



## PRESCHOOL TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF THEIR ROLE IN RELATION TO THEIR STUDENTS

Angeliki Kokkosi<sup>1</sup>,  
Maria Poulou<sup>1</sup>,  
Gerasimos Koustourakis<sup>1</sup>,  
Nikolaos Chaniotakis<sup>2i</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Department of Educational Sciences,  
and Early Childhood Education,  
University of Patras,  
Greece

<sup>2</sup>Department of Primary Education,  
University of Thessaly,  
Greece

### Abstract:

This article examines the perceptions of preschool teachers in reference to their role regarding their students. According to literature, the social contexts present in the school unit (Ahonen, Pyhältö, Pietarinen, & Soini, 2014; Avgitidou, & Gourgiotou, 2016; Matsagouras, & Poulou, 2009), with which teachers interact, influence the formation of their perceptions of their role (Ahonen et al., 2014; Broeder, & Stokmans, 2012; Burke, 1997; Konstantinou, 2015; Samuel, & Stephens, 2000). The qualitative method was followed for the design of the research tool and its analysis. The study involved 47 preschool teachers serving in public kindergartens in Western Greece. Preschool teachers' perceptions of their role in relation to children were derived using an open-ended questionnaire, in which they were asked to report some metaphors or metaphorical images descriptive of their role. The NVivo-8 qualitative analysis software was utilized for data analysis. The results of the study revealed six main categories regarding the perceptions of preschool teachers about their role in relation to students.

**Keywords:** preschool teachers, perceptions, role, students, metaphor

### 1. Introduction

In the 1930s the sociological theory of roles appeared in order to interpret the concept of role. Role theory refers to patterns of behavior, attitudes, values or roles adopted by members of a social position (Biddle, 1986; Linton, 1936: 139; Papaikonomou, 2014;

<sup>i</sup> Correspondence: email [angkokkosi@upatras.gr](mailto:angkokkosi@upatras.gr), [mpoulou@upatras.gr](mailto:mpoulou@upatras.gr), [koustourakis@upatras.gr](mailto:koustourakis@upatras.gr), [chaniot@uth.gr](mailto:chaniot@uth.gr)

Turner 1978: 124). Roles are perceived as a set of more or less strict expectations about how a person holding a particular position in a society or social group will behave (Lunenberg, Dengerink, & Korthagen, 2014; Van Doorn & Lammers, 1984).

These expectations accommodate the actions and perceptions of teachers about their role (Adams, 1970; Anastasiou, 2017; Broeder et al., 2012; Burke, 1997; Heckscher & Applegate, 1994; Levinson, 1986; Linton, 1936; Mavrogiorgos, 1998; Makovec, 2018; Papaikonomou, 2011; Tsardakis, 1995). However, expectations differ as the social reference groups that the teacher interacts with within the school context are different (Bates & Harvey 1975: 106; Holland, Lachicotte, Skinner, & Cain, 2001; Fridaki, 2015) with teachers being encouraged to implement many different roles (Heckscher et al., 1994; Konstantinou, 2015: 121; Lunenberg et al., 2014; Xochellis, 2006: 47-48). Teachers select in which order they will meet the expectations of the reference groups (eg parents, students, colleagues, seniors), a choice that is related to how they apprehend their role (Bates et al., 1975: 106; Holland et al., 2001; Konstantinou, 2015: 121; Xochellis, 2006; Santee, & Jackson, 1979; Frydaki, 2015).

Finally, in addition to the expectations of the above social groups identified in the school unit, the role of teachers is determined by their expectations and interpretation of their own role (Anastasiou, 2017; Biddle, 1986; Heckscher et al., 1994; Konstantinou, 2015; Xochellis, 2006: 48; Papaikonomou, 2014; Tsardakis, 1992: 61). In this paper we will present the roles of teachers in relation to their students.

## **2. Literature Review**

### **2.1. Teachers' perceptions of their role**

Teachers' perceptions of their role are considered solid and resistant to change (Makovec, 2018; McRobie & Tobbin, 1995). They are related to how they perceive the functioning of the school as a social organization (Ntouskas, 2007), with their values, goals, the way they teach, the quality of their work and their self-image (Arsenijević, & Maljković, 2016; Ben-Peretz, Mendelson, & Kron 2003).

In addition, teachers' perceptions of their roles are constructed in the parallel social contexts that are within the school community, so it is fundamental to examine beliefs in the two basic contexts of teachers' work. The first concerns the interaction with students and the second the professional community (Ahonen et al., 2014).

Finally, teachers' past experiences, the reasons why they chose the teaching profession and the prejudices that are identified for this profession play a significant role in shaping the future roles and practices that will follow (Saban, 2003).

