

## Learning the dance “Enteka” in the context of a holistic teaching program

Topatsi, A.<sup>1</sup>, Kateris, K.<sup>2</sup>, Filippou, F.<sup>1</sup>, Bebetos, E.<sup>1</sup>, Derri, V.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Democritus University of Thrace, School of Physical Education and Sport Sciences, Komotini 69100

<sup>2</sup> 18<sup>o</sup> Primary School of Serres, Serres 62125

---

**Abstract:** The Greek traditional dance is characterized as a socio-cultural phenomenon inextricably linked to individual elements of Folk Culture. This particular thesis reflects the complex character of Greek dance and sets the fundamental principles for the design of new teaching approaches. The purpose of this research was to compare two teaching approaches, holistic and typical teaching, in the learning of the dance "Enteka". In the survey participated 105 students of 6<sup>th</sup> grade from six Primary Schools. The experimental group followed the holistic teaching approach and the control group followed the typical suggested teaching from the Physical Education Teacher's Book for the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade. The intervention program, which was carried out in the context of a doctoral research, lasted 6 weeks and took place in Physical Education courses. For the evaluation of the kinetic part was used the "Scale Classified Criteria (rubric) for the Evaluation of Greek Traditional Dance" and for the theoretical part was constructed an evaluation criterion. From the analysis of variance with repeated measures, in the kinetic part wasn't observed any statistically significant interaction between group and measurement, while in the theoretical part was found a statistically significant interaction between the two factors with retention of learning in the experimental group. Therefore, the holistic approach of teaching can be an equally effective way of learning Greek traditional dance based on the relationship between the whole and the part, aiming at a wider range of Folk Culture approach and with the basic principle of linking experience with learning.

**Keywords:** Greek traditional dance, teaching, holistic approach, Physical Education.

---

### 1. Introduction

The education is a continuous, dynamic and evolving process, which has a social impact, is interconnected with social changes and prepares the citizens of future. The sociological dimension of education is also indicated through its fundamental purpose, according to which it is sought the all-round development and learning, so that all students through the acquisition of knowledge, skills, attitudes and behaviors, become able to cope effectively with any difficulties of the school and the wider social environment (Institute of Educational Policy - IEP, 2021). The course of Physical Education contributes decisively to the achievement of the above objective, as it approaches the students holistically and aims at their physical literacy with main thematic sectors: the kinetic, the cognitive, the behavioral and the moral/emotional/social (Government Gazette 6336/B/30-12-2021).

The multidimensional role of Physical Education is reflected in each of its learning object, one of which is the Greek traditional dance. Specifically, as an object of teaching it contributes to the development of abilities, the acquisition of skills and is linked to individual subjects of the school curriculum, such as History, Geography, Social and Political Education etc. (Gartzonika-Kotsika, 2016). According to the curriculum of the course of Physical Education in Primary Education, the learning of Greek traditional dance aims on the one hand at the anthropological and sociological approach of traditional dancing as a way of life and on the other hand at the psychomotor, emotional and cognitive development of the student (Government Gazette 304/B/13-03-2003). In order to achieve these goals, the Physical Education Teacher must create an appropriate learning climate that favours and encourages learning, stimulates the student's interest, evokes pleasant emotions and motivates him/her to participate in the learning process (Diggelidis, Theodorakis, Zetou & Dimas, 2009; Lykesas & Tyrovola, 2007).

The planning, therefore, the way of organization and the implementation of new teaching methods are considered important factors for the upgrading of the Greek traditional dance course. According to scientific research conducted in the last two decades, it is proposed to apply innovative approaches to the teaching of Greek traditional dance, such as music and movement, interdisciplinarity, playful teaching and theatrical play (Arapitsa, 2014; Lykesas, 2002; Lykesas, Koutsouba, Giosos & Tyrovola, 2015; Panagiotou & Papadopoulou, 2000; Stivaktaki, 2011; Topatsi, 2016). In addition, the new Physical Education Curriculum proposes the use of modern teaching approaches, such as experiential, collaborative, game-centered, etc., which are student-centered (Government Gazette 6363/B/30-12-2021). Regarding the teaching of Greek dancing in Primary school, in the Physical Education Teacher's Books there are structured lesson plans that constitute integrated teaching

proposals and include rhythmic and rhythmic-movement activities, references to folklore elements, proposals for an interdisciplinary approach, etc. (Diggelidis et al., 2007). Based on all the above, significant efforts are made to improve teaching practice and it is necessary the continuous training of the Physical Education Teacher in the sector of teaching and the new approaches.

