

Definitions: Literacy as a Life Skill

There are a number of words we frequently use that you may hear in our session today. The purpose of this document is to provide a handy list of words, acronyms, and definitions to support common understanding.

Frequently Used Words and Definitions

Alphabetic Principle: The idea that letters and groups of letters match individual sounds in words.

Automaticity: The ability to read a word correctly and instantly.

Blending: Reading words from left to right by linking each letter or group of letters to their sounds.

Educational Equity: When educational policies, practices, interactions, and resources are representative of, constructed by, and responsive to all people such that each individual has access to, can participate in, and make progress in high-quality learning experiences that empower them toward self-determination and reduces disparities in outcomes regardless of individual characteristics and cultural identities (Fraser, 2008; Great Lakes Equity Center, 2012).

Evidence-Based Practices (EBPs): A program, strategy, or activity that has been documented through research methodology in peer-reviewed journals as effective for a specific population.

Explicit Instruction: Teaching that is direct and step-by-step, including explaining and showing how to do something.

Family: All caregivers and the student.

Family Partnership: Family engagement is a collaborative relationship between families, educators, providers, and partners to support and improve the learning, development, and health of every learner (MDE, 2020). Where education is a shared responsibility between home and school, and communication is two-way (e.g., home to school and school to home).

Fluency: Reading with sufficient accuracy, rate, and expression.

Grapheme: A printed letter or group of letters that represent a sound in a syllable or word.

Instructional methods: Techniques or strategies used by teachers to support students'

acquisition and mastery of skills across content areas.

Multi-Tiered system of Supports (MTSS) Framework: A comprehensive framework that includes research-based strategies designed to meet the individual needs and assets of the whole child at all levels of achievement. MTSS intentionally interconnects the education, health, and human service systems in support of successful learners, schools, centers, and community outcomes.

Phoneme: The smallest sound part in spoken language, like /c/ in “cat.”

Phonemic Awareness: Ability to hear and manipulate sounds in words.

Phonics: Letter-sound correspondence in printed text and writing.

Phonological Awareness: The ability to recognize that spoken words are made up of individual sound parts.

SMART Goal: A general statement of an intended outcome that aligns with critical reading skills that are a high priority for the school, grade level, and/or the individual student. The elements are specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, timely, and equity-focused.

School Leadership Team (SLT): A group of people who develop and work to ensure resources are available to support educational policies for their school.

References

National Center on Improving Literacy. Glossary of Terms.

St. Martin, K., Harms, A., Walsh, M., & Nantais, M. (2022). *Reading Tiered Fidelity Inventory*. Elementary-Level Edition. (Version 2.0). Michigan Department of Education.

Michigan’s MTSS Technical Assistance Center is funded by the Michigan Department of Education and the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs.