

**SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHERS' PERCEPTION
OF MENTALLY HANDICAPPED PUPILS**

A CASE STUDY IN THE GREATER ATHENS REGION OF GREECE

Farahdokht Ajir-Fameli

Thesis Submitted for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

University of Stirling

Department of Education

June 1994 *1995*

THESIS ABSTRACT

THESIS ABSTRACT

SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHERS' PERCEPTION OF MENTALLY HANDICAPPED PUPILS

A Case Study in the Greater Athens Region of Greece

In this thesis I set out to study the process through which special education teachers characterise and educate a group of pupils who are categorised as mentally handicapped. Teachers' perceptions of their pupils are reflected in their educational practice and constitute an important element in the complex and lengthy procedure during which a child is defined as mentally handicapped. The research examines these issues in practice by way of a case study of teachers in the Greater Athens Region of Greece.

During the school years the label of mental handicap may be confirmed and maintained in a child's identity as he/she moves into adulthood. Schooling may also work in a positive way and provide for a child's eventual integration in the mainstream education and the community. It is this positive aspect of schooling which has become an inseparable part of the underlying principles in special education today.

The Greek Education Act of 1985 concerns individuals with special educational needs and refers to the category of mentally handicapped, among other groups, as those with a right to education. As stated in the Act the scope of education is to provide for the balanced and effective development of the individuals concerned as well as for their mutual acceptance and integration in the community as a whole.

(iv)

The above principles laid down by the policy makers are loosely framed in the context of the Act and are open to interpretation by those who are involved in the practice of special education. Reference in the Act to "*the balanced and effective development of the individuals and possibilities for their integration*" may be defined in a variety of ways by the professionals involved in the system of special education.

Among the latter the role of the teachers is a central one. Teachers are expected to educate pupils who are already categorised as mentally handicapped and help them develop their potential and integrate as best as possible in the community. Depending on their personal experience, gained in the community, their training and their involvement in the system of special education, teachers may take different approaches in defining what mental handicap is and how education of the mentally handicapped pupils should and/or could be carried out.

On the one hand teachers develop a professional ideology, that is, their conception of how their task should be carried out. On the other hand, faced with practical aspects of implementing such ideologies, teachers reach decisions as how to handle different cases in given situations. Thus, I am using the concept of teachers' perceptions of mental handicap to refer to the practical aspects of teaching the mentally handicapped as well as the teachers' own ideologies.

The empirical research began with an exploratory study. This involved a sample of 10 teachers in 5 special schools in the study area. The results of the exploratory phase were then used for the design of the main research which concerned the study of 13 special schools with a sample of 40 teachers. In both exploratory and main research I have followed a research methodology based on the ethnographic approach in educational studies. This involved a flexible design to start the research and the use of observation and informal interview techniques in data collection.

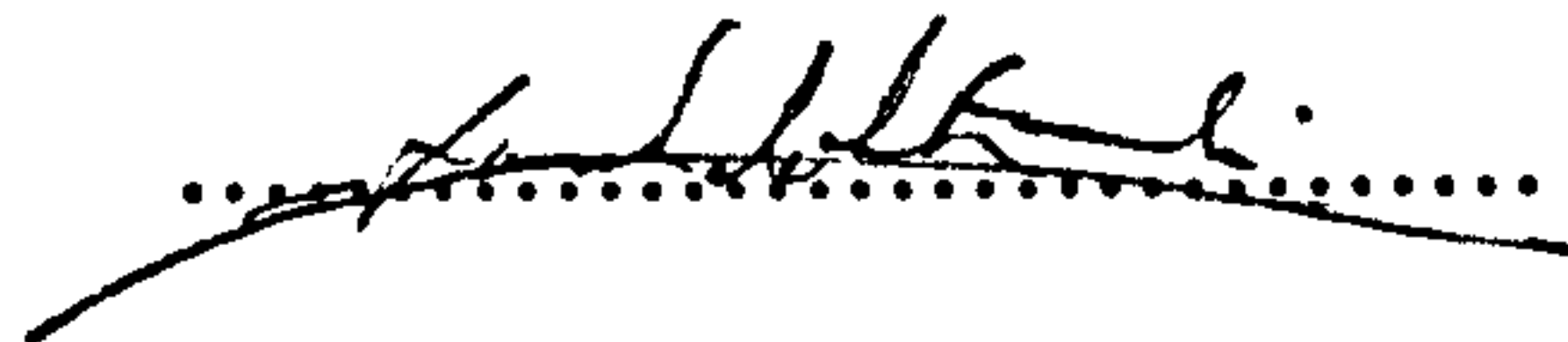
The results have been analysed mainly qualitatively. They show the range of criteria teachers in the sample are applying to identify their mentally handicapped pupils, criteria such as physical features or social and psychological characteristics of the pupils. They are not, however, applied in a universal manner by all the teachers. Variation in the criteria is analysed and conclusions are drawn that may be of use to further study in this area.

As far as education of the mentally handicapped is concerned the results of my research point out the existence of a complex network of interactions within which teachers have to carry out their task. It involves elements both within and outside the schools where they teach, i.e., the attitude of the community as a whole and the general atmosphere at work.

Teachers' approaches towards their mentally handicapped pupils may be formed through a process of interaction in different setups. In this research I am attempting to discover the outcomes of such interactions by studying teachers' practice of special education in the actual setting of the schools. I have sought to demonstrate that the outcome of teachers' interaction in each specific situation adds to a cluster of perceptions within which mental handicap is defined and dealt with. In some cases teachers may help maintain this already existing cluster, in other cases they may modify its form.

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this thesis is my own work and that no portion of this thesis has been submitted for application for another degree in this or any other University.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Farahdokht Ajir-Fameli', is written over a horizontal dotted line. The signature is fluid and cursive.

Farahdokht Ajir-Fameli

June 1994

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

I thank my supervisors Mr. Ian Knowles and Dr. Bill Inglis for their advice and support throughout this research.

I am also indebted to Mr. S. Nicodemos, Head of the Special Education Department in the Ministry of Education and Religion in Greece, for granting me permission to carry out my investigation by visiting the sample schools and for giving me information about the Greek system of special education.

Thanks have to be extended to all the head teachers of the sample schools who cooperated with me in their schools. Furthermore, I acknowledge the help and cooperation of all fifty teachers who took part in the interviews and accepted me to observe their classes. Without their understanding and collaboration this research would have not been possible. For reasons of confidentiality individual credit to head teachers and teachers is not possible.

I also extend my appreciation to all the pupils in the schools I visited for their hospitality towards me as a visitor and their persistence that I should visit their class.

This acknowledgement is not complete without thanking Nicholas, my husband, not only for his moral support all the way through this research, but also for his special help in translations of the Greek texts and advice concerning the presentation of this thesis.

LIST OF CONTENTS

(Summary)

1.	Thesis Abstract	(iii)-(v)
2.	Declaration	(vi)
3.	Acknowledgments	(vii)
4.	List of Contents	(viii)-(xiv)
5.	List of Tables	(xv)-(xviii)
6.	Introduction	1- 10
7.	Chapter One	11- 56
8.	Chapter Two	57-119
9.	Chapter Three	120-170
10.	Chapter Four	171-237
11.	Chapter Five	238-335
12.	Conclusions	336-357
13.	Footnotes	358-379
14.	References	380-399
15.	Appendices	400-426

LIST OF CONTENTS

(detailed)

THESIS ABSTRACT

DECLARATION

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

LIST OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

INTRODUCTION

CHAPTER ONE: MENTALLY HANDICAPPED IN GREEK SOCIETY

1. INTRODUCTION

2. MENTALLY HANDICAPPED CHILDREN IN GREEK SOCIETY

2.1 The broader context.

2.2 A historical review.

2.3 International developments in caring for the mentally handicapped and their influences in Greece.

2.4 The establishment of asylums in Greece.

2.5 Recognition of the concept of mental handicap.

3. **MENTALLY HANDICAPPED IN GREECE TODAY:
POLICY AND PRACTICE IN CONFLICT.**
4. **CONCLUSIONS.**

CHAPTER TWO: EDUCATION OF THE MENTALLY HANDICAPPED CHILD IN GREECE

1. **INTRODUCTION.**
2. **THE GREEK SYSTEM OF SPECIAL EDUCATION.**
 - 2.1 Sources of information on the greek system of special education.
 - 2.2 Structure of the greek system of special education.
 - 2.3 Information on compulsory schooling and number of pupils.
 - 2.4 Definition of Mental Handicap.
 - 2.5 Certain practical Implications of the concept of Mental handicap.
 - 2.6 Special needs.
 - 2.7 Integration.
 - 2.8 Coordination of official bodies involved.
3. **MENTAL HANDICAP:
PERSONAL IDENTITY OR SOCIAL PRODUCT?**
 - 3.1 **Mental Handicap as personal identity.**
 - 3.1.1 Physical and psychological development.
 - 3.1.2 Environmental influences.
 - 3.2 **Mental handicap as a social product.**
4. **IMPLICATIONS FOR THE PEDAGOGY
OF MENTALLY HANDICAPPED PUPILS.**
5. **CONCLUSIONS.**

**CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH DESIGN AND
EXPLORATORY RESEARCH**

1. INTRODUCTION.
2. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK.
 - 2.1 Criteria for characterising mental handicap.
 - 2.2 Provisions for dealing with the mentally handicapped children.
 - 2.3 Teachers' views on methods and material for teaching.
 - 2.4 Teachers' views on integration.
 - 2.5 Inter-professional relations and working conditions.
3. METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH.
4. RESEARCH STRATEGY, TECHNIQUES AND METHOD OF DATA ANALYSIS.
5. THE PROCESS OF SAMPLING AND DATA COLLECTION IN EXPLORATORY RESEARCH.
 - 5.1 Process of the exploratory research: March-June 1988.
 - 5.2 The Sample of the exploratory research.
6. RESULTS OF THE EXPLORATORY RESEARCH.
 - 6.1 Characterisation of the mentally handicapped pupils.
 - 6.2 Provisions for the mentally handicapped.
 - 6.3 Approaches in teaching the mentally handicapped.
 - 6.4 Teachers' attitudes towards integration.
 - 6.5 Inter-professional relations and work environment.
7. CONCLUSIONS.

CHAPTER FOUR: THE MAIN RESEARCH

1. INTRODUCTION.
2. SECTION ONE: RESEARCH DESIGN FOR THE MAIN RESEARCH.
 - 2.1 Assessment of mental handicap.
 - 2.2 Teachers' approaches in practice of special education.
3. SECTION TWO: RESEARCH METHOD AND STRATEGY IN THE MAIN RESEARCH.
 - 3.1 Main Research: Spring 1989 — The process of selection of schools and sampling.
 - 3.2 Preliminary analysis of data: Teachers' typology.
 - 3.2.1 Idealist teachers.
 - 3.2.2 Idealist-compromiser teachers.
 - 3.2.3 Compromiser teachers.
 - 3.2.4 Compromiser-realist teachers.
4. TEACHERS' BACKGROUND.
5. SECTION THREE: CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOLS IN THE SAMPLE.
 - 5.1 Years of operation.
 - 5.2 Teacher/Pupil Ratio.
 - 5.3 School staff and qualifications.
 - 5.4 Type of pupil and teaching material.
 - 5.5 School resources.
 - 5.6 School management.
6. CONCLUSIONS.

**CHAPTER FIVE: PROFESSIONAL IDEOLOGIES AND PRACTICE
OF SPECIAL EDUCATION**

1. INTRODUCTION.
2. SECTION I: TEACHERS' PROFESSIONAL IDEOLOGIES.
 - 2.1 Motives in becoming a special education teacher.
 - 2.2 Definition of Mental handicap.
 - 2.3 Teachers' attitudes towards integration.
3. SECTION II: TEACHERS' INTERPRETATIONS OF THE EDUCATIONAL AND SOCIAL CONTEXTS.
 - 3.1 Inter-professional relationships.
 - 3.2 Teachers' interpretations of parental' attitudes.
 - 3.3 Teachers' accounts of the schools' shortcomings.
 - 3.4 Teachers' views on the prevailing conditions in society as regards mentally handicapped pupils.
4. SECTION III: TEACHERS IN PRACTICE.
 - 4.1 Teachers' characterisation of their pupils.
 - 4.1.1 S.M.H. and P.M.H. pupils.
 - 4.1.2 M.M.H. and not M.H.
 - 4.2 Teaching material and method.
 - 4.3 Teachers' assessment of the possibilities for their pupils' integration.
 - 4.3.1 Teachers' assessment of the possibilities of their pupils' integration in ordinary schools.
 - 4.3.2 Teachers' assessment of their pupils' possibilities for integrating in the community.

(xiv)

- 4.3.3 Teachers' assessment of the possibilities for their pupils in following an independent life.
- 4.3.4 Ideology and practice: Teachers' perception of their pupils and their practice of special education.

5. CONCLUSIONS.

THESIS CONCLUSIONS

FOOTNOTES

REFERENCES

APPENDICES:

- APPENDIX I
- APPENDIX II
- APPENDIX III

LIST OF TABLES

CHAPTER TWO

- Table MEDS-A:** Evolution of the number of Special Educational Units, their Pupils and Staff.
- Table MEDS-B:** Number of Pupils by Category of Handicap and Education Level (School Year 1987-88).
- Table MEDS-C:** Special Educational Units by Category of Pupil Handicap (School Year 1987-88).
- Table MEDS-D:** Number of pupils and School Units of Special Education (SUSE) by category of handicap (School Year 1991-1992).
- Table MEDS-E:** Number of SUSE and pupils by level of education (reference year 1991).

CHAPTER THREE

- Table 3.1:** Criteria for defining the concept of mental handicap.
- Table 3.2:** Provisions for dealing with the mentally handicapped child.
- Table 3.3:** General Framework for the Research Procedure.
- Table 3.4:** Criteria applied by teachers in the sample to define the concept of mental handicap.
- Table 3.5:** Educational needs of the mentally handicapped defined by teachers in the observed classes.

CHAPTER FOUR

- Table 4.1:** Teacher types in the exploratory and the main research stages.
- Table 4.2:** Teachers' position in the system of special education.
- Table 4.3:** The research process and sequence of steps.
- Table 4.4:** Teachers' age by teacher types.
- Table 4.5:** Teachers' sex by teacher types.
- Table 4.6:** Teachers' marital status by teacher types.
- Table 4.7:** Teachers' family size by teacher types.
- Table 4.8:** Years of teaching experience in ordinary schools by teacher types.
- Table 4.9:** Years of teaching experience in special schools by teacher types.
- Table 4.10:** Years of operation of the schools surveyed.
- Table 4.11:** Number of pupils in the survey schools.
- Table 4.12:** Number of teachers in the schools surveyed.
- Table 4.13:** Teacher/pupil ratio in the schools surveyed.
- Table 4.14:** Qualifications of teachers in the schools surveyed.
- Table 4.15:** Presence of other professionals in the schools.
- Table 4.16:** Categories of pupils in the schools surveyed.
- Table 4.17:** Teaching material used in the schools surveyed.
- Table 4.18:** Type of school environment (Site).
- Table 4.19:** Type of school environment (Space).

Table 4.20: Type of school environment (playground).

Table 4.21: Type of school management.

CHAPTER FIVE

Table 5.1: Teachers' motives in becoming involved in special education by teacher types.

Table 5.2a: Criteria applied by teachers in the sample to define the concept of mental handicap (P.M.H.).

Table 5.2b: Criteria applied by teachers in the sample to define the concept of mental handicap (S.M.H.).

Table 5.2c: Criteria applied by teachers in the sample to define the concept of mental handicap (M.M.H.).

Table 5.2d: Criteria applied by teachers in the sample to define the concept of mental handicap (Not M.H.)

Table 5.3: Teachers' views on integration in the community by teacher types.

Table 5.4: Teachers' views on integration in ordinary schools by teacher types.

Table 5.5: Teachers' views on the possibilities for independent living by teacher types.

Table 5.6: Teachers' views towards the other professionals in the schools by teacher types.

Table 5.7: Teachers' views towards the parents of their pupils, by teacher types.

- Table 5.8: Teachers' accounts of the schools' shortcomings.
- Table 5.9: Teachers' proposals for improving the special education system by teacher types.
- Table 5.10: Teachers' views on problems encountered in the community by the M.H. Pupils.
- Table 5.11: Size of class for each teacher type.
- Table 5.12: School age of pupils by teacher types.
- Table 5.13: Number of teachers corresponding to type of pupils in their class.
- Table 5.14: Teaching methods by teacher types.
- Table 5.15: Teaching material by teacher types.
- Table 5.16: Curriculum for S.M.H. and P.M.H. pupils by teacher types.
- Table 5.17: Curriculum for M.M.H. and Not M.H. pupils by teacher types.

CONCLUSIONS

- Table 6.1 Factors influencing the formation of teachers' perceptions.

INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

Over the past decades the education of the group of pupils who have been categorised as mentally handicapped has increasingly become a major cause for concern to policy makers in Greece. The role teachers are playing in the implementation of the policies designed to improve the quality of life of these individuals is a vital one. In this research I set out to examine the ways in which teachers characterise and educate their mentally handicapped pupils, with particular emphasis placed on processes and actors in the special education system operating in the Greater Athens Region of Greece.

The education of handicapped children in the system of special education in Greece is ruled by the 1985 Education Act.⁽¹⁾ This Act introduces three major principles in the education of children with special educational needs—including those who are officially referred to as mentally handicapped children. The first principle promotes the balanced and effective development of the individuals with special educational needs. The second principle underlines the importance of integration of these individuals in the productive process. The third principle concerns the mutual acceptance of those with special educational needs in society as a whole.

Through this Act the State may be seen to impose upon Greek society an ideology ⁽²⁾ in dealing with the mentally handicapped. Such an ideology is supposed to influence currently prevailing “*negative*” trends of thought and action towards the handicapped and transform them into “*positive*” ones. “*Negative*” trends involve concentrating on disabilities in individuals and either

directly or indirectly effecting their isolation from the main body social. In contrast, a “*positive*” approach aims at utilising the handicapped individuals’ potential and integrating them in the community. In the context of the Act, teachers are encouraged and expected to follow the “*positive*” approach in their practice of educating the mentally handicapped pupils.

However, the legislative framework which regulates the operation of the special education system in Greece does not provide clear cut descriptions of the ways in which and on the basis of what criteria the “*positive*” trend should apply in practice. Key issues such as definition of mental handicap, educational approach, etc., remain unspecified and it is up to the individual teacher and other professionals involved in the system of special education to provide their own interpretations. The nature of the principles put forward by the policy makers could give those involved in the operation of the system a free hand in operationalising the relevant concepts in practice.

Teachers are not directly involved in diagnosis and placement of their pupils. However, their perceptions of the mentally handicapped pupils may have direct influence on the future of these children. Since no universally applicable definition of mental handicap is provided, no mentally handicapped pupil can be presented to a teacher as a clear cut case with specific characteristics and needs. Such definitions are left to the teachers to decide. Based on their personal background and experiences teachers may develop their own perceptions of mentally handicapped pupils and proceed to teach them by using such perceptions.

The perceptions of mentally handicapped pupils that are held by their teachers are not formed in a vacuum. Teachers are part of a wider social structure and are involved in an interaction network both within and outside the system of special education. At a macro-level of analysis, teachers should be

seen as members of the community as a whole who would bring into the system of special education certain cultural values. From a micro-analytical perspective teachers are actors in specific social settings, such as the schools. They are taking part in a process of interaction, i.e., educating the mentally handicapped pupils. In this interaction process they may bring in different ranges of previously acquired perceptions of mental handicap.

Thus a study of teachers' perceptions of mental handicap involves an investigation at both macro- and micro-level of analysis. Chapters one and two of this thesis deal with the theoretical analysis at the macro-level. Referring to the available literature, both Greek and English, I have pointed out the possible definitions of mental handicap and special educational needs which teachers may have come across. As far as the micro-level of analysis is concerned, I have studied teachers' operation in actual practice, beginning with an exploratory study (chapter three) and proceeding to the main research design on the basis of the exploratory research results (chapters four and five.)

I discuss "*negative*" and "*positive*" trends in the first chapter of the thesis. The literature review indicates that over the centuries the "*negative*" approach has proved the dominant one and is still influential in shaping Greek society's attitudes towards the handicapped in general and the mentally handicapped in particular. I suggest that these two approaches are both influential in the formation of teachers' perceptions of the mentally handicapped pupils.

The "*positive*" approach is presented in the Greek literature as being based on a humanitarian account in dealing with the handicapped. However, the study of the way in which the concept of mental handicap in pupils has come into existence suggests that professional intervention in characterising and dealing with this population has stemmed from other approaches of social policy than solely humanitarian ones.

Analysis of the socio-economic and political conditions in which policies are developed for the education of the handicapped indicates that policies are not only means of doing good to the handicapped population. Oliver (1988) refers to these different aspects within which policy for special education can be analysed.⁽³⁾ A policy for special education can be accounted for as “*social investment*” being set to reassure the functioning of the social system. In this sense policy for special education takes care of the interest of the wider society.

Social policy may be viewed as “*conflict between competing groups.*” Thus, policy concerning special education is introduced by the social group who intend to impose their own value upon other groups in society. “*Social control*” is another account of social policy for special education. By being categorised the handicapped become the subject of control.

I shall be arguing that all the above accounts may be relevant in the study of the process through which the special education system in Greece has come into existence. The central concern of policies for special education has always been characterisation of the population of the pupils who cannot be handled in ordinary (main stream) schools.

In chapter two of the thesis I examine the principles upon which the Greek system of special education is based. I explain that due to the vague nature of the official guidelines professionals involved, such as teachers, could use different interpretations and approaches in dealing with the mentally handicapped pupils. In the first section of chapter two I deal with the key issues in the legislative framework. These concern definitions of mental handicap, special educational needs, integration and coordination of official bodies involved. Since there are several uncertainties in these areas the education of the mentally handicapped pupils needs to be studied by taking into account the interpretations of the professionals involved.

Having studied the general background and the legal principles upon which the Greek system of special education is founded I am proceeding to investigate, at a theoretical level, the types of approaches which may influence the actual operation of that system. Professionals who are involved in the practice of special education are exposed to and influenced by not only commonsense based approaches towards the mentally handicapped but also policy layouts concerning their education.

Scientifically established theories on the one hand and the experiences gained by the professionals during their training and practice of special education may influence the approaches taken by the teachers towards their mentally handicapped pupils. The final section of chapter two deals with such issues.

In defining the concept of mental handicap I am discussing two currently existing perspectives which tend to affect teachers' perceptions of mentally handicapped pupils. On the one hand it can be approached as part of an individual's identity detectable within his/her physical, psychological and social aspects. On the other hand the individual who is categorised as mentally handicapped may be seen as a recipient of a social product.⁽⁴⁾

A large part of Greek literature on the subject of handicap is influenced by a "*structural functionalist*" approach which focuses on issues of "*causation,*" "*assessment,*" "*treatment*" and "*education.*" Pursuing the task of educating the mentally handicapped pupils teachers are very likely to be influenced by such writings since these are included in their training courses.

A universally applicable definition of the concept of mental handicap is yet to be found. The admitted ambiguity of the nature of mental handicap has not been fully clarified so far. However, there exist established approaches in dealing

with the mentally handicapped. This is fully demonstrated in the processes of assessment, diagnosis and the methods of treatment suggested.

Professionals who believe mental handicap is a reality within an individual are in search of the “*right*” answers about how to define and handle mental handicap “*effectively*.” This process in itself leads to the construction of mental handicap as a social reality since professionals are those who define mental handicap and proceed to deal with the individuals in this category as they see fit. There are certain theories and methods of dealing with the mentally handicapped which have become an integrated part of most systems concerning the mentally handicapped individuals.

The variation in the ways in which mental handicap is seen does not depend any more only on the culture of a certain society but also on the scientific approaches that are adopted by its professionals. Taking into consideration the variety of approaches existing in this area, even within some particular society, we could argue that mental handicap may be amenable to different definitions rather than being a well-defined social reality.

Therefore in the study of the phenomenon of mental handicap I take the approach which treats mental handicap as the product of interaction in a given society. In this account, mental handicap is a social reality or a social product rather than a “*cognitive norm*” or a reality within the individual.⁽⁵⁾

Chapter three includes the conceptual framework, methodological approach, research strategy and technique for the exploratory study. These are followed by the results of this part of the research and assumptions which are the basis for further research. In chapter three I discuss the principles of the ethnographic approach in educational research which I have made use of in this

thesis. This approach has enabled me to start with a flexible conceptual framework.

The literature review had provided me with certain concepts to start off my research on the definition of mental handicap, provisions for dealing with mentally handicap pupils, teachers' general approach towards the possibilities for their pupils and the influences the inter-professional relationships could have on teachers' perceptions of the mentally handicapped pupils.

In the first section of chapter three I am discussing how through the use of observation and informal interviews I carried out an exploratory study of the perceptions the sample of 10 teachers held of their mentally handicapped pupils. The second section of this chapter deals with the characteristics of the sample and finally the results. The results are analysed through the use of a qualitative method. The range of criteria used by teachers to define the concept of mental handicap and the approaches they took in dealing with their pupils is discussed in this section of chapter three. I am indicating how both negative and positive attitudes were found in the approaches taken by the teachers in the sample. I used the results of the exploratory research as the basis for the main research.

The conceptual framework in the main research was drawn gradually as the research developed. This process is discussed in chapter four where I am dealing with the research design for the main research. The conceptual framework, research methodology and strategy are also discussed in this chapter. The final section of chapter four contains the characteristics of the 13 schools and 40 teachers in the sample.

Chapter five contains the analysis of the results from the main research. Professional ideologies and the practice of special education are the subject of

discussion in three different sections of this chapter. What teachers would ideally wish to achieve in their profession and what they actually see plausible in that respect will be defined at an operational level and by way of interviews with the teachers and observation of their work in practice.

The first section of chapter five deals with what I refer to as teachers' professional ideology. This includes teachers' personal beliefs about what mental handicap is and how a mentally handicapped child should be educated and dealt with in society. The second section deals with teachers' interpretations of the educational and social context in which mentally handicapped pupils are supposed to be educated and live in. I discuss what teachers believe is actually possible to be done for the mentally handicapped child and how the latter are dealt with in the wider context outside special schools and in the community. I refer to teachers views on subjects such as the influence of other professionals in the education of the mentally handicapped, parental views, shortcomings in the schools and society in handling the needs of the mentally handicapped pupils.

The final section of this chapter consists of the analysis of teachers' practice of special education. Through the analysis of the observations in the classes and informal interviews I will define how mental handicap is defined and dealt with by the teachers in the sample.

The conclusions of this thesis provide an account of the general outcome of the research by attempting to bring together the main strands of the arguments developed in the thesis, both theoretical and practical, in order to present the possible approaches which can be taken by teachers of special education towards the mentally handicapped pupils. Some of the accounts given at this stage may be applicable only to the specific situation in which I had carried out in my research. However, they could provide a general background for further

investigation both within the Greek system of special education as well as that of other countries.

Since this research did not begin with set hypotheses and did not follow a predefined and restrictive research plan the conclusions should provide the major link between different stages of the thesis. This type of information at a micro-level of analysis is not only helpful for the understanding of teachers' perceptions of the mentally handicapped pupils in the geographical area where the research took place, but also for a wider audience who are involved in and concerned with the way in which mentally handicapped pupils are educated.

CHAPTER ONE

MENTALLY HANDICAPPED IN GREEK SOCIETY

CHAPTER ONE

MENTALLY HANDICAPPED IN GREEK SOCIETY

1. INTRODUCTION.

In this chapter I am setting out to discuss issues that are relevant to the concept of mental handicap and which have a bearing on the Greek context. This analysis will pave the way for a case study of teachers' perceptions of the mentally handicapped pupils. My discussion of historical developments concerning the way in which handicapped individuals have been treated in Greece attempts to contribute towards an understanding of the cultural responses associated with the phenomenon of handicap in general and mental handicap in particular. I am suggesting that these cultural responses are influential in the ways in which teachers of the mentally handicapped are forming their perceptions of their pupils.

I am using the term "mental handicap" as it is applied in relevant Greek legislation. Use of this type of disablist terminology is currently widespread and well established in Greece both in commonsense and academic contexts. Since I am discussing these concepts as they are applied in that country, I have made an effort not to alter the terminology I have encountered in my empirical work (cf. chapter two, p.75).

The first part of chapter one deals with an analysis of the responses of Greek society towards the handicapped individuals over the centuries. The aim of the review is not to provide a full historical analysis, but rather a selective account of certain social, economic and cultural developments relevant to my research. Although past practices may not be current in contemporary Greek society it is important to have a general view of the background upon which today's responses have emerged. This is particularly significant in a study concerning the Greek system of special education as the place of the handicapped people in Greek society is not a widely researched subject. ⁽¹⁾

The historical review focuses upon events which led to the introduction of the Greek system of special education, the recognition of different types of handicap and mental handicap as it has come to be known today. In this respect the Greek experience needs to be studied by taking into account international developments, too. The second part of this chapter deals with an analysis of such developments and their influence in Greece. I will be arguing that special educational policies in Greece were developed and are still developing on the same accounts upon which such policies are developed in other parts of the world.

As I have explained in the introduction to the thesis I shall be applying the accounts of policy for special education, as presented by Oliver (1988), in order to analyse the evolutionary process through which the system of special education in Greece has come into operation. The humanitarian, social investments, social conflict and social control accounts may all contribute to improved understanding of developments in modern Greek special educational policy.

In the final part of this chapter I shall be concentrating on policies for the mentally handicapped in the modern Greek State. This study includes a review

of the situation before and after recognition of the concept of mental handicap in Greece. It involves a brief study of the establishment of asylums in Greece where the mentally handicapped were confined under the label of mad. I have included such a review in my analysis in order to clarify a rather confused situation as I proceed to explain below.

In many Greek publications the mentally handicapped child is referred to as an individual who has been forgotten over the centuries and at best has been placed in a state of relative isolation in the asylum or has received charity from society. The special education system is presented in such publications as a form of salvation for these children. ⁽²⁾ The introduction of special education in Greece has undeniably constituted a step towards the care and protection of children who due to severe forms of physical and/or mental handicap have been subjected to cruelty, isolation and rejection.

However, a parallel analysis of the way in which asylums were established in Greece and the process through which special education gained importance indicates that special education was not originally introduced for the sake of children who had been lumped together with the mad. Rather the category of mentally handicapped was devised by the educational authorities to separate the population of the school children who were actually registered in the ordinary schools but could not cope with the curriculum.

The concept of mental handicap is differentiated from "*madness*" in official and scientific terminologies. However, it still gives rise to an image of the person who is mentally deficient, different from those who are "*normal*." Thus the mentally handicapped, too, may become subject to the type of response which has been shown towards individuals who have been labelled mad, idiot or imbecile in Greek society over the centuries.

In my discussion of the development of the system of special education I am dealing with the way in which those who have been referred to as mad, idiots or imbeciles have been treated in Greek society. I am also exploring the general image which is held of the mentally handicapped child. Analysis of the evolution of special education at this macro-level provides inputs for the micro-level study of the actual operation of the special education system by concentrating on the interaction of those who are involved in it. ⁽³⁾

2. MENTALLY HANDICAPPED CHILDREN IN GREEK SOCIETY.

2.1 The broader context.

The category of children known as mentally handicapped has been covered by welfare, health and educational policies in Greece since the early 20th century. This category of children includes two subgroups: (a) Children who about a century ago used to be referred to by means of terms such as “*mad*,” “*idiot*” and “*imbecile*.” (b) Children who have been recognised as such since the concept of mental handicap was introduced. This latter group would not have been categorised as handicapped had the children not been put under the obligation of learning to read and write in 1929 following the introduction of compulsory education.

As I mentioned in the introduction to this chapter, distinction between these two categories of mentally handicapped children is often ignored in the accounts of several writers on social responses to mental handicap in Greece. The relevant literature tends to be dominated by a humanitarian perspective on

handicap. This regards recognition of the concept of mental handicap as a discovery which entails a *“better”* life for the individuals concerned. In this sense, the concept of mental handicap is taken to refer to a phenomenon which had been existing and now it is discovered. The category of children who were not regarded as handicapped before such discovery are supposed to be able to benefit now by being assessed and responded to *“correctly.”* ⁽⁴⁾

Thus the *“correct”* definition of mental handicap is bound to bring about responses other than those which existed in the past before the *“correct”* definitions were introduced. Review of relevant literature in Greece reveals the existence of two distinct trends in dealing with the mentally handicapped. One trend is based on elements such as fear, shame, superstition and, at best, pity. These elements lead towards negative responses such as rejection and isolation of the mentally handicapped from the rest of the body social. The trend is often referred to in the literature as *“non-scientific,”* that which is pursued by lay persons in society, and *“unacceptable”* or *“pessimistic.”* I shall be referring to it as the *“negative trend”* to distinguish it from what I shall be calling the *“positive trend.”* ⁽⁵⁾

The latter is referred to in the literature as *“progressive,” “scientific,” “optimistic,”* etc. ⁽⁶⁾ It is supposed to involve use of scientific theories by experts for assessing the mentally handicapped by taking into consideration their potential and their right to be part of the community. In this trend the responses are supposed to be positive, leading towards integration of the mentally handicapped in the community and providing them with support to live as independent a life as possible. This *“positive”* trend is presumed to contribute towards a *“better”* life for the mentally handicapped. In contrast, the *“negative”* trend does not warrant support towards such a purpose and is not based on systematic and scientific theories and methods but, rather, on common sense.

I use the term "*trend*" to refer to different sets of "*negative*" and "*positive*" responses, given the wide range of variation present within each set. For example, the response based on charity which only focuses on providing food and shelter for the handicapped is regarded as "*negative*." However, a higher degree of negativity is involved in, say, the cruelty in some ancient cultures which practised the killing of the handicapped. ⁽⁷⁾

A similar variation may be found within the "*positive*" trend. Thus, the extreme "*positive*" response would be to seek to integrate all mentally handicapped children in the community, regardless of their degree of handicap. In so doing, the community needs to be adapted to the needs of the handicapped. This approach is referred to as the "*integration approach*," "*independent living*," etc. It differs from the approaches which involve segregation of the mentally handicapped children from the ordinary schools and the community based on the degree of their handicap, and their reintegration after they are rehabilitated. ⁽⁸⁾

The above trends are not exclusive to the phenomenon of mental handicap but apply to handicap in general. Greek literature concerning issues of handicap usually makes reference to attitudes towards the handicapped as a whole. Only in this way are some general comments about attitudes towards the mentally handicapped filtering through. There is no readily available survey of attitudes which would assess the extent to which the "*negative*" or "*positive*" trends influence attitudes in the community, either its lay members or its experts.

The majority of works about mental handicap deal with theories and methods of assessment, training and teaching. References made in such studies to social responses usually presuppose that lay members of the public do not adopt "*the correct*" attitude towards the handicapped. They also maintain that experts should undertake the education of the handicapped within a scientific framework accounts of which are usually given in those studies.

Two works by Greek authors help define both “*positive*” and “*negative*” trends. The first—an interesting work for its breadth of historical material—is a study by Skandalis (1980) concerning “*The status of the retarded individual in Greek society.*” In spite of its somewhat journalistic prose it does provide a wealth of examples and descriptions of social responses which can help understand “*positive*” and “*negative*” trends in Greek society from ancient times to date.

It is important to look at the responses in the Greek culture as a whole rather than selectively at practices applying only in certain areas of the country. In most historical analyses available in English which I have come across, the response of Greek society is encapsulated in the ubiquitous references to early Spartan society’s cruel attitude towards disabled children which involved their killing. ⁽⁹⁾ Skandalis’ work provides evidence of different types of responses in different parts of Greece and at different points in time.

Skandalis is a teacher of Special Education and a graduate of the Teacher Training Academy for Special Education which is situated in Athens. His perception of the handicapped in general and mentally handicapped in particular is useful as it contributes towards the formulation of the theoretical framework of my research. However, this work does not cover the 1980’s, a period during which major policy changes took place in Greece including the area of special education. I shall therefore refer to a second work, a study by Stassinou (1991) entitled “*History of Special Education in Greece*” covering the period from the formation of the modern Greek state (1830) to date.

This work deals with policy issues rather than attitudes in society. It allows for different perspectives on the policies of special education in Greece and so differs from Skandalis’ work. Stassinou refers to aspects of educational policy for the handicapped which involve social, economic and political

considerations in the Greek community. His work lends support to the theoretical approach in the study of the system of special education in Greece which involves not only the humanitarian account but also other accounts involving socioeconomic and political aspects.

2.2 A historical review.

Mental handicap had not emerged as a differentiated concept prior to the beginning of the 20th century. Individuals who appeared to deviate from the norm were lumped together as “*social misfits:*” they were referred to as beggars, lepers, bastards, homosexuals, dwarfs, lame, crippled and mad. ⁽¹⁰⁾

Social responses towards the mentally handicapped in the pre-20th century period need to be studied within the context of attitudes towards the handicapped in general. Such a study is necessary since some of the views present in today’s community are well rooted in the ideas and practices of the past. ⁽¹¹⁾ This analysis will provide insights into the process through which the current system of special education in Greece has come into existence, is operating, and deals with the mentally handicapped individuals as one of the groups of handicapped requiring special education.

Skandalis makes extensive reference to negative responses towards the handicapped over the centuries. He points out that some of these responses in contemporary Greek society are a reflection of social practices such as rejection and isolation of handicapped individuals from the mainstream of life. To indicate how well rooted such “*negative*” trends are in Greek culture Skandalis resorts to evidence from periods as far back as the Homeric/Hesiodic times (9th to 7th

centuries, B.C.) He shows that disabled people (making no differentiation between mental and physical disability) usually attracted sarcasm and insult.

In Homer's "*heroic*" or "*epic*" society physical and mental strength was a necessity for survival. Disabled individuals were regarded as having attracted the wrath of the Olympian Gods or bearing the sins of their ancestors. They were social outcasts and lived in isolation. However, those who had become physically disabled at war were treated with honour as heroes; yet even they were looked upon with pity.

The citizens of Sparta, a proud and warlike city-state in Ancient Greece, used to assemble "*handicapped and meek*" annually at the edge of nearby Kaeadas gorge and, after a summary ceremony, push them down the gorge to their peril. The cruel practice was justified on the grounds of the Spartans' pursuit of the ideal of a "*master race*" free from mental and physical disability and illness. Being almost continuously at war the Spartans could not afford to deal with people who could not contribute fully to the joint war effort.

In contrast to the Spartans' way of life, the flourishing culture of the Athenian society provided the milieu for the development of the culture, ideas and the arts which have become known as "*Classical Greece.*" The great philosophers of the classical period did influence attitudes towards caring for the handicapped. The idea of compassion and tolerance towards the disabled was current in Pericles' Athenian Republic, so-called Golden Age of Greece (third quarter to middle of the 5th century, B.C.) This approach is very far away from the one taken by the Spartans; in its own time such an approach could have been treated as positive.

Classical Athenian democracy had special laws caring for the "*meek*" by providing state help for two categories of citizens. Those who were poor, i.e.,

had demonstrably less than three “*mnas*”—the currency of the time was the drachma and a “*mna*” was a subdivision of it—were eligible for benefit. Those with physical and mental defects which made them unable to work would also qualify. This state benefit system was tempting enough for some to try to dodge by faking disability or poverty. Special tribunals had to be set up to evaluate all disability claims and the claimant had the right to employ a qualified person to support his case (a system not so far removed from legal aid.) Speeches by famous orators, such as Lyssias’ oration “*In support of the meek,*” have been saved on stone for posterity and are still standard textbook material in the Greek secondary schools.

The charity approach towards the disabled did not imply their acceptance in society. They were banned from certain activities such as religious ones. ⁽¹²⁾ The disabled were also subject to sarcasm and bullying. Theophrastus writes of the habit of his contemporaries to spit down their chest whenever they came up across some disabled individual--a superstitious practice which is still followed by some. There are references indicating that even Socrates, due to his deformity, had been the subject of this type of response.

The famous Athenian orator Demosthenes, living in the 4th century B.C., was originally suffering from a severe speech defect. He is known to have locked himself up in isolation from the other people and had improved his speech by putting pebbles in his mouth and practising in front of a mirror. Searching for cure and prevention of disability is referred to as a common enough practice in Classical Athens. Skandalis mentions numerous events to demonstrate this. However, he does not interpret these events as a positive step in helping the handicapped. At the peak of their civilisation the Athenians were presenting a very different approach in comparison to that of cruelty or mere charity towards the disabled. Theirs was a therapeutic approach taken by experts to cure or prevent handicap.

In Athenian society killing was regarded a barbaric act. The philosophers' influence was based mainly on a humanistic approach and tended to promote charity. Furthermore, interest in the human mind and body and knowledge of medicine were contributing factors in the therapeutic approach. Therapy was performed both by priests as well as medical practitioners. Sometimes the two roles were assumed by the same person.

Establishments referred to as "*Hierotherapeuterion*"—meaning "*a holy place for therapy*"—provided both refuge and treatment for the disabled. Sleep therapy was being practised to cure a variety of problems including mental illness. Hippocrates searched for the causes of physical and mental illnesses and regarded the brain as the locus of the cause of mental illness. Heredity and environmental factors were also referred to by Hippocrates as influencing mental disability.

The writings of Plato include recommendations for producing healthy children and suggestions as to causes of diseases and disabilities in children. Age of parents, their state of mental and physical health, emotional state of the pregnant women and consumption of alcohol are referred to by Plato as contributing factors to the state of health of the unborn child. He also referred to natural causes as well as family and upbringing as relevant factors in causing madness.

Plato's philosophy promoted a different view to that of State charity and the notion of therapy. He believed that the State did not have to contribute to the maintenance of the handicapped children and that they were the responsibility of their families. His description of ideal types also included the idea of "*model man*"—i.e., an individual with a sound mind in a healthy body—as a major component in the creation of a "*model society*." A person who deviated from

such norm would not be seen as fit to have similar rights as the others. In a passage in his *“Politeia”* he writes:

“ ... the children of the people of lower class as well as those children who happen to be known as retarded will be hidden in a remote and secret place for this is the way it should be. ” ⁽¹³⁾

Aristotle also contributed to the search for the causes of disability and particularly mental deficiency. For example, he put forward a hypothesis that tall individuals were slow in their brain functions because blood would take longer to reach their brain. The phrase *“tall and light-headed”* is still current in the Greek language.

The Hellenistic period gave rise to a cosmopolitan culture pervaded by humanistic values. However, no particular evidence is available to indicate any substantial *“improvement”* in attitudes towards the handicapped. The situation deteriorated in Roman times. There is little evidence of compassion and charity shown towards the handicapped in these periods.

Early Christians used to take in their society everybody including the *“meek”* whom they paid special attention to securing their survival and welfare. They were simply applying the Christian principle that all people were equal and had equal rights to the communal property (early Christian communes operated on the basis of communal ownership of property) irrespective of the physical, mental or social characteristics of the individual. Christianity was established as the official religion of the Roman Empire in 325 A.D. by Emperor Constantine the Great (subsequently pronounced a Saint of the Eastern Orthodox Church) and a second capital, Constantinople, was established in the East together with declining Rome in the West.

The Christian societies became part of the established state order of the Roman and Byzantine Empires and had to reckon with well entrenched social practices and the remnants of pagan attitudes and beliefs. In their attempts to absorb and assimilate the alien elements they were in turn influenced gradually by them to some extent.

Early Christian “*virtue*” gave slowly way to a more worldly approach: property became private again, social class distinctions were upheld even enforced, inequality ensued and welfare towards the “*meek*” was gradually reduced to alms from a distance. In Greece as in many other cultures prevalence of such a charity approach did not result in the elimination of the belief that people with “*mental deficiency*” were possessed by satanic spirits and that they were best dealt with by way of exorcism and persecution. ⁽¹⁴⁾ Even today it is not unusual to see people using their right hand to make the sign of a cross upon their chest whenever they encounter a handicapped individual—in the belief that in this way they secure protection for themselves against such a terrible fate.

The Christian Church promoted the attitude that defects were given by God to some individuals to try the faith of the others. The disabled as well as the poor had to be given food and shelter in order to be kept alive in this world. Matters concerning their acceptance were left to the other world when they would go to paradise. They were the “*noble parasites of society.*” ⁽¹⁵⁾ Care for the poor and meek was widespread even though it had its particularities. They were entitled to free bread (up until the reign of Emperor Herakleios (610–641 A.D.) who abolished the privilege) and free attendance to Constantinople’s Hippodrome. Those of them who did some work for the state, e.g., as guardians of the aqueducts or parks or helps in the state bakeries, received free food.

A Byzantine state official, the Koiaestor, was charged with the task of finding some useful occupation for the poor so as to prevent unemployment. Entry to the imperial capital, Constantinople, was forbidden to all those who demonstrably had no business there. Furthermore, there were asylums for the poor, so-called “*ptohocomeia*,” as well as hospitals for the aged and the sick, usually established either by the Emperor or his noblemen.

These institutions were attached to monasteries or convents and were run by monks or nuns. For the children of the poor and the meek there were special state orphanages, the largest of which was situated on the grounds of the Great Palace, home of the Byzantine Emperors. The Church managed to take over their running for a short time period (the iconoclastic period) but, later on, orphanages were returned to state management. (Runsiman, 1969, chapter VIII).

Despite this approach to organised charity, the handicapped were effectively segregated from society and were given shelter; in its absence they were taking to a life of begging in the streets. The writings of Holy Father Saint Gregory the Theologian refer to society’s rejection and maltreatment of the disabled:

“We distance ourselves from them with all our might for we cannot tolerate in the least to breathe the same air as they do ...” ⁽¹⁶⁾

These writings indicate that the handicapped were banned from social gatherings, they were not allowed to use the public water fountains and were rejected even by their own families:

“For this reason they wander day and night, they are naked and cold ... the charitable person to them is not the one who gives them alms but he who has not rejected them cruelly.” ⁽¹⁷⁾

In the middle ages, the way in which the handicapped people were treated in Greece does not appear to be different from the other nations (Skandalis, op. cit.) Evidence from Medieval Europe shows that communities tolerated handicapped people. "*Les enfants du Bon Dieu*" were freely circulating in different communities, although they did tend to become the focus of sarcasm. ⁽¹⁸⁾ Social tolerance for these individuals could be accounted for as a result of religious influence, as was also the case in Greece at that time period.

In 1453 the Byzantine Empire fell to the Ottomans who ruled Greece for almost four centuries. As a result, the country was thrown into a period of protracted Medievalism. The handicapped were not disturbed: their condition was explained in terms of faith rather than guilt. Despite the fact that hurting the handicapped was considered by the Turkish rulers as a sin they were regarded as second class citizens. If they were offered work they had the worth of animals. They were also used as slaves and were exploited at work.

The handicapped with a particular deformity were used as objects of amusement in the shows. Dwarfs and fools were engaged as public or court jesters. However, the mad had to be kept isolated as they were supposed to have been cursed or punished by God. Self-taught practitioners (so-called "*quacks*") used to travel in different parts of the country and its cities offering treatment for various disabilities and exploiting the disabled and their families in the process.

European Renaissance and the radical changes in social thinking which came with the Enlightenment played an important role in the change of social responses towards the handicapped in several European countries such as France and Britain. However, historical developments in Greece from the fall of Byzantium to the Turks until the formation of the independent Greek state did not allow the Greek society to become an integral part of Europe during the

fundamental social and cultural changes that took place in post 15th century Europe.

Thus, Ottoman rule effectively severed the social, cultural and political links of Greece with the evolutionary processes in the rest of Europe, processes that had been under way for centuries through the links of Byzantium with the Roman Empire (East and West Roman Empires.) Skandalis observes that since Greece did not follow the developments which took place in other parts of Europe in all aspects of the political, social and scientific fields Greek society could not make the necessary "*progress*" in the areas concerning care of the handicapped. He reviews international developments in relation to responses to the handicapped and suggests that such developments are important in studying the situation in Greece since the results of such developments eventually filtered through into Greece.

Skandalis' account of developments in the Western World and their influence in Greece reflects a humanitarian approach. He views state intervention in provisions for the care of the handicapped as a result of the policy makers' concern for these individuals. As a teacher, he regards the use of scientific tools and methods in the assessment and teaching of the handicapped as a truly progressive step in the right direction. His view is representative of similar approaches encountered in the relevant literature in Greece (Egg, 1971, Paraskevopoulos, 1980.) This point of view pays little attention to factors other than the humanitarian ones in motivating state care for any category of underprivileged individuals.

Studies in countries which lent models and ideas to Greece, tend to include a wider range of approaches rather than only the humanitarian ones. Thus social, economic and political reasons are discussed in the context of policy analyses and of the practice of special education. In Greece, the only work which

provides basic material for this type of analysis is Stassinou (1991), even though his contribution tends to limit itself to providing the information rather than analysing it from a sociological point of view.

In the following section I shall be discussing the international influences in Greece in the area of care for the mentally handicapped. The study will involve a brief analysis of developments and major theoretical approaches which are relevant to the Greek context.

2.3 International developments in caring for the mentally handicapped and their influences in Greece.

Developments which led to recognition of the field of special education need to be studied in the context of developments in different aspects of social life in European societies from around the 15th century onwards. Three major advances which influenced several aspects of social structure also influenced the way of thinking about the handicapped. First, the scientific discoveries after the Dark Ages opened up the path for “*logical*” as opposed to “*mystical*” reasoning. Second, humanist philosophy stimulated public interest towards the protection of those in need. Third, the American and French revolutions brought about the concept of equal rights through the American Bill of Rights and the French Declaration of Rights. ⁽¹⁹⁾

The humanitarian account of the results which the above changes brought about in relation to social welfare, health and education is based on a taken-for-granted belief that in this way underprivileged individuals began to receive the care and protection they needed. Skandalis’ view on this issue is quite

clear. He refers to relevant developments as far back as the 16th century, as steps forward towards a "*correct*" approach in dealing with the handicapped through "*systematic care*." As examples of such trends he cites the work of Pedro Ponche de Leon from Venice who cared for the deaf and dumb, the work of Itard in educating the wild boy of Avignon, the rise of the asylums in 18th century France, the establishment of the special asylum for the mentally handicapped in Switzerland in the 19th century, etc.

He differentiates, however, between the approach taken in confining the mentally handicapped together with the mentally ill in the asylums and the educational approach in the special institutes and schools. In his account, the former approach is taken to be purely medical while the latter is mainly educational and more "*appropriate*" for the mentally handicapped. This interpretation suggests that from a humanitarian point of view the underlying causes of the emergence of asylums or special schools are not sufficiently scrutinised.

The transition from a medical to an educational approach is taken to represent an improvement, a step taken towards a "*positive*" trend in dealing with the mentally handicapped. Skandalis' account is that at first asylums were created to help the mentally deficient. Further scientific discoveries helped differentiate the concept of mental illness from mental handicap. In this respect, he takes it for granted that State provisions for the education of the mentally handicapped were created because of the policy makers' concern for the population of the mentally handicapped who were grouped with the mentally ill in asylums.

Stassinis' study of the development of the asylums and the process through which the special schools for the mentally handicapped were established throws a different light on the issue. Asylums and special schools were not introduced to deal with the same categories of individuals. Asylums were (and

still are) places of confinement of the mentally deficient whereas special schools were established to reduce the population of pupils who could not cope in the ordinary schools. In the following section I am reviewing briefly the development of asylums in Greece and then discuss the developments which led to the introduction of the special schools.

It is necessary to discuss which category of children had been originally assessed to be suitable for "*treatment*" in the asylums and which children were considered as being in need of special schooling. I am arguing that these are two different categories and the concept of mental handicap in the educational policy context has been and still is being addressed mainly to children who cannot cope at school rather than to those who could have been found originally in the asylums.

2.4 The establishment of asylums in Greece.

Confinement of the mad began in Greece around the mid-nineteenth century. The characteristics of Greek efforts in most areas of health care and social welfare show a marked appreciation and wide acceptance of Western approaches. Traditional responses are substituted for imported ones from what are seen as "*more progressive*" Western countries. Greeks who had educated themselves in other countries such as France, Britain or Germany brought in ideas and methodologies from those countries, which they subsequently proceeded to apply to their own.

The rise of asylums in Greece was the result of professional intervention and policy makers' decisions. Charity combined with medical care seemed to

be the answer in protecting the “*mentally deficient*.” However, consideration of the particular time period in which asylums were established in Greece indicates that political and economic factors were also at play as underlying reasons for confinement of the mad. Public safety and prevention of poverty and vagrancy were also part of the policy makers’ reasoning. Establishing mental institutes seemed to be the most efficient way of clearing the streets from the “*socially obnoxious*” presence of the mentally deficient.

In 1840, the convention of The Medical Congress in Greece--a form of Supreme Health Council--recommended the gathering of data concerning the number of mentally deficient individuals to enable the State to take appropriate measures in the form of setting up suitable institutions for them. This recommendation resulted in a special Act of Parliament (Act 742/22nd March 1862) which was based on the French model of mental care and concerned the establishment of mental institutions.

Until the First World War the State had not yet managed to implement fully the policies and proposed measures of that Act. A new mental institution was set up in Corfou (Kerkyra) and in 1887 the Dromocaition Psychiatric Hospital, first of its kind, started operating in Athens as a charity. Apart from these establishments there were also small scale regional mental asylums such as the ones in Cephalonia, built in 1840 during the British rule of the Ionian Islands, in the island of Chios (1886, later to close down and be replaced by the Leros Psychiatric Asylum in 1958), in the island of Syros (1908), etc. ⁽²⁰⁾

The “*Dromocaition*,” a major psychiatric hospital, included some patients who referred to as “*idiots*” and “*stupid*” who were lumped together with the psychopaths. In these institutions there were no children under 10 years of age. This tends to suggest that children with mental deficiency were not a cause of concern for the society of that time. In a humanitarianist account, this would be

due to lack of care and understanding of the problems of the mentally deficient children or to the fact that relevant ideas and theories of dealing with mental handicap had not yet reached Greece.

However, considering other accounts of social policy lack of attention to mentally deficient children may be attributed to the fact that the policy makers of the time were not interested in this type of action. With regard to other accounts of social policy it may be argued that children under 10 years of age did not receive any attention from the policy makers because they did not cause any concern for public safety. A child under the age of 10 who displayed unruly behaviour would not have caused as much concern as an older child would.

In the early 19th century Greece was undergoing a similar situation to that prevailing in countries such as France and Britain in the 17th and 18th century. Review of literature dealing with the rise of asylums in the above countries indicates that asylums were introduced not only because of concern for the "mad." Foucault's works on the medicalisation of madness in eighteenth century France shows how discovery of the pathological causes of mental deficiency was used to confine the mad in order to protect the rest of society. This is very much the case as regards the policies of early 19th century Greece.

In his study of *"Madness and Civilization"* Foucault observes that the emergence of the concept of madness has to be viewed in the context of the evolution of science and the *"Age of Reason."* In the late Middle Ages and in the Renaissance period in France mental deficiency (referred to as *"madness"* at that time) was taken to be *"associated with particular forms of knowledge which were considered to provide insights into the human condition."* ⁽²¹⁾

Prior to the mid-seventeenth century *"madness was an undifferentiated experience."* It was the emergence of the concepts of *"reason"* and *"unreason"*

that resulted in the differentiation of mental deficiency sufferers from the other groups in the community. The "*hopitaux generaux*" (general hospitals) which were opened up across France were used as places of confinement for the poor, the unemployed and unemployable, the idle, the criminal and the mad. They were not medical establishments but mainly workhouses in which those who posed a threat to society were confined and put to work. In Foucault's account, it was not only due to economic reasons that individuals belonging to these categories were given work but also as a way for their salvation and moral reform.

Among the population in such houses of confinement the mad could not work and thus were further distinguished from the rest and were treated quite brutally. The advancement of science contributed towards the discovery of pathological causes of mental handicap with the ensuing medicalisation of madness.

In the eighteenth century, houses of confinement became the cause of concern for many, since the conditions in which the confined lived were regarded as unacceptable by those who used to take an interest in the fate of the "*insane*." The wide variety of diseases which were being treated in the houses of confinement called for the intervention of the medical profession. Foucault argues that contrary to the humanitarianist view, involvement of the medical men did not constitute a step towards improving the condition of the inhabitants but an action for prevention of diseases and for protection of those who lived outside the houses of confinement.

The idea of protecting society from the mad was very much the case in Greece when the asylums came into existence. A large population of mad were at large in the community and their presence could not be tolerated by a society which wanted to follow policies in harmony with those applied in more

developed Europe. There are also certain similarities between the situation in England and Greece. The accounts given by Scull (1981) on “*Lunacy reform*” in England could well apply to the Greek situation. ⁽²²⁾ While not accepting the humanitarianist approach as the sole reason for the “*lunacy reform*,” he does not dismiss it. In the early 19th century:

“ ... an authentic shift in moral consciousness took place, whose outcome was the development of a new sensibility vis-a-vis the treatment of the insane.” (op. cit., p.134)

The underlying element in the change of attitude was that:

“ ... through a suitable manipulation of inmate and environment the qualities the lunatic lacks can and should be recreated or reawakened, so that he may once again be restored to the world, a sober, rational, 'self determining' citizen.” (ibid.)

The “*new moral consciousness*” was shaped by the relations of production. The emergence of wage labour differentiated between those able to work and the others. The insane could not be used as labour force in the same type of institutes as those for the poor. If the insane were to be left in the community they would have to be taken care off and provided for. It would have meant caring for the insane more than for the majority who were already living in desperate conditions.

If the state chose to raise the standard of living of the insane who were living with their families it would have to introduce some form of benefit for those families. The ensuing rise in the standards of those families would establish a precedent justifying similar demands by other underprivileged groups. Poor families would soon resort to pretending to have a mad member so as to be

eligible for state aid. Scull points out that such a situation was not acceptable in a Victorian climate since it could have brought about idleness in the working classes and therefore a decline in labourers' willingness to work for a living.

Asylums were created to segregate the insane from the rest of the community without the above complications. By mid-19th century the medical profession acquired competence and authority to deal with mental problems. The influence of the medical profession opened up the way for assessing the mentally deficient by applying the tools of science. The idea of treatment implied that whatever was to be done to the mentally deficient was for their own good.

I am not intending to provide here a comparative analysis of the development of asylums in Greece and abroad as this would not be relevant to the main themes in this thesis. However, the above accounts provided by Western literature could afford a useful reference point in my study of developments in Greece. I am referring to analyses carried out in France and Britain since Greece has imported from those countries several elements of its policies in different fields, including health and education.

The foundation of asylums and mental institutions in Greece did not follow along the same path as it did in countries such as France and Britain. However the experience gained with such institutions abroad reached Greece by late-19th century and was accepted since the same type of conditions tended to prevail in Greek society in the area of mental care. The solutions which those countries appeared to have provided for their own problems were readily accepted by policy makers in Greece. Thus, asylums and mental institutions were set up to remove the mentally deficient from the streets and provide them with shelter.

Providing shelter for the mad involves humanitarian elements which are also combined with the idea of control of the mad to protect society. Under the umbrella of the medical model, mental problems tend to acquire the same status as physical problems and are seen as requiring treatment. The idea of treatment reflects an element of care for the mad rather than cruelty and punishment.

The introduction of asylums in Greece was the first basic step towards state care for the population who due to mental deficiency were incapable of coping in the community and contribute to the system of production. However, this development did not lead to the introduction of special education. Special schools were by no means introduced as some modified version of the asylums or mental institutions, a view which is often put forward in relevant Greek literature. A certain category of mentally handicapped children were taken into institutional care when asylums began to operate. However, the introduction of special schools did not help remove such children from those institutions. Up until today the severely mentally handicapped do not necessarily receive special education.

The concept of the mentally handicapped child was recognised in Greece as a result of increasing complexity being built into the educational system in teaching children who could not cope with current curriculum demands. ⁽²³⁾ I am dealing with this issue below.

2.5 Recognition of the concept of mental handicap.

In late nineteenth century the Greek State began to take measures for harmonising the physical and mental health of children. The medical profession

started becoming increasingly influential in the education system through the Office of School Hygiene which operated within the then Ministry of Religion and Public Education. That Office published a guide indicating the need to protect children from communicable and infectious diseases. In his recommendations one of the members of that Office stated that in order to complete the programme for the protection of Greek pupils it is necessary to establish special schools. ⁽²⁴⁾

Some special schools began to operate in the early 20th century, such as the school for the blind in 1906. However, no state special school was established for the mentally handicapped until 1937. The only establishment which offered education to the mentally handicapped was a private clinic set up in 1904 by Vlavianos, a psychiatrist; it kept operating until 1918. He organised a special section in his clinic, which he referred to as "*right mind*," to provide treatment and education for "*abnormal children*."

According to Vlavianos "*abnormal*" was an umbrella term referring to a wide range of children. These included backward, idiot, imbecile, nervous, epileptic, deaf and dumb, those with speech defects and behavioural problems, and the morally distorted. Vlavianos regarded his clinic as an independent unit which could offer help to both families and schools concerned. ⁽²⁵⁾

Skandalis observes that state provision for the education of the mentally handicapped in Greece lags behind that of other western countries in which these ideas were put into practice much earlier. In his account of such developments he refers to Scotland where in the late eighteenth century the first schools for the mentally handicapped began to operate. He further refers to England where in the 1890's the London School Board proposed a scheme for providing education for those pupils who, due to mental or physical deficiency, could not follow the ordinary classes.

He also points to the same type of development which took place in other countries. Towards the end of the 1860's the care of the mentally retarded in Sweden became a social issue. Moreover, the first special class in Germany began its operation in 1863, and in France in 1909. By mid-nineteenth century in the United States several institutions were operating which cared for the needs of the mentally retarded. He argues that the reasons for the delay in the introduction in Greece of state provisions for the handicapped in general were connected to the relatively unstable political situation in Greece since its independence. The country experienced a turbulent period of about 130 years affected by several major wars, political unrest, dictatorships, the influx of millions of refugees of Greek origin from neighbouring countries, occupation by foreign powers and a devastating civil war.

Such political and socioeconomic conditions tended to place a great strain on the country's financial and administrative resources. Priorities were invariably fixed to face fundamental needs and national survival requirements. This state of affairs permitted very little attention to be paid towards the development of policies and allocation of adequate resources to provide much needed help for the handicapped, even though acknowledgment of the problems and willingness to provide special provisions had been shown by the State at different points in time.

A variety of theories and methods dealing with handicapped individuals were brought into Greece from other countries in which they had developed. Gradually such knowledge and experience became interwoven in the ways of thinking and dealing with the needs of the handicapped. However, these ideas did not influence state policies because of some marked improvement in the economic and political conditions. Rather, the evolution of the education system and the introduction of compulsory education led to identification of a new

category of children, that of the mentally retarded, who were not necessarily included in the population of patients of asylums and other mental institutions.

Stassinou (1991) reviews developments in the education of the mentally handicapped in Greece. He argues that social concern in relieving ordinary schools from the added burden of retarded pupils has been a major influence factor in the movement towards establishment of special schools for the mentally handicapped. Thus, special education for the mentally handicapped in Greece was not necessarily introduced to deal with the category of severely handicapped who have been characterised as "*idiot*" or "*imbecile*" over the centuries. In this respect the situation in Greece varies from that of some other countries.

For instance, in her analysis of the system of special education in England and Wales Tomlinson (1982) refers to a different process. The special schools began to work in England and Wales initially to deal with a wide variety of cases. The categories of mentally defective idiot children who had been removed from the workhouses into the asylums since 1700 began to be subject to other provisions by mid-19th century. They were initially removed from the workhouses since they were incapable of work, but by mid-19th century the approach was taken by official bodies such as the Lunacy Commission that they could be instructed to work. ⁽²⁶⁾

Thus, in England and Wales the category of severely mentally handicapped (idiots) had already been a cause of concern for the education authorities even before the introduction of compulsory education. In Greece special education for the mentally handicapped became an official policy only after the introduction of compulsory education. In the ensuing discussion of the evolution of special provisions for the mentally handicapped in Greece, below, the influences will be shown of social, political and economic conditions.

The first reference by the official state to the “*mentally deficient*” or “*abnormal*” is encountered in the 1913 Educational Acts of the Liberal government of the time. These Acts introduced a six-year compulsory primary education for all Greek children and made special provisions for the “*more slowly developing*” pupils. More specifically, they set up new educational structures (e.g., establishment of special classes) and teaching methodology (e.g., adaptation of teaching methods to special educational needs) for these individuals. For the “*profoundly pathological*” the Acts recommended the establishment of “*special institutions.*” ⁽²⁷⁾ As mentioned earlier, it was not possible to implement these Acts very rigorously mainly due to the country’s continuous involvement in war efforts (Balkan wars of 1913, the Great War 1914-18, the Asia Minor Expedition of 1919).

Since then there was continual interest in the education of the mentally handicapped in different publications and forums. ⁽²⁸⁾ The Elementary Education Act 4397 (1929) exempted the “*mentally abnormal*” primary school age pupils from obligatory attendance, together with some other categories of pupils such as those suffering from communicable diseases. The Act gave the Ministry of Education discretionary authority to arrange special tuition for the “*mentally abnormal*” children of some primary school or to set up in their interests a special class or even a special school should there be a sufficient number of them involved.

Despite such legislation acknowledging the mentally handicapped as in need of separate education from the rest of the children, it took almost a decade until the first special school for the mentally handicapped was established. According to Stassinou, the major reasons for such delay were not only lack of funds and trained staff but also general indifference towards the education of the mentally handicapped in Greek society. ⁽²⁹⁾

Lack of provisions for the mentally handicapped meant that three categories of children were left unattended. First, there were those who did not attend any school and either remained at home or “*roamed about.*” They were mainly severely mentally handicapped children who, in the view of some social thinkers of the time, could be included in the labour force instead of being idle. Secondly, there were those who went to ordinary schools but disturbed the programmes since they could not follow the set curriculum like “*normal*” children. In the third category belonged those with mental illnesses who were considered a danger to the public. Generally speaking, children in any of these categories could be referred to as “*sick individuals*” (sic; in Stassinis, 1991, p.98)

Children in the second of the above categories eventually attracted the attention of the policy makers and special schools and/or classes were supposed to be set up. The more severe cases were to be dealt with in other establishments. While those capable of work could be trained to join the labour force the so-called “*dangerous*” ones needed to be taken into mental institutions.

The Education Act 453 (1937) provided policies for the establishment of a school for “*the abnormal children.*” Children within the age group of 8-15 who were in the category of educable were supposed to attend such a school. The other group of mentally retarded who were referred to as “*idiots*” were to receive institutional care. The role of special schools and special teachers was specified in a number of different ways:

1. The special teacher has to help the mentally handicapped to return to ordinary schools.
2. Special schools have to return the mentally handicapped to society as good and honest citizens.

3. The less able children should be helped to learn elementary skills to survive on their own without need of others' help. Through appropriate education these individuals may be helped so as not to become a burden on society when they are older.
4. "*Absent minded*" and "*abnormal*" children have a greater right to education than "*normal*" children.
5. Provisions are necessary for the care of the mentally handicapped. Special education should not be regarded as superfluous, i.e., useless expenditure, and its benefits may accrue in different ways. First, it could relieve ordinary schools from "*sick children*" and facilitate the work of the teachers. Second, treatment of such children will stop them from becoming corrupt characters and/or criminals. Last, study of the "*sick mind*" could provide a better understanding of the mechanism of the mind of the "*normal*" people.
6. It is the duty of a socially sensitive State to contribute towards the welfare and provide support for its citizens who are shown to be "*victims*" of unfavourable social conditions.

Thus it becomes clear that there was great concern with the treatment of the "*sick mind*," rather than leaving it unattended. The rationale was to protect society by making useful members of that society a population who would otherwise have been idle. The focus of attention was basically to isolate the "*abnormal*" population from the "*normal*" and then try and "*normalise*" that abnormal population. The target of such policy was pupils who could not cope with the ordinary school work, i.e.; educable children.

The first prototype school (so-called P.E.S.A.) for the mentally handicapped began to operate in 1937. The school had six classes. Children who were admitted to it were assessed by an examining committee including the headmaster of the school, a doctor and the school inspector. Definition of the "*mentally retarded*" pupil was based on criteria set by professionals. There is evidence that in the first year of its operation P.E.S.A. received 78 applications for registration of children. They were filed by teachers of ordinary schools. At the end 42 children of those applied for were accepted. The existence of the special school created demand from the teachers and in this way there was labelling of more pupils as mentally handicapped.

Skandalis recalls that in the early days, when that special school for the mentally handicapped had just begun to operate, people in the street were not walking on the same curbside as the school. One of the teachers in the school had observed that the mother of one particular child was driving her child in a car with tinted glass so as not to reveal that her child was attending a school for the retarded. The author, being a teacher who practices special education himself, observes that this kind of attitude has not changed much.

The education of the mentally handicapped did not receive much further attention until the mid-fifties. This delay was due to the unstable political situation in Greece during World War II and the subsequent Civil War. In that time period the goal of survival took precedence over all other social considerations in the Greek community. Concern for the mentally handicapped began to increase again in the mid-fifties mainly among parents of the mentally handicapped who helped privately funded institutions to operate. Some of these establishments are still in operation and provide education and vocational training for the handicapped. ⁽³⁰⁾ [In my field work I had observed the work of some of these organisations. I am providing an account of their practices in chapter five of this thesis.]

The institutions and schools which began to operate through the help of the families of the mentally handicapped had aims that were different from those of the Prototype State School (P.E.S.A.) Children admitted to the private establishments belonged to the category of those mentally handicapped children (severe cases) who would not have been accepted to any school. The aim of such institutions was to give support to the families of these children and provide education which they could never have received elsewhere. They concentrated on helping the category of children who had been suffering rejection from the mainstream of society over the centuries. Policy makers could no longer afford to ignore the need for educational policies for the severely handicapped.

State concern for the categorisation of handicapped pupils began to increase in the late 1960s. Thus, in 1969 the Office of Special Education was established in the Ministry of Education and Religion and special measures were taken to set up the Department of Special Education in the "*Teachers' Academy*" (training college.) In the 1970s more special schools began to operate. The policy of the 1970s was based on segregation of the handicapped and the establishment of new special schools.

In Skandalis' view, these developments were not enough and there was need for more "*systematic care*" for the handicapped. He calls for more educational provisions and more extensive use of up-to-date scientific approaches in assessment and teaching. He is also concerned with the negative attitude of society towards special education. He refers to cases of parents who do not agree to send their children to special schools for fear of social stigma. Special schools are not usually full to capacity because parents tend to be reluctant to cooperate.

Skandalis argues that although there has been some improvement in provisions for the handicapped, there is still a great deal to be done to bring the level of Greek provisions for the handicapped to that of other Western countries.

Despite the changes in the provisions, attitudes in society have not altered significantly in relation to those prevalent a century ago, attitudes both of the lay persons and the policy makers.

For instance, a few years ago there was the isolated case of a retarded boy living in a village about 130 miles north of Athens. His family had kept him chained and locked up in a basement for 18 years, living in squalor away from the eyes of the public. The police arrested the family and the state duly prosecuted them. The local police maintained, rather unconvincingly according to the press, that they had no idea of such a person's existence during all those years. However, after the matter was brought to the public's attention by an investigating journalist there was no way it could have been kept hushed up any longer by any official in authority.

The attitude of the policy makers towards the handicapped filters fairly clearly through the contents of Law 1904 (1952) which regards the blind as "*incapable of any work.*" It was as late as the mid-1970's when the handicapped began to have a collective voice. For example, there were demonstrations in the streets of Athens organised by associations of the blind protesting against their extremely low living standards and lack of any employment prospects.

Skandalis concludes that at the time he was finishing his book (1980) Greek society had a long way to go in order to reach the "*proper*" way of dealing with the handicapped. He points at the existence of a negative approach particularly towards the mentally handicapped through his criticisms of the delays in introducing special provisions for them and of the attitude of parents and the public in treating them. This view is shared by most writers concerned with the education of the mentally handicapped. Although in other publications there are no specific examples or descriptions of the negative trend in Greek society

towards the mentally handicapped there are general comments which support Skandalis' view. ⁽³¹⁾

Stassinis (1991) states that up until the late 1970s the state's response towards the mentally handicapped was mainly one of indifference. Most of the emphasis was focusing on charity for such children rather than on their education and integration in the community. The introduction of the 1981 Special Education Act was supposed to change this situation.

3. MENTALLY HANDICAPPED IN GREECE TODAY: POLICY AND PRACTICE IN CONFLICT.

The 1981 Special Education Act contains several principles which reflect a positive view towards handicapped pupils. The main ideology that is put forward by the Act concerns integration of handicapped children in ordinary schools and, eventually, into the wider community. The 1986 edition of the Information Bulletin of the Ministry of Education and Religion refers to the introduction of the 1981 Special Education Act as:

“ ... a great historical step, because it established special education as part of our education system and committed the state to assume at last its responsibilities towards its citizens with special educational needs, and not simply to demonstrate its sympathy towards them. ” ⁽³²⁾

This statement implies three important points. First, it indicates that prior to 1981 special education was not yet established as part of the educational

system. Second, it shows that the state had not been assuming its responsibilities for the care of the handicapped to the extent required. Third, there is implied recognition of the fact that until the 1981 Act was introduced the main policy line towards the handicapped was based on sympathy.

However, just as it happened with legislation of this kind in other countries, the 1981 Act left several loopholes and gaps in defining basic principles. In the end the Act turned out to be yet another step towards labelling more children as handicapped, segregating them from the ordinary schools and substantially prejudicing their chances of effective integration in society. I am discussing these issues in the next chapter.

At this point, however, there is need to clarify an issue regarding the current legislation for Special Education. The 1981 Special Education Act was widely criticised by the handicapped themselves and their families, academics and professionals. The Act was also criticised by the political parties of the left which were in opposition at the time. With the socialists in government, in late 1981, the Ministry of Education promised to review the 1981 Act and amend it. As a result of these changes, a new Education Act was introduced in 1985. Article 32 of the Act sets out the legal framework for Special Education in Greece. However, as some commentators argue, its contents are more or less the same as those of the 1981 Special Education Act. With reference to mental handicap in particular the 1985 Act has simply changed the terminology. ⁽³³⁾

Policy makers, however, claimed it was a step forward for special education as legislation for the latter had been included in the legislation concerning ordinary education. The extent to which the 1985 Act has actually changed the system of special education has not been studied extensively. In chapter 2, in my discussion of this Act, I shall be referring to some of the issues

which have proved problematic in implementing the ideologies the Act has attempted to introduce.

Examples similar to the ones given by Skandalis can be found in the Greek society of the 1980s and early 1990s. For instance, the planned introduction of a new Law, concerning "*New rules of Social Care and other regulations*" (June 1991), has been met with strong criticism from the National Council of Individuals with Special Needs (N.C.I.S.N.) In a press conference, the representatives of the largest association for the handicapped complained about the way in which decisions which affect them profoundly are taken without prior consultation between the Government and their own Council during preparation of the new legal framework for social welfare.

Their main criticism against the new Law was that it would expose the individual with special needs and his family to all kinds of exploitation if the sensitive area of social care were to be opened up to private interests potentially motivated by profit alone. Moreover, the N.C.I.S.N. accused the State of reducing benefits to unacceptably low levels, limiting current entitlements to free public transport, suspending special housing programmes for the handicapped, and introducing cuts in public spending for special education programmes. ⁽³⁴⁾ Admittedly, this legislation has been part of a much wider ranging Government policy package aimed at reducing public expenditure at all levels and sectors of the economy and was imposed by the poor state of the country's financial situation.

These developments suggest that there is a general awakening as regards the rights of the handicapped in Greece. Issues affecting them are no longer discussed solely in the confines of the Associations for the handicapped but also find keen supporters in the media: they are becoming the focus of public concern. An ever increasing number of articles have begun to appear in the daily

national and the periodical press covering activities and issues involving the handicapped in general.

For instance, articles about the annual "*Special Olympics*" which take place in Athens are published as a matter of routine in the press. There is also some coverage on national and private radio and television networks. Such reports and articles are usually filled in with admiration and appreciation of individuals with special needs and criticism against society's attitude in rejecting those individuals.

For example, in a relevant article published in the wide circulation national daily "*ELEFTHEROTYPIA*" (25 May, 1989, pp.17-19) entitled "*There are these children, too!*" the author makes the point that children who took part in the "*Special Olympics*" conveyed to Greek society the message that "*children with special needs can achieve the same goals as other children in life if only they were given the right chances.*" In this particular case, goals are interpreted as "*taking part and trying,*" not necessarily winning. The author of that article goes on to comment that contemporary Greek society has dispensed with the Spartan practice of the Kaeadas Gorge, yet:

"... we have something which could prove worse still: isolation, total exclusion from society and abandonment and, most tragic of it all, this situation is brought about by parents themselves."

