Education Glossary

This is the second installment of educational terms to which we will continue to add explanations throughout the series.

Accelerated Schools Project

Developed by Hank Levin of Stanford University in an effort to improve the learning of at-risk students. The program involves extensive training in inquiry, planning, teamwork, and working with parents. First implemented in 1986 in two San Francisco Bay Area elementary schools, the Project has now reached over 1,000 schools in 40 states. No single feature makes a school accelerated. Rather, each school community uses the Accelerated Schools philosophy and process to determine its own vision and work collaboratively to achieve its goals. The philosophy is based on three democratic principles: unity of purpose, empowerment coupled with responsibility, and building on strengths.

AYP
(Adequate Yearly Progress)

The **No Child Left Behind Act** requires an annual determination of whether schools, districts, and states have made adequate yearly progress toward the goal of having all students meet rigorous state academic standards by the 2013-2014 school year. Each year, the performance of all students in the school and district, as well as subgroups of students, is measured against annual performance targets. The subgroups required by **NCLB** are:

- Racial/ethnic (White, Black, Hispanic, Native American, Asian/ Pacific Islander)
- Economically disadvantaged (students on free or reduced lunch)
- Students with disabilities (students with Individual Education Plans)
- Students with limited English proficiency

Such reporting has always been required of schools receiving **Title I** funds; however, sanctions did not apply as they do now for all schools. Non-Title I schools do not face the same sanctions required for **Title I** schools. A school or district as a whole may have strong academic performance, but the designation of not meeting AYP may be based on a single factor or a single subgroup. Under **NCLB**, schools and districts that are not meeting AYP in the first year face no sanctions. States must identify for improvement any school or district receiving **Title I** funds that does not meet AYP for two consecutive years in the same content area. Sanctions outlined in **NCLB** range from offering school choice for students to restructuring the school personnel. *(None of the schools included in this issue of* Oregon's Future *are in danger of not meeting AYP.-Ed.)*

Oregon Congressman David Wu's legislation, the **No Child Left Behind Improvement and Flexibility Act**, addresses educators' complaints about **AYP** provisions in **NCLB**. *(For a more detailed explanation of AYP, including sanctions and exceptions, see http://www.ode.state.or.us/initiatives/nclb/docs/aypmanual0405rev_04062005.doc). Jay Hutchins and Marie Godfrey*

Benchmarks

In the late 1990s, the Oregon Department of Education commissioned the *Report on Education and Standards and Assessments for Oregon*. The information, supported by current research and the expertise of Oregon teachers, anticipated the passage of **NCLB**, leading to the development of frameworks for what are now officially Oregon's Grade-level Standards in Mathematics and English/Language Arts. The term *benchmark* is still used by educators to refer to state standards for grade levels K-12.

Certificates of Initial/Advance Mastery (CIM, CAM)

Part of the new Oregon school diploma requirements and systems integration. Beginning in 2006-2007, each Oregon high school graduate will have an education plan based on personal and career interests and goals and an education profile that documents his or her progress and achievement. Students graduating in the 2006-2007 school year must meet the new diploma requirements.

With the passage of HB 2744, each school district must institute programs that allow students to qualify for the CAM before September 1, 2008. School districts are expected to demonstrate continued progress toward development and implementation of the CAM prior to statewide implementation.

Constructivism

Constructivism argues that knowledge is not yours until you interpret it in light of your past experiences and personality, and place it within the mental structures you have already built. Here is a familiar example: A person reads that it snows a lot in Canada. He or she has a particular mental picture of that phenomenon. A child living in Africa, who has never seen snow, will certainly "construct" a very different understanding of snow from a child living in Buffalo, New York or one in Portland, Oregon.

Even more important than differences of understanding, however, is the placement of new knowledge in relation to the child's concept of the world. If the new information is meaningless or unimportant to him or her, the child will forget it or lump it with oth er miscellaneous information. If on the other hand the child is going on vacation to Montreal, he or she will place the new information about snow in a category that tells what clothes to bring.

