



## GLOSSARY OF EDUCATIONAL TERMS

**Disclaimer:** The definitions cited in this document are from many resources, as noted, and are not directly from the *No Child Left Behind Act*.

**504 plans:** student plans written in accordance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 states that:

*"No otherwise qualified handicapped individual in the United States...shall, solely by reason of...handicap, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance"* (Portland Community College, Office for Students with Disabilities).

**Alignment:** the practice of matching state curriculum standards, curriculum instruction, and assessment so that teachers teach to the standards and students are tested on what they are taught (RMC 2002, 2).

**All content areas:** for the purpose of supplemental educational services, all content areas refers to mathematics and reading/language arts only.

**Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA):** Public Law 336 of the 101st Congress which was enacted July 26, 1990. The ADA prohibits discrimination and ensures equal opportunity for persons with disabilities in employment, state and local government services, public accommodations, commercial facilities, and transportation. It also mandates the establishment of TDD/telephone relay services (U.S. Department of Justice).

**Assessment:** an activity or written test that measures a student's skill and/or knowledge in a particular subject area (RMC 2002, 2).

### Assessment Terms

**benchmark:** statement that provides a description of student knowledge expected at specific grades, ages, or developmental levels. Benchmarks often are used in conjunction with standards (see standards) (Ncrel, 2).

**criterion-referenced assessment:** an assessment that measures what a student understands, knows, or can accomplish in relation to specific performance objectives. It is used to identify a student's specific strengths and weaknesses in relation to skills defined as the goals of the instruction, but it does

not compare students to other students (compare to norm-referenced assessment) (Ncrel, 3).

**norm-referenced assessment:** an assessment designed to discover how an individual student's performance or test results compares to that of an appropriate peer group (compare to criterion-referenced assessment) (Ncrel, 5).

**pre-test:** assessment given to students to determine what they know or do not know prior to teaching a skill or concept.

**post-test:** assessment given to students after a skill or concept has been taught to determine what they know or do not know.

**reliability:** an indicator of score consistency over time or across multiple evaluators. Reliable assessment is one in which the same answers receive the same score regardless of who performs the scoring or how or where the scoring takes place. The same person is likely to get approximately the same score across multiple test administrations (Ncrel, 7).

**rubrics:** specific criteria or guidelines used to evaluate student work (Ncrel, 7).

**scoring guide:** a set of guidelines for rating student work. A scoring guide describes what is being assessed, provides a scoring scale, and helps the teacher or rater correctly place work on the scale (see rubrics) (Ncrel, 7).

**standardized tests:** assessments that are administered and scored in exactly the same way for all students. Traditional standardized tests are typically mass-produced and machine-scored; they are designed to measure skills and knowledge that are thought to be taught to all students in a fairly standardized way. Performance assessments also can be standardized if they are administered and scored in the same way for all students (Ncrel, 7).

**validity:** an indication that an assessment instrument consistently measures what it is designed to measure, excluding extraneous features from such measurement (Ncrel, 8).

**At-risk:** a term applied to students who have not been adequately served by educational systems and who are at risk of failing to meet the state's academic achievement standards. These students have a high risk of dropping out or failing school (Ncrel, 1; ASCD).

**Computer-assisted instruction (CAI):** educational programs delivered through the use of computers and educational software (ASCD).

**Curricula:** plural for curriculum (Ncrel, 3).

**Curriculum:** a plan of instruction that details what students are to know, how they are to learn it, what the teacher’s role is, and the context in which learning and teaching will take place (Ncrel, 3).

**Curriculum standards:** statements of what students should know and be able to demonstrate in each subject area (see state academic achievement standards or standards).

**Data-driven decision making:** a process of making decisions about curriculum and instruction based on the analysis of classroom data and standardized test data. Data-driven decision making uses data on function, quantity and quality of inputs, and how students learn to suggest educational solutions. It is based on the assumption that scientific methods used to solve complex problems in industry can effectively evaluate educational policy, programs, and methods (Ncrel, 3).

**Distance learning:** using technology such as two-way, interactive television, teacher and student(s) in different locations may communicate with one another as in a regular classroom setting (Ncrel, 3).

**Effectiveness:** a demonstrated record of improving student academic proficiency. (Non-Regulatory Guidance 2003, 5).

**Eligible child:** a child from a low-income family who attends a Title I school that is in the second year of school improvement, in corrective action, or in restructuring. Eligibility is thus determined by whether a student is from a low-income family and the improvement status of the school the student attends [NCLB Section 116(e)(12)(A)].

**Eligible school:** a Title I school that must provide supplemental educational services. This includes a Title I school that does not make adequate yearly progress for three years or more.

**ESOL:** English Speakers of Other Languages.

**English language arts:** this includes reading, writing, English (high school subject), grammar, vocabulary, phonics, etc.

