**PLT VOCABULARY**

**Ability grouping.**The process of placing students of similar abilities into groups and attempting to match instruction to the needs of these groups.

**Accommodation.** Responding to a new object or event by either modifying an existing scheme or forming a new one.

**Accountability**. Mandated obligation of teachers and other school personnel to accept responsibility for students’ performance on high-stakes assessments.

**Achievement tests.**Standardized tests measuring how much students have learned in a given content area.

**Action research**. Research conducted by teachers and other school personnel to address issues and problems in their own schools or classrooms.

**Active listening**.  A technique in which the listener paraphrases the other person's message and directly mentions the feelings that underlie the message.

**Advance organizer**.  An introduction to a lesson that provides an overall organizational scheme for the lesson.

**African American English**. Dialect of some African American communities characterized by certain pronunciations, idioms, and grammatical constructions different from those of Standard English.

**Age-equivalent score**. Test score indicating the age level of students to whom a test taker performed most similarly.

**Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, The (ADA)**.Legislation in the United States that extends civil rights protection of persons with disabilities to private-sector employment, all public services, public accommodations, transportation, and telecommunication including physical accessibility and the removal of barriers to hotels, restaurants, grocery stores, and parks if that can be accomplished without great difficulty or expense.

**Analytic scoring**. Scoring a student’s performance on an assessment by evaluating various aspects of it separately.

**Anecdotal records**. Narrative accounts of observed student behavior or performance.

**Antecedent stimulus**. Stimulus that increases the likelihood that a particular response will follow.

**Antecedents. St**imuli that precede and induce behaviors.

**Applied behavior analysis (ABA)**.  Systematic application of stimulus–response      principles to address a chronic behavior problem.

**Apprenticeship.** Mentorship in which a learner works intensively with an experienced adult to learn how to perform complex new skills.

**Aptitude tests**. Standardized tests designed to predict the potential for future learning and measure general abilities developed over long periods of time.

**Assertive discipline. A**n approach to classroom management that promotes a clear and firm response style with students.

**Assessment**. Process of observing a sample of a student’s behavior and drawing inferences about the student’s knowledge and abilities.

**Assimilation.** Responding to and possibly interpreting a new event in a way that is consistent with an existing scheme.

**Attention.**  Focusing of mental processes on particular stimuli.

**Attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD)**. Disorder marked by inattention, inability to inhibit inappropriate thoughts and behaviors, or both.

**Attributions**. Personally constructed causal explanations for a success or failure.

**Attribution theory**. Theoretical perspective focusing on people’s explanations (*attributions*) concerning the causes of events that befall them, as well as on the behaviors that result from such explanations.

**Authentic activity**. An approach to instruction similar to one students might encounter in the outside world.

**Authentic assessment**. Assessment of students’ knowledge and skills in a “real-life” context.

**Autism spectrum disorders**. Disorders marked by impaired social cognition, social skills, and social interaction, presumably due to a brain abnormality; extreme forms often associated with significant cognitive and linguistic delays and highly unusual behaviors.

**Autonomy**. Basic need to control the course of one's own life.

**Backward design**. An approach to instructional planning in which a teacher first determines the desired end result (i.e., what knowledge and skills students should acquire) and then identifies appropriate assessments and instructional strategies.

**Behaviorism.**Theoretical perspective in which learning and behavior are described and explained in terms of stimulus-response relationships, and motivation is often the result of deficit-based drives. Adherents to this perspective are called behaviorists.

**Belongingness**. General sense that one is an important and valued member of the classroom.

**Bloom’s taxonomy**.  A taxonomy of six cognitive processes, varying in complexity, that lessons might be designed to foster.

**Central tendency**. Typical score for a group of scores.

**Challenge**. Situation in which a learner believes that success is possible with sufficient effort.

**Checklist**. Assessment tool with which a teacher evaluates student performance by indicating whether specific behaviors or qualities are present or absent.

**Classical conditioning.**Form of learning in which a new, involuntary response is acquired as a result of two stimuli being presented at the same time.

**Classroom climate**. Overall psychological atmosphere of the classroom.

**Classroom management**. Establishment and maintenance of a classroom environment conducive to learning and achievement.

**Co-teaching**.  In co-teaching arrangements, two or more teachers teach together in the same classroom where students benefit from each teacher’s specialty (e.g., a regular and a special education teacher working with regular students and students with a specific disability such as hearing impairments).

