



Teaching Techniques: The Opinion of Teachers in Second Chance Schools and Evening Education Schools in the Greek District of Ioannina

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Abstract

The contemporary financial and social changes demand the constant update of the existent knowledge and the acquisition of new skills especially in the cases of people of low socioeconomic status who have not completed the basic education. The present case study examines the attitudes and perceptions of educators of Schools of Second Chance and in the Evening Junior High schools of the Greek district of Ioannina. In the study educators were asked to answer a questionnaire. The findings show that educators have a sufficient and good knowledge of the educational methods yet it seems that in the Evening High schools the educators are better educated concerning these educational techniques in comparison with those of Schools of Second Chance. The vast majority of the educators think that the application of the methods is very important, 25% of the sample has good knowledge of the available teaching means in the school units while the knowledge of the educators for the application of these techniques is positively correlated with its application in practice. Last but not least, the analysis has shown that the available time affects the use of the educational techniques and that the use of these specific techniques by some teachers increases the possibility of their use from their colleagues.

Keywords: Evening junior high schools, Schools of second occasion, Educational techniques, Teachers' attitude, Evening schools, Adult education.



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1. Introduction

The economic crisis leads many adults in searching for certificated knowledge acquisition. People who, due to personal difficulties, were unable to obtain this certificate led to specialized schools called Schools of Second Chance and Evening Schools. Combining work and study they are able to complete their studies.

The difficult aspect in teaching adults is associated with the consolidation of existing cognitive patterns and the loss of mechanisms which help to integrate new data. As people grow, the capacity to assimilate new information is reduced and the adaptation to new data is inhibited (Papanis and Roumeliotou, 2007). The normal biological damage that occurs over the years, combined with the psychological barriers that are often faced by adults, because of the level of self-perception of insecurity, mistrust and distrust and the possible challenge of the environment in which they live, are impediments to the learning procedure.

The purpose of this case study is to answer the following questions:

1. What percentage of teachers, by level of education, teaching in Evening High Schools and Second Chance Schools of Ioannina knows, was taught, uses, and believes in the importance of using teaching techniques?
2. What is the relationship between years of service of teachers who teach in these schools with the use of teaching techniques?

2. Theoretical Part

2.1. The Sociology of the Evening Training

The use of education as an incentive to accomplish the satisfaction of the desire and the tendency of the individual for social and professional development is a standard practice for many years (Parsons, 1959; Shultz, 1961). This practice, appears to fulfill the individuals' goals, at least in the field of the increase of the income, as the correlation between level of education and economic earnings are positive (Psaropoulos and Kazamias, 1985); (Galitis, 2007).

In particular, the desire to continue studies at a secondary school and even at a university is a strong incentive. It provides motivation for individuals to acquire more knowledge for personal fulfillment and satisfaction, and the acquisition of formal and substantive qualifications. These new skills improve their labor market position and help them in order to meet their professional expectations and ambitions.

However, it should be noted that the desire of pursuing higher education is not expressed by the majority of students of evening schools. Working in the daytime is the most important reason to continue studies during the evening while other important reasons are age, family responsibilities but also the low level of difficulty in the education which is provided in these schools.

In conclusion, evening education serves a unique - but very important – role. Evening education came to meet the educational needs of working people (young and old), giving them the opportunity to participate in the educational process. Furthermore, it gives them the same opportunities in education and vocational rehabilitation with these of the students of the casual education, while assuming the role of mediator in alleviating social exclusion of people exposed - or likely to be exposed - to it.

2.2. Teaching Methods in Second Chance Schools and in Evening Schools

Choosing educational methods is a multifactorial process that depends on a number of variables and conditions. The training techniques used in the learning process are one of the major preoccupations of scholars working in the field of Adult Education (Courau, 1994; Jarvis, 1995; Noye and Piveteau, 1999); (Brookfield, 1996; Rogers, 1996; Kokkos and Lionarakis, 1998; Kokkos, 1999); (Kokkos, 1999). This is primarily because it is an indicator on the effectiveness of learning (Rogers, 1996; Kokkos, 1999), but also because the choice of a particular educational technique should not be done randomly; the degree of promotion of students' active participation and self-determination should be taken into account (Rogers, 1996; Kokkos, 1999).

