

Special Education – Disability Glossary

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Use this glossary to look up the definitions for the disability related terms covered in many of our resources.

All

504 plan A plan that specifies the accommodations and modifications necessary for a student with a disability to attend school with her or his peers; named for Section 504 of the federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973, which prohibits discrimination against individuals with disabilities, ensuring that children with disabilities have equal access to public education; students with 504 plans do not meet the eligibility requirements for special education under IDEA.

ABC model A behavioral method through which to select interventions by analyzing events that occur antecedent to, concurrent with, or consequent to a target behavior.

ability grouping To place students with comparable achievement and skill levels in the same classes or courses; an approach often used in gifted education.

above-level testing The use of assessment instruments designed for older students as a means to evaluate the academic ability of a student thought to be gifted.

absence seizure; petit mal seizure An epileptic seizure involving brief loss of consciousness (usually less than 30 seconds).

academic English Mode of English, a grasp of which is required to understand abstract concepts in highly structured academic settings; the abstract language abilities required for academic work; also called Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP).

academic language The language used in academic settings to communicate information orally and in writing about discipline-specific content.

academic literacy The varieties of reading, learning, and understanding that are specifically related to academic tasks in content areas such as social studies and science.

academic vocabulary Terms and expressions used across academic subject areas that are considered crucial for student comprehension and learning.

acceleration	The practice of advancing learners through levels of curriculum according to individual achievement and performance.
Acceleration Phase	The fourth stage of the acting-out behavior cycle, during which a student exhibits an increase in the frequency of a problem behavior; although the Acceleration Phase falls in the middle of the acting-out behavior cycle, it is often when many teachers first recognize that a problem is occurring.
accessibility	An optimal state in which barrier-free environments allow maximum participation and access by individuals with disabilities.
accommodation	Service or support related to a student's disability that allows her or him to fully access a given subject matter and to accurately demonstrate knowledge without requiring a fundamental alteration to the assignment's or test's standard or expectation.
acquired hearing loss	Hearing loss that occurs through illness or accident in an individual born with normal hearing, also called adventitious hearing loss.
acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS)	A virus-borne illness that results in a breakdown of the immune system; caused by an infection from the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV).
acting-out behavior cycle	The seven-stage process often enacted by students who exhibit behavioral problems: Calm Phase, Trigger Phase, Agitation Phase, Acceleration Phase, Peak Phase, De-escalation Phase, and Recovery Phase. Acting-out behavior is that characterized as inappropriate, aggressive, or destructive.
action plan	Any of a number of methods to support the implementation of a comprehensive behavior management plan.
adaptation	Process through which educators alter the components of an evidence-based practice or program for some or all of their students, often to deleterious effect.
adapted physical education teacher	Professional whose role it is to assist physical education teachers in the development of appropriate accommodations and modifications so that students with disabilities can participate in physical education activities; adapted physical education teachers may also provide an individualized program of physical education for students with disabilities.
adapting instruction	To make changes to classroom instruction in order to allow students equal access to the curriculum and to give students the opportunity to both process and demonstrate

what has been taught; instructional adaptations can include both accommodations and modifications.

adaptive behavior

The performance of the everyday life skills expected of adults, including communication, self-care, social skills, home living, leisure, and self-direction.

adaptive skill area

Any one of numerous instructional targets that focus on an individual's ability to function in a typical environment and on successful adult outcomes (independent living, employment, and community participation).

Adderall

A psycho stimulant drug used primarily to treat Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD).

adult service

Any one of a variety of services available to individuals with disabilities who meet certain eligibility requirements and that typically falls into one of three categories: employment services, social security and health services, and community living and support services. In some cases, adult services are provided through agencies that also serve persons without disabilities (e.g., Medicaid).

advance organizer

A preview or organizational guide used to acquaint students with the content, structure, or importance of written material or a lecture.

adventitious blindness

A visual disability that is acquired after the age of two.

adventitious hearing loss

Hearing loss that occurs through illness or accident in an individual born with normal hearing; also called acquired hearing loss.

advocacy training

Process through which school counselors prepare families to become advocates for their children and children to become self-advocates. In advocacy training, school counselors work with families to help the child to become as independent as possible, make mistakes and learn from them, and gain more responsibilities throughout the transition process.

affective disorder

A mental disorder characterized by dramatic changes or extremes of mood; may involve manic or depressive episodes.

age of majority

Age at which students are considered legal adults and at which legal rights are transferred to students.

aggression

A state of hostility in which combative or violent behavior, which can include oral communication, is directed toward the student's own self, at others, or toward the

physical environment.

Agitation Phase	The third part of the behavior cycle'")>acting-out behavior cycle, during which students manifests a variety of sometimes contradictory seeming behaviors. Some students might dart their eyes, tap their fingers, or start and stop their activities, whereas others disengage, stare off into space, or diminish their involvement in the classroom.
alerting device	Any one of numerous devices that employ a visual cue, sound, or vibration to make individuals who are deaf or hard-of-hearing aware of an important sound in their environment (e.g., a flashing light, loud gong, or vibration might signal a fire alarm, doorbell, clock alarm, or ringing telephone).
alphabetic principle	The phonic relationship between sounds and written letters.
alternate assessment	Assessments used with students who are unable to take the typically administered standardized tests, even with accommodations; generally reserved for students with the most significant disabilities.
alternate form	A variant assessment test that measures the same skills and has the same format as the standard version but that features different content. Not to be confused with an alternative format, which may assess skills differently or utilize different content.
alternative and augmentative communication (AAC)	The clinical practice that attempts to compensate for the impairment and disability patterns of people with severe expressive communication disorders.
alternative portfolio	A collection of a student's work; often used to evaluate students' school performance through authentic assessments.
amblyopia	Dimness in vision not attributable to eye structure or injury; can lead to blindness if not addressed.
American Sign Language (ASL)	A form of sign language or manual communication system used by the deaf.
Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)	Federal disability antidiscrimination legislation passed in 1990 to guarantee basic civil rights to people with disabilities; similar to those provided to individuals on the basis of race, sex, national origin, and religion, ADA guarantees equal opportunities for individuals with disabilities in areas of employment, transportation, government services, telecommunications, and public accommodations.

anchor standards	Broad standards that define skills which all students are expected to master by the time they graduate from high school in order to be college- and career-ready.
anchored instruction	An instructional strategy that attempts to make learning relevant and meaningful by 'anchoring' tasks and assignments to examples from students' culture or from real-life situations.
annual goals	Statements in a student's IEP that outline the major expectations for that student during the upcoming twelve months; must be objective and measurable.
annual review	Required meeting of the IEP team, including parents and school professionals, to review the student's goals for the next year.
anorexia	An eating disorder characterized by a fear of weight gain, disturbed body image, and chronic absence or refusal of appetite for food, resulting in severe weight loss.
anoxia	A severe deficiency of oxygen; can result in brain injury.
antecedent	Any situation, action, or event that immediately precedes a behavior.
Anticipation-Reaction Guide	Instructional template designed to provide an organizational structure that guides students as they read and analyze a given text passage; teachers can use this guide to activate students' background knowledge before reading, help them identify textual evidence during reading, and help them to evaluate their own and one or more author's perspectives after reading
antiseptic bouncing	A technique in behavior management in which an instructor temporarily removes remove a student from the setting (e.g., let student get a drink of water or deliver a message to another teacher) to permit the student time to regain composure and control his or her behavior. The strategy is not designed to punish the student.
anxiety disorder	Any one of a family of conditions characterized by an irrational dread of ordinary circumstances and everyday occurrences; the condition causes painful uneasiness and emotional tension or confusion.
aphasia	The loss or impairment of language ability due to brain injury.
applied behavior analysis	Research methodology that employs single subject designs (e.g., reversal, multiple baseline); paradigms that describe human behavior in terms of events that stimulate behavior, maintain behavior, and increase its likelihood.

apraxia	The inability to perform purposive actions, such as moving the muscles in speech or other voluntary acts.
array of services	A constellation of special education services, personnel, and educational placements.
articulation disorder	The abnormal production of speech sounds or an inability to speak fluently or coherently.
Asperger syndrome	A disorder that is part of the autism spectrum disorders (ASD) in which cognition is usually in the average or above-average range.
assessment	The process of gathering information, both formal and informal, and identifying a student's strengths and needs through a variety of instruments and products; the data used in making decisions.
assessment results interpretation	The process through which school counselors or other qualified professionals offer analysis of assessment test results in order to identify areas of strength and need, and to assist in the development of appropriate goals for students.
assistance	Help offered to a teacher by an aid or other staff member during the administration of a universal screening assessment (e.g., a teacher's aid or other staff member supervises a class so that the teacher is able to assess students).
assistance card	A small card containing a message that alerts the public that the user is deaf-blind and needs assistance crossing the street.
assistive device	Any piece of equipment or technology that facilitates people's work, communication, mobility, or other aspect of daily life.
assistive listening device (ALD)	Any piece of equipment or technology (e.g., hearing aids, audio loops, FM transmission devices) that helps deaf and hard-of-hearing individuals to use their residual hearing.
assistive technology	Any item, service, equipment, or product system—whether acquired commercially, specially designed, or created via changes to an existing product—that is used to increase, maintain, or improve the functional capabilities in the daily life of an individual with a disability; comes in two forms, devices and services.
assistive technology specialist	Specialist who collaborates with teachers, other professionals, and families to ensure that all of the assistive technological needs of a student are met in order to reduce

the barriers to the physical and learning environments.

association	The ability to recognize the relationships among different concepts or knowledge bases; made up of memory and the executive control.
asthma	A respiratory condition that results in difficulty in breathing.
astigmatism	Blurred vision caused by an irregular cornea or lens.
at-risk	Term used to describe students whose condition or situation makes it probable for them to develop disabilities.
ataxia	A type of cerebral palsy characterized by a difficulty in coordinating the muscles in voluntary movement.
athetosis	A type of cerebral palsy that involves almost constant uncontrolled movement and writhing, particularly in the wrist, fingers, and face, and occasionally the toes and feet.
atresia	An absence or closure of a part of the body that is normally open.
attention deficit	A characteristic often associated with learning disabilities characterized by an inhibited ability to pay attention to or focus on relevant tasks.
attention deficit (ADD)/ hyperactivity disorder (ADHD)	Any of a range of behavioral disorders in children characterized by symptoms that include poor concentration, an inability to focus on tasks, difficulty in paying attention, and impulsivity.
Attribute Treatment Interaction approach	An instructional strategy in which learning methods are matched to a student's modality strength (e.g., visual learners are taught primarily through visual modes).
attribution	The explanation that an individual uses to make sense of his or her successes or failures.
audiogram	A graphic record produced by audiometry through which an individual's ability to hear pitches (frequencies) and different volumes (intensities) is quantified.
audiologist	A professional trained to diagnose hearing losses and auditory problems.

auditory accommodation	Any audio material offered to students with visual impairments.
auditory habituation	Part of the auditory-verbal approach for students with hearing loss in which students attempt to develop their residual hearing to its greatest possible extent.
auditory-verbal approach	Part of the oral approach to teaching students with hearing loss in which students attempt to make use of their remaining hearing to the greatest possible extent; emphasis is placed on amplification and the teaching of speech.
augmentative communication system	One of a family of alternative methods of communication, which includes communication boards, communication books, sign language, and computerized voices; used by individuals unable to communicate readily through speech.
auricle	The visible part of the ear, composed of cartilage, that collects sounds and funnels them through an external auditory canal to the eardrum.
authentic assessment	An ongoing assessment process that occurs in the individual's natural environment and includes a student's performance as well as the necessary supports; also includes student work samples.
autism	A pervasive developmental disorder considered to be part of the autistic spectrum disorders (ASD) characterized by problems in communication and social interaction, and repetitive or manneristic behaviors; generally evident by age three.
autistic disorder	An autistic spectrum disorder (ASD) characterized by problems in communication and social interaction, and repetitive or manneristic behaviors.
autistic savant	A person with autism whose social language skills are delayed but who demonstrates advanced skills in a particular area such as mathematics or graphic arts.
autistic spectrum disorder (ASD)	Any one of a family of disorders characterized by a pronounced difficulty with communication, inhibited social interaction, and manneristic behaviors.
autosomal recessive disorder	A genetically transmitted disorder which can only be passed down when both parents carry the gene (e.g., Usher syndrome).
background knowledge	The personal characteristics and experiences of students that teachers can use in the classroom to help build connections with new information and concepts.

baclofen pump	A surgically implanted pump designed to deliver small amounts of baclofen, a medication to relieve spasticity, into the spinal fluid; allows those with certain spasticity related disabilities, such as cerebral palsy, to have more flexibility.
barrier game	A drill-and-practice activity in a game format that requires the application of verbal skills to solve problems.
basal ganglia	The interconnected gray masses within the cerebral hemisphere and brain stem; generally responsible for the coordination and control of movement.
Basal reader	A textbook, often an anthology, that contains stories and lessons for reading instruction.
baseline	The level at which students, school personnel, or other individuals are performing before a new practice or program is implemented.
baseline data	The level at which the behavior occurs before an intervention is implemented. This information is gathered at the beginning of an assessment period for later comparative use.
Basic Interpersonal Communicative Skills (BICS)	Term referring to a student's ability to understand basic conversational English. Also, the social language that allows students to express their needs and desires and to communicate with peers and adults. See also: second language acquisition.
Beacons of Excellence school	A school selected through a national search for its excellent results for students with disabilities, including collective responsibility among school leadership, staff, and the community at large.
behavior	An observable or measurable act.
behavior analyst	An expert in behavioral support. Professionals who have undergone rigorous credentialing requirements will have the initials BCBA (Board Certified Behavior Analyst) after their name.
behavior crisis card	A physical object that a teacher can use to quickly inform office or other school personal that a behavior crisis is underway.
behavior crisis plan	In behavior management, strategies for obtaining immediate assistance for serious behavioral situations.

behavior expectations	Broad goals for behavior or the general ways that teachers would like children to act; guidelines for behavior that apply to all children and adults across all settings.
behavior management	A combination of strategies and techniques used to increase desirable behaviors and decrease undesirable ones
behavior modification	Systematic control of environmental events, especially of consequences, designed to produce specific changes in observable responses. May include reinforcement, punishment, modeling, self-instruction, desensitization, guided practice, or any other technique for either strengthening or eliminating a particular response.
behavior recording sheet	Log sheet used to collect data on a student's observed behavior, especially its frequency, latency, or duration.
behavior-specific praise	A positive, declarative statement directed toward a child or group of children that describes a desirable behavior in specific, observable, and measurable terms; also referred to as descriptive praise.
behavioral	Of, describing, or having to do with behavior itself and the observable conditions and events that cause it, rather than on unconscious motivations.
behavioral inhibition	A tendency among young children to avoid or withdraw from unfamiliar circumstances or individuals; the ability to regulate one's attention, as well as the behavior that accompanies this ability.
behavioral intervention plan (BIP)	A set of strategies designed to address the function of a student's behavior as a means through which to alter it; requires a functional behavioral assessment and an associated plan that describes individually determined procedures for both prevention and intervention.
behavioral phenotype	A collection of behaviors—including cognitive, language, and social behaviors as well as psychopathological symptoms—that tend to occur together in persons with specific genetic syndrome.
behavioral support	The organization and arrangement of environments (e.g., schools, homes, workplaces) as an attempt to lessen the frequency of problem behaviors.
benchmark	An indicator used to identify the expected understandings and skills needed for content standards by grade level; benchmarks are tracked during predetermined intervals (e.g., a mid-year benchmark).

