old. Maria had many positive qualities: she could tell a story well; she had a highly creative way of thinking; she could solve problems fast and critically; she had a talent in singing; she had excellent communication skills; she behaved well, participated in classroom activities, and was willing to work hard. She had a wide vocabulary not only in Greek, but also in foreign languages, and she was well supported at home.

Despite all these factors in her favour, Maria's achievement was less than her abilities would lead one to expect. Her reading and writing especially her spelling were very poor. When she read, she added extra words, missed lines and failed to understand the topic of the text at the same time as she read aloud. When she wrote, her letters were badly formed, she confused upper and lower case and she made very slow progress. She seemed unable to learn things that were in a list or in order. She had difficulties with her short-term memory: almost every lesson, she forgot a book or a notebook or material that she needed.

I was surprised with Maria's abilities and weaknesses and I decided that I wanted to learn more about her. So I talked to Maria's teacher, who was teaching Modern and Ancient Greek and History to her class, in

order to acquire more information about Maria. Maria's teacher was very concerned about her learning, however she could not explain what was happening with her. She was sure that Maria had a learning difficulty, but she could not identify it, because, she said, she was not a specialist and it was not her job to diagnose it. She was feeling confused as Maria seemed to give her different signs of her learning every time; she was feeling frustrated as she could not understand why Maria had not been diagnosed in primary school. The teacher and I have agreed that I would sit next to Maria and support her with her writing and spelling. I loved supporting Maria's learning, however I found it very difficult and sometimes I was getting upset with her, as she could not cope with simple things. Maria was a fighter and she was working much harder than the rest of her classmates as she wanted to succeed. When the observation finished, I lost contact with Maria, but a few years later I was informed by her teacher that two years before Maria had graduated from secondary school, she was diagnosed as a dyslexic student, received the statement of special needs and she was examined orally in her final exams.

When I graduated from the University of Athens, Department of Philosophy, Pedagogy and Psychology, I was not feeling ready to go in the classroom and teach, as my only personal experience in the classroom lasted forty minutes. I was terrified and believed that I would never be a good teacher. I spent the next year in Athens offering private tuition, or teaching small groups, a very popular option for newly qualified teachers in Greece at the beginning of their career. Still I was not happy with my teaching skills and I was not feeling comfortable to teach a whole class, so I decided that it was time to take the next step

and go to England for a Masters degree. In 2002 I moved to Nottingham and I attended a MA in Human Relations, which was a spiritual course for my personal development and known myself better, but not useful for my professional development. It was a course more about counselling than education. After a year in England, I realised that I enjoyed my experience as a student in an English University. Studying in Nottingham for a year was totally different from studying in Athens for four years. The University of Nottingham was organised, with facilities, guidance and very friendly and supportive staff in comparison to the University of Athens, which offered me more freedom, no deadlines and fees but more control as I was advised to read only the books and articles of my professors and not to use a variety of resources. So as I was feeling very comfortable with my life in England and I enjoyed studying in an English University, I decided to attend another MA, but this time in Special Needs, which I thought it will help me more with my career in education.

Three years after my experience with Maria, I met Paul. Paul was an eleven year old English boy whom I helped with his everyday school work when I moved to England. Paul, like Maria, had many positives qualities. He was an expert in mathematics; he loved to tell stories; he was very good in sports and especially in football; he had a talent in dancing. He too was well supported at home. Despite all these positive factors, Paul had many difficulties in his school and everyday life. His writing and spelling were poor; he made many mistakes, which were different in each piece of work and he formed his letters badly. His reading was very slow and he seemed to have a lot of difficulties remembering words; he could not remember them a few seconds after

being told what they were. He often reversed, transposed, omitted or inserted letters and words when he read. He said he hated school, his teachers and most books. He seemed to have little sense of time and certainly could not use the clock. His parents were helpful and supportive but Paul had very low self-esteem and considered himself a stupid boy. His four older sisters, who did well at school, laughed at his mistakes which often did sound very funny.

I was a good friend with Paul's mother and she asked me if I would like to support his learning, as Paul refused his mother's help. During that period of time I was attending the MA in Special Needs and I thought it would be an interesting experience for me to support a dyslexic student, as a year previously Paul had been diagnosed with dyslexia and he had a statement of special needs. It was a challenge supporting Paul's learning, as it was very difficult to convince him to sit down and do some work. Paul had lost his interest in education, as he found it very difficult to concentrate. As I was close to his mother, I had the opportunity to go with her to parents' evenings and talk to his teachers. Paul's teachers were concerned more about his behaviour than his learning. Almost every day he was in a trouble at school. Paul was improving his learning slowly with the help of a teaching assistant and extra supporting resources and activities for him. Personally, sometimes I felt hopeless, when I could not cope or understand his needs; other days I felt powerful and useful, when I could see progress in his learning.

These two cases of dyslexic pupils in Greece and in England made me to think how difficult and challenging it was for their teachers to teach

these students and a whole class at the same time. I tried to think myself into their position and I realised that, even when I had finished the MA in Special Needs, I would not feel confident enough to teach a class with dyslexic students and be able to support the whole class. I thought I had a good knowledge of the theory about dyslexia and other learning difficulties, but I did not have any practical knowledge or experience of how to deal with dyslexic students. I realised that Maria and Paul were two different dyslexic students with different needs and different ways of teaching would be appropriate. The Greek and the English teachers agonised in the same way; they were feeling powerless to take decisions about these students' learning.

I considered myself a lucky person, as I had the opportunity to observe two dyslexic students in two different educational environments. The experience of teaching dyslexic students in two different countries intrigued me to think about teachers' experience of dyslexia in Greece and in England. I thought it was fascinating that I had the opportunity to observe two dyslexic students and their teachers in two different educational systems. It was an exciting experience as I had a long experience of the Greek educational system, as a student in school and University and then as a trainee teacher. My experience in the English system was more limited, as I had only the experience of two postgraduate degrees in the University.

So my interest in dyslexia was sparked by my personal experience of the school life of these two secondary students, Maria and Paul, and by my studies in Special Needs. I was reading a lot of research about dyslexic students, how they feel, how they act in the classroom and how

they can achieve, tips for the teachers and parents of dyslexic pupils in both countries. These experiences made me to want to conduct comparative research on this topic.

At the time that I started the second Masters degree, I started working as a teacher at the Greek Supplementary School in Nottingham, where I was teaching Greek as a foreign language, following the Greek and English curriculum. It was a rewarding experience, which made me realise the difficulties, concerns and the problems that teachers are dealing with everyday in the classroom. I taught in the Greek school for seven years, and there I developed my skills and responsibilities, as I started as a teacher of key stage one and then I was responsible for the GSCE and A level classes. Over time, I got involved more with the managerial part of the school; I became Deputy Head of the school for two years and Examination Officer, and in my last year I was Head of the Greek school. Teaching in the Greek School I had the opportunity to understand my strengths and weaknesses as a teacher. In this school I met new and experienced teachers who had been educated in Greece and in England. They more or less they all had the same worries, difficulties and feelings about their teaching and students. This experience in the Greek School was another reason behind my decision to conduct this research.

The underlying aim of the research is to explore how dyslexia is conceptualised in the Greek and English educational systems at the moment and the implications of current understandings for training and professional development in both countries. It is hoped that this study will make a useful contribution to investigations into the conceptions and

beliefs of secondary teachers about dyslexia. The results may provide guidance to educators on what aspects of teaching and learning we need to improve beyond just improving exams, tests and books. The research is about changing aspects of organisational structures, of pedagogic practice and teacher-student, teacher-Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator [SENCO] relationships, in ways that make sense to teachers and help them to teach and be useful and confident. The research is also intended to contribute to the design of teacher education programmes with useful information which can determine what type of training programmes and staff development should be offered to secondary teachers.

The study was a journey, a physical and intellectual journey. The study has evolved and changed over the years I have been engaged on it. One of the things that has changed, is my writing. I have struggled to improve my grasp of academic English and the sub texts and layers of meaning in the responses of my interviewees. It was difficult to transcribe the English and Greek interviews, the English ones because I needed to listen again and again to the interviews in order to understand each word that they used and the Greek ones as I had to translate them into English without changing the meanings and the messages.

Another important change in my PhD process was the change of the supervisor. It was personally hard, as the sense of having answers to the research questions took a long time to be sorted out. However, now, in retrospect, it seems to me that I was gaining a more sophisticated understanding of the issues. Another difficulty was the changes to

planned data collection. These changes led me to do discourse analysis on the English as well on the Greek data. This was a challenge for me, which took much more time than I was expecting. However, the value of this hard work is that the real differences will be revealed only through the language and attention to cultural difference.

Despite my difficulties over the six years I have been engaged in working on this PhD, I think this is a study that is of real value. Understanding the differences between two educational systems is very difficult. Top level description is fairly easily available. But understanding the deep seated attitudes, philosophies and psychology that underpin these systematic structures, needs detailed and grounded understandings. What I have struggled to do in this study is work on developing just such a detailed and grounded understanding of one small aspect of the Greek and English systems: teachers' attitudes to and understandings of dyslexia. It was a long journey for me and I needed to pass through different stages every time. Firstly, I needed to get familiar with both educational systems and especially the English one, which I did not know. Secondly, I needed to understand the history and the development of the English system through the years. Then I needed to convince myself that I should keep a neutral attitude towards these two educational systems and especially towards the Greek system, which I knew very well and I had personal experience of as a student and teacher. When I started my work, I was very strict and I had already judged the Greek system as unsuccessful; I thought that the English system was the ideal educational system. I needed to read a lot in order to change this predictive judgement of the two systems. Since September 2009 I have worked in a primary school in London as a

teaching assistant of a Year 1 class. I enjoy it and finally every day I am witnessing the situation that the English teachers were describing to me in the interviews. I believe that if I was starting the research now, I would be able to understand the English educational system more easily and I would not be so judgemental about the Greek and English teachers. When I started the PhD I was thinking that I had gained the answers to improve the Greek system, as I believed that the English one did not need any changes. It is hard when you are introduced to a different educational system only by books and articles and not by your own experience.

I have aimed in this thesis to demonstrate self-reflexivity throughout, especially in the areas of data collection and data analysis. I have attempted to reflect on my own beliefs and where I stand in relation to the beliefs expressed by the participants in the study. Self-reflexivity, or critical reflexivity, acknowledges our role as researchers in the research processes, meaning that "how" knowledge is acquired, organised and interpreted is relevant to "what" the claims are (Altheide and Johnson, 1998). It emphasises the importance of our becoming consciously aware of these processes (Fonow and Cook, 1991) by thinking through them during the research. I believe the benefits of these critical reflections on my research have been enormous. Reflexivity entails looking into how a researcher generates knowledge within the research process, which kinds of factors influence the researcher's construction of knowledge and how these influences are revealed in the planning, conducting and writing up of the research.

The importance of comparative studies is in the distinctions and differences that emerge; the comparisons are sharper and clearer when just two cases are involved. Any education system is highly complex, so dealing with more than two cases is very difficult. Obviously there are outstanding cases where this has been done very effectively, as for example by Robin Alexander in *Culture and Pedagogy: International Comparisons in Primary Education*, in 2000. Often comparisons are made between systems where the language is the same (eg. England/ US/ Australia/ Canada / New Zealand). In this study the comparison is between two different countries and languages, Greek and English. The comparison in this study shows the importance of European dimensions: the importance of developing understandings of the cultural and professional differences across linguistic divides. My own case exemplifies the mobility across the educational systems and some of the difficulties in building cross-cultural understandings.

The thesis comprises six chapters. This introduction to the thesis aims to set out the main reasons for conducting the study, as well as the significance of the research in the English and Greek educational systems.

Chapter 2 sets out the general background and the theoretical principles on which this research is based, by reviewing the literature about dyslexia and teachers' work in England and Greece.

Chapter 3 explains the research methodology and clarifies how the study was performed. It also outlines the qualitative approach of the research, the conceptual framework and the methods used for collecting

qualitative data. It also concentrates on how the data of the research was processed and analysed.

Chapters 4 and 5 provide the main discussion of the data, based on the findings from the interviews. In chapter 5, an attempt is made to compare the Greek and English teachers in relation to dyslexia.

Chapter 6 outlines the implications of the research findings, paying particular attention to the implications for teachers. It also makes a brief summary of the findings and draws conclusions. The main limitations of the study are discussed and recommendations for further research studies are outlined.

## **Chapter 2**

### **Literature Review**

This chapter is divided into two sections which relate closely to the concerns of my study. The first section reviews literature about dyslexia as a condition and about the pedagogies needed to support dyslexic students. The second section reviews literature on teachers' work, paying particular attention to the training, development and duties of teachers in England and in Greece.

#### **2.1 Dyslexia**

I begin this chapter by presenting a brief historical background to the genesis of the idea of dyslexia. No one would deny that there are myths surrounding dyslexia.

But it does not mean that dyslexia is a myth. On the contrary, there is strong scientific evidence concerning the nature, causes and consequences of dyslexia (Snowling, 2005b, p.14).

So having in mind these words, I will define dyslexia as well as examine various models and explain the characteristics of a dyslexic student. It is difficult to define dyslexia, because it depends on the practitioner's professional background and what he or she considers to be the main cause of dyslexia (Payne and Turner, 1999). This difficulty is made even worse by the fact that establishing definitions and boundaries for dyslexia or specific learning difficulties continues to be a problematic and sometimes contentious task (Mortimore, 2003).

##### **2.1.1 Historical background**

Some people believe that dyslexia is something new in the world of research. However, since the beginning of the nineteenth century, researchers have been examining brain disorders related to

understanding and the production of speech. In the beginning, these disorders were known as "aphasias", as Head mentioned in 1926 (Miles and Miles, 1999).

In Britain, research concerning dyslexia started in 1800. Dr Morgan (1896, cited in Miles and Miles 1999, p.4), describes a little boy:

Percy F...has always been a bright and intelligent boy, quick at games, and in no way inferior to others of his age. His great difficulty has been – and is now- his inability to learn to read.

Dr Morgan, when writing these words, described a dyslexic boy with his strengths and weaknesses. Dr Morgan's description is very helpful for somebody, who does not have any special knowledge of dyslexia, to understand what is involved.

In Britain in 1950, St. Bartholomew's Hospital started being involved in the diagnosis and treatment of dyslexic children (Doyle, 2002). Many other hospitals followed this example. In the middle of the 20th century, the Dyslexia Unit was set up at the University College of North Wales by Professor T. Miles in order to continue the research in dyslexia (Doyle, 2002). In 1964, the Word Blind Centre for Dyslexic Children was established, carrying out a research project into the nature and the causes of specific developmental dyslexia and an elusive learning disorder (Ott, 1997). In 1972 The British Dyslexia Association [BDA] and The Dyslexia Institute were set up and the Department of Education and Science also started being involved in research concerning dyslexic children. That was a very important effort, carried out by unpaid volunteers and assisted by various professionals, such as teachers, doctors and psychologists (Ott, 1997). In 1970 the Warnock Report on

Special Educational Needs was published, which suggested the first government policy concerning dyslexic children (Miles and Miles, 1999).

During the 1980s, the whole movement grew and dyslexia was officially on the agenda, not just in the government, but also in schools and homes. In the following years, a great number of activities concerning dyslexia took place in Britain and all over the world, as well. Today many European countries co-operate in order to try to define and explain dyslexia, with the aim of helping the dyslexic student in his/her life, both in the school environment and the society (Doyle, 2002). In August 2004, the International Conference about Dyslexia took place in Greece, where many researchers, professors, students, dyslexics, parents and teachers met and presented new and helpful findings about dyslexia.

This reference to the history of dyslexia leads us to the question whether dyslexia is a medical or an educational matter, as it seems, both medicine and education have been involved in dyslexia. Of course, members of the medical field were the first who tried to identify and explain dyslexia, but according to Doyle (2002) teachers were the ones who gave the answers and emphasised the importance of learning processes and development. Ott expressed the opinion (1997) that the differences are personal, the diagnosis is clinical, the treatment is educational and the understanding is scientific.

### **2.1.2 Definition**

Dyslexia, specific learning difficulties, reading and writing difficulties, reading disability and specific literacy difficulties are terms that have been used more and more in everyday conversations at school or at home in recent years. However, is there a shared understanding of these terms? There is no unanimity concerning these terms, because each person exhibits different symptoms, which make a universal model impossible.

In this section, my goal is not to find new terms or offer new ways of identifying dyslexia. My goal is to analyze the existing terms and make them clearer if possible. Even if there has been great progress in the research into dyslexia, it is still difficult to define it. There are more than 500 definitions of dyslexia (Doyle, 2002). There is no doubt, in my opinion, that the term "*dyslexia*" is over-used.

#### **2.1.2.1 The British meaning of dyslexia**

Most authors agree that dyslexia is a difficulty with language skills that causes problems in reading, writing, spelling, talking and using numbers (Snowling, 2000; Pollock and Waller, 1994)

Researchers and authors in their books try to identify dyslexia. Most of them are using, analysing and criticising two popular definitions. I will present these two broad definitions. The British Dyslexia Association defines dyslexia as:

... a combination of abilities and difficulties affecting the learning process in one or more of reading, spelling, writing and sometimes numeracy /language. Accompanying weaknesses may be identified in areas of speed of processing, short-term memory, sequencing,

auditory and /or visual perception, spoken language and motor skills. Some have outstanding creative skills, others strong oral skills. Whilst others have no outstanding talents, they all have strengths. Dyslexia occurs despite conventional teaching and is independent of socio-economic or language background (BDA, 2001, p.67).

This definition of dyslexia was included in the campaign of the BDA and the Department for Education and Employment for the year 2003 (British Dyslexia Association, 2003). Many researchers believe this definition is the most complete so far, they agree with the notion that dyslexia is not just a difficulty, but also an ability and that this definition approaches a more holistic model. The BDA definition can be seen as a descriptive one (Peer and Reid, 2003b). It expresses the view that dyslexia is related to difficulties in writing, spelling, reading and generally in education, but at the same time involves some positive attributes. However, each child exhibits different difficulties or abilities which occur no matter what the educational and language background or the socio-economic level of the dyslexic child may be. Many researchers would agree that there is no "cure" for dyslexia, however, the educational background (the school, the teachers, the special support that the child is offered), the socio-economic level of the family (the influencing, the understanding, the knowledge and the specialist help that the parents can give to their child) and the level of difficulty (whether the child has difficulty in reading and spelling, or just in reading, or in reading, spelling and mathematics) affect the relative severity of dyslexia positively or negatively.

The next definition is given by the British Psychological Society [BPS] (1999, p.18), which states that dyslexia occurs

when accurate and fluent word reading and/or spelling develops very incompletely or with great difficulty. This focuses on literacy learning at the word level and implies that the problem is severe and persistent despite appropriate learning opportunities. It provides the basis for a staged process of assessment through teaching.

This definition is as inclusive as the one by the BDA, but it is stated in a more complicated way. This definition follows the literacy model and according to Peer and Reid (2003), it is a working definition.

This definition should, however, be seen within the context of the report which is based on the well-established Frith and Morton causal modelling framework and provides a theoretical framework for educational psychologists in relation to assessment of dyslexia. (Peer and Reid, 2003, p.14).

Cooke (2001) offered a critical discussion of this definition and found some problems arising from it. She did not consider this definition correct, as she criticized it word by word in order to understand and analyse the definition, which does not help the student, does not encourage anyone and does not offer any hope.

If dyslexia is not diagnosed, there is serious risk that instead of dyslexic, the diagnosis will be stupid, lazy, or not trying. (Cooke, 2001, p.50).

Another important point is that the definition of the BPS mentioned the "word level", which is not very accurate. What happens with the student who had a difficulty of this kind in the past, but has now overcome it? The question is: are they not dyslexic anymore? (Cooke, 2001).

Regan and Woods (2000, p.18) studied teachers' understanding of dyslexia and offered their own opinion about the utility of the BPS definition. Their research was based on the teachers' understanding of dyslexia in terms of their personal experience. The context was taking

part in an audio recorded group discussion and a presentation of an outline of the Division of Educational and Child Psychology [DECP] of the British Psychological Society. The teachers were divided in two focus groups; the first group consisted of mainstream primary school teachers from one Local Educational Authority [LEA] and the second group comprised a team of learning support teachers who worked in primary and secondary schools. There were no differences between the responses of group 1 and group 2. Many teachers expressed their concern about the vagueness of the definition of the BPS (Regan and Woods, 2000). Most of the teachers, and especially secondary teachers, seemed to have the need to relate the concepts of dyslexia and specific learning difficulties. However, when asked if they would support the use of this definition that separates description from causal explanations, the teachers that they found the definition of the British Psychological Society less confusing and easier to be applied universally. Some teachers were, however, concerned about the focus on word level which, they felt, might act at the expense of the comprehension aspect of skilled reading. Their replies included different descriptions of dyslexia and

made reference to elements beyond a simple behavioural observation of reading/spelling difficulty, with responses indicating causes/consequences at behavioural, cognitive and biological levels. (Regan and Woods, 2000, p.337).

In their definition of dyslexia, the teachers covered aspects of reading, spelling and maths as well as memory (short-term and long-term memory), phonological awareness (difficulties of matching sounds to symbols of letters), perceptual problems, sequencing and orientation (left-right orientation and organising skills problems). The teachers'

understanding of dyslexia is maybe more clear and analytical than the formal definitions given by different organisations (Regan and Woods, 2000). This is happening because the teachers' definition is based on their personal experience, on their everyday communication, relationship and work with dyslexic students. However, sometimes teachers experience is based on things, moments or events that they alone can see and hear (Payne and Turner, 1999). That means that teachers' understanding of dyslexia is unlikely to be as analytical and diagnostic as researchers' knowledge. A combination of the researchers' knowledge and teachers' experience in the classroom could give a combined and completed definition of dyslexia (Payne and Turner, 1999).

In 2009 Sir Jim Rose in his report to the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families, "Identifying and teaching children and young people with dyslexia and literacy difficulties", constructed a working definition which included key characteristics:

Dyslexia is a learning difficulty that primarily affects the skills involved in accurate and fluent word reading and spelling.

- Characteristic features of dyslexia are difficulties in phonological awareness, verbal memory and verbal processing speed.
- Dyslexia occurs across the range of intellectual abilities.
- It is best thought of as a continuum, not a distinct category, and there are no clear cut-off points.
- Co-occurring difficulties may be seen in aspects of language, motor co-ordination, mental calculation, concentration and personal organisation, but these are not, by themselves, markers of dyslexia.
- A good indication of the severity and persistence of dyslexic difficulties can be gained by examining how the individual

responds or has responded to well- founded intervention.

Dr John Rack, Dyslexia Action's Head of Assessments and Evaluation (and a member of the Rose Expert Advisory Group), comments:

This report represents a landmark for dyslexia in the UK. Finally, we have agreement on the definition of dyslexia, based on careful consideration of the research literature. (Rack, 2009, p.1).

This definition has been accepted by the UK's national dyslexia organisations and should therefore provide the clarity which has been lacking in the past. According to Dr Rack, Jim Rose asked the researchers to move the debate beyond the typical questions about the existence or not of dyslexia but to consider instead the more important issues of how best to help those who experience these difficulties, the students.

In his report, Rose defines dyslexia as a "learning difficulty which primarily affects skills involved in accurate and fluent word-reading and spelling". The charity Dyslexia Action said it was a "great step forward" to have a definition of dyslexia which those affected could recognise and accept. (Rack, 2009).

Rose argues that dyslexia should not be treated as a distinct category of people, but as a continuum, much like other disorders. He adds that children with dyslexia need to be taught in a highly-structured way, with a strong emphasis on the phonic structure of language. (Rack, 2009).

Those with dyslexia can experience mild or more severe difficulties, according to dyslexia organisations. However, some educational experts question how helpful it is to define dyslexia in such broad terms.

Professor Julian Elliott, head of education at Durham University, for example, questioned how dyslexia differed from children who simply found reading difficult. He said:

Most definitions - including I suspect the one in this report - simply describe children who have difficulty learning to read and write. We've known for generations there are plenty of such kids in society. They do need special help - but what they don't need is some pseudo-medical label. It's just really woolly thinking. (in Smith, 2009, p. 2)

Dyslexia Action's chief executive, Shirley Cramer, argues that reading difficulties are a classic symptom of dyslexia, but that other difficulties are often also involved, and some could occur together.

She described dyslexia as a "basket of issues" and said many people with dyslexia can experience difficulties with: phonological awareness, verbal memory, attention, organisation and sequencing (Smith, 2009, p.3).

To sum up Payne and Turner (1999, p.3), as teachers, defined dyslexia in this way:

Children who have difficulties in reading, writing, spelling, or manipulating numbers, which are not typical of their general level of performance. They may gain some skills in some subjects quickly and demonstrate a high level of ability orally, yet may encounter sustained difficulty in gaining literacy or numeracy skills. Such children can become severely frustrated and may also have emotional and/or behaviour difficulties.

In my view this definition is not too rigid. On the contrary, it is a simple definition, without many scientific explanations and difficult meanings, which is easily understood by everyone and, at the same time, is not over generalised (Payne and Turner, 1999).

An important thing to note is that the definition of dyslexia has changed considerably over the last thirty years and it is not as vague as it was in 1968, when the World Federation of Neurologists first defined it (Mortimore, 2003). It is interesting that the BDA, the BPS and other organisations have the need for their own definition, which can be fitted into their own practices (Peer and Reid, 2003). Each organisation gives a definition that addresses the questions and needs of the group that it represents.

#### **2.1.2.2 The Greek meaning of dyslexia**

"Dyslexia" is a compound noun, deriving from the Greek prefix "dys", which means difficult, painful or abnormal and the word "lexis", which means the words of language. So, dyslexia means having difficulty with words or language (Doyle, 2002). However, when native Greek speakers hear the word dyslexia «δυσλεξία», they think that it concerns a difficulty in speaking. If we try to find the exact meaning of the word "lexis", it will be easier to explain what kind of difficulty it is. The word "lexis" refers to visual thought (through the use of letters and syllables). So, dyslexia is a difficulty of a visual thought (Verigakis, 2005).

According to the Greek Association of Dyslexia, which was established in 1984 by a group of concerned scientists, psychologists and teachers and

has been a member of the European Association of Dyslexia since 1990, there is no official definition of dyslexia. The Greek Association of Dyslexia describes dyslexia as a learning difficulty, which delays or stops the learning process of writing and reading. The Greek Association agrees with the International Association of Dyslexia that dyslexia is certainly NOT a disease; therefore, there is no cure for it. It is NOT an organic problem, it is NOT some kind of immature development and it does NOT manifest the same symptoms in everybody.

According to Porpodas (1997, p.30), who was one of the first Greek researchers who got involved with dyslexia and who has been trying to help dyslexic students and support their teachers, argue differently about what dyslexia is

the result of a disorder, which has an organic explanation and it is special (it means that it occurs more in reading and spelling). Also, this disorder manifests itself in spite of the satisfied IQ level of the child, his/her school education and the positive social – family situation and support.

According to Polychronopoulou (2006, p.1)

Dyslexia is an unexpected failure or very low grading in reading and writing, which cannot be attributed to the age, the educational opportunities and the intellectual level of the pupil.

The reasons for this "failure" according to Polychronopoulou (2006) in the Greek educational system are manifested in the dyslexic pupil's difficulties in learning and understanding the symbols (letters), or the method of reading and writing. In addition, Polychronopoulou (2006) argues that teachers do not have the appropriate knowledge and training that are necessary in order to support these students; they

show disinclination and misunderstand the meaning of “fair evaluation” of the dyslexic student.

Porpodas (1997) argues that dyslexia is a learning difficulty, which continues to cause disagreements, doubts and confusion, because of the lack of knowledge concerning the reasons which cause this difficulty. This difficulty also involves psychological and social problems, apart from the learning problems, which influence the personality and the development of the child and are very difficult to be identified and solved by parents and teachers (Polychronopoulou, 2006).

The most important signs of dyslexia in the Greek language are (Polychronopoulou, 2006, p.2):

- Inversion of letters-numbers (3 for ε).
- Mirror reading or writing (μϵ for εμ)
- Replacement of words with other ones of similar meaning.
- Changing, missing or adding letters in the same word.
- Unjustified and weird mistakes, illegible writing.
- Difficulty in copying from the board.
- Difficulty in memorizing forms, tables, dates and names in order.
- Difficulties in the orientation of time and place.

However, the dyslexic pupils show (Polychronopoulou, 2006, p.2):

- Great power of understanding.
- Power of observation.
- Ability to combine.
- Ability to make logical conclusions.
- Talent with machines and IT.
- Power of fantasy, humour and inventiveness.

It is perhaps surprising that in the Greek educational reality there is no formal definition of dyslexia. It can certainly be argued that the lack of an agreed international and official definition of dyslexia might help or cause new problems for the dyslexic people. Peer and Reid argue that it is important for all and especially for the people that are involved with dyslexic children, such as parents, teachers, specialists and researchers, to have the same definition in their mind when they are thinking or speaking about dyslexia (Peer and Reid, 2003). They argue that definitions are important because they can guide identification, support, policy and practice. At the same time, they warn that

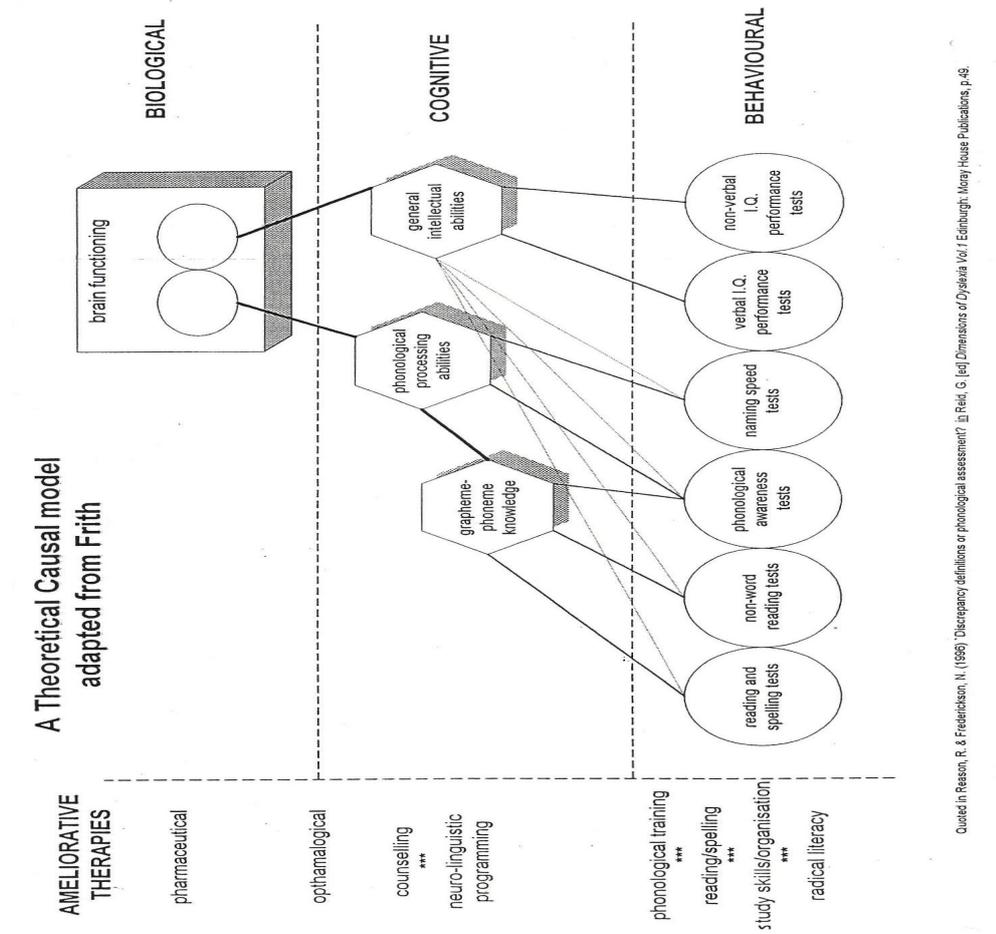
it is also important that a definition does not become a generic label open to misinterpretation and abuse. It is therefore important to recognise that a definition of dyslexia should be contextualised for a purpose and context to make it meaningful for a specific educational or work context. A definition should be informative and not merely an extended label. (Peer and Reid, 2003, p.17)

### **2.1.3 Models of Dyslexia**

In recent years, the field of knowledge about dyslexia has undergone significant changes as a result of considerable scientific and educational research (Reid, 2001). Different potential explanations have been offered to account for the observed symptoms of dyslexia (Doyle, 2002). According to Reid (2001) there are a number of hypotheses (explanations) which can be associated with dyslexia, as: Phonological Deficit hypotheses, Temporal Processing hypothesis, Working Memory hypothesis, Intelligence and Cognitive Profiles hypothesis.

These hypotheses each refer to different theoretical approaches supported by researchers (Snowling, 2000; Reid, 2001; Frith, 1999; Regan and Wood, 2000) to explain dyslexia from causal perspective. Dyslexia can be caused by a combination of phonological, visual and auditory processing deficits (Reid, 2002). The deficit model focuses on language processing tasks and the cluster model focuses on an individual displaying a range of characteristics (Dale, 2002). All these models are trying to show and explain dyslexia by separating the environment in biological, cognitive and behavioural levels. However, there is no consensus among experts on a definition of dyslexia, nor is there any agreement on its exact causes (DfES, 2004a).

**Table 1 : A theoretical causal model adapted from Frith.**



Uta Frith (1999) has provided a useful framework for thinking about the nature of developmental difficulties (see table 1). According to Frith (1999) there are three main perspectives on any given developmental condition: a biological, a cognitive and a behavioural one. In addition to this there are environmental factors that can have a role in the accounts offered from these perspectives.

#### Biological explanation:

In the last twenty years, efforts have been made to identify the genetic basis for dyslexia. For example, Gilger, Pennington and Defries (1991) estimated that the risk of a son being dyslexic if he has a dyslexic father is about 40 per cent. If genetic factors are associated with dyslexia and this, of course, can lead to the early identification of the condition or, at least, of some very early warning signs in a child being at risk of being dyslexic. The structure of the brain of a dyslexic individual is different particularly in the language areas. New technologies such as positron emission tomography (PET) and magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) have enabled researchers to identify the differences in the structure of the brain of a dyslexic and non-dyslexic (DfES, 2004a). Differences in form and function of brain, particularly interaction between right and left hemispheres affect speech processing, as well as more general motor control processes including time estimation and balance (Too, 2000). In particular, brains of people with dyslexia often show an unusual symmetry across hemispheres of a region called the *planum temporale*, which is larger in the left hemisphere and is involved in auditory and language processing (Kalat, 2001). There is evidence that this planum symmetry may relate to poor phonological skills (Larsen et al., 1990). Brunswick et al. (1999) reported that PET scans of young dyslexic adults

while reading aloud and word and non- word recognition tasks showed less activation than controls in the left hemisphere.

There is also evidence of visual factors relating to dyslexia (Reid, 2001). Stein (1994) provides evidence of some perceptual difficulties in dyslexia for tasks involving the processing of rapidly changing information, such as the perception of flicker or motion. Such difficulties implicate the magnocellular visual system (Eden et al., 1996; Stein and Walsh, 1997). According to DfES (2004, p.37)

Literacy difficulties may be a result of the impaired development of a system of large neurones in the brain (magnocells) that is responsible for timing sensory and motor events.

That means that the visual magnocellular is connected with the visual demands of reading, so any weakness can lead to visual confusion of letter order and poor visual memory for the written word.

Cognitive explanation:

Riddick (1996) argues that the actual manifest problems are more readily observed in the cognitive area. The cognitive model focuses on phonological processing difficulties caused by difficulties such as short term and working memory, organising, sequencing and synthesising information within the brain, writing and learning new information (Too, 2000). However, these difficulties have an additional feature in common; they contain a phonological component (Reid, 2001). They involve the processing of speech sounds in short- term memory. It is therefore possible to suggest that a deficit in phonological processing may provide an explanation of dyslexia (Muter, Hulme and Snowling, 1997). Wolf (1996) suggests the "double deficit" hypothesis explaining

that dyslexics can have difficulties with phonological processing and naming speed.

According to Fawcett and Nicolson (1994); Peer and Reid (2003a) difficulties in automaticity implies that dyslexic student may not establish new learning and because of that they find it difficult to change inappropriate learning habits. The concept of automatism refers to the gradual reduction in the need for conscious control as a new skill is learned.

This leads to greater speed and efficiency and a decreased likelihood of breakdown of performance under stress, as well as the ability to perform a second task at the same time with minimal disruption to either behaviour. (Peer and Reid., 2003a, p. 46)

Fawcett and Nicolson (1994) highlight that the dyslexic children could have Dyslexic Automatisation Deficit and Conscious Compensation Hypothesis. This means that the dyslexic children could have difficulty in acquiring automaticity, but in many cases they can hide this deficit by working harder. However, a general automatism deficit would be most evident during complex, highly demanding, multi-sensory tasks such as learning to read and write (Fawcett and Nicolson, 1994).

Behavioural explanation:

Biological and cognitive perspectives offer theoretical explanations that require experimental validation, although behavioural perspectives tend to be less debated because the behaviours can be directly observed (Too, 2000). The behavioural model includes difficulties in areas such as reading, remembering and generating sequences (letters, sounds, and days of the week), copying and generating oral or written language, characterised by slow speed, spelling errors, syllabification, blending

segmentation and rhyme, confusing between right/left, letter reversals (Frith 1999; Too, 2000; Regan and Woods, 2000; Snowling, 2005). A dyslexic person may exhibit specific difficulties with number work or difficulty in learning to read; a gap between listening comprehension and reading comprehension (Too, 2000). That means that dyslexia is a genetic term covering various learning disabilities, which cut across the whole curriculum.