First, the objectives of an educational program are an important variable in the choice of teaching methods. The objectives are divided into three categories (Chasapis, 2000):

- 1) Targets related to the knowledge that will empower learners through the program.
- 2) The competencies and the skills the trainees are expected to acquire after the completion of the program.
- 3) Objectives related to attitudes that are expected to adopt the trainees toward the educational process.

Therefore the teachers in lifelong learning programs must have clear goals in all three areas in order to be able to structure the educational process, to particularize the content but also to reduce the resistance and obstacles that may be encountered by the students through the selection of appropriate educational methods (Courau, 1994).

However, the choice of educational techniques depends on a number of other factors (Chatzitheocharous, 2010):

- 1) The purpose of the training program
- 2) The texture of the learning object
- 3) The learning methods and educational characteristics of learners
- 4) The skills and attitude of the teacher
- 5) The class level
- 6) The available time / timing
- 7) Resources available:

Field surveys show that one of the fundamental principles of adult learning is the learners' active participation in the educational process which requires somehow the instructor, to adopt and implement practices that promote interaction, exchange ideas and experiences, thus contributing to the discovery of knowledge (Mezirow, 1991). It is therefore appropriate, according to Kokkos and Lionarakis (1998) for adult educators to follow training techniques to enable adult learners to “penetrate and activate the cycle of learning”. Consistent with Courau (1994): “the more energetic the adult is, the better he can learn and this can be achieved using pedagogical techniques that favor the

active participation of the learners so they know how to continue their own learning process after the completion of the program”.

Also, other relevant research (Jaques, 2000) reveals that the process of group discussion is more effective than traditional teaching methods (e.g. presentation) for the development of critical, personal and social adjustment and in order to change attitudes. Moreover, the research data shows that the views of learners confirm these scientific findings. In a survey conducted by Strantzali (2005) learners showed clear preference to positive evaluation of the educational techniques that promote active participation in learning compared with those methods which aimed at simple transmission and accumulation of knowledge.

However, according to Kokkos (1999) adult educators in Greece do not often use active learning techniques, but they prefer more traditional teacher-centered techniques (like presentation and exercises). It is interesting that many confuse instructional techniques with optical media, while giving excessive importance to the latter, which shows how difficult it is to focus on techniques that involve the interactive relationships between teachers and their students. The conclusion is that few teachers know how to use appropriate instructional techniques for adult education.

Similar are the results of the research by Tzimopoulos and Karalis (2005) that came to the conclusion that regarding the selection and use of educational techniques, adult educators are recorded at a rate of 62.5% of applying frequently the presentation technique. Relatively low priority was given to the implementation of purely participatory educational techniques, such as case studies, working groups, despite the fact that the objects of the programs and the characteristics of learners, are advocating their use.

3. Methodology

3.1. Research Strategy

The chosen method is the case study as its main advantage is that it enables the researcher to investigate in depth one aspect of a problem in a limited time span (Berg *et al.*, 2004). Although this method is criticized by many as to the generalizability of the results, we adopted the view that the real value of a case study is assessed both by the extent of its operations and by the suitability and adequacy of the functions of others who teach in similar conditions.

In this research, the method of the case study will be helpful, because its results can be implemented in practice, through the improvement of structures and techniques and the promotion of the teachers’ training.

The study sample consists of 40 teachers. The data obtained from the questionnaires was grouped using the program SPSS and Excel and was analyzed statistically.

