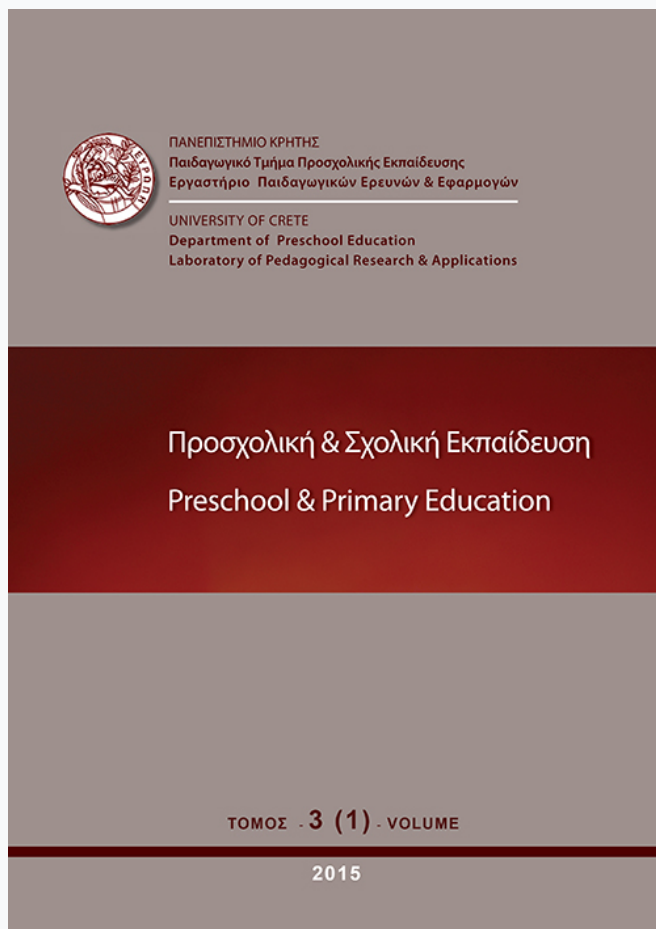


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### Arts education offered by Greek Universities to future pre-school and primary school teachers

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## **Arts education in Greek Universities for future kindergarten and primary school teachers: departmental programs and students' views**

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**Summary.** The arts education of generalist teachers in pre-school and primary schools seems to be a matter of great importance, because it is they who mainly practice arts education in school with children up to the age of 12. The purpose of this study is to describe and evaluate the arts education offered to pre-service pre-school and primary school teachers in the departments of education of all universities in Greece. The data were collected from two sources. First, data on the characteristics of the arts courses examined were collected from university documents on the syllabus of every department in the study. Second, a questionnaire was used to collect data on what the students at the examined departments believed about the arts education they were getting. The study showed that the arts education offered in Greek departments of education has developed in a peculiar manner and has problematic aspects. Even today, it is lacking in quantity, of a lower standard than other courses, and with an orientation that either is more mechanical or more theoretical than it should be. Both the analysis of the documents and of the students' views highlight changes that seem to be necessary to qualitatively and quantitatively improve the arts education and training provided in the departments examined.

**Keywords:** Arts education, Greek Faculties of Education, teachers' education, pre-school teacher, primary school teacher

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## Introduction

Recent research on arts education has shed light on the relation between the arts and cognition (Dorn, 1999; Efland, 2002; Eisner, 2002). The arts are now considered to be literacies, that is, modes of making and communicating meanings (Albers & Harste, 2007; Kress, 2003). Children's engagement with the arts can significantly improve their perceptions and behavior vis-à-vis learning, enrich their modes of expression, and bring about a creative way of thinking (Bamford, 2006; Catterall, 2002; Deasy, 2002; Dickinson, 2006; Kress, 2003; Rooney, 2004; Sotiropoulou-Zormpala, 2012; Stevenson, 2006; Winner & Hetland, 2007). Based on these considerations, agencies such as UNESCO (2006), the Council of the European Union (2010) and the European Parliament (2009) are coordinating in an effort to integrate arts into the totality of school curricula. Thus, generalist teachers are a significant factor in implementing arts education (Amadio, Truong, & Tschurennev, 2006; Kowalchuk & Stone, 2000). This is mainly the case in preschool and primary education, as it is the generalist teachers who mainly practice arts education with children up to the age of twelve (Burnaford, Brown, Doherty, & McLaughlin, 2007; Deasy, 2003; Eurydice, 2009).

While pre-service generalist teachers should have a solid grounding in strategies for creating opportunities for children to make and respond to art, the recent international evidence shows that they receive an underdeveloped arts education in their university studies, and are not prepared for the realities of their future working environment (Alter, Hays, & O' Hara, 2009; Ballantyne, Barrett, Temmerman, Harrison, & Meissner, 2009; Bamford, 2006; Hudson & Hudson, 2005; 2007).

