



TEACHING INFORMATION TECHNOLOGIES TO STUDENTS WITH MODERATE INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY – TEACHERS’ PERSPECTIVE

Alexandros Chatzoglouⁱ

South-West University “Neofit Rilski”,
Blagoevgrad, Bulgaria

Abstract:

Information technologies teachers face different challenges in their work when teaching their school subjects to students with intellectual disabilities. This paper points out some of the most important and most common challenges and makes the relevant paths for overcoming these obstacles to achieving good academic results.

Keywords: information technologies, students, moderate intellectual disability

1. Introduction

Information technologies – like everything – are a risky and sometimes dangerous phenomena. As Robert Lee Konsbruck (2017) states, *“The ongoing computing and communications revolution has numerous economic and social impacts on modern society and requires serious social science investigation in order to manage its risks and dangers. Such work would be valuable for both social policy and technology design. Decisions have to be taken carefully. Many choices being made now will be costly or difficult to modify in the future”*. As Omede (2014) informs, *“scientific and technological progress of the last few decades has brought not only the economic globalization and worldwide expansion of technologies but changes in social relations, culture, and education as well”*. The fast development of telecommunications, media and information technologies bears a huge potential of improving the quality of life. It is particularly vital for those, who cannot obtain an appropriate level of education without the assistance of educational and technology specialists, i.e. people with special educational needs. Technological advance has unveiled meaningful social opportunities for such citizens by providing more convenient access to information and communication tools.

As Hamidi et al. (2011) declare, today knowledge and information are the main keys to obtaining productivity, competition, wealth and comfort. So, countries have concentrated on approaches for increasing the gaining of better-quality education. In order to develop human capital, it is necessary to look at our schools and education and

ⁱ Correspondence: email alex.chatzoglou@gmail.com

see if our education is progressing in step with the world that is changing and developing quickly. The problem is that if we compare the modern world with the last century, we are confronted with dazzling developments in sciences, business, medical services, communications and many other fields.

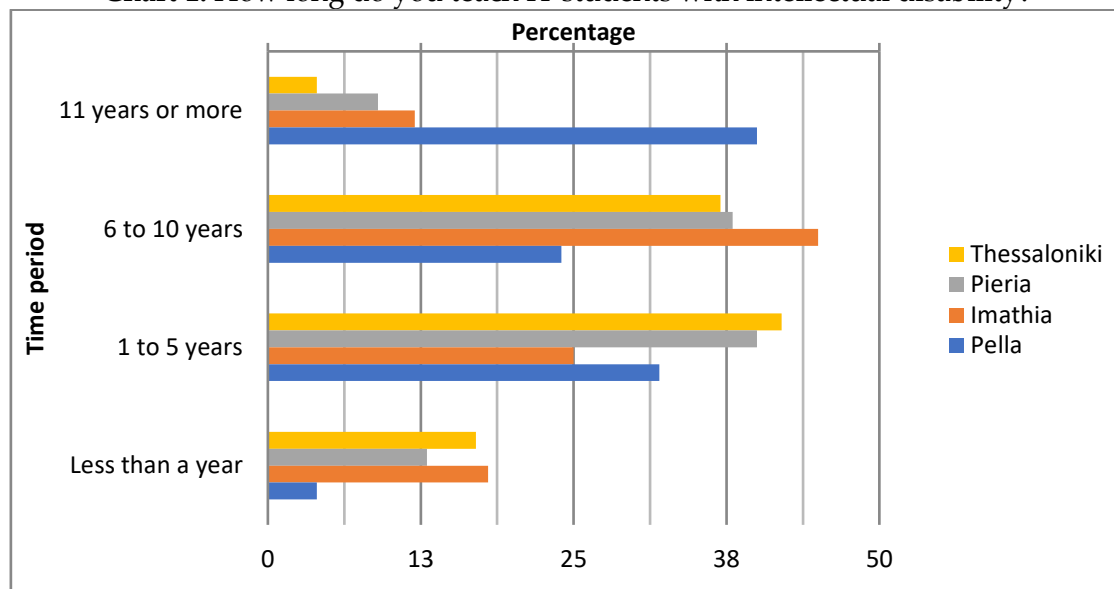
According to Blanchard (2017), there is difference between a computer science and information technology as well as in the degree there are three fields typically associated with the study of computers at the college level. Computer engineering, information technology and computer science are all disciplines within the same realm of study. However, each speciality focuses on specific aspects of the field, and careers within the three areas vary greatly.