### **2.2. Role and relationship with students**

The interpersonal relationships between teacher and children are determined by the roles and the expectations of the roles that each side has for the other (Kyriaki, 2005, as cited in Kantas, 2015: 43-44). How teachers perceive their roles is likely to influence their interactions (Chung, Marvin, & Churchill, 2005; White, 1993). The role of the teacher in the classroom with the behavior he manifests and everything else that is a consequence

of the role (teaching methods, relationships with students, classroom climate, etc.) affects the child's self-perception and self-esteem (Howes, 1997; Howes & Ritchie, 1998; Kantas, 2015: 53- 60).

Several roles have been assigned to the teachers in terms of their relationship with the students. The teacher plays a socializing role as he contributes to the smooth socialization of the child (Kitsaras, 2001: 369- 371; Konstantinou, 2015: 142). The teacher maintains the role of the counselor and helper, offering children any help they need (Konstantinou, 2015: 168) ensuring a healthy and safe learning environment with equal acceptance of all students. They also undertake the role of the emotional supporter by helping children to develop supportive and close relationships with their classmates and with them (Avgitidou et al., 2016: 39; Gourgiotou, 2016; Pianta, Howes, Burchinal, Bryant, Clifford, Early, & Barbarin, 2005). As animators, they assist the students in their efforts to develop a positive attitude towards learning and pursue the search for knowledge and not the sterile assimilation of available knowledge, discovering and developing their interests (Chaniotakis & Thoidis, 2002; Kantas, 2015: 39-41, 43).

All in all, they have been assigned the role of student needs caregiver (Cook-Sather, 2003) and supervisor-guardian, who ensures the physical safety and decent living of students (Konstantinou, 2015: 129, 167). Whereas in the role of the evaluator they evaluate the school performance of their students (Xochellis, 2006: 88-89) based on pedagogical methods and learning purposes (Konstantinou, 2015: 109, 124-125).

### **2.3. Research on the role of teacher in relation to students**

From the literature review we found that the majority of the research that has been carried out studies the perceptions of teachers about their role in the teaching context and concerns: prospective teachers (Domović, Vidović Vlasta & Bouillet, 2017; Hamilton, 2016; Pinnegar, Mangelson, Reed, & Groves, 2011; Saban, Kocbeker, & Saban, 2007; Seung, Park, & Narayan, 2011; Shaw, Barry, & Mahlios, 2008; Thomson, 2016; Wright, 1997), foreign language educators (Alger, 2009; Nikitina & Furuoka, 2008; Wan, Low & Li, 2011) and secondary and tertiary education teachers (Ahonen et al., 2014; Ben-Peretz et al., 2003; Epstein, 2013; Mahlios, 2002; Oksanen, Lahdenperä & Römö, 2018; Oxford, Tomlinson, Barcelos, Harrington, Lavine, Saleh, & Longhini, 1998; Yesilbursa, 2012).

The number of surveys on preschool teachers is limited (Argyropoulou & Hatira, 2014). Primary and secondary school teachers reported that their role in the school is to mediate and reproduce knowledge in relation to learning, student development and the professional community as a whole (colleagues, parents) (Ahonen et al., 2014). Greek teachers in a similar study reported that their role is pedagogical and scientific (Xochellis, 2006: 56; Pirgiotakis, 1992) while in another study when asked about their role they gave the pedagogical and socializing role as a first choice, followed by the procedural-technocratic and finally the inquiring role (Karras, 2011: 166-167).

Although the literature has highlighted the need to explore teachers' perceptions of their role in relation to the social contexts within the school unit (Ahonen et al., 2014). The role of preschool teachers has not been investigated in relation to them, which as mentioned above, affect based on their expectations the role of teachers, their obligations,

responsibilities and rights (Ahonen et al., 2014; Anastasiou, 2017; Biddle, 1986: 23-25; Ben-Peretz et al., 2003; Broeder et al., 2012; Heckscher et al., 1994; Holzner, 1980: 162, as cited in Konstantinou, 2015: 176-177; Kelly, Dorf, Pratt & Hohmann, 2014; Konstantinou, 2015: 121, 127; Lunenberg et al., 2014; Lieberman, & Miller, 1984; Makovec, 2018; Xochellis, 2006: 47-48; Papaoikonomou, 2014; Pirgiotakis, 1992). Finally, the study of teachers' perceptions of their role is important as it reveals to us who they wish to be, how they wish to be perceived (Goffman, 1967, as cited in Volkmann, & Anderson, 1998), how they perceive their role (Ntouskas, 2007) and how they teach (Arsenijević et al., 2016; Ben-Peretz et al., 2003).