The article concludes with the well-known quotation of the famous Greek poet Kavafy: "*... unsuspectingly they shut me out of the world.*"

In parallel with such pessimistic views of the attitude of Greek society towards children with special needs, there are also references to more optimistic approaches in the Greek community. For instance, the national daily

"MESIMVRINI" (23 October, 1990, p.21) in an article entitled *"Social support for all children with special needs"* refers to positive steps taken in Greece in favour of such children. The author of the article observes that emphasis has been put by the professionals on rehabilitation and integration of children with special needs. In his view this marks a significant trend towards elimination of society's negative attitude towards these individuals. He concludes that:

"Their social acceptance is not a matter for the State alone but concerns all of us."

Thus the 1985 Education Act is now operating in a society in which there is some familiarity with a positive way of thinking towards the handicapped. This situation, however, does not imply that the practice of special education has become easier. In fact considering the loosely framed principles and lack of precision in the definition of the key concepts in the Act I suggest that the administrators of the system of special education are faced with more problems even though there exists more public awareness.

The objective of my research is not to evaluate the system of special education in Greece. The scope of this research is to arrive at a satisfactory, plausible account of how special education teachers tend to view their pupils and educate them. Evaluation of such a social phenomenon would be relative to the values held by different individuals and governments.

The handicapped are still seen to demand their rights, and the mass media keep referring to events which are clear indication of a negative approach towards the handicapped (Stassinis, 1991.) There are no published surveys of social attitudes which could provide the empirical foundation of an evaluation of the above assumptions. This is the reason I am referring to the results of an

unpublished survey which I carried out in Athens, in 1987, entitled "*Social Construction of the mentally handicapped child in Greece.*" This survey does register a range of some current views in Greek society. ⁽³⁵⁾

This was a small scale survey of a random sample of 29 respondents among whom two were teachers of special schools for the mentally handicapped. The rest were lay persons such as civil servants or housewives. The results were analysed qualitatively. Apart from attitudes towards the mentally handicapped the survey provided a general indication of the type of responses towards the handicapped people in general which are prevalent in society in the region of Athens.

The attitude of the lay persons towards the handicapped is strongly influenced by the negative trend. The following quotation represents a very common response:

"When I come across a handicapped individual I close my eyes and thank God that I am not one of them ..." (Thirty-four years old female, graduate of an American University.)

The positive trend is indicated in the attitudes of a minority in the sample. A typical response from those in this group was:

"I believe there should be full knowledge of specialised requirements for each one case separately including knowledge of range and scale of the condition and the possibility of necessary practice, so as to enable children with special needs of all categories to participate fully in social life. Society should regard these children as equal to the others without complexes of pity, guilt or rejec-

tion.” *(Forty-eight years old University graduate, Mother of a physically handicapped child.)*

With reference to mentally handicapped children the following quotation reflects the views of several respondents in my survey:

“Mentally handicapped children stand no hope ... I believe they should be in an asylum away from the parents and the other children of the family.” (Thirty years old female with a University degree.)

The ideas of charity and compassion have also survived and are still influencing social practices:

“I feel sorry for them ... they need love and attention.” (Forty years old businesswoman, high school graduate.)

The above view was a fairly common one in relation to all types of handicapped children in the survey. Along the lines of the positive trend the following reply is typical of that position:

“A mentally handicapped individual is an individual with the same rights as all of us, and this should be common understanding.” (Thirty-five years old housewife, high school graduate.)

The positive trend is not exclusive to the experts as it is usually put forward in relevant Greek literature. Community members are also exposed to different ideas through their interaction and socialisation and have access to sources of information about handicap. This is particularly the case for the families of children with some form of handicap.

The type of information which is being fed to the public usually promotes intervention by specialists and encourages the families concerned to involve their children in a rehabilitation programme. Nowadays parents are being encouraged to have their children tested at an early age and to accept the facts they are given should something prove wrong with their children. There are charity organisations which are set up by parents aiming at educating the parents of the handicapped children as to the possibilities of rehabilitation of their children with the help of professionals. ⁽³⁶⁾

However, more radical thinking may also be found among the parents. In a discussion with the mother of a handicapped child I was given the following view:

“Had my daughter lived fifty years ago she would have been considered normal... she probably would have got married and have had kids... perhaps she would have been referred to as light-headed or tender-minded but not as mentally handicapped... she is a victim of having being born at the wrong time.”

Parents of the handicapped children are also involved in organising pressure groups and charity organisations. These bodies are not concerned solely with providing for the basic needs of the handicapped, but also with organising programmes for their integration and acceptance in society. Mass media exercise a strong influence in this respect. There are nowadays increasing numbers of public information programmes on subjects related to handicap. ⁽³⁷⁾

There is an increase in the number of private organisations and pressure groups in Greece which are involved in dealing with handicapped people and their families. Professional definitions of special needs are predominantly referred to by those involved in charity and pressure groups. Parents are

encouraged to seek professional help in order to get necessary help for their children with handicap rather than denying that there is need for the child to be labelled as handicapped. ⁽³⁸⁾

It is suggested in the literature concerning social responses to the mentally handicapped that the community should be more widely exposed to experts' views about handicap in order to promote development of more positive ideas. This suggestion is often made as if there were a uniform and universally accepted approach adopted by all experts and, in addition, as if this were a positive one.

Two respondents in my 1987 survey who were teachers of mentally handicapped pupils differed in their definitions of mental handicap. One of them referred to the level of IQ, communication skills and school performance; the other was more concerned with social conditions such as family life of the subjects. Their views towards the education of the mentally handicapped also differed. Although both acknowledged the importance of special education and rehabilitation their views on integration in the community did not coincide. One was strongly in support of unconditional integration of children with all degrees of handicap. The other was insisting on the importance of segregation and rehabilitation before reintegration. The former view presents a radical positive trend while the latter is aligned with a more traditional approach.

Despite the fact that my survey was only a small scale one it did provide some evidence that in the contemporary society of Athens both negative and positive trends tend to influence social responses. Moreover it has shown that the positive trend is reflected in the responses both of lay individuals and professionals. Admittedly, the negative trend has survived in varying degrees, over the centuries and still influences the way of thinking about the handicapped.

However, the positive trend seems to have started to leave its own mark, with variable success, both among professionals and lay persons.

The introduction of the 1981 Special Education Act in Greece which is seen as the hallmark of the positive trend in policies towards the handicapped in general has not eliminated the negative trends existing in practice.

4. CONCLUSIONS.

In this chapter I have discussed responses towards the mentally handicapped individuals in Greek society. I have reviewed past as well as current practices in dealing with the handicapped individuals. A scan of relevant literature has suggested that past practices still influence social responses to the handicapped in general.

A historical overview of the situation of the mentally handicapped in Greece yields at times a picture of a society which follows a negative trend in dealing with mentally handicapped people. The negative trend has been manifesting itself over the centuries up until today through different types of responses and at varying degrees of negativity. For example, the extreme of the negative trend is to be found in the killing of the handicapped people in Spartan society. This extreme contrasts with the much more positive approaches found in classical Athenian society where even though rejection of the handicapped was not uncommon practice some level of tolerance and even care for the handicapped can be identified.

Analysis of the situation in the modern Greek State indicates that policy makers and professionals involved in the relevant fields of care for the handicapped have been followers of a positive trend. This trend has been introduced in different policy lines as well as in the professional practices.

Developments in the areas of care and education of the handicapped since the late nineteenth century in Greece show that both the positive and the negative trends have been present in different forms. At the one extreme lies the practice to isolate the mentally handicapped in establishments such as asylums where they may receive "*treatment.*" At the other extreme we find the practice fully to integrate the mentally handicapped in the community. I have attempted to show that special educational policy in the 20th century in Greece has moved, at least in theory, in the direction of the latter extreme.

On the surface, policies are presented in a humanitarian context, i.e., the policies are for the good of the handicapped people. Yet further analysis of the way in which policies have been developed and implemented points to other accounts. I have tried to show that the concept of the mentally handicapped pupil has come into existence in Greece not with the sole purpose of creating improved educational opportunities for a minority group of children but also to protect the State's interest.

In the following chapters I shall be attempting to show that the principal official policy lines concerning the education of the handicapped in Greece contain underlying guidelines which may actually lead to maintenance of the negative trend. I am suggesting that these implied guidelines in effect tend to contribute to the maintenance and even the increase of the number of mentally handicapped individuals and reinforce the stigma attached to them.

CHAPTER TWO

EDUCATION OF THE MENTALLY HANDICAPPED
CHILD IN GREECE

CHAPTER TWO

EDUCATION OF THE MENTALLY HANDICAPPED CHILD IN GREECE

1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses the legislative framework of special education and its application in everyday practice. Analysis of the existing situation builds on the preceding description of the historical background against which the Greek system of special education has developed. Examination of the legislative and administrative aspects of the system which has been set up to deal with individuals with special needs in Greece helps define the position of the teachers and the task which is officially assigned to them.

2. THE GREEK SYSTEM OF SPECIAL EDUCATION.

2.1 Sources of information on the greek system of special education.

The principal references available that could provide information upon which to found an adequate description of the Greek System of Special Education were the Greek Education Act (1985) and “*The Information Bulletin of Special*

Education” of the Ministry of Education and Religion (usually published annually). In 1987, when I began my research, there was no purpose-written publication in which the legislative framework was reviewed or indeed any other suitable study which could provide background material concerning the way in which the system of special education operated in Greece.

I decided to make an appointment with the Director of the Special Education Department in the Ministry of Education and Religion in Athens to obtain general information and suggestions as to potential sources of material relevant to my conceptual framework. During that interview I gathered that the legislative framework is not set out so as to define all pertinent concepts and that there are notions which need to be clarified in practice. Publications I came across later on in my work, for example, Stassinou (1991), provide accounts of the present situation in Greek special education which are mainly based on a descriptive analysis of the legislation.

Furthermore, available studies on special education in Greece mainly express the authors' accounts of the way in which different types of handicap may be diagnosed (definition of causes rather than the process of assessment and referral) and the “*treatment*” and/or education of the pupils concerned. Authors who attempt to deal with the actual process of assessment and the procedure for referral of the pupils have provided accounts which appear to be based on their own interpretation of such issues. These accounts are not always similar to one another and authors tend to omit indication of their sources for information they supply.

I have referred to these authors, e.g., Krassanakis (1989), Paraskevopoulos (1980), Bardis (1993) in different parts of my thesis (for example, see Section 3: “Mental handicap”, below.) They are mainly those who are involved in teacher training courses and have their own notion of how the

system should work. Their accounts of the process of assessment and referral of pupils is based on their own approaches and therefore there is no uniform, clear cut way to describe how education of the special pupils proceeds. My research findings have not shown that any of these authors' views had been closely followed in the practice of special education in the schools which I visited.

For instance, I did not observe the "*full diagnostic team*" in every school—as one author refers to it in his description of the system (Bardis, 1993). This particular author makes reference to statistics only up to 1989 (at the time I was carrying out my main research). Given the time of publication of his article (1993) there follows that he has most probably written it sometime between 1990 and 1992 (if not before), that is, not sufficiently later than the time I was carrying out my research for there to have been introduced and taken effect any substantial changes in the system. Yet I could state without reservation that the account he provides of the Greek special education system does not correspond fully to what I had found to be the case in the schools of my research sample.

In an article in "*The Information Bulletin of Special Education*" (common to all editions up to 1992), the head of the Special Education Department of the Ministry of Education makes it quite clear that the processes of assessment and referral, and teaching of the pupils with special needs are very complicated and there is a great deal of conflict in terms of approaches and interests between those who are involved in such processes. Such issues need to be studied in practice.

In the first part of this chapter, I shall be arguing that the practical implications of the principles set out in the Education Act 1985 as regards Greek special education may be far from what the legislator appears to have aimed at. This is mainly due to the somewhat unclear nature of the basic concepts around

which these principles are developed. The definitions of mental handicap, special educational needs and integration are left to the professionals involved who may bring in different types of interpretation into the system. As one group of professionals teachers tend to influence the way in which the education of the mentally handicapped is carried out.

In the second part of this chapter I will concentrate on the role of teachers in the education of the mentally handicapped pupils. In chapter one of the thesis I had already underlined the response towards the mentally handicapped pupils which might be expected of the teachers. As members of Greek society teachers may hold views based on a positive or negative trend towards the handicapped.

However, apart from being exposed to the cultural responses of the community, teachers' views are also informed by the body of accumulated theoretical knowledge and professional practice. To probe this dimension of influence the final part of chapter two concentrates on identifying the ideas, concepts, theories and methods of teaching which may have influenced teachers of the mentally handicapped pupils.

2.2 Structure of the greek system of special education.

According to the Greek Education (1985) Act, the general aim of education is:

“... to contribute to the full, balanced and harmonious development of the mental and psychophysical capabilities of the pupils so as to enable them to evolve, independently of sex and origin, into

wholesome personalities and live creative lives.” (Article 1 of the Greek Education Act 1985)

The above statement indicates the policy makers’ concern for equality of individuals in receiving education with the purpose of being suitably equipped to lead independent and creative lives within the broader community.⁽¹⁾ However, Chapter 10, Article 32 of the same Act, concerning special education, is clearly indicative of a taken-for-granted attitude that certain individuals are not capable of achieving the above aims and are in need of a different kind of education:

“Special education and special vocational training is provided to individuals with special needs, ... it is aiming at:

(a) the wholesome and effective development and use of such individuals’ potential and capabilities;

(b) their integration in the productive process;

(c) their mutual acceptance within society as a whole.”

(Education Act 1985, Article 32)

The term “*individual with special needs*” is used in the Act to refer to specific categories of individuals as follows:

- a. the blind and those who suffer from visual impairment;
- b. the deaf and the hard of hearing;
- c. individuals with malfunction of their motor skills;
- d. the mentally retarded;
- e. those who exhibit partial learning difficulties or generally are not adjusted;
- f. those who suffer from psychological illnesses and emotional constraints;
- g. the epileptic;
- h. the hansenians (sufferers from leprosy);

- i. all those who suffer from chronic diseases requiring long-term treatment;
- j. those who could not be included in any of the above categories but exhibit disturbances of personality.

The above categories are developed on the basis of pathological and psychological criteria which are used to define the type of handicap. In this respect the Greek legislation is following a medical model in special education derived from approaches imported from abroad. ⁽²⁾ The legislation on special education does not provide any further definition of the categories of handicapped children. The remainder of Article 32 in the above Act is devoted to laying down general guidelines as how to pursue the aims of special education. The main principles that are implied in the legislation are:

- a. Dealing with children with special educational needs on the basis of their individual needs and circumstances.
- b. Providing organized and planned procedures in dealing with special needs by way of a multi-disciplinary approach.
- c. Providing education for all the handicapped children in ordinary schools and using special education only for the very complicated cases.

The main portion of the Act, which deals with special education (Articles 32-36) is devoted to the administration of the system of special education. Issues such as appointing specialists and training them or establishing special classes and special schools are the focus of the policy makers' attention. The legislative framework entrusts to the specialists the definitions of handicap and special educational needs as well as and the prescription of means for providing for these needs. In the next section I will be discussing the implications of the

legislative framework on major issues concerning special education and particularly the group of pupils who are labelled as mentally handicapped.

2.3 Information on compulsory schooling and number of pupils.

Schooling in Greece is compulsory between the ages of 5½ to 14½. This includes six years of elementary school (age 5½ to 11½) and the first three years of secondary school (which is referred to as “*Gymnasion*” in Greek, ages 11½ to 14½). The second part of the secondary school (in Greek, “*Lykeion*”, ages 14½ to 17½) is not compulsory. There is the possibility of children starting kindergarten from the age of 3½, but this is not compulsory. I have provided a more precise outline of the structure of the Greek education system in Appendix I of my thesis.

The school age for the pupils with special educational needs corresponds to the above age brackets, but special schooling is not compulsory: it is up to parents to decide. In clear cut cases most parents would be likely to choose to send their children to special school. In borderline cases this is unlikely to prove as straightforward. After such children are faced with insurmountable difficulties in ordinary school, parents could be convinced, albeit reluctantly, to send their children to special school. There have also been reports of extreme cases involving children with special needs who had been kept locked up in their homes, for several years, without formal knowledge of any authority. Their families had sought to hide them from public gaze and avoid the “*social stigma*” that is still attached by some sections of society (information obtained from the Director of the Department of Special Education, Ministry of Education and Religion, in Athens).

Moreover, there have been cases of pupils who had to remain in elementary school even beyond the age of 11½ since there was no sufficient number of secondary schools to accommodate all pupils with special needs. According to Ministry of Education and Religion statistics (1988) there are no secondary schools available for the “*mentally retarded*” (sic.) There exists only one vocational training school for this category of pupils, which is situated in the Athens area.

It is possible to provide education for children with special needs from the age of 3 up to 18 years old. Special vocational training may be available for such individuals between the ages of 14 and 20. The periods of attendance may be extended beyond the ages of 18 and 20, respectively, and up to such time as would be deemed necessary for the completion of these individuals’ special schooling.

In the “*Information Bulletin on Special Education*” (issues 1986, 1988, 1992) of the Ministry of Education and Religion it is stated that the estimated number of pupils with special needs is about 180,000. This figure is claimed to have been derived by applying the international standard of 10% of the school population in a country (based on the national population recorded in the 1981 Census). Any changes in the school population, from 1986 to 1992, do not seem to have been reflected in the Bulletin’ s estimate of the total number of pupils with special needs. Ministry of Education statistics set at 8,200 the number of pupils with special needs who are claimed to be receiving special education in school year 1988–89.

Statistics regarding different structural aspects of special education do not provide an adequate basis for establishing the exact number of pupils in each category that is specified in the legislation. The latest statistics available (school year 1991-1992) indicate that: the total number of pupils receiving special

education amounts to 12,383 in 706 School Units of Special Education (SUSE) helped by 1,200 educators and 151 specialist professionals in related fields such as social work, psychology, speech therapy (Table MEDS-A, below).

A breakdown of the number of pupils receiving special education (Tables MEDS-B to MEDS-D, below), extracted from the Ministry's "*Information Bulletin on Special Education*" (5th edition, 1992) distinguishes the following categories:

- blind and partially sighted,
- deaf and hard of hearing,
- physically handicapped,
- mentally backward, and
- pupils with learning difficulties

(Terminology of the Bulletin).

The Ministry's corresponding table for School Year 1987-1988 includes an additional category, that of "*socially maladjusted*", which does not appear in the 1991-1992 data. The reason for this omission from the table is not explained even though the lists of schools provided include SUSE's for the socially maladjusted. All other categories referred to in the legislation are not accounted for in the Ministry of Education statistics. A percentage of the pupils that are not accounted for are likely to be under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Health and Welfare. Bardis (op. cit.) gives the figure of 3,500 students as "*receiving special services in special education units which belong to the Ministry of Health and Social Security*". No source is given for the above data.

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION STATISTICS (MEDS)

School Year	Special School Units			Number of Pupils	Number of Teachers	Openings for specialists	Openings for Special Education School Advisers
	Special Schools	Special Classes or Sections in Ordinary Schools	Total no. of Special School Units				
1978-79	67	—	67	1997	163	—	—
1979-80	75	—	75	2092	184	—	2
1980-81	84	—	84	2360	212	—	2
1981-82	87	—	87	2536	213	—	4
1982-83	122	—	122	2725	332	—	4
1983-84	139	7	146	3241	—	—	8
1984-85	142	25	167	3484	471	—	8
1985-86	152	105	257	4989	619	—	8
1986-87	150	141	291	5330	641	24	8
1987-88	160	221	381	6929	777	64	8
1988-89	164	285	449	8200	850	200	16
1989-90	170	368	538	9150	950	200	16
1990-91	183	460	643	10200	1122	157	11
1991-92	186	520	706	12383	1200	151	10

TABLE MEDS-A: Evolution of the number of Special Educational Units, their Pupils and Staff

Statistics available on different aspects of special education do not as a rule come from the National Statistical Office of Greece. The reason is that this is not a subject covered in the National Census. The statistical data used in various publications originate from the Greek Ministry of Education and Religion, Department of Special Education and are elaborated by the Ministry's own Statistical Office (information supplied by officials of the Greek Ministry of National Economy, coordinating body for the National Statistical Office).

Category of handicap		Educational level		
		Primary	Secondary	TOTAL
1.	Blind	106	—	106
2.	Deaf-Hard of hearing	476	231	707
3.	Physically Handicapped	266	133	399
4.	Mentally Retarded	2100	135	2235
5.	Socially Maladjusted	81	49	130
6.	With Learning Difficulties (in Special Classes for certain hours per week)	3352	—	3352
TOTAL		6381	548	6929

TABLE MEDS-B: Number of Pupils by Category of Handicap and Education Level (School Year 1987-88)

As it is pointed out in the above mentioned article by the Director of the Special Education Department, it is not at all clear how certain pupils are referred to special schools and other units dealing with special needs. At the time I was carrying out the first stage of my field work (school year 1987-88) there were 2100 pupils in the category of *"mentally retarded"*. As shown in tables MEDS-D and MEDS-E, below, there is an increase in the numbers of pupils as well as special schools and units in Greece for this group of pupils.

Category of Pupil Handicap	TOTAL	Nursery	Primary School	Secondary School	Lycée	Vocational Training School
Blind	4	2	2	—	—	—
Deaf-Hard of hearing	23	6	11	4	2	—
Physically Handicapped	20	5	9	3	2	1
Mentally Retarded	109	13	95	—	—	1
Socially Maladjusted	8	1	6	—	—	1
GRAND TOTAL	164	27	123	7	4	3

TABLE MEDS-C: Special Educational Units by Category of Pupil Handicap (School Year 1987-88)

CATEGORY OF HANDICAP	SUSE	Number of Pupils
Blind and partially sighted	5	108
Deaf and hard of hearing	34	722
Physically handicapped	20	430
Mentally backward	131	2,400
With learning difficulties	520	8,723
TOTAL	710	12,383

TABLE MEDS-D: Number of pupils and School Units of Special Education (SUSE) by category of handicap (School Year 1991-1992)

A. FIRST EDUCATION LEVEL	NUMBER OF SUSE	NUMBER OF PUPILS
1. Kindergarten	37	125
2. Primary School	133	2,940
3. Special Classes in ordinary schools	515	8,750
TOTAL	685	11,815
B. SECOND EDUCATION LEVEL		
1. First 3 years of high school (Gymnasion)	7	180
2. Second 3 years of high school (Lykeion)	5	152
3. Vocational training schools	4	204
4. Special units	5	32
TOTAL	21	568
GRAND TOTAL	706	12,383

TABLE MEDS-E: Number of SUSE and pupils by level of education (reference year 1991)

So far as the Ministry's list of special schools for the mentally handicapped is concerned I am inclined to regard the relevant statistics as not entirely reliable. In my field work I discovered some of the schools listed in the statistics were actually not in operation. Officials at the Ministry of Education and Religion did not find this unusual. I was told that not all the schools listed in their official publications were operational in all academic years. If the number of pupils was below that which would justify the schools' operation they would cease to operate. The remaining pupils would then be referred to another school. The exact number of pupils is not the major issue for concern here but, rather, the definite increase in the population of the children in need of special education.

Official policy lines for special education in Greece promote the idea of integration of the handicapped individual in the community. However, implementing this ideology in practice may require means which are known to have contributed to further segregation of more pupils. These children are categorised and dealt with through a process dominated by different approaches from different fields such as educational psychology, medicine and welfare which are not all necessarily supportive of integration of the mentally handicapped pupils.

Review of the relevant literature from countries such as Britain indicates the complexities involved in applying such an ideology in practice (cf. Tomlinson, 1982, Oliver 1985, Barton 1988, Booth 1988, Fish 1989, Norwich 1990.) Analysis of Greek legislation reveals that some of those problems are encountered also in the Greek system of special education. Furthermore, there are certain particularities in the Greek system of education, health and welfare which add to the problems involved in pursuing the ideology of integration.

In the following pages I am discussing these issues with special reference to the category of mentally handicapped pupils. They are discussed in the context of the definition of mental handicap, special educational needs, coordination of Departments involved in special education and the issue of integration of handicapped children in ordinary schools.

2.4 Definition of Mental Handicap

The term “*mental retardation*” is used in the 1985 Act to differentiate between the group of pupils who are categorised as mentally retarded from those with learning difficulty, disturbance of personality and psychological disturbance, maladjusted etc. The concept of “*retarded children*”, used interchangeably with “*mentally handicapped*”, specifically refers to lower level of intelligence. The distinction between “mental handicap” and “special learning difficulties” is pointed out in the following paragraph:

“Special learning difficulties are mainly identified by the teachers and in cooperation with the parents. When the handicap is more prominent and severe, the assessment must be done by the medical/ pedagogical service.” [Information Bulletin of Special Education, Ministry of Education and Religion (p.162, 1991)].

Definition of mental handicap is left to the professionals. In their everyday practice they are expected to provide “*ad hoc*” definitions of an operational nature. According to the above Bulletin, there are 30 medical/pedagogical centres in different parts of the country and 30 mobile regional diagnostic units. There is

a strong medical emphasis on the definition of handicap. I am arguing below that a medical emphasis in defining mental handicap may give rise to further segregation and labelling of pupils who fall in this category.

The concept of special learning difficulties as used above seems to be employed as an umbrella term for referring to children who can follow the ordinary schools and do not need any further help than that of the educators in ordinary schools. However, in more “prominent” cases the role of other professionals seems to become a dominant one. It is most likely that mentally handicapped children are regarded as such “prominent” cases and, as a result, they fall within the responsibility of professionals other than the educators. It is debatable whether or not a child that has been diagnosed as mentally handicapped will in the end benefit from better education, as intended by the legislator.

As regards those with physical and sensory handicaps it may be easier to decide on the general theme of their special educational needs. In such cases, special education may offer a child an opportunity for education which otherwise he/she could not have received. For example, without the help of special education blind people would not have been able to follow an education similar to that available in mainstream schools. Without special aids the physically handicapped may not have been able to have any schooling at all.

The situation of the mentally handicapped is different from the above cases. Special education and its tools for the education of the mentally handicapped is still short of one highly important element, that is, a definition of mental handicap. Even in cases where there is medical evidence and an adequate account of the presence of mental handicap there is no clear cut method capable of expressing quantitatively the exact degree of mental handicap. ⁽³⁾

2.5 Certain practical Implications of the concept of Mental handicap.

In chapter one, above, I discussed relevant aspects of the attitudes of the Greek community towards individuals with special needs. A significant finding was that the use of labels has survived over the centuries. In chapter two, I am elaborating further on this issue by referring to the terminology used in the legal framework of the system of special education as well as to that used by the academics. The terminology used by teachers also suggests that there is currently extensive usage of disablist language.

My aim in this thesis was to point out how the particular terms were translated in practice by the teachers and what connotations they had as regards the status of a child. My findings are meant to indicate that mental handicap is socially constructed. The terminology I have used in no way reflects my own view of the children with special educational needs. I have sought to avoid the confusion that might ensue if I made alternate use of equivalent terms—disablist and non-disablist ones—and consequently I have followed the terminology currently in use in Greece. ⁽⁴⁾

It is unfortunate that the Greek community (including legislators, professionals involved in the education and health systems) still use labels quite extensively. It is even more unfortunate that parents of the pupils concerned are adamant that labels are useful. In my professional capacity as an educational consultant I am constantly under pressure by parents who want to know what their children's problems are called.

In a meeting with some parents and professionals I was accused of academic snobbery and ignorance of the suffering of the handicapped by trying to avoid terms such as "*mental handicap*" which they thought would identify their

exact problem. Labels are used in such contexts perhaps not to diminish the labelled individual but to relieve the tension off parents. That is to say, it is the child who has a problem not the parents.

In Greece, the use of the term "*child with special needs*" is not considered adequate in itself to cover the different areas of special education. For example, learning difficulty is clearly defined as a different concept than that of "*mental retardation*" in the legislation concerned. In the meeting I mentioned above, a mother told me that if the same term were to apply to refer to her child who has "*learning difficulty*" and to a different child who is "really mentally backward" it would not be fair to her own child. She pointed out that the term "*special needs*" is very confusing.

This is understandable since the term "*special needs*" in Greece has acquired, to some extent, the same stigma as other labels which have been used to diminish certain categories of people. For example, it has become a playground joke for children to refer to each other as "*the one with special needs*" implying the same definition as "*retarded*" or "*idiot*".

As a researcher visiting the schools I could not try to influence the terms used by the teachers. In this thesis I have maintained usage of the same terms as they used to refer to their pupils since it is their view that I am writing about. Having done otherwise would have resulted in altering experience. For example, if a teacher showed concern about pupils who were wrongly placed in the schools for the mentally handicapped and asked my view on the matter, I would normally agree with them. I would not try to indicate that I believed mental handicap was a label and that it was a superficial categorisation for controlling a group of individuals.

In the above cases I would not explain to them that I did not agree with the established labels and the way in which they tend to isolate some individuals from the rest of society. My personal view on the subject of labelling aside, even if one applied the usual criteria referred to in the literature on the definition of mental handicap as a personal identity, one would tend to agree with them. In my personal encounters with pupils I often wondered how the professionals had applied their theoretical knowledge to refer these pupils to special schools.

Basically the legislation clearly distinguishes the child with "*learning difficulty*" from the "*mentally retarded*". As Stassinis (1991) writes, "as a rule" the administration of the system requires those in the category of educable (mildly or moderately mentally handicapped) to be placed in special schools for the educable, with an emphasis placed upon their integration in the special classes as much as possible. The trainable pupils (severely mentally handicapped) are to attend schools for the trainable. The list of special schools contained in "*The Information Bulletin of Special Education*" of the Ministry of Education and Religion refers to some schools by such definitions. But no hard and fast rules are set for assessing the degree of handicap.

The category of trainable or severely mentally handicapped are to receive their education in special schools for the trainable mentally handicapped pupils or in institutions that are supervised by the Ministry of Health, Social Welfare and Social Security. These categories have emerged not so much as part of any formal legislation but rather through sets of guidelines laid down by those who are responsible for curriculum of special schools, their grading, teachers' training courses and the processes of referral of pupils.

The Legislative framework reflects the view that the type of pupils who should be in special schools would be those who have possibility for education. Guidelines of official teacher training courses and administrative procedures

indicate that educable pupils (mildly or moderately mentally handicapped) could attend special schools. Trainable pupils are supposed to attend special schools for the trainable handicapped. Behavioural problem pupils have to attend special schools for the maladjusted. Finally, those with profound handicap are to be referred to institutions for the profoundly handicapped.

The way in which children are assessed and characterised as mentally handicapped and the degree of their handicap may vary depending on the process of assessment, diagnosis and the methods and techniques used for their education. A major reference point for professionals in assessing mental handicap is theories which lead to categorisation of the mentally handicapped individual within a specific group. By using specific means in assessing children the degree of severity of handicap is pointed out and the type of educational needs is supposed to be determined.

A major part of the theories and methods used by professionals is based on a medical model. The terminology used by the policy makers in the legislative framework is limited to mental retardation without any reference to degree of retardation. However, in practice, there is need for assessment of the degree of retardation and this may well make a difference in a child's opportunities for education.

In the Greek literature different concepts are used to refer to different degrees of mental handicap. Educable, trainable, idiot, fool and imbecile are some of the terms which one encounters in the literature available to professionals such as teachers on the subject of mental handicap. I will be discussing these terms in some detail in the next section. At this point I am suggesting that use of the medical approach leads to categorisation of the children in ways which tend to distort the actual aims of the special education system which were mentioned above.

Those who are found with a severe or profound degree of mental handicap may never qualify for attending special schools. Despite the fact that there exist degrees of severe mental deficiency it may generally be claimed that there are minimal prospects for learning, for marked improvement or even partial self maintenance. Individuals in this category are in need of total protection either in the context of the family or in a suitable institutional environment (see Paraskevopoulos, 1980).

Thus special education may not help all children categorised as mentally handicapped. Those who in today's terminology are referred to as severely and profoundly mentally handicapped may still remain isolated in institutes. Such individuals come mainly under the responsibility of the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare. Some of the children who fall in these categories may have actually regressed mentally due to lack of stimulation and systematic help from the specialists.

Such cases are frequently reported in the daily national press. For example, the Athens/national daily "*ELEFTHEROTYPIA*" (22 July 1989, p.2) published an article concerning an unexpected inspection of one of the State Rehabilitation Institutes by the Health and Social Welfare Minister. After his visit the Minister commented that:

"... this establishment is a shame to our society as it reflects the extent of its indifference towards children who are in need of special care and love."

Later reports appearing in other newspapers about the same institution and the plight of children therein do not reveal any marked improvement in that state of affairs. For instance the Athens/national daily "*KATHIMERINI*" (1 June 1990, p.5) refers to the children in another branch of the same State institution as

“Children without destination.” The article raises the point that the particular establishment actually operates as only an asylum despite its officially declared function as a rehabilitation centre. It provides only food and sleep to some 40 children belonging to a wide age range and are physically and/or mentally severely and/or profoundly handicapped. Some of these children have lived all their lives in the same centre.

In another article *“Out of sight, out of mind,”* published in the wide circulation local English language newspaper *“ATHENS SHOPPER”* (May 25-31 1990, p.9) the author writes of her experience from a visit to a branch of the same institution:

“I was appalled by what I saw. Yet the children’s friendliness and cheerfulness surprised me. They had accepted their fate and they were trying to make the best of it. They loved meeting strangers and were eager to make friends.”

My own experience as a volunteer with a charity group in both branches of the above State institution tend to confirm the views expressed in these articles. In both of these branches the Ministry of Education and Religion has provided special school facilities. However, only a few of the children are given the chance of education: the other children are regarded as hopeless cases.

There are few private establishments in Athens and some other regions of Greece, which could take care of the educational needs of such pupils. (Stassinou 1991) The majority of these private facilities operate on a very tight budget consisting mainly of charity funds and donations. It is not at all certain whether such establishments can help provide the necessary care for all these children.

Ironically enough, there are children among the population of mentally handicapped pupils in special schools who have been labelled so as a result of the existence of the special education system. Two decades ago in Greece, a large number of pupils who are now in special schools would have been able to carry on with their education in ordinary schools and get employment without serious difficulty. Such children may have been regarded lazy, slow and less bright than other children, but would not have been officially assessed and characterised as mentally handicapped with a formal certificate to prove it.

It appears that the system of special education has been set up to provide relief for the ordinary schools (by assessing and categorising more pupils as being in need of special education.) Presumably, the term "*special educational needs*" is employed to reduce the stigma attached to mental handicap by placing emphasis on education and the individuals' needs rather than their disability. However, it is doubtful whether they will actually receive education on equal terms to those who are not labelled. As Oliver (1988) points out:

"...it could be argued that only the labels have changed; the underlying reality of an education system unable or unwilling to meet the needs of all children remains the same." (op. cit., p.20)

Here it is important to discuss the way in which the concept of "*special needs*" is treated by the policy makers in Greece.

2.6 Special needs.

“Special needs” is another vague term used in the legislation concerning special education in Greece. Once more the interpretation of an important concept is left to the specialists. The well known problem in this respect is the criteria on the basis of which special needs may be assessed. The problem in defining need does not appear only in relation to special educational needs but in the general context of welfare, health and education.

Special educational needs have inherited the ambiguities involved in the concept of need in other fields which involve client/professional interaction. The question is whether needs should be defined in terms of the professionals’ frame of reference and their *“subjective”* evaluation of the clients’ situation or the client should be allowed to decide on what his/her needs are. ⁽⁵⁾

Baldwin (1986) discusses the usage of the concept of *“need”* in such different contexts. First, needs assessments are used to explain needs FOR services or needs OF the individuals. When need FOR services is implied it involves imposing certain services for a large number of people. For example, it can be suggested that there is need FOR the services of a psychologist in a school. In the case where needs OF the individuals are assessed there is more flexibility involved in dealing with the special needs of each individual, e.g., suggesting that a particular child is in need OF a psychologist.

In Greek legislation there seems to be scope for the former usage of the term *“need.”* Greater emphasis tends to be placed upon defining what services are needed FOR the handicapped. This is because the major part of the legislation deals with the process of appointing staff and the intervention of different organisations in assessing needs.

The second usage of the concept of “*need*” identified by Baldwin (op. cit.) is found in the context of staff training and organisational purposes. In this case the way in which needs should be assessed provides some account of what special educational needs may be. For example, needs assessments can be used to define what type of training special education teachers should have in order to cope with their pupils. The Greek legislation includes guidelines for this aspect of needs by stressing how important it is to appoint suitably qualified staff or that the training of teachers should be in accordance to the types of need that are assessed in the schools.

A third instance of needs’ definition involves their assessment on the basis of what the handicapped persons themselves define as their needs. Baldwin (op. cit., p.141) states that this approach in assessing needs has been used only for the physically handicapped. It has involved questioning of the handicapped to establish what they thought their areas of needs were.

A newspaper article entitled “*They decide for us without us,*” which I have referred to in chapter one, above (p. 52) is a genuine example of exclusion of people with special needs from taking part in the process of needs assessment. This includes both the physically and mentally handicapped, although in the case of the mentally handicapped it is most likely that they would be considered as unable to decide about their own needs.

In a study of social construction of mental retardation Lea (1988) provides evidence which suggests that the mentally handicapped ARE capable of understanding “*their circumstances and of articulating their likes, dislikes, needs and wishes.*” (p. 68) There is need in Greece for studies of this nature to help professionals become more objective in their definition of what special educational needs may be.

According to the legislative framework the concept of need is supposed to be defined with regard to the individual's physical and psychological condition and social circumstances. This implies the necessity to treat these conditions in a way that the individual can adjust to and be accepted by the larger social setting. The role of special education here is to provide for suitable conditions for the "rehabilitation" of such individuals.

It appears that in describing the role of the different professional bodies involved in special education, the emphasis lies upon adjustment of the individuals with special educational needs to society, rather than upon preparation of the latter for acceptance of such individuals. A perspective of social policy may be applied here which denotes the idea of social control and social interest. (Oliver, 1988) The concept of need in this sense is defined with regard to the professionals' viewpoint in a more or less subjective way and on the basis of the professionals' construction of what needs are and how they should be met. ⁽⁶⁾

Due to the existence of national curriculum in the Greek education system it is very difficult to apply the principle of defining the special educational needs of the individual child and proceed to educate him/her accordingly. The Ministry of Education and Religion has always been providing the contents of the curriculum in a very clear cut form. Furthermore, it has been supervising the publication of the textbooks. Now, if the principle of individual needs is to be put into operation a major conflict is likely to arise concerning the material for teaching in special education.

The application of the concept of individual needs in the programmes for educating pupils with special needs would involve:

- a. change of the principle of national curriculum; ⁽⁷⁾
- b. introduction of greater flexibility as regards material used in teaching.

However, such flexibility should be afforded to the entire spectrum of education and not restricted to a minority of pupils if integration is to be implemented. Otherwise, that minority of pupils will be further segregated. No such provision is made in the context of mainstream education in Greece. Pupils in the mainstream schools follow the national curriculum which is not compatible with the needs of all pupils. Therefore, pupils with special educational needs would NEED to have a different type of curriculum and, consequently, to be differentiated. Variation in the curriculum for the pupils with special educational needs may lead to their further segregation from the mainstream schools.

I will deal with the problem concerning the curriculum for the mentally handicapped pupils in the last section of this chapter. At this point I shall proceed with the discussion of the implications of Greek special education policies as far as the integration programme is concerned.

2.7 Integration.

Official policy guidelines in special education promote integration of the pupils with special educational needs in the ordinary schools (Nikodemos, 1989; Polychronopoulou and Birtsas, 1989.) This policy is presented as a step forward in the direction of eventual integration of the handicapped individuals in the community at large.

The principle of integration is not a well-defined concept either by the legislators and policy makers or those who have studied it in Greece. Here I am borrowing two definitions of integration as stated by Booth (1988) in order to study this issue in the Greek context. Booth differentiates between the definition

of integration when it “... *is about matching provision to need*” and when it is about “... *essentially a political process ... about the transfer of power.*” (op. cit., p. 101)

The first type of definition follows a tradition in which the professional power determines the possibility of integration and the way it should be conducted. The second definition, in a more radical fashion, is intended “... *to challenge the social relations and curricula of schools, and to link these to the way inequalities are maintained, reproduced and countered.*” (op. cit., p. 119)

The legislative framework and the range of policies which are put forward in the direction of integration in Greece indicate that the concept of integration is almost synonymous with “*rehabilitation.*” First, an individual is segregated through a process of assessment. He/she is then put through special channels for rehabilitation which would enable him/her to integrate in an ordinary school and eventually in the community. The concept of integration in this sense is conditional: it is only possible when an individual child is found capable of following the ordinary school, socialising in the community and being able to contribute to the productive system.

The above definition of integration is different from the more radical approach which involves accepting the individuals’ right to lead an independent life, irrespective of their abilities. The notion of independence is relative and does not solely imply the individual’s ability to achieve various tasks, such as washing and dressing themselves or being employed. Independence is more related to an individual’s capacity to take decisions about his/her life (Oliver, 1990) (Bellacasa and von Tetzchner, 1991). It is highly unlikely that in a system of special education where the professional intervention has an important position such a definition applies.

The policy of integration in Greece is supposed to be pursued through different types of provisions. A handicapped child may be able to attend a mainstream school with extra help from specialists in an ordinary class or in a special class. In more "*complicated cases*" a handicapped child may be placed in a special school. The major policy line is to place special schools within the grounds of mainstream schools. However, there are still several special schools for the mentally handicapped which are totally segregated from ordinary schools. The policy followed by the Ministry of Education and Religion is to allow these schools to operate, but refrain from establishing any new segregated schools.

The legislative framework does not provide any specific guidelines as to how the integration programme should be carried out in any one of the above situations. Once more the whole process of assessment and referrals is left to the professional. It appears that so long as the handicapped children are placed locationally within the context of mainstream schools the policy makers feel their responsibility has been discharged. The rest of the process is left in the hands of the professionals and the community at large.

At the moment, around 66% of the children who receive special education are found in integrated programmes, that is, in schools situated in the grounds of mainstream schools, special classes within the mainstream schools, and some in the mainstream classrooms where special teams would help with their education. (Polychronopoulou and Birtsas, 1989.) Therefore, apart from the segregated special schools the rest of the provisions are considered to fall within the "*integrated programme.*"

Statistics concerning the number of mentally handicapped pupils in the integrated population were not available at the time of writing of this work. However, as stated by the above authors, a large number of special schools for the mentally handicapped are integrated within the ordinary schools. The idea of

a special school operating in the ground of the ordinary school does not necessarily involve interaction between pupils and staff of these schools. A special school located in the building of an ordinary school may be as segregated as a school which is isolated from an ordinary school if special programmes are not organised for the integration of the special pupils. ⁽⁸⁾

There is a strong emphasis present in the Greek literature on what the Warnock Report (1978) refers to as locational integration of children with special needs. This leaves a gap in other aspects of integration which would involve social and functional integration, to use Warnock Report terminology. Thus, social integration would involve interaction between children with special educational needs and those in the main stream school, for example, sharing school outings. Functional curriculum would involve full integration of a child with special educational needs within the ordinary classes and sharing the same curriculum as that of the other pupils.

It appears that in Greece the idea of integration has been relatively successfully applied as far as the integration of school space is concerned. Other aspects of integration do not appear to have been equally successfully dealt with.⁽⁹⁾ Examples of other aspects of integration are given by Danby and Cullen (1988) who assume that integration programmes should benefit the pupils concerned and the others in the following respects:

1. *The handicapped children losing the labels.*
2. *The handicapped children benefitting from other children's presence.*
3. *Parents take as effective a part as the professionals.*
4. *The handicapped children receive the education they need.*
5. *Other pupils benefit from the presence of the handicapped pupils."* (op. cit., p. 179)

The positive results of the integration programme in Greece tend to give a different dimension to what is expected of the integration programme in an educational context. For example, in an article on integration in Greece (Nicodemos, 1989) the Director of Special Education in the Ministry of Education states that since 1984 the new policy for integration of the handicapped has had several positive results.

These relate to an increase in the active participation of parents, to the legislation concerning special education being incorporated in the revised legislation on education, to special programmes for in-service training of teachers, and visits of teachers to EEC Member-States. Furthermore, there has been improvement in the provisions of educational means and material and the establishment of the General Secretariat of Special Education in the Ministry of Education for a better coordination of educational services.

Apart from the active participation of the parents, the other positive developments referred to above concern administrative processes and improvements in educational material. There are no further comments on whether or not these improvements have helped the integration of the handicapped pupils. Professionals involved in the system of special education and the community at large are supposed to develop further understanding of the needs of those with special needs and thus help their integration.

Professionals are expected to provide programmes for the handicapped children which would enable them to cope in the ordinary schools and finally in the open community. It is expected of the handicapped individual to satisfy the rehabilitation programmes in order to be accepted in the community. The teacher apparently occupies the most important role in this respect. Teachers being themselves members of the community bring into the system of special education a range of the views and attitudes prevailing in that community.

The legislation does not include clues as to how the community is supposed to accept the handicapped individuals. On the one hand a complex system of special education is set up by the State, which will eventually lead to larger numbers of children appearing with the label of handicap. On the other hand lay members of the community, whose views about handicap are already based mainly on fear, shame, superstition and pity, are supposed to cope with even larger numbers of handicapped. As was already discussed (chapter 1, above) taking the mentally handicapped through the process of professional assessment always tends to result in an increase of their numbers. Thus, society is expected to absorb more of the so-called handicapped individuals.

This is a paradoxical situation created by the policy makers. First, legislation promotes a model of policy which is based on integration. Second, by emphasising the importance of professional intervention it tends to revert the system back to a medical model which leads to segregation of the handicapped individual. The mere physical integration of those who receive the label of mentally handicapped in the mainstream schools does not imply the acceptance of the mentally handicapped in those schools or their eventual integration in the community. The reason for the Greek policy makers' enthusiasm for integration is not solely humanitarian and directed towards taking into account the needs of the handicapped.

Political and economic factors may also be at play in this respect. In a study of the politics of integration in England, Barton and Tomlinson (1984) observe that:

"The motives behind integration, just as those behind segregation, are a product of complex social, economic and political considerations which may relate to the 'needs' of the wider society, the whole education system and professionals working within the

system, rather than simply to the needs of individual children.”
(*op. cit.*, p.65)

This is also the case in the integration policies in Greece. On the one hand, there is the ideological background in terms of “*egalitarian beliefs*” guiding education of all children in a common school. On the other hand, there are several advantages and disadvantages identified in the process of implementing integration. The economic factors which are referred to by Barton and Tomlinson (1984) tend to underlie integration policy also in Greece.

Integration of the handicapped in already existing school facilities could be economically more viable than the construction of new school units, especially for the handicapped children. However, if locational integration is to be combined with social and functional integration it could prove financially more of a drain for the education system. Apart from the question of cost for social and functional integration there are other complex issues involved which might obstruct the full integration of the pupils with special needs.

Some issues concerning the implementation of the integration principle which have been studied and researched in other countries may also apply to Greece. ⁽¹⁰⁾ Teachers’ attitudes in the mainstream schools, parents of handicapped and other pupils and pupils themselves may all play a part in the process of integration. For example, teachers in the mainstream schools may not accept to spend longer hours and put in greater effort to deal with the pupils with special needs. Parents of the handicapped pupils may feel that their children would be more exposed to stigmatisation if they were included in the mainstream school population.

There is also the issue of professional interest in diagnosing and providing the handicapped pupils for their special needs. Specialists such as psychologists

and medical people may find it inappropriate and even harmful for a child with special needs to be registered in a mainstream school. This calls for coordination of professionals' work in different areas such as education, psychology and welfare.

The complexity of integration programmes has led to suggestions that full integration of the pupils with special needs in ordinary schools and, consequently, in the community is not feasible in all cases; that integration in this sense leads to more problems for those with special needs (e.g., cf. Soder, 1989.) However, the existence of problems in implementing integration does not necessarily suggest its dismissal. ⁽¹¹⁾ This issue brings the discussion to the issues of coordination of the bodies involved in the education of the mentally handicapped.

2.8 Coordination of official bodies involved.

The principle according to which a multi-disciplinary approach should be taken in dealing with the disabled leads to several complications. The tasks involved in providing for special educational needs are assigned to three major bodies: the Ministry of Education and Religion, the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare and the Manpower Employment Organisation. Furthermore, the Ministry of National Economy and Finance is involved in decision making for funding a variety of programmes, benefit and training schemes and other provisions, following the proposals of the above Departments. Involvement of all these departments and official bodies indicates the presence at work of a complex bureaucratic management system, a direct reflection of the power structure and the principles of written law in Greece. ⁽¹²⁾

Legislation is relatively explicit and most issues regarding the different aspects of administrative policy are clearly defined. When details of particular issues cannot be directly finalised in an Act of Parliament and require further elaboration, the procedure referred to as the Presidential Decree is employed as soon as such issues are finally clarified. There are several aspects of the system of special education which are not finalised yet. Among such issues is the way in which the different Ministries involved can cooperate and coordinate their operations. Their purpose would be to eliminate unnecessary overlapping of responsibilities and better synchronise and focus their interventions upon areas of highest priority: that is, who does what, where, when and for whom.

The Ministry of Health and Welfare is responsible for the assessment of needs, recommendations for placement, advise to teachers, parents and the individuals concerned on how to cope with the problems. The responsibility of the Ministry of Education and Religion is mainly to provide for the types of needs assessed in the mainstream schools and the special schools. ⁽¹³⁾ Therefore there is a strong influence of the medical profession upon the special education system. This tends to bring into the system of special education potential conflicts between members of different professions all of whom have "*vested interests*" in their dealings with the mentally handicapped. ⁽¹⁴⁾

Professionals who are given authority to assess and educate children are unlikely to follow similar approaches. Psychologists, welfare officers, teachers, etc., tend to be interested in exercising and imposing their own authority in the process of assessment of and courses of action taken for the children concerned. Tomlinson's (1981a, 1981b, 1982) account of the professionals power and their conflicting interests in dealing with the client appears to be applicable also to the Greek situation.

I have already discussed above how over different time periods in late nineteenth century the medical profession began their intervention in the areas concerning handicapped people. This power was then extended to other professionals such as psychologists and teachers. In today's Greek society each one of the professional groups try to impose different degrees of authority. Their professional opinion tends to be appreciated and accepted by lay people. However, in the hierarchy of power some of these professional groups are more powerful than others.

Teachers of special education may not be as powerful as their colleagues in the medical professions in situations in which pathological criteria are involved. For example, once a child is defined as brain damaged parents are more likely to accept the physician's opinion of the child's disabilities than that of the teacher's.

Conflicting interests in the system of special education become even more apparent when the professionals involved are actually employees in the different Departments of State bureaucracy. Here the political interests of those in charge of different Ministerial Departments add to the already existing competition between different professionals who are normally expected to honour their political allegiances in the sector they are employed in.

Thus definition, assessment of needs and education of the mentally handicapped pupils becomes a task for different competing professionals who are supposed to work in a coordinated and harmonious way. The implications of such ideology in practice appear to generate strains in the system. This is due not only to the differing interests of various professions involved but also to variation in the approaches taken by the professionals as individuals, no matter what their profession may be.

In the following pages I shall deal with a range of key issues relating to the definition of mental handicap and the education of the mentally handicapped, in the context of the group of professionals that I am concerned with in this thesis, that is, the teachers.

3. MENTAL HANDICAP: PERSONAL IDENTITY OR SOCIAL PRODUCT?

In this section I am examining the type of approaches which may be taken by teachers of the mentally handicapped in characterising and teaching their pupils. This involves a review of the range of theories and methods which may be available to the teachers.

Those involved in the system of special education in Greece may have come across a variety of scientific approaches either in their own country or through training and/or seminars abroad. Although the cultural, economic and political influences play an important role in the way in which special education for the mentally handicapped is carried out, the general guidelines upon which such a system operates may be influenced by available scientific theories in all related fields. Mental handicap may be interpreted by the teachers either as a "*personal identity*" or as a "*social product*." In the introduction of this thesis I have dealt with these two approaches in order to define my own theoretical stand. Here I am dealing mainly with the interpretations that are available to the teachers in Greece.

3.1 Mental Handicap as personal identity.

The main body of literature on the subject of mental handicap in Greece deals with this approach. Those who regard mental handicap as a personal identity present in an individual maintain that the advancement of science has enabled assessment of the “*problems*” of those who “*suffer*” from any form of “*mental defect*.” That is, socially aware and concerned individuals acknowledged the harsh conditions of life affecting the “*mad*” who were confined in asylums and, as a result, they sought to find “*better ways*” of dealing with them.

Scientific progress is supposed to have given a different dimension to the personal identity approach. The application of this approach in the system of special education is considered as a positive sign by a large number of participants in such a system. There are different devices through which the mental handicap is assessed. Intelligence tests, brain scans, different tests in reading and writing are just a few examples.

None of these means has been found yet to provide a fully valid account of an individual’s mental ability (Eden 1976, Paraskevopoulos 1980). However, they do afford the professionals with general guidelines which enable them to isolate the possible cases of mentally handicapped individuals from the rest of the population. The literature abounds with long lists of terms used to refer to different forms of mental malfunction, ranging from very severe to mild.

Selecting for review studies which deal with the definition of mental handicap by applying the personal identity approach is a rather difficult task. My aim in referring to such studies is not to evaluate them but to outline current views on the subject of mental handicap which influence the practice of special education. I shall not try to define mental handicap by reference to these studies.

Rather, I will use such works to provide a framework within which mental handicap is usually defined by the teachers of special education.

The concern of workers in this area focuses upon physical development, and psychological and environmental aspects of the mentally handicapped. I will refer to major issues which have been in the forefront of discussion and research in order to identify the basic criteria which are used to categorise the mentally handicapped. The sources I have used for this section are publications not only from Greece but also from Britain and the USA. The reason for this choice is a practical one. The major volume of theoretical and methodological research in all aspects of mental handicap, which is encountered in relevant Greek literature usually derives from translations or interpretations of seminal works produced in those countries.

Furthermore, it is likely that Greek teachers of special education do have access to foreign publications and could be influenced by these. The Bulletin of the Ministry of Education and Religion (1992 issue) refers to the existence of programmes involving in-service training of teachers in foreign countries and their attendance of international conferences and seminars.

3.1.1 Physical and psychological development.

There are two principal physical features that are used by the medical profession to define the concept of mental handicap. One is related to the observable characteristics of an individual, the other concerns non-visible features which can only be established through appropriate examination. Certain physical features are taken to indicate the existence of mental handicap. Once there is a

physical feature in an individual which statistically correlates with mental handicap then that individual is put through the process of professional assessment.

The connection between physical features and mental ability has been made for centuries in different communities. It is founded on the establishment of a set of what is being defined as “*normal*” physical characteristics and developments. Deviation from such a “*norm*” accounts for it in terms of some degree of mental ability. Before the advancement of medical science mental handicap was not so easily distinguishable from physical handicap. Existence of the latter usually constituted sufficient evidence for the presence of the former. ⁽¹⁵⁾

Ever since mental handicap was studied scientifically only specific types of physical features are taken to be relevant to it. They are features which have been statistically established to correlate with mental handicap. Greek literature is very rich in this respect. Writings on the concept of mental handicap tend to put strongest emphasis on physical features. Typical among such views is the following (Krassanakis, 1989):

“If one comes across an individual with mongoloid idiocy it is as if one has seen all other individuals suffering from the same syndrome. Such is the likeness among them. They are small individuals having a small and round head with narrow, sleepy eyes ... Their nose is small, fat, flat and saddle-shaped. Their tongue is long and sticks out. Their mouth remains almost always open. They breathe through their nose with difficulty. Lips are fat and always humid with saliva. Teeth and ears are deformed. The voice is hoarse ...” (op. cit., pp. 45-46)

This type of description is similar to works found in the English literature in which mental handicap is discussed as a personal identity. For example, in describing the characteristics of Down's syndrome individuals Eden (1976) states:

"Mongolism is also known as Down's disease or syndrome ... is the most common and best known form of mental handicap ... The physical appearance of mongols is distinctive. The nose is small and undeveloped, while the tongue, which is fissured, seems too large for the mouth. The iris of the eye may contain small white dots... The fingers are short and stubby, while hands, like the feet, are thick and square." (op. cit., pp. 23-24)

Having provided a "full" description of the physical appearance the invisible part is subsequently explained in terms of the extra chromosome and aspects of mental development.

All definitions of the physical aspects of a Down's syndrome individual are devised to account for the low level of intelligence in that individual. Statistically speaking, individuals with such physical features are known to have developed at a slower pace without reaching the same level of mental ability as "normally" expected. For instance, Krassanakis (1989) argues that:

"Most of them suffer from a mild form of idiocy. A few of them belong to the category of imbeciles and a very small number to the category of fools." (p. 45)

Thus, "fools" have I Q ranging from 50-68, "imbeciles" from 20/25-49 and "idiots" below 20/25. The lowest limit of "normalcy" is an I Q of 69. (op. cit., pp. 29-30.) This suggests that the intelligence level of Down's syndrome individuals is taken to be lower than the lowest level of "normalcy." Intelligence

is presented here as a physical characteristic linked to the functioning of the mind which is the physical brain. This view can be found also in (Eden, 1976):

“The person who is severely handicapped in his ‘mind,’ that is, his I Q is below 50, invariably has something wrong with his brain.”
(*op. cit.*, p. 18)

Whenever visible physical features exist which are statistically correlated with low I Q (such as those of Down’s Syndrome) the individual concerned is automatically assessed for the level of intelligence. The taken-for-granted view is that such an individual is bound to have low intelligence:

“... the famous Nigel Hunt, a mongol boy who wrote a book, should not be taken as representing the level of potential of all mongols.”
(*op. cit.*, p. 24)

Professionals who are exposed to such “*scientific*” accounts tend to take it for granted that once a child’s physical features correspond to certain predefined categories certain mental characteristics have to be present, too.

The concept of mental handicap as a personal identity involves a constant search for “*evidence*” to explain mental handicap in relation to the largest possible number of cases (statistical account.) In this sense, when some physical characteristic is visible, stereotyping becomes easier and further assessment becomes a necessity, i.e., a Down’s Syndrome child has to be assessed and be placed under close professional care from an early age.

In the absence of visible features there are other criteria which lead to identification of mental handicap. These criteria may not be directly relevant to physical features but aid the assessment of an individual’s general development

which may be explained in terms of a physical problem. For example, when a child does not follow the same pattern of development as the other children, parents may begin to suspect that there is something wrong with the child.

Greek literature provides several accounts of non-visible physical features which influence the functioning of the brain. They may relate to genetic factors which determine mental handicap before birth, encountered during pregnancy, brain damage at the time of birth or later on in life due to illness or injuries to the brain. ⁽¹⁶⁾

Physical examination of the child is supposed to be necessary in these cases: if it reveals any abnormality the child is categorised accordingly, e.g., brain damaged. However, even in the absence of any detectable physical problems the child may be categorised under the general label of mentally retarded, i.e., it is established that the child is not functioning properly but the causes are unknown.

Physical disabilities are much easier to spot and account for whereas mental development is a more complicated area. They are also more likely to be amenable to unequivocal and widely applicable definitions whereas mental disabilities may vary from society to society. For example, when a child is categorised as spastic, certain medical definitions apply to that condition which are almost universally accepted.

In the case of mental retardation there may be differences of opinion among the experts even within the same community. Even when certain physical features are present, which medically determine the possibility of retardation, there is no way to generalise the criteria to a whole population. ⁽¹⁷⁾ In the absence of sufficient scientific evidence to define different aspects of mental handicap in relation to physical criteria, experts turn to means which can establish the definition of mental handicap from a psychological point of view.

The introduction of I Q tests has provided a major shift of emphasis from physical to psychological criteria. Other types of test to examine developmental or social competence scales have been devised. The extent to which such tests can identify mental retardation has been the subject of discussion among researchers in the field. Since the standardised population is chosen by those who provide the test the results of such tests are directly related to the social contexts within which they are prepared.

The correlation made between the functioning of the brain and the level of intelligence is supposed to provide a bridge between physical and psychological criteria in individuals. While at times the presence of physical features leads to the assessment of intelligence, there are cases in which existence of low mental ability guides professionals to examine the physical aspects.

Therefore it is assumed that when the intelligence level is low some physical problem is present. This seems to be highly speculative and unfounded in experience. The standards through which intelligence is tested are man-made and have no universal validity in measuring the intelligence of an entire population. There is ample scientific evidence that different parts of the brain control the sensory system, the movements, the memory and so on. However, the relation between brain and intelligence level is by no means applicable to all cases of mental handicap. ⁽¹⁸⁾

A variety of tests are encountered in the Greek literature aimed at providing professionals with the final seal of reassurance about the diagnosis. There are references to tests such as W.I.S.C., Stanford-Binet, Draw a man Test of Harris and Goodenough (e.g., in Krassanakis, 1989 and Paraskevopoulos, 1980.) It is very likely that the test results may be used to support decisions that have already been made by professionals. In a study of professional files on educationally subnormal children Dyson (1986) points out that test results are used by

professionals to demonstrate their own competence (op. cit., p. 81.) This could also be the case for professionals in Greece. It is an important issue in connection with teachers' perceptions: when a child is referred to as mentally handicapped the test results are the most obvious criteria for a teacher to form an opinion of a child's ability.

The use of such methods in Greece by professionals may be problematic since the cultural background of the children would be different from that of the countries in which such tests have been devised. Yet textbooks of special education refer to these tests favourably even though they do not provide guidelines as how to adjust them to the needs of Greek children (Kypriotakis, 1985, Krassanakis, 1989.) However, in such publications the effect of environment is not ignored and the degree of mental development is seen as related to the individuals' family and social background.

3.1.2 Environmental influences.

The influence of the environment on a person's development has been discussed extensively in the literature (both Greek and English) concerning mental handicap. Family background, neighbourhood, educational opportunities have been referred to as contributing factors to a person's mental development.

The relation between environment and mental development is the subject of studies in philosophy, social psychology and sociology of education. Environmentalists argue that 80% of intelligence is environmentally determined (Manion and Bersani, 1987.) There are two different perspectives in viewing environmental factors as contributing to mental handicap. On the one hand, the

environment may have undesirable physical effects on a child. This may eventually cause some form of handicap. For instance, there are studies which suggest that a high level of lead in the environment could affect the intellectual function in a child (Kypriotakis, 1985.)

There is also evidence of the effect of illness and health complications in parents, which can cause mental deficiency in an unborn child during pregnancy or at the time of birth. Childhood illness is also known to have caused brain damage and mental retardation (Eden, 1976, Paraskevopoulos, 1980, Nitsopoulos, 1981.) On the other hand different aspects of the environment in which a child lives have been considered as possible causes of slow mental development. Variation in the children's background could account for variation in their degree of success in language acquisition, mental development and socialisation in the community. ⁽¹⁹⁾

Paraskevoploulos (1980) reviews such factors in his discussion of environmental effects on mental development. These are very similar to those referred to in the English literature. Among such factors is the family and social environment which is supposed to help the formation of language, sense of judgment, the sharpening of the senses, understanding social rules, and widening imagination and the sense of creation in a child. An "*undesirable*" family and social environment is one which has elements such as marriage break up, disturbed relationships between parents and children, lack of care and control in the family, low income and low standards of living (op. cit., pp. 71-72).

A very usual pattern of writing in the work of the Greek authors is that they concentrate mainly on the causes of mental handicap as being relevant to the individuals' background. They do not concern themselves with the parallel views which indicate that not all low achievers come from what is established as a

disadvantaged background, e.g., unemployed father, uneducated parents, single parent family, poor housing. ⁽²⁰⁾

Thus, the causes that are hypothesised to contribute to an individual's mental development are the stereotyped conditions which are viewed as undesirable by professionals and/or researchers. Galloway (1985) observes that teachers often refer to a child's background in their attempt to find the causes of disturbing behaviour or lack of progress at work. Yet they tend to overlook the possibility of stress at school as a cause of the child's problems. An example of the type of predefined views that teachers may have in dealing with certain criteria in a child's background is also given by Tomlinson (1982) in a study of the educational problems of the ethnic minority in Britain in which she discusses the case of the West Indian children:

"... the stereotyped beliefs which professionals and practitioners, particularly teachers, hold about West Indian children's ability, behaviour and attitudes towards education, together with the acceptance that these are somehow 'natural' racial attributes, have in the past made it likely that West Indian children would meet the criteria for referral into the non-normative areas of special education." (op. cit., p. 170)

Although there are no specific studies made on the same subject in Greece it may well be the case that children of immigrant families and other minority groups could be categorised as low achievers or mentally handicapped as a result either of their lack of language skills or their cultural differences. ⁽²¹⁾

A recent television report on the problems faced by children of immigrant families from Albania, Bulgaria, the former Soviet republics, etc., commented on substantial school difficulties and low employment prospects for these children.

Lack of knowledge of the Greek language was referred to as the principal cause of social isolation and low school performance of these children. At present, mainstream schools are not capable of providing suitable tuition for such pupils. The State is currently moving in the direction of training teachers to teach Greek as a foreign language for immigrant children. ⁽²²⁾

The environmentalists base their approach on the assumption that individuals learn behaviour patterns through the process of socialisation. In this process individuals acquire their abilities in the use of language and in understanding values and beliefs that exist around them. The focus of attention of the environmentalists lies in investigating the causes of mental handicap and discovering methods through which individuals could be given opportunities to overcome "*undesirable conditions*" and lead a "*normal*" life. Special education is supposed to provide such opportunities.

3.2 Mental handicap as a social product.

In the Introduction of this thesis I have already discussed the theoretical context in which mental handicap is regarded as a social product. In this section I refer to this approach as regards its influence upon the teachers of mentally handicapped pupils in Greece.

The approach which regards mental handicap as a social product is not discussed in great depth in the context of the Greek textbooks for teacher training. However, this does not necessarily mean that no teacher of the mentally handicapped has had the opportunity to study this perspective. Some of the teachers who have command of one or more foreign languages or those who have

studied abroad may have come across such an approach, have studied it and have been influenced by it.

In relation to the research design in this dissertation, I have to consider all possible concepts which, in theory, may have an influence upon teachers. The possibility of radical thinking among teachers may not be dismissed *'a priori.'* Furthermore, since the late 1930s, Marxist views have been acquiring followers in Greece. In this account, the condition of the under-privileged could be interpreted in terms of social suppression. Teachers of special education may well have been exposed to such views as part of their training courses, views that appear in relevant textbooks and in society at large at the political level.

I am not suggesting that the approach which treats mental handicap as an imposed label is founded only on Marxian theory. I am assuming that since a Marxist analysis of the social system points to the exploitation of the underprivileged by those in power (owners of the means of production) it is not unlikely that those who have come across such analyses, even without being Marxists themselves, would tend to take into account the influence of the social processes in the recognition of the concept of mental handicap.

I am indulging in some speculation at this stage yet with some justification. In the available literature in Greek in the area of special education, there are some references (e.g., Stassinou, 1991 and Kypriotakis, 1985) adding support to the view that recognition of the concept of disability is a sign of oppression of the underprivileged by powerful social groups:

"The 1981 (Special Education) Act encapsulates the policies of the conservative New Democracy Party which detach special education from the rest of education. This is a reflection of an underlying ideology that children with special needs should continue to belong

to a marginal and socially unacceptable group of individuals.”
(Stassinis, 1991, p.238)

As I have already mentioned briefly, the conservative New Democracy Party was voted out of government in 1981 and was succeeded by the socialists. The amendments the socialist government brought to the 1981 Special Education Act were limited to *“a form of transliteration of most articles of the 1981 Act.”* (Stassinis, 1991, p. 239) Stassinis refers to this amendment as:

“... a novelty and a disjunction from the received view of the ruling class which promoted segregation and labelling of individuals with special needs even at the legislative level.” (op. cit., p. 238)

Stassinis views special education as a necessity imposed by a more powerful class upon the underprivileged. This view refers only to the aspect of oppression of the disadvantaged groups by the ruling ones. However, he has not developed his conception of *“social control”* throughout his study of the history of special education. Rather he refers to it only in connection with the Special Education Act 1981.

He appears to adopt a neo-Marxian interpretation of handicap as a social product. There is emphasis on the terminology and policies imposed by the State upon the *“oppressed.”* In Stassinis’ work, for example, the idea of *“oppression”* appears mainly when the 1981 Special Education Act is discussed to criticise the policies of the conservative Government of the time. His criticism of special education legislation put forward by the successor socialist Government (the 1985 Education Act) does not appear as strong. This is surprising since he himself points out that in the 1985 Act provisions for special education did not differ significantly from those in the 1981 Act.

In his discussion of the history of special education in Greece Stassinou touches upon the importance of socioeconomic and political factors in shaping policies for the handicapped in Greece. However, he does not go into any depth in his discussion of the implications of such factors in policy making and the responses towards the handicapped in society.

His analysis stops short of reaching the necessary depth in providing an account of the concept of mental handicap as a social product. This suggests that his view diverges from the traditional approach which deals with mental handicap as purely an element of an individual's identity. Since the latter approach cannot be taken for granted it is necessary to explore the extent to which mental handicap as a social product is influential in the context of teachers' perceptions. Thus, the extent to which this approach is taken into account by teachers in special schools is an issue to be examined in the field work.

4. IMPLICATIONS FOR THE PEDAGOGY OF MENTALLY HANDICAPPED PUPILS.

Method of teaching and curriculum construction are complex subjects which lie at the centre of controversies in today's educational policy making and practice, not only in Greece but also in other countries such as Britain and the U.S.A. ⁽²³⁾ There are fundamental conflicts between different approaches in defining what the aims of education are and how they should be carried out.

There are two major problem areas relating to curriculum and to teaching approaches, not only in special education but in education in general. First, there is the issue of choice of teaching material. The question here is whether education:

(a) should be aimed mainly at epistemic/ academic achievements or (b) be extended, and to what degree, to more general areas of knowledge and skills of a non-academic nature which are necessary for survival in society. This relates to the well known dichotomy either to pursue knowledge for its own sake or to engage in cognitive enquiry in view of some practical use of its results.

The second problem area in today's educational debate is the choice of approach in teaching. The controversy involves the structured (traditional) approach vs. the child-centred (progressive/discovery) approach. ⁽²⁴⁾ Using the structured approach a teacher would impose his/her own view of what children's special needs might be. The "*child-centred*" or "*discovery approach*," seeks to develop the child's own interest. It defines the role of the teacher as one of guiding the child so as to use his potential to the full. In this sense, "*Education*" has a wider meaning than that of applied formal curricula in mainstream schools. Here education may be defined by reference to all types of activities to be learned, for instance, as simple a task as dressing oneself. ⁽²⁵⁾

The Greek legislative framework stipulates that it is the responsibility of the teachers to provide a child with special needs with appropriate education which would allow him/her to integrate in the community and be involved in the productive system. By introducing such aims for the education of the pupils with special educational needs, Greek legislators ascribe a wider meaning to education than that of "*academic knowledge*." Choice of teaching material and teaching approach is left to the educators. In this respect the education of pupils with special needs differs from that of other pupils. The latter are supposed to follow the national curriculum which is mainly based on academic knowledge, and is shared in all ordinary schools (primary or secondary). Basically, by exempting a group of pupils from the obligation of sharing curriculum with the rest of the school population the greek legislators have stepped forward to further segregation of those grouped with special needs.

In the absence of a legislative framework concerning curriculum and method of teaching for the mentally handicapped children two situations may arise. First, teachers may use the same material as that used in ordinary schools after appropriate adjustments are made to it. For example, a twelve-year-old mentally handicapped child may be given the curriculum suitable for a six-year-old ordinary pupil. Second, teachers may take the initiative and produce their own material for teaching suited to each individual child. ⁽²⁶⁾

In either of the above cases teachers will be applying their knowledge of teaching mentally handicapped pupils, which has been acquired through training courses and their study of teaching theories and methods. Review of the literature used in teacher training courses reveals the major issues which are put forward to the teachers for educating their mentally handicapped pupils.

Textbooks on the education of the mentally handicapped in Greece tend to be strongly dominated by the "*structured*" approach. By applying it a teacher is teaching set tasks through set means for all pupils. In the case of the mentally handicapped the goal will be mainly "*rehabilitation*." Thus, behavioural patterns may be changed through different methods, e.g., conditioning or behaviour reinforcement. The structured approach still tends to dominate the education of the mentally handicapped in most parts of the world, and Greece is no exception to that.

Using a child-centred approach the teacher will attempt to divert attention away from causes of mental handicap and normalisation. Instead his focus is on guiding the child to put into use his/her abilities. Even in very severe cases of handicap there should be opportunities available for "*education*." Although such theoretical and methodological approaches are available in the Greek literature on special education, the extent to which such a broad concept of education could be

applied in practice needs to be studied at an operational level. This is because the idea of child-centred education is usually presented by the Greek authors in a very general and vague way. The teacher is left to decide on what to teach and what method to use.

Furthermore, the child-centred approach is mainly proposed as suitable for the milder cases of mental handicap. More severe cases are expected to be provided with a “more systematic” and “better defined routine” in their pedagogical programmes. This brings the discussion to the way in which mentally handicapped pupils are categorised according to the degree of their handicap by different Greek authors and the “appropriate” type of education that is being suggested for them. The work of different authors may be used as guidelines for the teachers and other professionals to categorise pupils, due to the absence of a clear distinction in the legislative framework. Review of the work of some writers reveals variation in their views.

Some authors put emphasis on the level of I Q. For example, I have already referred to Krassanakis who sets the lowest level of “normalcy” at an I Q of 96. Another author, Bardis (1993), provides a procedure plan for categorising special pupils. For example he refers to a “9-step plan” in dealing with the assessment and placement of the pupils and their categorisation in special schools according to their I Q. According to Bardis, teachers of ordinary schools are the first groups of professionals who refer a pupil to a diagnostic team. This includes “a special education teacher, a doctor, a social worker and a psychologist” who deal with tests such as “medical history, educational history” and “an individual intelligence test.” Bardis argues that this team offers a placement to the pupil involved, but only by obtaining permission from parents could the placement be implemented. There is no suggestion as to what the next step might be if parents were to refuse.

Bardis refers to five levels in a special school starting from pre-school. There is no reference to type of school in which such levels are applied in categorising pupils and no reference to any official regulation concerning such categorisation:

- (i) Pre-school level;
- (ii) Lower level (I Q: 25-35);
- (iii) Middle level (I Q: 35-45);
- (iv) High level (I Q: 45-65);
- (v) Higher level (I Q: 65-75).

This view of the special pupils is rather confusing. Bardis does not indicate what type of special school he refers to. Furthermore, in his account of such “plans” in rural Greece he sketches a gloomy picture which indicates that not one of these “plans” is actually operational. My own accounts of the sample schools indicate that such “9-step plans” are not in operation in Athens either.

I have to qualify this statement by referring to the specific time period that my own research had been carried out (1988–1989). It could be possible that some such drastic changes had taken place between 1990 and 1992. However, I regard this as highly unlikely. Having been living and working in this field in Athens since 1982, I have not become aware of any substantial changes of this nature having taken effect during 1990-1992, since if they had my own work would have been affected, too. The only other possibility is that the “plans” may have been part of policy intentions at some administrative level.

Other authors do not depend on the level of I Q. Kalanjis (1985), for instance, defines how pupils should be categorised according to their ability to learn. He does refer to the level of I Q in the categories he discusses but his categories are different, i.e., educable pupils are to be within a range of I Q 60

and above while the trainable, the more severe cases, should have I Q between 30 and 60. Kalanjis points out that the role of a teacher is not to assess and diagnose the causes or the degree of handicap in pupils but to understand their ability to learn. Thus he refers to two categories of “*educable*” and “*trainable*” in defining the degree of mental handicap:

1. An educable child is incapable of following the programme of the normal school. He/she may have to repeat a class several times and never reach beyond the level of the first or second grade of primary school.
2. A trainable child does not pass through to the primary school and is usually for years the subject of medical examinations and treatment.

Another author, Paraskevopoulos (1980), discusses education of the “mentally retarded” by distinguishing different approaches for the educable and the trainable. He claims that the educable group should have I Q above 50 while the trainable should be within the range of 25 to 50 I Q. He suggests that the educable group are able to attend special schools while the trainable need “training” which should be conducted mainly by professionals other than educators, e.g. speech and occupational therapists. Individuals with an I Q below 25 (whom he refers to as “idiots”) that is due to a profound degree of handicap, cannot benefit from any form of pedagogy and are “better off” in hospitals and institutions.

One of the intentions of the legislation which set up the Greek system of special education was to provide for children who hitherto were excluded from any form of pedagogical opportunity due to their handicap. In this legislative context professionals are allowed wide discretion in discerning between different degrees of handicap. As a result of such flexibility in interpreting degree of

handicap it is very likely that the largest number of the groups who were isolated from the education system would tend to remain segregated. Furthermore, the children who are included in the special education schemes are most likely to remain isolated from the ordinary schools.

