

Specific Learning Disabilities Glossary

Term	Definition
Acquisition	Status of learning the skill in question.
Academic Language	The complex components of the English language that are required for success in academic discourse such as speeches, academic and workplace discussions, debates, comprehension of content area text as well as writing in the content areas.
Adaptation	Within the context of stages of learning adaptation means a student can solve new or novel problems using current skills.
Adequately yearly progress	A set of measurements of schools and districts to comply with the federal No Child Left Behind act (NCLB).
Analysis of discrepancy from aim line	Determining the gap between what is expected in terms of grade level performance and student's level of functioning as illustrated by data plotted on a graph. The standard set forth in Minnesota Rule 3515.1341 is state approved grade-level content standards.
Analysis of level	Teacher analyzes the student's performance against the long-range goal, often stated in the intervention plan. If a student's performance continues to fall below the desired goal, action is taken to accelerate growth towards the desired goal. If the student's performance exceeds the goal, the goal is revised upward until grade-level expectations are achieved.
Assessment	Means of gathering data in order to make informed decisions. Assessment may include screening, focused problem solving, profiling strengths and weaknesses, observing, testing, progress monitoring of day-to-day, week-to-week, month-to-month functioning (See Sattler, 2001 for additional information).
Associative memory	Ability to recall items that are associated with one another, whether by being presented in a single array or meaningfully related.
Attention	Focusing on particular material. As presented in research it involves the regulation of arousal and vigilance, selective attention, sustained attention, attention span, as well as inhibition and control of behavior.
Auditory processing	Ability to perceive, analyze, and synthesize patterns among auditory stimuli such as identifying, isolating, and analyzing sounds; the ability to process speech sounds, as in identifying, isolating, and blending or synthesizing sounds; and the ability to detect differences in speech sounds under conditions of little distraction or distortion.

Term	Definition
Basic psychological processes	Also known as information processing. These are the cognitive abilities that are involved in perception, thinking, reasoning, problem solving, learning, storing, and retrieving information. The basic psychological processes listed in Minnesota Rule 3525.1341 are not an exhaustive list and include one instance of motoric processing.
Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS)	Basic interpersonal communication skills are language skills that English Language Learners use during social interactions in a meaningful social context (e.g., at a party, talking with a friend, gaining directions).
Brain injury	Brain injury is not the same as traumatic brain injury (TBI), which is a separate disability category under IDEA and is defined at 34 CFR § 300.8(c)(12). That definition makes clear that “traumatic brain injury” means “an acquired injury to the brain caused by an external physical force” and “does not apply to brain injuries that are congenital or degenerative, or brain injuries induced by birth trauma.” If the child had a learning disability before the brain injury, the brain injury may make the learning disability worse. Inclusion of “brain injury” in IDEA’s definition of Specific Learning Disability (SLD) goes back to research conducted in the 1960s and the work of the National Advisory Committee on Handicapped Children which defined SLD and is practically the same definition used in IDEA 2004.
Cattel-Horn-Carroll Theory of Intelligence (CHC)	A theory of intelligence that proposes a three-stratum model of cognitive functioning. Under a general factor of intelligence come 10 general abilities that are built from 70 narrower abilities.
Co-exist	To occur with.
Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP)	CALP is defined as the ability to comprehend and communicate thoughts and ideas with clarity and efficiency and carry on advanced interpersonal conversations. This ability is believed to take approximately 5-7+ years to develop and is required for academic success. CALP is commonly used in referencing the level of language acquisition of an English Language Learner.
Constraining factors	Factors that impede or adversely influence acquisition, integration or production of learning.
Culture-Language Test Classification (CLTC)	A tool used to classify tests according to language and cultural demands.