### **3. Material and Methods**

#### **3.1. Research questions**

This research aims to examine the preschool teachers' perceptions about their role in relation to their students. We tried to explore and answer the following research question: 1o What are the perceptions of preschool teachers about their role in relation to their students through the use of metaphors or metaphorical images?

#### **3.2. Context and participants**

The research question and the purpose of this study are part of a larger study that lasted one month. Research participants are primarily informed about the aim of the study subsequently each participant completed the open-ended questions and the researcher collected the questionnaire. The research involved 47 preschool teachers of public kindergartens in the Prefecture of Achaia. In all they were women and their average age was 38.8 years old. From the 47 participants, 2 hold a doctorate master's degree and 17 hold a master's degree. They comprise a convenience sample of preschool teachers who volunteered to facilitate our research (Creswell, 2012).

#### **3.3. Data collection tools**

Regarding the research tool, the self-completing open-ended questionnaire was selected and used, which, according to the literature, is a very useful method of data collection (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2008: 418, 431; Oppenheim, 1992: 56-57). The open-ended questionnaire is a method of data collection in qualitative research (Creswell, 2015: 552). In addition, the use of open-ended questions in questionnaires produces qualitative data (Robson, 2010: 541).

To achieve validity when deriving the views of preschool teachers regarding their role, teachers are asked to answer the questions using metaphors-metaphorical images. According to literature, metaphors are preferred when there is an attempt to explain and understand something internal and abstract. The more abstract something is, the greater the variety of metaphors required to be understood (Collier, 2010, Yob, 2003). Metaphor is a reliable research tool, which helps them to understand their role, the type of relationships with students, their attitudes, thoughts and feelings during teaching. As a consequence, their use by teachers plays an important role among others in their

professional development (Carter, 1990; Saban, 2010; Zhao, Coombs, & Zhou, 2010). In addition, metaphors support and help teachers understand concepts of their profession that are difficult to understand through the use of literal language, acting as a tool for explaining complex experiences and subjective beliefs (Carter, 1990; Saban, 2010; Zhao et al., 2010).

The questionnaire applied was created in the context of conducting doctoral research and in this study, it was chosen to present a part of it. Specifically, an open-ended question was used, asking participants to describe what their role is in relation to their students *"In relation to your relationships with your students, what "metaphors" would you use to describe your role and why?"* Their answer was as follows: *"The kindergarten teacher is like...because..."*. The remaining questions of the questionnaire examine the role of preschool teachers as a whole within the school unit, in teaching, in relation to colleagues, parents and superiors.

### 3.4. Data analysis

The collected data were analyzed through the qualitative analysis. More specifically, teachers' responses were transcribed and prepared for coding in NVivo-8. For the analysis and interpretation of the data we used the process of coding by creating coding schemes and theoretical categories (Tsiolis, 2014). The beginning of most forms of qualitative analysis is data coding (Bryman, 2017), which is one of the most significant stages of analysis. By encoding qualitative empirical data, we give meaning to the data collected by providing the ability to connect different parts of the data through the rendering of the code. The code unites the parts to which it has been assigned in order to be perceived as a whole during the process of analysis as they derive from the same idea. Then, the initial codes that were created were grouped into a smaller number of interpretive categories, in order to emerge a "coding scheme" for each question (Iosisfidis, 2017). The main categories of teachers' perceptions of their role in relation to their students which were 6 in number, were created.

## 4. Results

Teachers who participated in the survey about their role in relation to children reported six role categories (Table 1), with 13 participants reporting more than one role in their responses (Table 2).

Participants reported a total of 69 roles, which were classified into six categories. More specifically, 25 participants mentioned roles that were categorized in the Collaborator category (eg *"The kindergarten teachers are like an explorer because they try to discover the potential of each child so that they can help him accordingly"*, *"The kindergarten teacher is like a mouse who supports computer functions because it supports and helps its students to open their horizons cognitively and emotionally"*, *"The kindergarten teacher is like a driving force because she is always next to the child to encourage and motivate him"*, *"The kindergarten teacher is like a stick because every child can lean on it helping it and encouraging it to lean on its own feet"*, *"The kindergarten teacher is like the table, on which the students rest all their thoughts"*

