

Glossary of Key Terms

Achievement Gap

Achievement gap refers to any significant and persistent disparity in academic performance or educational attainment between different groups of students, such as white students and minorities, for example, or students from higher-income and lower-income households.

Definition from: [The Glossary of Education Reform: “Achievement Gap.”](#)

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) are traumatic events such as physical or emotional abuse, neglect and household dysfunction, that have a profound effect on a child’s developing brain and body, and can cause lasting negative health effects throughout a person’s life.

Asset-Based Approach

An asset-based approach is one that emphasizes and values the assets, experiences, cultures, accomplishments, talents and knowledge base a community brings to the table, rather than a community’s deficits. The asset-based approach values partnership and collaboration between communities and institutions, such as libraries, to build programs and services that fit the community.

Background Knowledge

Information and/or strategies you have learned in the past from either home or school experiences. All students have background knowledge!

Bilingual

Able to speak two languages proficiently.

Biliterate

Able to read and write proficiently in two languages.



Booktalk

“Booktalking” means telling someone about a book with the intent of convincing them to read it. Booktalks come in all styles: they can be long or short; funny, scary, or surprising; acted out, scripted or very informal. Booktalking is the book equivalent of a movie trailer. The idea is not to summarize the whole book but to hook the listener’s interest with just enough, or just the right, detail.

For more on booktalking: [Scholastic: Booktalks, Book Trailers, and Book Teasers](#); [CCBC Podcast](#)

Choral reading

A group of voices expressively reading a text in unison. Rehearsal of reading aloud with a group is a great way to practice oral reading and fluency.

Comprehension

Comprehension is the ability to understand, connect to, question, infer, wonder, summarize or synthesize information from text, oral storytelling, discourse, etc. See **Reading Comprehension**.

Cueing Systems

In the act of reading we use integrated strategies to constantly reach out and predict the meanings of unfamiliar words in the sentences we are about to read. Three cueing systems provide the brain clues (or cues) as to what the words might be:

- Semantic, does it make sense? (meaning)
- Syntactic, does it sound right? (grammar & word order)
- Grapho-phonetic, does it look right? (letters and sounds).

Culturally Responsive Practice

A practice that is culturally responsive reflects students’ own cultural learning styles and tools. It is less about using racial pride as a motivator and more about embracing and reflecting a student’s own cultural norms. These are the strategies their moms, dads, grandmas, and other community folks use to teach them life skills and basic concepts long before they come to school and during out-of-school time.

Definition From: [3 Tips to Make Any Lesson More Culturally Responsive](#) by Zaretta Hammond



Differentiated Instruction

Differentiated instruction, also called differentiation, is a process through which teachers enhance learning by matching student characteristics to instruction and assessment. Differentiated instruction allows all students to access the same classroom curriculum by providing entry points, learning tasks, and outcomes that are tailored to students' needs (Hall, Strangman, & Meyer, 2003). Differentiated instruction is not a single strategy, but rather an approach to instruction that incorporates a variety of strategies.

Definition from: [Reading Rockets: Differentiated Instruction for Reading](#)

Emergent Literacy

A term that is used to explain a child's knowledge of reading and writing skills before they learn how to read and write words. It signals a belief that, in literate society, young children—even one- and two-year-olds—are in the process of becoming literate.

Emergent Writing

Emergent writing “means that children begin to understand that writing is a form of communication and their marks on paper convey a message.”

Definition from: [NEFEC: Emergent Writing](#)

Engagement

The degree of attention, curiosity, interest, optimism, and passion that students show when they are learning or being taught, which extends to the level of motivation they have to learn and progress in their education. Generally speaking, the concept of “student engagement” is predicated on the belief that learning improves when students are inquisitive, interested, or inspired, and that learning tends to suffer when students are bored, dispassionate, disaffected, or otherwise “disengaged.” See **Reading Engagement**.

Equity

Equity is giving everyone what they need to be successful. In the educational realm, it means that one's personal or social circumstances such as gender, ethnic origin or family background are not obstacles to achieving one's educational potential; and that all individuals are supported to reach at least a basic minimum level of skills.

For more on equity in education see: [Unpacking UDL, differentiation and adaptation](#)



EQUALITY VERSUS EQUITY



In the first image, it is assumed that everyone will benefit from the same supports. They are being treated equally.



In the second image, individuals are given different supports to make it possible for them to have equal access to the game. They are being treated equitably.



In the third image, all three can see the game without any supports or accommodations because the cause of the inequity was addressed. The systemic barrier has been removed.

Image credit: [Unpacking UDL, differentiation and adaptation](#)

Executive Function

A set of processes that all have to do with managing oneself and one's resources in order to achieve a goal.