Term	Definition
Cultural Language Interpretive Matrix (CLIM)	A tool used to assist interpreting the results of standardized tests to account for cultural and linguistic demands separate from cognitive abilities.
Curriculum-Based Measures (CBM)	CBM is an approach for assessing the growth of basic academic skills. It is a set of standardized assessment procedures that are technically adequate and have standardized rules about what and how to measure those skills. CBM tasks sample student performance directly and under timed conditions, have many equivalent forms, are very brief, use stimulus materials designed to follow certain guidelines, and are easy to teach and use. Deno (2003) Developments in CBM, Journal of Special Education, 37, 184-192.
Dyslexia	Dyslexia is a specific learning disability that is neurobiological in origin. It is characterized by difficulties with accurate and/or fluent word recognition and by poor spelling and decoding abilities. These difficulties typically result from a deficit in the phonological component of language that is often unexpected in relation to other cognitive abilities and the provision of effective classroom instruction. Secondary consequences may include problems in reading comprehension and reduced reading experience that can impede growth of vocabulary and background knowledge (Lyon, Shaywitz, & Schaywitz, (2003). A definition of dyslexia. Annals of Dyslexia, 53, 1-14.) For more information see the Dyslexia informational paper on the Specific Learning Disabilities page of the MDE Website.
Developmental Aphasia	The National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders (2002) at the National Institutes of Health describes aphasia as “a language disorder that results from damage to portions of the brain that are responsible for language.”
Drift	Deviation from implementing a practice or procedure as it was designed. Drift is usually unconscious changes made over time.
Due process requirements	Federally defined procedures and safeguards that protect the rights of individuals with disabilities.

Term	Definition
Early Intervening Services (EIS)	Services for children in K-12 (with a particular emphasis on children in K-3) who are not currently identified as needing special education or related services, but who need additional academic and behavioral support to succeed in a general education environment. EIS is a broad provision of support services that requires the collaborative involvement of general education and special education focused on providing high-quality and effective early learning experiences for all students (K-12). In implementing coordinated, early intervening services under § 300.226 (a), a local education agency may carry out activities that include: professional development ... for teachers and other school staff to enable personnel to deliver scientifically based academic and behavioral interventions [§ 300.226 (b)(1)], and providing educational and behavioral evaluations, services, and support [§ 300.226 (b)(2)]. [Burdette, P. (2007 April) and 34 C.F.R. § 300.226]
English Language Learners (ELL)	A term used to describe an individual that is learning English.
Evaluation Report (ER)	For more information see Minnesota Rule 3525.2710 supb. 6.
Error analysis	Analysis of errors used to identify patterns and determine what student needs to work on to improve performance.
Evidence-based Interventions	Interventions that are based on or informed by research, but do not meet the technical standards of scientific research-based interventions. See the definition of scientific research-based intervention for the technical standards.
Executive functioning	The ability to monitor performance and correct errors while simultaneously maintaining awareness of task relevant information in the presence of irrelevant information. Executive functions are responsible for the planning and implementation of complex tasks. These abilities are essential to virtually all areas of academic performance. Executive functioning does not fully develop until about the age of 21.
Facilitating factors	Factors that ease or positively influence acquisition, integration or production of learning.
Fidelity	Implementation as designed.

Term	Definition
Fluid reasoning	Ability to use and engage in various mental operations when faced with a relatively novel task that cannot be performed automatically. It includes the ability to discover the underlying characteristic that governs a problem or set of materials, the ability to start with stated rules, premises, or conditions, and engage in one or more steps to reach a solution to a problem. It also affects the ability to reason inductively and deductively with concepts involving mathematical relations and properties.
Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA)	<p>An FBA includes a variety of data collection methods and sources that facilitate the development of hypotheses and summary statements regarding behavioral patterns. A good FBA process should include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A description of problem behaviors. 2. Identification of events, times, and situations that predict the occurrence and nonoccurrence of the behavior. 3. Identification of antecedents (or “triggers”) both distal (occurring slightly before but not immediately before the target behavior) and proximal (occurring immediately prior to the target behavior). 4. Description of reinforcers that maintain behavior. 5. Hypothesis for functions of the behavior. 6. Description of positive alternative behaviors.
General Ability Index (GAI) score	GAI is a composite score that is based on three Verbal Comprehension and three Perceptual Reasoning subtests, and does not include the Working Memory or Processing Speed subtests included in the Full Scale IQ (FSIQ).
Inter-rater reliability	Agreement in ratings between individuals that administer an assessment.
Interventionists	Staff delivering interventions.
Individualized Education Program (IEP)	Individualized education program describes the educational program designed to meet the student’s unique needs and must contain specific information about the child or student such as present levels of academic achievement and functional performance, that lead to statements of need. Goals and accompanying objectives are developed based on the student’s assessed needs. An IEP is written for a 12-month period and must be reviewed and revised annually. For specific requirements of content to be specified in the IEP, see Minnesota Statutes section 125A.08.

