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Innovative Teaching Approach of Ancient Sparta in a Greek - American School

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Abstract

This is a qualitative research that focuses on the design, the application and the evaluation of an innovative educational material about the ancient Sparta for A' Gymnasium students (7th graders) of a Greek-American school. This research examines the correlation between this didactic material and the students' learning achievements with particular emphasis on the values of education using the paradigm of ancient Sparta. The positive results regarding the learning outcomes and the values clarification enrich the Greek education abroad with an example of meaningful history teaching within a different from the Greek educational and social environment.

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INTRODUCTION

The Greek education abroad has been supported in recent years with plenty of material for teaching the Greek language, which is created by both organizations of the Greek Community Abroad and Organizations in Greece. These textbooks provide options for teachers to support teaching and to enrich their lessons. At the same time there is a significant shortage of teaching materials for the teaching of history. Textbooks taught in Greek schools, because of lexical difficulties, are inappropriate for students of the Greek Community Abroad. The result is that there is a serious shortfall in the teaching of Greek culture and history, especially in the teaching of these elements of ancient Greek culture, which have been disseminated in the western world and which are widely known. The teaching of ancient history with a focus on timeless humanitarian values of Greek culture could be the cornerstone of socio pedagogical operation of Greek culture abroad.

This study seeks to contribute to filling this sociopedagogical and teaching gap using as an example the case study of the development of teaching materials and teaching a unit on ancient Sparta, with emphasis on cultivating critical thinking skills and teaching of values through experiential and interdisciplinary approach.

2. Literature Review

Beliefs, attitudes and values are interdependent elements that determine human behavior. Beliefs are simple views, conscious or unconscious, relating what someone says or does and which could be introduced with the phrase "I think". An attitude is a fixed belief system for an object or a position so as to prepare the individual to act in some way. A value is a relatively firm belief that a particular way of behavior or a final state of existence is personally or socially preferable to an opposite way of behavior or end state of existence. Every action is a synthesis between the awareness, the specific circumstances, the available means and resources and goals, as interpreted in the context of values. The awareness and the individual's value system influenced by his personal history and the culture of the

society to which it belongs. The transmission of values through education is a cornerstone of sociopedagogical dimension of education.

The biggest challenge for teachers is to reach appropriate good practices designed to increase the performance of their students and cultivate values. Already alone the idea of learning a foreign language even the Greek language for students living abroad is considered an experience that causes stress. History teaching to students living abroad is not an exception, because of the difficulty in vocabulary and understanding of concepts. Moreover the traditional approach has failed to provide values to students. At this point, it is important to claim that the application of innovative educational material is able to lead to positive results in the cultivation of values to students¹. If this is true or not remains to be answered through conducting a survey which aims to test whether or not the relationship between the implementation of teaching intervention based on teaching material about ancient Sparta and the performance and student interest with a view of cultivating values.

The efficiency of initiation in cultural heritage and intellectual production of Greek civilization depends on the degree to which teaching can actively engage the student in educational practice. The ultimate goal is to assimilate to its own system of knowledge, beliefs, values and attitudes, whatever believes that it would be beneficial for his life, both as an individual and as a citizen.

To assume someone that traditional teaching achieves these objectives because just teaches the dimensions of a culture that laid the foundations of humanistic education is a sham. Of course the fact that students pay attention on how to implement the ideas of democracy in ancient Athens and read philosophy texts and tragedies are important. Although, is it sufficient for the cultivation of values? Or else, how could be this valuable intellectual capital exploited more effectively? And what does it mean effectively?

Regarding the teaching of values there is the view that we should follow the so-called "laissez faire" policy. This means it should not be attempting to transmit these values to students, but should be free to make their own choices. Supposedly thereby ensure the objectivity of teaching. But it has become apparent that even if the teaching of values is not provided for in the curriculum, such messages are transmitted to the students by the so-called "paraprogramma".

Moreover, empirical research has shown that the position that the increase of knowledge on a topic leading to a more relevant value system does not apply. At the same time research has shown the close relationship between values and specific behavioral act². From these studies it has been shown that there are two important factors in the process of changing attitudes: the long struggle effect on the values and attitudes and the quality of teaching methods to achieve these goals. "Teaching is a form of research aimed on understanding how we can transform the educational values in direct forms of teaching practice".

As a result, education should pay special attention to the development of specific methods aiming at clarifying personal values of students and cultivating values that promote civic consciousness. Besides "the reason to teach history is not that changes society, but that is changing the students, changes what they see in the world and how they see it".

