



## Glossary of Reading and Assessment Terms

These terms may be encountered in more detail throughout the series of Literacy Solutions Reading Endorsement courses.

**Ability:** A performance on a measure of intelligence. Given that IQ tests vary in their theoretical foundations and in the skills they assess, an examinee's ability may vary from test to test.

**Academic:** Skills that are taught in school; performance on reading, writing, and math measures.

**Academic Language/Vocabulary:** Formal language or vocabulary that is common in books and at school, but that students are unlikely to encounter in everyday conversations with friends and family.

**Accommodations:** Adjustments that can be made to the way students access information and demonstrate performances that do not require changes in the curriculum.

**Accuracy:** Reading words in text with no errors.

**Active Reading:** Constructing reading from text by transforming and integrating textual information into existing networks of knowledge and experience.

**Affixes:** A general term that refers to prefixes and suffixes.

**Articulation:** The process by which speech sounds are pronounced by the human vocal tract.

**Age Equivalent:** Typically reported in terms of years and months, age equivalent is a manner of describing performance on tests that is discouraged by most knowledgeable professionals. It refers to the average age of students who earned the same raw score, a number that is often extrapolated.

**Auditory Processing:** The ability to discriminate and process sounds.

**Aural:** Relating to the ear or to the sense of hearing.

**Automaticity:** Reading without conscious effort or conscious attention to decoding.

**Average:** The sum total of a series of values that is divided by the number of values. Also referred to as median.

**Babbling:** An early stage of language development in which babies practice and refine their articulation of speech sounds.

**Background Knowledge:** Forming connections between the text and the information and experiences of the reader.

**Benchmark:** Level of proficiency desired in order to proceed to the next level of instruction.

**Bloom's Taxonomy:** Instructional practices to encourage higher-order thinking skills by first building upon the lower-level cognitive skills.

**BICS:** Basic interpersonal communicative skills; language used for social interaction.

**Body-coda:** The two parts of a syllable or monosyllabic word. The body is the initial sound and the vowel sound, the coda is the sound or sounds following the vowel. In the word mat, /ma/ is the body, /t/ is the coda.

**Ceiling:** A convention for reducing test time that permits evaluators to cease testing when items become too difficult.

**Cloze Procedure:** A technique for assessing reading comprehension at the sentence level that requires examinees to fill in missing words as evidence of their understanding.

**Cognates:** Words that are related to each other by virtue of being derived from a common origin.

**Cognition:** The study of human mental abilities.

**Cognitive Targets:** Mental processes or kinds of thinking that underlie reading comprehension (locate and recall, integrate and interpret, critique and evaluate).

**Collaborative Learning:** Involves groups working toward a common goal.

**Complex Sentence:** A sentence consisting of an independent clause and a dependent clause.

**Consonant:** A speech sound that is blocked or partially blocked; it can be voiced or unvoiced. Consonants are characterized by the place and manner of articulation.



**Consonant Cluster:** Adjacent consonants within a syllable, as in the word “sprints.”

**Consonant Digraph:** Two consonants that make one sound, as in the word “bath.”

**Content Validity:** The extent to which a test measures what it purports to measure.

**Contextual Analysis:** Using words or sentences around an unfamiliar word to help clarify its meaning.

**Corrective Feedback:** Clearly communicated, timely and developmentally appropriate information aligned to learning goals or objectives that specifically addresses learners’ errors or misconceptions.

**Correlation Coefficient:** An index of the relationship between two variables, typically expressed as “*r*.”

**Criterion-referenced Assessment:** Designed to measure student performance against a fixed set of predetermined criteria.

**Cued Phrase Reading:** A means to train students to recognize the natural pauses that occur between phrases in their reading.

**Curriculum--based Measurement (CBM):** Tests that are designed and constructed using classroom materials in the hope of measuring what has actually been taught.

**Decoding:** The ability to translate a word from print to speech, usually by employing knowledge of sound symbol correspondences; also the act of deciphering a new word by sounding it out.