The aim of the special school is to provide for the "*rehabilitation*" of the above pupils by way of teaching methods that are specifically suited to the education of the mentally handicapped. Theories of teaching the handicapped have developed around the ideas of the environmentalists in the same manner as those based on physical and psychological accounts. They aim at changing the individual into what might be referred to as "*normal*." This ideology of rehabilitation is under scrutiny from those who regard handicap as a social product and propose different ways to deal with this phenomenon.

For example, in a discussion on the appropriate type of curriculum for the mildly mentally handicapped, or, as he refers to them, "*educable*" children, Kypriotakis (1985) maintains that the idea of national curriculum is not useful for the educable group. However, the author insists that the teacher should have control over what any particular child should learn. In this sense, the role of child-centred education is to replace national curriculum due to the inability of the mentally handicapped child to cope with the latter. However, the method of teaching which is proposed by Kypriotakis remains as a structured one since it is the teacher who is responsible to decide what is "*better*" for the child.

Kypriotakis argues that since the child-centred approach is well known to teachers there is no need to discuss it in any detail. There are only general guidelines and rules of thumb such as: understanding the individual child's needs, facing them as "*normal*" children, not demanding too much of the child, adjusting the pace of teaching to suit the ability of the child, and the like. It seems that the author uses the term child-centred as an "easy way out" both for the mentally

handicapped child and the teacher. He presents the image of an educable mentally handicapped child as a child who is capable of some elementary functions (which trainable children are not capable of) and therefore not presenting much of a problem. If the children cannot count or read the teacher should not be too concerned.

This author goes on to contradict himself by requiring teachers to treat the educable child as a “*normal*” child and then urging them not to demand too much from such children since they cannot attain the achievements of normal children. Kalanjis (1985) also promotes a type of education for the mildly mentally handicapped pupils based on the principle of “*least effort*” and “*psychological security*.”

The idea of pedagogy for the severely mentally handicapped is interpreted in different ways by these writers. The special needs of the trainable group are more limited than those of the mildly mentally handicapped. They could be taken care of with the help of a specialist, the family and a special unit. In the view of the above writers, the more severe cases of mental handicap are more in need of structured types of programmes to enable the individuals concerned to take care of their own basic needs as much as possible.

Structured programmes could involve medical care and training for basic life skills and possibly some form of vocational training. Any other form of “*education*” comes as a second priority. The development of motor-skills, language acquisition, etc., are supposed to be dealt with by specialists other than teachers. (Krassanakis, 1989; Kalanjis, 1985; Kypriotakis, 1985.)

In this account, a typical proposition for the type of activities in which the severely mentally handicapped may take part could look like this:

- a. Reading, which is not "*really reading*" but only recognition of some important words, e.g., the child's own name the road signs.
- b. Arithmetic, which is not the teaching of arithmetic proper but only activities which seek to enhance understanding of space (distance, dimensions, sizes, etc.), quantity, and the use of significant numbers (e.g., age, telephone number, street number).
- c. Arts and crafts, drama, music, physical education, at the same elementary level as above.

There is no indication of the precise nature of the material which a teacher should use in his teaching of the above subjects. Kalantjis (1985) also provides general guidelines regarding the type of subjects which should be taught in special schools without providing the form these should be presented in.

The main theme of the literature on the method of teaching and curriculum for the mentally handicapped is that teachers play the most important role in making the choice for each individual child and in assessing the child's circumstances. However, the guidelines that are put forward by the above authors are focused on a specific model of teaching the mentally handicapped.

This model interprets mental handicap as a personal identity which may be changed into some form which is nearer to the "*normal*." In some cases and to a certain extent, by applying specific types of "*treatment*" and/or "*education*." The concept of pedagogy is defined in a medical as well as an educational context. The major problem referred to in the literature is that there are no solutions available for all cases. This is the reason why teachers are advised to decide on each case considering the circumstances.

Therefore, even the teacher training courses cannot provide any precise type of procedure according to which teachers should operate. Teachers of the mentally handicapped are faced with the complex issue of choice of method and material in teaching, in the same manner as those involved in teaching the other types of children either in special or mainstream education. If a teacher tries to concentrate solely on the predefined concepts of the special educational needs of the mentally handicapped pupils he/she may run into several problems which have not been foreseen by those who have dealt with the subject at a theoretical level.

A major part of the process through which teachers characterise their pupils and carry on with their practice accordingly takes place throughout their day to day interaction inside the school. Several factors may exert an influence upon teachers' attitudes towards the mentally handicapped pupils and their education in the school context. Studies concerning such issues in Greece are not available at present. There is no constructive work which could provide a general picture of how a special child is educated either in a mainstream school or in a special unit. In this sense, I am making reference only to certain areas of potential significance by using English literature as the foundation for the strands of ideas I shall be developing. I will be discussing issues of relevance to schools in greater detail in the course of the field work.

Schools may be viewed as organisations. Much like any other organisation they have a range of common general characteristics. These relate to division of labour, presence of some form of central power, and assessment of the performances of those involved. Study of these characteristics should involve a study of history and ownership, size, technology, goals and objectives, the ambience and spatial criteria and, finally, the people involved in the organisation. ⁽²⁷⁾

The period of time a school has been in operation, the number of its pupils, the building and available equipment, the location and, most importantly, the

people involved characterise a school and present it as a unique place. In a given society, the goals and objectives of education may be set out by the legislators. However, the way in which they are interpreted and implemented by people involved in educational practice in the schools may suggest a different picture as to what education is about in that society.

A theoretically derived balanced curriculum design could prove unworkable in practice. Individual as well as circumstantial needs have to be taken in consideration at the same time. As Stenhouse (1975) puts it:

“The central problem of curriculum study is the gap between our aspirations and our attempts to operationalise them.” ⁽²⁸⁾

He points out that such difficulties are not peculiar only to curriculum design and the education system:

“We have to look around us to confirm that it is a part of the human lot.” ⁽²⁹⁾

Being themselves members of a wider community teachers tend to be influenced by society's expectations of them as teachers. They are members of a profession and so they are influenced by the official bodies which they manage or administer. They are further influenced by the professional ideologies which they acquire from the time they get involved in training and from actual practice. It is this processed attitude which has to be studied in order to discover how teachers characterise their pupils who are labelled as mentally handicapped and how they proceed to educate them.

5. CONCLUSIONS

The implementation of the principal ideologies that are put forward by the Greek Education Act (1985) are faced with difficulties. The ideologies implied in the Act tend to promote certain advanced views about the education of the mentally handicapped, which are at times totally alien to and incompatible with the Greek education system.

Greek literature about mental handicap does cover a broad area of the theory of education for the mentally handicapped. It is, however, largely influenced by a perspective which assesses mental handicap as a condition within the individual. Referring to it as the personal identity perspective, I have defined its central concepts as seen in the Greek and English literature.

I have discussed that an alternative perspective in defining mental handicapped, i.e., the imposed label perspective approach is not widely referred to in the context of the Greek textbooks. However, I have not dismissed the possibility of the teachers' awareness and acceptance of this approach.

In practice, the definitions derived from the personal identity perspective, irrespective of the extent to which they are theoretically elaborated and refined, become operationalised when they are founded on each individual child's circumstances and the conditions in which a teacher is supposed to teach. The definition of mental handicap tends to vary not only in relation to the terminologies attached to it in different theories, but it is also very flexible and dependent on the specific context in which it is dealt with. This can be examined only by observation of the practice of special education.

It is in actual practice that the definition of mental handicap is elaborated. The social formation of mental handicap as presented by the teachers of the special schools in Athens could demonstrate, at an operational level, how one group of professionals at one point in time and in one particular cultural context contribute to the moulding of the concept of handicap into different forms.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH DESIGN AND EXPLORATORY RESEARCH

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH DESIGN AND EXPLORATORY RESEARCH

1. INTRODUCTION

The literature review in the preceding chapters provided a general theoretical basis for the field work. It indicated that teachers' perceptions of their mentally handicapped pupils may be founded both on commonsense as well as professional knowledge and experience. Moreover, analysis of the legislative framework and the administration of the system of special education helped identify the principles which professionals are likely to observe in the system of special education.

I have suggested that due to ambiguities in the official guidelines, definitions of mental handicap, special educational needs, integration may be derived at the operational level. I have discussed the type of definitions which teachers may use in characterising mental handicap and have pointed out the possible teaching methods and material they may use in practice.

On the basis of the above theoretical framework I am commencing my fieldwork starting with an exploratory research, which provides the major guidelines for the main research scheme. In this chapter I shall be discussing the conceptual framework of the research, its methodology, strategy and technique. This is will be followed by a description of the sample and results of the exploratory research.

2. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Beginning with the exploratory research I dealt with four major topics drawn from my literature review. These are:

1. Criteria used by teachers in characterising mental handicap.
2. Provisions proposed by teachers in dealing with the mentally handicapped children.
3. Teachers' views on method and material for teaching the mentally handicapped pupils.
4. Teachers' views on possibilities of integration of the mentally handicapped pupils.
5. Inter-professional relations and work environment.

I have provided a framework for the above subjects in order to carry on with my field work. I am explaining the framework below.

2.1 Criteria for characterising mental handicap

In my literature review I established that being themselves members of the community teachers may hold positive or negative views of the mentally handicapped. I suggested that such commonsense views may influence teachers' performance in the special schools. I assumed that such tendencies will be present in the context of teachers' professional ideology and in combination with their theoretical knowledge about defining and dealing with mental handicap.

My literature review indicated a possible range of criteria according to which the concept of “*mental handicap*” could be defined. These criteria are listed below (Table 3.1.) The contents of this Table can be used in conjunction with reference to particular cases of handicapped pupils. ⁽¹⁾ Furthermore, there can be different interpretations in the definitions of any one of these criteria or concepts in practice. I have used this and other Tables, below, as rough guidelines in my exploratory research.

- | |
|--|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Physical features.2. Language skills.3. Behavioural aspects.4. Emotional state.5. School performance6. Social stigma.7. IQ8. Unknown |
|--|

TABLE 3.1: Criteria for defining the concept of mental handicap

To start with I assumed that the criteria used by teachers in characterising their pupils would be within the range of those included in Table 3.1, above. However, considering the possibility that other criteria could be applied by teachers in practice, I did not use Table 3.1 as a rigid framework and allowed for appropriate adjustment in the light of empirical evidence. It seemed likely that teachers use several criteria in combination to identify mental handicap. For example, unsatisfactory school performance of a child may not be the only grounds for a teacher to make an assessment. Other criteria, such as low IQ, may also be applicable. In the field work I examined how different criteria were used in combination.

Criteria used to refer to each particular child's situation may also be applied in the course of a teacher's assessment to determine the degree of handicap. Some teachers may find the presence of certain criteria as indication of a higher degree of handicap. For example, some teachers consider that the lower the level of IQ the higher the severity of mental handicap. Others may not find IQ level as a reliable element for determining the degree of handicap.

The sets of criteria according to which pupils are characterised can have a close bearing on the course of action that a teacher may find suitable for a child. The type and degree of handicap may be a determining factor upon the way in which a teacher decides on dealing with a child. This is an issue which I decided to explore in the first part of my research.

2.2 Provisions for dealing with the mentally handicapped children

In the literature review I referred to types of provisions, and the motives behind these, as they had been used over different periods of time in Greece. While some provisions have been based on negative tendencies others have been claimed to be related to positive trends in dealing with the mentally handicapped

In Table 3.2, below, I have referred to the main type of measures and provisions which are available in Greece with the possible motivation for each type of provision. I used this list to check out on teachers' views on such provisions in order to find out how they see fit to deal with the mentally handicapped children and the reasons for imposing the particular provision.

1. Institutionalisation for the protection of the community against “disorderly” behaviour.
2. Institutionalisation in order to protect the handicapped from the social pressures and for their own safety.
3. Medical treatment.
4. Provision of special education for the mentally handicapped individuals within special schools in order to isolate them from the rest of the population in the ordinary school.
5. Placing the handicapped individuals in special schools to prepare them for integration in the ordinary school and the community.

TABLE 3.2: Provisions for dealing with the mentally handicapped child

I am suggesting that the mere fact that a person becomes a special education teacher may not necessarily imply a positive attitude towards the prospects of a mentally handicapped child's education. Teachers of the mentally handicapped follow their tasks at schools in dealing with the pupils who are designated to them. This, however, may not mean that they agree with the presence of all the pupils in their classes. Teachers' views on such matter may influence their teaching and whole view towards a child.

For example, a teacher may believe that some mentally handicapped pupils with higher degree of severity could not benefit from special school. If that teacher happens to have that type of child in his/her class, he/she may not be as positive about dealing with such a child as with those with a lower degree of mental handicap. In discussing such issues I am using individual cases in actual practice, as I am carrying on with my field work.

2.3 Teachers' views on methods and material for teaching

In my observation of teachers' practice in classrooms I am exploring the methods and material they use in teaching. I am proceeding by way of a very general framework. I will try to discover whether they follow a structured or a child-centred approach. These are approaches which I have defined above in my literature review. That review indicated that a structured approach is more likely to be used for the pupils with higher degree of handicap. I am attempting to explore this area by interviewing teachers and observing their teaching in practice in relation to individual cases.

The type of material which is used by teachers to educate the mentally handicapped pupils will be of concern next. There is a possibility that ordinary schoolbooks are used in special schools for the mentally handicapped pupils, but without reference to age. It is likely that the curricula of the first and second grade are used for most children. The ensuing research will concern itself with the way in which the material is adjusted to the different needs of the pupils. I am not dismissing the possibility of teachers using different material and shall be trying to interview and observe the work of such teachers.

2.4 Teachers' views on integration

The fourth issue to be studied in this research is teachers' views on integration. First, their definition of integration needs to be registered. I will use an open end question for the teachers to define integration and then ask them the extent to which they may see integration possible for their pupils.

Integration may be defined only in terms of integration in the ordinary schools. In this respect integration may be defined as locational, social and/or functional. Integration may be interpreted by the teachers as placing the mentally handicapped in the ordinary schools; either in a special unit attached to the ordinary school or in the ordinary classes. Apart from this type of integration, i.e., locational, teachers may also conceive of social integration of the mentally handicapped pupils with the non-handicapped ones. Furthermore, some teachers may believe in functional integration which involves shared curriculum for all the pupils.

Teachers may interpret integration as an even wider concept which concerns the pupils' future situation in the community after leaving school. The issue in question concerns the extent to which teachers see their pupils capable of "*ultimate*" integration in the community and the possibility of their leading an independent life. In this respect, apart from the educational opportunities, teachers would need to consider the social implications for a mentally handicapped individual. I am suggesting that teachers' responses in connection with such issues relate to their interpretation of the social responses to mental handicap as well as the degree of mental handicap.

2.5 Inter-professional relations and working conditions

Teachers as individual members of an organisation such as the school are bound to be influenced by different sets of organisational circumstances in their practice of special education. In the study of coordination of official bodies involved I have referred to some of the complex issues concerning the operation of the special education system. Teachers as one group of professionals involved

in this system are supposed to work within a network of professionals both within and outside schools. Their interaction with teachers, head teachers, psychologists, social workers, etc., may be crucial in their handling of the education of their pupils.

Furthermore, the type of facilities, in terms of equipment and teaching material, the physical environment of the schools, etc., may also be influential in their performance as teachers of special schools. I will attempt to explore this area of interest to teachers and discuss with them issues that are related to their working circumstances and which they see as being relevant to their work.

I am suggesting that teachers' perceptions are not only influenced by their own preferences but also through their interpretation of the circumstances within which mentally handicapped individuals are dealt with in the community, in general, and in the system of special education in particular. The exploratory research provides an analysis of the above issue by way of observation of the sample schools' operation and the interaction between teachers and other professionals.

3. METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

In this research I propose to use a methodological framework which lends itself to the study of concepts as they materialise in an operational context. Beginning with the exploratory part I have chosen an ethnographic approach as it has been applied to educational studies. This can be shown to have the following characteristics:⁽²⁾

- (1) The emphasis is placed mainly on the “*process*” rather than the “*outcome*” of the research.
- (2) The research process involves the researcher’s participation in the social vent being studied as well as the actors involved.
- (3) The analysis of the research results is qualitative and involves also the research process as an integral part of the research out come.

The research does not proceed on the basis of hypotheses and a predefined research design in a strict sense, as is the case in a quantitative approach. In the study of an educational setting and aspects related to those who take part in the social events in such settings, the ethnographic research:

“ ... will tend to be descriptive/analytic, particular, small scale ... (It) will record and draw on the judgments and perspectives of participants in the process— teachers, pupils, heads—in coming to understand observations and events in a specific context. ” ⁽³⁾

The researcher does not follow the research procedure with the sole purpose of investigating specific issues and relevant situations, but so as to record events in progress with regard to all possible observable, unofficial and unforeseen aspects of the research. It is through the course of the research work that important issues and major concepts are identified:

“ ... the ethnographer navigates and explores the varied surface of diverse social senses: the backwaters as well as the main streams. By virtue of his or her acts, of the transactions he or she engages in, the ethnographer/reporter recounts the actor’s discoveries and self discoveries. Information and hosts tell their stories, and in turn the ethnographers have their own tales to tell. ” ⁽⁴⁾

Research work in this sense involves making constant “*cultural inferences*” from what people say, from the way they act, and from the artifacts they use. This is one of the reasons why ethnography has been criticised for abandoning the rules of scientific method and instead taken in by the techniques used in literature, biography and journalism. Rejection of scientific method is claimed to reduce credibility, explicitness and precision of research towards verification and generalisation.

The ethnographic approach is criticised for its strong emphasis on the actor’s own definition of the situation and the qualitative analysis which usually provides these accounts. It is argued that these elements in the research are in fact obstacles to the scientific study of human behaviour, that they entail description rather than explanations. Hammersley (1983) maintains that there is a fundamental tension existing between the two principles of “*reflexivity*” and “*naturalism*” which provide for a large degree of confusion regarding the methodological aspects of ethnography.

In the ethnographic approach the reflexive nature of research is recognised, i.e., the researcher and his subject matter influence one another. A researcher cannot avoid influencing the social world which he studies. He interacts with his field of study and participates in the social events which he studies. The ethnographer’s own interpretation of the aspects of the social phenomenon he studies are applied in the research procedure. He is working in a subject-to-subject relation, that is, being a member of society himself he interacts with the social world he is attempting to study. Thus, he/she makes social life available as a phenomenon for observation by drawing upon his knowledge of it and thus constituting it as a “*topic for investigation.*” ⁽⁵⁾

However, Naturalism has been employed in two different contexts with opposite meanings. On the one hand it refers to the use of the methods of the

natural sciences in the study of social phenomena. Whilst, in a wider context, naturalism can be defined as a *“commitment to the observation and description of social phenomena in much the same manner that naturalists in biology have studied flora and fauna and their geographical distribution.”* ⁽⁶⁾

The principles of naturalism, in the latter case, imply that the research concerned has to be carried out on the basis of discovery, generation and development of theory and not on the basis of hypotheses. The discovery is to take place in the natural setting and through participant observation techniques. Finally, the observed natural settings are interpreted in a way that can only suggest the way in which the social setting *“is.”*

According to Hammersley (1983) there are five major weaknesses present in Naturalism:

1. Naturalism is based on the assumption that the nature of the world can be known without indicating the methods through which such an assumption can be made.
2. Naturalism leaves the question of the validity of findings unattended. Alongside with the discovery and generation of theory accounts are given of why the validity of the findings is to be accepted without further testing.
3. Naturalism opposes the procedure of the type of research which is carried out in an artificial setting. However, observation in a natural setting does not guarantee the validity of interaction as the actor may not interact in the same way in different settings.

4. Naturalism implies that as soon as the researcher *"is there,"* immersed in the setting which is of interest to the research, his findings are bound to be valid. This is in conflict with the interactionist account in which people are usually seen as *"strategists and there is, of course, plenty of room in the relationship between observer and participants for the presentation of false fronts, on both sides!"*
5. Naturalism fosters a particular style of writing (similar to that of literary naturalism) which does not allow sufficient room for the principles of reflexivity to be applied.

The above characteristics within ethnographic studies could become obstacles to an adequate formulation of theory were they to be taken at face value. However, it is possible to overcome such obstacles:

1. By not indicating a precise research framework to study a social phenomenon a researcher is not necessarily abandoning the coherent way of research. Abandoning methods proposed by the positivists is not abandoning all adequate and plausible ways of studying social phenomena.
2. Validation of the results in an ethnographic research may not be possible through the quantitative tools. However, while in the process of data collection a researcher could assess the validity of his/her findings by constant comparison of data at different stages of the research.
3. The fact that an ethnographic study takes place in a natural setting is not necessarily an indication that all aspects of the phenomenon being studied have been covered; yet it may provide the researcher with such possibilities.

4. The relationship between those who are the subject of a research and the researcher is always a complicated one. The possibility of either side putting up a false front is always present. It is a very difficult task for a researcher to reveal all his/her intentions to the population being investigated. It is even more difficult for a researcher to be sure that what he/she observes is genuine. This is the reason why it is important to develop a research strategy which is flexible enough to leave margins for re-examining issues and studying them in depth. The flexibility which the ethnographic approach offers has been interpreted by some writers as "*simplicity*" and as a form of research that "*anyone can do,*" whereas due to its flexibility this approach requires careful choice of research strategy and technique. ⁽⁷⁾

5. The style of writing in ethnographic research need not oblige the researcher to provide a purely descriptive account of research. The importance of theory and method should not be forgotten as it may be the case in some ethnographic work. ⁽⁸⁾

Ethnographic study should pursue evaluation, generalisation and comparison, and through such process generate theory. A qualitative analysis of data need not be only descriptive without leaving any margin for generalisation. ⁽⁹⁾

4. RESEARCH STRATEGY, TECHNIQUES AND METHOD OF DATA ANALYSIS

Participant observation is a major technique of the ethnographer, although there are several degrees of participation after the consideration of the

possibilities and requirements of different research studies. These may vary from the type of observation in which the observers are fully involved in the setting where the research is taking place to the case of the researcher being relatively involved in the setting and yet not playing a permanent role in the interaction.⁽¹⁰⁾

The type of observation which I considered that I could employ for my research depended on the school rules and what the management would permit me to do as well as the attitude of the classroom teachers. Since I was not totally sure of the circumstances in which I could carry on my observation, I provided a flexible framework for it. I decided that observation of the school would have to include:

1. The general atmosphere regarding both building ambience and school spirit.
2. The management aspects, which would include management of people as well as resources.
3. Interaction between teachers, head teacher, pupils and others in the schools.

Observation in the classroom would have to cover:

1. The general atmosphere in the classroom.
2. The interaction between teachers and their pupils.
3. Teaching methods and material used.

Observation cannot be completed without discussing with those involved in the setting which is being observed by the researcher. Such discussions need not be carried out in the context of structured interviewing with set questions. Other types of interview techniques which are less formal or completely informal

could help a researcher to explore areas which cannot be analysed only through observation.⁽¹¹⁾

Furthermore, before I began my research I was not aware of the length of time I could spend in each school. Therefore, I could not be sure if I would be able to have a chance to explore all relevant areas of concern. Using interview as another technique would enable me to pose the necessary questions when observation by itself could not help.⁽¹²⁾

Having prepared an interview scheme, I would be able to put questions as would be necessary to cover relevant issues without taking too much time for observation.⁽¹³⁾ Subjects to be covered in such interviews could be those that are of interest to the researcher as well as the ones which the individuals involved in the setting under study would find important to discuss. Before starting my observations I had provided an interview framework within which I had put forward a range of important issues I thought would be relevant to my research.

As I have mentioned in the conceptual framework, my questions were concerned with the criteria with which mental handicap is characterised: teachers' attitudes towards their pupils' potential, the possibilities of their integration in the ordinary schools and community, and whether they thought their pupils could ever lead an independent life.⁽¹⁴⁾

It was not necessary to pose all the above questions in all cases. All the way through my fieldwork I mainly had to listen to the teachers in order to receive answers to the questions that I had in mind. In many cases there was no need to ask questions or persuade teachers to discuss the relevant issues, since they themselves appeared to volunteer the information. They also provided me with other types of information which was not included in my list. In most cases, as soon as I was introduced to a teacher and entered a classroom, various bits

of information were provided for me and the method of teaching was explained. I usually had a chance in the breaks for discussion with the teachers and hence cover those areas of interest which I could not cover in the classroom.

The interview scheme was also helpful in talking to the head teachers. These being extremely busy people they did not always have time for making conversation and were much happier to answer my structured questions. In the meantime in a majority of cases, the head teachers became interested in providing more information and I finished my discussion with them with more information than I had actually asked for.⁽¹⁵⁾

Throughout my observation at schools I was also given the chance to observe the teachers' interactions outside classroom and also meet teachers who were not included in the sample. In this way I could get a general picture of the schools rather than observe only a few classes in operation. I also joined in the school outings in two different schools and this gave me the opportunity to see the special children in interaction with the open community.

Prior to starting up the observation process I made a plan to guide me through different stages of the fieldwork (Table 3.3, below.) This plan was not adhered to in the suggested order in any of the schools. I discovered from the start that I had to modify the set procedures and take notes dealing with different stages of the research at points which I regarded appropriate in individual cases. Therefore, the data provided in the ensuing pages of this report were at times collected in a totally different order to the one which appears in the original plan.

For example, on one occasion I had finished the discussion about all the relevant subjects before I attended the particular class. I could then simply check

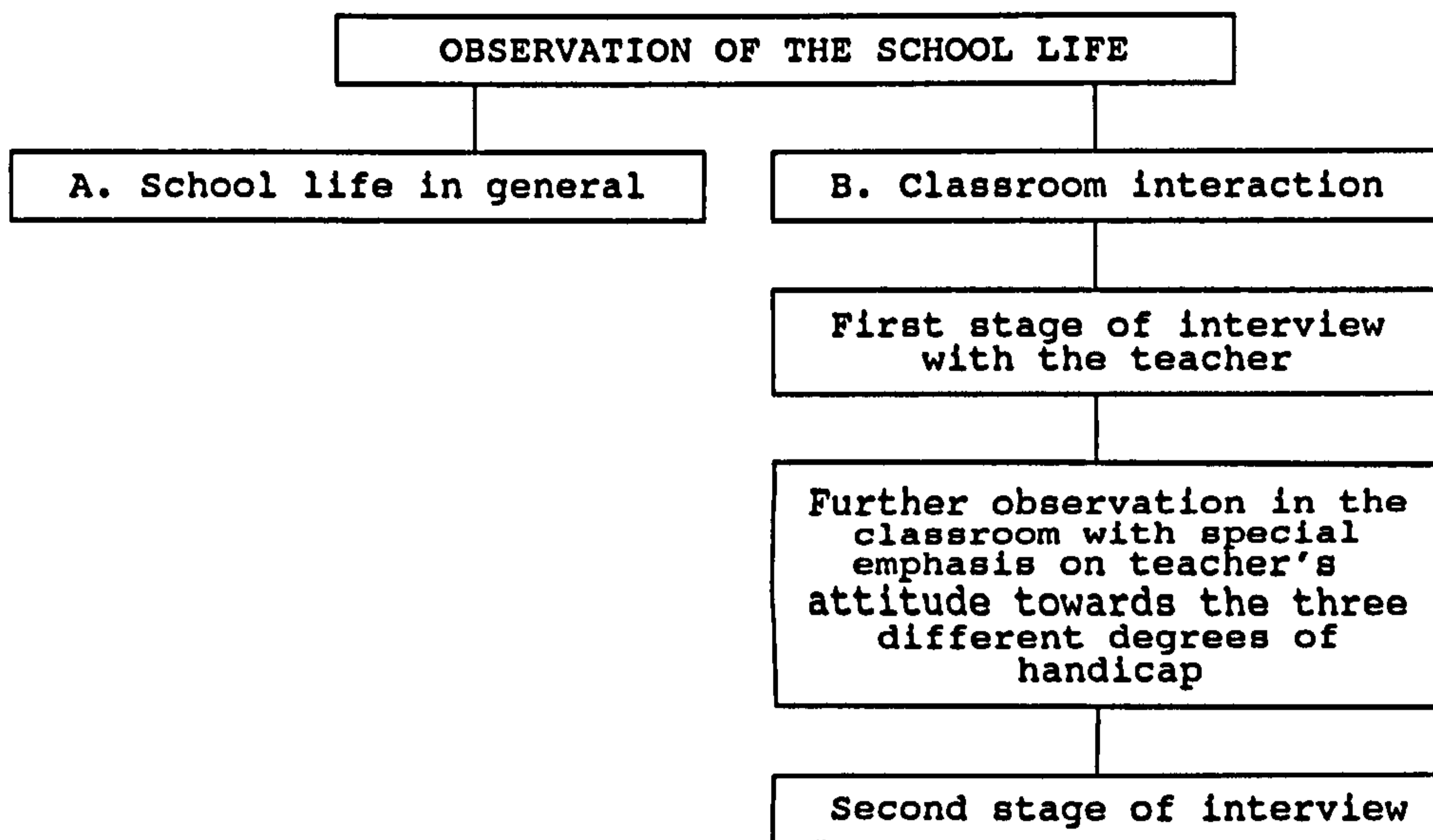


TABLE 3.3: General Framework for the Research Procedure

out the information which I had collected earlier and follow the class in operation as part of the final stage of my observation of that particular situation. This form of data collection presented me with great difficulties in recording the information as well as analysing the data. As it was not possible to use a tape recorder, I had to take notes. I was specifically requested by the officials at the Ministry of Education and Religion not to use any tape recorder. In any case, even if the use of a tape recorder had been permitted by the educational authorities I do not believe that it would have helped the process of data collection. As I came to realise in the course of the field work, even my taking written notes proved distracting to teachers and was not welcome by them since most of them did not wish to have their views and work pattern recorded by an outsider.

I found teachers less eager to air their views when they saw me take notes. One teacher told me that he was happy to see I was not involved in recording his words continuously as was the case with one other researcher they

had seen before in that school. Generally speaking, teachers I talked to were not used to the idea of observers in their classes and I had to be very careful not to distract their attention away from their work by attempting to record every single move they made. I also discovered that some children were paying particular attention to what I was doing and wanted to know why I was writing and what. Therefore, I tried to take notes by writing as little as possible and reviewing my notes either in the breaks or after I had left the school.

There were also cases when I was involved in discussions with the teachers, without the purpose of interviewing them, and they were voluntarily pointing out their views. Teachers were at their most talkative mood and eager to provide information when they were in such situations. In this way they felt they were talking about what was important to them rather than being imposed upon to answer a range of set questions.

The methodological approach in this research can be defined more specifically when the results are discussed. The quotations that I refer to in the following pages indicate how the teachers defined for me the criteria they used in dealing with the mentally handicapped pupils and the approaches they took in "*educating*" them. These approaches fitted the ones I had suggested in my conceptual framework. These concepts became operational in the course of the fieldwork and were subsequently used in the design for the main research design.

The analysis of the data is purely qualitative and mainly based on the subjective interpretations of the teachers. I have tried to provide a general picture of the situation in the schools that I visited and the classrooms where my observations took place. This part of my analysis is mainly descriptive; however, I combined these descriptions with explanations and analysis of the relevant aspects. In my main research I have used some basic quantitative analysis of

some issues but that only to make an easier understanding of the data which is mainly analysed qualitatively.

Analysis of data in ethnography is claimed to be an integral part of the research, starting with formulation of the research problem and continuing with data collection and explanation of the research strategy. ⁽¹⁶⁾ Taking this account at face value would imply that an ethnographer plunges into observation without any preparation.

A deeper understanding of ethnographic research would indicate that a researcher's own ideas and speculations about the research problem are in fact brought into the research process and are developed further, analysed, evaluated, compared and, ultimately, validated or rejected. This process is not the same as hypothesis testing in a quantitative research context. An ethnographer allows his/her speculations to change form and, at times, even be abandoned on the basis of what the research procedure will require.

The number of issues which I had presented in my conceptual framework for the study of teachers' perceptions did not restrict my research since the research strategy I have chosen permitted the discovery of other aspects of the research problem. The definitions and analyses of data in this research have to be studied in relation to the process in which the research was conducted.

5. THE PROCESS OF SAMPLING AND DATA COLLECTION IN EXPLORATORY RESEARCH.

5.1 Process of exploratory research: March-June 1988

(i) I visited the Ministry of Education where I was told I needed to apply for gaining access to the schools. I was also told that I needed a letter of reference from my supervisor indicating what I intended to do in my research. They also wanted to know what use I intended to make of the information I would gather in those schools and, in particular, whether I had the intention to publish. I had to reassure them also that I would treat as confidential names of schools, teachers, pupils and any other individuals involved in my survey.

(ii) As part of the usual procedure to establish the authenticity of any document issued outside Greece, the reference letter had to be seen at the Greek Consulate General (I chose Edinburgh) where it was signed, duly stamped and sealed. Subsequently the letter had to be translated into Greek by the Service of Official Translations if the Foreign Ministry in Athens, at considerable cost.

(iii) I was given the chance to suggest in my application which schools I wanted to visit. I was given the choice of five schools. I could use the list of special schools provided in the Bulletin of the Ministry of Education.

(iv) I chose the special schools in my application according to their size and their geographic location.

(v) After filing my application the Director of the Dept. of Special Education gave me his support by writing to the head teachers of the schools

about my intention to visit them and the purpose of my research. I was supposed to phone each head teacher and ask for their permission.

(vi) In my telephone calls I discovered that the Ministry's letter would not necessarily secure my admission to the schools. All the head teachers wanted further explanation as to what my intentions were and why I wanted to visit their school in particular. Some of them claimed they had not received any letter from the Ministry notifying them of my intended visit. Others hinted at the fact that they did not have the time to read all the letters, circulars and other material that is sent to them from the Ministry as they had much more pressing matters to take care of.

In one case I could not contact the school through the telephone and had to go back to the Ministry. There I was told that the school may have stopped its operation. This made me realise that not all the schools in the official list of the Ministry were necessarily operational. I was told that it was not very easy to make sure exactly which school operated since in certain school years, due to lack of pupils or personnel or resources or other reasons, some schools may be forced to suspend their operation. Since I was interested to find out how many schools for the mentally handicapped actually operated in Greece I asked the Ministry's staff for the relevant figure. The reply I received was fairly vague.

It was suggested to me to ask the departmental secretary to telephone, one by one, the schools I could not contact to find out whether they were actually in operation. The secretary tried to contact the school I was not successful in contacting myself. Since there was no reply she told me to take it for granted that they had closed for that particular school year. Therefore instead of the school I had requested to visit in my original application I had to settle for another one.

(viii) Finally I managed to gain access to five schools in all. Despite the initial surprise that the head teachers showed when hearing my intention to visit their schools, I did not have too much difficulty to make an appointment and ultimately my application was not turned down by them. The reception I had in all the schools I visited was mostly friendly although there was expression of curiosity on behalf of the staff about my intentions.

(ix) I made an appointment with the head teacher of each school for a preliminary discussion before I begin my visits to the classes and my interviews with teachers.

(x) In one case I had difficulty in finding the location of a particular school. Since the school was within the ground of a mainstream school I asked several members of staff of the ordinary school but they were not quite sure to direct me. In the end I asked an ancillary staff member whether she knew where Mrs. S., the head of the special school, was. She showed me the way and I found a room situated in the most isolated part of the ordinary school where the one class special school operated.

The other major problem I faced was in the only private primary school which I visited. Having made an appointment with the head teacher I travelled to an Athens suburb, about 13 miles from the centre. When I arrived I was faced with a locked door and had great difficulty persuading the porter that the head teacher was expecting me. Finally the head teacher appeared and invited me inside the school.

She introduced me to the other teacher and explained what the purpose of my visit was. The other teacher told me that I had no right to interfere with their work and that I should better leave. The head teacher kept silent and did not show any sign of disapproval of the teacher. I told them both very politely

that there must have been some misunderstanding because I had asked the head teacher's permission over the telephone. I asked the head teacher whether she recalled our conversation. Her answer was positive, but she explained that she was in a difficult position and the parents of the pupils might be very distressed if they heard an outsider had entered the school.

At this point, although I had become even more interested to talk to this head teacher, I realised that I had to leave. I told them I sympathised with their situation and that I could arrange to see another school through the Ministry of Education. The head teacher, obviously quite embarrassed told me that she was sorry and asked whether I had come a long way. I told her that it was not the first time I had made such a long journey for a visit to an establishment (either in Athens or abroad) and that it was part of a researcher's work. When she found out how far I had travelled from my place of residence, at the opposite side of Athens, and that I had already visited other schools she told me to wait for a while for her to have a word with the other teacher.

The outcome of their discussion was that I could attend only the head teacher's class. I was not supposed to talk to the pupils or take notes. The other teacher, however, continued to tell me that I was not welcome in her class because she did not want any criticism. Finally I attended the head teacher's class which was nothing very different from any other class I had visited. The pupils were very happy to see me. The teacher gave no explanation to them about my presence. Their questions concerning me were ignored by her but this did not stop the pupils' smiles and questions to me.

At the break the head teacher took me to her office and apologised for her colleague's behaviour. She told me that their pupils were mainly from very well known families who did not want anybody to find out about their problem child. Some of them went to school and paid the whole of the school fee in cash

because they did not want to have a record in their bank accounts of having paid to that school. This was the only school where I did not take any notes in the classroom, but since the head teacher was very helpful in explaining about all her pupils and her method of teaching, when we had the informal talk I managed to record the information I needed.

(xi) On my arrival to the other schools I discussed with the head teacher different aspects of the school which I had listed beforehand (see Appendix II to the thesis). This proved to be the most useful and positive part of my research design: I had produced several copies of these schedules and knew exactly what I wanted to find out. I had left enough space in every copy also to write down information on subjects which I had not accounted for. The special tables I had prepared on degree and criteria of handicap, teaching material and teachers' views on the possibilities of integration and independent living also proved particularly useful. All I had to do was fill in the tables which I developed as I went along with the first range of interviews.

For instance, if a teacher with six pupils referred to the two of them as being severely handicapped and the rest as moderately handicapped I would fill in the relevant part of the table with information on those pupils. I had prepared these forms using the classification which I had come across in the teachers' training course books, rather than on my own ideas of the possible categories of pupils.

I had included in my forms profoundly and severely handicapped pupils, even though they were not supposed to be attending the types of schools I visited. I would not have used these concepts had teachers provided me with different categories. However, teachers did use these concepts to categorise their pupils according to their ability to learn; they did not group them according to criteria in their background.

(xii) Following my initial discussion with the head teacher I was introduced to the other teachers in the school. The head teachers then invited me to observe the classes they thought would be most suitable.

(xiii) In the school with six grades I observed three classes, in the four grade school three classes, in one of the two grade school both classes and in the other one only the one class, and the only class in the one grade school.

5.2 The Sample of the Exploratory Research.

The exploratory research involved me in observations and interviews in five different special schools in the Athens region. The number of schools I could visit for my research purposes was specified in the permit I had to obtain from the Ministry of Education and Religion. The school sample was my own selection and was based mainly on the geographical location of the schools and their size (in relation to the number of grades.) This was due to the fact that I had limited my study only to the special schools which operate under the supervision of the Ministry of Education and Religion. The total number of special schools for the mentally handicapped in the Athens Region at the time of this study amounted to 60.⁽¹⁷⁾

This relatively limited sample universe implied that the schools I could choose from were likely to have basic similarities in their characteristics, e.g., administration, teachers' qualifications, type of pupils, method of teaching, etc. The location and size of the schools appeared to provide me with some measure of comparison in my research.⁽¹⁸⁾ In the five schools I was allowed to study, ten

out of a total of fifteen teachers accepted to cooperate with me for interviews and observation of their practice in the classrooms.

All five schools in the sample operated as primary schools catering for children six to twelve years of age, although there were a number of older children in some of the schools. The pupil/teacher ratio ranged from a minimum of 3:1 to a maximum of 10:1. The sample included: one single-grade, two two-grade, one four-grade and one six-grade schools. The classes were usually organised according to pupils' age. In some schools, however, different age groups were lumped together due to lack of teaching staff. For example, in the single-grade school children were between 7 to 12 years of age.

The teaching material was mainly based on books used in ordinary schools. These did not vary due to the fact that the Greek educational system is based on national curriculum. In Table 3.5 (Section 6, below,) I have given a summary of the type of material taught to children in different age groups and with different levels of mental handicap.

Teachers in these schools were supposed to have at least five years' practice in ordinary schools. They possessed qualifications in special education from the only officially acknowledged school in Greece for the training of special teachers. Selection of the teachers' sample in each school presented me with rather limited choices. In schools with only one or two grades I managed to observe the work of the teachers in all classes. In larger schools I usually took the advice of the head teacher to attend particular classes. In some schools I was invited by teachers themselves to follow their work.⁽¹⁹⁾

At the exploratory level I did not find it necessary to see a particular class and the random sample of the teachers seemed to be useful in providing a comprehensive idea of how teachers worked. I did not try to provide any

explanation for teachers' background and their perceptions. This may well be an important aspect for explaining the existence of certain attitudes, but at this stage my aim was to develop definitions of relevant concepts and establish the possibility of the existence of certain approaches among the teachers.

In the sample of the teachers there were seven female and three male teachers: all but one were married and had children. They all had experience of ordinary teaching, had qualification for teaching in special schools, and all but one had more than a year of experience in teaching in special schools. Four teachers in the sample were also the head teachers of the special school in which they worked.

Throughout the research some aspects of the teachers' background appeared to play a role in the formation of their approaches. For example, years of experience in special education practice seemed to have influenced their way of thinking. Moreover, their own family commitments appeared to be brought as an excuse by some teachers for not providing programmes for their pupils individually as this would involve them in spending extra hours in school. I examined these aspects in my main research work in greater depth. In the exploratory stage I concentrated on the definitions of mentally handicapped pupils and their education.

6. RESULTS OF THE EXPLORATORY RESEARCH

6.1 Characterisation of the mentally handicapped pupils

The schools I had included in my sample were those for the educable category of pupils. In practice, however, this type of classification was not apparent in most schools. In the exploratory research teachers referred to their pupils within different categories of mildly or moderately (also referred to as educable) as well as severely (trainable) and profoundly (very severely) handicapped. There were also a few pupils whom teachers did not find as having any major handicap and having very similar characteristics to the moderately handicapped. Teachers considered them as within the “normal” intelligence level and not mentally handicapped.

The operational definition of mental handicap as provided by the teachers in the sample was mainly based on their own personal interpretation of a child’s situation. Each teacher appeared to have formed an opinion of the mental ability of each one of their pupils and each pupil was categorised in a group of his/her own ability. They referred to the other professionals’ assessment of a pupil only when there was a particular feature which would lead to categorising a child in a specific group. Table 3.4, below, shows the most important criteria that are applied by teachers to characterise their pupils.

Usually certain physical features led the teachers to refer to the diagnosis made by the other professionals, e.g., cases of Down’s Syndrome children. In such cases of well-defined conditions teachers would also use their previously acquired theoretical knowledge of these conditions in order to qualify a child’s ability to learn.

Degree of mental handicap	Criteria of primary importance	Criteria of secondary importance
Profoundly mentally handicapped	1. Child is unable to communicate 2. Professional diagnosis	1. Family problems 2. Emotional disturbances 3. Social stigma
Severely mentally handicapped	1. Child is not articulate 2. Professional diagnosis	As above
Moderately mentally handicapped	1. Behavioural aspects 2. Emotional disturbance 3. Family problems 4. Low school performance	1. Social stigma 2. Professional diagnosis

Table 3.4: Criteria applied by teachers in the sample to define the concept of mental handicap

The same types of definition were used in the cases of pupils who were previously categorised by the other professionals by the use of familiar terms, e.g., “*low-IQ.*” In such cases teachers had developed certain expectations of children in the above categories and the rest of their judgment about a child’s abilities was based on those expectations:

“As you can see this girl is a mongol ... what can one do in such cases, it is very difficult to teach her anything. She also has family problems, her parents are divorced ... ”

It was significant that in the case of pupils with specifically diagnosed conditions, the major criterion was the specific condition of the child. Other types of “*problems*” were referred to as secondary criteria in discussing a case. However, in the case of children whose handicap was not labelled with a specific term the teachers made different interpretations:

“Poor George doesn’t really have a major handicap, his family situation is terrible ... he could study in an ordinary school if the teachers in those schools were more tolerant. ”

Teachers in the sample had constructed their own image of the mentally handicapped they dealt with: they had grouped them at different levels and carried out their teaching accordingly.

Before I began the research I had decided to ask the teachers to identify pupils with different types of handicap. As the research proceeded it became clear that there was no need for me to pose such questions. In most cases, the teacher involved would define the types of pupils in the classroom and indicate the range of their abilities:

“These four are not too bad, they can follow a book which is suitable for children three years younger ... these two can just do a little reading and writing at the level of the primary one book ... now, this girl is really difficult, she cannot follow any programme, she has a very limited vocabulary and has great difficulty in understanding the others ... I just let her be.”

In the above quotation a teacher (Mrs. S.) was describing the situation of her pupils to me. She appeared to be very concerned with the behavioural problems of all her pupils apart from the most handicapped one, i.e., the last one discussed in the quotation. She felt that the major reason for the other pupils to be in her class was their behavioural problem and that they could have followed an ordinary school had there not been a behaviour problem.

The same view was given by another teacher, Mr. Y. who described his pupils as follows:

“Fortunately I don’t have any profoundly handicapped pupil. These children here mainly have behavioural problems which are caused by their family situations.”

Furthermore, Mr. Y. pointed out that it was a pity these pupils were in a special school since they had the ability to learn and communicate normally. The same type of explanation was given by Mr. A. in defining his pupils. He referred to three of them as "*easily educable*," another two as "*relatively difficult*," and an eight year old girl as "*incapable of learning anything*." The pattern in Mr. A.'s definition was similar to that of Mrs. S.'s and Mr. Y.'s. I came across this pattern all the way through my observations. The major criterion in considering the child's degree of handicap was the child's ability to communicate.

It appears that when a teacher is faced with a child who is having trouble communicating, the usual routine used by the teachers in dealing with their pupils breaks down. In the case of pupils who can communicate, the teachers see themselves as more capable of handling the situation. They expect more of the latter group of pupils and deal with them in a more positive way. There is a trace of an element of pity towards those with a higher degree of handicap which prevents some teachers being as strict with them as with the others. These teachers refer to the profoundly handicapped as children who "*are in a world of their own*," "*should be taken care of with love*," "*can never be accepted in the society*," and other pessimistic expressions.

This is a very important aspect of teachers' characterisation of their pupils. They group them according to their abilities as teachers themselves define them. All those children who are referred to special schools within the authority of the Ministry of Education and Religion are supposed to be capable of learning, i.e., educable. ⁽²⁰⁾ Teachers within their own classroom authority categorise pupils into those who are "*not able to learn*," "*can learn a little*" and those who "*should be able to learn something*."

There appears to be a fundamental difference between what "*educable*" means in an official sense of term and the way it is defined by the teachers. In most classes I attended, teachers referred to their pupils using terms "*severely*" as well as "*mildly or moderately*" mentally handicapped. In a few classes teachers referred to some of their pupils as "*profoundly*" handicapped. The usage of these terms was not based on any scientific reference but the degree of ability of the pupils to learn what the Greek national curriculum sets for ordinary education. There were larger number of pupils, of all age groups, referred to as profoundly handicapped in two particular schools.

One was a private school which did not accept pupils on the basis of their degree of educability. As the head teacher of the school indicated, had the parents of some pupils not been able to afford the fees a large number of the pupils in that school would have been dealt with in the institutions. Another school in the sample of the exploratory work was based on the similar ground as a children's home run by a semi-private charity.

These two organisations did not have any shared official administration. However, there were children from the children's home who were attending the special school since it happened to be next door. The head teacher of the school was very keen to provide education for the children whom she sympathised with. She told me that with patience those pupils could become integrated in the community. She indicated that she had already seen signs of progress in her pupils.

This type of approach towards profoundly mentally handicapped pupils may be taken by other teachers in special schools. However, teachers are not always involved in the process of referral and, as a result, not in charge of such cases. Although the majority of teachers in my sample pointed out that they did not see it in their role to be responsible for very severe cases, the way in which

the two teachers managed to cope with more severe cases indicates that there is possibility to provide such children with equal educational chances appropriate to their abilities.

Pupils referred to special schools are supposed to have been assessed as to their ability to *“learn”* by experts such as educational psychologists. Ability to learn in this sense must acquire a more general meaning than learning the contents of the ordinary school curriculum. In practice, however, the concept of education becomes restricted to that of national curriculum. The description one can provide of the typical case in each particular category of pupils can be seen in the following vignettes. I have chosen three typical characterisations of different pupils given by their teachers.

The first case is that of Despina, a 14 year old. Her major difficulty at school is total lack of concentration and dislike of school work. Her reading age is that of an eight year old; in sums she can just manage simple subtractions. Her writing is very poor for her age: *“a six year old could do better than that;”* *“her I Q is not too low.”*

It should be mentioned that the IQ criterion was not referred to in all cases in an appropriate way or with reference to the child's record. The majority of teachers indicated that it was not important to them. In some cases when teachers mentioned the IQ level, I was not sure whether they based their view on the results of an IQ test or merely on a guess. The question of what actually a child's IQ was did not receive a genuine response most of the time. In some instances teachers actually felt uncomfortable that they could not provide an accurate answer.

In discussions with teachers on this subject I discovered that their characterisation of the mentally handicapped pupils is mainly based on what they

see the child is capable of. In the case of Despina, the teacher mentioned an IQ of *"below average."* Her communication skills were considered to be those of a child of her age although a conversation with her at times followed an erratic pattern: *"she jumps from one subject to another."* The teacher thought Despina could have done much better if her parents had imposed some discipline upon her and had helped her to get on with her school work. This is a case of a mildly handicapped child. Some children with similar characteristics may be considered as not handicapped by the teachers, if they assess their intelligence level as that of "normal". In effect the way in which teachers proceeded in assessing and educating both types of pupils were very similar since both were considered as educable. In more severe cases of pupils the majority of teachers used different criteria to associate with their "handicap".

A typical case of a severely mentally handicapped pupil is George, a 9 year old. According to his teacher one cannot expect much from a child like George, with Down's Syndrome. His communication skills are very limited. He has not yet managed to learn more than a few letters of the alphabet and counts up to 10 with great difficulty. The approach of the teacher towards the child's family was one of sympathy and she did not believe they could do much to help this child. This was the case of a severely mentally handicapped child.

The third case which I mention here, as was told to me by the teacher, is typical of very few children in the special schools which are run by the Ministry of Education. These types of cases are usually taken care of in special units for the profoundly handicapped. The child concerned was Mary, a six year old. She had no communication skill. In reply to any question she would just stare or run away. She had a hand/eye coordination problem which prevented her from any type of pencil work, even simple tasks such as drawing lines. This was a case where the teacher was puzzled as to what a special school with the kinds of facilities that they had available could offer such a child.

Physical features, language skills, behavioural and emotional aspects were all mentioned as criteria in defining mental handicap and its degree. While physical features and language skills appeared to be the main criteria for defining "*profoundly and severely mentally handicapped*" other criteria were more often referred to in the case of "*mildly mentally handicapped*."

The criteria I mentioned in the above cases were used by the majority of the teachers. One particular criterion which I had listed in my conceptual framework and was referred to by only one teacher is that of the social stigma. This teacher referred to this criterion in an abstract sense and in a general comment about the situation of the mentally handicapped pupils. He stated that once a child is known as mentally handicapped it is very difficult to change the label. His major concern here related to those children who were in special schools mainly because of their low school performance and for no other apparent cause.

Having outlined the criteria for characterisation of the mentally handicapped pupils I now move on to the process in which the educational needs of these pupils are dealt with.

6.2 Provisions for the mentally handicapped

The general view held by all the teachers in the sample in teaching the mentally handicapped was that these children should be given the chance to use their potential. Most teachers agreed that special schools should work towards integrating their pupils in the ordinary schools and only suggested that some pupils could in fact follow an ordinary school without attending special school

beforehand. The teachers' approach in providing for their pupils seems to depend on degree of handicap. This I noticed was not only related to teachers' own views on mental handicap but also to their views on what special schools could offer and the shortcomings in society for integrating different degrees of handicap.

The majority of teachers were not sure if special schools could help the profoundly handicapped pupils. They thought such children should be left to the care of other establishments, such as special centres run by the Ministry of National Health. This was particularly the case in the one- and two-grade schools where teachers had to cope with a variety of special educational needs and did not have the necessary means for dealing with pupils who needed help from other experts.

Teachers did not mention the idea of the institutionalisation of the profoundly handicapped in a direct way. However, in some cases they mentioned that there were no other ways of dealing with some children as, for example, in the case of Mary (the child mentioned above.) In the teachers' sample I did not come across any who appeared to have an extremely negative attitude towards the mentally handicapped pupils. This may be explained in relation to the motive of the teachers in choosing this line of work, i.e., they believe there are ways of helping the mentally handicapped children. This is a question which needs further analysis of teachers' views. I have discussed this in the main research.

Throughout the exploratory research I had a chance to interact with all the teachers, even those not included in the sample, in the schools, in which I carried out my observation, I talked to some teachers whose attitudes could be so classified. For example, in a chat during the break, a teacher told me that in the cases of profoundly handicapped, euthanasia at birth was not "*such a bad idea!*"

6.3 Approaches in teaching the mentally handicapped

As the Greek system of education is based on a strict national curriculum, teachers have a well-defined concept of the type of material they should teach in their classroom, if their pupils are not mentally handicapped. In teaching their mentally handicapped pupils they usually assess the special pupils' abilities in relation to the ordinary pupils in the same age groups. In most schools, teachers used the ordinary school books of lower grades to teach pupils of all age groups. Table 3.5, below, shows the educational needs of the mentally handicapped pupils as defined by teachers in the observed classes. A few children who were not found with a major handicap were also being dealt with as moderately handicapped with regard to their educational needs.

Two teachers in the sample produced their own teaching material and programme for each child according to what they thought the needs of these pupils were. One of these teachers was in charge of a very small unit with less than five pupils. She had freedom of choice in the material and method she used in the school since she was the only teacher (officially the head teacher.) The other teacher worked in a larger school (six-grade) and, despite the fact that he had to cope with seven pupils with different ranges of ability managed to follow a child-centred approach in his teaching pattern.

In some schools, the choice of approach and material in teaching is not always left to the teacher. Decisions on such subjects may be taken by the head teacher. In two of the schools in my sample it was quite obvious that the head teacher wanted the traditional teaching method to be applied and the books of the ordinary schools to be used for teaching.

Degree of mental handicap	Age range		
	6 to 8 years	8 to 10 years	10 to 12 years
Profoundly mentally handicapped	Social codes. Elementary reading and writing of alphabet letters. Numbers up to 10. Painting.	Same as 6 to 8 age group. Possibly more successful in learning.	Same as 6-8 and 8-10 age groups. Possibly more successful in learning.
Severely mentally handicapped	As above	First grade of primary school material.	Same as 6-8 and 8-10 age groups. Possibly greater success in learning.
Moderately mentally handicapped (including those with no major handicap)	Teaching of social codes. Elementary reading and writing of single words. Sums. Painting.	First grade of primary school material. Simple sentences. Numbers up to 100. Sums. Painting. Study of the environment.	Usually make use of book up to 2 or 3 years junior. Usually manage to follow this programme.

Table 3.5: Educational needs of the mentally handicapped defined by teachers in the observed classes.

In such situations, different teachers may have different reactions: while some fully conform to the rules set by the head teacher others try to change them. In my sample of the teachers from these two schools only one teacher showed that his approach was different and did try to change the situation. It is significant that disregarding their general view on how much a child can learn teachers demonstrate that they try to do their *“best”* in providing some form of *“education”* for that particular child.

I observed this in the cases where teachers had referred to some particular children in a very negative way. For example, Mrs. S. had told me she just leaves the most handicapped child in her class to be in the classroom rather than

leaves the most handicapped child in her class to be in the classroom rather than making her follow lessons. In practice she did try to organise some form of programme for the girl concerned.

She tried to teach her to write her name, read relatively simple words, paint, and despite the child's total disability in communication she spoke to her very frequently. Had I not observed the way in which Mrs. S. characterised this particular child, I would have classified Mrs. S.'s approach as extremely negative. However, I could not categorise Mrs. S.'s attitude as very positive since she had mentioned that that particular child had no chance of becoming independent and being accepted in the community.

Mrs. S.'s effort in teaching the above child was mainly a demonstration of her ability to teach an individual at a particular moment in time in the classroom. I did not see her believing that her effort would ever be rewarded by the outside world in appreciating of the child's achievements. Her views came into contrast with those of Mrs. R.'s who had severely mentally handicapped pupils in her class. Mrs. R. believed she had to do everything she could to secure a future for her pupils. She remarked that despite their severe handicap these children could develop skills which would enable them to get a job. She tried to discover the type of skills each child was capable of developing and sought to stimulate that potential in them.

6.4 Teachers' attitudes towards integration

Teachers' views on integration of the mentally handicapped depends on two major issues. The first issue concerns the definition of integration, the

second one the degree of mental handicap. The definition of integration was basically interpreted by the teachers as integration of the mentally handicapped in the ordinary schools. Then I asked them to amplify their views about integration in the community and the possibility of a child following an independent life.

In their reference to integration in ordinary schools teachers used the concept of integration not as locational integration but also social and functional. Full integration was interpreted by the teachers as integration of all pupils in the ordinary classes where mentally handicapped could receive education side by side of the other pupils. Some teachers thought such form of integration was possible in some cases some others had doubts. I have referred to four types of attitude from relatively negative to very positive in defining the teachers' views.

There was no teacher who dismissed all the aspects of integration in all cases of mental handicap. Therefore, I have no reference to very negative views. Three teachers showed their lack of enthusiasm concerning the integration of all mentally handicapped in ordinary schools. This negative attitude was extended to include the possibility of integration of the profoundly and severely mentally handicapped in the community. In the case of the moderately mentally handicapped they saw a "*possibility*" for their integration in the community or for independent living.

It is significant that these teachers even though they saw the integration of the mentally handicap in the community and their independent living as a possibility in moderate cases, they still were not convinced that these children could be integrated in the ordinary schools. This indicates that either teachers of special education do not see the ordinary schools as fit for the mentally handicapped, or that they believe that these pupils can be problematic for the

smooth running of the ordinary schools. Further discussion with these teachers indicated that the reason was the former concern.

For example, Mr. Y. carried on with his teaching programmes and appeared to put plenty of effort into helping his pupils. He talked about them with a touch of affection and tolerated their behavioural problems without any complaint:

“What do you expect when a child has so many family problems and does not have anybody to take care of him.”

Despite his compassion for his pupils Mr. Y. did not show any hope for the majority of the pupils to have an independent life (e.g., taking care of one's basic needs, getting a job) and to be accepted in their immediate environment. Teachers sharing Mr. Y.'s attitude, e.g., Mrs. L. and Mr. B. in the sample did not believe that there were sufficient resources in the ordinary schools as well as in the community for the children to benefit from after they left school.

This attitude was common in almost all the teachers, but in the case of the above teachers the disappointment appeared to have influenced directly both their attitude and their aim in teaching their pupils. Nevertheless, other teachers in the sample felt that in recent years the community's approach towards the handicapped had changed. They believed that nowadays there was more tolerance and that there was a range of possibilities open to the mentally handicapped for attending ordinary schools.

Three teachers in the sample decided that moderately mentally handicapped pupils could integrate in the ordinary schools and community. However, these teachers were not certain that the mentally handicapped, and even those with moderate handicap, could live independently. They shared this

view with the teachers who were found to have relatively negative attitude. Their views on the severely handicapped was more positive than the teachers with relatively negative attitude. Those teachers who had a relatively positive attitude pointed out that severely handicapped pupils could possibly be integrated in the ordinary school and community. However, they did not regard such pupils as being capable of leading an independent life.

This type of attitude was less positive than the attitude of Mr. N., the teacher whose attitude I have categorised as positive. Mr. N. worked in the same school as Mr. Y. I had categorised the latter as relatively negative. Mr. N. had both moderately as well as severely handicapped pupils in his class. I could see that his approach towards the severely handicapped pupils was more positive than Mr. Y.'s appeared to be towards the moderately handicapped. In fact, Mr. N. referred to the pupils of Mr. Y.'s as having more chance of being accepted in the community than his own pupils. Mr. Y. did not agree with him.

However, Mr. N. was not very positive in the cases which he considered the pupils as profoundly handicapped. He told me that he could not bear working with *“extremely handicapped children such as mongol children.”* He felt such children would have less chance of following a *“normal”* life. However, he did not deny the importance of special education in helping them. His personal lack of enthusiasm in teaching them was (as he claimed) due to his emotional disturbance in *“seeing them suffer because of their abnormalities.”*

However, Mr. N. supported the idea of full integration for all the handicapped people in the open community. He condemned the act of those parents who do not allow their handicapped children to socialise with other children. Again he was being very apologetic for his lack of ability to teach the profoundly handicapped. He insisted that people like himself should learn to live with individuals with disabilities of any nature. This teacher had a positive

attitude yet not as positive as three other teachers whom I refer to as very positive.

For example, Mrs. R. was also aware of the problems involved in the integration of all degrees of mentally handicapped pupils. In the same manner as Mr. N., she, too, pointed out her disappointment at the available provisions for the profoundly handicapped. However, her approach towards her pupils varied from that of Mr. N.'s in one respect. Mrs. R. believed that what she provided for her pupils was vital to their future. She had decided that her job was "*worth doing*" and that her programme would, in many ways, help the children in her class to cope with their future circumstances. According to her, the idea of independence was related not only to physical needs and achievements, say, in getting a job and the like, but also to the issue of the individual's dignity.

There were two other teachers in the sample whose attitude was similar to the very positive attitude shown by Mrs. R. Their optimism extended even to the profoundly handicapped. This is contrasting with the view of teachers in other categories who did not seem to have much hope in doing anything positive for less able children. Relatively negative teachers did not appear to be enthusiastic even in the cases of more able pupils.

Teachers with negative views believed that mentally handicapped pupils have certain shortcomings and that their own teaching cannot go beyond those limits. Those with positive approach pointed out that shortcomings should be also seen in terms of community's lack of understanding and refusal in coping with special children. Teachers with negative view stressed the need for providing facilities for the education of the mentally handicapped. They call for more special schools, workshops, housing, etc., to accommodate the handicapped within specific units. Those with positive attitude hope for more compassion and

tolerance in the society in accepting the handicapped in the ordinary stream of life. They are aware of the social stigma attached to the mentally handicapped and the general social rejection.

A genuine example of society's rejection that I observed in the course of my fieldwork was in a school's outing in a nearby park. As soon as the special pupils arrived in the playground the other children who were already there were taken away by their guardians. The park attendant blamed the teachers and complained to a local counsellor. Moreover, he accused the teachers of irresponsibility in having taken "*such children*" to a public park. One of the parents said to a teacher: "*these children are dangerous, take them away...* "

Teachers told me this was not an unusual reaction and that they had come across similar cases before. The reaction of the teachers with a positive view to such cases is to persevere in integrating the children. At the other end, teachers with negative views appeared to become even more discouraged. In the park case that I observed, the teachers with positive attitude in the group blamed the others for having acted rather apologetically towards the local counsellor who came to the park personally to find out what the problem was.

The above special school was located within the grounds of an ordinary school. However, according to all teachers in this school the idea of integration had not gone beyond the locational integration of the special school. Although children share the morning assembly and their break hours there was no social integration achieved. Even the staff of the special school were not socialising with the teachers of the ordinary school. School outing on that particular day was arranged because the children from the ordinary school had their own outing, to which the special school pupils were not welcome.

I noticed this condition of work in all the other special schools which were located in the same ground as ordinary schools. The special school with only one grade was a small classroom (which had been used previously as an attic) well isolated from the rest of the school. I have discussed the difficulty I had in finding this special school in the process of sampling. I found the children of this special unit spending their break hour with their teacher in the classroom. They were totally isolated from the ordinary school.

The school with the six grades located in a large complex of a primary and secondary school did not seem to have achieved much in terms of social integration either. Members of staff of the special school did not share the same staff room as the other teachers. Children played in the same ground as the others but there did not seem to be much interaction. My impression of the situation was proved not removed from the truth when I came across the reaction of the pupils of the ordinary school on one occasion.

In one of my visits to this school a teacher of the special school (whom I have categorised as relatively positive) was asked to fill in for a teacher of the ordinary primary 4th grade for half a day. She took her pupils to the ordinary class and I joined in too. The *“ordinary”* pupils’ reaction towards the presence of the *“pupils with special needs”* was reflected in their questions:

“Who are these pupils?” “Why are they in a different building?”

“What do they do there?” “Were they born like that?” etc.

The teacher sent her pupils out for a while to the playground and explained to the other children what special education was about:

“We do in our school exactly as you do here, it is like going to the same place but choosing different roads.”

I suggested to the teacher to ask the pupils of the ordinary class to write an essay about their impression of the special children and special education. I have chosen extracts from three typical essays. I chose them in the belief that they reflect what one single attempt at integrating ordinary pupils with those who are labelled may achieve. Vasso, a 10 year old girl pupil in the mainstream school writes:

“I had never been so close to children with special needs before ... Children with special needs are not different from us in any way. They are human beings like all other children.”

Vasso's classmate, Vangelio, a 10 year old girl pupil, gives her own impressions of that meeting:

“... one of the teachers from the school with special needs ^(sic) came to our class with six of her pupils. Those children were not different from us... Nikos played with us during the break and all of us got to know him just like one of our classmates ... It may be that these children have got some problem, but nothing can stop them from becoming grown-ups and useful individuals in society.”

Their classmate, Demos, a 10 year old boy writes about his conversation with Babis, one of the visiting boy pupils from the special school:

“... 'Hallo, Babis! How are you?' I asked in order to see how he would answer. 'I am O.K.' he said as if he had understood my question... To test his intelligence I put in a difficult question: 'the verb to aim what does it do? an adjective or something else?' 'An adjective' he replied confidently. 'Bravo!' I told him with all my

heart. I was surprised when he had said that. I understood then that these kids, too, know something.”

In spite of my inquiry about the nature of Demos's strange question, I was unable to interpret either the question or the reply to it. I did not wish to ask the boy directly just in case I embarrassed him. I was told it could be one of the school jokes. In any case, the two children seem to have spoken the same language.

6.5 Inter-professional relations and work environment

The choice of approach and material in teaching is not always left to the teacher in some schools. Decisions on such subjects may be taken by the head teacher. In two of the schools in my sample it was quite obvious that the head teacher wanted the traditional teaching method to be applied and the books of the ordinary schools be used for teaching. In such situations different teachers may have different reactions while some fully conform to the rules set by the head teacher some others try to change them. In my sample of the teachers from these two schools only one teacher showed that his approach was different and did try to change the situation.

In a meeting of the teachers when programmes for a school play were discussed this teacher could not accept that the mentally handicapped children in the school could not seriously take part in a play by stating that:

“We cannot allow these children to make fools of themselves and us, just give them something easier to do...”

Another teacher argued against this view by pointing out that after all one has to try, and that without trying to help these children they cannot achieve anything. In this discussion, one could easily see the conflict between a negative and a positive approach. Each one of the above teachers had support among the other teachers and the controversy between the two groups took about an hour to settle. The positive approach overtook the negative one.

This is the type of interaction process in the practice of special education which help the maintenance or change of the formation of different types of pupils' perceptions. There are, of course, times when no matter how positive a teacher's approach may be the negative approach may take over. This may be the case when the management structure in the school does not allow teachers to get involved in certain decision making procedures.

The interpretation that I have made of the approaches taken in dealing with the mentally handicapped can underline the variations existing among the teachers in the sample and, to some extent, the differences of attitude among all the teachers in different schools that I used in this research. These approaches may be construed as reflecting the prevailing attitudes in modern Greek society.

7. CONCLUSIONS

The findings of this fieldwork have enabled me to formulate the following three assumptions:

1. The concept of the mentally handicapped pupil is defined on the basis of certain criteria, relevant to physical, psychological and social aspects in a child's background. The degree of handicap is assessed by the teachers mainly on the basis of pupils' ability to learn. Some teachers may rate the degree of handicap as higher when there are more physical features present which are usually associated with mental handicap.
2. Teachers carry out the task of teaching the mentally handicapped following different patterns. The structured teaching pattern is used by most of the teachers for all types of pupil. However, there are some teachers who follow a child-centred approach in their practice of teaching. The type of method they apply in their teaching appears to be mainly based on their personal choice—qualified by their assessment of the child's needs—rather than on the pupils' degree of mental handicap.
3. In their teaching practice some teachers tend to adopt, naturally within some range of variation, a positive view; others a negative view. A positive view is based on the belief that mentally handicapped pupils may be integrated in the ordinary schools and community and have an independent life. Those pupils within the mild level of mental handicap are seen to have a better chance of integration. A negative view dismisses the possibility of integration in most cases. In this positive–negative spectrum I have identified four types of attitude among the teachers:

(i) Very positive attitude is adopted by teachers who believe their pupils could attain the goals of integration and independent living given the opportunity. These teachers see themselves as influential agents in pursuing such tasks.

(ii) Positive attitude is taken by teachers who believe some of their less able pupils are not going to reach the stage of full integration and independent life. They do not believe that they themselves could influence the situation of those less able pupils.

(iii) Relatively positive attitude is displayed by teachers who think some of their pupils have certain possibilities for integration so long as their handicap is not too severe. They do not see themselves as directly responsible for the changes needed in schools and society to help their pupils' integration. However, they feel there are some changes under way both in the special education system and the attitude of the community in general.

(iv) Relatively negative attitude is the least optimistic view towards the situation of the mentally handicapped. Teachers with this type of attitude show disappointment in the way in which the education system and the community react towards mentally handicapped children. They see few possibilities for there to be any improvement of the situation and do not see themselves as capable of contributing to its improvement.

4. The teachers' pattern of characterisation and teaching the mentally handicapped pupils may depend on the condition in which they work both within and outside the school.

On the basis of the above assumptions I shall now proceed to design a research plan for the final stage of my study of the teachers' construction of the mentally handicapped pupil.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE MAIN RESEARCH

CHAPTER FOUR

THE MAIN RESEARCH

1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the procedure of the main part of my research on teachers' perceptions of the mentally handicapped pupils. The results of this stage of research are based on observation and interviews that were carried out in 13 special schools in the Greater Athens Region. The research has focused on the way in which a sample of 40 teachers in the sample schools, characterised their pupils and proceeded to educate them. ⁽¹⁾ As was the case with the exploratory research (chapter 3, above) the choice of sample was influenced by (a) the number of school units I was permitted to study by the Ministry of Education and Religion and (b) the number of teachers in the sample schools who accepted to cooperate in the project.

The sets of assumptions derived from the results of the exploratory stage were used to provide a research design for the main research. This involved a critical analysis of those assumptions, which is the subject of discussion in the first section of this chapter. The new research design also required some amendment in the areas of method of research and strategies as discussed in the second section. Finally, the third section of the chapter includes a preliminary analysis of data, the description of the sample of teachers and schools.

2. SECTION ONE: RESEARCH DESIGN FOR THE MAIN RESEARCH

Having regard to the assumptions made in the conclusion of the exploratory stage the task of the main research was twofold. First, the results of the exploratory stage needed to be studied in more depth. Second, the questions which were asked on the basis of these results had to be answered. The exploratory research led me to the assumption that the way in which teachers practice special education was influenced not only by their personal beliefs but also with their working circumstances. This pointed to the need for organising the main research so as to deal with two separate but interrelated issues in more depth. The first issue was that of teachers' personal preferences; the second was the way in which such preferences were put into practice.

The results of the exploratory research revealed some basic issues in relation to teachers attitudes and their practice which required a re-adjustment of the research design for the main research. These included teachers' assessment of their pupils' handicap as well as the approaches they took in their education. I am explaining these issues below.

2.1 Assessment of mental handicap.

I began my research with a view that teachers used specific criteria in characterising their pupils. I had used a list of criteria (Table 3.1 in chapter three, above) based on the review of relevant literature, as a framework to explore teachers' views. The results indicated that teachers used these criteria in order to identify handicap in their pupils but not necessarily as references to categorise them for educational purposes. Teachers in the sample of the

exploratory research referred to the ability of their pupils to learn in order to categorise them into different groups.

According to the teachers their pupils included three major groups namely profoundly mentally handicapped (P.M.H.), severely mentally handicapped (S.M.H.), and moderately or mildly mentally handicapped (M.M.H.) According to the teachers the latter group were the educable group. It also included pupils who did not have “a major” handicap (Not M.H.) In their categorisation of their pupils teachers grouped M.M.H. and Not M.H. pupils into one category, i.e., the more able group.

For example, in one class a teacher had mildly mentally handicapped pupils who had been assessed by psychologists and diagnosed as educable mentally handicapped. She also had pupils whose intelligence were assessed within the “normal” range. In grouping of her pupils she had these pupils using the same teaching material and found them of similar learning ability.

Teachers in the exploratory sample were seen to follow a pedagogical approach in categorising their pupils, which was based on ability to learn. In the main research I set out to find out the types of criteria teachers used to characterise mental handicap, but had to concentrate more on their grouping of pupils on the basis of ability to learn.

Furthermore, in the review of literature I had established that “as a rule” the special schools operating under the supervision of Ministry of Education and Religion had to cater for the category of educable mentally handicapped. This required further research in relation to the types of pupils teachers had referred to as profoundly and severely handicapped as well as those whom they referred to as not having a major handicap.

2.2 Teachers' approaches in practice of special education.

In the exploratory stage I had used the terms “positive” and “negative” to refer to different attitudes held by teachers. I had referred to four types of attitudes held by different teachers as very positive, relatively positive, positive and very positive. In the main research although I set out to investigate teachers views in the context of the above variations I changed the terms I had used in referring to different types of teachers. In characterising the actual courses of action they take in teaching I used the concepts *idealist*, *idealist-compromiser*, *compromiser* and *compromiser-realist*.

I decided on this change of terminology because the concepts “positive” and “negative” may suggest dominance of certain established views towards mentally handicapped pupils. These terms immediately imply a variation between two general currents of thought, in the community, in dealing with mental handicap. One dismisses the potential of the mentally handicapped and stresses upon their disabilities—the negative trend. The other concentrates on the potential of such individuals—the positive trend. The negative trend presents an extremely pessimistic approach which might involve the total isolation of the mentally handicapped persons.

In my original research design I had discussed that teachers may actually have very negative views towards the mentally handicapped. I had pointed to this issue as a part of the research problem. The results of my exploratory research indicated that terms positive and negative are too general and not sufficiently precise in referring to the approaches taken by the professionals. The way in which teachers form their opinion of the mentally handicapped and of the pupils' potential for education differs from that prevalent among ordinary members of the community. The latter, who as a rule have little or no experience of the

system of special education, ⁽²⁾ tend to be influenced in their opinion-forming mainly by their personal beliefs and cultural milieu.

Teachers of the mentally handicapped, on the other hand, tend to form their opinion by fusing their personal perspectives with their accounts of the situation based on professional experience. Thus, the concepts “positive” and “negative” should be construed flexibly in this context. These concepts should not be seen only as a reflection of teachers personal views of the mentally handicapped pupils and their potential. Rather, the negative and positive concepts need to be interpreted in terms of teachers’ understanding of the community’s capacity to accept mentally handicapped pupils.

On the basis of the results from the exploratory research I am suggesting that teachers in special schools are members of the community who have chosen to work within the system of special education with a view towards understanding and attending to the educational needs of the mentally handicapped. Teachers’ education in their special subject and their teaching experience has steered them towards the view that it would be possible to educate the mentally handicapped.

In this sense, it could be stated that teachers are already taking a positive view of their task simply by virtue of selecting their own profession. I found this to apply to all the teachers I had interviewed in the exploratory stage. Although they held varying views on how their pupils should and/or could be educated, they all tended to agree upon the principle that the mentally handicapped had the same rights to education as all other pupils. It is possible that some teachers had other views which they would not reveal considering they would be expected to have positive views.

I have not dismissed the possibility that there may be teachers of the mentally handicapped holding extreme negative views. They would believe that any child who is mentally handicapped is unable to integrate in the community and would be better off being isolated. Such negative views may indeed filter through the system of special education. I had referred to one remark presenting such negative view on profoundly mentally handicapped made by a teacher who was not included in my sample. However, in the course of my field work, I had not come across evidence about the existence of such negative trends among the sample teachers. (The results of the main research eventually proved the same as the exploratory work.)