and thoughts", "The kindergarten teacher is as a gardener because she takes care of each flower (child) according to his needs so that it can bloom at the right time", "The kindergarten teacher is like a sponge because she works with the students and they can absorb her knowledge", "The kindergarten teacher is like an airplane that "travels" with the children every day in order to discover knowledge"). 21 participants mentioned roles categorized as Love and Protection Provider (eg "The kindergarten teacher is like a big fluffy toy because she has a big hug for all children". all the children", "The kindergarten teacher is like an umbrella because she protects the children whenever there is a need" , "The kindergarten teacher is like an open hug because everything starts and ends with a hug that offers love and protection", "The kindergarten teacher is like a nest because there the students find security, love, acceptance, food by extension the kindergarten teacher is the mother of all students, who generously offers all the above and in addition the knowledge", "The kindergarten teacher is like a reservoir because it contains love, patience and caring for each of its students. At the same time, it is lovingly fed back by the children so that this tank never empties"). 4 participants mentioned roles that were categorized in the Person-Centered category (eg "The kindergarten teacher is like a conductor because she coordinates all her students to work in groups and harmoniously"). 5 participants mentioned roles that were categorized in the category Flexible (eg "The kindergarten teacher is like a trampoline because she can stretch and gather according to the cases", "The kindergarten teacher is like plasticine because depending on the case she shapes and changes shape"). About 3 participants mentioned roles that were categorized in the category Solver of everything (eg "The kindergarten teacher is like a key or magic button because she solves everything and any problems that arise inside and outside the classroom", "The kindergarten teacher is like a machine god because she always intervenes and helps to find solutions when this seems impossible"). Finally, 2 participants mentioned roles that were categorized in the category Transmitter of knowledge (eg "The kindergarten teacher is like a postman because she brings knowledge to children").

It is worth noting that six of the above participants mentioned two roles that fall into the Collaborator category. Two participants mentioned two roles that belong to the category Love and Protection Provider and one teacher mentioned two roles that belong to the category Flexible. In total, 31 roles were mentioned for the Collaborator category, 23 roles for the Love and protection provider category, and 6 roles for the Flexible category, 4 roles for the Person-centered category, 3 roles for the Solver of everything category and 2 roles for the category Transmitter of knowledge (Table 1).

Some teachers cited more than one role in response. From the teachers who mentioned 2 or 3 roles (table 2) some combinations of roles emerged. The role combinations that were made do not reveal any contradiction in terms of the roles mentioned by the teachers who participated in our research. The resulting role combinations are: 1st: Love and protection provider & Collaborator, 2nd: Love and protection provider & Solver of everything, 3rd: Collaborator & Flexible, 4th: Collaborator & Solver of everything & Love and protection provider and 5th: Transmitter of knowledge & Love and protection provider & Solver of everything.

**Table 1:** Number of participants and roles frequency

Role categories	Participants	Frequency of roles
Collaborator	25	31
Love & protection provider	21	23
Person-centered	4	4
Flexible	5	6
Solver of everything	3	3
Transmitter of knowledge	2	2

**Table 2:** Number of roles mentioned by the participants

Number roles	Participants
1	33
2	6
3	8

## 5. Discussion and conclusions

The study of preschool teachers' perceptions of their role allows us to understand how they perceive their role (Ntouskas, 2007; Sharp & Green, as cited in Folerou-Tserouli & Frederikou, 1993), provides us with information about who they want to be, how they want to understand the image they have of themselves (Ben-Peretz et al., 2003; Goffman, 1967, as cited in Volkmann et al., 1998), how they act during the educational process, the quality of their work and the pedagogy they apply, which in turn shapes the nature of classroom interactions (Arsenijević et al., 2016; Ben-Peretz et al., 2003; Kamil & Pearson's, 1979, as cited in Fang, 1996; Sharp & Green, as cited in Folerou-Tserouli & Frederikou, 1993). The role of teachers is considered as the result of the function and interaction between the social factors that exist within the school unit (Konstantinou, 2015: 127) with teachers' perceptions of their role being influenced and is a result of these dynamic interactions (Ahonen et al., 2014; Ben-Peretz et al., 2003; Broeder et al., 2012; Burke, 1997; Konstantinou, 2015; Lieberman et al., 1984; Saban, 2003; Samuel & Stephens, 2000).

However, despite the above benefits and the need that arose from the literature review to explore teachers' perceptions of their role in relation to the social contexts found in the school context (Avgitidou et al., 2016; Ahonen et al., 2014; Matsagouras et al., 2009), there are not studies that explore the role of preschool teachers in relation to the four social factors that interact directly (children, colleagues, parents, superiors) (Ahonen et al., 2014; Ben-Peretz et al., 2003; Lieberman et al., 1984; Saban, 2003). In this study we studied the role of preschool teachers in relation to one social factor that interacts, their students.

From the answers of the participants for their roles in relation to their students through the use of metaphors and metaphorical images, six categories emerged (Collaborator, Love and protection provider, Person-centered, Flexible, Solver of everything and Transmitter of knowledge). Most preschool teachers reported roles that fall into the Collaborator category with a slight difference to the next category of Love and protection provider. With much less frequency they mentioned roles that belong to

the categories Person-Centered, Flexible, Solver of everything and Transmitter of knowledge.