**Derivation:** A word that changes its part of speech through the application of a suffix.

**Derivational Morphemes:** A word created by the addition of affixes to a base word.

**Diagnostic Assessment:** An assessment that is typically given to those identified as at-risk on a screening assessment to provide specific information to practitioners about a student’s strengths and weaknesses.

**Dialect:** A regional or social variation of a language that has its own phonological, lexical, and syntactic characteristics.

**Dialogic Reading:** During story reading, the teacher/parent asks questions, adds information and prompts student to increase sophistication of responses by expanding on his/her utterances.

**Digraph:** Two letters that make one sound such as /sh/, /th/, /ch/

**Diphthong:** Vowels that change their pronunciation within a syllable, as in cow/crown and boy/boil.

**Discourse:** Units of language, oral or written, that are longer than one sentence or utterance.

**Diverse Texts:** Books across multiple genres that are representative of the diverse world in which we live.

**Domain-specific Vocabulary:** Words specific to a field of study that help the reader understand a new concept.

**Dysgraphia:** An impairment of writing ability that results in poor graphomotor control.

**Dyslexia:** Specific learning disability (SLD) in basic reading skills that can range from mild to severe. The primary characteristics include difficulties with accurate and fluent word recognition and spelling.

**Echo Reading:** An experienced reader reads a section of text aloud, then the student reads the same section aloud.

**Elkonin Boxes:** Used to build phonological awareness skills in beginning readers. Words are segmented into individual sounds, or phonemes and corresponding boxes are drawn to match each.

**Emergent Literacy:** Reading and writing behaviors that precede formal instruction.

**Encoding:** Determining the spelling of a word based on the sounds in the word.

**English--language Learner (ELL):** A nonnative speaker of English.

**Expository Text:** Text that describes and explains factually based content.

**Expressive Language:** Language that is spoken.

**Etymology:** The study of a word’s history.

**Evidence-based:** Instructional practices demonstrating a statistically significant effect on improving student outcomes based on strong, moderate, or promising levels of evidence.



**Explicit:** Intentional teaching with a clear and direct presentation of new information to learners, which does not require student inferencing during the introduction of new content, concepts or skills. One example is the gradual release model.

**Expressive Vocabulary:** The vocabulary used to communicate in speaking and writing.

**Figurative Language:** Language expressing one thing in terms normally denoting another with which it may be regarded as analogous language characterized by figures of speech.

**Fluency:** Ability to read text quickly, accurately and with proper expression. Fluency provides a bridge between word recognition and comprehension.

**Formal Reading Assessment:** The collection of data using standardized tests or procedures under controlled conditions.

**Formative Assessment:** An on-going assessment process that is used by teachers and students to gauge student learning of the current unit of instruction. Formative assessments help teachers provide corrective feedback, modify instruction to improve the students' understanding or indicate areas needing further instruction.

**Genre:** Refers to how literature is classified. There are broad genre categories that include narrative fiction, informational text/non-fiction, and poetry.

**Grade Equivalent:** A manner of describing performance on tests that is discouraged by most knowledgeable professionals. GE refers to the average grade placement of students who earned the same raw score, often extrapolated, and reported in terms of years and months.

**Gradual Release Model:** Involves helping the student reach independence by first modeling a new concept or skill and then gradually transferring the responsibility to the student.

**Grapheme:** Smallest written unit corresponding to a sound or phoneme.

**Graphophonemic:** The relationship between letters and phonemes.

**Higher Order Thinking:** Higher order thinking skills include critical thinking, analysis and problem solving and hypothesizing.

**Homophone:** A word that has the same pronunciation as another despite different meaning and different spelling.

**Immersion:** A method of teaching a second language in which content courses and activities are conducted in the target language.

**Individual Educational Plan or 504 Plan:** An Individual Educational Plan is a written plan to identify the annual goals and objectives and special education and related services designed to meet the individual needs of a student with a disability. A 504 Plan specifies the accommodations and modifications necessary for a student with a disability to attend school with her or his peers; named for Section 504 of the federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973, which prohibits discrimination against individuals with disabilities, ensuring that children with disabilities have equal access to public education; students with 504 plans do not meet the eligibility requirements for special education under IDEA.

