

Autism and the Contribution of the Circle of Friends in the Event for the 200 Years since the Greek Revolution 1821

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Abstract— *The present work studies the possibilities offered by non-formal education for the social involvement of the student in the school community through the conditions of the learning process, as they are formed during the interaction of the circle of friends. The research was carried out in a secondary school, specifically in the General Lyceum of the Southwest Region of Peloponnese, which a student with autism and problems in speech and social interactions attends, during the school anniversary event for the 200 years since the Greek Revolution of 1821. The intervention was structured according to the principles of pedagogical tool TISIPfSEns, which is defined as Targeted, Individual, Structured, Integrated Program for Students with Special Educational Needs. The results of the research, which took place in the context of the preparation of the school event, highlighted the positive effect of the circle of friends for the social integration of the student.*

Keywords— *School celebration, autism, circle of friends, school integration, TISIPfSEns.*

I. INTRODUCTION

Neurodevelopmental Disorders known as Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) are presented by (American Psychiatric Association, 2013) in the form of deficits in social interaction, communication, and limited, repetitive behaviour that reveals a deficit in the creative imagination and affects a person's life forever. (Synodinou, 1999), in her book "Childhood Autism - Therapeutic Approach" when describing people with autism, refers to their denial of the outside and their isolation in the inside, as a defence reaction to the "intense outside" from which they try to be protected. In this process, they set the boundaries between the two worlds, creating an impenetrable shell, avoiding or even blocking communication. Synodinou's therapeutic approach does not aim at "breaking the shell" but at transferring its limits by extending them to the outside world through the observation of the child's preferences and identified abilities. Her work highlights the incomparable value of understanding autism for educational intervention (Synodinou, 1999).

One of the most important advances in education is the development of Special Education. In fact, with the enactment of the law (Law 2817, 2000), Special Education, following the developments of the relevant European legislation, ensures the reversal of social exclusion of students with special needs and seeks their integration in General Schools. In this educational legislation, the category of students with autism is included in the educational process, for the first time. Despite this positive development, the obligation of the State to provide special educational services is set by the legislation "Special Education and Training of Persons with Disabilities or Special Educational Needs" (Law 3699, 2008). Then, with law 4368/2016 among the "Measures for the acceleration of government work and other provisions" with Article 82 refers

to Regulations on Special Education issues (Law 4368, 2016). The text favours the education of students with disabilities, such as those with autism and problems in speech and social interactions, in general education and training classes with their classmates without disabilities. The General School, in order to make the attendance of these students in its complex structure possible and effective, must differentiate and adapt the educational process and every activity of school life to the possibilities and peculiarities of students with autism, in the same way that it owes to do it for each of its students. A school celebration such as this school anniversary event for the 200 years since the Greek Revolution of 1821 serves as an excellent opportunity to engage a student with autism in the pedagogical process, through the process of preparation and implementation. The involvement of the circle of friends contributes to the development of skills, either by strengthening the child's existing capabilities or by providing ways to replenish or create opportunities in the areas where the biggest deficits occur.

According to (Kalyva, 2005), the "circle of friends" is an approach to enhance social interaction, which, according to (Newton, Taylor, & Wilson, 1996) is part of the promotion of integration of children with behavioural and emotional disorders at school. Due to the various deficits that children with autism have in communication and social interaction skills, the "circle of friends" particularly benefits these children, by systematically using the social networks that operate within a classroom. Through the "circle of friends" children with autism are provided with the appropriate supportive environment to deal with social disabilities, which are undoubtedly an obstacle in the effort to integrate into the general school (Whitaker, et al., 1998). According to the learning readiness activities, the experiences of students with autism in school life are promoted (Ministry of National

Education and Religious Affairs - Pedagogical Institute, 2009). These experiences favour the Emotional Organization by the cooperation with peers (CIPPA, 2019, Drossinou-Korea, (2017 b). School celebrations can also expand a school unit's capacity to support a student with autism with differentiated learning adapted to their abilities but also to offer skills development opportunities. Within this context, we encouraged and coordinated the participation of the student with autism who attends the General School in the anniversary event of the school for the 200 years since the Greek Revolution of 1821.

