

## Exploring Teacher Candidates' Views on Teacher's Vision

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### Abstract

The formation of an open, democratic, progressive and modern school is the pursuit of the entire educational community. In this paper, the opinions of prospective teachers are being explored on how they envision the school in which they wish to work. From their answers, it can be concluded that their main concern is the formation of a space with perfect infrastructure, equipment, and staffing. In addition, a school that will plan and implement innovative actions and programs will aim on the one hand at the all-around development of each student's personality and on the other hand at creating good working conditions for all teachers. In such an environment, which will be characterized by good interpersonal relations, respect and mutual understanding, the moral values and ideals that should accompany the citizens of a society could be cultivated.

**Keywords:** Educational vision, school unit vision, modern school, interpersonal relations, school principal.

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### INTRODUCTION

Education is the pillar of the development and progress of a society. It is not just a process of imparting knowledge but a catalyst responsible for shaping a brilliant and sustainable society. A well-structured education system gives students the resources to express themselves, develop their talents and achieve their dreams. It is, essentially, a "journey" of self-discovery, creating critical thinking and achieving self-determination.

In the 21st century, the demand for renewed and progressive education practices is more necessary than ever because, despite the significant advances that have been made in this field, there is always room for improvement and innovation. With the burden of this mission, educators bear the responsibility to shape a new framework by offering innovative perspectives and initiatives that will reflect the needs and developments of our society.

The vision of young teachers represents a fresh perspective on the future of education. By encouraging active participation, differentiation and open discussion, it is called upon to create an environment where students

will be at the center of the learning process. In this way, education is transformed from an obligation into an opportunity for growth, creation and inspiration. Every student is unique, with different needs, abilities and interests; and for this reason, a teacher should look for ways to personalize the educational process, offering alternative methods, programs and support, adapted to each student.

Modern learning environments require new approaches to education. A teacher is asked to create an environment where each student will be an active cell in it. Education should be approached as a potential space of developmental opportunities, aiming at the inspiration, self-esteem and personal development of students. By encouraging self-motivation and curiosity, a student discovers the joy of learning.

Education should know no borders. For this reason, every teacher should promote multiculturalism, teaching students to understand and respect each other's diversity. Cultivating intercultural awareness comes through open discussion and the exchange of views, creating thus an educational environment that is rich in experiences.

A new teacher envisions a role in which he/she will not just impart knowledge but inspire. The importance of education for him/her lies in encouraging creativity, innovation, and independent thinking, preparing students for the demands of the future. He/she aims to create a culture of positive thinking and creativity, which will encourage students to seek the limits of their potential. Realizing that learning is not limited to classrooms but extends to every aspect of our lives, he/she aspires to remain an eternal student and for this reason, he/she does not stop studying, reading, being informed and continuing to enrich his/her knowledge. For him/her, education is a path, along which he/she seeks new lessons and practices, respecting the principle that there is never an end to knowledge.

In his/her vision, a future teacher does not treat education as an abstract theory. He/she understands that the acquisition of knowledge must be combined with its application in real life. For this reason, he/she creates learning environments that encourage autonomy, creativity and problem-solving. He/she teaches his/her students to put critical thinking at the center of every reflection, to question, to look for solutions and to propose their own ideas. It guides the improvisational process, encouraging invention and creation.

The visionary educator realizes that education is the main driver of development and the prospect for a brighter tomorrow. At the same time, it is a powerful means for the individual's self-improvement and personal cultivation. Through continuous learning, the connection of theory with practice and the application of the teaching principles of great educators, the conditions are created for a richer educational experience that will awaken the spirit and creativity of tomorrow's citizens.

The vision of a new teacher is the core of educational renewal. Education is a powerful means of recognizing the value of self-realization and the respectful treatment of differences since it aims to cultivate open-mindedness and mutual cooperation. At the cutting edge of educational reform and change, each of their visions is a beacon of educational renewal. Through a constant focus on development and learning, a new generation of citizens is formed, capable of meeting the challenges of tomorrow. Their vision outlines a world where knowledge is the primary power and education is the gateway to a better humanity.

## THE STARTING POINT, AIM AND METHODOLOGY OF THE RESEARCH

The starting point for this research was teachers' endless discussions about the weaknesses of school units and their desire to work at some point in an ideal school, as they envision it.