**Inflectional Morphemes:** A suffix that is added to a word (noun, verb, adjective or an adverb) to assign a particular grammatical property to that word, such as tense, number, possession or comparison.

**Informal Assessment:** Assessment that does not involve the use of norm---referenced instruments.

**Informal Reading Assessment:** Does not follow prescribed rules for administration and scoring and has not undergone technical scrutiny for reliability and validity. Teacher-made tests, end-of-unit tests and running records are all examples of informal assessment.

**Informal Reading Inventory (IRI):** A method of reading assessment designated by teachers using classroom materials or purchased from publishers. IRIs include teacher observation and judgment, which may or may not be reliable or valid.

**Intensifying Interventions:** Intensity consists of three variables: time, focus and group size. An increase in intensity would be reflected by an increase in the amount of time a student(s) would be exposed to instruction/intervention and/or a narrowing of the focus of instruction/intervention and/or a reduction in group size.



**Intervention Practices:** Includes evidence-based strategies frequently used to remediate reading deficiencies and includes, but is not limited to, individual instruction, multisensory approaches, tutoring, mentoring or the use of technology that targets specific reading skills and abilities.

**Language Experiences:** An approach to language learning in which students' oral compositions are transcribed and used as materials of instruction for reading, writing, speaking and listening.

**Linguistics:** The science and study of language.

**Meta-analysis:** Research that combines findings from a large body of research to draw conclusions.

**Metacognition:** An awareness of one's own thinking processes and how they work. The process of consciously thinking about one's learning or reading while actually being engaged in learning or reading. Metacognitive strategies can be taught to students; good readers use metacognitive strategies to think about and have control over their reading.

**Mean:** An average obtained by adding all scores and dividing by the number of scores.

**Median:** The middle score in an odd number of scores.

**Miscue Analysis:** A process by which deviations in oral reading are analyzed to determine the strategies used by a child in question. Miscues are analyzed in order to assess a child's ability to use a cueing system of phonemic, syntactic, and semantic cues to form meaning.

**Modifications:** In Florida, modifications are defined as "changes in what a student is expected to learn, and may include changes to content, requirements and expected level of mastery."

**Morphemes:** The smallest meaningful unit of language.

**Morphemic Analysis:** The process of determining a word's meaning by analyzing its meaningful parts, or morphemes. It includes the study of affixes, root words and compound words.

**Morphology:** Knowledge of meaningful word parts in a language (typically the knowledge of prefixes, suffixes and/or base words).

**Multimedia:** Using, involving or encompassing several media such as text, image, audio, video and/or animation.

**Multiple Meaning Words:** Multiple-meaning words are words that take on different meanings in different contexts.

**Multisensory Practices:** Multisensory practices use visual, auditory and kinesthetic-tactile cues simultaneously to enhance memory and learning. Links are consistently made between the visual (what we see), auditory (what we hear) and kinesthetic-tactile (what we feel) pathways in learning to read and spell.

**Multisyllabic Word Reading:** The decoding of words with more than one syllable.

**Norm-referenced Assessment:** The assessment of performance in relation to that of the norming group used in the standardization of a test or in relation to locally developed norms.

**Normal distribution:** The bell curve distribution that represents an average. For example, 1 standard deviation in both directions would capture two-thirds of the population.

**Oral Language:** Spoken language. There are five components of oral language: phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics and pragmatics.

**Orthography:** A writing system for representing language.

**Orthographic Mapping:** The process students use to turn unknown words into "sight words." It is a process for forming connections between the sounds and the letter sequences in words.

**Outcome Measures:** Assessment measures that result in decisions and actions; a term used to describe students' achievements.

**Paired Reading:** Also referred to as Partner/Peer Reading. Students reading aloud with a partner, taking turns to provide word identification help and feedback.

**Percentile Ranks:** A scoring system that defines that percent of a group who earned scores below or equal to the score obtained.

**Personalized Instruction:** Involves individualized, tailored learning and the use of digital tools to meet the learning goals.

**Phoneme:** The smallest unit of sound within a language system.



**Phonemic Awareness:** A subcategory of phonological awareness essential for reading, including the awareness of individual sounds/phonemes in spoken words.