Research in dyslexia can be viewed from different perspectives. According to Rice and Brooks (2004) there might be either one cause, or more than one cause of dyslexia.

If there is only one cause, it has to be either biological or experiential. However, if there is more than one cause, the causes might be either biological, or experiential, or part biological and part experiential. If there is more than one cause, the causes might take effect separately or in combination.  
(Rice and Brooks, 2004, p.19)

Any single level of description, taken in isolation, will provide an incomplete explanation of what might cause the behavioural symptoms (Frith, 1999). Frith (1999) suggests that the case of dyslexia illustrates a general finding that few conditions are caused by a single biological problem, which affects a single cognitive process and which ends in a set of behavioural symptoms.

According to Frith (1999, p. 211):

Defining dyslexia at a single level of explanation- biological, cognitive or behavioural- will always lead to paradoxes. For a full understanding of dyslexia we need to link together the three levels and consider the impact of cultural factors which can aggravate or ameliorate the condition.

The environment (physical, psychological and biological) can impact on all these levels and either exacerbate or temper the severity of condition as a result (Snowling, 2005).

#### **2.1.4 Types of Dyslexia**

The attempt to classify dyslexic children into different types has a long history (Snowling, 2000). The importance of differentiating dyslexic students according to the kind of the difficulty they have with reading and writing has long been recognised by educators (Johnson and Mykelbust, 1967; Mykelbust and Johnson, 1962). An influential approach to typing that started from analysing reading and spelling errors made by dyslexic students was that of Boder (1971). Boder's approach was well motivated and pioneering and offered clinicians the opportunity to devise remedial programmes to support the individual needs of dyslexic children (Snowling, 2000).

There are three types of dyslexia based on Boder's approach (Snowling, 2000):

- **Dysphonetic dyslexics:** Sometimes called "auditory dyslexia", because it relates to how a person hears and mentally processes the sound of their language (Ripley et al., 2002). Dysphonetic dyslexics have difficulties in connecting sound and symbols. These learners are unable to spell words and they have limited vocabulary (Snowling, 2000). They have difficulties with words, with phonic analysis and synthesis. Miller (1991) calls them auditory specific developmental dyslexics and believes that they cannot respond to a phonic approach. They need extra time to answer to any kind of question as if they are using monosyllables and are considerable slow. They need to be taught in very small group and for an extended time (Miller, 1991).

- **Dyseirditic dyslexics:** Sometimes called “surfaced dyslexia” or “visual dyslexia”, because relates to how a person sees and mentally processes the symbols, letters and word concepts of their language into connecting written formats (Ripley et al., 2002). It applies to people who although they have a good grasp of phonetic concepts, nevertheless have considerable difficulty with whole word recognition and with spelling. These learners read “by ear” (Snowling, 2000). They cannot memorise visual shapes of the words. According to Miller (1991) these are visual specific developmental dyslexics who are unable to recognise words just by their shape and look. They usually reverse letters in their effort to learn them. They confuse with d/b, p/b and d/g and with u/n and m/w, the last two pairs because they turn them upside down (Miller, 1991). In Miller’s view, they need a lot of work and effort and they need to learn the sounds systematically, then the shapes of the letters and finally how to combine the letters to be able to read the word.
- **Mixed dyslexics:** This type of dyslexia is a combination of the two other types, dysphonetic and dyseirditic. According to Miller (1991) these learners have characteristics of both (weak visual and motor skills), but usually of a milder form. Sometimes called “dysphoneiditic” dyslexia and it is the severest form of the condition and often the most difficult to treat (Ripley et al., 2002).

Ripley et al. (2002) and other authors believe that there is a fourth type of developmental dyslexia called dyspraxia. Dyspraxia refers to the learning disability term sensor- motor integration and it is a widely motor condition characterised by immaturity of the organisation of movement with problems

of language, perception and thought (Ripley et al., 2002). These learners have difficulties with the co-ordination and the organisation of movement. Others argue that dyspraxia does not belong to the types of dyslexia but to the category of Specific Learning Difficulties (Snowling, 2000). However, there have been some reports which have stated a family link in (Gordon & McKinlay, 1980; MacIntyre, 2000; Portwood, 2002; Kirkby et al., 2005) as well as family links in other conditions such as Dyslexia, Attention Deficit Disorder (A.D.D.), Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder (A.D.H.D.), Aspergers Syndrome and Autism.

#### **2.1.5 The dyslexic student in secondary education**

The attempts made to describe dyslexia, the different models it may take and the difficulties encountered in trying to create an exact definition have been outlined in the previous parts. Little was said, however, about what a dyslexic child is like. Since dyslexia and the dyslexic child are two sides of the same coin, now a more complete picture will be given by discussing some dyslexic children.

The fact that many dyslexic children exhibit a variety of difficulties has been known for many years (Snowling, 2005; Polychronopoulou, 2006). Many studies have been made and reported on, but one of the most detailed and interesting ones, which offers the most clear picture of dyslexic children was the one by Miles, who has spent some decades dealing with and writing about dyslexic children (Doyle, 2002). In 1983, Miles published the results of his research on 223 dyslexic children. Miles assessed dyslexic children in different subjects of their school and everyday life in order to describe and understand them, as: reading,

spelling, creative writing, subtraction- addition, reciting tables, recall digits, memory, learning a foreign language, finding rhymes, playing chess, music, art and confusing directions, time, date- months (Miles, 1983). His general evidence from this research shows that dyslexic children could develop their performance in all kinds of ways in all different subjects. Even so, Miles supports the view that the "traces of the handicap remain" (Doyle, 2002, p.109). Miles argues that a way to understand and describe a dyslexic child is by communicating with him/her, trying to get to know him/her so as to be able to spot his/her strengths and weaknesses.

Research in dyslexia can help both parents and teachers to understand what is happening to the child and how they can help him/her (Broomfield and Combley, 2003). Dyslexic pupils are perceived as being at risk of failure not only academically but also socially and emotionally. The difficulties in learning experienced by dyslexic pupils may also lead to social and behavioural difficulties in class, and/or at home (Augur, 2002). The failure on a range of curriculum subjects has as a result to feel insecure. Aggressive, self-blaming and anti-social behaviour may result from these tensions (Palti, 1998).

The dyslexic pupils are vulnerable to negative reactions from family and school environment, and may show feelings of shame of failure, feeling of inadequacy, low self-esteem, hopelessness and helplessness (Palti, 1998). At school, underachieving pupils may be perceived as 'lazy' and 'not trying hard enough', and their failure may be perceived as pupils' anxiety, frustration and confusion, and bring adverse consequences to self-esteem (Palti, 1998). Pupils with low self-esteem are more likely to

exhibit anxiety and insecurity, and to perform less effectively under stress and failure. So pupils experience these feelings, they will feel less enthusiastic, optimistic and self-confident (Hoiem and Lundberg, 2000).

In the light of the evidence that pupils with dyslexia may experience behavioural, emotional and social deficits, it is important to identify those pupils at risk of experiencing such difficulties and to develop intervention programmes to deal with the (Doyle, 2002). Remediation must find a way to reverse the cycle of failure and to experience success, build feelings of self-worth and increase confidence (Augur, 2002). It is important that social and emotional problems of pupils with dyslexia are identified in the early stages (primary school) as there is evidence that these difficulties may persist into adulthood, affecting their performance at work and everyday life (Augur, 2002). Developing efficient communication between the pupils and the others involved with them such as parents, teachers and peers is an important process towards the effective adjustment of these pupils in their environment (Hoiem and Lundberg, 2000). Every teacher should keep the following words in mind, when he/she is dealing with dyslexic students, according to Peer and Reid:

Teachers are dealing with learners who despite their difficulties may indeed be extremely able and are as frustrated by their struggles as their teachers! (Peer and Reid, 2003, p.3)

## **2.2 Policy**

In this section, I consider the U.K. legislation concerning children with special educational needs (dyslexia) by using publications of the Department for Education concerning the identification, assessment and

provision in the secondary sector. I then move on to consider how the legislation in Greece works for Greek students. I will describe how the Greek education system works and analyze the rights of students with learning difficulties.

### **2.2.1 The English legislation**

The Department for Education (DFE) suggested in 2001 that schools should attempt to meet a child's SEN (Special Educational Needs) by following a staged process. This process was first set out in 1994 and was divided in five stages (Doyle, 2002). However, the revised Code of Practice in Special Educational Needs in November 2002 has reduced the five stages to three:

1. Early Years Action/ School Action
2. Early Years Action Plus/ School Action Plus
3. Referral for statutory assessment

According to these three stages, once a school identifies a child as a cause of concern and support, the school should do its best and be able to respond to the child's needs from within its own resources. If they do this but have no positive result, then a specialist teacher or other field expert should be called in for advice and support. If this is not effective either, then referral needs to be made to the Educational Psychology Service, so that the school educational psychologist can assess the child's condition and give the appropriate advice (Code of Practice, 2002).

The first stage of the process is school action. The teacher becomes concerned about the progress of the child and he/she agrees with the

child's parents that he/she may need further support. According to McKay and Neal (2009) teachers working under pressure from the continuous need to reach school's targets, may not address a student who is failing to complete his learning and distracting others, as they do not have the clinical skills to recognise potential underlying problems. Under this system the teacher asks for the assistance of the SENCo (Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator). The SENCo plays a key role in helping the school, the teachers, the LSA (Learning Support Assistant) the parents and of course the pupils with special education needs. The Government Strategy for SEN (2004b) underlined the importance of all teachers having the skills and the confidence to support children with SEN:

We will work with the Teacher Training Agency and higher education institutions to ensure that initial teacher training and programmes for continuous professional development provide a good grounding in core skills and knowledge of SEN; and work with higher education institutions to assess the scope for developing specialist qualifications. (DfES, 2004b, p. 18)

The teachers that will be awarded qualified teacher status (QTS) should be able to show that they understand their responsibilities under the SEN code of practice; they can differentiate their teaching to meet the needs of all pupils in the classroom and they are able to identify and support pupils with SEN (DfESb, 2004). However, trainee teachers believed that their teacher education course needed to include more practical experience and practical knowledge about inclusive schooling and SEN (Golder, Norwich and Bayliss, 2007; Booth, Nes and Stromstad, 2003).

According to the Code of Practice (2002) the SENCo has many responsibilities. They should train, advise and help the teachers of the school. He/she has to manage and inform the SEN team of teachers and learning support assistants. They should support and help the pupils with different special educational needs and at the same time keep their records up to date, in order for fellow teachers to know the programme and the progress of each pupil. The responsibilities of the SENCo do not stop here. They have to check the day to day operation of the school and be in touch with external agencies, including the Local Authority's support and educational psychology services, the Connexions personal adviser, health and social services and voluntary bodies (Wedell, 2006). The Code of Practice devotes a whole section on the subject of "time required for SEN coordination", but Ofsted has raised the issue of the range and time allowed for SENCos to carry out their roles (Ofsted, 2002).

The teacher and the SENCo are expected to act as researchers, collect the available information about the child and start observing the child in the classroom and outside it with the support of his/her parents. When the SENCo has collected enough information about the child, he/she organises the assessment by planning support, monitoring progress and reviewing action. At the same time, the teacher is responsible for working with the child on a daily basis. The SENCo and the teacher decide on the action needed to help the child make progress. During the first stage an Individual Education Plan (IEP) will be developed for the child. The teacher with the support of the SENCo, tries to figure out what is not going well with the child's progress. They collect information by monitoring the progress of the child and interviewing the parents.

Therefore, they first do research in order to find out where the problem lies and then act by providing an Individual Education Plan, which includes information about the short-term targets set for or by the child, teaching strategies, provisions to be put in practice when the plan is to be reviewed, and success and exit criteria.

The second stage of the process is School Action Plus. The school takes things up at this point, if the first stage does not have any positive results for the child. Then the school will ask for the help of an outside specialist. At this stage if measures fail to achieve the targets, there is a sense that the responsibility for this failure "lies with the individual, rather than with the system itself (McKay and Neal, 2009). External support services should advise about a new IEP. The IEP should focus on three or four individual targets, from the key areas of communication, literacy, mathematics and behaviour and social skills. The IEP gives information about the targets of the pupil, teaching strategies, the timetable of this programme, the criteria and the outcome. Therefore, this time they will have new targets and expectations from the child and they will provide more specialist assessment as well as support for particular activities. The SENCo along with the teacher and the external specialist have different teaching approaches and experience, provide the appropriate materials and produce a new IEP to help and support the child. As a result, the new decisions are based on the results of their observations and experience in the field. In recent years there have been a number of programmes supporting young people according to their needs, for example, Sure Start, Connexions, Children's Fund and family learning programmes (McKay and Neal, 2009). Critics of these programmes claim that they focus on individuals and perceived problem

populations without paying attention to the real needs (Broadhurst, Paton and May-Chahal, 2005; Gordon, 2001).

The third stage of the process is Referral for Assessment. This is the last stage of the process and the only one that does not take place in the school, but in the LA (Local Authority). This last stage occurs in very few and special occasions, because a lot of preparation, time, human effort and money are necessary. If the second stage is also unsuccessful, then the LA decides whether a statutory assessment of the child's SENs is necessary by co-operating with the parents, the school, the teachers and other agencies. The LA will examine the situation and will decide if statutory assessment is required. If not, the LA should inform the parents and if they agree, no further action will be taken. However, if parents do not agree, the LA should reconsider the situation and decide about the assessment. The LA conducts the assessment in co-operation with the parents, who are always informed about any action taken by the LA. After the assessment, the LA should decide whether the child requires a Statement of Special Educational Needs, in which the child's needs are described as well as the provision that is going to be made in order to help meet those needs. The Statement cannot be submitted without sound educational justification. The child should be assessed every year and the Statement should be reviewed according to the new findings. A written notice of parental rights to appeal to a Tribunal for Special Educational Needs is given. The name of the LA person, who will provide advice and information, is also given.

The role of the LA is therefore of crucial importance, according to the Code of Practice. The Local Authority is the link between the governing

body and the school. As part of their role, LAs should work in cooperation with schools in order to evaluate the effectiveness of their arrangements concerning the support and the achievements of children with Special Educational Needs. The LA is responsible for providing high quality support in schools. Children with SEN should benefit from co-ordinated provision by developing close relationships with parents, schools, health and social services and the voluntary sector. In this stage the child will receive the support of the LA, the SENCo, the classroom teacher, the LSA (Learning Support Assistant) and the parents. Planning, delivering and managing the provision for inclusion of which support is a pivotal part is a very complex enterprise, which involves the support of a lot of people, professionals or not, working in school or outside school. According to Devecchi (2007) the children with learning difficulties receive most of the support by the LSA. Since the publication of the Green Paper *Excellence for All Children* (DfEE, 1997) part of the solution to promote and implement inclusion is to improve the support for teachers and children in the form of support staff and more specifically learning support assistants (Devecchi, 2007). According to Jacqui Smith in the introductory paragraph of the *Developing People to Support Learning* report (TDA, 2006, p. 5) *people working in support roles are at the heart of school reform*. The number of the support staff has increased dramatically in a decade, from 61.300 to 148.500 (TDA, 2006). Research on the support staff is controversial, with some supporting the LSA and believing that they support the social and academic inclusion of the children with learning difficulties (Howes, et al, 2003, Lacey, 2001 and Ofsted, 2006) while other researchers believe the opposite (MacBeath, et al, 2006). Indeed, the new workload agreements with the increase in provision of teaching assistants (TAs)

as well as LSAs are, Wedell (2005) argues, predicated on the continuation of existing standard class groupings, although it has been widely recognised that the 'velcro-ing of LSAs to pupils sometimes actually becomes a form of within-class segregation' (Wedell 2005, p.5). Ofsted (2004) has commented that the inflexibility of school and classroom organisation could sometimes be 'handicaps to effective developments'. However, even research on the benefits of LSAs has come to face a brick wall (Howes, et al, 2003; Mujis and Reynolds, 2003). We will come back to LSAs' role and see how significant is their role when we will present the findings from the data.

However, commentators suggest that in reality, things do not always work according to the Code of Practice. Klassen (2001), for example, suggests that most LAs use the Code of Practice not as guidance, as they should, but as if it were statutory. Another big issue about the LAs is the financial support that they provide to schools with SEN students. Some LAs have decided not to issue statements for dyslexia, and to devolve the funds directly to schools, or in other cases, a pupil may have a statement for dyslexia, but the money for meeting his/her needs must come out of the school funds rather than the LA budget (Klassen, 2001).

According to the legislation, if the pupil is known to have special educational needs when he/she arrives at the secondary school, the head teacher, the SENCo, the teachers and anybody involved should use the information, which is offered by the student's primary school, so as to be able to prepare a new plan and curriculum and support the student. This plan and targets should be organised with the help of the

dyslexic student. The helpful way to support the dyslexic students is to highlight the areas in which they are really good. Also, it is important that all teachers are informed about the dyslexic students and that they are able to offer feedback to the parents by providing observation and assessment regularly (Klassen, 2001). The relationship and co-operation between the school and the parents is vital.

The pupil's participation is another very important part of the Code of Practice. According to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (Code of Practice, 2002, p.27)

Children, who are capable of forming views, have a right to receive and make known information, to express an opinion, and to have that opinion taken into account in any matters affecting them. The views of the child should be given due weight according to the age, maturity and capacity of the child.

Another important focus of the law is the inclusion of the children with Special Educational Needs. For example, in the first page of the *Removing Barriers to Achievement* (DfES, 2004) which was the government's strategy for SEN, is written:

All children, wherever they are educated, need to be able to learn, play and develop alongside each other within their local community of schools.

There are clear still dilemmas about the concept of 'inclusion' and especially about all pupils with SEN being included in mainstream schools (Baker, 2007). On the other hand, Ofsted sees no problem with special schools being inclusive and expects them to be. However, the policy document *Removing Barriers to Achievement* (DfES, 2004) contradicts itself about inclusion, as on the one hand it supports

inclusion and on the other supports the need to maintain and develop special schools. As Baker (2007, p. 76) criticised:

It is, as if two different hands with opposing educational ideologies wrote the text. The only answer I have for why this is so is, to use Armstrong's insights, '...policy is paradoxical, the product of struggles and contradictions' (Armstrong, 2003, p. 5).

The Code of Practice in Special Educational Needs (2002) is not the only legislation to benefit children with Special Educational Needs. The field of SEN has always been informed by policies based in professionalism and bureaucracy. According to Riddell, et al. (2010, p. 69):

Since 1990s, England, with a growing emphasis on managerialism, consumerism and legality, reflected in the Code of Practice and the SEN.

As Newman and Clarke (2009) noted, it is very important to investigate how big important designs get translated into politics, policies and practices. In such processes the contradiction and antagonism of different social forces are clear, different problems to be overcome or accommodated, different local or national contexts get new forms (Newman and Clarke, 2009). Policy actors play an important role here, in the case of SEN, parents and professionals may find themselves pulling in different directions (Riddell, et al., 2010, p. 56).

The government has published many other relevant Acts, reports and papers in the last ten years, such as a *Green Paper Excellence for all children: meeting special educational needs* (1997), which was concerned with raising standards, shifting resources to practical support and increasing inclusion (Doyle, 2002). *Meeting special educational needs*, which was published in 1998, is another action programme. In September 1999 Johnson, Phillips and Peer with the Department of

Education published a project: *Specific Learning difficulties (dyslexia): effective identification, assessment and intervention strategies* that could be used by classroom teachers in mainstream schools. The project also sought to evaluate three published teaching schemes, and develop additional materials that are appropriate to the UK classroom. Another important document is the *Removing Barriers to Achievement: the Government's Strategy for SEN* which was published in 2004 and it was based around the Every Child Matters (DfES, 2003) and the commitment of early intervention, inclusion and raising of expectations. It also identifies the weaknesses of the services and suggests changes for improvement. In 2004 another document was also published for teachers *Delivering Skills for life: A framework for understanding dyslexia*. In 2005 a CD-Rom *Learning and Teaching for Dyslexic Children* was produced in order to be used in staff meetings or INSET days of primary schools by providing information, classroom resources, strategies and teaching styles for dyslexic children. Sir Jim Rose and his team worked in a review on the identification and teaching children with learning difficulties. The review *Identifying and Teaching children and young people with dyslexia and literacy difficulties* was published in June 2009 and according to Sir Jim Rose, wanted to help the policy makers and providers to strengthen practice and assure parents that schools will offer the best support that they can to their dyslexic children.

A research project conducted by Klassen, (2001) reports on reading progress made by secondary students after the statement and shows the effectiveness of the Code of Practice and especially of the third stage of the process, Referral for Assessment. According to Klassen's research, secondary students identified with special learning difficulties make

about 6 months of progress per year of state provision and consequentially fall behind their non-dyslexic peers.

There is still the problem that this policy refers generally to children with special educational needs and not specifically to dyslexic children, which is an important difference and causes many kinds of difficulties. The policy is supposed to encourage research; the Code of Practice in Special Needs then puts the results of research into practice. The procedure is, in principle, as follows: the researchers observe, examine and create new theories and methods, the government puts the results of research in action by publishing new policies and, in the end, there is the practice, where researchers can evaluate the whole procedure and change, cancel, prove or disprove some of their previous theories (Mortimore, 2005; Bauer et al., 2007). However, many authors talk about a gap between research and practice, a debate between researchers, practitioners and policy makers (Wagner, 1997, Mortimore, 2003, Levin, 2004, Chafouleas et al., 2005, Bauer et al., 2007). In broad terms, there are two types of knowledge: on the one hand, the researchers' knowledge, which is published in journals and on the other hand, the pedagogical knowledge, which teachers are using in their classroom (McIntyre, 2005). Bates (2002) and Vries and Pieters (2007) considered that the debate exists because teachers ask for new solution to operational problems (allocation of time, new resources, authority issues and lack of cooperation between organisational boundaries), while researchers ask for new knowledge (theory, vocabulary, reward systems).

### **2.2.2 The Greek legislation**

In the last twenty years, the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs, the Institute of Pedagogy and the school community in Greece have been trying to change the reality for dyslexic children in secondary school. All this effort was initiated by legislation since 1981, when the Ministry of Education started considering dyslexic children as a part of Greek reality. The rights of "disabled child" were first mentioned in 1975 in paragraph 4 of the constitution.

All Greeks have the right of free education at all levels in state schools. The state reinforces the distinguished students, as well as those who need support or special care according to their abilities. (Constantopoulou, 2002)

During the period 1981-2008 the changes that have been made in the Greek legislation are about the organisation of special schools and classes, examining secondary dyslexic pupils orally and the establishment of some medico-pedagogical centres in big towns for the assessment of special needs (Constantopoulou, 2002). The Greek state guarantees special education services backed by a series of laws, presidential decrees, ministerial decisions and other secondary ministerial circulars (Anastasiou and Polychronopoulou, 2009). According to introduced law 2817/2000 concerning special education, dyslexic children belong to the group of children with special educational needs. However, from the very first law on special education in 1981, until the new one in October 2008, categorization of pupils with disabilities has been vague and confusing (Anastasiou and Polychronopoulou, 2009). The most recent law (3699/2008) with the title "Special Education of Individuals with Disabilities or with Special Educational Needs" presents specific learning disabilities such as

dyslexia, dyscalculia, dysgraphia (writing difficulties), dyspelling (spelling difficulties) and dysreading (reading difficulties). Special education and treatment is offered to these children by the Ministry of Education and the school community, according to their needs. The goals of special education for dyslexic children are stated as being:

- a) The development of personality.
- b) The improvement of the abilities and skills of dyslexic children, so that they may become, once more, part of the educational system and the society.
- c) The development of their professional background and their participation in the production process.
- d) Their acceptance by the community and their equal social development. (2817/2000, article 1, § 6-8)

According to law 2817/2000, the Ministry of Education is the only institution permitted to make decisions about the education of dyslexic children. Education for dyslexic children is free, in common with all pupils. The period of education of dyslexic children is defined as starting at the age of 4 years and may finish at the age of 22 years, depending on the needs and the difficulties of each particular child. More specifically, dyslexic students are given the chance either to go to a general secondary school, in an ordinary class with the support of a teacher specialized in working with children with special needs, or to attend a special integration class with teachers specialized in children with special needs.

If the attendance of dyslexic children is difficult and not possible in the general secondary school, because of the level of their difficulties, then

the law allows the children to be educated either in an independent school for children with special needs, in special schools or branches of schools in hospitals, in disabled people's rehabilitation centres or in special institutes. There is also provision for children to be educated at home with the support of a teacher specialized in children with special needs.

The criteria for the assessment of pupils in secondary school do not differ for the dyslexic pupils. Facilitative legislative measures for children with dyslexia have a long history in the Greek educational system, starting with the Presidential Decree 420 /1978, which allowed to dyslexic students attending senior high schools to be examined orally. This arrangement was later extended to the entire secondary education (ages 12-18) through the Presidential Decree 465/1981. According to 246/98, a dyslexic child is only examined orally because of their special difficulties in writing. The parents of dyslexic children are required to submit a special diagnostic report by a recognised public Medico-Pedagogical Centre to the Head of the school at the beginning of the school year in order to exempt the child from written examinations. This report is valid for three years and certifies that the child cannot be examined in writing because of dyslexia. Oral examination of the dyslexic child takes place at the same time and place with the other students. The dyslexic child is examined on the same topics with the other students by the school committee, which consists of the head teacher, as the chairman, and two teachers for each subject. The average of the grades of the two teachers will be the final grade of the student in the examined topic (Anastasiou, 2008).

### **2.2.2.1 Independent special secondary schools**

The independent special secondary school for the dyslexic starts at the age of 14 years and finishes at the age of 18 years. The independent school is divided into a preliminary class and the three grades of secondary school, A, B and C (L. 2817/2000). The independent special school follows a different curriculum from other schools. Dyslexic children use different books, along with support materials, such as cards and CDs. The most important aim of this school is to help and support children with special needs so as to become part of the general school community and the society once more (P.D. 301/1996). The programme of special secondary schools also includes some courses on technical and professional training.

Supplementary support in the form of individual teaching is offered, especially on the lessons of Modern Greek Language, Maths and IT. These do not always take place at the end of the school day; they may take place at the beginning or in the middle of it. The Head of the school is responsible for the structure of the daily programme. Assessment and examination of dyslexic children is the same as in the general secondary school.

**Table 2: Comparison of secondary school and independent secondary school**

LESSONS	SECONDARY SCHOOL			INDEPENDENT SECONDARY SCHOOL		
	A	B	C	A	B	C
Religious Education	2	2	2	2	2	2
Ancient Greek Language	4	4	4	3	3	3
Modern Greek Language and Grammar	5	4	4	6	6	6
History	2	2	2	2	2	2
Social Political Education	-	-	2	-	-	1
English Language	3	2	2	1	1	1
French or German Language	3	3	3	-	-	-
Maths	4	4	4	4	4	4
Physics- Chemistry	-	3	3	-	3	3
Geography	2	2	-	2	1	-
Biology	2	-	2	1	-	1
Physical Education	3	3	2	2	2	2
Music	1	1	1	-	-	-
Arts	1	1	1	2	1	1
Home economics	1	2	-	1	1	-
IT.- Technology	2	2	1	2	2	1
School Career advising	-	-	1	-	-	1

The differences between the curricula of an ordinary secondary school and an independent secondary school are few (see table 2). The most characteristic difference is that secondary school students are taught English and a second foreign language, French or German. This does not happen in an independent secondary school. However, learning a foreign language in secondary school for the dyslexic students is an issue. Some dyslexic pupils are able to attend ordinary secondary school; however, they have great difficulty in learning English or another foreign

language. The Greek Association of Dyslexia and parents of dyslexic students have asked the Greek Ministry of Education to introduce a special regulation, in order for the secondary students with learning difficulties not to be referred or to fail in these modules (Greek Association of Dyslexia, 2004).

Centres for Diagnosis, Evaluation and Support (KDAY) have been created by the Ministry of Education and, in accordance with the law 86/2001, §27, are responsible for the diagnosis of the kind and the level of the special difficulties of children with special educational needs, the evaluation and support of these pupils, the information and sensitization of parents, teachers and society. More specifically:

- 1) They examine the children in order to diagnose the type and the level of their difficulties.
- 2) They recommend registration, classification and attendance of dyslexic children in the appropriate school community and evaluate their improvement and general progress.
- 3) They make suggestions concerning the preparation of special programmes for the development of dyslexic children.
- 4) They offer counselling support and information to teachers and parents of dyslexic children.
- 5) They decide on the special equipment and materials that are necessary in independent secondary schools.
- 6) They recommend the change from written to oral examinations for children with dyslexia.
- 7) They make suggestions concerning the preparation and practice of programmes for teachers.

In accordance with the law regarding special education, centres for diagnosis, evaluation and support are required in the capital of each prefecture. Today, there are 58 KDAY offices for the 54 prefectural districts in Greece, 7 of them operating in the 4 prefecture districts of Attica prefecture (greater area of Athens), 2 in the prefecture of Thessaloniki (the second largest city in Greece) and 1 in each remaining 49 prefectural districts in the country (Anastasiou and Polychronopoulou, 2009). The school population that correspond to the KDAY offices are around 2000 students and about 50000- 70000 students for the largest ones (Athens and Thessaloniki) (ESYE, 2007). Identification procedures are carried out by a multidisciplinary team of one special education teacher, one psychologist and one social worker. According to the new law 3699/2008 the multidisciplinary team includes a speech pathologist and a child psychiatric (or child neurologist). This addition could mean the transfer from a traditionally psycho educational diagnostic model to a more "medical" one, a change that was reflected to the new name of the centres, Centre for Differential Diagnosis, Diagnosis and Support (KEDDY) (Anastasiou and Polychronopoulou, 2009). In all cases, diagnosis is free of charge for everyone insured either by the public or private sector. Diagnosis is understood as the first step in helping the child with learning difficulties and it is the way in which specialists can check, test and decide about the progress and the future of the child. The person that makes the diagnosis and the evaluation of each pupil is expected to keep in mind that this is for the benefit of the child, which means dealing with the particular configuration of learning difficulties and the promotion of the pupil's abilities (Porpodas, 2003). Porpodas included all the basic values and advice experts should keep in mind in a guide for the Centres. This guide has been published by the Ministry of

Education, because there were many different positive and, at the same time, negative comments concerning the action of these centres. In this guide, Porpodas explains how important the cooperation between the centre specialist and the school teacher is. Porpodas believes that the three most important things during the period of diagnosis of a pupil are: first, the materials and the tests, which will be chosen and used by the specialist, should provide answers not only concerning the pupil's learning difficulties, but also his/her talents and strong areas. Therefore, these centres do not diagnose, evaluate and support only the difficulties of a student, but also his/her strengths. Secondly, the specialist should not reach any conclusions fast and based only on the results of tests that the school teachers have given the pupil. Thirdly, it is really useful for the school teacher to keep updated data for each pupil's progress, which could later be helpful for the specialist to get a general picture of the work and progress in the classroom.

The Greek system therefore relies heavily on standardised diagnostic procedures conducted either at the state controlled Medico-Pedagogical Centres, which operate in most main towns or in the Centres of Psychological Health under the supervision of the Ministry of Health and Social Solidarity, which are also found in most main towns. These medical-educational agencies tended to examine the various learning difficulties from a medical perspective, focusing mostly on psychiatric explanations (Protopapas and Skaloumbakas, 2007).

The typical scenario for identification can be described as follows: a teacher or a parent notices student's difficulties in the areas of reading, or/and spelling, or/and writing, or/and maths. As the teacher cannot ask

a referral to a KDAY, parents should apply to a KDAY office. Parents should wait from one month to a year in order to be invited to discuss their child's case, because of the long waiting list and the lack of staff (Anastasiou and Iordanidis, 2006).

During the first appointment, parents will be interviewed by a professional, usually a social worker, who will take written records of child's medical and educational history, social interactions and generally child's background. Then in the second appointment, a psychologist will run an IQ test and carry out a psychological evaluation of the child. During the third and last appointment a special education teacher examines the child's academic achievements. Following these three appointments, the multidisciplinary team will arrange a special meeting to discuss the results of the social-psychological-educational evaluation and decide whether the child does or does not have a difficulty. If the child is found dyslexic, then an evaluation report will send to the parents by KDAY. This evaluation report contains the experts' opinion, the specific disability label, a short description of the evaluation results, the proposed educational placement and recommendations to the student, parents and the school (Anastasiou and Polychronopoulou, 2009).

To be valid a dyslexia certificate should be signed by at least three of the professionals, who were conducted the meetings. According to the new law of 2008, is needed five signatures, two of which should be those of the speech pathologist and the child psychiatrist, who are now the new members of the multidisciplinary team. A dyslexia certificate should be accompanied by an individualised education program (IEP), according to the Ministerial Decision C6/4494/2001. However, in

practice in the larger KDAYs, IEP are offered to fewer than 10% of the students with disabilities and usually the ones with the severest disabilities (Anastasiou and Bantouna, 2007).

The Ministerial Circular C6/136/1986 recommended that the dyslexic students could be placed in a special school or in the general education class or the special class. The operation of the Greek type of special class was launched in the elementary schools in the middle of the 1980s and only transferred to secondary schools in the beginning of 2000 (Law 2817). Until 2000, this class was called "special class", but Law 2817 renamed them "inclusive classes". However, regardless of the exact name, a rather minimal pull-out setting operates in parallel with the general classroom. A Greek "inclusive class" provides support on basic academic areas, as reading, writing and mathematics, to children with disabilities for one to hours per day (Christakis, 1989; Tzouriadou et al., 2001). According to the new law of 2008, every student with milder disabilities should attend a maximum of 15 hours per week in the "inclusive class", which will have a limit of 12 students. In practice, in most cases, students typically receive teaching in small groups or on an individual basis for about 3-5 hours per week (Anastasiou and Polychronopoulou, 2009).

Since 1996, the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs has been offering a pack of information about dyslexic children to each school. The aim of this campaign is to inform and activate all teachers about dyslexia, to make it clear to everybody how important it is to diagnose a child with special educational difficulties and to encourage teachers and parents to inform the Head of school and the School Counsellor of

General or Special Education as soon as possible. The Ministry of Education gives instructions to teachers about how they could help the dyslexic child and make their oral examination easier. For example, the guidance mentions that in theoretical lessons, the dyslexic child cannot communicate all the information in continuing speech, so it is more helpful for him/her to be asked questions by the teachers, using question words, such as who, when, where, why. In lessons, such as Maths, Physics or Chemistry, which include exercises, teachers should pay more attention to the way a child is thinking in order to solve the problem than in the result itself. If the dyslexic child makes any mistakes, these must be mentioned by the teachers and the child should be helped in order to solve the problem. During the oral examination, if the dyslexic child loses his/her concentration, the teachers should help him/her to concentrate again. The guidance also emphasises the fact that facilities for dyslexic children must not be considered as preferential treatment, but as their legal right, which is given to them by the state. All this effort aims to make the teachers, the Heads of schools, the parents and the whole school community more sensitive and make them show their love, support and forbearance to dyslexic children in order to help and encourage them.

The Greek Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs has been trying to improve the legislation for dyslexic pupils and the proof for this is P.D 246/98 where it is stated that the dyslexic child can be examined only orally. Of course, this happens only if the student has the statement which proves that the student is dyslexic. This statement can be provided only by the public centres of diagnosis, evaluation and support. The oral examination is one of the few privileges of the dyslexic

students. However, the system has its critics. Some teachers and people from the educational environment believe that oral exams should be cancelled, because it is a very easy way of examination, even for pupils with special learning difficulties (Anastasiou and Polychronopoulou, 2009). They cannot understand the deeper reasons for using this method of examination. They cannot accept the fact that dyslexic students, or students with different learning difficulties may need "a second opportunity", if the first answer that they gave is not complete or sufficient. They do not think that the oral examination is the best way for the examiner to look deeper and check if the student, if he/she has understood the module and if he/she was well prepared. For the last ten years, the oral examination for the pupils with learning difficulties has been a contentious issue in the Greek education world. It has been proved that some students, who believed that it would be easier for them to pass the exams by sitting oral exams have provided the school with fake statements that they are dyslexic, hoping that they would have a better treatment by the examiners (Anastasiou, 2008). District attorneys' offices have demanded investigation after citizens complaints about the issuing of "dyslexia certificates" in two Greek cities, Mitilini and Serres (Tsarouhas, 2002). Balaskas (2002) reported that dozens of parents denounced the issuing of "spurious dyslexia certificates in the city of Mitilini". A number of young pupils, belonging to the middle- and upper class families, were identified as having dyslexia for the first time at the age of 17, just before their selection for entrance to higher education (Balaskas, 2002). According to Balaskas (2002) these young pupils were examined orally by teachers, who were friends of their parents. So, it appears that middle- and upper class parents under certain circumstances can use their social ties to control over the

identification procedures followed by multidisciplinary teams (Anastasiou and Polychronopoulou, 2009).

However, things in Greek reality are more complicated than they look. In Greece, the Ministry of Education, the teachers, the school environment, the parents and therefore the pupils feel confused with all these things. During the last twenty years, each government has made a lot of changes in the educational system, teachers continuously asking for higher financial support for the schools and parents getting more and more anxious so as to be able to see their children studying at the Greek University without any failure and without exhibiting any learning difficulties. In the end, students are losing the control of the whole situation.

In the context of Greek secondary education, the label of dyslexia can help the identified students by easing their examination procedures and most possibly securing their teacher's understanding and well-intentioned support, but it cannot offer them systematic and intensive special educational support (Anastasiou and Polychronopoulou, 2009).

### **2.3 Teachers' work**

In the previous two sections, I focused on dyslexia; the definition, the condition and the description of this learning difficulty in England and in Greece, as this is the one part of my research. Then I move on to present the legislation about dyslexia and how it works in each country. Now, I will focus on teachers and their training and development in England and in Greece, as they are the second part of the research.