**Code of ethics**.  Set of professional standards for behavior of members of a profession.

**Cognitive apprenticeship.** Mentorship in which a teacher and a student work together on a challenging task and the teacher gives guidance about how to think about the task.

**Cognitive dissonance**. Feeling of mental discomfort caused by new information that conflicts with current knowledge or beliefs.

**Cognitive modeling.**Demonstrating how to think about as well as how to do a task.

**Cognitive style**. Characteristic way in which a learner tends to think about a task and process new information; typically comes into play automatically rather than by choice.

**Collaboration**.  Joint communication and decision making among educational professionals to create an optimal learning environment for students and especially for students with disabilities. A philosophy about how to relate to others—how to learn and work.

**Collective self-efficacy.** Shared belief of members of a group that they can be successful when they work together on a task.

**Community of learners.**Class in which teacher and students actively and collaboratively work to create a body of knowledge and help one another learn.

**Competence**. Basic need to be effective in dealing with the environment.

**Comprehension monitoring.**Process of checking oneself to be sure one understands and remembers newly acquired information.

**Computer-based instruction (CBI).** Instruction provided via computer technology.

**Concept map.**Diagram of concepts and their interrelationships; used to enhance learning and memory of a topic.

**Conceptual change.**Revision of one’s understanding of a topic in response to new information.

**Concrete operations stage.**Piaget’s third stage of cognitive development, in which adult-like logic appears but is limited to concrete reality.

**Conditioned response (CR).** Response that begins to be elicited by a particular (conditioned) stimulus through classical conditioning.

**Conditioned stimuli (CS).**  Stimulus that begins to elicit a particular response through classical conditioning.

**Conferences**.  Face-to-face interactions with teachers and students or teachers and parents to communicate strengths in student learning or areas that need improvement.

**Consequences**. Events (stimuli) that occur following a behavior and that influences the probability of the behaviors recurring.

**Conservation.**Realization that if nothing is added or taken away, amount stays the same regardless of alterations in shape or arrangement.

**Constructivism.**Theoretical perspective proposing that learners construct (rather than absorb) a body of knowledge from their experiences—knowledge that may or may not be an accurate representation of external reality. Adherents to this perspective are called constructivists.

**Content validity**. Extent to which an assessment includes a representative sample of tasks within the domain being assessed.

**Contingency**. Situation in which one event (e.g., reinforcement) happens only after another event (e.g., a specific response) has already occurred (one event is *contingent* on the other’s occurrence).

**Contingency contract**. Formal agreement between teacher and student that identifies behaviors the student will exhibit and the reinforcers that will follow.

**Convergent questions**. Questions that have a single correct answer.

**Convergent thinking**.  The process of pulling several pieces of information together to draw a conclusion or solve a problem.

**Cooperative learning.** Approach to instruction in which students work with a small group of peers to achieve a common goal and help one another learn.

**Creative thinking**.   New and original behavior that yields a productive and culturally appropriate result.

**Creativity (creative thinking).** New and original behavior that yields a productive and culturally appropriate result.

**Criterion-referenced score.** Assessment score that specifically indicates what a student knows or can do.

**Critical thinking**.  The process of evaluating the accuracy and worth of information and lines of reasoning.

**Crystallized intelligence**.  Knowledge and skills accumulated from prior experience, schooling, and culture.

**Cueing**. Use of simple signals to indicate that a certain behavior is desired or that a certain behavior should stop.

**Cultural bias**. Extent to which assessment tasks either offend or unfairly penalize some students because of their ethnicity, gender, or socioeconomic status.

**Cultural mismatch**. Situation in which a child’s home culture and the school culture hold conflicting expectations for the child’s behavior.

**Culture**. Behaviors and belief systems that members of a long-standing social group share and pass along to successive generations.

**Culture shock**. Sense of confusion when a student encounters a culture with behavioral expectations very different from those previously learned.

**Curricular web**.  Visual representation of organized content and useful for instructional planning as it identifies how concepts are connected.

**Declarative knowledge.** Knowledge related to “what is”—that is, to the nature of how things are, were, or will be.

**Deductive reasoning**. Process of drawing a logical inference about something that must be true, given other information that has already been presented as true.

**Developmental milestone.**   Appearance of a new, developmentally more advanced behavior.

**Diagnostic assessment**. Highly specialized, comprehensive and detailed procedures used to uncover persistent or recurring learning difficulties that require specially prepared diagnostic tests as well as various observational techniques.