Still, this is an over-simplification of constructivism. More academically defined, it is a theory of how people handle new information. Kant, **Piaget**, Vygotsky, and others hypothesized that we interpret all new information in terms of what we already know and believe. In order for information to be useful to us, we have to be able to fit it into an existing framework and build on it. We also have to continually re-form and re-adjust those frameworks in light of new information. Learners do not reinvent the world as they read and have new experiences, but they do re-interpret it, categorize its contents, and use new knowledge in ways that seem most meaningful to them. —*Joanne Yatvin*

More on constructivism: Approachs represented by terms such as whole language, new math, and whole student emerged from a constructivist or progressive outlook. Diane Ravitch, an outspoken critic of constructivism, in her book *Left Back: A Century of Failed School Reforms*, points out that the central claim of constructivists, that students are not blank slates upon which knowledge can be imposed, is correct. However, Ravitch, Rob Kremer, Siegfried Engelmann, and other critics believe claims by constructivists that people only learn by integrating experiences are overreaching. Critics of constructivism support reforms such as **Direct Instruction** in the **Reading First** Program, a sanctioned intervention for **Title I** schools under **NCLB**, and more standardized testing, especially for early grades.

Education Glossary

A 1989 reform based on constructivist principles was the standards developed by the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics. See Ron Kremer's article *Progressive Education: One Parent's Journey, Winter 2005*. Please see **Piaget, Jean** for more on constructivism. *—Jay Hutchins*

Core Reading Program

A core reading program is the primary instructional tool that teachers use to teach children to learn to read and ensure they reach reading levels that meet or exceed grade-level standards. A core program should address the instructional needs of the majority of students in a respective school or district.

Most explanations of core programs include the book Teaching Reading is Rocket Science, by Louisa Moats (1999). Moats explains that teaching reading is far more complex than most professionals and laypersons realize-that phonologic, alphabetic, semantic, and syntactic systems of written language require a careful schedule and a sequence of objectives-and that reading programs need to use explicit strategies to support students' first learning experience. This, she explains, allows the reader to transfer knowledge and skills to other contexts. Her point is that this process is too important to leave to the judgment of individual teachers. Moat's argument is that the better the core program addresses instructional priorities, the less teachers will need to supplement and modify instruction for the majority of learners. These ideas are points on which people like Siegfried Engelmann from the University of Oregon base their arguments against multiple approaches.

CSR (Federal Comprehensive School Reform)

The Center for Comprehensive School Reform's mission is to assist schools and districts engaged in comprehensive school reform and improvement by providing reliable information about research-based strategies and assistance. The center also provides support for the Comprehensive School Reform Program. It is funded by the Office of Elementary and Secondary Education of the U.S. Department of Education. http://www.ed.gov/ *(Details at http://www.csrclearinghouse.org/ -Ed.)*

Desegregation Money

A response to school segregation, these funds came first from the federal government and then from the states. Twenty-five years ago, desegregation was an issue that could rile parents and neighborhoods and spur chanting protests at school board meetings. Now, after decidedly mixed success, the pot of money and an era of thinking are leaving US schools.

Achievement gaps that now exist appear to be based more on class than on race: more and more education research and discussion are focused on the gap that exists between minority and poor students and students from middle-class white families. Also, race is now a more complex issue, with larger percentages of students from a wide variety of ethnic backgrounds.

Success or failure of desegregation initiatives aside, beginning in fall 2005 the money will be gone and it won't be replaced. Schools in Oregon have used the money for many programs: to bolster their staff, pay for reading specialists, and create manageable class sizes-$5 million to $7.5 million was used annually in North and Northeast Portland.

DIBELS (Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills)

An assessment that checks for phonetic awareness, phonics, and fluency using a set of standardized, individually-administered measures of early literacy development. They are designed to be short (one minute) fluency measures used to regularly monitor the development of pre-reading and early reading skills. The measures were developed based on the essential early literacy domains discussed in both the National Reading Panel (2000) and National Research Council (1998). These reports assessed student development of phonological awareness, alphabetic understanding, and automaticity and fluency with the code.

