

Talk the Education Talk

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As the Education Category continues to grow, you will find yourself having deeper conversations with educators. You may feel sometimes that these educators are speaking a different language. It is important to understand the education terms that you may encounter during a conversation. So, I have created this Education Glossary of Terms to help you speak the Education Language. This list will provide you with the latest terms and buzz words in the Education Category. You can now speak confidently while meeting with educators and impress them with your knowledge! Speaking the language will help you find the solutions and grow sales!

Achievement Gap: The difference between the performance of subgroups of students, especially those defined by gender, race/ethnicity, disability and socioeconomic status.

Active Learning: A process whereby learners are actively engaged in the learning process, rather than “passively” absorbing lectures. Active learning involves reading, writing, discussion, and engagement in solving problems, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation. Active learning often involves cooperative learning.

ADA (Average Daily Attendance): Total ADA is defined as the total days of student attendance divided by the total days of instruction. District and School funding is tied to ADA and a poor ADA can result a loss of funding.

Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP): A measurement indicating whether a school, division or the state met federally approved academic goals required by the federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act/No Child Left Behind Act (ESEA/NCLB)

Alternative Education: (Also known as **non-traditional education** or **educational alternative**) This describes a number of approaches to teaching and learning other than traditional publicly- or privately-run schools. These approaches can be applied to all students of all ages, from infancy to adulthood, and all levels of education.

Alignment: Effort to ensure that what teachers teach is in accord with what the curriculum says will be taught and what is assessed on official tests.

Applied Academics: An approach to learning and teaching that focuses on how academic subjects (communications, mathematics, science, and basic literacy) can apply to the real world. Further, applied academics can be viewed as theoretical knowledge supporting practical applications.

Assessment: The process of documenting, usually in measurable terms, knowledge, skills, attitudes and beliefs.

-Formative Assessment: including diagnostic testing, is a range of formal and informal assessment procedures conducted by teachers during the learning process in order to modify teaching and learning activities to improve student attainment

-Summative Assessment: The goal of summative assessment is to evaluate student learning at the end of an instructional unit by comparing it against some standard or benchmark. Summative assessments are often high stakes, which means that they have a high point value. Examples of summative assessments include: A mid-term exam or final project

At-Risk Students: Students who have a higher than average probability of dropping out or failing school

Benchmark: A detailed description of a specific level of student achievement expected of students at particular ages, grades, or developmental levels. Benchmarks are often represented by samples of student work. A set of benchmarks can be used as checkpoints to monitor progress in meeting performance goals within and across grade levels.

Blended Learning: Learning in a combination of modes, often used more specifically to refer to courses which use a combination of traditional face-to-face teaching and distance learning techniques on-line or with digital devices.

BYOT or BYOD: Bring Your Own Technology or Bring Your Own Device. This refers to students using their own mobile devices in school during instruction.

Charter Schools: Publicly funded schools that are exempt from many state laws and regulations for school districts. They are run by groups of teachers, parents, and/or foundations.

Classroom Management: A term used by many teachers to describe the process of ensuring lessons run smoothly without disruptive behavior by students. It is possibly the most difficult aspect of teaching for many teachers and indeed experiencing problems in this area causes many people to leave teaching altogether. It is closely linked to issues of motivation, discipline and respect.

Collaborative Learning: An umbrella term for a variety of approaches in education that involve joint intellectual effort by students or students and teachers. Groups of students work together in searching for understanding, meaning or solutions or in creating a product. The approach is closely related to cooperative learning, but is considered to be more radical because of its reliance on youth voice. Collaborative learning activities can include collaborative writing, group projects, and other activities.

Common Core State Standards: Sometimes abbreviated as CCSS. The Common Core State Standards Initiative is an educational initiative in the United States that details what K–12 students should know in English language arts and mathematics at the end of each grade.

- Forty-two of the fifty U.S. states and the District of Columbia are members of the Common Core State Standards Initiative, with the states of Oklahoma, Texas, Virginia, Alaska, Nebraska, Indiana, and South Carolina not adopting the initiative at a state level. Many other states are currently re-working their standards to move away from Common Core.

Cooperative Education: A structured method of combining academic education with practical work experience. Research indicates that one of the attributes employers value most in newly hired employees is work experience. A cooperative education experience, commonly known as a “co-op”, provides academic credit for career work. Cooperative education is taking on new importance in school-to-work transition, service learning, and experiential learning initiatives.

Core Curriculum: The body of knowledge that all students are expected to learn in the subjects of English, mathematics, history/social studies and science.