Analysis of all teachers' attitudes in the sample indicated that reasons for their positive and negative attitudes did not necessarily reflect their personal opinion and ideal of how their pupils should be educated. The process through which teachers form their perceptions of mentally handicapped pupils depends on a range of criteria rather than solely on their personal beliefs. I have regarded this assumption sufficiently significant to justify reconsideration of the concepts by which I had originally categorised teachers. I decided upon this change of concepts as I carried out my main research. There were points when I had to reflect upon the results and adjust my research framework as I went along in the course of my field work.

One of the teachers in my main research sample, who had rejected the possibility of integration, brought to my attention that teachers' personal beliefs are not necessarily reflected in their practical choices:

"... I look at things in a realistic way ... it is all too easy to say that mentally handicapped pupils should be integrated. I personally believe in that, but there are few possibilities available in the ordinary schools for these children..."

The above teacher might have come through in the research results as holding a negative view towards the mentally handicapped pupils. However use of informal interview techniques helped elicit his own account of his perception. He interpreted the situation in terms of the "*reality*" he understood. He felt that since he himself could not bring about any change in the system of education it was not possible to integrate mentally handicapped pupils in the ordinary school given the prevailing conditions.

This teacher did not show any personal negative approach towards his pupils but made a statement on how he saw himself incapable of pursuing a very difficult goal. Indeed he accepted that his pupils could have been integrated should the circumstances of ordinary schools and the community's views change. Another teacher expressed similar concern about integration of his pupils but did not agree that he was not playing a role in pursuing such a goal. He had already managed to refer several pupils to the ordinary school in the same neighbourhood and was in constant contact with the local authorities and the officials in the Ministry of Education and Religion.

Both of the above teachers held positive views towards the idea of integration, but one found himself incapable of being involved in the actual practice of the ideology while the other did get involved and had some degree of success. In the main research I decided to separate the two issues of attitude and the actual action taken by the teachers by characterising their types according to the type of action they took in practice.

I formed the opinion that it was at this junction that the levels of negative or positive professional views could be assessed, that is by observing the interaction between the teachers and the other individuals in their working environment and the ways in which they coped with prevailing conditions. Some teachers tended to spend considerable effort in order to bring about what they

believed should be done for their pupils. Others chose to compromise in view of difficult circumstances in their work conditions and so they appeared to have stopped pursuing some of their initial ideas.

At this point of time in my main research, I had already interviewed some teachers and had observed their work. If there were teachers whom I had already interviewed without taking into account this type of information, I contacted them again and went through their explanations. This is a genuine example of how in an ethnographic approach one can make interpretations and build in the conceptual framework as the research progresses.

The degree of teachers' "positive" or "negative" attitude depended on the extent to which they thought they could put their personal beliefs into practice. In this respect I assumed that teachers' attitudes could range from a very high degree of enthusiasm in pursuing their ideals to some degree of realism as defined below. Study of the results of my exploratory work indicated that the teachers I had referred to as very positive were those who, disregarding the problems, pursued their teaching aims and tried to change undesirable situations, not giving in when faced with obstacles. These teachers followed their ideal and in this sense I refer to them as "*idealist*." ⁽³⁾

Other teachers were less enthusiastic than the idealist are those teachers who try to "*do as much as possible*" to overcome the problems, but would not go to as great lengths as the idealist in comparable circumstances. This type of teacher concentrates on the individual pupils he\she comes across every year and tries to help them on a daily basis. They compromised with the obstacles they were faced with in their task of teaching.

Some teachers whom I had referred to their views as relatively negative in my exploratory were more prepared to compromise than others and accepted

what they saw as “*reality*” more often. I will refer to these teachers as “*compromiser-realists*.” They were the most passive teachers in my survey sample. Teachers I had referred to as relatively positive were slightly more challenging to the system than the above teachers. They did not always feel they could change the situation but were willing to try to pursue at times their own views against the odds. I will refer to them as “*compromisers*.”

More inclined to challenge the system than this group was one teacher who were clearly less reluctant than the “*compromisers*” to accept the situation; he more effort to practise according to his beliefs particularly in relation to more able pupils. His approach was exactly that of the idealists when dealt with the more able pupils; yet similar to the compromisers in relation to those who were less able. I am referring to him as “*idealist-compromiser*.”

In the main research I have examined the extent to which teachers see themselves capable of helping their pupils to achieve educational goals and/or their integration in the community. Thus, apart from defining negative or positive tendencies in the attitudes of the teachers I also tried to characterise the way in which they pursued their teaching practice. Four main groups may be drawn each corresponding to one of the categories that had been derived in the exploratory stage. This correspondence is shown in Table 4.1, below.

Teacher type in the exploratory research	Teacher type in the main research
1. very positive 2. positive 3. relatively positive 4. relatively negative	1. idealist 2. idealist/compromiser 3. compromiser 4. compromiser/realist

Table 4.1: Teacher types in the exploratory and the main research stages.

In the main research I examined teachers backgrounds and views on different issues in special education. This was followed by the analysis of teachers' reasons for their views and the way in which they felt their role as a teacher could help achieving the goals of integration and independent living. The results of this analysis led to the categorisation of the teachers along the spectrum "*idealist*" to "*compromiser-realist*."

Throughout the process of the data collection I compared teachers responses and placed them in the categories I saw them best fit. Therefore, in discussing the results I use those categories to refer to the teachers. In discussing different issues which I have studied through my field work I will explain how different categories of teachers responded. The reason each individual reacts differently to his/her surroundings is a highly complex issue and is certainly not within the scope of this research to attempt to provide a plausible account or explanation of the processes involved. My major concern here is to identify different patterns of teachers' response to their working conditions and try to assess their consequences upon the practice of special education.

I am assuming that each teacher brings into the pattern of interaction in the system a range of "ideas" which he/she believes to be most appropriate and effective in dealing with the mentally handicapped. Such "ideas" could be formed as a result of different kinds of experiences that teachers have gone through in their lives. I shall not attempt to discover the origin of such ideas in this context as this would not be relevant to my research. My main concern here is to establish the existence of such "ideas" and record their variation in the sample of the teachers surveyed. ⁽⁴⁾

The individual teacher in this research is looked upon as a contributor to the system of special education bringing in personal views as to how to educate the pupils. Such contributions will be explored as to the ways in which they are

made and the extent to which teachers in the sample can influence the pattern of interaction in the schools.

In Table 4.2, below, I have outlined the position of the teachers on the basis of the results the exploratory research. Taking this diagram as a rough guide, I will now set out to explore in greater depth the ways in which teachers belonging to each one of the above types define the concept of mental handicap and go about educating their pupils.

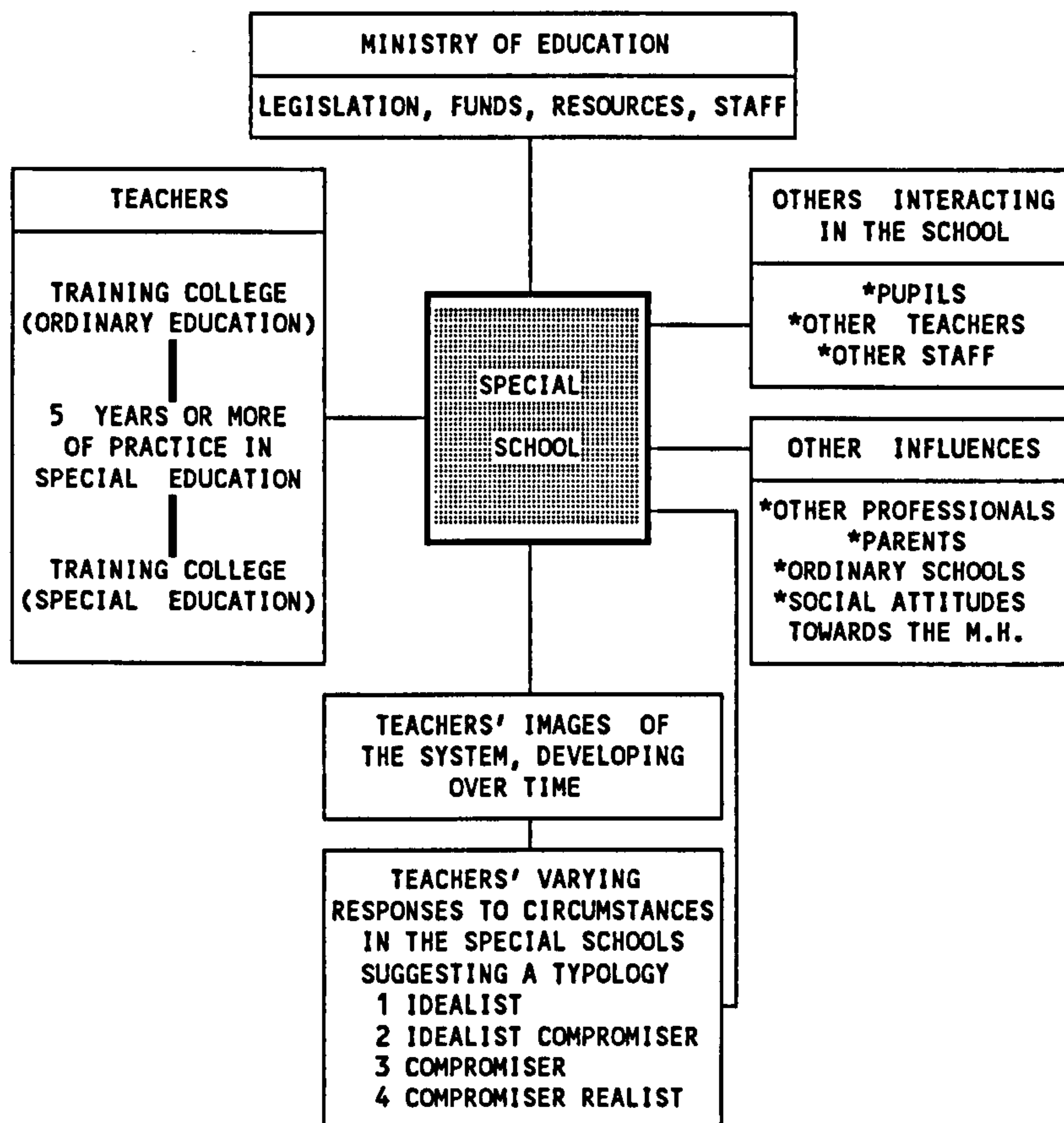


Table 4.2: Teachers' position in the system of special education.

3. SECTION TWO: RESEARCH METHOD AND STRATEGY IN THE MAIN RESEARCH

The approach I took in the collection of data, in the main part of the research, was not different from the approach of the exploratory stage. Following the principles of ethnography I continued to collect data within the flexible framework which I had developed on the basis of my findings in the exploratory research (see chapter three, above.) I continued to make comparisons and evaluate the results of each interview and observation as I carried out the research. I kept the interview scheme that I had developed in the exploratory stage and observed the class procedure within the framework of a flexible schedule (see Observation and Interview Schedule, in Appendix II of the thesis).

I had prepared the questions in the form of an interview schedule. As was the case in the exploratory stage of my research, I did not need to go through the entire schedule in a formal way. I could fill in the answers as I went along during observation. Frequently, teachers would volunteer information whenever pupils did not require their attention, e.g., when they were writing their exercises.

I did not use a tape recorder in any of my interviews. The reason for this was that I had found teachers felt rather uncomfortable even when I took notes. They did not want to be identified and they stressed the need for confidentiality on my part—not only the head teachers but also the officials at the Ministry of Education who had given me permission for the visits. Although I did not use a tape recorder and did not write everything on the spot I managed to get answers to all the questions since I had the chance to meet the teachers on several occasions. This form of data collection was by no means simple and I needed to go back to teachers and ask further questions.

Since the sample was not unmanageable I could record the information with relative efficiency. In any of my visits to a school I did not have to deal with more than two teachers. Therefore, once a teacher referred to an issue which interested me and I needed to take a record of it was easy to remember the replies of each teacher and write down the information at break time or after I had left the school—at the earliest possible time. In some cases when I had finished my visit to a school and I needed further information I would call the school and ask the head teacher to help me contact the teachers on the telephone. When I wanted to use a quotation, if I did not have the time to write it on the spot, I asked the teachers if they could repeat their views because I had found them interesting and I wanted to write them down in my report.

The way in which I carried out the interviews was rather complex and involved. I did not go through all the questions in one particular session and had to refer to respondents on several occasions. This strategy, however, proved most useful. I do not refer to the difficult aspect of collecting information the way in which I did as a negative aspect since it provided me with positive results in getting replies to the questions I had prepared as well as getting further information. It enabled me to get familiar with each particular school, class and teachers before I completed my investigation.

Since I had the chance to talk to the teachers both before and after my observations I had the chance to check on the different type of information they had given me in the interviews, as I went throughout the observations. If I found discrepancies then I could then get back to the teachers and ask them the reasons. This type of questions had to be asked carefully without offending the teachers concerned.

For example, a teacher had told me, before my observation of his class, that he believed he should pay individual attention to each particular child and

use specifically designed teaching material. In observation of his class work I noticed that he used a traditional approach in teaching which involved teaching his pupils as a group. He used some material which was provided by the head teacher for the particular class. This teacher did not believe that this was an effective way of teaching his pupils. In referring to his pupils whom he regarded as severely handicapped he mainly mentioned their disabilities and their problems in coping with the school.

I did not see him paying individual attention to his pupils and trying hard to make sure that they have actually learned what he had taught them. In my further discussion with this teacher, after the observation, I asked him his views on the possibilities he saw for his pupils future. He told me that there is so much one could expect in working with the severely handicap. He pointed out that could not pursue what he ideally wanted to achieve as a special education teacher when dealing with the severe cases. He told me he would have been more successful in educating more able pupils.

The above example presents a typical way in which I managed to collect information on teachers views in the context of their practice. Had I relied only on one session of interview, probably I would not have had a chance to compare this teachers' views on what he saw as ideal and what he actually put into practice.

The period of time in which I visited the schools from the beginning of March to June 1989 was spent in observation and interviewing as I was given the chance depending on the circumstances in the schools and the teachers' timetables. At times I had to follow work of different teachers in different schools since I had to adjust my schedule to the time which was suitable for the teachers.

The flexible framework of my interviews also allowed the teachers to bring in their own ideas and views about different issues which they saw as important. The exploratory stage of the research had yielded results which suggest that the process through which the mentally handicapped child is labelled and “educated” by a teacher is the product of a continuous interaction between the teacher and others involved in the system of special education as well as the community at large.

By way of qualitative analysis I had indicated the main areas of importance and the general outcome of those interactions as regards the sample in my initial research. In this final part of research I will try to go beyond the above explanations and attempt to analyse in greater depth the way in which the mentally handicapped child is labelled and “educated.” In the main research I will apply the principles of ethnographic approach which I have already discussed above. The process of research will be rather different from the exploratory work since I have already established certain definitions of the relevant concepts at an operational level.

The existence of operationally defined concepts in the exploratory work provides me with the possibility of a comparison of data taken from the main research process and an evaluation of my findings through such comparisons. My earlier description of the interaction between the teachers and the others involved in the system of special education pointed to the presence of three different, yet interrelated, factors:

- a. teachers’ personal preferences,
- b. prevailing conditions in the system of special education,
- c. the wider social context, i.e., the attitudes in the community and the range of opportunities that are made available by society to the handicapped.

Seen from a sociological perspective the above factors are interrelated and their separation could only be justified for purposes of detailed analysis. In the following stage of this research I am attempting to deal with each of the above factors, in the light of the results of my fieldwork, from both a qualitative and a quantitative point of view.

The general approach taken in the research is *qualitative*, but I have also resorted to quantitative means whenever I felt they would help the process of analysis and clarification of data in a way that could not be achieved solely by relying on qualitative means. ⁽⁵⁾ The process of data collection and analysis of the results is illustrated in Table 4.3, below.

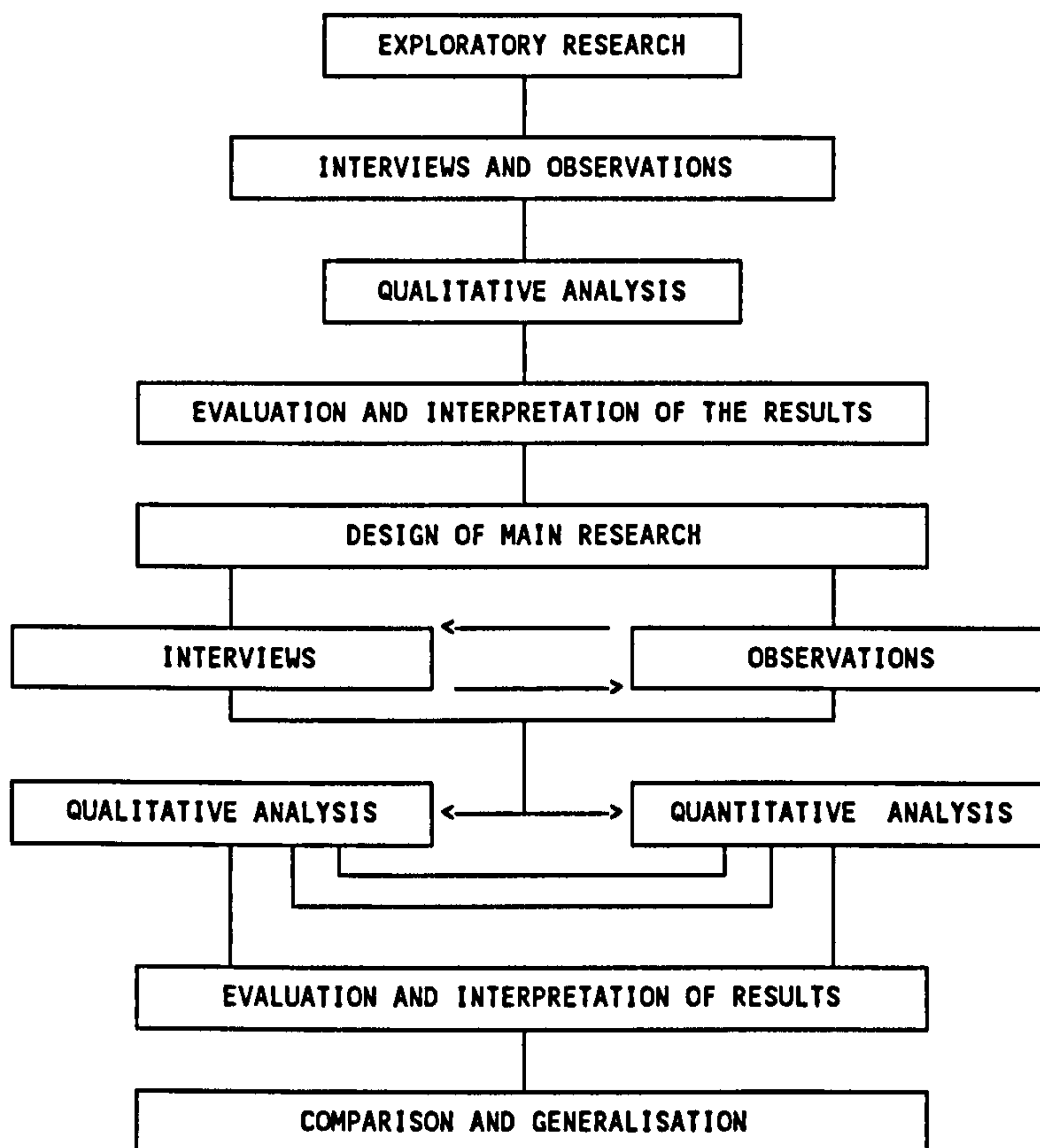


Table 4.3: The research process and sequence of steps

According to Table 4.3, the main research proceeded on the basis of the findings of the exploratory stage. It was not carried out within a rigidly set framework in which all aspects of the field work would have been pre-determined in the research design. There was also continuous interrelation and feedback between the interview and observation results.

The methodological approach that I have been following in this research lends itself to a form of discovery that cannot be concluded through a *one-shot* analysis and examination of the phenomenon under study. Through a qualitative analysis of the findings as the research proceeded I managed to identify the four types of teacher which I had assumed I would come across. From the methodological point of view observation of the classroom helped me to re-evaluate, verify and expand upon the definitions of the concepts I had recorded at the interview level. In this sense I have followed the principles of triangulation in the research strategy. ⁽⁶⁾

The combination of the interviews with the observation of the classes gave me a better chance to elicit the operational definitions of the concepts used by teachers. There were cases in which I managed to obtain answers to the questions I had put in the interviews only in the course of observation. For instance, when a teacher had answered a question by maintaining that "*it would depend upon the degree of handicap*" the concept of handicap was a difficult one to define without referring to the actual pupils in question. In the class situation, I could see how teachers defined the degree of mental handicap by referring to specific children.

Throughout the observations I did not attempt to participate in the classroom procedure. In a few cases, when the teachers invited me to participate I felt that I disturbed the daily routine of the class and that this was not

permitting me to see the real classroom interaction. I always made a point of telling the pupils who I was and answered their questions, if asked at the appropriate time when their teacher did not require their concentration. If I heard sudden remarks addressed to me in the middle of a lesson such as "*look, look, I painted that ...*," I would pretend I was not listening. I had to take this course of action as teachers would not appreciate my intervention in class procedures.

I usually tried to speak to the pupils when they were involved in individual work, or during breaks. I found it very useful to talk to the pupils, not only asking them questions but also listening to their own. They asked me questions such as where I came from, told me they knew where my country was, and spoke about themselves. Sometimes, I could not remain impartial and began to evaluate the pupils' capabilities. Putting my own view that mental handicap is socially constructed, even if I wanted to evaluate the view that mental handicap is identifiable within an individual's background I could not understand why the particular pupils I had come across needed to be segregated.

In these cases I was influenced by my personal views and tended to agree with those teachers who maintained: "*the handicap is in us, not in the pupils,*" and disagree with those who pointed out "*these children are not capable of learning.*" Subjectivity however had to be avoided, since my aim in this research was by no means to judge the "*efficiency*" of the system or of the teachers but to discover "the way" in which the system operated and the teachers' contribution to this process.

A well known problem in social science is to achieve an acceptable level of objectivity. Some social thinkers have even argued that full objectivity (if at all possible) might in fact work in a disadvantageous fashion in social science.⁽⁷⁾ At this point, I only intend to stress that I have sought to overcome the weaknesses of either approach by using different techniques and by looking at

the phenomenon under study from different perspectives. By using the technique of interview at different stages of the research I could check out my findings. In this way I discovered that on many occasions the results of my observation in the class, which tended to be influenced by my subjective understanding of the situation, required re-evaluation.

For instance, in one case I observed that a teacher did not spend the same length of time with one of her pupils as much as with the others. The child had speech and comprehension problems. After one hour in the class I gathered that the teacher, considering the degree of handicap of the child, had abandoned hope in her and did not really bother about how that particular pupil spent her time in the classroom. I reached this conclusion because on previous occasions I had observed such cases and had heard teachers' comments on severely handicapped pupils: that it was not possible to do much for them since they could not really learn anything. Further discussion with the teacher in this particular case, at the end of the first session of the class, suggested that I needed to revise my earlier assessment. Without my asking the teacher told me:

“Did you notice little Maria, she is in a world of her own, she cannot do anything with me being next to her. I usually attend to her once I am finished with the rest.”

The hour of observation which followed in that class proved to be a surprise. “Little Maria” could in fact read and write her alphabet. She could also count up to twenty. In this and similar cases there is the risk of misinterpreting what is actually going on in a classroom and it is up to the researcher to go below the surface of the observed phenomenon and analyse the findings in a more vigorous manner. ⁽⁸⁾

This type of analysis helped the categorisation of data beginning from the sample characteristics to the results of interviews and observations. In the following section I provide the characteristics of the sample of teachers, by teacher type as well as the characteristic of the schools which I visited. It is essential to study the teachers' role within the school structure since their practice of special education depends on their working context.

3.1 Main Research: March–June 1989.

The process of selection of schools and sampling.

- (i) I applied for permission of access to further schools. The same process was followed, as described in steps (iii) to (vi) in exploratory research, to obtain permission from the Ministry of Education to visit the schools.
- (ii) I had difficulty in getting permission from the first head teacher I telephoned. He was less than pleased to hear that his school was going to be "*inspected*" by someone he did not know. Without listening to what the purpose of my visit was he told me that I had no business visiting his school. His unkind reference to the Dept. of Special Education made me realise once more that it was best if I approached the head teachers without referring to the introductory letter from the Ministry.

In all my future calls I introduced myself as student of a foreign university who was interested to find out about the work of the special schools in Greece. I mentioned that it was a pity that despite the existing structure for the education of special children there was little known abroad (which was my own feeling). I managed to make three appointments through these calls.

In my visits to each of these schools, I asked the head teachers to refer me to the other schools I had in my list. I even managed to get back to the head teacher who earlier on was very abrupt in answering me over the telephone. He apologised for his reluctance to allow me to visit at first but reassured me there was no intention of insulting me. Rather, it was just that he was fed up with the authorities which never wanted to help him.

I gained access to all the schools and received the collaboration of the head teachers. Only in one case the head teacher was not in the school I was visiting but had left a message of apology indicating that he had an urgent meeting. The teacher in charge was most helpful in answering my questions and letting me observe the work of the classroom. I observed the work of all the forty teachers I included in the sample from all the 13 schools.

In three two-grade schools all the teachers were included in the sample, in another two grade-school one teacher. In the three-grade schools I included all teachers in one school, two in another, and one teacher in the third. In the only four-grade school I visited, three teachers accepted to take part in the survey. I managed to include all six teachers in one of the six-grade schools, five and four teachers in the other two six-grade schools respectively. In the two eight-grade schools I included in my sample five teachers from one school and four from the other.

I left most of the schools with the best wishes of the teachers I had worked with. Most of them wanted me to contact them in case I needed further information. In two schools I was even presented with flowers and the best wishes for my work. Having built this type of relationship helped me to contact teachers again even weeks after my visit. I managed to get replies to all the answers in my question sheets because of the air of informality which I created about my work.

Indeed, the objectives of my research did not require me to criticise teachers but to report their views, their ways of practising education and provide an account of the possible effects they may have upon the future of their pupils. In my visits to some schools I interviewed and observed the work of all the teachers; in larger schools the work of some of the teachers. However, I did seek the opportunity to talk to the other teachers who were not included in my sample. This provided me with extra information about the school operation and the relationship between teachers. I was made welcome to take part in teachers' meetings in some of the schools. On such occasions it became possible to observe the interaction between different types of teachers and the ways in which they were reacting to each other's views.

3.2 Preliminary analysis of data: Teachers' typology.

In the preliminary analysis of my data I looked upon the actions taken by the teachers in their teaching practice and found variations in their practice of special education. I analyzed their views in general, as well as in particular concerning their own pupils in chapter five of the thesis. I analysed the above results in relation to the type of action teachers took in practice.

In the collection of data I did not only ask teachers to provide me with a "yes" or "no" or "*possible*" answer to their view on pupils' potential. I also asked them their reasons as well as the extent to which they felt they could contribute. Moreover, observation of their work in the classroom clarified how they sought to contribute to such goals. Therefore, if two teachers agree that a particular pupil is capable of integration in the community, this does not

necessarily imply that they would agree on what they should do to attain that goal.

One teacher may carry on with the expected routine of teaching and expect that since the particular pupil has the potential he/she will manage. This usually involves the use of ordinary school books, typically of lower level than the pupil's actual age. Pupils are persuaded to read a paragraph, write some words and do some simple sums. The other teacher may try to enhance the skills in that pupil to reach the highest possible level of achievement. This type of action involves a teacher in operations such as:

- putting some of his/her spare time to organise specially adjusted material for individual pupils,
- getting involved in meetings with the local authorities to educate the public on the subject of special education,
- pressurising administrative bodies concerned to provide their school with necessary equipment,
- demanding the appointment of specialists.

This teacher believes that as a teacher he/she plays the most crucial role in developing a pupil into an individual capable of integrating and living in the community. Furthermore, if two teachers both show doubts on the possibility of integration of their pupils they need not take similar actions in their teaching practices. While one teacher may take up the challenge and provide the type of education which he/she believes may help those pupils reach a point where their integration may become a possibility, another teacher may leave the pupils "to themselves" and try not to "push them into doing something they cannot achieve".

The latter type of teachers usually came up with remarks such as:

“the system is inadequate,” or “the majority of these pupils will not be able to follow a normal life anyway,” or “nobody listens to us,” or “we don’t have appropriate material for teaching,” etc. ⁽⁹⁾

In general I recognise the following variations in teachers’ approach to teaching:

1. **Idealists**: Teachers who in all cases and difficult situations try to follow a positive ideology and contribute to the enhancement of pupils’ ability to cope in the future. Idealists’ views are opposite to those of the Compromiser–realists.
2. **Compromiser–realists**: Teachers who did not believe they could add anything more than what was available to most of their pupils and could not see their role as a teacher being related to the future achievements of their pupils without the intervention of other community members, professionals and/or government bodies involved.

I recognised that some teachers had tendencies towards either of the above groups even though they were not following as rigid a pattern as above:

- a. **Idealist–compromisers**: they were teachers who would consider challenging the obstacles in the milder cases and, provided that there was not too much conflict involved, also in the more severe cases.
- b. **Compromisers**: those who would usually not choose in any of the cases of their pupils (either milder cases or more severe ones) to challenge situations which were too difficult and were likely to expose them to the risk of conflict with the others (e.g., head teachers, other colleagues, parents or other professionals.)

The main difference between this group and those in the compromiser–realist group was that the compromisers were more prepared to follow the other teachers even if they did not agree with their views. The compromiser–realists on the other hand seemed to have formed rigid views on what they were capable of achieving and what role they could play in a child’s education. They would not give in easily to the views of the other teachers or even their school head teachers if they felt the approach they were proposed was not suitable.

In relation to the level of effort teachers are prepared to put into pursuing the ideology of integration the idealists’ group come at the top followed by the idealist–compromisers. The compromisers are somewhere in the middle of the scale followed by the realist–compromisers. I am explaining in detail the main characteristics of these teacher types, with examples as appropriate, below.

3.2.1 Idealist teachers.

They believe they should try to overcome obstacles for integration and independent life for their pupils. They get out of the usual routine of teaching and adjust the teaching pattern to the individual pupil’s needs. They pay individual attention to pupils disregarding the degree of their ability to learn. Whether they make a positive or negative reference to the possibilities of integration and independent life for pupils, they believe that as special education teachers they should try to overcome the obstacles and make contributions even in difficult and conflicting situations.

Example 1: Teacher with S.M.H. pupils.

She was quite aware of the difficulties her pupils would have had in ordinary schools and did not believe they could benefit in these circumstances. Her reply to the possibility of integration of her pupils in ordinary school was negative. However, she felt that being their teacher she could make a significant contribution in helping them to integrate in the community and be able to have some level of independence.

She believed the teachers' role was the most important one in the process of preparing the pupils for their future lives. Her programme for teaching was based on each individual child's needs. She tried to spend an equal amount of time with each one of them on an individual to individual basis. She did not believe, as did some of her colleagues in the same school, that working with the severely handicapped was not requiring too much preparation since they could not learn much any way. She thought that with patience and by adopting the right pace she could teach them necessary skills for their future lives. In this teacher's view, education had a much wider meaning than only the ability to read, write and count.

The attitude of this teacher is different from the teachers who indicated that their S.M.H. pupils could be integrated in the ordinary school since they would not cause too much problems in the ordinary school, or that they were integrated anyway since they used the same playground.

Example 2: Teacher with M.M.H. and not mentally handicapped pupils.

He was involved not only in teaching his pupils the school subjects, but was also offering them counselling to deal with their personal and family

problems. He felt his role did not end in teaching his pupils to read, write and count and extended it to guiding them to relate to the outside world. He believed that the majority of his pupils were categorised as mentally handicapped because they were not given the chance to learn at their own pace.

He explained that their family problems—usually stemming from a lack of sufficient funds and/or parental care for their education—were the main reason for his pupils' lack of success in the education system. This teacher had made himself familiar with the family condition of the pupils and was in touch with their parents. In fact he sympathised with the parents and believed that they need guidance and help as much as their children.

This teacher stated that he had worked previously with more severe cases of handicapped pupils and even in those cases he carried out in the same way. He believed children, no matter how disabled we assess them, have the right to education and should be given the chance to integrate in society and be as independent as possible. He mentioned that these are difficult goals to achieve but we should not give up because of obstacles.

He expressed doubts as to whether his pupils could become independent, because he could see the problems they had in getting employment. However, he was in contact with his pupils' families and was trying to persuade the prospective employers to help out. This approach in teaching is very different from the approach adopted by a compromiser–realist teacher who expressed his certainty about his pupils' ability to be independent since he did not consider it important whether they gained employment or not. He claimed the state was going to give them the social welfare benefit anyway.

3.2.2 Idealist-compromiser teachers.

They attempt to overcome obstacles but concentrate on cases of more able pupils, particularly the M.M.H. and those whom they do not regard as handicapped. They get out of their usual teaching routine in order to give their pupils individual attention when there are not too many difficulties involved. In the case of S.M.H. they do not put as much emphasis on teaching particular subjects as they do with the more able pupils. When they make negative references to pupils' possibilities of integration or independent life the consequences in action are that there is not much a teacher can do in such situation.

Example 3: Teacher with S.M.H. and M.M.H. pupils.

She expressed her disappointment about her S.M.H. pupils. She said some of them do not have a chance and therefore there is not much she could do. She tried hard to help the M.M.H. to overcome their problems and get the ability to cope in the outside world. She expressed deep care and sympathy for her S.M.H. pupils, but she believed that in view of the limited facilities available in the school at the time they could not do any more for them. Especially in the cases of older pupils with severe handicap she felt there was not much one could expect from the teachers.

Example 4: Teacher with S.M.H. and M.M.H. pupils.

He mentioned that teachers should try harder in the ordinary schools to accept the mentally handicapped pupils. Furthermore he felt that in the case of milder cases the possibility of integration was higher and therefore in special

schools they had to do their best to get better results for these pupils. He believed that ordinary schools should become available for the M.M.H. pupils and that people in society should have more tolerance for them.

In the case of the S.M.H. pupils he was not quite sure whether the problem was of the same degree since those with more severe problems needed more patience and understanding. He was not sure whether a severely mentally handicapped would benefit in an ordinary school. He felt other professionals should be more involved in these cases and help the teachers. He was disappointed with the visiting psychologist who was not providing him with enough information about his S.M.H. pupils. However, he did not want to challenge her because he felt that it was too much work and in the end he would not get any results.

3.2.3 Compromiser teachers.

They do not usually try to change the situation and only follow the approach adopted by the majority or more experienced (senior) teachers in the school. They might follow the idealists and idealist compromisers if there is not too much of a problem that would involve conflict with school policy. When they reply positively as regards the possibility of integration and independent living of some pupils they tend to be more concerned with putting discipline upon the pupils to complete their school work. This does not necessarily imply that the compromisers will get out of their usual teaching routine.

When faced with less able pupils who have more limited possibility for integration and independent living they would tend to be less strict in persuading

them to learn. This does not mean that the compromisers do not teach the severely handicapped but, rather, that the level they aim for is much lower than for those with higher ability (see chapter five, below.)

Example 5: Teacher with S.M.H. and M.M.H. pupils.

He was very sympathetic towards his pupils because he felt they were not accepted by the society for something which was not their fault. He thought that the 10 pupils he had to deal with were far too many for a special class. He found his task particularly difficult since he had mixture of S.M.H. and M.M.H. pupils. On the whole he thought that some of the M.M.H. had certain possibilities for integration in society, but due to lack of special classes in ordinary schools they could not follow ordinary school. He was not sure how to deal with severe cases and felt that they needed other professionals. He was following the ideas of the older teacher in the school (an idealist-compromiser, the one mentioned in example 3 above). He claimed that although he was the head of the school the other teacher had more experience than him and therefore he respected her views.

Example 6: Teacher with S.M.H. pupils.

This teacher was not qualified as a teacher but as a psychologist. He had just been placed in the school due to shortage of teachers. He claimed he had some radical ideas on special education but was avoiding any conflict with the head teacher or other members of staff. He was being careful to avoid causing any prejudice against himself in case he lost his position. His view was that all children with any type of handicap or any degree of handicap could follow their education in the mainstream schools and should be given the chance to integrate

in society and lead an independent life. However, he did not believe that he was in any position to help out his own pupils in attaining this goal.

3.2.4 Compromiser–realist teachers.

They do not get out of their teaching routine and believe there is no way teachers could change the system. They may consider putting in extra work when they believe the pupil involved is not actually handicapped. In all other cases they would continue along the usual teaching patterns. What differentiates this group from the compromisers is that they are hardly prepared to follow other teachers' suggestions. They are particularly in conflict with the idealists and the idealist–compromisers. The characteristic of this group is that they are all very frustrated with their work.

Example 7: Teacher with S.M.H. and M.M.H. pupils.

He was the head teacher of the school. He had chosen special education because he felt it would be easier for him to teach the mentally handicapped. He believed these children were not likely to learn what the ordinary pupils do, therefore there was no point in trying it. However, he gave a positive answer as regards integration and independent life for his pupils. He pointed out that they would not harm anyone by not being able to read or write. Even if they acted in some strange way which other people might not approve of, it would not be of any consequence since these children could not actually understand that they were being stigmatised.

Example 8: Teacher with S.M.H. and M.M.H., and Not M.H. pupils.

He found it very difficult to follow what he really wanted and said he had long ago forgotten about fighting with the system. This teacher was under a lot of stress due to what he referred to as lack of understanding among the professionals, parents and the community in general of what special education should be all about. He had little hope in getting his pupils integrated in the community.

He did not feel that Greek society would change so quickly as policy-makers expected them too. He said he had given up getting involved in anything more than the daily routine of school work. He did not believe anything he did was going to change anything in the system. He was critical of those teachers who were pursuing some idealist goals. He had one pupil whom he thought was not handicapped. He said he would try to integrate that child in an ordinary school.

The above examples of different teacher types suggest that variation in teachers' perceptions of their pupils does not depend only on the criteria they use to categorise the degree of handicap but also on their interpretation of the future potential of their pupils as well as the contribution which they believe they can make towards that goal. If a teacher, in theory, fully supports integration for the pupils but, in practice, finds it impossible to contribute to such ideology his/her perception of the pupils involved is different from that of a teacher who fights the obstacles and pursues the goals of integration. An idealist's perception is that the pupils should be directed to attain the integration goals irrespective of present circumstances and/or adversities. A compromiser-realist does not see how teachers can be influential in attaining such goals since others are not helping, too.

Having discussed the basic variations which occurred in the teachers views towards their practice of special education I will now proceed to make further analysis regarding different aspects of their background, their work environment, their attitudes towards major issues concerning special education.

4. TEACHERS' BACKGROUND.

The teacher sample was 40 individuals out of a total of 59 teachers in the sample schools. A screening of the teachers' background reveals that they have several common characteristics. I did not intend to find any definite correlation between teachers' background and their perception of their pupils. However, if there were any aspect of their background which appeared to have some significance in studying their perception I will mention in this section. The reason for providing such information is to give as clear a picture as possible of the background of the teachers in the sample.

The use of figures and percentages in this study is not meant to establish quantitative results but only to help the understanding of the qualitative analysis. Considering that when this research was being carried out the estimated number of special education teachers in special schools for the mentally handicapped was about 200 in the entire country (of which around 100 in Athens alone) a sample of 40 teachers should be sufficiently representative. Tables 4.4 to 4.9, below, depict the variation in different aspects of the teachers' background. These include gender, age, marital status, family and teaching experiences.

Teachers in the sample are mainly (92.5%) over 30 years of age (Table 4.4). There is an equal number of male and female teachers in the sample (Table

4.5). The majority (87.5%) are married and 85.0% of them have children (Table 4.6). This pattern in the general sample is not present within each teacher type.

Teacher Types	AGE OF TEACHERS				Row Totals
	20-30yrs	30-40yrs	40-50yrs	Over 50yrs	
IDEALIST	-	3	1	2	6 (15.0%)
IDEALIST COMPROMISER	-	3	2	2	7 (17.5%)
COMPROMISER	3	4	7	7	21 (52.5%)
COMPROMISER REALIST	-	1	4	1	6 (15.0%)
Column Totals	3 (7.5%)	11 (27.5%)	14 (35.0%)	12 (30.0%)	40 (100.0%)

Table 4.4: Teachers' age by teacher types

KEY:

- Figures in brackets are percentages of the total teacher sample of 40 individuals.

For example, Table 4.5, below, shows a higher number of male teachers in the types "idealist," "idealist-compromiser" and "compromiser-realist." The number of female teachers belonging to the compromiser type is twice that of the

Teacher Types	TEACHERS' SEX		Row Totals
	Male	Female	
IDEALIST	4	2	6 (15.0%)
IDEALIST COMPROMISER	5	2	7 (17.5%)
COMPROMISER	7	14	21 (52.5%)
COMPROMISER REALIST	4	2	6 (15.0%)
Column Totals	20 (50.0%)	20 (50.0%)	40 (100.0%)

Table 4.5: Teachers' sex by teacher types

KEY:

- Figures in brackets are percentages of the total teacher sample of 40 individuals.

male teachers. One apparent implication here is that female teachers appear to be more reluctant to adopt extreme views, opting out instead for a middle-of-the-road attitude. I am putting forward this assumption on purely qualitative grounds; it is also supported by my own impressions formed in the interviews.

There is a mixture of different age groups in each teacher type. Idealists, idealist-compromisers and compromiser-realists consist mainly of teachers over 30 years of age. The compromiser type consists of all age groups. The only teachers in the sample who are below 30 years of age belong to this type. Perhaps younger teachers are most likely to compromise since they have also less experience.

Tables 4.6 and 4.7, below, show teachers' marital status and family situation. The majority of teachers were married and had children. It may well be the case that these aspects are influential for teachers' general attitudes, but I have no grounds to support their correlation at this stage. There were cases

Teacher Types	MARITAL STATUS			Row Totals
	Married	Single	Divorced/Widowed	
IDEALIST	5	1	-	6 (15.0%)
IDEALIST COMPROMISER	7	-	-	7 (17.5%)
COMPROMISER	18	3	-	21 (52.5%)
COMPROMISER REALIST	5	-	1	6 (15.0%)
Column Totals	35 (87.5%)	4 (10.0%)	1 (2.5%)	40 (100.0%)

Table 4.6: Teachers' marital status by teacher types

KEY:

- Figures in brackets are percentages of the total teacher sample of 40 individuals.

of teachers who claimed their family commitments do not permit them to spend extra time to prepare their own teaching material. This was especially true in

one of the schools where a teacher managed to provide his own programme for his pupils. His colleagues in that school accounted for his devotion in terms of his lack of family commitments. I had come across similar cases in my exploratory research.

In some cases family commitments did not have the opposite effect. This was particularly obvious in the case of three teachers who despite their busy family life did manage to devote extra time preparing work sheets for each of their pupils. They stated that having children makes them feel more appreciative of their pupils' parental expectations.

Teacher Types	FAMILY SIZE			Row Totals
	With children	W/out children	No response	
IDEALIST	3	2	1	6 (15.0%)
IDEALIST COMPROMISER	7	-	-	7 (17.5%)
COMPROMISER	18	3	-	21 (52.5%)
COMPROMISER REALIST	6	-	-	6 (15.0%)
Column Totals	34 (85.0%)	5 (12.5%)	1 (2.5%)	40 (100.0%)

Table 4.7: Teachers' family size by teacher types

KEY:

- Figures in brackets are percentages of the total teacher sample of 40 individuals.

The aspects of teachers' background discussed so far provide information about teachers outside their professional capacity. These aspects have to be explored now in conjunction with the teachers' professional background (Tables 4.8 and 4.9, below) in order to get a more complete picture of the characteristics of the sample.

Table 4.8, below (years of experience in ordinary schools) shows that over half of the entire sample have had between 10 to 20 years of experience in ordinary schools. There are also equal numbers of teachers in the categories of idealist and idealist-compromiser, but they are not distributed equally by teacher type, the majority falling within the compromiser type. It is probable that years of experience affect teachers' images of their role.

Table 4.8 should be studied in relation to Table 4.9, below, "Years of experience in special education." Teachers with less than one year of experience

Teacher Types	TEACHING EXPERIENCE IN ORDINARY SCHOOLS					Row Totals
	Reply 1	Reply 2	Reply 3	Reply 4	Reply 5	
IDEALIST	1	1	2	1	1	6 (15.0%)
IDEALIST COMPROMISER	-	1	6	-	-	7 (17.5%)
COMPROMISER	5	4	9	3	-	21 (52.5%)
COMPROMISER REALIST	1	1	4	-	-	6 (15.0%)
Column Totals	7 (17.5%)	7 (17.5%)	21 (52.5%)	4 (10.0%)	1 (2.5%)	40 (100.0%)

Table 4.8: Years of teaching experience in ordinary schools by teacher types

KEY:

- Reply 1 - Up to 5 years of teaching experience.
- Reply 2 - Over 5 and less than or equal to 10 years of teaching experience.
- Reply 3 - Over 10 and less than or equal to 20 years of teaching experience.
- Reply 4 - Over 20 years of teaching experience.
- Reply 5 - No response.

Figures in brackets are percentages of the total teacher sample of 40 individuals.

in special education mainly fall within the compromiser type, only one of them belongs to compromiser-realist type. I am suggesting that teachers with fewer years of experience are more likely to become compromisers and less likely to adopt idealist trends.

The above observation contrasts with the one concerning teachers with over 10 years of experience. While idealist and compromiser teachers each comprise 7.5% of the total sample, idealist-compromisers and compromiser-realists each contain only 2.5% of the total. This pattern of distribution makes it difficult to explain why more of these teachers fall within idealist and compromiser types, and this may indicate that teachers with greater experience are also inclined to become compromisers. In the case of teachers with over one and up to five years of experience (reply 2) 57% of them belong to compromiser type, while of the teachers with experience between five and ten years (reply 3) only 20% belong to compromiser type.

Teacher Types	TEACHING EXPERIENCE IN SPECIAL SCHOOLS					Row Totals
	Reply 1	Reply 2	Reply 3	Reply 4	Reply 5	
IDEALIST	-	2	1	3	-	6 (15.0%)
IDEALIST COMPROMISER	-	5	1	1	-	7 (17.5%)
COMPROMISER	5	12	1	3	-	21 (52.5%)
COMPROMISER REALIST	1	2	2	1	-	6 (15.0%)
Column Totals	6 (15.0%)	21 (52.5%)	5 (12.5%)	8 (20.0%)	(-)	40 (100.0%)

Table 4.9: Years of teaching experience in special schools by teacher types

KEY:

Reply 1 - Up to 1 year of teaching experience.

Reply 2 - Over 1 and less than or equal to 5 years of teaching experience.

Reply 3 - Over 5 and less than or equal to 10 years of teaching experience.

Reply 4 - Over 10 years of teaching experience.

Reply 5 - No response.

Figures in brackets are percentages of the total teacher sample of 40 individuals.

On a qualitative analysis of teachers' attitudes in relation to their years of experience I found that all teachers in idealist and compromiser–realist types answered my questions firmly. It seems that these teachers had made up their minds about whether or not they could pursue their task the way they wanted.

On the one hand I could see teachers who were very enthusiastic about what they had accomplished in their years of experience. On the other hand I could detect traces of pessimism in teachers whose efforts were not rewarded as they had expected. The former types (the idealists) would continue striving to change problematic aspects of their job as best they could. The latter types, the compromiser-realists, would tend to accept the problems as they existed and would see no way of bringing about necessary changes.

For example, Mr. V., categorised as an idealist, had twenty years of experience in special education and could be considered as a pioneer of the system of special education in Greece. He thought that everything in special education is dependent upon the teachers:

“It is important to have certain facilities in the school, but in the end it is the teachers’ devotion that puts everything to work.”

Another teacher, Mr. B., who also had 20 years of experience in special education had a different view on the matter:

“I have been in this profession for so many years and don’t think that our voices can be heard at all, teachers on their own cannot do everything.”

I find it significant that the majority of newly appointed teachers all belonged to the type of compromiser. This may well be due to the influence of their training in the only college where a course for teaching the handicapped pupils is available. Apparently, the teachers who had just entered special education practice had not yet had the chance to try their ideas and were not very sure as to how to implement in practice the theoretical concepts they had been taught at college.

These teachers were not very certain about the exact contents of their task or about how they should proceed in carrying them out. Mrs. E., a teacher who had just began work in special education recounted that she was not quite sure how much she could help the mentally handicapped pupils and what to expect from them. In reply to several questions along this line of argument, I received statements such as:

“Well, I can’t answer for sure, perhaps you should ask the head teacher.”

In all the schools that I visited, teachers with fewer years of experience tended to do exactly as the head teacher instructed them to. Usually, head teachers had greater experience in special education than all other teachers in their school. In one school (a two-teacher unit) the reverse was the case and the head teacher, a compromiser, often took the advice of the other, more experienced teacher, an idealist-compromiser.

I must point out here that it is not very often that teachers with fewer years of experience are appointed as head teachers. This is an important factor in the management of special schools which may place the head teacher as the most experienced teacher in the school and therefore, if he/she wishes to be so, the most powerful. I will be discussing the management in the schools in a different section in this chapter and deal with this issue further.

In analysing teachers experience I could make a distinction between those compromisers who had greater experience in special schools and other teachers in this type. The former were more aware of what to expect of themselves or the system. In this case, teachers appeared to have accepted that there are certain things they cannot achieve and had conformed or even submitted to their work conditions. As one teacher with over 10 years of experience pointed out:

“In the beginning I was not sure whether I could do this job, but now I have learned from experience that we cannot do everything that we would like to...”

These teachers had already formed their opinions regarding their role, whereas teachers with fewer years of experience chose to compromise because they did not know how to handle certain cases. It would be interesting to study the views of the teachers with fewer years of experience some years later to see if their attitudes had changed and how their theoretical knowledge, acquired in their training course, had been reformed in the light of their practical experience.

The programmes of the training course expose teachers to a pool of theoretical concepts and ideas upon which teachers base their images of their role. All teachers in the sample but six had attended the special course. Those six were appointed either because of their experience with the mentally handicapped or on a temporary basis since in some special schools there is a shortage of teachers. I found out that teachers consider attendance of the course to be a very important aspect of their profession. This is in spite of the fact that not many teachers in the sample made reference to what they had learned in the course. Yet as they spoke of their qualifications, I got the impression that it was very important to them that they had completed the training course.

As mentioned above, qualification in special education resembles a formally required qualification by the members of a club. The minority who manage to enter the club without possessing this qualification are regarded rather differently:

“You know there are teachers here who don’t even have the qualification for teaching handicapped children. Well, this shouldn’t be the case.”

The minority who had not attended the course referred to their “*short-coming*” in different ways. Some were apologetic:

“I don’t have a qualification for teaching the mentally handicapped, but I thought to give it a try. They needed an extra teacher and I accepted to work here temporarily. Of course, I have to go through the course if I decide to continue.”

Some were frustrated for not having the formal qualification:

“I feel upset that here they don’t treat me as equal to those with the formal degree. Some weeks ago they had student teachers and they never brought them to my class.”

Although attendance of the course is considered very important only the newly appointed teachers used specific references to the knowledge they had gained in the college. Each teacher in the sample appeared to have formed a certain personal “*ideology*” on how the mentally handicapped should be dealt with which had been forged over the years of practice both in the ordinary as well as the special schools. These “*ideologies*” could have been modified as the result of external influences and interaction between the teachers and the others involved in the education system.

It is very difficult to analyse systematically the way in which teachers’ attitudes have changed throughout their years of experience, since this could be unknown to the teachers themselves. However, it is reasonable to assume here that teachers’ attitudes towards the education of the mentally handicapped are mainly formed during their years of practice. Teachers themselves in the

interviews stated that at times they had to change direction in their ways of thinking and acting in this profession regarding the experiences they had.

Having discussed the general aspects of the teachers' background I will proceed in the next chapter to discuss their views on different matters of importance in their profession.

5. SECTION THREE: CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOLS
IN THE SAMPLE.

In this section I am discussing the main features of the 13 schools of the sample, which were situated in different neighbourhoods of the Greater Athens region. I shall be focusing on issues which I elaborated in the course of my observations in the schools while looking at each school as a whole. I shall then attempt to integrate the results of the observation of the sample schools into a framework which would facilitate micro-analysis of teachers' attitudes in the light of the interviews and observation of individual classes.

This study will remain basically descriptive and concentrate on important characteristics of the schools, such as: years of operation, number of pupils and their type of handicap, number of teachers and their qualifications, the presence of other professionals in the schools, teaching material, school resources, and type of management.

5.1 Years of operation.

All the schools in the sample were State schools. Most of these (61.5 %) had come into operation just over ten years ago. Only one of the schools in the sample (7.0%) had been established less than five years ago; the remaining ones had already been in operation for between five and ten years. Table 4.10, below, shows years in operation of the schools in the survey. It suggests a significant reduction in the number of new schools set up in the last five years.

Years of operation	Number of schools	Percent of total school sample
• Up to 1 year	—	—
• 1 and less than 5 years	1	7.7
• 5 and less than 10 years	4	30.8
• Over 10 years	8	61.5
TOTAL	13	100.0

Table 4.10: Years of operation of the schools surveyed

The highest number of schools in the sample were those which had started their operation over ten years ago. The fact that the majority of the schools were over ten years old may indicate that in the past ten years there has been a reduction in the number of special schools. This is the reflection of the policy of integration.

Three of the schools belonging to the group of 8 older schools (see Table 4.10, above) operated independently from the ordinary schools and were located in their own grounds. One of the schools in this group shared the site with a nursery school which had only one class. All other schools of the group were

situated in sites shared with ordinary school complexes (see Table 4.18, below.) This further corroborates my earlier assumption that over the years there has been growing government interest to integrate the mentally handicapped in the community, rather than keep them separated from ordinary pupils. ⁽¹⁰⁾

This approach, however, has not been systematically pursued in all neighbourhoods. The usual procedure is that as soon as a school for the mentally handicapped starts operating in some area, the majority of the children in that area who are found to need help are sent to that particular school. Therefore in the neighbourhoods in which there have been segregated special schools operating for many years the possibility of integration with the ordinary schools is reduced. Such schools have been operating without any serious effort to become part of an ordinary school. At the same time the State pursues its integration programme by placing emphasis in the provision of special schools or units in the grounds of the ordinary schools where there are no special school facilities. It does not deal with integration of existing segregated units and allows them to operate the way they have been so far.

My selection of schools was guided by considerations of their geographical location within the Greater Athens region. Thus I sought to include units situated in central areas as well as others located in peripheral neighbourhoods. Segregated special schools with a longer history of operation were mainly situated in comparatively older neighbourhoods. Special schools occupying sites shared with ordinary schools tended to be situated in more recently developed suburbs. Pupils attending the sample schools came from all types of family background. There were pupils from families of, say, University professors to families of unskilled labourers. The teachers I interviewed did not refer to family income or social class as the major factors contributing to their pupils' situation.

5.2 Teacher/Pupil Ratio.

Table 4.11, below, indicates that in 8 schools the number of pupils was less than 45. The rest had more than 45 pupils. In further analysis I discovered a correlation between the location of the schools and the number of pupils. The number of pupils in the schools appears to be greater in the segregated than the integrated ones. Three of the segregated schools had over 45 pupils. Only two of the schools situated in ordinary school grounds had an equally large number of pupils (see Table 4.11, below). This could be due to shortage of space in the schools which are hosted in ordinary schools.

One of the segregated schools with about ten pupils is located within the special school for the blind, in the unit designated for the blind mentally handicapped. Since it is not suitable for all types of mentally handicapped pupils it is not highly populated.

Number of pupils	Number of schools	Percent of total school sample
• Less than 25	6	46.1
• 25 and less than 35	2	15.4
• Over 35 and up to 90	5	38.5
TOTAL	13	100.0

Table 4.11: Number of pupils in the survey schools

The available school spaces appear to determine also the number of teachers, since in every class there is usually only one teacher (see Table 4.12, below). There were only two schools with 8 teachers. The majority (30.8%) had two teachers. In one school, the head teacher had used the principle of an open

plan by dividing the same space between two teachers in order to overcome the space problem. This was not appreciated by the teachers who did not seem to be

Number of grades	Number of schools	% of all schools surveyed
2	4	30.8
3	3	23.1
4	1	7.7
6	3	23.1
8	2	15.3
TOTAL	13	100.0

Table 4.12: Number of teachers in the schools surveyed

at ease teaching while other teachers were present. They also claimed that this situation limited the possible range of activities in the classroom since different groups of pupils supervised by different teachers, had to follow the same programme. For instance, while one group is involved in maths another group cannot have music.

In Table 4.13, below, the teacher/pupil ratio ranges from 1:3 to 1:9. Only in two schools is there a ratio of 1:9. One of these schools was the only secondary school available for the mentally handicapped in the Greater Athens Region; the other school was the one with the open plan approach referred to above. The only school with a ratio of 1:3 was the unit for the blind mentally handicapped.

Teacher/pupil ratio	Number of schools	Percent of all schools surveyed
1:3	1	7.7
1:7	4	30.8
1:8	6	46.2
1:9	2	15.3
TOTAL	13	100.0

Table 4.13: Teacher/pupil ratio in the schools surveyed

From the preceding discussion it follows that there is usually one teacher assigned to a class of more than six pupils. These pupils can belong to different age groups, have varying degrees of handicap and, generally speaking, different kinds of "needs." In all the sample schools but one, pupils of primary and secondary age groups were mixed in the class. The exception was the only secondary school in Athens with all its pupils belonging to the secondary age group. The effect that such mixed groups may have upon the actual practices of the teachers is best studied in the context of the discussion of the teachers' operation in the classroom.

Teachers in the interviews invariably stated that they would do much better if they had fewer pupils to take care of. Some also stated that they would be able to cope better if they had some form of specialist help. This brings the discussion to the problem of the lack of qualified staff for the special schools, both in relation to the teachers and the other professionals.

5.3 School staff and qualifications.

The majority of the teachers in the sample schools had the Diploma in special education. In 6 schools there were teachers who had not followed the special education course, or teachers who had degrees in other fields such as psychology. Table 4.14, below, indicates the number of teachers with and without special education qualifications. Not all the teachers who are qualified as teachers in special education had followed the usual course of study in special education. Since some of the teachers had already been involved in the teaching

of the mentally handicapped before the special education course began to operate they were given qualifications because of their experience.

Teachers' qualifications	Number of schools	Percent of all schools surveyed
• Fully qualified	7	53.8
• Not all fully qualified	6	46.2
TOTAL	13	100.0

Table 4.14: Qualifications of teachers in the schools surveyed

Apart from qualified teachers there seems to be a shortage of other professionals in the schools. In 7 of the schools other professionals such as psychologists, speech therapists, social workers, etc., were present on a full-time basis (see Table 4.15, below). One school had an auxiliary teacher. Of the others, only 46.2% had the help of other professionals on an ad hoc basis. While I was interviewing the teachers I realised how those who had full-time help of other professionals were happy not to have to deal with all of the pupils all of the time.

Professional contribution	Number of schools	Percent of all schools surveyed
• Full-time in school	7	53.8
• Outside help on <i>ad hoc</i> basis	6	46.2
TOTAL	13	100.0

Table 4.15: Presence of other professionals in the schools

Among those who did not have such help, some thought that the presence of this type of help would have been a great relief not only to use their professional opinion but also to have a few pupils sent outside the classes for few hours

per week. This was particularly the case where the teachers concerned had to deal with children with different types of handicap.

Although the number of non-teacher professionals is very small in the sample schools, I observed that as soon as there is help from other professionals several issues tend to become the subject of dispute in the school. This problem is frequently referred to by researchers in other countries. ⁽¹¹⁾ A similar range of problems has also been recorded in the Greek situation. A conflict of approach between teachers and the other professionals is always a possibility. ⁽¹²⁾ This question which concerns essentially the relationship between the different professions in the schools will be discussed in the chapter five, below.

The point to be made at this stage is that, basically, shortage of professional help for the teachers makes the task of assessment of the pupils' needs and choice of method and material for teaching the sole responsibility of the teachers. In order to discuss this further it is necessary to analyse the type of pupils in the sample schools and the material used for teaching.

5.4 Type of pupil and teaching material.

The schools in the sample included pupils whom teachers found with different types of needs (see Table 4.16, below). Only in the special unit for the blind mentally handicapped all the pupils had a common need of learning Braille. However, pupils were categorised according to degree of ability to learn. Variation in the degree of pupils' ability was regarded by teachers as a major problem in organising suitable programmes for their classes. The majority of teachers preferred to rely on the ordinary school books as teaching aids. Since

in most classes different children could cope with different levels, teachers taught the first grade books up to the fifth grade.

The major issue in this context is the definition of the individual child's educational needs. This relates directly to the definition of handicap. As discussed in my literature review, mental handicap has to be defined in the social context where it is applied. The categorisation of the type of handicap that I have provided in Table 4.16, below, was based on the definitions that I received from the teachers and the head teachers while they referred to their pupils. ⁽¹³⁾

Categories of pupils	Number of schools	Percent of all schools surveyed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • P.M.H., S.M.H. & M.M.H. and not M.H. • M.H. & BLIND 	12	92.3
TOTAL	13	100.0

Table 4.16: Categories of pupils in the schools surveyed

There seemed to be four major categories of pupils in every school. First, there was the group of pupils in whom the teachers could not identify any specific problem apart from the fact that they could not learn with the expected speed or enthusiasm. These children were usually referred to as having behavioural problems and being lazy in school work, i.e., moderately mentally handicapped. I refer to them as M. M. H.

Second, there were pupils whose "*problems*" were more easily defined as they were of a more serious nature. These were children who were usually assessed by other professionals, e.g., psychologists, and their type of handicap was placed within one of the established categories of handicap, i.e., severely mentally handicapped I have referred to them as S. M. H.

Third, there were children whose problems were of a more complex nature. These pupils had no ability in communication, i.e. profoundly mentally handicapped. I have referred to them as P.M.H.

Fourth, the type of pupils who are very similar to the M.M.H. type but their teachers do not find them of low intelligence and do not consider them as mentally handicapped. I refer to them in this research as Not M.H.

In Table 4.16, above, I have referred to the pupils of one school in a separate row to indicate the existence of this category of pupils in my sample. Their teachers also grouped them within different degree of ability to learn as was the case in all other schools.

One of the major problems of teachers in the survey schools appears to be the wide variation in pupils learning ability. From the very first visits to the schools I found this subject at the top of the list of teachers' problems. I came across only a few teachers who could manage to provide for each one of their pupils material that was tailored to their individual needs.

Table 4.17, below, shows that in 8 out of 13 schools the material used was not only the ordinary school books but also additional material. This does not imply that all teachers in these eight schools produced their own teaching

Teaching material	Number of schools	Percent of all schools surveyed
• Ordinary school books	5	38.5
• School's or teacher's own	8	61.5
TOTAL	13	100.0

Table 4.17: Teaching material used in the schools surveyed

material, as in some cases the school (mainly head teacher) provided the teaching material. Only in four schools did all teachers use different material than the ordinary school books. In these schools the general teaching policy was to adjust the teaching material to suit the needs of the individual pupils. ⁽¹⁴⁾

Special schools are often faced with parents' demands for their children to be educated with the same material as the ordinary pupils. In one of the schools a former head teacher had originally put forward the idea of using different material than that of the ordinary schools. As a result he had been criticised by the parents. The present head teacher who is continuing with the same policy still finds it difficult to convince parents that their children need different types of teaching material than the ordinary school children.

In those schools where other teaching material than ordinary school books is used, not all the teachers agreed with the principle of producing their own material or using the school teaching material. Apart from the school for the blind mentally handicapped where there was an obvious necessity for the use of special equipment and material, in all the other schools there were teachers who did not believe it to be the school's responsibility to provide teaching material.

Some teachers who were willing to produce their own teaching material indicated that they are often faced with different problems such as lack of space or equipment to carry out their task. Here it is necessary to discuss the question of the resources available to the schools.

5.5 School resources.

Even though the schools I visited differed widely in relation to their physical environment, the equipment available in them did not vary noticeably. A large school with a large playground was not necessarily better organised than a smaller school. In Tables 4.18 to 4.20, below, I have attempted to provide some idea of the schools' environment using three different criteria. Table 4.18 shows the number of schools which were situated within ordinary schools and those schools which were independent in their own site.

Environmental criterion	Type of environment	Number of schools	Percent of schools
School site	• Schools sharing site with ordinary schools	9	69.2
	• Schools situated in their own site	4	30.8
TOTAL		13	100.0

Table 4.18: Type of school environment (Site)

A relatively large number of schools are situated in the grounds of ordinary schools. In observing them, the first issue that comes to mind is that a special school in such a location would afford its pupils greater scope and opportunity for integration with the other children. However, in my discussions with the head teachers and teachers of these schools, I was often given a rather grim view of their liaison with the ordinary school.

Usually the teachers of the two "integrated school units" did not seem to even meet each other on a daily basis let alone discuss their programmes. In two schools where the teachers used the same common rooms, I heard the teachers

of special schools complaining that they did not have their own room. One teacher said that he preferred to stay in his classroom than join the teachers of the “other” school. I should point out here that teachers in the special schools are usually very concerned about the prospects of integration with the ordinary schools. In many cases they make serious attempts to help their pupils integrate in the larger establishments. I was told that, unfortunately, such attempts are usually abandoned for a variety of reasons.

Despite the considerable pessimism shown by the sample teachers in that respect, there may be advantages to have special schools exposed to the problems of integration rather than leave the pupils for several years in an isolated and secure environment, some form of “*cocoon*” sheltered from the inequalities of the outside world. I noticed that teachers who worked in the independent schools did not have the same experience and clear grasp of such day to day problems. The second criterion that I have applied is the suitability of the school for the mentally handicapped. It is often taken for granted that as long as a child can walk there is no need for special provisions in the school buildings.

Tables 4.19 and 4.20, below, show the type of space and the playground arrangements, respectively, in the sample schools. Apart from the school for the blind mentally handicapped, in all the other schools which I visited the pupils

Environmental criterion	Type of environment	Number of schools	Percent of schools
School space	• Schools with suitable space for M.H. pupils	5	38.5
	• Schools with space not suitable for M.H. pupils	8	61.5
TOTAL		13	100.0

Table 4.19: Type of school environment (Space)

seemed to be able to circulate without any assistance. However, certain aspects of environmental design in some schools had not received due consideration as regards the children with special needs.

Environmental criterion	Type of environment	Number of schools	Percent of schools
School playground	• Schools with organised playground.	2	15.4
	• Schools without playground.	11	84.6
TOTAL		13	100.0

Table 4.20: Type of school environment (playground)

Such aspects concerned the general construction of the building and the use of space. They appeared to create obstacles and potential risks to the unassisted free movement of the handicapped pupils within the school grounds and buildings. They could easily have been avoided at the design stage for the sake of all pupils, irrespective of their individual capabilities. For instance, in several schools pupils had to climb up staircases with no safety provisions.

It was certainly not my intention to examine the safety standards in the schools I visited. However, some of these points were so obvious or mentioned so many times by the teachers that I thought they were well-worth taking a note of. I was rather astonished at the high quality of care the children would receive from the teachers in that respect. Obviously, this entailed further responsibility for the teachers who would have to maintain a thorough watch on their pupils even at break times.

The third criterion I have applied concerns the playground arrangements in the schools. In Table 4.20, above, I have shown that only two schools had

well arranged playground. In these schools there were green areas as well as some facilities for games in specially designated areas. This came into contrast with the overcrowded school yards of some of the schools where pupils could not even run freely. One school did not even have a yard.

As regards teaching equipment, all the schools had an acceptable stock of books, games and puzzles. Some schools also had projectors for slides, and photocopying facilities. There was no great variation among the schools in terms of their equipment. All the head teachers complained that their demands for additional necessary equipment were hardly ever taken into account by the state administration. One head teacher could not even manage to obtain a photocopying machine despite several requests he had made to the Ministry of Education and Religion.

In a discussion with the Director of the Special Education Department of the Ministry of Education and Religion, I was given the impression that the requests of the schools for equipment necessary to improve their environment and resources were usually examined favourably and met within the constraints of the national education budget allocation. However, the head teachers' list of priorities does not seem to coincide always with that of the authorities who decide on supplies and equipment for the schools.

The issue of the school resources touches upon the ways in which the administrative problems of the school are handled by the head teacher and opens up questions on the subject of management of the schools.

5.6 School management.

The characteristics discussed above provide a general image of the schools in which the sample teachers work. Years of operation of the schools, numbers of pupils per teacher, categories of pupils, qualifications of the staff, teaching material, the school's environment: these are all interrelated factors in influencing the teachers' patterns of practice and the beliefs that inform their work. It is not easy to point to one of these characteristics as being more significant in the operation of a school. The combination of these characteristics in each school creates a unique situation which makes the school a separate entity with its own patterns of operation. There were no two schools which I could categorise here as identical in all of their characteristics.

The uniqueness of each school creates a major methodological problem for studying the teachers' pattern of attitudes and practice. If every single school has a unique pattern of operation then those involved in its functioning would have to practice according to that pattern. Methodological emphasis would then have to be placed on studying each school as a whole rather than focusing on individual teachers. The study of one teacher's work would have provided sufficient information to infer how the rest of the school operated. However, in actual practice there was no school in my sample which presented such a coherent pattern of operation, even though that pattern was more dynamic in some schools.

I had collected data on the schools while I interviewed the teachers and I could see that teachers in the same school did not always follow the same path. Having observed the variation in their attitudes I decided to explore the way in which they worked as a team in the school, i.e., following a particular pattern of practice at school. In short, I sought to provide an answer to the question of

how individual teachers with different attitudes managed to work together. In every school there appeared to be a certain management style which was influencing teachers' practice.

This is not to say that all teachers followed the same pattern at all times. There appeared to be an understanding of the ways in which every member carried out their duties. For example, in one school the head teacher was the centre of all decision making activities while in another school all the teachers seemed to have a say.

In defining such patterns in a school Handy and Aitkin (1986) maintain that the management of every school just as that of any other organisation is based on a certain model of "*culture*" or a series of "*deep-set beliefs*" that can influence the whole school structure. In this section of the paper I am providing an account of the types of culture I came across in the schools.

This is the result of human interaction in the specific context in which rules are to be applied. In other words, each individual teacher is capable of creating his/her own pattern of practice within the wider context of rules put forward by the head teacher. The combination of all these sets of rules and the way in which they influence the operation of a school evolves a certain "*culture,*" even though "*...culture cannot be precisely defined for it is something that is perceived, something felt.*" (Handy, *op. cit.*, pp.196-197)

In describing the types of cultures which can appear in an organization Handy ⁽¹⁵⁾ provides a more detailed characterisation of the concept of culture by creating four models. I am using those four models which depict the types of cultures in order to describe the management aspects of the sample schools (Table 4.21, below.) I shall then proceed to explain how I decided on the management culture in each school, by providing examples of each type in the

sample schools. I developed these culture types as I proceeded with my observation in different schools, comparing their management structures.

Type of management	Number of schools	Percent of schools
• Power Culture	2	15.4
• Role Culture	6	46.2
• Task Culture	3	23.0
• Person Culture	2	15.4
TOTAL	13	100.0

Table 4.21: Type of school management

The first type of culture is the “*power*” culture. It may be depicted as a web, developed around a central power force. The whole activity in this type of organization depends on the way in which its central feature wishes to operate. Among the schools in the sample two schools had such characteristics. In these schools the central power force was the head teacher who set the rules and had little tolerance if the teachers diverted from them.

These two schools were not very similar in terms of their other characteristics. While the one school was very small in size (two grades only) the other was a large school with six grades. The former school had a minimum amount of equipment and personnel while the latter possessed a relatively high level of such facilities, e.g., large and well equipped playground, the services of a social worker. The method and material for teaching were also different. The larger school followed a child centred approach and the head teacher produced the teaching material himself. The smaller school followed a traditional method of teaching and the ordinary school books were used.

The only other teacher (Mrs. E.) in the smaller school followed the head teacher (Mr. B.) in every respect in teaching. In discussions she often referred

to his views on special education. I had categorised the head teacher of this school as a compromiser-realist and the teacher as compromiser. Mr. B., a teacher with more than twenty years of experience had stated to me very clearly that he was so disappointed with the way the system worked he was not prepared *“to do anything more.”* His views had influenced Mrs. E. who was a young teacher with less than five years of experience.

Power culture existed in this school mainly due to the small size of school and the younger teachers lack of experience. There was no dispute over any issue Mr. B. decided and Mrs. E. followed. In the larger school the pattern was slightly different. The head teacher Mr H, whom I had categorised as an idealist-compromiser, did not have the full support of his staff. In that school there was one idealist teacher, one compromiser-realist and the rest were compromisers. ⁽¹⁶⁾

The idealist teacher was the teacher who was more than other teachers in conflict with Mr. H. She told me that she produced her own material and followed her own initiative in the classroom. The head teacher was in conflict with this teacher. He considered her as a strong minded individual who did not want to work in a group. Throughout my observation I noticed that this teacher did follow her own way in the classroom but in the schools affairs the head teacher did not allow her to interfere. This head teacher had no trouble with the rest of the teachers. The compromiser-realist teacher, however, told me that he was not quite sure of Mr. H.'s programmes yet he was the head and a teacher had to follow him.

The second form of culture is the *“role”* culture. Handy characterises this type of culture by employing the metaphor of the Greek temple: each pillar is situated for a specific function and is coordinated at the top by a narrow band of senior management. In a school with this type of culture there is an emphasis on

the division of labour and specialisation in particular tasks. There exists a certain element of security and predictability since everyone's task is well defined. Six of the sample schools had adopted this type of culture.

These schools had varying characteristics. Two larger schools in this category had eight grades each. The other four included a two-grade, a three-grade, a four-grade and a six-grade school. The school with two grades was in need of extra professional help, teaching equipment, and an organized playground. Despite its suitable environment the school with three grades lacked teaching equipment. The school with four grades was in need of equipment and more teachers. The school with six grades had serious problems regarding its building facilities which lacked a playground and the pupils had to climb up an old staircase to reach their classrooms.

In schools with a role culture there emerged a predictable pattern of behaviour. Each individual teacher knew his/her limitations. The role of the teachers in these schools was to concentrate on their teaching within their own classroom. Administrative affairs of the schools were the responsibility of the head teachers. This aspect of the role culture is similar to that of the power culture. The major difference between these two types of culture was that teachers in the schools with role culture had a freer hand in choosing their method and teaching material. However, they were not able to participate fully in the school's administrative affairs.

The third type of culture which I came across was the "*task*" culture which I encountered in three schools. The emphasis here is more on expert power than on position or personal power as was the case in the cultures mentioned earlier on. Groups, teams or task forces are formed to accomplish a certain task, each expert functioning as a knot would function in a net (Handy, op. cit.)

Among the schools falling in this category there was one with two grades, one with three grades and one with six grades. These schools had different characteristics and although they were all situated in the grounds of ordinary school complexes each was facing different problems. The smallest school had serious problems of accommodation and teaching equipment. The three-grade school needed the services of other types of experts, e.g., social worker or psychologist.

In a school in which absence of an expert is interpreted by teachers as a shortcoming the task culture could still operate even without the presence of some of its distinguishing characteristics. For example, in the school mentioned above, absence of a social worker or a psychologist did not result in teachers accepting to carry out the specialists' duties. In the case of forms of management other than the "*task*" type, members of staff appear to be willing to fill in the gaps in specialists' services to the extent of their abilities. For instance, in one of the schools with "*role*" culture one of the teachers with a background in psychology was being consulted by other teachers when they saw the need.

Dependence on experts' contribution could be seen in the largest school in the category of TASK culture, in which there was a problem of relationships between the school staff with the staff of the mainstream school with which they were sharing the site. The task of dealing with this problem was left to the social worker who was expected to sort out the differences, e.g., whether pupils from both schools could share the playground at the same time, or as regards joint arrangements for school outings.

The fourth type of culture which I came across in two schools is the "*person*" culture. Handy maintains that this type of culture does not often pervade the organizations. There are, however, individuals who favour its values and try to apply them in practice:

“If a group of individuals decide that it is in their own interest to band together to follow their bents, to do their own things, and that an office, a space, some equipment ... would help, then the resulting culture would have a person culture.” ⁽¹⁷⁾

The structure of a “*person*” culture is as minimum as possible, and human motives and their interactions are very crucial. A “*person*” culture in an organization, such as of school comes into existence only as the result of the individual teacher’s motives, in particular the head teacher. The structure of a school cannot be officially based on such a culture and only in practice could the elements of a “*person*” culture be seen.