This teaching proposal is actually a differentiated application of the "circle of friends", in the General Lyceum. The intervention program includes several elements and techniques that contribute to enhancing the student's social interaction and communication with his classmates. The evolution of the teaching proposal with the school celebration is a flexible educational process during which the student can choose the activity that suits his particular characteristics, create a strong sense of volunteerism and initiative. The presence of "friends" presupposes the collaborative process and offers the conditions for peer-to-peer teaching. It also provides the opportunity for students to express and highlight talents for which curricula are indifferent. The fact that it was the anniversary event for the 200 years since the Greek Revolution of '21 was a happy occasion, which gave prestige to this event and a stronger motivation to participate.

The parents of the student with autism participated in the school's anniversary event for the 200 years since the Revolution of 1821 and consented to the creation of the circle of friends. This was not self-evident, when in fact in the research of (Lawrence Scahill, et al., 2019) the stress factors are recorded in 990 young people with autism spectrum disorder and their parents by the analysis of the theory. In the same study, they identified mild anxiety (n = 116, aged 5-17 years, 79.3% men) of the stress scale of 25 items in each parent of a child with autism. Consequences of children's stress lead parents to aim at the orality of words and less at the activation of transactional elements that are a prerequisite for communication. Aspirations such as eye contact, voice response, imitation, simplification of speech in terms of type and structure, style and volume of the voice are neglected due to the non-response of the child while they should be pursued even more intensely and adapted to the child's abilities and interests, just as in formal development.

In our case, due to the current conditions of the covid pandemic and the strong possibility that the anniversary event will be online, the involvement of the parents of the student with autism became very important and extremely necessary. Their initial reaction, as well as that of the student, was negative, answering that his participation was not necessary. The deficits in the student's communication had created the belief in the parents that it would not be of any use to him or to the school. The main argument of the parents was the excessive stress of the student that does not allow him to concentrate and communicate properly in every situation. The contribution of his circle of friends was important for the reversal of the initial negative attitude of the student and his parents, as they relied on them to negotiate the manner and conditions of the

participation of the student with autism and problems in speech and social interactions. The teachers of the school collaborated in the event and contributed to the participation of the student.

II. BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE RESEARCH STUDY

This research study was implemented in a school of Secondary Education, to students of the 1st grade of Lyceum in the South-West Region of Peloponnese. 18 students participated, including the student with autism. Before the beginning of the preparations for the school anniversary event, a systematic presentation was made -mainly in the Physical Education course- of the dimensions of this anniversary. It was pointed out through websites and other relevant material that the preparation was not only in a national but also in a global level. It became clear that the participation in this anniversary is extremely unique in terms of quality, since it is presented as a world-renowned event and in terms of quantity since students have the unique opportunity to celebrate the 2nd century after the liberation of the nation.

The preparation of the anniversary event lasted ten days, from March 8 to 17, 2021. The pedagogical principles used in the intervention were cross-curricularity, flexibility, student-centeredness and team collaboration. The subjects that connected the anniversary event with the Curriculum of the General Lyceum were mathematics, history, literature, computer science. It was also associated with art, music and theatrical education. The event was scheduled to last 2 teaching hours. Due to the current distance education, the work was all done with synchronous and asynchronous procedures on the e-classroom platform. Collaborative doc documents and ppt presentations were also created for more effective collaboration between team members.

Specifically, for the didactic intervention to a student with autism with problems in speech and social interactions, the pedagogical tool TISIPfSEnS was used, in order to define the goal of the interventions in short-term, medium-term and long-term planning. According to the targeted individual structured and differentiated teaching of special education, of this important integrational anniversary event of the school, the enhancement of the functionality of the student with autism in his school was sought. The interventions aimed at improving and enriching his communication and social skills with differentiations and cognitive mechanisms (Drossinou-Korea, 2020, pp. 807-856). The medium-term goal was to offer quality in the participation in the school life of the students who constitute the circle of his friends but also of all the students of the class and further of the school, through the application of basic principles of special education and training. The circular rotation helped to get to know all the students in the class and laid the foundations for building a very good collaboration. Classmates proved to be the best teachers for the student with autism. This process, involving the parents of the student with autism, the parents of the other students as spectators, and the teachers of the School Association, sought ways to build strong bonds between members of the school community. As suggested by (Attwood, 2001), the ultimate goal is to achieve a friendly school which is a prerequisite for the highest possible degree of functionality of the student with autism. This is how

the bridge that connects the ecological environment of the family to that of the school is built. The ecological perspective presupposes everything that constitutes a friendly school for the student with autism, in order to achieve their possible autonomy without discrimination and categorization.