Best Buddies	A program that pairs college students with people with intellectual disabilities as a means through which to build relationships, friendships, and opportunities for support.
best practice	Term used to describe any instructional technique, scientifically based practice, or method proven through research to be effective or valid.
best-evidence information	Recommendations that, because no large-scale studies exist to confirm their validity, are instead based on the best available evidence.
bicultural-bilingual approach	An approach to instructing students with hearing impairment that stresses teaching American Sign Language as a first language and English as a second language in order to promote a student's ability to function in both hearing and deaf culture.
bilateral hearing loss	Deafness or hearing loss in both ears.
bilingual education	Instructional approach in which a non-English-speaking student's native language is used in primary instruction until he or she has developed sufficient command of English.
bilingual special education	Instructional approach in which students' home language and culture, along with English, are used as the means through which to deliver individualized instruction to English language learners with disabilities.
blindness	Disability or condition in which an individual has no vision or possesses only the ability to detect the presence or absence of light.
booster session	Follow-up support in which additional training is provided to review previously covered information or skills and to troubleshoot problems. This support is provided at relevant intervals throughout the school year (e.g., after winter break, the first Monday of every month).
braille	A system of reading and writing that uses dot codes embossed on paper; the concept of tactile reading was promoted by Louis Braille in 1824, whose method is a precursor to the one used today.
braille bills	Legislation passed in several states to increase the availability of braille to students with visual impairments.
braille notetakers	Portable devices that can be used to take notes in braille, which are then converted to speech, braille, or text.

braille transcribers	Individuals who prepare braille versions of textbooks, which in turn allow students with visual impairments to access the general education curriculum.
bulimia	An eating disorder characterized by periods of binge eating followed by compulsive purging (i.e., vomiting, refusing to eat).
C-Print	A real-time, speech-to-text, computer aided service designed to help students to understand lectures through the use of special word processing software, a trained typist, and a computer display.
Calm Phase	The first phase of the behavior cycle'")>acting-out behavior cycle, during which student behavior is characterized as goal-directed, compliant, cooperative, and academically engaged. Students are responsive to teacher praise and are willing to work with peers.
captions	Subtitles that print the words spoken in film or video; can be either 'closed' (so that only those who want to can see them) or 'open' (so that everyone always sees them).
career exploration	Process during which students with disabilities begin to explore their career options. Ideally, they should begin to do so as early as middle school. In high school, students may job shadow, participate in vocational assessments, and explore employment options. Counselors can help students and families to process these experiences and to use them to influence further decisions.
cataract	A condition in which the lens of the eye becomes cloudy to the effect that light rays are not properly transmitted to the retina.
categorical approach	A system of classifying disabilities (e.g., learning disabilities, intellectual disabilities).
catheter	A tube that is inserted into the body in order to either introduce or remove fluid.
center school	Separate school (sometimes residential), typically dedicated to serving students with a particular disability (e.g., a school for the deaf).
cerebral palsy	A nonprogressive, neuromotor impairment that affects body movements and muscle coordination.
certified vision rehabilitation therapist (CVRT)	A specialized therapist who works with students with visual impairments to ensure that they have the necessary skills to succeed in post-secondary settings.

changing expectations	Term sometimes used to describe an emerging attitude in American society regarding what is expected for students with disabilities: An increasing number of parents now expect schools to assume responsibility for their children's overall health.
choice making	Process through which students are given increased control over their own learning.
choral responding	Instructional activity in which all of the students in a group say a response together.
classroom reinforcement system	Preventive or reinforcement-based system in which children are acknowledged and earn rewards for their appropriate behaviors.
ClassWide Peer Tutoring (CWPT)	Instructional program in which pairs of students take turns acting as the tutor; originally designed to address developmental goals among students, with or without disabilities, from low socioeconomic backgrounds.
close reading	Intensive, thorough, and methodical analysis of a text passage to determine its key ideas and supporting details, as well as to gain a deeper understanding of the overall text.
coaching	A method of ongoing support in which an individual—often of similar position—guides, instructs, and trains another person or group to develop specific skills.
cognates	Words that sound similar in two languages and have the same meaning.
Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP)	Term referring to a student's ability to effectively understand and use the more advanced and complex language necessary to understand academic subjects and abstractions, sometimes referred to as academic language; See also: second language acquisition.
collaboration	Any collective action in which two or more individuals work together towards a common goal of planning, implementing, or evaluating a specific aspect of an educational program for a student or group of students.
collaborative mentoring	An approach that combines reflective and direct mentoring, through which the mentor and mentee discuss the new teacher's experiences as colleagues. The approach is often referred to as instructional coaching. Collaborative mentoring generally requires a high level of comfort in the mentor and mentee relationship.
Collaborative Strategic Reading (CSR)	A multi-component approach to reading improvement in which students apply comprehension strategies while reading expository text in small cooperative

learning groups.

college exploration	In the context of special education, the activities of school counselors to help students with disabilities—an increasing number of whom are attending post-secondary schools—and their families to prepare for and select an institution of higher learning.
Common Core State Standards (CCSS)	An educational initiative originally sponsored by the National Governors Association designed to create consistent educational standards to prepare students across the United States either for college or for post-secondary employment.
communication	The organized transfer of knowledge, ideas, opinions, or feelings. It comprises both speech and language.
communication access real-time translation (CART)	A method of communication for students who are deaf or hard of hearing involving a trained professional transcribing spoken language as it is happening (i.e., in real-time) through the use of a keyboard; also known as open captioning.
community participation	In the context of special education, the efforts of clergy, youth ministry personnel, recreational staff, or others to help students with disabilities to become and remain more fully active in their communities.
community transition team	Group composed of education and agency staff, families, employers, and students with the purpose of developing linkages, accessing and monitoring services, and constructing a means for ongoing communication and collaboration.
community-centered learning environment	Used to describe an environment in which explicit values or norms that promote lifelong learning are fostered.
compensation	The use of technology or strategies to make up for a student's difficulty in performing specific tasks, with an emphasis on functional performance rather than instruction.
comprehensible input	Instructional method by which teachers—using sheltered instruction—teach at a level that is just beyond the students' current level of language competence, while also providing the scaffolded supports necessary to understand the information.
comprehensive behavior management	A method of behavioral management that entails viewing a classroom not as a conglomeration of discrete parts, but rather as an organized, consistent, and integrated setting in which instructors, school leaders, students, and parents are all active participants.

computation	In student assessment, a test in which a student is presented with a number of computational problems sampled from the year's curriculum and given a short amount of time (based on the child's grade level) in which to complete as many of them as possible. The student's score is the number of correctly placed digits. This test can be administered to a group.
concept development	The construction of ideas or mental images through a process of classifying or grouping similar things (e.g., beagles, poodles, and golden retrievers are all dogs) and through discriminating categories or concepts (e.g., dogs are different from cats).
concepts and applications	In student assessment, a test in which a student is presented with 25 problems selected from the year's curriculum dealing with concepts and application and given a short amount of time (based on the child's grade level) to finish as many as possible. The student's score is the number of correct answers. This test can be administered to a group.
connected text	The reading material in a textbook.
consequence	In behavior management and modification, the stimulus that follows a behavior that may serve either to increase or decrease its future incidence.
consequence-based intervention	A systematized means of negating certain undesirable behaviors through the use of negative and positive consequences.
consultation	Process through which a professional assists or interacts with other professionals and the families of students with disabilities in order to acquire information that facilitates the learning of such students.
content scaffolding	Instructional strategy in which educators teach material that is not too difficult or unfamiliar to students learning a new skill.
content standards	An instructional outline delineating what students should know, understand, and be able to do in specified content areas throughout the course of their K–12 education; a definition of the breadth and depth of knowledge, skills, and processes that are to be taught in a given domain.
contextual supports	Sheltered instructional method in which teachers use their students' unique or personal experiences or characteristics as a means to facilitate greater learning and comprehension. Might include visual cues to help students learn new words of content.

conversational English	Variety of English-language exchange that occurs when students use the context or contextual clues around them to receive social communication and information (e.g., playing on the playground, socializing in the classroom); also known as Basic Interpersonal Language Skills (BICS).
cooperation	Collaborative process requiring interaction and mutual agreement among multiple entities working toward a common goal.
cooperative learning	Instructional arrangement in which heterogeneous (mixed ability) groups are employed as a method of maximizing the learning of everyone in those groups; also helps students to develop social skills and has been demonstrated to yield especially favorable results for students in at-risk groups, such as those with learning disabilities.
cooperative teaching	Instructional arrangement in which heterogeneous (mixed-ability) groups are employed as a method of maximizing the learning of everyone in those groups; also helps students to develop social skills and has been demonstrated to yield especially favorable results for students in at-risk groups, such as those with learning disabilities.
cornea	The transparent, convex front of the eye; responsible for most of the refraction of light rays in focusing on an object.
corrective feedback	Constructive comments provided as soon as possible following the implementation of an activity in order to help an individual improve his or her performance.
cortical visual impairment	Any damage to the part of the brain dealing with sight resulting in the incorrect interpretation of images received by the eye.
course of study	The courses and educational experiences that help a student to achieve his or her post-school goals.
creativity	A form of intelligence characterized by advanced divergent thought, the production of original concepts, and an ability to develop flexible and detailed responses and ideas.
criterion-referenced measure	A benchmark used to identify the expected skill levels for students at each grade level.
criterion-referenced testing	An assessment wherein an individual's performance is compared to a goal or standard of mastery, as opposed to a comparison to the performance of other

	students.
cross-cultural dissonance	Situation created when the home and school cultures are in conflict.
cued speech	A method to aid speech reading in people with hearing impairment in which an interpreter uses hand signals near his or her mouth to supplement or clarify lip reading by helping to distinguish sounds.
cued-language transliterators	Professionals who provide a verbatim translation of communication for a student who is deaf or hard of hearing through means of cued speech. Cued speech transliterators use hand shapes and placements of hand shapes, along with mouth movements representing phonemes of spoken language, to assist students with speech reading; also known as cued-speech transliterators
cultural competence	Refers to the ability to learn from and relate respectfully to other cultural backgrounds, heritages, and traditions.
cultural pluralism	Social or cultural organization in which distinct cultural groups are seen as valued components of the society, and the language and traditions of each group are maintained.
cultural responsiveness	The process through which educators and others broaden their awareness of the cultural and racial issues facing diverse students, families, and communities by reflecting on their own cultures and learning about those of others.
cultural-familial intellectual disability	Mild intellectual disability due to an unstimulating environment or hereditary factors.
culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD)	Term sometimes used to describe students from diverse cultural or linguistic backgrounds.
culturally responsive instruction	Instructional modifications or adjustments made by culturally responsive educators to meet the individual needs of their diverse classrooms and students.
culture	The complex system of underlying beliefs and attitudes that shape the thoughts and behaviors of a group of people.
curricular materials	Any of a variety of resources, items, or tools, including textbooks, supplemental materials, and activities, used by teachers to engage students in the learning process.

curriculum based assessment (CBA)	A method of evaluating student performance by directly and frequently collecting data on their academic progress.
curriculum based measurement (CBM)	A type of progress monitoring conducted on a regular basis to assess student performance throughout an entire year's curriculum; teachers can use CBM to evaluate not only student progress but also the effectiveness of their instructional methods.
curriculum compacting	The act of reducing the instructional time spent on typical academic subjects so that enrichment activities can be included in the curriculum; used in gifted education.
curriculum mapping	A method used to gather information about what has been taught in a classroom over a specific period of time.
curriculum omission	Information consciously excluded from the curriculum, often occurring due to an erroneous belief of some teachers that certain topics will be taught at a later time or within another subject area.
curriculum overload	Situation that occurs when the range of taught content is too broad and the instructional time offered to students to learn it too short.
cystic fibrosis	An inherited disease affecting most of the organs and bodily functions; characterized by thick, sticky mucous that often interferes with breathing or digestion; generally does not affect intellectual functioning but is increasingly debilitating.
cytomegalovirus (CMV)	A herpes virus that usually produces only mild symptoms but that can cause severe neurological damage in newborns or persons with weakened immune systems.
De-escalation Phase	The sixth part of the behavior cycle'")>acting-out behavior cycle in which a student exits the Peak Phase confused, disoriented, and at a reduced level of agitation. Many students will withdraw, deny any responsibility or involvement, attempt to blame others, and even try to reconcile with those they harmed or offended. Although students will most likely not want to discuss the incident, they are often responsive to directions.
deaf	Hearing loss severe enough that speech and most other sounds cannot be perceived without the use of a hearing aid.
Deaf culture	The structures of social relationships, language, dance, theater, and other cultural activities that characterize the Deaf community.