The schools in the sample in which I came across a “*person*” culture were both small scale. One had two grades and the other three grades. In the two-grade school the head teacher thought highly of the other teacher who was many years his senior. Many decisions were made by the teacher rather than the head teacher without any conflict of opinion. Answering my questions the head teacher referred me several times to the other teacher:

“I think you should ask Mrs. M. about this, she knows better than I.” Or: *“In this case Mrs. M. decided to ... ”*

The same situation was present in the school with three grades where all the three teachers (head teacher included) were “*old pals*” and decided jointly on everything. It was not surprising that despite the absence of any other professionals in this school, the teachers did not seem to be very keen to receive outside help. They thought the presence of an outsider might influence, in a negative way, the harmonious way in which they operated in the school.

The use of the above models of cultures in describing the schools' management might imply that the patterns of practice in the schools were rather static and always followed the same routine. The analysis of teachers' reactions to these patterns provides for a different understanding of the situation.

6. CONCLUSIONS.

The main research design was also prepared within a flexible framework which could accommodate the possible needs for change. The ethnographic approach used in the exploratory research was also applied in the collection of data and their analysis. Considering the importance of teachers' work environment I included a discussion about the characteristics of the schools in order to clarify different aspects of teachers' working conditions. The data derived from this source indicated certain variation in schools' characteristics which I assumed would be influential upon teachers' operations.

The characteristics of the teachers were also discussed in this chapter. Thanks to the method of research I was able to categorise teacher types in the course of the research; and the sample characteristics are given according to teachers' type. Having discussed the characteristics of teachers and schools I will now proceed to analyse the way in which teachers interact in the schools, what approaches they take in relation to different aspects of their pupils and others with whom they are interacting within the school as well as influences outside the school.

By taking into account the influence of the teachers' interpretations of the possibilities of putting their beliefs into practice the typology of teachers based on negative/positive tendencies did not seem to be adequate in defining teachers' perceptions. The type of explanation I had provided in the exploratory stage provided a general guideline for discovering how teachers characterise their pupils, educate them and interpret their possibilities of integration.

CHAPTER FIVE

PROFESSIONAL IDEOLOGIES AND PRACTICE OF SPECIAL EDUCATION

CHAPTER FIVE

PROFESSIONAL IDEOLOGIES AND PRACTICE OF SPECIAL EDUCATION

1. INTRODUCTION

Results from observations and interviews in the sample schools reveal two different aspects of teachers' views concerning the education of the mentally handicapped. On the one hand they tend to define teachers' professional ideologies on the subject and, on the other hand, they offer insights into teachers' views on how the task of education of the mentally handicapped could be carried out in practice.

First, by "*professional ideologies*" I am implying the sets of values that teachers attach to their task in teaching: ⁽¹⁾ in other words, what they believe they should do and what their aims should be in teaching the mentally handicapped. Second, each teacher may develop certain personal preferences in the choice of approach for dealing with the mentally handicapped pupils. Teachers tend to introduce such personal preferences in everyday special education practice: into the classroom process within which a child is educated. Teachers' perceptions of their mentally handicapped pupils are built through the daily interactions that constitute these processes.

It is by no means a straightforward task to draw a line between teachers' professional ideologies and the approaches they take in actual practice. Teachers in the sample did not always account for their actions by stating whether the approach they took was in fact what they believed was best suited for each particular case. Rather, by way of the interviews and observations I could see that the pattern through which the mentally handicapped were characterised and educated did not depend fully on teachers' own preferences.

This became apparent as I compared my notes on three different results which I had gathered through interviews and observations:

- a. the content of what teachers referred to as their personal beliefs;
- b. the extent to which they thought they could apply their beliefs in practice;
- c. the extent to which they in fact applied those beliefs in practice.

The first section concerns personal beliefs. Results are drawn from teachers' responses concerning two main issues: (i) their motives in becoming a special education teacher; (ii) their interpretation of who a mentally handicapped pupil is and what their potential is for being educated, integrated in the community and leading an independent life. The second section of this chapter, concerns teachers' interpretations of what they have defined as most significant issues relevant to their work, namely: their attitude towards other professionals in the special schools, their views towards the parents of their pupils; their accounts of the school's shortcomings and, finally, the general conditions of life for a mentally handicapped individual in society. This analysis will help reveal the possibilities they see open to them to apply their beliefs in practice.

In section three of this chapter I am discussing the results of my observations and interviews with reference to specific cases in the classroom. Teachers' views that are put forward in relation to specific pupils are useful in providing operational definitions for the abstract concepts teachers referred to in section one of this chapter.

I will be discussing these issues in the three sections of this chapter. In each section I will be comparing teachers' views and practices in different types. At some points there may be underlying similarities between teachers responses at some others variations may appear. The use of tables in discussing the relevant issues is not meant to produce exact correspondence between each teacher's type and their responses. Rather, I have tried to show how teachers in some respects follow a uniform pattern of attitude but in their reaction to certain issues they vary.

2. SECTION I: TEACHERS' PROFESSIONAL IDEOLOGIES

Before I begin my analysis of teachers' attitudes I will discuss their motives in becoming teachers of special education. ⁽²⁾ This is important as it may reveal their personal feelings towards their profession and the pupils they deal with. For example, teachers may have become interested in the job because they felt strongly that they could help make education available to all handicapped children; and that these children could be helped to integrate if appropriate education were to be provided for them.

Such a motive brought into the system of special education can help explain changes that may arise in the profession when dealing with the mentally

handicapped pupils. Teachers' motives in becoming teachers of mentally handicapped pupils could be taken as a starting point for discovering the perception they hold of their pupils.

2.1 Motives in becoming a special education teacher.

Although all the teachers in the sample pointed out that they wanted to help the mentally handicapped, it was not always the case that this motive had been the most important reason for their choice of profession. Table 5.1, below, shows the kinds of motives given by teachers in each type.

Teacher Types	MOTIVES IN BECOMING A SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHER						Row Totals
	Reply 1	Reply 2	Reply 3	Reply 4	Reply 5	Reply 6	
IDEALIST	4	-	1	-	-	1	6 (15.0%)
IDEALIST COMPROMISER	-	-	4	1	1	1	7 (17.5%)
COMPROMISER	2	-	13	-	1	5	21 (52.5%)
COMPROMISER REALIST	1	1	2	1	1	-	6 (15.0%)
Column Totals	7 (17.5%)	1 (2.5%)	20 (50.0%)	2 (5.0%)	3 (7.5%)	7 (17.5%)	40 (100.0%)

Table 5.1: Teachers' motives in becoming involved in special education by teacher types

KEY:

Reply 1 - Compassion for special children.

Reply 2 - To earn a higher salary.

Reply 3 - To broaden own knowledge and gain further degree.

Reply 4 - To move to Athens from the provinces.

Reply 5 - No particular motive.

Reply 6 - Other reasons.

Figures in brackets are percentages of the total teacher sample of 40 individuals.

This table reveals that the motive of half of the teachers was to broaden their knowledge and gain a further degree. Only 7 teachers had chosen this vocation due to their interest in helping the mentally handicapped children. Among these, four were idealist teachers. Two out of forty teachers felt that by choosing this profession they could get a chance to teach inside the Athens region where living standards are higher than in the places where they worked before as ordinary school teachers.

Athens has the highest number of schools and special classes in Greece and there is great demand for teachers of the mentally handicapped. There was also one teacher who gave as his principal motive the desire to earn a higher salary. The most usual comments I received from teachers on why they had chosen this profession were:

"I wanted to get a new degree."

"I thought it was better for my family to move into Athens and I also wanted to know about special education."

"I wanted to get a degree and also I wanted to help special children."

There were three teachers who didn't refer to any specific motive in becoming involved in special education. I have no way of defining their motives although I could reasonably suggest that the higher salary offered to special education teachers had been the most likely attraction for their choice. My reasons for suggesting this are based on the teachers' indirect comments about the extra pay involved in this job which made a very significant contribution to their family budget.

Apart of the above motives, seven teachers referred to other motives such as shorter working hours for higher pay, less tiring work, higher job satisfaction,

proximity of workplace to place of residence. I would not dismiss the possibility that such advantages do play an important role in attracting teachers to special education, even though not all teachers in the sample chose to refer to them. For instance, it would be interesting to see how many teachers would consider continuing work for the mentally handicapped without the advantages that are currently available to them.

The study of teachers' motives indicates that the concept of professionalism and not charity prevails as regards dealing with special children. Teachers of the mentally handicapped believe that they are doing a job and not a favour. In this respect, the idea of charity and pity is replaced by the concept of therapy and education. The challenge for the teachers is to do something to change the mentally handicapped pupils into independent individuals who may integrate in the community, rather than protect them as helpless beings. Even those teachers who stated their motive was to help children, translated the concept of help as educating rather than feeling pity for their pupils.

The notion of professionalism in the field of education can be the first and most vital step in considering seriously the education of the handicapped. ⁽³⁾ Having worked for a few years in Greece with a number of charity organizations I can differentiate between the attitude of a teacher who earns a living within the system of special education and that of a member of a charity organisation who believes the handicapped people are the forgotten ones and need only love and protection.

The way in which a teacher deals with a child might even look cruel to those who work for charity, because the former mainly strives for progress in the child's general state of being and tries to treat the special child as a pupil. In contrast to the professional, the charity motivated person could not dream of blaming a handicapped child for some "*improper*" conduct. I can recall the

strong protest of a visitor from a charity organization in one of the schools I have been to. She could not understand how the teacher could bear to “*punish*” any of those “*poor children*” since they were actually “*not responsible for their actions.*”

Teachers are likely to rely on their knowledge of the phenomenon of mental handicap and on scientific ways of defining it as well as the possible ways of “*dealing with it.*” As I have shown in my discussion of their motives this is one of the reasons why many of them have become teachers of mentally handicapped pupils. I am expanding on this issue below by discussing teachers’ characterisation of the mentally handicapped pupils and the possibilities they see for them in terms of integration and independent living.

2.2 Definition of Mental handicap.

The most important aspect of the teachers personal views regarding their task of teaching being the definition of the mental handicap is the most difficult for them to specify. Teachers do not use a singular definition of mental handicap applicable to all pupils. As was the case in the exploratory research, teachers often used real life examples in defining mental handicap.

Comparing the results of my exploratory research, with the criteria that teachers had used in defining mental handicap in my main research indicates great similarities. Teachers associated certain degrees of handicap with the type of ability they found in their pupils in a relatively uniform fashion. Teachers also referred to different criteria such as lack of communication skills, behavioural

and emotional problems, low level of intelligence in associating to different degrees of handicap.

These criteria were referred to as a type of reasoning behind some children's difficulties to learn. I have referred to the ways in which teachers classified their pupils into different groups, in the exploratory research, i.e., the type of criteria I had mentioned in Table 3.4, chapter three. Tables 5.2a-5.2d, below, show the views of the teachers in the main research. The range of criteria referred to by the teachers indicate that they differentiate between three major degrees of mental handicap. The first and second types being those of profound and severe mentally handicapped are mainly characterised by physical and psychological criteria.

According to teachers' accounts, a profoundly mentally handicapped pupil has very limited vocabulary, is unable to follow simple instructions, copy letters or recognise sounds in reading (Table 5.2a, below).

	Criteria of primary importance	Criteria of secondary importance
Profoundly mentally handicapped	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Child is unable to communicate 2. Professional diagnosis 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Family problems 2. Emotional disturbances 3. Social stigma

Table 5.2a: Criteria applied by teachers in the sample to define the concept of mental handicap (P.M.H.)

Teachers refer to a pupil as severely mentally handicapped who is capable of following simple instructions, can learn socialisation skills, but has serious difficulty in following instructions in school subjects even though they can be taught simple words to read and write, such as their names, road signs (Table 5.2b, below).

Degree of mental handicap	Criteria of primary importance	Criteria of secondary importance
Severely mentally handicapped	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Child is not articulate 2. Professional diagnosis 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Family problems 2. Emotional disturbances 3. Social stigma

Table 5.2b: Criteria applied by teachers in the sample to define the concept of mental handicap (S.M.H.)

The third category of mentally handicapped pupils is associated with a behavioural and social problems of the individual's background. It concerns the type of child who can communicate comfortably and socialise with the other children and adults, and can learn basic skills in reading and writing but at a lower pace and level than that expected by teachers (Table 5.2c, below).

Degree of mental handicap	Criteria of primary importance	Criteria of secondary importance
Moderately mentally handicapped	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Behavioural aspects 2. Emotional disturbance 3. Family problems 4. Low school performance mainly due to lack of ability to learn 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Social stigma 2. Professional diagnosis

Table 5.2c: Criteria applied by teachers in the sample to define the concept of mental handicap (M.M.H.)

Teachers characterise a child as Not mentally handicapped when they cannot detect any particular physical or psychological problems which could account for the child's low school performance. They find them basically uninterested in school work but capable of learning (Table 5.2d, below).

Degree of mental handicap	Criteria of primary importance	Criteria of secondary importance
Not mentally handicapped	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Behavioural aspects 2. Low school performance due to lack of interest to learn, but otherwise as capable as ordinary schoolchild 3. Emotional disturbance 4. Family problems 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Social stigma 2. Other professionals have defined them as handicapped

Table 5.2d: Criteria applied by teachers in the sample to define the concept of mental handicap (Not M.H.)

The major concern for teachers appears to be communication skills in a child. Once a child is able to communicate he/she is considered of a more able individual. In the more severe cases teachers depend more on medical and psychological diagnosis. This, however, does not imply that they assess the degree of mental handicap in the same way as the other professionals would do.

Teachers do not categorise their pupils according to their medical background. For example, no teacher grouped all pupils with Down's Syndrome in one group separated from the others on the basis of their specific medical condition. Even in the special unit for the blind mentally handicapped pupils teachers grouped pupils based on their level of ability to learn.

There were cases in which the specific medical condition may have influenced a particular teacher's view, e.g., a child with Down's Syndrome is bound to be severely handicapped and incapable of learning, therefore he/she would best be grouped with the severely handicapped. Yet there were teachers who grouped their Down's Syndrome pupils within the range of mildly mentally handicapped pupils. The existence of a medical condition by itself was not the only reason for the teachers to categorise their pupils, but one of the major criteria.

Teachers among compromisers and compromiser realist types usually referred to these children by applying the label and did not see any necessity to explain to me their problems any further. For example, a "*compromiser*" teacher pointed out:

"You can see for yourself that this child is a mongol, surely you know about their problems."

This contrasts with the view of an idealist compromiser teacher who spoke about a child in the same category:

“Don’t think that because this child has Down’s Syndrome she is in a very low level in the class; it is amazing how each child in this category has different capabilities.”

Medical or psychological labels may prejudice teachers’ views in presupposing the degree of learning ability in some cases. For instance, if the teacher has access to the child’s I Q, that may become a criterion for the evaluation of some pupil’s ability to learn. There are teachers who question these diagnoses and doubt the validity of the other professionals’ reports.

Teachers would not categorise their pupils on the basis of their social and psychological background either. For instance, they would not put those from a one parent family in one group and the rest in another. The category of the mildly mentally handicapped was referred to as an indication of the level of a child’s capacity to learn. They were supposed to do better in their school subjects than the severe cases. For instance, in a class of eight pupils with both severe and mild cases, a teacher had a clear view of which pupils belonged to what category of learning capacity and the teaching material was adjusted accordingly.

My aim in defining teachers’ perceptions was to find out how the categories were defined and what type of approach was taken by teachers in their practice of special education. In these cases teachers followed their particular educational programmes not simply because of those pupils’ exact level of I Q or level of their disruptive behaviour. Rather, they had a general personal way of assessing how much a child could learn and how much they could teach them.

Although the type of categorisation made by teachers corresponds to the type of categorisation of the mentally handicapped in official guidelines of the system of special education and the theoretical framework presented to the teachers, it is not necessarily the case that teachers' criteria correspond to those of the other professionals who initially refer the pupils to the special schools. Teachers use terms such as trainable, severe or educable because in their training courses and practice of special education they have been given these terms as the scale to refer to the degree of handicap.

However, since even theoretically the boundaries between these degrees are not universally agreed upon, teachers are likely to apply different criteria in placing their pupils. As a result they may disagree with the psychologist or the medical personnel in establishing the degree of handicap and the ability of an individual to learn. On several occasions I heard teachers commenting on the way in which a child had been "wrongly" diagnosed and placed in an unsuitable school or class.

This lack of confidence in the work done by the other professionals is particularly apparent when: firstly, a child has no problem in communicating and does not have any specific physical features which would enable the teacher to place him in a certain group of mentally handicapped pupils. Secondly when a pupil is considered as not educable by the teachers.

For instance, in a discussion with a psychologist in one of the sample schools I mentioned that some teachers refer to their pupils as very severely handicapped and not educable. She was very critical of the teachers' suggestions. She accused them of not having the ability to use the scientific criteria which psychologists use in order to categorise their pupils. This type of conflict between the teachers in my sample and other professionals was not a rare occurrence. I have already referred to such problems in my discussion on inter-

professional relationship. My aim in this section is to explain how teachers themselves characterised their pupils in the classes I carried out observations.

Educable handicapped pupils according to teachers were those who were placed in special schools not mainly due to very low intelligence or lack of communication skills. The major problems were referred to as "*lack of interest*", "*family problems*", "*behavioural problems*". Such a pupil, according to teachers is able to learn some basic subjects within the range of the curriculum of the ordinary schools. Teachers concept of education reflects their view of educability.

Therefore, to teachers any child who cannot fulfil such standard is regraded as not educable. This may lead to prejudice by the teachers towards the less able pupils. While they can tolerate the existence of those pupils they consider as not mentally handicapped, they may be unwilling to take charge of education of pupils whom they consider as unable to learn.

For instance, the type of pupils referred to by teachers as profoundly handicapped were placed in the special schools under the label of educable by the specialists such as psychologists but teachers did not even consider them as trainable. Teachers explained that these children could not speak or follow them at all, whereas the severe cases had some basic language skill and could follow some instructions. Professionals such as the psychologists mentioned above appeared to be almost terrified at the suggestion that even severe cases were referred to special schools for the educable let alone the profoundly handicapped. Teachers' accounts of different degrees of "*educability*" appears to be varied from the accounts of other specialists.

If profoundly handicapped pupils are not supposed to be registered in the State run special schools under the supervision of the Department of Special

education, then the presence of these children in special schools may be due to the fact that teachers' way of categorising their pupils is different from those of the other professionals who originally refer children to special schools. Consequently the ways in which some teachers proceed to teach the pupils with higher level of handicap may vary from their approach towards the more able groups. I will discuss some of these issues in the following pages to define the general trends teachers chose to assess their pupils prospects. I will then examine these general trends in section three of this chapter to show how teachers deal with specific cases in classroom situations.

2.3 Teachers' attitudes towards integration.

In spite of the fact that teachers are not prepared to provide a precise definition of mentally handicapped pupils in an abstract sense they seem fairly sure of the type of education they would benefit from, the possibilities of their integration and all other aspects of education of the mentally handicapped.

As I mentioned in my exploratory research integration may be defined in different contexts. In a limited sense of the term, it may be seen only in the context of the possibility of acceptance of the handicapped pupils in the ordinary schools. In a wider sense of the term, integration may refer to the "*mutual acceptance of the society and the handicapped person.*" Furthermore, the definition of integration may be extended to the subject of the handicapped person's position in the community, i.e., the individual's abilities to lead an "*independent*" life, e.g., getting a job or having a family. ⁽⁴⁾

The above interpretations of the term integration are all relative to the particular context in which they apply. In this sense integration remains to be defined operationally by those who are involved in a system of special education. The majority of teachers in the sample expressed their views on the subject with regard to integration in the ordinary schools. Since the scope of my study involved the analysis of integration from a more general point of view, I had to ask the teachers to amplify their views so as to take in other aspects of integration as well. This was not always welcome by the teachers because they thought their role was limited mainly to dealing with the aspects of the pupils' school life rather than their integration in the community or their future. Yet most teachers had a relatively clear idea of what their pupils could expect outside of the special schools.

In the interviews I asked teachers whether they believed it was possible to integrate the mentally handicapped pupils in the community and the school and whether they thought there was a possibility of the pupils leading an independent life. In the case of those teachers who provided negative answers I asked for their reasons. These were found to be relevant to the children's own limitations, to the constraint inherent in the society and to the limitation of schools.

The responses of teachers towards the subject of integration are shown in Tables 5.3, 5.4 and 5.5, below. These replies were given in a general context without referring to specific cases. I pursued each response further, during the observation phase, to determine how each individual case was viewed by the teachers and establish correspondence between interview response and actual practice. ⁽⁵⁾ The tables show how teachers in each type conceived of the possibilities of integration for the mentally handicapped both in the schools and the community at large.

Table 5.3, below, presents teachers' views on the possibility of integration of the mentally handicapped pupils in the community. Two of the idealist teachers suggested that it is mainly the shortcomings in the schools which present obstacles to integration. One idealist referred to constraints in the society as major problems in integration of the mentally handicapped. One idealist saw that integration was possible in all cases and the remaining two thought that the majority of the mentally handicapped were able to integrate in the community.

Teacher Types	VIEWS ON INTEGRATION IN THE COMMUNITY							Row Totals
	Negative Replies				Positive Replies			
	Reply 1	Reply 2	Reply 3	Reply 4	Reply 5	Reply 6	Reply 7	
IDEALIST	-	1	2	-	1	-	2	6 (15.0%)
IDEALIST COMPROMISER	1	2	1	-	2	1	-	7 (17.5%)
COMPROMISER	5	8	5	1	2	-	-	21 (52.5%)
COMPROMISER REALIST	3	-	2	-	-	1	-	6 (15.0%)
Column Totals	9 (22.5%)	11 (27.5%)	10 (25.0%)	1 (2.5%)	5 (12.5%)	2 (5.0%)	2 (5.0%)	40 (100.0%)

Table 5.3: Teachers' views on integration in the community by teacher types

KEY:

- Reply 1 - Integration is not possible due to the limitations of the handicapped child.
- Reply 2 - Integration is not possible due to constraints inherent in society.
- Reply 3 - Integration is not possible due to the limitations of the schools.
- Reply 4 - Integration is not possible due to a combination of the above three factors.
- Reply 5 - Integration is possible in all of the cases.
- Reply 6 - Integration is possible only for the M.M.H.
- Reply 7 - Integration is possible in the majority of cases.

Figures in brackets are percentages of the total teacher sample of 40 individuals.

Idealist teachers did not refer to the limitations in their pupils as obstacle in integration. This was a criterion referred to by some teachers in the other types. There are similarities between the idealist teachers' replies and teachers from other types in relation to other replies. For example, constraints in the society and limitation in schools were referred to by several other teachers. These shared views on the type of problem, however, do not necessarily bring about similar

type of action to deal with the problems. The variation among different types may be observed in the teachers' actual practice. The most important aspect of the idealist teachers in respect to this subject is that they are not using their pupils limitations as the reason for their inability to integrate in the community.

Results show that idealist compromisers had relatively similar views to that of the idealists. Thus, only one teacher considered the limitations of the pupils as the major obstacle in integration. Moreover, only one teacher thought integration was possible in the milder cases alone. About 29% of teachers in this type thought all the cases of mental handicap could be integrated. The same proportion of teachers regarded limitations inherent in society as the main obstacle to integration and, finally, one teacher felt that shortcomings in the ordinary schools were responsible for any failure to integrate the mentally handicapped pupils.

The level of enthusiasm drops off further in the case of compromisers. Here 23% of these teachers refer to deficiencies in the schools as the main obstacles to successful integration. An equal number regarded limitations of the pupils as the major impediment to full integration. Over one third of compromisers pointed out that problems in integration lay in society in general. One teacher in this group stated that all of the factors mentioned played an influential role in integration. Only two teachers (9.6% of the total number of compromisers) responded that integration should be possible in all cases.

In the case of compromiser realists half of the teachers did not consider integration in the community as a possibility for the mentally handicapped due to their limitations and disability. Two teachers referred to the schools' shortcomings as obstacles to integration. Only one teacher out of six compromiser realists accepted the possibility of integration of the M.M.H. pupils. Results obtained here are different from those concerning the issue of integration

in ordinary schools. Of the total sample only two teachers accepted that integration in ordinary schools should be possible in all cases of mental handicap. This is less than half of the number who accepted integration in the community.

Teachers' reluctance in sending their pupils to ordinary schools can be seen clearly in reply 3 of Table 5.4, below, where 45% of the teachers blamed the ordinary schools for not managing to cope with the mentally handicapped. Only 15% of the total sample thought that only milder cases of handicapped pupils would be able to follow the ordinary schools. Idealist and idealist compromisers seemed to be least in favour of integration of their pupils in ordinary schools, due to shortcomings in the schools and the community. They pointed out that they believed, in principle, in the eventual integration of their pupils in the ordinary schools, but they just did not believe that their pupils would benefit more from ordinary education: *"These children can learn something here, in an ordinary school they will be forgotten."*

Teacher Types	VIEWS ON INTEGRATION IN ORDINARY SCHOOLS							Row Totals
	Negative Replies			Positive Replies				
	Reply 1	Reply 2	Reply 3	Reply 4	Reply 5	Reply 6	Reply 7	
IDEALIST	-	-	4	1	-	1	-	6 (15.0%)
IDEALIST COMPROMISER	1	2	3	-	1	-	-	7 (17.5%)
COMPROMISER	4	-	9	1	3	-	4	21 (52.5%)
COMPROMISER REALIST	2	-	2	-	2	-	-	6 (15.0%)
Column Totals	7 (17.5%)	2 (5.0%)	18 (45.0%)	2 (5.0%)	6 (15.0%)	1 (2.5%)	4 (10.0%)	40 (100.0%)

Table 5.4: Teachers' views on integration in ordinary schools by teacher types

KEY:

- Reply 1 - Integration is not possible due to the limitations of the handicapped child.
- Reply 2 - Integration is not possible due to constraints inherent in society.
- Reply 3 - Integration is not possible due to the limitations of the schools.
- Reply 4 - Integration is possible in all of the cases.
- Reply 5 - Integration is possible only for the M.M.H.
- Reply 6 - Integration is possible in the majority of cases.
- Reply 7 - All other replies.

Figures in brackets are percentages of the total teacher sample of 40 individuals.

Idealists' and idealist compromisers' replies in relation to integration in ordinary schools show a discrepancy with the results of their replies when they were asked about their views on specific cases. In Section three of this chapter I am discussing these teachers' attitudes towards the integration of their own pupils. In that context teachers tended to show greater enthusiasm for their pupils' integration rather than when they answered questions about integration in general.

Apparently, when faced with pupils in classrooms teachers may form different views of the whole situation. Perhaps these teachers' general image of a mentally handicapped pupil is that of a less able child whose chances of admittance in an ordinary school are lower than those of the pupils whom they are actually dealing with in their classes.

Among compromiser realist teachers one third referred to the limitations of their pupils as the main cause of their pessimistic attitude towards integration in the ordinary schools.

"Now what can these children do in the ordinary schools; you can't expect a teacher in the ordinary class with over 30 pupils to spend a lot of time with the handicapped pupils."

A similar problem to the one above was raised by 19% of the compromisers and idealist compromisers. The highest number of teachers in these groups (42.9% of the total in each case) referred to the shortcomings of the ordinary schools in coping with the mentally handicapped as the main problem for integration. Since only 17.5% of the total sample referred to the pupils' own problems in coping in the ordinary schools, in contrast to 45% of the total who blamed the schools, it appears that teachers in the sample were pessimistic in

their view of the ordinary school's ability to handle the mentally handicapped pupils.

In the light of these results there appears to be an element of "*vested interest*" ⁽⁶⁾ in the way teachers approach their task, i.e., the idea that no one can do a better job than them. Even the minority who were in favour of integration in the ordinary school set conditions for integrating their pupils, e.g., "*there should be special classes available to help these pupils*" or "*it depends on the devotion of the teacher in the ordinary school.*"

Most teachers in the sample stated that they considered their profession very difficult as it demanded enhanced intuition and skills that not everybody could develop. Some teachers even compared their own pupils' achievements with those of pupils in the other classes of special education. They claimed that they found their own pupils the most difficult ones to cope with. Statements such as the ones below were not unique:

"My pupils have lots of problems, Mrs. D. should be able to achieve more with her own pupils since they are so much better than mine."

or:

"In my class pupils are very handicapped; you will see how much easier Mr. K.'s work is in the other class."

The above interpretation of the pupils' potential concerned the children's ability to learn. This issue was directly related to the possibility of the pupils to integrate in ordinary schools, i.e., the less able to learn the children are the less possible is it for them to be integrated in the ordinary school. However, the possibility of integration in the community was not necessarily based on the

criteria of learning ability. A comparison between Tables 5.3 and 5.4 indicates that in discussing the possibility of integration in the community the criterion of the shortcomings in the community for accepting the mentally handicapped is the most important criteria.

The results of the interviews on the subject of integration reveal a positive approach among most of the teachers as regards the possibilities of the mentally handicapped living in the community. However, they do not all regard this as possible once they begin to consider the attitudes prevailing in society. I am discussing the major points concerning society's shortcomings in integrating the mentally handicapped below. Here, it is necessary to examine teachers' attitudes towards another aspect of integration which concerns the possibility of independent living.

Teacher Types	VIEWS ON POSSIBILITIES FOR INDEPENDENT LIVING					Row Totals
	Negative Replies		Positive Replies			
	Reply 1	Reply 2	Reply 3	Reply 4	Reply 5	
IDEALIST	-	-	-	-	6	6 (15.0%)
IDEALIST COMPROMISER	2	1	-	3	1	7 (17.5%)
COMPROMISER	8	2	2	8	1	21 (52.5%)
COMPROMISER REALIST	2	1	-	3	-	6 (15.0%)
Column Totals	12 (30.0%)	4 (10.0%)	2 (5.0%)	14 (35.0%)	8 (20.0%)	40 (100.0%)

Table 5.5: Teachers' views on the possibilities for independent living by teacher types

KEY:

- Reply 1 - Independence is not possible due to the limitations of the handicapped child.
- Reply 2 - Independence is not possible due to constraints inherent in society.
- Reply 3 - Independence is possible in all of the cases.
- Reply 4 - Independence is possible only for the M.M.H.
- Reply 5 - Independence is possible in the majority of cases.

Figures in brackets are percentages of the total teacher sample of 40 individuals.

Teachers' interpretation of the possibility of a mentally handicapped child leading an independent life was based upon a commonsense definition involving achievements such as finding a job, settling down and having a family, etc.

Table 5.5, above, shows that teachers who regarded the mentally handicapped capable of independent life were in excess of those teachers who thought integration in the community was possible. However, there were reservations among some teachers. One third of the compromiser idealists, the compromiser realists as well as almost the same number of the compromisers did not see independent life as a possibility for the mentally handicapped, due to the pupils' own disabilities.

A smaller number of teachers, one idealist compromiser, two compromisers and one compromiser realist referred to society's shortcomings in helping the mentally handicapped to be independent. They referred to the stigma attached to the mentally handicapped persons and that it was very difficult to make employers to consider giving them a chance. The head teacher of the only secondary school in my sample stated that, by the end of their stay in his school, children acquired certain necessary skills to maintain themselves.

He suggested that there are not very many employers who would offer them a job by giving them opportunities equal to those offered to non-handicapped individuals. His school, he said, had started a liaison with the community mainly by approaching employers in different areas where the pupils lived. However, they had had little success in finding employment for all their school leavers.

This head teacher was not one of the teachers in my sample but I interviewed him to get information on the future of school leavers. He believed that teachers of special education have a crucial role not only in improving skills on

school subjects for their pupils but also to get involved in helping their pupils find the type of career which may be suitable for them. He also stated that it was necessary to educate the public to take a more positive attitude towards the mentally handicapped and consider their potential, too, rather than their handicap alone.

Thus, while special schools may achieve the goal of providing the mentally handicapped pupils with skills to earn a living and make them prepared for an independent life the attitude prevailing in the community may still result in their stigmatisation and failure of their acceptance as "*ordinary*" members of the community.

Furthermore, table 5.5, above, shows that all the idealist teachers see independent living possible in the majority of cases. Among idealist compromisers, 42.9% believe that those with milder handicap can live independently, and 14.3% see independent living possible in all cases. Among idealists and idealist compromisers, the number of those who tended to be optimistic about the possibilities of independent living was very high, whereas in other types the level of optimism was lower. Among compromisers, 38.1% believed the milder cases of mental handicap could become independent and only 4.8% (i.e., only 1 teacher) referred to all the pupils as being capable of independent living. None of the compromiser idealist teachers thought that independent living was possible in all of the cases while 50% believed those with milder forms of handicap could live independently.

The majority of respondent teachers in the compromisers' group and half of the realists' group thought that mentally handicapped pupils could not lead an independent life due to their own shortcomings or to constraints inherent in society. A general inference may be made that possibility of integration and independent living does not depend only on personal limitations and potential but

also on the context in which a child is supposed to be dealt with, i.e., schools as well as the community at large.

Teachers' interpretations of integration indicates that while a mentally handicapped pupil may be "*better off*" in a special school this does not automatically mean that integration in the community is not possible or that their pupils cannot live independently. Moreover, the results indicate that while most teachers agree that some pupils may be able to live independently this does not imply their actual acceptance in the community.

For most teachers the major obstacle of integration in the community is people's negative attitude to the mentally handicapped. The majority of teachers find the obstacle in the possibilities for the mentally handicapped people to get into some form of employment. Yet there are teachers mainly the idealists who are concerned with the possibility of the mentally handicapped people having equal right to the non handicapped and being treated as an independent person.

As one teacher explained, it may be possible for those characterised as mentally handicapped to gain employment but the question to be asked is the extent to which they may be allowed to lead a life without having the stigma attached to them, without having their behaviour judged on the basis of the way they look, or the level of their I.Q.

News items that appear frequently in the mass media tend to lend support to the arguments in the above discussion. For instance, a news item in one of the national circulation Athens dailies, "*MESIMVRINI*," (21.1.1987) indicates that simply providing employment for the mentally handicapped does not necessarily entail their acceptance by and integration in society as individuals without a label. This news item refers to violation of medical confidentiality as regards

handicapped individuals who had been appointed by the Ministry of Transport (Greek State Railways Organisation.)

The Under Secretary involved wanted to demonstrate to Parliament that handicapped individuals were in fact being helped by the Government of the time. To prove it he made public a list of names of handicapped employees which together with their names also gave details of the nature of their handicap by using crude terms such as "*idiot,*" "*mentally backward,*" "*one-eyed,*" "*wolf-mouthed with nasal voice,*" "*IQ 57.*"

Another more recent example reported in the national daily "*KATHIMERINI,*" edition of 3 April 1993, concerns the refusal of the Greek Telecommunications Organisation (O.T.E.) to honour its obligation to employ 210 new recruits. The latter were individuals with special needs who had been legally selected from a pool of applicants by the Ministry of Employment and subsequently placed in the O.T.E. in application of Law 1648/1986 which exempts such individuals from the severe restrictions of new appointments in the public sector.

The above examples suggest that the employment problem of individuals with special needs, in all categories of handicap, is a very serious one. It is characterised by a level of complexity in its connection with other unemployment problems of a more general structural nature which could not be overcome by Government legislation alone. Moreover, even if the employment problems for the handicapped are solved one way or another it would still be necessary to create conditions in society which would permit the acceptance of the handicapped. In this context it would be necessary to study the interaction between the employed handicapped and their "*other*" colleagues with a view to establish whether the former are accepted and treated as equals.

3. SECTION II: TEACHERS' INTERPRETATIONS OF THE EDUCATIONAL AND SOCIAL CONTEXTS

Teachers do not see themselves as the only individuals in the community and the only professionals in the system of education who are responsible for the mentally handicapped pupils. Their interpretation of how schools and community deal with the mentally handicapped influence the formation of their perception of the mentally handicapped. Whenever teachers referred to limitations at schools and the community which prevented the successful integration and independent living of the mentally handicapped I asked them to specify the types of issues which they considered important. I am discussing these issues below.

Teachers in the sample may have given similar views towards different issues in their immediate work environment, however, teachers in different types react differently to the problems they may be faced with. It is important to cover both teachers interpretation as well as reaction here. Teachers' interpretation provides a picture of the range of issues that are important to the teachers while their reactions indicate their influences in changing or maintaining the present situation.

3.1 Inter-professional relationships.

The first important issue referred to by teachers was their relationships with the other professionals and their view of the way those other professionals operated. "*Other professionals*" included their colleague teachers, teachers of the ordinary schools, psychologists, social workers, auxiliaries, speech therapists.

Table 5.6, below, shows how teachers viewed the other professionals' contribution in the schools. In my analysis here I have not discussed matters concerning the special education teachers' relationship in the school. I have referred to teachers' interaction with one another as the matter had arisen in different stages of the fieldwork. In the next section I will discuss the interaction between the teachers in the special schools in more detail. Here I will mainly deal with teachers' views of professionals other than the special education teachers.

Teacher Types	VIEWS TOWARDS THE OTHER PROFESSIONALS IN THE SCHOOLS							Row Totals
	Reply 1	Reply 2	Reply 3	Reply 4	Reply 5	Reply 6	Reply 7	
IDEALIST	5	-	-	-	-	-	1	6 (15.0%)
IDEALIST COMPROMISER	2	3	1	-	-	1	-	7 (17.5%)
COMPROMISER	14	1	1	-	3	2	-	21 (52.5%)
COMPROMISER REALIST	3	1	-	1	-	1	-	6 (15.0%)
Column Totals	24 (60.0%)	5 (12.5%)	2 (5.0%)	1 (2.5%)	3 (7.5%)	4 (10.0%)	1 (2.5%)	40 (100.0%)

Table 5.6: Teachers' views towards the other professionals in the schools by teacher types

KEY:

- Reply 1 - Positive view, favouring the other professionals' deeper involvement in the schools.
- Reply 2 - Negative view, unable to acknowledge that any benefits could derive from other professionals' involvement in the schools.
- Reply 3 - Middle-of-the-road view, recognising that some professionals are helpful while others are not very co-operative.
- Reply 4 - Stress upon the need for more psychologists.
- Reply 5 - Stress upon the need for more speech therapists.
- Reply 6 - Does not have any contact with them and so cannot express a view.
- Reply 7 - All other replies.

Figures in brackets are percentages of the total teacher sample of 40 individuals.

The professions that are referred to in Table 5.6, above, are the ones mentioned by the teachers. I did not have a list of specific professions involved in the system before I began the research. I let teachers decide which profession was more important to them. A comparison between the results of the explora-

tory and the main research shows consistency among teachers' views regarding the role and influence of certain professions in the system.

The responses shown in Table 5.6, above, concern mainly the medical professions as well as those working in the areas of welfare, child psychology, and speech therapy. Overall results indicate that 60.0% of the total sample are in favour of the professionals who are involved in the system, 12.5% are not very happy about their involvement, and 5.0% are in favour of some professions but not of others. Some teachers did not specify which particular type of professionals they were in favour of. Others made it clear that they needed more psychologists (2.5% only of the total sample) and others stressed the need for speech therapists (7.5% of the sample).

One teacher in the sample, an idealist, had a totally different view of the role of the other professionals. This teacher made a somewhat sarcastic remark concerning the professionals present in his school. He spoke of how grateful teachers had to be to have them; yet what those professionals actually did was altogether another matter. This teacher felt most of the time professionals were used as a kind of help to take the burden off the teachers for a few hours per week, by taking some of the pupils away from the classes. He confronted the psychologist in the school very often and did not hesitate to tell her that her assessment of some pupils were "*wrong*".

In the same school I found two teachers who appreciated having those professionals in the school since:

"... at least they take some of the children away from my class for a while and I get more time with the others."

The idealist teacher thought the school would have been better off with some form of auxiliary teachers for this purpose. Apart from the one idealist teacher mentioned above the remainder of the idealist teachers had positive views about the other professionals. Although they did not accept their views at all times they felt that their presence was helpful in case of some specialised subjects such as speech therapy.

Half of the compromiser realist teachers were also in favour of the presence of other professionals in the school. One teacher mentioned the need for a psychologist in the school. Moreover, two thirds of compromiser teachers regarded the other professionals to be of great help.

Among the idealist compromisers 28.6% viewed the other professionals as very helpful. Here, the highest percentage included those who did not believe that other professionals were much help. Two of these teachers were from the same school where there had been a great deal of problems with the psychologist who had visited the school. As one of them pointed out:

“I need to know what the psychologist finds out about a child; what is the use since they keep their records to themselves and do not let us know their findings.”

This teacher did not believe that he could change the attitude of the psychologist and did not want to get into conflict with her. His reaction was quite different from the idealist teacher mentioned above who demanded the psychologist to produce a report for him and went as far as even verbal confrontation with her.

It was usually the case that teachers who did not believe that other professionals could benefit the system had already had some unpleasant

experience in working with them and so had a reason to be pessimistic about the prospect of others interfering in their job. Teachers' attitudes towards other professionals depended upon the professionals' personal characteristics rather than solely on their professional capabilities. In one school, teachers were delighted to have a psychologist "helping" them, while teachers of another school could not like the "interference" of the psychologist in their teaching programme.

Teachers tend to rely on the other professionals usually when their own training cannot provide them with any solution to the problems. For example, Mr. D, a compromiser, was very concerned that they were not given the help that they really needed:

"They have sent us a social worker, why do I need her to tell me about my pupils' family problems... I need a psychologist to let me know what I have difficulty in understanding."

This teacher was not an exception among the others in being aware of the range of problems his pupils had in their families. It is quite usual for the teachers in Greece to be in touch with the family of their pupils and listen to the parents' problems. This type of interaction happens very often when the parents are picking up their children after school. They can also go to school without any previous arrangement to discuss their children's problems with the head teachers or teachers. This is an unwritten code of conduct which is not very often appreciated by the teachers.

Another important group of professionals to be considered here are the staff of the ordinary school in case it occupies a shared site with a special school. Although in some schools there is a certain degree of collaboration between the special school and the ordinary school, I found that special education

teachers were not satisfied about the attitude of their colleagues in the ordinary schools. ⁽⁷⁾ There appeared to be problems involved in the sharing of the schools' playground and facilities and the integration of the pupils from the two schools.

The way in which such problems were tackled depended on the managements of both schools. In one school with two grades one of the teachers had managed to persuade the head teacher of the ordinary school to take the special pupils in the school outing. In a six grade school, however, there was a tense atmosphere in relations with the staff of the ordinary school. The head teacher in this school was involved almost in a personal battle with the head teacher of the ordinary school and could see very limited possibility of collaboration with him. In this particular school, when the teachers were discussing an outing for their pupils, they decided not to take their children away from the school while the ordinary school pupils were away. As one teacher put it:

"At least let them have all the playground to themselves for one day."

This was welcomed by the other teachers, although later on I heard from the idealist teacher in that school claim that the problem with the ordinary school had to be solved in a more reasonable manner. This teacher was very critical of the school organisation and wanted to see a lot of change in it. In one of the staff meetings, which I, too, was invited to attend he had some sharp exchanges with his colleagues, both fellow teachers and other professionals. He made statements such as: *"What we're involved in is no special education, it's a joke..."* This was received by other teachers in the school with rebukes such as: *"What would you want us to do, we are doing our best ..."*—a compromiser's comment. I observed the idealist teacher's efforts to convince other teachers in the school that

their pupils could easily take part in the school play as he himself was in the process of organising it.

He had actually written the play for his pupils and had cast them in roles according to their interest and abilities. He took his time also outside school hours to help those children to practice. He told me that at times it was very difficult to teach the kids what they should. Yet he was prepared to be patient with them and carry on practising until they learned their lines. This teacher was very similar in his attitude to a teacher I had encountered in my exploratory sample and who was also involved in organising a performance for his pupils and had difficulty in persuading his colleagues to organise the play the way he wanted.

Teachers' interaction in the above cases provides genuine examples of the ways in which teachers' perception of the mentally handicapped is built. Some teachers take the view that they have to be realistic. They have to see the mentally handicapped pupils as individuals who cannot achieve what others do and who are not accepted as "*ordinary pupils.*" Other teachers challenge such "*reality*" and follow their own ideal. They consider that a mentally handicapped pupil should be helped out against odds so as to be accepted in the ordinary school and the community. Challenging the existing situation does not involve only interaction with other professionals but also with parents of both their own pupils and the parents of the pupils in the ordinary schools. I am discussing this issue below.

3.2 Teachers' interpretations of parental' attitudes.

Table 5.7, below, depicts teachers' attitudes towards the parents of the mentally handicapped pupils. The majority (65.0%) of the total sample found parents helpful and cooperative. The usual answer in this case was:

"They are all right, I find it easy to get on with them."

or:

"They need our help, and usually take our advice."

Around 10.0% of the total sample found parents not helpful; 12.5% thought that they were not aware of their children's problems and needs. There

Teacher Types	VIEWS TOWARDS PARENTS						Row Totals
	Reply 1	Reply 2	Reply 3	Reply 4	Reply 5	Reply 6	
IDEALIST	3	-	1	1	-	1	6 (15.0%)
IDEALIST COMPROMISER	6	-	-	1	-	-	7 (17.5%)
COMPROMISER	16	2	2	-	1	-	21 (52.5%)
COMPROMISER REALIST	1	2	2	-	-	1	6 (15.0%)
Column Totals	26 (65.0%)	4 (10.0%)	5 (12.5%)	2 (5.0)	1 (2.5%)	2 (5.0)	40 (100.0%)

Table 5.7: Teachers' views towards the parents of their pupils, by teacher types

KEY:

- Reply 1 - Finds them helpful.
- Reply 2 - Finds them not very co-operative.
- Reply 3 - Finds them ignorant of their children's problems and needs.
- Reply 4 - Finds them too pessimistic towards their M.H. children.
- Reply 5 - Finds them too demanding.
- Reply 6 - Other views.

Figures in brackets are percentages of the total teacher sample of 40 individuals.

were also a few who found their pupils' parents too pessimistic (5.0% of the teachers in the sample) and 2.5% found parents to demand too much from special education for their mentally handicapped child. As one teacher put it:

"I have this mother who is blaming me for not being able to teach her 13-year-old severely handicapped child to read as well as any other 13-year-old." ⁽⁸⁾

Two teachers (5.0% of the total sample) expressed opinions which included a mixture of all of the above views. These two teachers had been involved in teaching for over 15 years in different schools and areas and claimed to have come across all types of parents. While half of the idealist teachers and 85.7% of the idealist compromisers and 76.2% of compromisers found parents helpful, among compromiser realists only 16.7% thought so. Furthermore, no teacher in idealist and idealist compromisers had found parents non-cooperative. There were 2 (9.5%) teachers among the compromisers and 2 (33.3%) of the compromiser realists who found the parents non-cooperative. An equal number of teachers in the same groups (2 and 2 each) thought parents were unaware of their children's problems. Of the idealist group, one teacher (16.7% of their total) thought parents were ignorant of the problems.

I found teachers with a tendency towards an idealist approach more supportive of the parents and willing to help them. When teachers were inclined towards a realist approach they tended to be more demanding of the parents and blame them for not doing enough. Teachers in Greece come into contact with parents very regularly. As I mentioned above some teachers are not very keen on such interactions. I had the chance to see some such interaction in some schools since I usually stated my visits to schools at the beginning of the school day until the afternoon.

Parents were chatting to teachers about their family, work, etc. Most teachers can have a fairly good idea of their pupils family situation if they are prepared to. The idealist teachers thought they could influence parents views towards that of more positive towards their children and they did not mind interacting with parents. In one of the schools as I waited for the head teacher (an idealist) in his office I had a chance to talk to parents who had come to discuss the possibility of their child to be referred to an ordinary school.

They told me the head teacher had been very kind to them, quite unlike the teacher (she was one of the compromisers in my sample). They felt their child was not really handicapped and could be referred to ordinary school. Thus could not get any help from the teacher so they had decided to discuss the case with the head teacher. I asked about this situation when I interviewed the head teacher. He told me that the child could attend the ordinary school but the whole procedure was too complicated and that the class teacher was not prepared to take responsibility in recommending the child.

This head teacher had doubts on whether the particular child was going to receive the type of care he needed in the ordinary school. Yet, he said that the programme of integration into ordinary class had to be pursued. He pointed out that if everybody gave up because it was a difficult task then the ideology of integration was never going to be applied in practice.

Despite the presence of a certain degree of disappointment among some teachers, there seemed to be close collaboration between the majority of the teachers with the parents of their pupils. This did not mean that there was always plain sailing for the interested parties; rather, that parents were not completely left out of the procedures which involved the education of their children. Teachers in the sample were very conscious of the parents' criticism, although their reactions varied. While there were those among the teachers who felt they

should influence the opinion of the parents, others were willing to adapt to the parents' point of view.

The major problem that teachers were faced with was to educate the parents into believing that special education "*does good*" to their children. Even those teachers who found parents helpful were not quite sure if the parents knew the scope of special education.

There exists an element of shame in sending one's child to a special school, which teachers find very difficult to alter. This situation is aggravated when the special school is sharing the site with an ordinary school. The parents of the pupils in ordinary schools are usually very concerned in seeing their children integrate with the mentally handicapped. For instance, one head teacher told me of the case of some parents of pupils in an ordinary school who had protested about the fact that their children were sharing school facilities with the mentally handicapped pupils. The latter attended a special school operating in a site shared with the ordinary school. Those parents were actually claiming that their children ran the risk of catching "*diseases*" from the mentally handicapped pupils.

Incidents such as this were also known in other schools which shared their site with ordinary schools. I established this by interviewing not only teachers but other professionals as well. I found it very helpful to discuss such issues with the other professionals in the school since they could provide me with their own version of the parents' relationship with the school. One social worker gave me an example of prejudice towards the mentally handicapped which seems to be a genuine example of the general attitude of a large number of parents.

It involved the mother whose child from an ordinary school was assessed and found to be in need of special education. The mother who had objection to

this result was advised by the social worker to visit one of the special classes (which operated in the same site as the ordinary classes.) The mother accepted to do so, but returned to the social worker outraged at the suggestion that her child was going to be lumped with those "*abnormal*" children. The social worker pursued the matter and discovered that the mother had in fact mistakenly entered the class of the ordinary school adjacent to the special class!

This incident indicates that local integration of a special school within an ordinary school cannot guarantee that all other aspects of integration will follow. People's prejudices towards the mentally handicapped cannot be eliminated so easily. The extent to which teachers of the mentally handicapped and other professionals may be able to contribute to achieve social integration and perhaps functional integration is related to the way in which each particular school operates.

I compared the situation in the school where the parents of the ordinary children had shown negative views towards the presence of the mentally handicapped pupils with another school where the teachers claimed they had achieved some level of integration between the ordinary school and their own school. Among the school characteristics there appeared to be differences in size, number of professionals other than teachers, and school culture.

The school in which integration was more successful was smaller (two grades). It had no full-time professionals but the teachers and the school culture belonged to the type I had referred to as "*person culture*." The other school was a six-grade one and had two full-time staff: a psychologist and a social worker. I had categorised its school culture as "*task culture*." It appears that in the school with less formal management the teachers had managed to build a better relationship with the ordinary school staff.

3.3 Teachers' accounts of the schools' shortcomings.

Once the question concerning the problems that teachers encountered at school was raised one result became quite clear in every interview: all the teachers believed their schools could do better. At this point I could see that all teachers had certain standards for their practice which they felt were not met by their working conditions. Table 5.8, below, reflects these attitudes. Teachers made several suggestions but I asked them to point out their top priority. The results indicate the teachers' views as to which was the most important issue. There is a significant result in reply 1 which could be explained in terms of teachers' type. This reply suggested the need for special books in special education. The highest number here belongs to compromisers (28.6% of the type 3 total).

Teacher Types	ACCOUNTS OF THE SCHOOLS' SHORTCOMINGS								Row Totals
	Reply 1	Reply 2	Reply 3	Reply 4	Reply 5	Reply 6	Reply 7	Reply 8	
IDEALIST	-	-	2	-	2	-	1	1	6 (15.0%)
IDEALIST COMPROMISER	-	-	-	1	3	3	-	-	7 (17.5%)
COMPROMISER	6	5	3	3	3	1	-	-	21 (52.5%)
COMPROMISER REALIST	1	1	-	-	3	1	-	-	6 (15.0%)
Column Totals	7 (17.5%)	6 (15.0%)	5 (12.5%)	4 (10.0%)	11 (27.5%)	5 (12.5%)	1 (2.5%)	1 (2.5%)	40 (100.0%)

Table 5.8: Teachers' accounts of the schools' shortcomings

KEY:

- Reply 1 - Lack of books tailored specially for M.H. pupils.
- Reply 2 - Lack of specialists in the school.
- Reply 3 - Problems concerning the school's physical environment.
- Reply 4 - Conflicts with the ordinary school operating in the same site.
- Reply 5 - Non-rational grouping of the pupils in classes.
- Reply 6 - Lack of necessary equipment (e.g. xeroxing facilities, video).
- Reply 7 - Problems with the parents.
- Reply 8 - Problems in the general organisation of the school.

Figures in brackets are percentages of the total teacher sample of 40 individuals.

Among the compromiser realists 16.7% of the total gave reply 1, whereas none of the idealists and idealist compromisers did so. I assume that these teachers were mainly interested in their pupils in an individualistic fashion, and do not see how one particular book can meet the educational needs of all their different pupils. The compromisers and compromiser realist teachers found it difficult to provide their own material for teaching each individual child. This result can also be validated by looking at the teaching material and the method of teaching of teachers belonging to different types, in Section III of this chapter.

The rest of the replies do not appear to be related to teacher type. Since I could not see any particular pattern among the teachers according to their type I tried to see if these problems stemmed from the particular school where the teachers worked. Different types of teacher shared in their views of problems in their schools. The fact that the majority of teachers from one particular school pointed to similar problems in their school shows how teachers with different points of view could be affected by their working conditions and acquire similar impressions of the possibilities open to the mentally handicapped. However, this does not mean that they react in the same way in dealing with the problems at hand.

When teachers were asked to suggest what their first priority would be to improve the system of special education, their replies showed variation. Replies tended to correlate with teacher types rather than with the schools where the teachers worked. For example, two teachers who agreed their school had a major problem in relation to the physical environment of the building and playground gave different views on how to improve the situation. In that school there was a major problem concerning shortage of space and overcrowding in the classrooms.

In the above case, an idealist teacher suggested there should be immediate action taken by Government to improve the school environment. A compromiser teacher, however, thought it was very important to have a psychologist who could help the teachers with some of the pupils who had major emotional and behavioural problems. This teacher felt that a psychologist would be able to take a few children away from the classes for some hours so as to allow teachers more time to deal with the rest of the pupils. The idealist teacher was very devoted to the goal of improving the building conditions, and was in the process of organising meetings and writing to the responsible bodies for dealing with the problems. This reaction differed from that of the compromiser teacher, above, who was not very sure whether anything could be done for the building problem, or whether he could do anything to ensure the appointment of a psychologist.

Teacher Types	PROPOSALS FOR IMPROVING THE SPECIAL EDUCATION SYSTEM							Row Totals
	Reply 1	Reply 2	Reply 3	Reply 4	Reply 5	Reply 6	Reply 7	
IDEALIST	2	-	-	-	1	2	1	6 (15.0%)
IDEALIST COMPROMISER	-	3	-	3	-	1	-	7 (17.5%)
COMPROMISER	5	3	1	3	5	1	3	21 (52.5%)
COMPROMISER REALIST	-	1	-	3	1	1	-	6 (15.0%)
Column Totals	7 (17.5%)	7 (17.5%)	1 (2.5%)	9 (22.5%)	7 (17.5%)	5 (12.5%)	4 (10.0%)	40 (100.0%)

Table 5.9: Teachers' proposals for improving the special education system by teacher types

KEY:

- Reply 1 - Special books for the teaching of the M.H. should be provided by the Government.
- Reply 2 - More publicity should be given to the subject of M.H. by the Government, e.g. through the media.
- Reply 3 - More special schools are needed.
- Reply 4 - More specialists are needed.
- Reply 5 - There should be more emphasis on further education for the M.H. pupils.
- Reply 6 - Grouping of the M.H. pupils in classes should be more rational, e.g. according to age.
- Reply 7 - Financial help is needed from the Government to provide equipment and improve the environment of the schools.

Figures in brackets are percentages of the total teacher sample of 40 individuals.

Table 5.9, above, concerns teachers' proposals for improving the education system. In identifying the major areas of teachers' concern I asked them what they would have liked to do had they had the power to change what they saw as a problem area in the education system. Then I classified their answers under the different headings of Table 5.9, above. This Table shows the teachers' first suggestion which reflects their top priority. Priorities referred to by the teachers did not necessarily correspond to the problems they had shown concern with in their schools.

Comparison between Tables 5.8 and 5.9 indicates how teachers' responses varied in relation to the problems in their immediate working environment and when they sought to decide how to make improvements in the system in a wider context. When teachers were given the chance to think about what should be done to improve the system, the scope of the problems concerning them did not relate solely to their immediate working conditions but became much wider.

Therefore not all teachers restricted their recommendations for improving the system to their everyday problems at school and sought change in problem areas on a long-term basis. For example, a teacher who was very concerned about the physical environment of his school did not necessarily propose any specific solution to that problem. He placed programmes for the education of the public in the needs of the mentally handicapped at the top of his list of priorities.

Table 5.9, above, shows that 22.5% of all the teachers referred to the need for the appointment of more specialists as the most important issue in the system of special education. This percentage is higher than the percentage of teachers who referred to the problem of lack of specialists in their schools (15% of the total sample) as shown in Table 5.8, above. Thus, even those teachers who did not have immediate problems concerning the lack of specialists in their schools were aware of this problem in the system in general.

Another example of the variation in teachers' attitudes towards their school problems and the problems of the system in general is found in relation to the issue of the grouping of the pupils. Around 27.5% of the total sample had considered it as a major problem that pupils were not categorised according to their abilities to learn. These teachers believed that their pupils in different age groups had also different degrees of handicap. However only 12.5% of the total sample identified need for proper grouping of pupils as a top priority for improving the system.

The issues of need for publications in guidelines in teaching, publicity on the subject of mental handicap, and further education are the most important subjects by some teachers. Although teachers in different types have similarities in their proposals a further assessment of their views show that there are differences among them. For instance, the compromisers wanted the teaching guidelines which would include standardised teaching material. The idealists who had pointed out the need for teaching guidelines were more interested in general approaches to teaching and methods of teaching which would help the pupils with special needs.

3.4 Teachers' views on the prevailing conditions in society as regards mentally handicapped pupils.

The picture that teachers in the sample draw of the community's approach towards the mentally handicapped is rather gloomy. The basic cause for concern is the lack of understanding that society in general shows towards the problems of the mentally handicapped. Teachers in the sample were not satisfied with the range of views that are still held by lay members of the community towards the

handicapped pupils. The majority of teachers had also had experience of the situation outside Athens. Therefore, their views of the community's approach could be regarded as potentially applicable to other areas of the country as well and indicative of trends in the entire country.

Teachers believed that despite all the efforts they made to educate their pupils and teach them how to cope in the community they could not anticipate with any degree of certainty how the community would cope with these individuals. In this context, some teachers pointed out that they had lost their enthusiasm since they could not see any way in which some of their pupils would achieve a successful in integration in society.

However, some teachers were hopeful, in general, that given time, the Greek system of special education could improve so as to facilitate the teaching of the mentally handicapped.

Teacher Types	VIEWS ON PROBLEMS IN THE COMMUNITY				Row Totals
	Reply 1	Reply 2	Reply 3	Reply 4	
IDEALIST	5	1	-	-	6 (15.0%)
IDEALIST COMPROMISER	5	-	-	2	7 (17.5%)
COMPROMISER	12	4	2	3	21 (52.5%)
COMPROMISER REALIST	4	-	-	2	6 (15.0%)
Column Totals	26 (65.0%)	5 (12.5)	2 (5.0%)	7 (17.5%)	40 (100.0%)

Table 5.10: Teachers' views on problems encountered in the community by the M.H. Pupils

KEY:

- Reply 1 - Lack of understanding of the needs of M.H. pupils.
- Reply 2 - Lack of publicity.
- Reply 3 - Parental ignorance and lack of co-operation in educating the children.
- Reply 4 - Combinations of views.

Figures in brackets are percentages of the total teacher sample of 40 individuals.

Yet the majority of teachers could not anticipate a significant change in the attitudes of the members of the community unless the government undertakes to educate the public by promoting special programmes through which the public could become more aware of the needs of the mentally handicapped.

This attitude of the teachers is shown in Table 5.10, above, in which the majority (65.%) of the total sample regarded lack of understanding of the needs of the mentally handicapped as the major problem. Lack of publicity was mentioned by one idealist and 4 compromiser teachers. Parental ignorance and lack of parental cooperation in teaching were also mentioned by 2 compromiser teachers. The remaining teachers in the sample referred to combinations of the above factors. They alleged that the State was responsible for raising awareness in the general public in matters concerning the handicapped.

4. SECTION III: TEACHERS IN PRACTICE.

The range of problems encountered by the teachers in the sample in educating the mentally handicapped pupils lead one to surmise that their approaches towards their pupils are not very dissimilar. There are certain issues that are agreed upon by all teachers as relevant to the task of educating the mentally handicapped pupils. In this sense, it could be argued that there should be similarities in the outcome of their teaching, too.

However, the results of my research gave a different picture. Although there were some teaching patterns shared between the teachers, the interaction between their own personal beliefs and structural conditions of their working

environment were unique to each individual teacher. I discovered the existence of variation in the pattern of interaction by observing the sample teachers in the classroom. In the classroom situation I saw that the majority of teachers were trying to reconcile their personal and/or ideal views about the education of their pupils, on the one hand, with the “*problems*” they were facing in their working environment on the other hand. ⁽⁹⁾

In this section I shall present the results of my observations in the classrooms and the interviews with the teachers concerning their approaches to their present pupils. First, I will discuss how pupils were categorised the teachers. Second, the type of method and material in teaching will be examined. Third, I will discuss the view of the teachers on integration regarding the particular pupils in their class where I had carried out observation.

4.1 Teachers’ characterisation of their pupils.

In the process of observation in classroom it became possible to establish teachers’ definitions of mental handicap at an operational level. In 40 classes, I observed teachers’ practice of special education for pupils within the age range of primary and secondary school. Table 5.11, below, shows that the majority of teachers had between 6 to 10 pupils in their class, 6 teachers had less than 6 pupils and only 4 had more than 10 pupils.

Table 5.12, below, indicates that the majority of teachers in all types had pupils of primary age group. The second largest group were those who had pupils in both age groups. The low percentage of teachers with only secondary school pupils is due to the fact that in the school sample only one school

operated as a secondary school. The largest number of schools were primary schools where pupils of secondary school age also attended.

Teacher Types	Number of Pupils in Class			Row Totals
	1 - 5	6 - 10	11 - 14	
IDEALIST	2	3	1	6 (15.0%)
IDEALIST COMPROMISER	-	6	1	7 (17.5%)
COMPROMISER	3	17	1	21 (52.5%)
COMPROMISER REALIST	1	4	1	6 (15.0%)
Column Totals	6 (15.0%)	30 (75.0%)	4 (10.0%)	40 (100.0%)

Table 5.11: Size of class for each teacher type

Among the sample schools in the main research age of the pupils did not emerge as a very influential factor in placing pupils in special school classes. Teachers in the sample found it one of the most difficult aspects of their work

Teacher Types	School Age of Pupils			Row Totals
	Mainly primary	Mainly secondary	Mixed	
IDEALIST	3	1	2	6 (15.0%)
IDEALIST COMPROMISER	4	-	3	7 (17.5%)
COMPROMISER	11	2	8	21 (52.5%)
COMPROMISER REALIST	5	1	-	6 (15.0%)
Column Totals	23 (57.5%)	4 (10.0%)	13 (32.5%)	40 (100.0%)

Table 5.12: School age of pupils by teacher types

that they had to deal with a variety of age groups in their class. Their task was also made more difficult by the mixed ability groups they had to deal with. Teachers in the sample of the main research, as shown on Table 5.13, below,

categorised their pupils mainly into four groups, mildly or moderately mentally handicapped (M.M.H.), severely handicapped (S.M.H.), not mentally handicapped (not M.H.) and profoundly handicapped (P.M.H.).

TEACHER TYPES	CATEGORY OF PUPILS							ROW TOTALS
	S.M.H. & M.M.H.	M.M.H.	S.M.H.	S.M.H. M.M.H. & Not M.H.	P.M.H. S.M.H.& M.M.H.	P.M.H. & S.M.H.	M.M.H. & Not M.H.	
IDEALIST	1	2	2	-	-	-	1	6 (15.0%)
IDEALIST COMPROMISER	5	1	-	-	-	-	1	7 (17.5%)
COMPROMISER	10	4	2	3	-	1	1	21 (52.5%)
COMPROMISER REALIST	1	1	1	1	1	1	-	6 (15.0%)
COLUMN TOTALS	17 (42.5%)	8 (22.5%)	5 (12.5%)	4 (10.0%)	1 (2.5%)	2 (5.0%)	3 (7.5%)	40 (100%)

Table 5.13: Number of teachers corresponding to type of pupils in their class

By taking into account all the cases of pupils in the classes observed the concepts teachers used to refer to their pupils in different categories for the purpose of teaching depended on the pupils' ability to learn.

During observation in each class I asked teachers what feature of their pupils' background they found as the most important aspect in relation to their being labelled as mentally handicapped. There was some divergence in teachers' choice of most important criteria to characterise their pupils in comparison to the ones they had used for defining mental handicap. This is because not all teachers had all types of pupils in their class and, as a result, they did not refer to all the criteria they had cited in discussing the general definition of mental handicap. For instance, a number of teachers who did not have P.M.H. and S.M.H. pupils did not refer to the criteria of communication problems and medical diagnosis as often.

In analysing teachers' views towards particular pupils they had in their classes I concentrated more on what they could see as the reason for their pupils' particular problem. When teachers referred to their pupils' behavioural problems I asked them their opinion on what they thought was the reason for their disruptive behaviour.

I have recorded what teachers found most important in characterising their pupils. I did not find any variation between characterisations of boys and girls. The majority of teachers had an equal number of boys and girls in their classes. In a few cases there appeared to be more complaints from some teachers about "bad behaviour" from boys rather than girls. This did not imply that "bad behaviour" was observed by teachers only in boys. Variation in attitudes towards boys and girls was present more in the way in which teaching material was chosen and will be discussed in the following section.

In discussing each type of pupil I shall illustrate the emergent definitions of the particular category of pupils by way of a vignette. I collected information on the background of some of the pupils. This information was based on teachers' accounts of their pupils concerned. I reached this choice after I had made several attempts to compare different pupils drawn from different classes in order to find the most typical cases. These vignettes could also provide a guideline in the ensuing part of this chapter whenever the terms P.M.H., S.M.H., M.M.H. and not M.H. are encountered.

4.1.1 S.M.H. and P.M.H. pupils.

These two categories were considered as less able to learn by the teachers. The major problem area referred to by all types of teachers to in relation to their

S.M.H. pupils was their low IQ. Fifteen teachers referred to this criterion, however, did not refer to the exact number of a conducted test. Teachers views in these cases may have been reflection of their own assessment of a pupils intelligence level. The concept IQ is used to refer to the criteria of intelligence rather than formal testing.

Among the three idealists who had S.M.H. pupils one referred to the low level of intelligence in her pupils while the two others were concerned with their pupils communication skills. Among five Idealist-compromisers, two were concerned with the level of intelligence, two with communication skills and one referred to professional diagnosis. The majority of seventeen teachers with S.M.H. pupils (nine teachers) considered the low level of IQ as the major criterion. Three compromisers referred to other professionals' diagnosis, two referred to emotional disturbances. Two compromisers referred to lack of communication skills and one referred to the low performance of the S.M.H. pupils as the most important issue.

The more severe levels of handicap may require teachers to resort more to other cliché approaches of other professionals. When some teachers explained about their pupils' "*problems*", they had no great difficulty in characterising a child who had been diagnosed with a specific label by some professional. For instance, once a child is diagnosed medically, teachers refer with confidence to that diagnosis and the attached label. I contend that there is a certain element of dependence upon professional diagnosis by the teachers. ⁽¹⁰⁾

Teachers often refer to "*cliché*" approaches adopted by the other professionals in characterising pupils. However, when they proceed to categorise their own pupils they do not necessarily apply the same concepts in defining the degree of handicap. This was particularly the case with the category of profoundly handicapped: they were defined by teachers as those who could learn

nothing and who were totally isolated from the outside world. Three teachers (no idealist or idealist–compromiser included) who referred to some of their pupils as profoundly handicapped considered total lack of communication skills as the major problem.

An issue which needs to be discussed here is that all the pupils, who were referred to by teachers in the sample of the main research as profoundly handicapped, were younger, under eight years of age. Teachers often referred to some of their older pupils mentioning how they had managed to pull through and *“are now not as much handicapped as they used to be.”* I observed this as part of teachers’ references to some of their severely handicapped pupils. For example:

“You should have seen him some years ago, he was not able to do anything...”

or :

“Daphne could not even understand what you said when she started school.”

I had no way of checking on the exact characteristics of such pupils in the previous years. Yet, since teachers’ perception is the issue here, it may be assumed that pupils such as the ones mentioned in the examples would have been referred to as profoundly handicapped. I am not suggesting that all pupils considered as profoundly mentally handicapped by the teachers are definitely getting the label of severely handicapped when they are older.

Yet, it is a possibility that some teachers at times use criteria in their assessment of their pupils which has too much emphasis on their ability to learn reading and writing. When a child does not respond the way they expect to their instructions and they cannot communicate with that child they cannot see

themselves as qualified to deal with that child since they believe that child “is not even trainable let alone educable.” It is quite likely that a younger child who has just began school through is unable to fulfil the teachers expectations and therefore be labelled as profoundly handicapped. The same child in future years may develop more ability to learn and therefore be referred to as having different degree of handicap.

According to relevant legislation educable children should attend special school. However, if teachers consider some pupils as not educable, it is possible that they would feel they are being imposed upon to teach pupils who should not be in special schools in the first place. This emphasis on categorisation of pupils according to their degree of handicap is yet another step towards labelling and segregation of pupils. Segregation of some children not only from equal chances with children in the ordinary schools but also from the special schools. ⁽¹¹⁾

In the present system of special education in Greece where the idea of integration of the child with special needs is treated as almost rule of law, it is very strange that some professionals are so concerned in labelling their pupils and even isolating some children as unable to learn. Whatever criteria used either by the teachers or by the other professionals once a label of not educable is attached to a child it is quite likely that the particular child will be even more segregated and subject to prejudices than those who are considered educable.

I do not suggest that all teachers are bound to act upon cliché approaches and prejudices when faced with severely and profoundly handicapped pupils. In my exploratory study I have referred to teachers who carry on with their teaching in similar fashion for all degrees of handicap. Such responses appeared among the sample of the teachers in the main research too.

A typical case of a profoundly handicapped pupils is that of Yannis a seven year old. He has very little ability to communicate and cannot follow simple instructions such as "*sit down*" or "*open your book*". On receiving such instructions he just looks at his teacher and gives the impression of not being aware of anything. He has very poor hand eye coordination and cannot write any letter of alphabet or read anything.

An example of an S.M.H. pupil is 12-year-old Eleni. She is a very quiet child who lives in a world of her own. She has difficulty in understanding the simplest instructions given by the teacher and everything has to be repeated several times for her to comprehend. Her eyesight is also very poor. Her teacher mentioned that the psychologist had found the child as one of very low intelligence with very little ability to learn. Eleni has been attending special school from the beginning of her school years. She can read only very simple words and apart from some letters of the alphabet and her own name she cannot write anything else. Her understanding of numbers is very limited and she can only recognise numbers up to 10.

In these cases, the major criterion used in defining handicap appears to be the assessment of the children's physical and psychological abilities. Although in many cases of S.M.H. pupils teachers took into consideration the pupils' family and behavioural problems as well, they did not attach so much importance to those criteria as to the criterion of low intelligence.

4.1.2 M.M.H. and not M.H.

The criteria used by teachers in characterising more able pupils tend to vary more than those applied to more severe cases. In particular, idealist teachers were more concerned with their pupils' social and psychological aspects. One idealist teacher referred to the assessment other professionals had made of his pupils and revealed that they were found with low level of intelligence. Another teacher in this category stated that some of his pupils were being stigmatised and some were not really handicapped.

Three idealist-compromisers cited the same criteria they had used in referring to their S.M.H. pupils, i.e., articulation problems and low I Q. Two others focused on family problems. Another idealist-compromiser who only had M.M.H pupils referred to their low school performance. There was one teacher in this group who believed that his pupils were socially stigmatised and some were not mentally handicapped.

Some of the compromisers in the case of M.M.H. continued to take into account the same criteria as the ones they had considered for the S.M.H. Others turned towards family and emotional problems. One considered the social stigma and another referred to low school performance. All the compromisers with not M.H. pupils considered their family situation as the main reason for their behavioural problems and their referral to special schools. One teacher in this group felt that information available to her about her pupils was not enough to discuss the factors which could account for their handicap.

Finally, compromiser-realists showed concern mainly for the problems of the M.M.H. within the pupils' families. Only one of these teachers did not want to explain the "*causes*" for her pupils' handicap.

I have already discussed teachers' views towards the parents of their in an earlier section. In analysing attitudes in different types I had indicated that compromiser-realists were more critical of parents than all other teacher types. In the absence of any physical or psychological factors related to mental handicap compromiser-realists tend to blame parents for their pupils' school performance.

A typical profile of an M.M.H. pupil is that of Petros, a 12-year-old. He comes from a broken home and at the moment lives with his grandparents. He had attended ordinary school for some years but all of his teachers had considered him problematic and very disruptive in the classroom. He shows no interest in learning anything apart from the news of the soccer matches. His reading and writing ability is that of a 7-year-old; he can only manage easy sums. However, once the concept of money is involved he manages well in calculations. He is articulate and communicates easily, although the language he uses is often not very appropriate.

The criteria used in discussing Petros' background were mainly relevant to his family situation and his behavioural problems. This is a typical case of an M.M.H. pupil who does not have any particular medical history attached to his background, but who is labelled as a mentally handicapped since his learning "*ability*" is not satisfactory for ordinary school. Some teachers differentiated between the M.M.H. pupils and those who had "*ability to learn*" but who, due to behavioural problems, were referred to special schools. These pupils who were referred to as not M.H. shared the characteristic of being very disruptive. In their majority they were referred from ordinary schools.

A typical pupil in the not M.H. group is Stavros, a 15 year old who had previously attended ordinary school. Due to no progress in his school work he was referred to special school. He has a very short span of attention and can be

very disruptive in class. He has no interest in any subject. His reading age is well below the expected. His major interest is football—a subject he can discuss about very eagerly.

In the remainder of this chapter I will be discussing the way in which teachers' teaching patterns and attitudes varied in dealing with each type of pupils.

4.2 Teaching material and method.

During the interviews, I put the question about the type of method and teaching material that teachers used in practice. However, I did not discuss the results of the interviews in the first section of this chapter. The reason for this choice was related to the variation that I found between the responses of the teachers in the interviews and their actual practice as I observed their teaching. I thought that presenting the interview results in a separate section would probably be misleading: rather, it needed to be studied in the context of the observation results.

The responses given to the question concerning method and material used in teaching can be categorised in two groups. First, the responses of those who were very eager to discuss their way of teaching and felt they were doing something worthwhile. Second, the responses of those who were not quite sure whether they were doing anything that was worth mentioning. A large number of teachers in the second group could have provided a rather disappointing image of the teachers of special education. These teachers warned me not to expect too much in terms of methods and material used in teaching.

Teachers in the second group were very weary of hearing terms such as teaching method or material. They thought I wanted to know how “*progressive*” their schools were in terms of equipment and set plans and books for teaching. Observed in practice, every single one of these teachers, had a relatively good idea about how and what to teach the pupils. This was precisely why I felt the results of the interviews did not provide an adequate account of the subject and decided to re-examine these results in the light of the observation outcomes. ⁽¹²⁾

From the methodological point of view, this particular procedure in this research could demonstrate how important it is to examine a phenomenon from different perspectives by applying different research strategies. Had I relied mainly on the interview results I would have painted a very gloomy picture of the classes in the special schools for the mentally handicapped. Such an account would have been at variance with my observation results. In this section, I am dealing with teaching approach and material used in teaching, and curriculum used for different types of pupils.

Table 5.14, below, indicates that almost half of the teachers take a of traditional approach in teaching. The majority of these are the compromisers and compromiser-realists. The teachers who took the traditional approach were

Teacher Types	Teaching Methods		Row Totals
	Traditional	Child - centred	
IDEALIST	1	5	6 (15.0%)
IDEALIST COMPROMISER	2	5	7 (17.5%)
COMPROMISER	16	5	21 (52.5%)
COMPROMISER REALIST	3	3	6 (15.0%)
Column Totals	22 (50.0%)	18 (50.0%)	40 (100.0%)

Table 5.14: Teaching methods by teacher types

mainly those who used the ordinary school books of lower age level than their own pupils and tried to adjust them to their pupils' needs. Teachers who took a child-centred approach spent more time in producing their own material in teaching or used their own special school curriculum. Not all these teachers took this approach because they believed that it was their own responsibility. Further analysis of teachers' practice is necessary in order to understand their choice. Table 5.15, below, indicates that 50% of the total number of teachers used the books of the ordinary schools, 20% used the special material given at the school, and 30% produced their own teaching material. Moreover, Table 5.15 shows a lower number of compromiser-realists teachers who produced their own material in contrast to idealists and idealist-compromisers who were more willing to make their own teaching material.