III. NECESSITY OF THE RESEARCH STUDY AND BRIEF BIBLIOGRAPHIC REVIEW OF PREVIOUS RESEARCH

We also look into this issue in the context of the results of research on the prevalence of cases of people with autism attending general schools: the increase in the number of students identified by schools with Autistic Spectrum Disorders (ASD) is examined in an annual school census held in the United Kingdom (Mcconkey, 2020) for a period of nine years from 2010/11. Prevalence rates were higher in secondary education than in primary schools. Increases in prevalence and fluctuations within the country are associated with a higher appreciation of ASD which occurs alongside other development difficulties. In the same survey the school population rates were higher in Northern Ireland and Scotland compared to Wales and England. The findings were based on population data from nearly nine and a half million students across the UK for 2019, of whom nearly two hundred thousand were identified by schools as having ASD. In addition, a common system was used to obtain information in all countries and years that was monitored, validated and analyzed by statisticians in the educational institutions of the respective governments. Across the United Kingdom, around 58% of all pupils attend primary school, 40% secondary school and between 1% and 2% special school. In addition, a study of Special Needs Education in Secondary Education in England at a time when schools are embracing a wider set of policies and adjustments with funding constraints foreshadows consequences that may affect the sustainability and quality of inclusive education.

Research on barriers to the integration of students with autism in General School, through literature review and with an emphasis on human differences rather than deficits, suggests that barriers to integration for autistic students exist in the interactions between characteristics associated with autism and aspects of school education that pose a greater challenge to autistic students than to their non-autistic peers. In our case of Angelos (the name is imaginary), it was obvious that understanding between the student with autism and his environment was necessary to support the removal of barriers for his integration and improve his school experience (Bailey, & Baker, 2020)

IV. METHODOLOGY

The work is empirical in the interdisciplinary field of special education and training. It has taken into account the prejudice against people with disabilities, such as autism, which leads to their exclusion from social life and decent living, often due to the identification of the disability with the person themselves. This identification is already evident since the first steps of the social life of the child with a disability at school. The person with autism is stigmatized as incompetent, isolated and excluded from the educational process. The

observation methodology, according to (Panopoulos, & Drossinou-Korea, 2019, Drossinou-Korea, & Bakogianni, 2018), seeks to understand autism for the participation of this student for their integration in the General School. The intervention methodology seeks to find ways to overcome the difficulties in the participation of the student with autism in every aspect of their student life.

A. Research questions, purpose and hypotheses of the research

The first research question is expressed with the work hypothesis of whether and how autism is understood by students and with emphasis the circle of friends.

The second research question investigated whether and how autism is understood by the teachers involved and the Association of the school unit.

The third research question investigated whether and how autism is understood by the parents of the student with autism. Often, stigma starts in the home of the child with autism. The parents' demand for a "normal" behavior from their child often leads to the loss of both their own faith in the child's abilities and of the child's trust in themselves. That is, the parents are the cultural ecosystem that will determine how the student enters the "ecosystem" of the school.

B. Sample, techniques of analysis, presentation and interpretation of results

The present research uses empirical and bibliographical data. It also approaches the problem with the method of "case study" of a student with autism and difficulties in speech and social interactions (Avramidis, & Kalyva, 2006). It is now recognized as a scientific method despite the reservations of generalizing its conclusions, as it provides research with qualitative data. The sample of the research was a case study of a student with autism and difficulties in speech and social interactions, 4 students who are his circle of friends, 13 additional classmates who participated in the preparation of the event and 4 adults, that is his parents and 2 teachers who were involved in the learning process with the specific students.

The study used the research tools regarding the methodology of participatory observation and intervention of the person with autism according to the pedagogical tool TISIPfSEns, which is defined as Targeted, Individual, Structured, Integrated Program for Students with Special Educational Needs.