The problems in the arts education of pre-service teachers can be confirmed by evidence from various European countries (Eurydice, 2009; KEA European affairs, 2009), and from countries outside Europe, such as Australia, the USA, and various African countries (Bamford, 2006; Russell-Bowie, 2010; 2013). The literature sheds light on certain deficiencies in the arts education offered kindergarten and primary school teachers. One such is that the time devoted to arts courses is limited and has indeed decreased over the recent years (Duncum, 1999; Eurydice, 2009; Harland, et al., 2000; Russell-Bowie, 2012). Also, with regard to the content, the arts education offered is not distributed equally among each of the art disciplines (Morgan, & Hansen, 2010; Russell-Bowie, 2010; 2013) in primary curricula (Benavot, 2004; Eurydice, 2009; Ministerial Decision 21072a/C2, Official Government Gazette, 303, 304/v. A',B'/Mars, 2003; Poyet & Bacconnier, 2006). Furthermore, it seems that the arts courses offered do not address the multiplicity of orientations which 'arts in education' can include, such as, artistic skills, aesthetic judgment, cultural heritage and diversity, expression and creativity (Duncum, 1999; McKean, 2000). Arts courses in faculties of education do not cultivate necessary skills either on a personal or a professional level (Ballantyne, Barrett, Temmerman, Harrison, & Meissner, 2009; Hudson & Hudson, 2005; Russell-Bowie, 2012). Also, they aim more at a technical rather than a critical teaching of art in schools (Miller, Nicholas, & Lambeth, 2008). Briefly, in current pre-service teachers' degree programs there are gaps between the research, academic and teaching aspects of the arts courses (Ballantyne et al., 2009).

These problems are reflected in the negative perceptions of pre-service teachers about their arts education (Alter et al., 2009; Grauer, 1998; Lemon & Gravis, 2013). The above evidence is not a good omen for the implementation of arts education in schools (Amadio et al., 2006; Bamford, 2006), given that the stronger a background in the arts pre-service teachers have, the more confident they will feel to teach art, to create authentic learning environments, and to effectively implement trans-disciplinary and cross-curricular learning with the arts as a central focus (Davies, 2010; Dixon & Senior, 2009; Downing, Lamont,

Newby, 2007; Gibson, 2003; Grauer, 1998; Hudson & Hudson, 2005; Kowalchuk & Stone, 2000; Nderu-Boddington, 2008; Ogden, DeLuca, & Searle, 2010; Russell-Bowie, 2012).

An important step to deal with problems in generalist pre-service teachers' arts education would be to have surveys with information on all countries. There would be an opportunity to examine the extent, severity and nature of these problems that would inform the decisions of arts educational policy on a national and international level (O' Farrell & Meban, 2003). As far as Greece is concerned very few data are available. Some evidence comes from comparative data of European countries which indicates that the arts education provided in the Greek faculties of education lags behind in terms of how compulsory and systematic it is (Eurydice, 2009). Other data comes from a study which examined the current arts education provided at the two departments of education (preschool and primary) at the University of Crete (Sotiropoulou-Zormpala & Trouli, 2011). The results of this study shed light on the prejudices that contribute to the lack of sufficiency and range of the arts education offered. In addition, in a study that examined whether the arts courses provided pre-service kindergarten teachers in Greece were oriented toward the teaching methods of arts activities (Sotiropoulou, Trouli, & Linardakis, 2010) the findings showed that the arts education provided focused more on theory and students' 'personal development' than on using arts education in school. Based on the previous findings, this paper attempts to draw a more detailed picture of current arts education offered to pre-service kindergarten and primary school generalist teachers in all faculties of education in Greece.

### **The education and arts education of pre-service kindergarten and primary school teachers in modern Greece**

In the history of modern Greece, the education of teachers can be divided into three main periods which correspond to three different models of education (Bouzakis, Tzikas, & Anthopoulos, 1998; Evagelopoulos, 1987). The first period began a few years after the foundation of the modern Greek state, when the education of teachers came under the jurisdiction of vocational (secondary) schools called *Didaskaleia* (Law 6/18-2-1834 "for Primary Schools"). The education provided was not standardized and was influenced by political developments and party disputes (Dimaras, 1993). The arts courses provided for, that is, 'vocal and ecclesiastic music' and 'sketching' were frequently not taught at all (Lefas, 1942).

The second period began in 1933 (Law 5802, Official Government Gazette, 286/v.A'/September, 1933, "for the foundation of Pedagogical Academies") during which, influenced by German educational models, there was an attempt to unify and improve the education of teachers in institutions of higher learning: (post-secondary) "Pedagogical Academies" for primary school teachers (Antoniou, 2002) and "Kindergarten Teachers' Schools" (Charitos, 1996) for preschool teachers. In the critical and turbulent period that followed (WWII, the Civil War and the Military Junta), there were some, but not consistent steps taken so that teacher training curricula could be freed from their classicistic, moralistic and nationalistic roots, and acquire a more progressive orientation (Haralampous, 1990). Teachers in this period were regarded as the representatives of central authority and shapers of a "national consciousness", and because of this their education was closely and strictly controlled by the state. The arts courses included in the teacher education programs until the 1980s dealt with very specific areas of music (singing, instruments) and the visual arts (calligraphy, sketching, and crafts). At the end of this period, some curricula began timidly to include lessons in folk studies and demotic dances. It is worth noting that among the prerequisites to take entrance exams for the Pedagogical Academies and Kindergarten

Teachers' Schools was a "good singing voice" (Bouzakis et al., 1998, p. 59). A general conclusion about this period is that, while arts education was reinforced in more developed countries, being considered a means for developing taste among the masses, in Greece arts education was seen as not necessary and frequently not implemented (Stavrou, 2009).

