Content Area Literacy Glossary

Academic English
The English language ability required for academic achievement in context-reduced situations, such as classroom lectures and textbook reading assignments. This is sometimes referred to as Cognitive/Academic Language Proficiency (CALP).

Accuracy
The ability to recognize words correctly when reading.

Affix
The part of a word that is "fixed to" either the beginning of the word (prefix) or the ending of the word (suffix). For example, the word *disrespectful* has two affixes, a prefix (*dis-*) and a suffix (*-ful*).

Analogical Problem Solving
A problem solving approach that involves remembering a similar (or analogous) problem that was solved previously and applying the solution to the current problem.

Assessment
The process of identifying a student's knowledge, strengths and needs to help determine student placement, instructional delivery, and need for interventions. See also **formal assessment**, **formative assessment**, **placement assessment**, **portfolio assessment**, and **summative assessment**.

Background Knowledge
Factual knowledge a student already understands and can build upon when exposed to new content and concepts. Sometimes it is referred to as prior knowledge.

Base Words
Words from which many other words are formed. For example, many words can be formed from the base word *migrate*: *migration*, *migrant*, *immigration*, *immigrant*, *migrating*, *migratory*.

Cloze Passage
A cloze passage is a reading comprehension exercise in which words have been omitted in a systematic fashion. Students fill in the blanks, and their responses are counted correct if they are exact matches for the missing words. Cloze exercises assess comprehension and background knowledge, and they are also excellent indicators of whether the reading level and language level of the text are appropriate for a given student.

Cognates
Words in different languages related to the same root, e.g. *education* (English) and *educación* (Spanish).

Comprehension
Understanding the meaning of text by reading actively and with purpose (for learning, understanding, or enjoyment).

Comprehension Strategies
Techniques to teach reading comprehension, including summarization, prediction, and inferring word meanings from context.

Comprehension Strategy Instruction
The explicit teaching of techniques that are particularly effective for comprehending text. The steps of explicit instruction include **direct explanation**, teacher **modeling** ("think aloud"), **guided practice**, and **application**.

- **Direct Explanation** - the teacher explains to students why the strategy helps comprehension and when to apply the strategy.

- **Modeling** - the teacher models, or demonstrates, how to apply the strategy, usually by "thinking aloud" while reading the text that the students are using.
- **Guided Practice** - the teacher guides and assists students as they learn how and when to apply the strategy.
- **Application** - the teacher helps students practice the strategy until they can apply it independently.

Connected Instruction
A systematic teaching method in which the teacher continually explains to students the relationship between what they have learned, what they are learning in the process, and what they will learn in the future.

Constructing Meaning
A process of making sense of text. By connecting one's own knowledge with the print, readers "build" an understanding of the text.

Content-Area Literacy
(Also called Discipline-Area Literacy.) The advanced literacy skills required to master academic content areas, particularly the areas of math, science, English, and history. Content-area literacy is necessary for success at the secondary level and requires knowledge and understanding of the language, terminology, structure, and patterns of specific academic subject areas

Context Clues
Sources of information outside of words that readers may use to predict the identities and meanings of unknown words. Context clues may be drawn from the immediate sentence containing the word, from text already read, from pictures accompanying the text, or from definitions, restatements, examples, or descriptions in the text.

Continuous Assessment
An element of responsive instruction in which the teacher regularly monitors student performance to determine how closely it matches the instructional goal.

Cooperative Learning
A teaching model involving students working together as partners or in small groups on clearly defined tasks. It has been used successfully to teach comprehension strategies in content-area subjects.

Critical Literacy
An instructional approach that advocates the adoption of critical perspectives toward text. Critical literacy encourages readers to actively and flexibly analyze texts and discuss various interpretations and meanings.

Curriculum-based Assessment
A type of informal assessment in which the procedures directly assess student performance in learning-targeted content in order to make decisions about how to better address a student's instructional needs.

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

Deep Reading
The active process of purposeful reading that enhances comprehension and generates deep thoughtful interactions with the text.

Differentiated Instruction
An approach to teaching that includes planning and executing various approaches to content, process, and product. Differentiated instruction is used to meet the needs of student differences in readiness, interests, and learning needs.

Digital Literacy

The ability to learn and use the computer skills required to function in the workplace and in educational settings. Many researchers believe it will become increasingly necessary to be digitally literate to succeed in an Internet-connected economy.

Direct Instruction
A teaching method that features highly scripted lessons and repetitive, interactive activities that teachers present to groups of students. The method is designed to increase student skills through carefully sequenced curriculum.

Direct Vocabulary Learning
Explicit instruction in both the meanings of individual words and word-learning strategies. Direct vocabulary instruction aids reading comprehension.

Discipline-Area Literacy
(Also called Content-Area Literacy) - The advanced literacy skills required to master academic content areas, particularly the areas of math, science, English, and history. Content-area literacy is necessary for success at the secondary level and requires knowledge and understanding of the language, terminology, structure, and patterns of specific academic subject areas.

Double-Entry Journals
Also called two-column notes. With this strategy, a student writes two kinds of notes in two columns or on facing pages. On the left are the key ideas in the assigned reading selection, with the page on which they occur, either directly quoted or paraphrased; on the right, the student writes his thoughts about those ideas. Double-entry journals can be completed on paper or using word processing or other software.

Dyslexia
A language-based learning disability that affects both oral and written language. It may also be referred to as reading disability, reading difference, or reading disorder. Dyslexia can also cause difficulty with writing, spelling, listening, speaking, and math.

Dysnomia
Difficulty remembering names or recalling specific words; sometimes called a "word-retrieval" problem.

Explicit Instruction
The intentional design and delivery of information by the teacher to the students. It begins with the teacher's modeling or demonstration of the skill or strategy; a structured and substantial opportunity for students to practice and apply newly taught skills and knowledge under the teacher's direction and guidance; an opportunity for feedback; and an opportunity for independent practice.

Expository Reading
Text that explains, informs, describes, or persuades the reader. Textbooks are an example of expository reading. Students must understand how expository reading is constructed if they are to extract its meaning accurately.

Expressive Language
The aspect of spoken language that includes speaking and the aspect of written language that includes composing or writing.

Fluency
The ability to read a text accurately, quickly, and with proper expression and comprehension. Because fluent readers do not have to concentrate on decoding words, they can focus their attention on what the text means.

Formal Assessment
The process of gathering information using standardized, published tests or instruments in conjunction with specific administration and interpretation procedures, and used to make general instructional decisions.

Free-writing

A writing exercise used for brainstorming and to develop writing fluency. Students write non-stop for five to ten minutes, expressing their ideas without concern for revision, editing, or controlling the words.

Grapheme

A letter or letter combination that spells a single phoneme. In English, a grapheme may be one, two, three, or four letters, such as *e*, *ei*, *igh*, or *eigh*.

Graphic Organizer

A text, diagram or other pictorial device that summarizes, organizes, and illustrates interrelationships among concepts in a text. Graphic organizers are often known as maps, webs, graphs, charts, frames, or clusters.

Independent Reading Level

The level at which a reader reads with about 95% accuracy.
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Indirect Vocabulary Learning

Vocabulary learning that occurs when students hear or see words used in many different contexts.

Inference

An indirectly stated conclusion drawn from the text based on evidence and reasoning.

Informal Assessment

The process of collecting information to make specific instructional decisions, using procedures largely designed by teachers and based on the current instructional situation.

Inquiry Chart

A type of graphic organizer (also called I-chart) that gives students a framework for examining critical questions by integrating what they already know about a topic with additional information from several sources. This strategy helps students resolve competing ideas found in separate sources and develop new questions to explore based on any conflicting or incomplete information they find.

Instructional Reading Level

The level at which a reader reads with about 90% accuracy.

Literacy

Reading, writing, and the creative and analytical acts involved in producing and comprehending texts.

Main Idea

The main point an author is making about a topic.

Media Literacy

From the Center for Media Literacy , "Media Literacy is a 21st century approach to education. It provides a framework to access, analyze, evaluate, and create messages in a variety of forms, from print to video to the Internet. Media literacy builds an understanding of the role of media in society as well as essential skills of inquiry and self-expression necessary for citizens of a democracy."

Metacognition

Metacognition is the process of thinking about thinking. For example, good readers use metacognition before reading when they clarify their purpose for reading and preview the text.

Morpheme

The smallest meaningful unit of language. A morpheme can be one syllable (*book*) or more than one syllable (*seventeen*). It can be a whole word or a part of a word such as a prefix or suffix. For example, the word *ungrateful* contains three morphemes: *un*, *grate*, and *ful*.