**Phonemics:** The study of speech sounds that represent meaning.

**Phonetics:** The study of the production, transmission, and reception of speech sounds.

**Phonic Decoding:** Identifying the individual letters in a word, connecting the letters to phonemes and successfully blending the phonemes to read a word.

**Phonics:** The study of the relationships between letters and the sounds they represent; also used to describe reading instruction that teaches sound-symbol correspondences.

**Phonological Awareness:** One's sensitivity to, or explicit awareness of, the phonological structure of words in one's language. This is an "umbrella" term that is used to refer to a student's sensitivity to any aspect of phonological structure in language. It encompasses awareness of individual words in sentences, syllables and onset-rime segments, as well as awareness of individual phonemes.

**Phonological Processing:** The use of phonological information for processing spoken and/or written language.

**Phonology:** A system of rules dealing with sounds in a language.

**Pragmatics:** The study within psycholinguistics of how people employ language in social situations; emphasizes the functional use of language, rather than its mechanics.

**Prior Knowledge:** The knowledge possessed by an individual prior to a reading event, which may or may not be correct.

**Problem-solving Process:** The recursive, self-correcting, systematic process of finding solutions by accurately identifying problems, analyzing relevant data to understand why the problem is occurring, designing and implementing probable solutions and measuring the effectiveness of the solutions that were implemented. Teams continue to engage in problem solving to ensure that student success is achieved and maintained.

**Progress Monitoring Assessment:** Tests that keep the teacher informed about the child's progress in learning to read during the school year. These assessment results provide a quick sample of critical reading skills that will inform the teacher if the child is making adequate progress toward grade level reading ability at the end of the year.

**Prosody:** Making your reading sound like spoken language, attending to pace, expression, inflection and phrase boundaries.

**Rate:** The speed at which a person reads.

**Receptive Vocabulary:** Language that you understand.

**Regression:** A significant decrease in test scores from one administration to another.

**Reliability:** the consistency of a test measured from one evaluation session to another, between test forms and among different evaluators.

**Repeated Reading:** Rereading of text until the reader is able to read at a predetermined rate to produce fluency.

**Response to Intervention (RTI):** A movement in education focused on early intervention and prevention through progress monitoring.

**Rime:** The part of a syllable that includes the vowel and all subsequent sounds in the syllable, such as the *ip* in *trip*.

**Running Record:** A method developed by Marie Clay (1967) of documenting behaviors during oral reading.

**Scaffold (Scaffolding):** The intentional support provided by a teacher for learners to carry out a task or solve a problem, to achieve a goal that they could not do without support. It is temporary support matched to the current understanding or skill level of learners. The intent is to provide a decreasing level of support until learners are empowered to perform independently.

**Schema:** Prior knowledge, the knowledge and experience that readers bring to the text.

**Schwa:** An unstressed speech sound that originates from the mid---central position in the mouth, such as the second syllable of the word "lessen."

**Screening Assessment:** Brief assessments, typically administered to all students, designed to identify those at risk of failing an outcome.



**Self-monitoring (Self-monitor):** Self-monitoring is the mental act of knowing when one does and does not understand what one is reading. When students use self-monitoring strategies, they actively think about how they are learning or understanding the material, activities or reading in which they are engaged.

**Segmentation:** The act of breaking words into their component speech sounds.

**Semantics:** The study of word and phrase meanings.

**Semantic Mapping:** Graphic display of a cluster of words that are meaningfully related. Semantic mapping is especially valuable during prereading and vocabulary-building.

**Sequential:** The sequence begins with the easiest and most basic concepts and progresses methodically to more difficult material. Each concept must also be based on those already learned.

**Sight Word:** An irregular word that is taught as a whole with the goal of instantaneous recognition.

**Simple View of Reading:** A theory that uses a predictive formula with two components: word recognition (decoding) and language comprehension.

**Standard Error of Measurement:** The standard deviation of the differences between observed scores and true scores. The standard error of measurement decreases as the reliability of the instrument increases.