The main objective of the research was to explore the opinions of teacher candidates regarding the structure and character of a modern school, which would be a model for them.

The research sample comprised 28 postgraduate students of the Department of Primary Level Education of the Democritus University of Thrace, who were asked to submit an anonymous and spontaneous text production (at least 500 words) on the topic: "How do you envision the school as a future teacher". The postgraduate students had one teaching hour at their disposal. The written texts, which were collected in the spring of 2023, were the research tool. For the statistical processing of the collected material, the content analysis method was used (Taratori, Tsalkatidou & Tsalkatidis, 2010). The texts were studied several times and all references related to the topic were removed and categorized into different thematic categories. The thematic categories emerged from the reporting of the same words, phrases or sentences by different individuals in the research sample (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2008; Jaisingh, 2000). A word, phrase, or sentence was used as the unit of analysis. All respondents' opinions, regardless of their frequency of occurrence, were considered important. The total number of reports amounted to 168 and the resulting thematic categories were given the codes K1 to K7, as follows:

- Structures/Means (K1)
- Teaching/Learning (K2)
- Teacher profile (K3)
- Student personality (K4)
- Climate/Interpersonal relations (K5)
- Staffing (K6)
- Planning programs/Implementation of actions (K7)

### Content analysis

Here is the quantitative and qualitative analysis of the research data:

#### a) Quantitative analysis

**Table 1: Aggregate distribution of references in thematic categories**

Thematic categories	Number of references	Percentage %
Structures/means (K1)	35	20.83
Teaching/learning (K2)	34	20.23
Teacher profile (K3)	32	19.05
Student personality (K4)	26	15.48
Climate/interpersonal relationships (K5)	19	11.31
Staffing (K6)	14	8.3
Planning programs/ Implementation of actions (K7)	8	4.7
<b>Total number of references</b>	<b>168</b>	<b>100%</b>

In Table 1, the thematic category "Structures/Means" (K1) presented several references that amounted to 20.83%. This is followed by the categories "Teaching/Learning" (K2), "Teacher Profile" (K3) and "Student Personality" (K4), which gathered percentages of 20.23%, 19.05% and 15.48%

respectively. The next thematic category "Climate/Interpersonal relations" (K5) collected 19 references (11.31% percentage). Table 1 is completed with the categories of "Staffing" (K6) and "Planning programs/Implementation of actions" (K7) with references of 8.3% and 4.7% respectively.

**Table 2: Structures/Means (K1)**

(K1)	Number of references	Percentage %
Building premises (K1a)	18	51.42
Infrastructure (K1b)	17	48.58
<b>Total</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>100 %</b>

Analyzing the first thematic category "Structures/Means" (Table 2, K1), we notice that the participating postgraduate students stated that they wanted a school with modern building facilities

(percentage 51.42%, Table 2, K1a) and sufficient infrastructure (percentage 48.58%, Table 2, K1b), to teach as future teachers.

**Table 3: Teaching/learning (K2)**

(K2)	Number of references	Percentage %
Goals (K2a)	13	38.24
Curricula (K2b)	11	32.35
Methods (K2c)	7	20.59
School books (K2d)	3	8.82
<b>Total</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>100 %</b>

In the second thematic category, which refers to "Teaching/Learning" (Table 3, K2), we notice that many of the participated postgraduate students (percentage 38.24%, Table. 3, K2a) considered that in a school the determination of the intended goals is its main pillar.

They also considered its curricula (percentage 32.35%, Table 3, K2b), the teaching methods followed (percentage 20.59%, Table 3, K2c), as well as the use of modern schoolbooks, to be quite important (percentage 8.82%, Table 3, K2d).

**Table 4: Teacher profile (K3)**

(K3)	Number of references	Percentage %
Style/characteristics (K3a)	21	65.63
Training (K3b)	11	34.37
<b>Total</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>100 %</b>

In the third thematic category, postgraduate students described the profile of an ideal teacher (Table 4, K3). More specifically, most of them (percentage 63.65%, Table 4, K3a) referred to specific characteristics

that were considered necessary for a teacher to possess but in combination with his/her training, which was considered equally important and necessary (percentage 34.37%, Table 4, K3b).