Direct Instruction

Evolved from a theory of instruction developed by Siegfried Engelmann of the University of Oregon. Englemann's early works focused on beginning reading, language, and math and were published by Science Research Associates in 1968 under the trade name DISTAR (Direct Instruction System for Teaching and Remediation). Over the past three decades, the original curricula have been revised and new ones developed through sixth grade (plus remedial programs and science programs for higher grades). These curricula have been incorporated into the comprehensive school reform model known as the Direct Instruction Model.

ELL/ESL (English Language Learner, English as a second language)

These provisions are included under **Title I** and Title III of **NCLB**. **Title I** outlines the state standards, assessment, **annual yearly progress**, and other accountability requirements for ELL students. Title III provides funding to state and local education agencies who are obligated by **NCLB** to increase the English proficiency and core academic content. The term LEP is used for Limited English Proficiency. Under **Title I**, local school districts decide on the method of instruction to be used to teach ELL students English, but must choose instructional programs scientifically proven to be effective. *(Details at http://www.ncpie.org/nclbaction/english_language_learners.html -Ed.)*

Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA)

A federal law first enacted in 1965 that governs K-12 education, which was modified by President Bush to create the **No Child Left Behind Act**.

Fluency

Reading aloud at a rate that matches the normal speech rate. Fluency also includes grouping words in meaningful phrases, which is called prosody. Grouping words helps people with comprehension. **DIBELS** is a program used by educators to develop fluency in elementary schools.

Leveling

The practice of grouping students by ability rather than age or grade in school. It is most often used for language arts. Leveling should not be confused with tracking, which is a form of segregating students by their perceived overall ability.

Local Option

In 1990, passage of Measure 5 limited the amount of property taxes that could be raised by local government; receipts from property taxes fell by 23 percent. The state was required to backfill school budgets with money from the general fund, resulting in a shift in education funding from roughly 60 percent local, 30 percent state,

Education Glossary

and 10 percent federal, to 30/60/10. Thus, funding for public education shifted from local property taxes to state income taxes.

Voters approved Ballot Measure 50 in May 1997, which established additional limitations on property taxes and preserved the key provisions of another property tax buster, Measure 47, which was passed by voters in November 1996.

Meanwhile, the state, which had been under legal pressure on the issue of inequitable school funding, implemented an equalization formula to redistribute funds from rich school districts to poor ones. Local education property tax dollars and state education funds were put into one pot, and distributed to school districts on a per-student basis.

The formula was weighted to account for students with special needs, along with factors such as poverty, teacher experience, and small rural school districts. Some districts that had been perennially pinched found themselves flush with funding, while others that had been relatively well-funded, such as in Portland, were forced to lay off staff. The result was more equity in funding, with urban areas subsidizing rural ones.

Local Option is a provision in Measure 50 that allows local option levies on property outside the stricture of permanent rate limits for property taxes. When Jane Fielding in *Without Excuse and Without Exception* refers to losing Local Option money she is referring to an expiring Local Option passed in the Portland School District. *Scott Bailey*

(For more on the history of Oregon's School funding crises see Scott Bailey's "Education Funding In Oregon" at oregonsfuture.org -Ed)

National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP)

NAEP compares student achievement in states and other jurisdictions and tracks changes in achievement of fourth, eighth, and twelfth graders over time in mathematics, reading, writing, and science. **The No Child Left Behind Act** of 2001 provides strong incentives for school districts and states to participate in NAEP. **Title I** grants from the federal government are only available if schools participate in the biennial fourth grade and eighth grade NAEP reading and mathematics assessments. The federal government assumes the full cost of administering these assessments. Federal law also specifies that NAEP is voluntary for every pupil, school, school district, and state. Recently, the NAEP has come under criticism because the level they call "basic" for fourth grade confuses parents who think basic means below standard. In this case basic means reading grade level material with only literal comprehension which most educators consider satisfactory for fourth grade students.