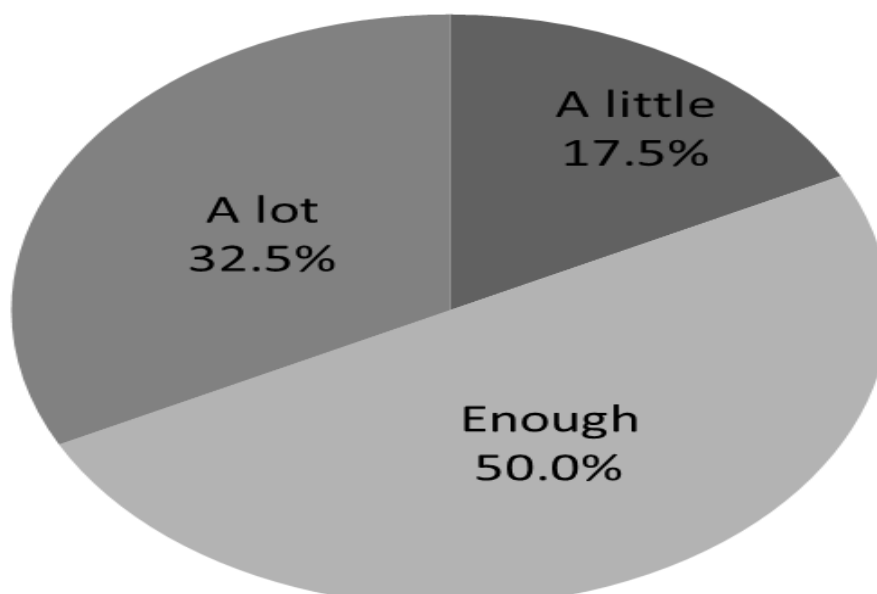
3.2. Research Tools

The participants were asked to complete a questionnaire. Initially, the first questions provide information on the demographic characteristics of the sample. Then the participants were interviewed regarding how well they know the teaching techniques, if they were trained to use the teaching techniques, how often they use them and if they consider relevant the time during which they use these techniques.

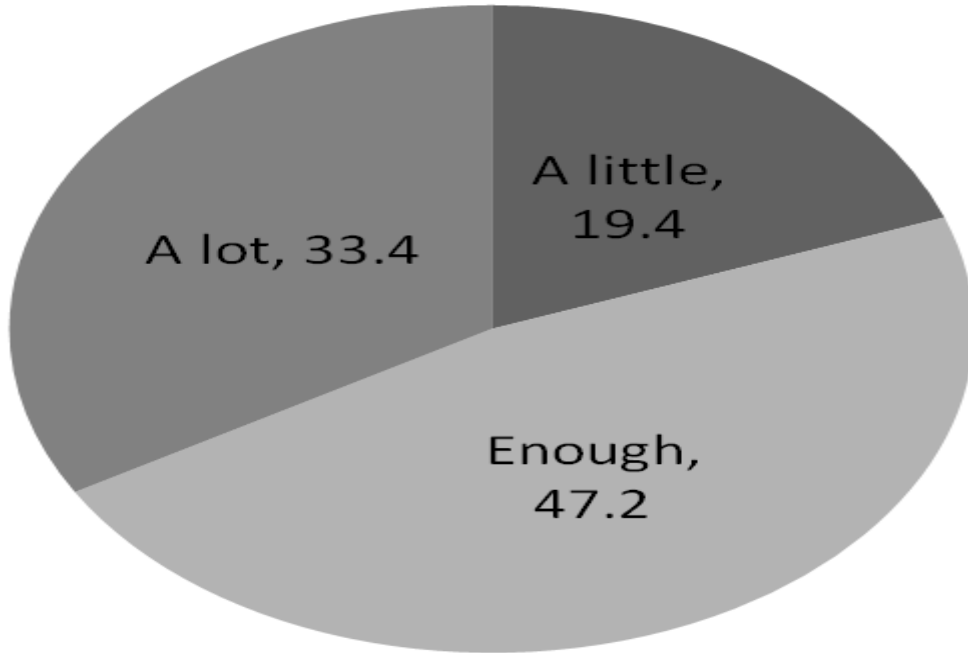
In close-ended questions the participants had to choose between three options: Yes / No / Do not know-No Answer. Accordingly, in the questions which reflect the opinions of teachers, the available options are: Not at all / A little / Enough / A lot. The questionnaires were distributed in the school year 2012-2013 to teachers who taught in previous years in Evening High Schools and in Second Chance Schools of Ioannina.