An interesting and innovative proposal of teaching Greek traditional dance, which is structured with modern teaching methods and deals with the complex character of traditional dance, is the holistic approach. This approach proposes a different way of learning, as it focuses on the relationship between the whole and the part, supports the implementation of teaching and learning methods in a wider range with the basic principle of linking experience to reality and develops a pedagogy directly linked to the real world of the student (Mahmoudi, Jafari, Nasrabadi & Liaghatdar, 2012). According to the holistic approach and the triptych of Greek dance move-music-lyrics, the dance is treated as a totality, as a single whole with individual elements of Folk Culture (e.g. traditional musical instruments, songs, traditional costumes, customs, folk events, etc.) and as a social and cultural phenomenon, which, adapted to the pedagogical criteria, contributes to the all-round development of the students' personality, achieves the broader goals of education and seeks to use it in social reality (Cowan, 1998; Flouris, 2018; Gartzonika-Kotsika, 2016; Hanna, 1999; Royce, 2005). Therefore, the fundamental aim of this teaching approach is the holistic perception of Greek traditional dance as an integral part of Folk Culture through discovery, experiential and collaborative methods (Gartzonika-Kotsika, 2016).

However, despite the fact that the holistic approach is known worldwide, is gaining more and more supporters (teachers, students and parents), is studied in books and scientific journals and functions as a philosophy for the organization of schools and university departments, the research activity is limited to philosophical treatises and case studies (Forbes & Martin, 2004). As far as the Greek literature is concerned, there are fragmentary proposals for the interdisciplinary teaching of Greek traditional dancing in Secondary Education (Arapitsa, 2014; Stivaktaki, 2011), which, however, do not take into account all the parameters of the specific teaching object. Therefore, the absence of comprehensive studies on the holistic approach of teaching Greek traditional dance leads to a research gap (Flouris & Zbainos, 2018).

The aim of the present study was to compare two teaching approaches, the holistic approach and the typical teaching proposed in the Physical Education Teacher's Book, as to the learning of the dance "Enteka".

## **2. Methodology**

### **2.1 Participants**

The participants were 105 students of the 6<sup>th</sup> grade from six Primary Schools of Serres. Specifically, 49 boys and 56 girls participated and were randomly divided in two groups, the experimental and the control group. The experimental group (n = 67) followed the holistic teaching approach and the control group (n = 38) followed the typical recommended teaching from the Physical Education Teacher's Book for grades 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup>. Furthermore, the parents/guardians of the participants were requested to give written permission for their children to participate in the research on a special form, which informed them of the purpose and objectives of the research and assured them of the student's voluntary withdrawal throughout the duration of the research, to ensure anonymity and to use the results exclusively for scientific purposes.

### **2.2 Procedure**

Before the start of the program, the Ethics Committee of the Democritus University of Thrace and the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs granted permission to the researcher to conduct the research in the schools. Subsequently, meetings were held between the researcher, the Principals and the Physical Education Teachers of the school units, in order to inform them about the objectives and the conduct of the research. Also, the training of those Physical Education Teachers who would teach the dance with the holistic approach was carried out.

The intervention program, which was carried out in the context of a doctoral thesis, had a duration of 12 teaching hours, exactly as many as provided for by the Curriculum for the 6<sup>th</sup> grade of Primary School. The frequency of teaching hours was twice a week with each lesson lasting 45 minutes. The program was implemented by the Physical Education Teachers of the schools in collaboration with the researcher in the Physical Education lesson. In this program, was taught the dance "Enteka", which is proposed, among other dances, in the Curriculum of Physical Education for grades 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> of Primary School (Government Gazette 304/B/13-03-2003). This dance has a musical measure of 9/8 and is danced opposite each other in pairs. It is a well-known dance of Western Macedonia and more specifically of the wider region of Kozani and is danced in all festive periods (Diggelidis et al., 2009).