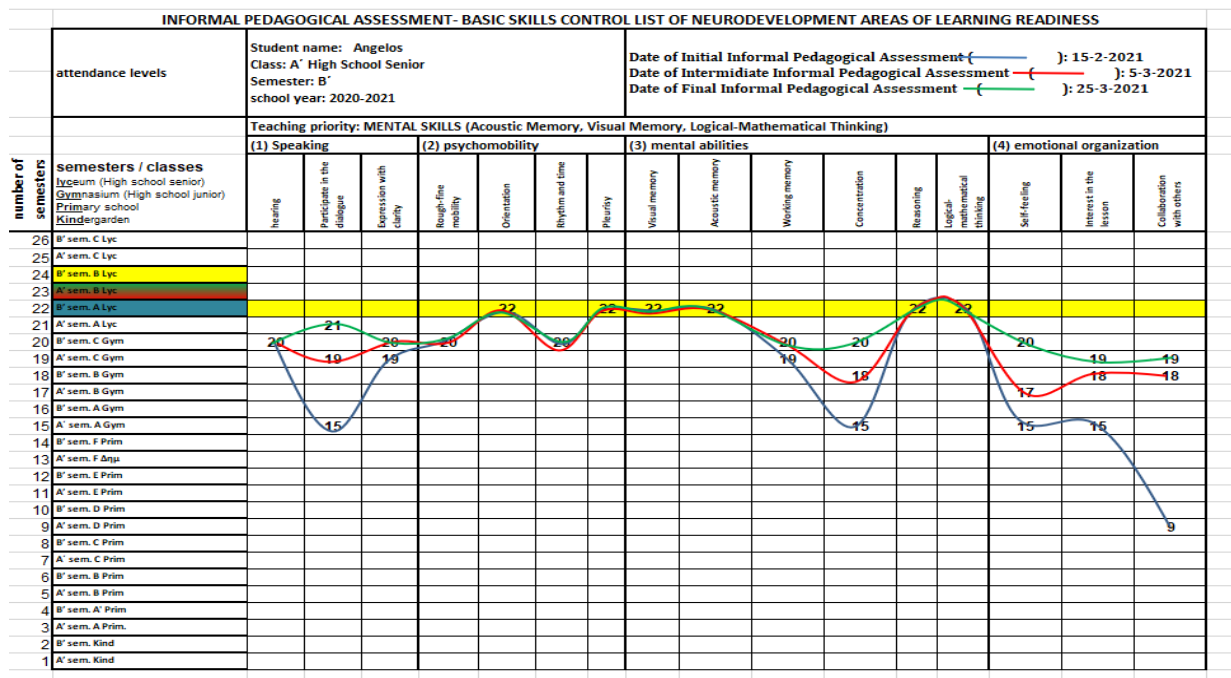
The first tool was the protocols with systematic empirical observation that were utilized with hetero-observations in the individual history of the adolescent that we named Angelos for the needs of the study. Researchers have shown that in the case of developmental disorders, parents first detect delays in the development of motor skills and speech and later the ones of cognitive function or behavior, thus delaying in addressing to specialists to intervene therapeutically. In the family history, parents are recorded as negative towards their child's autism. In particular, the father was too late to accept his son's particularity and the mother said she was unable to deal with this denial resulting in severe problems in the family environment during the first years of his life. Also, Angelos

was excluded from the beneficial effects of early intervention in the way described in the study on the effects of early intervention on students with autism (Noyes-Grosser, et al. 2018). In his school history the student is recorded to have attended the general Kindergarten, Elementary and High School and did not accept to attend classes in the integration class. His attendance at the General School, not in an integration class and without the help of Parallel Support, with teachers who did not understand autism, gradually caused his isolation.

In Secondary Education, however, and especially in the first three grades of High School, only four of his classmates formed his circle of friends. They were by his side and supported him but this happened every time a problem had already arisen. The student greatly reduced his attendance at school. In the Lyceum, at the beginning of the school year, the continuation of the previous situation began to appear and the

student became particularly withdrawn. For this reason, we used hetero- and self-observations of the teacher who undertook the involvement of Angelos in the preparation of the anniversary event. Recordings of the observations will lead to much faster identification of problems and ways to overcome them. The importance of this process is of even greater value in the case of Angelos, as systematic hetero / self-observation provides the possibility of access to non-verbal forms of communication, interaction and interpretation of the individual's behavior (Drossinou-Korea, 2020).

The second tool of the observation methodology was the informal pedagogical evaluation (Drossinou-Korea, & Bakogianni, 2018) according to the second phase of TISIPfSEs and some protocols with EXCELL tables were used in which they were recorded, with Basic Skills Checklists (BSC) focusing on the characteristics of autistic spectrum disorders (autism) (graph 1).