### **2.3.1 The crisis in teachers' work**

Many researchers argue about the "power" of the state, as they believe that, in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the educational system has global, national and local goals, which are interdependent (Zmas, 2007; Smyth, et al., 2000; Mok and Tan, 2004). The end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century saw major social, political and economic transformations on a global level. These developments and changes had a powerful influence upon societies and cultures worldwide (Mebrahtu, Crossley and Johnson, 2000). For example in 1996 the Delors Report to UNESCO suggested a highly demanding agenda of aims which should determine many features of education systems of the coming decades: these are, *learning to be, learning to know, learning to do and learning to live together*. (Hallak, 2000a, p. 21). More recently, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) noted that the employment high quality teachers was fundamental to the drive to improve education for all. (OECD, 2005). However, UNESCO in a joint study with the International Labour Office highlighted the severe shortages of teachers (2002, World Teachers' Day):

The declining conditions and low salaries in the industrialised nations are discouraging new recruits to the profession, creating shortages and threatening to diminish the quality of education at a time when the need for new knowledge and skills is growing dramatically.

Globalisation and internationalism have had a serious influence and effect on the changes and crisis of teachers' work (Smyth, et al., 2000). Mok and Tan (2004) define globalisation as referring to an extensive network of economic, cultural, social and political interconnections and processes that routinely transcend national boundaries (Mok and Tan,

2004). Waters (1995, p.3) defined globalisation as *a social process in which the constraints of geography on social and cultural arrangements recede and in which people become increasingly aware that they are receding*. Jones (2007) referred to globalisation as a means of conducting business more efficiently, more profitably and more discreetly. Giddens (1990) pointed to the influence of globalisation on social relationships and believed that globalisation led to the "intensification" of world-wide social relationships. Robertson (1996) suggested that the aims of globalisation are not a homogeneous world and that globalisation will be best understood in terms by which the world becomes "united" but not "integrated". Globalisation is seen by these authors as a series of long term processes, which affect and influence people's knowledge, thoughts, attitudes and actions and which also impact on the material conditions under which people live (Gullingford, 2005).

Waters (1995) suggested that globalisation operates in three dimensions of social life, the economy, the polity and culture. 1) The economic globalisation offers: freedom of exchange, social arrangements and for production, free movement of labour and distribution and consumption of goods. 2) The political globalisation refers to: powerful international organisations, fluid and multicentric international relations, local issues discussed and situated in relation to a global community, a weakening of value attached to the nation-state and a strengthening of common and global political values (Jones, 2007). 3) Cultural globalisation includes: global distribution of images and information, universal tourism, exchange and expression of symbols that represent facts, effects, meanings, beliefs, preferences, tastes and values (Waters, 1995).

These globalisation characteristics seriously affect the organisation of human societies. According to Hallak (2000) the consequences of globalisation can be in geopolitical and cultural dimensions. Previously borders were used to define the territories of a nation state. Nowadays borders have lost their strength and the nation state experiences the weakness of their capacity for action. "Consequently, even national social policy seems to depend heavily on the world economic situation, global tendencies and market needs." (Hallak, 2000b, p.24). From cultural perspectives, globalisation develops two contradictory phenomena, standardisation in order to have similarities in the living conditions of societies and on the other hand differentiation, which promote the diverse features of world heritage (Hallak, 2000b).

The processes of globalisation have a profound impact on where work is located, the skills required in the workforce and how the workplace is organised (Hall, 2007). According to Smyth et al. (2000, p. 3) the changes in work are:

- The emphasis on continuous improvement
- Peer pressure and team work
- Emphasis on customer needs
- Reliance on market forces as a mode of regulation rather than rules and centralised bureaucratic modes of organisation
- Emphasis on image management
- Reliance on technology to resolve social, moral and political problems
- Resort to increasingly technicist ways of responding to uncertainty

In recent decades, these changes have created a very strong force that has affected work in the public sector and they have particularly affected education development (Mok and Tan, 2004). The changes in teachers' work across the developed world are well documented within writing about the forces of globalisation. Smyth claims that teaching has been transformed into something quite different from what it was even a decade ago (Smyth et al., 2000). According to Hall (2007) teaching is a complex, caring, moral, cultural and intellectual effort, subject to social, cultural, economic and political change. According to Smyth et al. (2000, p.6) the genesis of the changes in teachers' work is based on the identifiable socio-cultural and geopolitical paradoxes that are restructuring societies and economies to correlate to a specific global view of the way some interests want the world to be. The following statements are representative of what has come to be seen as a "crisis" in teachers' work:

Unions are under pressure as a result of changes in industrial relations; salaries have declined; teachers' work has intensified as social and organisational demands have increased; teachers feel less valued in the community; teachers' work has become more routinised and subject to accountability; and as a result of cuts in education funding, teachers work in increasingly poorly resourced workplaces. (Seddon, 1997, p.230)

The knowledge society .... craves higher standards of learning and teaching, yet it has also subjected teachers to public attacks; created epidemics of standardization and overregulation; and provided tidal waves of resignation and early retirement, crises of recruitment, and shortage of eager and able educational leaders. The very profession which is so often said to be of such vital importance for the

knowledge economy is the one that too many groups have devalued, more and more people want to leave, is more than paradox. It is a crisis of disturbing proportions. (Hargreaves, 2003, p.2)

Whether or not the current situation in teaching is regarded as a “crisis”, there seems little room for arguing other than that teachers’ work is undergoing a process of radical change.

### **2.3.2 Professionalism**

As Lawn (1996, p.11) points out, professionalism is:

A double-edged sword and it can be used both to control teachers and to protect the space and the labour process in the arena of policy and politics.

As such it can be used to demand change or to defend the status quo. Historical analyses of the concept of professionalism (Lawn, 1996, Hargreaves and Goodson, 1996, Hall, 2007) reveal the extent to which definitions of teacher professionalism are situational, relational and often contradictory. In the early twentieth century the social and political character of the teacher was emphasised, whereas at the end of the century technical skills and measurable outcomes dominated the construction of the good teacher and professionalism (Helsby, 2000). Lawn (1996) believes that the period between the 1920s and the 1990s constituted a distinct, modern period in education during which many changes took place in the education sector, such as the school system was developed, teachers’ training was established and foundations were laid for local and national public services of education linked to the expansion of state welfare. Lawn (1991) argues that teacher quality has

changed along with political imperatives and the relative shortage in the supply teachers.

Harris (1994) summarises many of the changes in teachers' work:

The present history of teachers in much of the Western world has become one of decreased status and control with relation to educational issues, loss of autonomy, worsening of conditions, loss of purpose and direction, destruction of health, increased anxiety and depression, lowering of morale, and, despite a continued proliferation of policy rhetoric to the contrary, subjugation to increasing government and other external controls of schooling and curricula. The initiatives currently being imposed on teachers are serving, at one and the same time, to reduce the professional knowledge and critical scholarship which teachers bring to their work, and to decrease the political impact that teachers might bring to bear through their instructional activities. (1994, p. 5)

Hargreaves (2003) argues that professionalism in practice is in danger of being undermined when central government control is on the increase, and teachers are devalued and blamed for society's ills. Bell and Gilbert (1994) believed that the gradually increasing government control in initial teacher education has resulted in a reduction in teachers' autonomy and the status of teaching as a profession.

Day (2000) considers that it is not surprising that many teachers have often lost sight of their original motivation to teach and to make a difference to their students' lives. He refers to the moral and professional purposes of teachers. However, from 1980s the official

discourse surrounding professionalism has highlighted the tensions between moral purpose and technicism in teaching (Tickle, 2000).

According to the School Teachers' Review Body:

A world class teaching profession is efficient, effective and accountable, but also encouraged, supported and trained, trusted, respected and valued. (2003, p. vi)

Former UK Education Secretary, Estelle Morris presented the modern profession as having a clear focus on accountability:

- High standards at key levels of the profession
- A body of knowledge about what works best and why (keeping teachers up to date)
- Efficient organisation and management of complementary staff
- Effective use of leading edge technology
- Incentives and rewards for excellence
- Clear and effective arrangements for accountability and for measuring performance and outcomes. (DfES, 2001a, p.19)

Hargreaves (1995) characterises these changes, from the emphasis on mass production, expansion, central decision making to the emphasis on flexibility, responsiveness, decentralised decision making and compression of time and space, as more of struggle than a transition.

Some suggest that education is being "reprofessionalised" and others suggest that professionalism in education is changing or even that teaching is being "deprofessionalised" as the curriculum and ways of teaching are increasingly mandated (Seddon, 1997). These theories

offer different ways of making sense of recent educational changes and the new nature of teachers' work in the first decade of a new century.

### **2.3.3 Labour Process Theory**

The development of Labour Process Theory is useful in thinking through recent changes in teachers' work. The work of Smyth et al. (2000) gives in depth examination of the application of this theory to teachers' work. Robertson summarises the changes in teachers' work by using Labour Process Theory (1996, p.38):

An increasingly flexible labour process centred in the principles of core, contracted and contingency labour and new set of production concepts, based upon teamwork, self-management and multiple but basic skills; and finally, modes of regulation which are in the main governed by the ideologies of the free-market, individualism and private charity.

Braverman's original formulation of the theory in 1974 argued that the desire for profit determines the organisation of the capitalist labour process (Smyth et al. 2000). Labour Process Theory offers a framework through which to gain perspective and understanding of the changing nature of teachers' work in a globalising economy. Connell (1985) explained the relationship of education and labour productivity by giving the picture of the schools as producers of human capital needed by the economy and the teachers as a specialised workforce producing the larger workforce. The effects of economic globalisation from the mid 1980s have resulted in a post-modern, post-Fordist restructuring of workplace organisation and flexible forms of production, which are replicated in education (Robertson, 1994). Harris (1994) considers that this model aims to make education economically efficient by ensuring

students are well-equipped with the knowledge and vocational skills required for future labour.

Smyth et al. (2000) and Lawn (1996) consider that present education policy borrows often failed notions from industry and mistakenly transfers them into education. Lawn (1996, p.11) maintains that production processes are organisational structures within teaching which contain "labour processes which determine many aspects of the content, skills, speed and work relations of teaching." The labour process of state teachers has two aspects (Smyth et al., 2000). The first aspect is the relationship between teachers and others in the education community, such as managers, parents, students, assistants, non-teaching staff. The second aspect is the relationship with the employer, which is the state.

Teachers use their skills and the educational resources available to them, to try to develop the capacity for social practice of their students. Teachers engage in dozens of activities- teaching and assessing, administration, counselling students, extra-curricular activities, meeting and planning, to name just a few- to achieve this end....Teachers' work has been organised in such a way as to facilitate the kind of outcome that is required by the state. (Smyth et al., 2000, p.25)

The key element of these activities is the curriculum. According to Smyth et al. (2000) the curriculum, both hidden and formal, is the main means of state control over teachers, controlling not only what is taught, but how it is taught and then evaluated and assessed.

...control lies at the heart of labour process theory; that state teachers have a labour process; and that this

labour process is defined by the curriculum. (Smyth et al. 2000, p. 26)

#### **2.3.4 Control and teachers**

According to Labour Process Theory, control of the labour process of teaching is the means of converting teachers' labour power into actual work (Seddon, 1997). According to Smyth et al. (2000) the teachers' work is controlled for three main reasons. The first one, which is common to all workers, is the need to control in order to ensure that the teachers are doing their work. The second reason for control is to reduce the cost of "production". This may be achieved by asking teachers to do more or by devaluing the work of teaching. The third reason to control teachers is the most crucial and different from other workers. The school system (teachers) should be able to produce workers (students) who have appropriate work ethic and skills. One of the major goals of the education system is to pass the values and priorities of the nation to the next generation and since the school curriculum is seen as the mechanism of cultural, political and social transmission, then the state controls the curriculum decisions about what is taught, to whom, when and how (Smyth et al., 2000).

Teachers are disciplined and rewarded according to their performance and in this way their compliance or consent are engineered (Smyth et al., 2000). These elements to establish and maintain control imply that the state cannot trust its teachers to implement its agenda which is seen as being driven by globalising economic imperatives, and therefore it employs a variety of control mechanisms. Smyth et al. (2000, p.39-46) identify six types of control over teachers (Hall, 2007):

1. Regulated market control: market priorities influence the curriculum, rewards go to those who best deliver consumer demand, competition reigns.
2. Technical control: is about structure, through "teacher proof" teaching materials and text books based on the specified national curriculum and standardised testing.
3. Bureaucratic control: educational institutions rest on hierarchical power exemplified in for example jobs are differently divided and defined.
4. Corporate control: competition between and within schools focus on economic goals, with hierarchical systems of line management and teachers as economic managers.
5. Ideological control: hegemonic beliefs, as for example that "good teacher" should have specific characteristics, become part of dominant ideology within schools.
6. Disciplinary power: (Foucault, 1977) teachers should be disciplined into ways of understanding their work. Teachers and others within school regulate their own behaviours to meet these expectations.

Teachers are, Sikes argues (1992), often required to implement changes which they disagree with on professional grounds and analysts assert this results in *reluctant rather than enthusiastic compliance* (Sikes, 1992, p.37). Fullan (2001) mentions "collateral damage" from initiatives which can mean the neglect of pupils with special educational needs, or other subjects being "downplayed", or teachers being burnt out.

Control of teachers goes back to initial teacher education. Trainee teachers are required to meet set standards. They must demonstrate

competence in the national curriculum and government strategies. In that way the training of the initial teachers is more a practical and technician training, rather than educational engagement with theory (Hall and Millard, 1994).

The emphasis is on "doing" rather than thinking "controlling" rather than understanding and "managing" classes rather than innovating or reflecting on teaching and learning. (Hall and Millard, 1994, p.65)

Intensification is a real and serious problem for teachers and their work (Hargreaves, 1992). It is an effect of control, a concrete way in which teachers' work, already demanding, is changed and becoming more difficult with few resources for the teachers (Smyth et al., 2000).

There is evidence to suggest that teachers are becoming more stressed and they offer worse services, as they deal more with administration and technical skills and less with the primary tasks of teaching and learning (Day, 1997, Hargreaves, 1992, Smyth et al., 2000).

Hargreaves (1992, p.88-90) describes seven effects of intensification:

1. intense working days
2. lack of time to keep up to date
3. constant overload on materials and expertises
4. reduction of quality
5. enforced diversification of expertise
6. lack of preparation time
7. voluntary support of intensification

Robertson (1996, p.45) comments on the effects:

The intensification of teachers' work inevitably leads to the prioritising of those activities which are rewarded

over those that are not. This is only human. Given that the reward structures for teachers are now based upon being able to generate market competitiveness, it is obvious where the sacrifices will be made. However the more distant teachers become from their students, the more depersonalised their teaching. This leads inexorably to an even further alienated relationship between themselves and their students.

The adoption of business model approaches to public sector management have effected change in the education sector and influenced teachers' workloads, working hours and different roles (Burchielli, 2006). According to Smith (1995, p.36):

Effective teachers often combine the manners of a doctor, the incision of a lawyer and the charisma of an actor. In a sense teachers really are a mixture of other professional, and are often complicated, sensitive persons who need encouragement and understanding as they are expected to show to their pupils.

## **2.4 Teachers' work in England**

### **2.4.1 Teachers' preparation**

Over the past two centuries initial teacher education in England has experienced many changes. As Robinson notes: "Policy, theory and practice in initial teacher education in England has a long history of turbulence" (2006, p.19). Looking back at the history of teacher education, it is clear that the same questions are repeated and debated by policy makers and researchers, for example regarding the subject knowledge teachers need, the essential skills, the nature of the training, the balance between theory and practice and the different roles of the participants (Robinson, 2006).

Tripp, in his classic study of teaching, maintains that the most important topics from the history of teacher training in the past two hundred years are the domination of a school-based or a college-university-based model of training (Tripp, 1957). The school-based model of the nineteenth century and the college-university-based model of the twentieth century had a clear influence on the return to a more school-based approach in the past twenty years (Robinson, 2006). Another important topic of the teachers' history refers to the complex relationship of teacher training to a much broader educational and social developments and priorities, such as the control of teaching education by the government and other agencies, funding and expectations for teachers (Tripp, 1957).

Throughout the 1820s, 30s and 40s the demand for qualified teachers grew and the college-based model was established to offering basic training (Robinson, 2003). By 1850 and after negative reviews of poor quality and standards and low levels of professional and academic instruction of teachers in training, a school-based model of training was developed and regarded as a new and sophisticated model (Robinson, 2003). By the end of the nineteenth century the government supported the training of teachers in universities and the development of educational faculties to promote the academic study of education and research (Sayer, 1993).

In 1902 the newly constituted Local Education Authorities (LEAs) became responsible for providing training and instruction for teachers and moved to a more college-university-based approach to initial teachers training (Robinson, 2006). According to Furlong et. al. (2000)

during this period of changes, there were debates about the appropriate balance of theory and practice in teaching training courses. After 1940, the universities started offering post-graduate, secondary training courses and the training colleges offered non-graduate primary training courses (Robinson, 2006). So teacher training came closer to the universities. In 1963 the four year B.Ed degree was introduced for selected students in the training colleges (Maguire, 2000). According to Robinson (2006) the James Report in 1972 recommended teaching training to become a college-university based training. The James Committee suggested the "three cycles" of linked education and training (personal, initial training and in-service) and the right to teachers to have one term's study leave every seven years (Furlong and et.al., 2000). However, the James Report did not find many supporters and the government never followed up the proposals. The "failure" of education to respond to the needs of the nation has been a key topic in the political arena since the 1970s (Richards, Simco and Twiselton, 1998).

In the late 1970s and early 1980s a number of projects, some funded by the Department of Education and Science, developed models of ITT linked with schools (Richards, Simco and Twiselton, 1998). A general change in political climate came with the White Paper "Teaching Quality" in 1983, which suggested ways in which teachers' education could best be improved (Sayer, 1993). In 1984 the Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (CATE) was established with the remit of approving all ITT courses (Hudson and Lambert, 1997). According to Taylor (1990) the period of the late eighties showed the impact of CATE in improved standards of teachers' education in a good balance between theory and practice, a higher number of staff with

experience of teaching in schools, a better relationship between schools and institutions and a clear subject match. Taylor also identified some weaknesses: a "lack of sufficient preparation in the organisation and management of learning, poor assessment and recording of pupil progress, an undeveloped understanding of ways in which children learn and develop; and problems in dealing with different levels of ability". (1990, p.121). Many researchers commented on the changes in teacher education in the 1980s. Furlong et.al. (2000, p. 25) argue that in the 1980s the government:

...aimed to re-establish a national system of accountability in initial teacher education and progressively to introduce a more practically focused professionalism by opening up training courses to the realities of the 'market' of school. As a result, the academic study of education was intended to be increasingly marginalised.

Robinson (2006, p.24) states that the period of eighties:

...has been characterised by a move towards greater government control of teacher training with the traditional hegemony of college and university-based provision eroded in favour of a renewed interest in school-based/centred apprenticeship models of initial professional preparation in partnership with existing and new providers.

In 1990 the possibility of being awarded Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) without the benefit of a higher education course was introduced. This was established the idea that teachers could be awarded a license to practice without any reference to the institutional and academic standards (McCulloch and Filder, 1994).

Since 1992 in England and Wales the students' teachers have been required to spend more time in schools than in previous years and the role of schools in training new teachers is increased (Raffo and Hall,

2006). Secretary of State for Education Kenneth Clarke announced in his speech to the North England Education Conference in 1992 (Clarke, 1992, para 19):

Student teachers need more time in classrooms guided by serving teachers and less time in the teacher training college.

Clarke argued that teachers' training should be 80% school based and that schools should be selected for this purpose according to government based criteria (Sayer, 1993). Clarke believed that teacher's training would only work with much closer relationship between schools and Higher Education Institutions, based on funding, with schools being paid for taking student teachers, and the development of a new professional role for serving teachers, the school-based mentor (Robinson, 2006). Hodkinson and Hodkinson (1999) agree with Clarke's analysis, arguing that the best place to train as a teacher is school and the best people do the training are teachers. The proposal was, however, contested by higher education institutions and by many teachers (Robinson, 2006).

The Teacher Training Agency (TTA) was established by the government in September 1994 in order to regulate the framework of partnership between Higher Education Institutions and schools and arrange new standards for the training of teachers (Richards, Simco and Twiselton, 1998). According to Richards, Simco and Twiselton (1998, p.14) the TTA's purposes were:

...to improve the quality of teaching, raise the standards of teacher education and training and to promote teaching as a profession in order to improve the standards of pupils' achievement and the quality of their learning. These purposes are ambitious and far reaching.

Jacques (1998) believed that the central aim of TTA was to promote teaching as a profession and because of that the TTA's first Corporate Plan established a number of objectives (TTA, 1995b):

- To establish a centrally controlled programme to promote teaching as a profession.
- To encourage teachers to promote teaching as a profession.
- To encourage a diversity of routes into teaching in order to meet the varying needs of prospective teachers.
- To establish strategies to help prevent teacher shortages.

However, there were many who were against this cooperation between Higher Education Institutions and schools and they believed that only Higher Education Institutions should have the responsibility of initial teachers' education and not the schools.

Despite the misgivings of Government agencies over the style and quality of teacher education provided by universities and colleges, most heads think higher education is better initial teacher training ground than classroom (Tysome, 19 July 1996, p.4)

In 1998 all Newly Qualified Teachers were required to have a Teacher Training Agency Career Entry Profile (Bleach, 2000). The TTA, which was renamed the Teacher Development Agency (TDA) in 2005, committed itself to developing more diverse routes into teaching through entirely school-based programmes, despite the negative comments (Robinson, 2006). According to the TDA all providers needed to work in partnership with schools and actively involve them in the planning and delivery of initial teacher training and in the selection and assessment of trainee teachers. The politics and rationale for this shift towards school-based

training have been much debated (Richards, Simco and Twistelton, 1998, Furlong, 2002).

In September 2002, a review of Circular 4/98 claimed to take greater account in three areas: Professional Values and Practice; Knowledge and Understanding; and Teaching (a. Planning, Expectations and target-settings, b. Teaching Monitoring and Assessment, c. Teaching and Class Management) (Harrison, 2007).

...all new teachers have the subject knowledge and the teaching and learning expertise they need, and are well prepared for the wider professional demands of being a teacher. They will also help to ensure that training tackles issues such as behaviour management and social inclusion. (TTA, 2002)

According to Robinson (2006) it was the first time that so much detailed instructions were given, about what student teachers should be taught, should know, and should be able to teach and how to teach it. Harrison (2007) argues that the English government focuses on what beginning teachers "can do", rather than what a beginning teacher "is" or "can become". Nowadays, the focus in ITT is on the methods, techniques, assessments and performance-related skills (TTA, 2003).

According to a research with the title 'Teachers Matter' in September 2009, teaching profession in England is in crisis, as the English schools are staffed by under-qualified and demoralised teachers. According to the researchers the entry and training model has failed.

Too many of the wrong candidates being are being admitted and processed through a system unable to equip them to teach. Entry standards are too low. Meanwhile pay and conditions are amongst the worst in the European countries, with the lowest final

salaries and the highest levels of control, and consequently attrition rates. (Burghes et al., 2009, p. 2)

#### **2.4.2 Continuing professional development**

Continuing professional development is increasingly becoming recognised as important for all professionals in order to maintain and develop their competence (Muijs and Lindsay, 2008). Many professions, including teaching in some jurisdictions, require evidence of continuing professional development in order to demonstrate that professionals are up to date. Teachers' continuing professional development (CPD) is being given increasing importance in countries throughout the world. In England the changing professional and political context has resulted in unprecedented investment in CPD (Fraser et.al., 2007).

Continuing Professional Development, known too as in- service education and training, or INSET, was, until the mid 1990s, a voluntary commitment for the teachers with career ambitions (Craft, 2000). However, the present climate in education with the economical and social changes enforces more and more teachers to become involved in personal and professional development and improvement in teaching and learning (Tomlinson, 1997). The White Paper, *Schools Achieving Success* (DfEE, 2001) highlighted aspects related to the professional development of teachers. According to the Strategy Document (DfEE, 2001) the government would offer support for CPD in schools (£92 million for the period 2002-2005). These three documents supported different views of what the government wished to encourage (Neil and Morgan, 2003). On the one hand the documents presented CPD as open, free and with a sense of choice, for example:

By professional development we mean any activity that increases the skills, knowledge and understanding of teachers and their effectiveness in schools.(DfEE, 2001, p.3)

On the other hand, the same documents supported a much more controlled agenda, guiding teachers to select from a list of four recommended areas of professional developments (Neil and Morgan, 2003, p.78):

- Particular curriculum issues (literacy, phonics, writing, numeracy).
- ICT.
- Leadership skills.
- Working with particular groups of students (special educational needs students).

Whilst many influential commentators argue that professional development is an essential part of improving school performance (Hargreaves, 1994, Day, 1999); the problem is that discourse about professional development is typified by “conceptual vagueness” (Coffield, 2000, p. 3). Friedman and Philips (2004) also argue that professional development is an ambiguous concept, while Hoban (2002) highlights a distinction between professional learning and professional development. To understand better this distinction Middlewood et al. (2005, cited in Fraser et al., 2007, p. 156) explain that:

- Professional development is an ongoing process of reflection and review that articulates with development planning that meets corporate, departmental and individual needs; and
- Learning is a process of self development leading to personal growth as well as development of skills and knowledge that facilitates the education of young people.

This distinction helps pin down the “vagueness” which Coffield (2000) commented on teachers’ professional learning can represent the

processes, individual or in groups, that can change the professional knowledge, skills, attitudes, beliefs or actions of teachers. And on the other hand, teachers' professional development can represent the broader changes that need longer periods of time resulting in qualitative shifts in aspects of teachers' professionalism (Fraser et. al., 2007).

Day (1999, p.4) draws on both stands of the definition to define CPD as:

... all natural learning experiences and those conscious and planned activities which are intended to be of direct or indirect benefit to the individual, group or school, which constitute, through these, to the quality of education in the classroom. It is the process by which, alone and with others, teachers review, renew and extend their commitment as change agents to the moral purposes of teaching; and by which they acquire and develop critically the knowledge, skills and emotional intelligence essential to good professional thinking, planning and practice with children, young people and colleagues throughout each phase of their teaching lives.

Professional development is therefore considered to be centrally important in maintaining the quality of teaching and learning in schools (Harris, 2002) and in successful school and teacher's development (Hargreaves, 1994). Evidence suggests that when teachers have access to new ideas and are able to share their experiences and practices, there is greater potential for school and classroom improvement (Dean, 1991; Hargreaves, 1994).

An obvious implication of definitions of CPD that link personal and institutional learning, is clear from the definition that any evaluation of CPD should take account of both the direct and indirect impact of its

effects, not only upon knowledge and skills, but also upon teachers' commitment, moral purposes and actions (Goodall et al., 2005). Goodall et al.'s research for the UK Development for Education and Skills, however, found that a good deal of CPD was focussed on the longer term benefits. They reported about CPD that (Goodall et al., 2005, p.27):

- It rarely focuses upon longer term or indirect benefits.
- It rarely differentiates between different kinds of benefits in relation to different purposes in the definition.
- It is often based upon individual self report which relates to the quality and relevance of the experience and not its outcomes.
- It usually occurs simultaneously, after the learning experience, rather than formatively so that it can be used to enhance that experience.
- It rarely attempts to chart benefits to the school or department.

Lieberman (1996) provided a list of practices which encourage professional development not only by offering new ideas or frameworks.

Lieberman (1996, p.187) presented three settings in which learning occurs:

1. direct teaching (e.g. conferences, courses, seminars and workshops).
2. learning in school (e.g. peer coaching, critical friends, quality review, appraisal, portfolio assessment, working on tasks together).
3. learning out of school (e.g. professional development centres, school- university partnerships, reform networks and informal groups).

With regards to CPD in relation to special educational needs, in the last few decades many changes have taken place for teachers in England (Tod, 2004). In 1988, Robson et al. (1988) were arguing for a clear and coherent staff development policy for all UK teachers and others working with people with special educational needs. Robson et al. (1988)

believed that CPD could help teachers working with students with special needs to learn new developments which would help them to deliver a better service to their students. Picking up this point the Code of Practice (1994, p. 26) suggested that a school's Special Educational Needs (SEN) policy should describe plans for the in-service training and professional development of staff to help them work effectively with pupils with SEN. The SEN in-service training policy should be part of the school's development plan and should, where appropriate, cover the needs of non-teaching assistants and other staff (Garner, Hinchcliffe and Sandow, 1995). The Government, via the DfEE has provided guidance on CPD and the use of SEN Standards (TTA, 2002b). The national ideals for CPD could support teachers and schools in relation to SEN by (Tod, 2004, p. 178):

- Helping teachers to manage change. (Teachers should understand the increasing drive for inclusion set within the context of ongoing standards-raising for pupils).
- Improving the performance of individuals and institutions as a whole. (Data showing the progress made by the SEN pupils).
- Increasing staff morale and sense of purpose. (This can be achieved with CPD and recognition of additional responsibilities and specialist training).
- The personal as well as the professional development of teachers. (The teachers should feel confident and trained in SEN. "An emergent emphasis on evidence-based practice and opportunities for teachers to engage in research that impacts upon their practice should serve to link personal and professional development." (Tod, 2004, p. 180)).
- Promoting a sense of job satisfaction. (Via CPD supporting teachers to make a difference).
- Pulling together a school's vision for itself. ("In relation to SEN and via initiatives to support inclusion, schools can use the impetus of external reform to improve or develop themselves by

working on common identified themes and principles". (Tod, 2004, p. 180).

Teaching professionals need to think about education and development not only in terms of initial courses, but more in terms of rhythms by which communities and individuals continually renew themselves (Hammerness et al., 2005). The in-service programmes should offer to teachers an understanding of teaching in different ways from what they learned by experience. To achieve this, requires much more than simply memorise some procedures and tricks, since there is a major difference between 'knowing that' and 'knowing why and how' (Hammerness et al., 2005).

## **2.5 Teachers' work in Greece**

### **2.5.1 Teachers' preparation**

In Greece education is constitutionally a basic goal of the state, provided free at all levels of the system. This education operates within a context of great geographical contrasts and variety with corresponding differences in the distribution of population between urban and rural areas (Papagueli-Vouliouris, 1999). The history of Greece has also weighed heavily on the development of the national education system.

Since the country's emergence as an independent state, Greece has been involved in more than four wars, a three-year foreign occupation, two long-lasting dictatorships, a devastating civil war, and has accepted large inflows of refugees and immigrants. (Papagueli-Vouliouris, 1999,p.129)

According to Papagueli-Vouliouris (1999) the organisation and operation of the Greek education system was for many years centralised and bureaucratic, not easily amenable to change and innovation

Contemporary Greek society within the Europe is characterized by accelerated changes in economy, policy and population. Changes concern matters in administration, increasing diversity in population and the knowledge and information demands of the Greek society. (Stylianidou et al., 2004). All these changes have challenged the Greek education system (CEDEFOP, 2002). The development of the system, which is result of the socio-economic development of the country, has unavoidably influenced the type and content of teachers' education (YPEPTH, 2000). In Greece, the form and length of the initial teacher education as individual has to undergo varies, depending on the subject of specialisation and the level of education (primary or secondary) (Koutouzis et al., 2003).

Until 1984 prospective teachers of primary education were trained only in the Pedagogic Academies, a public educational institution which offered two years non-university education (theoretical and practical) (Stylianidou et al., 2004). The studies in the Pedagogic Academies, which has existed for half a century (1933-1983), were short and were characterised by methodological weaknesses.

For example, there was no distinction between the programme of nursery and elementary teachers, while sociological or psychological subjects were not taught. (Papagueli-Vouliouris, 1999, p.130).

In 1984 (in accordance with Law 1268 of 1982) the primary teacher programmes were brought into the university sector. (Papagueli-Vouliouris, 1999).

Pre-service education for secondary teachers has been provided by the University, the appropriate department according to specialisation: in classical studies, physics, mathematics or theology (Kallen, 1996). Minimum attendance in the University for the degree is four years. Graduates of the departments of economics, engineering, sociology, agriculture, law, political studies and medicine in order to become teachers should have a second qualification which proves that they have received pedagogic training (Stylianidou et al., 2004). This is a one year certificate in pedagogic studies offered by the Higher School of Pedagogical and Technological Education, but it can also be a second university degree (Stamelos, 2002). To become a special needs teacher, it requires a first degree or a postgraduate degree in Special Needs Education. However, if the graduate has some years of experience in teaching special needs students, it is considered as sufficient requirement for transfer to a special needs school (Antoniou, 2002).

However, according to the law 2525 of 1997, from 2003 an additional year of professional teacher training will be compulsory for all the future teachers of secondary education (Andreou, 2002). This training will be offered by the university facilities in which the graduates have received their initial degree. The aim of the proposed reform was to improve the quality of teacher training by giving it a more professional focus. This reform originally planned to come into effect in 2003, but it has been postponed (Panitsidou and Papastamatis, 2009).

It seems that this due to financial and organisational reasons, as well as to social concerns that such a regulation will reduce the scope of the first degree university studies, to providing solely academic qualifications with no explicit professional prospects. (Stylianidou et al., 2004, p. 66)

The number of places, which are available for initial teacher training, are defined basically after recommendations made by the institutions. As Stylianidou et al. (2004) commented this move towards a more centralised quota aimed at regulating the growing demand for study places in general.

Alternative routes to initial teacher training do not exist. Greece could be characterised as a country with almost total autonomy of its institutions concerning initial teacher education (Eurydice, 2002).

Institutions are entirely free to decide how the training they provide will be organised in terms of both curricular content and/or time to be allocated to both general and professional training (total autonomy). (Stylianidou et al., 2004, p.66)

Pre-service education has been to a great extent determined by the selection procedures of candidates for the University departments. Because of the policy, for a large number of educators the teaching profession was not their own personal choice, but the consequence of their participation in highly competitive state exams (Vamvoukas, 1982). The funding of all initial teachers training is responsibility of the public sector, so the pre-service teacher do not pay for their studies and training (Antoniou, 2002).

Teachers' selection has been one of the main policy concerns of the last decade in Greece (Stylianidou et al., 2004).

The policy of teacher recruitment represents a crucial element in the Greek education system. The oversupply of qualified teachers, mainly of the secondary school level, has posed the challenge to policy makers of how to select the most able for appointment. (Papagueli-Vouliouris, 1999, p.131)

Until 1997, all nursery, primary and secondary school teachers were required to be placed in tenured positions according to lists kept by the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs. These lists accorded to priority order by the date of submission of candidates' applications (OECD, 1995). The lists were divided to categories, for example secondary education teachers were found in special lists according to the subject of their specialisation. So all the University degree graduates automatically were appointed to the lists when they had submitted the necessary documents (Solomon, 1997). However, there was a big gap between the date of graduation and the employment of teachers (Papagueli-Vouliouris, 1999).

This time lag varies, ranging from about ten years for nursery and primary school teachers to fourteen-eighteen years for the various posts of secondary education with the exception of teachers of specialised subjects who are employed almost immediately. The average age of recruitment is over thirty (Kallen, 1996, p.56).

As a result, the teachers who remained unemployed for long time needed to find another job, which sometimes was relevant to their subject and sometimes not. Teachers, who were distanced from the

subject matter of their studies lost their initial enthusiasm for working at schools (OECD, 1995).

These lists were closed on 31<sup>st</sup> of December 1997 (Stylianidou et al., 2004). For the years 1998-2002, a progressively decreasing percentage of appointments were made from the lists of candidate teachers and the remaining appointments were made from those who successfully participated in public, organised competitive examinations held by Supreme Council for Selection of Personnel (Law 2525 of 1997). Successful candidates were required to have an average of 60% in the exams. If this average was obtained, then candidates were ranked on additional criteria, such as the university degree's grade, any postgraduate qualifications or previous teaching experience (Eurydice, 2003). However, not all successful candidates can be guaranteed a teaching post, as this depends on the availability of posts and on candidates' rank in the pass lists, which remains valid for two years (KEMETE, 2003).

There is no final "on the job" qualifying phase for teachers in Greece. Fully qualified teachers are selected for admission to the profession on completion of their initial education (Stylianidou et al., 2004). Firstly, they are appointed to a post for a "probation" period (for 2 years) prior to secure their permanent position. However,

in practice all teachers acquire tenure after this probationary period.(Stylianidou et al., 2004, p.67)

In Greece teachers are part of the civil service and according to law teachers' conditions of employment are guaranteed under public

provisions and their post is secure until retirement. According to Law 3687/2008, the acquisition of tenure is associated with positive evaluations of a teacher's performance. However, this law has not yet been fully implemented and new teachers after two years of probation period, they become full-time permanent teachers (Panitsidou and Papastamatis, 2009).

### **2.5.2 Continuing professional development**

Modern societies are under the impact of socioeconomic internationalisation, digital technological advancement as well as demographical reallocation (Giddens, 1990). We are living at a time when information and knowledge are being produced fast, partly because of the new technologies (Gravani, 2007). In this context, seeking to adapt the new socioeconomic and scientific challenges and continuous changes, educational system needs to undergo various structural, cultural and organisational transformations (Papastamatis et al., 2009). At such times, there is a concern with the teacher as adult professional learned, demonstrated through the current emphasis on 'in service training', 'continuing professional development' and the wider concern with 'the knowledge based society' and 'lifelong learning' (Gravani and John, 2005; Hargreaves, 2003; Hoban, 2002).