In the experimental group with the implementation of the holistic approach, the teaching of the dance "Enteka" was combined with the carnival custom of "Fanoi", which takes place on the Sunday of Carnival in Kozani. In more detail, the students of the experimental group worked collaborative in groups, searched and

collected information from the Internet in the context of WebQuests about the custom of "Fanoi" and about individual elements of Folk Culture (e.g. traditional costumes, traditional musical instruments) with the Kozani region as a reference point and then presented their findings to the class plenary. In addition, they were taught the traditional dance "Enteka" and did an experiential enactment of the custom of "Fanoi", linking the dance with the actualization of the custom. Then followed the repetition of the kinetic form of the dance and the supplementation of the concept map with the main theoretical concepts of the program. As for the control group, the teaching was based on the lesson plan for the dance "Enteka" and on the activities proposed in the Physical Education Teacher's Book for the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade (Diggelidis et al., 2009).

### 2.3 Instrument

In the present research, the "Scale Classified Criteria (rubric) for the Evaluation of Greek Traditional Dance" (Pitsi, Diggelidis & Filippou, 2013) was used to evaluate the kinetic part of the dance "Enteka". From the scale, the following five criteria were used: dance recognition, response to the rhythmic pattern, synchronization, dance step sequence and direction-shape-grip of the dance. For each criterion five performance levels were defined: non acceptable, marginally acceptable, moderately acceptable, very good and excellent, while the overall score was derived from the average score of the criteria. The evaluation of the learning of the kinetic form of the dance was carried out by two independent Physical Education Teachers specially trained in the use of this particular rubric and with many years of teaching experience in Greek traditional dance.

For the evaluation of the theoretical part (historical, geographical, folklore, etc.) of the dance, an Evaluation Criterion was used, which was constructed by the researcher for the needs of the research. The Criterion contained multiple choice questions, fill in the blank, true/false questions and a crossword puzzle.

The measurements taken for the kinetic and theoretical part of the dance were two, the final measurement at the end of the intervention and the remeasurement. Specifically, participants were remeasured 2 weeks after the completion of the intervention, a period which there was no practice or contact with the items under study, in order to examine the retention of learning (Tzetzis & Lola, 2015).

### 2.4 Statistics

For the statistical analysis of the data, analysis of variance with repeated measurements (ANOVA Repeated Measures) and Post hoc Bonferroni analysis were used to find differences between groups. Finally, the SPSS statistical package version 21 was used to conduct the statistical analysis and the statistical significance level was set at  $p < .05$ .

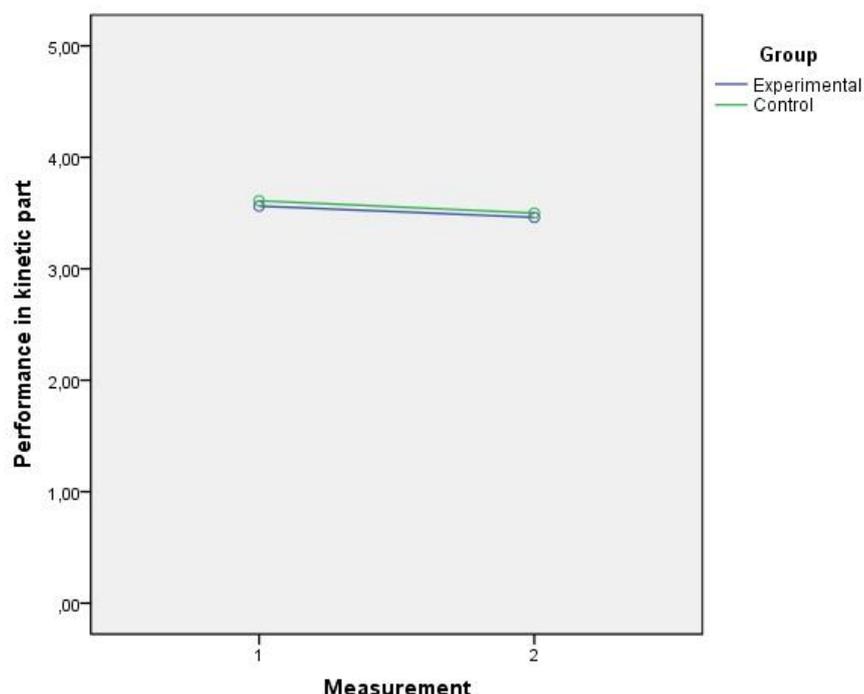
## 3. Results

### 3.1 The effect of the intervention in the learning of the kinetic part of the dance "Enteka"

The analysis of variance with repeated measures did not find a statistically significant interaction between the two factors "group" and "measurement" ( $F_{(1,103)} = .115, p = .735 > .05$ ) in the learning of the kinetic part of the dance "Enteka". Similar performances of the experimental and control groups emerged on the two measurements, with learning retention in both groups (Table 1 and Figure 1).