Graph 1. Learning Readiness-2nd phase TISIPfSEs

The average of the initial deviations from the baseline of his formal and compulsory education (22 semesters: 2nd semester of high school), was determined at 18.75 semesters of study (6th semester, 3rd semester of high school), while the average of final deviations at 20.69 semester of study (Semester of Lyceum and 10.35% change). In the field of emotional organization, in which he presented the largest deviation found in the 13th semester of study (first semester, elementary school), the final deviation was limited to 19.3 semesters (first semester, third year of high school and 48.46% change) (Table 1).

According to the Basic skills checklist (BSCL) -see in Greek with the acronym LEVD- of Curriculum Framework for special education (FCSE) see in Greek with the acronym PAPEA, of the general and learning needs

TABLE 1. Atypical Pedagogical Evaluation (APA) of functional and adaptive behavior

Year	Semester	TOTAL DIFFERENCES			emotional organisation		
		Average of initial deviations	Average of final deviations	change %	Average of initial deviations	Average of final deviations	change %
15	22	18,75	20,69	10,35%	13	19,3	48,46%

In the results from the APA for his participation in the dialogue, the concentration of attention, the self-feeling and the interest for the lesson, a change of improvement is recorded with an average of 3 semesters of study for Angelos. The most dramatic improvement, however, was found in Collaboration

with others. This was also pointed out by the mother who witnessed the developments of her child. The findings confirm that the student, by strengthening the circle of friends and adapting the teaching objectives to his learning readiness, participated in a process that presupposes but also enhances social skills and aims at familiarity with cultural tradition.

The teacher who was responsible for the preparation of the celebration, used the close circle of his friends as a channel of communication of the student both with her and with the other participating students. Qualitative analysis of the results, through the case study, the recording of observations, and the semi-structured interviews in the three groups (students, parents and teachers) is the main research limitation of the present study.

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V. RESULTS

After studying the data collected by the recording of the teacher's observations during the preparation of the anniversary event and during its realization, regarding the interactions of the student with autism with his classmates who belong to the circle of friends and of the remaining 13 students in the class, the gradual and steady improvement of the relations between them was ascertained.

A. *Understanding of autism by the students and the circle of friends.*

The circle of friends, who are next to the student with autism for his effective involvement in the school's anniversary event for the 200 years since the Revolution of 1821. At first his participation was very limited. The work was done by his classmates who were members of the same group. The student's shyness was excessive despite the security provided by the distance meeting. The assignment of tasks followed the basic principles of TISIPfSEns (Drossinou-Korea, 2017 a, b). Angelos' team undertook the task of presenting a specific event of the revolution, the burning of the Turkish flagship by the orders the Greek captain Kanaris after the massacre of Chios in 1822 (Kargakos, 2019), through the different approaches of history, literature and art. In order to achieve the involvement of Angelos, the teacher discussed his special wishes, preferences and inclinations with the circle of friends. The answers helped them to write and suggest tasks that are feasible and enjoyable for the student, that is, individualized. The initial working hypothesis was confirmed. Based on this hypothesis, cooperation will be able to overturn their idea that their classmate is weak and therefore, in their opinion, he needs defense, while at the same time, their faith in his potential will be reinforced. This led them to identify the school community's dysfunction in the wrong attitude to life which derives from prejudices about the other. Finally, it was understood, experientially, that it is possible to remove the prejudice created by the view of autism as disability, which result in the stigmatization of the student, his marginalization and his removal from the school community.

B. *The understanding of autism by the teachers involved and the Association of teachers of the school unit*

The school mathematician understood autism and the student's difficulty - obsession with his special connection and love for speed and fast cars. Angelos undertook the task of solving a problem related to the distance that Kanaris' speedboat had to travel after it had attached its artillery named "Volcano" to the flagship of the Turkish fleet after the massacre of Chios, within the limited time of three minutes that it had until the blast. To understand the solution to the problem, the students were asked to draw - he likes drawing cars - and a classmate from the circle of friends used the drawing to present the solution of the problem with Angelos. His interest in finding speed was evident from the questions he asked the teacher about the weather. The problem was simplified in order for him not to be discouraged by any difficulty and yet his response was excellent. This process aroused the interest of the other students. Teachers' discussions with students about understanding autism and focusing on the terms by which a person with autism enters a friendship have made it clear and fully respectable that the way in which he operates within these relationships, regardless of the importance they have for his life, is rigid and mechanical. (Brereton, & Tonge, 2005). This ensures the basic principles that apply to the development of special education services for autism, as listed by (Matthews, P. 2001): a. absolute respect, b. protection from any form of violence and c. ensuring an environment adapted to the student's particularities, full of understanding and encouragement. Thus, an attempt was made to remove the possibility of creating anxiety to the student with autism because of the unfamiliar subject of history, as stress is one of the most important inhibitors of social interaction (Field, 2021). The cooperation of teachers for cross-curricularity also contributed to this, creating the opportunity for differentiation of the timetable, adapted to the different possibilities of the group and referring to the spirit of parallel support, an institution of Special Education that defines the good cooperation of teachers within the same class with common goals (Drossinou-Korea, 2020).