Currently, there is widespread agreement that the education system in Greece needs to be modernised and redefined in the light of the demands of the new global socioeconomic environment (Bouzakis and Koutsourakis, 2002). The support framework of the European Union has recognised this need and has provided funding to help them facilitate change (Papananoum, 2000). Despite the investment and the new

schemes of professional development, research indicates that the Greek education system is still failing in its primary purpose to upgrade the knowledge and skills of the teachers (Papananoum, 2000; Karofillaki et al., 2001). The Greek educational system, despite the number of the strategies aimed at increasing democratisation and decentralisation, remains highly centralised and bureaucratic (Kazamias, 1990). Teachers' professional development is not independent of this educational context and is defined and controlled at national level by the Greek Ministry of National Education and Religion Affairs (Gravani, 2007). The Greek Ministry of Education defined roles, responsibilities of the programme's organisers, university tutors who will lead these courses, numbers of teachers that will participate and their selection criteria, finances and resources for the purchase of books and other equipments. It also controls each programme during its progress by asking for monthly reports by the organisers (Gravani, 2007). Courses are also universally regarded as being poorly organised, operating spasmodically and paying very little attention to teachers' needs and expectations (Karofillaki et al., 2001). According to Papastamatis et al. (2009, p. 89) research:

Until nowadays, professional development programmes have failed to reach professionals' needs while they run randomly and uncoordinatedly, ignoring most rudimentary principles.

Legislation concerning teaching staff professional development in Greece, can be tracked back to 1910 with a training institute for secondary education teachers, while in 1922 training programmes for primary education teachers were introduced at the University of Athens (Papastamatis et al., 2009). However, the most important step towards teacher training framework in formal education was established under

Law 1566/1985, providing for a general framework for the restructuring and operation of education in Greece. Initial training of newly appointed teachers, annual training for teachers training with five years experience at least and short periodic training were introduced (Papastamatis et al., 2009). Since 1985, several changes concerning purpose, curriculum and structure of training programmes have been initiated. A major change was the creation, under the Law 2986/2002, of the Teacher Training Agency, a private entity and supervised by the Greek Minister of Education. The Teacher Training Agency is responsible for setting training policy, coordinating and implementing training activities. According to the Law 2986/2002 the Teacher Agency is responsible for the following:

- The planning of the in-service training policy for teachers of primary and secondary education.
- The coordination of all forms and types of in-service training as well as of the application of in-service activities.
- The development of in-service training programmes, which after the approval by the minister of education are delivered by in-service training establishments/institutions.
- The allocation of in-service training to appropriate organisations.
- The distribution and management of the funds allocated to in-service training of teachers.
- The accreditation of organisations and certifications in the domain of in-service training.

However, the 'Achilles heel' of all teaching staff development initiatives in Greece, has been the development of programmes which have as a goal the actual needs of teachers (Papastamatis et al., 2009). These programmes have been often characterised by a discrepancy between theoretical framework and teaching practice, ignoring teachers' needs, professional experience, knowledge and diversity between trainees

(Panitsidou and Papastamatis, 2009). The Greek teachers who participated in this research, mentioned these different programmes that the Ministry of Education offers to them and have a clear opinion about these programmes, as we will see in the analysis chapter. Moreover, programme contents have been randomly selected, rather than being organised and systematically researched teachers' needs. According to Panitsidou and Papastamatis et al., 2009, p.23):

There has been absence of provision for a continuous professional development scheme, in order to enable constant acquisition of necessary skills and competences to respond to overall demand for quality educational services and restructuring of the educational system.

How teachers learn in the course of an in-service course should be as important as what they learn (Gravani and John, 2005) and emphasis should be placed on the way by which teachers develop professionally as well as the conditions that support and promote this development. It is widely accepted that one of the issues with teachers' development programmes has been the tendency on part of staff developers to treat adult learners as children rather than as adults (Papastamatis et al., 2009). The quality and the style of teaching are influenced by the extent and the quality of the professional education and training. The more knowledge and skills that the teachers have, the easier they will plan and deliver their lesson and the better their students will learn.

Professionals without sufficient teaching knowledge tend to teach by instinct and we doomed to trial and error approaches (Arrends, 2006, p.46).

According to Panitsidou and Zafiridis (2009) in the name of transparency and merit based management, the Greek state is surrounded by a bureaucratic system of the public sector, a tendency which blocks

flexibility. Papastamatis et al., 2009 (p. 85) agree with this statement by suggesting:

Greek educational policy ought to focus on setting more flexibility and granting greater autonomy to schools and educational institutions, so that they could be able to function as 'learning organisations' fostering sustainable professional development of all employees.

To restructure in- service programmes in Greece, emphasis should be shifted from the delivery of the courses to a systematic understanding of the processes by which learning is created and shared in communities of practice (Gravani, 2007). In particular, the Ministry of Education and teachers should share authority and trust; they also need to communicate, create mutual boundaries and to be committed to their work.

## **2.6 Inclusion and teachers' work**

The inclusion of pupils with special educational needs (SEN) in a general education classroom has been an issue at the forefront of educational debate over the last twenty-five years across the world (Rose, 2001). Despite the growing support for inclusion, there is still confusion about its definition (Norwich, 2008). Campbell (2002) not only believes that what is meant by inclusion lacks clarity, but that its complexity leads to confusion. According to Kochhar et al. (2000) there is still no general consensus and as Farrell (2001) stresses, there are still things to be done before gaining a common agreement on the definition of inclusion. Hegarty (2001, p.244) comments that the effort given to defining inclusion is "striking" and he acknowledges the conceptual difficulties related to inclusion. According to Norwich (2008, p.19):

...the construction of inclusion as a universal concept representing a pure "value", that accepts no degrees, conditions or limits, leads to a conceptual dead end. Recognising the diversity of interpretations of inclusive education is one step, but if these interpretations are incompatible, then a response is required.

Inclusion could therefore be defined in a variety of ways (Ainscow et al., 2006). Booth considers it as "a process towards an unattainable goal" (Booth et. al., 2003, p.2). O' Brien and O' Brien (2002) rejects the idea of inclusion as a "mechanistic process", because inclusion involves humans, as pupils, teachers and parents. Nikolarazi and Mavropoulou (2005) consider that inclusion is not just a new programme or experiment, but it is a response to the economical, social, political and cultural conditions and humanistic values that appear in most societies.

In UNESCO documentation, inclusion is considered to be a "never-ending search to find better ways of responding to diversity" (UNESCO, 2005, p.15). From a practical perspective, inclusion is defined by UNESCO in the following way (2005, p.15):

- Inclusion is concerned with the identification and removal of barriers in order to plan for improvements in policy and practice.
- Inclusion is about the presence (where children are educated), participation (quality of experiences) and achievement (outcomes of learning) of all students.
- Inclusion involves a particular emphasis on those groups of learners who may be at risk of marginalisation, exclusion or underachievement.

The U.K. educational system follows a process suggested by UNESCO (2005) which some commentators consider to be in line with international trends towards successful inclusion (Hornby and Kidd, 2001).

Ideas about inclusion changed substantially in England over the course of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (Brownlee and Carrington, 2000). In the beginning, people with disabilities were considered as “problems” that needed to be helped (Brownlee and Carrington, 2000, p.99). The 1944 Education Act divided children with disabilities into eleven categories and provided them with special education (Hackney, 2000). Children were diagnosed by medical and psychometric assessment techniques, which grouped those children with the same symptoms (Cole, 2005). Cole argues that with this system, parents and teachers felt confident about their children/students and what was expected of schools (Cole, 2005). Removing children with special needs from schools took the pressure off teachers and removed their responsibility for teaching children who sometimes were considered unable to learn (Thomas and Vaughan, 2005; Thomas and Loxley, 2001).

The Warnock Report (1978) and Education Acts of 1981 and 1988 brought changes to schools, teachers and students’ lives. According to the 1988 Education Act, Local Authorities should:

... allocate an annual budget to each school, as part of the Local Management Schools (LMS) and the formula for determining the size of this budget must include provision for SEN. (Galloway et. al., 1994, p.3).

According to Clark et al. (1997) with the introduction of the national curriculum, schools were required to compete in the market place and the educational system demanded that teachers change their working practices and manage the balance between their beliefs and demands. Some teachers resisted integration along with the more general educational changes (Cornwall, 2002).

The World Conference on Special Needs Education in Salamanca in 1994, at which the Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education were adopted, represents the event that set the policy agenda for inclusive education on a global basis (UNESCO, 1994; Vislie, 2003). According to UNESCO Documents (Vislie, 2003, p.18) inclusive education:

- challenges all exclusionary policies and practices in education;
- is based on a growing international consensus of the right of all children to a common education in their locality regardless of their background, attainment or disability;
- aims at providing good quality education for learners and a community- based education for all.

After Salamanca, it can be argued that inclusion had obtained a global status; however, still there was not a formally fixed and stable use of terminology in the literature (Vislie, 2003). In England the subscription to the principles of the Salamanca Statement was transformed into a range of guidance documents to schools, which implied not only that schools should educate a large number of students with disabilities, but also many of the groups of learners who had historically been marginalised (Ainscow, 2006).

Two policy documents from Department of Education, *The Green Paper* (DfEE, 1997) and the Programme of Action- *Meeting Special Educational Needs* (DfEE, 1998) proposed that children with SEN should be educated in mainstream schools and that a common curriculum for all the pupils will be the most effective. The Green Paper was based on three principles (DfEE, 1998): creating a suitable learning environment, responding to individual needs and overcoming obstacles to learning and assessment of individuals and groups. According to Tod (2002) teachers have to face two challenges; firstly to be able to promote inclusive education and at the same time to keep high national targets and secondly to contribute to deconstructing segregation and exclusion with beliefs based on the ideology on inclusion.

However, in practice, things are different, as Ainscow et al. (2006) point out: students with SEN, even if they are in mainstream classrooms, are often relatively isolated. Tait and Purdie point out that some teachers, even after several years had passed, react unfavourably towards the notion of increased inclusion of students with disabilities (Tait and Purdie, 2000).

According to several researchers, teachers, even if they have a positive feeling towards the general philosophy of inclusive education, do not share a "total inclusion" approach to special educational provision (Avramidis and Norwich, 2002). Teachers have different attitudes about school placements, based on the nature of the students' disabilities (Avramidis and Norwich, 2002). English teachers are more positive about including students with mild disabilities or physical impairments than students with more complex needs (Avramidis and Norwich, 2002).

These researchers also maintain that teachers' attitudes would become more positive with the provision of more resources, support and a more educational environment related to SEN (Avramidis and Norwich, 2002). They argue that the most important implication for practice is the setting of appropriate external support systems; that the existing support groups should be reorganised and trained and new learning support teams should be trained to offer support to individual teachers who request guidance over teaching pupils with special needs (Avramidis and Norwich, 2002).

Research studies on teachers' attitudes suggest a number of implications for professional development in SEN to promote more inclusive teacher attitudes (Tait and Purdie, 2000). Pryor and Pryor (2005, p.25) assert that:

Once you know how a group of people think and feel about an object or idea- what their attitudes are, and how they are formed- you can effectively try to influence those attitudes in the desired direction.

Florian et al. (1998) point out the importance of initial teacher training as the start of professional development which will continue through an entire career. Weiner (2003) considers that professional development is not an event but a process and teachers need to spend time and energy on this process throughout their working lives. Thomas and Vaughan (2005, p.82) characterise the notion that only the special educators have the special qualifications required to successfully teach children with SEN as a "myth". Walker points out that the notions of "expertise" and "professionalism" were used previously both to support special

education and simultaneously to resist inclusion of children with SEN in mainstream classrooms (Walker, 1997).

In England, in a survey conducted in 2001 by the National Foundation for Education Research, 50% of teachers claimed that they needed more staff training (Archer et al., 2002). Others claim that there seems to be "a minimal input on teaching pupils with SEN in initial training courses and limited in- service training available (Booth et al., 2003; Hornby, 2002, p.8). Povey et al. report that professional development opportunities are often described by teachers as a "quick-fix" (Povey et al., 2001). Nevertheless, in Booth's view, some efforts seem to be taking place in teacher education in England, such as the introduction of new more relevant courses and more contact with schools and teachers to support inclusion (Booth et al., 2003). For example, the National Strategies were responsible for taking forward the commitment made in *Removing Barriers to Achievement* by providing a four- year programme of Continuing Professional Development (Heap, 2008). The *Inclusion Development Programme* (IDP) was designed to increase the confidence and expertise of mainstream practitioners in meeting high incidence of SEN in mainstream settings and schools. The first phase of the programme focused on Speech, Language and Communication Needs (SLCN), Dyslexia and future phases will focus on Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD), Behavioural, Emotional and Social Development (BESD) and cognition (Heap, 2008). These resources included a theoretical framework which gave teachers the opportunity to reflect on their beliefs and practices and discuss them.

In the last twenty years, in Greece, inclusion has become the dominant discourse in the field of Special Education (Zoniou-Sideri et al., 2005). Despite the move towards inclusive education policies, commentators argue that the inclusive education movement is still facing considerable obstacles, in the form of a number of theoretical and practical difficulties and contradictions related to the implementation of inclusive educational practices (Avramidis and Kalyva, 2007; Zouniou-Sideri et al., 2005).

The Greek education system has always been totally centralised and controlled by the state (Avramidis and Kalyva, 2007). Unlike the UK, no regional variations in terms of policies and decisions exist in the Greek education system. The Greek Ministry of Education takes decisions and applies them uniformly across the various Greek educational authorities (Avramidis and Kalyva, 2007).

The educational system in Greece has been competitive, knowledge and discipline orientated with strong emphasis on exams and qualifications. In parallel with the increased rhetoric around "difference", "inclusion", "representation" and so on, the educational reforms of the last twenty years intensify the competitive selective character of education emphasising knowledge acquisition and examination success. (Zoniou- Sideri, 2005, p.3)

The comparative literature on Special and Inclusive Education indicates that Greece has relatively low numbers of students identified as having "special educational needs" and low levels of "special provision" (European Commission, 2000, Vislie, 2003). According to Zoniou-Sideri et al. (2005, p.3) the low number of students having "special

educational needs" and low "special provision" could be explained by financial restrictions.

Until the 1980s, only a small number of special schools existed for students with "mainly normative categories of disability" (Zouniou-Sideri et al., 2005). In 1985 the Structure and Operation of Primary and Secondary Education Act 1985 (Government of Greece, 1985) promoted the integration of a wide range of children with "learning difficulties" into ordinary primary schools through the operation of "special classes".

Pupils with learning difficulties were considered those whose access to the mainstream curriculum was limited because of short-term or persistent problems in one or more areas of literacy, numeracy and learning skills. Each "special class" consisted of at least eight pupils with learning difficulties of a moderate to severe nature, and on very rare occasions, pupils with significant disabilities, who were only placed there with their parents' consent. (Avramidis and Kalyva, 2007, p.369)

Vlachou (2006) considers that the Greek description "special classes" is not very accurate and she used the term "support room/class", as she believed that the Greek "special classes" are closer to what the British described as part-time withdrawal in a learning support base. These "special classes" quickly became the dominant model of special education provision, but without any assessment and research into their effectiveness (Efstathiou, 2003). In 1983-4 there were seven "special classes"; by 1992-3 there were 602 and by 2003-4 there were more than 1000 (Zoniou- Sideri et al., 2005, p.3).

With the Law 2817/14.3.2000, the *Education of Persons with Special Education Needs* (Government of Greece, 2000) special classes were reformed, or as Zoniou- Sideri et al. (2005, p.3) commented “renamed” to become inclusive classes, reflecting an increased policy emphasis on inclusive education.

The Law enacted the design and development of individualised educational plans for children with SEN, which must be accommodated within the general curriculum with the support of appropriately trained educational staff. (Avramidis and Kalyva, 2007, p.369)

According to the Ministerial Degree 102357/G6/1.10.2002 for the first time, pupils with SEN could be educated in a mainstream classroom for most of the day and they also could attend the inclusive classes, which were limited to a few hours per week (no more than 10 hours). Only in exceptional cases and after the permission of the Centre for Diagnosis, Assessment and Support could the time period be increased (Zoniou-Sideri et al., 2005). Avramidis and Kalyva (2007) mentioned that since the enactment of the Law, 70% of the identified population of children with SEN have been placed in over 1000 mainstream schools with inclusive classes.

Zoniou- Sideri et al. (2005, p.3) view the model of “inclusive classes” as problematic for a number of reasons. Firstly, there was no research to prove that special classes had been effective for students with special educational needs in general education. Secondly, the model of special classes consists an “add-on policy” that does not suggest anything new to the overall structure of the mainstream schools and does not require schools to change their curriculum and practices. Thirdly, the

“idiosyncratic” way in which the special classes work, in contrast to the formalised way of the Greek educational system, results in diverse models of operation. For example, as Zoniou-Sideri et al. (2005, p.3) point out students with Greek as a second language often attend special classes after direct or indirect pressure from mainstream teachers, even though the Law does not accept pupils with Greek as a second language as pupils with SEN.

The simple “renaming” process that put into existence the “inclusive classes” trivialises the whole concept of inclusion. Inclusion instead of being an important issue of educational debate and reform was put into practice by a simple “bureaucratic trick”, by the change of a name. In this way inclusion, in the form of inclusive classes, inherited all the negative aspects of special classes without any scope for real reform. (Zoniou- Sideri et al., 2005, p.3)

The majority of the teachers working in the inclusive classes have a general education background. The teachers therefore take theory guidance from the Greek National Curriculum, which is accompanied by guidance books for teachers and textbooks for the students. However, there is not a corresponding official curriculum for inclusive classes. The role of the inclusive teacher is not only to work with individual students or group of students for a specific amount of time every week, but also to cooperate with the teachers of the mainstream classes. According to the research of Zoniou-Sideri et al. (2005), the majority of teachers cooperate with the mainstream teacher only about the “most important” subjects, such as Greek language and Mathematics. Another problem is that the inclusive class is usually located in a small classroom, in an

office or even a storage room, as this is a cheap and easy solution to the “problem” of inclusion (Haralambakis, 2005).

It is generally agreed that the recent arrangements have placed considerable demands on mainstream teachers who are faced with the challenge of meeting the needs of an increasingly diverse student population (Avramidis and Kalyva, 2007). Greek teachers have traditionally been sceptical about the inclusion of children with special educational needs (Padeliadou and Lambropoulou, 1997). Yet Avramidis and Kalyva’s (2007) survey about Greek mainstream teachers’ attitudes towards inclusion, suggests that attitudes were positive and that Greek teachers believed strongly that pupils with SEN have the right to be educated alongside their mainstream peers. However, teachers’ attitudes were strongly influenced by the nature and the severity of the child’s needs and they perceived the process as dependent on the availability of adequate support and resources (Avramidis and Kalyva, 2007, p.384-385). Another important finding from the survey refers to the influence of training in developing more positive attitudes towards inclusion. Greek teachers with further training in SEN and inclusion matters were found to hold more positive attitudes than those without training (Avramidis and Kalyva, 2007). Nevertheless, the findings of the studies from the last decade give an indication of the “isolation” of the inclusive classes within the context of the Greek schools and the Greek educational system (Zoniou- Sideris et al., 2005; Vlachou, 2006; Avramidis and Kalyva, 2007).

## **Chapter 3 Methodology**

### **3.1 The methodology of the research**

The focus of this research was to explore the perceptions and needs of secondary teachers of dyslexic students in Greece and in England. I aimed to obtain an in-depth examination of the situation of Greek and English teachers, to gain some insight into their concerns and listen to their own perceptions. The focus on human concerns and perceptions clearly indicated the need for a qualitative methodology which supported the gathering of data through contact with people and took into consideration their reactions, their behaviour and their emotions (Burgess, 1985).

The use of quantitative methodology would be very impersonal and intensive as these studies aim to select data that are mostly based on numerical results which permit statistical analysis (Parlett and Hamilton, 1976). In addition qualitative methodology tends to look at people's behaviour as it is related to the current social and economic situation, ignoring the role that their experiences, the past and the overall background has played in determining their attitude (Veal, 1995).

In order to accomplish the focus of this research, I sought answers to specific research questions which are listed below. As Fraenkel & Wallen state:

A research problem is exactly that- a problem that someone would like to research. Usually a research problem is initially posed as a question, which serves as the focus of the researcher's investigation.  
(Fraenkel & Wallen, 1993)

The aim of this research is to find out how dyslexia is conceptualised in the Greek and English educational systems on the moment and the implications of current understandings for training and professional development in both countries.

The focus of this study directed me into forming the following specific research questions:

- Do teachers receive professional training related to dyslexia? (If yes, when do they receive this training? Are they happy with this training? Would they suggest any changes?)
- How do teachers define and understand dyslexia in their classroom? (Do they believe in the existence of dyslexia? Could they identify dyslexic students in their classroom?)
- How do teachers teach dyslexic students in the classroom? (Do they use different methods and strategies in order to support dyslexic students' learning? Is it a "problem" to have the dyslexic student in the classroom?)

### **3.2 The illuminative character of the research**

In this study I was engaged in field work focusing upon a group of teachers aiming to explore their point of view and understand their vision of a particular situation (Hegarty and Evans, 1985; Hitchcock and Hughes, 1995).

As the study focused on Greek and English teachers and it was associated with sociological, educational and psychological phenomena, I adopted the illuminative approach. The illuminative approach is an interdisciplinary research style that has as its main characteristic the

interpersonal element, which is the main element of this research, as it is about teachers' views and the primary concern was the description and interpretation (Burton and Bartlett, 2005).

Great attention and interest was placed on teachers' perspectives, recognising that these participants had their own ideas (Hegarty and Evans, 1985) and saw and perceived things in their own unique way. The respect for the participants in the study and the recognition of the uniqueness of each individual perception forms the basis of illuminative approach as Burton and Bartlett (2005) point out:

Each participant is an enterprise is a theory builder, explainer, advocate, observer, rapporteur, informant; each has a unique perspective, vantage point and 'stance'... A commitment to acknowledging multiple perspectives not only preserves the integrity and independence of this study but also signals to participants that they are not used as mere data points... Both the quality of the findings and the ultimate acceptability of the report depend on people viewing the study as fair, detached, honest, broad-based and plain-speaking (p. 224-225).

The illuminative approach was adopted because its principles (Jamieson et. al, 1977) lie within the aims of this study. Initially, I aimed to identify issues which were of importance to teachers of dyslexic students in Greece and England, such as the definition of dyslexia, the diagnosis of a dyslexic student, the methods that teachers are using and the support that they have from the authorities. The next step was to acquire a deep understanding of these issues through the comments and judgements of the teachers selected to participate in this study. Their views and comments were not intended to help me to develop a theory or test a hypothesis, but they enabled me to provide such interpretations and analysis. This, in turn, allows me to develop a more

general theory about the way that teachers deal with dyslexic students in Greece and England.

Illuminative evaluation must not be considered as standard methodological package but as a general research strategy, which aims to be adaptable and eclectic (Parlett and Hamilton, 1976). Therefore, there is no specific method that can be used exclusively, but most illuminative research is based on observation, interviewing, analysis of documents, questionnaires and variety of other techniques. However, many researchers who are interested in listening to teachers' perceptions have adopted interviewing as their main method of research (Beazly et al., 1998).

According to Cannel and Kahn as cited by Cohen and Manion (1994, p.271):

The research interview has been defined as a two person conversation initiated by the interviewer for the specific purpose of obtaining research relevant information and focused by him on content specified by research objectives of systematic description, prediction or explanation.

These explicit objectives are the elements that convert a basic conversation between two or more people to a research interview (Powney and Watts, 1987). The interview provides access to what is inside a person's head, at best giving an authentic insight into people's experiences and in this way enables the researcher to explore people's views (McNeill, 1985). Interviewing, mostly in-depth interviewing is a key tool in qualitative research used not only as a data gathering technique but also as a tool to find out about people, as a way of

understanding social actions through the participants' point of view (McNeill, 1985).

### **3.3 In-depth Interview**

It has been mentioned that the main interest of this research was oriented to revealing teachers' perceptions and achieving teachers' views and experiences. Therefore, a semi-structured interview, which was also an in-depth or exploring interview (Silverman, 2001), was chosen as the most appropriate type of interview, because it aimed to develop ideas rather than to gather facts and statistics and to understand how teachers of dyslexic students thought and felt about the topics that were being researched.

The selection of the semi-structured interview was based on the fact that both I and the interviewee had more freedom and could produce information that might not derive from a more structured situation. I considered beforehand the general thematic areas and set a list of questions which aimed to address the areas that were going to be explored. However, I was allowed to introduce new material into the discussion, ask questions out of the sequence and interviewees were given a lot of power and initiative during the interview and they were allowed to answer, analyse, comment and describe in their own words, with the minimal intervention of the interviewer (Veal, 1995). The use of open-ended questions allowed me to probe, go into detail and clear up misunderstandings and also analyse and discuss further issues that came from the responders' answers (Cohen and Manion, 1994). Therefore, this type of interview could produce unexpected, useful and important information as it provided an open situation with great

flexibility and freedom, issues that have been well documented in the literature (Bell et al, 1984;Hitchcock and Hughes, 1995).

### **3.4 The interview schedule**

The major thematic areas that aimed to be explored were defined at an initial stage and in this way I tried to establish what type of questions were most of concern and could address the thematic areas to the best effect (see Appendix 2 for the interview schedules in English and Greek and the accompanying notes and procedures, including the consent form for interviewees). The aim of this study was to explore and understand secondary teachers' perceptions of dyslexic students in Greece and England. Thus, the overall interest of this study focused on the field of teachers and dyslexia. The field of dyslexia and teachers is a wide area, therefore it was considered as important to focus on the following areas:

#### **Dyslexia**

1. Meaning of dyslexia (definition)
2. Existence of dyslexia
3. Study of dyslexia
4. Description of a dyslexic student in the classroom
5. Policy about dyslexic students in a mainstream secondary school.

#### **Teachers**

1. Demographical information
2. Teachers' training in dyslexia
3. Teachers' beliefs about dyslexia
4. Teachers' knowledge about dyslexic students in their schools
5. Dealing with dyslexic students in the classroom
6. Suggestions and changes in the classroom according to their experience

7. Relationships with dyslexic students and their parents.

### **3.5 The sample**

Qualitative research allows flexibility concerning the selection of the sample which:

Reflects the emergent design of qualitative research, that is, the freedom it affords researchers to develop and adopt methodologies in order to gain new insights into the phenomena being studied. (Gall et al., 1996, p. 231)

A question that often should be answered by qualitative researchers is how large a sample should be so that the study can be effectively carried out. In qualitative research there is no exact sample size that is considered as appropriate or representative (Gall et al., 1996).

Qualitative researchers usually work with small samples of people nested in their context and studied in -depth unlike quantitative researchers, who aim for larger numbers of context-stripped cases and seek statistical significance. (Miles and Huberman, 1994, p.27)

Gall et al. (1996) argue that sample size in qualitative study does not follow specific rules. The sample may involve a large number of people (seeking breadth) or may involve a small number of people (seeking depth).

During March 2005 I prepared the questionnaire for the semi-structured interviews. I received the Enhanced Disclosure from the U.K. Criminal Records Bureau and the Research Ethics Approval from the University on 12<sup>th</sup> April 2005.

During August 2005 I sent letters to fifteen English Secondary schools in order to invite them to participate in my research (see Appendix 1). These schools belong to different LEA (Local Education Authorities) in

shire counties in the East Midlands in economically advantaged and disadvantaged areas. They are all mainstream schools and all had dyslexic students and specialist teachers to support these students.

Five schools did not participate in the research: a) The headmaster of one sent me a letter saying that they had already participated in some research during this year, and therefore they would not be able to help me. b) The headmaster of a second school sent me an e-mail that they could not accept my invitation because of new specialist status (management re-structuring). c) I was not able to make contact with the Special Education Coordinator of the other three schools despite numerous attempts and therefore I could not arrange for an appointment.

Finally, therefore, my sample in England consisted of ten teachers. I interviewed five teachers from different fields (teachers of English literature, of religious education and history and geography) and five SenCos (Special Educational Needs Coordinator). Most of the teachers were aged between 45 and 55 years old and had 20-25 years teaching experience. I interviewed nine women and only one man, who was the youngest (23 years old) and had only one year teaching experience. The interview generally took between 30 and 40 minutes and the interviews took place in an office in the teacher's school.

During August 2005 I also asked in the Greek Ministry of Education for permission to visit Greek Secondary Schools and interview teachers about their experience of teaching dyslexic students. The Greek Ministry informed me that I did not need approval from any office and the

decision of the Greek teachers about if they want to participate in my research depends totally on them. Therefore I identified ten Greek teachers, who agreed to help me and I scheduled appointments with them during April 2006. I interviewed nine teachers from different fields such as Greek literature, Maths and Physics and one school head teacher. (There is no equivalent to the SENCO role in Greece). There were eight women and two men; all were aged between 35 and 45 and each had 10-20 years teaching experience. They all work in public (state) schools and the interviews took place in the schools during the school day. The schools are located in different social areas of Attica (Athens), they are in both economically advantaged and disadvantaged areas. I did not send invitation letters to the schools, because the Special Needs Office of the Greek Ministry of Education, where dyslexic students are registered, does not have a central list of the students' schools. However I called at all ten schools and asked permission to interview teachers with teaching experience in a classroom with dyslexic students. I gained permission in all ten schools. It is therefore noteworthy that I had a 100 per cent success rate in gaining access to the Greek schools, but only a 66% success rate in gaining access to the English schools. This could be accounted for in a number of ways. It seemed likely that the English schools were approached more often by researchers than the Greek ones. Also the bureaucratic procedures, to do with child protection and entry to schools, are far more complex in England than in Greece. It also seemed that the pace of life and stress levels were faster and higher in the English schools, although this is of course a subjective judgement.

I therefore gathered twenty in depth interviews with teachers, ten in each country. Having analysed these twenty interviews, I decided to focus on ten in my research study. I chose five English and five Greek interviews. My procedure was, firstly to read all twenty interviews and code them and then identify the themes. Within the sample I found similarities in respondents, for example one responder in each group was the parent of a dyslexic child. Across each of the Greek and English groups, there was a great deal of similarities in the responses, although there were very clear differences between the groups. In order to allow me to analyse the data in some depth, I grouped the themes and selected a smaller sample of interviewees whose interview covered all the thematic areas identified across sample. I chose those interviews where respondents had elaborated most fully on their answers, as I felt this would allow me to understand the issues more fully.

I would like to stress that the findings of this study showed the reality as this was presented through the perceptions of English and Greek teachers.

Local context and the human story, of which each individual and community study its reflection, are the primary goals of qualitative research and not generalisability. (Miller and Crabtree, 1994, p. 293)

However, there is not a need to draw such a sharp distinction between the local and the general. The ideas originated from this research are intended to transcend the local and the particular. Although, I recognise that the perceptions of teachers in this study do not represent the perceptions of all teachers in England and Greece, in certain cases the perceptions of the sample in this study may illustrate a more general

reality. The coherence of the answers within each of the sample groups suggests that this was in fact the case.

### **3.6 Limitations of the sample**

I am aware that a more representative sample would include more teachers in the research. However, this was not possible in this study because there were no official records of dyslexic children that were educated in mainstream settings. Therefore, there were no records of teachers who had the experience of teaching dyslexic students in their classroom. Because of the lack of these records my sample was opportunistic, but illuminating.

A further limitation in the selection of the sample concerned the fact that I have used in my research interviews with female teachers only. This, however, happened as I had interviewed three male teachers, one English and two Greeks. The English teacher was young in age and with one year teaching experience, when the rest of the interviewees had at least twenty years experience and that was the reason that I decided not to use him in my sample. The two male Greek teachers' interviews were not as elaborated as the other once and because I had already decided not use the English male interview, I thought it would be better to keep stability in my sample and use the same sex in the interviewees.

### **3.7 Reflexivity and the role of the researcher**

I was aware of the existing suspicion concerning the authenticity and the objectivity of an illuminative approach, because of its subjective nature and the high degree of interpretative work by the investigator that illuminative evaluation demands (Parlett and Dearden, 1981).

However, I would like to point out that I developed the notion of perspective rather than the notions of "objectivity" and "subjectivity" as has been notified by Reason and Rowan (1981). The development of such notions is based on the fact that a basic assumption in illuminative evaluation is that there is no absolute "reality" that is objective, rather there are various perspectives, which the researcher should see from the position of a neutral outsider, without giving special attention to one view point and ignoring the others (Burton and Bartlett, 2005). Therefore, Coffey and Atkinson (1996, p. 163) argued that *qualitative research captures multiple versions of multiple realities*. It was a difficult procedure as I have been educated in the Greek system, school and university, but I have been educated in the English system too, but not at school, only university. I found it difficult to understand the English school system as I did not have any experience of it as a student or teacher. I had to read a lot about the evolution of the English educational system and read many times the interviews in order to discover and understand the various perspectives of the interviewees and then interpret and analyse discourse in English and Greek interviews. However I had an advantage in the Greek educational system, as I knew it very well as a student, training teacher and teacher. So there was a balance in the study. My knowledge of the Greek system and the procedure of discovering the English one made me take the decision to draw a comparative study between these two countries.

I considered that qualitative research and in particular in-depth interviews entailed some risk of prejudice as Hammersley and Atkinson

(1992) suggest that respondents may conceal the reality and give accounts which are not simply representations of the world but part of the world they describe. Moreover, due to the nature of the research technique, I realised that there were factors that influence and shape the encounters between me and the interviewee, such as my attitudes and opinions, a tendency to see the respondent in my way, misconceptions and misunderstanding concerning what has been answered and on the part of the respondent concerning what has been asked (Cohen and Manion, 1994; Hitchcock and Hughes, 1995).

However, I took into consideration a basic principle which Silverman (2001) suggests that it reduces prejudice:

If interviewees are to be viewed as subjects who actively construct the features of their cognitive world, then one should try to obtain intersubjective depth between two sides so that a deep mutual understanding can be achieved. (Silverman, 2001, p.94)

The reflexivity of this research was based on the relationship between the interviewer and the participant and the development of rapport with interviewees so that the interviewer and the interviewee would view each other as peers and companions (Hitchcock and Hughes, 1995; Reason and Rowan, 1996).

According to Kitwood as cited by Cohen and Manion (1994):

...it is necessary to generate a kind of conversation in which "the respondent" feels at ease. In other words the distinctive human element of the interview is necessary to its validity. The more the interviewer becomes rational, calculating and detached the less likely the interview is to be perceived as a friendly transaction and the more calculated the response a lot is likely to be. (Cohen and Manion, 1994, p. 282)

The development of such a relationship between the interviewer and the interviewee as described above aimed to make the participants feel free to speak about quite personal matters, trust me and furthermore enable me to move forwards and backwards during the interview and raise further questions in order to clarify points (Hitchcock and Hughes, 1995).

### **3.8 The transcription**

Transcription is an essential before the analysis takes place; it involves not only the literal statements but also non-verbal and paralinguistic features of the communication (Cohen and Manion, 1994). Transcription is not simply a technical detail that precedes analysis, rather it is a research activity which involves careful repeated listening that often reveals very significant elements that were previously unnoted (Silverman, 2001). Although, transcription is a time consuming process, it is necessary and the time that the researcher spends transcribing the data accurately enables the researcher to gain familiarity with the data (Hitchcock and Hughes, 1995).

Although I aimed to present as accurate a transcription as possible, I am aware that the transcription is not the interview itself and that the spoken word differs from the written word (Powney and Watts, 1987). The most basic difference concerns the fact that oral speech is more spontaneous, has rhythm and is combined by various postures, characteristics that together give a certain meaning to the words of the person who is talking.

Transcription takes a long time and I estimated that for a 45-50 minutes interview there was a need for a 4 hours transcription. The transcriptions of the interviews were particularly difficult because they had to be translated into English. The transcription and the translation occurred simultaneously. This means that in addition to the fact that the researcher had to transcribe the interview and type it in the computer, she also had to translate it. Translation was not simply a changing of words and sentences to another language. I had to find the most appropriate expressions which could convey to the reader the meaning that the responder wanted to give, I had to take in consideration many cultural differences which, although they were perceived by me, could not be easily transferred in another language and be understood by a reader who is familiar with the way that the Greek society is structured. I have tried to be accurate and I am aware that the transcriptions may entail meanings which cannot easily be conceived because they could not be conveyed in another language. However, despite these difficulties I tried to present to the reader a transcription which was as precise as possible.

### **3.9 Development of thematic areas**

The analysis followed certain steps which involved selecting, categorising, synthesising and interpreting in order to provide the necessary explanations (McMillan and Schumacher, 1989).

The first step towards the analysis was the development of categories, which included the careful reading of each transcript of the interview. This first reading was necessary in order to acquire a general picture of the interview. Further readings were required until the thematic areas started to be developed. The development of thematic areas was done

based on the method known as “open coding”, widely used in grounded theory, which involved exploring patterns and breaking down the data into discrete patterns known as segments, comparing for similarities and differences, identifying particularly meanings and phenomena (Strauss and Corbin, 1990; Bartlett and Payne, 1997).

Once I identified particular concepts and phenomena in the data, I had to group them and list them under the name of a general category. The name of the categories related to the thematic areas that I had set from the beginning; at the beginning of this study I identified the aim of the study which was to explore teachers’ understanding of dyslexia in Greece and England and I set some broad thematic areas upon which this study was focused. The questions of the interviews and the responses of the participants addressed the thematic areas and in this way, each concept that was related to a certain category was placed under it (Strauss and Corbin, 1990; Bartlett and Payne, 1997).

The general categories that linked to the thematic areas were about teachers’ definition of dyslexia and description of a dyslexic child. I needed to clarify if teachers’ understanding of dyslexia was analytical and diagnostic (Payne and Turner, 1999) or if it was based only in their classroom experience. Based on Frith’s (1999) three main perspectives, I explained their identifications. Another thematic area was the English and Greek legislation about dyslexia and in relation to the teachers. The actions that teachers took in order to teach and support the dyslexic students and all the relatives aspects, as CPD, inclusion, LSA and parents (Bates, 2002; Vries and Pieters, 2007). This thematic area would expose the differences and similarities between policy and practice,

according to Brain typology (2006). And, finally, teacher's feelings and satisfaction of the support that they offered to dyslexic pupils (Gewirtz and Ball, 2000). This final area presented teachers' voice.