**Table 1:** Means and standard deviations of the kinetic performance of the groups (experimental & control) in the two measurements (final & remeasurement)

Group	N	1 <sup>st</sup> measurement (final)		2 <sup>nd</sup> measurement (remeasurement)	
		M	SD	M	SD
Experimental	67	3.56	.53	3.46	.52
Control	38	3.61	.66	3.50	.72
Total	105	3.58	.58	3.48	.59



**Figure 1:** Performance of the groups (experimental & control) in the two measurements (final & remeasurement) of the kinetic part of the dance "Enteka"

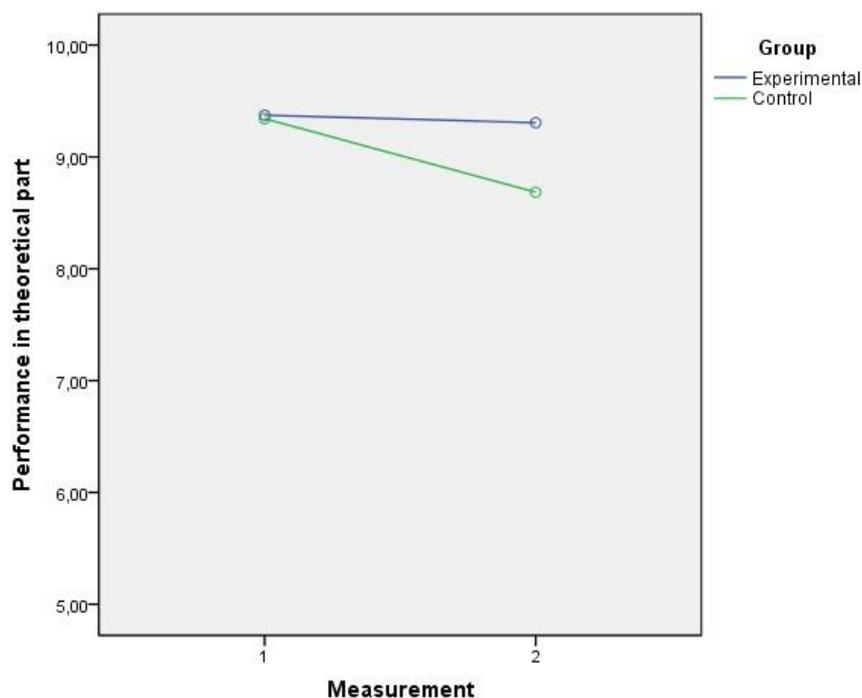
### 3.2 The effect of the intervention in the learning of the theoretical part of the dance "Enteka"

The analysis of variance with repeated measures found a statistically significant interaction between the two factors "group" and "measurement" ( $F_{(1,103)} = 75.783, p < .05$ ) in the learning of the theoretical part of the dance "Enteka". Analyzing the interaction for each grade of the factor "measurement", no statistically significant effect of the factor "group" was found on the final measurement ( $F_{(1,103)} = .064, p = .801 > .05$ ), but was found only on the remeasurement ( $F_{(1,103)} = 23.441, p < .05$ ). Therefore, in the final measurement the performance of the experimental group ( $9.37 \pm .62$ ) did not differ from the control group ( $9.34 \pm .57$ ), while in the remeasurement the experimental group had a statistically significantly higher performance ( $9.31 \pm .61$ ) than the control group ( $8.68 \pm .67$ ).

Furthermore, analyzing the interaction for each grade of the factor "group", a statistically significant effect of the factor "measurement" was found only in the control group ( $F_{(1,103)} = 147.306, p < .05$ ) and not in the experimental group ( $F_{(1,103)} = 2.707, p = .103 > .05$ ). Therefore, regarding the control group, performance decreased statistically significantly between the final measurement ( $9.34 \pm .57$ ) and the remeasurement ( $8.68 \pm .67$ ), while in the experimental group, performance did not differ between the final measurement ( $9.37 \pm .62$ ) and remeasurement ( $9.31 \pm .61$ ) (Table 2 and Figure 2).