Critical Thinking: Consists of a mental process of analyzing or evaluating information, particularly statements or propositions that people have offered as true. It forms a process of reflecting upon the meaning of statements, examining the offered evidence and reasoning, and forming judgments about the facts. Critical thinkers can gather such information from observation, experience, reasoning, and/or communication. Critical thinking has its basis in intellectual values that go beyond subject-matter divisions and which include: clarity, accuracy, precision, evidence, thoroughness and fairness.

Curriculum: (plural **curricula**) The set of courses and their contents offered by an institution such as a school or university. In some cases, a curriculum may be partially or entirely determined by an external body. In the U.S., the basic curriculum is established by each state with the individual school districts adjusting it to their desires.

Differentiation: Refers to a wide variety of teaching techniques and lesson adaptations that educators use to instruct a diverse group of students, with diverse learning needs, in the same course, classroom, or learning environment.

Early Childhood Education: Covers the education of a child from the period from birth to eight years of age.

E-learning: An approach to facilitate and enhance learning through, and based on, both computer and communications technology. Such devices can include personal computers, CD-ROMs, Digital Television, P.D.A.s and Mobile Phones. Communications technology enables the use of the Internet, email, discussion forums, collaborative software and team learning systems.

Elementary & Secondary Education Act (ESEA): The primary federal law affecting K-12 education; the most recent reauthorization of the law is also known as the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB)

English as a Second Language (ESL): A program of instruction and services for non-English-speaking or limited-English-proficient students to help them learn and succeed in schools.

Experiential Education: (or “learning by doing”) The process of actively engaging students in an authentic experience that will have benefits and consequences. Students make discoveries and experiment with knowledge themselves instead of hearing or reading about the experiences of others. Students also reflect on their experiences, thus developing new skills, new attitudes, and new theories or ways of thinking. Experiential education is related to the constructivist learning theory.

Gifted Education: A broad term for special practices, procedures and theories used in the education of children who have been identified as gifted or talented. Youths are usually identified as gifted by placing highly on certain standardized tests.

Guided Reading: Small-group reading instruction designed to provide differentiated teaching that supports students in developing reading proficiency. The small group model allows children to be taught in a way that is intended to be more focused on their specific needs, accelerating their progress.

Guided Reading Level: All of Irene Fountas and Gay Su Pinnell’s work references their text leveling system—The F&P Text Level Gradient™—often referred to as Guided Reading Levels or F&P Levels.

Head Start: A federally funded child-development program that provides health, educational, nutritional, social and other services to pre-school children from economically disadvantaged families.

Individualized Education Program (IEP): A written plan created for a student with disabilities by the student’s teachers, parents or guardians, the school administrator, and other interested parties. The plan is tailored to the student’s specific needs and abilities, and outlines attainable goals.

Individualized Instruction: A method of instruction in which content, instructional materials, instructional media, and pace of learning are based upon the abilities and interests of each individual learner.

Integrative Learning: A learning theory describing a movement toward integrated lessons helping students make connections across curricula. This higher education concept is distinct from the elementary and high school “integrated curriculum” movement.

Lexile: A Lexile measure is defined as “the numeric representation of an individual’s reading ability or a text’s readability (or difficulty), followed by an “L” (Lexile)”. There are two types of Lexile measures: Lexile reader measures and Lexile text measures. The Lexile measure is shown as a number with an “L” after it — 880L is 880 Lexile.

Literacy: The ability to read, write, speak, and listen. In modern context, the word means reading and writing in a level adequate for written communication and generally a level that enables one to successfully function at certain levels of a society.

Magnet School: A school that focuses on a particular discipline, such as science, mathematics, arts, or computer science. It is designed to recruit students from other parts of the school district.

Migrant Education: A program of instruction and services for children who move periodically with their families from one school to another in a different geographical area to secure seasonal employment.

National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP): A national test that is given to specific grade levels in specific subjects every other year. A small sample of student’s representative of the state are tested. NAEP test scores can be compared to national averages. Not all states participate.

NAEYC: The National Association for the Education of Young Children is a large nonprofit association in the United States representing early childhood education teachers, para-educators, center directors, trainers, college educators, families of young children, policy makers, and advocates.

National Blue Ribbon Award: Honors public and private K-12 schools that are either academically superior in their states or that demonstrate dramatic gains in student achievement; awarded annually by the U.S. Department of Education through the Blue Ribbon Schools Program.

Observational Learning: (or **social learning**) Learning that occurs as a function of observing, retaining and replicating behavior observed in others. It is most associated with the work of psychologist Albert Bandura, who implemented some of the seminal studies in the area and initiated **social learning theory**. Although observational learning can take place at any stage in life, it is thought to be particularly important during childhood, particularly as authority becomes important.