2.3. Aim of the Research

The aim of the research is the design of teaching material about ancient Sparta, with emphasis on the content of the teaching of values and on teaching methodology in experiential, interdisciplinary approach and cultivation methods of critical thinking, which will apply to students of A' Gymnasium of an English-speaking school of the Greek Community Abroad and will be evaluated.

2.4. Research Issues

¹ Armstrong, T. (2009). *Multiple Intelligences in the Classroom*. Alexandria, VA: Association of Supervision and Curriculum Development. Benson, P. (2007), *Autonomy in Language Teaching and Learning*. State of the Art Article. *Language Teaching*, 40(1), pp. 21-40.

² Rokeach, M. (1973). *The nature of human value*, New York: MacMillan Pub. Co. Inc.

2.4.1. General Assumption

The application of a teaching intervention to students of A' Gymnasium of an English-speaking school of the Greek Community Abroad based on innovative teaching material about ancient Sparta contributes to achieving cognitive goals and clarifying values.

2.4.2. Special Assumptions

1. Design and development of teaching material for the cultivation of critical thinking skills and values concerning the ancient Sparta for A' Gymnasium Students of an English-speaking school of Greek Community Abroad is possible.
2. This specific teaching material about ancient Sparta is suitable based on specific evaluation criteria for students of A' Gymnasium Students of an English-speaking school of Greek Community Abroad
3. Based on the teaching material for the cultivation of values and skills of students critical thinking concerning the ancient Sparta is possible to achieve the defined objectives of teaching.
4. The teaching material about ancient Sparta positively affects the interest and students' performance.

3. Methodology

3.1. Research Sample

Two groups of students formed the study sample. Specifically, the survey applied to students of two school classes of seventh grade (corresponding Greek first grade of Gymnasium) of a big private English-language school of abroad, 18 and 17 students each. The choice of the population held under Non-probability sampling, with convenient sampling³. In this case, selected participants were approached easily and were intending to participate in research. The parents' socioeconomic profile was similar, since the school is religious. Equally similar is the educational level of parents, most of who are not university educated and are active in business. It is worth noting also that in class there was homogeneity in ethnic background and religious beliefs, as it is a condition for attending the Orthodox religion of at least one parent and at least one of the student participants' parents are Greek origin. Regarding the level of skill was heterogeneous, as indicated by the school performance of students and the observations of teachers. During the study, conducted the period 1 to 31 of March, these students attended the courses of Greek history in ancient Sparta (a total of 10 credit hours). The teaching intervention carried out by the researcher, who was a teacher in this school.

3.2. Research Method

This research is a case study involving a small group of students. As a case study, is defined the study of a phenomenon within a given context and environment⁴. The case study is used as a strategy for those researchers who operate small-scale research mainly in their workplace. It differs from other research methods in the fact that researchers have not aiming to export a generalized universal truth, but focused on a description of their case⁵.

In this case, research reference point was whether and how the teaching material about ancient Sparta, the development process of which is described in the chapter of results, affects the learning of Greek history in a group of expatriate students with the aim of fostering values and skills of critical thinking, reaching cognitive goals and development interest. Since the aim of the researcher was the in-depth understanding of the behavior of participants

³ Teddlie, C., & Yu, F. (2007). Mixed Method Sampling: A Typology with Examples. *Journal of Mixed Methods Research*, 1(1), pp. 77-100.

⁴ Simons, H. (2009). *Case Study Research In Practice*. Thousand Oaks/ CA: SAGE Publications.

⁵ Yin, R. K. (1994). *Case Study Research: Design and Methods*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE. Cohen, L., Manion, L., & Morrison, K. (2000). *Research Methods in Education*. London: Metaichmio. Gomm, R., Hammersley, M., & Foster, P. (2000). *Case Study Method: Key Issues, Key Texts*. London: SAGE.

on this matter, the qualitative research was the appropriate mean of achieving it. However, the implementation of a combination of tools for data collection contributed to the triangulation of the findings⁶.

3.3. Research Tools

Observation is widely used in studies as a tool that supports the understanding and development of aspects of the phenomenon under consideration in a particular environment⁷. Ellis argues that perhaps the only way to understand someone how and what students learn is to observe them directly in the classroom⁸. Simons refers to the fact that this tool allows the study of people in their natural environment, without their behavior being affected by the presence of the researcher⁹. Observation is a flexible tool as it can also include the study of groups¹⁰. For the purposes of the research, it was shaped by the researcher an observation form.