Presidential Decree 89/1983 marked the beginning of the third period of teacher education in Greece, providing for the establishment of the first university department of education. This brought huge changes in teacher education and training. The aim of this education was to create well-educated teachers, so the duration of studies became four years, and future teachers had access to an academic education and research (Stamelos, 1999). The General Assembly of every department formulated its own degree program, which reflected the philosophy and vision of the particular academic community with regard to the new type of teacher. Generally, although not homogeneous, all the programs acquired an ever stronger psycho-educational nature and they were modernised by adding new fields of study on the teaching profession within the more general situation and changes that were occurring in Greece, Europe and the world (Kalogiannaki & Makrakis, 1996). However, from the first studies on teachers' education provided by the Universities (Andreou, Anthopoulos, & Daglis, 1990) it was clear that arts courses were not being brought up to the standards of tertiary education. It is indicative that in the 90s these courses were referred to as 'activity courses' (Antoniou, 2002) and covered music, aesthetic education (this term referred only to the visual arts) and physical education (this was also referred to as 'sports' and was not related to the arts). The hours devoted to these courses were not the same in the various programs and ranged from 18.18% to 4.2%. In addition, only 2.15% of staff with academic qualifications taught such courses as they were, for the most part, handed over to less qualified staff (without a doctorate). In some university departments, arts courses were placed in a category together with foreign languages as 'adjunct educators courses' (Charitos, 1996; Stamelos, 1999). Furthermore, arts courses were usually assigned fewer credits than those courses that were considered "academic" (education, psychology etc). Even more striking was the fact that the arts education provided for future kindergarten teachers was different and superior to that offered to future primary school teachers (Stavrou, 2009). A positive development at this time was the 'Melina' program (see: <http://www.prmelina.gr/a7/a722.htm>), which provided for a reinforcement of arts courses in the primary schools. Within this program, the hours devoted to art were increased, and artists were invited to participate in the teaching process. However, this program was implemented only casually because teachers had not been educated as to how to support it. The arts courses offered in their tertiary education were not in any way connected with the philosophy and aims of the arts activities provided for in school curricula (Stavrou, 2009). Furthermore, given the more general shift of current Greek school curricula, art has to be used in a cross-curricular manner (Chrysostomou, 2007; Ministerial Decision 21072a/C2, Official Government Gazette, 303, 304/v. A',B'/March, 2003).

Within the socio-political and educational context described, the current arts education of pre-service generalist teachers is provided as part of the education and training coursework within the university departments. These courses are provided at the nine departments of preschool education and the nine departments of primary education at Greek universities and are distributed throughout a 4-years degree program.

## **Purpose of the study**

The purpose of this study is to describe and evaluate the arts education offered to

pre-service kindergarten and primary school teachers in the departments of education at the universities of Greece. As such, the study focuses on specific characteristics of the arts courses offered which are indicative of the adequacy of the arts education, and on the views of pre-service kindergarten and primary teachers as to their arts education.

In order to explore the arts education offered to the students of the departments of education at the universities of Greece, the authors examined data concerning:

- i. The quantity of arts courses offered to the students of the departments of education in Greece, and whether these courses are compulsory or optional;
- ii. The content of arts courses offered. More specifically to what extent each art discipline is offered;
- iii. The orientation of arts courses offered. More particularly what types of objectives the courses have, and what mode of instruction is used when they are taught;
- iv. The teaching position of the instructors in the arts courses offered;
- v. The views of pre-service kindergarten and primary school teachers with regard to the arts education offered, and their suggestions that may improve the courses.

## Method

The study was carried out over the 2011-2012 academic year. The arts education offered in a total of eighteen departments of education was examined: 9 departments (bachelor degree programs) of preschool education (PRED), in which teachers of 4-6-year-old children are educated; another 9 departments of primary education (PRID) in which teachers of 6- to 12-year-old children are educated. The departments belong to the 9 Faculties of Education in Greece, (Universities of the Aegean, Athens, Crete, Ioannina, Patra, Thessaloniki, Thessaly, Thrace and Western Macedonia).

### *Data collection and analysis process*

A descriptive method was used to gather data on the state of the arts education offered in the departments of preschool and primary school education on a quantitative and a qualitative level (O'Farrell & Meban, 2003). The data were collected from two sources.

First, data on the characteristics of the arts courses examined were collected from university documents from every department in the study; The term 'university documents' refers to course guides, course lists, lecture timetables, arts course outlines, and the resumes of the instructors teaching the arts courses. After an initial familiarization with these university documents, themes associated with the research questions were investigated. For every theme, a thematic/content analysis of the documents was carried out. These themes were coded and corresponded to the four research questions on the quantity, the content, the orientation of arts education, and the teaching position of the instructors. The coding and analysis of the data was carried out by the authors, and a second time by undergraduate students taking a research methodology seminar. The data coding and analysis between the two groups of raters had the same or very nearly the same results.

Second, a questionnaire was used to collect data on what the students at the examined departments believed about the arts education they were getting. The collected data offered evidence about the fifth research question, that is, the views of pre-service kindergarten and primary teachers with regard to the weaknesses of the arts education offered in their university studies.