4. Findings

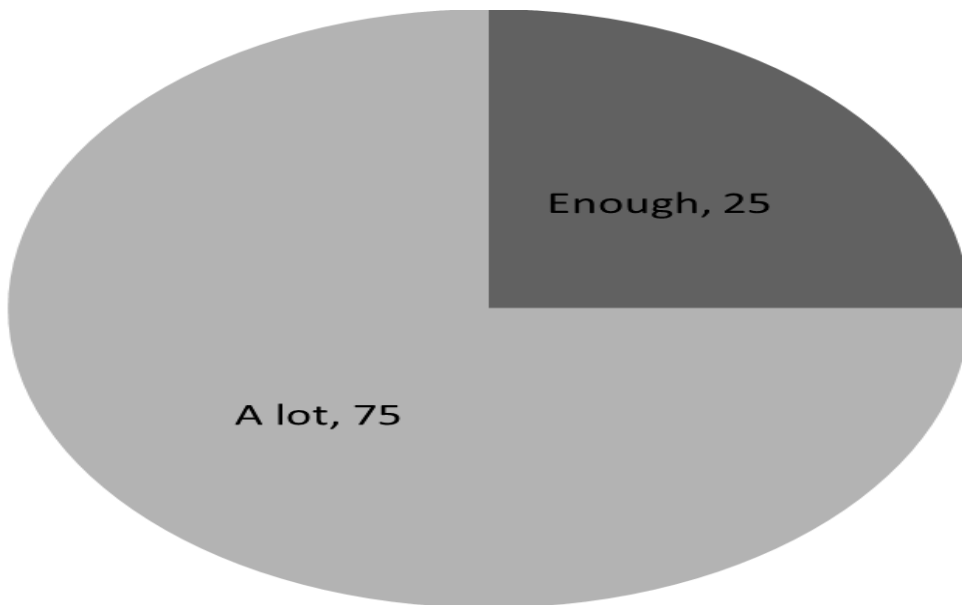
The first question gives answer to whether the training techniques are applied. The responses of the participants were tested in overall and by educational level (if the participants were graduates of universities or technological education institutes - TEI). Half of the participants know enough about the teaching techniques while it is encouraging that none answered that he/she knows nothing about the teaching techniques (Graph 1). The analysis shows that among graduates of universities and TEI, the latter know the teaching techniques in greater numbers (Graphs 2, 3).



Graph-1. Participants who know about the teaching techniques (overall)