The main aspects that were focused by the observation form were the interest, confidence and efficiency that the participants have been shown during the teaching intervention. For the commentary, verbal characterizations were based on a numerical scale in order to avoid time consuming and untimely recording. In points, however, where the circumstances required, the choice was descriptive analysis and notes, all of which helped to further understand the process in the classroom.

But when teaching was conducted, participants completed and answered questions on worksheets on the content of the modules for ancient Sparta. They had the following objectives:

1. Assess the understanding of this teaching unity and the acquired knowledge by students.
2. The utilization of information learned in this section in exercises which aim to cultivate critical thinking.
3. The emphasis on clarifying values of Spartan society.
4. The completed worksheets were studied by the researcher.

After the end of the course, students completed assessment test which included open and closed questions.

The criteria for the evaluation of worksheets and evaluation test were the accuracy of the answers given by the students and the precision in the use of historical data of Spartan society.

3.4. Pilot Application

To ensure the reliability of the tool and the validity of the investigation, it was considered necessary to pilot application of teaching material in people with characteristics similar to the studying population in order to identify any problems and ambiguities before the start of data collection. The teaching material about ancient Sparta, therefore, was given to two students who did not participate in the survey, but were willing to offer their help. From the pilot, the questions and expected answers were controlled, in order to increase the reliability of tools, based on the following criteria¹¹: understanding the vocabulary of texts and exercises, the validity of the content of the exercises in relation to the content of the texts of the lesson.

In this way, the teaching material would receive the final form through the application of alternative formalities and necessary modifications, if necessary¹². The two students have stated that they had no difficulty either to understand or to answer questions. As a result, the original design of the teaching material did not change.

⁶ Yoshikawa, H., Weisner, T., Kalil, A., & Way, N. (2008). Mixing Qualitative and Quantitative Research in Developmental Science: Uses and Methodological Choices. *Developmental Psychology*, 44(2), pp. 344-354.
 Creswell, J. W. (2003). *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative and Mixed Methods Approaches*. Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications.
 Tashakkori, A., and Teddlie, C. (2003). *Handbook of Mixed Methods in Social and Behavioral Research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

⁷ Malderez, A. (2003). Key Concepts in ELT: Observation. *ELT Journal*, 57(2), pp. 179-181.

⁸ Ellis, R. (1990). *Instructed Second Language Acquisition*. Oxford: Blackwell.

⁹ Simons, H. (2009). *Case Study Research In Practice*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications

¹⁰ Salant, P., & Dillman, D. (1994). *How to Conduct Your Own Survey*. New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

¹¹ Sands, D. I., & Barker, H. B. (2004). Organized Chaos: Modelling Differentiated Instruction for Preservice Teachers. *Teaching & Learning*, 19(1), pp. 26-49.

¹² Iraossi, G. (2006). *The Power of Survey Design: A User's Guide for Managing Surveys, Interpreting Results, and Influencing Respondents*. Washington, D.C.: The World Bank.

4. Research Results

4.1. Initial Stage – Before the Intervention

In order to establish the teaching material to be applied in the classroom, it was necessary to distribute a questionnaire based on the teaching material. The questionnaire helped the researcher to collect systematic information that was used to develop the plans of courses to the students' benefit. The questionnaire was used in the Greek language, as the level of students it allows to. However, the necessary explanations were given before the distribution of the questionnaire in order to avoid any ambiguities.

The results of this questionnaire about ancient Sparta, which was given to students before the teaching of the unit, were found that students ignored the geography, politics, social organization and education in ancient Sparta and also the core values of Spartan society. Having more information from films such as "The 300", students were created for the Spartans the stereotype of physically powerful, warlike soldiers. Also, students ignored basic vocabulary in Greek, useful for teaching this section. The exploitation of the results of the questionnaire was the next step of the researcher. The results guided the researcher to construct the teaching material about ancient Sparta during an hourly lesson in such a way that the teaching meets the needs and abilities of students.

4.2. Planning of Teaching Material

Regarding the design of teaching material, the following options were made:

A. The structure

The module was structured in four small chapters, which could be taught in one didactic class hour. Each chapter included worksheets, which students need to complete by their own on a second didactic class hour.

B. The objectives

The objectives of the teaching unit about ancient Sparta were the students to be able to:

1. Describe elements of the political system, education and the military organization of ancient Sparta.
2. Recognize the values of Spartan education and society.
3. Separate, based on the sources for ancient Sparta, the data from the historical reality from the historical distortions and fantasy elements in the historical narrative.
4. Cultivate critical thinking and teamwork skills learning.