I did not look exclusively at each thematic area but I aimed to maintain an overview of the data as being part of the whole of a wider picture so that I could look into relationships between the various categories and "formulate a series of insights and hunches in the light of the relationships observed". (Hitchcock and Hughes, 1995, p. 297)

## **Chapter 4**

### **Data Analysis**

#### **4.1 The English teachers' interviews**

##### **4.1.1 Bianca's interview**

Bianca had worked in education since 1989. She took a PGCE course to become a teacher and then a master's degree specialising in religious pluralism. At the time of the interview Bianca taught religious education in a large and academically successful mainstream secondary school and she was the deputy SENCO of the school. Before and during the interview she mentioned that she wanted to learn more about dyslexia. Bianca considered that she was the only specialist in her school about dyslexia. She considered herself as the one that supported the dyslexic students and helped the teachers.

I am the specialist in this area so I am doing the research myself, so we don't have anybody else that is quite familiar with dyslexia.

Bianca produced a booklet in order to help her colleagues to understand dyslexia. Conversation prior to the interview and during the interview itself suggested that Bianca considered the booklet made an important contribution. The title of the booklet that she made for the school is "Practical Classroom Strategies for Pupils with Dyslexic Tendencies".

Bianca said that first time that she heard and learned about dyslexia was in her current school. Since then she reported that she had undertaken a lot of "research", reading different books, articles or attending seminars. She characterised herself both as researcher and as "a new learner".

I think I heard the word in the background because I did not always have anything to do with special needs, but the word dyslexia has been in the education sector for some time now.

Bianca mentioned that she had attended three seminars about dyslexia, only one of which she found useful.

She defined dyslexia in the following words:

Dyslexia is that you look at a word and you see the first letter and you think you know what the word is and you don't really because actually you have not read the whole word. You have seen maybe the first letter or two letters and you have said. "Right, o.k. It's *motivation*." And after you have another look and it's not fitting in the sentence and you go back again and it wasn't "motivation" it was "meditation".....you know for me it is misreading words.

Bianca's primary definition of dyslexia therefore focuses on guesswork and prediction, which she understands as an element in dyslexia. Her definition centres on a perceived problem in "misreading" words. Bianca also described her own experience with a student who she considered presented a classic case of the symptoms of dyslexia.

He was saying the letters seem to move off the board.

This was the extent of the description she gave of the student, other than to say that he was "intelligent" and "struggled" when copying writing off the board. Bianca's description therefore moved from the identification of a reading difficulty, to an assessment of his overall intelligence and then to a focus on his writing difficulties. Her second

point, however, was about the student's seating position in the classroom.

Again the classic was to sit at the back of the classroom in the corner.

Because a degree of ambivalence ran through Bianca's responses, I asked directly "Do you really believe that dyslexia exists?", to which Bianca responded:

No, I think it's poor readers, actually. They need extra help with reading. I don't think it's dyslexia, no. It's confusing words and confusing letters. That is purely. Because it's poor readers.

As it happens in the week in which I conducted the interview there had been a well publicised television documentary on the subject of dyslexia. In our conversation prior to the interview Bianca had mentioned this TV programme. The thesis of the programme, which I had also seen, was that dyslexia does not exist. I was surprised by Bianca's response, which suggested that she also did not believe that dyslexia exists, since she appeared to have accepted the concept and worked with it in her previous responses. Therefore I asked whether she felt she had been influenced by the TV documentary. Bianca's response was again negative.

No because I felt I-I-I often talk to my colleagues: "Oohhh hang on, the more we read this, this is me". And then the colleague would say: "Yes this is me as well!" And you are saying: "Well, everybody can't be dyslexic!"

Bianca's frame of reference for understanding the existence of dyslexia was therefore highly personal. Her argument appeared to be that if she

could recognise characteristics of "dyslexia" in herself and also her teacher colleagues, this would suggest that the characteristics were simply "normal" human characteristics and not "symptoms" of dyslexia. Dyslexia by this definition is part of a continuum or set of characteristics which people might have to greater or lesser extent, not a special condition. At this point in the interview therefore the logic of Bianca's position was to deny the existence of dyslexia.

Further in the interview, however, Bianca explained that she considered herself to be dyslexic. She related this particularly to her reading processes.

The more I read about it, the more  
I begin to believe that yes I do  
have some symptoms of dyslexia.

At the end of the interview she returned to this same analysis, pointing out that she "strongly" believed that she had been dyslexic by remembering when she was student and she was a weak reader. She described so vividly her own experience.

I began to believe that yes I have  
some symptoms of dyslexia. .... I  
do strongly believe that I was  
dyslexic as well. Partly because I  
look back and I can understand  
what these children are going  
through, you know. And when you  
are in classroom situation and you  
read... I was a weak reader and I  
used instead of following the book  
I used to think any minute she  
would ask me to read. That was  
most worrying in my mind and if I  
was asked to read I used to try  
pretending in front of the rest of  
the class that I can read really fast  
and then while I was reading fast  
there goes "motivation /  
meditation" and so on. I looked for  
information there and you know I

looked at *in* and then I think it's *for* and I was making another word, "informative" or something. And then "oh this doesn't make sense". And I have to go back and it was like I need to prove to the rest of the classroom that I can read as fast as you.

Apart from few times that she used the word dyslexia or dyslexic, most of times during the interview she used the word "weakness" and "weak". It was noticeable that she used this same word thirteen times. Other words that she mentioned many times were the word "motivation" and the word "support", especially when she was trying to find out procedures to help dyslexic students.

Bianca explained the procedure that she followed in the current school when she thought that one of her students was dyslexic. Bianca's school could offer only one diagnostic test and an educational psychologist, who visited the school every three weeks. However, the school had organised homework clubs, which offered reading and spelling sessions for twenty minutes in small groups. According to Bianca, these groups are mixed, students with behaviour problems, reading difficulties, or "just lazy", but not dyslexic.

The extra classes support them, so we are giving them reading and spelling sessions at midday registrations twenty minutes, you know sessions. So they are all in small groups two or threes, and these aren't always dyslexic or could be a statement or behaviour problems as just struggling.... some of them are just lazy, just have behaviour problems, some of them struggle to read and write but are not dyslexia, it's just this weakness.

I asked her to say to me if she had seen any improvement in students by following this procedure of extra support through homework clubs. She replied positively, with excitement repeating three times, "yes, yes... yes very much...we are very happy." However, the success she was referring to related to one student, who the previous year was struggled to read and to write; by giving him extra time during the exams and by providing him with a writer and reader in the exams, he passed.

He did very very well, he got some C's, which we were very surprised about, you know and successful...we were all very very happy. You know this is the person who struggled to read and write and he has gone to college now.

According to Bianca, supporting dyslexic students in class was beyond the teachers, as there was not any money and people to help the teachers and the students. Even if the teachers wanted to offer more, they could not, as there were not facilities, money and specialists to help.

That's the maximum support that we can give, you know, because the money isn't there, the facilities aren't there and it all come down to money issues... We cannot give them support in every lesson, because this is above us, so we actually trying to distribute the support where it is needed and so the maximum we give is three lessons out of each subject especially the core subjects English, Maths, Science.... the help is there but is a minimum, you know, so it just depends on whether the person is available... we have to ask for help, sometimes we get it, sometimes no.

She considered that if she had the power to change something in the education system, she would separate classes according to students' abilities. She believed that setting should happen to all the classes for all the lessons. She thought it would be the best solution to have an upper middle and a lower set, where the teacher could "bring the best out of the students". Bianca knew that diplomatically she should say that everybody should have equal opportunities and rights to learn, but in reality she believed that things were much more difficult and the teachers "were not magicians".

The only solution is to have an upper class and a middle class and a lower class. And yes all the politicians would argue "well done, you labelled" the reliability and that should not happened but the real solution is when I was in school, you know those solution did work with all done all right, but I think, you know that actually it work (a child pays) it get more out of it you try rushing them, rushing them, rushing them, you know and that's the solution really...to have mixed classes doesn't always work.

Bianca described also her own relationship with the parents of dyslexic students. She thought that even if some parents wanted to support the effort of the teachers, even if they were keen and they had started well by giving big promises, in the end it would fall apart:

It starts for a week or two but the parents have busy lives and then they give up. Most parents would prefer the school to do it all. Some parents make a good use of it, start with good intentions...

In Her view the biggest issue and worry of the parents was the written statement of special education needs, which would prove that their children were dyslexic. The parents really wanted their children to have a written statement provided by the local authority to explain whatever the problem was. However the authority did not give easily the statement.

They actually want it written down. The authority doesn't want to write it down, it will say yes, we will give them extra time in the exam time, we will give them support in class and so on but parents. Some parents, not all, would say, no my child has dyslexia and so therefore I want a document to say he has dyslexia. And the authority says well no it maybe be some tendencies, so the only way to get around it is to say to parents that your child has some tendencies and then that covers 99.9% of the population. You all have tendencies in dyslexia.

#### **4.1.2 Julia's interview**

Julia had worked in education since 1986. She did a degree in psychology and sociology and then she trained in teaching in social and political studies. At the time of the interview Julia taught leisure, tourism and geography in the mainstream school, where she herself had been educated when she was a student.

When I originally made contact with the school SENCO to arrange the research interviews, I was directed toward Julia as the teacher who was most knowledgeable about dyslexia and therefore appropriate to interview. It was clear that the SENCO had considered my letter, which set out my research questions. She told me that Julia had an expertise

in the area of dyslexia and mentioned that Julia's own daughter was dyslexic. When I first met Julia, I was therefore surprised that she immediately claimed that she had very little knowledge about dyslexia and she was worried about what she could offer to the research. In fact, Julia said that the first time that she heard about dyslexia was in her current school. She reported that since then she had read some articles and she had attended a useful seminar that her school had organised. She mentioned that she wanted to know more about dyslexia as she had a daughter who was dyslexic.

Julia considered that the special educational needs team of the school was doing an excellent job and offered support to the teachers and students. She maintained that the special needs provision in her school was of a high quality:

I find in this school that we are given a lot of support by the special needs team, a lot of support, they are very good.

Later in the interview, however, Julia explained that the support that the Senco team offered took the form of a booklet containing the names of the students with learning difficulties.

Yes you get support. We get this booklet and this is full of information about dyslexic students, and then we get specific information about teaching a dyslexic child or a child with behaviour difficulties and we renew it every year, so to know which children need our support.....

Extra support in class was offered by teaching assistants with no specialist knowledge of dyslexia or of literacy support in general.

We call teaching assistants, who will come to the classroom and sit with them but they are not for children with learning difficulties, but...but not in terms of dyslexia. Behaviour difficulties and things like that. Most of my teaching assistants' support is behaviour as well as the reading skills.

Julia's definition of dyslexia focused on "decoding the information on the page", on reading and writing difficulties.

They are looking a word, but they don't see the letters in the same order we do or the same way round. So when they copy that word letters can be reversed or put in a wrong order. I think the classic letter reversal or things like copying from the board....

When asked to describe a dyslexic student in her classroom, Julia used entirely positive images. She was keen to minimise any potential differences between dyslexic and other students to the extent that she did not mention any learning difficulties at all.

Challenging ....interesting and one that I worked with very orally, very capable, very articulate with what they say, which for me as a teacher is often hidden by the dyslexia, because they can be so confident, so sharp.

Julia explained the methods that she followed when she had a dyslexic student in her class. She used some techniques that the special educational needs coordinator advised her to try and some others that she had created and thought would be helpful for the dyslexic students. Her main teaching strategy was to bring the student to sit next to her:

Apart from bringing them in my desk.....

A further strategy was related to the use of different colours:

I use the trick writing each line in a different colour.

For students engaged in examination work. Julia acted as an amanuensis at the computers.

with my year eleven students at the moment one boy in particular he sits next to me, we do research and I ask him a question and he answers me and he speaks and I am writing down what he is saying, he then goes to the computer and types that up, then I have to go and spell check, because he can't even always transfer my notes on to the computer.

It is notable that the strategy of using the spell check is one that remains in Julia's control. Julia believed in these teaching methods, but she was uncertain about why they were working.

I don't know if this is a proper method, but it's helping him to achieve his grade.

I write each line a different colour on the board, it seems it helps them, I don't know why, but it seems it helps them and we record that information....

I am not sure if this is an appropriate method, but I am not expert, I couldn't diagnose...

In general she rejected the role of expert on dyslexia, as she had made clear at the beginning of the interview. Nevertheless she referred often to the amount of experience she had and the relative success in teaching dyslexic students.

I have been teaching twenty years and even now I don't really think

that I know enough about dyslexia  
or any other learning difficulty

Julia's idea of what worked relied upon small group teaching. She saw this as the educational solution to teaching dyslexic students.

I think the idea should be smaller classes, because I find, if I have got 30 students and I teach them for one hour per week... if some children need my support, they are taking most of my time and I must be neglecting other people in the group... particularly the higher ability students, so smaller classes would hopefully allow me to give more support to the full ability range if you like. There are those that are finding reading and writing very easy and there are those who have challenges. So I think smaller groups.

She also believed that some students needed individual support outside the classroom.

I can't give the one to one attention that they need, so for some children bring them out of the classroom to get one to one support or small groups, I think it would be very good.

She supported the inclusion of more able dyslexic pupils in her classes and expressed concerns about setting, which implied support for mixed ability teaching.

children that are more able to cope in a mainstream classroom, I think it's better to keep them, because, because they get access to all this information, so yes, may they aren't able to write it down really quickly, but they hear that information and they get that knowledge and understanding, which they may not get it, if they put in sets, you know.

Julia suggested that oral methods of teaching helped to support dyslexic students and that writing was of secondary importance and could be differentiated by task.

I don't know the word to make it simpler, ... in my class I just work all the way up to the higher ability range and my discussion to the higher level thinking skills. So everybody gets access to that whether they can write it down or not and my written tasks are differentiated. So, you know, I have three different levels of written work.

This led Julia to re-emphasise her own lack of expertise in the area and her sense of powerlessness.

They think that I am an expert, but I am not, I can only work with the parents.

She felt that she was able to talk about the issues but not propose any real interventions as solutions.

In parents evening, if dyslexia is an issue we will talk about it, but usually this is with parents that they want to talk about it and who are interested and they want to help the child as much as they can and understand, I suppose...

Julia also described her own relationship with the parents of dyslexic students. She thought that the parents accepted that their children had learning difficulties.

I don't think that I have ever come across with anybody who is in denial...

However the parents were "in the dark".

They don't have the information either how to help the child, you know like me.

In her view to have a dyslexic student or child was very hard and needed more time and more support and more help. Julia believed that the teacher should sit next to the student and be there for him/her. She repeated many times how difficult it was.

It's hard. It takes a lot of extra support and extra help. Yes, it does...take a lot of teaching time.

After I had finished taping the interview, Julia spoke at some length about her daughter's dyslexia and the issues she had faced in relation to her schooling.

#### **4.1.3 Rebecca's interview**

Rebecca had worked in education since 1973. At the beginning of all the interviews I asked some demographical questions. One of them was about the age of the interviewee. When I asked Rebecca about her age, she looked around her, she ran to close the door of the room and she came next to me and she whispered her age (55) in my ear. Rebecca did a first degree and a Masters in Special Educational Needs in reading. At the time of the interview Rebecca was the Special Education Needs Coordinator and the literacy coordinator in her school.

Rebecca said that the first time that she heard and learned about dyslexia was a long time ago but she could not remember when exactly. Rebecca kept informed about dyslexia through magazines and articles and by attending seminars, when she had enough time. She considered the seminars as an opportunity to "refresh her memory".

If I had time I probably would (attend more seminars). Sometimes. Yes, usually because they remind you of things that you should know. They also refresh you.

Rebecca felt she had an expertise in using professional journals. She knew where and for what to look.

I would probably look – if I really wanted to know something – I would probably look at the journals in the university or I would ring the Dyslexia Institute or that kind of thing. I quite like understanding the theory that underpins the strategies but I don't always have enough time.

Rebecca's definition of dyslexia focused on "information processing" on writing and speaking difficulties.

It's a difficulty in processing language really. Sometimes it's written language and sometimes it's oral and sometimes it's with numbers. But it's a sort of information processing thing.

Later in the interview, however, Rebecca did not want to define a dyslexic student, because she thought that it would not be right to label the student.

It depends on how you want to define "dyslexic" but in terms of putting them on a register and in terms of dyslexia making them more than two years behind then, well (we have in the school) over a hundred dyslexic students. If you want to identify them in that way.

Rebecca believed that all the dyslexic students are different, so dyslexia could not be generalised.

I don't care! I think that if somebody has a difficulty then it's my job – whether it's (dyslexia) there or not – to work my way around it and help them to achieve. So giving it a name is neither here nor there. I think they are all different. We have kids right across the spectrum.

When asked to describe a dyslexic student in three words, Rebecca gave entirely three social definitions of dyslexia. She was keen to minimise any potential differences between dyslexic and other students to the extent that she did not mention any learning difficulties at all.

Well, "underachieving", "lack of self esteem" and "embarrassed or self conscious".

Rebecca explained the procedures that she followed when she had a dyslexic student in her class. She used different programmes in the computer as "Toe by Toe", "Flash", "Accelerate Read and Write" and different books from the Dyslexia Institute according to the needs of the student. Rebecca taught them in groups inside and outside the classroom. She used programmes, which supported students' writing without paying attention to the spelling mistakes.

I tend to use something like Spelling Made Easy and we do that. I tend to, you know, make it quite clear that spelling is not that important anyway and, in terms of their English, I always say: "Forget about it. We'll sort it out in the end".

Further strategies were related to their reading:

And then there are different strategies within that teaching to help them. Things like comic sans font and coloured paper and stuff like that...I have a number of

books from the Dyslexia Institute for things like units of sound and stuff like that.

According to Rebecca only 25 students in her school had a statement of special educational needs from the Local Education Authority and would have extra support in the form of a classroom assistant during the lesson. However, she did not know which of these 25 students had the statement for dyslexia.

Only a few (have a statement), only those at the extreme end. The LEA now is trying to stop statementing children who have dyslexia so we have twenty-five statements and I don't know how many of them are for dyslexia but it's not many... If they are statemented then it is usually five hours (classroom assistant during the lesson).

I asked her to say to me if she was happy with the procedure that she followed and if she would make changes. She replied that the reading strategies were successful, but she did not believe the same for the writing ones.

Children do improve in terms of reading quite a lot but in terms of writing we are not particularly successful. We find writing very hard to impact on especially to make it generalised across the board and that is very hard because children can perform in one area and they don't take it with them. As I say for reading we have a good track record but in terms of writing the children do make improvements but not enough.

Rebecca considered writing was much harder for dyslexic students. She thought of writing as a permanent “weakness” of the dyslexic student.

There are some whose strengths get stronger and whose weaknesses we can work on. It depends on the child and their circumstances. I think in my experience usually if there is a weakness in spelling it can, it depends on what type it is really. There are people who can improve but there is always a slight weakness there in spelling. I suppose it depends on how you see it and what form it takes.

Rebecca was frustrated by the “emotional blackmail” from the head teacher of the school and the system. She described a situation verging on financial abuse in the special needs department by the head teacher, who tried to find enough money to run the school. She blamed the system for the way the money was allocated. She also highlighted her own lack of power and the moral dilemma of the choice she faced.

The local authority gives us £160-170, 000 of which I receive £50,000 for teaching assistants and the rest we don't get. Also the authority gives a certain amount for children who are statemented and I get the statemented money but I don't get the School Action Plus and the head pays salaries out of it so he says that I can make people redundant or I can have the support for the children. Now that is not my decision and I feel that is emotional blackmail...I have stamped my feet and argued but I am not sufficiently powerful enough to change it. I've even told the governors and everything but the problem is that heads don't have enough money to run schools so do you make staff redundant? What do you do? So, in the end, the targeted money doesn't go to

the targeted children and I think that is wrong.

According to Rebecca, even with a much smaller number of teaching assistants, they tried to help dyslexic students.

My children and my staff actually work very hard to achieve what they achieve because instead of having something like twenty teaching assistants in a school like this I have six. Somewhere between fifteen and twenty is the number we should have so there is a big difficulty there.

Rebecca considered that if she had the power to change something in the education system, she would make the schools smaller, make sure all the teachers were qualified and create a link between the school community and the parents' community.

I would make the schools smaller; non selective and I would give teachers time to study and research what they are doing and I would not have unqualified people teaching classes which we have in this school. I think that is where we are going wrong. I think it is unfair on the staff and it's unfair on the students and it waters down a system which has been hard won anyway. And then I think I would ensure that all schools were a community centre fully integrated into the community with parents.

Rebecca analysed further her statement about unqualified teachers. The causes of this situation, according to Rebecca, were the tiring and stressful job of being a teacher and the size of the school.

In any walk of life there are those who are prejudiced or bigoted who will teachers get tired and this is a

big school and it's stressful. I'm not going to criticise colleagues but I do think that the perceptions of special needs and the perceptions of dyslexia must vary so much that it is very difficult to have a consistent view on things. It's very hard to gain a consistent approach.

Rebecca did not agree with the idea that dyslexic students should be in a special classroom. She believed that students should make their own decisions about the nature of the support they received after they had been informed about options.

I think it's a mixture of both, isn't it? There are some children who wouldn't come out if you paid them money and there are those children who love to come out. I think the children have the right to make their own decisions if they are well informed and also they have the right to be treated and consulted and dealt with respect so, in this school, by and large, most kids want to come out. There is one or two who won't come out so we support them in class. But until they are ready to accept help there is no point in bringing them out. I wouldn't take a hard and fast line on it.

Rebecca believed that dyslexic students can cause trouble in the classroom or have emotional problems; however this behaviour is the consequence of the failure of the system and it is not their own fault.

Yes, especially when they get older but then why not? If the system doesn't support you or acknowledge you or recognize you and you find trouble with reading then you haven't got a vested interest to behave, have you? So there are some students whose lack of basic skills affects their

behaviour. I'm quite unhappy about it and I will try to do something about it but I feel the system has failed them.

Rebecca felt unhappy about this situation and she tried to support these students by working with a big number of outside agencies or by using "circle of friends" in order to support dyslexic students with behavioural and emotional problems.

I work with about twenty-six outside agencies so there are a number of people I could call on...We did things like that so if there is someone who is vulnerable in that way then we will use the circle of friends if they are happy with it.

She ran family literacy groups in the school once per year in order to help the parents to understand and learn to support their dyslexic children. Rebecca said she never had any problem with parents who could not accept that their children were dyslexic.

I had an evening last night for which parents were invited to come in and I shared the strategies that I use with the parents so that they can use them at home. And I have run family literacy groups in schools... I run one evening a year really and all I do is explain what they could do to help their children with their reading. I don't teach them how to teach reading or spelling or anything like that but what I do is show how I would like them to support their children by showing them my procedures, if you like.

#### **4.1.4 Diana's interview**

Diana had worked in education since 1977. She did an English degree and she had specialised in special education. At the time of the interview Diana was the head of learning support in a large and mainstream secondary school.

Diana said that the first time that she heard and learned about dyslexia was a long time ago, when she did her Special Education course. She had read about dyslexia during her studies, but she believed that understanding of dyslexia had changed since then.

Well it was quite a long time ago so I think attitudes and research has changed. At the time it was interesting but now things have moved on.

Diana kept informed about dyslexia through journals that school provided to her and by attending seminars. She expressed her concern about some of the seminars and research in dyslexia, because they were about primary school and not secondary.

Some of them are quite primary school based so you have to pick and choose. Sometimes the research forgets it's a secondary school so that's the hard bit. You've got to make that fit our situation.

She defined dyslexia in the following words:

Well I was about to say "literacy" but now probably just "a learning difficulty that goes across everything" and not just literacy.

Diana's primary definition of dyslexia therefore focused on something more than "just" a learning difficulty related to literacy, but her overall

definition was vague. Diana also described her own experience with two students in the school, who she considered presented cases of dyslexia. Her sense was that they had a “more severe difficulty” than simply literacy problems.

I think that I have got children in this school who have got a literacy difficulty and then I have got – not many – but I would say two out of the whole of this school who have more than just that and which affects not just their literacy. So I take that as dyslexia... I can say that within our school I’ve got two children who I can’t explain it other than a more severe difficulty.

However, when I asked her to picture a dyslexic student in the class, she described a student whose learning difficulties appeared to be exclusively related to reading, writing and spelling and therefore might have been defined as literacy difficulties.

Somebody who finds it extremely difficult to record work that makes any sense; somebody who can’t read their own work; somebody who – even with the simplest of words – can spell them in three or four different ways on the same page; somebody who relies on other strategies of learning such as listening or the visual.

Diana’s description of a dyslexic student using three words was based on deficit language, but was relatively general and unspecific. Her language was negative and generally related to social rather than cognitive difficulties.

Lack of self esteem; below average; inarticulate.

According to Diana's analysis, there were just two dyslexic students in her school. However when she was asked how many students were officially considered dyslexic, she responded:

I must have- on the special needs register- I think, we are probably in the twenties with a dyslexic diagnosis.

She explained that in her county a student would not get a statement from the Local Education Authority only for dyslexia, but he/she would also need to have another difficulty.

Some have and some haven't (the statement). In ..... they don't get a statement for just dyslexia.

Diana explained the procedures and methods that she followed when she had a dyslexic student in the class. She used different programmes on the computer and offered to the student special support one to one out of the class.

They take one language instead of two. We teach French and German so they will chose which one they want and in the time that the rest of the other children are doing their second language these children will come out for special support. We use the (?) B Dyslexia programme; we use Toe By Toe; we use Alpha Omega. So we have a range of schemes, if you like, and we chose which one is more suited to the individual child. They also then have - during registration time in the morning - they have more intense one-to-one. So they come out in a small group of, say, five or six and they will work with an adult one-to-one twice a week as well.

According to Diana the teaching assistants were helping with this procedure, as they were the ones that would support the dyslexic student in the class by helping with the writing and reading. Diana explained that the teaching assistants that got involved with dyslexic students were qualified and had the skills to help.

They know that if they are going into a class what the range of abilities are in the class and who to work with; who to write homework down for; who to describe words to and those sorts of things... The way I do it is that there are three of them who will concentrate on dyslexic students so they are the ones that will go on the courses and they are the ones that we try and make sure that they have the right skills.

I asked her to say to me if she was happy with the procedures that she followed and if she would make changes. She replied that she and her team did a lot of work and tried to learn as much as they could, but she thought that if they spent more time with the students, they would be able to help them better. Diana expressed her concern that meeting the students three times per week was not enough to help them.

I think if I could take them out more regularly. They come down to us instead of going to their language twice a week for an hour and they come after registration once a week. Ideally I'd like to see them for some support every single day but that is quite hard to do.

Diana considered that if she had the power to change something in the education system, she would fund it differently to offer more one to one support.

I would fund it differently so that I had got some... we know that funding somebody with them makes the difference. We do a lot of work with the teaching assistants scribing so that we are getting them to be articulate because we do exam concessions so it affects the students if they get an amanuensis and so I'd like to work on that more. So that's funding. Really just having more access to them. It's very small steps really.

According to Diana there was no cure or solution to dyslexia. Diana's idea of what worked relied upon individual teaching.

I don't think there is a cure or a solution. I think it's working with the child in whichever way you can and none of them will fit the same pattern so you have to work with them on an individual basis.

Diana believed that dyslexic students could be trouble in the classroom and this was because dyslexic students had very low self-esteem and they realised that they were different from the others.

They can be (trouble) and that can be the result of low self esteem. One in particular has low self esteem because his work doesn't look the same as somebody else's. Some of them know that they can't do it and sometimes schools depend so much on what is written down. So what can you do? If you don't understand it then you can get attention in other ways. So occasionally that happens... I think it can be because it's not just their reading and their writing - it's the way they think and it's their organisation. So it's making sure that they take things in visually or, I mean we use lots of Dictaphones. You can't just walk into a classroom and deliver: you've got to differentiate.

According to Diana, this “differentiation” would not be only during the lesson; the teachers gave homework to dyslexic students by using different techniques and quantities in order to be easier for them to give the answers.

It can either be exactly the same but we ask them we bullet point so that the answer can be written in. Or they will get a differing amount or they will be asked to do a diagram. It’s a mixture – depending on the subject. We use quite a lot of PowerPoint, we use a lot of interactive whiteboards and that seems to help because some of the children have access to laptops which they find a lot easier to manage. We teach keyboard skills as well. Again, it’s not tricks but dictaphones or taking verbally their responses.

Diana believed that the school tried hard to support the dyslexic students emotionally by building high self-esteem for them.

If they are feeling very vulnerable – which some of them do – they will have a mentor so they’ll have either a teaching assistant or a sixth former who they will meet once a week. We have a positive book for them so that positive comments are written down. We make sure that they get certificates so that when they do Toe by Toe they will get a certificate for it. And we are constantly reminding staff to give merits to dyslexic students.

Diana also described her own relationship with the parents of dyslexic students. She thought that generally the parents accepted that their children were dyslexic and they would be very supportive.

In this school we have parents who will say that their children are dyslexic. Some parents are, most

of the parents, are very supportive.

However, occasionally some parents would use dyslexia as an “excuse” and were too demanding about what the school could provide.

Sometimes I find that some parents use dyslexia as an excuse for children who aren't particularly achieving. So they will put down the lack of achievement to dyslexia. We do have the occasional one or two who want a lot of difference made and it's impossible. If they are going to have access to a curriculum in a secondary school it's quite impossible to do what some parents want us to do.

#### **4.1.5 Susan's interview**

Susan had worked in education since 1987. She did a first degree in Science and a Masters in Special Educational Needs. She had a diploma in dyslexia and also two postgraduate qualifications, one in education and one in the education of autistic children. At the time of the interview Susan was the Special Educational Needs Coordinator in a comprehensive school in a rural town.

Susan said that the first time that she heard about dyslexia was a long time ago, when she taught in a school for dyslexic students for three years. She kept informed about dyslexia through books and courses that she attended, however she considered courses and seminars rarely offered her new information.

It's very difficult to find about new resources and things like that, but you intend to read a bit everywhere about dyslexia.

Susan's definition did not focus only on learning difficulties, but on different things:

It's those sort of things, because, I mean many of our staff say "oh they cannot read, they cannot spell", but for me it is the memory, the physical coordination side, because, you know, for them it is a way of life.

Susan believed that dyslexia existed, but she thought that people were "misdiagnosed" as they looked only for the literacy difficulties and not "the whole thing".

Yes, I believe (that dyslexia exists). I believe that there are people that they misdiagnose, it's just a weakness in spelling or weakness in reading but they don't get the whole thing.

When asked to picture a dyslexic student in the classroom, Susan pictured a student with learning and behavioural difficulties.

They are very, you know sometimes they are very quiet and sitting in the corner, just they don't want to be noticed, but you know verbally answering something sometimes, but nothing in the book. Or sometimes they are very very naughty; because they are covering up they cannot do something.

Susan described dyslexic students as:

They are often very able..... It's under achieving really

Susan was conscious of her own expertise, which was marked by the number of degrees she had. She could exchange ideas with the inclusion support service in her local area.

We do have inclusion support service people that work along side us, but I tend to have more qualifications than they have now, but we do liaise, we do talk to each other about what is available.

Susan was able to recognise easily the dyslexic students in her class.

I am used to recognising them, so you can usually pick them very quickly, but one or two don't quite fit all the categories or there's other stuff obviously you don't recognise.

She explained that in her county it was rare for a student to get a statement from the Local Education Authority only for dyslexia; the student would also need to have another difficulty. She attributed this to the funding.

Not in ..... It's very-very rare for a child to be statemented at all. We are supposed to be a leading county for them, special needs, but their attitude is you should not get any more money by statements and things like that. So we don't attend to do it. We have one child in the school who has got statement, because he is dyslexic but he is also an autistic. The dyslexic tends to work at the "school action", or at "school action plus", on the code of practice.

Susan considered that she had a pivotal role in identifying children with dyslexia, in responding to parents' anxieties and in rectifying mistakes that had been made in primary school.

Most of the children are identified before they come to us in the secondary school, often they are coming to us in year seven, we have got a lot of information because we are getting the

cognitive reliability test results and if there is something in there that doesn't match verbal or non verbal scores are very different. Then I will ask parents "can I check?" and usually the parents are fine. Sometimes the member of staff will say to me "look this child's work does not reflect what I am seeing, will you have a look?" or sometimes the parents will say to me, "look I am really worried." Often they have been all the way through the primary school and I think "something is wrong, something is wrong". But they don't do anything and then they come here and we get them tested....

Susan placed great emphasis on the importance of diagnostic testing. She used different tests to identify the learning difficulties of the students.

What I am tending to do is some diagnostic spelling tests, which identify all their difficulties and looking how to write coursework and things like that. So we build a programme around them, so we have lots and lots of different resources that have to do with different strategies. There are never more than two or three children that we are doing something similar with, because they are so different.

According to Susan, after the diagnostic tests, the dyslexic students would have some support in some lessons from teaching assistants, or special programmes, which were different for each student.

Depending on how dyslexic they are, I mean we tell all the teachers, they get some support within lessons, we have a lot of teachers assistants are going around and for some of the children we are drawing out to

follow a special programme to work. It's different for each child.... Again it's different for each child, but we do have programmes for dyslexia, like Alpha to Omega and other sort of things, but I don't really like any of them. Some of them work on them at home, because they don't like it in the school.

When I asked her if she was happy with the procedures and methods that she followed, she replied that there were helpful, but the support that she and her team were offered was too small and that was a problem.

It's helpful to a lot of them (students), but there is never enough. They all need so much support and you know you can only give them a little, little bit. We have got one student that is doing his A Levels now and he puts everything in a folder and we type everything for him, but this is only one student, there are hundreds out there. That's the truth.

Susan considered that if she had the power to change something in the education system, she would offer more knowledge and training about dyslexia to the teachers.

I would like all the teachers to get a sort of dyslexic not necessarily qualification- but more awareness. You know we have got a lot of new teachers again this year and each year you've got to start again and there is not enough education about dyslexia when they learn to how to teach. So I want to put more of that in the system.

Susan analysed further her statement about teachers training. According to Susan, the cause of this situation was the few hours of training about dyslexia that trainee teacher had.

A lot of them I will work with the newly qualified teachers in the school, but I've got one session to work with them, so its a couple of hours after school and they all tell me that they had half a day on special needs.

According to Susan there was no cure or solution to dyslexia. Susan's idea of what worked relied upon teaching strategies.

No, I don't think that they will ever be cured. It's not going to go away. The only thing is to teach them some sort of coping strategies.

Susan did not consider it difficult to teach in a classroom with dyslexic students; however she did not believe that her colleagues would have the same opinion as her.

I have found what strategies I can put in use for them that actually help everybody. You know, you reduce the writing and things like that for them. It's often a waste of time to sit and copy from the board anyway. Just it helps everybody.... I think a lot of teachers would, for me as I worked for long time with dyslexics, it's a long time, but I think a lot of staff, you know, they don't put enough effort in for some of them, because, it is, it is a huge amount that needs to be prepared for them or just a different way of thinking. We have got some that need photocopying different coloured papers, just planning things and they take a long time, you know. Children supposed to wear coloured glasses, so it's a lot of things to remember to do.

Susan believed that the school tried to support the dyslexic students emotionally by offering psychological and behavioural services to them.

Yes, it's very difficult to give these children the confidence and things like that. I mean I do have one that has a very severe depression and it's all related to his dyslexia. I mean for him we have gone..., he has support to each every lesson now, we have provided him with a laptop through the council to type his notes rather than to write them.

During the interview Susan frequently returned to her own role as advocate on behalf of the individual dyslexic students, and the lack of expertise in the school and in local services.

Again educating the staff that look he has got an issue, he needs that support, he cannot do the work, just constant reassurance ... We do have a behaviour unit. The dyslexic students do not much access to that. We also have the support of the behaviour services they are available if we need that. And the educational psychologist is working with some of the children.

## **4.2 The Greek teachers' interviews**

### **4.2.1 Vanessa's interview**

Vanessa had worked in education since 1982. She did a degree in Physics in the University of Athens. She trained in teaching in the subject of Physics. At the time of the interview Vanessa was a teacher of Physics in the mainstream school, where she had a permanent position.

Vanessa said that first time that she heard about dyslexia was ten years earlier in her current school. Since then she reported that she had

attended many seminars about dyslexia, as more and more students in her current school were diagnosed dyslexic.

I have voluntarily attended many seminars; because I paid regard to this topic (dyslexia) as I see the dyslexic students in Greece all the time are increased in every classroom.

Vanessa attended many different seminars about dyslexia that were theoretical and their duration was two to three hours. However, she was informed about these seminars from her children's independent school.

No, I was never informed by the school or anybody else. Only by myself when I was hearing anywhere about seminars, I wanted to attend, to participate and to hear some things, but never something organised by the school or the Ministry of Education.... It happens that my children are registered in independent school and from there I learn about dyslexia and I run to attend the seminars. It's only because of my interest, otherwise it's possible someone would not even to know the word dyslexia, simply when the head teacher would say that we have a dyslexic student and should be examined only orally, only that.

In general Vanessa rejected the role of expert on dyslexia, as she had made clear at the beginning and during the interview. She referred often to the small amount of knowledge that she had in dyslexia.

I believe that I don't know many things about dyslexia and I wish to learn more.....I don't know exactly what that means (dyslexia).

Vanessa defined dyslexia in the following words:

Dyslexia might have many aspects. Now, clinically, I cannot say many things, I am not a doctor, but it should have many different models.

Vanessa's primary definition of dyslexia therefore focused on something "medical", but her overall definition was vague. Vanessa also gave a definition according her own experience as a teacher. Her sense was that dyslexic students had learning difficulties.

I observe the dyslexic students and dyslexia can be difficulty in maths, difficulty in writing, difficulty in concentrating....it's very easily for the dyslexic students to be inattentive.

When I asked her to picture a dyslexic student in the class, she described a low level student with concentration problems.

Usually the dyslexic student fails in attention. Generally the dyslexic student isn't very calm, most of the times he jumps, he doesn't concentrate, and even if we push him/her to attend the lesson and advise him/her to focus on attention, I know that the dyslexic student cannot cooperate.

Vanessa's description of a dyslexic student using three words was based on deficit language, but was relatively general and unspecific. Her language was negative.

Usually he/she (the dyslexic student) is abstracted, he jumps all the time and he cannot concentrate.

Vanessa explained that the number of the dyslexic students increased continually and that year in her current school 15% of the students were dyslexic and they had the proofs from the public Medico-Pedagogical

Centre. Vanessa believed that apart from the students that had the diagnostic report from the centres and could be only examined orally, there were also other students, who were dyslexic, but they did not want to be diagnosed. She thought that the concept of dyslexia was used by some other students, who took advantage of the situation to be dismissed from written examinations.

The students, that we have named dyslexic, they have been diagnosed and at the end of the year we will examine them orally, of course if they want they can also take written exams, but I believe that probably there are other students, who don't want to be named dyslexic or there are others, who are not clearly 100% dyslexic and they have been diagnosed dyslexic in order to escape the written exams. They think that we will treat them with leniency.

Vanessa thought that the public Medico-Pedagogical Centres were hospitals. She explained that the specialists from these centres never visited her current school in order to explain to them what they were doing and how the teachers could help the dyslexic students. Vanessa considered that the specialists were very busy and they did not have time to visit schools.

Vanessa explained the procedures and methods that she followed when she had a dyslexic student in the class. She would pay more attention to that student, support him/her more and be next to the dyslexic student to give more explanations.

I will go closer to the dyslexic student to check his/her work, ask him/her if he/she has understood the lesson, I might test him/her more often. This is what I can do. I

cannot neglect the other twenty students.

According to Vanessa, it was difficult to teach a class with dyslexic students as there are many different levels in together. The teacher would have to stand next to all the students and be able to recognise the dyslexic student from the other one that pretended to be the dyslexic.

First of all I feel understanding for them, I will go close to them and I will explain to them, but there many things that need to be explained and it's difficult for the whole class. If there is a big diversity then it's difficult. You should stop ten times and say pay attention to the lesson you, and you, and I am explaining this for you, and again pay attention, and if we didn't say all this we could continue our lesson. And the students are feeling bored, because they can't attend to the lesson....However, they aren't all dyslexic. Maybe it's dyslexia with laziness together. Dyslexia with laziness and maybe a little spoiled, the student might say, "since I am dyslexic, I will take advantage of it", there is also craftiness from the student's side.

I asked Vanessa to tell me if she was happy with the procedure that she followed and if she would make changes. She replied that she tried hard, but she thought that if the student had been diagnosed when he/she was in the primary school, the difficulties would be much less for the student and for the whole class.

Anything that could have happened, it should be done already when the student was six, nine or ten years old, now in the college, it's too late, the modules are much more difficult and the exams push the students. It's too hard for the teacher to sit

down and deal from the start with this student. It should be that this procedure already has taken place.

Vanessa considered that the school was not obligated to offer any kind of support to the dyslexic student. It was a personal decision of the teacher, if he/she wanted to help and stand next to the dyslexic student.

I believe that nobody can force me (to support the dyslexic student), only my conscience. The school is expecting from the teachers to take the initiative to do something.

Vanessa's view about the corroborating teaching classes was positive and optimistic. She saw some positive results from these classes, especially when students started with good conditions and they asked early for this extra help. Vanessa's experience from these classes was that the average level students started the programme, they continued and they had reasonable results, but the other students dropped it.

According to Vanessa there was one way of making the collaborating teaching classes work properly and have positive results for all those who attended. This solution related to "the homogeneity" of these classes.

The solution for the collaborating teaching classes is to be divided according to different levels. The students who are coming to learn the a, b, c, one level, the students who are in the middle to be separated, and the students that they want to learn, to continue to another class. If you put them in the same class, a very good student with a medium student, the students and the teacher will suffer and some will stop making the effort.

Vanessa considered that if she had the power to change something in the education system, she would suggest individual teaching.

Unfortunately, these students should have individual teaching that means that we put everything together and we try to offer something, but few things can happen like this. Every school should have a lower class with the weak students and the teacher should go slower, to cover fewer things, to insist more on some points and support the students. A middle class with the medium students, where the teacher can go little faster and the upper class where the teacher can offer them something more, the unique, and to feel better. I think that all the students should be in the same school, but in different classes according their level. They should be all together in order not to feel that they are different or second which is bad for their psychological situation.

Vanessa considered that there was no cure for dyslexia, if dyslexia was something organic.

I don't think that there is any cure; they can just reach very high, if they try. For example when I was attending a seminar about dyslexia in independent school, there was a woman that had reached the highest level of education and she did postgraduate and research studies etc. She was dyslexic and she had received many insults from her teachers during her school years in the old days when there was no knowledge about dyslexia. However, she became stubborn and she got over it herself and she succeeded.

Vanessa described also her relationship with the parents of dyslexic students as exactly the same as with the other parents.

I do not have any problem with them. They are as the other parents.

#### **4.2.2 Penny's interview**

Penny had worked in education since 1997. She did a degree in Maths in the University of Athens and then a Master's degree specialising in programming in Paris. She also had a postgraduate qualification in Organisation and Management in Business. Then she worked for some years in a government department where she specialised in statistics. After ten years she started teaching in schools and she attended a distance-learning course in dyslexia from the University of Thessalia, however she did not complete it as she needed to submit her assessments by e-mail and she had difficulties with the internet. At the time of the interview Penny was a mathematics teacher in a mainstream school, where she had a permanent position.

The first time that Penny read about dyslexia was in the training seminars that she did when she started teaching. There she realised that her daughter was dyslexic.

In the Programme of Educational Proficiency, I realised that my daughter is dyslexic, when they gave me some papers, how the writing of dyslexic students is, it was like I was seeing my daughter's writing at a younger age, because now she easily covers her "marks" of dyslexia. It seems as if she is not dyslexic and her teachers don't believe it. But I took her to the hospital and they gave her a diagnostic report of dyslexia.

Penny kept informed about dyslexia through journals, books and seminars. She read many books about dyslexia, as there was a library in her school. However, she found things more different in practice than

was suggested by the information that she had from the books and seminars.

O.K. there was in the school's library many books, but it's different in the theory from the practice and every child is different and we (the teachers) have many children in every class.

Penny believed that she and the other teachers did not have enough knowledge about dyslexia.

No, I don't believe that I have enough knowledge about dyslexia, but I don't need them, neither me, neither any other teacher in the school. Here, in this school we don't have many dyslexic students. This year, I have one dyslexic student with a diagnostic report only in one classroom, of course it's possible to be more dyslexic students in the classroom but without the diagnostic report, but these students cannot be helped in a class with all the other students.

However, later Penny changed her mind and she thought that she wanted to know more about dyslexia, but she did not know anybody that could help her.

I don't think that I have learned everything....But there isn't someone that can help us (the teachers), there isn't someone that we can ask for more information.

Penny defined dyslexia in the following words:

Dyslexia is a learning difficulty....that doesn't have any relation with mental retardation; on the contrary dyslexic children are very clever. The dyslexic children's brain "runs" faster, it's going forward and what you say to them confuses them, because they are going back.

Something like this I think it's dyslexia.

Penny considered that dyslexia existed and presented differently in each student. She described her own experience with two students in her current school. These two students were cases of dyslexia but they presented different characteristics.

No, I believe that dyslexia exists. It's not a specific figure. For example, this year I have a boy, who is very shy, he isn't moving at all, every time I approach him, he blushes, he never writes well, he has many difficulties....and he tries to avoid me. However, all dyslexic students aren't like this. Last year I had a girl in the third year of secondary school, who was so easygoing, she was feeling that she wasn't able, when I said to her that "you can do it" and I gave her some courage and I examined her orally, she gave me amazing answers, better than children that are excellent students.

When I asked her to describe a dyslexic student in her class with three words, Penny produced an entirely positive and social definition. She was keen to minimise any potential differences between dyslexic and other students to the extent that she did not mention any learning difficulties at all.

Insecure...clever.....and tired from his/her effort.

Penny explained the procedure that she followed in the current school when she thought that one of her students was dyslexic. Her answer was "nothing". The only thing that she could do was to discuss it with the other teachers in their meetings and the director could have a further discussion with the students and parents. However she believed

that the best solution was the Integration classes, which the school could organise.

In Limnos (Greek Island), where I taught for three years, the head teacher brought these classes into action and he had a talk with the parents and the teachers. We had started from the first year of the secondary school and the mathematicians and the classical scholars prepared a test, a diagnostic test, very easy and by this test we understood which students were weak. So we organised integration classes of eight to ten students.

Penny believed that the Integration classes were a good support and help for the dyslexic students, however she was surprised when she found out that these kind of classes were not possible in her current school, because of lack of money.

It's the school's initiative the Integration classes, but when I moved back to Athens and I started working in this school, I suggested these classes, because here we had a big problem with the many different levels of the third year. There were students with learning difficulties and in a class of 28 students, 14 had difficulties. However, when I suggested to the head teacher, firstly she was very interested and she asked in the Ministry of Education about it and they said to her that in the big cities, there is no Integration class. It doesn't exist! And when she asked why, they said to her because there is a lack of money.

Penny explained the methods that she followed when she had a dyslexic student in her class. She knew to use some techniques, but she was not

always able to use them because of the lack of time and the length of the materials that she needed to teach.

If the things that I should teach aren't too many and if it is something that I can do, yes. When I was teaching in the first year of the secondary school, I drew the exercises and this helped many students and they could follow the lesson more easily, but now I cannot in the third year, it's not possible with the trigonometry.

According to Penny there was no cooperation between the school and the public Medico-Pedagogical Centre. She argued that there was a lack of these centres in many places of Greece. Penny mentioned a case of a dyslexic student who had to take a written examination, because there was no Medico-Pedagogical Centre in that island to diagnose and support the dyslexic student.

There is no cooperation with the school and especially in areas that they don't have these centres where they can go for the specialists to diagnose, evaluate and support the dyslexic children. In Limnos we had a big problem with a student and finally he took his exams in written form. He had the diagnostic report, but because this paper should be renewed every three years and the student couldn't travel to another island to visit the centre, he didn't get it.

Penny believed that the diagnostic report did not offer any further information or help to the teachers. The teachers without knowing how exactly they could help these children, were alone in the whole procedure.

This paper diagnoses the child as dyslexic and the student should be examined orally. We (the teachers)

don't know how to overcome this kind of situations. We try to help the student, to giving him/her more time, we let him/her by himself/herself in the classroom during the exams and when we finish the exams, we examine him/her orally slowly and we help him/her.

Penny considered the corroborating teaching classes could be helpful only when the students attended all the lessons, something that did not happened very often. Penny thought that if she had the power to change something in the education system, she would organise Integration classes in all the schools and for all the years. She believed that that was the only solution for the dyslexic students.

According to Penny there were many difficulties of teaching in a classroom with dyslexic students. The problem was that the teacher would be unfair with somebody all the time, the dyslexic students or the others. She also thought that the dyslexic students could be naughty sometimes during the lesson.

Sometimes, I am obligated to be unfair with them, I cannot always continue fast and I need to insist more on the new things of the lesson and repeat them many times, but I cannot always, because the other students would be bored and they want to continue and learn more and faster. Especially in the class that I have this year the dyslexic student, all the students, are very good, all of them, but fortunately the dyslexic student is sitting next to a very good boy and a very good student and he is helping him.

Penny described her own relationship with the parents of dyslexic students. She thought that parents were not informed about dyslexia

and they were in the dark and they could not accept that their children were dyslexic.

If the parents don't want to do something about their children, the whole thing had been ended. There are many parents that they don't want to believe that their children are dyslexic and they say that "it's not dyslexia, they are lazy". The parents aren't informed.

In Penny's view to have a dyslexic student in the classroom was hard and the student needed a lot of support from the teachers, something that Penny could offer more easily because she had a dyslexic daughter. She believed that they also needed psychological support from a specialist, because these students felt they were failures.

I personally love them and support them a bit more because I have a dyslexic daughter.

#### **4.2.3 Carol's interview**

Carol had worked in education since 1976. She did a degree in Modern Greek Literature in the University of Athens and then took a Master's degree in special needs in a University in Great Britain. She started also studying English Literature in the University of Athens, but she did not complete the course for personal reasons. At the time of the interview Carol was the head teacher of the mainstream school, where she had a permanent position. Before and during the interview she mentioned that she had a great deal of knowledge about dyslexia and she considered that she was the only specialist in her school about dyslexia. Carol considered herself as the one that supported the dyslexic students and advised the teachers.

Of course I believe that my knowledge is more than what it is needed to be to be able to diagnose

and teach dyslexic students.... As an expert, with a colleague from primary education I am translating exclusively the articles of the Association of Dyslexia....We have participated in many conferences about learning difficulties and I have done a lot of research about dyslexia in secondary education and teachers knowledge, their methods, the contribution of the parents to the students' learning..... and I have taught newly qualified teachers in the second Programme of Educational Proficiency about learning difficulties. And there I realised that teachers are in the dark about dyslexia.

Carol produced her thesis from the Master's degree that she got in Great Britain. Conversation prior to the interview and during the interview itself suggested that Carol considered her thesis made an important contribution for the research in dyslexia in secondary education.

Carol said that the first time that she heard about dyslexia was between 1983-1985 when a diagnostic report of dyslexia came to the school for a student. Since then she reported that she had undertaken a lot of "research", reading different books and articles or attending seminars.

About dyslexia I have read a lot, because that was the topic of my thesis in my postgraduate studies. Since 1998 I have been doing research about dyslexia. Of course, I am informed all the time about new research, furthermore dyslexia is a topic which is developing all the time and as it's well known the researchers haven't yet decide what dyslexia is.....I have read all the latest bibliography about dyslexia and I am a subscribe to research journals, English books and I am a member of the British Dyslexia Association.

Carol explained that one of the main reasons that she was interested in dyslexia was that her relative was dyslexic.

I have a dyslexic relative and that was one of the reasons that I started my postgraduate studies in the education of dyslexic students. I have diagnosed him dyslexic. He was lucky as we started to study together from the beginning of his primary schooling. I have designed a special programme for him and he had a special teacher who followed this programme at home.

Carol did not want to define dyslexia and she referred to her thesis to find the definition.

It doesn't matter for me what dyslexia is. You can find in my book the definition of dyslexia.

Later in the interview, Carol said she believed that every dyslexic student was different, so it was difficult to picture him/her. So she decided to speak about specific cases of dyslexic students in her current school. She described her relative from the time he was a little boy until nowadays when he was 15 years old. She described a boy not only with learning difficulties, but also with health problems and special needs.

We should speak only for specific cases, because dyslexic students are different, so dyslexia shouldn't be generalised. For example, I could describe my relative to you, a boy with an attention deficit, a boy that until he was 13 years old was not able to knot his shoelaces, he could not zip his jacket, he had vision problems and I was the one that pushed his parents to send him to the eye doctor. He is underweight and as you might know underweight children often are dyslexic according to research. I believe that he is a characteristic case of a dyslexic child and I think that it's a severe case

that includes everything. And of course he has learning difficulties. His reading was terrible, but he was lucky and I helped him with a special teaching programme that I designed. So now, he is in the last grade of secondary school satisfactory, he doesn't have comprehension problems, but he needs someone, who should be a special teacher next to him all the time.

According to Carol dyslexia exists and it has a neurological and genetic nature. She thought that dyslexia was a very serious subject which the parents and the teachers were not ready to accept and to deal with.

I don't believe that dyslexia is an educational exaggeration, dyslexia exists, but it's not a simple topic as the parents and the teachers face it.

Carol explained that neither the Ministry of Education nor any other organisation offered any help or support to teachers or students. There was a lack of information about dyslexia in schools.

The only that I remember that we have received in the school was a 11 pages leaflet "The dyslexic adolescent" by a professor of the University of Athens. One copy of this leaflet has been given to each school with symptoms of the dyslexic student and the intervention that the school should make at the psychological and not the teaching level and not teaching. And continuously we receive legislation about the way the examination of dyslexic students should be conducted. And last year I was shown an interesting seminar about dyslexia with decent hours, which in the future would be developed to a postgraduate course from the University of Thessalia.

Carol believed that her current school or any other school could not offer much to the dyslexic student because “wrong people were in the wrong places”. She explained that public Medico-Pedagogical Centres were established to help in diagnosis, evaluation and support of the dyslexic students. However, today these centres were few in number and they were not specialised in helping dyslexic students from secondary schools.

The public Medico-Pedagogical Centres have been established for 10 years, they have been increased, and however there is lack of specialists for secondary education. For the teachers of the primary education the situation is much easier, you can find many specialists for the primary education, but not the secondary. It's unbelievable that teachers of primary education diagnose students of secondary schools or high schools.

Carol explained that there was no cooperation between the Centres and the schools and the teachers. She considered that there was nobody that could help them and answer teachers' questions about dyslexia. Carol believed that even the coordinators did not give solutions to the problem.

We (the teachers) don't have any relation with the Medico-Pedagogical Centres. The parents are going by themselves, they apply and they are waiting for their children to be diagnosed..... In the secondary education there is no special teacher who would be sent to a department of education or to visit different schools and offer new teaching methods to the teachers and psychological support to the students..... Even the coordinators don't do anything. They find “easy” temporary solution. They don't want to find a permanent solution.

Carol was doubtful about the value of the diagnostic reports. She did not know if these reports were reliable and should be given in all the cases of dyslexia. She considered that the diagnostic reports did not offer any help to the teachers in supporting the dyslexic students. Carol made it clear that she did not agree with the diagnostic reports and she decided to read in front of me a diagnostic report of one of the students of the school without mentioning any personal detail of the student. She concluded that "the diagnostic report does not say anything!"

I am not sure if these diagnostic reports are all reliable and if they describe the gravity of the situation. I think that it's woolly ideas... You must have heard that many parents went to the court to find out why some students got these reports..... These diagnostic reports do not offer any information to the teacher that can be used. For me who has done so much research all these years I don't understand it. Imagine a teacher that he/she has never heard this terminology to have in hi/her hand a diagnostic report. It should be analytical. I was expecting 2-3 pages at least with suggestions and reference to a specialist.

I asked her to tell me if she was happy with the procedure that the system followed and if she would make changes. She replied that she did not think of the oral examination as a solution to dyslexia and she suggested that every school needed a special teacher to teach and support the dyslexic students.

It's unbelievable what it is happening here. We give the student the diagnostic report for three years and we facilitate the students by examining him/her only orally. This is a benefit of the state, because the state cannot do anything else. It's a "present" to the students to be

examined orally but the student has to forget the writing, instead of insisting equally on the writing and speaking. My opinion is that the student should not stop writing, because the writing is very important. The school should have a special teacher and a supporting class at least for the Greek language. A special teacher who would spend 3 hours per week from each secondary school or high school and the time that they are doing Greek language the 3-4 dyslexic students should be in the supporting class with the special teacher. And of course a psychologist could help with all the other things, which are not academic.

Carol also described her relationship with the parents of the dyslexic students. In her view the biggest issues and worry of the parents was the diagnostic report, which would prove their children were dyslexic and the score that they would have in their modules.

The parents are coming to school and asking for weird things. For example how we can help the student in the classroom to get a higher score. And we should explain to the parents that the problem is not the score. The problem is how the student will cover the gaps to be able to finish the year and to be ready to continue to the next one. Of course there are parents that think that they have solved the problem by themselves. They have been to private institutes and they also pay private tutors at home to help their children. However, these tutors are irrelevant to dyslexia. But the important thing is not what the parents are doing individually for their children but what the school is doing for them.

#### **4.2.4 Monica's interview**

Monica had worked in education since 1979. She did a degree in Biology at the University of Athens and then she attended different seminars about the subject of biology. At the time of the interview Monica was a teacher of Biology in a mainstream school, where she had a permanent position.

Monica said that first time that she heard about dyslexia was not during her studies but when she started teaching. Since then she reported that she had been informed about dyslexia by some leaflets that the Ministry of Education sent to schools, but she thought that this was not enough. Monica was also informed by the parents of dyslexic students. However, she did not believe that she had enough knowledge about dyslexia.

We receive some leaflets from the Ministry of Education about dyslexia. Most of them are about the way that the oral examination should be done and they describe dyslexia with few words. These leaflets are useful, but are not enough. Now, occasionally, I find these leaflets and according my mood I will learn something new or not before I put them in my bag....I try to study some thing about dyslexia and get informed from the parents that have dyslexic students. They are going to private institutes and they give them professional information.

According to Monica, only school's psychologist would offer her some support and advices.

There is a psychologist, who is coming once per week and she can advise the teachers, the students and the parents. Anyone he/she wants. So, if I wanted to have some more information about dyslexia,

then I would refer to her, if she could help me.

Monica defined dyslexia as a learning difficulty in writing by using the following words:

Dyslexia is the difficulty of expression in writing. Many children have a problem not only to express right sentences, but also to write correct sentences. They confuse the letters and their writing is messy, up and down and it's difficult to read their writing. This is dyslexia.

Monica considered that dyslexia exists and it was not an educational exaggeration, but the problem was that all dyslexic students were different, so dyslexia could not be generalised.

Dyslexia exists, but this doesn't mean that all children have the same level of the problem and I think that dyslexia has fluctuations. It's not the same for every case of a dyslexic student. We cannot put everything together and say that this is dyslexia.

When I asked her to picture a dyslexic student in her classroom, she could not, as she could not identify anything different in dyslexic students from the other students.

In general they are not different from the other students; even their behaviour is not different. Not at all! In speaking most of the dyslexic students do not have any problem. When you get in the classroom you do not see a different behaviour, or something special to the children that they have dyslexia.

Monica's description of a dyslexic student using three words was based on deficit language, but was relatively general and unspecific. Her language was generally related to social and leaning difficulties.

That's a difficult question. I will describe a medium dyslexic student; let's not speak for extreme cases. He/she is shy and hesitant, slow in expressing himself/herself, which means that he needs time to give answers.

According to Monica in her current school there were one or two dyslexic students in every classroom, which was not a big number. By saying dyslexic students she meant students that have the diagnostic report from the public Medico-Pedagogical Centres.

Monica explained the procedure that she followed in the current school when she thought that one of her student was dyslexic. Monica's school could offer only addresses of the Medico-Pedagogical Centres to the parents of the students. So the parents were responsible for finding a solution.

If we (the teachers) confirm a problem, we can give to the parents addresses of centres that they can send their children to check if they have a problem or not. We speak to the parents, we inform them that we have realised that something it is going wrong and we advise them to look at it and ask the help of specialists.

The procedure that Monica and her colleagues followed when the student has been diagnosed was to examine him/her orally. The diagnostic report of the student had been sent to the head teacher's office and there it stayed. However, the teachers tried by themselves to

help these students. They had teachers' meetings and they discussed about the cases of dyslexic students and how they could help and support these students.

We are trying with the knowledge that we have and sometimes we discuss these children (dyslexic) in our meetings in order to have a special attitude all together and not each teacher to face it differently. We try to support them, not to scare them and make them feel confident and comfortable. If a dyslexic student has a particular problem, because he/she might also have other problems too, family or personal problems, we discuss it all together in order to be able to help him/her to overcome the totality of the problems and to be ready to perform in his/her studies.

When I asked her if she was happy with the procedure that they followed and if the oral examination was the solution in the problem, she answered there was no specialist in her current school, so the oral examination was a solution, but not the only one. Monica supported the idea of extra support for the dyslexic students.

There is no special teacher or counsellor in the school. So the oral examination is a solution, but I believe that extra help should be offered to the children. As far as I know some dyslexic children attend some sessions with psychologists, I don't know who are these people that they help the students to solve their problems. However, we cannot do that.

Monica considered that if she had the power to change something in the education system, she would offer teaching training to all the teachers about the methods and procedures that they should be followed to help and teach a dyslexic student. Monica believed that the problem was that

the teachers tried different methods and teaching tricks during the lesson without being sure if they were using the right ones because of lack of teaching experience.

I believe that the teachers, the scientists that are finishing at University in order to work in education, before they get in the classroom, they should have a year training about dyslexia. Before you get in the classroom you should be informed about the problems in order to know more things and to be able to help these children correctly from the beginning. Let's say the truth, until we learn to teach we "experiment" with the students and for ourselves the negatives are few, but not for the students. All the schools of the University don't offer teaching training, so at the end the teaching is an individual affair. This is a disadvantage.

Monica had not heard about the Integration classes. She did not also teach extra hours to the corroborating teaching classes. However, she considered that these classes helped dyslexic students. Monica commented that the number of the students that wanted to attend these classes was increasing every year. According to Monica a difficulty of the corroborating teaching classes was the time that they took place. It was just after the school hours, so most of the students were tired to continue attending extra classes.

Monica believed that only a specialist could answer the question of whether was a cure or solution to dyslexia. Monica explained that for sure there was an improvement, as she had examples of students that they succeeded in their studies.

I am not the one that can know if there is a cure or solution, but I

believe that there is an improvement, a progress. I have seen this progress and I know children that with the support of their parents achieved being accepted to the University and they didn't have any problem.

Monica considered that dyslexic students should not be a trouble in the classroom, because they were few in every class, only one or two.

No, no children create a problem in the class, just because he/she is dyslexic. If in a classroom there is a big number of children that need more time to understand what the teachers says, than the other students, then there is a problem, but if there are one two or students, I do not think that this a problem for the classroom, no.

Monica described also her own relationship with the parents of dyslexic students. According to Monica the roles between the teachers and the parents had changed. The parents visited the teachers and informed them about the students' progress in the private institutes or lessons. The parents advised and informed the teachers.

We have good relationship with the parents of dyslexic students. They are coming to school and we discuss their children and they help us. Some parents are visiting us very often and they bring us leaflets and books about dyslexia and we learn about students' progress in these institutes.

Monica's view was that the school tried to support the dyslexic students emotionally by building high self esteem for them and having a psychologist at school once per week for anyone who needed advice and help.

#### **4.2.5 Anne's interview**

Anne had worked in education since 1973. She did a degree in Modern Greek Literature in the University of Ioannina. She trained in teaching the subject of Modern Greek Language. At the time of the interview Anne was a teacher of classics in a mainstream school, where she had a permanent position.

Anne said that she heard a few things about dyslexia a long time ago during her studies, however in the recent years she had learned many things about dyslexia, as nowadays the "problem is more profound". Anne was not happy with information about dyslexia that the Greek Ministry of Education offered to teachers. She thought that teachers do not have much knowledge about dyslexia and they tried by themselves to learn something new. However Anne believed that she and her colleagues were willing to attend seminars that the Greek Ministry of Education would offer to allow teachers to be able to recognise, understand and support a dyslexic student in the class.

Just by ourselves we fight to learn things (about dyslexia), individually. I and many colleagues would like to attend seminars about dyslexia, which the Greek Ministry of Education would organise and not only during schools hours.

Anne's definition of dyslexia focused on "information processor" in writing and speaking difficulties.

Dyslexia is, in some children, I would not say that it appears in everybody, a difficulty to write. Although some of the dyslexic children maybe sometimes are pushed by their parents to write. It's this difficulty to express their thoughts.

Later in the interview, however, Anne could not define a dyslexic student, because she thought that dyslexic students did not have anything special in relation to the other students. The only thing that she could define was that dyslexic students were more hyperactive than the other students.

When I asked her to picture a dyslexic student in the class, she described a student with different learning difficulties.

A dyslexic student is not very able to concentrate and he/she has difficulties in absorbing new information and expressing himself/herself. In recent years this is a phenomenon for all the children.

According to Anne's analysis, dyslexia exists but it was exaggerated.

Dyslexia does not exist to the degree that we present it. Nowadays the parents overdraw it.

Anne explained the procedures and methods that she followed when she had a dyslexic student in the class. She would have a talk with her colleagues and then with the parents they would decide all together if the student should be sent to the public Medico-Pedagogical Centre for diagnosis, evaluation and support. According to Anne the Greek Ministry of Education sent the schools a catalogue with information about these centres.

Anne explained that it was important for the students to visit these centres, because from these centres students who were dyslexic would get a diagnostic report and they would be dismissed from written examinations.

We (the teachers) rely on the diagnostic report from - not exactly institutes - centres, where the students can get the proof. Without this paper (diagnostic report) we cannot examine them (the students) orally, it's obligated. We agitate the students to get this paper, because we see that they labour.

However, according to Anne the whole procedure of supporting the dyslexic students ended with the diagnostic report. The teachers do not have any contact with the specialists of these centres and the diagnostic report could be sometimes "concise".

It's very rarely that a meeting takes place between the teachers of the school and the people from the centres in order to give us more information about the dyslexic students and to answer to our questions... Suppose that they have done deep research about the difficulties of the students, but we need to wait more or less one year to have results. The child has to visit the centre many times in order to be diagnosed with the problem... Sometimes we see and get informed about the diagnostic report. Some reports are more detailed, the causes, the kind of the difficulty, the procedure of the diagnosis, the way that the child expresses the difficulty, because it's different for each child. However, some reports are very concise.

Anne considered that the only support that the school offered to dyslexic students was the oral examination. A student who had the diagnostic report could be examined orally in the same subjects, topics and with exactly the same questions as the other students, just that they offered them more time. However, Anne did not think that the oral examination was always the right solution and support for the dyslexic students.

I don't agree always with the solution of the oral examination. Because there are students that can write and they can succeed when they write, but they find it extremely difficult to be examined orally.

According to Anne, her school did not have a special needs coordinator or a specialist that could advise and help them. The teachers tried to give answers to their questions.

There is no special needs coordinator in the school, but sometimes if we know somebody.... We discuss it, mainly the classical scholars of the school, to help ourselves better.... Only the council has specialists and if we want we can address them. Of course, I wouldn't say that they are absolutely informed, but any way....

Anne's view about the corroborating teaching classes was that they were disappointing. She believed that some students took advantage of these classes and they covered the things that they could not catch during the lesson especially in maths and Ancient Greek Language. However, the students lost their interest of these classes and in the end they stopped attending them.

They (the corroborating teaching classes) don't work properly and the children don't want them. There is the will to organise these classes, but the students don't attend them. And usually they stop running. In the private lessons the students are pushed more. The students start and then they stop.

Anne considered that if she had the power to change something in the education system, she would change the books; she would reconsider

the modules and the way of teaching. She thought that it was difficult to make changes to mainstream schools.

The way of teaching is already like this, because the level is quite low, so they (the students), I think at least the students that they want, they wouldn't have difficulties. We have dyslexic students that they are so high level students.

Anne did not agree with the idea that dyslexic students should be in a special classroom. She believed that students would not want to be different from the other students.

I believe in inclusion and also the students are not informed properly. They would not want to be something "special". This is what I believe according to the psychology.

Anne believed that dyslexic students can cause trouble in the classroom or have emotional problems; however this behaviour was the consequence of "an abuse" of the word dyslexia in the Greek reality.

For some children it can really be a problem (dyslexia), for some others it can facilitate their school life.

Anne also described her own relationship with the parents of dyslexic students. She thought that generally nowadays the parents accepted that their children were dyslexic and they would be very supportive.

The parents are coming to the school and they want to know what exactly is happening to their children.... They cooperate and they want to talk about it... Some parents are offering private lessons to their children, and I can understand that these children have worked hard and there is an improvement.

However, according to Anne sometimes parents needed more time to accept that their children were dyslexic and the teachers had to push them to support their children.

At the beginning we find difficulties, because it's not so easy, and some parents recently they think that to be dyslexic is a "fashion", but at the beginning they do not accept it with a positive mood.

## **Chapter 5 Findings and Discussion**

### **5.1 Greek- English teachers and dyslexia in changing times**

In recent decades and across a number of European countries, major legislative innovations have taken place in education for dyslexic pupils have taken place. Whilst in some countries there is more or less a continuation of on-going integration policies without major or abrupt changes, there are other countries (such as Denmark, Switzerland) that talk of more “revolutionary” changes compared to the previous period (European Agency for Development in SEN, 1998).

In almost all European countries, the concept of special educational needs is high on the agenda. However, at the same time it tends to be acknowledged that dyslexia is a very complex issue and countries are struggling with the practical implementation of policies related to dyslexia (Constantonopoulou, 2002). As a result, this topic, the definition and description of dyslexia in terms of educational consequences, is being debated in almost all European countries (Riddell, et al, 1992, Spalding et al, 1996, Mills, 2007). This debate has wide political and financial ramifications; Pumfrey et al. (1991), for example, points out that the social and educational advantages of integration education in the community and a “whole school approach” to meet Special Educational Needs often result in financial savings. In September 2004, David Mills produced a documentary in channel four, the “Dyslexic Myth” that asked searching questions about the disorder and predictably this sparked a national row of its own (Mills, 2007).

One recent study into the condition identified 28 slightly different definitions of the term (Elliott, 2009). The symptoms typically associated

with it include everything from poor short-term memory to clumsiness. The English Government has defined dyslexics as those for whom "accurate and fluent word reading and/or spelling develops very incompletely or with great difficulty". According to Mills (2007), if this is dyslexia, then it is anything but a myth, with perhaps as many as one in five children experience such serious problems in learning to read. However, this definition contradicts the common view of dyslexia and offends the many people who hold it. They claim that dyslexia is a broader problem, a medical one, even: that while most poor reading simply reflects slower learning skills, dyslexics are intelligent people who suffer visual or other problems that make it difficult for them to process print properly (Mills, 2007). This is the justification for the special help given to them and denied to others who are classed simply as poor readers.

In January 2009, Graham Stringer, the MP for Manchester Blackley, argued:

The reason that so many children fail to read and write is because the wrong teaching methods are used. The education establishment, rather than admit that their eclectic and incomplete methods for instruction are at fault, have invented a brain disorder called dyslexia. To label children as dyslexic because they're confused by poor teaching methods is wicked. (Lipsett, 2009, p.2)

In both England and Greece there are debates about dyslexia. In England there were changes in the special education system which began in the 1970s and continued afterwards (for example, the *Warnock Report on Special Educational Needs* (1970), the *Green Paper Excellence for all children: meeting special educational needs* (1997), *Specific*

*Learning difficulties (dyslexia): effective identification, assessment and intervention strategies* (1999) *the Code of Practice 2002, Removing Barriers to Achievement: the Government's Strategy for SEN* (2004) *Learning and Teaching for Dyslexic Children* (2005) and *Identifying and Teaching children and young people with dyslexia and literacy difficulties* (2009)). In Greece, there has never been a long established tradition of special education. The systematic development of the field started in the mid 1980s (op cit).

Across both countries, some commentators have considered dyslexia as a "problem", others as a "gift" and most of them as a "learning difficulty". The debate about the definition of dyslexia is clear in the interviews with both the English and Greek teachers in the present study: both the English and Greek teachers experienced some difficulty in producing a definition of dyslexia or even expressing more fully and freely what dyslexia meant for them. However, the English teachers considered this question more difficult and challenging than the Greek teachers. The English teachers' definitions tended to be descriptions of dyslexic students' characteristics: for example "they are looking a word, but they do not see the letters in the same order....so when they copy that word letters can be reversed or put in a wrong order....Dyslexia is that you look at a word and you see the first letter and you think you know what the word is and you don't really actually you have not read the whole word." (Bianca) This focus on characteristics and symptoms could be perhaps be seen as suggesting difficulties in understanding what dyslexia is and what the complex issues for the dyslexic students in their classes are; certainly all of the English teachers found it difficult to conceptualise dyslexia in a more abstract or holistic manner.

It was notable that the English teachers tended to give an educational definition of dyslexia by describing the reading and writing difficulties of students "It's a difficulty in processing language really. Sometimes it's written language and sometimes it's oral and sometimes it's with numbers" (Rebecca). However, when they were asked to describe a dyslexic student in the class, they used a social description. They described students with low self-esteem, underachieving, different, sharp, capable, sitting at the back of the classroom. As they envisaged this dyslexic student, they did not mention any learning difficulty; furthermore they presented a picture of a student with emotional and behavioural problems.

The teachers' difficulty in explaining the concept of dyslexia might be attributed to a general vagueness in the use of the term (Snowling, 2005, Frith, 1999, Stanovich, 1994). Many researchers believe that there is no right or wrong answer as there is no single definition of dyslexia. Frith for example (1999) maintains that definitions and explanations of dyslexia have long been problematic. She identifies three levels of description: behavioural, cognitive and biological, which need to be separated when considering developmental disorders, because developmental disorders are dynamic and there are environmental interactions at all levels. The behavioural manifestations of dyslexia change with time and also in different contexts. The phonological deficit theory of dyslexia is a theory at the cognitive level; it explains a constellation of behaviours that are normally related with dyslexia (for example short term memory problems, word finding difficulties, etc.). Yet, some behaviours often associated with dyslexia

are not explained by the theory (for example visual problems, organisation and motor control problems etc.). Snowling (2005, p.730) argues that the next step in understanding and defining dyslexia should involve seeking both biological and cognitive explanations of these disorders in order to be able to answer the questions "what is dyslexia?", "what is not dyslexia?" and "why these behaviours co-occur so frequently?" Snowling argues that gathering everything under the umbrella of "dyslexia" helps neither theory nor practice. The evidence from the interviews with the English teachers supports Snowling's argument. They tended to focus on some characteristics of behavioural and cognitive difficulties but had problems in connecting all the aspects they observed to work with a theory of dyslexia as operating simultaneously on all the three levels identified by Frith.