2. Research data analysis

In this paper, we are going to present part of the summary results data gathered from the preliminary special teachers’ questionnaire we applied during our research. We conducted this viewpoints study before we realized our experimental program in order to gain information from colleagues on the issue we research. We describe our participants’ data and their answers in the charts below. This is the summary of data gathered from teachers working in different special schools in the prefectures of 1) Pella, 2) Imathia, 3) Pieria, and 4) Thessaloniki.

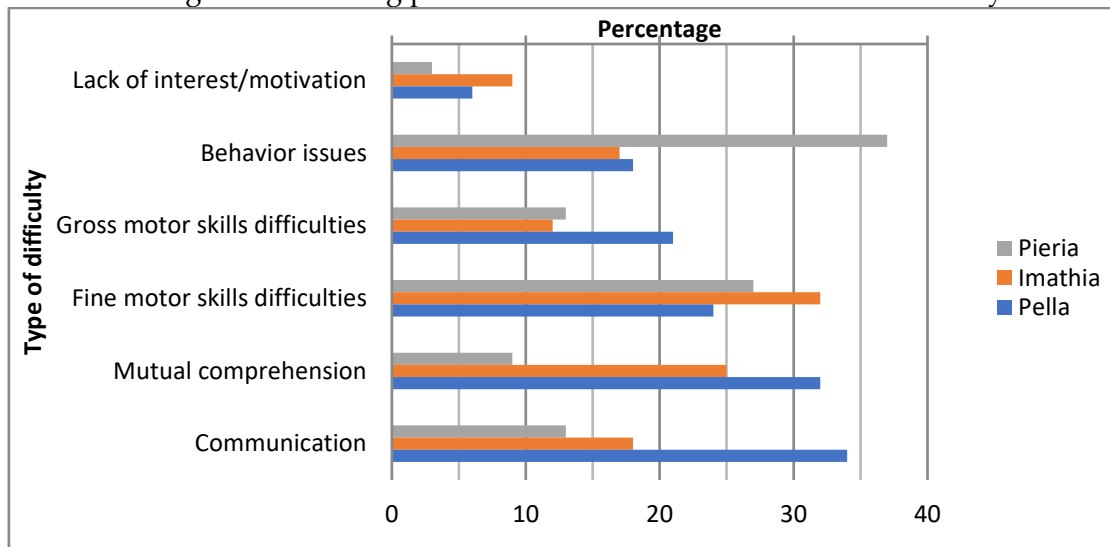
Note: In Greece, the abbreviation of “EEEK” refers to the special educational vocational training schools with an age range of 12 – 18, where our research took place.

Chart 1: How long do you teach IT students with intellectual disability?



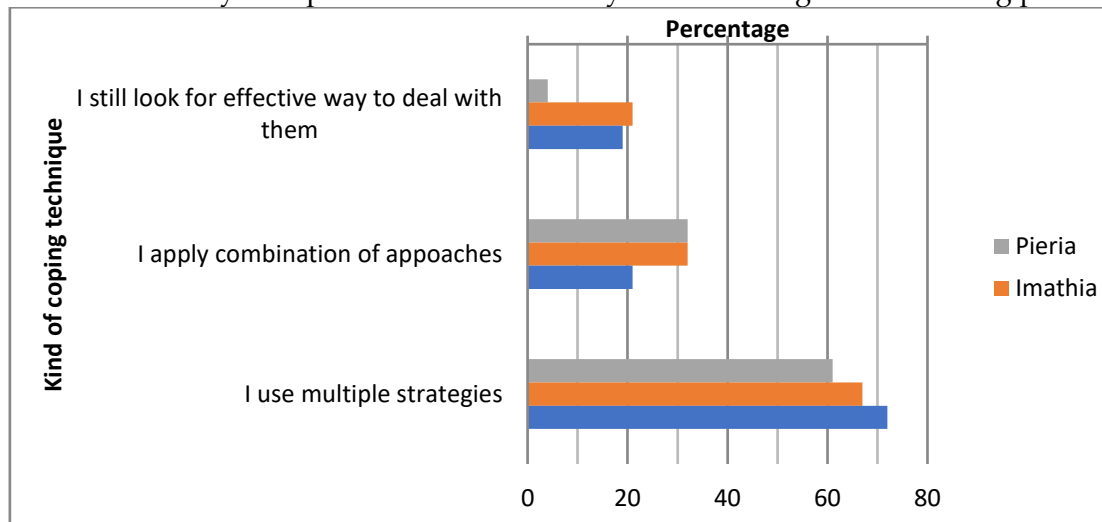
We can see the dynamics of teaching periods for the four different prefectures of Greece where special schools are in function for students with a moderate degree of intellectual disability. Most of the teachers have experience between one and ten years in the field of IT teaching to this target group of students.