The main concern of teachers (in all types) was that they did not have specifically designed books for the mentally handicapped pupils. Not all teachers in the interviews had referred to this issue as the most important problem. Yet, in the classroom situation they referred to this issue very often. Teachers in Greece are used to teaching from standard books available for the ordinary schools and a traditional way of teaching. In their majority they find it outside their range of

Teacher Types	Teaching Material			Row Totals
	Mainstream books	School Material	Teachers' Material	
IDEALIST	1	3	2	6 (15.0%)
IDEALIST COMPROMISER	2	-	5	7 (17.5%)
COMPROMISER	15	2	4	21 (52.5%)
COMPROMISER REALIST	2	3	1	6 (15.0%)
Column Totals	20 (50.0%)	8 (20.0%)	12 (30.0%)	40 (100.0%)

Table 5.15: Teaching material by teacher types

responsibilities to produce their own teaching material. Teachers prefer to use a standard curriculum for all their pupils.

The idealist teacher who took a traditional approach in teaching and used the main stream books had decided that his pupils were able to follow the same procedure as that of an ordinary school. As the head of his school, he promoted the child-centred approach and teaching material suited to each individual pupil. The idealist-compromisers who took the traditional approach also followed the main stream books for their pupils. Both these teachers believed that their pupils were capable of following the material with some re-adjustment.

The accounts of the compromisers and compromiser-realists are different from the teachers mentioned above. These teachers were by majority interested to follow a traditional approach and have standard books for teaching. However, in some occasions they had to shift away into a child-centred approach and different type of teaching material.

All the compromisers who took a child-centred approach worked in schools where the head teachers were idealists or idealist-compromiser. These teachers also produced their own teaching material, apart from one who used the school material. One of the compromiser-realists who took a child-centred approach also worked in a schools where the head teacher was an idealist compromiser and he had to use the school material for teaching. Another compromiser-realist had to use the school material since he taught in the school for the blind and mentally handicapped he pointed out that he had deal with each child individually. The third compromiser-realist who took a child-centred approach and made her own material could not do otherwise since she taught art to M.M.H. pupils.

There were also a compromiser and a compromiser- realists who took a traditional approach in teaching but used the school material because of their schools policy. I differentiate between the reasons for the choice of material and approach in teaching by these teachers and those who because of their own beliefs chose the child-centred approach and made their own material.

Teaching material used by the teachers is shown in Tables 5.16 and 5.17, below. Considering the time limit that I had in observing each class, I cannot claim that I have recorded the ways in which all the subjects are covered by the teachers. I could only spend one to three hours in every class, which was not sufficient to take in all aspects of teaching of all teachers in the sample. However, I could detect the teaching trend during my observation and subsequently confirm it by way of further discussion with the teachers.

Some teachers used more extensive curriculum for their pupils while others limited the type of material. The idealist teachers appeared to include more subjects in teaching all types of pupils; other types of teachers tried to go

Subjects taught	Number of teachers who taught the subjects
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Personal hygiene ● Games and puzzles ● Social codes ● Reading/writing: 5th and 6th primary grade ● Reading/writing at 3rd and 4th primary grade ● Reading/writing at 1st and 2nd primary grade ● Arithmetic at 5th and 6th primary grade ● Arithmetic at 3rd and 4th primary grade ● Arithmetic at 1st and 2nd primary grade ● Other subjects: e.g., art, history, music, sport 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● All teachers } including those ● All teachers } with P.M.H. ● All teachers } pupils ● None ● None ● All teachers (only S.M.H.) ● None ● None ● All teachers (only S.M.H.) ● 3 Idealists, 1 idealist/ compromiser, 1 compromiser (only S.M.H.)

Table 5.16: Curriculum for S.M.H. and P.M.H. pupils by teacher types

Number and type of teachers who had S.M.H. pupils:

- idealists - 3
- idealist compromisers - 5
- compromisers - 17 of whom 1 also had P.M.H.
- compromiser realists - 5 of whom 2 also had P.M.H.

(See Appendix III for a sample of teaching material.)

into fewer subjects and related the type of subject to the degree of handicap. For example, most compromiser-realists concentrated mainly on the basic subjects of reading and writing for the M.M.H. and Not M.H. pupils. One compromiser-realist who taught art in the secondary school was appointed only as Art teacher. She did not deal with any other subject.

A comparison between Tables 5.16, above, and 5.17, below, shows that the major subject in the curriculum of special schools is reading and writing. In both of these tables it is shown that the highest percentage of teachers were interested in teaching reading and writing. The subjects of reading and writing were taught at slightly higher levels in the case of M.M.H. and Not M.H. pupils. About 11.8% of the total number of teachers actually attempted to teach

Subjects taught	Number of teachers who taught the subjects
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Personal hygiene ● Games and puzzles ● Social codes ● Reading/writing at 5th and 6th primary grade ● Reading/writing at 3rd and 4th primary grade ● Reading/writing at 1st and 2nd primary grade ● Arithmetic at 5th and 6th primary grade ● Arithmetic at 3rd and 4th primary grade ● Arithmetic at 1st and 2nd primary grade ● Other subjects: e.g., art, history, music, sport 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 1 idealist ● None ● 1 compromiser ● 1 idealist, 1 idealist/compromiser, 2 compromisers ● 3 idealists, 1 idealist/compromiser, 7 compromisers, 2 compromiser/idealists ● 2 idealist/compromisers, 6 compromisers, 1 compromiser/realist ● None ● 1 idealist/compromiser ● All teachers, except 1 idealist/compromiser ● All idealists and idealist/compromisers, 5 compromisers, 1 compromiser/realist

Table 5.17: Curriculum for M.M.H. and Not M.H. pupils by teacher types

Number and type of teachers who had M.M.H. and Not M.H. pupils:

- idealists - 4 with M.M.H., of whom 1 had also Not M.H.
- idealist compromisers - 7 with M.M.H. of whom 1 had also Not M.H.
- compromisers - 19 with M.M.H. of whom 4 had also Not M.H.
- compromiser realists - 4 with M.M.H., of whom 1 had also Not M.H.

(See Appendix III for a sample of teaching material.)

their pupils the level of 5th and 6th grade of the primary school reading. The number of such cases for the S.M.H. and P.M.H. was nil. S.M.H. pupils were receiving mainly reading lessons up to the level of 2nd grade of primary school.

Two idealist teachers used books and material from the 3rd and 4th grades but not with a view to following precisely this material in their teaching. The reason for choosing this particular material did not necessarily stem from the confidence of the teachers in their pupils' ability. Rather, their goal was to vary the teaching material for the benefit of pupils who had already worked with 1st and 2nd grade material over a number of years.

These teachers used the books of the primary school which would match their pupils' age and then made their own readjustment and decided how much a particular child could learn. They were concerned that if a child remained with the same book for several years not only would he/she get bored with learning, but also, in some cases, children would tend to become very conscious of being left far too much behind the rest of the children in their age group. This teaching approach was proving helpful in schools sharing their site with ordinary schools. It was one way of avoiding potential teasing of the mentally handicapped pupils by their fellow pupils in the ordinary schools. One idealist teacher stated that when a child shows his books to others, if they are ordinary school material the stigma of his handicap is less apparent.

Apart from reading and writing, other subjects tended to create problems to most teachers. This was especially the case in the teaching of arithmetic. There was hardly any teacher who did not find it difficult to teach this subject to the mentally handicapped pupils. The level of arithmetic for the majority of children was as low as that of the first grade of the primary school.

The subjects discussed above have priority over all other subjects in the teaching of the M.M.H. and Not M.H. As far as the S.M.H. and P.M.H. were concerned teachers taught them mainly social codes and the rules of personal hygiene. Not all teachers considered this type of work as teaching. In one case a compromiser-realist teacher pointed out that he would be very happy if he found out that his pupils had learned how to dress themselves (he had 10 to 12 year old pupils.) Some teachers did not regard the above type of subjects as part of education: *"You can't really teach them anything, just help them learn how to dress, sit at the desk..."*

Teachers with the type of attitude mentioned above tended to dismiss non-academic subjects as "education." Once they assessed a child as "unable" to learn, they regarded themselves unable to teach them anything. Only in the case of older pupils, these teachers tended to see their pupils' educational needs differently, e.g., when the question of suitable employment arose.

In these cases the majority of teachers are more likely to concentrate on making the child interested in different skills than simply reading and writing. Usually boys are expected to be interested in professions such as woodwork, gardening and the like, while girls should learn domestic skills, sewing, etc. Teachers in the sample could not expect to have all the above subjects as part of the curriculum of all schools. They expected pupils to follow such subjects in special training units and at present there is a shortage of such units. Only in the secondary school in the sample some of these subjects were dealt with. There were classes for woodwork in which all pupils were boys. In classes dealing with sewing pupils were girls and the majority of pupils in the art class were also girls.

Facilities available to teachers are limited in terms of both teaching material and the types of subjects they can teach. A usual day at school for the

majority of pupils is to read a part of a text for the teacher, copy a text from a book, and do a few sums in arithmetic. This account of a school day does not indicate any particular subject that these pupils could not follow in an ordinary school—obviously, at a much slower pace than the other pupils. However, most teachers believe that what they do in the special class is not possible to accomplish in an ordinary class.

In discussions with the teachers in the sample regarding teaching method and material I understood that the majority of teachers looked upon special education as a totally separate system from that of ordinary education. It appeared as if they wanted to keep their area of teaching separate and exclusive to themselves. This trend became even more apparent when I proceeded to interview them in connection with the issue of integration. The majority appeared reluctant to accept that their pupils could benefit in ordinary classes.

Analysis of teaching method and material indicated that some teachers, mainly idealists and idealist compromisers, pursued their teaching tasks having in mind their pupils' future achievements. Other teachers limited their aims to classroom achievement alone. For instance, an idealist teacher who used 3rd and 4th grade material for some of his M.M.H. pupils did not consider the possibility of their achievement in the classroom but, rather, the impression they made on the others. For instance, other children in their immediate surrounding would not be making fun of them that they were still reading primary first books.

Idealist teachers were also very concerned that their pupils learned what they were taught. They paid individual attention to their pupils and made them repeat their task until they learned the correct form. In the classes of the six idealist teachers I attended there was no child without a programme to follow.

I did not come across pupils who would spend all hours involved in doing simple puzzles, playing with toys or drawing without supervision.

In my observation of the work of other teachers I did not see the same degree of perseverance. By perseverance I imply a way of teaching which is based on an organised and constructive programme through which a child is followed closely by a teacher. This type of approach involves not only presenting a pupil with sets of instructions and information on certain subjects but also making sure that the pupil has assimilated most of the material. Therefore, a teacher would be also interested in feedback from the pupils.

Only the idealist compromisers were following a consistent pattern such as that of the idealists in relation to their M.M.H. and Not M.H. pupils, but not in more severe cases. A typical case is that of Mrs. M.'s approach in teaching. She had eight pupils. She had arranged their seating by separating the M.M.H. from the S.M.H. She went through the work of all her M.M.H. pupils and corrected them with great care. In relation to the S.M.H. she did not take too much time.

She did not correct all the mistakes in their homework and let them continue reading while they made mistake. Previously, she had given a row to one of her M.M.H. pupils for not having done her instructions properly, and had insisted on him correcting everything. Comparing the notebooks of the two groups of pupils could indicate that she had put more effort in correcting the work of the more able pupils than the rest. An S.M.H. pupil may have made the same mistake over and over without any sign of the teacher's correction.

The compromisers' degree of perseverance also varied in different situations. I observed that some compromisers were teaching even more able pupils without too much concern about the results of their work. One particular

compromiser who was teaching in the secondary school in my sample spent thirty minutes reading a text in a history lesson. His pupils were mainly either talking or looking outside the window, but he did not try to get their attention. He did not mind very much that they could not answer his questions in relation to the text. I discussed with him, after the class, his pupils' lack of interest. He was not particularly concerned. He pointed out that if they had an interest to learn in the first place they would not have been placed in a special school.

There were, however, times when I noticed compromiser teachers were trying very hard to make sure of their pupils progress and followed their work by correcting. This was particularly the case when they dealt with more able pupils, whom they thought had a better chance of being integrated in ordinary schools. They proceeded as in the cases of the idealists and the idealist-compromisers in persisting that their pupils learn properly.

In observing the practice of the compromiser-realists I noticed that all six teachers went through the material they wanted to teach and then left the pupils to carry on. A typical example of such practice is as follows. The teacher goes through the notebooks of all pupils and assigns some work to them, then he goes through their reading one by one. There is no further effort made by these teachers to correct the work of their pupils. In the case of severely and profoundly handicapped pupils, sometimes they are only given some puzzles and games to spend their time.

In some cases teachers in this type put in greater effort for some pupils. For instance, Mr. B. took a slightly different approach towards one particular child in his class, whom he thought was wrongly placed in a special school. He went through the lessons with him individually and used the ordinary school books of his age group. He said he was certain the child was going to be admitted to an ordinary school if he could follow the type of programme he had

organised for him, but this was something the child could not receive in an ordinary school for the time being. According to Mr. B., the child had behavioural problems and was not mentally handicapped like his other pupils with whom he would not *“waste time in teaching ordinary school material.”*

The attitude that teaching the mentally handicapped could be a waste of time was a fairly common feature of compromiser-idealists. They believed there was no need to teach them too many things since they are not going to learn, either because they cannot or that they are not interested. For example, Mr. L. pointed out there was no reason to make his S.M.H. pupils' lives more difficult by trying to teach them too many things:

“Teaching mentally handicapped is easy, you teach them one or two things and that is it.”

The common pattern of teaching among compromiser-realists was to provide pupils with simple information which they may or may not learn. There was no teacher in the compromiser-realist group who would consider straying away from this usual pattern.

Description of the work of teachers who did not show the same degree of persistence towards all their pupils may present them as not very devoted to their work. However, by talking to each teacher and listening to their views I noticed that they believed that was all they could do. They were sure that their pupils were not going to improve in the school subjects no matter what they did. They mainly thought such pupils should be given a chance to learn a skill rather than attending a school which was a place to learn academic subjects.

In my discussion with the teachers whom I observed were not very persistent in their teaching I noticed that they justified their action in relation to

the prospects they saw for those pupils. It was a usual comment which I heard any number of times that since these pupils were not going to integrate fully in an ordinary schools, why should they be given academic subjects. Therefore these teachers created a pattern of teaching which implied more effort in teaching those who were more able to follow ordinary school's curriculum. In further discussion with these teachers in relation to the possibilities they saw for integration of their pupils I found out that these teachers put more effort into teaching those pupils whom they considered as more able to follow ordinary schools.

The comparison between the type of curriculum used for M.M.H. and Not M.H. pupils with those for the S.M.H. and P.M.H. pupils indicates that there is more extensive curriculum used for the more able groups by most teachers. The idealist teachers appear to be the only group who use relatively equal curriculum for most of their pupils. They were also the only group who pursued their teaching with an equal degree of perseverance in all cases.

These results appear to correspond to the type of views teachers hold towards the possibilities of their pupils integration in ordinary schools, the community and their independent living. I will be discussing these issues in detail below.

4.3 Teachers' assessment of the possibilities for their pupils' integration.

In this section I will discuss teachers' views on the possibilities of their pupils' integration in ordinary schools, integration in the community and independent living. I have dealt with teachers' general views on these subjects

above. Here I am examining the attitudes of teachers in the context of their actual practice and in relation to the pupils they had in their class at the time of my observation.

Discussion of teachers' general views, in the preceding section, has revealed that teachers interpret the concept of integration and independent living in different ways. They also assess the possibilities for their pupils' future on the basis of different criteria. For example, two teachers may both have similar positive or negative responses about the possibilities of integration of their pupils in the ordinary school, but may have different reasons for their belief.

In some cases, teachers assess the possibilities for their pupils mainly on the basis of the latter's personal background. In others they take into account the schools' and community's potential to integrate mentally handicapped pupils. Not all teachers had all the categories of pupils in their class, but the accounts they gave for assessing their pupils could indicate the extent to which degree of handicap was the criterion they applied in their assessment. I shall be discussing these results in relation to different types of teachers. Discussion of teachers' views concerning the process through which teachers characterise their pupils.

4.3.1 Teachers' assessment of the possibilities of their pupils' integration in ordinary schools.

Results drawn from analysis of teachers' views on the possibilities of their pupils' integration in ordinary schools indicate, firstly, that a large number of teachers thought their M.M.H. and Not M.H. pupils had more chances to integrate than S.M.H. and P.M.H. pupils. Secondly, a few teachers did not

found their opinion on the degree of their pupils' handicap but, rather, on the capacity of the ordinary schools to cope with them.

All six idealist teachers used the criteria relating to schools' and society's potential to integrate their pupils. Of the three teachers in this group who had S.M.H. pupils, two believed that the pupils could have attended ordinary school. These teachers were convinced that there were ordinary schools which had sufficient resources to deal with those pupils. One of the two teachers, Mr. C., worked in a special school which was located within an ordinary school. He could not see any reason why his pupils (who also included M.M.H. pupils) could not carry on in an ordinary school class with the help of a specialist such as himself. He was not satisfied that his pupils were sharing only the playground with the ordinary school pupils. He pointed out that his pupils were being effectively exposed to the label of mentally handicapped since they attended a different class in an ordinary school.

For idealist teachers the possibility of integrating S.M.H. and P.M.H. pupils in ordinary schools should be seen not only in terms of locational integration but also in terms of some form of social integration and shared curriculum. The idealist teachers who expressed doubts about their pupils potential for integration in ordinary schools did so on account of the absence of a suitable shared curriculum.

For instance, Mrs. J., the idealist teacher who did not believe her S.M.H. pupils could immediately integrate in an ordinary school had a specific reason for her view. She explained that in that particular class she had pupils who needed a lot of individual attention. She had devised a method of teaching her pupils which could enhance their ability for future integration in ordinary school, the community and independent living. She felt that in an ordinary school (or

even another special school) her pupils could not achieve as much without first being specially prepared by her.

Another idealist teacher, Mr. A., also with M.M.H. pupils, who taught in the only secondary school in my sample, firmly believed that his pupils, who were approaching school leaving age, were not particularly interested in attending ordinary school. He did not believe it was important for his pupils to integrate at that stage in ordinary school, since they had already received suitable education and could get on with their lives independently. He wanted to concentrate more on the aspects of integrating them in the open community and employment. I will refer to this teacher below, in my discussion of integration in the community and independent living.

This line of thinking was followed by two teachers who had M.M.H. (one of whom had also Not M.H.) pupils over 12 years of age. They entertained doubts about the possibility of successful integration of those pupils. They could not see how the ordinary school could offer these pupils at that age something which it had denied them all the previous years. Lack of confidence among idealist teachers in ordinary school's ability to educate their pupils did not appear to be definitive. All teachers who had expressed doubts were in effect enthusiastically involved in preparing special programmes and organising meetings to promote cooperation of special and ordinary school and the community.

All idealist teachers in their assessment of their pupils referred to what they saw as beneficial for their pupils, rather than taking into account the kinds of problems their pupils would give rise to in ordinary schools. Three teachers who did not have S.M.H. pupils stated their views about the more severe cases. Two of them were head teachers of their school and made general remarks about all the pupils in their school. The third teacher told me that he used to teach

severely and profoundly handicapped pupils following the same teaching approach.

Study of idealist teachers' attitude and practice reveals that they share a common characteristic, that is, their determination to overcome problems involved in enabling their pupils to become eventually integrated in the community and lead as far as possible an independent life. This pattern was followed by these teachers in all cases without regard to degree of their pupils' handicap and the assessment they made of their potential for integration and independent living. This characteristic of treating equally pupils with different degree of handicap tends to differentiate idealists from the other teacher types which I am discussing below.

Some Idealist-compromisers took the same approach as idealists in their assessment of M.M.H. and Not M.H. pupils. Two idealist-compromisers who thought their M.M.H. pupils could integrate in the ordinary schools gave the same reasons as the idealists. One of these teachers, who also referred to some of his pupils as Not M.H., worked in a school situated in an ordinary school. He had made special arrangements for his pupils to attend some activities together with ordinary school pupils. He found it unacceptable that the ordinary school was not ready to offer more. The second of these teachers worked in a self-contained special school. He pointed out that ordinary schools should begin to integrate special pupils and adjust their approach accordingly. He said that he could recommend several ordinary schools which would have the capacity to accept his pupils.

Other idealist-compromiser teachers were not sure that their pupils could benefit in ordinary classes. They felt they were more capable of helping their pupils, for the time being, since ordinary schools did not have qualified teachers in special education.

The idealist-compromisers deviated from the pattern they shared with the idealists in their way of assessing their S.M.H. pupils. When they regarded a child to be more severely handicapped they tended to place emphasis on difficulties of that particular child to cope in ordinary school. In this sense their approach differs from that of the idealists who were concerned whether available resources in the school and community were adequate for their pupils. The idealist compromisers shared the view with the idealists that integration could only be completed when the pupils were given equal chances in the ordinary schools. They deviated from the idealists when they show lack of optimism to pursue such goal for their S.M.H. pupils.

Among the five idealist-compromisers with S.M.H. and M.M.H. pupils four believed firmly that their S.M.H. pupils could not be integrated in ordinary schools. All of those teachers referred to problems their S.M.H. pupils would be faced with in ordinary school and that one cannot expect ordinary schools to look after those pupils' needs. There were two idealist-compromisers who did not have S.M.H. pupils, but both had made general remarks indicating that they would not have recommended that very severely handicapped pupils be integrated in ordinary school.

Idealist teachers could not see any reason why their pupils could not be integrated in the ordinary schools once there were possibilities of specialist help in the ordinary schools. Idealist-compromisers believed this was plausible only for more able pupils. They could not see how ordinary schools could take care of the needs of the more severely handicapped who would not be able to cope anyway due to their disabilities. Although the idealist compromisers agree that the stigma attached to mental handicap should be removed and all pupils should have equal right to education in practice they cannot see this principle applicable.

One idealist-compromiser who pointed out that his S.M.H. pupils could integrate believed that ordinary schools had to accept severely handicapped pupils. He added, however, that integration would not necessarily "*improve*" their "*conditions*". Generally speaking, he did not believe that as a special school teacher he himself could help the S.M.H. pupils to achieve much.

Idealist-compromisers tended to accept the situation as it actually was for the less able pupils. They tended to compromise with and adjust to difficulties they were faced with. Their approach to teaching S.M.H. pupils was closer to that of compromiser teachers who, in most of the cases, followed a similar line in assessing and teaching their pupils. Out of nineteen compromisers with M.M.H. pupils (two had also Not M.H. pupils) eleven believed their pupils could be integrated. Their reason was that their pupils were able to follow some programmes in the ordinary school and that they would not be any trouble. Eight teachers in this group worked in schools situated within ordinary school grounds and took this to be a form of integration anyway. In this respect compromisers' interpretation of the concept of integration is contrast to that of the idealists and somehow different from the idealist-compromisers.

For example, I had referred to the views of Mr. C. the idealist teacher who was unsatisfied with mere locational integration of his special schools with the ordinary school. In the same school, compromiser teachers with different types of pupils were satisfied that their pupils were sharing the playground with the ordinary school pupils. This they regarded as an adequate form of integration. These teachers thought it was too much to ask of the ordinary school teachers to cope with the handicapped pupils.

Compromisers who did not accept that their M.M.H. and Not M.H. pupils could integrate maintained that they would be faced with far too many problems in ordinary schools. Two of these teachers worked in schools located

in ordinary school grounds. They thought their pupils were not treated as equals in the presence of other pupils and were exposed to stigmatisation. However, they also remarked that it was too much to request of an ordinary school teacher to try and cope with this type of problem.

Seventeen compromiser teachers had S.M.H. pupils (one of whom also had P.M.H. pupils). Ten of these teachers, including the latter three, remarked that their pupils could not integrate in ordinary schools. They believed their pupils would not be able to cope. Six teachers in the compromiser group with S.M.H. pupils suggested that their pupils could integrate in ordinary schools. They did not think their pupils could be better educated in the ordinary schools but accepted the shortcomings of ordinary school. Some (five) of the above six teachers worked in schools located within ordinary schools. They also felt that sharing of grounds was already a sign that their pupils could integrate in ordinary school. They did not believe that much more could be done for them.

The distinguishing characteristic of the compromisers' approach is that they do not seek to impose their pupils upon the ordinary schools. In the account they provide for their positive approach to integration, they always try to justify their pupils' ability to cope in ordinary school. They are not too concerned with their pupils' integration in ordinary classes but believe that there are possibilities for their pupils to share some aspects of schooling with the other pupils. Compromisers tend to concede to the limitations involved in integrating their pupils rather than try to overcome obstacles. This is what brings them closer to the group I have referred to as compromiser-realists.

The latter were mainly concerned with their pupils' disabilities before any other consideration. Naturally they were interested in the existence of community resources and possibilities in the schools. However, they mainly took the view

that there was not much to be expected of pupils when they do not have within themselves the possibility to cope with the real world.

Out of the total of six compromiser-realists (two also had P.M.H. pupils) no teacher thought their pupils who had any degree of handicap could integrate in ordinary school. Two of these teachers suggested with reluctance and scepticism that their S.M.H. and M.M.H. or Not M.H. pupils could integrate if their condition improved. One of these two, Mr.L., remarked that if the pupils were not disturbing the work of the ordinary class they could just attend ordinary school since they were not learning much in the special school anyway.

When compromiser-realists talk of integration in ordinary school as a possibility they imply that their handicapped pupils are not necessarily capable of following ordinary classes but could coexist within the same school grounds as ordinary school pupils.

Some compromiser-realist teachers were taken by surprise when I addressed them with a question concerning the actual integration of their severely and profoundly handicapped pupils in ordinary classes. The type of surprised replies that I received from them were characteristic of their views: "*Surely you are joking...*", or "*Are you seriously suggesting this child can sit next to an ordinary child?*" Others did not get as surprised but explained that children with severe handicap could not possibly reach the requirement for attending ordinary schools unless substantial changes were to take place in the structure of ordinary education. These teachers did not feel that they could change the situation themselves and were not prepared to go through any length to alter a pupil's chances.

The kinds of approaches taken by teachers of different types in assessing their pupils' possibilities of integration in ordinary schools were also followed

in their assessment of possibilities of integration and independent living, as I am discussing below.

4.3.2 Teachers' assessment of their pupils' possibilities for integrating in the community.

The most significant issue concerning pupils' integration is that more teachers believe their pupils are capable of integrating in the community than in ordinary schools. All idealists believed there was possibility for the integration of their pupils in the community. Only two were slightly doubtful. One of them Mr.A. believed that his pupils as individuals in their own right could integrate and live independently. He had pupils who were of school leaving age. They had received vocational training as part of their school curriculum.

He explained that he was not quite certain about his pupils' acceptance in the community. He thought that even though these pupils may take up a job they could always be exposed to stigmatisation. This view, however, did not stop this teacher from involving himself in schemes to promote his pupils' acceptance. He thought it was his responsibility to make the public aware of their duties towards the handicapped.

The other idealist teacher, Mrs. F., who had reservations pointed out that her S.M.H. pupils were sociable and capable of coping in the community like any other child. She suggested that all her six pupils, between six to eleven years of age, had some physical features which people were not used to. Her concern was the potential reaction of people in the community towards them. This type of scepticism regarding possibility of integration is different from the views held by teachers in other groups who judged that their S.M.H. pupils

could not cope in the community since their own disability would hold them back from the rest of the community.

Idealists tended to regard society's ability to cope with the mentally handicapped as more important than the ability of the mentally handicapped persons to cope with conditions in society. They stressed that it was society that attached the label to such individuals, therefore it should be the responsibility of society to help out these individuals. They believed that with further progress in educational technology and the increase in public awareness of the problems of the mentally handicapped the chances of integration for their pupils should improve. Idealists adopted this approach towards their pupils without referring to their degree of handicap.

Idealist-compromisers assessed the possibility of their M.M.H. and Not M.H. pupils' integration in the community almost along the lines of the idealists. Only two teachers were uncertain about the possibility of their pupils' integration. Both were confident of their pupils' adjustment to society but were not certain of the way in which people in the community would react towards them.

The idealist-compromisers' approach in assessing more severe cases of S.M.H. pupils was different. The caution with which these teachers approached the issue of integrating the S.M.H. in the community as a definite possibility related to their belief that their pupils would suffer from stigmatisation. In this respect their views came close to the idealists views. Their difference is that they did not believe they could be influential in any changes whereas the idealists thought a teachers of special education they had to get involved in public awareness schemes. For instance, Mrs. F., the idealist teacher who was concerned about her pupils satisfactory integration in the community was involved in writing articles in newspapers on the subject.

The idealist compromiser teachers were not sure of their own role in increasing the possibilities of integration. For instance, one idealist compromiser kept referring to the importance of changes of attitude in the community but did not identify how he could be of any help in such situation. He was very concerned that the severely handicapped pupils who had some physical features unusual for the ordinary members of the community could never be really accepted. His view in principle is similar to Mrs. F. but his reaction is far away from an idealist one but more of a compromiser.

Compromisers also believed that they could not influence conditions in the community which are undesirable for their pupils. Yet their view is slightly different from the idealist compromisers. In their majority they thought their pupils could integrate in the community. They were aware of stigmatisation problems faced by some of their pupils, but did not find such problems were too vital for their pupils's well being. They thought that, in any case, the situation in the community would not change easily: their pupils had to learn to live with the problems they were faced with.

Only two compromisers suggested that the possibility of integrating their pupils was very low since the situation in the community was not going to change that fast. One of them had S.M.H. and M.M.H. pupils, the other S.M.H. and P.M.H. They thought their pupils needed special help and protection to cope and that was not readily available in society. This approach appears to come close to that of the idealist teacher, referred to above, who had some doubts about her pupils' prospects for integration in the community. However, her focus was more on whether society would accept her pupils as they were, rather than on providing protection and making provisions for them. The concern of compromisers here was to ensure that provision is made for rehabilitation of the mentally handicapped. In the event that their pupils do not turn up as expected by the community integration cannot take place.

Four compromisers teachers who did not give any definite reply, thought that they could not be sure about their pupils who were too young for such assessment. These teachers did not believe that they it was relevant to their profession to make such predictions. One of these teachers mentioned that I should better ask the head teacher who knew better. This particular teacher Mrs E. who was newly appointed, and unqualified was very unsure of her role as special education teacher.

Apart from these teachers the other compromisers always related their assessment of their pupils the their degree of handicap and evaluated the extent to which their pupils could cope with the outside world. In this respect their view is very close to that of the compromiser realist.

Criteria used by compromisers were also applied by compromiser-realists in assessing possibilities of their pupils' integration in the community. However, compromiser-realists differed in their approach to the extent that they were not prepared to accept that their less able pupils could integrate in the community. Only one teacher, Mr. L., in this group gave a definitive, positive reply for the prospects of his pupils' integration and independent living. He pointed out that there was no reason why his pupils could not live within the community even if they were stigmatised and unable to take care of all their needs. He stated that *"after all these kids would not do any harm to anyone and why should not they live in the open community among the others."*

Mr. L.'s reflects a perception of the mentally handicapped pupil who has to accept what is on offer for him\her and there is not much one can do. In general the compromiser-realists were not prepared to accept there could be much change to an individual's situation while that person is labelled by others as handicapped. They accepted their M.M.H. and Not M.H. pupils had better

chances of integrating in the community, but even so they did not believe that such pupils could be treated as non handicapped by the society.

The approaches towards the possibilities of integration in the community taken by different teachers are very similar to those on their assessment of the possibilities of their pupils' independent living.

4.3.3 Teachers' assessment of the possibilities for their pupils following an independent life.

The overall results of teachers' responses to the question concerning their pupils' future indicated general optimism. The majority of teachers associated independent living with the possibility of employment. This involved the process of assessment to be based on the individual's abilities to learn some skills. The majority of teachers made no reference to other aspects of independent life.

The interpretation of independent living as equal opportunities for those referred to as "*mentally handicapped*" and for the rest of the population was put forward only by idealist teachers. They referred to the importance of their pupils' ability to decide for themselves. One idealist teacher pointed out that he did not agree that because of their problem in school performance some children should lose their right to choose for themselves.

Idealist teachers took this approach towards their S.M.H. pupils, too. One teacher in this group stated that her pupils could be independent adults, but then added that she did not mean that they should necessarily be gainfully employed

and maintain themselves physically. She put more emphasis on their ability to express their wishes and their needs.

Idealist-compromisers applied the same criteria as idealists in assessing possibility of independent living for their M.M.H. and Not M.H. pupils. They deviated from this pattern as regards their S.M.H. pupils. Only two teachers out of the five idealist-compromisers with S.M.H. thought their pupils could become independent. The reason for their positive attitude was their belief that their pupils could learn some skill.

Another two of these teachers firmly believed these pupils could not live independently, and one teacher remarked that she could not provide an answer. The two teachers who considered their pupils capable of living independently did not have the same conception of independent living as the idealists. It is important to notice that idealist-compromisers used different criteria in assessing their pupils' ability to become independent: they were concerned about the prospect of their pupils' job opportunities. Idealists, on the other hand, were more concerned with individual choice and equality of opportunity.

Compromisers are different from both idealists and idealist-compromisers in that they have a less exacting view of the possibilities for their pupils. When teachers refer to their pupils as capable of being independent they express their positive approach in terms which imply that "*the pupils can do something*". They are not particularly anxious about the pupils having a choice in what they do so long as they have some income from their work.

Among compromisers with M.M.H. and Not M.H. pupils none dismissed totally the pupils' ability to live independently. Four teachers did not give any precise answer. These were the same teachers who had not been sure about their pupils' ability to integrate in the community. Their reasons were the same as

those mentioned in the section on integration in the community. Although it is encouraging to see that the majority of compromisers are not pessimistic about the prospects of their pupils' employment it is rather alarming that they do not consider their pupils' views as equally important. This type of approach was even more strongly manifest in relation to S.M.H. and P.M.H. pupils.

Only four compromisers thought their pupils could not become independent because they could not get employment due to their disabilities. A further two teachers claimed they could not decide. Thus the majority of compromisers with S.M.H. and P.M.H. pupils found them capable of living independently. However, comparing their accounts with the idealists' suggests that they are mainly concerned with the type of ability their pupils have for work, rather than their condition of equality towards the others or with whether they could choose for themselves.

The approach of the compromiser-realists was very similar to that of the compromisers. However, in relation to their S.M.H. and P.M.H. pupils they tended to be very pessimistic. Two teachers did not give a definitive response since they thought their pupils were too young to be assessed in that respect. Two teachers found their pupils incapable of becoming independent due to their disabilities. The only teacher who thought his S.M.H. pupils could become independent, Mr. L., pointed out that he could not see why there should be problems for them since they were going to receive State benefit. He mentioned that in that respect the handicapped could obtain income more easily than the non handicapped. In relation to the milder cases he thought they are able to get into some easy profession. This view of independence is different from that held by idealists.

These general definitions become more specific when teachers refer to particular cases of pupils. Different definitions attached to independent living

become relevant to particular circumstances of the pupils. Two teachers who give positive answers to the question whether their pupils could be independent may have totally different views of independence.

For example, the idea of being able to support oneself financially may be interpreted by a teacher as "*getting a minimum wage in a workshop*" doing the type of work that usually does not appeal to the "*normal*" people. In this sense a person labelled as mentally handicapped is given no choice but to accept what is on offer. In my visit to the only secondary school for the mentally handicapped a compromiser-realist teacher, Mrs. D., stated that she could not understand why one of her pupils was not grateful for being given the offer of a job in a sewing workshop. She could not readily think of anybody who would be prepared to offer a better job to that pupil.

I made a point of talking to that girl. She told me that she really wanted to get involved in designing clothes and did not want to clean the floor as was usually the case when she attended the workshop. She told me she could not understand why people would not accept her preference to do something else: "*they think my brain does not work*". The attitude of that pupil's teacher contrasts with the views of the idealist teacher, Mr. A., in the same school, whom I referred to above. He thought his pupils should be given a choice and was prepared to get involved in negotiations with prospective employers.

The extent to which any of the above teachers may be able to contribute to the actual integration of their pupils cannot be assessed in this research and is not one of its objectives. The views of teachers concerning their pupils' prospects and their conception of the extent to which their role could influence those prospects could provide useful insights into the prevailing trends in special education practice.

4.3.4 Ideology and practice:

Teachers' perception of their pupils and their practice of special education.

The concepts of idealist, idealist-compromiser, compromiser and compromiser–realist teacher indicate the extent to which teachers believe they are capable of enhancing their pupils' prospects at schools and in the community. Teachers may wish to see all pupils, who are categorised as mentally handicapped, being integrated in the ordinary schools and the community with the prospect of independent life ahead of them. In their actual practice, this positive approach may change as teachers face obstacles in attaining these goals for their pupils. Some teachers attempt to overcome the problems, others may choose to accept the situation as it is.

The type of approach taken by special education teachers towards their pupils does not have roots only in their assessment of the degree of their pupils' ability to cope with the outside world or the ways in which the community responds to them. There is also a link with the way in which teachers see their role in enhancing the possibilities for their pupils. As I have already discussed in the preliminary analysis of data teachers in the sample showed different degrees of interest in pursuing the goals of integration and independent living for their pupils. At this final stage I will bring together different types of data which I have referred to in different sections of the thesis to explain how each type of teacher may be differentiated from the others.

The idealists tended to be consistent in their manner of teaching and their extra activities which were aimed at improving their pupils' prospects disregarding the degree of the pupils' ability. The principal characteristic of idealist

teachers' practice was apparent in their attempts to render the community towards more awareness of the needs of mentally handicapped individuals.

For instance, one head teacher (idealist) Mr. G., had organised special local meetings in which teachers from different schools, both mainstream and special, could participate along with members of the local councils and officials from the Ministry of Education. Parents of the mentally handicapped pupils and other members of the lay public were made welcome. He did not expect to solve all problems in these meetings but he surely could make officials and the public more aware of the needs of the mentally handicapped. I attended one such a meeting. There was discussion of different kinds of problems on the basis of points raised by the principal parties concerned. Subjects revolved around the lack of specialists and textbooks, difficulties in integration, employment prospects etc.

The same type of approach was taken by another idealist head teacher. He was very active in public awareness projects and organising training programmes for his teachers. A very important part of his spare time, he claimed, was spent on producing school material for the pupils in the school. Every year he added new material and evaluated the teaching material for different classes. He also left teachers to sort out some material for their pupils and added that to the files in the school for future use.

Another example of the idealists' involvement with their pupils' future can be found in the work of Mr. C. who was collaborating with the parents of his pupils in organising social functions and getting his pupils to get in touch with other children who were in the ordinary school. He even visited the parents at home outside his work hours. Other teachers in the same school were finding such activities as those in a social workers responsibility and thought he was going well beyond the limits of his role.

The central concern of teachers in the idealist group was not confined to teaching pupils some basic subjects. They were concerned with the quality of education that these pupils received which would help them eventually in the open community and open up possibilities for them to be accepted in the productive system. This was the task which these teachers thought was expected of them to accomplish, whereas the majority of other teachers found such a task irrelevant to their profession.

Only idealist-compromisers took approaches similar to the idealists' in some cases which did not involve very severe cases. These teachers were prepared to go beyond the usual routine of their teaching if they thought their pupils had the potential and were not severely handicapped. This is because they thought the less handicapped pupils had more chances of leading an independent life and integrating in the ordinary schools and the community.

A typical approach of idealist compromisers towards the more able pupils may be seen Mr. K.'s practice. He had developed an interest in his pupils and placed emphasis in his teaching of history and geography. He was making them involved in projects and types of work required of ordinary school pupils. He said he did not mind if their standards were not the same, rather it was important for them to believe they were doing something interesting.

I attended Mr. K.'s class and observed the enthusiasm of the pupils in having done a project on a Greek hero. Mr. K. asked me afterwards whether I really thought that was a group of mentally handicapped pupils. I answered in the negative. Mr. K.'s remark indicates that he would consider certain categories of pupils as "really mentally handicapped". My agreement with his views towards the pupils he referred to as "not mentally handicapped" does not imply agreement with his view that mental handicap is within individuals and needs to

be detected. I did not get into any discussions on such subjects with the teachers since I wanted to register their views and not to impose my views upon them.

Mr. K. specifically made it clear that he was not quite sure how much he could have achieved had his pupils been severely handicapped. This feature of the Idealist-compromisers tended to shift their approach away from the idealists and closer to the compromisers.

An example of idealist-compromisers' teaching practice may be also seen in Mrs. M.'s work. She did try to teach her pupils what she thought was useful for them but in relation to her severely handicapped pupils she was not prepared to put too much effort. She felt she should concentrate on what such pupils were able to learn than trying to be too ambitious:

“For some children school is the only place where they can learn the good manners and self respect. A lot of these children are treated like babies at home... I think I have to teach them some social skills.”

This teacher complained that parents often look at school as a place where their children can be “cured” of handicap. She mentioned her problems with one particular child whose parents could not understand why was not using ordinary school books. She told me that child was not able to follow any instruction in reading or writing. In this case the teacher believed she was not practising education but rather doing what parents should have been doing at home.

She was concentrating on teaching him social skills. His parents did not believe this was education. Yet she was not prepared to change her own method to please the parents. She felt that the child could not follow an ordinary school but could learn to cope with some aspects of life if was given the chance at

school. She gave this child some reading and writing lessons but was not trying hard to make sure he had learnt everything. This view was different from that of the idealist who tried to make sure their S.M.H. pupils would be able to read some basic words and also concentrated on teaching social skills which she firmly believed was a part of her responsibility.

Comparison between an idealist–compromiser and an idealist is clearly seen in observing the work of Mrs. F., an idealist teacher, and Mr. H., a compromiser–idealist who was the head teacher of the school in which Mrs. F. worked. This head teacher was interested in organising his school around what he referred to as a “*progressive programme*”. However, he did not believe that much could be done to improve the situation of the pupils with severe handicap such as those in Mrs. F.’s class.

Mrs. F. was aware of all kinds of obstacles in providing her pupils with their educational needs, but tried to treat them as individuals capable of learning. She was planning to involve them in some extra activities so as to encourage them to communicate with the others. She told me she was faced with some difficulty in carrying out her teaching of S.M.H. pupils using material from ordinary schools which she was adjusting to the individual pupil’s needs.

The head teacher was not in favour of her teaching method and often criticised her for trying to achieve the impossible. This was a genuine example of an idealist teacher trying to change the existing situation while having to cope with several obstacles. The head teacher of this school used a management model which I had referred to as a power model. He required to have control over all activities in the school. He often referred to Mrs. F. as a troublemaker. This head teacher was trying to impose his own perception of the mentally handicapped pupils upon the rest of the teachers.

In the same school there were three compromisers and one compromiser-idealist. The compromisers all appeared to accept his ideas while the compromiser-idealist seemed to find some of his ideas unrealistic and was doing as little as he could. The compromiser teachers had reservations regarding the head teacher's approach but did not show any resistance and went along with his views. They tried to teach their pupils what the head teacher had prepared for them. This was a very common pattern among the compromisers. They usually did not try to get into conflict with the others and accepted the situation. They were not willing to jeopardise their position or disturb their working relationship with the others.

In their majority compromisers were not prepared actively to pursue such goals by devoting of their time and energy. They were, however, prepared to follow their idealist or idealist-compromiser colleagues when they were obliged to do so or when they felt not too much effort was involved. For instance, there were eight teachers among the compromisers who had been recently appointed and were very concerned to hold on to their positions. These teachers were not prepared to risk their job by getting into any conflict with their head teachers.

Another reason for a teacher to become a compromiser may be due to a personal lack of confidence in dealing with some children. This was the case among the less experienced teachers. For instance, a newly appointed teacher provided me with replies in which she frequently quoted the head teacher's views. In one case, a head teacher who felt the other teacher was more knowledgable followed her views and even told me to ask her about some aspects of the school.

There were some occasions when compromisers would search for channels to help the process of integration. For instance, one head teacher in this group referred some of his M.M.H. pupils, who were at an acceptable age for leaving

primary school (around 12 years old), to the 6th grade of the ordinary primary school towards the end of the school year. This was to enable them to receive the certificate of the ordinary primary school rather than that of a special school. He believed this would give these pupils a better chance of being accepted for vocational training courses to which they would not be eligible to apply if they had the certificate of a special school. He had a good relationship with the head teacher of the ordinary school which had shared ground with the special school. It was not a very difficult task for him and he did not need to get involved into conflict with anyone. These types of action taken by the compromisers differentiate them from the compromiser realist.

Compromiser-realists were the least optimistic teachers in the sample. Their approach was not only related to their belief that handicapped pupils, due to their own disabilities, could not follow the same path as "*ordinary pupils*". They were also discouraged by what the system of education and society at large could offer them so as to "*improve*" the situation of their pupils. They did not believe they should contribute anything extra to that of the day's work. This comes in total contrast to the idealists' approach who believed it was first and foremost community's attitude to handicapped people that needed to change.

Compromiser-realists were not prepared to get out of their usual teaching routine for their pupils. For instance, Mr. B. saw his task only as an educator and not a social worker. He did not see why he should do something which he was not paid for. He did try to make his pupils familiar with certain social codes and prepare them for coping with some tasks that were expected of them in the community. However, this he saw as something extra. He indicated that "*since parents don't care he has to do their job and teach children these basic things*".

The compromiser-realists referred to certain issues regarding their practice which may help understand their approach in teaching. Two teachers

expressed their frustration with the system of special education in consideration of their own role. Both of them regarded themselves as having been well behind a long overdue promotion. Two others expressed their frustration with society in general and the way in which the system of special education was run in particular.

Another teacher in this group was not really interested in what she was involved with and had chosen this job since she could not get employment elsewhere. Concern for higher income was the reason for another teacher in the compromiser–realist group who also thought that as a special education teacher he got a better deal in terms of working hours and the time he needed to prepare for the lessons.

Teachers in other types were in the same predicament yet they devoted more time and effort to their work than the compromiser–realists who were adopting the principle of "*least effort*" in their work. For example, one idealist, Mr. G., with a much longer experience than Mr. B. (a compromiser–realist) complained of the limited appreciation he had received either from authorities in the related Ministries or from parents. Despite his frustration he carried on regardless putting in extra work for organising meetings, writing articles, etc. He himself produced most of the teaching material he used—a task the compromiser–realists felt was not their responsibility since they were not being paid for it.

Some compromiser–realists were not prepared to put any further effort than their usual teaching routine required, even when they believed their pupils could integrate. Some of them thought pupils who were able to integrate and follow an independent life would do so in any case. This was particularly the case in some schools where the special schools were located in the grounds of

the ordinary schools. In these cases the teachers had accepted that this was as much integration as their pupils could attain in an ordinary school.

These teachers thought their pupils were already integrated in the ordinary school since they shared facilities and sometimes they took part in activities together. For them integration did not take place in terms of curriculum or social integration. Rather, they were satisfied that integration was attained through the mere presence of their pupils along with the pupils of the ordinary schools.

For instance, Mr. L., who had pointed out that all of his pupils could attend ordinary school, be integrated in the community and lead a life of their own. He did not mind the lack of specialist care in the ordinary schools or the type of problems his pupils could face in gaining employment, etc. He mentioned that even in the special school pupils were not able to cope with the curriculum they were provided for. He did not spend time to correct the mistakes his pupils made and did not appear to be concerned with their lack of knowledge of the outside world. He believed that as a special education teacher, within the limits that had been set out for him, he could not help his pupils to achieve more.

Compromiser-realists believe once a pupil is in special school, no matter what degree of handicap, that implies that they cannot cope well in learning and it would not be of much use to try and push those pupils to learn in similar fashion to mainstream schools. What differentiates these teachers from the compromisers is that they do not seem to be influenced by the other teachers in changing their pattern. They resist the idealist teachers in particular and find their approaches unrealistic. A compromiser-realist pointed out that her pupils would not have been referred to a special school if they were able to follow what the ordinary school pupils do. She did not see why she should pretend that they were not different from other pupils since they were.

Three compromiser–realists were also head teachers in their schools. They had the power of putting forward ideas and making an effort to overcome obstacles. However, they did feel that this would involve too much extra work and would be beyond their responsibilities. They thought their task was not to deal with problems such as lack of understanding by community of the needs of their pupils or their bleak employment prospects. One of these head teachers was often in conflict with an idealist–compromiser teacher who wanted to improve the type of teaching material and equipment in the school. This head teacher could not see any point in pursuing such matters since he felt the authorities were not going to respond to his demands.

The other three teachers in this group had the same type of attitude and were not happy to follow their head teachers. For example, Mr. S. was very frustrated that his head teacher, an idealist–compromiser, was “*pushing him*” to teach the type of material that his pupils could not absorb in any case. Although on the surface he was pursuing the head teacher’s views, in practice he was not very concerned to make sure that his pupils followed the material he presented them with.

The ways in which teachers chose certain patterns of practice in the classroom may not be related only to the criteria according to which they characterise their pupils but also to the complex processes through which they see fit to carry out the task of teaching. While some teachers try to follow their ideal despite the problems others may compromise to varying degrees.

5. CONCLUSIONS.

In the final part of this chapter I shall attempt to outline the major results of this research with a view to showing the way in which the teachers' construction of the mentally handicapped pupils is formed. Use of a flexible research framework has enabled me to collect data by means of different research strategies, i.e., interview and observation, compare the results of each part of the research with one another and arrive at some generalisation.

The results of my primary analysis of data led me to postulate the existence of four different types of teacher corresponding to different ways in which teachers' construction of the mentally handicapped takes place. These are founded upon three basic ways of looking at mentally handicapped pupils.

In the main research I provide an account of teachers' views on how they regard the possibilities of integration and independent life for their pupils. I also discuss the extent to which they themselves took a role in achieving these goals. Teachers do not view the possibilities for all their pupils in a uniform way, but they have a general view on how much they can do for their pupils to help them achieve the goals of integration and independent life.

The **first** set of attitudes reflects a realistic approach. This is based on the belief that the limitations of an individual with mental handicap are and will always be observed by others in the community. In this account, a mentally handicapped pupil could not "*catch up*" with the rest of the community since he/she does not have the requisite potential nor would the community be likely to reduce its expectations. Teachers who espouse such a view accept "*reality*"

as it is and do not believe any major changes could be imposed or brought about by themselves.

Second, there is the image of the mentally handicapped pupil as a person who is not completely capable of leading an independent life, and not always accepted in the community. This perception is based upon the view that there should be a "*compromise*" between the needs of the mentally handicapped and the facilities available in the community. Therefore, there will always be obstacles for the mentally handicapped, which are very difficult to overcome only through the efforts of the teachers.

Third there is the conception of the mentally handicapped pupil as an individual capable of learning, of integrating in the community, and of following an independent life. Teachers who take this "*idealist*" approach are aware of the obstacles in achieving the above goals but try not to allow the difficulties involved to reduce their enthusiasm and confidence that such goals could be achieved.

In the analysis of the sample teacher's attitudes, I could identify in each teacher the dominance of one of the above three approaches over the others. Sometimes I found that a combination of such approaches existed in some teachers. I did not find any teacher who was a "*realist*" in an absolute sense of the term, since those who adopted a "*realist*" approach did not completely give in to the problems they observed, although they appeared to make less effort than teachers in the other types to overcome the obstacles.

The level of the teachers' enthusiasm in overcoming the problems was very high in the case of the "*idealist*" type. Such enthusiasm tended to reduce in the case of the "*idealist-compromisers*" and the "*compromisers*"; it finally reaches its lowest level in the "*compromiser-realist*" type of teachers. The

variation in teachers' attitudes may not be attributed only to their personal feelings and thoughts towards the mentally handicapped. Teachers are influenced in different ways and in different stages of their professional lives by factors existing in their environment—professional and/or social. The processes of interaction between the teachers and the others involved in the system of special education determine during years of experience their own pattern of behaviour so as to enable them to continue being part of that system.

In the process of interview and observation, I looked upon the teachers as actors who had been through several performances and had already formed their views of the role they should play and of the reaction of the audience towards their performances. However, I found that some teachers were not as sure as others as regards the role they had to play.

Furthermore, each teacher before becoming a professional is an individual with his/her own characteristics and different patterns of behaviour. Therefore not all teachers would interact in similar ways, and their construction of social reality would tend to vary from individual to individual.

It is significant that teachers' understanding of the problems of the mentally handicapped at school and in society falls almost into a pattern. Teachers define the type of handicap by applying similar criteria, are aware of the limitations of the education system and the community at large, but do not react to these factors in a similar way. As a result of teachers' different patterns of behaviour the system of special education cannot remain static following the same paths and practices, since each individual teacher contributes in the formation of new patterns as well as in maintaining the old ones. The possibility of the old patterns being kept is higher when the teacher takes a "*realist*" approach, while by adopting an "*idealist*" approach the teacher will introduce new patterns into the system.

Teachers' construction of mental handicap appears to follow a general pattern which in some instances is not adhered to by some of the teachers. Since teachers who follow this pattern contribute to its maintenance, those who divert from it produce new trends and so help introduce change in the existing pattern.

CONCLUSIONS

CONCLUSIONS

In this research I focused upon teachers' perceptions of their mentally handicapped pupils. I studied the way in which teachers educate their pupils on the basis of such perceptions. Clear understanding of the relevant processes involved is essential in the context of educational policy for the mentally handicapped. This is especially the case in the light of the most recent legislative framework of the special education system in Greece. According to this, teachers of mentally handicapped pupils are expected to take an active part in the process which is aimed at providing for the balanced and effective development of such pupils, their integration in the community and their involvement in the productive process.

However, the principles guiding teachers' involvement in this process are not well defined officially. Several main concepts remain to be specified by professionals such as teachers themselves. Thus, the teachers' role in the education of mentally handicapped children is important not only because they are supposed to implement policy, but also due to the fact that they themselves have to work out definitions for a range of relevant concepts that are instrumental in that policy. Such concepts relate to nature and degree of mental handicap, the special educational needs of pupils, and methods of dealing with those needs.

I studied such definitions by investigating teachers' practices in 18 special schools situated in the Greater Athens Region. Making use of the methodological tools of informal interviews and observation I carried out the research in two stages. The exploratory research was concerned with 10 teachers in 5 special schools and the main research dealt with 40 teachers in 13 schools in the sample.

The study of teachers' perception of the mentally handicapped pupils which I carried out is a topic of investigation which I have not encountered in the Greek literature. This is because studies available on the subject of mental handicap in Greece do not, as a rule, get to grips with the question of attitudes.

Due to lack of systematically gathered and evaluated empirical data pertinent to conditions in Greece, I had to develop my conceptual framework as my research evolved. In this process I also made use of relevant material which I drew from the literature in English in the area of mental handicap. However, in my review of Greek literature relevant to attitudes towards handicapped individuals, in general, and the mentally handicapped in particular, I established a starting point in the discernible trait that the Greek community's approach to handicap is based on a "*negative*" trend.

Flexibly interpreted such a trend tends to lead to rejection and isolation of the individuals concerned or total indifference towards them. This trend is contrasted by Greek authors against the "*positive*" trend. Their central concern is to discuss the nature of the particular form of handicap and propose "*positive*" ways of dealing with it. In this approach, it is only through the understanding of the causes of mental handicap and the discovery of methods for dealing with it that the mentally handicapped person may be helped. Rehabilitation of the mentally handicapped individuals may make possible their integration in the community.

This approach is promoted as the "*positive*" one and is taken to be guided by humanitarian considerations, that is, having the best interests of the handicapped individuals in mind. In these studies, handicap is regarded as a reality within the individuals concerned, which is there to be discovered. The sociological approach which claims that handicap is imposed as a label upon

certain groups by the criteria imposed by "*others*" is not dealt with in the Greek literature.

The use of labels such as mental handicap or retardation is referred to in the legislative framework as well as the relevant literature as "beneficial" for those who are being labelled by such terms. The dimising effects of such terms are not recognised in the Greek context. Only occasionally did some authors bring in accounts other than the humanitarian one in analysing State intervention for the education of mentally handicapped pupils. ⁽¹⁾ However, I have found no published work concerning educational policy for the mentally handicapped which had handled the process of labelling and acknowledged its importance in defining and dealing with the handicapped individuals. In this research I undertook to study a part of this process and to establish that definitions of mentally handicapped pupils and assessment of their educational needs depend also on the interpretations of the teachers.

I discussed at a macro-level of analysis the Greek community's attitude towards the handicapped individuals and the policy of special education as it has evolved over the last decades in that country. I argued that such evolution has been the result of social and political developments which have not always been guided by some version of a humanitarian approach, i.e., one which would place greatest emphasis on improving the life of the handicapped. I further discussed that policies for educating the mentally handicapped have been developing in Greece along the lines of interests of the "*others*" rather than only those who are categorised as mentally handicapped.

The educational policies leading to characterisation of a group of pupils as mentally handicapped may be seen as a reflection of the educational and social shortcomings which do not allow for equality of pupils with different needs in learning. As legislation permits identification of the population of the mentally

handicapped, professionals are given the power to control them and assess their potential. The aims of the legislators, as discussed in chapter two, were to involve this population in the productive system and integrate them in the community.

However, by categorising a group of individuals on the basis of their disability, and in this way setting them apart from all other individuals, does not appear to be the best way of integrating them in the community and the productive system. Indeed it may achieve quite the opposite result. My study of teachers' perceptions of the mentally handicapped pupils attempted to throw light on the way in which the special education system, by characterising some pupils as handicapped, tends to limit their possibilities of integration in the community and of leading an independent life.

Once a child is labelled as mentally handicapped a range of characteristics become attached to that child's biography. These are not related only to his physical and psychological characteristics but also to the possibilities one may foresee for his/her future. They concern issues regarding a child's ability to cope with the outside world, i.e., ability to integrate in ordinary schools and in the community, and to lead an independent life, such as getting employment or having a family. By labelling a child as mentally handicapped doubts are raised as to whether that child may be able to carry on in life in the same way as the majority of children without any such label are expected to.

On a humanitarian account of social policy the actual identification of the mentally handicapped pupils is necessary in order to help them overcome their difficulties in coping with the educational requirements. In this research I established that shortcomings which are perceived by the education system as part of a child's "*personal identity*" may be also interpreted in terms of shortcomings in the education system and the community as a whole to cope with

different types of individual needs. Teachers in my sample referred to these shortcomings on several occasions.

Since the education system has not always proved capable of dealing with all pupils with different educational needs in the mainstream schools, it has tended to promote the policy of labelling some children as handicapped. Professionals involved in the system of special education have been expected to deal with this group of pupils, among whom are included the mentally handicapped pupils, and see that they receive equal chances in education and in their future as the other pupils.

Teachers in the system of special education are supposed to work within the above policy framework. This is not necessarily concerned solely with what the handicapped individuals actually achieve, but also with other groups in society. The mere discrimination of some pupils as mentally handicapped is not a necessity based on the personal identity of those pupils but on the social requirement to protect the interests of society. Removing the burden off the ordinary schools or protecting the interests of those involved in the assessment of the mentally handicapped pupils are examples of such interests.

It is very difficult to keep a balance between what might be referred to as the interests of the child with special educational needs and the interests of the community in which they are dealt with. Teachers are expected to take a positive approach in teaching their mentally handicapped pupils in the context of a society which is still dominated by a negative trend. They are asked to decide on the educational needs of the individual child and carry on with their educational practices accordingly.

In chapter two I described the way in which the concept of need is defined by the professionals in the relevant theoretical context. The concept of need may

be defined in a traditional way—that is, needs as characterised by means of the subjective interpretations of the professionals. In this respect the teachers themselves will decide what the mentally handicapped pupils need. This traditional interpretation contrasts with the more radical one which deals with the individual child's needs by bringing in the picture the child's own potential. However, by being labelled as mentally handicapped children almost automatically lose the right to influence others' decisions concerning their own felt needs. If definition of needs is left only to other individuals, such as teachers, this would imply that they ought to know better what the best interests of the child are.

Special educational needs of the mentally handicapped pupils are assessed by teachers on the basis of their personal background, their theoretical knowledge of mental handicap and their experiences in practice. Due to their upbringing teachers may have formed negative views towards the mentally handicapped, but in the context of their training they are likely to become familiar with the positive trend.

On a theoretical level I examined the types of theories according to which teachers of mentally handicapped pupils are most likely to operate. I suggested that teachers were more likely to take the approach which deals with mental handicap as a "*personal identity*," as a property within the individual concerned which needs to be defined and dealt with appropriately in a positive way. I also suggested that there may be some teachers who take the view that mental handicap is a social product and bring in a different type of positive approach, a more radical one, in the education of the mentally handicapped pupil.

Using this theoretical framework I proceeded with my exploratory study which helped the formation of certain sets of assumptions as I moved on to the main research. The results of the exploratory research (discussed in chapter

three) indicated that both positive and negative approaches were present, to varying degrees, in teachers' educational practices. I categorised some as relatively negative, some as relatively positive and others as positive or very positive.

However, as I moved on to the main research I reevaluated these concepts and made modifications which I felt were necessary. In the conceptual framework of the main research, in chapter four, I discussed that teachers do not necessarily manage to apply their own choices in their actual educational practice. I suggested that the outcome of teaching a mentally handicapped pupil is not always in correspondence with what the teachers want.

The results of my in depth study of the key issues in the main research lent support to the assumption that the teachers' perception of the mentally handicapped pupils depends also on a series of outside influences both within the school and in the wider community. Teachers as individual members of the community are exposed to cultural values which tend to affect their conceptualisation of mental handicap. Teachers are brought up in a society which has been dominated by the so-called "*negative*" approach towards handicap.

The existence of the "*negative*" approach in the community may have two different types of effect on teachers' perceptions of their pupils. Firstly, due to cultural influences they themselves may have developed a "*negative*" approach towards the handicapped individuals. Secondly, they may not hold a "*negative*" view themselves, but given the social context of educational action they may pursue conventionally accepted approaches which may reflect a "*negative*" trend so as to maintain conformity. Despite the possibility that in their training teachers have been exposed to a "*positive*" trend it is highly likely that they are conscious of prevalent "*negative*" approaches in the community which are obstacles to applying the "*positive*" trend.

In their response teachers in the sample did not reveal that they held negative views towards the mentally handicapped pupils. They were critical of how the mentally handicapped were dealt with in the community in a “*negative*” way. I had no way of making an evaluation of such results and had to take it for granted that the teachers in my sample did believe in a “*positive*” approach for dealing with mentally handicapped children.

This result is important in my study since it indicated that teachers believed they were expected to be in favour of the positive approach. Even if some teachers due to their personal experience and cultural influences had negative views towards the mentally handicapped they were not prepared to reveal those personal feelings.

It is possible that teachers did not present their actual view towards the mentally handicapped but this need not have any constraining influence in my research. I have referred to teachers’ personal views in the context of their professional ideology, that is, what they think should be done in the schools for the pupils. A comparison of their professional ideology and the actual practice in the classrooms can indicate the extent to which each individual teacher tries to achieve his/her ideal.

The usual account given by the teachers who did not pursue the positive approach was lack of necessary provisions in the society and the schools as well as the children’s disability to cope. For the purposes of this research it is important to conclude that professional ideology no matter how positive, may be difficult to apply once it is faced with obstacles in practice. It is not reasonable to refer to teachers as being negative or positive since they may suggest that they are personally in favour of a positive approach but they are not able to apply it in practice. Yet by analysing the extent to which some teachers try to apply the

positive approach as opposed to those who take a realistic view and abandon it, one may suggest some teachers are more capable of being positive than others.

Furthermore, it is important to notice how conscious teachers are of the shortcomings in the community and schools and how they try to refer to these criteria in their educational practices. In particular, in the cases of pupils they consider as severely handicapped, teachers appear more reluctant to pursue the positive approach. Whether teachers themselves hold negative views of their pupils or not is not the question here, but rather the types of perception they believe to exist in the community regarding their pupils. So long as teachers see the integration of the mentally handicapped pupils being hindered by the community, they will find it difficult to operate along a positive trend for their pupils.

Teachers' perceptions are formed as the end product of a process of interaction between teachers, pupils and others involved in the school environment, the system of special education and the wider social context. In their daily classroom practice teachers contribute to the construction of mental handicap in different ways. Some teachers conform to the existing pattern. Others pursuing their personal choices seek to change what they find unacceptable in dealing with the mentally handicapped, being successful at times. This process produces perceptions of the mentally handicapped which are by no means static. Both characterisation and education of the mentally handicapped can be modified depending on the circumstances in which a child is educated.

This thesis focused upon the case of a number of teachers in a specific setting of time and place. I described the way in which a concept such as mental handicap is formed, maintained and changed through interaction among those involved in the practice of teaching. The use of the ethnographic approach provided a suitable ground for a flexible research strategy. ⁽²⁾ However, this

flexibility and the qualitative nature of data analysis need not limit the potential of this study for further generalisation and contribution to theories in the relevant field. ⁽³⁾

The study of professional ideology and its implication in practice is an important aspect in special education both on a micro- as well as a macro- level of analysis. I have used the term “*professional ideology*” to refer to “*motives and the individual frame of preference.*” ⁽⁴⁾ I argued that teachers are generally inclined to use their professional knowledge and expertise to educate their pupils. However, their interpretation of who the mentally handicapped are, how and why they should be educated differ widely at times. Such variation results in different perceptions of the mentally handicapped pupils.

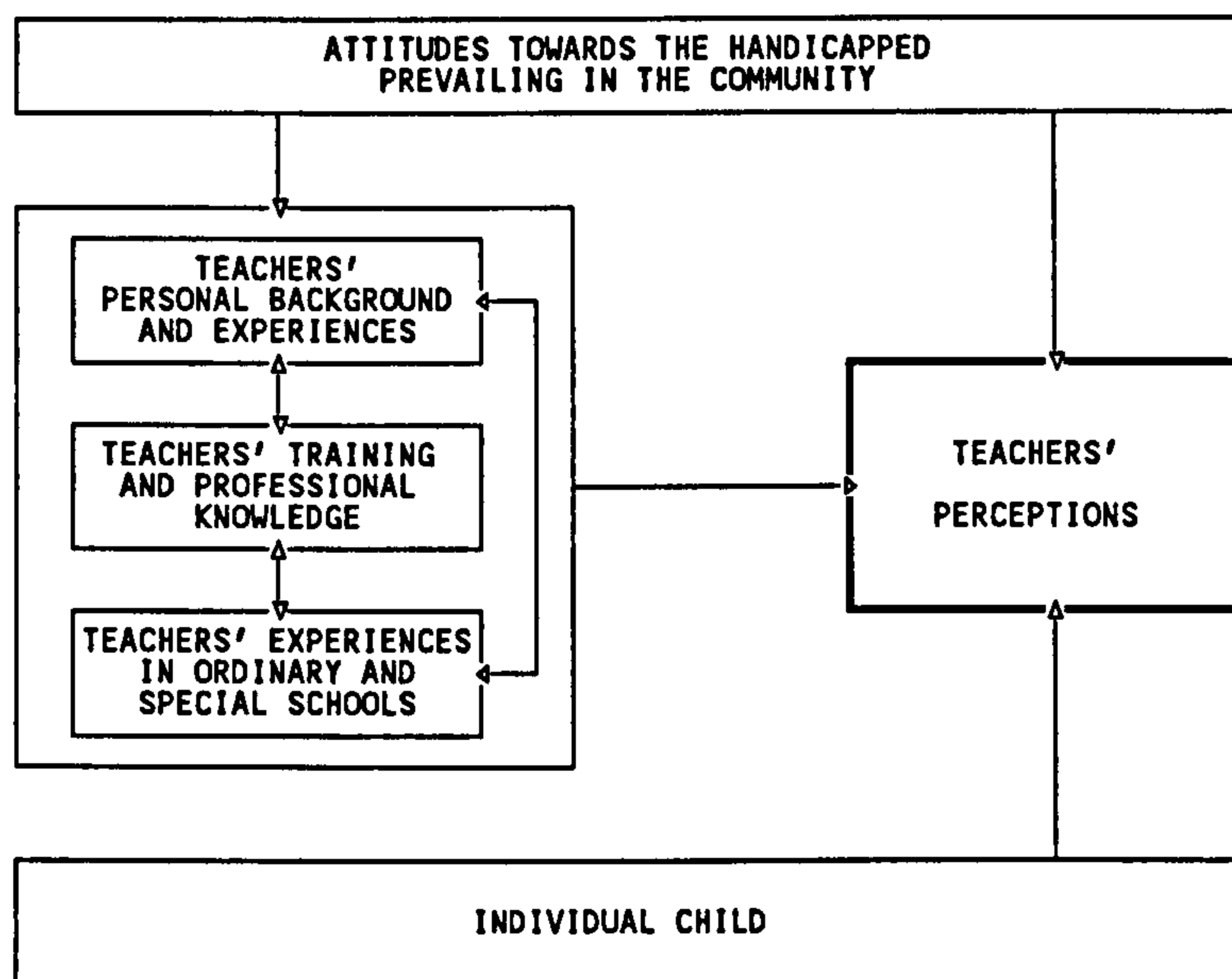


Table 6.1: Factors influencing the formation of teachers' perceptions

I established that the professional ideology of those who deal with the mentally handicapped is dominated mainly by approaches which present mental

handicap as a personal identity. The received view is that the policies and administration of the system of special education aim at “*rehabilitating*” the mentally handicapped rather than addressing themselves to “*society’s handicap*” in dealing with these individuals. I expanded the above account by way of my case study research. I found that there may be teachers who take a different approach contributing to change in the above pattern. Analysis of teachers’ beliefs and practice has provided me with the following perceptions of a mentally handicapped pupil:

1. A mentally handicapped pupil is a child who due to his/her shortcomings cannot be integrated in the mainstream schools and community. The prospects of employment and leading an independent life are nil for such an individual.
2. A mentally handicapped pupil is a child who is characterised not only on the basis of his/her own shortcomings but also in consideration of shortcomings in society in general and schools in particular. Although there are few possibilities open to such an individual there are ways of integrating him/her provided the degree of the child’s handicap is not very high.
3. A mentally handicapped pupil is a child who is characterised so as a result of social constraints and the process of stigmatisation of those who are not conforming to a widely applicable population standard. The child who is categorised as mentally handicapped is able to integrate in the mainstream schools and community and lead an independent life if given the chance.

The above perceptions are drawn as hypotheses based upon teachers’ interpretations and are reflections of the extent to which teachers regard their pupils’ potential. In my research sample there were those who used the first perception in several cases. I have referred to such teachers as realist

compromisers. These teachers did not believe that they could always contribute to their pupils' integration and future life.

The second perception corresponded to the view of those who were prepared to put in some effort to pursue the objectives of integration and independent life for their pupils. I have characterised such teachers as compromisers.

The third perception concerned teachers who contributed fully to their pupils' integration and future development. Some of these teachers demonstrated this trend in most cases involving their pupils, other less so. I have referred to the former as idealists and to the latter as idealist compromisers.

The perception of the mentally handicapped pupil is a reflection of teachers' understanding of their task and their ability to discharge it. This perception of the mentally handicapped child is not based on universally defined criteria but depends on individuals' interpretation. I explained that the majority of those who are involved in teaching the mentally handicapped maintain the existing definitions and patterns by means of which a mentally handicapped pupil is educated. However, there still remains a minority who contribute changes to the existing pattern.

In this research I have sought to demonstrate that teachers' perceptions of the mentally handicapped pupils depend on the interpretations teachers make not only of the nature of mental handicap and its degrees, but also of their interpretations of the actual context in which the mentally handicapped pupils are dealt with. I have discussed that apart from any ensuing variation in the above interpretations teachers differ from one another in the ways in which they proceed to interact in their practice. I argued that depending on the perception held by the teachers a child may be dealt with in a "*positive*" or a "*negative*" way.

The final results of my field work indicated that approaches taken towards the mentally handicapped pupils were mainly directly related to the possibilities teachers saw for their future. When a teacher perceives that a mentally handicapped child is capable of integration in society the type of approach the teacher takes in educating that child is different from that taken when the child is assessed as being incapable of ever integrating. In the former situation a teacher is most likely a positive approach in teaching in the latter a negative one. In both cases the interpretation is made by the teachers involved and not only on the basis of the child's background but also on the basis of the possibilities in the society. In the section on teaching approaches I have provided evidence helping to the formation of this assumption.

Idealist teachers who believed there should be chances given to all pupils disregarding their degree of handicap took a consistent and positive attitude in their teaching practices. Idealist-compromisers were more enthusiastic about their more able pupils. They put more effort in teaching these groups than the less able ones. The compromisers made special efforts for some cases of the more able groups and the compromiser realists even in less cases. Therefore, in the majority of cases teachers put more effort in their teaching when they felt their pupils had "*better*" prospect for integration.

This general result is of major importance in a study of the system of special education. It indicates that the label of mental handicap is defined at an operational level and on the basis of interpretations of those who deal with the mentally handicapped. Furthermore, it appears that since it is the interpretation of the professionals involved which affects the education of the pupils with mental handicap there is always the possibility that both a negative and a positive trend are at play and influence the operation of the system of special education. Further research in this area could be useful in promoting understanding of special education practice in Greece with potential policy implications.

The Greek system of education in general and special education in particular are not yet based on a long established legislative framework and reasonably stable administrative procedure. It is a well known fact of political life in Greece that a government change or reorganisation might lead to substantial changes in several sectors of the administration, e.g., the national economy, the health and education systems and the like. This makes it very difficult to suggest whether the strategy I used in my research will be useful to follow in any future academic endeavour involving the field I have covered. For example, a new Director in the Special Education Department of the Ministry of Education and Religion might be less flexible and decide that different, stricter procedures should apply for academic researchers requiring to study the system of special education.

On the other hand an individual with the right type of contacts and connections in one of the schools may actually manage to collect information and prepare a research piece with data from several schools even without any permission from the Ministry concerned. The key to success for a researcher in gaining access to the particular sample he/she is interested in is to proceed with caution, pursue any initial leads and exploit connections in the system, and follow the process as it best fits. For example, had I continued to rely on official permission of the Ministry to help me gain access to the schools—while contacting the head teachers—I may have had problems in gaining access to all the schools I had originally intended to. As I had explained in the section on data collection process my informal approach worked out better in the end.

Furthermore, if I had used more formal means of research, say, a set questionnaire, I may not have received a satisfactory number of replies. I had already tried a questionnaire approach in a previous research I had carried out in the context of a diploma course in Stirling University. The result was that the special education teachers in the sample, apart from one who is a personal

friend, did not return them. The teacher who returned the form told me that some of the teachers she talked to had mentioned that they would not commit themselves in a written "*document*". The fact that no names were to be involved and that the whole matter would be kept confidential had not made any difference to them.

This type of attitude is not peculiar to special education teachers but is quite common in other fields. I recall being checked for cameras or tape recorders on several occasions when I was a regular visitor to one of the rehabilitation centres in Athens as a member of a charity organisation. The staff seemed to be very concerned about bad publicity regarding their work practices and the conditions prevailing in their establishments.

In view of the well established trend to involve politics in influencing appointments to school teaching posts, teachers are very anxious to be found competent in their job and be able to hold their position. They tend to become very uncomfortable when they see someone recording their views and observing their work. In these circumstances use of a tape recorder was totally out of the question. I had actually been asked by the Director of Special Education not to use any tape recorder because that would render teachers and other staff ill at ease.

Such a request would be understandable since there were not many academic researchers visiting special schools and the staff were not accustomed to seeing total strangers observing their work. Cautiousness towards outside observers was also due to journalists' investigations into special education schools and practices. Most articles that had come out of such visits and had been published in the national dailies had been highly critical towards schools, staff and, ultimately, the administration.

The head teacher in one school where they had a visit from another researcher before me told me how he appreciated that I had phoned him and made an appointment to visit the school. The other researcher had turned up unannounced. He told me that his teachers had been annoyed by that researcher's insistence upon writing down everything and also by his criticism of their work.

The success I had in obtaining replies to all my questions and the good cooperation I received from the teachers was mainly due to the informal approach I had adopted and the appreciation and gratitude I showed towards them for their allowing me to observe their work practices and environment. I believe it is actually an additional burden upon teachers to have some unknown visitor observing their work.