deafblindness	A dual disability wherein an individual has both vision and hearing problems but might not be both profoundly deaf and also blind.
deafness	The inability to usefully perceive sounds in the environment with or without the use of a hearing aid; the inability to use hearing as a means of processing information.
debriefing	Process through which a teacher deals not only with a misbehaving student but also with the emotions and expectations of the entire class. In addition, the teacher must deal honestly with his or her own mistakes and feelings surrounding a behavior-related incident. The goal of debriefing is to create a healthier learning environment.
decentralized hiring practices	Process by which school leaders hire teachers, often after an initial screening at the district level, so that candidates and school staff have opportunities to interact, thus allowing both with more knowledge about each other.
decibel (dB)	A unit of measure for the intensity of sounds; commonly expressed as dB.
decodable text	Text that contains previously taught letter-sound correspondences and patterns.
decreased visual acuity	A reduction in one's ability to visually perceive fine details.
deinstitutionalization	Process of decreasing the number of individuals with disabilities (e.g., intellectual disabilities) who live in large congregate facilities with a goal of closing all institutions and segregated settings.
demographics	Term used to denote any of a variety of pre-selected population characteristics (e.g., racial, ethnic, gender) that are collected and analyzed usually for the purpose (either scientific or commercial) of studying group action dynamics; not to be confused with demography.
demography	The study of populations and their defining characteristics.
depression	A continued and sustained state of despair and dejection.
descriptive praise	A positive, declarative statement directed toward a child or group of children that describes a desirable behavior in specific, observable, and measurable terms; also referred to as behavior-specific praise.
descriptive video service	A service for use by people with visual impairment that provides audio narrative of the key visual elements of television programs and movies.

developmental bilingual education	Method of language instruction in which academic content is provided to ELLs in their native language; also referred to as late-exit bilingual program or maintenance bilingual programs.
developmental delay	Term used to encompass a variety of disabilities in infants and young children indicating that they are significantly behind the norm for development in one or more areas, including motor development, socialization, independent functioning, cognitive development, or communication.
developmentally appropriate	Term defining an instructional tool, strategy, or practice that is tailored to the age of a given child, his or her individual needs and abilities, and his or her cultural and social norms and expectations.
developmentally appropriate practice (DAP)	Educational methods for young children that are compatible with their developmental levels and that meet their individual needs; coined by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC).
diabetic retinopathy	A leading cause of blindness; results from a complication of diabetes, occurring when diabetes damages blood vessels inside the retina.
dialect	Variety within a language involving variations in pronunciation and word usage; a particular form of a language associated with a specific region or social group.
differential reinforcement	A behavioral management technique designed to decrease instances of problem behaviors by either giving (in the case of desirable behavior) or withholding (in the case of undesirable behavior) reinforcement.
differential reinforcement of incompatible behavior (DRI)	A behavior management technique in which a teacher reinforces a positive behavior in order to prevent a student from engaging in another, problematic one.
differential reinforcement of low rates of behavior (DRL)	A behavior management technique through which a teacher can keep a given student behavior at a manageable level without fully suppressing it.
differential reinforcement of other behaviors (DRO)	A behavior management technique through which a teacher reinforces the absence of a problem behavior.
differentiated curriculum	The flexible application of curriculum targets to ensure content mastery, in-depth and independent learning, and the exploration of issues and themes; often used in gifted education.

differentiated instruction	An approach whereby teachers adjust their curriculum and instruction to maximize the learning of all students: average learners, English language learners, struggling students, students with learning disabilities, and gifted and talented students; not a single strategy but rather a framework that teachers can use to implement a variety of strategies, many of which are evidence-based.
diplegia	Weakness or paralysis in the legs and arms caused by disease or injury to the nerves of the brain or the spinal cord.
direct instruction	Instructional approach through which specific skills or concepts are taught in highly structured environments using clear, direct language; focused on producing specific learning outcomes and sometimes achieved through the use of scripted lessons. See also: explicit instruction.
direct mentoring	An approach in which the mentor takes on the role of problem-solver by providing specific feedback to the new teacher on how he or she can improve classroom practice. The mentor provides new special education teachers with explicit answers and advice to questions or problems they are experiencing.
direct vocabulary instruction	An instructional method in which a focus is placed on words and their meanings in order to help students to directly learn new vocabulary.
disabilities studies	A college course of studies about people with disabilities, their history, culture, and rights.
disability	Any of a wide variety of conditions characterized by limitations in typical function (e.g., seeing, hearing, speaking, or learning) or development resulting from a physical or sensory impairment.
discalculia	A severely impaired ability to calculate or perform mathematical functions; presumed to be caused by central nervous system dysfunction.
discrepancy formula	Any one of a variety of formulas developed by state educational agencies or local districts to determine the difference between a child's actual achievement and, using the student's IQ scores, expected achievement; used to identify students with learning disabilities.
discrepancy score	The score used in some states to determine eligibility for services designed for students with learning disabilities; calculated by applying one of several different discrepancy formulas.

disgraphia	A severely impaired ability to write; presumed to be caused by central nervous system dysfunction.
disproportionate representation	Situation wherein a particular group is represented significantly more or less than would be predicted by the percentage that group represents in the general population.
disruptive behavior	Any classroom behavior that interferes with a teacher's ability to effectively provide instruction and with other students' ability to learn.
doctor's office effect	The observation that children with ADHD often do not exhibit their symptoms when examined by a clinician during a brief office visit.
Down syndrome	A disorder arising from chromosome defect (i.e., an extra chromosome on the twenty-first pair) that often results in identifiable physical characteristics (e.g., short stature, broad facial profile) and that usually causes delays in physical and intellectual development.
drift	In implementation fidelity, the inadvertent modification or omission over time of the recommended procedures or activities that make up a practice or program; usually occurs gradually and is considered a threat to fidelity.
dual-discrepancy approach	The use of twin criteria, performance level and rate of growth, to evaluate student progress.
due process hearing	A noncourt proceeding before an impartial hearing officer that can be used if parents and school personnel disagree on a special education issue.
duration	In behavior intervention, the length of time that a student engages in a behavior.
dysfluencies	Any break, interruption, or aberration in the normal flow of speech; typical of normal speech development in young children, but considered to be speech impairments in older children (e.g., stuttering).
dyslexia	A severely impaired ability to read; presumed to be caused by a central nervous system dysfunction.
early childhood special education	The provision of customized services crafted to meet the individual needs of young children with disabilities; generally used among children from birth to five years old.

early expressive language delay (EELD)	A significant interruption in the development of expressive language that is apparent by age two.
early intervening	Instructional intervention in which assistance or services are offered to students as soon as they begin to struggle academically and before they fall too far behind their peers.
early intervention	Specialized services provided to very young children at risk for or showing signs of developmental delay.
ecological assessment	A procedure that includes observational data collected in the student's natural environments to identify specific events that cause a problem behavior or consequent events that maintain or increase the target behavior; ABC analysis is an example.
Education for All Handicapped Children Act (EHA) or Public Law PL 94-142	Act of Congress passed in 1975 with many provisions for assuring free appropriate public education for all students with disabilities; later renamed the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).
educational interpreter	Related service provider who translates or converts spoken messages to the mode of manual communication preferred by a student who is deaf.
effect size	Statistical calculation that, when used in intervention studies, measures the effectiveness of a practice or program.
effective instruction	The use of research-based instruction in the classroom.
effective teaching behaviors	Instructional methods that engage students in learning and increase their on-task behavior as a means through which to their increase academic achievement.
emotional or behavioral disorder – emotional disturbance	A condition of disruptive or inappropriate behaviors that interferes with a student's learning, relationships with others, or personal satisfaction to such a degree that intervention is required.
empirically validated	Condition or characteristic of having been proven through high-quality research to be accurate or to produce positive results.
encephalitis	An inflammation of the brain often brought on by a viral infection; can affect the child's mental development adversely and may result in seizures, brain damage, and partial paralysis.

encopresis	Bowel incontinence; soiling oneself.
endogenous	Of or having come from within the body; used to describe an inherited disability.
English as a second language (ESL)	Instructional approach in which non-native speakers are instructed in English until a level of proficiency is achieved; does not provide support in the student's native or primary language; also referred to as English for speakers of other languages (ESOL).
English language development	An instructional method used with English Language Learners (ELL) that focuses on learning the formal structures of language (grammar); another term for English as a second language (ESL).
English language learner (ELL)	The preferred term for a student engaged in learning English as his or her second language; sometimes called limited English proficient (LEP) students.
enrichment	To add topics or skills to the traditional curriculum or to present a particular topic in more depth; an approach used in gifted education.
enuresis	Urinary incontinence; wetting oneself.
environmental restructuring	Classroom behavior approach in which a student's peers are instructed and reinforced for encouraging appropriate behavior in a classmate who exhibits disruptive behavior.
epidemiological studies	The scientific and medical study of the causes, transmission, and characteristics of disease or disorders within a population.
epilepsy	A neurological disorder characterized by recurrent seizures.
error analysis	The process by which instructors identify the types of errors made by students when working mathematical problems.
error correction procedure	A method of corrective feedback in which a student who has made an error is immediately prompted to say or write the correct response.
ESL/ bilingual paraprofessional	Professional who provides instruction or support under the supervision of an ESL or bilingual teacher.
ethnocentrism	A tendency to see one's own culture as natural and correct, while viewing other cultures as unnatural or inferior; the tendency to evaluate other cultures according to

	one's own cultural standards or assumptions.
etiology	The causes of a disability, including genetic, physiological, environmental, or psychological factors.
eugenics	A pseudoscientific social study characterized by its belief in the 'perfectibility' of human beings through directed breeding; supports improving the human race through selective reproduction and protecting society by not allowing people with disabilities to reproduce, reside in mainstream society, or, in some cases, live.
evaluation	Assessment or judgment of special characteristics such as intelligence, physical abilities, sensory abilities, learning preferences, and achievement.
event	In behavior intervention, the number of times a behavior occurs; also called frequency.
evidence level	Quantification of the research or data that exists in support of the effectiveness of a given practice or program.
evidence-based practice	Skills, techniques, and strategies that have been proven to work through experimental research studies or large-scale research field studies. Examples include the Good Behavior Game and peer tutoring.
evidence-based program	A collection of practices that has been proven to work through experimental research studies or large-scale research field studies. Examples include Peer Assisted Learning Strategies (PALS).
evoked response audiometry	The use of a electroencephalograph to measure changes in brain-wave activity in response to sounds; can be used with newborns, who do not need to voluntarily respond to sound.
exceptional learning needs (ELN)	The exhibition of variations in behavior or performance sufficient to warrant a special educational intervention.
excess cost	Additional expenses, beyond those for typical learners in the general education program, incurred to educate students with disabilities.
exclusionary clause	The omission of possible etiological factors to explain a student's learning disabilities.

executive functions	The mental processes that control and coordinate activities related to learning, including processing information, retaining and recalling information, organizing materials and time, and using effective learning and study strategies.
expanded core curriculum	Curriculum encompassing the range of skills that address the disability-specific needs of students who have visual impairments, including communication skills, daily living skills, social skills, and orientation and mobility skills.
explicit instruction	Instructional approach in which teachers clearly identify the expectations for learning, highlight important details of the concept or skill, offer precise instruction, and connect new learning to earlier lessons and materials.
expository text	Written text that is informational, descriptive, persuasive, or explanatory in nature.
expressive language	The ability to communicate thoughts and feelings through gestures, sign language, verbalization, or the written word.
externalizing behavior	Any behavior, especially aggressive ones, that are directed toward others.
extinction	In behavior intervention, refers to the withholding of something that is pleasant (e.g., an activity, a tangible item, attention) in order to eliminate the likelihood that a behavior will occur in the future.
extinction burst	In behavior intervention, an elevation or increase in the rate of an undesirable behavior in response to a teacher's use of the extinction consequence.
facilitated communication	Augmentative technique in which a facilitator assists a person with a communication disorder to express himself or herself through either written or manual communication.
family system of supports	Potential sources of support for people with disabilities, including sons and daughters, spouses, parents, siblings, in-laws, aunts and uncles, grandparents, extended family members, step-family members, and legal guardians; might also include close friends or others outside the family.
feedback	Constructive feedback offered by an observer (e.g., a coach, principal, or fellow teacher) to a teacher about a specific lesson or instructional technique.
fetal alcohol syndrome (FAS)	A condition that can result in congenital cognitive disabilities, behavior problems, and physical disability in the children of women who drink alcohol during pregnancy.

fidelity of implementation	The degree to which an intervention is implemented accurately, following the guidelines or restrictions of its developers.
field of vision	The range of physical space that is visible to a person looking straight ahead; 180 degrees is considered normal.
financial planning workshop	An instructional or advisory session during which appropriate personnel can communicate and collaborate with the families of students with special needs on such topics as guardianship and financial planning.
finger spelling	A form of manual communication that assigns each letter of the alphabet a sign; one form of sign language used by people who are deaf.
first letter strategies	Any of a number of mnemonic strategies in which students use the first letters of words in a list of items or steps to create another word (acronym) or sentence (acrostic).
five core reading components	The five essential building blocks of reading ability: phonemic awareness, phonics and word study, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension.
flexible grouping	A fluid or dynamic method of grouping students. Rather than being set, group membership changes to meet the different needs of the students.
fluctuating hearing loss	Hearing loss that varies from day to day.
fluency problems	Hesitations or repetitions of sounds or words that interrupt a person's flow of speech; a speech impairment.
FM system	An assistive listening device that brings sound to a student's ears so that he or she can hear better. An FM system allows teachers to talk into a microphone and transmit the sound of their voices to a student. An FM system consists of three parts: a microphone, a receiver, and a transmitter.
follow-up study	The provision of an evaluation, diagnosis, or treatment of a condition.
formative assessment	A system of providing continual feedback about students' preconceptions and performances to both learners and instructors; an ongoing evaluation of student learning.
four-point method	Method for evaluating a student's performance in which the relationship between the four most-recent progress monitoring data points and the goal line is examined. If

most of the points are on or above the goal line, the child or student is demonstrating improved outcomes. If most of the points are below the goal line and data indicate that the child or student will not meet the benchmark, performance is not improving.

four-tiered RTI model An RTI model in which the fourth level of intervention is provided by the special education program. Tiers 1 through 3 are provided by the general education program and are increasingly intensive.

fragile X syndrome (FXS) An inherited genetic disorder associated with disabilities and particularly linked to intellectual disabilities; some children with fragile X have average intelligence with or without learning disabilities; other symptoms include a large head and prominent forehead, nose, ears, and jaw, ADHD, heart murmurs, and some incidence of autism-like behaviors.