Overall, for the roles they mentioned in relation to the children, we find that the categories of Collaborator, Solver of everything and Love & protection provider are found in the literature. Specifically, according to the literature review, the teacher acts as a counselor and assistant to the students as he offers them any help, they need that does not fall only in the part of teaching but in general for all issues related to his role (Konstantinou, 2015: 168). In this way it ensures a healthy and safe learning environment, with acceptance for all its students, without separating them but providing the same learning opportunities for all (Avgitidou et al., 2016: 34; Dimitropoulos & Kalouri-Antonopoulou, 2003; Xochellis, 2006 : 87-89). Other similar positions are identified in the literature, according to which the role of the teacher should be the helper and collaborator of the student and not the regulator of his development (Kossivaki, 2003: 34-35). The teacher should take on the role of caregiver of students' needs (Cook-Sather, 2003) and provide security and love to his students (Thomas & Beauchamp, 2011). A previous study found that 50% of teachers' views of themselves reflected a supportive and protective role (eg listening ear, supporting shoulder, protective tree) (Ben-Peretz et al., 2003).

Furthermore, the teacher is considered to be acting as a guide for children in activities in accordance with their cognitive, emotional, psychomotor and creative needs, their interests and individual growth rate. To function as a shaper of appropriate pedagogical processes (Avgitidou et al., 2016: 34; Kitsaras, 2001: 369- 371; Xochellis, 2006: 88-89). To act as a facilitator or animator in the classroom in order to support their students to participate in the educational process (Avgitidou et al., 2016: 39, 41; Ahonen et al., 2014; Gourgiotou, 2016; Hännikäinen & Rasku - Puttonen, 2010; Karras, 2011: 174; Matusov 2001; Tateo, 2012; Thomas et al., 2011). In the literature the meaning of the word teacher is described as a person who acts as a scaffold in the holistic development of the student, helping him to face the challenges (Tateo, 2012).

Finally, the category of the roles of Transmitter of knowledge in the way they were rendered by the participants correspond to a more traditional perception of the role of the teacher.

### **Acknowledgements**

This research did not receive any specific grant.

### **Conflict of Interest Statement**

The authors declare no conflicts of interests.

### **About the Author(s)**

**Angeliki Kokkosi** is Kindergarten teacher, PhD Student at the University of Patras, Department of Educational Sciences and Early Childhood Education, Greece.

**Maria Poulou (PhD)** is Associate Professor at the University of Patras, Department of Educational Sciences and Early Childhood Education, Greece.



**Gerasimos Koustourakis (PhD)** is Professor at the University of Patras, Department of Educational Sciences and Early Childhood Education, Greece.

**Nikolaos Chaniotakis (PhD)** is Associate Professor at the University of Thessaly, Department of Primary Education, Greece.

## References

- Adams, R. S. (1970). Analysing the teacher's role. *Educational Research*, 12(2), 121-127. doi: 10.1080/0013188700120205
- Ahonen, E., Pyhältö, K., Pietarinen, J., & Soini, T. (2014). Teachers' professional beliefs about their roles and the pupils' roles in the school. *Teacher Development*, 18(2), 177-197. doi: 10.1080/13664530.2014.900818
- Alger, C. L. (2009). Secondary teachers' conceptual metaphors of teaching and learning: Changes over the career span. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 25(5), 743-751. doi: 10.1016/j.tate.2008.10.004
- Anastasiou, E. (2017). The professional development of the teacher through the self-evaluation procedures of the school. Exploring the views of primary school teachers. Master Thesis, University of Ioannina/P.T.D.E., Ioannina. [In Greek]
- Argyropoulou, E., & Hatira, K. (2014). Metaphors and drawings as research tools of head teachers' perceptions on their management and leadership roles and responsibilities. *European Early Childhood Education Research Journal*, 22(4), 496-512. doi: 10.1080/1350293X.2014.947832
- Arsenijević, J., & Maljković, M. (2016). Teachers' roles in relation to the ownership structure of a faculty. *Procedia Technology*, 22, 1152-1159. doi:10.1016/j.protcy.2016.01.162
- Avgitidou, S., & Gourgiotou, E. (2016). *Teachers as reflection professionals*. In Avgitidou Sofia, Tzekaki Marianna, Tsafos Vasilis (Eds) Candidate teachers observe, intervene and reflect: suggestions for supporting their internship. A' issue, (pp. 9-92). Athens: Gutenberg. [In Greek]
- Bates, F. L., & Harvey, C. C. (1975). *The structure of social systems*. New York: Wiley.
- Ben-Peretz, M., Mendelson, N., & Kron, F. W. (2003). How teachers in different educational contexts view their roles. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 19(2), 277-290. doi:10.1016/S0742-051X(02)00100-2
- Biddle, B. J. (1986). Recent developments in role theory. *Annual review of sociology*, 12(1), 67-92. doi: 10.1146/annurev.so.12.080186.000435
- Broeder, P., & Stokmans, M. J. W. (2012). The teacher as reflective practitioner: Professional roles and competence domains. *International Proceedings of Economics Development and Research*, 33, 5-9.
- Bryman, A. (2017). *Quantitative and qualitative research: further reflections on their integration*. In *Mixing methods: Qualitative and quantitative research*. London: Routledge.

