

Glossary of Reading Terms

Just Read, Florida!: Governor Bush's statewide reading initiative involving parents, educators, businesses, and the community to ensure all children can read at or above grade level by 2012 and to create reading as a core value for every Floridian.

Reading First: Reading First is the largest, most focused, scientifically based K-3 federal reading initiative this country has ever undertaken.

Florida Center for Reading Research: An organization whose purpose is four-fold:

- To serve as part of Florida's "Leadership Triangle" for the Just Read, Florida! Initiative and to provide technical assistance and support to districts and schools receiving a Reading First Award;
- To conduct applied research that will impact policy and practices related to reading instruction;
- To disseminate information about research-based practices related to reading instruction and assessment; and
- To conduct research on reading, reading growth, reading assessment, and reading instruction that will contribute to the scientific knowledge of reading.

Assessment

Diagnostic: Diagnostic tests can be used to measure a variety of reading, language, or cognitive skills. Although they can be given as soon as a screening test indicates a child is behind in reading growth, they will usually be given only if a child fails to make adequate progress after being given extra help in learning to read. They are designed to provide a more precise and detailed picture of the full range of a child's knowledge and skill so that instruction can be more precisely planned.

DIBELS: Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills. An assessment tool used primarily for screening and progress monitoring. Includes:

- **Letter Naming Fluency (LNF):** Provides a measure of risk. Students are presented with a page of upper- and lower-case letters arranged in a random order. They are asked to name as many letters as they can. This is a one-minute task.
- **Initial Sounds Fluency (ISF):** Provides a measure of a child's ability to recognize and produce the initial sound in an orally presented word. The examiner presents four pictures to the child, names each picture, and then asks the child to point to or say the picture that begins with the sound produced orally by the examiner. Then the child is asked to orally produce the beginning sound for an orally presented word that matches one of the given pictures. This measure takes about 3 minutes to administer.
- **Phoneme Segmentation Fluency (PSF):** Provides a measure of a student's ability to segment three- and four-phoneme words into their individual phonemes. The examiner orally presents a word and the child produces verbally the individual phonemes for each word presented. This is a one-minute task.

- **Nonsense Word Fluency (NWF):** Provides a measure of the alphabetic principle including letter-sound correspondence and the ability to blend letters into words in which letters represent their most common sounds. The student is given a page with randomly ordered vowel-consonant (VC) and consonant-vowel-consonant (CVC) nonsense words and asked to produce verbally the individual letter sound of each letter or verbally produce, or read, the whole nonsense word. This is a one-minute task.
- **Oral Reading Fluency (ORF):** Provides a measure of accuracy and fluency with connected text. Students are asked to read a passage aloud for one minute. Words omitted, substituted, and hesitations of more than three seconds are scored as errors. Reading rate is calculated by counting the number of words read correctly in one minute. This is a one-minute task.

Formal Assessment: Assessment that follows a prescribed format for administration and scoring. Scores obtained from formal tests are standardized, meaning that interpretation is based on norms from a comparative sample of children.

Informal Assessment: Assessment that does not follow prescribed rules for administration and scoring and that 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.

Outcome: Outcome assessments are given at the end of the year for two purposes. First, they can help the principal and teachers in a school evaluate the overall effectiveness of their reading program for all students. Second, they are required in Reading First schools to help districts evaluate their progress toward meeting the goal of “every child reading on grade level” by third grade. Schools must show regular progress toward this goal to continue receiving Reading First funds.

Progress Monitoring: Progress monitoring tests keep the teacher informed about the child’s progress in learning to read during the school year. They are a quick sample of critical reading skills that will tell the teacher if the child is making adequate progress toward grade level reading ability at the end of the year.

Screening: Screening tests provide the teacher a beginning assessment of the student’s preparation for grade level reading instruction. They are a “first alert” that a child will need extra help to make adequate progress in reading during the year.

Comprehension

Comprehension: Understanding what one is reading. Comprehension is the ultimate goal of all reading activity.

Expository Text: Text that reports factual information and the relationships among ideas. Expository text tends to be more difficult for students than narrative text because of the density of long, difficult and unknown words or word parts.