Frayner Model A type of graphic organizer designed to help students develop more comprehensive vocabulary skills by offering not only a definition and examples of what a given person, place, event, or thing is but also a definition and examples of what those things are not.

free appropriate public education (FAPE) A provision of IDEA ensuring that students with disabilities receive necessary education and services without cost to the child or family.

frequency In behavior intervention, the number of times a behavior occurs; also called event.

frequent progress monitoring A type of formative assessment in which student learning is evaluated often and on a regular basis in order to provide useful feedback about performance to both learners and instructors.

full inclusion An interpretation of the least restrictive environment concept that all students with disabilities should receive their instruction in the general education classroom; the act of facilitating the full participation of an individual in an activity, lesson, or course of study.

function In behavior assessment, term used to describe the motive for particular behaviors.

function-based intervention A systematized means of negating certain undesirable behaviors, often by replacing them with behaviors that serve the same function.

functional academics Category of instruction in which an emphasis is placed on the skills needed for daily living.

functional assessment	Method used to determine special education eligibility, the nature of the needed instructional program, and long-term goals for individuals with severe disabilities; evaluations focus on independent living and are conducted in natural settings.
functional behavioral assessment	A behavioral evaluation technique that determines the exact nature of problem behaviors, the reasons why they occur, and under what conditions the likelihood of their occurrence is reduced.
functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI)	Adaptation of the MRI used to detect changes in the brain while it is in an active state; unlike a PET scan, it does not involve using radioactive materials.
functional vision	A quality in which a person possesses enough useable vision to employ sight as a primary channel for learning.
functional vision assessment (FVA)	An assessment, required in most states, to determine a student's eligibility for educational vision services. Conducted in the student's natural learning environment by a teacher of students with visual impairments, an FVA describes the ways in which the student's visual impairment affects his or her development and learning.
functionally equivalent behavior	Any appropriate behavior that serves similar purposes to, and can be used to replace, an inappropriate one.
gait training	The analysis of and instruction in walking as a means of locomotion.
general education	A typical (regular education) classroom and curriculum designed to serve students without disabilities.
generalization	The transfer of learned information from particular instances to other environments, people, times, and events.
genetic counseling	Discussions between medical personnel and prospective parents for the purpose of determining the parents' genetic history and their likelihood of bearing children with disabilities.
genetic hearing loss	Hearing loss caused by the presence of an abnormal gene within one or more chromosomes.
genius	Term sometimes used to indicate a particular aptitude or capacity in any area; rare intellectual talents.

gifted	Used to describe individuals with high levels of intelligence, outstanding abilities, and the capacity for high performance.
glaucoma	A family of diseases characterized by excessive pressure in the eyeball that results in damage to the optic nerve; if untreated, blindness results.
globus pallidus	Structure in the basal ganglia of the brain; site of abnormal development in persons with ADHD.
goal line	On a chart of a student's academic progress, the indicator that connects a student's initial CBM probe scores to an expected short-term goal or benchmark.
goal-setting	An instructional process that involves setting goals and breaking them into steps as needed, developing plans for meeting goals and monitoring progress, implementing the plans, self-monitoring, and revising the goals when needed.
Good Behavior Game	A game-like situation that uses the principles of positive reinforcement and group contingencies and divides students into teams, competing against each other, to encourage improved classroom deportment.
graphic organizer	Any visual aid designed to help students to organize and comprehend substantial amounts of text and content information.
group contingency	Any of a number of reinforcement systems that involves an entire class and in which rewards are contingent upon a group's performance.
guardianship	A legal authority that grants one person the right to make decisions for another.
guided example	A step-by-step instructional guide for how to apply a strategy or how to complete a task.
guided notes	A strategic note-taking method in which teachers provide their students an outline containing the main ideas and related concepts in order to help guide the students through a lecture.
guided practice	A method of practice that involves working with students on activities that focus on a previously modeled or taught skill.
hard-of-hearing	Hearing loss significant enough to adversely affect education and communication but sufficient, with the assistance of a hearing aid, to comprehend others' speech and

oral communication.

hearing aid	An electronic device worn by those with hearing loss to help to amplify received sounds.
hearing impairment	A term referring to any degree of hearing loss—either permanent or fluctuating, mild or profound—that adversely affects an individual's education and that requires special training or adaptations.
hearing loss	A general term used to loosely describe a variety of hearing impairments.
hearing threshold	The point at which a person can perceive the softest sound at each frequency level.
hemiplegia	A condition in which one half of the body (right or left) is paralyzed.
heritability studies	Method of determining the degree to which a condition is inherited.
herpes simplex	A viral infection caused by a group of herpes viruses that may result in cold sores and, if contracted late in pregnancy, can cause mental abnormalities in the child.
hertz (Hz)	The unit of measurement for the frequency of sound.
heterogeneous grouping	To place students of varying abilities (i.e., lower achieving, typically achieving, and higher achieving) together in a small instructional group.
high achiever	Label applied to those students who consistently perform at a high academic level.
high-frequency word	Any of those words that commonly appear in reading materials and are often times not easily decodable (e.g., the, and, of, a, to).
high-probability request (high-p request)	In behavior management, a request based on the assumption that students are more likely to obey teacher directives if they are already actively engaged in compliant classroom behavior.
high-quality instruction	Effective instruction (i.e., research-based instruction) provided to all students in the general education setting using a standards-based curriculum and research-validated practices.
high-stakes testing	A term frequently used to describe the significant consequences tied to the performance of students on a test; tests that involve incentives and disincentives on

teachers, schools, and school districts.

HIV infection	The human immunodeficiency virus; a microorganism that infects the immune system, impairing the body's ability to fight infections.
home or hospital teacher	An educator who teaches in a child's home or hospital when the child must be absent from school due to health problems.
home-based	Term used to describe instruction delivered primarily in a student's home rather than in a school or center.
homogeneous grouping	To place students of similar abilities together into groups; can be used by teachers to provide more intensive instruction to students who are working at a similar level and who can benefit from instruction that is designed for their specific learning needs.
Hoover cane	A long, white cane used in the mobility and orientation system developed in 1944 by Richard Hoover to help people with visual disabilities to move with a greater degree of independence through their environment.
hydrocephaly	Condition characterized by enlargement of the head due to an excess build-up of cerebrospinal fluid; can result in brain damage.
hyperactivity	Term used to describe the impaired ability to sit or concentrate for long periods of time.
hyperopia	Farsightedness.
I Can Read (ICARE)	Instructional approach in which teachers work with and track the progress of small groups of reading students in order to focus more on students' individual needs.
identification	The process of seeking out and designating students with disabilities who require special education and related services.
idioms	Words and phrases that have meanings different from the literal one.
IEP Team	The multidisciplinary team of education and related services professionals that develops and evaluates, along with the students and their parents, the individualized education program plan for each student with a disability.

impaired vision field	A limitation in one's ability to perceive the average visual field (generally speaking, an area one can see when looking straight ahead, typically 160 to 180 degrees wide).
impulsive	Term used to describe an impaired ability to control one's own behavior.
inactive learner	Term applied to students who do not become involved in learning situations, do not approach the learning task purposefully, do not ask questions, do not seek assistance, or do not initiate learning.
incidence	Frequency of occurrence, such as the number of children identified with autism and receiving early intervention services.
incidental learning	The acquisition of knowledge and skills without being directly taught.
incidental teaching	Instructional technique in which information and skills are taught through the reinforcement of behaviors and activities performed naturally by students.
inclusion	In education, a state of inclusivity in which all students are educated so as to reach their fullest potentials, regardless of ability or disability.
independent practice	Instructional method in which students are encouraged to work on their own or to work separately from the teacher on activities that they are capable of performing without significant assistance.
indirect vocabulary instruction	Instructional method through which students learn words and their meanings via daily conversations and independent reading.
individualized education program (IEP)	A written plan used to delineate an individual student's current level of development and his or her learning goals, as well as to specify any accommodations, modifications, and related services that a student might need to attend school and maximize his or her learning.
individualized family service plan (IFSP)	A written document used to record and guide the early intervention process for young children with disabilities and their families; designed to reflect individual concerns, priorities, and resources.
individualized transition plan (ITP)	A statement, included in a high-school student's IEP, outlining the transition services required for coordination and delivery of services as the student nears adulthood.
Individuals with	Name given in 1990 to the Education for All Handicapped Children Act (EHA) and

Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)	used for all reauthorizations of the law that guarantees students with disabilities the right to a free appropriate education in the least restrictive environment.
induction	Any of a comprehensive package of supports designed to help new teachers transition into a school placement and become competent and effective classroom professionals.
informal reading inventory (IRI)	Method of reading assessment in which a student is asked to read progressively more difficult material, while his or her teacher notes any errors.
infused	Term used to describe a general education curriculum that has been enhanced with any of a number of enrichment activities.
inner ear	The portion of the ear that contains the cochlea and the vestibular apparatus.
input	Any of the numerous ways that a learner can receive information.
instructional scaffolding	A process in which a teacher adds supports for students to enhance learning and aid in the mastery of tasks; the teacher accomplishes this by systematically building on students' experiences and knowledge while they are learning new skills.
instructional support	Element added to an instructional routine in order to accommodate the different learning needs of students with disabilities.
instructional technology	Any device or instrument that exists in a classroom and that teachers use for the purpose of day-to-day instruction; such devices, when assigned to an individual student through an IEP, are known as assistive technology.
insulin pump	A surgically implanted medical device used to administer insulin medication and help those with diabetes to keep their blood-sugar levels within a prescribed range.
integrated (or supported) employment	An employment setting in which an individual with a disability receives the support necessary to learn and maintain his or her job.
integration	The process by which people of different backgrounds, abilities, social classes, religious persuasions, genders, etc., are permitted full and equal access to social institutions, services, and legal protections.
intellectual disability	A disability characterized by significant intellectual impairment and deficits in adaptive functioning that occurs in the developmental period (before the age of

eighteen) and has adverse effects on education.

intellectual functioning The actual performance of tasks believed to represent intelligence, such as observing, problem solving, and communicating.

intentionally and systematically teach The act of being thoughtful and purposeful about designing activities and providing instruction, and doing so in a methodical manner.

inter-observer reliability The extent to which two or more observers agree in their rating or coding of the same behavior or action.

interdisciplinary instruction Instructional technique in which students study a topic and its related issues in the context of several different disciplines.

interdisciplinary team Group of professionals from different disciplines who work together to plan and manage a student's IEP.

interest Refers to topics, skills, or activities that peak a student's curiosity or inspire him or her. Teachers can discover their students' interests by determining what topics they enjoy or which activities they engage in outside of class.

interim alternative setting A temporary (no more than 45-day) educational placement for a student with disabilities who is violent, brings a gun to school, or is involved with drugs; not considered a change in educational placement and does not require a new IEP.

internalizing behavior Behavior that is withdrawn, directed inward, or focused on oneself.

interpreter Individual who helps people who are deaf or hard-of-hearing to communicate by translating what a hearing person says into signs or some other means of transmitting information.

interval In behavior intervention, an indication of whether or not the behavior occurs within a given period of time.

intervener Professional who facilitates communication between a person who is deaf and another individual by translating spoken language into a manual one, such as American Sign Language.

intervening In behavior management, to interrupt the acting-out cycle when behavior problems are less serious and when students are more amenable to intervention efforts.

intervention	An instructional technique designed to improve or remediate a certain set of skills.
Intervention Ladder	A hierarchy of disciplinary tactics organized from the least intrusive and least complex to the most intrusive and most complicated.
IQ-achievement discrepancy model	The traditional assessment vehicle used to determine whether a student has a learning disability and requires special education services.
iris	The clear tissue of the eye, under which are pigment cells that give the eye its color.
itinerant teacher	Educator who teaches students or who consults with others in more than one setting.
job coach	Individual who works alongside people with disabilities in order to help them to learn all the parts of a job.
joint attention deficit	A deficiency or inability to mutually interact or to share interest in events or objects.
judicial hearing	A hearing before a judge in court of law.
juvenile arthritis	A chronic and painful muscular condition seen in children.
keyword method	A mnemonic strategy in which students use a keyword and a related sentence or image to help them to remember new information.
knowledge-centered learning environment	Instructional environment in which facts, ideas, concepts, and principles are introduced when a need for their introduction becomes apparent.
Kurzweil Reader	One of the first computerized systems designed for people with visual disabilities; translates print into synthesized speech.
language	Rule-based method of communication, typically defined through social systems.
language delay	Circumstance in which a child's language development occurs at a slower rate or over a longer period of time than is usually seen.
language difference	Natural variations or anomalies that occur in the language development of non-native English speakers or of those who speak nonstandard English.
language impairment	A pronounced difficulty or inability to master the various systems of rules in

	language.
latency	In behavior intervention, the length of time it takes for a behavior to occur.
learned curriculum	All of the information that students learn as a result of being in the classroom and by interacting with the taught curriculum; can include information that may not be a part of the standards-based or taught curriculum.
learned helplessness	A phenomenon in which individuals, usually as a result of repeated failure or control by others, gradually become less willing to attempt tasks.
learner-centered learning environment	Instructional environment in which a teacher designs lessons to uncover the knowledge, skills, interests, attitudes, and beliefs of each learner.
learning disability (LD)	Any one of a variety of disorders characterized by a difficulty or delay in the development of the ability to learn or use information.
learning media assessment	Evaluation process in which a variety of information is used to determine the primary and secondary learning media and literacy needs of students with visual impairments; often addresses a student's use of sensory channels and needs for general learning media.
learning profile	Refers to a student's preferred method of learning new information or skills (e.g., visually, hands-on, through deductive means) and to environmental factors that influence a student's learning (e.g., small group, bright lights, no distractions). In addition to these factors, a student's profile may be influenced by gender and culture.
learning strategies	Instructional methods employed to help students to read, comprehend, and study better by helping them to strategically organize and collect information.
least restrictive environment (LRE)	One of the principles outlined in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act requiring that students with disabilities be educated with their non-disabled peers to the greatest appropriate extent.
legal mandates	In reference to education policy, the laws or legislative changes that outline the required guidelines for serving students with disabilities.
legally blind	Visual acuity measured as 20/ 200 or worse in the better eye with correction, or peripheral vision no greater than 20 degrees.