- Burke, P. J. (1997). An identity model for network exchange. *American Sociological Review*, 63(1), 134-150. doi: 10.2307/2657456
- Carter, K. (1990). Meaning and metaphor: Case knowledge in teaching. *Theory into practice*, 29(2), 109-115. doi: 10.1080/00405849009543440
- Chaniotakis, N. & Thoidis, I. (2002). Cross-curricular activities in the all-day school. *Inspection of Educational Issues*, 6, 239-267. [In Greek]
- Chung, L. C., Marvin, C. A., & Churchill, S. L. (2005). Teacher factors associated with preschool teacher-child relationships: Teaching efficacy and parent-teacher relationships. *Journal of Early Childhood Teacher Education*, 25(2), 131-142. doi: 10.1080/1090102050250206
- Cohen, L., Manion, L., & Morrison, K. (2008). *Methodology of educational research*. Athens: Metaichmio. [In Greek]
- Collier, S. T. (2010). Reflection as a social problem-solving process. In E. G. Pultorak (Ed.), *The purposes, practices, and professionalism of teacher reflectivity: Insights for twenty-first-century teachers and students* (pp. 25-44.). United Kingdom: Rowman & Littlefield education.
- Cook-Sather, A. (2003). Movements of mind: The matrix, metaphors, and re-imagining education. *Teachers college record*, 105(6), 946.
- Creswell, J. W. (2012). *Educational research: Planning, conducting, and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research* (4th ed.). Boston, MA: Pearson.
- Dimitropoulos, E. & Kalouri-Antonopoulou, O. (2008). *Pedagogical psychology: From learning theory to the education of young people and adults*. Athens: Ellin. [In Greek]
- Domović, V., Vidović Vlasta, V., & Bouillet, D. (2016). Student teachers' beliefs about the teacher's role in inclusive education. *European Journal of Special Needs Education*, 32(2), 1-16. doi: 10.1080/08856257.2016.1194571
- Epstein, S. E. (2013). What is my role? Establishing teacher and youth worker responsibilities in social action projects. *Teachers and Teaching*, 19(5), 492-506. doi: 10.1080/13540602.2013.827364
- Fang, Z. (1996). A review of research on teacher beliefs and practices. *Educational research*, 38(1), 47-65. doi: 10.1080/0013188960380104
- Folerou-Tserouli, F., & Freiderikou, A. (1993). *Primary School Teachers: a sociological approach*. Athens: Ypsilon Books. [In Greek]
- Fridaki, E. (2015). *The Professional Identity of the Teacher and the Future of Teaching*. Athens: Kritiki. [In Greek]
- Gourgiotou, E. (2016). The evaluation of didactic interactions in kindergarten and the first grades of primary school: the case of the CLASS tool. In R. Martidou (Ed.). *Modern teaching approaches in pre-school and primary school education* (pp. 142-176). Thessaloniki: Disigma.
- Hamilton, E. R. (2016). Picture This: Multimodal representations of prospective teachers' metaphors about teachers and teaching. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 55, 33-44. doi: 10.1016/j.tate.2015.12.007