With regard to the first research question, the authors sought to establish how many arts courses are offered out of the total number of courses in the PREDs and PRIDs. 'Arts

courses' were considered those courses related to the four disciplines of art that are usually included in the curricula of elementary schools (Benavot, 2004; Eurydice, 2009; Poyet & Bacconnier, 2006), i.e. theatre, music, movement expression - dance and visual arts courses. 'Arts courses' also include 'general arts/aesthetic education' courses, that is, those that take a broader approach to the arts and deal with them as a unified whole, such as subjects concerned with folk studies, aesthetic theories, the teaching of art, the history of art, the psychology of art, and museum education. It is worth noting that literature, despite its undoubted aesthetic nature and value, was not included in the arts disciplines because the qualitative data analysis indicated that this course is regarded as a language course in both school curricula and bachelor degree programs. This rationale provided the key-words used to make the list in which the units were the arts courses. Data on this was gleaned from course lists and timetables. The same sources were used to examine whether arts courses were compulsory or not and how many, out of the total number, were compulsory. This was done to examine whether and to what extent the universities in the study consider a minimum of arts education necessary for future teachers.

Another feature that was examined was the content of the arts education and more specifically the kinds of arts disciplines taught. Information on this was collected from the titles of the offered courses as they appear in the course guides, lists and timetables. Therefore, following the definition of arts courses (as was explained in the previous paragraph), the analysis of the variety of arts courses offered in the PREDs and PRIDs was based on the categories of 'music', 'visual arts', 'movement expression', 'drama', and 'general aesthetic education'. Using key-words, all the arts courses were classified into the above categories. This provided information on whether all the categories were given the same weight within the departments being examined.

The orientations that arts courses could have as to the various aspects of arts education, such as creative, academic, productive, technical (McKaen, 2000; Miller et al., 2008) was examined in the third research question. Data were collected by looking into the objectives of every course and the instruction modes used. The titles and outlines of the courses that the instructors provided for students either in print or online were examined as to their objectives. In the outlines of some arts courses, the instructors stated that the objective was the personal aesthetic development of the students, whereas other instructors focused more on the arts teaching readiness of the students. A third category of courses was considered to be those whose outlines combined both the above objectives. Using key-phrases for every one of these three cases, a thematic/content analysis was carried out. To analyse these data, arts courses were organised into three categories: courses of personal aesthetic development, of arts teaching readiness and those with mixed objectives. The purpose was to see to what extent the arts courses sought to prepare students to use their arts education in school. Similarly, a thematic analysis was carried out on the titles and outlines in terms of the mode of instruction used to see the orientation of the arts courses. Key phrases were used to classify the arts courses into three categories depending on whether the instructor stated that the course was taught by lecture, experiential (practical, hands-on training) approach or more than one mode of instruction.

In Greece, to fill a teaching position in a university department, the General Assembly of that department decides to issue an announcement. Therefore, the position of arts course instructors was considered to be a good indicator of whether the university/academic community acknowledged their significance, what status they ascribed to arts courses, and the academic level of these courses. Information was collected on the position held by instructors of arts courses from their CVs. The data were analysed based on key-words related to two categories: one with those instructors who held the position of professor (lecturers, assistant professors, associate professors and professors) and another,

which corresponds to the remaining instructors (adjunct educators and teaching assistants) who usually have fewer qualifications than the former (Stamelos, 1999, p. 126).

It was also considered necessary to examine the views of students in the departments of education toward their arts education, given that they are related to students' prospects of becoming confident and effective when they use arts education in school (Davies, 2010; Dixon & Senior, 2009; Downing et al., 2007; Gibson, 2003; Grauer, 1998; Hudson & Hudson, 2005; Nderu-Boddington, 2008; Ogden et al. 2010; Russell-Bowie, 2012). To answer the last research question of the current study, data were collected from a sample of students who were asked to fill in an anonymous short questionnaire developed for the purpose of this study that consisted of three questions. The first question was "if they had attended arts courses during their studies". This question was considered necessary since arts courses may not be compulsory in many (mostly primary) departments of education. The second question was the 5-scale Likert type "Is your aesthetic training given by the University adequate". The third question was an open one, where students were asked to state the main problems in the arts education offered by their degree program and to offer suggestions about "the improvements that must be made".

The statistical analysis of the data from the documents and the questionnaire includes descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation, frequencies, and percentages) that were calculated with SPSS-IBM v.21.

### *The sample of the study*

The population of reference was students in their 4th year of studies of a four-year degree (typically a Bachelor of Education). A short questionnaire was given to a sample of 859 students from all the departments of education at the universities of Greece. Of these, 54.8% were students of PREDs, while 45.2% were of students of PRIDs. A random sample of students was taken from each department, from the students who attended the compulsory courses. To ensure the highest possible participation, the questionnaire was distributed for two weeks (7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> week of the winter semester), just before the instructor began each compulsory course, and care was taken so that each student only filled in the questionnaire once. The data collection step for each department was completed when 2/3 of the 4<sup>th</sup> year students had filled in the questionnaire. Ninety-one percent of the sample was female (95.6% female in PREDs and 85.6 PRIDs). Only students that answered that they have attended arts courses (in the first question) were taken into account to calculate the percentages per students' views in the second and third question. This selection reduced the used sample size to 714 students (403 from PREDs and 311 from PRIDs).