legislation	Law or laws passed by a state or federal representative entity or other governing agency and signed by a governor or the president.
lens	The part of the eye that functions to focus on image on the retina.
lesson plan	The most detailed standards-based plan that a teacher will develop; outlines the purpose and activities of what will be done on a specific day or across several days.
letter naming fluency	Test in which a student is given a sheet of randomized letters and asked to name as many letters as possible in one minute; this test must be administered to each student individually.
letter sound fluency	Test in which a student is given a sheet of randomized letters and asked to say as many sounds corresponding to the letters as possible in one minute; this test must be administered to each student individually.
letter-sound correspondence	Method of learning language in which students associate a letter or group of letters with its spoken sound.
life skill	Generally speaking, any of those skills used to manage a home, cook, shop, manage finances, and organize personal living environments.
limited English proficient (LEP)	Term used to describe non-native English speakers whose ability to read, write, or speak may be limited or developing more slowly than that of their peers; English language learners is the preferred term.
litigation	A lawsuit or legal proceeding.
logical consequences	In behavior management, the actions taken by a teacher that are designed to respond with appropriate severity to instances of disruptive student behavior.
long cane	A variety of white cane used to facilitate the independent mobility of people who are blind; developed during World War II by Dr. Richard Hoover and so sometimes referred to as a Hoover cane.
low achievers	Students who experience school failure and poor academic achievement, come to expect failure, and develop an attitude that expending effort to learn will not produce results.
low birth weight (LBW)	Condition in which babies are born weighing less than 5.5 pounds; usually a result

	of premature birth or intrauterine growth retardation.
low incidence disability	Term used describe a disability whose occurrence in a general population is relative uncommon (e.g., deafness, deafblindness).
low vision	A level of visual disability in which vision is still useful for learning or for the execution of a task.
low-stakes testing	State- and district-wide testing that does not entail negative consequences for schools or teachers that perform poorly.
macroculture	A nation or other large social entity whose culture, beliefs, and assumptions are shared by a majority of its inhabitants.
macular degeneration	Medical condition in which the deterioration of the central part of the retina results in an inability to clearly perceive fine details.
mainstreaming	Process through which students with special needs are placed in an educational setting that is as close to what is considered the norm for most students for some or all of their school day; the term is now somewhat outdated.
maintenance	In behavior assessment, term used to describe the extent to which a student's behavior is self-sustaining over time.
malleus	The hammer-shaped bone in the ossicular chain of the middle ear.
manifestation determination	The result of a process used to determine whether a student's disciplinary problems are the result of a disability.
manipulatives	Concrete objects—for example, an abacus or popsicle sticks—that students can use to develop a conceptual understanding of math topics.
manual communication	Form of organized expression in which the hands are used as a means of communication (e.g., sign language, finger spelling).
mastery measurement (MM)	A form of classroom assessment conducted on a regular basis; once a teacher has determined the instructional sequence for the year, each skill in the sequence is assessed until mastery has been achieved, after which the next skill is introduced and assessed.

material scaffolding	The use of written prompts and cues to help students to perform a task or to use a given strategy.
mathematics disability	Condition characterized by significant difficulty in the area of mathematics.
Maze Fluency	Test during which the student is given two and a half minutes to read a passage in which every seventh word has been deleted and three choices offered to fill the blank; the student's score is the number of correct replacements that he or she makes; can be administered to a group.
median	The score that falls in the middle when scores are ordered from lowest to highest.
mediation	Process through which a neutral party facilitates a meeting between parents and school officials to resolve disagreements about a student's individualized education program and questions about his or her placement and services.
medical advances	In the context of special education, improvements in medical care and technology that allow students who are medically fragile to participate in school with their non-disabled peers.
medically fragile	Term used to describe children whose medical conditions are subject to sudden change or that place them at risk for developmental delays.
melting pot	Idiomatic metaphor used to describe a homogenized society in which the cultural traditions and home languages of non-native citizens are largely abandoned in favor of the dominant culture.
memorandum of understanding	A legal document describing the terms and details of an agreement between two or more parties, including the requirements and responsibilities of each.
meningitis	An inflammation of the coverings of the brain and spinal cord that affects the central nervous system and characterized by intense headaches, fever, sensitivity to light, and muscular rigidity.
mental age (MA)	An age estimate of an individual's mental ability, derived from an artificial comparison of the individual's IQ score and chronological age; not a preferred means of describing an individual's abilities.
mentoring	A method of ongoing support in which a more-experienced or more-knowledgeable person helps a less-experienced or less-knowledgeable person to learn or refine skills.

mentorship	A program in which a student is paired with a qualified adult for the purpose of learning to apply knowledge in real-life situations.
meta-analysis	A research methodology that allows for the synthesis of many individual research studies to determine the power or effectiveness of an educational practice.
meta-analysis	Method of reviewing research on a given practice or program in which a systematic and reproducible literature search is conducted, specific criteria are used for including research studies in the analysis, and the combined statistical results of these studies yield an effect size for the practice or program across the studies reviewed.
metacognition	Process through which one comes to understand one's own learning, to organize one's thinking before acting, or to relate information just learned to information already stored in the brain; thinking about thinking.
microcephaly	A neurological condition characterized by the occurrence of a small, conical-shaped head and an underdeveloped brain.
middle ear	The air-filled central cavity of the ear that contains the eardrum, the Eustachian tube, and the three little bones (hammer, anvil, and stirrup) that together are called the ossicles.
milieu teaching strategy	Any of a number of naturalistic approaches to language intervention in which the goal is to teach functional language skills in a natural environment.
mixed hearing loss	Hearing loss that results from a combination of conductive and sensorineural hearing impairments and is characterized by a difficulty in hearing faint or muffled sounds.
mnemonics	A learning strategy in which a verbal device is employed to help promote the memorization of names or other information (e.g., the mnemonic device 'HOMES'—Huron, Ontario, Michigan, Erie, and Superior—is sometimes used to help students remember the names of the Great Lakes).
mobility	The ability to travel safely and efficiently from one location to another; a topic of instruction for students with severe visual problems; also used to describe any of the means through which an individual with a motor impairment ambulates (e.g., walking, using a wheelchair or cane).
modeling	The act of providing an example as a means through which to encourage the imitation of a skill, process, characteristic, or style; process whereby a teacher

observes a colleague as he or she provides instruction in order to see the process in action and to see its benefits firsthand.

modification	Any of a number of services or supports that allow a student to access the general education curriculum but in a way that fundamentally alter the content or curricular expectations in question.
morpheme	The smallest element of language that still carries meaning.
motivation	The inner drive to work hard, achieve, and master skills and learn concepts; internal incentives that are often influenced by previous success or failure.
multi-tiered systems of support	A model or approach to instruction that provides increasingly intensive and individualized levels of support for academics (e.g., response to intervention or RTI) and for behavior (e.g., Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports or PBIS).
multicultural education	An instructional principle that employs concepts of culture, differences, equality, and democracy to develop effective classroom instruction and school environments.
multidisciplinary team	A team of teachers, educational professionals (e.g., related services personnel, school psychologist), administrators, specialists, and parents or guardians who assess the individual needs of students to determine eligibility for special education and develop individualized education programs (IEP); often called IEP teams.
multiple disabilities	Circumstance in which an individual has more than one disability.
multiple intelligences (MI)	A theory originally developed by the psychologist Howard Gardner in which human intelligence is viewed as multidimensional.
multiple opportunities to respond	Instructional technique in which teachers offer their students several chances to practice a response and to attain mastery in a targeted skill.
multiple-severe disability	Term used to describe any of a number of especially challenging disabilities in which more than one condition combine to affect learning, independence, and the range of intensive and pervasive supports required by individuals and their families.
muscular dystrophy	Hereditary disease characterized by progressive weakness caused by the degeneration of muscle fibers.
muscular/ skeletal	Any of a number of conditions that affect the muscles or bones and that result in

condition	limited motor functioning.
myopia	Nearsightedness.
natural consequences	The outcomes of a student's behavior that are neither planned nor administered by a teacher (e.g., after a student throws food in the cafeteria, his classmates refuse to sit with him).
natural supports	System of supports that are available to all individuals as a natural result of typical family and community living (e.g., through their family and friends).
negative consequence	Any of a variety of reinforcements used to decrease a student's problem behavior; negative consequences are functional and should be applied in an educative rather than vindictive fashion; also sometimes referred to as 'punishment.'
negative punishment	Means by which teachers can decrease the probability that a behavior will reoccur; negative punishment removes something that is pleasant.
negative reinforcement	Means by which teachers can increase the probability that a behavior will reoccur; negative reinforcement removes something that is unpleasant.
networking	Level of cooperation in which inter-connected professionals or agencies coexist, work together, and communicate.
neural tube disorder	Any congenital defect of the brain and spinal cord caused by failure of the neural tube to close (e.g., spina bifida).
neuromotor impairment	Condition that affects the central nervous system, limiting an individual's ability to move or to control the operation of his or her muscles.
No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB)	Federal school reform legislation that aimed to increase school accountability for student learning, offer more choices for parents and students, create greater flexibility for schools in the use of funds, and emphasize early-reading intervention.
non-verbal learning disabilities	Term used to describe a subgroup of learning impairments that hinders an individual's ability to decipher non-verbal communication (e.g., facial expressions, eye contact) due to a dysfunction in the part of the brain that controls non-verbal reasoning.
nondiscriminatory testing	Term used to describe any assessment that properly takes into account a student's

cultural and linguistic diversity.

nonexample	In instruction, a concept used to define a topic, idea, or material object by referencing its disqualifying attributes (e.g., a sphere lacks the vertices of a triangle).
nonoptical device	Any device or instructional strategy used to improve the performance of tasks linked to visual ability among individuals with low vision that does not involve direct optical enhancement (e.g., book stands, writing guides, lighting, and large-type materials).
nonpaid supports	Assistance of a kind available in one's natural environment, such as that offered by friends and neighbors.
nonrepresentative norming samples	A systemic deficiency in which a test is developed without a sufficient number of students from linguistically diverse cultures in the norming group; such a test is unlikely to yield valid results when administered to English language learners (ELL).
nonsense word fluency	Test in which a student is given one minute to read as many nonsense words (or separate sounds in each word) as possible; must be administered to each student individually.
norm-referenced measure	A standardized assessment tool that compares a student's test scores to the average score of a representative group.
normal curve	A bell-shaped, theoretical construct used to illustrate the normal distribution of human traits such as intelligence.
normalization	An underlying philosophy of special education holding that every individual, regardless of disability or severity thereof, should have available to them the ordinary patterns and conventions of everyday living.
Nurse Practice Act	Legislation established by each state in order to regulate the nursing profession.
nystagmus	Condition characterized by rapid involuntary movements of the eyes; may affect fine-motor skills and cause difficulty in reading.
obstacle sense	Skill possessed by some people who are blind, whereby they are able to detect the presence of obstacles in their environments.
occupational therapist	Professional who directs activities to help improve fine-motor muscular control and

(OT) develop self-help skills and adaptive behavior in conjunction with services for persons with disabilities.

off-level testing The use of assessment instruments designed for older students in the academic evaluation of a student believed to be gifted.

open-head injury Physical trauma in which the skull is fractured to the extent that the membrane surrounding the brain is penetrated; an open wound to the head.

ophthalmologist Medical doctor who specializes in diagnosing and treating disorders of the eye; also performs surgery and evaluates visual acuity, visual fields, and the need for glasses.

optic nerve The nerve that carries messages from the eye to the visual center of the brain.

optometrist A non-medical professional who tests vision, evaluates the need for glasses and low vision devices, and prescribes corrective lenses.

oral language proficiency The knowledge of or use of vocabulary, grammar, and sentence structure, as well as strong comprehension skills. Research has shown that students with poor oral language proficiency struggle with academic skills such as reading fluency and reading comprehension.

oral transliterators Professionals trained to facilitate spoken language for students who are deaf or hard of hearing by silently repeating what the speaker has said so that the student can easily read his or her lips. These people also sometimes serve as the 'voice' of the person who is deaf or hard of hearing; also known as oral interpreters.

oral-only approach Instructional approach to educating children with deafness or hearing loss that stresses learning to speak in order to communicate in the hearing world.

organizing routine Any one of a variety of activities, including question-and-answer sessions, that precede instruction and are used to focus students' attention on the information to be presented.

orientation The process of using vision and other senses to establish one's position and relationship to other significant objects in the environment; the mental 'map' the people use to navigate their environments; a topic of instruction for people with severe visual deficits.

orientation and mobility (O&M) The sense of where one's physical position in relation to other people, objects, and landmarks.