**Dialect**. Form of a language that has certain unique pronunciations, idioms, and grammatical structures and is characteristic of a particular region or ethnic group.

**Differentiated instruction**. Practice of individualizing instructional methods, and possibly also individualizing specific content and instructional goals, to align with each student’s existing knowledge, skills, and needs.

**Direct instruction.** Approach to instruction that uses a variety of techniques (e.g., explanations, questions, guided and independent practice) in a fairly structured manner to promote learning of basic skills.

**Discovery learning.** Approach to instruction in which students develop an understanding of a topic through firsthand interaction with the environment.

**Disequilibrium.**Inability to explain new events with existing schemes; tends to be accompanied

by a sense of discomfort.

**Distributed intelligence**. Idea that people act more “intelligently” when they have physical, symbolic, or social assistance.

**Divergent questions**. Questions that have no single correct answer.

**Divergent thinking**.  The process of mentally moving in a variety of directions from a single idea.

**Due process**.The principle that government must respect all legal rights that are owed to a person.

**Dynamic assessment**. Systematic examination of how easily a student can acquire new knowledge or skills, perhaps with an adult’s assistance.

**Elaboration.**  Cognitive process in which learners embellish on new information based on what they already know.

**Emotional and behavioral disorders**. Emotional states and behaviors that consistently and significantly disrupt academic learning and performance.

**Encoding.**Changing the format of information being stored in memory in order to remember it more easily.

**Entity view of intelligence**. Belief that intelligence is a “thing” that is relatively permanent and unchangeable.

**Equilibrium.**State of being able to explain new events with existing schemes.

**Essay tests**. An assessment format that requires students to make extended written responses to questions or problems.

**Ethnic group**. People who have common historical roots, values, beliefs, and behaviors and who share a sense of interdependence.

**Ethnic identity**. Awareness of one’s membership in a particular ethnic or cultural group, and willingness to adopt behaviors characteristic of the group.

**ETS score**. Standard score with a mean of 500 and a standard deviation of 100.

**Expectancy-value theory**. Theoretical perspective proposing that human motivation is a function of two beliefs: that one can succeed in an activity (*expectancy*) and that there are direct or indirect benefits in performing the activity (*value*).

**Expository instruction.** Approach to instruction in which information is presented in more or less the same form in which students are expected to learn it.

**Extrinsic motivation**. Motivation resulting from factors external to the individual and unrelated to the task being performed.

**Extrinsic reinforcer**.  Reinforcer that comes from the outside environment, rather than from within the learner.

**Fair and nondiscriminatory evaluation**. Nonbiased, multifactored methods of evaluation to determine if child has disability and needs special education; nondiscriminatory evaluation with regard to race, culture, or native language, with placement decisions made on basis of multiple test scores and observations.

**Fluid intelligence**. Ability to acquire knowledge quickly and adapt effectively to new situations.

**Formal assessment**. Preplanned, systematic attempt to ascertain what students have learned.

**Formal operations stage.**Piaget’s fourth and final stage of cognitive development, in which logical reasoning processes are applied to abstract ideas as well as to concrete objects, and more sophisticated scientific and mathematical reasoning processes emerge.

**Formative evaluation**. Evaluation conducted before or during instruction to facilitate instructional planning and enhance students’ learning.

**Free and appropriate public education (FAPE)**.Special education and related services that (a) have been provided at public expense, under public supervision and direction and without charge; (b) meet the standards of the state educational agency; (c) include an appropriate preschool, elementary, or secondary school education in the state involved; and (d) are provided in conformity with the individualized education program.

**Functional analysis**.  Examination of inappropriate behavior and its antecedents and consequences to determine one or more purposes (functions) that the behavior might serve for the learner.

***g*.** Theoretical general factor in intelligence that influences one’s ability to learn in a wide variety of contexts.

**Giftedness**. Unusually high ability in one or more areas, to the point where students require special educational services to help them meet their full potential.

**Goal theory**. Theoretical perspective that portrays human motivation as being directed toward particular goals; the nature of these goals determines the specific ways in which people think and behave.

**Grade-equivalent score**. Test score indicating the grade level of students to whom a test taker performed most similarly.

**Group differences**. Consistently observed differences (on average) among diverse groups of students (e.g., students of different genders or ethnic backgrounds).

**Guided participation.**A child’s performance, with guidance and support, of an activity in the adult world.

**Heterogeneous ability grouping.**A strategy that groups students of varied ability instead of by grade/age level.

**High-stakes testing**. Practice of using students’ performance on a single assessment instrument to make major decisions about students or school personnel.

