

## A TEACHING INTERVENTION FOR IMPROVING DEFINITIONAL SKILLS IN UPPER ELEMENTARY STUDENTS

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### ABSTRACT

This study discusses the importance of learning to define a word. It provides a brief background on the metalinguistic nature of definitions, on the contribution of definitional skills to school success and proposes teaching methods for improving definitional skills. The teaching methods were implemented in an intervention program, which took place in a Greek public school. The sample consisted of 24 typically developed students, who were attending the sixth grade of an Elementary school in Greece. The class was divided into 4 groups. The intervention was implemented by the investigator in three sessions of about 20 minutes for each activity. These separate teaching units involved 3 activities that were related to the production of definitions. The activities used words based on the studies of Gavriilidou (2011, 2015) and Dourou (2019). The words belonged to different categories ( $N=$  16 words, 8 nouns, 4 verbs, 4 adjectives / 6 simple, 2 derivatives and 8 compounds / 4 concrete nouns and 4 abstract nouns). The findings showed that teaching intervention was effective and the students used more types in order to define words. A closer inspection of intervention data revealed that students provided more extended definitions using more vocabulary and avoiding repetitions or tautologies. The results of teaching intervention could be useful not only for the improvement of typically developed students in regular classrooms but also for students with learning difficulties or students who are taught Greek as a second language.

**Keywords:** Definitional skills, Elementary education, students, intervention, activities.