## **Results**

### *Quantity of arts education offered to the students of the Departments of Education at the universities of Greece*

From a review of the offered courses in lists and in the timetables, arts courses accounted for 10.98 % of the total courses (N=2121) offered in all PREDs and PRIDs in the 2011-2012 academic years. It also appears that of the total number of compulsory courses in the programs of all departments, those having to do with arts education accounted for 7.59 %. The percentages are given in Table 1.

### *Content of arts courses offered to the students of the Departments of Education at the universities of Greece*



Courses in music, the visual arts, movement, drama and arts/aesthetic education (dealing with the arts as a unified whole) were counted to examine the number of arts courses offered for the various arts disciplines. These data were collected from the course guides, the lists and the timetables. Table 2 shows that of the 233 arts courses offered in the PREDs and PRIDs of Greece, the largest part (27.04 %) is on the visual arts, 23.18 % is on music, 21.03% is on theatre, 15.45 % deals with the arts and aesthetics in general, while courses on movement expression account for the smallest percentage (13.3 %).

**Table 1** Frequencies and percentages of arts courses out of all offered courses and compulsory arts courses out of all compulsory courses

	Department of Education					
	PRED		PRID		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Total courses	1138		983		2121	
Arts courses	143	12.57	90	9.16	233	10.98
Compulsory courses	198		118		316	
Compulsory arts courses	20	10.10	4	3.39	24	7.59

**Table 2** Frequencies and percentages of offered arts courses by subject

Arts subjects	Department of Education					
	PRED		PRID		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Music	31	21.68	23	25.56	54	23.18
Visual arts	35	24.48	28	31.11	63	27.04
Movement Expression/ dance	22	15.38	9	10	31	13.3
Theatre	33	23.08	16	17.78	49	21.03
General arts/ Aesthetic education	22	15.38	14	15.56	36	15.45
<b>Total</b>	<b>143</b>		<b>90</b>		<b>233</b>	

### *Orientation of arts courses offered to the students of the Departments of Education at the universities of Greece*

In order to study the orientation of arts courses, their objectives were examined, as were the modes of instruction used. For this reason, the title and outline of the courses were analyzed to see if the instructor mentioned that he/she sought the personal aesthetic development of students, or the development of students' abilities to use arts activities in school, or if both of these objectives were mentioned. The courses considered as having the objective of students' personal aesthetic development involved arts skills development (e.g. reading music, technical drawing, technology of visual arts materials) and/or mastering knowledge about art (e.g. arts theory, history of art). The arts teaching readiness courses were on arts pedagogy (e.g. arts curriculum content, music education, movement expression in school). The category of courses with mixed objectives included courses such as music education: theory and practice, aesthetic development of children: designing activities. It appears that 61.37% of the arts courses had as their main objective the personal aesthetic development of students, 9.95% sought to develop their teaching readiness, and 28.68% had mixed objectives (see Table 3). Furthermore, the arts courses offered in all the departments whose objective was to aesthetically develop the students, were on average 10.58; those

whose objective was arts teaching readiness were on average 1.91, while those having mixed objectives were on average 5.08.

The text of the outline of every arts course was examined to see if the instructors had stated they used lectures, experiential or mixed modes of instruction. During the analysis, it was observed that the courses in the first category had to do more with an academic and/or cognitive aspect of the arts (e.g. art history, art psychology, arts theory). In the second category, were the courses which mostly had to do with practical, hands-on training (e.g. learning to play a musical instrument, visual arts workshops, drama workshops). The category in which instructors stated that they used more than one mode of instruction (third category) included courses of an educational/methodological content (e.g. methodology of aesthetic activities, methods of teaching singing, visual arts education in school, music education in kindergarten). The results showed that 45.16% of arts courses were taught through lectures, 28.69% used experiential methods, and 26.14% adopted a mixed approach (see Table 4). Furthermore, the mean value of arts courses taught by lectures in all the departments was 7.84 on average; the mean value of those using experiential methods was 5.00 on average, and those using mixed approaches had a mean value of 4.68 on average.

**Table 3** Mean values and standard deviations of the number of offered courses per arts courses objective, and percentages

	Department of Education					
	PRED		PRID		Total	
	<i>M</i>	<i>Sd</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>Sd</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>Sd</i>
Personal aesthetic development	12.26	2.22	9.05	2.57	10.58	2.89
Arts teaching readiness	2.82	2.07	1.09	.88	1.91	1.78
Mixed objectives	6.56	1.80	3.72	1.53	5.08	2.18
Personal aesthetic development (%)	57.09	7.79	65.25	8.14	61.37	8.96
Arts teaching readiness (%)	12.38	8.36	7.76	6.41	9.95	7.75
Mixed objectives (%)	30.53	7.86	26.99	10.84	28.68	9.69

**Table 4** Mean values and standard deviations of the number of offered courses per arts mode of instruction, and percentages