Graphic Organizers: Graphic organizers provide a framework or structure for capturing the main points of what is being read. They are a visual representation of a certain body of knowledge that might include concepts or ideas, events, vocabulary, or generalizations. The structure of a

graphic organizer is determined by the structure of the kind of text being read. Graphic organizers allow ideas in text and thinking processes to become external by showing the interrelatedness of ideas, thus facilitating understanding for the reader.

K-W-L: K-W-L is a technique used most frequently with expository text to promote comprehension. It can be used as a type of graphic organizer in the form of a chart, and it consists of a 3-step process: What I know (accessing prior knowledge), What I Want to Know (setting a purpose for reading), and What I Learned (recalling what has been read).

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.

Narrative Text: Text that tells a story about fictional or real events.

Self-Monitoring: This is another way of referring to metacognition. 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.

Story Maps: Story Mapping is a strategy used to unlock the plot and important elements of a story. These elements can be represented visually through various graphic organizers showing the beginning, middle and end of a story. Answering the questions of who, where, when, what, and how or why, and listing the main events is also part of story mapping. These elements are also referred to as story grammar.

Strategic Learners: Strategic learners are active learners. While reading they make predictions, organize information, and interact with the text. They think about what they are reading in terms of what they already know. They monitor their comprehension by employing strategies that facilitate their understanding.

Fluency

Affix: Affix is a general term that refers to both suffixes and prefixes.

Automaticity: Accuracy and speed. Fast, effortless word recognition resulting from a great deal of reading practice. For many students, accuracy is not achieved without explicit and systematic instruction in decoding. Speed is also known as rate. The rate a student reads encompasses how smoothly he or she can read connected text.

Chunking: Chunking refers to the process of dividing a sentence into smaller phrases where pauses might occur naturally. Slash marks can be drawn to highlight the phrases or chunks. Students practice reading and rereading the chunks to build fluency. Example: When the sun appeared after the storm,/ the newly fallen snow /shimmered like diamonds. Or, When the sun appeared after the storm, / the newly fallen snow shimmered like diamonds. (Also see Phonics section).

Cognate: Cognates are words that are related to each other by virtue of being derived from a common origin. For example, 'decisive' and 'decision' are cognates.

Derivational Affix: A prefix or suffix added to a root or stem to form another word, as -ness in likeness. Note: A derivational suffix changes the word to which it is added into another part of speech, as -ness forms nouns from adjective.

Derivative: A word formed by adding an affix to a root or stem; derived form; as adding pre- before fix to make prefix.

Etymology: The origin of a word and the historical development of its meaning. For example, the origin of our word etymology comes from late Middle English: from Old French ethimologie, via Latin from Greek etumologia, from etumologos ‘student of etymology,’ from etumon, neuter singular of etumos ‘true.’

Expressive Language: Language that is spoken.

Fluency: Ability to read text quickly, accurately, and with proper expression.

Frustrational Reading Level: Also known as the frustration level, the frustrational reading level is the level at which a reader reads at less than a 90% success rate, i.e., with more than one error per 10 words read. Frustration level text is difficult text for the reader. Vocabulary

Independent Reading Level: The level at which a reader can read text at a 95% success rate, i.e., with no more than one error per 20 words read. Independent reading level is relatively easy text for the reader.

Inflectional Suffix: In English, a suffix that expresses plurality or possession when added to a noun, tense when added to a verb, and comparison when added to an adjective and some adverbs. A major difference between inflectional and derivational morphemes is that inflections added to verbs, nouns, or adjectives do not change the grammatical role or part of speech of the base words. (-s, -es, -ing, -ed).

Irregular Words: Words that contain letters that stray from the most common sound pronunciation.

Instructional Reading Level: The level at which a reader can read text at a 90% success rate, i.e., with no more than one error per 10 words read. Instructional reading level engages the student in challenging but manageable text.

Prefix: An affix attached before a base word or root, as re- in reprint

Prosody: Reading with expression, proper intonation, and phrasing. This helps readers to sound as if they are speaking the part they are reading. It is also this element of fluency that sets it apart from automaticity.

Reading Fluency Prorating Formula: When students are asked to read connected text for more than one minute or less than one minute, their performance must be prorated to give a fluency rate per minute. The prorating formula for this is the following: words read correctly x 60 ÷ number of seconds = Reading Fluency Score.