**Table 2:** Means and standard deviations of the theoretical performance of the groups (experimental & control) in the two measurements (final & remeasurement)

Group	N	1 <sup>st</sup> measurement (final)		2 <sup>nd</sup> measurement (remeasurement)	
		M	SD	M	SD
Experimental	67	9.37	.62	9.31	.61
Control	38	9.34	.57	8.68	.67
Total	105	9.36	.60	9.08	.70



**Figure 2:** Performance of the groups (experimental & control) in the two measurements (final & remeasurement) of the theoretical part of the dance "Enteka"

#### 4. Discussion

The aim of the present research was to compare two teaching approaches of Greek traditional dancing, the holistic and the typical teaching, in the learning of the dance "Enteka" with participants students from the 6<sup>th</sup> grade of Primary School. Specifically, the experimental group was taught the dance "Enteka" using the holistic teaching approach, while the control group followed the lesson plan for this dance, which is proposed in the Physical Education Teacher's Book for grades 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup>. In both approaches the fundamental element was the general philosophy of Greek dance as a way of life and as a socio-cultural phenomenon (Cowan, 1998; Government Gazette 304/B'/13-03-2003; Hanna, 1999; Royce, 2005). However, the configuration of the appropriate learning climate, the way of organizing the teaching and the implementation of innovative methods by the Physical Education Teacher are particularly important factors for achieving optimal learning outcomes (Diggelidis et al., 2009; Lykesas & Tyrovola, 2007).

According to the results of the study, in terms of performance evaluation in the kinetic part of the dance, the performance of the two groups was similar on both measurements, with the following retention of learning in both groups. The results of the present study agree with the results of other studies, which have applied innovative teaching approaches, such as music and kinetics (Lykesas, 2002; Panagiotou & Papadopoulou, 2000), the playful way of teaching (Topatsi, 2016), the theatrical game (Lykesas et al., 2015) and which prove to be effective in the learning of Greek traditional dance. In addition, the implementation of modern teaching approaches (e.g. experiential, interdisciplinary, collaborative) is also proposed in the new Physical Education Curriculum, which is expected to be implemented in the near future and upgrade the learning process (Government Gazette 6336/B'/30-12-2021).

Regarding the results of the research that emerged from the evaluation of the theoretical part of the dance "Enteka", the performance of both groups was high in the final measurement. However, their performance differed on remeasurement, with the experimental group performing the best. It is also worth noting that in the control group, the performance followed a downward trend from the final measurement to the remeasurement, while in the experimental group performance stabilized at high levels, confirming the retention of learning. The results of the research are in agreement with the results of the research of Lykesas et al. (2015), according to which the teaching of Greek traditional dance combined with theatrical play enriched students' knowledge with folklore elements. Of course, it should be noted at this point that no research has been conducted that studies the holistic approach in teaching Greek dance, while those interdisciplinary studies that include Greek traditional dance in their programs (Arapitsa, 2014; Stivaktaki, 2011) focus mainly on the study of psychological factors.

The implementation of discovery, experiential and collaborative methods within the holistic program

may have contributed to the high performance of the experimental group in the theoretical part of the dance, but also helped to maintain the learning at a high level. Specifically, the experiential enactment of the carnival custom of the "Fanoi" and its connection with the dance "Enteka", the conducting of WebQuests by the students and their work in groups, the presentation of their findings to the class plenary and, finally, the supplementation of the concept map at the recapitulation stage with the diagrammatic representation and connection of the basic theoretical concepts, probably helped the learning and the retention of learning in the experimental group. Therefore, the holistic approach is a different way of learning, as it is based on the coherence of the elements and understanding the relationship between the whole and the part, while developing a pedagogy directly connected to the real world of the student (Mahmoudi et al., 2012).

## 5. Conclusion

The holistic approach of teaching approaches the multidimensional character of Greek traditional dance holistically as an inseparable whole with individual elements of Folk Culture (e.g. traditional musical instruments, traditional costumes, customs) through discovery, experiential and group collaborative methods. According to the present research, in which participated students of the 6<sup>th</sup> grade of Primary School, the learning of the kinetic part of the dance "Enteka" was achieved with both teaching approaches, holistic and typical teaching. However, regarding the theoretical part, higher performance and retention of learning were achieved with the holistic approach. Thus, the implementation of the holistic approach to the teaching of Greek traditional dance can be an equally effective way of learning Greek dance, based on the relationship between the whole and the part, aiming at a wider range of Folk Culture approach and with the basic principle of linking experience with learning.