	Department of Education					
	PRED		PRID		Total	
	<i>M</i>	<i>Sd</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>Sd</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>Sd</i>
Theoretical lectures	9.22	1.91	6.58	2.64	7.84	2.67
Experiential methods	6.13	1.90	3.96	2.19	5.00	2.32
Mixed mode of instruction	6.18	1.92	3.31	1.28	4.68	2.16
Theoretical lectures %	43.23	8.54	46.92	14.86	45.16	12.40
Experiential methods %	28.32	6.53	29.04	15.71	28.69	12.23
Mixed mode of instruction %	28.45	6.63	24.04	8.60	26.14	8.03

### *Teaching position of arts courses educators in Departments of Education at the universities of Greece*

Data as to the teaching position of educators in arts courses were sought in their CVs. Table 6 shows that 45.59% of arts course educators belong to the category of professors, while 54.41% are adjunct educators or teaching assistants, instructors whose qualifications

are usually lower. It seemed worth noting that all the arts courses instructors ( $N=68$ ) make up 13.5% of the total of the remaining instructors ( $N=504$ ). Also, in 6 of the 18 examined departments, the adjunct educators and teaching assistants were exclusively arts course instructors.

*Pre-service kindergarten and primary school teachers' views on the arts education offered in Departments of Education at the universities of Greece*

Students answering that they have attended arts courses (first question) were the sample on the second and third question of the questionnaire. The second question was a Likert-type 5-point question, namely, "Do you consider the arts education you are receiving from your university adequate". The mean values for both PRIDs and PREDs students were lower than the median value of 3 of the Likert scale used; PREDs students' mean value was 2.67 ( $sd = 0.87$ ), whereas the mean value of PRIDs students was 2.15 ( $sd = 0.80$ ). The difference between the two mean values was highly statistically significant (two independent samples  $t$ -test,  $t = -8.23$ ,  $df = 685.88$ ,  $p$ -value  $< 0.01$ ), showing that, according to their responses, PREDs students are more satisfied than PRIDs students.

**Table 5** Frequencies and percentages of the teaching position of arts courses teaching staff

	Department of Education					
	PRED		PRID		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Professors	20	52.63	11	36.67	31	45.59
Adjunct educators and teaching assistants	18	47.37	19	63.33	37	54.41
Total	38		30		68	

The individuals who filled out the questionnaire were asked to express their opinion on their arts education by answering an open-ended question on "the improvements that must be made in arts education and training provided in the undergraduate program". A thematic analysis was carried out on the answers based on key-phrases related to various possible problems. The findings were then classified into eight general categories, depending on their content, which accounted for 78.5% of all answers. The first category, "Improving the teaching venues and equipment", comprised all answers that had to do with improving the venues of arts courses (e.g. suggestions on "larger spaces", "suitable studios"), and the materials used in courses (e.g. "buying more materials", "replacing worn equipment", "modernising equipment"). The second category, "Increasing the number of arts courses", comprised suggestions such as "more arts courses", "increasing the hours of instruction" etc. The third category, "Increasing the courses in using the arts in the classroom", included suggestions such as increasing courses having to do with "teaching through the arts", "designing arts activities", "implementation of arts activities in their practicum" etc. The fourth category, "Increasing the number of and improving instructors" comprised suggestions such as "increasing specialised arts instructors", "being taught by artists", "hiring new instructors with higher qualifications in art". The fifth category, "Assigning greater prestige to arts courses", included answers in which students stated that their university community must "not undervalue the arts", "not discount their participation in artistic activities", "provide more funds for organizing activities", "value arts instructors more". The sixth category, "Reinforcing the personal aesthetic development of students", included suggestions about their own personal artistic interests such as "creating art clubs", "creating competitions for art work", "screening films", "producing plays", "organising art exhibitions" etc. The seventh category, "Organizing courses into smaller groups", included suggestions about "reducing the number of students in arts classes", "organising arts seminars with a small, limited number of students" etc. Finally, the eighth category, "Increasing the number of compulsory courses", included answers in

which the students stated that “more arts courses should be compulsory” within their degree program.

The remaining answers (21.5%) constituted a ninth category containing various other suggestions (having to do with cooperation between universities, improvement of teaching methods, restructuring of organization etc.), which did not appear frequently. For this reason, the ninth category was not included in the calculation of the frequencies. In terms of the sufficiency of arts education, the multiple responses distribution (see Table 6) showed that the dominant statements among the entire student sample had to do with “improving the teaching venues and equipment” (35.6%), and “increasing the number of courses and the teaching hours having to do with arts education” (19.3%). Following, in descending order were suggestions on “increasing the number of courses and the teaching hours in using the arts in the classroom” (12.9%), “increasing the number and quality of instructors” (12.2%), “increasing the number of compulsory courses” (5.3%), “reinforcing the personal aesthetic development of students” (3.2%), “assigning greater prestige to arts courses” (2%), and finally, “organizing courses into smaller groups” (1.4%).