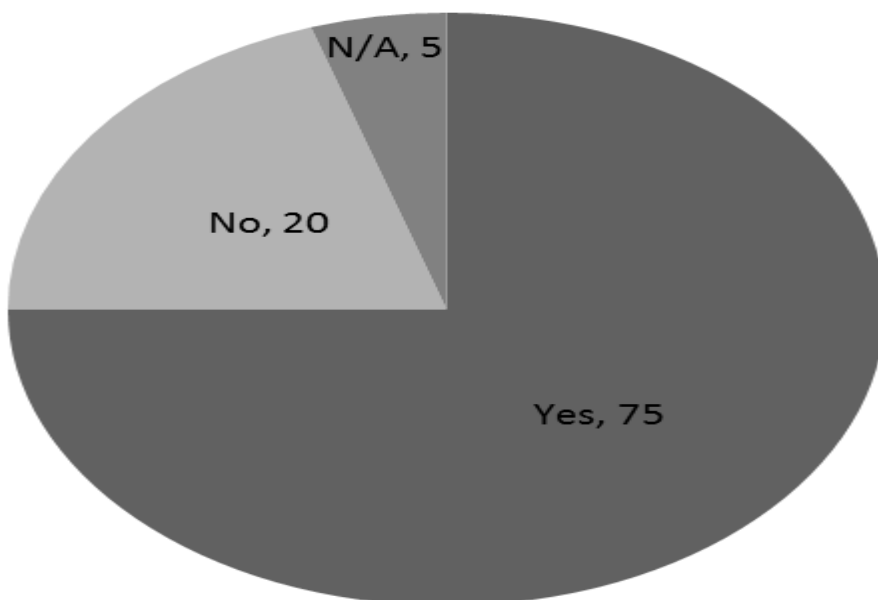


Graph-2. Participants who know about the teaching techniques (graduates of universities)



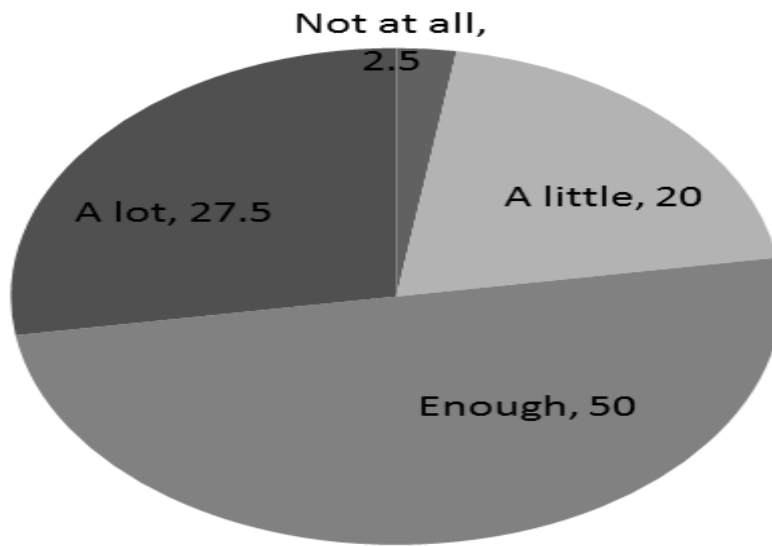
Graph-3. Participants who know about the teaching techniques (graduates of TEI)

As to the percentage of participants who were trained to the teaching techniques, the majority answered that they were trained. However, 20% of them answered that they were not trained, but they use them according to their experience (Graph 4).



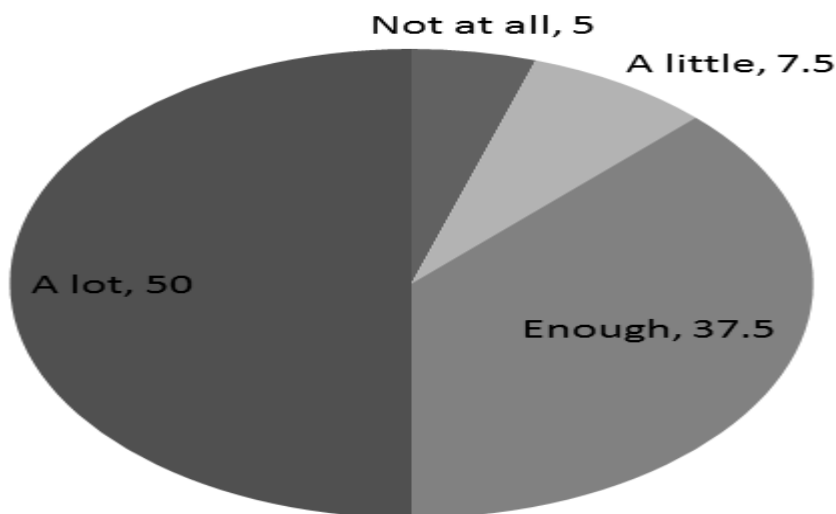
Graph-4. Training in teaching techniques

The next aims to outline the percentage of teachers who use instructional techniques. Through the statistical analysis shows that 50% seem to use educational techniques in an adequate degree, while 27,5% believe that they use them a lot. It is important to note that 20% use the techniques a little and 2,5% do not use them at all.