**Table 5: Student personality (K4)**

(K4)	Numbers of references	Percentage %
Acquisition of values (K4a)	6	23.08
Cultivating critical thinking (K4b)	5	19.23
Intellectual development (K4c)	4	15.38
Social development (K4d)	3	11.54
Emotional development (K4e)	3	11.54
Environmental consciousness (K4f)	3	11.54
Skills development (K4g)	2	7.69
<b>Total</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>100 %</b>

The fourth thematic category refers to the elements of personality that the participating postgraduate students envisioned for a student attending the school to possess (Table 5, K4). According to their statements, most of them wished students to acquire

values (percentage 23.08%, Table 5, K4a) and cultivate critical thinking (percentage 19.23%, Table 5, K4b). In addition to these, they also considered important the intellectual (percentage 15.38%, Table 5, K4c), social (percentage 11.54%, Table 5, K4d) and emotional

development of children (percentage 11.54%, Table 5, K4e). Finally, they envisaged students with environmental awareness (percentage 11.54%, Table 5,

K4f), who would have developed a multitude of abilities and skills (percentage 7.69%, Table 5, K4g).

**Table 6: Climate/Interpersonal relationships (K5)**

(K5)	Number of references	Percentage %
School climate (K5a)	9	47.36
Teacher-student communication (K5b)	4	21.05
Teacher-teacher communication (K5c)	2	10.53
Teacher-parent-students communication (K5d)	2	10.53
Teachers-principal communication (K5e)	2	10.53
<b>Total</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>100 %</b>

Observing the fifth thematic category "Climate/Interpersonal relations" (Table 6, K5) we find that the school environment and the formation of good interpersonal relations are the pursuit and vision of a future teacher. Postgraduate students declared that the formation of a good school climate is a key priority for them (percentage 47.36%, Table 6, K5a). They were also

interested in building a warm communication relationship with their students (percentage 21.05%, Table 6, K5b), their colleagues (percentage 10.53%, Table 6, K5c), students' parents (percentage 10.53%, Table 6, K5d) but also with a school principal (percentage 10.53%, Table 6, K5e).

**Table 7: Staffing (K6)**

(K6)	Number of references	Percentage %
Staff (K6a)	8	57.14
Recruitment of school psychologists (K6b)	6	42.86
<b>Total</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>100 %</b>

Regarding the "Staffing" of a school (Table 7, K6), most postgraduate students who participated in the research stated that the existence of suitable and specialized staff is an important factor for the school they

envision (percentage 57.14%, Table 7, K6a). However, they also considered it necessary for school psychologists to be hired to solve problems that arise in a school unit (percentage 42.86%, Table 7, K6b).

**Table 8: Planning programs/Implementation of actions (K7)**

(K7)	Number of references	Percentage %
School extroversion (K7a)	3	37.5
School – local community relation (K7b)	3	37.5
Educational programs (K7c)	2	25
<b>Total</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>100 %</b>

The planning of programs and the implementation of actions in the context of a school were also a vision for the future teachers (Table 8, K7). According to their answers, they considered the extroversion of a school (percentage 37.5%, Table 8, K7a), its connection with its local community (percentage 37.5%, Table 8, K7b), as well as the organization of educational programs (percentage 25%, Table 8, K7c), which promote a school and aim to upgrade it, significant.

**b) Qualitative analysis**

Building premises and adequate infrastructure are, according to the statements of the research participants (thematic category K1), particularly important in the formation and operation of a school, since these factors determine, to a very large extent, the outcome of the learning process. The structures of a school unit and the resources provided contribute to the formation of an ideal school, which is a vision for the

future teachers of the study. This view was shared by the participants in the research, who in the spontaneous production of their texts mentioned: "...something else I dream about for my school concerns practical issues, building infrastructure, safety conditions at the school, as well as securing financial resources...", "I would be satisfied if there was a response from the Local Government regarding building infrastructure, as there are many problems and deficiencies in materials and equipment, but zero response from those in charge..." and "...building infrastructure can effectively support teaching, e.g. beautiful buildings and classrooms, technology support, sports facilities...". Another postgraduate student mentioned: "...more financial resources to cover the basic needs of the children in a school, colors, desks with colorful chairs, beautiful classrooms...". We also read: "I would like to teach in a school that is different from the ones that exist. Not to be a sterile and ordinary school. To have comfortable spaces, a well-kept courtyard, corners inside the school

where students can rest and talk" and elsewhere: "...I would imagine a school in which each teacher could have his/her own room with the necessary materials in every subject, including the one related to New Technologies... all this can be implemented by creating a small laboratory area, well equipped with technological equipment and a workbench".