Guided Reading

Coaching readers during the reading process to problem-solve as they read a new text. The text should be at the edge of their development. The goal is to support the reader as they work toward reading independently.

Immigrant

A person who comes to a country to take up permanent residence.

Interactive Read-aloud

A systematic method of reading a book aloud. The teacher is doing the word-decoding work and the students are asked to do the thinking work. Through careful planning, teachers can **scaffold** and support the students' understanding of the book being read.

Language Acquisition

Children acquire language through a subconscious process during which they are unaware of grammatical rules. This happens especially when they acquire their first language. In order to acquire language, the learner needs a source of natural communication. The emphasis is on the text of the communication and not on the form. Also known as the *Natural Approach*.

Language Experience Approach

The Language Experience Approach exemplifies integration of reading and writing, taking advantage of an initial highly comprehensible, shared experience that students then narrate to the teacher, modeling the move from oral language to print.

Language Learning

Language learning is not communicative, but instead the result of direct instruction in the rules of language. In language learning, students have conscious knowledge of the new language and can talk about that knowledge. They can fill in the blanks on a grammar page. Research has shown, however, that knowing grammar rules does not necessarily result in good speaking or writing.

Latino/Latina

A person of Latin American origin or descent. Also refers to people with cultural ties to Latin America.

Latinx

A person of Latin American origin or descent, or with cultural ties to Latin America. Used as a gender-neutral or non-binary alternative to **Latino** or **Latina**.

Learning Gap

A learning gap is the difference between what a student has learned—i.e., the academic progress he or she has made—and what the student was expected to learn at a certain point in his or her education, such as a particular age or grade level.

Definition from: [The Glossary of Education Reform: "Learning Gap"](#)



Mentor Text (Anchor Text)

Any text that can be used as an example of good writing (or illustration) for writers and readers (and artists).

Monolingual

Able to speak one language proficiently.

Multilingual

Able to speak more than two languages proficiently.

Opportunity Gap

Closely related to **achievement gap** and **learning gap**, the term opportunity gap refers to the ways in which race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, English proficiency, community wealth, familial situations, or other factors contribute to or perpetuate lower educational aspirations, achievement, and attainment for certain groups of students. Generally speaking, opportunity gap refers to inputs—the unequal or inequitable distribution of resources and opportunities.

Outreach

In the library context, outreach means reaching out to one's community to connect people with the resources your program offers. Outreach is not the same as PR and marketing; it is more about making connections and opening channels of communication and recognition within the community. Outreach can include the practice of modifying or developing program resources based on community input gathered while reaching out to the underserved.

“In libraries, outreach is often described as services for those who are infrequent users or nonusers or as services for those who are traditionally underserved. Outreach librarians strive to provide equitable delivery of library services to all people through the development of programs, policies, practices, and behaviors which make the library available to all people.”

Definition from: [American Library Association: "Outreach Librarian"](#)



Oracy

Listening comprehension and oral language production working together. Children with strong oracy skills in English (or another language) are more likely to develop strong literacy skills in that language.

Oral Language

Oral language is the system through which we use spoken words to express knowledge, ideas, and feelings. Developing children's oral language, then, means developing the skills and knowledge that go into listening and speaking—all of which have a strong relationship to reading comprehension and to writing.

Passive Programs

Self-directed activities, activity stations, or interactive displays are programs that people can engage with on their own, without staff direction. Some examples include setting out (for example, on a table) coloring books, origami papers, board games, crafts, or [blackout poetry](#) supplies with an inviting and explanatory sign; or self-directed scavenger hunt sheets or other activity outlines.

Phonics

A method of teaching people to read by correlating sounds with letters or groups of letters in an alphabetic writing system.

Picture Walk:

By previewing the pictures in the story (you can just choose a few) before reading the text, readers of all ages and abilities can engage in the book before actually reading it. Ask kids the **Visual Thinking Strategies questions** or other open-ended questions. Be sure to avoid pictures/pages with spoilers!

Reading Comprehension

Reading comprehension is the ability to process text, understand its meaning, and to integrate it with what the reader already knows. See **Comprehension**.



Reading Engagement

Engaged readers get immersed in their reading — they read for pleasure, and to satisfy their curiosity, discover information and stories that help them learn and achieve, and are motivated to read and learn more. See **Engagement**.

Realia

Realia are real-life or everyday objects, materials, or artifacts that learners can interact with as they work to make sense of new ideas and, build connections between what they are learning and their own lives or the lived experiences of others. For example, maps, menus, photos, articles of clothing, toys, and games, etc.

Refugee

A person who has been forced to leave his or her country because of persecution, war, violence, or natural disaster. A refugee has a well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, political opinion or membership in a particular social group. Most likely, they cannot return home or are afraid to do so. War and ethnic, tribal and religious violence are leading causes of refugees fleeing their countries.