The philologist in charge of the celebration connected the event to a poem by Kalvos (Ode third [XIII] The Volcanoes) and to paintings with a corresponding theme. The circle of friends also located these two events of the Revolution on a digital map and presented them. Angelos painted his sketch and a photo of his work was posted on the padlet created for the needs of the anniversary event. The process proved the effectiveness of the pedagogical tool of TISIPfSEns. The targeted, structured, individual didactic intervention with reinforcement and focus on the student's abilities highlighted his face among his friends. The recognition of his abilities by the circle of friends also contributed to his acceptance by the other participants. His active presence during the implementation became impossible as he did not agree. However, the presence of his work as well as his name in the titles as well as the mention of his name as a member of his team that was applauded by the children, made his participation felt throughout the school. This boosted his self-esteem.

Finally, the teachers of the School Association, agreed from the beginning with the involvement of Angelos in the event, although their consent was accompanied by comments of sympathy and warnings for his possible denial even at the last minute. Two of the teachers, the computer science teacher and the mathematics teacher, volunteered for the preparation of the event. The mathematician decided to participate extraordinarily when the special and obsessive relationship of the student with the fast cars was discussed by the circle of friends. Obsession, a key feature of autism, becomes a serious reason for communication deficits (Vogindroukas, I. and Sherratt, D. 2020) . Special Education can take advantage of the obsessions of the person with autism and offer the basis for communication with the student by including them, through the pedagogical tool TISIPfSEns , in the intervention aimed at the functionality of the student in the group and therefore his integration (Drossinou-Korea, 2017 a, b). After the end of the process with the exercise that Angelos solved, the teacher commented that he had to reconsider the way he approached the student in terms of learning. This change provoked a discussion with the other teachers.

A deterrent factor, for a fruitful dialogue, was the distance between the teachers and the students. (Nanni, and Kolokouri, 2020-2021) in their work present the training program conducted for teachers on sustainable development in the context of enhancing the education of people with special educational needs (SEN). They point out how obvious the current trend is for students with SEN to co-educate with their non-SEN classmates in common schools of all levels. However, a precondition for this is the realization of teacher training, starting with the teachers of Primary Education. The confirmation of the hypothesis for the understanding of autism by the involved teachers and the Association of teachers of the school unit became evident from the reconsideration of their beliefs about the incapacity of the student. The necessity of changing the teaching methods with the aim of motivating the participation of the student in the learning process was made clear. The teachers realised that a student who was completely inactive in the classroom and gave up all participation and action, accepted his participation in an environment that allows for initiative, creativity, teamwork, and, most importantly, offers the flexibility of choosing his kind of working task without neglecting the needs and goals of the project being served.

C. Understanding autism by parents

Angelos's parents helped us to communicate with him in the beginning. We agreed on the meeting times together. After a discussion with the responsible teacher, they encouraged their child to participate. The father does not seem to understand the nature of autism or did not want to discuss the matter with the teacher. He always talked about the student's shyness and his phobia towards some of his classmates. He always added that "otherwise he is normal and you do not understand if you do not know". However, he was very cooperative. He warned us that his son might give up because he hadn't had similar involvement in the past. Angelos' mother, although she was willing to talk about her child's autism, did not understand it

either. He still wonders why he refuses to talk to his classmates, why he does not listen to her and, why, when he gets ready for school in the morning, he never looks in the mirror. When her child solved the problem with Kanaris' "Volcano", however, she contacted the responsible teacher to express her joy, not so much for the solution of the exercise but for his participation and interest.