Concerning teaching and learning, the research participants stated that in an ideal school particular importance should be given to defining its goals, because they are the trigger for the quality upgrade of education. Another element, equally important, is the preparation of the curriculum because it contributes to the all-round and harmonious development of students' personality, in combination with the teaching methods to be followed, as well as the use of modern schoolbooks. These elements were emphasized in many texts, a fact that reflects the importance that postgraduate students gave to this subject. In particular, in the collected texts we read: "My vision as an educator is effective and efficient teaching. My goal is that all foreign-language students can join the Greek school and that illiteracy would be eradicated", "I dream of a school that will not operate in the confines of tutoring, processing the teaching material, and preparing for the transition to higher education", "the goal of creativity should be prioritized and children should be led on paths that do not restrict their imagination and dreams", "...my main vision is to provide a creative environment, full of stimuli for experiential and spontaneous learning..." and "education should be seen holistically and inter-subjectively to achieve the goal-vision". At another point in their texts, they mentioned: "...I envision a school classroom, which will be structured and later function as a working classroom, where students will acquire knowledge through their own effort..." and "...implementing innovations, i.e. new teaching methods, to create literate citizens...". Also, it was stated that "...in a system that is lost between Ministry's 'shoulds' and teachers' 'wants', I would envision a school highly targeted for the best for children, a school that takes into account the 'wants' and the needs of students, where children would learn how to learn and not what to learn, a school with active participation of students in the teaching process and a school book that does not aim at the educational policy of a respective government, nor at the manipulation of the world, but at the creation of worthy people", "...there should be no standard of performance for a student but to take into account the individual effort of each child, without comparisons and criticisms", "I personally appreciate, to a very large extent, the arts, in whatever way they are approached (music, visual arts, sculpture), and I dream of an education that would be based to them...", "...my vision is to be able to be spontaneous and creative, without being limited by the system or teaching material...", "to receive general, not specialized, knowledge that will serve them in the rest of their lives" and "...the knowledge

that they will get to connect with real life and make the educational process more interesting by adopting alternative teaching methods".

The profile of a teacher is an important factor in the learning process because it responds best to the introduction of innovative programs and teaching methods in education. The characteristics and personality of a teacher influence the product of teaching and the wider intellectual development and cultivation of a student. However, the training of a teacher is considered equally important because it is a factor that shapes his/her profile. Postgraduate students reported: "...my vision is to succeed in becoming a teacher who is loving, friendly, and at the same time organizational and responsible towards students, and to be able to combine humor with discussion and the learning of knowledge...", "I would like a school where teachers are democratic and impartial and fight for equality while decisions are collective and respected by all", "...to be able to use my knowledge from my undergraduate and postgraduate studies, as well as my experience from classroom, and compensatory intervention programs in order to be more effective and efficient in my work", "...one of the visions, ambitions, and desires I have concerns the management of a school classroom, so that the learning process develops in a smooth and even way...", "justice and impartiality on my part towards everyone will be a given", "my own mobilization will be great, when I feel that my offer pays off", "my vision is to be able to transfer all that I wish to the classroom for the benefit of the students but also for my own psychological upliftment", "...I wish for training and sample teaching to be carried out at regular intervals under the responsibility of a school unit...", "to be constantly trained so that we are able to apply curriculum every time in the best way" and "to deal with the various problems that I will encounter in the best and most effective way". Furthermore, we read: "...the appropriate motivation of teachers and the implementation of in-school training should be proceeded for the realization of all the aforementioned...", "to be able to inspire my colleagues for effort, organization, improvement...", "as for the part of personal development, I wish to receive continuous training and information on issues related to both the educational and administrative issues in order to be able to respond fully in everything that concerns my specialty...", "I would like all colleagues to have the same passion for our work and to have an appetite for work, correct and creative, since our profession requires responsibility, love, a good mood, and a cooperative spirit...", "...as a primary education teacher I wish to be scientifically qualified...", "I envision a classroom where students will be taught by people who inspire trust, respect, and understanding", "my vision is to work in a school that will be staffed by educational democrats and pioneers, who will exploit the potential of everyone involved", "it would be a good idea for my contribution as an educator to be a small contribution to the