National Reading Panel (NRP)

In 1997, the US Congress created the NRP with the charge to determine, from existing research, the most effective approaches for teaching children how to read. Please see Joanne Yatvin's article *"O Brave New World." Oregon's Future* Winter 2005.

No Child Left Behind (NCLB)

The Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) enacted in 1965 provided guidance and funds to K-12 schools. The No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001 is the latest revision of ESEA. Taking effect at the start of the 2002-2003 school year, NCLB set deadlines for states to expand the scope and frequency of student testing, revamp their accountability systems, and guarantee that every teacher is qualified in their subject area. Under the act's accountability provisions, states must make sure all students, including those who are disadvantaged, racial and ethnic groups, disabled students, and students with limited English proficiency achieve academic proficiency. Schools must demonstrate **adequate yearly progress (AYP)** toward state learning standards or be sanctioned.

The goal is 100 percent proficiency for all students by the 2013-14 school year. Opponents of NCLB contend that the policy focuses on the wrong priorities, making education a one-size-fits-all program without attention to important features of the educational process such as reducing class size, maintaining strong after school programs, or increasing professional development efforts. They also complain that too much of NCLB funding is earmarked for assessment rather than for actually making improvements to schools. Another common complaint made by principals is that schools are often penalized under the rules of **AYP** for not meeting standards, even when a number of students may have made great progress toward meeting benchmarks. Melissa Sandven gives an example of this in an interview in this edition of *Oregon's Future*. Another common complaint regards the choice of curricula such as **core** reading programs available to schools who wish to receive a **Reading First** Grant. Still others worry about the requirements for "qualified" teachers and notification of parents if teachers do not meet NCLB standards for a highly qualified teacher.

Oregon Congressman David Wu is attempting to address educator's complaints about the provisions of **NCLB** with legislation named the **No Child Left Behind Improvement and Flexibility Act**. Proponents of NCLB believe it is designed to change the culture of America's schools by closing the achievement gap, offering more flexibility, giving parents more options, and teaching students based on what works. *(None of the schools included in this issue of* Oregon's Future *are in danger of not meeting AYP and all seem to have embraced many of the reforms supported by NCLB well before they were mandated by Congress. -Jay Hutchins)*

No Child Left Behind Improvement and Flexibility Act

Legislation put forth by Congressman David Wu that seeks to modify the **NCLB** law by increasing flexibility in specific areas including issues involved with the designation of highly qualified teachers. Critics are concerned about **AYP's** rigid model for demonstrating proficiency and progress and complain that AYP assessment of schools is equivalent to giving students only A's or F's. Congressman Wu's legislation acknowledges all progress made as the school works towards meeting the federal mandates. Melissa Sandven's interview, in this edition of *Oregon's Future*, also discusses this issue.

Acknowledging that year-to-year test results, by their nature, are not stable, Wu's bill allows states to average test data for up to three years for purposes of measuring **AYP**. Under **NCLB**, secondary teachers who hold Masters degrees and advanced certification or credentials are considered highly

Education Glossary

qualified. The Improvement and Flexibility Act expands this definition to elementary teachers as well. The bill also recognizes the unique circumstances of special education teachers and rural schools by allowing for increased flexibility in meeting the highly qualified teacher requirements. The bill acknowledges the challenges under **NCLB**, and seeks to give rural schools flexibility in requirements for fully certified and licensed biology, chemistry, physics, and earth science teachers, because of a school's size and geographic isolation. It also gives them flexibility when dealing with the mandates of school choice under **AYP** rules, since school choice may be impractical due to the distance between rural schools.

Phonemic Awareness

The ability to hear and manipulate sounds in words. Phonemic awareness is not phonics; it is auditory and does not involve words in print.