Definition from: [The UN Refugee Agency, “What Is a Refugee”](#)

Resilience

Resilience is the process of and ability to adapt well in the face of significant trauma, adversity, tragedy, or other significant source of stress. It can be described as the ability to “bounce-back.” Tools, skills, and processes that build resilience in people and communities can be strengthened through developing healthy relationships (especially with adult caregivers in the case of children), fostering a sense of hope and cultural tradition, and teaching stress management and self-regulation techniques.

Scaffolding Talk

Scaffolds refer to supports designed for communicating ideas, and are particularly important for English language learners. Some scaffolds may include **sentence frames**, norms for discussions, time for thinking and time to process with a peer.



Sentence Frames

Sentence frames, oral and written, give a structure that supports young children, reluctant speakers and those learning English to share their ideas. You can allow children to alter or deviate from these depending on their need. E.g. “*My favorite character is _____.* *They are my favorite character because _____.* “

Sentence Prompt (or Stem):

A tool when using expressive language (speaking or writing) to help to get an idea going without the added pressure of thinking how to start. Similar to sentence frames, sentence prompts (or stems) are meant to be open-ended to elicit a variety of responses. E.g. “*When I saw _____, I thought...*”

STEM/STEAM

The acronyms STEM and STEAM stand for the fields of science, technology, engineering, the arts (in the case of STEAM), and math. STEM/ STEAM is an interdisciplinary approach to learning where rigorous academic concepts are coupled with real-world lessons as students apply science, technology, engineering, art, and mathematics in contexts that make connections between school, community, and work. There is a global trend toward the development of STEM literacy, with an eye toward fostering in today’s youth the ability to compete in the contemporary world economy.

Definition from: [The Toy Association: Decoding STEM/STEAM](#)

Syntax

The set of rules, principles, and processes that govern the structure of sentences in a given language, usually including word order.

Translanguaging

“An approach to the use of language, bilingualism, and the education of bilinguals that considers the language practices of bilinguals not as two autonomous language systems...but as one linguistic repertoire with features that have been societally constructed as belonging to two separate languages.” (Garcia/ Johnson/Seltzer, *The Translanguaging Classroom: Leveraging Student Bilingualism for Learning*, 2017, Caslon Publishing.)



Transmedia Storytelling

Transmedia literally means “across media” and transmedia storytelling is commonly defined as the use of multiple media platforms to tell a story. Transmedia storytelling includes extending the original story, mapping the story’s world, exploring secondary characters, and engaging the audience. Examples of transmedia storytelling include using interactive apps based on a familiar story to allow audiences to engage with the story in new ways, as well as low-tech options like engaging children in creating musical or illustrated versions of a text.

Trauma-Informed Practice

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Association (SAMHSA) conceptualizes a trauma-informed approach as when “A program, organization, or system ...:

1. Realizes the widespread impact of trauma and understands potential paths for recovery;
2. Recognizes the signs and symptoms of trauma in clients, families, staff, and others involved with the system;
3. Responds by fully integrating knowledge about trauma into policies, procedures, and practices; and
4. Seeks to actively resist re-traumatization."

A trauma-informed approach can be implemented in any type of service setting or organization and is distinct from trauma-specific interventions or treatments that are designed specifically to address the consequences of trauma and to facilitate healing.

Universal Design

Universal Design is about designing spaces and services in a way that makes them as functional as possible for all people regardless of age, ability or background. It is different than an accessibility approach in that it looks to improve usability for all, not just those who identify as disabled, and it focuses on finding one solution that will function equally for everyone, rather than fragmented approaches that divides users.

For more on Universal Design see: [Unpacking UDL, differentiation and adaptation](#)



Visual Thinking Strategies and the Whole Book Approach

“The Whole Book Approach (WBA) uses Visual Thinking Strategies (VTS) in storytime to support participants of all reading levels in developing verbal literacy through visual literacy.”

- VTS is a research-based method that uses works of art to stimulate critical thinking, communication skills, and visual literacy.
- WBA is a storytime model incorporating VTS

A Thumbnail Sketch of Visual Thinking Strategies

- The leader invites the group to take a few moments to look closely at an image and then asks these, and only these, open-ended questions:
 1. What's going on in this picture?
 2. What do you see that makes you say that?
 3. What else can you find?
- The leader continually paraphrases student responses, all the while increasing the of the language without making participants feel corrected, validating individual views, connecting observations, and pointing out differences of opinion.
- Participants must provide visual evidence to support their interpretations.

Whole Book Approach

The Whole Book Approach (WBA) is a storytime model incorporating Visual Thinking Strategies (VTS). WBA uses VTS in storytime to support participants of all reading levels in developing verbal literacy through visual literacy. See **Visual Thinking Strategies (VTS)**.



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