Considering the short time that the special education system has been in operation it is understandable why teachers may feel their standards are not high enough and that they may get criticised. On several occasions I was asked to compare their work with that of a foreign school. My standard reply was that the circumstances they worked in were different from those prevailing in another country and that would not warrant a comparison. In answering that way I was implying that I did not find their work to be in any way of a lower quality than similar work abroad.

Furthermore, given that I am Greek by marriage rather than a native Greek, teachers tended to be more sympathetically inclined towards me and tried to help me as a "*foreigner*" who was interested in their work. This aspect of my background also influenced the teachers approach in the way they conducted their discussions with me. They usually spoke slowly and prompted me to ask them for further explanation if I felt they had used any words I was unable to understand. This proved extremely helpful in the process of my recording their replies and citing their statements.

If I were to repeat this research I would follow the same strategy. Having had the experience, I would try to gain access to fewer schools and, instead, increase the length of time used for observation. When I began my research I had received hints from the Ministry of Education that I should not make lengthy visits to schools and disturb the work of the teachers.

Now, a few years later, the officials may be in a position to understand better the need for a longer term study of the teachers' work. In my field work I also came to believe that through the use of informal interviewing teachers are quite prepared to discuss their views, indicate their problems and air their complaints.

I would begin a study of teachers' attitudes and practice by choosing a sample of two schools which would be located on the grounds of ordinary schools and two other schools from among the ones that would be segregated from the ordinary schools. I would then try to obtain the cooperation of all teachers and specialists in these schools. A long term observation of teachers' practice, at least one full school year, would be helpful to gain further insight into the approaches they follow in assessing their pupils and educating them. These observations should be parallel with the assessment of the views of the other professionals involved.

Being already familiar with the major issues in the practice of special education for the group categorised as "*mentally handicapped*" I could make a deeper analysis of the ways in which pupils are characterised and educated. A longer term study based on the findings of my research would enable a researcher to go into deeper analysis of some areas of importance. Two major points should be dealt with in such a study.

Firstly, the most important and useful follow up research would be to monitor the cases of pupils who were being educated in the sample schools in my research. This type of research could indicate the extent to which the ideals of integration and independent living has been attained in the case of some of those pupils. For instance, it would be very useful and could contribute to policy inferences to establish how many pupils were integrated in ordinary schools, gained employment etc.

Secondly, it would be useful to carry out a similar research on the attitudes and practices of the teachers in my research sample to compare their previous views with the more recent ones. For example, it is important to find out whether the idealists are still involved in their challenging the problems or they have changed their views.

Obviously there would be some problems in implementing the above research suggestions as concrete research tasks. Issues that would have to be taken into consideration concern the difficulties involved in tracing all the children and the teachers in the sample schools. Some of the teachers may have moved away, changed jobs or have retired just as some of the pupils' families may have moved. However, even a study of those who could be reached would provide valuable information for the education system, in terms of enabling an assessment to be made of the extent to which the goal of integration of the special pupils has been attained.

In my thesis I have made references to some other areas in which research could be carried out in the system of special education in Greece. Here I summarise the major areas which can become the subject of future research.

The issue of school management and its role in implementing the ideology of integration is very vital to the integration ideology. There should be an

extensive and systematic study of the way in which special schools and units are operating within or outside the ordinary school grounds. The "*pride*" of the special education system in Greece is that integration is pursued very seriously since the special schools and units are placed within the grounds of ordinary schools.

This form of locational integration may not necessarily be an indication of social integration. In my research I had pointed to several examples in this respect indicating that there was very little contact between the special schools and the ordinary schools in whose grounds they were located. A study of the interaction between the staff and pupils of both types of schools is necessary to identify any obstacles to integration.

The ordinary school teacher's negative attitude towards the mentally handicapped pupils was referred to by many teachers in my research. It would therefore be important to study their approach and make suggestions for "*improving*" their level of tolerance and understanding of the special pupils. A study on the process of teachers' training and their first year experience in the schools would be advisable. It would be interesting to follow the teachers before and after their attendance of training course with a view to accounting for the way in which their attitude is formed, modified and finally informs their practice.

The other areas of importance would be the relationship between parents, teachers and other specialists involved in the system of special education. These are very sensitive areas and need careful planning of the types of questions to be asked. For example, it is important to convince the parents that their replies will not be revealed to the teachers to receive genuine replies.

Finally, it is very useful to follow the processes of diagnosis of the pupils before they are referred to special schools and define the types of criteria on the basis of which professionals and teachers refer them to special schools. This is a very vague aspect of the system of special education in Greece and it is left to the professionals to decide upon. Therefore it is only through a study of the specialists' practices that the procedure may be clarified. Further research in that direction may prove useful both for policy-making and teaching practice.

In assessing the results of the main research I discussed how some teachers challenged the received traditional approach and tried to pursue the aims of integration and independent life for their pupils. The objectives these teachers applied in their teaching practice were not restricted to teaching certain subjects in the classroom just to keep their pupils occupied. They were instead concerned with the final results of their teaching.

The socially constructed concept of mental handicap was presented by these teachers through the criteria by which the mentally handicapped are characterised. However, these teachers did not try to maintain this social construct. Instead they tried to create situations within which the existing definitions of the mentally handicapped could be changed.

Therefore, teachers who challenged the existing definitions did not reverse the process of construction of the concept of mentally handicapped pupils. They did not have the power to remove the label from those pupils and send them all back to mainstream schools. Instead, they attempted to eliminate the label of mental handicap from their pupils' profiles after they left school. Teachers who do not believe in labelling and promote full integration of their pupils in the community may be accused of ignoring the actual problems of the mentally handicapped individuals in the open community. This was argued in the schools by the teachers who took a "*realistic*" view of the situation. ⁽⁵⁾

However, those in favour of full integration of their pupils did not believe in ignoring the problems. As I had discussed in chapter five, these teachers were aware of their pupils' shortcomings and the constraints in society in accepting them. They did not mean to ignore these problems but meant to change the situation. In pursuing this task they attempted to get their pupils to acquire necessary skills as well as developing a liaison between the school and the community.

The extent to which these teachers' efforts would lead to successful integration of their pupils cannot be evaluated in this research. However, the fact that these teachers promoted the approaches which would enhance the integration of the pupils in the community and independent life, may be seen as a step forward in accepting the so called mentally handicapped child as capable of such tasks. In this respect these teachers fulfil what they consider as their task in teaching by following a positive approach. Furthermore, due to their persistence in pursuing their ideal they may in fact change the attitudes of the other teachers as well as other professional and members of the community whom they come across.

In this research I have shown how characterisation and education of the mentally handicapped are based on socially constructed criteria which are a reflection of cultural as well as professional knowledge and practice. Although there exists a general pattern in the process of characterisation and education of the mentally handicapped, there are exceptions which should be taken into consideration. These exceptions to the general pattern help change the existing structure.

FOOTNOTES

FOOTNOTES

INTRODUCTION

1. The Greek Education Act 1985 contains a section devoted to special education. Details are given in chapter two.
2. Ideology in this sense is authority guided. It consists of sets of beliefs which are imposed by the State (Reading (1977), p.104.) These sets of beliefs which are presented by the State in the context of law are only manifested through the interpretations of those who are supposed to implement such ideology, i.e., lay as well as professional members of the community.
3. In this research I have borrowed concepts from several studies which provide analyses of educational policy and are informed by accounts other than humanitarian ones. However, to start with I use Oliver's definitions as a guideline to examine how applicable each approach may be in the Greek context.
4. These perspectives have been referred to in different terms in the English literature. For example, the perspective which views handicap as a part of personal identity is referred to by Oliver (1986) as "*personal tragedy*" or by Manion and Bersani (1987) as the "*pathological model*." The view of handicap as a social product is developed by various authors. They have employed different terms to refer to it according to their sociological orientation. For instance, Ingleby (1985) speaks of it as the "*critical view*"

and Manion and Bersani (op. cit.) refer to it as the “*social system model*.” In the Greek literature there is hardly any acknowledgment of the perspectives that regard handicap as a social product. In this respect, my approach to the study of mental handicap is new in the Greek context.

5. By taking this approach I am not denying the importance of the structural functionalist studies on the subject of mental handicap. However, I argue that without understanding the social context within which mental handicap is dealt with this concept cannot be fully understood. Therefore, apart from considering mental handicap as a “*reality*” within the individual it is important to examine where, when and by whom that “*reality*” is defined. In Berger and Luckman’s terms an additional question needs to be answered: “*which reality?*” (1966, p. 196.)

CHAPTER ONE

1. See pp.17-18, for further details.
2. For example, Egg (1971), Skandalis (1980), Kypriotakis (1985), “*The Information Bulletin of the Ministry of Education and Religion*”, 1987, 1988, and 1991 editions.
3. I have not come across any study in Greece which has brought together the macro/micro level of analysis. There is need for the recognition of the processes through which policies are made as well as the problems involving their implementation in practice. It is not easy to bridge the gap between these levels of analysis (Ozga 1987). In Greece in particular the study of educational policy is usually done on abstract form and separate

from the actual process through which it has developed and implemented. Most works on policy in Government publications discuss mainly the administrative procedure.

4. Skandalis (1980) frequently uses terms which imply rather than prescribe the “*correct*” approach to dealing with the handicapped. He is not alone in using vague terms without providing any specific definitions. Writers such as Kypriotakis (1985), Krassanaki (1989), etc., have all been taking it for granted that there exists a “*correct*” approach although they do not proceed to define it.
5. These terms appear in both the Greek and English literature.
6. There are variations in this trend. Some writers who adopt a functionalist approach aim at defining handicap within a child. Others pursuing a more radical direction see handicap as a social construction and/or social creation. I review these approaches in greater detail in my introduction and chapter two of the thesis.
7. Examples from different cultures such as those of Spartan and Roman societies are encountered in a variety of works. See, for instance, Ryan and Thomas (1987), Manion and Bersani (1987).
8. Bellacasa and Tetzchner (1991) differentiate between these two approaches.
9. For example, L’Abate and Curtis (1975), in their historical review refer to the practice of the Spartans in killing the handicapped infants as if that were the only way the ancient Greeks dealt with the handicapped

individuals. They neither recognise the differences in the culture of the Spartans from that of, say, the Athenians nor do they refer to other practices of the ancient Greeks in dealing with the handicapped people.

10. This was the case not only in Greece. Examples from other cultures indicate the same situation to that described by writers such as Ryan and Thomas (1987), and Manion and Bersany (1987).
11. I will refer to some of these practices in the next section.
12. For example, people with "*incomprehensible language*" were not permitted to read the sacred texts of the mystics.
13. Politeia "E," Section 5, quoted in Skandalis (1980).
14. This is still practised. There may be cases of parents who consider exorcism. One teacher I came across in a professional capacity spoke of the intentions of a grandmother who thought this was the solution to her grandchild's problems.
15. Skandalis (1980).
16. Skandalis, op. cit., page 82.
17. Skandalis, op. cit., page 83.
18. Manion & Bersani (1987).
19. Manion & Bersani, op. cit.

20. Stassinis (1991).
21. In discussing Foucault's views I have referred mainly to Smart (1985), Scull (1981), Ingleby (1985) and Liggett (1988).
22. This is because the Modern Greek State has been looking up at ideas and concepts which have originated in the Western world in its attempt to "*improve*" the situation in Greece.
23. For example, the account given by Tomlinson (1988) can be observed in the Greek context. Further analysis of the present Greek system of Special Education indicates that the major reason for concern, particularly in relation to the mentally handicapped, is to separate the group of pupils who cannot reach the standards of the ordinary schools. Having been identified this group could subsequently be segregated from the ordinary schools.
24. Stassinis (1991).
25. Stassinis, *op. cit.*
26. I do not imply that the needs of the severely handicapped were taken care of "*entirely satisfactorily*" in Britain. Rather, I am referring to the existence of some form of State concern for their education—a policy which was not pursued in Greece until relatively recently.
27. Stassinis, *op. cit.*
28. For example, cf. Stassinis (1991).

29. Skandalis, too, refers to this state of affairs and observes that the general condition of Greek society is the contributing factor to the tendency to ignore the needs of the mentally handicapped.
30. There are establishments, such as "*Theotokos*," for the severely mentally handicapped pupils which provide also vocational training.
31. For example, Paraskevopoulos (1980), Stassinis (1991).
32. Cf. The Information Bulletin of the Greek Ministry of Education and Religion, Athens (1988).
33. Stassinis, *op. cit.*
34. In the national daily "*KATHIMERINI*," June 1991, "*They decide for us without us.*" Similar problems have been identified in other countries; see, for example, Glendinning (1991), Jongbloed & Crichton (1990).
35. This was a small scale survey which was carried out in the Athens Region, in 1987 for submission to the Advanced Special Educational Study Course, University of Stirling, to satisfy course work requirements.
36. There are special groups working as charitable institutions such as "*The Greek Epileptic Association.*" The extent to which charity organisations may act on the basis of the handicapped persons' own views is debatable since they tend to employ professionals who are supposed to know "*better*" the needs of the handicapped. At times they are actually professionals who are paid to run such associations, as may be the case in other countries (see, for example, Oliver & Zarb 1989). Furthermore

the existence of such groups may be an indication that the handicapped and their families have accepted the label and believe that by knowing what is wrong they can overcome their difficulties. Parents' acceptance of their children's handicap can strengthen further the process of labelling and the professionals' intervention becomes more "*legitimate*". From the moment parents find there is "*something wrong*" in their child the process of labelling and further isolation of the child begins. These issues which are already studied in other countries, e.g., Squibb (1981), Lewis and Vulliamy (1981), Booth T. A. (1986), are not referred to in the Greek literature. Parents are encouraged to accept their children's handicap and seek professional advice.

37. For example, recently an increasing number of television series, both Greek and foreign, present the image of the mentally handicapped individuals as innocent, likeable and in need of community support. Such programmes may have positive influences on lay members of the community in accepting the handicapped (St Claire, 1986.) There are also public information programmes on people with special needs almost on a weekly basis.
38. Refusal of parents to accept their children's handicap is referred to as a major problem in the practice of special education; cf. "*The Information Bulletin of the Ministry of Education and Religion*" (1988).

CHAPTER TWO

1. It is not certain whether an education system can actually fulfil such principles in practice even for those who are not labelled as handicapped, let alone the handicapped themselves. Educational policies are not only guided by the personal benefit of those they are addressed to, but are also informed by other perspectives which may reflect a society's social, political and economic structures. Cf. Finch (1984), Barton (1986).
2. It is however not certain that by discarding these categories and using only the term "*child with special needs*" the Greek legislators could have changed the professional concepts of handicap which are mainly informed by the medical model. Examples from other countries in which current legislation does not include labels indicate that, in practice, the medical model still prevails (cf. Fish (1989)).
3. Even when we have present some types of well known conditions which determine handicap, e.g., Down's syndrome, there is no clear cut definition applicable to all cases. See Booth (1985), Freeman and Gray (1989).
4. There are no debates similar to those put forward in other countries such as Britain (cf. the "Editorial", in "*Disability, Handicap & Society*", Vol.2, No.1, 1987) aimed at changing the disablist language.
5. Smith, G. (1980).
6. Tomlinson (1981a) and (1981b).

7. National curriculum as it is in operation in Greece requires all schools to use standard books and the area of each course is set out by the State. This concept of national curriculum may be different from the one which has developed in current British educational practice. For example, see Hope (1989), Swann (1983) and (1992), Carpenter (1992), Peter (1992). Similar arguments on problems involving national curriculum in special education are experienced in Greece along with other types of issues peculiar to the Greek system of education. The structure of the Greek educational system has always been a rigid one. Pupils and teachers are not given the choice of material since the State provides all textbooks (see Appendix I for the structure of the Greek education System). Pupils are supposed to pass tests on different subjects. In the past few years the debate on testing pupils has caused great confusion. However, a range of policies are devised for testing at different levels (although examination arrangements may vary over time depending on the ministerial decisions.) For example, cf. Bouzakis (1986). In a system of education where pupils are not only tested on certain subjects but are also supposed to have used the same textbooks, those with special needs have little chance of ever competing with the others.
8. In a discussion with Mr. Nicodemos, Director of the Special Education Department in the Ministry of Education and Religion, I was given an account of problems of full integration. In his view, such problems were due mainly to the attitudes of the public as regards acceptance of the handicapped pupils. He also expounds this view in an article published in 1989 and in different issues of the Bulletin of his Department. Polychronopoulou and Birtsas (1989) also refer to this issue as the most important aspect of integration. However, there is need for systematic cooperation of ordinary schools with the specialists in order to find the

actual needs of the children who may be considered as belonging to a special group: *“schools need to translate their general concern about children with special needs into a practical plan policy framework.”* (Pearson & Lindsay 1986). There are no related studies in Greece which could indicate how functional integration for the *“mentally handicapped”* may be seriously followed. There is need for *“allowing”* the integration of this group of pupils in ordinary classes and monitoring the results and building the policy for full integration on those results. Examples of such type of integration are given in other countries, e.g., Madden & Salvin (1983), Booth (1987). In fact the existence of special schools may increase the possibilities of more referrals from the ordinary schools who are interested in getting out of the burden of pupils who do not perform satisfactorily. The increase in the number of special pupils in Greece in the past few years is an evidence to this process already taking place. This situation is not only peculiar to Greece. There are statistics from other countries indicating the rise of numbers of pupils in special schools. For example, Rogers (1992) refers to an increase in the number of pupils of primary age in special schools in England in the recent years.

10. For example, Hudson (1991) refers to specific inter-professional contexts which contribute to segregation of some individuals by the professionals who have an interest in keeping their own power and authority in different fields of welfare, health or education. This is not an issue peculiar only to special education but also in education in general (Barton & Walker, 1984) in health care and other social services (Borsay, 1986).
11. For instance, Lukes (1981), Barton & Tomlinson (1984).

12. However, the written Law principle is not necessarily implemented fully in practice. Especially since administrative rules are clarified by the legislators rather than all relevant concepts such as those of mental handicap or special educational needs.
13. This arrangement may vary in practice as I observed during my field work. Not all children are actually assessed formally.
14. This is encountered also in other countries, for example in Britain. Cf. Adams (1986), Tomlinson (1981a), (1981b), (1982), Norwich (1990).
15. Ryan and Thomas. (1987).
16. For example details on these issues are given by Paraskevopoulos (1980), Nitsopoulos (1981).
17. Eden (1976), Stow & Selfe (1989), Le Prevost (1990), Heyman (1990), Harding & Beech (1991), Hardy et al. (1990).
18. Gillham (1986), Le Prevost (1990).
19. The Greek studies are more concerned with the whole set up of the family unit and the relationships between the parents and the child. The criteria of family income and class do not appear to be as predominant in the Greek literature as those found in relevant studies in the English literature.
20. These factors are observed in Greek literature, in which there are references to German, French and English works. Examples are: Gruenberg (1964), Bernstine (1971). There are general references without

specific articles to the work of Tizard in Paraskevopoulos. The Greek authors mainly put emphasis on actual findings that disadvantaged background is associated with low achievement. They do not get involved in discussions on stigmatisation.

21. Gipps, et al. (1987) also refer to the possibility that some children's school performance may be evaluated on a non-educational basis. They provide evidence from different studies in Britain and the U.S.A.
22. I have referred to such programmes in the first section of chapter two.
23. The discussion of the concept of curriculum is mainly based on Stenhouse (1975), Scottish Education Department: The Munn Report (1977), Taylor and Richards (1979), Peters (1979), Peters (1981), Brennan (1985), Fish (1985) and Kelly (1986).
24. Cunningham (1974).
25. This aspect of education is mainly referred to as "training" rather than "formal education". I will discuss this in the results of my fieldwork.
26. There is shortage of guidelines in teaching subjects such as history and geography to children with special educational needs. There are no references comparable to those available in English, such as Wilson (1985), for teaching history.
27. These subjects which are widely discussed in the English literature have not yet been studied in the Greek context.

28. Stenhouse (1975), page 2.
29. Stenhouse (1975), page 2.

CHAPTER THREE

1. This list is particularly based on a study by Tomlinson (1981a) and (1981b); the content corresponds to the criteria referred to in the Greek literature.
2. Atkinson and Delamont (1985).
3. Simon (1979) p.120, as quoted in Atkinson & Delamont (1985) p.28.
4. Atkinson (1980) pp.5-6, as quoted in Hammersley (1983) p.3.
5. Silverman (1985).
6. Hammersley (1983) pp.10-14; Hammersley and Atkinson (1983) pp.1-19.
7. Atkinson & Delamont, op.cit.
8. Some ethnographic work such as "*Interaction in the Classroom*," Delamont (1983) has overcome a major part of the problems claimed to be associated with the ethnographic studies.
9. Atkinson & Delamont, op.cit.

10. Spradly (1979)
11. Burgess (1984); Denscombe (1984).
12. I refer to such occasions in detail in the analysis of the results. For the interview framework and observation sheet used in this research see Appendix II.
13. It was not always possible to return to a classroom on more than two occasions.
14. Although the concept of independent living is not specified in the Greek Education Act concerning children with special needs I attempted to find out how teachers in the sample view this matter.
15. I developed my conceptual framework as I received information in addition to what I had expected; see Glaser and Strauss (1967). Therefore, the interviews were not carried out all in the same way and standard form. Although this form of interviewing may have its weaknesses (cf. Ball (1983)) in my research it proved to be most useful. I have discussed this in more detail in chapter four.
16. Hammersley (1986).
17. This number was drawn from the list of the special schools in the Information Bulletin of the Ministry of Education and Religion (1986). In later issues of the Bulletin there was not remarkable change.

18. I did not have a final say in choosing the sample schools according to certain criteria since it was up to the Ministry of education to propose the units and the head teachers concerned to agree on my visit.
19. This happened on several occasions when I had a chance to get to know the teachers.
20. Although there were teachers who felt this rule was not followed at all times. Two teachers had to cope with autistic pupils in their classes. They had been referred to their schools, on a temporary basis due to lack of any other provision for them.

CHAPTER FOUR

1. This is drawn from a total number of 60 special schools in the Greater Athens Region.
2. In chapter one I have discussed some of the variations in Greek society's attitude in this respect.
3. There are studies available in English which also deal with similar types of issues as I discussed here. Jordan and Silverman (1990) in their study of Canadian schools, discuss that teachers who pursue their task on the basis of a traditional, medical approach do not express negative attitude or rejection of the exceptional pupils. Indeed to them their attitude is suited to their pupils and is compatible to their teaching task. My own argument is rather different in that teachers in my sample who deal with

their pupils in a negative way appeared to be acting that way out of necessity. I discuss what Hargreaves (1978) refers to as "*coping strategy*." Teachers are not only acting on their own preferences. They also depend on the other conditions surrounding them. Webb and Ashton (1987) refer to such issues relevant to teachers' motivations and condition of teaching: "*all teachers must struggle against environmental forces that work to alienate them,*" some teachers are less successful than the others in pursuing their own beliefs.

4. I am using teachers' types in order to refer to the type of reaction they make in dealing with different aspects of their roles. They may have similar views on some issues but when faced with obstacles they tend to act differently.
5. The figures referred to may present small numbers of teachers. However it should be pointed out that the number of teachers involved in teaching the mentally handicapped pupils in the whole of Greece is estimated at around 200, of which about 100 are working in the Greater Athens Region.
6. Cf. Cohen and Manion (1980), Silverman (1985).
7. Cf. Cohen and Manion (1980), pp. 26-27.
8. Delamont (1983) uses a similar strategy in her study of interaction in the classroom.
9. These are drawn from my interviews with the teachers.

10. This is stated in the *"Information Bulletin of Special Education"* (1986) in Greece.
11. For example, research by Tomlinson (1981a) and (1981b), and Evans & Ware (1987) indicates the presence of the same type of problems in Britain.
12. Teachers are not always defining mental handicap according to the criteria applied by other professionals and at times they themselves vary in their definitions from one another. Teachers' perceptions of their role depend not only upon their personal background and training but also on the actual situation in which they are supposed to carry out their task, Nespor (1987), Zeichner & Tabachnick (1987). I discuss these issues in the next chapter.
13. Barton and Tomlinson (1984) question earlier approaches in social policy when the segregation of the handicapped people was supposed to be in their best interest. They suggest that moral justifications of this nature are made to suit the policy makers rather than the handicapped people. This is very much the case in the Greek context, where definitions of handicap and special needs are left to be decided by different groups of professionals who eventually segregate a group of children as handicapped to reduce the burden off the ordinary schools. The policy of integration appears to have little effect while the justification for labelling still exists. See chapter five section three for detail.
14. This is a particularly difficult task in Greece considering the presence of a national curriculum in the education system.

15. Theories of school management are discussed with reference to Handy (1984) and Handy & Aitkin (1986).
16. This head teacher referred to certain managerial problems in organising a school based curriculum in terms of school resources. His remarks were similar to those listed by Skilbeck (1988). He refers to issues such as teachers' capabilities and skills, motivation, organisation of the school curriculum along the lines of what is actually expected of a school within the community, and financial aspects. I will be discussing some of these issues in chapter five.
17. Handy (op. cit.)

CHAPTER FIVE

1. The concept of professional ideology is not necessarily implying that all teachers share similar beliefs.
2. Results concerning types of motives are based solely on teachers' own accounts: what they referred to as the first reason for choosing this profession.
3. As Withers (1986) has pointed out, having empathy is not a necessary qualification for a special education teacher. To have sympathy and understanding is different from feeling pity for the handicapped pupil.

4. The concept of independent living is not used in the 1985 Greek legislation for special education. However, I discuss teachers views on this matter since it can define an aspect of integration in practice.
5. These will be examined in section 3 of this chapter.
6. Barton & Tomlinson (op.cit.)
7. It would be important to discuss how the teachers of ordinary schools saw the problems involving the ordinary and special school together. For example Gans (1985) in a study of inter-professional relations between the regular and special educators defines the problems of the regular educators. They can also be frustrated and intimidated by the special educators. I do not dismiss such possibility in the Greek context although my research project did not include this issue for analysis.
8. This issue was discussed by several teachers who thought that some parents were not aware of the difference between a child with learning difficulty and one who is mentally handicapped. It could be that even if parents do understand the differences they still prefer to consider that their child has learning difficulty. As Carrier (1987) has pointed out, learning difficulty applies a concept to the child's problem which is not as difficult as mental handicap to cope with nor does it blame parents for their child's situation. Unfortunately there is no available study on parental attitude and their participation at school. Studies such as Wolfendale (1987) in which parents views are examined parallel to teachers would prove very useful in the Greek context.

9. I use the account given by Merton (1967) in relation to the individuals' different pattern of reaction to their environment. Teachers under constraints imposed upon them try to find a strategy to deal with their task. Zeichner et al. (1987) observe that teachers are not, as it is often argued, uniform in their understanding and practising of their profession. Their study of the nature of teachers' craft knowledge includes analyses of different stages in teachers professional experiences and the condition of their work. They indicate that teachers' practice depends also on the structural constraints in the school environment.
10. This does not imply that teachers are always aware of full diagnosis made by other professionals. I referred to this issue earlier in the discussion of teachers' attitude towards other professionals.
11. It appears that in the Greek special education system some pupils can be rejected from the special schools if head teachers decide that those pupils are not suitable for their school. Similar practices have been referred to in the context of other systems of special education; for example, see Booth (1987).
12. These teachers of special education in my sample appeared to think of special education as being far too complicated and beyond their knowledge of teaching. As Westwood (1987) points out special education is surrounded by "*esoteric mysticism*" which "*obscures the fact good basic teaching procedure applied with commonsense and precision*" are its basic ingredients.

CONCLUSIONS

1. For example, in his study of the history of special education, Stassinou (1991) referred to the content of the 1981 Education Act as a sign of oppression of the minority group by the majority. However, his account does not involve a critical approach towards the use of the disablist language and its negative effects in the lives of those who are being labelled.
2. See sections on methodology of the exploratory research and the main research for more detail.
3. Atkinson & Delamont (1985).
4. This was discussed in detail in the conceptual framework to the main research in detail.
5. A study of the practice of those teachers who do not accept the obstacles to integration and try to ignore the labels can become a useful proof also to argue against those writers who consider labelling and segregation as the first positive step in dealing with individual needs of pupils in education system. Such account is not peculiar only in Greek literature but also in other countries, i.e., Soder (1989).

REFERENCES

REFERENCES

- L' Abate, L. and Curtis, L. T. (1975): *"Teaching the exceptional child."* Philadelphia, Pa.: Saunders.
- Adams, F. (Ed.) (1986): *"Special Education."* Essex: Councils and Education Press, in association with Longmans.
- Atkinson P. (1980): "Writing Ethnography", Mimeo.; quoted in Hammersley, M. (1983) (Ed.): *"The Ethnography of Schooling."* N. Humberside: Nafferton Books.
- Atkinson P. & Delamont Sarah (1985): "Bread and Dreams or Bread and Circuses? A Critique of 'Case Study' Research in Education;" in Shipman M. (Ed.): *"Educational Research: Principle, Policy and Practice."* East Sussex: The Falmer Press.
- Baldwin, S. (1986): "Problems with Needs—where theory meets practice;" in *Disability, Handicap & Society*, Vol.1, No.2.
- Ball, J. S. (1983): "Case Study Research in Education: Some Notes and Problems;" in Hammersley, M. (Ed.) (1983): *op. cit.*
- Bardis, P. (1993): "Integration of Children with Special Needs in Rural Greece;" in: O'Hanlon (Ed.): *op.cit.*
- Barton, L. & Meighan, R. (Eds.) (1978): *"Sociological interpretations of schooling and classrooms: a reappraisal."* Driffield, England: Nafferton Books.

- Barton, L. & Walker, S. (Eds.) (1984): "Introduction;" in Barton, L. & Walker, S. (Eds.): *Social Crisis & Educational Research.* Kent: Croom Helm Ltd.
- Barton, L. (1986): "The Politics of Special Educational Needs;" in *Disability, Handicap & Society*, Vol.1, No.3.
- Barton, L. (Ed.) (1988): *The Politics of Special Educational Needs.* East Sussex: The Falmer Press.
- Barton, L. & Tomlinson, Sally (Eds.) (1981): *Special Education: Policy, Practice and Social Issues.* London: Harper and Row.
- Barton, L. & Tomlinson, Sally (Eds.) (1984): *Special Education and Social Interest.* London: Croom Helm.
- Barton, L. & Tomlinson, Sally (1984): "The politics of Integration in England;" in Barton, L. & Tomlinson, Sally (Eds.): *op. cit.*
- Bellacasa, R. and von Tetzchner, S. (1991): "The Disabled Person in Society: a Historical Perspective;" in von Tetzchner, S. (Ed.): *Issues in Telecommunication and Disability.* France: Commission of the European Communities.
- Berger, P.L. and Luckmann, T. (1966): *The Social Construction of Reality—A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge.* Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin University Books.
- Bernstein, B. (1971): *Class Codes and Controls.* London: Routledge.

Booth, T. and Potts, Patricia (Eds.) (1983): *"Integrating special education."* Oxford: Blackwell.

Booth, T. (1985): "Labels and their consequences;" in Lane, D. and Stratford, B. (Eds.): *"Current approaches to Down's Syndrome."* New York: Holt, Reinhart and Winston.

Booth, T. (1987): "The policy and practice of integration;" in Booth, T. et al. (Eds.): *"Preventing Difficulties in Learning: Curricula for All."* Oxford: Blackwell.

Booth, T., Potts, Patricia and Swann, W. (Eds.) (1987): *"Preventing Difficulties in Learning: Curricula for All."* Oxford: Blackwell.

Booth, T. (1988): "Challenging Conception of Integration;" in Barton, L. (Ed.) (1988): *op. cit.*

Booth, T. et al. (Eds.) (1992a): *"Learning for All 1: Curricula for Diversity in Education."* London and New York: Routledge in association with The Open University.

Booth, T. et al. (Eds.) (1992b): *"Learning for All 2: Policies for Diversity in Education."* London and New York: Routledge in association with The Open University.

Booth, T.A. (1986): "From normal baby to handicapped child; unravelling the idea of subnormality in families of mentally handicapped children;" in Swann, W. (Ed.): *op. cit.*

- Bovoir, K., Carpenter, B. and Upton, G. (Eds.) (1992): "*Special Curricula Needs.*" David Fulton, Publisher; National Association for Special Education Needs.
- Borsay, Anne (1986): "Personal Trouble or Public Issue? Towards a model of Policy for people with physical and mental disabilities;" in *Disability, Handicap & Society*, Vol.1, No.2.
- Bouzakis, Sifis (1986): "*Modern Greek Education 1821-1985.*" Athens: Gutenberg Educational Series.
- Bowers, T. (1989): "*Managing Special Needs.*" Milton Keynes: Open University Press.
- Brennan, W. K. (1985): "*Curriculum for Special Needs.*" Milton Keynes: Open University Press.
- Burgess, R. (1984): "*In the Field: an Introduction to Field Work.*" London: Allen & Unwin.
- Calderhead, J. (Ed.) (1987): "*Exploring teachers thinking.*" London: Cassell.
- Carpenter, B. (1992): "The Whole Curriculum; Meeting the Needs of the Whole Child;" in Bovoir, K. et al (Eds.): *op. cit.*
- Carrier, J.G. (1987): "The Politics of early Learning Disability Theory;" in Franklin, D. (Ed.): *op. cit.*

- Cohen, L. & Manion L. (1980): "*Research Methods in Education.*" London: Croom Helm.
- Cohen, S. & Scull, A. (Eds.) (1985): "*Social Control and the State.*" Oxford: Blackwell.
- Cunningham, C. (1974): "The Relevance of 'Normal' Educational Theory and Practice for the Mentally Retarded;" in Tizard J. (Ed.): "*Mental Retardation, Concept of Education and Research.*" London: Butterworth.
- Danby, Joy & Cullen, C. (1988): "Integration and Mainstreaming: a review of the efficacy of mainstreaming and integration for mentally handicapped pupils;" in *Educational Psychology*, Vol.8, No.3.
- Delamont, Sarah (1983): "*Interaction in the Classroom.*" London: Methuen.
- Denscombe, M. (1984): "Interviews, Accounts and Ethnographic Research on Teachers;" in Hammersley, M. (Ed.): *op. cit.*
- Disability, Handicap & Society (1987): "*Editorial*", Vol.2, No.1.
- Dyson, S. (1986): "Professionals, Mentally Handicapped Children and Confidential Files;" in *Disability, Handicap & Society*, Vol.1, No.1.
- Eden, J. (1976): "*Mental Handicap: An Introduction.*" London: Allen & Unwin.
- Egg, Maria (1971): "*The education of the backward child.*" Iraklion, Crete: Petroutsos.

- Evans, P. & Ware, Jean (1987): “ ‘*Special Care*’ Provision: *The Education of Children with Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties.* ” Berkshire, England: Nefer-Nelson.
- Finch, Janet (1984): “*Education as social policy.*” London and New York: Longman.
- Fish, J. (1985): “*Special Education: The Way Ahead.*” Milton Keynes: Open University Press.
- Fish, J. (1989): “*What Is Special Education?*” Milton Keynes: Open University Press.
- Foucault, M.: see Smart, B. (1985).
- Franklin, B. (Ed.) (1987): “*Learning disability: dissenting essays.*” Lewes: Falmer Press.
- Freeman, A. and Gray, H. (1989): “*Organizing Special Educational Needs: A critical approach.*” London: Paul Champon Publishing Ltd.
- Galloway, D. (1985): “*Schools, Pupils and Special Educational Needs.*” Kent: Croom Helm.
- Gans, Karen (1985): “Regular and Special Educators; Handicap, Integration, Attitudes and Implications for Consultants;” in *T E S*, Vol.8, No.4.
- Gillham, B. (1986): “Mental Handicap;” in Gillham, B. (Ed.): *op. cit.*

- Gillham, B. (Ed.) (1986): *"Handicapping Conditions in Children."* London: Croom Helm.
- Gipps, Caroline, Gross, Harriet & Goldstein, H. (1987): *"Warnock's Eighteen Percent Children with Special Needs in Primary Schools."* East Essex: The Falmer Press.
- Glaser, B. G. & Strauss, A. L. (1967): *"The discovery of grounded theory—strategies for qualitative research."* London: Widenfeld & Nicolson.
- Glatter, R., Preedy, Margaret, Riches, C. & Masterton, Mary (Eds.) (1988): *"Understanding School Management."* Milton Keynes: Open University Press.
- Glendinning, Caroline (1991): "Loosing ground: social policy and disabled people in Great Britain, 1980-1990;" in *Disability, Handicap and Society*, Vol.6, No.1.
- Gruenberg, E. M. (1964): "Epidemiology", in H. A. Stevens and R. Heber, (1964): *"Mental retardation: A review of research."* Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago Press.
- Hammersley, M. and Atkinson P. (1983): *"Ethnography Principle in Practice."* London: Tavistock Publications.
- Hammersley, M. (Ed.) (1983): *"The Ethnography of Schooling."* North Humberside: Naferton Books.
- Hammersley, M. (Ed.) (1986): *"Controversies in Classroom Research."* Milton Keynes: Open University Press.

- Hammersley, M. (1986): "Introduction;" in Hammersley, M. (Ed.) (1986): *"Controversies in Classroom Research."* Milton Keynes: Open University Press.
- Handy, C. (1984): *"Understanding Organizations."* Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin Books.
- Handy, C. & Aitkin, R. (1986): *"Understanding Schools as Organizations."* Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin Books.
- Harding, Leonora and Beech, J. (1991): "Introduction to Educational Assessment;" in Harding, Leonora and Beech, J. (Eds.) (1991): *"Educational assessment of the primary school child."* Berkshire: Nefer-Nelson.
- Harding, Leonora and Beech, J. (Eds.) (1991): *"Educational assessment of the primary school child."* Berkshire: Nefer-Nelson.
- Hardy M., et al. (1990): *"Studying Child Psychology."* London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson.
- Hargreaves, A. (1978): "The significance of classroom coping strategies;" in Barton, L. and Meighan, R. (Eds.): *op. cit.*
- Heyman, B., et al. (1990): "Social Class and the Prevalence of Handicapping Conditions;" in *Disability, Handicap & Society*, Vol.5, No.2.

Hope, Mary (1989): "The Introduction of the National Curriculum: implications for management in special schools;" in Bowers, T. (Ed.): *"Managing Special Needs."* Milton Keynes: Open University.

Hudson, B. (1991): "Deinstitutionalisation: what went wrong?" in *Disability, Handicap & Society*, Vol.6, No.1.

Information Bulletin of Special Education in Greece (1986). Athens, Greece: Ministry of Education and Religion.

Information Bulletin of Special Education in Greece (1987). Athens, Greece: Ministry of Education and Religion.

Information Bulletin of Special Education in Greece (1988). Athens, Greece: Ministry of Education and Religion.

Information Bulletin of Special Education in Greece (1989). Athens, Greece: Ministry of Education and Religion.

Information Bulletin of Special Education in Greece (1991). Athens, Greece: Ministry of Education and Religion.

Information Bulletin of Special Education in Greece (1992). Athens, Greece: Ministry of Education and Religion.

Ingleby, D. (1985): "Mental Health and Social Order;" in Cohen, S. & Scull, A. (Eds.): *op. cit.*

Jones, N. (Ed.) (1990): *"Special Educational Needs Review."* London: Falmer Press.

- Jongbloed, Lyn & Crichton Ann (1990): "Difficulties in Shifting from Individualistic to Socio-political Policy regarding Disability in Canada;" in *Disability, Handicap & Society*, Vol.5, No.1.
- Jordan, Anne J. and Silverman, H. (1990): "Teacher Assumptions and Beliefs about Exceptionality;" in Jones, N. (Ed.): "*Special Educational Needs Review*." London: Falmer Press.
- Kalanjis, C. G. (1985): "*Teaching in Special Schools, for mentally handicapped children*." Athens: Karavias—Roussopoulos.
- Kelly, A. V. (1986): "*Knowledge and Curriculum Planning*." London: Harper.
- Krassanakis, G. E. (1989): "*Children with Mental Deficiency*." Athens: Smyrniotakis.
- Kypriotakis, A. (1985): "*Special Children and their Education*." Heraklion, Crete: Psychotechniki.
- Lane, D. and Stratford, B. (Eds.) (1985): "*Current approaches to Down's Syndrome*." New York: Holt, Reinhart and Winston.
- Le Prevost, Pat (1990): "Language skill; child with Down's Syndrome in ordinary class;" in Jones, N. (Ed.): *op. cit.*
- Lea, Susan J. (1988): "Mental Retardation: social construction or clinical reality?" in *Disability, Handicap & Society*, Vol.3, No.1.

- Lewis, I. and Vulliamy, G. (1981): "The Social Context of Educational Practice: The Case of Special Education;" in Barton, L. & Tomlinson, Sally (Eds.): *op. cit.*, pp.53-70.
- Liggett, Helen (1988): "Stars are not Born: an interpretative approach to the politics of disability;" in *Disability, Handicap & Society*, Vol.3, No. 3.
- Lukes, J. R. (1981): "Finance and policy-making in special education;" in Swann, W. (Ed.): *op. cit.*
- Maden, Nancy A. and Salvin, R. (1983): "Mainstreaming Students with Mild Handicaps: Academic and Social Outcomes;" in *Review of Educational Research*, Vol.53, No.4, pp.519-569.
- Manion, Mary L. & Bersany, H. A. (1987): "Mental Retardation as a Western Sociological Construct: a cross-cultural analysis;" in *Disability, Handicap & Society*, Vol.2, No.3.
- Merton, R. K. (1967): "*Social Theory and Social Structure.*" New York: The Free Press.
- Nespor, Jan (1987): "The role of beliefs in the practice of teaching;" in *Journal of Curriculum Studies*, Vol.19, No.4, pp.317-328.
- Nicodemos, S. (1989): "Special System and Integrated situation in Greece"; in Struiksma, C. & Meijer, F. (Eds.): "*Integration at Work,*" *op. cit.*
- Nitsopoulos, M. (1981): "*Special mentally retarded individuals.*" Thessaloniki, Greece: Paratiritis.

- Norwich, B. (1990): *“Reappraising Special Needs Education.”* London: Cassell.
- O’ Hanlon, C. (1993): *“Special Education Integration in Europe”*. London: David Fulton Publishers.
- Oliver, M. (1985): “The integration—Segregation Debate; some sociological considerations;” in *British Journal of the Sociology of Education*, Vol.6, No.1.
- Oliver, M. (1986): “Social Policy and Disability: some theoretical issues”; in *Disability, Handicap & Society*, Vol.1.
- Oliver, M. (1988): “The Social and Political Context of Educational Policy; the Case of Special Needs;” in Barton, L. (Ed.): *“The Politics of Special Educational Needs.”* East Sussex: The Falmer Press.
- Oliver, M. and Zarb, G. (1989): “The Politics of Disability: a new approach;” in *Disability, Handicap & Society*, Vol.4, No.3.
- Oliver, M. (1990): *“The Politics of Disablement.”* London: Macmillan Educational, Ltd.
- Ozga, Jenny (1987): “Studying Education Policy through the lives of the Policy-makers; an attempt to close the Macro-micro Gap;” in Walker, S. and Barton, L. (Eds.): *op. cit.*
- Paraskevopoulos, I. N. (1980): *“Mental Retardation.”* Athens: Reprint of the original publication on behalf of the Author. (Original first published in 1974 by the Greek Organisation for the Publication of Textbooks {O.E.D.B.} for the use of pupils and students.)

- Pearson, L. and Lindsay, G. (1986): "*Special Needs in the Primary School: Identification and Intervention.*" Berkshire, England: Nefer-Nelson.
- Peters, R.S. (Ed.) (1977): "*John Dewey reconsidered.*" London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.
- Peters, R.S. (1981): "*Essays on Educators.*" London: Allen and Unwin.
- Peter, Margaret (1992): "A curriculum for all, A hard task for some;" in Booth, T. et al. (Eds.) (1992b): "*Learning for All 2: Policies for Diversity in Education.*" London and New York: Routledge in association with The Open University.
- Polychronopoulou, S. and Birtsas, C. (1989): "Mainstreaming, a major trend in Greece;" in Struiksma, C. & Meijer F. (Eds.): "*Integration at Work: The First European Community Conference on Handicap and Education.*" Rotterdam: Pedologisch Instituut.
- Reading, H.F. (1977): "*A Dictionary of the Social Sciences.*" London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.
- Rogers, R. (1992): "Primary Drift to Special Schools;" in *The Times Educational Supplement* (TES) Friday, 8 May 1992, No. 3958.
- Runsiman, S. (1969): "*Byzantine Civilisation.*" (Greek translation) Athens, Greece: Galaxias Publications.
- Ryan, Joanna and Thomas, F. (1987): "*The Politics of Mental Handicap.*" London: Free Association Books.

- Skandalis, Chr. (1980): *"The Retarded Person in Greek Society."* Ioannina, Greece: Kamina Brothers.
- Scottish Education Department, Consultative Committee on the Curriculum (1977): *"The Structure of the Curriculum in the third and fourth Years of the Scottish Secondary School."* (Munn Report) Edinburgh: H.M.S.O.
- Scull, A. (1981): "Humanitarianism or Control? Some Observations on the Historiography of Anglo-American Psychiatry;" in Cohen, S. and Scull, A. (Eds.): *op. cit.*
- Shipman, M. (Ed.): *"Educational Research: Principle, Policy and Practice."* East Sussex: The Falmer Press.
- Silverman, D. (1985): *"Qualitative Methodology & Sociology."* Hants.: Gower.
- Simons, H. (1979): "Process evaluation in Schools;" in Lacey, C. & Lawton, D. (Eds.): *"Issues in Evaluation."* London: Methuen. (Quoted in Atkinson and Delamont, *op. cit.*)
- Skilbeck, M. (1988): "The Schools and Curriculum Decisions;" in Glatter, R. Preedy, Margaret, Riches, C. and Masterton, Mary (Eds.): *op. cit.*
- Smart, B. (1985): *"Michel Foucault."* London: Tavistock.
- Smith, G. (1980): *"Social Needs."* London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- Soder, M. (1989): "Disability as a Social Construct: the Labelling Approach Revisited;" in *European Journal of Special Needs Education*, Vol.4, No.2.

- Spradley J.(1979): "Participant Observation" New York:Wiley.
- Squibb, P. (1981): "A Theoretical Structuralist Approach to Special Education;" in Barton, L. & Tomlinson, Sally (Eds.): *op.cit.*, pp.35-52.
- Stassinou, D. (1991): "*Special Education in Greece.*" Athens: Gutenberg.
- St Claire, Lindsay (1986): "Mental Retardation: impairment or handicap?" in *Disability, Handicap & Society*, Vol.1, No.3.
- Stenhouse, L. (1975): "*An Introduction to Curriculum Research and Development.*" London: Heinemann.
- Stevens, H. A. and R. E. Heber (1964): "Mental Retardation." Chicago. Ill.: University of Chicago Press.
- Stow, Lynn & Selfe, Lorna (1989): "*Understanding Children with Special Needs.*" London: Unwin Hyman.
- Struiksma, C. & Meijer, F. (Eds.) (1989): "*Integration at Work.*" The First European Community Conference on Handicap and Education. Rotterdam: Pedologisch Instituut Rotterdam. Brussels: E.C.-Helios.
- Swann, W. (Ed.) (1981): "*The Practice of Special Education.*" Oxford: Blackwell.
- Swann, W. (1983): "Curriculum Principle for Integration;" in Booth, T. and Potts Patricia (Eds.): *op. cit.*

- Swann, W. (1992): "Hardening the hierarchies—The National Curriculum as a system of classification;" in Booth, T. et al.(1992a): *op. cit.*
- Taylor, P. H. & Richards, C. (1979): "*An Introduction to Curriculum Studies.*" Windsor: Nefer.
- Tizard J. (Ed.) (1974): "*Mental Retardation, Concept of Education and Research.*" London: Butterworth.
- Tomlinson, Sally (1981a): "Professionals and ESN (M) education;" in Swann, W. (Ed.): *op. cit.*
- Tomlinson, Sally (1981b): "*Educational Subnormality—A Study in Decision-making.*" London: R.K.P.
- Tomlinson, Sally (1982): "*A Sociology of Special Education.*" London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- Tomlinson, Sally (1988): "Why Johnny can't read; Critical Theory and Special Education;" in *European Journal of Special Needs Education*, Vol.1, No.3.
- von Tetzchner, S. (Ed.) (1991): "*Issues in Telecommunication and Disability.*" France: Commission of the European Community.
- Walker, S. and Barton, L. (Eds.) (1987): "*Changing Policies, Changing Teachers: New Directions for Schooling?*" Milton Keynes: Open University.

- Warnock M. (Chair) (1978): "*Special Educational Needs. Report of the Committee of Enquiry into the Education of Handicapped Children and Young People.*" London: H.M.S.O.
- Webb, R. B. and Ashton, Patricia (1987): "Teachers' Motivation and the Conditions of Teaching; a Call for Ecological Reform;" in Walker, S. and Barton, L. (Eds.): *op. cit.*
- Westwood, P. (1987): "*Commonsense Methods for Children with Special Needs.*" London: Croom Helm.
- Wilson, M. D. (1985): "*History for Pupils with Learning Difficulties.*" London: Hodder and Stoughton.
- Withers, R. (1986): "Having Sympathies in Special Education: an argument for the refusal of empathy;" in *Disability, Handicap and Society*, Vol.1, No.2.
- Wolfendale, Sheila (1987): "*Primary School and Special Needs: Policy, Planning and Provisions.*" London: Cassell.
- Zeichner, K. M., Tabachnick, B. R. and Densmore, Kathleen (1987): "Individual, Institutional, and Cultural Influences on the Development of Teachers' Craft Knowledge;" in Calderhead, J. (Ed.): *op. cit.*

ACTS OF THE GREEK PARLIAMENT

Law 4397 (1929): “Concerning Elementary Education;” in *Government Gazette*, 16-24 August 1929.

Compulsory Law 453 (1937): “Concerning the establishment of a school for the abnormal and retarded children etc.,” in *Government Gazette*, Vol.A, No.2, 30 January 1937.

Law 1222 (1972): “Concerning the further education of Primary Education Teaching Staff and the reorganisation of the Teacher Training College;” in *Government Gazette*, Vol.A., No.153, 31 August 1972.

Law 227 (1975): “Concerning the further education in Special Education at the Marasleion Primary Teacher Training College;” in *Government Gazette*, Vol.A., No.273, 4 December 1975.

Law 1143 (1981): “Concerning Special Education, Special Vocational Training, Employment and Social Welfare of Individuals Deviating from the Normal, and other Educational Provisions;” in *Government Gazette*, Vol.A, No.80, 31 March 1981.

Law 1566 (1985): “Structure and operation of Primary and Secondary Education, and other Provisions;” in *Government Gazette*, Vol.A, No.167, 30 September 1985, Chapter 10: “Special Education.”

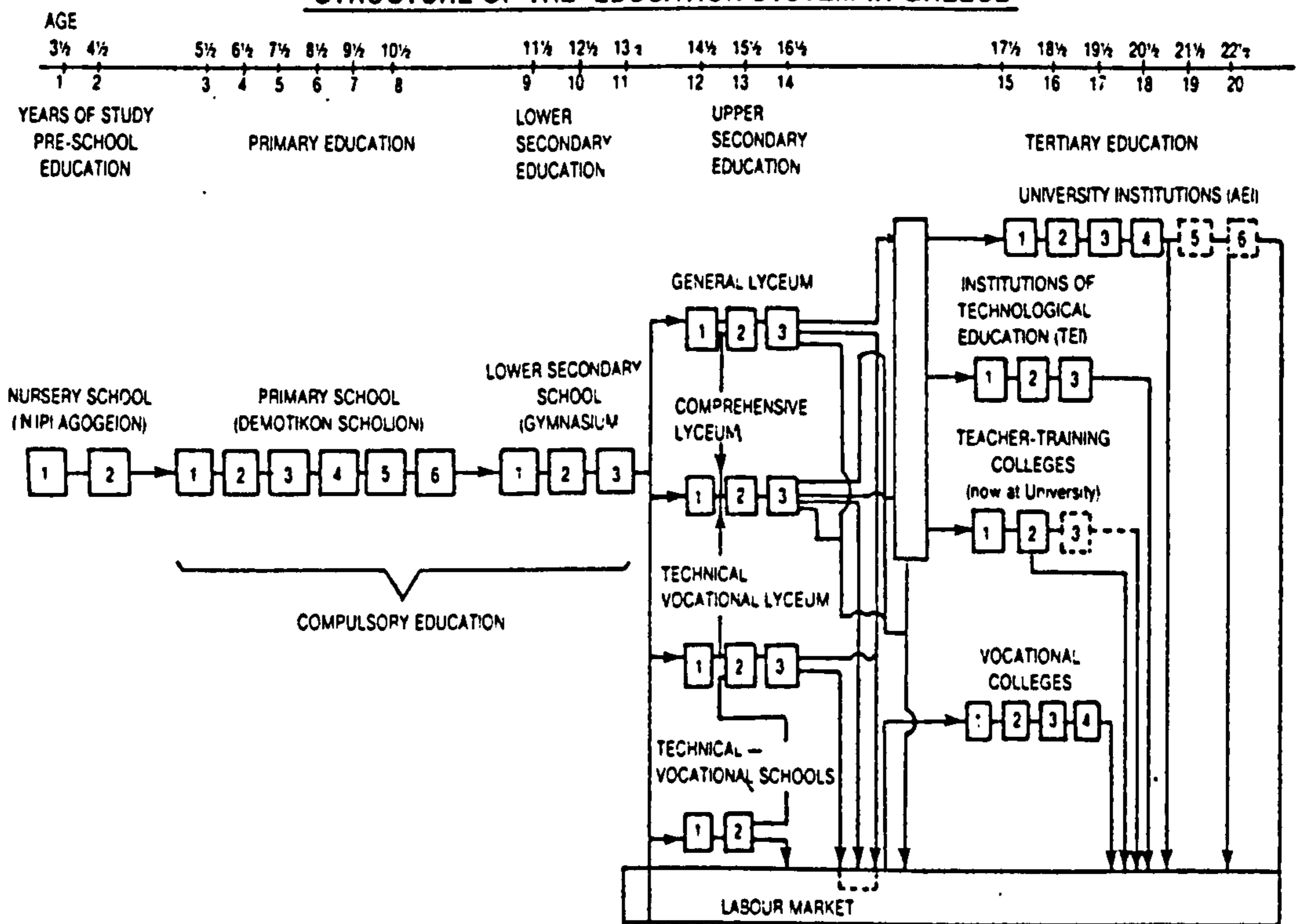
Law 1943 (1991): "Concerning the modernisation of Public Administration etc.;" in *Government Gazette*, Vol.A, No.50, 11 April 1991, article 66: "Extension-modification of work contracts of individuals with special needs."

APPENDICES

APPENDIX I

Structure of the Education System in Greece

TABLE 1
STRUCTURE OF THE EDUCATION SYSTEM IN GREECE



Source: Information Bulletin of the Ministry of Education and Religion (1991 Edition)

APPENDIX II

A. Observation Sheet

School characteristics

=====

1. state / private

2. years of operation

3. number of pupils

4. number of teachers

5. teacher / pupil ratio

6. categories of pupils

.....

.....

.....

.....

7. teachers' qualification level
.....
.....
.....

8. number and position of the other
professionals
.....
.....
.....

9. type of material for teaching
.....
.....
.....
.....

10. school environment
.....
.....
.....

11. type of management
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

Teachers

SCHOOL:

1. Age
2. Sex
3. Marital status
4. Children
5. Any personal experience of a handicapped person in the family or among friends
.....
6. Origin
7. Number of years in ordinary education
8. Number of years in special education
9. Numbers of years living in Athens
10. Qualifications
11. Motives in becoming a special ed. teacher
12. Number of pupils (

13. The type of handicap
.....
.....
.....

14. Age group
.....

15. General method of teaching
.....
.....
.....

16. Teaching material
.....
.....
.....

17. View towards integration
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

18. Integration in ordinary schools
.....
.....
.....
.....

19. The possibilities for independent living

.....
.....
.....

20. The attitude towards the other professionals

.....
.....
.....

21. The attitude towards parents

.....
.....
.....

22. The major difficulties encountered in the school

.....
.....
.....

23. The major difficulties encountered in the society

.....
.....

24. What type of programme is most needed for M.H. in schools and society

.....
.....
.....

CRITERIA APPLIED BY TEACHERS TO DEFINE
THE CONCEPT OF MENTAL HANDICAP

DEGREE OF HANDICAP	CRITERIA OF PRIMARY IMPORTANCE	CRITERIA OF SECONDARY IMPORTANCE	OTHER CRITERIA
PROFOUNDLY MENTALLY HANDICAPPED			
SEVERELY MENTALLY HANDICAPPED			
MODERATELY MENTALLY HANDICAPPED			

T E A C H I N G M A T E R I A L

DEGREE OF HANDICAP	A G E R A N G E		
	6 TO 8 YEARS	8 TO 10 YEARS	10 TO 12 YEARS
PROFOUNDLY MENTALLY HANDICAPPED			
SEVERELY MENTALLY HANDICAPPED			
MODERATELY MENTALLY HANDICAPPED			

TEACHERS ATTITUDES

QUESTIONS	ATTITUDES TOWARDS THE P. M. H.	ATTITUDES TOWARDS THE S. M. H.	ATTITUDES TOWARDS THE M. M. H.
! POSSIBILITY OF ! EVER FOLLOWING ! ORDINARY SCHOOL			
! POSSIBILITY OF ! EVER BEING ! INTEGRATED IN ! SOCIETY			
! POSSIBILITY ! OF EVER LEADING ! AN INDEPENDENT ! LIFE			

AN OUTLINE OF POSSIBLE QUESTIONS IN THE INTERVIEWS.

1. How do you view your role as a teacher of mentally handicapped pupils?
2. Do you think any of your pupils could ever be able to attend a mainstream school?
3. What are the main reasons for selecting those pupils to attend a mainstream school?
4. Can you refer to pupils in your class who could be characterised as "*the most handicapped*," "*relativelyhandicapped*," and "*the least handicapped*" among the pupils?

GENERAL LINE OF QUESTIONING

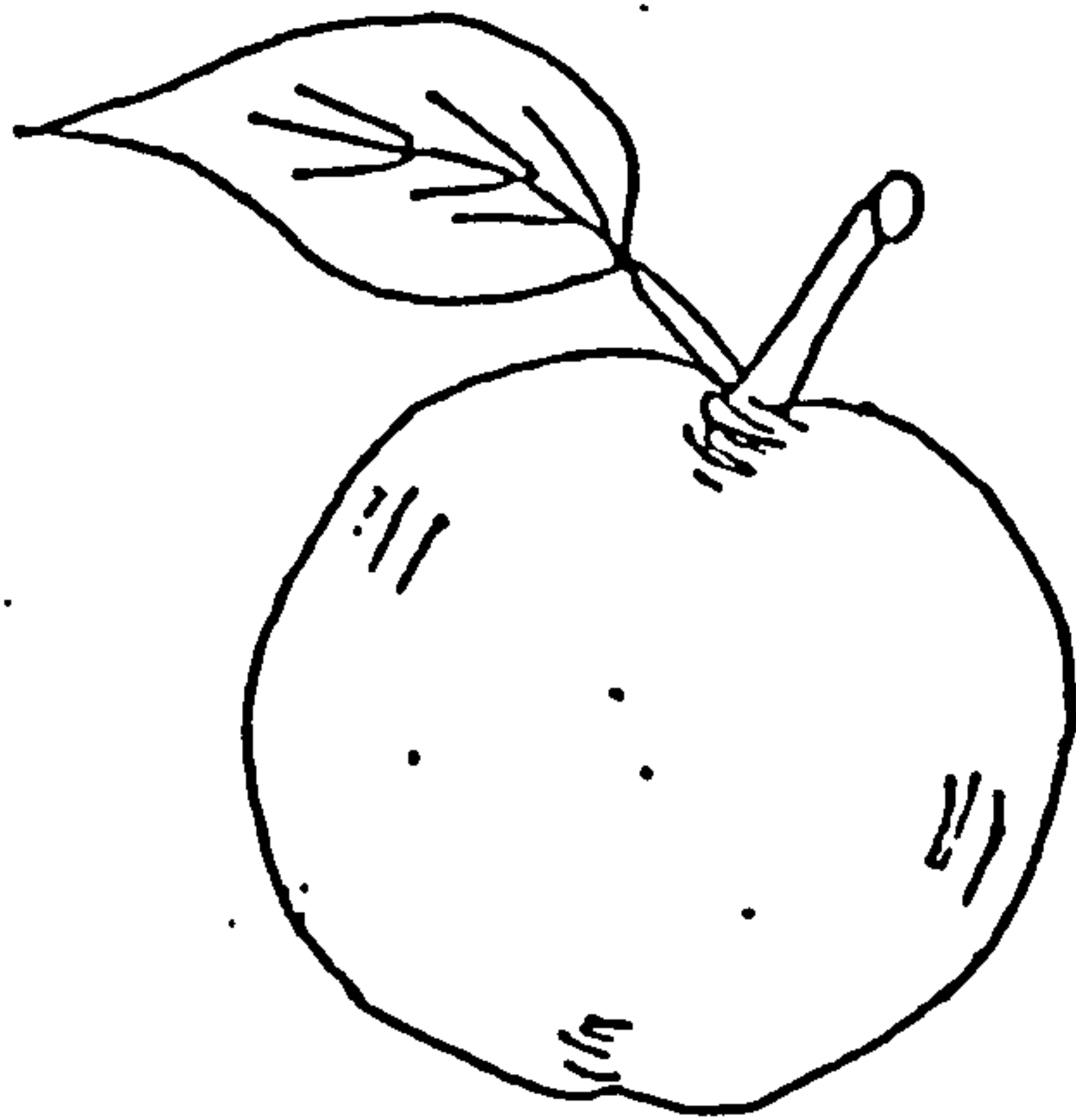
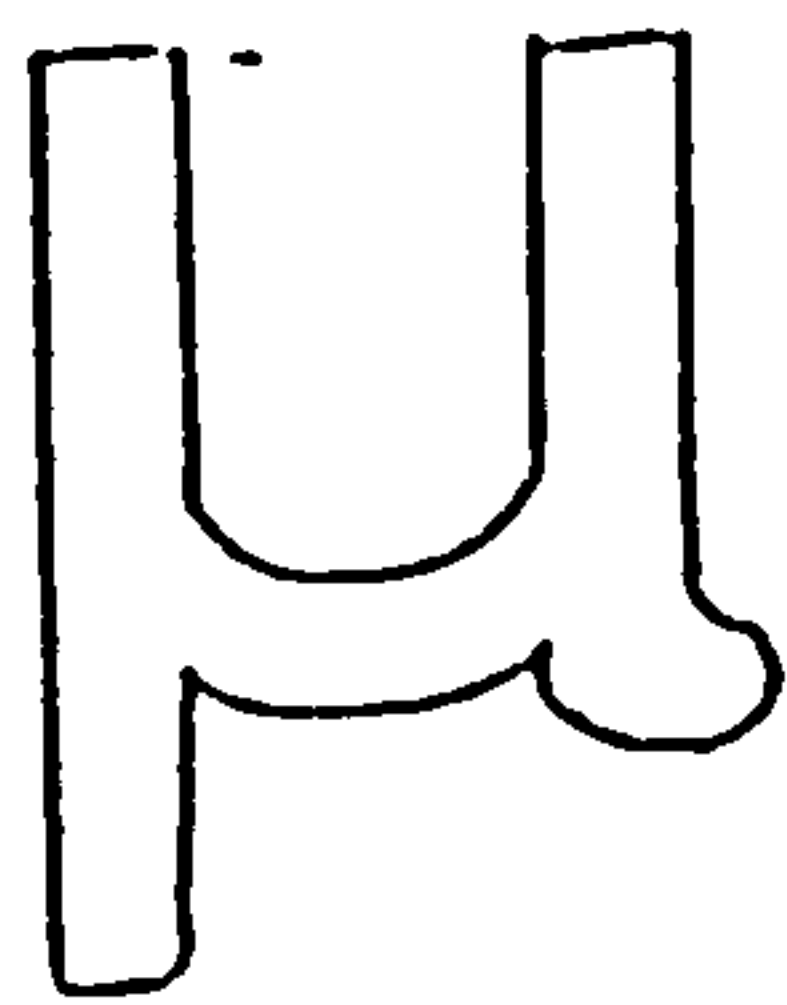
The general line of questioning will be focused upon aspects of interaction between the teacher and their pupils concerned. Questions varied depending upon information requirements. For example, there may have been issues which I have not managed to understand merely by observation and thus required further elaboration by the teacher.

APPENDIX III

This appendix includes samples of teaching material used in the special schools in my research sample.

I have provided translations of the texts. Some of the texts referred to here are used for a wide range of age groups. References to the level of teaching material do not always correspond to the age of the mentally handicapped pupils who were studying the texts.

The next two texts are material for first and second grade primary M.M.H. pupils and older S.M.H. pupils used for spelling. Material produced by the teacher.



μήλο

Γράφω το μ:

I write m

μμ

μ

Κυκλώνω το μ:

I circle m

γ μ ρ φ χ μ ρ κ μ γ φ μ

Υπογραμίζω τη λέξη μήλο:

I underline the word: apple

φύλλο, μήλο, μέλι, μύλος.

Συμπληρώνω τα κενά:

I fill in the gaps

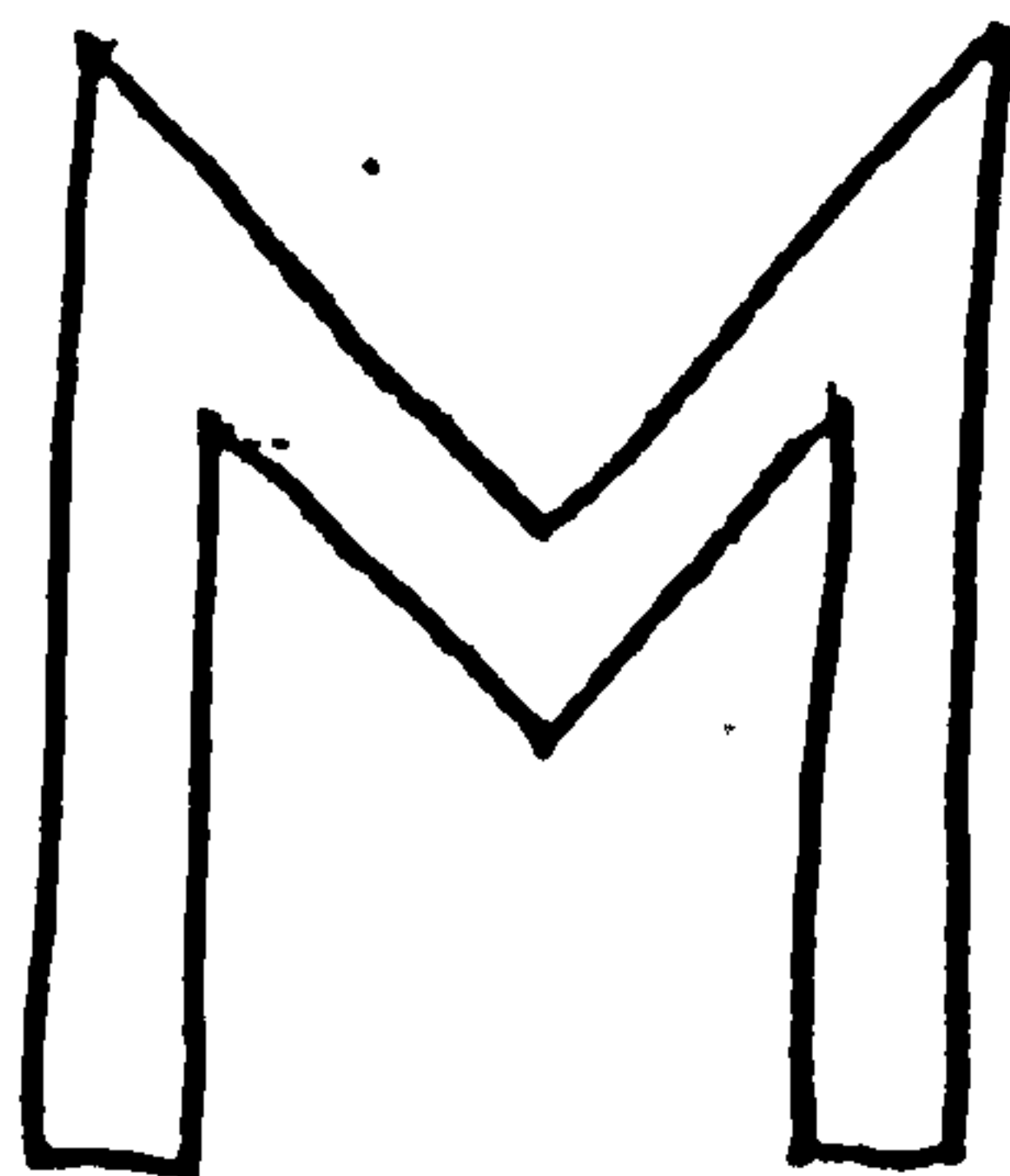
μ	ή	λ	ο

μ	ή	λ	ο

Γράφω
μήλο

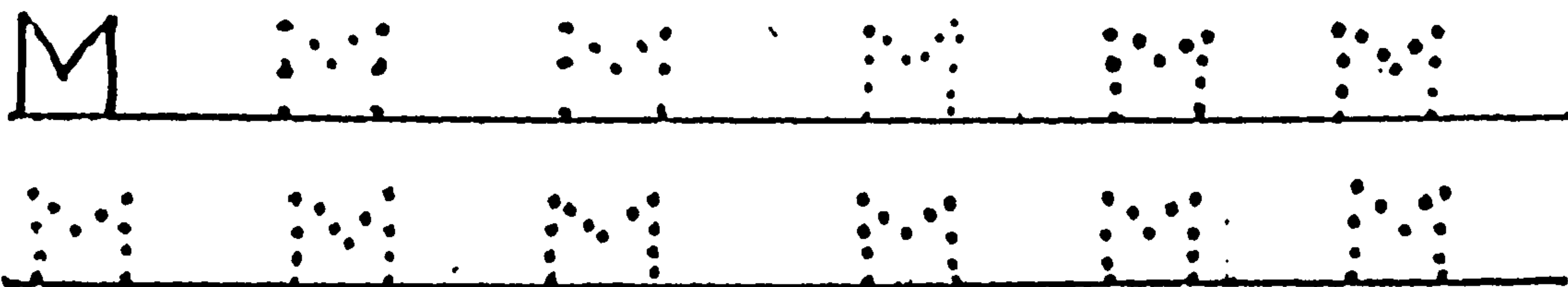
Χρωματίζω το Μ:

I paint M



Ενώνω τις τελίτσες:

I connect the dots



Γράφω το Μ:

I write M

Μ

Μ

Μ



Secondary School Greek Language for M M H Pupils.

(Material produced by the teacher)

2. ΓΡΑΜΜΑΤΙΚΑ ΣΤΟΙΧΕΙΑ

Όταν λέμε χρυσό ρολδί, τρυφερό κρέας, έσπασε το αυγό οι λέξεις χρυσό, τρυφερό, έσπασε παίρνουν τη συνηθισμένη τους, την πραγματική, την κύρια σημασία, για τούτο λέμε πως έχουμε κυριολεξία

Όταν όμως λέμε χρυσή καρδιά, τρυφερά λόγια, έσπασε η καρδιά οι λέξεις χρυσή, τρυφερή, έσπασε δεν εκφράζουν την κύρια σημασία τους. Η σημασία τους μεταφέρθηκε από το ρολδί στην καρδιά, από το κρέας στα λόγια και από τ' αυγά στις καρδιές. Έτσι λέμε πως έχουμε μεταφορική σημασία, ή μεταφορά.

3. Να κλείσεις μέσα σε κύκλο τις φράσεις που λέγονται με κυριολεξία:

Πικρό γιατρικό.

Άγουρα νιάτα.

Χοντρό σκονί.

Χοντρό ψέμα.

Πικρός λόγος.

Άγουρο φρούτο.

Σκληρή πέτρα.

Σκληρή καρδιά.

Μαύρος γάτος.

Μαύρη σιλαβιά.

Άσπρο περιστέρι.

Άσπρη μέρα.

Ένοτεινός θάλαμος.

Ένοτεινή σκέψη.

Φωτεινή ιδέα.

Φωτεινή αίθουσα.

Βαριά λόγια.

Βαριά μηχανήματα.

Χρυσό δαχτυλίδι.

Χρυσό παιδί.

Βαθύ πηγάδι.

Βαθύ νόημα.

Γλυκό φαγητό.

Γλυκό όνειρο.

Ραϊσμένο ποτήρι.

Ραϊσμένη καρδιά.

Η φωλιά του χελιδονιού.

Η φωλιά της ευτυχίας.

Το αλάτι της θάλασσας.

Το αλάτι της αλήθειας.

Τα χέρια της μητέρας.

Τα χέρια της δικαιοσύνης.

Η γέφυρα της Αλαμάνας.

Η γέφυρα των στεναγμών.

Η καρδιά του Τάκη.

Η καρδιά του χειμώνα.

Translation of text on p.414:

On the use of Metaphor:

When we say golden watch, tender meat, broken egg, the words golden, tender and broken take on their principal meaning. However, when we say golden heart, tender words, broken heart then golden, tender and broken do not take on their principal meaning.

Their meaning has been transferred from watch to heart, from meat to words and from egg to heart. We have transferred the meaning or we have used metaphor.

Circle the words which are used in their principal meaning:

Examples:

bitter medicine

thick rope

hard stone

black cat

dark room

etc.

bitter word

thick lie

hard heart

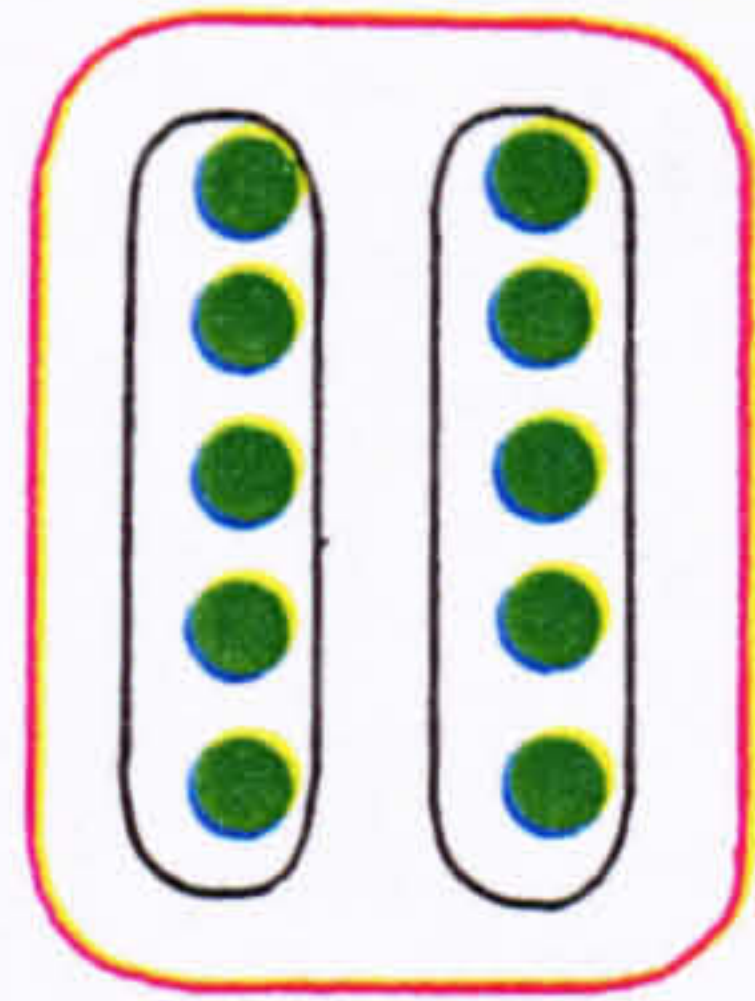
black slavery

dark thought,

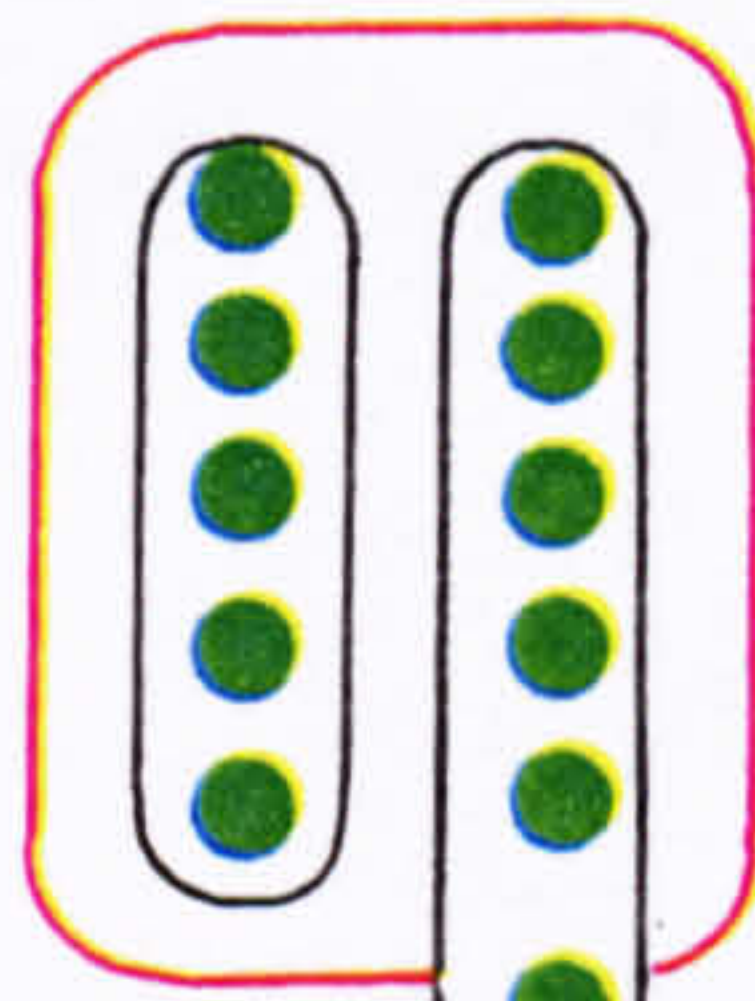
Maths for M.M.H. pupils third grade, material produced by the teacher.

