



Cap sur l'école inclusive  
en Europe



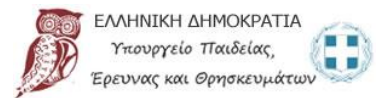
## Pedagogical Sheet

### Identifying the literary theme in a class including SEN students

#### Section of the module / E

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<https://macrisocialsciences.blogspot.gr/>

After studying: (a) Swanson H.L.'s article (2001) concerning Joanna Williams' work on identification of the theme in literature by students with severe learning disabilities, as well as (b) the opinions of other researchers that we have been able to study in Woolfolk's book (2005), we decided to adopt a revised model of Joanna Williams' work for teaching the literary theme to students with severe learning difficulties and some mental retardation.

#### General definition / Brief description of the content

The purpose of this educational project is to identify the theme in literature in order to help students with severe learning disabilities and / or mental retardation to understand and use abstract concepts, ideas, and values encountered in literary texts.

The objectives are thus as follows:

1. Understanding a literary text or poem and, in particular, understanding the concepts, ideas and abstract values contained in the text / poem. In our case, we chose a short story by Chekhov, "A number".
2. The use of these abstract concepts, ideas, and values by pupils
3. Pupils' contact with literature
4. A familiarization of pupils with the literary language
5. The expression of feelings resulting from the text / poem

## Use / Fields of application

- Pupils of junior high school (12-15 years old)
- Number of pupils per class: up to 27
- Knowledge areas/fields: Literature
- Estimated course duration: 1 or 2 hours of teaching

## Principles and theoretical foundations / Methodology

We relied on the theoretical model suggested by Swanson, which we expanded and adapted to our current needs.

### Bibliography

Swanson, H.L. (2001) « *Research on Interventions for Adolescents with Learning Disabilities: A Meta-analysis of Outcomes Related to Higher-order Processing* », *The Elementary School Journal*, 101, 332-348.  
Woolfolk, A. (2007). *Εκπαιδευτική Ψυχολογία, [Psychologie Educative]*. Athènes: éd. Ellin

### Tools

Educational support: board or computer and projector (The choice depends on the teacher and how he / she uses the technology),

Materials for pupils: school notebook, pedagogical sheets prepared by the teacher

## PROPOSED ACTIVITIES

### Conduct

#### Before reading

1. We give a schematic diagram of the author's biography (Chekhov)
2. We identify the theme of the short story, which in our case is the defeatism and the weakness of the teacher to demand what belongs to her, so that pupils acquire an orientation for the course. (Understanding the title of the table).
3. We discuss the importance of the theme (defeatism and weakness)
4. We build on the pupils' experiences to reach our goal.

- We create the first column of activity on the board with the theme:

## WHAT WE BELIEVE WE KNOW ABOUT DEFEATISM AND WEAKNESS

#### During the reading

1. We read the short story "A number" by Chekhov while clarifying the unknown words.
2. We read the story twice, in the second we ask questions to allow pupils to make the necessary connections to everything they know about the story, while completing the following chart:

Place	Time	Characters	Characters' Occupation
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1. When the reading is over, pupils discuss the main subject of the story by asking the question: what is the meaning of the story?
2. The teacher reads and / or displays on a concept map or a PowerPoint show a summary of the main themes of the story.

**"Summary of the text:** *The employer of Miss Julia and father of the children for whom she is a home teacher, when he calls her to pay her salary, systematically tries with inaccuracies and lies to reduce the amount he owes her. The teacher, while correcting him, doesn't claim what belongs to her. Then the employer, indignant, tells her he made a hoax in order to teach her how to claim what she is entitled to and gives her the normal pay."*

### **Step A: Discussion aiming at using the literary theme**

The teacher discusses important information with pupils, focusing on six organizational issues. The first four are related to the content of the story, while the last two invite pupil to use their judgment to understand and detect the problem. The questions are:

1. Who are the protagonists of the story?
2. What is the problem?
3. What did they do?
4. What happened at the end of the story?
5. Was what happened good or bad?
6. Why is it good or bad?

### **Step B: Presentation of the theme**

The theme is presented in the following standard format. It would be good, if possible, not only to express it orally, but to write it on the board in the form of a concept map.

- Miss Julia learned that she should \_\_\_\_\_
- We have to \_\_\_\_\_
- This story is about \_\_\_\_\_

➤ **At this point, we create the 2<sup>nd</sup> column of activity on the board:  
WHAT WE WANT TO KNOW ABOUT THE THEME**

### **Step C: Application of the theme**

At this point, pupils generalize the problem by asking three questions:

- Can you name someone who doesn't claim what he or she is entitled to?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- When is it important for this person to learn how to assert his / her rights?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- In which situations will this be useful?  
\_\_\_\_\_

## **Step D: Consolidation of the theme**

At the consolidation stage, following the method outlined by Swanson, - with the exception of the first course, which introduces this method of work - pupils in the class can use a variety of techniques, including:

- The role-playing technique based on the characters of the story
- Painting (in relation to the story)
- The creation of a rap song on the subject of the story

- For this short story by Chekhov, we chose the role-playing: "Question the characters" to consolidate the literary theme. For this role-playing game, two pupils stand forward, one of two represents the teacher and the other the employer. The other pupils in the class ask questions about their actions described in the short story.

**- Finally, we create the 3<sup>rd</sup> column of activity on the board:  
WHAT WE LEARNED ABOUT THE THEME**

## **Critical review**

- Review of the thematic scheme
- Preliminary presentation of the next theme to be studied

## **Photocopied materiel**

Summary of Chekhov's biography

Summary of the short story

## **Worksheet**

### **1<sup>st</sup> Exercise**

- Miss Julia learned that she should \_\_\_\_\_
- We have to \_\_\_\_\_
- This story is about \_\_\_\_\_

### **2<sup>nd</sup> Exercise**

- Can you name someone who doesn't claim what he or she is entitled to?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- When is it important for this person to learn how to assert his / her rights?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- In which situations will this be useful?  
\_\_\_\_\_