**Goal:** broad term for a task to be accomplished.

**Heterogeneous grouping:** grouping together students of varying abilities, interests, or ages (Ncrel, 4).

**High-quality instruction:** instructional practices, shown to be effective by academic research, to improve student academic achievement in English language arts and mathematics.

**Highly-qualified tutors:** Tutors in the SES program must meet the minimum qualifications of a Title I paraprofessional. These tutors must have a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent; and at least one of the following:

- Completed two years of study at an institution of higher education (equivalent to 60 semester hours)
- Obtained an associate's (or higher) degree
- Met a rigorous standard of quality and be able to demonstrate, through a formal local academic assessment, knowledge of and the ability to assist in instructing, reading, writing, and mathematics (or, as appropriate, reading readiness, writing readiness, and mathematics readiness).

**Independent research studies:** study of the effectiveness of a topic or program using data over a period of time, conducted by person(s) having no vested interest in the success or failure of the topic or program being studied. Results are published in research journals.

**Individual tutoring:** one instructor teaches one student at a time based on the student's needs.

**Individualized Education Program (IEP):** students with certain special needs as specified by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), have a legal right to a special plan written by a multidisciplinary team based on identified needs of the child. The team designs services to blend the best methods of teaching with the most conducive learning environment for the child (ASCD).

**Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA):** a revision of the Education for All Handicapped Children Act, the IDEA is a federal law passed in 1991 and amended in 1997 that guarantees a free appropriate public education for eligible children and youth with disabilities. According to the law, this addresses children such as those with hearing impairments (including deafness), speech or language impairments, visual impairments (including blindness), and so forth.

**Instructional design elements:** the theoretical underpinnings of instructional practices. For example, if you are using Direct Instruction, behaviorism (teaching/learning based on a system of rewards) is the theoretical foundation of your instructional practices. If you use inquiry, constructivism is the theoretical foundation of your instructional practices.

**Instructional materials:** materials used to teach children such as books, textbooks, manipulatives, etc.

**Instructional practice:** a method one uses when teaching or providing instruction.

**Instructional Practices Terms (examples of)**

**coaching:** an instructional method in which a teacher supports students as they perfect old skills and acquire new skills (Ncrel, 2).

**cognitively guided instruction:** an instructional strategy in which a teacher assesses what students already know about a subject and then builds on students' prior knowledge. Students typically are asked to suggest a way to represent a real problem posed by the teacher. Guided questions, encouragement, and suggestions further encourage students to devise solutions and share the outcome with the class (Ncrel, 2).

**collaborative learning or cooperative learning:** an instructional approach in which students of varying abilities and interest work together in small groups to solve a problem, complete a project, or achieve a common goal (Ncrel, 2).

**constructivism:** theory suggesting that students learn by constructing their own knowledge, especially through hands-on exploration. It emphasizes that the context in which an idea is presented, as well as student attitude and behavior, affects learning. Students learn by incorporating new information into what they already know (Ncrel, 2).

**explicit instruction:** teaching children in a systematic and step-by-step way (RMC 2002, 8).

**hands-on/minds-on activities:** activities that engage students' physical as well as mental skills to solve problems. Students devise a solution strategy, predict outcomes, activate or perform the strategy, reflect on results, and compare end results with predictions (Ncrel, 4).

**inquiry:** a process in which students investigate a problem, devise and work through a plan to solve the problem, and propose a solution to the problem (Ncrel, 4).

**manipulative:** any physical object (e.g., blocks, toothpicks, coins) that can be used to represent or model a problem situation or develop a mathematical concept (Ncrel, 4).

**metacognition:** the process of considering and regulating one's own learning. Activities include assessing or reviewing one's current and previous knowledge, identifying gaps in that knowledge, planning gap-filling strategies, determining the relevance of new information, and potentially revising beliefs on the subject (Ncrel, 5).

**modeling:** demonstrating to the learner how to do a task, with the expectation that the learner can copy the model. Modeling often involves thinking aloud or talking about how to work through a task (Ncrel, 5).

**problem solving:** a method of learning in which students evaluate their thinking and progress while solving problems. The process includes strategy discussion—determining solution strategies to similar problems and pinpointing additional problems within the context of their investigation (Ncrel, 6).

**scaffolding:** an instructional technique in which the teacher breaks a complex task into smaller tasks, models the desired learning strategy or task, provides support as students learn to do the task, and then gradually shifts responsibility to the students. In this manner, a teacher enables students to accomplish as much of a task as possible without adult assistance (Ncrel, 7).

**teaching for understanding:** a teaching method that focuses on the process of understanding as the goal of learning rather than simply the development of specific skills. It focuses on forming connections and seeing relationships among facts, procedures, concepts, and principles, and between prior and new knowledge (Ncrel, 8).