I count how many and then I write in
 1. Μετρώ πόσα είναι και ύστερα το γράφω στο [

First grade Primary School Maths second level.



$$5 + 5 = 10$$



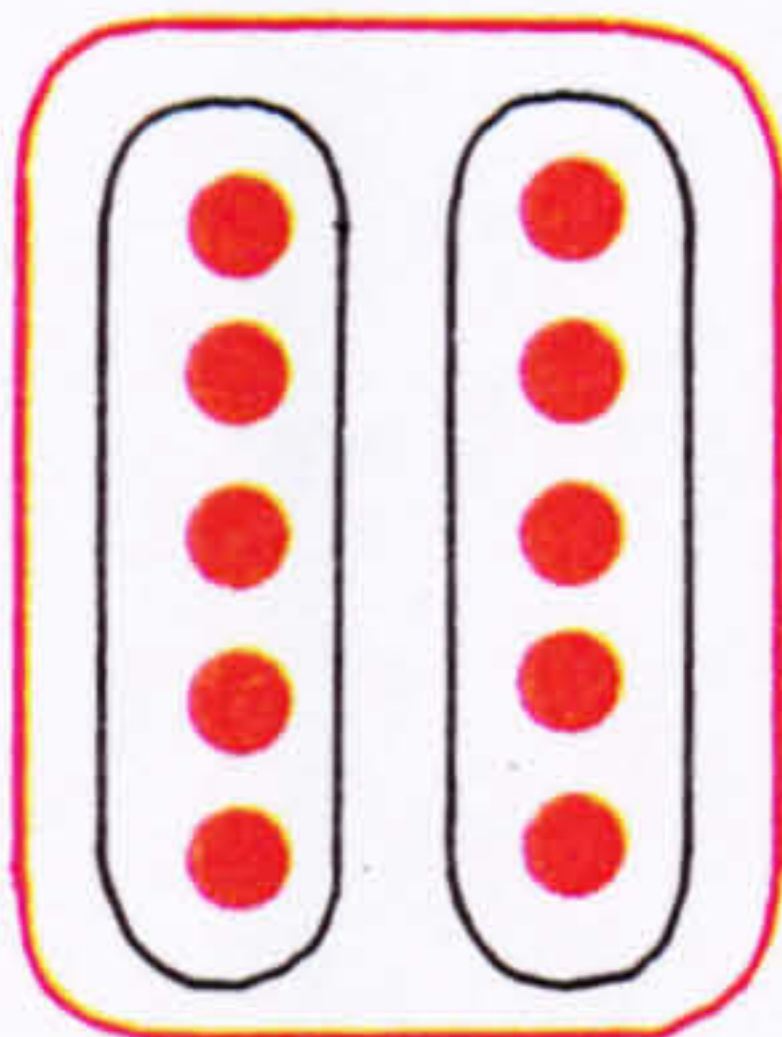
$$5 + 6 = 11$$

Μάθημα 110ο

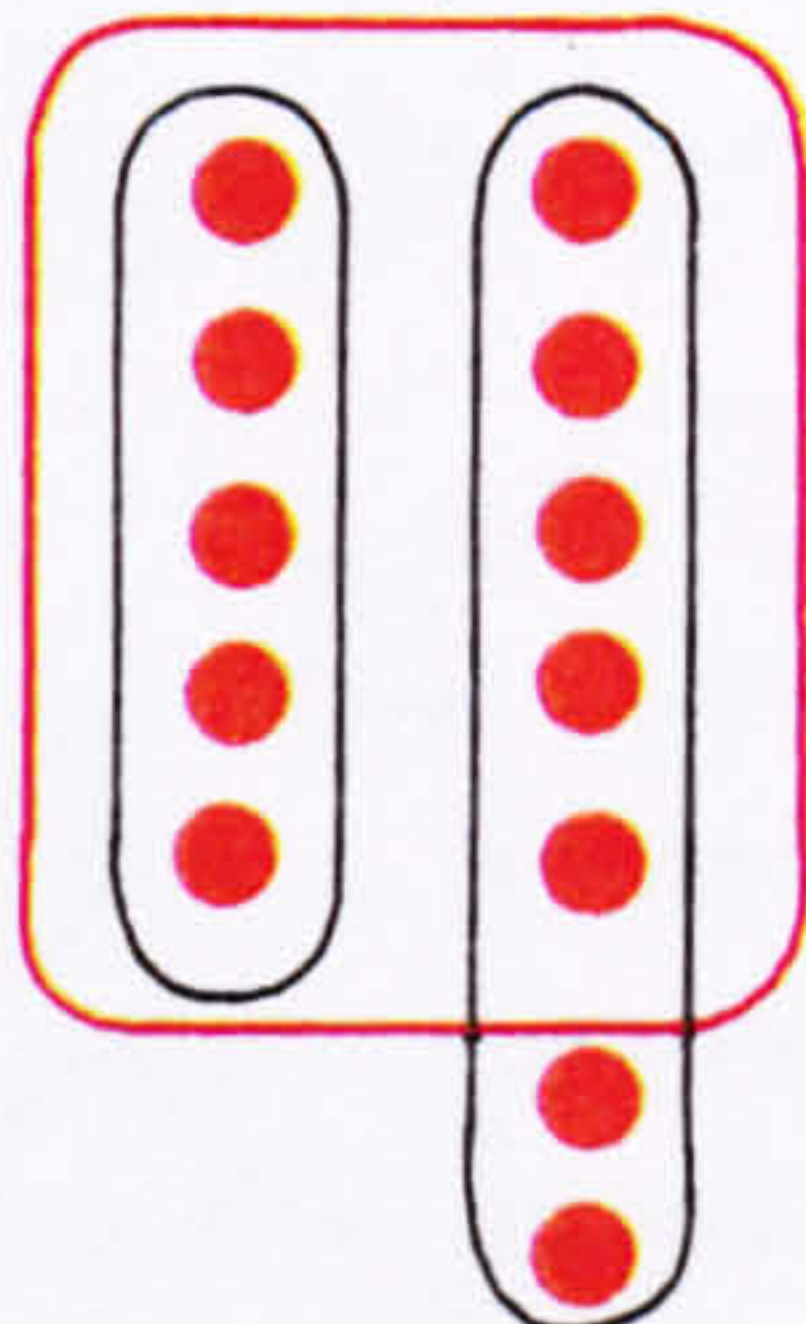
5+5=10... 5+6=11



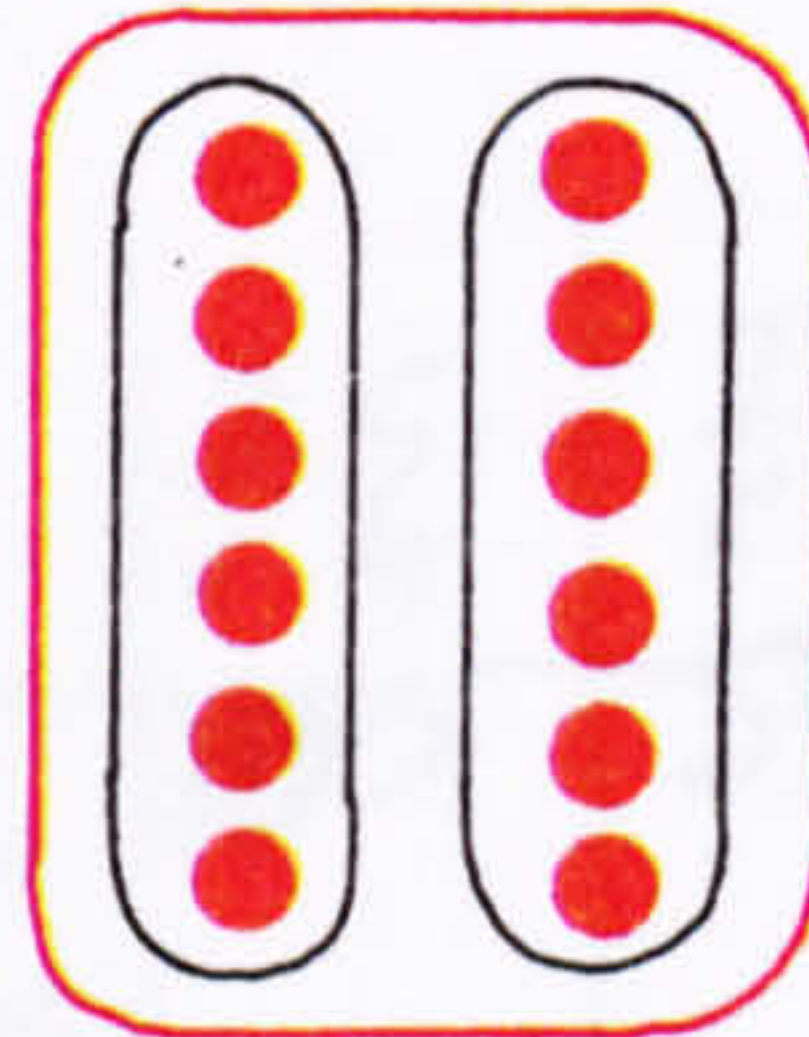
Να βάλεις σε κάθε τετραγωνάκι τον αριθμό που λείπει.



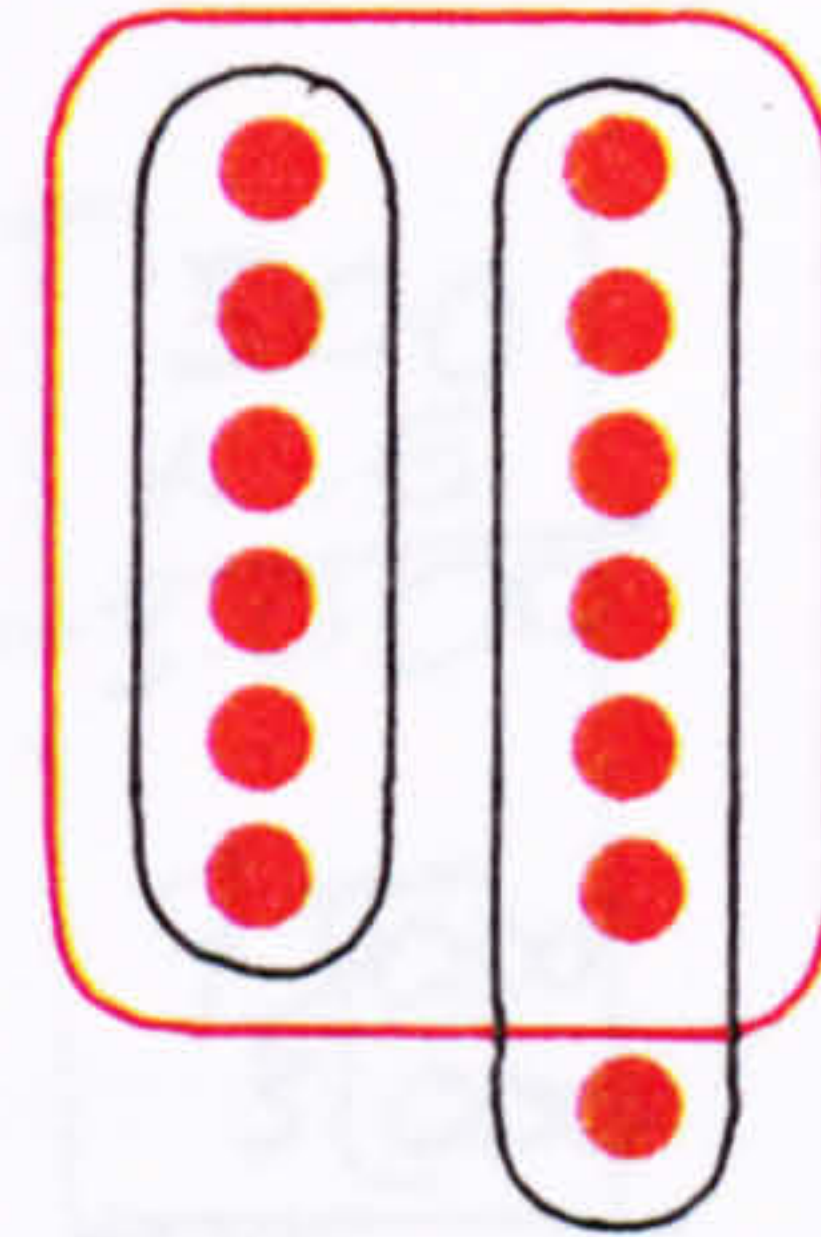
$$5 + 5 = 10$$



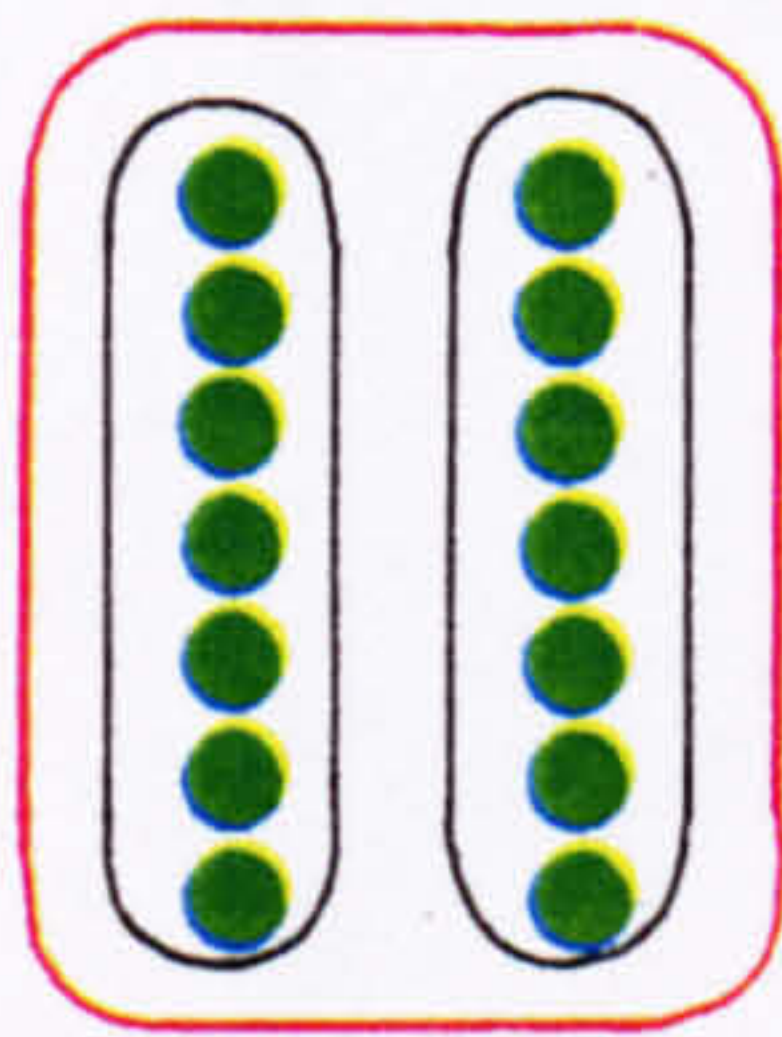
$$5 + 7 = 12$$



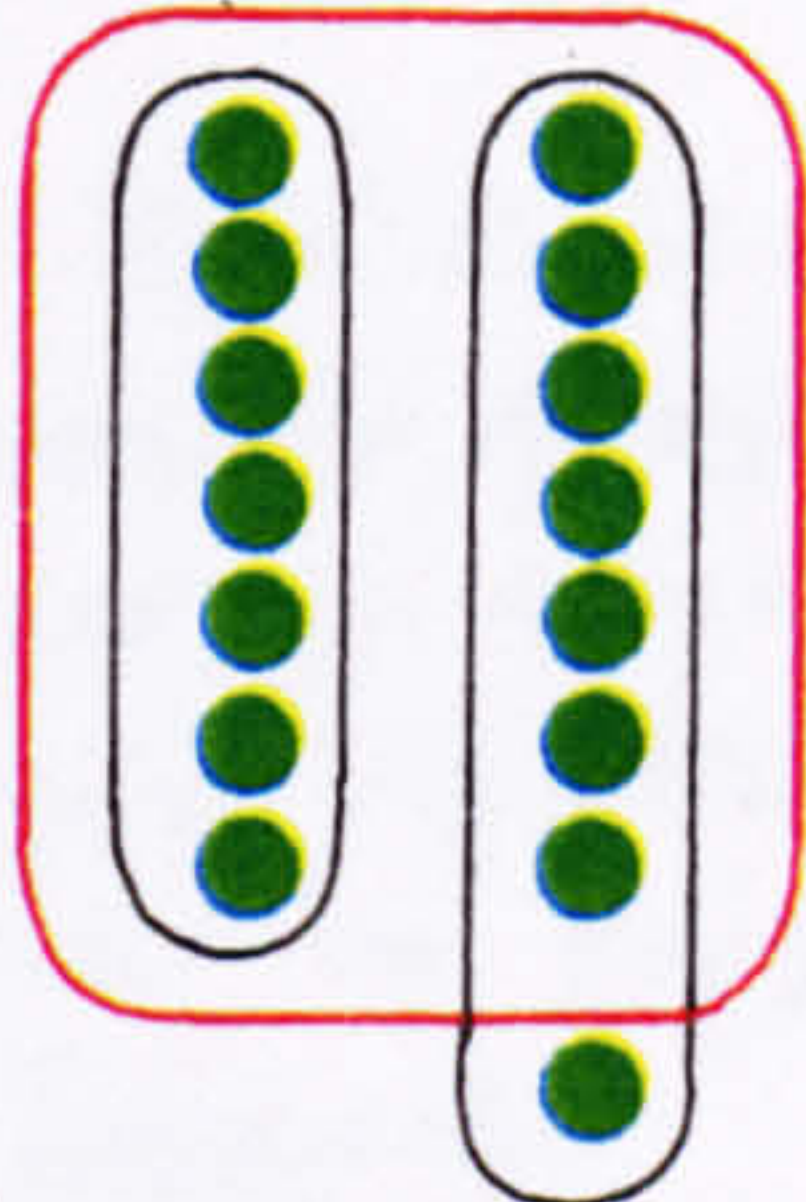
$$6 + 6 = 12$$



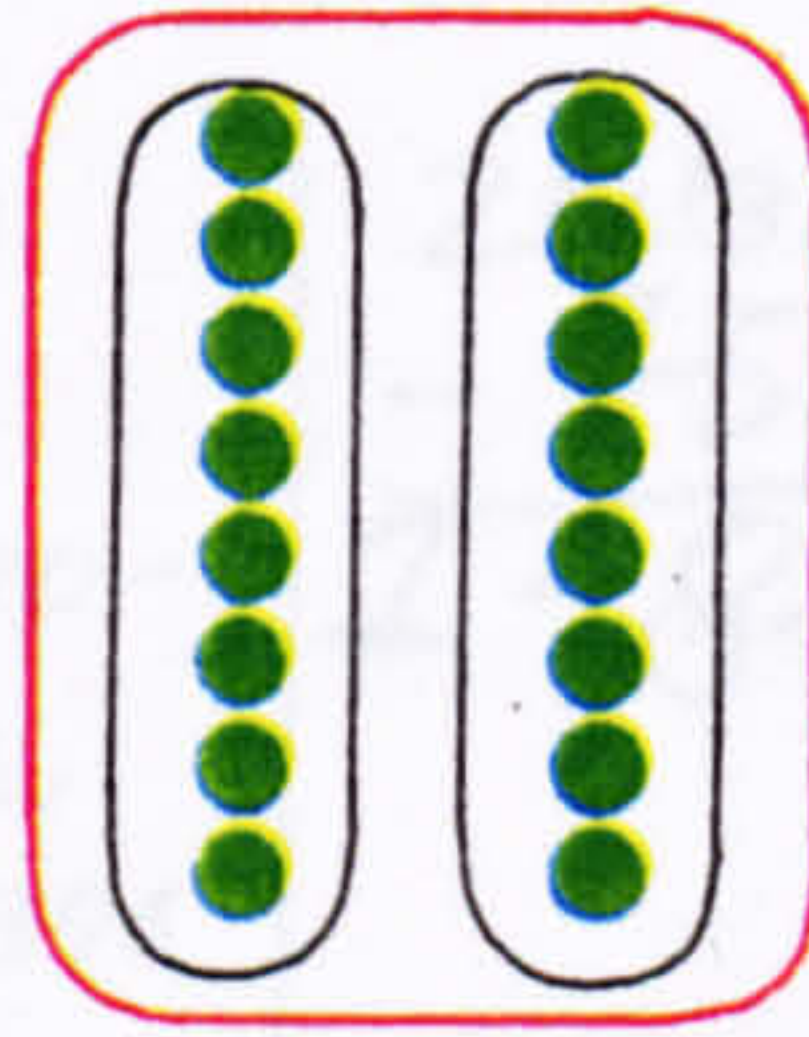
$$6 + 7 = 13$$



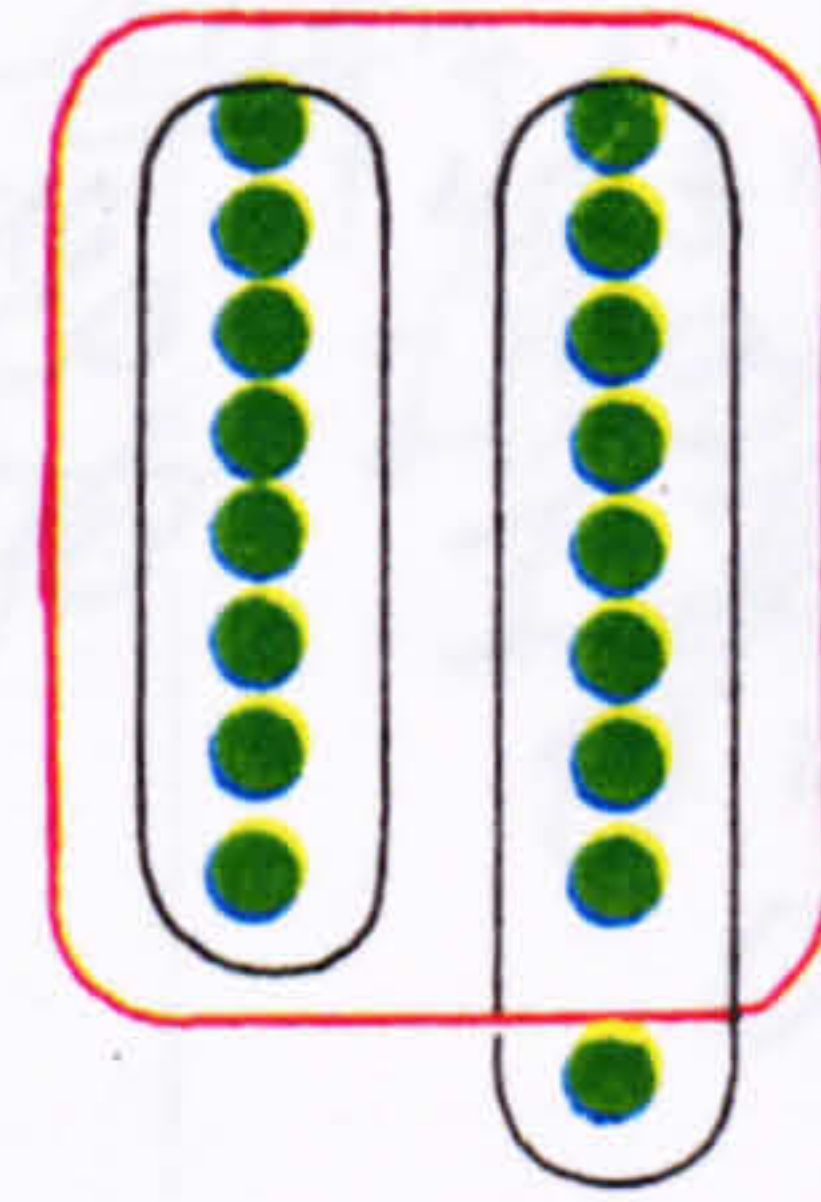
$$7 + 7 = 14$$



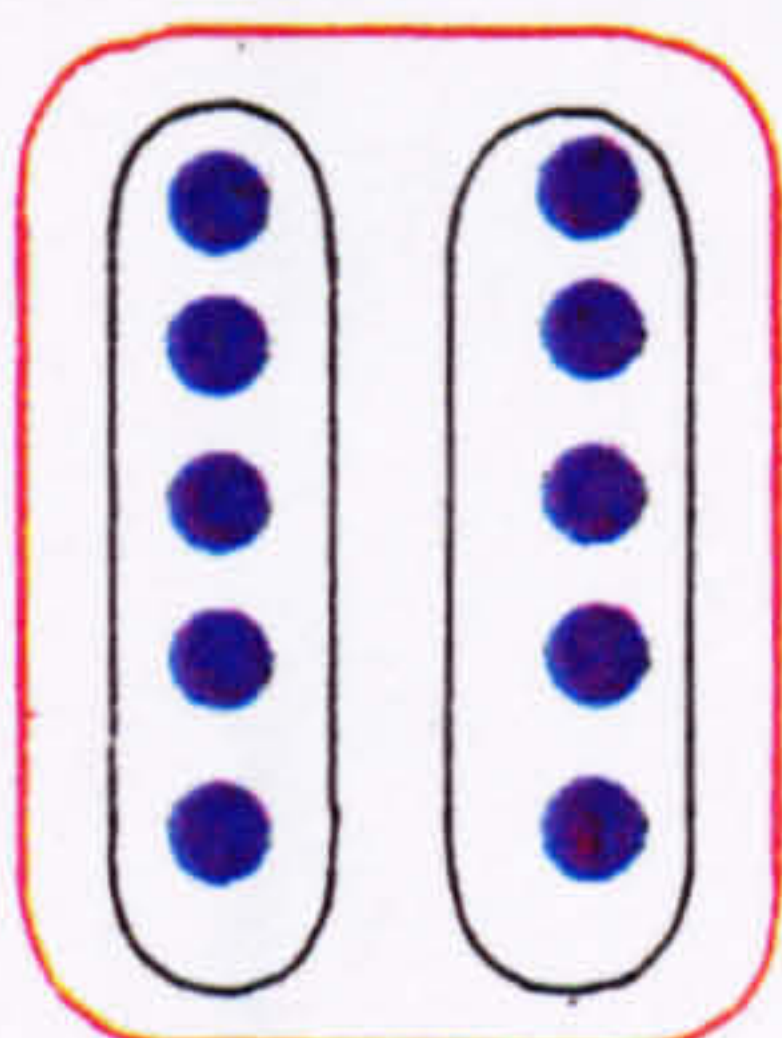
$$7 + 8 = 15$$



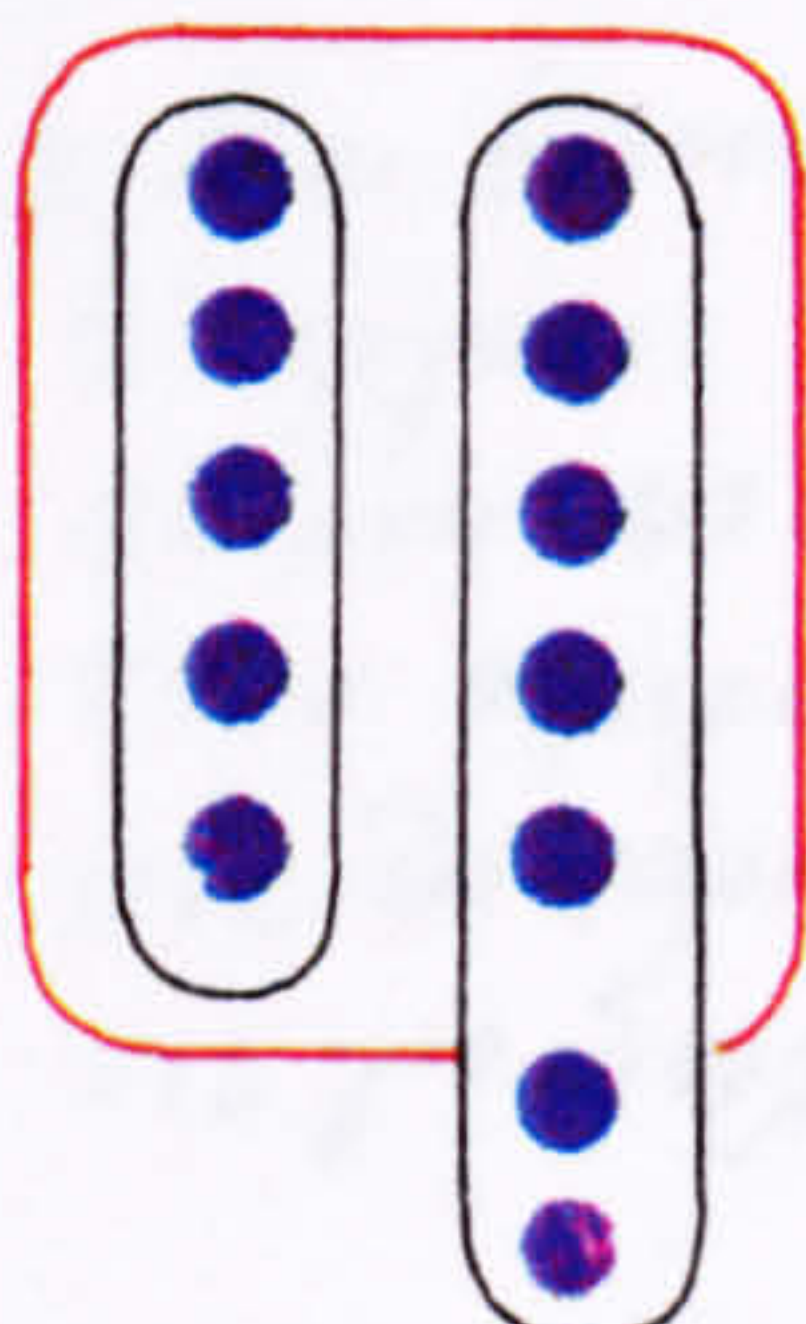
$$8 + 8 = 16$$



$$8 + 9 = 17$$

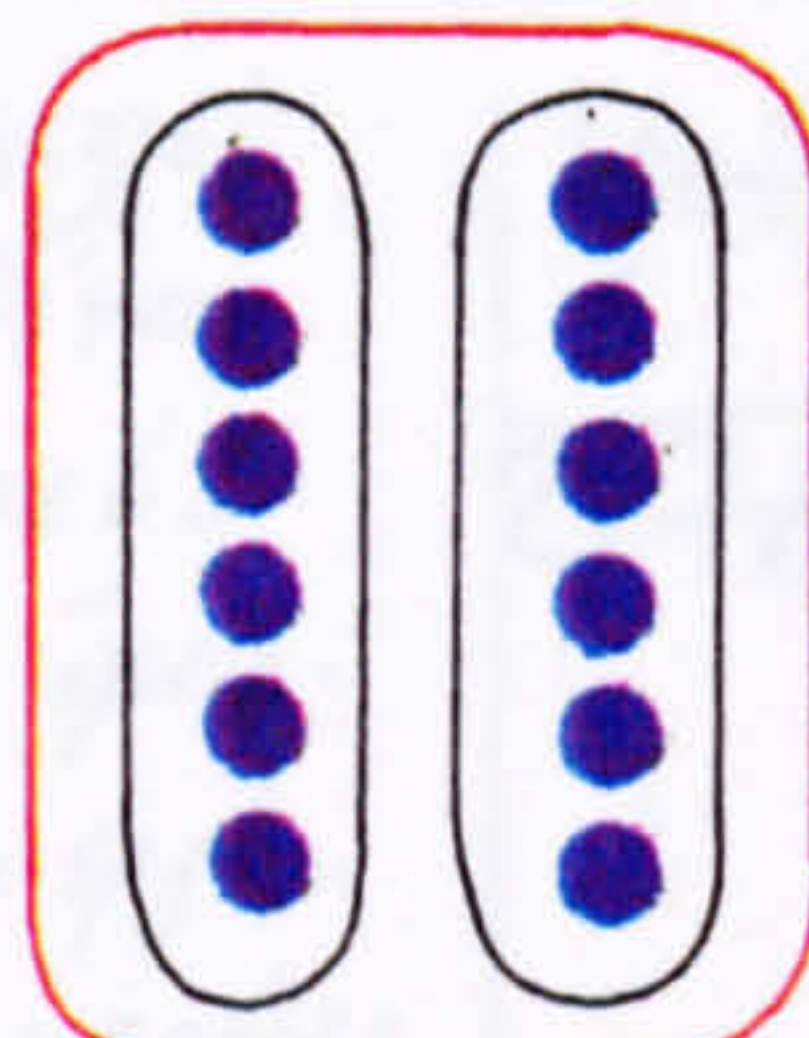


$$5 + 5 = 10$$

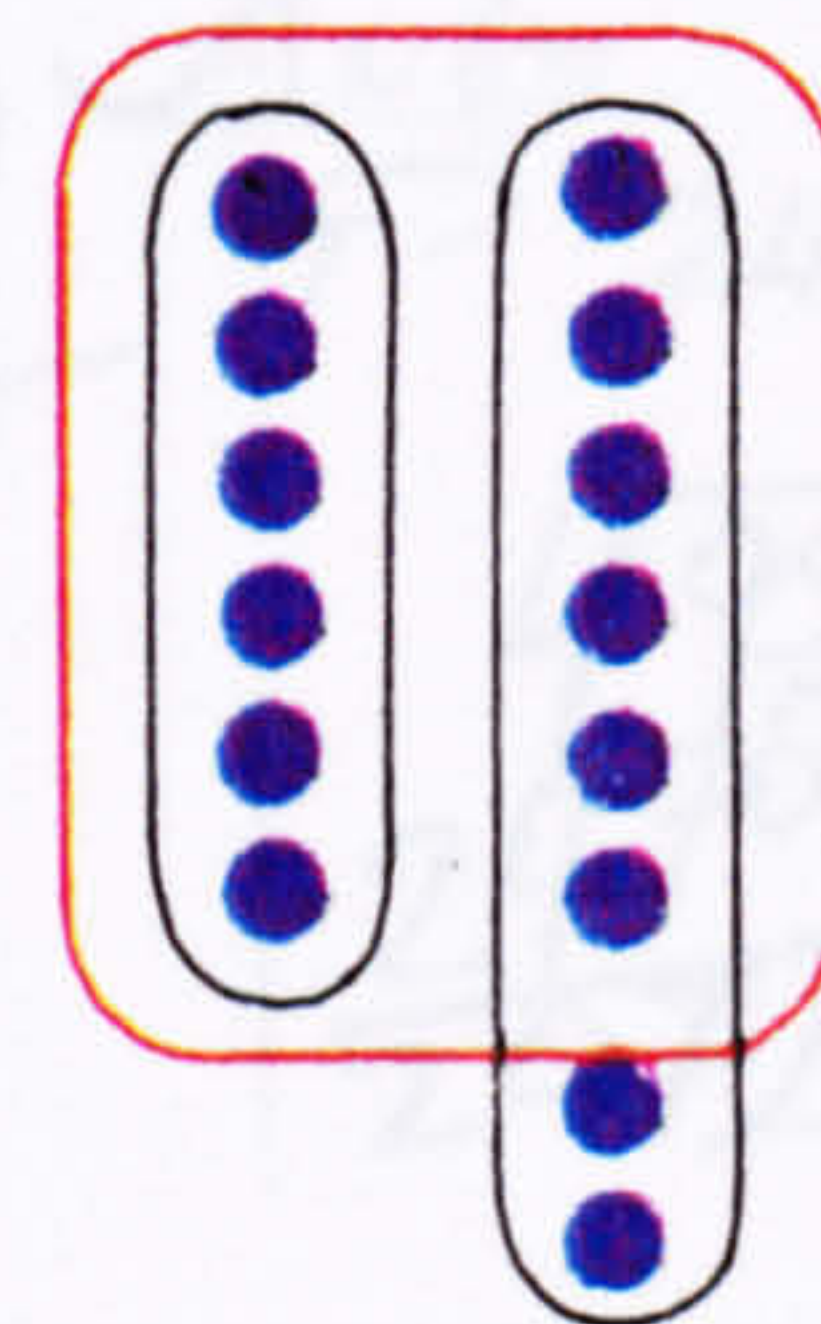


$$5 + 7 = 12$$

127



$$6 + 6 = 12$$



$$6 + 8 = 14$$

Maths for M.M.H. pupils in secondary school

Material produced by the teacher

Ομάδα

Όνομα

Ημερομηνία

Προβλήματα:

1. Αγόρασε 6 σανίδες που είχαν μήκος 4 μέτρα, πλάτος 25 εκατοστά και πάχος 5 εκατοστά προς 75.000 δραχμές το τετραγωνικό μέτρο. Πόσες δραχμές θα πληρώσει;

25	100	500
× 4	× 5	× 6
100	500	3.000
		75.000
		3.000
		<u>25.000.000</u>

2. Ένας τεχνίτης σε 23 ημέρες έφτιαξε έπιπλα, που του στοιχίσει συνολικά 75.000 δραχμές, και τα πούλησε 223.396 δραχμές.

Με πόσες δραχμές την ημέρα δουλεύει ο τεχνίτης;

223.396	148.396	23
- 75.000	101.396	4
<u>148.396</u>	1.7	6
	0.46	
	00	

3. Μια βιοτεχνία απασχολεί 6 εργάτες που ο καθένας παίρνει 4.128 δραχμές την ημέρα. Πόσες δραχμές θα πάρουν όλοι οι εργάτες για δουλειά 12 ημερών;

4.128	24.768
× 6	148.608
<u>24.768</u>	4.9536
	24.768
	<u>297.216</u>

Translation of text on p.418:

Group.....

Name.....

School.....

Problems:

1. You purchase 6 planks, each being 4 metres long, 25 metres wide and 5 cm. thick, at 75.000 Drahmas per square metre. How much will you have to pay?
2. A workman took 23 days to produce furniture. The whole work cost him 75.000 Drachmas. He sold this for 223.396 Drachmas. What was his daily wage?
3. A small manufacturing industry employs 6 workers. Each one of them receives a daily wage of 4.128 Drahmas. How much will all the workers get for a 12 day job?

History for M.M.H. pupils fifth and sixth grades primary school.

Material produced by the teacher.



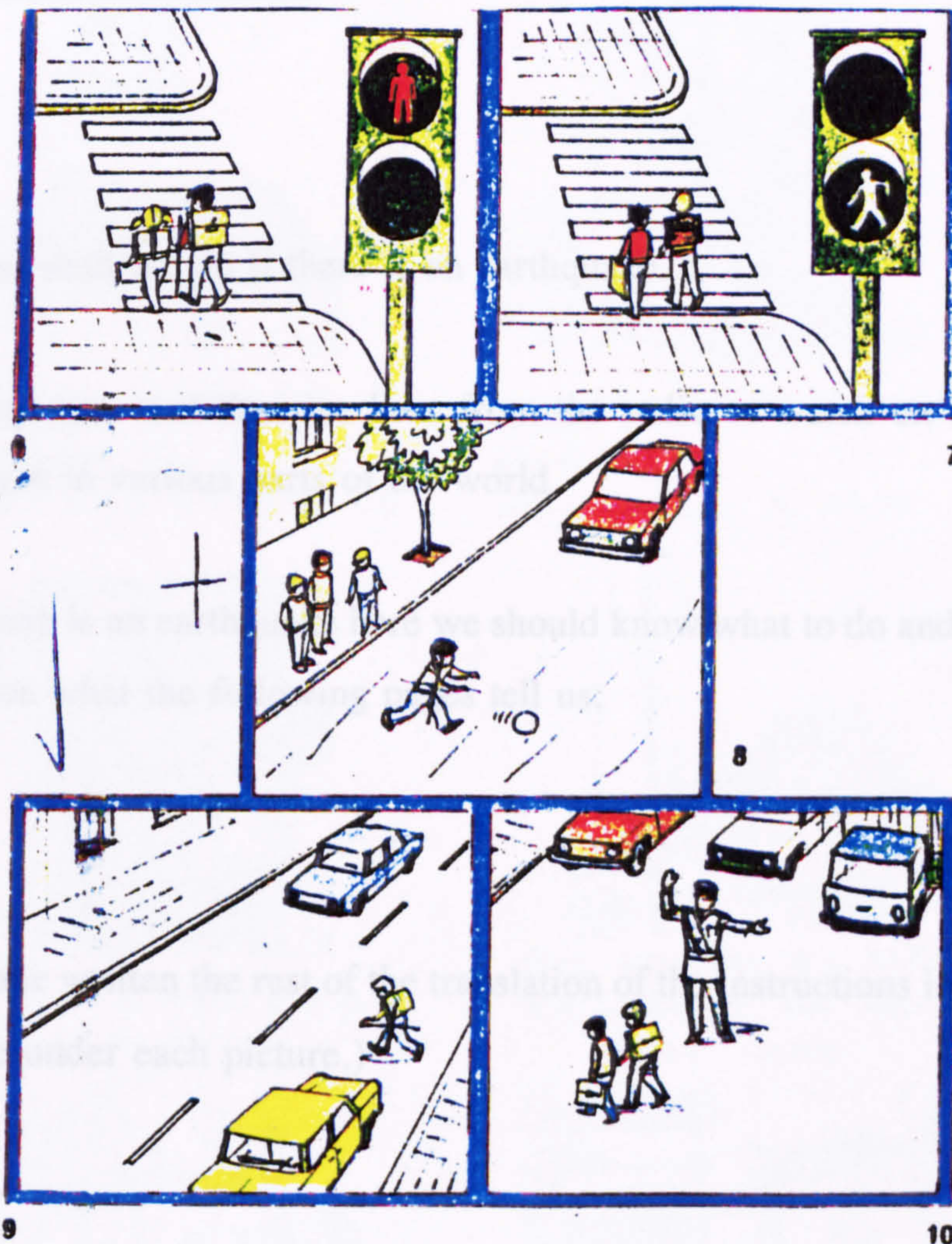
Write the name of the above heroes.

Βάλτε τα ονόματα των

First grade Primary School on the Subject of
Knowledge of the Environment.

Question is asked at the bottom of the page:

Put a cross in the picture where the children are in danger.



→ Σε ποιες εικόνες τα παιδιά κινδυνεύουν; Βάλε ένα σταυρό.

The next two pages concern instructions about how to deal with the situation should there be an earthquake. This material was used for the sixth grade primary mentally handicapped pupils. Earthquakes are not infrequent in Greece.

Translation of the text:

What shall we do if there is an earthquake.

Every now and then we hear from the radio or watch on television of earthquakes in various parts of the world.

If there is an earthquake here we should know what to do and what to avoid. Let us see what the following pages tell us:

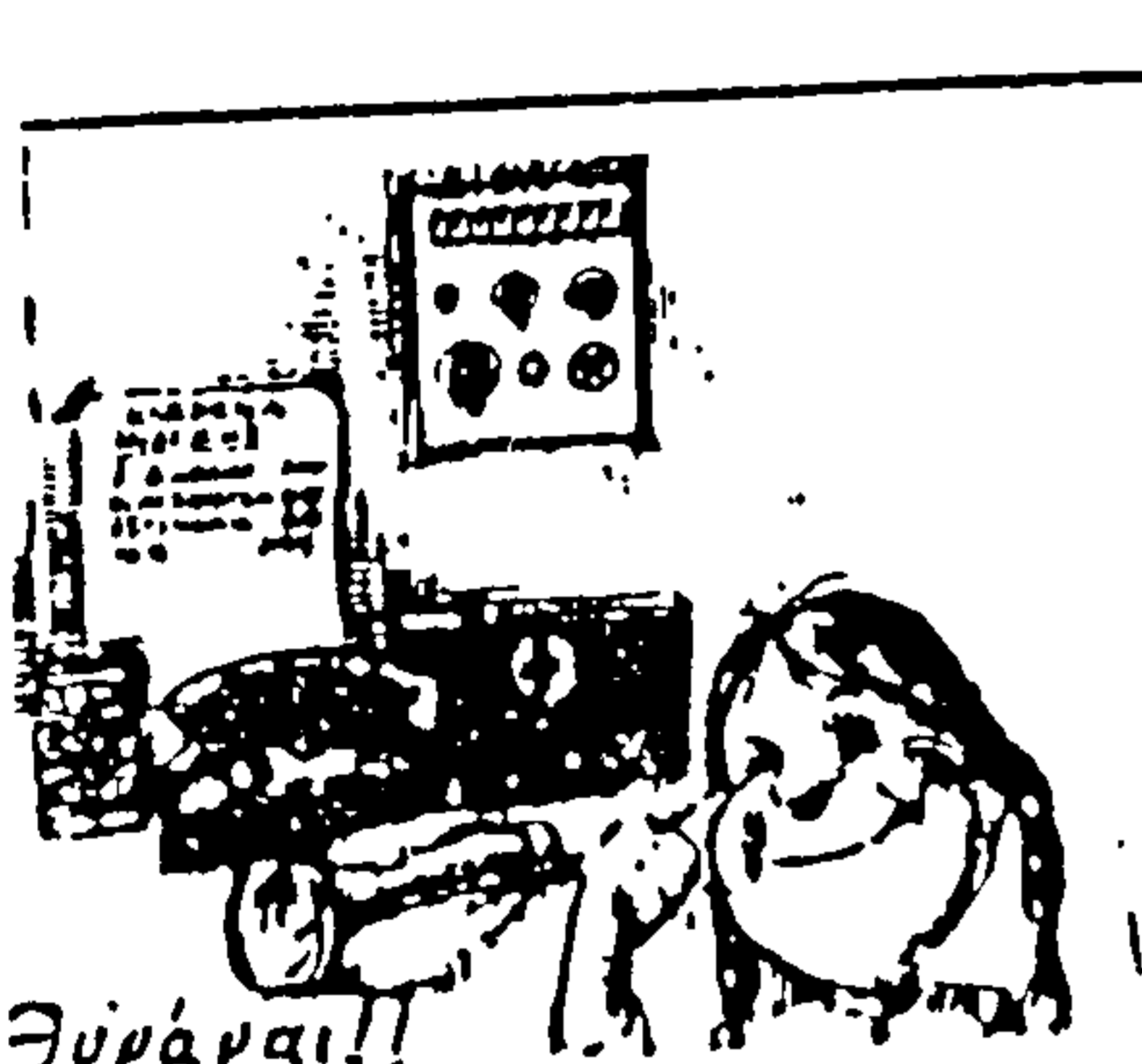
(I have written the rest of the translation of the instructions in the text in the next page under each picture.)

Τι κάνουμε αν γίνει σεισμός

Κάθε τόσο, ακούμε από το ραδιόφωνο και την τηλεόραση για σεισμούς που γίνονται σε διάφορα μέρη του κόσμου.

Αν καμιά φορά γίνει σεισμός κι εδώ σε μας ξέρουμε τι πρέπει να κάνουμε και τι να μην κάνουμε;

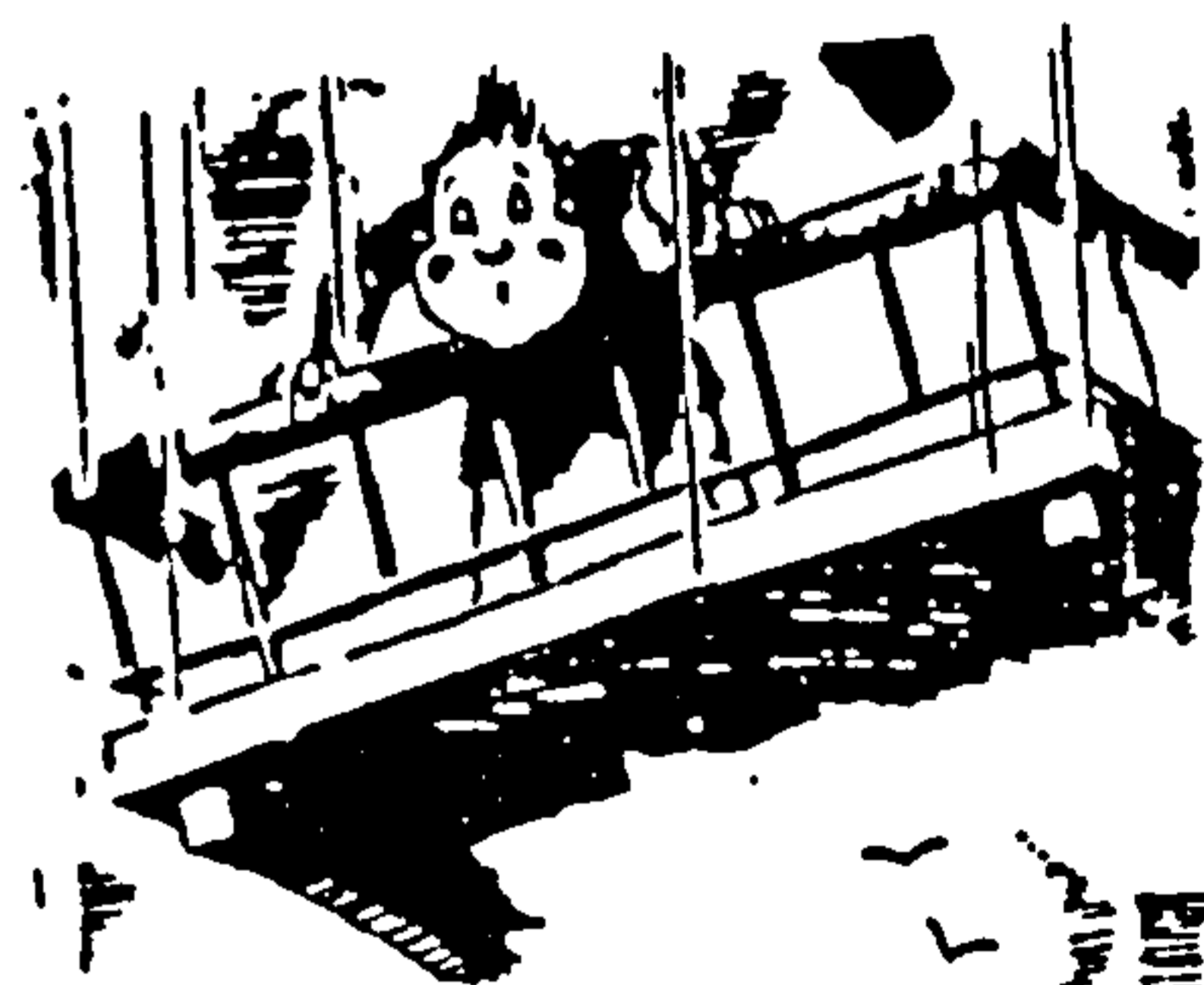
Ας δούμε τις παρακάτω εικόνες, τι μας λένε:



Θυράται!!
Remember
τηλέφωνο και γενικό
telephone and mains
διακοπή ρεύματος
power switch



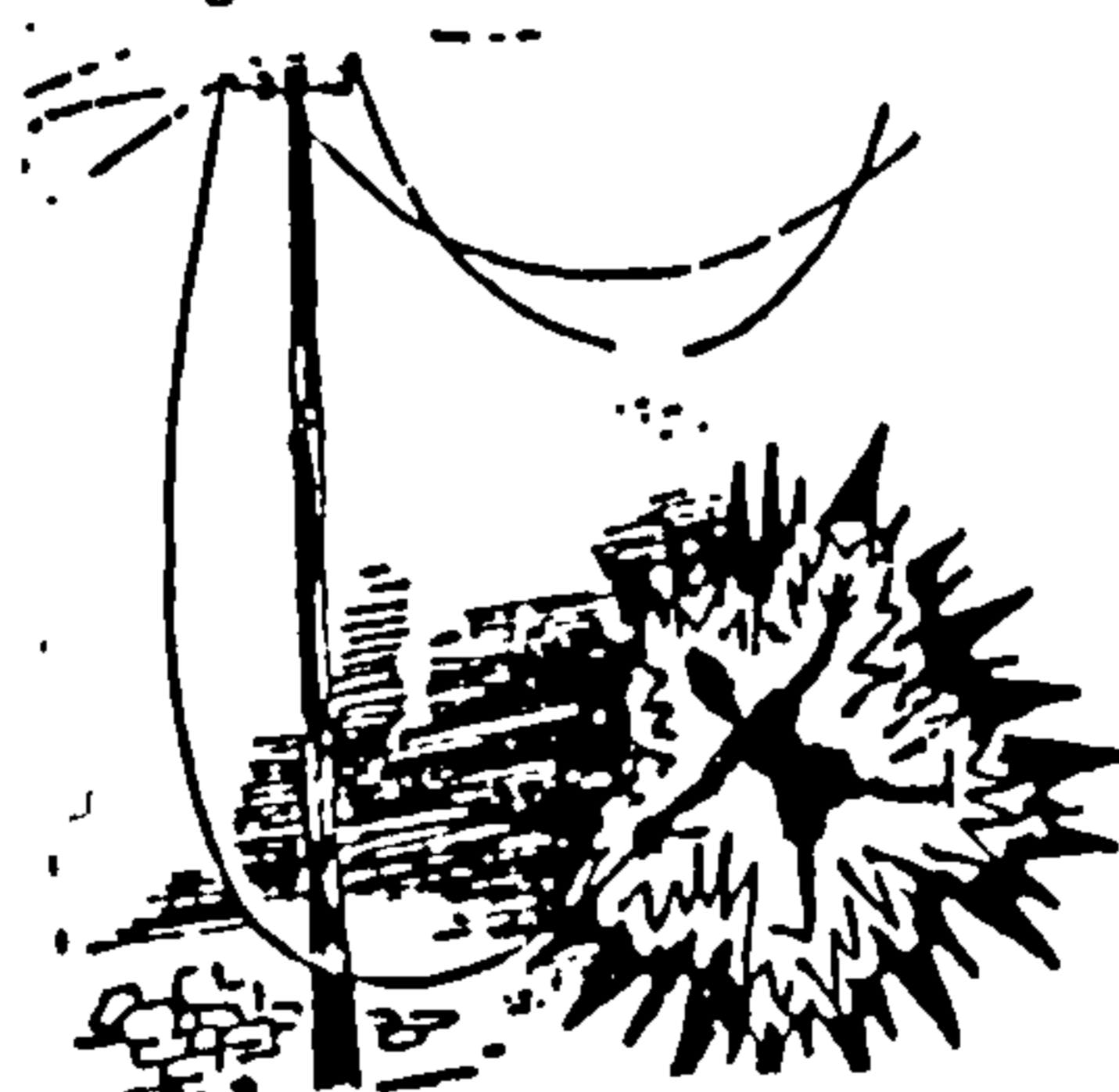
Όχι όλοι μαζί στις σκάλες!
Not altogether in the stairs



Όχι στο μπαλκόνι
Not in the balcony



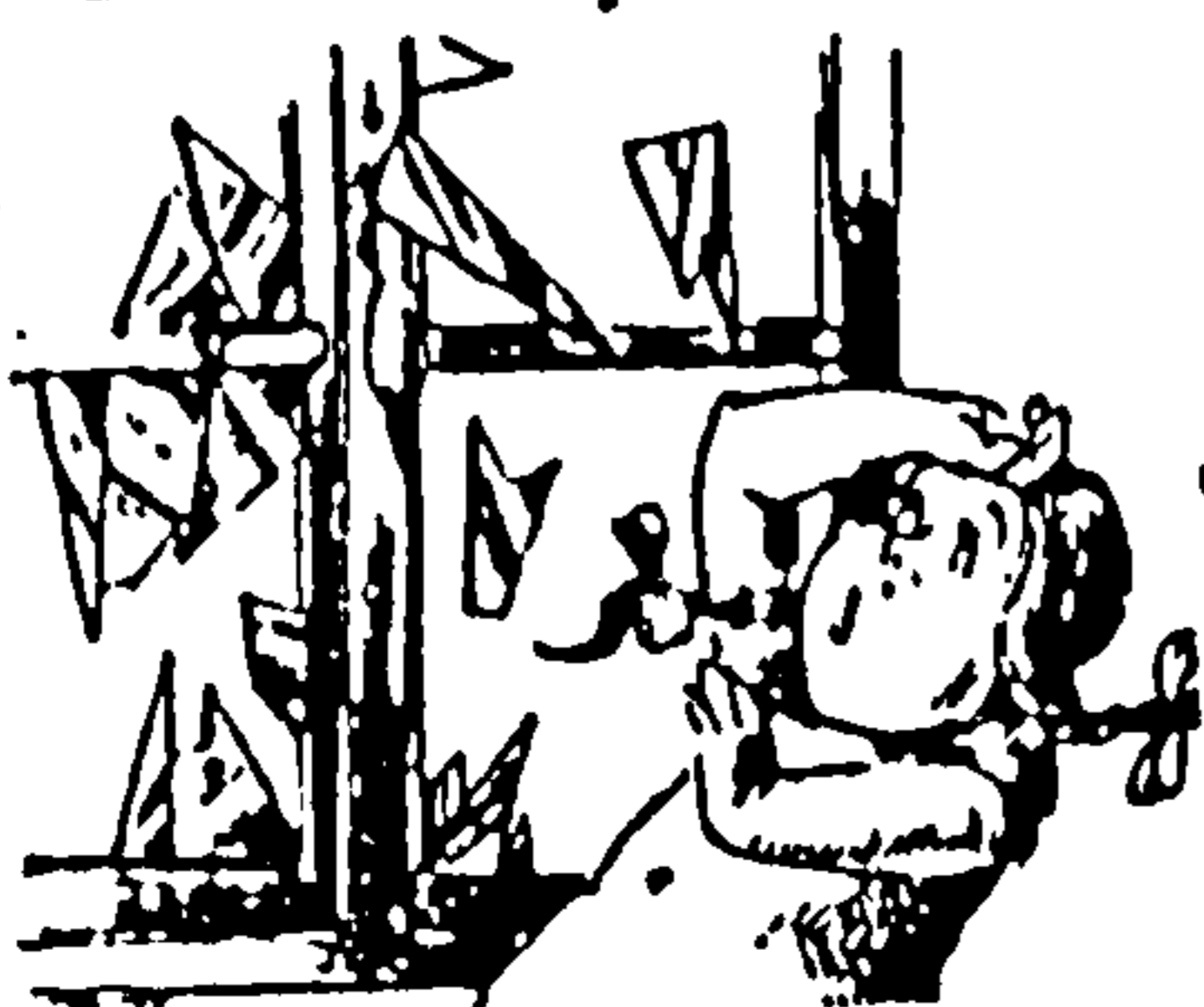
Όχι στο ασανσέρ!
Not in the lift



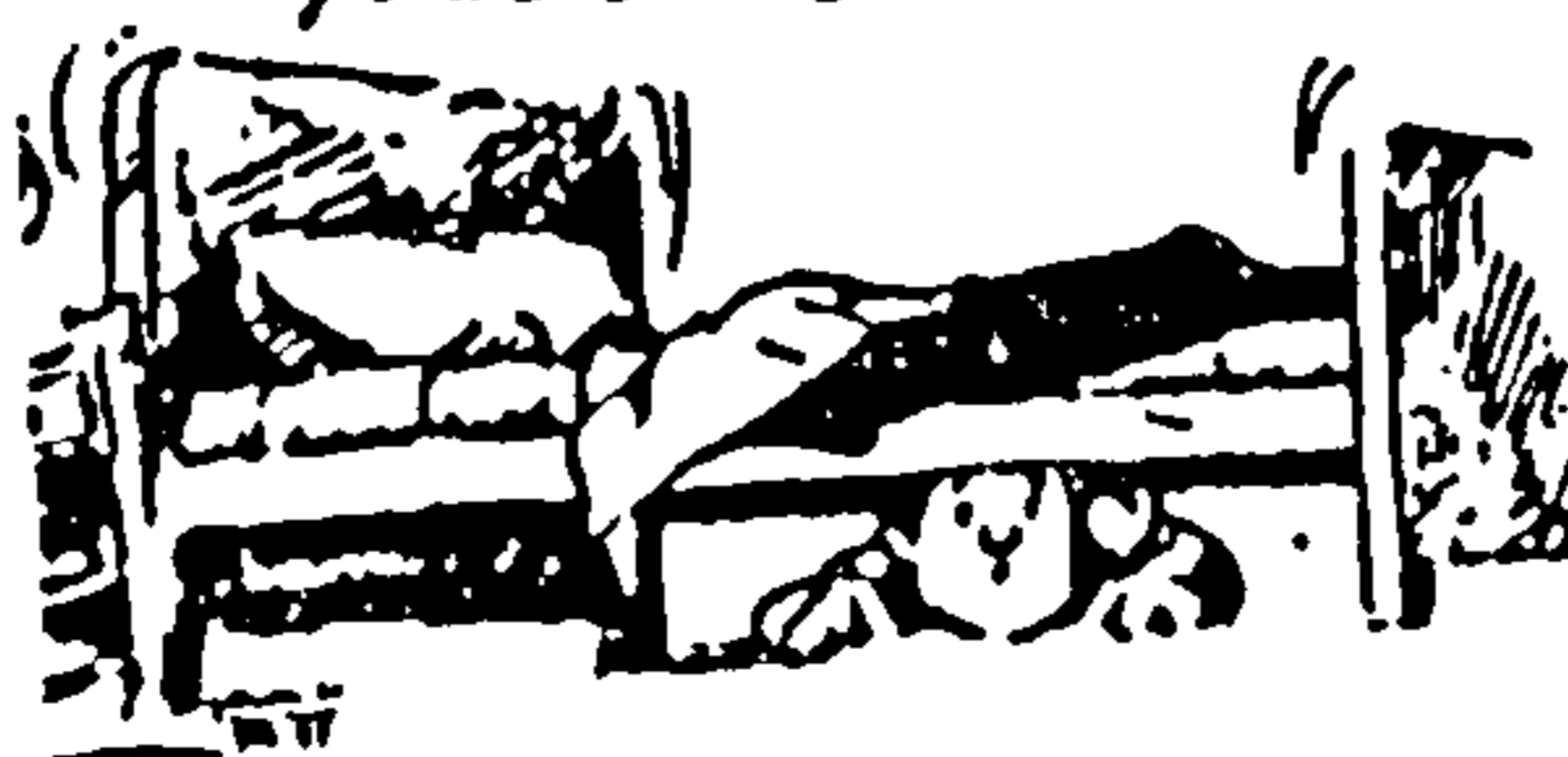
Όχι κοντά σε πεσμένα καλώδια!
Not near any fallen cables



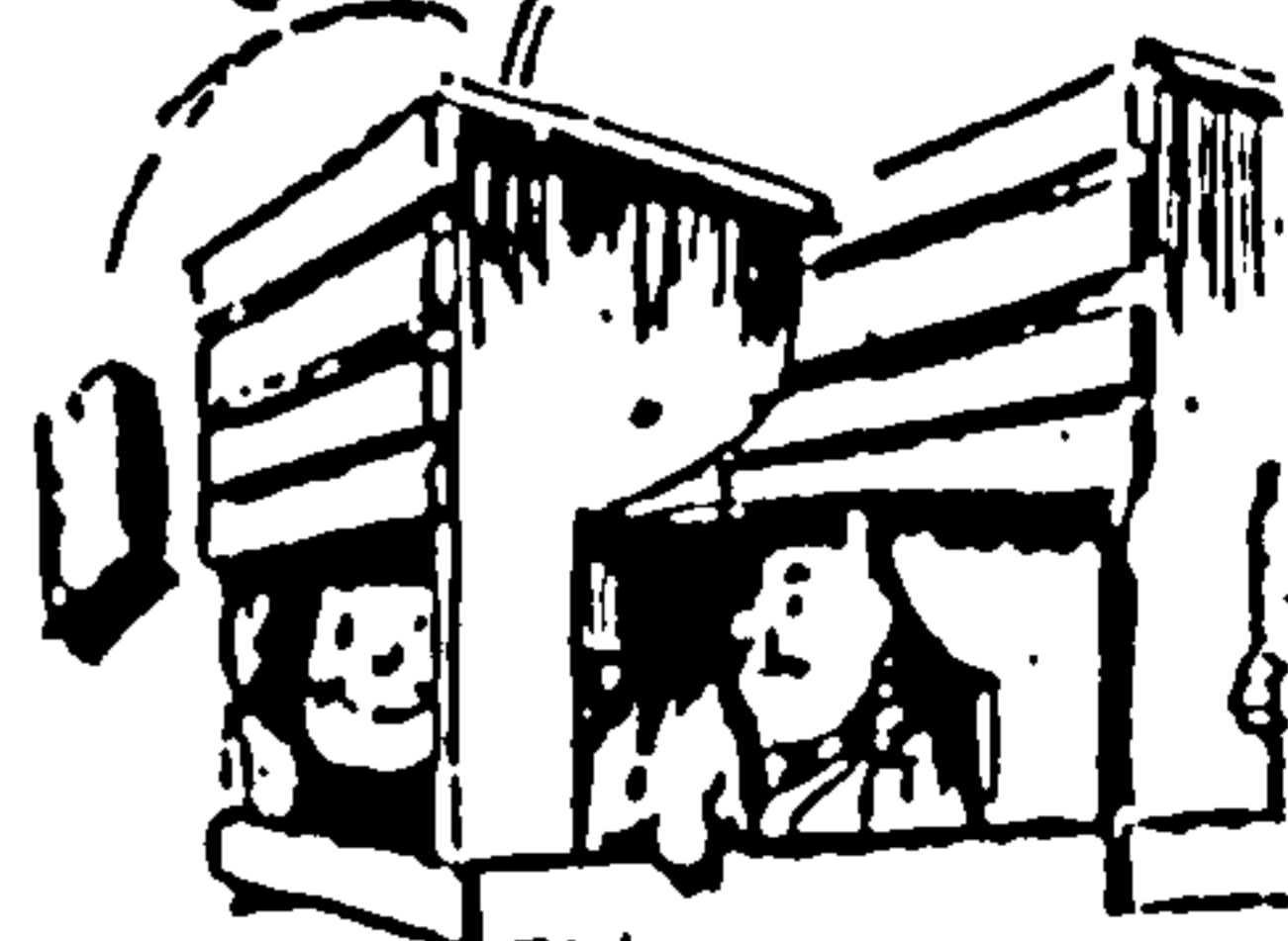
Δεν πηδάμε απ' τα παράθυρα!
Do not jump out of the window



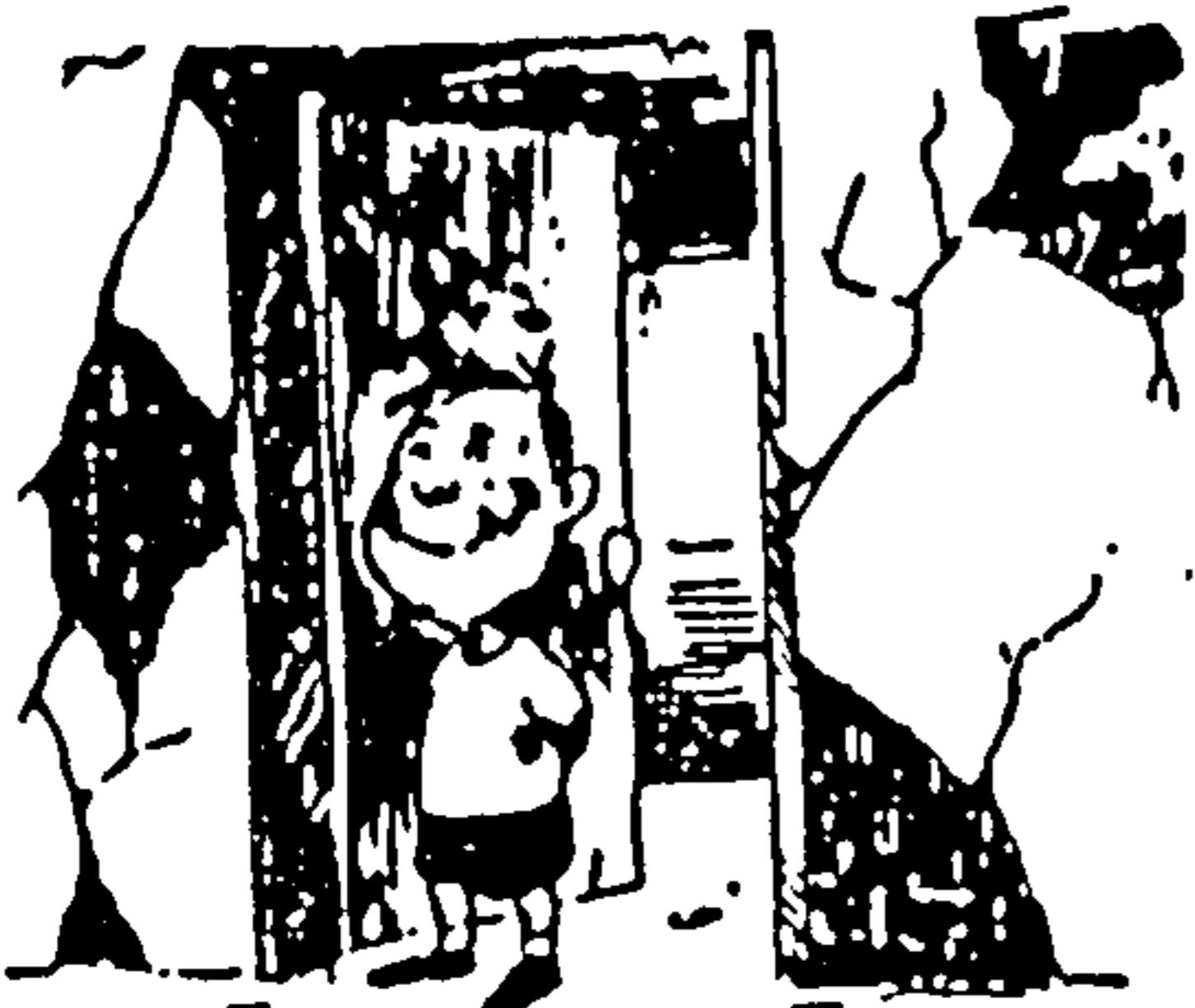
Όχι κοντά σε τζάμια!
Not near the glass doors



Ναι κάτω απ' το κρεβάτι!
Yes under the bed

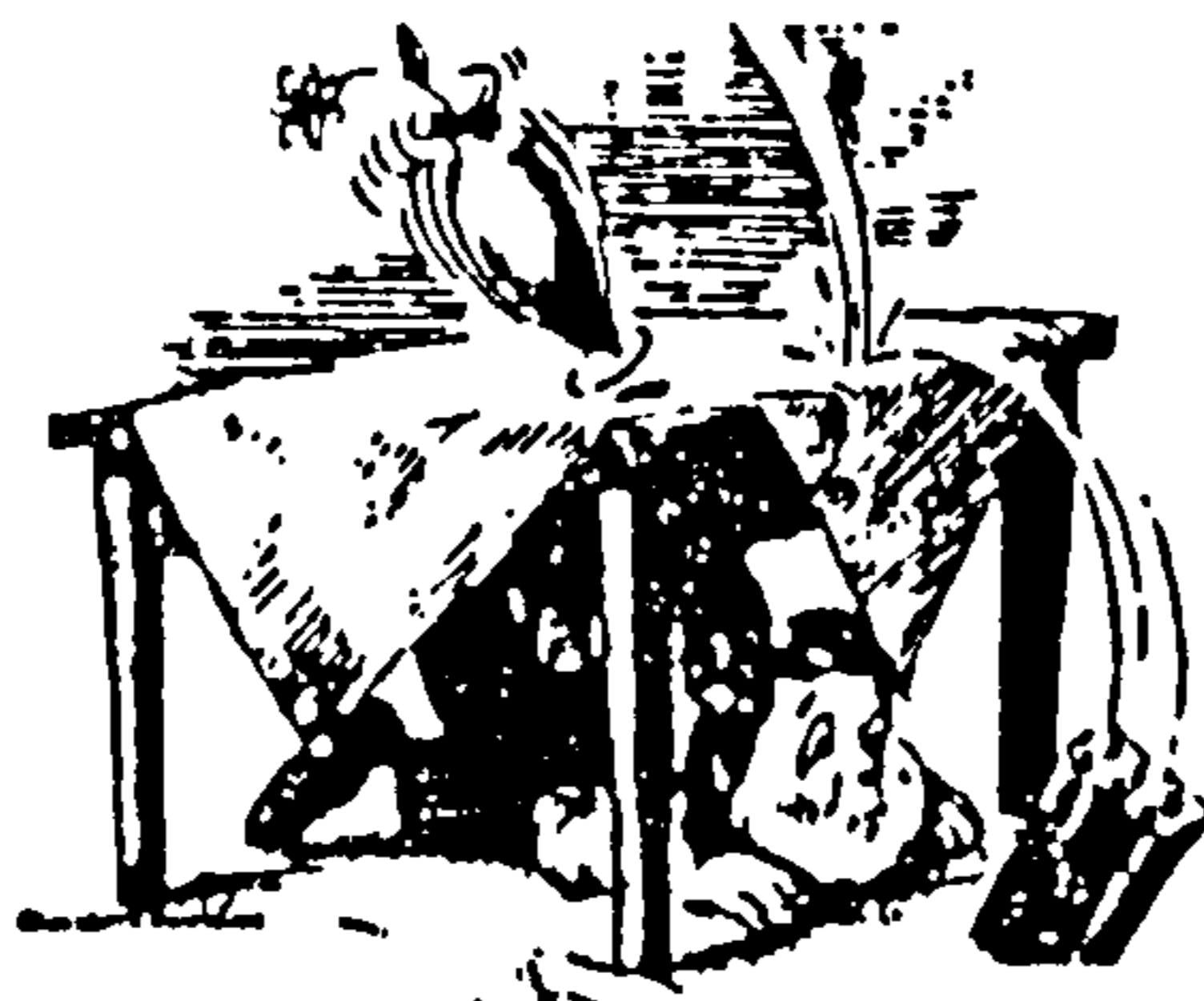


Ναι κάτω απ' τα θρανία!
Yes under the desk



Ναι κάτω από την κάσα
εσωτερικής πόρτας!

Yes under the door frame



Ναι κάτω απ' το τραπέζι!

Yes under the table



Μακριά από χαλασμένα
for away from crumbling build.

Βάζω σταυρό στη σωστή απάντηση:

I mark with a cross the right answers

1. Αν γίνει σεισμός και είμαι στο κρεβάτι.
If there is an earthquake and I am in bed

- Θα βγω και θα τρέξω έξω.
I will run out

- Θα κουκουλωθώ με την κουβέρτα.
I will tuck myself under the blanket

- Θα μπω κάτω απ' το κρεβάτι.
I will go under the bed

2. Αν την ώρα του σεισμού είμαι στην κουζίνα.
If at the time of earthquake I am in the kitchen

- Θα μπω κάτω απ' το τραπέζι..
I will go under the table

- Θα πηδήσω απ' το παράθυρο.
I will jump out of the window

- Θα τρέξω έξω..
I will run out

3. Αν είμαι στο δρόμο:

If I am in the street

- Θα μπω σ' ένα σπίτι.
I will get into a house

- Θα τρέξω να φύγω μακριά από τα κτίρια.
I will run to be away from the buildings

- Θα μείνω εκεί που είμαι.
I will remain where I am

This page and the following display drawing samples of two S.M.H. pupils, age group 7 to 10.