orientation and mobility (O&M) specialist	A professional who specializes in teaching travel skills to visually impaired persons, including the use of a cane, dog guide, or sophisticated electronic travel aids, as well as the sighted guide technique.
orthopedic impairment	A condition related to a physical deformity or disability of the skeletal system and associated motor function.
ossicles	The collective name for the tiny bones (malleus, incus, and stapes) that assist in the transfer of sound waves.
otitis media	An infection of the middle ear, usually caused by an upper-respiratory tract infection that affects the Eustachian tube, that can result in hearing loss, communication impairments, or learning disabilities.
otoacoustic emission (OAE)	The low level of sound produced when the hair cells inside the inner ear vibrate; testing for OAEs allows for newborn hearing assessment.
outcomes	The results of decisions and actions; a term used to describe students' achievements.
outer ear	The part of the ear composed of the pinna—what most people call the ear—and the auditory canal.
outreach program	Specialized program offered in communities or in students' homes by local schools or agencies that serve students with special needs.
overrepresentation	Circumstance in which the number of students from a cultural or ethnic group found to be participating in a special education category is above the level one might expect based upon that group's proportion of the overall school population.
pacing	Instructional consideration through which teachers attempt to provide instruction quickly enough to keep students engaged but not so fast that those students get lost.
PALS set-up procedures	Any or all of the steps necessary to ensure the successful execution of a PALS session, including but not limited to moving to a partner quickly and quietly, working cooperatively, gathering materials, and following the rules of PALS.
paradigm shift	A fundamental change in the conceptual framework, orientation, or belief system that underlies a field of study.
paraplegia	Paralysis of the lower body, typically caused by a spinal injury or disease; term used

to describe a type of cerebral palsy that affects both of the legs.

paraprofessional	An individual trained to assist a professional.
partial participation	Educational approach in which students with disabilities in general education classrooms engage in the same learning activities as students without disabilities, but on an appropriately modified basis.
passage reading fluency (teacher copy) or passage reading fluency (student copy)	A form of curriculum based measurement (CBM) in which the student reads a passage for one minute; the passage's difficulty is based on his or her expected end-of-year reading competence; the student's score is the number of words read correctly, this test must be administered to each student individually.
passage reading fluency probe (PRF)	A form of curriculum based measurement (CBM) in which the student reads a passage for one minute; the student's score is the number of words read correctly; this probe is appropriate for students in second through sixth grade and should be administered to each student individually.
Peak Phase	The fifth stage in the behavior cycle')">acting-out behavior cycle, during which a student's behavior is clearly out of control; students may physically assault others, hurt themselves, cry hysterically, and destroy property—any of which may produce devastating outcomes.
Peer Assisted Learning Strategies (PALS)	Instructional approach in which teachers pair a high-performing reader with a low-performing one in order to complete activities designed to promote the development of reading skills; complements the existing reading curriculum by providing research-validated learning strategies through a course of peer-mediated instruction (i.e., peer pairing, peer tutoring); grade-appropriate versions of PALS (e.g., K-PALS, PALS-High School) address specific reading issues.
peer tutoring	In special education, a cooperative learning strategy that pairs a student with disabilities with a non-disabled student; either student may adopt the role of teacher or learner.
peer-reviewed professional journal	Journal that publishes articles that have been through a process of review by experts in the field, who also make recommendations regarding possible revisions and whether or not the article is worthy of publication.
pegword strategy	A mnemonic strategy in which students use common rhyming words for numbers (e.g., one = bun; two = shoe) and link this word to the information being learned.
percentage of non-	One common method of calculating the effectiveness of a practice or program using

overlapping data (PND)	the results of single-case design studies.
performance level	An indication of a student's academic skills, usually denoted by a score on a given test or probe.
performance or achievement standards	The level of mastery in a given content area that a student is expected to attain.
perinatal	Of or having to do with the period just before and just after birth.
peripheral vision	The outer area of a person's visual field.
perseveration	The tendency to repeat behaviors; may be found in persons with brain injuries or ADHD.
personal reader	A person who reads text orally to those who cannot read print.
personality disorder	A deeply ingrained and maladaptive pattern of behavior—such as anxiety, depression, guilt, shyness, or feelings of inferiority—that typically manifests by the time of adolescence and causes long-term difficulties in personal relationships or in one's ability to function normally in society.
pervasive developmental disorder-not otherwise specified (PDD-NOS)	A disorder included in the autistic spectrum disorder (ASD) characterized by problems in communication and social interaction, and repetitive or manneristic behaviors.
petit mal seizure (absence seizure)	A form of generalized seizure that causes a brief clouding or loss of consciousness.
phenylketonuria (PKU)	A hereditary condition in which the amino acid phenylalanine is not properly metabolized; can cause intellectual disabilities if not diagnosed and regulated through diet shortly after birth.
phoneme	The smallest unit of sound that can be identified in spoken language.
phonemic awareness	The ability to listen to, identify, and manipulate phonemes—the smallest units of sounds that are combined to create words.
phonics	A method of reading instruction in which students are taught the relationship between sounds and written letters.

phonics and word study	Instruction designed to teach students about the relationship between sounds and written letters (known as the alphabetic principle) so that they learn how to decode and read words; the combination of phonics and word study helps students to improve their word recognition, reading, and spelling.
phonological awareness	An understanding of the relationship between sounds and the corresponding words or word parts that they represent; facilitates the abilities to rhyme and to understand sound-symbol relationships; an oral language skill that enables children to understand that words can be represented in print.
phonology	The rules within a language used to govern the combination of speech sounds to form words and sentences.
physical therapist (PT)	A professional who treats movement dysfunctions through a variety of nonmedical means in a program tailored to the individual's needs; provides a special education related service.
picture exchange communication system (PECS)	A technique used to provide individuals who are nonverbal, particularly children with autism, where pictures are used to make requests
planned ignoring	In behavior intervention, a strategy whereby a teacher ignores or refuses to react to a minor behavior (e.g., a student tapping a pencil on his desk) that he or she is confident will soon run its course.
planning	In the context of writing instruction, a deliberate and organized approach to tackle a writing task that includes a writer's first thoughts or basic ideas about a given topic.
Play Audiometry	A game-like format used to test the hearing of young and hard-to-test children during which the examiner teaches the child to respond to sounds.
portfolio assessment	An alternative form of individualized evaluation that includes numerous samples of the student's work across all curriculum targets and reports of teachers and parents about that individual's social skills.
positive behavior intervention plan (PBIP)	Instructional strategy which deploys positive reinforcement procedures as a means through which to support a student's appropriate or desirable behavior.
positive behavior support	An approach to behavior management in which scientifically validated practices are applied across a number of settings, such as the home, school, place of work, and community.

positive behavioral interventions and supports (PBIS)	A three-tiered framework (i.e., primary, secondary, tertiary) that provides a continuum of supports and services designed to promote appropriate behaviors and to prevent and address challenging behaviors.
positive consequences	Reinforcement used to recognize and, ideally, to increase the frequency with which students engage in prescribed behaviors.
positive punishment	Means by which teachers can decrease the probability that a behavior will reoccur in the future; positive punishment provides something that is unpleasant.
positive reinforcement	Means by which teachers can increase the probability that a behavior will reoccur in the future; positive reinforcement provides something that is pleasant.
Positron Emission Tomography (PET scans)	Computerized method for studying the metabolic and chemical activities of tissue, mainly that of the brain.
Possible Sentences	Instructional strategy designed to help students examine how an author uses academic vocabulary and, eventually, facilitates their close reading of content-area text; involves pre-teaching vocabulary terms before students read a content-area text passage and then allowing them to later revisit that vocabulary in order to solidify their learning.
postlingual hearing loss	Hearing Loss that occurs after the development of speech and language.
postnatal	Of or having to do with the period after birth.
Prader-Willi syndrome	A form of genetic disorder caused by a mutation of chromosome 15; a leading genetic cause of obesity often related to some degree of intellectual disability.
pragmatics	The study within psycholinguistics of how people employ language in social situations; emphasizes the functional use of language, rather than its mechanics.
pre-teaching vocabulary terms	A method of preparing students for unfamiliar words they will encounter in text by providing them with the pronunciation, definition, and examples of the words' use.
precorrection	Behavior strategy that entails reminding a child of appropriate behavior before the child can make an error; can be given either to groups of children or to an individual child.
preference	Of or having to do with an individual's values and based on informed personal

	choices among interest-related options.
prelingually deaf	Total hearing loss that occurs before the development of speech and language.
prenatal	Of or having to do with the period before birth.
prereferral	Term used to describe a set of procedures designed to assist students experiencing academic or behavior difficulties prior to any consideration of special education services.
present level of educational performance	Information pertaining to a student's current level of academic achievement and other areas of development, such as social, behavior, and communication skills; a required component of a student's IEP.
prevalence	The total number of cases of a disease in a given population at any particular time.
primary prevention	Intervention designed to eliminate or counteract risk factors so that a disability is never acquired.
primary source document	An original document or text written by an author(s) with direct knowledge of a topic, event, or issue (e.g., a historical document, personal letter, journal entry, literary text, research article); not to be confused with a secondary source—text that summarizes or analyzes information based on primary sources.
prior knowledge	Any information that a student has already learned about a given topic that teachers can, in turn, connect to new information in a lesson or lecture.
problem behavior	In behavior intervention, the behavior that a teacher wishes to reduce or eliminate; also called the target behavior.
problem solving	The process through which an individual finds answers or solutions to situations for which a resolution is not immediately obvious.
procedural safeguards	In the context of IDEA, the guarantee of a free appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment possible through a process of resolving disagreements and disputes beginning with mediation and ending with civil action.
procedure	A description of the steps required for students to successfully or correctly complete any of a number of daily routines (e.g., going to the restroom, turning in homework) and less-frequent activities (e.g., responding to fire drills).

product	An instructional element that refers to the method students use to demonstrate learning.
progress monitoring	A form of assessment in which student learning is evaluated on a regular basis in order to provide useful feedback about performance to both learners and instructors.
progressive time delay	Instructional technique in which the amount of time given to a student to provide correct answers is gradually decreased.
prosthesis	An artificial body part (e.g., teeth, an arm) designed to replace, either partially or completely, a part of the body.
proximity control	In classroom behavior management, a strategy on the part of an instructor to either initiate physical contact or reduce the distance between herself and a student to help the student to control his or her impulses.
psychoeducational evaluation	An evaluative measure that usually includes intelligence testing, achievement testing, and an assessment of adaptive behavior skills for the purpose of designing an educational program appropriate to the needs of the student.
Public Law (PL) 94-142	The first special education law, passed by Congress in 1975 as the Education of All Handicapped Children Act and later updated as IDEA.
pull-in program	Educational program in which instruction and related services are delivered to students with disabilities within the general education classroom.
pull-out program	Educational program in which instruction and related services are delivered to students with disabilities outside the general education classroom.
punishment	Any of a spectrum of prescribed penalties used either to discourage or encourage certain behaviors.
pupil	The contractile opening in the middle of the iris of the eye; admits light into the eye.
pure-tone audiometry	A test whereby tones of various intensities and frequencies are presented as a means through which to determine a person's hearing loss.
quadriplegia	A condition in which all four limbs are paralyzed.
quality-of-life issue	A subjective and individual-specific concept dependent on a number of life-dimensions, including social relationships, personal satisfaction, employment,

	choice, leisure, and community adjustment.
rate of growth	An indication of how much a student's academic skills have improved; represented by the slope on a graph of the student's scores.
readiness	Refers to a student's knowledge and skill level regarding given content; might vary across subjects or content areas.
reading coach	A professional who provides teachers and other school personnel with support and supervision in the areas of instruction, assessment, and professional development; also offers support and supervision toward the effective implementation of the RTI approach.
reading comprehension	The ability to understand written text.
reading disability	Any condition in which a student's learning disability in reading is significant or unusually pronounced.
reading fluency	The ability to read text with accuracy, speed, and intonation.
real-time captioning (RTC)	The practically instantaneous translation of speech into print; an accommodation for deaf students attending lectures.
realia	Any concrete item or device used in the classroom to teach vocabulary or aid in comprehension.
reauthorization	The act of amending and renewing a law.
receptive language	The ability to understand what is being expressed either verbally or nonverbally.
reciprocal peer tutoring	A method of instruction in which students take turns acting as tutor. In the Peer Assisted Learning Strategies method, the student in the role of tutor is referred to as the Coach, while the student being tutored is referred to as the Reader. Typically, the Coach provides constructive feedback (i.e., corrective feedback) to the Reader regarding his or her performance.
reciprocal teaching	An instructional tactic wherein teachers and students switch roles in predicting, summarizing, questioning, and clarifying reading passages.
Recovery Phase	The seventh and final phase of the acting-out behavior cycle during which students are generally subdued and may still want to avoid talking about the Peak incident.

Teachers often incorrectly think that they will re-trigger the misbehavior if they try to debrief the student. Not only is this erroneous but it is also the case that not talking about the situation with the student can unintentionally reinforce the behavior.

recursive	In the context of classroom instruction, a reference to a 'test-teach-test-teach' process through which a teacher uses student performance data to fine-tune his or her instruction; this instruction often changes in order to determine the most effective way of accelerating student performance.
recursive (2)	Term used to describe the way in which school personnel continually improve implementation of a new practice or program through the cyclical process of implementation, evaluation, and refinement.
referents	Words that are used to represent other words.
referral	Process through which a student is sent to another professional for services to support his or her academic, social, or behavioral needs.
reflective mentoring	An approach in which the mentor typically asks a series of questions to provoke thoughtful reflection by the new teacher to improve classroom practice; also called cognitive coaching.
refraction	The bending of light rays as they pass through the structures of the eye.
Regular Education Initiative (REI)	An instructional philosophy holding that general education, rather than special education, should be primarily responsible for the education of students with disabilities.
rehabilitation	Program designed to teach persons with recently acquired disabilities the basic skills needed for independence.
reinforcer	Method through which a classroom instructor attempts to either sustain or dissuade the continuation of certain student behaviors.
related services	A part of special education that includes services from professionals (e.g., occupational therapist [OT], physical therapist [PT], Speech-Language Pathologist [SLP]) from a wide range of disciplines typically outside of education, all designed to meet the learning needs of individual children with disabilities.
remediation	Educative program designed to teach individuals to overcome the effects of

	disabilities on functioning.
replacement behavior	In behavior intervention, the behavior that a teacher uses to replace a problem or target behavior.
research synthesis	Method of reviewing research on a given practice or program in which a systematic and reproducible literature search is conducted and specific criteria are used for including research studies in the analysis. This method of reviewing research studies does not calculate an effect size.
research-validated practice	A strategy or practice has been proven to work through experimental research studies or large-scale research field studies. Also called: research-validated strategy.
research-validated strategy	A strategy or practice has been proven to work through experimental research studies or large-scale research field studies. Also called: research-validated practice.
residual vision	The amount and degree of vision of which one has functional use despite a visual disability.
resistant to treatment	A newly emerging and defining characteristic of learning disabilities in which, despite systematic instruction efforts, a student fails to learn the targeted skill or task.
resource room	Classroom in which students with exceptional learning needs receive individualized services for part of the school day.
response cards	Cards, signs, or items that are simultaneously held up by all students to display their response to a question or problem presented by the teacher.
response cost	Method of behavior management in which reinforcement is withdrawn when an objectionable behavior occurs.
response to intervention (RTI)	A multi-tiered method for delivering instruction to learners through increasingly intensive and individualized interventions.
retina	The back portion of the eye, containing nerve fibers connected to the optic nerve, upon which images from cornea and lens are focused and transmitted to the brain.
retinitis pigmentosa	A condition, usually hereditary, resulting in the degeneration of the retinas of both eyes that causes a narrowing of the field of vision and increased difficulty seeing at

night.

retinopathy of prematurity (ROP) An eye disorder that can develop in premature infants (often seen in those who exposed to high concentrations of oxygen at birth as a treatment for respiratory distress); causes scar tissue to form behind the lens of the eye.