**Table 6** Frequencies and percentages of multiple responses on the students’ suggestions

Student statements	Department of Education					
	PRED		PRID		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Improving the teaching venues and equipment	139	34.5	115	37.0	254	35.6
Increasing the number of arts courses	77	19.1	61	19.6	138	19.3
Increasing the courses in using the arts in the classroom	63	15.6	29	9.3	92	12.9
Increasing the number of and improving instructors	39	9.7	48	15.4	87	12.2
Assigning greater prestige to arts courses	8	2.0	6	1.9	14	2.0
Reinforcing the personal aesthetic development of students	14	3.5	9	2.9	23	3.2
Organizing courses into smaller groups	6	1.5	4	1.3	10	1.4
Increasing the number of compulsory courses	16	4.0	22	7.1	38	5.3
<b>Total</b>	403		311		714	

## Discussion

The present study examined the current arts education training that is offered by all faculties of education at the Greek universities. The findings showed that the quantity of the arts education provided (proportion of arts courses out of the total number of courses offered, and percentage of compulsory arts courses out of the total number of compulsory courses offered) in the PREDs and PRIDs was insufficient. These data are in agreement with the data provided by studies on arts education in other countries (Duncum, 1999; Eurydice, 2009; Russell-Bowie, 2012) and on the history of teachers’ arts education in Greece (Andreou et al., 1990; Stamelos, 1999; Stavrou, 2009). It seems that the quantity of arts courses offered to future teachers remains at the same percentage as in the past, namely just one tenth of all courses. However, given that recent arts education literature has highlighted many new and pedagogically important benefits of the arts in preschool and primary school education

(indicatively, Albers & Harste, 2007; Bamford, 2006; Catterall, 2002; Deasy, 2002; Dickinson, 2006; Dorn, 1999; Efland, 2002; Eisner, 2002; Kress, 2003; Rooney, 2004; Stevenson, 2006; Winner & Hetland, 2007), a significant rise in arts courses in the departments of education of the Greek universities would have been expected. Moreover, with regard to the number of compulsory arts courses offered there are even greater issues. As the arts courses account for approximately 10% of the total courses offered, one would have expected that at least this percentage would be reflected in the compulsory courses. This is not proven in the findings, which show that the percentage of compulsory arts courses is less than 7% of the total number of compulsory courses. Thus, it seems that future teachers can graduate from the departments of education at Greek universities without having even a basic training in the arts. The findings lead to the conclusion that there is not a satisfactory number of arts courses in the bachelor programs examined, much less so for the compulsory courses, and there is a clear indication that the academic communities examined lack an awareness of the pedagogic importance of arts education and the accompanying benefits (Harland et al., 2000). Indeed, it is worth noting that the situation in terms of the quantity of the arts education is markedly worse in the PRIDs than in the PREDs.

The examination of the content of arts courses showed that today future teachers in Greece have access to a broad range of disciplines in arts education which conforms to the arts disciplines that appear in the curricula of Greek and international kindergartens and primary schools (Benavot, 2004; Eurydice, 2009; Ministerial Decision 21072a/C2, Official Government Gazette, 303, 304/v. A', B' / March, 2003; Poyet & Bacconnier, 2006). At the same time, however, the results showed that the way in which each arts discipline is treated on the examined bachelor programs is unequal. Indicatively, the frequency with which visual arts courses are offered differs vastly from that with which movement courses are offered (27.04% and 13.3% respectively). While pre-service teachers need to develop their skills in each of the art disciplines (Russell-Bowie, 2010, 2013), along general lines, it is evident that the curricula of Greek Faculties of Education, just as those of most European countries (Eurydice, 2009), give priority to the visual arts and music. Courses in drama education seem to be rising compared to the past (Bouzakis et al. 1998), particularly in PREDs. Courses that deal with the arts as a unified whole and movement expression/dance courses are offered to an unjustifiably lesser degree. From these results, it could be concluded that the planning of arts education within the 18 bachelor programs examined is not, to a great extent, based on academic trends. The results on the paucity of movement courses is reminiscent of hidebound traditions – that movement activities in school take place outside the classroom and have more to do with physical education and sports than with bodily expression and dance. Movement is used in a one-dimensional way that has only to do with improving movement and maximising achievement (De Lièvre & Staes, 2006; Morgan & Hansen, 2010). This ignores the possibility of teaching through movement and is contrary to recent findings that demand a cross-curricular approach to the arts (Chrysostomou, 2007). It is indicative that movement lessons in school are frequently assigned to physical educators, and generalist teachers rarely involve themselves in movement activities (Stavrou, 2009).

The orientation of the arts courses offered was examined to see if pre-service teachers' arts education is oriented towards use in the classroom as contemporary literature demands (Ballantyne et al., 2009; Duncum, 1999; Hudson & Hudson, 2007; McKean, 2000). This examination brought to light that only a small number of arts courses aimed at teaching readiness, namely, less than two courses on average in every department of education. The number and average of courses that combine theory with practice using mixed modes of instruction is also deemed to be insufficient. It seems that in all of the departments of education the arts education provided lacked courses on arts pedagogy and the courses offered were more theory-based and less school-centered than they should be, as previous

studies had shown (Miller et al., 2008; Sotiropoulou et al., 2010; Stavrou, 2009). What possibly lies behind these findings is the outdated view that the arts are a discrete discipline within a curriculum, one that cannot or need not be integrated into the school learning process and life, as recent studies have shown that they should be (Amadio et al., 2006; Burnaford et al., 2007; Catterall, 2002; Deasy, 2003).