C. The content

The content was selected based on the interdisciplinary approach of ancient Sparta. Elements of the economic, political life and geography were given to students. Particular emphasis was given on teaching values such as democracy, equitability, social justice, anticonsumerism, equal education for men and women, equal distribution of agricultural land so as not to exist rich and poor citizens.

D. The vocabulary

Because one of the biggest problems in understanding history is the issue of the difficult vocabulary, in order to address problems of understanding, the following three options when writing texts were made. Firstly, texts were drafted as far as possible based on words from Greek roots which formed words of English language. Secondly, references are cited at the bottom of the page of each chapter. Thirdly, a table was created in every text so as the difficult phrases to be translated. The ultimate goal was that students can understand the text without further explanation by the teacher.

E. The worksheets

As to the content included skills cultivation exercises of critical thinking, the types of which were designed to correspond to those used by students from the school textbooks of teaching of social sciences in the American school. A second criterion for the design of worksheets was that students can without further explanation by the teachers, autonomously supplement the answers to the exercises. Also, they were designed to emphasize the clarification of values of Spartan society and fostering critical thinking skills. Some critical thinking skills that were mentioned that the teaching intervention through educational material about ancient Sparta sought to cultivate along with an illustration of the students activity were : the ability of comparison the opposites (What kingdom in Sparta differed from that of Persia?), skills of determining cause and effect actions (Why the Spartans were soldiers until their 60 years?), identification of different aspect of the same subject (What is democracy for you and what was for the ancient Spartan?), solving problem skills (The Spartans come from a martial race that came down from the north to Greece and chose to stay in Laconia. The Dorians. You are the first Dorians in Laconia. Discuss in groups how to organize your life.) and decision-making skills (in "Education" Sparta accept children from other cities. Will you send your child to be educated there? In pairs, write in two columns the pros and cons.).

F. The formulation of the final test questions

The final test questions were designed to be completed by the students after the teaching intervention and included questions that controlled the achievement of the described above objectives of teaching.

4.3. Intermediate Stage- During the Intervention

4.3.1. Role of Researcher

The researcher tried to apply various techniques to achieve desired results for students. This is evident from the variety of processes that took place in the classroom. There was a continuous assessment of practices used on the basis of the results produced by the students and the notes of the researcher.

Also, the researcher applied differentiated approach to teaching. Her role focused on facilitating the process and be active supporter and supporter of students with different capacities. The appropriate management and flexibility as for the time considered necessary parameters of the course. For those students, for example, who asked for more time, the required time limit was given in order to successfully meet the learning activities. One of the tasks was also the organization of students depending on the type of activity, which may require individual or group work. During the implementation of the teaching intervention, the role of the researcher was two-dimensional, as she both taught and observed. Throughout the sequence of the courses, she completed an observation form, recording the behavior and reaction of students as to the procedure.

4.3.2. Teaching and understanding of vocabulary of historian texts

While teaching, students understood the texts and exercises worksheets. They participated particularly when teaching English words derived from Greek roots and included in texts drawn up for the teaching of unity in ancient Sparta. Even the usually indifferent students in the school class, they participated actively and could find English words that have Greek roots.

4.3.3. Cultivation of critical thinking

Regarding the cultivation of critical thinking students' difficulties are the following outcomes of the way the Greek educational system approaches history¹³. Similar findings exist in international literature for the development of critical thinking and enhancement understanding of history. One of their important findings is that even in the age of formal reasoning, historical understanding of students is lower than expected by the Piaget's model for their age. Despite the criticism of the investigation of Hallam on the criteria chosen to determine the historical thinking of students aged 11-16 years old, his findings are still valid as a result of the traditional way of teaching history¹⁴. It

¹³ Kamarinou, D. (2000). *Experiential learning at school*, Self-published.