Another problem for the English teachers in arriving at a conceptual overview of dyslexia was that at the time of the data collection (and subsequently) the whole question of whether dyslexia actually exists was open to debate. At the time of the data collection (2005-6) there was, in England, a cultural debate which foregrounded the social model that was so evident in the English teachers' responses. In a television programme entitled "The Dyslexia Myth" Dr Julian Elliot argued that dyslexia does not exist and maintained that it is "a middle class excuse for poor reading and writing". This argument influenced, confused and divided the teachers, as was clear in their responses. Elliot's TV programme argued that the question as to whether dyslexia exists or not is essentially meaningless: what was certain was that there are children who read below the level of their classmates as measured by standardised tests. The evidence of the influence of this television

programme and the strand of the debate that it promoted was clear in the interviews with the English teachers.

The Greek teachers, unlike their English counterparts, were generally confident about their ability to define dyslexia. All of the Greek teachers talked about learning difficulties and they gave examples of their own experiences with dyslexic students during the lesson. This is interesting in taking account of the fact that in Greece there is no formal definition of dyslexia and the Greek Association of Dyslexia is using the International Association's definition. Most of the books, resources and references that Greek teachers are using are based on British, American and Australian research (Polychronopoulou, 1996, Christakis, 1998). This could be seen as a positive result of globalisation, as the Greek teachers had the opportunity to read and be informed about dyslexia in other countries. On the other hand, homogenising definitions of dyslexia can be seen as potentially dangerous. Educational systems differ in different social and cultural contexts and as Frith pointed at: "The influence of cultural factors is such that in some contexts the condition causes hardly any handicap in affected individuals, but in others it can cause a great deal of suffering" (Frith, 1999, p.211). In an area of work where the focus is on the analysis of each individual's characteristics within the social and cultural context, it is potentially dangerous to borrow advice and policy across international boundaries.

The Greek teachers tended to favour cognitive and biological definitions of dyslexia and to support a clinical approach. Most of them considered that dyslexia is confusion in the brain, is neurological and genetic in nature. In their view, doctors were the only experts about dyslexia.

Despite the fact that the system had changed and the medically focused Diagnostic Centres had become educationally focused “Centres of Diagnosis, Evaluation and Support” the Greek teachers tended to retain the view that dyslexia was a medical matter. This was symbolised in the interviews by the fact that none of the Greek teachers used the new name of the centres; instead they referred to them as “Ιατρο-Παιδαγωγικά Κέντρα” [Medical-Pedagogical Centres]. They saw the teaching of dyslexic students as an area for specialists and trusted them to deal with the students. This attitude led them to feel rather more distant from the pedagogical problems than the English teachers felt. In this respect then the Greek teachers were more comfortable about their own identities as teachers of dyslexic students. Their views were clearly affected by the fact that, until 2000, Diagnostic Centres has been located only in hospitals; doctors and psychologists had offered diagnoses of dyslexia and provided statements of dyslexia. The Greek teachers in the sample claimed that if dyslexic students were not diagnosed during primary schools years, then it was too late for them to be offered any kind of educational support “...for the teachers of the primary education the situation is much easier, you can find many specialists for the primary education, but not for the secondary...” (Carol). So they generally felt as teachers it was not their responsibility to diagnose and understand the detail of dyslexic students’ problems. In an educational system where secondary school teachers were experiencing increased levels of stress and burn out and feeling that they were already overloaded with work and had no real support from the government (Antoniou et al., 2000), it is perhaps not surprising that the teachers were resistant to taking on responsibility for students who had previously been the concern of medical practitioners.

These findings raise the question of continuing professional development [CPD] in both countries. The Greek teachers in the sample felt that opportunities for CPD were not systematically offered to them; Stylianidou's (2004) study, for example supports this view. Greek teachers' training relative to Special Educational Needs [SEN] has only recently become available and there is a restricted attendance number for CPD courses. The Greek educational system is highly centralised and controlled by the Ministry of Education (Gravani and John, 2005). Teachers' professional development is not independent of this broad educational context; even more so since the establishment of the Organisation for the Professional Development of Teachers [OEPEK] in 1999, a centralised mechanism for the management of in-service training (Gravani, 2006). Since 1999 the only compulsory training programme that all Greek teachers have been expected to attend in their first year in a teaching post in the public sector is the induction training programme by the Regional In-Service Training Centres [PEK] (Stylianidou et al., 2004). The Regional Centres for Professional Training constitute the central providing agency for in-service training and other agencies have to operate under its authority (Chronopoulou and Giannopoulos, 2001). A basic characteristic of these training programmes is the central control that flows from the State to nearly every aspect of them (Eurydice, 1999). The Ministry of Education defines roles and responsibilities of the organisers of the programme, tutors' qualifications, numbers of teachers required to participate and their selection criteria and finances and resources for the purchase of books and other equipment (Gravani, 2006).

This training programme is about teaching generally; it aims to provide practical information about how to manage classes and plan lessons. The new teachers taking this induction programme will have been studying on a pedagogic four years degree course, six months of which will have been spent in school but purely in the role of an observer. The teaching requirement during that six month period is to teach only one 45 minutes lesson. The new teachers on the PEK training programme therefore are very keen to learn about the practical everyday realities of managing classes. Special Educational Needs is discussed within the programme, and dyslexia is touched upon, but the main emphasis of the programme is elsewhere.

These induction programmes were introduced in 1999 as a "solution" to problems in the university education of teachers in Greece (OLME, 2008). The degree of centralised control by the universities and the Ministry of Education creates political difficulties in negotiating change (Mavrogeorgiou, 2005; OLME, 2008). Some of these political difficulties have been dealt with by the creation of a complex system of post-degree teaching national examinations [ASEP], followed by the induction programme [PEK], and followed by assignment to a school. All of this is handled centrally by the Ministry of Education.

In the sample of Greek teachers in this study the two who had entered the profession from 1999 onwards had received this PEK induction programme. Those who had entered the profession before 1999 had no induction programme; they had been directly assigned to schools by the Ministry after they had successfully completed their degrees. According to their own accounts, they had received no training at all about

dyslexia prior to starting teaching. Ongoing CPD was therefore very important to both groups of teachers in the Greek sample. This was recognised by the Ministry of Education and during the data collection period three training programmes concerning dyslexia were organised by PEK in the regions from which the sample group of teachers were drawn. Also information about dyslexia was distributed to all secondary schools in the form of a leaflet. However, the Greek teachers in the sample maintained that they had no information about the programmes from the Ministry of Education and several of them were concerned about this: "The only that I remember that we have received in the school was a 11 pages leaflet by a professor of the University of Athens... (i.e. nothing from the Ministry of Education) and continuously we receive legislation about the way the examination of dyslexic students should be conducted" (Vanessa). Direct communication from the Ministry to the teachers was poor. Some of the teachers had attended private seminars and courses, but they were informed about these courses by the parents of dyslexic students or through other personal means. "I was never informed by the school or anybody else. Only by myself, when I was hearing anywhere about seminars, I wanted to attend, to participate and to hear some things, but never something organised by the school or the Ministry of Education"(Vanessa). The highly centralised Greek system offers tight control of what information should be disseminated; however if the centralised communication system breaks down, as it had done in this case, it leaves the teachers with no information and very few alternative resources to draw upon. According to Koutrouba's et al. (2008) research, 81.1% of Greek teachers reported that they had never attended a seminar on special needs; however 84.3% of the responders agreed that continuing

professional development in special education should be obligatory for the teachers who work in mainstream schools. The majority of the Greek teachers in the study appeared to be very much what Hoyle (1980) identifies as "restricted" professionals. The Greek teachers expressed the desire to attend in-service training programmes which would provide solutions to practical classroom problems; and they advocated the necessity for their practical needs to be met and for gaps to be filled. The results of another Greek study by Avramidis and Kalyva (2007) showed that when Greek teachers were asked to rank ten methods for improving practice in terms of their usefulness, in-service training and attending courses at the university, received the second and third highest ranking respectively. "Direct teaching experience with pupils with SEN", received the highest ranking. This call for tips and quick-fix solutions can be seen as a direct result of the situation that the Greek teachers have been put in by the lack of fundamental education and theorising about the special needs of their students. The system has taught them to look for such "solutions" or to locate the solution with other professional, such as medical practitioners. In this sense then, they are "restricted" professionals who have not been provided with the means of theorising about learning of the children they are teaching. At the same time the system encourages them to further restrict themselves by looking for tips rather than seeking deeper understanding.

On the other side, the English educational system offers many different CPD programmes (Eurydice, 2008), as CPD is considered as a professional duty for teachers. In England, teachers must be available for work but the school is not open to pupils for five days per year;

these days were introduced to support a number of non-teaching activities, including professional development (Eurydice, 2008). Apart from these five training days, schools, local authorities, councils and different organisations organise seminars, conferences and courses for secondary teachers including courses about SEN (Garner, 1996). However, critics have argued that there has been insufficient evaluation of these CPD programmes. Muijs, for example, argues that huge amount of money has been spent in the name of professional development, but “the quality of these programmes goes virtually unchallenged” (Muijs et al., 2005 p. 202). Certainly, the English teachers in the research challenged the quality of many CPD programmes (seminars, conferences and courses) that they had attended. The courses had been organised either by the school or by the local authorities. The teachers criticised the courses as being more appropriate for primary than secondary school teachers, and for simply rehearsing the basic knowledge that they already possessed. This suggests a view of the CPD provision as low level and too simplistic.

In their interviews, the English teachers showed frustration, high levels of emotion and many contradictions. This suggests that they knew they were working with inadequate definitions and that, as Snowling (2005) argues they should, they were seeking to connect up different characteristics and explanations of dyslexia to arrive to a more sophisticated understanding of the learning and social needs of the students they were teaching. They tended to be isolated in their roles in their schools. The place they might hope to achieve this deeper level of understanding would be through CPD courses, but on the whole these

were disappointing and none of the teachers had found CPD really stimulating or useful.

I have argued earlier in relation to Hoyle's notes of "restricted professionalism" that it is important for teachers to have access to learning theories that underpin their work in the classroom. I also want to argue that it is important for teachers to be able to make connections between theory and the specific learning difficulties and situations of the students they are teaching. The English teachers emphasised in their interviews the isolation and frustration of their work. Much of this unhappiness arose from the lack of opportunity for professional discussion and analysis of the individuals they were trying to help. This analysis needed to take account of context and the particulars of the situation of the learner and the school. Goodall et al. in an evaluation of CPD programmes (2005), found that English teachers put particular emphasis on the value of observation and professional discussion on the creative and useful focus of CPD. The views of the English teachers in my sample were in line with these findings.

The CPD offered to the English teachers suffered from what Beck and Young (2005) have called a growth in "genericism" in education. They identified the growth of key skills including "thinking skills, problem solving and team-work skills" in "virtually every recent education White Paper in the United Kingdom, most noticeably in association with such ideas as life- long learning as well as the increasing tendency for government publications to refer to learning and skills rather than education" (Beck and Young, 2005, p.190). Bernstein characterised this as a move towards "generic pedagogic modes", related to the pace of

innovation and change in a globalising world and especially a globalising economy: "This is where a skill, task, area of work, undergoes continuous development, disappearance or replacement; where life experience cannot be built on stable expectations of the future and one's location in it" (Bernstein, 1996, p.72). Such a situation creates a need for "continuous pedagogic reformations" to enable workers and trainees to cope with the changing requirements of work and life.

The CPD that the English teachers received suffered from a similar form of genericism: it repeated basic theory but it did not help them deepen their working knowledge of the classroom realities they were dealing with. Much of their emotion seemed to stem from sense of a lack of the expertise that they were willing to acquire but unsure how to do it.

There was also an issue about time. Although the time allocated to CPD activities in the English system was generous compared to the Greek system, there was a lot of pressure to use the time for new government initiatives and strategies (such as the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies) and to meet the needs of the accountability regimes. The English teachers complained about their and their students' busy timetable. Elliot (2001) has described school cultures as "intolerant of time", often in a state of fending off impending crisis and this description are echoed in my data. Foucault (1977, p. 149) described the timetable as "an old inheritance" derived from the monastic communities, a means of disciplining teachers and students through the control of time. Foucault discussed the constant supervision of teachers and students and the elimination of anything that might disturb or distract them; he sees timetable as "a collective and obligatory rhythm, imposed from the

outside; it is a 'programme'; it assures the elaboration of the act itself; it controls its development and its stages from the inside. We have passed from a form of injunction that measured or punctuated gestures to a web that constrains them or sustains them or sustains them through their entire succession" (1977, p. 152). This sense of being caught in constraining/sustaining web offers a very apt description of the position of the English teachers in my sample.

In England the educational policy shifts of the two decades before my study had been towards decentralisation, accountability and competition (Wong, 2008). Educational decentralisation has been described as a process of redistribution of power, which changes power relationships among different stakeholders within the education sector (Jeffrey, 2002, Ball, 2003). According to some commentators, for example Hargreaves (2000) and Smith and Rowley (2005), educational decentralisation can offer more power to teachers to have more say on what they intend to teach in their classrooms. In this way the commentators argue, they will develop a collaborative workforce with their colleagues and overcome some of the problems of individualism and isolation in teaching. In this context, teachers would be able to develop their professionalism in a broader social context. This was certainly not the view expressed in the English teachers' interviews. They felt they did not have any power to decide about their roles and responsibilities in the classroom and they felt trapped in the system. Their experience related more closely to Ball (2003), Helsby (1999) and Whitty's (2002) analyses, which call into question both the effects of decentralisation and the contradictory tendencies within it. These analyses argue that decentralisation is a way for the state to decrease its responsibility for public spending by

decentralising decision-making power to the community level, but that “The state will maintain control of education and teachers in various indirect ways even though it has less fiscal responsibility in the sector” (Wong, 2008, pp. 268). As Michael Apple pointed out in 1986, there is considerable pressure to have teaching and school curricula “totally prespecified and tightly controlled by the purposes of ‘efficiency’, cost ‘effectiveness’ and ‘accountability’” (Apple, 2004, p. 12). Apple argues that this results in a deskilling that is now having an impact on teachers as more and more difficult to do. These pressures and difficulties counteract decentralising moves and, in themselves, constitute some of the “indirect ways” of maintaining control referred to by Wong. These included from the evidence of my data, loading teachers with extra tasks and responsibilities and intensifying the work hours, so that there was less and less time to investigate the situation of the children they were teaching. This resulted in a loss of professional morale. As Helsby and McCulloch (1996, p.15) stated:

The introduction of centralised and prescriptive National Curriculum appears to have weakened their professional confidence, lowered morale and left them uncertain both of their ability to cope and of their right to take major curriculum decisions. These findings are consistent with the view of increased State control of the curriculum undermining teacher professionalism.

Many recent international studies show that teachers (like the English teachers in my research) have been experiencing intensification rather than increased professionalisation in their work and lives (Apple, 2004; Bottery and Wright, 2000; McCulloch, Helsby and Knight, 2000). This may in part be due to the fact that educational decentralisation internationally has been influenced by “new public management”

(Helsby, 1999) through the importation of business philosophy. Ball (2003) argues, for example, that education is treated as a commodity. "Teachers' work is tightly controlled by notions of accountability, effectiveness, performance and efficiency, key features of the culture of performativity which have significant impact on teachers' working patterns" (Wong, 2008, pp.270). So teachers are pressurised "to do more" with the aim of attracting more students, in order that their school can be more competitive in the local educational market. As Apple (2000) argues, such changes result in teachers experiencing overload rather than an increase of professional autonomy.

The imposition of increasingly detailed curriculum statements, centrally imposed and defined, had decreased the English teachers' sense of autonomy. All of them remembered a time when the responsibility for curriculum design was in teachers' hands, rather than controlled by outside experts who, in their view, were not conversant with the problems they were dealing with each day. The centralised curriculum was associated with a series of standardised tests (for example, the dyslexic students' assessments to get the "Statement" which identified the students' learning difficulties), and with accountability systems which produced "performance indicators" that were used to evaluate teaching effectiveness and students' learning outcomes. As both McNeil (2000) and Osborn et al. (2000) point out, this loss of control over "what" and "how" to teach and assess students' performance and a diminished sense of creativity in curriculum design damaged teachers' professional autonomy and sense of personal fulfilment and ownership of their work.

The English teachers in my sample, when they were asked to explain the methods that they were using to help and support the dyslexic pupils in their classrooms, gave examples of different computer programmes that they were using, organising small supporting groups in and out of the class, using different colours on the board and in photocopies and the support by teaching assistants. However, the teachers could not explain why they were using these methods and why and how these methods were helping the dyslexic students. This is perhaps a result of an over-emphasis on developing the functional efficiency of teachers and schools. Despite rhetoric about specialisation and the diversity of schools, the marketisation of education has created pressures towards standardisation in teaching and in the organisation of schooling (Reid et al., 2004). As Brain et al. (2006, p.412) outlined: "An end-product of this process has been to increasingly reduce the role of teaching to that of a technical deliverer of pre-set pedagogies." It can be argued that the English teachers were becoming primarily technocratic implementers of policy; they honestly answered that they did not know why they were using particular methods and teaching strategies. These changes in education have moved away from seeing teaching as a key concern in policy development; the focus instead is on curriculum, control and outcomes. Furlong (2005) argues that this focus has been brought about by reducing teacher education to an unproblematic, technical rationalist procedure. There is evidence, then, that the English teachers had suffered from this technical rationalist approach, but there is also evidence that they found it insufficient. Even the teachers that they were offering only a little to dyslexic students, according to their opinion, they believed that they could do better.

In Greece changes to the education system have been managed differently by the government. Whereas in England, increases in centralisation have been a change, in Greece centralisation is expected and accepted. Greek teachers' rejection of the policy changes has tended to be very different from English teachers. For example, in September 2006 most of the Greek primary and secondary schools were closed for more than four weeks, because the teachers were on strike, complaining about the Ministry of Education introducing new books, resources and the new way of teaching. The teachers mounted a counter-offensive, demanding a 45 percent pay increase and a net annual salary of €16,800 for new entrants to the profession. They argued that Greek teachers were among the lowest paid in Europe, with an annual starting salary of €12,555 compared with €37,350 in Germany, €28,819 in the UK and about €17,500 in Italy and France (The News, 2006). Other demands included a reduction in class sizes, the maintenance of free public education and books. Their campaign aimed to mobilise support in relation to widespread opposition to chronic under-investment in schools in Greece, which they argued allocated the lowest percentage of GDP to education in the European Union (4%) (The News, 2006). In response to the teachers' demands, the government proposed a monthly €105 state benefit to be paid in four installments spread over three years and a wage increase—the economy permitting—of around €17.50 a month. Other demands were referred for assessment to the Economic and Education Ministry but no concrete concessions were made. After six weeks on strike, Greek teachers ended the strike and went back to their work.

This detailed example illustrates certain key differences between the English and Greek workforce in the twenty first century. The Greek teachers positioned themselves as workers, taking industrial action primarily around salary issues and conditions of work. The pedagogic issues related to curriculum, teaching methods and class size were very obviously secondary and the teachers were willing to settle their dispute without resolution of these concerns. The 2006 example which was discussed here is typical of other examples (for instance, the Greek teachers' strikes in 1989, 1992, 1994, 2000, 2004, 2008). By contrast, in April 2008 members of the English National Union of English Teachers were set to take part in the first national teachers strike (one day walk-out) in 21 years in response to government's failure to keep pay-rises in line with the rate of inflation (Curtis, 2008). The NUT's last national strike, over salaries, had been under Margaret Thatcher's government in 1987 and ended with the elections that year (Curtis, 2008). In the intervening two decades English teachers only twice took industrial action around salary issues. However the teacher unions were very active in campaigning for improvements in the quality of the educational system: in March 2008, for example, the NUT threatened to be on strike if the government did not reduce primary class sizes to not more than 20 until 2020. In September 2003, English teachers threatened to strike if a deal aimed to reducing workload resulted in extra responsibilities (Lipsett, 2008). In 2009, teachers at a union conference threatened to strike if ministers end national tests for 11 years olds (Sats). Teachers would be unwilling to mark internal tests instead of sending papers away to be marked by external markers. According to Shepherd (2009) teachers believed that changes to the testing regime should only be made on the basis of a guarantee that these changes genuinely free up

the curriculum, enabled teachers to exercise greater professional judgment and freedom, and did not increase workload and bureaucracy. The National Union of Teachers also said no to the government's suggestion of schools becoming Academies, in 2010. Unions were against this because there is the potential involvement of private sector companies as sponsors of schools. Companies could gain control of school land and premises; be able to shape the curriculum; and dominate governance of schools (Unison, 2010).

Acknowledging that pedagogy is critically connected to culture, social structure and the mechanisms of social control, Alexander (2000) suggests that it is clearly more than teaching. It includes the theories, beliefs, policies and controversies that 'reflect characteristically ... a gulf between theory and practice' (p.540). A prominent theme for Alexander (2000) is the controlling of education and the power of education to control. Today our teacher certification boards, teacher training institutions and universities and pre-service teachers are witness to this divergence between education theory and the practice of teaching ("just tell me what to do on Monday!") being played out.

Brain's typology (2006) helps us understand some of these differences between the ways English and Greek teachers adapt to education policy. Brain modified Merton's earlier (1978) 'typology of adaptation to social system' to apply to teachers. He identified five different types of adaptation:

- "Conformity" when teachers accept both policy and practice. Brain accepts that all teachers are mediators, but that "conforming" teachers are minimalist mediators who can be characterised as

technocrats. He describes these teachers as “exactly what would appear to be the type that central government wishes to inhabit English schools” (Brain, 2006, p. 413).

- A second category in the typology is the “Innovation” type, where teachers accept the policy, but they reject the practice. This involves professional mediation and development of new practice on the part of the teacher.
- Brain’s third type of adaptation is “Ritualism”. In “Ritualism” policy is rejected by the teachers, but practice is accepted. This produces ritualised technocratic practice disconnected from the policy intent which underpins it. Hence there is minimal mediation and technocratic teaching.
- A fourth type, “Retreatism”, is when there is rejection of both policy and practice, but without resistance. Brain considers that this results in professional anomie and complete disconnection from the values base of the policy.
- Brain’s last type is “Rebellion” where teachers also reject both policy and practice, but they substitute their own versions of them. Brain considers that this kind of spirited rejection of both policy and practice can give rise to a degree of creativity.

This typology is summarised in the table below.

**Table 3: Brain’s typology of teachers’ adaptation to education policy and practice**

<b>Adaptation</b>	<b>Policy</b>	<b>Practice</b>	<b>Teachers</b>
Conformity	√	√	Minimalist, technocrat
Innovation	√	x	innovative
Ritualism	X	√	Minimalist, technocrat
Retreatism	X	x	Anomic
Rebellion	X	X	creative

Source: Brain (2006, p. 414)

Applied to the English and Greek teachers in my sample, Brain's typology helps in understanding the differences in the way the teachers adapt to the different education policies and practices they encounter. The English teachers tended to accept the practices – they generally said that they were all happy with their own efforts with the methods that they were using. However, they tended to reject the policy, although this was ministered at different levels. For example, during the interview the English teachers were asked what they would change in the education system if they had the power. Two of them answered that they would offer better initial and ongoing training about dyslexia and special needs in general to raise teachers' awareness of the issues. The other three teachers said the changes they would make would be to spend more time with the students with learning difficulties individually and in the class; they wanted smaller schools and classes. They considered that in a class with 30 pupils, it was not possible to support all the ability groups of students, so the solution would be to take the dyslexic students out of the class, for one to one session more regularly or to teach classes set by ability. One of the English teachers, Bianca, was particularly clear about this and she ironically anticipated political objections to her position: "The only solution is to have an upper, middle and a lower class. And yes all the politicians would argue 'Well done, you've labelled them'..." (Bianca).

The English teachers in my sample disagreed with the national policies about teachers' training and, even more fundamentally, with the policy of inclusion and mixed ability classes. Despite the fact that they believed that it was unlikely to work, they accepted and they worked within this system, rather than resisting it. They accepted the

pedagogical practices they were encouraged to use and sought to spread them and individualise still further to ensure that dyslexic students had access to the benefits of these practices. According to Brain's typology, these teachers would be labelled as engaging in 'ritualism' – carrying out a policy they could not fundamentally believe in, but through practices which they considered has the power to be effective. Their interventions were minimalist because they did not feel the need to change practice at classroom level. In one sense, then, these teachers might be considered 'technocrats', but this was not a professional position which left them feeling cool or dispassionate or merely functional about their work.

Ball's work about "performativity" is relevant to these points. Ball describes performativity as a technology, a culture and a mode of regulation that employs judgements, comparisons and displays as means of incentive, control, attrition and change- based on rewards and sanctions. The performances (of individual subjects or organisations) "serve as measures of productivity or output, or displays of 'quality', or 'moments' of promotion or inspection." (2006 p.144). The English educational system certainly put the teachers under pressure to "perform" acceptance of the expected practice. Pressure was applied both through and upon the SENCO, the head teacher and the Local Authority staff, each of whom might or might not believe or agree with this performance. The degree of control exerted through high stakes accountability systems encouraged a culture of performativity. This was done at personal and psychological cost. Ball (2006, p. 149) describes this cost as "a kind of values schizophrenia which is experienced by individual teachers where commitment, judgement and authenticity

within practice are sacrificed for impression and performance". This "values schizophrenia" seems to describe some of the responses of the English teachers in my sample.

The opportunity for the English teachers to change could be characterised according to two of Brain's different types. The pressures on the English teachers were to become 'conformist' teachers: to capitulate and accept the policy of inclusion that, as Bianca's comment shows, it was hard to speak against. If, on the other hand, the pressures of being unable to practice in ways they currently accepted became too great, there was a strong possibility that the teachers would become retreatist, rejecting practice as unworkable in a policy context they did not accept. The chances of the English teachers rejecting practice as well as policy and becoming rebellious seem low: their "values schizophrenia" undermined their confidence, individualised them and tended to make them emotional rather than driven to political activity or creative pedagogical invention.

On the other hand, the Greek teachers in the study accepted both the policy and the practice dictated by their system, agreeing that it was not their responsibility to support and help dyslexic students. According to the Greek policy, dyslexic students should attend the mainstream school's class with the support of a specialised teacher in special needs. The fact that this support service was not offered to dyslexic students in the Greek secondary schools did not have direct impact on the teachers' work: they followed and accepted the policy and practice and the students went without the support the policy suggested they should receive. The issue of support were therefore displaced to the family,

particularly the student's parents. The teachers' positions could therefore be characterised as minimalist and technocratic, according to Brain's typology. On the personal level, the teachers complained and disagreed with the actions of the Education's Ministry, but their expectation was that the solution needed to be found elsewhere. For example, Carol was very upset and opposed to the "solution" of the oral examination that the Ministry was offering: "It's unbelievable what is happening here. We give the student the diagnostic report for three years and we facilitate the students by examining him/her only orally. This is a benefit of the state, because the state cannot do anything else. It's a "present" to the students...". The Greek teachers were asking for the same things with the English teachers: they wanted better initial and ongoing training in teaching generally and particularly in special needs. They identified faults with the system but did not tend to feel personally responsible. For example, Monica commented: "Let's say the truth, until we learn to teach, we experiment with the students and for ourselves the negatives are few, but not for the students..." (Monica). They considered that ability classes streamed or settled by ability could work better than the mixed classes, as the English teachers did. In some senses then, the Greek teachers could be seen as belonging to the retreatist type in that they rejected the policy and the practice and did not take any action to improve the conditions of learning for the dyslexic students. Whilst the political climate of industrial relations amongst Greek teachers and their employers suggested a degree of rebelliousness, the teachers' focus was on salary and working conditions rather than matters of pedagogical principle and practice. The chances of the Greek teachers in my sample creatively resisting the existing policy and practice seemed low.

English and Greek teachers have similarities and differences. Foucault's and Ball's analyses of the differences between policy and practice in the managerial world of education provides the theoretical framework for my understanding of English and Greek teachers in the study. According to the study, the English and Greek teachers lacked power, autonomy and a clear picture of their role in order to be able to focus on supporting students with learning difficulties and be creative. Ball (1990, p. 154) describes his management theory in the educational system: "In the restructuring of teachers' pay and conditions, in specialist training for school management, in central control over curriculum and the possibility of comparative testing (of students, schools and teachers), the three basic elements of classical management theory are clearly in evidence." First, "decision-making" is the responsibility of the management team, which is the policy that schools, teachers and students should follow. For example, according to the Greek policy, the teachers should examine orally the dyslexic students and this is their only involvement in dyslexics' support. Second, systems of quality control, time, curriculum, techniques and monitoring teachers had as a result to develop the appraisal of teachers' work. Third, efforts are being to connect a better salary and a promotion directly to performance (Ball, 1990).

Within such a discourse, the curriculum becomes a delivery system and teachers the technicians or operators of this system (Ball, 1990). Teachers are losing the control of the school, students and their own work situation and they become workers. According to Harris (1982) the gap between the workers (teachers) and management appears to be

increased, while at the same time the control upon teachers' work is growing ever more. They should follow rules, policy, techniques and "solutions" that they did not believe that were effective and helping dyslexic students. According to Foucault (1980) and Ball (1990) the school operates according to management theories. Foucault (1980, p. 105) believed that "Management is a micro-physics of power". This micro- power touches every aspect of organisational life of school. This power offers specific mechanisms, procedures and techniques for the benefit of the economy and politics (Ball, 1990). "The worker, the technician, the teacher is constituted (or reconstituted) in this network of discourses, rules, aspirations and desires" (Ball, 1990, p. 165).

The teachers' stories in this study show how the culture of the new managerialism is impacting on teachers' understanding of dyslexia. The interviews with these ten teachers indicate that they are uncomfortable with the values and practices of the new work order, in particular the ways in which it undermines their deeply pedagogical values. These findings confirm that English and Greek teachers had similarities and differences in their understanding about dyslexia. Both English and Greek secondary teachers were feeling unprepared to define, diagnose and support dyslexic students in their classroom, as both lacked power, autonomy and the clear picture of their role which will have allowed them to be able to focus on supporting students with learning difficulties and to be personally creative.

## **Chapter 6**

### **Conclusion**

This research journey began from my interest as a teacher to explore teachers' understandings of dyslexia. The questions that were raised were the following:

- Do teachers receive professional training related to dyslexia? (If yes, when do they receive this training? Are they happy with this training? Would they suggest any changes?)
- How do teachers define and understand dyslexia in their classroom? (Do they believe in the existence of dyslexia? Could they identify dyslexic students in their classroom?)
- How do teachers teach dyslexic students in the classroom? (Do they use different methods and strategies in order to support dyslexic students' learning? Is it a "problem" to have the dyslexic student in the classroom?)

In seeking answers to the above questions, the literature on dyslexia and secondary English and Greek teachers' work was reviewed; a qualitative methodology was used to grasp the wider picture of teachers' understanding of dyslexia in both countries, and data was analysed.

The aim of the present chapter is to summarise and evaluate the main findings and to present the main conclusions drawn from the results of the research into teachers' understanding of dyslexia in England and Greece.

### **6.1 Summary and conclusion of major findings**

The main aims of this research were to find out how dyslexia is conceptualised in the Greek and English educational systems and the reactions of the teachers in both countries.

The findings indicated that English teachers tended to focus on some characteristics of behavioural and cognitive difficulties and give an educational definition. However, they had problems in connecting all the aspects of dyslexia and describe a dyslexic student in the classroom. In that case they used a more social description. The Greek teachers tended to favour cognitive and biological definitions of dyslexia and to support a clinical approach. According to the Greek teachers, doctors were the only experts about dyslexia. This attitude led them to feel rather more distant from the pedagogical problems than the English teachers felt. The study indicated the complexity of dyslexia's definition and the confusion that English and Greek teachers are feeling. The differences in the meanings and the descriptions of a dyslexic student prove the need for action from the English and Greek Education departments in order to give some clear and guiding answers to the teachers about learning difficulties and especially about dyslexia.

The research raised the question of continuing professional development in both countries. The Greek teachers in the sample felt that opportunities for CPD were not systematically offered to them and were strictly controlled by the Ministry of Education. The highly centralised Greek system offers tight control of what information should be disseminated and encourages the teachers to further restrict themselves

by looking for tips rather than seeking deeper understanding. On the other side, the English educational system offers many different CPD programmes. Although, the English CPD repeated basic theory, it did not help teachers deepen their working knowledge of the classroom realities they were dealing with. Research, definitely, highlighted the important role that pre-service and in-service training plays in the development of teaching practices. Greek teachers were asking for quantity of CPD and English teachers for quality, however both said they did not want any more basic theories, they wanted to be able to make connections between theory and specific learning difficulties and the situations of the students they were teaching. This finding suggests that to all Greek teachers with or without teaching experience should be offered CPD training in learning difficulties in order to promote deeper understanding of their students' needs. For English teachers, it would be beneficial not to consider CPD as a professional duty, but as an opportunity to share their concerns and to develop more sophisticated conceptions of teaching dyslexic students. It would be beneficial for both Greek and English teachers to get more involved in explaining their needs and being part of this process of pre-service and in-service teacher training. For teachers in both countries the urgency of the need for more training was clear.

It is evident that teachers experienced enormous pressure of time and work, especially in the English teachers' schedules. The findings of the study suggest that both Greek and English teachers are experiencing increased levels of stress and burn out and feeling that they are overloaded with work and without real support. A further suggestion arising from this research is that teachers need to find again the

satisfaction of teaching and that their time should be rescheduled in a way that will offer them more time in the classroom and with their students and less time in the office completing forms.

The findings indicated that the English teachers in my sample disagreed with the national policies about teachers' work and the teaching of students with learning difficulties. The implication of recent policy shifts towards managerialism, accountability and performativity in education have been profound, and my findings support the point made by Gewirtz and Ball (2000, p.253) who explain:

For the new manager in education, good management involves the smooth and efficient implementation of aims set outside the school, within constraints also set outside the school. It is not the job of the new manager to question or criticise these aims and constraints.

Despite the fact that they believed that it was unlikely to work, the English teachers accepted and worked within the system rather than resisting it. My findings suggest that English teachers are becoming primarily technocratic implementers of policies with which they do not agree. The English teachers in the sample did not agree with the inclusion policy and the current orthodoxies in teachers' training. Nevertheless, they carried out policies that they did not believe in, in order to support and help dyslexic students practically. It is 'schizophrenic' for the English teachers to follow rules, instructions and routines in the everyday work environment that they do not agree with and accept. Solondz (1995, p.219) describes the psychological consequences of this new managerialism including 'reduces staff morale, job security, professionalism and career development'. These consequences were

clear amongst my own sample of teachers. Even more importantly, they found their professional values undermined. As Gewirtz and Ball (2000, p. 253) acknowledge, the new market revolution in education has produced fundamental changes or reforms that have consequences 'not only for work practices, organisational methods and social relationships but also for values of schooling'.

On the other hand, the Greek teachers in the study accepted both, the policy and the practice dictated by their system, arguing that it was not their responsibility to support dyslexic students. However, although the Greek teachers did not accept the solutions that were offered to dyslexic students (the oral examination) their expectation was that the solution should be found elsewhere. In fact, the Greek and English teachers were asking for the same things: they wanted better training in teaching generally and particularly in special needs and they believed that classes streamed or settled by ability would work better than the mixed ability ones.

Greek and English secondary teachers were educated and trained in two different educational systems. They taught in two different school systems, using different curriculums, skills, timetables, languages, teaching approaches and theories. They belong to two different cultural contexts and they have different histories of educational development, however, Greek and English teachers had so many similarities. They were both controlled by their educational systems; English teachers were more aware of this lack of autonomy and they were asking for more power in their hands, but Greek teachers, sometimes, could not explain it and they found it easier to blame others. When teachers do

not feel in control of what they consider to be valued working conditions they experience vulnerability. The basic structure in vulnerability is always one of feeling that one's professional identity and moral integrity, as part of being 'a proper teacher', are questioned and that valued workplace conditions are threatened or lost (Malm, 2009).

## **6.2 Recommendations for further research**

The present research study suggests some answers to the questions of secondary teachers' understanding in dyslexia in England and Greece, however, there are still many questions around the issue of teachers' understanding that remained unanswered and which could usefully, form the basis for future research in the field.

The in-depth, semi-structured interviews gave very interesting results for the study, especially about the gap between policy and practice in England and Greece. A suggestion would be to take this research further by going back to schools, meet with the teachers and observe them in their classroom, during their seminars and meetings and at the same time meet with their dyslexic students in order to check how they feel and understand the support that they receive by their school and especially their teachers. Further research regarding teachers' and students' views and experience of learning difficulties may shed some light as to how teachers need to interact and support the dyslexic students.

Another suggestion for further research would be to compare the experienced teachers of the sample with newly qualified teachers from both countries. In this way we could check if the pre-service and in-

service teacher training programmes with the latest improvements offer to newly qualified teachers the confidence, the knowledge and the understanding that those with 10 years experience were looking for these courses. It would not be appropriate on the basis of these findings to argue that there are 'right' or 'wrong' conceptions of teaching or learning. It is, however, possible from the research to determine whether there is room for improvement in the area of special educational difficulties.

### **6.3 A personal view**

This research journey came to its end. Having undertaken a lot of difficult stages and having taken a lot of difficult decisions the aim of the present study was accomplished.

During this research journey, I have learned to be aware of factors that affect my knowledge and how influences are exposed in organising and writing up the research. I appreciated and understood the importance of carrying out a piece of educational research. More specifically, I believe I became much more aware about the specific epistemological and other guiding principles informing such research and particularly the ways in which the participants' experiences were interpreted. I also understood that we can only make sense of these theoretical positions by adopting a high degree of reflexivity and awareness throughout the analytical process of research (Frith and Kitzinger, 1998; Hollway and Jefferson, 2000). I was able to adopt a critical approach towards these interpretations and positions by paying attention to the conditions and limitations in which they were developed. I realised all these influences

and have been able to step back and look critically my role in the research process (Guillemin and Gillam, 2004).