*reformation of the educational system towards a more democratic and humane one...", "to take into account the needs of students and find solutions to the problems that arise" and "my vision is to be able to deal with the various problems I will encounter at school in the best and most efficient way possible".*

The multifaceted development of a student's personality and the acquisition of values, critical thinking, environmental awareness and other skills are the aspirations of a school, which the research participants envision. In the collected texts we read: *"our goal is for students to acquire basic and further skills, so that we can achieve the formation of a 'good citizen'", "transmitting values and developing the potential and skills of all students regardless of performance, participation in activities that will enhance their self-esteem and help them develop or discover their special inclinations", "my vision as an educator is to help students develop intellectually, socially, and emotionally; without necessarily being scientists", "my main concern is to help students develop critical thinking, put information under control, so that they do not adopt uncritically; to develop 'true' people who will be interested in their fellow human and will be possessed by the feeling of mutual help and solidarity... to offer stimuli that will make them sensitive not only to people, but also to the environment", "to let children live as children, to enjoy their age and to form their own opinion about the world, without imposing anything on them... only in this way they will feel free and alive", "the development of children's desire to attend at school and the creation of feelings of joy and happiness in the moments they will be there", "through this process students can discover abilities, which they did not think they possessed, while the self-esteem that will be created for them will activate their interest in new knowledge", "to provide the appropriate stimuli, so that children grow up to develop a well-rounded and composed personality", "to be able to contribute to their education and in the development of their potential, so that they become cheerful and happy" and "I envision a school that will be based on the students' self-activity and on the construction of their critical thinking".* And elsewhere: *"I envision creative students, without prejudices, with freedom of ideas and goals of mutual trust and respect, hoping, over the years, to develop into versatile personalities and characters", "my vision, as a teacher candidate, is of a school that contributes to the formation of a proper character in a child; a school where students, freed from anxiety and fear of the new and different, will treat the school space as something of their own", "...to create anything that will favor the all-round development of students..." and "a teacher has in his/her hands the most pure and malleable material, children, to whom he/she should give the possibility to create... and inspire them, so that they create personalities that will improve social conditions".*

The creation of a good communication climate in a school classroom and the establishment of supportive interpersonal relationships between teachers and students' parents, a school principal and teachers and teachers among themselves are factors of vital importance for the smooth operation of a school unit and the achievement of the intended learning goals. A teacher's communication skills play a catalytic role in them. In the collected texts, we read: *"...my vision is to create a positive climate, where all the involved members (teachers, students, parents) have direct cooperation and communication with each other...", "a positive climate and good interpersonal relations always lead to positive results for the educational process", "a prerequisite for all these is good cooperation with colleagues, respect, and the development of trust", "a cooperative, decentralized school, where teachers will not have the leader and parents against them in an inspectional manner but through a holistic process they will strive to improve the conditions of learning and the education of children" and "the most basic element, according to my point, is maintaining meaningful communication with students and their parents... so all other processes will be achieved more easily and efficiently".* In some texts the following are mentioned: *"...to manage, as far as it concerns me, to create an atmosphere of cooperation with colleagues and also with students' parents", "to have a spirit of cooperation with both children and their parents; and excellent communication, understanding, and assistance between educational staff and school management", "everyone would be interested in the good of school and its lively material, and there would always be a collegial and friendly atmosphere that would help its improvement and development", "my vision, as an educator, is first to create a positive atmosphere with my students; so that they love school and want to come to it and at the same time create good cooperative relations with their parents, so that they facilitate my work", "I believe that interpersonal relationships in such a school should be ideally perfect, without fear of expressing feelings and resolving conflicts" and "I envision mutual communication and cooperation both with fellow teachers of school unit, the parents of students and my own students in order to be productive and efficient in my work".* Other texts mention the following: *"I would like a school in which democracy and equality will prevail and decisions will be collective to be accepted by all", "...maximum possible cooperation with all involved, parents, students, colleagues...", "special emphasis on the creation of a good school climate where there will be respect and appreciation among the members of school, support for teachers in their work, but also interest in each one individually" and "creating good interpersonal relationships so that everyone feels school as a familiar place, where collectiveness and teamwork are what will bring the desired results".*