Another question examined in this study is the teaching position of individuals who are now teaching arts courses. It appears that to a great extent the examined academic communities have decided to assign the teaching of arts courses to staff whose qualifications are lower than those of a professor. This is a remnant of a tradition that began when the departments of education in universities were established (Antoniou, 2002; Charitos, 1996; Stamelos, 1999). Indeed, in many departments of education the only reason such staff (adjunct) are hired, is to teach the arts courses. It is clear, therefore, that disciplines considered to be academic are assigned to persons with higher qualifications than the arts courses instructors have. These findings indicate that the pedagogic importance of the arts has not been acknowledged by those who design bachelor programs in departments of education. It seems that despite raising the level of education of teachers to the tertiary level over the last 30 years (Bouzakis et al., 1998; Evagelopoulos, 1987; Haralampous, 1990), with regard to arts education the models of the past are being reproduced. That is, teachers are being educated on a merely practical level and do not master the scientific or academic underpinnings of the work they will be called to perform.

From another point of view, giving students in the PREDs and PRIDs an opportunity to express their views on their arts education at the undergraduate level confirms some of the above findings and highlights others. An indication of the insufficiency in the quantity of arts courses and compulsory arts courses was provided by the finding that a significant number of students felt that there were too few arts courses and too few compulsory arts courses in their education. Students suggested that an increase would be a significant factor in improving university arts education. Furthermore, the sample students posited the issue of the orientation of the courses, stating that there is a need to increase courses on using arts activities in the classroom. In addition, they believed that increasing and improving the instructors is of primary importance in their arts education. Another issue mentioned by a large percentage of students as needing improvement was the equipment and teaching venues for arts courses to take place in. Finally, it is interesting that some students mentioned that a negative dimension of their arts education is the low status ascribed to it within the university context. Briefly stating the answers of the sample, a picture emerges that the students in Greek departments of education believe that their arts education has many problems. As many other future teachers all over the world, they too seek more education in the arts, and indeed, more arts education that will increase their prospects of using the arts in school (Alter et al., 2012; Davies, 2010; Dixon & Senior, 2009; Downing et al., 2007; Gibson, 2003; Grauer, 1998; Hudson & Hudson, 2005, 2007; Kowalchuk & Stone, 2003; Lemon & Gravis, 2013; Nderu-Boddington, 2008; Ogden et al., 2010; Russell-Bowie, 2012).

### *Conclusions, recommendations and limitations*

According to the findings of this study, the arts education offered in the Greek departments of education has not shown the same levels of progress as the rest of future teachers' tertiary education over the last thirty years (Bouzakis et al., 1998; Evagelopoulos, 1987; Haralampous, 1990; Stamelos, 1999). It has also not been impacted by the current view of the arts as a central axis of school curricula (Albers & Harste, 2007; Amadio et al., 2006; Bamford, 2006; Catterall, 2002; Deasy, 2002; Dickinson, 2006; Dorn, 1999; Efland, 2002; Eisner, 2002; Kress, 2003; Rooney, 2004; Stevenson, 2006; Winner &

Hetland, 2007). The findings of this paper show that the arts education examined has developed in a peculiar manner and has problematic aspects. Even today, it is lacking in quantity, of a lower standard than other courses, and with an orientation that is either more mechanical or more theoretical than it should be. Thus, the arts education offered is to some extent static, because it has not followed the development of other courses in Greek departments of education, and because it has not incorporated the conclusions of recent arts education research.

Both the analysis of the documents and the students' views highlight changes that seem to be necessary to qualitatively and quantitatively improve the arts education and training provided in the departments of preschool and primary education in Greece. The number of arts courses must be increased, and much more so the number of compulsory arts courses. Courses need to be offered in various arts disciplines that seem to be neglected. Most faculties must add courses on movement expression - dance. It is particularly important to prepare future teachers for the realities of their working environment. Bridges must be built between theory and teaching practice. The arts education offered in Greek faculties of education must be rid of its theoretical and mechanical nature, and be enriched with courses using mixed modes of instruction, ones that focus on how arts activities in schools are designed, used and evaluated. It is also necessary that a sufficient number of instructors of arts courses have up-to-date, expert knowledge as to the benefits and roles of the arts in education, and as to the methodological approach of arts activities. In other words, these individuals must have deep knowledge of the pedagogical dimension of the arts and the alignment between university students' arts education and the arts syllabus of schools. What was also made clear was the need to improve the venues and the equipment used in arts courses. It is also important that the students themselves be satisfied with the level of arts education they are offered so that they have confidence in using arts activities in school. Briefly, one change which underlies and is included in all of the above is raising the status ascribed to arts courses and arts education (Amadio, et al. 2006). In other words, the basic proposal of this study is to increase Greek university communities' awareness of the pedagogical importance of an effective arts education for teachers.

In this article we presented specific aspects of arts education, that is, the quantity, content, orientation and instructors of the offered arts courses, as well as particular students' views. According to the present findings, it appeared that the study of the orientation of the arts courses should be expanded, since a more in-depth study could provide additional useful findings. Moreover, a wider questionnaire could reveal additional information on the views of pre-service teachers for their arts education. The conjunction of these two further research suggestions could provide a new framework for the policy of the university arts education of pre-service generalist teachers on a theoretical, experiential and methodological basis.

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