Before I started the research, what I knew was obvious and it was "black or white". In my limited understanding, knowledge was in some ways universal and it could be easily specified. Reality for me was taken for granted. These issues formed some of the critical ingredients of who and what I was as a teacher and as a person. As a result of the research process and the changes it has helped me make in my perspectives on reality and truth, I am much better equipped to examine my own actions in general and to teaching in particular.

Significant amounts of patience and determination proved vital for completing the study. Often the work became monotonous and dreary. The analysis chapters in particular proved to be the most difficult, as I was not exactly clear how I was supposed to deal with the data that I had gathered. The heavy work load involved resulted in an educational experience, which although positive in many ways, was also physically, emotionally and mentally exhausting. However, the benefits of such sacrifices have been enormous. By getting involved in this research, I have learned many new skills which I never thought possible.

What then have I learnt from the activities of the past six years? What kind of changes can I claim have made during the period of the research? Going through this process has helped me as a teacher and as a researcher and I have begun to see "things" in a different way. The process of this research for me has been very much a learning- oriented experience. The fact that this was the first time that I was able to speak intensively to English and Greek teachers, gave me an insight into their

educational worlds that I was not otherwise able to reach. This has as a result helped me to develop my own awareness and in many different ways change me as a teacher. It changed my understanding, my feelings and my expectations as a teacher towards dyslexic students, but especially towards other teachers.

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(accessed 1 July 2008).

## **Appendix 1**

### Letter to schools' Head teachers

0115 9162767  
07817651924  
ttxap@nottingham.ac.uk

I know that as a Head Teacher you receive many requests from students, like myself, to do research in your school. I hope that you will give strong consideration to my request as I think it is an important one of educational research for all schools.

My name is Ms Aikaterini Papalouka and I am registered as a student for the degree of Master of Philosophy in the Faculty of Education, University of Nottingham. I have already completed the degrees of MA in Special Educational Needs and MA in Human Relations here at the University.

My research is on dyslexia in Secondary Schools in Greece and in England. I am interested in issues of teacher awareness, teacher training and special educational provision, to make a comparative study between Greece and U.K. related to dyslexia. I am supervised by Dr Mark Dale, who is the Deputy Head of the School of Education and Lecturer and Ms Kerry Vincent, who is an Educational Psychologist.

I would like to ask for your support and help in this research by giving me permission to include your school in this research, which it would ideally take place in September-October 2005. I would like interview one teacher, who has dyslexic students in their classroom. The interview will be totally confidential and it will not take more than 30 minutes. I appreciate that a teacher's workload means that they have little non-contact time, but I will guarantee that I will share overall results. I will be very flexible in finding a suitable date for the school and the teacher. Your support and help is essential for my research.

I am happy to answer any further question or supply information you may require and share with you the results of my research. I would be grateful to hear from you that your school is able to participate by September.

Yours faithfully  
Ms Aikaterini Papalouka

## Appendix 2

### Interviews notes, procedures and consent form in English and Greek



#### Interviewer's Notes

- Introduce myself.
- Briefly explain that the interview will ask about their attitudes, experiences and beliefs about dyslexia and dyslexic students.
- Explain that I am particularly interested about their beliefs, views and experiences; it will help people to provide better help to the teachers, that they have in their classroom dyslexic students and make the education more realistic.
- Re-assure participants about confidentiality and give them to read and sign an informed consent form.
- Explain ethical issues:
  1. They do not have to answer any questions that they do not want to.
  2. There are no right or wrong answers.
  3. Data will be kept locked up.
  4. Explain what the data will be used for.
- Explain how long the interview will take (30 minutes, but of course I am really interested in what they have to say so it does not matter if it is longer)

- Thank participants for being interviewed (explain that many others are being interviewed too) and ask them if they would like to send them a copy of the results of the research at the end.
- Finally, check permission to tape record (to save me having to take notes and to make sure that I am able to record all this valuable information). Tell participants that they can turn off tape recorder at any point if they want to (show how).

### **INTRODUCTION**

Good morning/afternoon/evening. I am Katerina Papalouka from the University of Nottingham, Department of Education.

I am conducting a survey as part of my PhD study to find out the constructs and practices of secondary school teachers in relation to dyslexic children. A representative sample of teachers in U.K. and Greece has been selected for interview in this survey. This will give you the opportunity to "have a say" and your taking part will make a great contribution to the study.

Everything you say will be treated confidentially. No names will be attached to any information you provide. You need to read and sign an informed consent forms.

The interview will take 30 minutes and it will be tape-recorded.

### **SECTION 1: DEMOGRAPHICAL ISSUES:**

- Your name is:
- How old are you?
- How many years are you working in education?
- Which is your position in this school?
- Are you dyslexic?

- Do you have dyslexic relative, friends or colleagues in your close environment?

### **SECTION 2: EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND:**

- Which is your educational background?
- Did you ever read about dyslexia in your studies? (If yes, offer more information).
- Do you inform yourself with new researches, books or seminars about any new educational approaches? (If yes, could you give some examples, and explain in which topics you are more interested in).

### **SECTION 3: SOME INTRODUCTORY QUESTIONS ON DYSLEXIA:**

- When and where you did first heard about dyslexia?
- Do you wish to know more?
- Who would you ask if you wanted to know more?
- What sort of meaning does the word "dyslexia" have for you?
- Do you really believe that dyslexia "exists" and it is not an exaggeration or excuses for lazy students?
- How would you picture a dyslexic student in the secondary school?
- If you have to describe with three words a dyslexic student, which ones would you choose?

### **SECTION 4: KNOWLEDGE ABOUT DYSLEXIA IN SCHOOL:**

- Are you informed if there are dyslexic students in your school? (Give a number of students).

- Do you know if there are dyslexic students in your classroom?  
(Give a number of students).
- Could you recognize them by yourself?
- Do you know if these students have a statutory statement of special educational needs from their LEA?
- If I will give you this statutory statement, could you explain in which points would be concentrated and how would you use this statement to help your student and create your own assessment?  
(Provide a statutory statement)
- Could you explain me which procedure you should follow if you think that one of your students is dyslexic, according to the Code of Practice?
- Do you follow this procedure?
- Finally, which procedure do you believe that it should be followed by your personal experience?
- Could you describe in as much detail as possible a teaching plan and methods that you would adopt, if you have a dyslexic student in your classroom?
- Did you ever receive the support and advice of a Special Education Needs Coordinator? Did you find it helpful?
- If you had the power to change the system, which changes would you make?

**SECTION 5: PERSONAL BEHAVIOUR/FEELINGS  
ABOUT DYSLEXIA:**

- Do you believe that there is a "cure" or a solution to this special difficulty?

- Do you find it difficult to teach in a classroom with a dyslexic student? Is a problem the dyslexic student in the classroom?
- How do you feel about this situation?
- Do you adopt a different behaviour with the dyslexic students?
- How is your relationship with the parents of a dyslexic student?
- Do you use any “tricks” to make the lesson easier for all?
- How do you emotionally support a dyslexic student?

**CONCLUSION:**

- Any further comments to make on your statements?
  - Thank participants very much for taking part.
  - Turn off the tape-recorder.
  - Ask if participants want a feedback. If yes, take contact details.
-

*This consent form is to check that you are happy with the information you have received about the study, that you are aware of your rights as a participant and to confirm that you wish to take part in the study.*

**"AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE CONSTRUCTS & PRACTICES OF SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHERS IN RELATION TO DYSLEXIC CHILDREN IN GREECE AND ENGLAND"**

Please tick as appropriate

1. Have you read the research information leaflet?
2. Have you had the opportunity to discuss further questions with the researcher?
3. Have you received enough information about the interview in order to decide if you want to take part?
4. Do you understand that you may stop the interview at any time without giving your reasons and that you can stop at any time the tape-recorder?
5. Do you understand that the researcher will treat all information as confidential?
6. Do you understand that you are free to refuse to answer any questions?
7. Do you agree to take part in the study?

YES	NO

**Signature** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date** \_\_\_\_\_

**Name** \_\_\_\_\_

**I confirm that quotations from the interview can be used in the final research thesis. I understand that these will be used anonymously.**

**Signature** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date** \_\_\_\_\_

**Name** \_\_\_\_\_



## ΠΛΗΡΟΦΟΡΙΕΣ ΕΡΕΥΝΑΣ

- Συστάσεις και παρουσίαση της ερευνήτριας.
- Περιληπτικές εξηγήσεις ότι στην συνέντευξη θα ερωτηθείτε για την συμπεριφορά σας, τις εμπειρίες σας και τα πιστεύω σας για την δυσλεξία και το δυσλεκτικούς μαθητές.
- Η ερευνήτρια ενδιαφέρεται για μόνο για τις απόψεις σας, τις ιδέες σας και τις εμπειρίες σας. Οι δικές σας απόψεις θα βοηθήσουν τους ειδικούς να προσφέρουν καλύτερη βοήθεια στους εκπαιδευτικούς, που έχουν στην τάξη τους δυσλεκτικούς μαθητές και να κάνουν την εκπαίδευση πιο ρεαλιστική.
- Θα υπάρξει απόλυτη εμπιστευτικότητα κατά την διάρκεια της συνέντευξης. Δεν πρόκειται να φανεί το όνομα σας στην έρευνα. Παρακαλώ διαβάστε προσεκτικά και συμπληρώστε την φόρμα που θα σας δώσει η ερευνήτρια.
- Διευκρινήσεις για ηθικά θέματα:
  - 1.** Δεν χρειάζεται να απαντήσετε σε οποιαδήποτε ερώτηση, που δεν επιθυμείτε.
  - 2.** Δεν υπάρχουν σωστές ή λάθος απαντήσεις.
  - 3.** Τα δεδομένα της έρευνας θα παραμείνουν ασφαλισμένα.

4. Διευκρινήσεις να δοθούν από την ερευνήτρια για το που θα χρησιμοποιηθούν τα δεδομένα.

- Η συνέντευξη δεν θα κρατήσει πάνω από 30 λεπτά. Η ερευνήτρια κατανοεί την έλλειψη χρόνου των εκπαιδευτικών.
- Η ερευνήτρια θα ήθελε να ευχαριστήσει τους συμμετέχοντες στην έρευνα και να τους ρωτήσει αν επιθυμούν να τους στείλει τα αποτελέσματα της τελικής έρευνας.
- Τέλος, πρέπει να δοθεί η άδεια σας για την ηχογράφηση της συνέντευξης (αυτό εξυπηρετεί την ερευνήτρια, κερδίζοντας χρόνο από το να κρατά σημειώσεις). Φυσικά οι συμμετέχοντες έχουν το δικαίωμα να σταματήσουν την ηχογράφηση οποιαδήποτε στιγμή θελήσουν. (η ερευνήτρια πρέπει να τους δείξει από πού θα μπορούσαν να το κλείσουν).

### **ΕΙΣΑΓΩΓΗ**

Καλημέρα σας/ καλησπέρα σας. Ονομάζομαι Κατερίνα Παπαλουκά, από το Πανεπιστήμιο του Nottingham, Τμήμα Εκπαίδευσης.

Κάνω μια έρευνα ως μέρος των διδακτορικών μου σπουδών. Στόχος μου είναι να ερευνήσω την θεωρητική και πρακτική αντιμετώπιση των εκπαιδευτικών της δευτεροβάθμιας εκπαίδευσης σε σχέση με το δυσλεκτικό μαθητή. Ένα αντιπροσωπευτικό δείγμα εκπαιδευτικών της Αγγλίας και της Ελλάδας έχει επιλεγεί για συνέντευξη σε αυτή την έρευνα. Θα σας δοθεί η ευκαιρία να ακουστεί η γνώμη σας και η συμμετοχή σας θα συνεισφέρει σημαντικά σε αυτή την έρευνα. Ότι δηλώσετε θα αντιμετωπιστεί απολύτως εμπιστευτικά. Οι πληροφορίες που

θα προσφέρετε δεν θα συνοδεύονται από κανένα όνομα. Θα πρέπει να διαβάσετε προσεκτικά και να υπογράψετε τα έντυπα που θα σας δοθούν. Η συνέντευξη θα κρατήσει τριάντα λεπτά το μέγιστο και θα ηχογραφηθεί με την άδεια σας.

### **Section 1: Demographical issues**

- Το όνομά σας;
- Πόσα χρόνια εργάζεστε στον τομέα της εκπαίδευσης;
- Ποια είναι η θέση σας στο σχολείο που εργάζεστε;
- Είστε δυσλεκτικός;
- Έχετε συγγενείς, φίλους ή συναδέλφους οι οποίοι είναι δυσλεκτικοί;

### **Section 2 : Educational background**

- Ποιο είναι το ιστορικό εκπαίδευσης σας;
- Έχετε διαβάσει για τη δυσλεξία κατά τη διάρκεια των σπουδών σας; ( Παρακαλώ προσφέρετε περισσότερες πληροφορίες)
- Ενημερώνεστε για τη δυσλεξία μέσω βιβλίων, νέων ερευνών, σεμιναρίων, άρθρων, διαδικτύου)

### **Section 3 : Some introductory questions on dyslexia**

- Πότε και που πρωτοακούσατε για τη δυσλεξία;
- Θεωρείτε ότι έχετε αρκετές γνώσεις πάνω στη δυσλεξία;
- Θα θέλατε να γνωρίζετε περισσότερα;
- Ποιον θα ρωτούσατε εάν θέλατε να μάθετε περισσότερα;
- Τι είναι η δυσλεξία για σας;
- Πραγματικά πιστεύετε ότι υπάρχει δυσλεξία και ότι δεν είναι μια εκπαιδευτική υπερβολή ή δικαιολογίες για τεμπέληδες μαθητές;

- Πως θα φωτογραφίζατε έναν δυσλεκτικό μαθητή σε μια τάξη δευτεροβάθμιας εκπαίδευσης;
- Εάν έπρεπε να περιγράψετε με τρεις λέξεις ένα δυσλεκτικό μαθητή, ποιες θα ήταν αυτές;

#### **Section 4 : Knowledge about dyslexia in school**

- Γνωρίζετε εάν υπάρχουν δυσλεκτικοί μαθητές στο σχολείο σας; (δώστε έναν αριθμό)
- Γνωρίζετε εάν υπάρχουν δυσλεκτικοί μαθητές στην τάξη σας; (δώστε έναν αριθμό)
- Θα μπορούσατε να τους αναγνωρίσετε;
- Γνωρίζετε αν αυτοί οι μαθητές έχουν διαγνωστεί, αξιολογηθεί και υποστηριχτεί από τα αντίστοιχα κέντρα του ΥΠΕΠΘ;
- Τι γνωρίζετε για τα ΚΔΑΥ;
- Μπορείτε να περιγράψετε τις διαδικασίες που ακολουθείτε εάν υποπτευθείτε ότι κάποιος μαθητής σας μπορεί να είναι δυσλεκτικός;
- Αυτές οι διαδικασίες είναι προσωπική σας επιλογή ή ακολουθείτε τις οδηγίες της διεύθυνσής σας;
- Ποιες πιστεύετε ότι θα ήταν οι πιο αποτελεσματικές διαδικασίες σύμφωνα με την προσωπική σας άποψη;
- Θα μπορούσατε να μου περιγράψετε με όσο το δυνατό περισσότερες λεπτομέρειες το εκπαιδευτικό πλάνο και τις μεθόδους που υιοθετείτε σε περίπτωση που έχετε ένα δυσλεκτικό μαθητή στην τάξη σας;
- Έχετε ποτέ ζητήσει ή λάβει συμβουλές ή υποστήριξη από ειδικούς εκπαιδευτικούς;
- Το βρήκατε χρήσιμο;

- Ποια η γνώμη σας για τις τάξεις ενισχυτικής διδασκαλίας;
- Εάν είχατε τη δυνατότητα να αλλάξετε το εκπαιδευτικό σύστημα, τι αλλαγές θα κάνατε για την εκπαίδευση των δυσλεκτικών μαθητών;

### **Section 5 : Personal behaviour / feelings about dyslexia**

- Πιστεύετε ότι υπάρχει θεραπεία ή λύση για τη δυσλεξία;
- Πόσο δύσκολο είναι να διδάξετε σε τάξη με δυσλεκτικούς μαθητές;
- Είναι πρόβλημα οι δυσλεκτικοί μαθητές στην τάξη; Ποια η γνώμη σας για την ιδέα διαφορετικών τάξεων ανάλογα με το γνωστικό και νοητικό επίπεδο των μαθητών;
- Υιοθετείτε διαφορετική συμπεριφορά απέναντι στους δυσλεκτικούς μαθητές;
- Ποια είναι η σχέση σας με τους γονείς των δυσλεκτικών μαθητών;
- Χρησιμοποιείτε κάποια τεχνάσματα για να κάνετε το μάθημα ευκολότερο για όλους;
- Πιστεύετε ότι οι δυσλεκτικοί μαθητές δεν βοηθούν στην γενικότερη πρόοδο της τάξης;
- Πως υποστηρίζετε συναισθηματικά έναν δυσλεκτικό μαθητή;

### **Conclusion**

- Θα θέλατε να προσθέσετε τίποτα άλλο;
- Σας ευχαριστώ πολύ για τη συμμετοχή σας στην έρευνα.
- Τερματισμός ηχογράφησης.
- Εάν ο συμμετέχων θα επιθυμούσε ανάλυση και σχολιασμό των απαντήσεών του να δώσει στοιχεία επικοινωνίας.

**ΕΡΕΥΝΑ**  
**«Η ΘΕΩΡΗΤΙΚΗ ΚΑΙ ΠΡΑΚΤΙΚΗ ΠΡΟΣΕΓΓΙΣΗ ΤΩΝ**  
**ΕΚΠΑΙΔΕΥΤΙΚΩΝ ΔΕΥΤΕΡΟΒΑΘΜΙΑΣ ΕΚΠΑΙΔΕΥΣΗΣ ΣΕ ΣΧΕΣΗ ΜΕ**  
**ΤΟ ΔΥΣΛΕΚΤΙΚΟ ΜΑΘΗΤΗ ΣΤΗΝ ΕΛΛΑΔΑ ΚΑΙ ΤΗΝ ΑΓΓΛΙΑ»**

**Αυτή η φόρμα είναι για να τσεκάρετε ότι είστε ικανοποιημένος/-η με τις πληροφορίες που έχετε λάβει για την έρευνα, ότι είστε ενήμερος/-η για τα δικαιώματα σας ως συμμετέχων/-ουσα και ότι βεβαιώνεται ότι επιθυμείτε να πάρετε μέρος σ' αυτή την έρευνα.**

Παρακαλώ βάλτε ✓

	<b>Ναι</b>	<b>Όχι</b>
1. Έχετε διαβάσει το έντυπο με τις πληροφορίες της έρευνας;		
2. Είχατε την ευκαιρία να συζητήσετε διάφορες ερωτήσεις με την ερευνήτρια;		
3. Έχετε λάβει αρκετές πληροφορίες για την συνέντευξη ώστε να αποφασίσετε αν επιθυμείτε να πάρετε μέρος;		
4. Κατανοείτε ότι μπορείτε να σταματήσετε την συνέντευξη οποιαδήποτε στιγμή χωρίς να δώσετε εξηγήσεις και ότι μπορείτε να σταματήσετε επίσης οποιαδήποτε στιγμή την μαγνητοφώνηση;		
5. Κατανοείτε ότι η ερευνήτρια θα κρατήσει όλες τις πληροφορίες εμπιστευτικές;		
6. Κατανοείτε ότι είστε ελεύθερος/-η να αρνηθείτε να απαντήσετε σε οποιαδήποτε ερώτηση;		
7. Συμφωνείτε να πάρετε μέρος στην έρευνα;		

**Υπογραφή:**

**Ημερομηνία:**

**Ονοματεπώνυμο:**

Βεβαιώνω ότι αποσπάσματα από την συνέντευξη μπορούν να χρησιμοποιηθούν στην τελική διατριβή. Αντιλαμβάνομαι ότι αυτά τα αποσπάσματα θα χρησιμοποιηθούν ανώνυμα.

**Υπογραφή:**

**Ημερομηνία:**

**Ονοματεπώνυμο:**

### **Appendix 3**

#### Interview with English Teacher (Bianca)

26/09/2005

All taped interview has been transcribed. A general discussion about dyslexia in the beginning and at the end of the meeting is not recorded.

#### **SECTION 1: DEMOGRAPHICAL ISSUES**

**I: Could you give your name?**

B: My name is B...

**I: How old are you?**

B: O:oh.....45 ((smiles, laughing))

**I: Bad question**

B: Yes, right

**I: How many years are you working in education?**

B: In education since (1.0) 1989

**I: Which is your position in this school?**

B: In this school I am a deputy (senior).

**I: Are you dyslexic?**

B: e:::::h= the more I read about it the more I begin to believe that yes↑ I have some symptoms of dyslexia.

**I: Do you have dyslexic relative, friends or colleagues in your close environment?**

B: No....no

#### **SECTION 2: EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND**

**I: Could you give me your education background?**

B: e::h ok I have done PGCE obviously to being a teacher e::h and a master's degree in religious pluralism, so my mane object would be religious education.

**I: Did you ever read about dyslexia?**

B: Not before this post, so I:: am a new↑ learner myself and doing research on it↓ now.

**I: Do you read books, articles this period or following any seminar about dyslexia?**

B: Yes...books to do the research- I have been in courses as well, so yes I have been on (many) courses to do with dyslexia, some very good ↑, some walk away because it was waste of time.

**I: Are these courses private?**

B: No the school pays for.... The local education

**I: Do you find these courses helpful?**

B: e::mmm for about three↑ the time I went the one was very useful. One was brilliant and // (it's running them) (opening- closing doors) and what was in the course but some, majority it's usually waste of time = one particularly very useful.

### **SECTION 3: SOME INTRODUCTORY QUESTIONS ON DYSLEXIA**

**I: When and where you did first heard about dyslexia?**

B: ok. Eeee:::hhhhhhh I think I heard the word in the background because I not always had anything to do with special needs, but the word dyslexia has been in the education sector for some time now but I think more heard has been interested since I have been in this school.

**I: Do you wish to know more? Did you find helpful when you learned more about dyslexia?**

B: Yes↑. Helpful in an essence you assess yourself as well and you think yes maybe we all have these tendencies. So yes...it has been helpful in order to approach children differently in a class.

**I: And if you want to ask more, did you feel there is anybody here in your school, who can help you, give this information.**

B: Ee:::hh No↑. Nether than my (line) manager Jeanette English, she would help me to get courses and dial me in the right place but she left↑ (I remain ) be the specialist in this area so I am doing the research by myself so we don't have anybody else that is quite familiar with dyslexia.

**I: What do you think dyslexia is for you?**

B: For meeeee...Sorry could you repeat this again.

**I: Yes! What sort of meaning does the word dyslexia have for you?**

B: Dyslexia!!!! ↑ is eeee:::hhh you look a word and to me you look a word and you see the first letter and you think you know what the word is and you don't really because actually you not read the whole word, you have seen maybe the first letter or two letters and you have said right, o.k. it's motivation and after you have another look and it's not fitting in the sentence and you go back again and it wasn't motivation it was meditation.....you know for me is misreading ehhh words↓.

**I: Do you really believe that dyslexia exists?**

B: eeee:::hhhh... No I think it's poor readers, actually, they need extra help with reading eee:::hhhh I don't think it's dyslexia, no...it's confusing words and confusing letters that purely because it's poor readers.

**I: Did you have any influence by the documentary that you watched in television about dyslexia?**

B: Eee::hhh NO↑ because I felt IIII often talk to my colleagues ohhh hung on the more we read this, this is me and then the colleague would say yes this is me as well and you say well everybody cannot be dyslexic.

**I: How would you picture a dyslexic student in your school?**

B: How would I picture them...in what terms how would I picture them?

**I: I mean any symptoms or from their behaviour or how would say that ohh yes this is a dyslexic student.**

B: Right... lack of interest in what the teacher is saying = looking out of the window = looking everywhere but not in front = trying to avoid the works = seating in the back corner = right back of the classroom thinking I have not been noticed = answering less questions = less motivation generally.

**I: If you have to describe with three words a dyslexic student, which ones would you choose?**

B: Eeee::hhh three words for a dyslexic student...eeee::hhh (0.6) weak, (0.4) extra support is needed for them and word trying cut corners in the work ...yes. I do not know if I have answer to the question.

#### **SECTION 4: KNOWLEDGE ABOUT DYSLEXIA IN SCHOOL:**

**I: Are you informed if there are dyslexic students in your school?**

B: We do not have any statement as to say well the teachers don't approach them and say this child is dyslexic they would actually say a lots of other problems this child is not concentrated or this child is not motivated, this child is doing this this this. We pick it up from that and we do say yes there is weakness let's work with this child given extra support and so on. And as I have said we can test them for dyslexia and pass it on, but the authority struggle to accept that they are dyslexia because of lots other reasons and issues around it.

**I: Do you have any dyslexic student in your classroom?**

B: If they have been actually identified as dyslexia?

**I: No identified, if you thought that this could be dyslexic or having learning difficulties**

B: Yes. We have plenty of them.

**I: Could you recognize them by yourself?**

B: Yes. Through the work, the way they write the word, they way they will mix the words up, the way they will misspell, I think the classic one is when they are coping from the board or coping from a sheet when it's not self writing.

**I: Do you know if these students have a statutory statement of special educational needs from their LEA?**

B: Yes! We ...The primary school if it's a statement of a child or behaviour problems or low ability that it passed on to us, so we can continue the support.

**I: So could you explain me which procedure you should follow if you think that one of your students is dyslexic?**

B: We only have one test actually the (outcome) has not come and head psyche is coming in on, we appreciate if he is back every three weeks, but the head psyche is coming on Thursday. I will prompt it again and say it we gave you that what happened eeee:::hhhh but ↑ if children lower down of school on ( ) to be maybe they have symptoms of dyslexia and there is so we give them extra support, we send them to homework clubs, we run homework clubs and that things in lunchtimes....the extra classrooms support them, so we are giving them reading and spelling sessions midday registrations twenty minutes, you know sessions, so they are all in small groups two or threes and these are ( ) always they are dyslexic or could be a statement to behaviour problems just struggle....and eeee:::hhhh so there isn't a thin line, I am trying to think now, without a spelling group, without reading group that come up with twenty minutes, some of them are just lazy, just have behaviour problems, some of them struggle to read and write but are not dyslexia, it's just this weakness. Dyslexia to me the closest that ever happened I felt it was the one that he was saying the letters seem to move off the board again he classic was to seat at the back of the classroom in the corner. We link to learn has it in he is intelligent, but when it comes to writing he struggled copying of the board. That was the closest person that I felt maybe he is dyslexic and then if that was proven, we would..., because he is intelligent and there is just the spelling issue, not even the reading so much, then we are saying yes there is a symptom there ....then to follow that top, when it comes to GCSE's we apply to examining board to give them extra time and then the examining board says yes or no and then there is a percentage of the extra time that they can have.

**I: Have you seen any improvement following this procedure?**

B: Yes...yes very much so... We are very happy, I mean it was one last year that he couldn't read and could not write and so we had to depending on what exam he was doing he was given extra time fifteen minutes or half hour depending now on the length of the exam....Eeee:::hhh it was a writer forum, he↑ would give the answer and the writer would purely write, because he was struggle writing and then if he couldn't read, it was a reading one, the person would seat there and read↑ and he would give then the answer and he did very very well, he got some C's, which we were very surprised, you know and successful...we were all very very happy. You know this is the person who struggled to read and write and he has gone to college now to be ( ) international. That's just one person that has done very very well.

**I: Do you have any Special Educator in the school?**

B: We have somebody that comes in an assess the hearing inept children that they can hear properly, (awarding) hearing aid, we have...we currently now have inherited one youngster, who first day he said he couldn't spell his name either and he is secondary and he struggled with spellings, writing,

organisations skills just generally struggles with everything and there is a lady who will coming and do one to one. Doesn't happen very often, sometimes we are very lucky.

**I: Do you ask for this?**

B: Oh yes we ask for this, but sometimes...we don't get it always. I mean it could be a language problem we have with Japanese children with very little English we have to ask for help, sometimes we get it sometimes no.

**I: Which procedure do you believe that it should be followed by your personal experience?**

B: Eeeee::hhhh to help this...I mean.....the ( ) that we tested he is now year ten, sorry he is year eleven and he needs help very very quickly and we need to come back on that and I think the maximum help that we have so far is the extended time for examination, maybe a writer for them or maybe a reader for them, which is...the parents are very happy with that because they feel their children do not have to finish the exam in one hour, they will have one hour fifteen minute. Parents are quite happy with that and after they are going to the Universities and equally they get extra support, they will get people to check their written work and then help them addressed spelling issues and so on. So yes...that kind of support is there but in class to have it for five years has to be our teaching assistance to manage that, because they needed so much all the class, we can actually support a child three out of the six lessons. That's the maximum support that we give, you know, because the money isn't there, the facilities aren't there and all come down to money issue. So this child, as I said, is struggling to write, as he said "I can't spell my name" which I think he is maybe trying little bit, but he is very very extremely weak. I am supporting him in three lessons out of the six in English and I am sure he gets three out of the six in Science. We cannot give them supporting in every lesson, because this is above us, so we actually trying distribute the support where is needed ee::hh and so the maximum we give is three lessons out of each subject especially the course subject English, Maths, Science.

**I: Which method do you follow to help them?**

B: Yes...there is a work sheet, a large work sheet that they can see them and there is also some of these dyslexic children may suffer colour vision and they may be able to see black or red better, there is somebody that we are saying that she could not see red, so teacher uses red in a white board and she was saying I can't see red, some are better looking and then we are having these plastic rulers if you like, different colours rulers and transparent, so they would put that sawed on and some say blue is better for them, some would say yellow is better for them and it's also a guideline. These sort of things, facilities are there or we are just making large it for somebody if somebody can just quite clear can see black and white.

**I: Did you ever receive the support and advice of a Special Education Needs Coordinator?**

B: We never needed it, so when sometimes we get somebody that has no language for instance, a new from abroad, from another country or (0.8) we have got a child which is very very weak and you are saying hung on this child is very weak, so maybe they had an outside agency helping them in primary school that may continue to secondary school or it may not, it depends whether that person is taken to another child but yes the help is there but is minimum, you know so it's just depends on whether the person is available. I mean speech therapy, some children, you know they need help speech therapy, so you book it, somebody is coming in, somebody assesses them, somebody says yes extra help with speech is needed then they will come on regular basis to help but if it isn't then they say no, we think that this child can manage.

**I: If you had the power to change the system, would you keep these children in the same school or not?**

B: Ohhh yes...I know. Diplomatically I should say everybody has equal opportunities, everybody should have equal right to learn the highfliers intelligent, but in reality it's much more difficult and I think the classroom should be yes....it actually slows and teachers are not magicians, you know the highfliers or the weaker ones and then if you got weaker classes...yes they can be in a school like this but you have weaker class and highflier class in some subjects you can do that, maths are groupings, you know one to nine and other subjects so as well, Science, but just with English is all in one group, teachers they say, you know differentiation should happened, we should have a weaker one. This is all very good...in reality is not working. So for me...yes separate classes then you can bring the best out of their ( ) you know you aren't moving them quickly, because you say right you got five minutes to do this, half of the class can do it quarter of the class can't do it, the others have nearly finished, so it's difficult. So yes I would have separate classes if I could in an ideal world, but we are not living in an ideal world.

#### **SECTION 5: PERSONAL BEHAVIOURAL/FEELINGS ABOUT DYSLEXIA:**

**I: Do you believe that there is a “cure” or a “solution” to this special difficulty?**

B: Yes, the only solution is to have this short of classes and have an upper class and a middle class and a lower class. And yes all the politicians would argue well done you labelled the reliability and that should not happened but the real solution is when I was in school, you know those solution did work with all done all right, but I think, you know that actually it work (a child pays) it get more out of it you try rushing them, rushing them, rushing them, you know and that's the solution really...to have mix classes don't always work.

**I: Do you find it difficult to teach in a classroom with a dyslexic student? Are they a trouble in your classroom?**

B: No...they never are trouble, because children do accept each other very very well. So really there is no trouble, no. You know...eee::hhh they don't make fun of each other, they accept it, it's difficult for the teacher to try keep them with them and not keep them and that's short of things else or slowed down, but within the classes itself no trouble at all.

**I: How do you feel about this situation?**

B: It's very worrying for the teacher in fact the very the very weak child that I am talking about, I am going to be supporting him next lesson and if I am not there I know the teacher is worried thinking ohhh I have got thirty children and there are two children who are very weak sometimes, it's ok they can manage, the teacher is ok and the support isn't here and remember it's three out of six lesson and I think that she is appreciating the fact that I am in there, like I am working with the two very weak children and she can get over with the rest of the class eeee::hhhh whether if I am not there and it is very worrying for the classroom teacher to have, you know.

**I: How is your relationship with the parents of dyslexic student?**

B: Parents are usually aware, because it's something that it's coming from primary school, they already know whether the child is statement, whatever is the problem, but sometime the parents prefer to be written black and white, my child has dyslexia, so to pursue the extra help, the extra needs and so on, that's sometimes what parents would like for being black and white and we have one two parents that we say looking our child tttttttt can you please and it's the same with the speech one that I am thinking of they actually wanted written down, the authority doesn't want to write it down, it will say yes, we will give them extra time in the exam time, we will give them support in class and so on but parents, some parents not all would say no my child has dyslexia and so there for I want a document to say he has dyslexia and the authority says well no it maybe be some tendencies, so the only way to get around it's to say to parents that your child has some tendencies and then that covers 99.9 to the population. You all have tendencies in dyslexia.

**I: Do the parents support your help; do they help them at home?**

B: Some parents do, they are very keen, we have a discussion and we are saying ok they are coming in the parent's evening and they are saying you know my child tttttt and we say yes o.k. we will look at that and we look this and we will do this and we will do that and we will do a spelling skim for them, if you could just check then if this child is doing what we test them. We work together. It starts for one week or two and then the child themselves is trying to find ways to get out of it, others would say I forgot it at home and after they would come in school and say ohhh the homework I forgot it at school or Mrs is taken to mark and just is falling apart. But some parents would want to help, but it's not coming in regular basis. It starts for a week or two but the parents have busy lives and then they give up. Most

parents would prefer the school to do it all, some parents make a good use of it, start with good intentions but when they see through all five years for instance.

**I: Do you use any “tricks” to make the lesson easier for all?**

B: Sometimes we have group work and we are trying to group them in mixed ability, so there is not all lower ability getting together. So we are trying mix both agendas and abilities, but group work is not always there, so we need to turn and have to do actually the ordinary work with all.

**I: How do you emotionally support a dyslexic student?**

B: Yes, we have a learning mentor, who also sees, you see it's not only learning it could be emotionally, it could be stuff that goes off in the background and so on, so there are a lot of factors of there. So we have a lady who just deals with behaviour problems and emotionally problems and then we have a lady who is a learning mentor, so she is known as the behaviour teacher, where actually they talk about behaviour and it's usually some stands out of at home, which actually changes that behaviour and she will trace back to transport them and then we got the learning mentor which is somebody no so bad but has organisational problems just bring it in the equipment, just weeklies and worries and seats at the back and so on and so it's little bit weak and needs help with the homework, she will have an hour a week with them and pull them out from certain lessons that this child will work with me and trying not have the same time so no always the child is missing English for instance and they will have one hour session. So we have learning mentors and we have behaviour teacher as well.

**I: Do you think that these children are feeling quite weak emotionally?**

B: Ohhh it's a bid or both. Some are naturally weak and lack of confidence. When they are naturally slightly weak they start pick it up in the primary school and say I am weaker than this child, or look this child, because they are seating in tables and then they lose the confidence and that adds to it, you know. Others have background problems, you know family splitting up or mother's left home or whatever and that adds to it and then they switches off, so they look for reasons to getting out of work, but it is a lot of mixture of things and then the child loses the confidence and he brings the confidence back and you say you can do I, I think a lot of is lack of confidence and switching off because of it. If it's a child suffering from dyslexia, says I can't do this , this weak child I am going be seating next and he would be doing this (moving her body) and then this (make some face expressions) he will not just seat and listen because he knows that he will not go be part with the rest of the class and a lot of this is lack of confidence and if the teacher is reading something he will not follow it, you know and then. So I think that this is because they are slightly weaker and then they lose confidence and then they bring that confidence back and you always praising and saying well done and so on. So yes....I think dyslexia, I think the reason why some of the authority doesn't accept it because if we look the symptoms we all carry majority of these symptoms and the symptoms

actually come from lots of reasons and I do strongly believe that I was dyslexia as well partly because I take back and I can understand what these children are going through, you know and when you are in classroom situation and you read. I was a weak reader and I used instead of following the book I used to think any minute she would ask me to read that was most worrying my mind and if I was asked to read I used to trying pretend in front of the rest of the class that I can read really fast and then while I was reading fast there goes motivation meditation and so on. I looked information there and you know I looked in and then I think it's for and I was making another word, informative or something and then oh this doesn't make sense and I have to go back and it was like I need to prove to the rest of the classroom that I can read as fast as you and it's self worry that left me with that. So it is other things that you try to cover as well and you know I still read funny, my kids laugh at me, because I am slow and so on and they say come on mum get on with it now all right you spend five minutes in that one line.....and so I think in sterns of confidence because every child is different. Others love to read in the class hands always go up and I can pick them up and then there are always one or two that they will say no and then when you made then read it, it's a complex and when this complex is there, you have it.

**I: O.k. we finished.**

B: I hoped I was useful.

**I: Oh yes....Thank you so much.**