

**‘Specialization in ICTs and Special Education: Psychopedagogy of Integration’  
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**WORD DEFINITION ABILITY IN PEOPLE WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY**

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## **ABSTRACT**

This dissertation looks into the ability of students with mental retardation or intellectual disability to provide comprehensive word definitions. The ability to define words constitutes a complex ability which encompasses linguistic and meta-linguistic skills, an area in which these students present serious deficiencies. More specifically, we look into the type of definition these students seem to prefer as well as into the impact factors such as the part of speech of words to be defined and their semantic structure (specific and abstract words) have on the definitions produced. The definitions are examined according to their content and form. Besides, we compare the performance of students with mental retardation with one another but also with the performance of typically developing students of the same age so as to establish whether and to what extent the ability to define words is differentiated among the students with mental retardation and between the two peer groups.

The findings of the research point out that as far as the ability to provide concise word definitions is concerned the performance of students with mental retardation is lower than that of the typically developing students. Yet, if we compare students with mental retardation with one another, although in certain cases their diagnosis is identical, that is “mental retardation”, their performance is significantly differentiated, a fact that reflects the presence of crucial individual differences. Thus, the importance descriptive evaluation holds for students with mental retardation is highlighted as it is this kind of assessment that can shed light on their deficiencies and special educational needs.

This study was carried out with a limited sample of students with mental retardation. Hence, it is not possible to generalize its findings in the population of students with mental retardation. However, it can instigate a similar study on a bigger scale, aiming at a more in-depth investigation and analysis of their linguistic abilities which can then form the basis for more efficient educational interventions.

**Keywords:** mental retardation, word definition, ability, performance, evaluation

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