- Hännikäinen, M., & Rasku-Puttonen, H. (2010). Promoting children's participation: the role of teachers in preschool and primary school learning sessions. *Early Years*, 30(2), 147-160. doi: 10.1080/09575146.2010.485555
- Heckscher, C. & Applegate, L.M. (1994). Introduction. In C. Heckscher, & A. Donnellson (Eds.), *The post bureaucratic organization* (pp. 1–14). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Holland, D., Lachicotte Jr, W., Skinner, D., & Cain, C. (2001). *Identity and agency in cultural worlds*. Harvard University Press.
- Howes, C. (1997). Children's experiences in center-based child care as a function of teacher background and adult: child ratio. *Merrill-Palmer Quarterly*, 43(3)404-425.
- Howes, C., & Ritchie, S. (1998). Changes in child–teacher relationships in a therapeutic preschool program. *Early education and development*, 9(4), 411-422. doi: 10.1207/s15566935eed0904\_6
- Iosifidis, Th. (2017). *Quality research methods and sciences of the social sciences*. Athens: Tziolas. [In Greek].
- Kantas, K. (2015). The crucial role of the teacher in the modern school. Rhodes: Veretta. [In Greek].
- Karras, K. (2011). *The teacher in a changing world: A challenge for pedagogy today*. Athens: Gutenberg. [In Greek].
- Kelly, P., Dorf, H., Pratt, N., & Hohmann, U. (2014). Comparing teacher roles in Denmark and England. *Compare: A journal of comparative and international education*, 44(4), 566-586. doi: 10.1080/03057925.2013.800786
- Kitsaras, G. (2001). *Preschool Pedagogy*. Athens. [In Greek].
- Konstantinou, Ch. (2015). *The good school, the competent teacher and the appropriate education as pedagogical theory and practice*. Athens: Gutenberg. [In Greek].
- Kossivaki, F. (2003). *The Educator's Role in the Meta Modernist School: Teachers Expectations, Perspectives, Limits, Attitudes and Beliefs, Regarding Their Teaching Alertness*. Athens: Gutenberg. [In Greek].
- Levinson, D. J. (1986). A conception of adult development. *American psychologist*, 41(1), 3.
- Lieberman, A., & Miller, L. (1984). *Teachers, Their World, and Their Work. Implications for School Improvement*. Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development. Washington Street: ERIC.
- Linton, R. (1936). *The study of man*. New York.
- Lunenberg, M., Dengerink, J., & Korthagen, F. (2014). *The professional teacher educator: Roles, behaviour, and professional development of teacher educators*. Rotterdam: Springer Science & Business Media.
- Mahlis, M. C. (2002). Teacher role formation. *Action in Teacher Education*, 24(1), 9-21. doi: 10.1080/01626620.2002.10463263
- Makovec, D. (2018). The teacher's role and professional development. *International Journal of Cognitive Research in Science, Engineering and Education*, 6(2), 33. doi: 10.5937/ijcrsee1802033M
- Matsagouras, H., & Poulou, M. (2009). School and Family Relationships. Comparative Quotation of Teachers 'and Parents' Views. *Mentoras*, 11, 27-41. [In Greek].

- Matusov, E. (2001). Becoming an adult member in a community of learners. In *Learning together*. Oxford University Press. doi: 10.1093/oso/9780195097535.001.0001
- Mavrogiorgos, G. (1998). Teachers and your eyes. *Modern Education: Quarterly Review of Educational Issues*, (100), 42-44. [In Greek].
- McRobbie, C. J., & Tobin, K. (1995). Restraints to reform: the congruence of teacher and student actions in a chemistry classroom. *Journal of Research in Science Education*, 32(4), 373-385. doi: 10.1002/tea.3660320406
- Nikitina, L., & Furuoka, F. (2008). "A Language Teacher is Like...": Examining Malaysian Students' Perceptions of Language Teachers through Metaphor Analysis. *Online Submission*, 5(2), 192-205.
- Ntouskas, N. (2007). The role of the teacher in the modern school. *Epistimoniko Vima*, 6(1), 12-15. [In Greek].
- Oksanen, S., Lahdenperä, J., & Rämö, J. (2018). University Teaching Assistants' Metaphors About Teachers' Role. In H. Palmer & J. Skott (Eds.), *Students' and Teachers' Values, Attitudes, Feelings and Beliefs in Mathematics Classrooms* (pp.33-42). Cham: Springer.
- Oppenheim, A. N. (2000). *Questionnaire design, interviewing and attitude measurement*. London: Bloomsbury Publishing.
- Oxford, R. L., Tomlinson, S., Barcelos, A., Harrington, C., Lavine, R. Z., Saleh, A., & Longhini, A. (1998). Clashing metaphors about classroom teachers: Toward a systematic typology for the language teaching field. *System*, 26(1), 3-50. doi: 10.1016/S0346-251X(97)00071-7
- Papaoikonomou, A. (2011). *The role and the self: its centrality educational role for self-formation*. (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). Aristotle university of Thessaloniki, Thessaloniki. [In Greek]
- Papaoikonomou, A. (2014). A sociological view of the role of the teacher in the teaching practice. *Academia.edu*. [In Greek].
- Pianta, R., Howes, C., Burchinal, M., Bryant, D., Clifford, R., Early, D., & Barbarin, O. (2005). Features of pre-kindergarten programs, classrooms, and teachers: Do they predict observed classroom quality and child-teacher interactions?. *Applied developmental science*, 9(3), 144-159. doi: [10.1207/s1532480xads0903\\_2](https://doi.org/10.1207/s1532480xads0903_2)
- Pinnegar, S., Mangelson, J., Reed, M., & Groves, S. (2011). Exploring preservice teachers' metaphor plotlines. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 27(3), 639-647. doi: [10.1016/j.tate.2010.11.002](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2010.11.002)
- Pirgiotakis, J. (1992). *The Greek teachers. Empirical investigation of teaching conditions*. Athens: Grigoris. [In Greek].
- Robson, C. (2007). *Real world research: A resource for social scientists and practitioner-researchers*. Athens: Gutenberg. [In Greek]
- Saban, A. (2003). A Turkish profile of prospective elementary school teachers and their views of teaching. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 19(8), 829-846. doi: 10.1016/j.tate.2003.03.004
- Saban, A. (2010). Prospective teachers' metaphorical conceptualizations of learner. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 26(2), 290-305. doi: 10.1016/j.tate.2009.03.017