Chart 2: Which are the main obstacles that you have to overcome during the IT teaching process of students with intellectual disability?



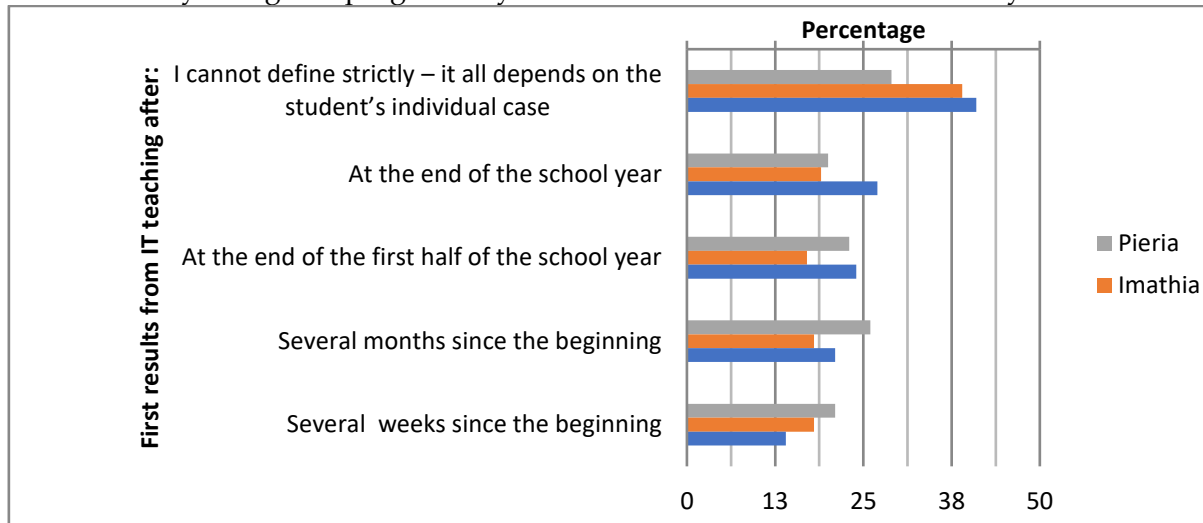
The chart shows some of the most common issues that teachers are facing when they work with students with intellectual disability. We can see that in Pieria special schools, for example, behavior issues are the most common difficulty to cope with during the lessons. Mutual comprehension and communication are the difficulties in Pella. The chart provides us with summarized valuable information about the teaching difficulties for IT teachers in special schools.

Chart 3: How do you cope with the difficulties you face during the IT teaching process?



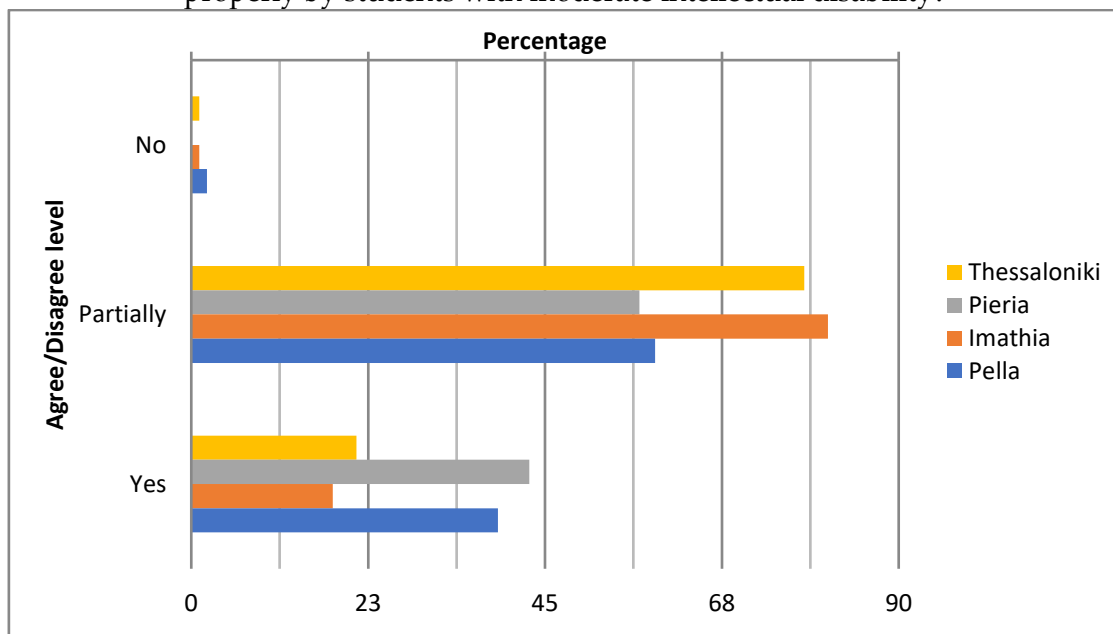
As seen from the chart, most of the teachers in all four prefectures have found their way to cope with the difficulties they face in the classroom. However, there are still some that keep on looking for such.