**Standardized Reading Test:** A standardized test is a test that is administered and scored in a consistent, or “standard” manner. It is constructed by specialists and experts based on standardized norms and principles. Standardized tests are designed in such a way that the questions, conditions for administering, time for completion, scoring procedures and interpretations are consistent and are administered and scored in a predetermined, standard manner. This standardization permits more reliable comparison of outcomes across all test takers.

**Standardized Test:** A test that has specific rules for administration and scoring that must be followed if the obtained scores are to be meaningful.

**Standard Deviation (SD):** A yardstick for norm---referenced tests that makes all scoring systems comprehensible; describes how the scores were distributed around the mean. One standard deviation from the mean in both directions captures about two---thirds of the population in a normal distribution.

**Stanine:** A 9---point scoring system with a mean of 5 and a standard deviation of 1.96.

**Structural Analysis:** A procedure for teaching students to read words formed with prefixes, suffixes or other meaningful word parts.

**Summative Assessment:** An assessment generally administered one time, usually at the end of a school year, to evaluate students’ performance relative to a set of content standards.

**Syllable Spelling Patterns:** There are six syllable types:

- **Closed syllable:** A syllable ending in one or more consonants and having a short-vowel sound spelled with one vowel letter (e.g., cat, cobweb)
- **Open syllable:** A syllable ending with a long-vowel sound spelled with one vowel letter (e.g., he, silo)
- **Vowel-consonant e syllable:** A syllable with a long-vowel sound spelled with one vowel letter followed by one consonant and a silent e (VCE) (e.g., like, milestone)
- **Vowel pairs:** A type of syllable with a short-vowel, long-vowel or diphthong sound spelled with a vowel team or digraph (e.g., ai, ea, ee, oi, oo) (e.g., count, rainbow)
- **Consonant-l-e:** candle, juggle (second syllable)
- **R-controlled:** star, corner

**Syntax (Syntactic):** The formation of sentences and the associated grammatical rules.

**Systematic:** A planned sequence that includes a logical progression of content, concepts and skills, from simple to complex, with cumulative teaching/review and practice to enable learners to achieve learning goals.

**Test Reliability:** Consistency in measurements and tests; specifically, the extent to which two applications of the same measuring procedure rank persons in the same way.



**Text:** The entirety of a linguistic communication, as a conversation and its situational context. A text can also denote a segment of spoken or written language available for description or analysis; the original spoken or written words or wording, in contrast to translations, abridgments, introduced errors, etc.; the main part of a written communication, other than title, footnotes, etc.; the topic or theme of a discourse, as a text of a lecture; a written or printed matter on a page or in a book, in contrast to illustrations; words; a textbook, or handwriting that uses large, bold lettering.

**Text Coding:** Also referred to as text-marking or annotating; an instructional strategy that teachers can use to ensure student reading engagement and critical thinking during the reading process.

**Text Complexity:** The complexity of a text refers to an assessment of its features such as general readability, levels of meaning, structures and language clarity that may cause some difficulties for readers to comprehend.

**Text factors:** refer to the author's approach to organizing and sharing their ideas. Teaching about text factors focuses on genre, text structure, and text features to provide the scaffolding that students need when learning to read and write.

**Text Structures:** Structures used to organize information in a text. (e.g., chronology, comparison and cause and effect).

**Triangulation of Data (Triangulate/Triangulating):** The process of using at least three points of data when making educational decisions.

**Validity:** The evidence that the inferences drawn from test results are accurate.

**Vocabulary:** Refers to all of the words in a language. One must know words to communicate effectively. Vocabulary development refers to stored information about the meanings and pronunciation of words necessary for communication. Four types of vocabulary include listening, speaking, reading and writing.

**Whole Language:** An approach to reading instruction based on the premise that learning to read is as natural as learning to speak.

**Zone of Proximal Development:** The distance between a learner's developmental level and their potential developmental level.

Adapted from:

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[www.dictionary.com](http://www.dictionary.com) --- retrieved August 1, 2015

[www.en.wiktionary.org](http://www.en.wiktionary.org) --- retrieved August 1, 2015

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