Term	Definition
Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)	The federal law that ensures services to children with disabilities throughout the nation. IDEA governs how states and public agencies provide early intervention, special education and related services eligible individuals. It also includes a description of parent rights and procedural safeguards which support compliance with the law.
Law	Legal requirement made by the Congress and signed by the President.
Least squares regression line	A statistical method of fitting data between a model and observed data.
Maintenance	Within the context of stages of learning the student applies knowledge accurately and automatically overtime.
Multidimensional Assessment Model for Bilingual Individuals (MAMBI)	A tool for to selecting the most appropriate assessment methods and materials and means of assessing non-native English speakers. "Most appropriate" is to the method that is likely to yield the most fair and non-discriminatory estimates of actual ability assuming that standardization is maintained in the administration of the test.
MAZE replacements	Fluency measures where students are required to select, from a limited number of choices, the word that makes the text make sense.
Measures	The tools by which information relative to some established rule or standard is collected.
Minimal Brain Dysfunction	This is a term referenced in the federal definition of a Specific Learning Disability that is not currently used in Minnesota. As put forth in research by the NACHC, minimal brain dysfunction referred to: children of near average, average, or above average general intelligence with certain learning or behavioral disabilities ranging from mild to severe, which are associated with deviations of function of the central nervous system. These deviations may manifest themselves by various combinations of impairment in perception, conceptualization, language, memory and control of attention, impulse, or motor function (Clements, 1966, 9-10). The term began to fade in the professional literature as use of the term "learning disabilities" increased.

Term	Definition
No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB)	The federal law that reauthorized the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA). The focus of the law is on a number of federal programs aiming to improve the performance of U.S. primary and secondary schools by increasing the standards of accountability for states, school districts, and schools, as well as providing parents more flexibility in choosing which schools their children will attend. Additionally, it promoted an increased focus on reading. The No Child Left Behind Act (Public Law 107-110), is often abbreviated in print as NCLB.
Oral Reading Fluency (ORF)	An outcome indicator used by having a person read passages within a specified time followed by calculation of words read correctly.
Passive consent	A type of consent where programming moves forward unless the consenting party objects or refuses.
Perceptual disabilities	<p>Perceptual disabilities speaks to the difficulties that an SLD can cause in visual or auditory discrimination. Among other things, visual discrimination difficulties may manifest themselves in: organizing the position and shape of what is seen; focusing on the significant figure instead of all the other visual inputs in the background; judging distance; or doing things when the eyes have to tell the hands or legs what to do (Silver, 2001).</p> <p>Problems with auditory discrimination may manifest themselves as difficulties in, among other things:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • distinguishing subtle differences in sounds, or one specific sound (e.g., their mother’s voice) from a field of noises (e.g., the TV); • understanding what people are saying; or • processing sound input as fast as normal people can (called an “auditory lag”) (Silver, 2001).
Phonological awareness	Refers to an individual’s awareness of and access to the sound structure of his/her oral language. This awareness proceeds from word length phonological units in compound words (e.g., cowboy), to syllables within words, to onset-rimes units within syllables to individual phonemes within rimes, and finally to individual phonemes within consonant clusters.
Phonological core deficits	<p>Refers to difficulties in making use of phonological information when processing written or oral language.</p> <p>Major components: are phonemic awareness (one’s understanding of and access to the sound structure of language), sound-symbol relationships, and storage and retrieval of phonological information in memory.</p>

Term	Definition
Phonological memory	Refers to coding information phonologically for temporary storage in working memory. A deficient phonological memory does not appear to impair either reading or listening to a noticeable extent, provided the words involved are already in the individual's vocabulary. However, phonological memory impairments can constrain the ability to learn new written or spoken vocabulary.
Planning, Attention, Simultaneous, and Successive (PASS) Theory	A theory of intelligence that consists of three components. First is attentional processes that provide focused cognitive activity; second is information processes (simultaneous and successive); and third is planning processes that provide the control of attention, information processes, internal and external knowledge, and cognitive tools and self-regulation to achieve desired goals (Naglieri, J. and Das, J. (1990).
Predictive accuracy	The extent to which a measure accurately predicts future performance.
Problem-solving	A systematic approach that reviews student strengths and weaknesses, identifies evidence-based instructional interventions, frequently collects data to monitor student progress, and evaluates the effectiveness of interventions implemented with the student (Cantor, 2004 in Principal Leadership).
Proficiency	Student accurately applies knowledge. Measures of proficiency do not always include efficient or automatic performance.
Progress monitoring	The frequent and continuous measurement of a student's performance that includes these three interim assessments and other student assessments during the school year (Minnesota Statutes section 125A.56). Progress monitoring may include more frequent measurement of student performance to determine growth over shorter periods of time.
Processing speed	The ability to fluently and automatically perform a cognitive task, especially one involving focused attention and concentration (e.g., searching for and comparing visual symbols, manipulating numbers).
Regulation	Guidance on how to apply a law made by the executive branch. Federal Regulations and Minnesota Rules specify what is required for legal compliance.
Response to Intervention (Rtl)	Response to Intervention is a framework for building a school-wide process for delivering high-quality instruction and interventions and ensuring they are matched to the needs of students requiring additional academic and behavioral supports.