Chart 4: In what period of time since the onset of IT teaching you register progress in your students with intellectual disability?



Most special teachers claim that the students they work with have their strictly individual progress due to the individual characteristics they have. The resting state they can speak of some noticeable results at the end of the school year. It is all different for the different cases of students – something expected and not surprising having in mind the specifics of this target group.

Chart 5: Do you find that IT knowledge can be acquired properly by students with moderate intellectual disability?



It is interesting how most of the special teachers are supportive and believe in their students’ capacity and abilities to learn – even on a basic level – IT knowledge. They are supportive and encouraging towards students with intellectual disability. They also

remain realistic, claiming that the students can practically acquire all planned skills and information within the school subject.

3. Discussion and conclusion

Based on the research results we can draw the following conclusions:

1. We registered the dynamics of teaching periods for the four different prefectures of Greece where special schools are in function for students with a moderate degree of intellectual disability. Most of the teachers have experience between one and ten years in the field of IT teaching to this target group of students.
2. Some of the most common issues that teachers are facing when they work with students with intellectual disability are behavior issues, mutual comprehension and communication.
3. Most of the teachers in all four prefectures have found a way to cope with the difficulties they face in the classroom. However, there are still some that keep on looking for such.
4. Most special teachers claim that the students they work with have their strictly individual progress due to the individual characteristics they have. The resting state they can speak of some noticeable results at the end of the school year.
5. Most of the special teachers are supportive and believe in their students’ capacity and abilities to learn – even on a basic level – IT knowledge, however, remaining realistic, they claim that the students can practically acquire all planned skills and information within the school subject.

Conflict of interest statement

The author declares no conflicts of interest.

About the Author

Alexandros P. Chatzoglou (PhD) is a special education teaching professional. He teaches Educational Psychology in University of Macedonia (Thessaloniki) and independent living (social skills) to students with special educational needs. He holds a PhD in Special Education. He has 15 years of professional experience of research and teaching in the field of special education. He has published articles in international conferences about special education.

References

1. Blanchard, Jessica (December 15th, 2017). Difference Between a Computer Science & Information Technology Degree. Retrieved from: <https://online.king.edu/information-technology/difference-between-a-computer-science-information-technology-degree/>

2. Hamidi, F., M. Meshkat, M. Rezaee & M. Jafari (2011). Information Technology in Education. *Procedia Computer Science* 3 (2011) 369–373
3. Konsbruck Robert Lee (2017). Impacts of Information Technology on Society in the new Century. Retrieved from: <https://www.zurich.ibm.com/pdf/news/Konsbruck.pdf>
4. Omede, Andrew A. (2014). Information and Communications Technologies in Special Needs Education: Challenges and Prospects. *European Journal of Business and Management*. Vol.6, No.39, 2014.

Creative Commons licensing terms

Author(s) will retain the copyright of their published articles agreeing that a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (CC BY 4.0) terms will be applied to their work. Under the terms of this license, no permission is required from the author(s) or publisher for members of the community to copy, distribute, transmit or adapt the article content, providing a proper, prominent and unambiguous attribution to the authors in a manner that makes clear that the materials are being reused under permission of a Creative Commons License. Views, opinions and conclusions expressed in this research article are views, opinions and conclusions of the author(s). Open Access Publishing Group and *European Journal of Public Health Studies* shall not be responsible or answerable for any loss, damage or liability caused in relation to/arising out of conflicts of interest, copyright violations and inappropriate or inaccurate use of any kind content related or integrated into the research work. All the published works are meeting the Open Access Publishing requirements and can be freely accessed, shared, modified, distributed and used in educational, commercial and non-commercial purposes under a [Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License \(CC BY 4.0\)](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/).