Rett's disorder One of the disorders included in the autistic spectrum disorders (ASD) characterized by difficulties with communication and social interaction as well as in repetitive or manneristic behaviors; genetic in nature.

review Summary of research literature for a given practice or program. This typically involves reviewing several studies to summarize the findings for that practice or program.

Reye's syndrome Rare disease (possibly related to a virus or to the use of aspirin) that occurs in children over the age of six; can be fatal or lead to neurological damage or intellectual disability.

rigidity A type of cerebral palsy characterized by increased muscle tone or spasticity, with little muscle elasticity.

Ritalin The most commonly prescribed psychostimulant for ADHD or ADD; its generic name is methylphenidate.

rocket words In the Peer Assisted Learning Strategies (PALS) method, vocabulary words embedded in first-grade stories as a means of enhancing student interest. Examples of rocket words for first-graders are 'fuzzy' (beginning of the year), 'birthday party' (mid-year), and 'marshmallows' (end of the year).

rods In the anatomy of the eye, the receptors located on the periphery of the retina, needed for peripheral vision, detection of movement, and vision in dim light.

round of intervention A set period of time, determined by the school or district, during which an intervention is implemented.

RTI (response to intervention) A multi-tiered method for delivering instruction to learners through increasingly intensive and individualized interventions.

RTI coach Professional who has specific expertise in instructional techniques, interventions, and the RTI approach; hired to provide professional support to school personnel implementing RTI.

rubella (German measles)	A contagious viral infection whose symptoms include rash, fever, and enlarged lymph nodes; if it occurs in the first trimester of pregnancy it is likely to result in fetal abnormalities, including intellectual disabilities.
rules	In behavior management, explicit statements of how the teacher expects students to behave in her or his classroom.
scaffolded instruction	Instructional technique in which teachers offer support for students learning new skills by systematically building on their experiences and knowledge.
scaffolding	The process of using scaffolded instruction.
scaled model	Any model, either larger or smaller than the original object, the parts of which are in equal proportion to their actual size.
schizophrenia	A rare disorder in children that sometimes is characterized by bizarre delusions, hallucinations, and flat (or blunted) affect dissociation from reality; usually appears during adolescence or early childhood.
school counselor	Professional whose job it is to advise students in matters related to school success and planning, including academics, attendance, social issues, and post-secondary transitions.
school nurse	Professional who participates in delivering services to students with disabilities by assisting with medical services at school and designing accommodations for students with special healthcare needs.
school psychologist	A professional trained to test and evaluate individual students' abilities.
scientifically based research	Research that uses a rigorous and systematic design and high-quality data analyses, and that is published in a peer-reviewed journal.
scientifically validated interventions	Instructional procedures or methods proven by careful and systematic research.
scoliosis	A c-shaped or s-shaped curvature of the spine; may occur as a result of neuromuscular disease, of one leg being shorter than the other, or of a congenital abnormality of the vertebrae.
screening	Procedure in which groups of children are examined or tested in an effort to identify those most likely to have a disability; the first step in the assessment process that

	helps identify the need for further testing.
scripted lessons	Written scripts that guide teachers through instructional lessons for the purpose of enhancing fidelity of implementation and increasing the likelihood of positive student outcomes.
scripted stories	Short books written from a child's perspective that are used to teach children how they are expected to behave in different situations or settings. In most cases, especially for young children, scripted stories are illustrated with drawings, photographs, or clip art. The length of the story, the type of visuals used, and the amount of text per page are dependent on the developmental needs of the individual child.
second language acquisition	The process whereby non-native speakers learn a new language; second language acquisition is divided into stages and the speed of the process is determined by the type and purpose of the language being acquired. See also: BICS, CALP.
secondary prevention	Intervention directed at reducing or eliminating the effects of existing risk factors.
secondary transition	The transitional stage in which students exit secondary education and enter the world of postsecondary education or employment as adults.
Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973	Federal law that set the stage for both the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, passed in 1975, and the Americans with Disabilities Act, passed in 1990, by outlining basic civil rights for people with disabilities.
seizure	Involuntary movement or changes in consciousness or behavior brought on by abnormal bursts of electricity in the brain. See also: epilepsy.
seizure disorder	A spontaneous abnormal discharge of the electrical impulses of the brain; sometimes referred to as a convulsive disorder.
selective attention	The ability to attend to the crucial features of a task.
selective listening	Focusing attention on only one sound in the environment, such as on a speaker's voice in a lecture.
selective mutism	A form of communication disorder in which an individual, usually a child, is unable to speak in certain situations despite the ability to do so in others.

self-advocacy movement	A social and political movement started by and for people with intellectual disabilities to speak for themselves on important issues such as housing, employment, legal rights, and personal relationships.
self-contained class	A special classroom, usually located within a regular public school building, that exists only for students with exceptional learning needs.
self-determination	A set of behaviors that includes decision-making, self-regulation, goal setting, problem-solving, and self-advocacy; a curriculum target for many students with disabilities, particularly those with intellectual disabilities.
self-injurious behavior (SIB)	Behavior that results in self-inflicted injuries (e.g., intentionally hitting one's head with or against an object, poking oneself in the eye).
self-instruction	A cognitive training technique that requires individuals to speak aloud and then to themselves as they solve problems.
self-management techniques	A set of instructional procedures whereby an individual uses self-instruction, self-monitoring, or self-reinforcement to modify his or her behavior.
self-monitoring	A cognitive training technique that requires individuals to keep track of their own behavior and record it in writing.
self-questioning	A process in which students ask themselves and then answer questions about what they have read as a means of monitoring their comprehension.
Self-Regulated Strategy Development (SRSD)	A scientifically validated framework for explicitly teaching academic strategies that incorporates steps critical to a student's ability to effectively use those strategies.
self-regulation	Generally refers to a person's ability to regulate his or her own behavior.
self-regulation strategy	Any of a number of instructional strategies designed to help students to select, monitor, and use learning strategies.
self-reinforcement	In self-regulation strategy, a method by which students reinforce their own behavior by giving themselves a reward upon the completion of a task or assignment.
semantic feature analysis (SFA)	An instructional strategy designed to increase students' vocabulary by using a grid to show relationships and common features among known and unknown concepts.

semantic map	An instructional device in which a series of connected circles illustrates relationships among word meanings.
semantics	The system within a language that governs the content, intent, and meaning of spoken and written language; the study of same.
sensorineural hearing loss	Hearing loss caused by damage to the inner ear or the auditory nerve.
sequencing	Mentally categorizing and arranging items, facts, or ideas according to various dimensions; a thinking skill.
service coordination	The process of facilitating students' access to services, and coordinating the services, supports, and resources as identified on the IFSP or IEP; assures that services will be provided in an integrated way and that they will not be needlessly duplicated.
service coordinator	The case manager who oversees the implementation and evaluation of an Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP).
service delivery option	Any one of numerous means through which special education services are provided to students with disabilities (e.g., full inclusion programs, pull out programs, special classes, center schools).
setting demands	The behavioral requirements, both obvious and subtle, that characterize a given environment.
severe disorder/ disability	Term generally understood to describe disorders or disabilities that compromise an individual's functional skills to the extent that substantial assistance with daily living activities and ongoing supervision is required.
sheltered instruction	Educational strategy in which English language learners are taught knowledge in specific subject areas while also attaining a higher level of proficiency in the English language. Involves efforts to enhance student comprehension by speaking more slowly, speaking more clearly, monitoring vocabulary, using multimodal techniques, and keeping clauses and sentences short.
sheltered workshop	Facility that provides a structured environment for persons with disabilities in which they can learn skills, either on a transitional or permanent basis.
shunt	A tube used in a medical procedure that draws excess fluid from the brain and head area and disposes of it in a safe area in the body, such as the stomach; used to

	prevent cognitive disabilities resulting from hydrocephaly.
sickle-cell anemia	A hereditary blood disorder that inhibits blood flow; African Americans are most at risk for this health impairment.
side-by-side teaching	Instructional collaboration in which a teacher works with a colleague to practice a new lesson or technique.
sign language	An organized system of manual gestures used as a means of communication; used by some people with severe cognitive disabilities and by people who are deaf.
sign-language tranlitterators	Trained professionals who facilitate voice-to-sign and sign-to-voice communication for students who are deaf or hard of hearing.
single-case design studies	Research studies in which an individual or small group serves as its own comparison across conditions (e.g., baseline, intervention).
sleep apnea	A disorder that results in the cessation of breathing during sleep.
Snellen chart	A chart used to determine visual acuity; consists of rows of letters corresponding to the distances at which normally sighted persons can see them; developed in 1862 by the Dutch ophthalmologist Hermann Snellen.
social competence	The ability to understand social situations, respond to others appropriately, and interact with other people.
social maladjustment	In connection with determining the eligibility for special education, a term applied to children who do not act within society's norms but who are excluded from the definition of children with emotional or behavioral disorders.
Social Security Disability Office	The office that houses federal programs tasked with providing benefits to individuals with disabilities who qualify and meet the established medical criteria.
social validity	In behavior assessment, the extent to which the intervention and desired replacement behavior represent socially accepted practices.
social-emotional development	Process through which young children learn to manage their personal experiences, emotional states, and relationships with both peers and authority figures.
socioeconomic status	The relative measurement of an individual's or family's status in a given society,

(SES) usually determined by professional attainment, level of education, and income.

sound blending Process of vocalization through which the sounds of individual letters are combined into a spoken word.

spastic A type of cerebral palsy characterized by the uncontrolled tightening or pulling of muscles.

special education Individualized education for children and youth with exceptional learning needs.

specialized support Any of a variety of disability-specific benefits used to help people with disabilities to participate in their communities.

specific language impairment (SLI) Language disorder with no identifiable cause and not attributable to another disability.

speech Vocal production of language requiring the coordination of oral movement to make sounds.

speech audiometry Technique that tests an individual's ability to detect and to understand speech; an alternative to using pure tones to detect hearing loss.

speech impairment Any one of several disorders that interferes with an individual's ability to communicate clearly and articulately; used to refer to speech and language disorders.

speech reception threshold (SRT) The decibel level at which an individual is able to understand spoken language.

speech/ language pathologist (SLP) A professional who diagnoses and treats problems in the area of speech and language development; a related services provider.

speechreading Instructional method in which children are taught to use visual information from a number of sources to understand what is being said to them, rather than relying on their ability to interpret lip and facial movements to understand speech.

spina bifida A developmental defect whereby the spinal column fails to close properly.

spinal cord disorder Any injury or disease of the spinal column, usually one affecting both the nerves and muscles.

spontaneous recovery	In behavior management, instance or instances in which a previously extinguished behavior unexpectedly reappears.
squaring off	A method of positioning the body so that it is perpendicular to an object, wall surface, or sound in order to establish a perpendicular line of direction to cross an open space.
standard deviation (SD)	In connection with standardized assessments, a statistical measure that expresses the variability and the distribution from the mean of a set of scores.
standard protocol	A validated intervention, selected by the school (often for the secondary intervention level), to improve the academic skills of its struggling students.
standard protocol approach	An approach to RTI that uses a intervention (selected by the school at the secondary intervention level) to improve the academic skills of its struggling students; an alternative to the problem solving approach, which individualizes instruction at Tier 2. Sometimes also referred to as the standard treatment protocol approach.
standard scores	In connection with norm-referenced tests, scores resulting from statistical operations on raw scores; converted test scores that equalize those from different tests as a means of comparison.
standards-based curriculum	The content and skills believed to be important for students to learn.
standards-based reform	A process of school improvement or reform that is tied to the achievement of verifiable goals.
stapes	The stirrup-shaped bone in the ossicular chain of the middle ear.
Star Legacy model	A formalized inquiry cycle constructed around the basic principles of the How People Learn (HPL) framework; the structural basis for all IRIS Modules.
statement of purpose	In behavior management, any brief, positive statement that conveys to educational professionals, parents, and students the reasons why various aspects of the behavior management plan are necessary.
statewide and districtwide assessments	Part of the national education reform movement that includes the annual achievement testing of all schoolchildren for the purpose of increasing school accountability.

statistically significant effect	In statistical analysis, an effect or outcome large (or visible) enough to have been unlikely to occur simply by random chance or through an interaction of other factors.
stay-put provision	The legal mandate that prohibited the expulsion of students with disabilities due to behaviors associated with their disabilities.
stereotypic behaviors	Nonproductive motor behaviors (such as twirling, flapping hands, rocking) that an individual repeats at a high rate; commonly observed in youngsters with autistic spectrum disorders.
stimulus	Any condition or input that evokes a response from an individual.
stimulus control	Process of reinforcing a desired response in the presence of a specific stimuli, while not reinforcing undesired responses in the presence of other stimuli.
story maps	Simple diagrams that help students to organize and recall important elements and features of the stories they have heard or read.
strabismus	A condition that prevents the eyes from aiming in the same direction at the same time; a misalignment of the eyes.
Strategic Instruction Model (SIM)	Instructional model based around a set of guidelines or steps that can be used to effectively teach students a variety of learning strategies.
strategies instruction	Instruction designed to teach students the elements or steps for implementing successful strategies.
strategy	A coordinated series of steps designed to help an individual to use preskills (i.e., his or her pre-existing knowledge) to perform a task.
structured teaching	A feature of TEACHH (Treatment and Education of Autistic and Related Communication Handicapped Children), an instructional program in which visual aids are used to help students with autism to comprehend their environments.
student accountability	A system of accountability in which primary responsibility is assigned to the student; designed to motivate students to achieve their best.
student-friendly definition	A vocabulary definition phrased in terms more likely to make sense to students than is a dictionary definition.

