

## Glossary

- 21st-century workplace skills:** These are not traditional skills, but factors—a mix of knowledge, skills, and dispositions—that researchers have identified with statistical methods from survey items that were administered to employers from different fields. These factors represent clusters of priorities that employers seek in general, for employees in all occupations, usually including problem solving, technical skills, teamwork, communication, customer service, and flexibility/persistence/dependability.
- Academic language:** A register of the English language; the formal variety of language used for academic purposes (e.g., in academic conversations, lectures, and textbooks) and connected with literacy and academic achievement. Includes reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills used to acquire new knowledge and accomplish academic tasks. In the United States, sometimes known as *academic English*.
- Accountable talk:** A classroom practice in which students engage in frequent conversations and active listening to what every speaker has to say. Students build on each others' contributions, negotiate their ideas, and verbalize their thinking.
- Anecdotal records:** An assessment strategy in which the teacher or learner keeps informal records of incidents that show specific behaviors (e.g., evidence of learning, stories of small successes, a list of what the learner can do, errors, or problem behaviors).
- Authentic language:** Language that has not been modified or simplified. Typically refers to language that is written for a native-speaking or proficient audience and created by a native speaker to convey a message.
- Benchmark assessment:** A short assessment administered at regular intervals to give teachers feedback on how well students are meeting the academic standards that have been set; a tool to measure student growth and tailor curriculum or design an intervention to meet individual learning needs. Sometimes known as *formative assessment*.
- Career training program:** A vocational education program that prepares students for jobs. The training is usually short term, consisting of a combination of practical experience and coursework.
- CASAS:** A widely used assessment framework in the United States for measuring the English language proficiency of adult English learners. Formerly known as the Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System (see [www.casas.org](http://www.casas.org)).
- Civics program:** A course of study to prepare for the citizenship exam. In the United States, it includes preparation in the basics of U.S. history and the Constitution.
- Collaborative inquiry:** A group of educators study together to improve their practice. They identify a problem or critical question, research the topic, and decide what data they need to answer the question. They collect and analyze data, solve the problem/answer the critical question, and share their findings with colleagues. This process may be a cyclical form of teacher professional learning. Also known as *practitioner inquiry* or *action research*.
- Collaborative learning:** An approach to teaching in which students spend the majority of class time working in pairs and small groups. They work as team members, talking and discussing, dividing tasks, and taking turns with different roles. Also known as *cooperative learning*.
- College and Career Readiness Standards:** An adaptation of the Common Core State Standards for adult education. It sets benchmarks for five levels to achieve 12-grade equivalency in English language arts and mathematics. These standards are used by adult basic education programs in the United States to plan curriculum and to track learners' progress.
- Comprehensible input:** Oral or written input (e.g., new information) to the learner, structured or presented in such a way as to help him or her negotiate the meaning of the communication (e.g., through visuals, gestures, annotations). Over time, the input may increase in complexity of the language structures used or the amount of information shared.

- Cultural broker:** A person who serves to facilitate communication and to build connections between individuals and groups from different cultures. They facilitate mutual understandings and advocate on behalf of persons and groups from minority cultures.
- Dynamic bilingualism:** The ability to use more than one language flexibly and strategically, depending on the audience, conversational partners, or the situation.
- English language proficiency (ELP) standards:** Sets of concise statements identifying the knowledge and skills that English learners are expected to know and be capable of doing in English; statement-by-statement articulations of what students are expected to learn and what schools are expected to teach. May refer to national, state, or district standards. Each U.S. state is required by the federal government to have ELP standards and related assessments.
- English-speaking countries:** Countries where English is the primary language of the majority of the population, such as the United Kingdom, the United States, Ireland, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand. Because the use of English is widespread in other countries, some qualify these countries as inner circle English-speaking countries. Note that many smaller nations are also English-speaking countries (e.g., Jamaica, the Bahamas, Trinidad and Tobago, Barbados).
- Family literacy:** A program whose goal is to improve everyone's skills in the family with reading, writing, numeracy, and critical thinking.
- Filler phrase:** A meaningless or redundant expression that speakers use to fill in gaps in their speech (e.g., *I mean, like, you know, the thing is that, stuff like that*).
- Funds of knowledge:** Knowledge gained through nonacademic means, usually from family and community members in traditional societies. It may include knowledge of the natural world, farming, food preparation, crafts, customs, personal histories, legends, and stories.
- Genre:** A form of communication that has recognized conventions. For example, a work memo, a weather report, a formal invitation, an editorial, a stand-up comedy routine, an academic lecture.
- High-frequency words:** Words that occur most frequently across many different types of texts and transcripts of spoken language. Most are function words, such as articles (*a/an, the*), prepositions (*in, on, at, of*), auxiliaries (*do, be, have, can, may*), pronouns (*that, I, they, it, what, who*), conjunctions (*and, but, so*), conjunctive adverbs (*finally, however*), or quantifiers (*some, much*). They also include common verbs (*go, take, want, make*), nouns (*way, type, thing*), adjectives (*good, nice, great*), and adverbs (*here, now, sometimes, never, well*). These words are the most important to teach to beginners. For more, see The New General Service List ([www.newgeneralservicelist.org](http://www.newgeneralservicelist.org)).
- Higher order thinking:** Thinking that requires more than memorization, recall, and the comprehension of ideas from texts or teacher presentation. Higher order thinking involves using ideas actively: applying, analyzing, evaluating, synthesizing, and creating.
- Input:** Oral or written language provided to the learner.
- Intake assessment:** A systematic approach to document students' skills and knowledge before they begin a course of study. It usually involves the collection and analysis of different types of information: answers on forms and questionnaires, interviews, placement test, transcripts.
- Integrative motivation:** A person's strong desire to be included as a member in a community.
- Just-in-time teaching:** A student-centered strategy in which the teacher applies feedback from learners to determine what skills or information they need to make progress with a project or task and teaches that to them in small bursts. The advantage is that learners are motivated to obtain this knowledge and have immediate application for what they learn.
- Just-right text:** A text that is neither too easy nor too difficult for a developing reader; it suits the reader's independent reading level.
- Language modalities:** Ways to use language orally and in writing.
- Late-onset language learner:** A person who begins to learn a new language after the first decade of life.