- Saban, A., Kocbeker, B. N., & Saban, A. (2007). Prospective teachers' conceptions of teaching and learning revealed through metaphor analysis. *Learning and instruction*, 17(2), 123-139. doi: 10.1016/j.learninstruc.2007.01.003
- Samuel, M., & Stephens, D. (2000). Critical dialogues with self: Developing teacher identities and roles—a case study of South African student teachers. *International Journal of Educational Research*, 33(5), 475-491. doi: 10.1016/S0883-0355(00)00030-6
- Santee, R. T., & Jackson, S. E. (1979). Commitment to self-identification: A sociopsychological approach to personality. *Human Relations*, 32(2), 141-158. doi: 10.1177/001872677903200204
- Seung, E., Park, S., & Narayan, R. (2011). Exploring elementary pre-service teachers' beliefs about science teaching and learning as revealed in their metaphor writing. *Journal of Science Education and Technology*, 20(6), 703-714.
- Shaw, D. M., Barry, A., & Mahlios, M. (2008). Preservice teachers' metaphors of teaching in relation to literacy beliefs. *Teachers and Teaching: theory and practice*, 14(1), 35-50. doi: 10.1080/13540600701837632
- Tateo, L. (2012). What do you mean by "teacher"? psychological research on teacher professional identity. *Psicologia & Sociedade*, 24(2), 344-353. doi: 10.1590/S0102-71822012000200012
- Thomas, L., & Beauchamp, C. (2011). Understanding new teachers' professional identities through metaphor. *Teaching and teacher Education*, 27(4), 762-769. doi: 10.1016/j.tate.2010.12.007
- Thomson, M. M. (2016). Metaphorical images of schooling: beliefs about teaching and learning among prospective teachers from the United States displaying different motivational profiles. *Educational Psychology*, 36(3), 502-525. doi: 10.1080/01443410.2015.1024612
- Tsardakis, D. (1995). *The social theory of roles*. Athens: Skaravaios. [In Greek].
- Tsiolis, G. (2014). *Methods and techniques of analysis in qualitative social research*. Athens: Kritiki. [In Greek].
- Turner, R. H. (1978). The role and the person. *American journal of Sociology*, 84(1), 1-23.
- Van Doorn, J. A. A., & Lammers, C. J. (1984). *Moderne sociologie* [Modern sociology]. Utrecht/Antwerpen: Het Spectrum.
- Volkman, M. J., & Anderson, M. A. (1998). Creating professional identity: Dilemmas and metaphors of a first-year chemistry teacher. *Science Education*, 82(3), 293-310. doi: 10.1002/(SICI)1098-237X(199806)82:3<293::AID-SCE1>3.0.CO;2-7
- Wan, W., Low, G. D., & Li, M. (2011). From students' and teachers' perspectives: Metaphor analysis of beliefs about EFL teachers' roles. *System*, 39(3), 403-415. doi: 10.1016/j.system.2011.07.012
- White, K. A. (1993). Does a degree make a difference? A comparison of interactions between degreed and non-degreed early childhood educators and their four-year-old children. *Early Child Development and Care*, 96(1), 147-160. doi: 10.1080/0300443930960112
- Wright, M. V. (1997). Student teachers' beliefs and a changing teacher role. *European Journal of Teacher Education*, 20(3), 257-266. doi: 10.1080/0261976970200305

- Yesilbursa, A. (2012). Using metaphor to explore the professional role identities of higher education English language instructors. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 46, 468-472. doi: 10.1016/j.sbspro.2012.05.143
- Yob, I. M. (2003). Thinking constructively with metaphors. *Studies in Philosophy and Education*, 22(2), 127-138.
- Xochellis, P. (2006). *The teacher in the modern world*. Athens: Tipothito/ Dardanos. [In Greek].
- Zhao, H., Coombs, S., & Zhou, X. (2010). Developing professional knowledge about teachers through metaphor research: facilitating a process of change. *Teacher Development*, 14(3), 381-395. doi: 10.1080/13664530.2010.504024

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 Education 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/).