A basic priority for the operation of a school unit is its staffing. The quality and adequacy of the

human resources that will work in it are an essential condition for a school to successfully respond to its tasks. This fact is highlighted by the research participants, who in their written statements stated: "...teachers, for their part, can easily ask for and receive appropriate and practical help in anything that arises, e.g. psychological support...", "to have psychologists, who intervene in any crisis or conflict situation", "I would like to be in a working environment with adequate staff and school psychologists, to solve issues when they arise... because this is how a model school is structured and organized", "...in a working environment that deals with people, mainly children, the presence of a psychologist is required to approach not only them but also staff, to listen to their needs and difficulties and to provide solutions when necessary..." and "...in these cases, a school psychologist comes to cover needs that should have already been covered...".

School units collaborate with public organizations and local government agencies to design programs and implement actions that highlight the school's extroversion and strengthen its connection with the local community. These actions are implemented with the participation of all members of a school unit and aim to promote the school and its work. In the spontaneous production of their texts, the research participants stated: "My vision of an ideal school includes a school open to society and the world, where all perceptions will be accepted and critically processed...", "...environmental activities with the operation of a botanical garden, with space granted by Municipality...", "adoption of local historical monuments and cooperation with Local Government with the ultimate aim of highlighting and promoting them", "I will seek to connect school-society believing that there is a long sequence between them and that the improvement of one also means the improvement of the other..." and "...participating in actions and educational programs would be a wishful work for me...".

## CONCLUSIONS

The findings that follow are the result of this research and cannot be generalized due to the limited sample. However, the implications hidden in these conclusions could be a motivation for a more in-depth study.

The survey showed that the postgraduate students who participated envisioned a school with excellent building facilities and sufficient infrastructure. Included in this vision are modern school buildings with comfortable, sunny, and airy spaces, which will have accessibility for people with special needs and safety systems to prevent accidents. The insufficient maintenance of school infrastructure and the lack of technological equipment reduce the performance of the educational work (Theodosiadou, 2013) and make it difficult for the proper functioning of school units

(Germanos, 2006). The establishment of organized workshops, sports facilities, a library, a reading room, a music room, and events are a necessity for students since they can be used outside of teaching time. When the environment of school and the configuration of the courtyard area reflect the expectations of teachers and students, only then can the respective educational leadership aspire that the school will be a place that is welcoming, friendly and lovely to its members.

One of the goals of education is the improvement of traditional practices and the emergence of new teaching methods (Chatzidimou, 2015; Efthymiou & Vitsilaki, 2007; Eggen & Kauchak, 2017; Kossyvaki, 2006; Rellos, 2007; Taratori-Tsalkatidou, 2015), which meet the modern demands of both students and society in general. The design of multifunctional curricula is a challenge for every school unit, as it reflects the educational innovations and changes that will have to follow (Chatzidimou & Chatzidimou, 2014). The goals for creativity, pioneering, and innovation in education should be a priority in a model school. Education is not only a learning but also a psychological process (Elliott, Kratochwill, Littlefield Cook, & Travers, 2000). For this reason, students' motivations, interests and desires should be taken seriously into account in the design of a curriculum, which should be based on intersubjectivity and experiential learning. In addition, the adoption of innovative and alternative forms of teaching (Panteliadou & Filippatou, 2013) helps to cultivate internal motivation (Schunk, Pintrich, & Meece, 2010) and the creative expression of students. An important place in all this have school textbooks, which, despite the rapid technological development, is the cornerstone of the educational system. Through this knowledge, values, ideas and standards are transmitted to students (Lind, 2009). Therefore, special importance should be given to their writing, as they are the structural element of pedagogical practice (Bonidis, 2004).