Receptive Language: Language that is heard.

Suffix: An affix attached to the end of a base, root, or stem that changes the meaning or grammatical function of the word, as -en in oxen.

Vocabulary: Vocabulary refers to all of the words of our language. One must know words to communicate effectively. Vocabulary is important to reading comprehension because readers cannot understand what they are reading without knowing what most of the words mean.

Instruction

Ample opportunities for student practice: Ample practice opportunities are provided when students are asked to apply what they have been taught in order to accomplish specific reading tasks such as accurately pronouncing words in text, or constructing the meaning of a text. Practice should follow in a logical relationship with what has just been taught in the program. Once skills are internalized, students are provided with more opportunities, for example at student learning centers, to independently implement previously learned information.

Differentiated Instruction: Matching instruction to meet the different needs of learners in a given classroom.

Explicit Instruction: Teacher-led, interactive instruction in which the teacher directly presents materials and relationships that need to be learned. The teacher models expectations and then supports the students by providing immediate corrective feedback as the students demonstrate their learning. Nothing is left to chance. Students are not guessing. When explicit instruction is implemented, students are not practicing errors. For example, if we want children to know how to use active comprehension strategies while they read, we should clearly identify those strategies for children, show how they are used to enhance comprehension, and provide opportunities for practice with feedback. The same principles apply to instruction in all the critical components of reading.

Flexible Grouping: Grouping students and regrouping students according to shared instructional needs and abilities.

Immediate Corrective Feedback: When an error occurs, the teacher immediately attends to it by scaffolding instruction.

Immediate Intensive Intervention: As soon as we know that students are not making adequate progress in reading, we need to immediately implement more intensive instruction than what they have been receiving.

Implicit Instruction: The opposite of explicit instruction. Students discover skills and concepts instead of being explicitly taught. For example, the teacher writes a list of words on the board that begin with the letter m (mud, milk, meal, mattress) and asks the students how the words are similar. The teacher elicits from the students that the letter m stands for the sound you hear at the beginning of the words.

Initial Instruction: First line of defense to prevent reading failure for all students. A core reading program is the instructional tool used for Initial Instruction in Reading First.

Intensity: Focused instruction. Students are academically engaged with the content and the teacher. Students are receiving more opportunities to practice with immediate teacher feedback.

Learning Centers: Learning centers, sometimes referred to as reading or literacy centers, are special places organized in the classroom for students to work in small groups, pairs, at computers, cooperatively or individually. Each center contains meaningful, purposeful activities that are an extension and reinforcement of what has already been taught by the teacher in reading groups or in large group. Learning centers offer students the opportunity to apply the skills they have been learning.

Learning centers are an excellent system for accountability. This is a way for students to stay academically engaged and for teachers to determine whether or not students actually know what they have been taught. It is important to develop a system and organize your classroom in such a way that you can provide feedback to students in a timely manner. Waiting until the end of the week to look at what students have worked on all week is not a productive use of instructional time, as students may have been practicing errors all week.

Students practice phonics skills at the phonics center, sort word cards at the vocabulary center, and at the reading center, they read books, listen to taped books, record the reading of a book, and read in pairs. The reading center would contain a variety of books at various reading levels to meet the needs of all students. Other centers may consist of writing and spelling activities, pocket charts, white boards, magnetic letters to practice word building, sentence strips and word cards to create stories, sequencing activities with pictures, story boards, or sentence strips to retell a story that has been read. Some centers may be permanent; others will change according to the skills, books and activities being currently addressed. At learning centers, all activities focus on the content of the reading segment. It is recommended that teachers not bring in material from other content areas unless the activity from science or math for example, specifically focuses on a skill that is being addressed in reading instruction. Learning centers require careful planning. Usually students work in centers while the teacher is conducting reading groups or working with small groups of students.

Scaffolded Instruction: Students are given all the support they need to arrive at the correct answer. For example, after an error occurs, the support or assistance a teacher offers may include cues, giving reminders or encouragement, breaking the problem down into steps, providing an example, or anything else so that students can arrive at the correct answer instead of the teacher giving the answer.