Multiple Intelligences

A theory that suggests that the traditional notion of intelligence, based on IQ testing, is far too limited. Instead, it proposes eight different intelligences to account for a broader range of human potential in children

and adults. These intelligences are linguistic, logical-mathematical, spatial, bodily-kinesthetic, musical, interpersonal, intrapersonal, naturalist.
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Norm-referenced Assessment

A type of assessment that compares an individual student's score against the scores of other students who have previously taken the same assessment. With a norm-referenced assessment, the student's raw score can be converted into a comparative score such as a percentile rank.

Phonics

A form of instruction to cultivate the understanding and use of the alphabetic principle; that there is a predictable relationship between phonemes (the sounds in spoken language) and graphemes, the letters that represent those sounds in written language, and that this information can be used to read or decode words.

Placement Assessment

An assessment used to determine the most appropriate academic placement (grade level, setting, and special services) for an individual student.

Portfolio Assessment

A systematic collection of a variety of teacher observations and a student's work, collected over time, that reflect growth of the student's knowledge, skills, and attitudes in a specific subject area. Portfolios can be print-based or digital.

Readability

The quality of a text that makes it easy or difficult to understand.

Reading Across the Curriculum

Teaching reading strategies in all classrooms and subjects, not just in reading and language arts classes. This helps students access and understand texts that are specific to subjects such as science, math, and history.

Reading Disability

Another term for dyslexia, sometimes referred to as reading disorder or reading difference.

Receptive Language

The aspect of spoken language that includes listening, and the aspect of written language that includes reading.

Reciprocal Teaching

Reciprocal teaching is a multiple-strategy instructional approach for teaching comprehension skills to students. Teachers teach students four strategies: asking questions about the text they are reading; summarizing parts of the text; clarifying words and sentences they don't understand; and predicting what might occur next in the text.

Responsive Instruction

A way of making teaching decisions in which a student's reaction to instruction directly shapes how future instruction is provided.

Root Word

Words from other languages that are the origin of many English words. About 60 percent of all English words have Latin or Greek origins.

Scaffolding

A way of teaching in which the teacher provides support in the form of modeling, prompts, direct explanations, and targeted questions – offering a teacher-guided approach at first. As students begin to acquire mastery of targeted objectives, direct supports are reduced and the learning becomes more student-guided.

Self-monitoring

The mental act of knowing when one does and does not understand what one is reading.

Semantic Maps
Semantic maps are a strategy for graphically representing relationships between and among concepts. Researchers consider this an excellent technique for increasing vocabulary and improving reading comprehension.

Study Strategies
A broad term that refers to strategies students use to improve their comprehension. Study strategies help students acquire process, organize, and remember new information.

Summary
The reduction of a large amount of information to its most important points.

Summative Assessment
Summative assessment is generally carried out at the end of a course or project. In an educational setting, It is typically used to assign students a course grade.

Technical Vocabulary
Refers to vocabulary specific to a particular topic.

Text Comprehension
The reason for reading: understanding what is read by reading actively (making sense from text) and with purpose (for learning, understanding, or enjoyment).

Text Structure
Text structure refers to the semantic and syntactic organizational arrangements used to present written information. Common formats for text structure include compare/contrast, cause and effect, and sequencing.

Thematic Teaching
Thematic teaching is interdisciplinary teaching that organizes instruction around, and delivers curriculum through, the exploration of major topics or themes.

Vocabulary
Word knowledge. *Listening vocabulary* refers to the words a person recognizes when he hears them in oral speech. *Speaking vocabulary* refers to the words he uses when speaking. *Reading vocabulary* refers to the words a person knows when he sees them in print. *Writing vocabulary* refers to the words he uses in writing.

WebQuests
A WebQuest is an inquiry-oriented lesson format in which most or all the information that learners work with comes from the web. A critical aspect of WebQuest design is finding good resources on the Web.

Word Recognition
The ability to automatically recognize a previously-learned word.

Word Study
Instruction that helps a student focus on the parts of a word. This approach helps break apart words and identify parts such as root words, prefixes, and suffixes to discover the meaning of the word.

Sources:
www.adlit.org
www.readwrtethink.org
John Langan, *Ten Steps to Advancing College Reading Skills, 5/e,* Townsend Press, 2010.