Term	Definition
Rapid naming	The ability requires efficient retrieval of verbal information (names of objects, colors, digits, letters, etc.) from long-term memory. Rapid naming impacts a student’s ability to efficiently retrieve phonological codes associated with individual phonemes, word segments, or entire words.
Rules	An administrative rule is a general statement adopted by an agency to make the law it enforces or administers more specific or to govern the agency's organization or procedure.
Scientific Research-based Intervention (SRBI)	<p>A. Research that involves the application of rigorous, systematic, and objective procedures to obtain reliable and valid knowledge relevant to education activities and programs.</p> <p>B. Includes research that employs systematic, empirical methods that draw on observation or experiment.</p> <p>C. Involves rigorous data analyses that are adequate to test the stated hypotheses and justify the general conclusions drawn.</p> <p>D. Relies on measurements or observational methods that provide reliable and valid data across evaluators and observers, across multiple measurements and observations, and across studies by the same or different investigators.</p> <p>E. Uses experimental or quasi-experimental designs in which individuals, entities, programs, or activities are assigned to different conditions and with appropriate controls to evaluate the effects of the condition of interest. It carries a preference for random-assignment experiments, or other designs to the extent that those designs contain within-condition or across-condition controls.</p> <p>F. Presents experimental studies in sufficient detail and clarity to allow for replication or, at a minimum, offer the opportunity to build systematically on their findings.</p> <p>Accepted by a peer-reviewed journal or approved by a panel of independent experts through a comparably rigorous, objective, and scientific review.</p>
Short-term memory	The ability to obtain and hold information in immediate awareness and then use it within a few seconds. See also “working memory.”
Slope	Teacher analyzes student’s rate of progress against pre-determined aim line or decision rules. If student’s growth is below what is desired or expected, action is taken to accelerate growth. If growth exceeds aim line, the goal and aim line are adjusted upward.
Technically adequate assessment	Refers to tests and procedures for which recognized professional standards of construction, validity, reliability, and use have been met.

Term	Definition
Test	Any standardized procedure used for measuring a sample of behavior (e.g., observations, student constructed responses, rating scales, checklists, curriculum based measures).
Testing of limits	Altering standardized assessment procedures selectively in order to gain additional qualitative information about a student's abilities and problem-solving strategies.
Total Special Education System (TSES) Plan	The Total Special Education System (TSES) is designed to assist districts and local education agencies in achieving compliance with special education mandates and funding requirements. The TSES includes all pertinent requirements in the Code of Federal Regulations which are carried out by the local education agencies: (1) child study procedures for the identification and evaluation of students or other persons suspected of having a disability; (2) methods of providing special education services for identified individuals; (3) administration and management plan to assure effective and efficient results of items 1 and 2; (4) operating procedures for interagency committees required in statute; (5) interagency agreements the district has entered; and, (6) policy for describing the district's procedures for implementing the use of conditional interventions. Districts must keep a plan that documents their policies and procedures for ensuring compliance. For more information see Minnesota Rule 3525.1100.
Teaching English as a Second or Other Language (TESOL)	A national professional organization for ESL teachers; sometimes also used to refer to an instructional program.
Trend	The direction of a student's rate of growth across time.
Universal Design for Learning (UDL)	UDL provides a blueprint for creating flexible goals, methods, materials, and assessments that accommodate learner differences. To learn more about UDL visit the CAST Website (www.cast.org/teachingeverystudent).
Visual processing	An individual's ability to understand and mentally manipulate visual information.
Working memory	The ability to hold a small amount of information in memory while manipulating it. Sometimes used synonymously with "short-term memory."