¹⁴ Hallam, R.N. (1970). Piaget and thinking in history. In: Ballard, M. (ed.). *New movements in the study and teaching of history*. London: Temple Smith.

means that the types of responses that Piaget observed and attached to younger children, were the same as those of students of secondary school on History and that students were developing reasoning at a lower level than expected. Later researchers, also, agree that the past is a cloudy area for younger students, emphasizing as important finding that even in the age of formal reasoning, historical understanding of students was lower than expected in Piaget's model for their age¹⁵. Although, experimental investigations of the last decades, have put in question the existence of some putative data constraints in the development of thinking in specific ages (not the existence of restrictions in general) and have studied the contribution of specific teaching methods to a better understanding of historical conditions¹⁶. Their starting point was the didactic principles of the "New History". Bruner did not apply his ideas in history in a systematic way, but Rogers made an interesting effort and created a trend in England known as the "New History"¹⁷. From research point, the teaching concept of "New History" put in the center the question of whether and with what methods and teaching aids can foster historical thinking of students at ages in which according to the Piaget's model, put restrictions on development of historical thinking. Based on didactic principles of the "New History", researches show that sometimes the younger students were able to handle difficult concepts and understood better than older students, if the teaching was done by certain methods¹⁸.

This means in practice that if we want to cultivate specific skills and critical thinking skills to students, it needs first to identify them and secondly to know methods and best practices that can contribute to their cultivation.

The correct answers of all students in the worksheets and questions in the final test showed that this teaching intervention helped to develop skills of students' critical thinking.

4.3.4. Utilization of sources and checking of the reliability of the interpretations of history

The teaching material about ancient Sparta simply included texts of ancient Greek writers as sources. The use of sources for the study of history has been proposed by many researchers because they raise the interest of students and because they believe that familiarity with these will result to better understanding of the interpretation of the history and their reliability. Many researches in the teaching of history, especially after the 80s, have resulted in the necessity of having such experiences from an early age already, before the Piaget's stage of the development of formal considerations, as a prerequisite for the development of critical thinking skills and understanding of history¹⁹. According to the above, during the teaching intervention and in order to monitor the achievement of the objective

¹⁵ Arthur, J. and Phillips, R. (2004). *Issues in History Teaching*, London: Routledge and Falmer Press.

Haydn T., Arthur, J. and Hunt, M. (2003). *Learning to teach History in the secondary school*, London: Routledge and Falmer Press.

¹⁶ Lee, P. and Ashby, R. (2000). "Progression in Historical Understanding among students 7-14", in Stearns, P., Seixas, P. & Wineburg, S. (eds). *Knowing, Teaching and learning history. National and International perspectives*, New York University.

Lee, P., Ashby, R. & Dickinson, A.K. (1997). "Research methods and some findings on rational understanding", in O'Neil, C. and Pendry, A. (eds.). *Principles and Practice: Analytical perspectives on Curriculum Reform and Changing Pedagogy from History Teacher Educators*, SCHTE.

Dickinson, A.K., and Lee, P.J. (1978). *History teaching and historical understanding*, London: Heinemann Educational Books. Dickinson, A.K., and Lee, P.J. (1984). "Making sense of history", in Dickinson, A.K., Lee, P.J. & Rogers, P.J. *Learning history*, London: Heinemann Educational Books.

¹⁷ Bruner, J.S. (1966). *Toward a theory of instruction*. Cambridge, Massachussets: Harvard University Press. Rogers, P.J. (1978). *The New History-Theory into practice*, London: Historical Association.

¹⁸ Lee, P. and Ashby, R. (2000). "Progression in Historical Understanding among students 7-14", Stearns, P. Seixas, P. & Wineburg, S. (eds). *Knowing, Teaching and learning history. National and International perspectives*, New York University.

Lee, P., Ashby, R. and Dickinson, A.K. (1997). "Research methods and some findings on rational understanding", in O'Neil, C. and Pendry, A. (eds.). *Principles and Practice: Analytical perspectives on Curriculum Reform and Changing Pedagogy from History Teacher Educators*, SCHTE.

¹⁹ De Silva, W.A. (1969). *Concept formation in adolescence through conceptual clues*. Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, University of Birmingham. Hallam, R.N. (1970). Piaget and thinking in history. In: Ballard, M. (ed.). *New movements in the study and teaching of history*. London: Temple Smith. Honeybone, M. (1971). The development of formal historical thought in school children. *Teaching History*, Vol.II, 6, pp. 147- 151.

goal, three students watched a documentary in English from the series “Decisive Battles”, which is based on the description of ancient Greek historian Herodotus about the battle of Thermopylae and they compared it with the elements of the film “The 300” on the accuracy of content in relation to historical reality. Students in total, at the end of teaching, were able to record details of the film corresponding to the historical reality and distinguish items that are simply film findings.

4.3.5. Student Projects

All students have developed small individual project on a subject of ancient Sparta, having gained interest and without being pressed by the instructor. The assessment of their content by the researcher showed that they had included core elements of ancient Sparta and they had reported core values of Spartan society.