Future researches could study the holistic approach of teaching Greek traditional dance in other grades of Primary and Secondary Education. In addition, research could be carried out to study the implementation of the holistic approach to the other objects of Physical Education, as well as to other subjects of the school program.

## References

- [1] Arapitsa, V. (2014). The effect of an interdisciplinary program of traditional dances on the development of dance skills and motivation of secondary school students. Unpublished Master's Thesis, Democritus University of Thrace, Komotini, Greece.
- [2] Cowan, J. (1998). Idioms of belonging: multilingual (co-)articulations of local identity in a small town in Macedonia. In M. Gefou-Madianou (Ed.), *Anthropological theory and ethnography* (pp. 583-618). Athens: Ellinika Grammata.
- [3] Diggelidis, N., Theodorakis, I., Zetou, E., & Dimas, I. (2009). *Physical Education for 5<sup>th</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup> grade. Teacher's Book*. Athens: Textbook Publishing Organization.
- [4] Flouris, S., & Zbainos, D. (2018). A modern holistic teaching approach of Greek traditional dance. *Education Sciences*, 3, 82-116.
- [5] Forbes, S. H., & Martin, R. A. (2004). What Holistic Education Claims About Itself: An Analysis of Holistic Schools' Literature. *American Education Research Association Annual Conference*. San Diego, California.
- [6] Gartzonika-Kotsika, E. (2016). *Traditional dance in education*. Athens: Pedio.
- [7] Hanna, J. L. (1999). *Partnering Dance and Education. Intelligent Moves for Changing Times*. Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics.
- [8] Institute for Education Policy (2021). *Curricula for Physical Education in Primary School (A' edition)*. Athens: IEP Publications.
- [9] Lykesas, G. (2002). The teaching of Greek traditional dances in Primary Education with the method of Music and Movement Education. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Greece.
- [10] Lykesas, G., Koutsouba, M., Giosos, I., & Tyrovola, V. (2015). The effectiveness of a theatrical game program in the learning process of Greek traditional dance in primary school students. *Woman & Sport*, 9, 47-56.
- [11] Lykesas, G., & Tyrovola, V. (2007). The place of traditional dance in the curricula of primary education and its implementation in practice. *Music Pedagogy*, 5, 102-116.
- [12] Mahmoudi, S., Jafari, E., Nasrabadi, H., & Liaghatdar, M. (2012). Holistic Education: An Approach for 21 Century. *International Education Studies*, 5(2), 178-186.
- [13] Ministerial Decision 21072b/C2/28-2-2003. Interdisciplinary Unified Curriculum Framework for Physical Education (Government Gazette 304/B'/13-3-2003).
- [14] Ministerial Decision 169870/D1/2021. Curriculum for Physical Education in Primary School (Government Gazette 6336/B'/30-12-2021).

- [15] Panagiotou, A., & Papadopoulou, K. S. (2000). *Positive effect of music education on the learning of Greek traditional dances at school age*. Presentation at the 8<sup>th</sup> International Conference of Physical Education & Sport, Komotini.
- [16] Pitsi, A., Diggelidis, N., & Filippou, F. (2013). Construction Scale Classified Criteria (rubric) for the Evaluation of Greek Traditional Dance. Validity and Reliability. *Inquiries in Sport & Physical Education*, 11(2), 79-98.
- [17] Royce, P. A. (2005). *The anthropology of dance*. (M. Zografou, ed. & trans.). Athens: Nisos.
- [18] Stivaktaki, Ch. (2011). Organization and implementation of a special interdisciplinary program for teaching traditional dances in Physical Education and their influence on the attitudes and perceptions of students of the first grade of High school. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Peloponnese, Sparta, Greece.
- [19] Topatsi, A. (2016). The influence of a playful way of teaching on learning Greek traditional dances in preschoolers. Unpublished Master's Thesis, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Serres, Greece.
- [20] Tzetzis, G., & Lola, A. (2015). Motor Development. In G. Tzetzis & A. Lola (Eds.), *Motor Learning and Development* [Undergraduate textbook] (Ch. 7). Athens: Kallipos, Open Academic Editions. Retrieved from: <http://hdl.handle.net/11419/336>