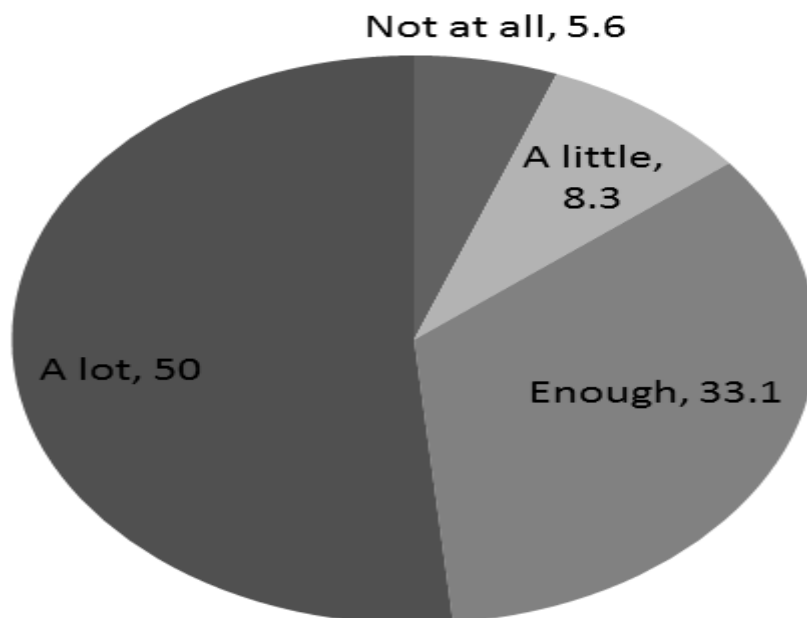


Graph-5. Use of teaching techniques

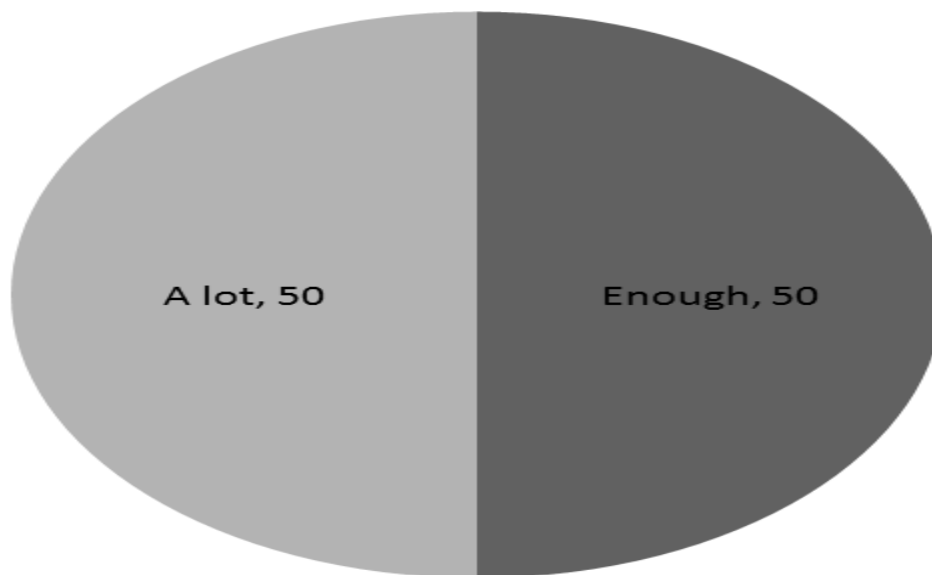
The importance of the teaching techniques in education is highlighted by the responses. 87.5% consider them as important and very important during the teaching process (Graph 6). In regard to the higher education which the participants have, half the graduates of universities consider educational techniques as very important in teaching and 36.11% consider them quite important (Graph 7). Respectively 100% of the TEI graduates consider the educational techniques as important and very important in teaching (Graph 8). It should be noted that there is a percentage of participants educated in universities, which believe that the teaching techniques are not important at all (5%) or only a little (7.5%) (Graph 7).