One to One Initiative: The term one-to-one (1:1) is applied to programs that provide all students in a school, district, or state with their own laptop, netbook, tablet computer, or other mobile-computing device. One-to-one refers to one computer for every student.

Preschool: A school for the education of very young children (generally five years of age and younger). These schools range from schools which seek to teach young children to schools which only provide childcare with little educational benefits. Schools which focus on education generally teach early social skills including interpersonal interaction, being a part of a group of peers, and classroom skills such as following the instructions of a teacher.

Pedagogy: The art or science of teaching. The word comes from the ancient Greek paidagogos. The word “paidia” refers to children, which is why some like to make the distinction between pedagogy (teaching children) and andragogy (teaching adults). The Latin word for pedagogy, education, is much more widely used, and often the two are used interchangeably.

Primary Education: (or **elementary education**) Consists of the first years of formal, structured education that occurs during childhood. This is typically Grades 1-5.

Problem-Based Learning: (PBL) A didactic concept of “active learning” in tertiary education, but is currently being adapted for use in K-12 education. The defining characteristics of PBL are: learning is driven by messy, open-ended problems; students work in small collaborative groups; and “teachers” are not required, the process uses “facilitators” of learning.

Professional Development: This term is used in reference to a wide variety of specialized training, formal education, or advanced professional learning intended to help administrators, teachers, and other educators improve their professional knowledge, competence, skill, and effectiveness.

Reading First: A federal education program in the United States mandated under the No Child Left Behind Act and administered by the Federal Department of Education. The program requires that schools funded by Reading First use “scientifically based” reading instruction to ensure that students are reading by 3rd Grade.

Response to Intervention (RTI): A method designed to identify and provide early, effective assistance to children who are having difficulty learning: Tier 1 students need extra help understanding the core curriculum, Tier 2 students consistently showing a discrepancy between their current level of performance and the expected level of performance, and Tier 3 students need even more support.

Rubric (academic): In education, a rubric is a set of criteria and standards linked to learning objectives that is used to assess a student’s performance, such as on a paper, project, or essay.

Scaffolding: Refers to a variety of instructional techniques used to move students progressively toward stronger understanding and, ultimately, greater independence in the learning process.

Scientifically Based Research: Research that involves the application of rigorous, systemic, and objective procedures to obtain reliable and valid knowledge relevant to educational activities and programs.

Small Group Instruction: Refers to a teacher working with a small group of students on a specific learning objective. These groups consist of 2-4 students and provide these students with a reduced student-teacher ratio. Small group instruction usually follows whole group instruction.

Special Education: Describes an educational alternative that focuses on the teaching of students with academic, behavioral, health, or physical needs that cannot sufficiently be met using traditional educational programs or techniques.

Standards Based: The term standards-based refers to systems of instruction, assessment, grading, and academic reporting that are based on students demonstrating understanding or mastery of the knowledge and skills they are expected to learn as they progress through their education.

Standardized Testing: Tests administered and scored under uniform (standardized) conditions. Because most machine-scored, multiple-choice tests are standardized, the term is sometimes used to refer to such tests, but other tests may also be standardized. Most standards-based approaches to educating students use state learning standards to determine academic expectations and define “**proficiency**” in a given course, subject area, or grade level.

STEM: Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM, previously SMET) This is an acronym that refers to the academic disciplines of science, technology, engineering and mathematics.

STEAM: This is the same as STEM, but also includes arts.

Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills: TEKS is the State Standards for Texas public schools from kindergarten to year 12. They detail the curriculum requirements for every course. State-mandated standardized tests measure acquisition of specific knowledge and skills outlined in this curriculum. TEKS replaces Common Core State Standards as followed by many other states.

Title I: Federal funding program authorized by Title I of ESEA/NCLB to support instructional needs of students from low-income families to ensure that all children have a fair and equal opportunity to obtain a high-quality education and reach (at a minimum) proficiency on state academic achievement standards and assessments.

Title 1 School: A school with a high rate of disadvantaged students making it eligible for participation in Federal Title I Programs. Additional federal funds are given to these schools.

Whole Language: A term used by reading teachers to describe an instructional philosophy which focuses on reading as an activity best taught in a broader context of meaning. Rather than focusing on reading as a mechanical skill, it is taught as an ongoing part of every student’s existing language and life experience. Building on language skills each student already possesses, reading and writing are seen as a part of a broader “whole language” spectrum.

***21st Century Learning:** The term “**21st-century skills**” is generally used to refer to certain core competencies such as collaboration, digital literacy, critical thinking, and problem-solving that advocates believe schools need to teach to help students thrive in today’s world. There are 21st Century Learning Centers in many states, with additional federal funding.