Scientifically Based Reading Practice: This refers to instructional practices based on scientifically based reading research. This type of research applies rigorous, systematic and objective procedures to obtain valid knowledge relevant to reading development, reading instruction, and reading difficulties. This includes research that:

- Employs systematic, empirical methods that draw on observation or experiment;
- Involves rigorous data analyses that are adequate to test the stated hypotheses and justify the general conclusions drawn;
- Relies on measurements or observational methods that provide valid data across evaluators and observers and across multiple measurements and observations; and

- Has been accepted by a peer-reviewed journal or approved by a panel of independent experts through a comparably rigorous, objective and scientific review.

Student Aligned Materials: The content of student materials (texts, activities, homework, manipulatives, etc.) work coherently with classroom instruction to reinforce the acquisition of specific skills in reading. If students are taught specific letter-sound relationships, they should have the opportunity to practice applying that knowledge to decoding words in text. Instruction should support the kind of reading practice students are assigned. If students are taught specific vocabulary words, they should have the opportunity to read materials containing those words, or write compositions that apply those words in sentences or paragraphs. Student aligned materials include a rich selection of coordinated student materials at various readability levels to help build student skills through practice.

Systematic Instruction: A carefully planned sequence for instruction, similar to a builder's blueprint for a house. A blueprint is carefully thought out and designed before building materials are gathered and construction begins. The plan for instruction that is systematic is carefully thought out, strategic, and designed before activities and lessons are planned. Instruction is clearly linked within as well as across the five components (phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary & comprehension). For systematic instruction, lessons build on previously taught information, from simple to complex.

Phonics

Alphabetic Principle: The principle that letters and letter combinations represent individual phonemes in words in written language.

Blending: Given the distinct units of sound that comprise a word, blending is the task of combining those sounds rapidly, to accurately represent the word.

Chunking: Chunking refers to the practice of breaking a word into manageable parts or chunks for the purpose of decoding, or as a strategy for figuring out a longer word.

Consonant Blend: Two or more consonants appearing together in a word with each retaining its sound—st, pl, br, str.

Consonant Digraph: Two consonants together that represent one phoneme, or sound—ch, sh.

Decodable Text: Decodable or controlled text consists mostly of words that contain phonic elements that are familiar to the students as well as previously taught sight words such as high frequency words, irregular words, and story words. Decodable texts provide students the chance to apply newly acquired phonic knowledge to what they are reading.

Decoding: Decoding refers to the process of translating printed words into an oral language representation, using knowledge of letter-sound relationships and word structure.

Example: pic nic picnic; yes ter day yesterday (also see Fluency section)

Graphophonemic Knowledge: Knowledge of the relationships between letters and phonemes.

Morpheme: The smallest meaningful unit of language.

Onset and Rime: In a syllable, the onset is the initial consonant or consonants, and the rime is the vowel and any consonants that follow it. For example, in the word *sat*, the onset is *s* and the rime is *at*. In the word *flip*, the onset is *fl* and the rime is *ip*.

Orthography: A writing system.

Phoneme: A speech sound that combines with others in a language to make words.

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

Segmenting: Separating the individual phonemes, or sounds, of a word into discrete units.

Sight Words: Words that are recognized immediately. Teachers sometimes think sight words are irregular, or that this refers to high frequency word lists, such as the Dolch and Fry. However, any word that is recognized automatically is a sight word. These words may be phonetically regular or irregular.

Syllable: A segment of a word that contains one vowel sound. The vowel may or may not be preceded and/or followed by a consonant.

Systematic Phonics Instruction: Systematic phonics programs teach children an extensive, pre-specified set of letter–sound correspondences or phonograms. Systematic phonics instruction:

- initially introduces the most common sounds for a new letter,
- presents the most useful letter-sounds first,
- progresses from simple to more complex concepts (e.g., short vowels before long vowels),
- separates confusing letters and sounds, and
- often uses controlled vocabulary (decodable text) to provide practice with these elements.

Vowel Digraph or Vowel Pair: Two vowels together that represent one phoneme, or sound—*ea*, *ai*, *oa*.

Phonological Awareness

Phonemic Awareness: The ability to notice, think about, or manipulate the individual phonemes (sounds) in words. This term is used to refer to the highest level of phonological awareness: awareness of individual phonemes in words.

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 child’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.

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