

## BALANCED LITERACY GLOSSARY

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**Assessment:** The collection of data and the gathering evidence regarding the appropriation of knowledge; not useful unless evaluation is included.

**Automaticity:** Accurate and rapid word recognition, including reading in meaningful phrases; allows reader to focus attention on meaning. A skill or complex behavior that can be performed rather easily with little conscious awareness.

**Benchmark book:** A book that represents typical difficulty or quality; used as a guide for assessment and in leveling books in a collection.

**Comprehension:** The process of simultaneously extracting and constructing meaning through interaction and involvement with written text.

**Comprehension strategy instruction:** The explicit teaching techniques that are particularly effective including think alouds, modeling and guided practice.

**Cloze:** The method of assessment wherein a word is eliminated from a passage and the student is to apply an appropriate word.

**Conferring:** A one-on-one reading evaluation in which the teacher listens to a student read aloud and retell, or the teacher silently reads a portion of the text along with the student and then asks the student to talk about what has been read; including analyzing progress with the student and setting goals.

**Connections:** A comprehension strategy of connecting the text to one's experiences, another text or the world.

**Determining importance:** A comprehension strategy influenced by the reader's purpose, prior knowledge, and their knowledge of text structures and formats. Pointing out non-examples (what isn't important) can help students distinguish importance more clearly.

**Differentiated instruction:** Challenging and relevant instruction that meets the needs and interests of each learner. In a heterogeneous group, students receive scaffolded, multi-level instruction across content, processes, and product that enable each student to be successful.

**Evaluation:** Interpreting, analyzing, and reflecting on assessment data in order to make it meaningful; includes making wise instructional decisions based on careful examination of the evidence.

**Explicit teaching:** Complete and clearly expressed instruction of a particular process followed by practice. It should be deliberate, responsive, clear, and relevant and research based.

**Fluency:** The ability to read a text accurately, quickly and with proper expression and comprehension. Fluent readers do not focus on decoding words, but on the meaning of the text.

**Gradual release of responsibility:** An instructional approach to teaching higher order skills in which the teacher supports students' learning by explicitly teaching a cognitive strategy, regulating difficulty during practice, providing feedback, increasing student responsibility for learning, and finally creating opportunities for independent practice.

**Guided reading:** A teaching technique in which a student or students, read-mostly silently-a carefully chosen book at their reading level, and the teacher supports, teaches, and evaluates as necessary.

**Just right books:** Books that are appropriate for the student's reading level.

**Inference:** A conclusion, prediction, or judgment arrived at from the text and the reader's prior knowledge.

**Independent reading:** On their own, readers choose and read books they enjoy and understand; usually involves a sustained period of silent reading along with careful teacher monitoring.

**Flexible/invitation groups:** A small group of students experiencing difficulty with the same skill or strategy. Students are in and out in one or two sessions.

**Interactive reading:** The teacher reads aloud and invites students to talk about the text during his/her reading, not just after he/she has finished.

**Listening comprehension:** The understanding of speech; lower levels understand only the facts explicitly stated in very simple syntax while advanced levels would include implicit understanding and inferences.

**Literature circles:** Small heterogeneous, often student-directed literature conversations about an excellent text.

**Metacognition:** A person's reflection of their thinking process.

**Mini lesson:** A brief (5-10 minutes) whole class session in which the teacher instructs a reading or writing skill or strategy that addresses a specific need common to all students in the class.

**Miscue:** Any departure from a written text a reader makes while reading; for example, omitting, reversing, or substituting a word, phrase, or punctuation.

**Modeling:** Showing and demonstrating for students the process of performing a particular task.

**Modified running records:** As a student reads a portion of text out loud, the teacher notes the miscues by drawing a line and recording what the child says above the line and what the text says below the line. The quality of the miscue, not the number of miscues, is emphasized. For example, a meaningful substitution may indicate comprehension.

**Monitoring comprehension:** The metacognitive ability of the student to know whether he/she understands the text or whether he/she does not; the student then applies the appropriate fix it strategies such as rereading, reading ahead for clarification, or adjusting reading rate.

**Paired reading:** Taking turns reading aloud a text with a peer, supporting each other, and intermittently stopping to discuss the text.

**Phonemic awareness:** Sensitivity to and awareness of the fact that sounds make up spoken words; being able to discriminate between different consonants and to sequence each small unit of sound (phoneme) in a word.

**Predicting:** To make a smart prediction about an unknown word, phrase or idea based on what is already known about the text; the reader then confirms or disconfirms his prediction after reading on and acquiring new information.

**Prior knowledge:** All information stored in long-term memory.

**Questioning:** Students self-generate questions before, during and after reading to clarify meaning, speculate about text yet to be read, determine the author's intent, style, content or format, locate a specific answer in text or consider rhetorical questions inspired by the text.

**Reading aloud:** Teachers (or students) fluently read aloud excellent fiction or nonfiction to the class; hearing the material allows student to listen to ideas and vocabulary they may not be ready to read on their own and introduces them to new authors and genres.

**Reading workshop:** A 40-60 minute daily block of time in which the entire class is dedicated to reading. May include a variety of components including a mini-lesson, guided reading, shared reading, conferring and read aloud time.

**Repeated reading:** Student reads and rereads a passage until a certain level of fluency is attained.

**Retelling:** a detailed oral or written recounting of a story that includes major and minor events, setting, characters, problems and resolution; easier to do than a summary which involves deleting less important information.

**Rubric:** Specific criteria used to establish guidelines for quality and/or evaluate work.

**Running records:** Sitting right next to a student, the teacher listens to the student read a new or familiar text out loud and makes notations for every word; indicating the student's accurate reading as well as the errors and corrections; mostly used for developing readers in K-2 or with older students still learning to read.

**Scaffolding:** Temporary support from a teacher, parent, or accomplished peer that enables the learner to succeed.

**Self-monitoring:** The reader is aware of his/her own word reading and comprehension or the limits of his/her comprehension and is able to "fix" gaps in meaning or answer his/her own questions about a text that arise as he/she reads.

**Shared reading:** Teacher and students read text together; this process is intended to develop fluency, increase comprehension and promote reading strategies.

**Shared writing:** Students and teacher compose a coherent text collaboratively; the teacher does the writing while scaffolding children's language and ideas.

**Summarizing:** A process in which the reader generates the main ideas, connects central ideas, eliminates redundant and unnecessary information to remember what was read.

**Turn and talk:** Within a large group children turn and talk to a partner about a concept, idea or question for a short period of time (2-3 minutes).

**Text structure:** The way any piece of text is organized (narrative structure, cause/effect, order of importance, chronological, problem/solution or inconsiderate).

**Think aloud:** The teacher shows verbally "how to do it" by initiating, modeling, explaining, and thinking aloud. The teacher shares his/her thinking, using strategies, reading fluently, working through confusions, rereading, monitoring, correcting. The modeling is explicit and clear.

**Word wall:** High frequency words are posted alphabetically on a wall and used as a resource for primary students' reading and writing. As new words are introduced, the students discuss their meaning, spelling and potential uses.