**New York State
EDUCATION DEPARTMENT**
Knowledge › Skill › Opportunity

Glossary of Key Terms

Effective communication among key stakeholders is a crucial part of any literacy improvement effort. This glossary fosters shared understanding and alignment, aiming to minimize misunderstandings for teams working with the NYSED Literacy Initiative Briefs series. The terms below represent concepts that are central to the content in this series.

Key Term	Description
Assessment-Instruction Links	The use of assessment results to inform and adjust instruction, supporting a responsive, inclusive, and effective approach to learning and teaching.
"Big 6" Skills and Competencies	A set of essential literacy skills—oral language, phonics, phonological awareness, comprehension, vocabulary, and fluency—that are the targets of effective literacy instruction, from the PreK through secondary years. Learn more about the "Big 6" Skills and Competencies in the NYSED Reading Foundational Standards.
Cognitive Skills	A set of functions that inform thinking, learning, reading, remembering, planning, and paying attention. These include (but are not limited to) attention, working memory, short-term memory, and executive functions.
Content-Based Learning	An instructional approach that integrates literacy learning with the study of a particular subject matter, such as science or social studies. The approach simultaneously promotes content area learning and literacy development.
Culturally Responsive-Sustaining Education (CR-SE)	A framework that promotes learning environments that affirm racial, linguistic, and cultural identities; engages students with rigorous, supportive instruction; develops their abilities to connect across lines of difference; elevates historically marginalized voices; and empowers students as agents of social change.
Data: Aggregated and Disaggregated	Aggregated data reflects the information from a full dataset, to identify broad patterns and trends. Disaggregated data displays information by subgroup or subset, to identify and examine variation within the full dataset.
High-Impact Literacy Practices	A set of instructional practices for use in all literacy-learning settings, from PreK through secondary years, to cultivate the "Big 6" skills and competencies.
Inclusive Curriculum and Assessments	Instructional tools that embrace student diversity, promote differentiated instruction (tailored teaching methods and content that meets the diverse learning needs of students), support ongoing evaluation of student progress, and inform supplemental supports as needed.

Key Term	Description
Knowledge Building	An active process by which learners construct, refine, and extend knowledge, including cultural knowledge, knowledge of various text types and their features, word knowledge, content knowledge related to specific content areas, and knowledge of a variety of processes that can be called upon to make sense of a text.
Metacognitive Skills	A self-awareness and self-understanding of thinking (cognitive) processes, including goal-setting, planning, monitoring learning, and reflecting on one's own thinking and learning strategies.
Metalinguistic Skills	The capacity to think about and analyze language, involving the recognition and manipulation of individual sounds, understanding grammatical rules, and reflecting on language choices for effective communication.
Oral Language Skills	The skills that promote an understanding of how spoken words sound, what words and sentences mean, and how to communicate ideas. Specific aspects of oral language include: phonology, grammar, morphology, vocabulary, discourse, and pragmatics.
Protocols and Routines (Thinking, Talking, Collaborating, etc.)	Tools for learners that teach and support structured processes for more effective, efficient, and inclusive classroom work. These protocols support learner engagement, communication, and collaboration.
Reciprocal Skill Development	The developmental principle that certain skills or abilities reinforce or enhance one another through a mutual, interactive relationship; the development of one skill positively influences the development of the other.
Science of Reading	An interdisciplinary body of research that describes how reading and writing skills and competencies develop from PreK through secondary, and provides evidence-based guidance to inform curriculum and pedagogy.
Social Emotional Learning (SEL)	Social emotional learning (SEL) is the process through which children, youth, and adults acquire and effectively apply the knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary to understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions. Learn more about SEL by reading NYSED's Social Emotional Learning: Essential for Learning, Essential for Life document.
Student-Centered Environments	Learning environments that center individual student needs and learning styles, foster active student participation, provide personalized learning opportunities, and reflect a culturally responsive-sustaining approach.
Universal Design for Learning (UDL)	Universal Design for Learning (UDL) is a framework that outlines the design principles for flexible and inclusive learning environments, as well as instructional materials and assessments, to improve and optimize teaching and learning for all students. UDL principles support equitable and accessible educational experiences by accommodating diverse learner needs, abilities, and preferences. Learn more about UDL and its role in NYSED's MTSS-I Pilot Framework.