Piaget, Jean

Jean Piaget (1896-1980) was one of the most influential researchers in the area of developmental psychology during the 20th century. Piaget was trained in the areas of biology and philosophy, and considered himself a genetic epistemologist—he was mainly interested in the biological influences that affect how people come to know things. Piaget created the theory that a child takes information and processes the information at a level of understanding already attained—and that actual learning takes place by constructing a new view as a child processes the new information. Piaget believed that he had discovered through observation the biological stages of development that corresponded with a child's progress toward more sophisticated levels of understanding of the world. Piaget's views have often been compared with those of Lev Vygotsky (1896-1934), who thought these stages were influenced by socially interacting with others to co-create a new understanding. The writings of Piaget and Vygotsky, along with the work of John Dewey, Jerome Bruner, and Ulrick Neisser, form the basis of the **constructivist** theory of learning and instruction. *—Jay Hutchins and Barbara Ruben*

Progressive Education

Please see **Constructivism**.

Project Follow Through

A massive program designed to follow through on the gains of Project Head Start; Project Follow Through was a significant part of President Johnson's War on Poverty. The project began in 1968 and involved over 500,000 disadvantaged students living in more than 180 communities. The Office of Education and the Office of Economic Opportunity provided funding. Parent groups in each community selected and installed one of 18 educational models for children in grades kindergarten through 3. The project was designed as an experiment that used planned variation. Each model was fully implemented for several years before the final evaluation occurred in 1976. The evaluation compared Follow Through third graders and comparable non-Follow Through students. The models were evaluated on three categories of assessment: Basic Skills, which focused on basic components of cognitive skills; Cognitive Skills, which measured the child's high er levels of knowledge; and Affective Performance, which measured the child's self-esteem and attitudes about self reliance and achievement. The **Direct Instruction** students performed the highest of all models in all three categories. The **Direct Instruction** model showed the greatest advantage over all other models in higher order thinking and skills-comprehension. The **Direct Instruction** Model was the only model that essentially eliminated the performance difference between disadvantaged and average students. In other words, the **Direct Instruction** Model was the only model that raised the performance of high-poverty students (generally performing at the 20th percentile) to the average level (50th percentile). *—Siegfried Engelmann, Bonnie Grossen*

Qualitative Research

Inductive research. The goal is to understand a social phenomenon through a holistic, context-specific approach that often makes use of participant observation and narrative descriptions. Examples of this type include historical research, ethnographic research (in-depth case studies of particular groups), and action research (self-study, in which the researcher is part of the study; a method designed to examine the effects of one's actions on research). In this type of research, theory is developed after, not before, the study. It is therefore more open-ended than **quantitative research**.

Quantitative Research

Deductive research. Often considered more scientific, it is designed to test an already developed theory. The role of the researcher is as a detached scientist. This type of research looks at relationships, cause and effect, and statistical analysis, and focuses on individual variables. This includes experimental research (when the researcher deliberately manipulates a variable to determine the effects), survey research, and correlational study. Participants must be randomly assigned, and therefore are not considered in their normal social context. In quasi-experimental research a variable is also being tested, but the participants have not been randomly selected; "naturally selected groups" are studied, providing a somewhat more contextual approach.

NCLB, which relies on quantitative research, does not recognize a whole body of research that is "not scientific," i.e. **qualitative**. Based on William Wiersma's definitions from *Research Methods in Education: An Introduction. 7th Ed.* Needham, MA: Allyn & Bacon. *—Barbara Ruben, EdD*

Reading First

The **No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB)** signed into law by President George W. Bush in 2002, established Reading First as a new, high-quality, evidence-based program for the students of America. According to the US Department of Education web site, the Reading First initiative builds on the findings of years of scientific research, which, at the request of Congress, were compiled by the **National Reading Panel**. Reading First is designed to assist schools in establishing reading programs for students in kindergarten through third grade. These programs aid in ensuring that every student can read well by the end of third grade. **Title I** schools which apply for Reading First Grants must use only programs on the Reading First list.

Strand

In the Oregon Department of Education Standards, math, science, arts, English, physical education, and social science are the *subjects*. A **strand** is a subdivision of a subject; for example reading, speaking, writing, literature, and listening are the four strands in English. Jane Fielding in our interview *Without Excuse and Without Exception* describes the use of strands at Ball Elementary.