**Lesson objective:** A statement of what students will be able to do by the end of the lesson. Its purpose is to focus students' attention on what is important in the lesson. The statement usually begins with "Students will be able to (SWBAT) . . ." or "I can. . ." Teachers who have English learners may have separate content and language objectives for the same lesson. The content objective relates to the content standards or content curriculum, and the language objective states what language skill students need to focus on during the lesson.

**Leveled reader:** Series of books that are created or modified to match the skills of developing readers, based on their scores on a reading test. The number of levels varies for each series.

**Literacy practices:** The ways in which groups and individuals employ of reading, writing, and numeracy in their lives.

**Low literacy:** Experiencing major challenges with performing basic reading, writing, numeracy, and critical thinking tasks.

**Multilingualism:** The use of more than one language by an individual or a community of speakers or within a geographical area. A multilingual person speaks more than one language. A multilingual community consists of a group with speakers of more than one language, but some members of the community may speak only one language.

**Native-like proficiency:** The ability to perform with language skills similarly to people who speak the language as their primary or native language. Native-like proficiency does not preclude having an accent or making mistakes with grammar and word choice.

**Needs assessment:** An inquiry process that documents the current conditions and the desired conditions of stakeholders. The goal is to use the information to identify approaches that can bridge the gap between the current and the desired conditions. Educators use this process to evaluate learners' skills and to analyze the skills they need to succeed with specific tasks.

**Output:** Oral or written language generated by a person.

**Practice:** The collective name of activities whose goal is to improve the fluency and accuracy of language use with any subskill (e.g., active listening, speaking, reading, writing, grammar, or vocabulary).

**Primary language:** The language an individual uses the most, especially at home. Often, this is the first language learned. Also known as *home language*, *first language*, *L1*, *mother tongue*, or *native language*.

**Register:** A variety of language that is associated with specific social situations. For example, academic language, legal language, the language of mathematics, or the language of sportscasting.

**Scaffolding:** Classroom support given to assist students in learning new information and performing related tasks. Often provided by the teacher through demonstration, modeling, verbal prompts (e.g., questioning), feedback, adapted text, graphic organizers, and language frames, among other techniques. Provided to learners over a period of time but gradually modified and then removed in order to transfer more autonomy to the learner, leading to independence.

**Settlement services:** This term designates services to those who are newcomers to Canada. Service providers receive federal funding to deliver a range of services (e.g., housing, document translation, job training, obtaining employment and social services, and language classes).

**Settlement worker:** A staff member at an agency that provides settlement services.

**Social capital:** Resources, affordances, or various forms of support that a person can access through social connections.

**Standards-based lesson:** A planned lesson in which the learning goals are aligned with an applicable standards document. These lessons fit an overall plan of study, which is detailed in a specific standards document, usually skill-by-skill and grade-by-grade. Standards documents contain descriptors of skills and knowledge, which define what learners can do at each step of development on their way to proficiency or toward a suitable learning target.

**Strength-based approach:** An attitude in professional practice. Practitioners focus primarily on each individual's abilities, skills, knowledge, and potential contributions over any weaknesses and special needs they may have.

**Target language:** The language that the student is learning. Also known as *new language*, *additional language*, *second language*, and *foreign language*.

**Text-to-voice protocol:** Using a built-in or added-in feature within software applications that will read back the text.

**Translanguaging:** The strategic choice to mix two or more languages to serve a specific purpose in a communicative situation or accomplish a task.

**Vocabulary size test:** Tests that are designed to estimate vocabulary size. They test knowledge of words that represent a sample of different word-frequency bands. For more on measuring vocabulary size, see [my.vocabularysize.com](http://my.vocabularysize.com).

**Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014 (WIOA):** Federal law in the United States that defines the types of career services and adult education programs that are eligible for funding through the federal government. The law emphasizes efficiency by requiring a unified statewide plan and a one-stop system for assisting job seekers.

**Workplace education program:** Classes that serve the employees of a company or members of a workers union, sometimes delivered in partnership with an educational institution, such as a community college.