A school is a social and educational institution that performs specific social and educational functions. The leading role in these functions is played by the teacher, who should carry out his/her professional mission in an efficient manner. The factors that shape the profile of an effective teacher (Symeonidou, 2014) are his/her personal and professional elements, combined with his/her training. A balanced and healthy personality, in conjunction with pedagogical and teaching competence (Taratori-Tsalkatidou, 2006), are the most important characteristics of such a teacher. Empathy, pleasant disposition, fair and impartial behavior, respect for students, democratic style and effective management of a school classroom are important elements of a teacher's personality, which highlight educational work and, in connection with his/her scientific constitution and training, decisively influence his/her role and outline the type of education he/she applies (Konstantinou, 2007).

Ensuring high-quality education contributes to the harmonious and balanced development of students on a cognitive, emotional and social level. School, apart from family, is the most important institution in society. Its goal, in addition to the most complete education, is the all-round development of the child, that is, the simultaneous cultivation of his/her intellectual abilities, his/her mental world, and his/her sociability (Poulos, 2008). A modern school adapted to the needs of the time (Triarchi-Herrmann, 2005; Tsagkarli-Diamanti, 2008), puts students at the center of the educational process and prepares them to develop autonomous action, critical thinking (Mavroskoufis, 2008) and environmental consciousness. Emphasizing their active participation in learning activities, students' consciousness is strengthened based on the values of collectivity, solidarity and respect for the environment.

The modern way of education has brought about changes in the relationships between people, compared to those that applied in the past. The distant teacher-student relationship, with the imposition of authoritarianism and the creation of feelings of intimidation, failed, at least, to bring about the desired results (Stamatis, 2012). Learning has better results when it takes place in a place where there are good interpersonal relationships (Anagnostopoulou, 2005; Koula, 2011). Cultivating a positive school climate, free discussions between people, a democratic attitude, the free possibility of speech and opinion and the encouragement of activities and reflection bridge human relationships (Baros, Stergiou & Chatzidimou, 2014) and create feelings of equality and reciprocity trust between teachers and students and their parents, as well as colleagues.

The quality and adequacy of human resources in an agency/institution is an essential condition for it to be able to successfully respond to its institutional tasks. The staffing of a school unit with suitable and highly qualified staff is considered particularly important because the people who will make up its potential will, at any time, be able to cope seamlessly, effectively and efficiently with the needs of planning and managing its work (Stravakou, 2003). Teacher is the main factor that determines the quality of education (Stravakou, 2018). For a school unit to respond effectively to the demands of the modern school reality, it should be staffed by people who have scientific, pedagogical, didactic and professional responsibilities (Balita, 2014; Chatzidimou & Stravakou, 2003; Fokiali & Raptis, 2008; Katanou, 2006; Oikonomidis, 2011). Beyond this, however, another element that concerns the strengthening of the school community and the possibility for students and teachers to be able to effectively manage critical and unpredictable classifications (Christakis, 2011) is the permanent presence of school psychologists in school. This is a request that is frequently and strongly made by teachers, as their input is seen as a catalyst in finding

effective strategies for handling problem behaviors when they arise.

The connection of school with life is a basic principle of modern Pedagogy. For this reason, the vision of a school unit is the pursuit of extroversion and the formation of a creative educational environment, which will aim to open the school to its local and wider society and to develop cooperation with other schools, the Local Government, or other agencies. The development of collaborative relationships between them results in the exchange of opinions and experiences on issues of social and educational interest and the promotion of acts and actions aimed at the socialization of students and their taking an active role in dealing with the problems of the society that surrounds them. Through this process, students acquire autonomous action, collective spirit, and environmental awareness. This connection between school and life revolutionizes the entire process of education (Chatzidimou, 2015). School ceases to be a separate part of society with an independent role. Rather, it is a vital component of society and offers its knowledge and practices as a basis for its inclusion in society. A catalytic role in this is played by the teacher, who with his/her scientific training and experience can support such efforts and initiatives. A typical example is the participation of schools in European programs, which provide teachers with the opportunity to communicate with colleagues from other countries, broaden their cognitive horizons, revise existing perceptions of the educational process (Athanasakis & Mitrentsi, 2013) and strengthen their scientific background.

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