Graph-6. Importance of teaching techniques (overall)



Graph-7. Importance of teaching techniques (university graduates)



Graph-8. Importance of teaching techniques (TEI graduates)

Statistically significant correlation exists between the available teaching time and the implementation of educational techniques (p-value = 0.003).

Matrix-1. Available time of implementation of methods and how much the teachers use them

		Use of teaching methods				Total
		Not at all	A little	Enough	A lot	
Available time	Yes	0	3	14	11	28
	No	1	4	5	0	10
	N/A	0	1	1	0	2
Total		1	8	20	11	40

Matrix-2. Chi-square tests

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	11,821 ^a	6	,066
Likelihood Ratio	14,252	6	,027
Linear-by-Linear Association	9,035	1	,003
N of Valid Cases	40		

The results showed that there is no statistically significant relationship between the years of service of teachers and the use of teaching techniques.

Matrix-3. Years of service and use of teaching techniques

		Years of service as teachers					Total
		1-5	5-10	11-15	16-20	21-25	
Use of techniques	Not at all	0	1	0	0	0	1
	A little	4	4	0	0	0	8
	Enough	9	5	2	3	1	20
	A lot	8	3	0	0	0	11
Total		21	13	2	3	1	40

5. Conclusions

In conclusion, the aim of this study is to investigate the attitudes and opinions of trainers in Evening High Schools and in Schools of Second Chance on teaching techniques and to examine the effect of different variables on the use of these techniques, such as level of education.

At the Evening Schools teachers have been trained to a higher proportion of specific techniques compared with educators in Second Chance Schools. One reason for the differentiation of the two groups of teachers is likely that, as default, Evening High Schools teachers will have to go through specific training to learn these techniques. However, there is no stable staff in Second Chance Schools. Every year, applicants are invited to submit requests to be selected for these positions. Therefore, specific education and training in these techniques is not mandatory.

On the other hand, it is encouraging that the techniques are considered as very important by the majority of teachers. It is encouraging, as teachers are more likely to prefer these teaching techniques over traditional conventional training methods (Vergidis, 2002).

Of course, as evidenced by the statistically significant relationship between knowledge of educational techniques and their use by the trainers, training is necessary as the more familiar the teachers are with these techniques the more they use them in the educational process. Besides, instructors are required to acquire new knowledge and skills

that will enable them as 'adult educators', so that they can meet the needs of learners (Kioulanis, 2006). The above information on the need for further training of trainers is enhanced by the lack of correlation between the years of service of teachers and the rates of use of these techniques. It seems clear that the use of these techniques is not the result of experience, but proper and adequate training.

Finally, time affects the use of learning techniques which is consistent with the principles of Vergidis (2002) for adult education, as teachers choose their teaching techniques depending on the time available. This should be taken into account in determining the curriculum as adequate time should be given to instructors to apply techniques by which the trainees will really benefit.

6. Discussion

The state should promote training programs for adult educators on teaching techniques to feel more familiar with their implementation. It should provide the necessary resources to all units of adult education, so they can be easily accessible and available to teachers but also to adjust the detailed timetable and related structures in order to encourage the teacher to use these unconventional teaching techniques during the educational process.

It would be unrealistic to argue that the findings of this study can be generalized, but through the case of Ioannina, another piece can be added to the great puzzle of the literature on adult education in the Greek area and simultaneously to inspire similar studies in local areas. This will help to build a comprehensive picture for this field.

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