4.3.6. Clarifying values of ancient Sparta

The educational material about ancient Sparta, both texts for teaching, as well as worksheets, trading securities issues, through the description of historical events, the Spartans sayings and the description of the structure of Spartan society and education. During the teaching intervention, discussions with students and comparisons with modern values and approaches to the same issues were took place. Then the students filled out relevant questions on the worksheet. After the film “300” all students wrote five values of Spartan society that do not show in the film. Also in the projects, they drawn up and reported values of Spartan society. In addition, in the final test questions, all the students distinguished and reported values of ancient Sparta regarding the treatment of young people and social organization.

4.3.7. The contribution of the use of audiovisual material

It was found that the support of geographical site of Sparta with map and pictures of Power point presentation was required so as to facilitate the understanding and answers by the students to relevant questions on the worksheet.

4.3.8 The cooperation of students in groups

However, students still have great difficulties in group work in class. This is due to the lack of such relevant experience in school. In the didactic intervention, limited in time (10 credit hours), is not feasible to develop students such skills, along with the realization of cognitive objectives. But it is important to include teamwork activities, so that students can practice on them²⁰.

4.4. Final-Stage after Intervention

4.4.1. Learning achievements

After teaching intervention, students were asked to complete the evaluation test questions. The study of completed students' worksheets and answers to questions test given after the implementation of the teaching intervention, showed that students have understood the content of teaching, had acquired the relevant knowledge, they gave the correct answers to questions required skills of critical thinking and had understood the values of ancient Sparta. The needs and objectives of the course were succeeded.

4.4.2. Suitability of teaching materials about ancient Sparta

Research on textbook evaluation suggests that the below questions should be addressed and these shape the criteria for the evaluation of the educational material on ancient Sparta²¹.

²⁰ Kamarinou, D. (2015). Individual versus teamwork in a local history project, *International Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences*, 5 (19): 69-77

²¹ Anderson, T.H. & Armbuster, B.B. (1984). Content area textbooks. In: Anderson, J., Osborne, J. & Tierney, R.J. (eds.). *Learning to read in American schools: Basal readers and content texts*. New Jersey: Erlbaum.
Armbuster, B.B. & Anderson, T.H. (1984). Textbook analysis. In: Lewy, A. (ed.). *The international Encyclopedia of curriculum*. Oxford: Pergamon Press.

A. The structure of the educational material.

Is the structure clearly apparent to the readers by clearly dividing it in chapters, subchapters and thematic units? Is there a balance between the length of the chapters and the new information and ideas they incorporate in terms of the students' ability to comprehend and remember? The structure in four units (introduction, society, education, military life) of similar length and body of new information facilitated the students' learning and the accomplishment of their projects as well.

B. The content of the educational material.

Can it serve as a teacher's companion that aids teachers to effectively teach students of different skills some of the difficult issues? Does it somehow link to the students' life experiences?

The educational material in every unit related the information on ancient Sparta with the students' life experiences. It facilitated discussions in the classroom, particularly on values. Being simple and interesting, it motivated all students to active participate.

C. The vocabulary of the educational material

Is it easy for the students to comprehend the vocabulary? The effort to use Greek vocabulary that connects with English words in terms of etymology was proven highly successfully both for the motivation as well as for the comprehension of the texts and the exercises. But it had to add lexical clarification and to further simplify the vocabulary of the texts to be better understood by their low level of Greek students.

5. Conclusions and Suggestions

While research is a case study and its results due to the small sample of participants, it is not legitimate to generalize to the wider population, it can be the beginning for new actions within the framework of Greek language education abroad. The consequent impact of research findings are deemed important for the Greek data as teachers working in classes environments, which are characterized by increasing diversity on the national origin of students. Another point is that the application of an innovative teaching material for learning values in homogeneous students is a philosophy and a teaching approach that is changing the happenings in the classroom in such a way as to give students multiple opportunities to receive and process information, to express freely ideas and knowledge, ensuring equal educational opportunities for all participants.

In summary, this investigation has shown that it is possible to design and develop educational material for the cultivation of critical thinking skills and values concerning the ancient Sparta for A' Gymnasium students of an English-speaking school of the Greek Community Abroad. This is because the objectives of teaching based on appropriate teaching material for the cultivation of critical thinking skills and values concerning the ancient Sparta can be achieved.

So this teaching material could design and development a model for the teaching of ancient Greek history and values of Greek culture so as to be extended to other subjects beyond the ancient Sparta.

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