When the parents were asked to answer, in the context of the semi-structured interview, on the distance education platform, some questions of the responsible teacher, the father avoided it, appointing this responsibility to Angelos' mother. The questions were related to the student's autonomy in his daily life, his study method, his entertainment, his interests, the responsibilities he may take on at home, his relationships with others. They were also asked about their plans, dreams and expectations from their child. The mother referred quite strongly to her fear for her child's future. In her responses, she generally expressed her fears about her child's inability to survive without the help of his parents. She had been concerned by the bad relationship with his classmates, since elementary school, something that put her off from choosing of a more "suitable" school for Angelos and his vocational rehabilitation, since it was located in another city. Regarding his participation in the school's anniversary event, she said that she was not surprised by his abilities but was excited by the fact that he consented and collaborated with his classmates.

Angelos' participation in the preparation of the school event for the two hundred years since the Greek Revolution of '21 justified the expectations of the responsible teacher. The seemingly limited participation became visible to the rest of the school community, making the sense of "belonging" really strong, to both Angelos and his circle of friends as well as to all members of the school community, teachers and students. The positive effects were felt, in a shape of concentric circles centered around the student with autism. Around him, the circle of friends first experienced a stronger impact, then the teachers and the student's parents, but further on the other students and the parents (figure 1). It turns out that when a change occurs to one member of an ecosystem, a corresponding change is caused to the whole ecosystem.

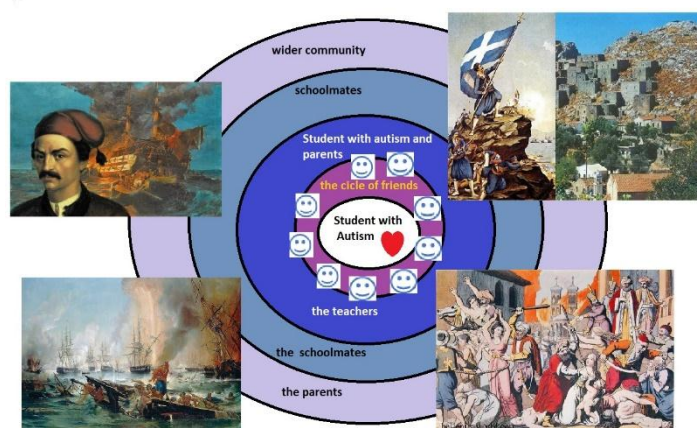


Fig. 1. The concentric circles of the results

VI. CONCLUSIONS - SUGGESTIONS

The process made it clear that autism is not identified with the student. In the oral speech the student managed to participate in the dialogue, in an alternative way, solving the mathematical exercise for his group and drawing a project that was posted among the other tasks. Even temporarily, his classmates, teachers and parents revised the way they treated the student. Of course, one intervention is not enough to radically change a belief that has defined the perceptions of students and adults in all previous years. But it is a good start. Efficiency would be even more beneficial in a lifetime process. Certainly, it has become apparent that the type of interventions required for a student with autism attending general school, require knowledge of special education by the teachers of General Education too (Drossinou-Korea, 2020). The effectiveness of the educational tool TISIPfSEnS, with its step-by-step implementation, presupposes teachers who possess the material and intangible principles that govern it and the intervention methods that it proposes. The positive results of this application offer quality in the learning process by turning the mechanical and indifferent participation into experiential, creative, collaborative and conscious participation of students. This is a proposed teaching method in all the subjects taught in the school. In other words, Special Education suggests ways to improve quality in General Education as well. It should be noted, however, that most special education teachers have at least one degree in education and are fully certified teachers or professors, but for many of them their training in special and inclusive education may be less than 400 hours. Many universities in the country have developed postgraduate courses and four hundred hour programs that formally verify the specialisation in Special Education (Mavropalias, and Anastasiou, 2016). A similar picture is given in other countries where research shows the unpreparedness of teachers to teach students with SEN properly (Sucuoglu, et al. 2019). Much more in a General School where the only weapon of teachers is, often, good intentions.

Understanding autism, after all, by the people who determine the education of the student with autism is essential for their fair participation in the educational process. Finally, parents do not always have the ability or potential to understand autism and, consequently, to get to know their child in order to educate them in the right way. In these cases, the school can play a decisive role and contribute to the improvement of the parents' attitude towards their child thus proving the interconnected relationship of the two ecosystems.

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