

## List of acronyms

ABC	Anti-bullying campaign
ADHD	Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder
AFL	Australian Football League
AIM	Achievement improvement monitor
BST	Basic skills test
CPC	Child parent centre
DART	Developmental assessment resource for teachers
DECS	Department of Education and Children's Services
DEETYA	Department of Employment, Education, Training and Youth Affairs
DEST	Department of Education, Science and Training
DOTT	Duties other than teaching
EAB	Equivalent age band
ESL	English as a second language
FTE	Full-time equivalent
IEP	Individual education plans
IT	Information technology
LAP	Literacy assessment profile
LD	Learning difficulties
LOTE	Language other than English
MCG	Melbourne Cricket Ground
MTM	Mother tongue maintenance
NCP	Negotiated curriculum plan
NESB	Non-English-speaking background
NIT	Non-instructional time
RRB	Record of reading behaviours
SACSA	South Australian Curriculum Standards & Accountability
SAER	Students at educational risk
SD	Standard deviation
SES	Socio-economic status
SHIP	Students with high intellectual potential
SRC	Student Representative Council
SSABSA	Senior Secondary Assessment Board of South Australia
SSO	School Services Officer
TAFE	Technical and Further Education
TRT	Temporary relieving teacher
WALNA	Western Australian literacy and numeracy assessment

## Glossary of terms

**Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder** – a developmental disorder involving one or more of the basic cognitive processes relating to focusing and maintaining attention, and including hyperactivity and impulsivity

**Automaticity** – fluent processing of information that requires little effort or attention.

**Benchmarks** – a set of indicators or descriptors which represent nationally agreed minimum acceptable standards for literacy and numeracy at a particular year level.

**Capital** – can be cashed within various fields such as the school. Capital may be cultural, social or symbolic. Cultural capital has to do with culturally based values and patterns of consumption. Social capital has to do with holding status and prestige in various fields or situations. Symbolic capital is that which is material but not recognised as such, for example dress sense and style. Symbolic capital may be a disguised form of economic capital.

**Constructivism** – is a philosophical perspective derived from Kant which views reality as existing mainly in the mind, constructed or interpreted in terms of one's own perceptions.

**Decode** – to analyse spoken or graphic symbols of a familiar language to ascertain their intended meaning.

**Diagnostic teaching** – the use of the results of student performance on current tasks to plan future learning activities.

**Early intervention** – a program designed to supplement or substitute the existing program for those very young children judged to be at risk when they begin school.

**Environmental print** – consists of print and other graphic symbols, in addition to books, that are found in the physical environment, such as street signs, billboards and TV commercials.

**Ethnography** – the study of human groups through first hand observation.

**Everyday texts** – are those texts that are part of people's personal and public daily lives, such as diaries, lists, manuals and greeting cards.

**Explicit teaching** – direct and focused teaching of specific skills, which are often broken down and clearly explained to students.

**Expository text** – a form of speech or writing the main purpose of which is to set forth or explain.

**Fluency** the freedom from word identification problems that might hinder comprehension.

**Funds of knowledge** – the knowledge that children bring to school from their experiences at home and from the world outside of school.

**Genre** – a category used to classify texts, usually by form, technique, content or purpose.

**Grade norms** – the median score obtained by students at a particular year level at a given time of the year.

**Habitus** – a view of the world, including dispositions and aspirations.

**Literacy event** – a communication act that represents any occasion in which a piece of writing is integral to the nature of participants' interactions and their interpretative processes.

**Longitudinal research** – a way of studying behaviour or development by taking repeated measures on one or more variables on the same individual or groups over an extended period.

**Matthew effect** – relates to the reciprocity of processes whereby for example where reading skill leads to enjoyment in reading which leads to more reading which in turn improves skill.

**Metalinguistic skill** – is the ability to use language to understand and talk about language as an object in itself.

**Narrative text** – a written or spoken text, which tells a story, either real or fictional.

**Onset** – that part of a syllable preceding the syllable peak or nucleus, normally the consonant preceding a vowel.

**Orthography** – the study of the nature and use of symbols in a writing system.

**Outcome-based education** – an educational program that relies on performance assessment to determine its effectiveness.

**Pedagogy of reading** – the study of the teaching of reading in relation to materials, methods and problems involved in learning to read and in improving reading behaviours.

**Permeable curriculum** – is a dynamic curriculum that draws from the knowledge, skills and interests of the children who are being taught. Home and school are worlds are viewed as having shifting and intersecting boundaries. A 'permeable' curriculum supports crossing-over between worlds.

**Phoneme** – a minimal sound unit of speech which, when contrasted with another phoneme, affects the meaning of a word.

**Phonics** – a way of teaching reading and spelling that stresses symbol-sound relationships.

**Phonological awareness** – Awareness of the constituent sounds of words in learning to read and spell.

**Print awareness** – in emergent literacy, a learner's growing recognition of the conventions and characteristics of written language.

**Readers Theatre** – a performance of literature as a story, play or poem.

**Reading Recovery** – an early intervention program developed by Marie Clay for use with children at risk in reading progress after one year of school.

**Rime** – a vowel and any following consonants of a syllable.

**Scaffolding** – the gradual withdrawing of teacher support as the learner gains confidence and autonomy in the task.

**School literacies** – those literacies, which are taught and valued in classrooms.

**Semiotic systems** – systems of signs to communicate meaning.

**Social constructionism** – views knowledge as constructed symbolically in the mind through social interaction with others and is heavily dependent on culture, context, custom and historical specificity.

**Sight vocabulary** – words that are immediately recognised as a whole and do not require word analysis for identification.

**Standardised test** – a test with specified tasks and procedures so those testers working in different geographic areas may make comparable measurements.

**Syntactic awareness** – the recognition of grammatical patterns or structures in language. A phase of metalinguistic awareness.

This glossary of terms draws heavily on *The literacy dictionary: The vocabulary of reading and writing* (1995), edited by T.L. Harris and R.E. Hodges. IRA: Newark, Delaware.

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**Hill  
Comber  
Louden  
Rivalland  
Reid**



This Australian study of children's literacy development traces children's progress from the year before school through to the fourth year of schooling.

It provides detailed case studies on focus children, as well as comparative data on these children in relation to a cohort of children with whom they began school.

This project was funded by the Australian Commonwealth Department of Education, Science and Training. The research was undertaken by researchers from three Australian universities – the University of South Australia, Edith Cowan University and the University of New England.