**Zone of Proximal Development (Zoped):** a level or range in which a student can perform a task with help (Ncrel, 8).

**Instructional program:** how the instruction is implemented. There are six components of effective instruction. They are (1) the introduction, (2) the presentation of information, (3) the activities, (4) the practice of concepts and skills, (5) the amount and quality of feedback, and (6) the review activities and information (Virginia Tech).

**Large group:** ten children taught by one instructor at the same time.

**Low-income students:** in Florida, low-income students are defined as those students eligible for free or reduced priced lunch.

**English Language Learning (ELL):** students who speak another language but who have not yet mastered English (Education Week).

**Local Educational Agency (LEA):** school district.

**Migrant students:** students whose parents move frequently to gain employment in seasonal agricultural areas (RMC 2002, 16).

**On-line:** instruction provided over an Internet site.

**Professional development:** training for instructors or teachers that builds knowledge and skills to be implemented (see staff development) (RMC 2002, 20).

**Provider (supplemental service):** a non-profit entity, a for-profit entity, or a local educational agency that

- (i) has a demonstrated record of effectiveness in increasing student academic achievement;
- (ii) is capable of providing supplemental educational services that are consistent with the instructional program of the local educational agency and the academic standards described under section 1111; and
- (iii) is financially sound [NCLB Section 1116(e)(12)(B)];

**Research-based instructional strategy:** an instructional strategy that has been shown effective through research.

**Small group:** five children taught by one tutor at a time.

**Special education:** program designed to serve children with mental and physical disabilities. Such children are entitled to Individualized Education Plans (IEP) that spell out the services needed to reach their educational goals, ranging from speech therapy to math tutoring. Traditionally, special education has taken place in separate classrooms. Increasingly, the services may also be offered in regular schools and classrooms (Education Week).

**Staff development:** training for instructors or teachers that builds knowledge and skills to be implemented (see professional development) (RMC 2002, 20).

**Standards:** statements of what students should know and be able to demonstrate. Various standards have been developed by national organizations, state departments of education, districts, and schools (Ncrel, 7).

**State academic achievement standards:** individual state's statements of what students should know and be able to demonstrate in each subject area (see standards or curriculum standards).

**State educational agency (SEA):** State Department of Education

**Student academic achievement goals:** goals are statements of how the student is expected to improve academically as a result of the supplemental educational services. Goals are established in consultation with parents.

**Supplemental educational services (SES):** tutoring and other supplemental academic enrichment services that are

- (i) in addition to instruction provided during the school day; and
- (ii) are of high quality, research-based, and specifically designed to increase the academic assessments required under section 1111 and attain proficiency in meeting the State's academic achievement standards [NCLB Section 1116(e)(12)(C)].

Supplemental educational services are additional academic instruction designed to increase the academic achievement of students in low-performing schools. These services may include tutoring, remediation, and other educational interventions provided

that such approaches are consistent with the content and instruction used by the local education agency (LEA) and are aligned with the state's academic content standards. Supplemental educational services must be provided outside of the regular school day. Supplemental educational services must be high quality, research-based, and specifically designed to increase student academic achievement (Non-Regulatory Guidance 2003, 1).

**Timetable:** task to be completed by a predetermined date(s) or within a given timeframe.

**Title I:** refers to a federal program that provides additional educational services for low-income children under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965. The most recent reauthorized version of this federal law is known as the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001* (RMC 2002, 4).

## References

Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD). "A Lexicon of Learning. What Educators Mean When They Say . . ." <<http://www.ascd.org>>

Education Week on the Web. "Glossary." <<http://www.edweek.org>>

North Central Regional Educational Laboratory (Ncrel). "Glossary of Education Terms and Acronyms." <<http://www.ncrel.org>>

Northern Arizona University.  
<<http://jan.ucc.nau.edu/~mid/edr610/class/research/question/lesson1-1-1.htm>>

Portland Community College, Office for Students with Disabilities.  
<<http://spot.pcc.edu/osd/504.htm>>

Rocky Mountain Center for Health Promotion and Education Research Corporation (RMC). 2002. *The ABC Book of Educational Terms: A Plain Language Guide for Parents* <<http://www.rmc.org>>

South Carolina Department of Education (SDE). "Understanding Your Child's Individual Student Report."  
<<http://www.myschools.com/offices/assessment/PACT/parents/index.htm>>

Title I, Part A, Section 1116 (e) 12 A–C of the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001* (NCLB).

United States Department of Education. 2003. *Supplemental Educational Services. Non-Regulatory Guidance.*

United States Department of Justice. <http://www.usdoj.gov/crt/ada/publicat.htm>

Virginia Tech. <<http://athena.english.vt.edu/~jdross/Step4Gym.html#Introduction>>