study skills	Any of a number of skills that students can use to strategically approach academic tasks in order to gain and use information effectively.
stuttering	The lack of fluency in an individual's speech pattern, often characterized by hesitations or repetitions of sounds or words.
summative assessment	An evaluation administered to measure student learning outcomes, typically at the end of a unit or chapter. Often used to evaluate whether a student has mastered the content or skill.
supported employment	An approach to job training whereby students with disabilities are placed in paying jobs for which they receive significant assistance and support.
surface management strategy	Any of a number of simple, nonintrusive responses to minor disruptive behavior without interrupting classroom instruction.
survival period	Period of time during which a teacher's early-career optimism often gives way to discouragement and disillusionment.
syntax	The way words are joined together to structure meaningful sentences; grammar.
syphilis	A venereal disease that can cause mental abnormality in a child, especially if it is contracted by the mother during the latter stages of pregnancy.
system accountability	Program of assigning responsibility for the performance of an educational system to individuals within that system; designed to improve educational programs.
systemic bias	Favoritism toward a particular group that occurs at multiple levels within a society or institution.
systems of supports	The network of supports that all individuals develop in order to function optimally in life.
tactile accommodation	A modification that allows for access to print materials and that enables students who are blind to learn about their environment through the sense of touch.
tactile map	A map on which information is perceptible to the touch; used by people with severe visual disabilities.
tactile material	Any material, object, model, or learning tool designed to be manipulated digitally or

through the sense of touch.

talent development	The process of translating ability into achievement; another name for the education of the gifted.
talking book	A version of a book made available in auditory format.
target behavior	In behavior intervention, the behavior that a teacher wishes to reduce or eliminate; also called the problem behavior.
targeted intervention	Strategy of intervention in which a teacher offers a standard, validated instructional program to students in a group, typically consisting of no more than five students; may be implemented by general education teachers, paraprofessionals, reading specialists, or other qualified individuals.
task analysis	Process of breaking down problems and tasks into smaller, sequenced components.
task scaffolding	Method of instruction whereby a teacher begins by specifying the steps in a task or instructional strategy and then goes on to model those steps for his or her class while verbalizing his or her thought process.
taught curriculum	The daily events that occur in the school community, including all lessons and activities, social gatherings among peers, techniques used by teachers during instruction such as lectures and discussions, and the teacher's style of instruction.
Tay-Sachs disease	An autosomal recessive brain disorder characterized by a failure to thrive, intellectual disabilities, deafness, blindness, paralysis, and seizures; usually fatal by age five; symptoms present by the time an infant is six months old.
teacher attrition	Term used to describe any of a number of reasons that teachers leave the field of education for non-education work (e.g., change careers, stay home with children, retire from profession).
teacher migration	Circumstance in which a teacher moves from one special education position to another.
teacher of students with visual impairments (TVI)	A specially trained and certified teacher who provides direct or consultative special education services related to the effects of vision loss.
teacher transfer	Process by which a teacher transfers from a special education position to a general

education one.

teacher turnover	General term used to refer to any of a number of major reasons that special education teachers leave their immediate roles, including through attrition, transfer, or migration.
teacher-reflection	An on-going practice that occurs when teachers identify their own thoughts, values, and behaviors about other cultures in order to gain deeper levels of self-knowledge and recognize how their personal worldviews can influence their teaching and shape their students' concepts of self.
technology-dependent children	Term used to describe children whose survival is heavily dependent on the use of high-tech devices such as ventilators.
telecommunications relay service (TRS)	A telephone system required by federal law wherein an operator at a relay center converts a print-telephone message to a voice-telephone message.
teratogen	Any of a number of chemical agents that can disrupt the normal development of the fetus.
tertiary prevention	Intervention designed to minimize the effect of a specific condition or disability.
test item bias	Bias that occurs when tests rely on concepts, shared assumptions, or events that are by definition outside the experience or understanding of English language learners (ELL).
text cohesion	The explicitness with which meanings and relationships between and among words and concepts.
text telephone (TTY)	Communication equipment (formerly called the telecommunication device for the deaf [TDD]) that allows people to make and receive telephone calls by typing messages over the phone lines.
text-dependent analysis	The process of gaining a thorough understanding of information, details, concepts, and perspectives through a careful reading of text.
theoretical construct	A model based on theory, rather than on practice or experience.
think-pair-share	Learning strategy that provides children time and structure to think about a given topic or question, pair with a peer and share their own ideas with their partner, and

then share their ideas with classmates.

three-year reevaluation	Triannual process, conducted by a multidisciplinary team, to reassess the needs of students with disabilities.
Tier 1: class- or school-wide interventions (primary prevention)	Program of reading instruction that includes all students, whether struggling in reading or not.
Tier 2 service provider	Any individual who has been trained in the appropriate Tier 2 instruction: classroom teacher, reading specialist, special education teacher, supervised paraprofessional, tutor, or trained volunteer.
Tier 2: targeted interventions (secondary prevention)	Program of reading instruction that offers more focused instruction than is usually offered in the typical classroom.
Tier 3: intensive, individualized interventions (tertiary preventions)	Program of increasingly intensive, specialized services designed to help students to become successful readers.
time delay	An instructional procedure in which a student is given a set period of time (e.g., 20 seconds) in which to answer to a question, read a sight word, or spell a word, after which the correct answer is given.
time of onset	The moment in time during which a disability first occurs.
token economy	In behavior management, a commonly used method whereby students earn tokens or points for appropriate behavior, which they can exchange for a tangible item, the opportunity to interact with others, or a special activity.
tonic-clonic seizures	Seizures characterized by a stiff (tonic) phase in which the muscles become rigid, followed by a jerking (clonic) phase in which the arms and legs snap; formerly referred to as grand mal seizures.
topic association	Style of oral communication characterized by free association and the frequent omission of explanations about the relationships between topics or ideas; also called topic chaining.
topic chaining	Style of oral communication characterized by free association and the frequent omission of explanations about the relationships between topics or ideas; also called

	topic association.
total communication approach	A system of instruction for deaf students that employs any and all methods of communication (oral speech, manual communication, ASL, gestures) that are easy, efficient, and preferred by the student for communication.
total immersion	An instructional strategy wherein a student is taught entirely in English in a classroom in which all the other students are likewise non-native English speakers, and the teacher can speak the students' home language.
Tourette's syndrome	A low incidence disability characterized by multiple and uncontrollable motor or verbal tics.
toxoplasmosis	An infection caused by a parasite carried by more than 60 million individuals; usually dangerous only to expectant women, who can pass it on to their unborn children, causing them to develop intellectual disabilities or blindness.
trailing	A technique used by individuals with visual impairments in which one hand maintains contact with the environment in order to establish a straight line of travel or to locate specific objectives along an environmental line.
transcription	The process of transferring thoughts and ideas into words and then putting them on paper.
transit accessibility	Any of a number of programs that provide door-to-door transportation services for people whose disabilities prevents them from using standard transportation (e.g., city bus, metro rail).
transition	Any of a number of routine aspects of a student's educational experience involving movement to new classes, grade levels, schools, or school systems; the final transition stage, from high school to adulthood, is know as secondary transition.
transition planning	In connection with special education, the development and implementation of activities designed to prepare students with disabilities for postsecondary options, such as work, college, or supported living; transition activities are individualized and are typically designed to address skills or knowledge relevant to the students' postsecondary goals.
transition specialist	Professional who collaborates with and acts as a liason between numerous individuals and agencies in order to ensure that students with disabilities enjoy successful post-secondary transitions.

transitional bilingual education	An instructional method used with English Language Learners (ELL) in which academic subjects are taught in the student's native language until sufficient English is mastered for transition; also referred to as early exit programs.
transliteration services	Services that assist students who are deaf or hard of hearing with their communication needs; can be provided anywhere the student is located, such as the classroom, the playground, the library, the soccer field, or the science lab.
traumatic brain injury (TBI)	Injury to the brain not present at birth or resulting from birth trauma that often results in total or partial disability; may affect cognitive, sensory, or motor functioning.
Trigger Phase	The second phase of the acting-out behavior cycle, during which student misbehavior can be triggered by a concern that is not addressed; such concerns can take place either within or beyond the school day.
triplegia	A condition of paralysis in any three limbs.
tunnel vision	A severe limitation in peripheral vision; limitations in the width of the visual field.
Turner's syndrome	A chromosomal disorder in females caused by the absence of an X chromosomes in any or all of the individual's body cells; characterized by a short physical stature, webbing of the skin of the neck, a broad chest and underdeveloped breasts, infertility, eye and bone abnormalities, intellectual disabilities (in some instances), and heart defects.
twice-exceptional student	Term used to describe a student who both has a disability and who is gifted.
two-way immersion	Method of language instruction in which academic content is provided to all students in two languages (e.g., Spanish and English); also referred to as dual-language immersion.
tympanic membrane (eardrum)	The anatomical boundary between the outer and middle ears; the sound gathered in the outer ear vibrates here.
type I diabetes	A disease caused by an inadequate secretion or use of insulin and resulting in excessive sugar in the blood and urine; manageable through diet or medication.
underrepresentation	The Low or non-presence of a group or groups of individuals in a special education category; smaller numbers than would be predicted by their proportion in the overall school population.

unexpected underachievement	A description associated with learning disabilities wherein poor school performance cannot be explained by a student's intellectual potential.
unilateral hearing loss	Hearing loss in one ear only; potential for significant negative effect on education process.
unit plan design	A plan designed to help teachers to organize what will be done in the classroom as a means of helping students to achieve whatever long-term goals have been set for the class.
universal design	Barrier-free architectural and building designs that meet the needs of everyone, including people with physical disabilities.
Universal Design for Learning (UDL)	A research-based framework for teachers to incorporate flexible materials, techniques, and strategies for delivering instruction and for students to demonstrate their knowledge in a variety of ways.
universal infant screening	The process of testing all newborns to determine whether they have or are at risk for a disability; specific term associated with newborn screening for hearing loss.
universal screening	The practice of assessing every student with a brief screening tool.
unlicensed assistive personnel (UAP)	Personnel who stand in for school nurses and cover nurses' responsibilities in their absence.
upper-hand-and-forearm self-protective technique	A self-defense method in which one arm is used to protect the upper body, specifically the head and shoulders; often used in conjunction with trailing or with the lower-hand-and-forearm self-protective technique.
Usher syndrome	A genetic disorder characterized by nonprogressive sensorineural hearing loss, retinitis pigmentosa and progressively restricted field of vision, loss of the sense of smell, and impaired balance and motor skills.
videodisc instruction	An alternative to computer assisted instruction (CAI) in which instructional discs contain narrated segments of visual images.
vision specialist	Professional whose major role is in the special education assessment and education intervention of students with visual impairments.
visual accommodation	Any of a variety of modifications made to printed materials (e.g., enlarged print,

increased contrast) that render them easier to read.

visual acuity	How well a person can see at various distances.
visual cortex	Part of the brain that functions to process electrical signals from the optic nerve into visual images.
visual efficiency	How well a person uses his or her sight.
visual field	The range at which an individual can see objects centrally or peripherally; the total area that a person is able to see without moving his or her eyes or head.
visual functions	The abilities of the visual system, such as visual acuity, visual field, color discrimination, dark adaptation, and contrast sensitivity, as measured by performance on standardized tests of sight; a reference to the extent to which vision is used.
visual impairment	Any level of vision loss that affects an individual's ability to complete daily tasks; term often used to describe both blindness and low vision.
vitreous humor	The transparent, gelatinous substance that fills the eyeball between the retina and the lens of the eye.
vocabulary	The words known by a person; a knowledge of words and their meanings.
vocational rehabilitation	Any of a number of programs designed to help adults with disabilities to obtain and hold employment.
vocational training and education	Job training or employment counseling offered to students who wish to enter the work force after high school.
voice disorder	Any of a number of disorders that negatively affect an individual's ability to produce speech.
voice recognition software	Computer software that allows a user to issue spoken commands to his or her computer; particularly useful to those whose disabilities prevent them from manipulating other forms of computer interface, such as a keyboard or mouse.
William's syndrome	A rare genetic condition resulting from deletion of material in the seventh pair of chromosomes, and characterized by mild to moderate intellectual disabilities, heart

defects, and elfin facial features.

word identification fluency A test in which a student is asked to read as many words as possible in one minute; this test must be administered to each child individually.

working memory A memory system with limited capacity to hold information while a task--such as following directions, comprehending text or solving a multi-step mathematics problem--is accomplished.

wraparound service A service delivery model whereby all of the student's needs are met through the coordination of the education system, mental health agencies, social services, and community agencies.

writing A test in which a student is asked to write for three to five minutes in response to a story starter; the student's score is the number of word pairs that are grammatically and semantically appropriate and spelled correctly; this test can be administered to a group.

year-end achievement test A test administered once a year, often near the end of school, that offers an indication of a student's overall progress for the year; an example of summative assessment, annual achievement tests focus on the outcomes of student learning.

year-long planning A method of instructional planning that allows for continuous, sequential, integrated, and cumulative learning.

Young Autism Program (YAP) Program developed by I. Lovass at UCLA in which behavioral principles are used to reduce problems associated with autistic spectrum disorder (ASD); sometimes incorrectly called the ABA program.

zero reject The core principle of IDEA stating that no student with a disability, regardless of its nature or severity, can be denied an education.

zero tolerance Popular term used to designate (and promote) school policies that address incidents of drug or weapon possession with automatic suspension or expulsion.