Education Glossary

Supplemental Services

Low-achieving, low-income students must be offered tutoring or other **supplemental services** outside of the normal school day/program; services are selected from an approved list. **Reading First** is a grant program for these services that provides a large list of programs approved in Oregon by the Oregon Reading First Center, which is a state initiative funded by the Federal Government as part of **NCLB**. Programs approved under Reading First must be scientifically-based. Other examples of supplemental programs mentioned by authors in this edition of the Education Forum are **DIBELS**, Reading Mastery, and Open Court. Supplemental services comprise a large array of commercial resources that may be purchased by schools.

TESA (Technology-Enhanced Student Assessment)

This method uses web-delivered tests to assess the accomplishments of students related to the **Certificate of Initial Mastery** and other **benchmarks**. The Oregon Department of Education obtains its testing program through Vantage Learning of Pennsylvania, a subsidiary of Vantage Laboratories and an international corporation providing many testing and assessment tools for business and education. Vantage provides educational and high-stakes assessment solutions in all 50 states and delivered more than 17 million assessments in 2003.

TESA's web-delivered tests offer schools many benefits over conventional paper-and-pencil tests. They eliminate the need for test booklets, answer sheets, and other conventional materials. They also eliminate all of the handling, shipping, and securing of paper-and-pencil test materials. Online tests organize student data on tests administered on multiple occasions over many years, simplifying the district's and school's file handling required before students testing. Additionally, teachers, instructional specialists, and students say they like TESA because individual students see the results of tests immediately.

Some positives given for TESA

- Students may have up to three opportunities to test
- Strand data provides immediate feedback on possible areas that may require further attention *(Please see Jane Fielding's interview, Without Excuse Without Exception -Ed.)*
- Adaptive testing allows students to test at their ability level
- A test may be stopped and restarted at any time

Some Challenges:

- Limited lab time in schools
- Difficult for some schools to obtain up-to-date technology
- Students cannot go back in a test
- Some teachers feel that reading on the computer may be a different skill than reading on paper.

Title I School

First enacted through the 1965 **Elementary and Secondary Education Act**, Title I is now the part of **No Child Left Behind** that supports programs in schools and school districts to improve the learning of children from low-income families. **Title I** distributes funds to schools based on the number of children from low-income families rather than on achievement scores. Under the **NCLB Title I** provision, the number of disadvantaged (low-income) students determines funding, but low achieving students get services regardless of income. Some educators refer to this as *school-wide Title I*. **Title I** is just one of the nine provisions under **NCLB** that school districts must meet to qualify for the federal education dollars attached to the **NCLB** legislation. Schools that receive **Title I** funds from the government (two-thirds of all schools in the US) and don't make **adequate yearly progress** face more severe consequences than schools that do not receive **Title I** funds. In Oregon, 38 percent of schools are **Title I**.

The Oregon Department of Education glossary<http://www.ode.state.or.us/search/topics/ is a good site to use for topics not listed here. Many of the educational programs are also identified at http://www.pen.k12.va.us/VDOE/Instruction/ModelsDocument.doc.

Whole Language

A philosophy of how literacy best develops in learners, a system in which children are immersed in rich literature. Skills are not taught in isolation, but are instead woven into the context of reading and writing. Whole language classrooms are student-centered, places where children read books of their choosing and freely write about topics of their interest. Drama, music, poetry, and writing are interwoven. Whole language supporters believe that children can be taught to read the same way they learn to speak their native language— by interacting with their environment. The ideas behind the development of whole language emerge from the **constructivist** approach to teaching. Please see Joanne Yatvin's article *"O Brave New World". Oregon's Future Winter 2005*

Whole language does not omit the teaching of phonics or other skills, as its critics claim. Rather, it attempts to integrate those skills into a flexible process aimed at comprehension of real written material not contrived teaching texts. Whole language teaching also uses the characteristics of oral language and written literature that young children are already familiar with to facilitate the shift from the speaking and listening habits of early childhood to the reading and writing modes required at school. *—Joanne Yatvin and Barbara Ruben, EdD*