**Higher-level cognitive process**.  A cognitive process that involves going well beyond information specifically learned (e.g., by analyzing, applying, or evaluating it).

**Higher-level question**. Question that requires students to do something new with something they’ve learned (i.e., to elaborate on it in some way).

**Holistic scoring**. Summarizing a student’s performance on an assessment with a single score.

**Humanism**. Philosophical perspective in which people are seen as having tremendous potential for psychological growth and as continually striving to fulfill that potential. Adherents to this perspective are called humanists.

**Hypermedia**. Collection of multimedia, computer-based instructional materials (e.g., text, pictures, sound, animations) that students can examine in a sequence of their own choosing.

**I-messages**. A form of communication in which a person directly states what another person is doing, its effect, and how he or she feels about it (e.g., “When you all call out, I can’t concentrate on each answer, and I’m frustrated”).

**Inclusion**. The practice of educating all students, including those with severe and multiple disabilities, in neighborhood schools and general education classrooms.

**Incremental view of intelligence**. Belief that intelligence can improve with effort and practice.

**Individual constructivism.**Theoretical perspective that focuses on how people, as individuals, construct meaning from the events around them.

**Individual differences**. Variability in abilities and characteristics (intelligence, personality, etc.) among students at a particular age and within any group.

**Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)**. U.S. legislation granting educational rights to people with cognitive, emotional, or physical disabilities from birth until age 21; initially passed in 1975, it has been amended and reauthorized in 1997 and again in 2004. IDEA operates under six basic principles: zero reject, nondiscriminatory identification and evaluation, free and appropriate public education, least restrictive environment, due process, and parent and student participation in shared decision making with regard to educational planning.

**Individualized education program (IEP**).  Written document required by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (P.L. 94-142) for every child with a disability; includes statements of present performance, annual goals, instructional objectives, specific educational services needed, extent of participation in the general education program, evaluation procedures, and relevant dates, and must be signed by parents as well as educational personnel.

**Inductive reasoning**. Collecting data to draw a conclusion that may or may not be true.

**Informal assessment**. Assessment that results from a teacher’s spontaneous, day-to-day observations of how students behave and perform in class.

**Information processing theory.**Theoretical perspective that focuses on how learners mentally think about (process) new information and events and how such processes change with development.

**Instructional goal**.   A desired long-term outcome of instruction.

**Instructional objective**.  Desired outcome of a lesson or unit.

**Intelligence**. Ability to modify and adjust behaviors to accomplish new tasks successfully; involves many different mental processes and may vary in nature depending on one’s culture.

**Intelligence test**. General measure of current cognitive functioning, used primarily to predict academic achievement over the short run.

**Internalized motivation**. Adoption of others’ priorities and values as one’s own.

**Intrinsic motivation**. Motivation resulting from personal characteristics or inherent in the task being performed.

**Intrinsic reinforcer**.  Reinforcer provided by oneself or inherent in a task being performed.

**IQ score**. Score on an intelligence test, determined by comparing a student’s performance on the test with the performance of others in the same age group. For most tests, it is a standard score with a mean of 100 and a standard deviation of 15.

**IRE cycle**. Adult–child interaction marked by adult initiation (e.g., a question), child response, and adult evaluation.

**Least restrictive environment**. Educational setting for special needs child that most closely resembles a regular school program and also meets child’s special educational needs.

**Learned helplessness**. General, fairly pervasive belief that one is incapable of accomplishing tasks and has little or no control over the environment.

**Learner-centered instruction.** Approach to teaching in which instructional strategies are chosen largely on the basis of students’ existing abilities, predispositions, and needs.

**Learner-directed instruction.** Approach to instruction in which students have considerable say in the issues they address and how to address them.

**Learning**. Long-term change in mental representations or associations due to experience.

**Learning communities.** New and experienced teachers working together to pose problems, identify discrepancies between theories and practices, challenge common routines, draw on the work of others for generative frameworks, and attempt to make visible much of that which is taken for granted about learning and teaching.

**Learning disability**. Deficiency in one or more specific cognitive processes despite relatively normal cognitive functioning in other areas.

**Learning strategy.** Intentional use of one or more cognitive processes for a particular learning task.

**Lesson planning**.   Instructional planning that requires writing a predetermined guide for a lesson that identifies learning goals or objectives, necessary materials, instructional strategies, and one or more assessment methods.

**Lesson study**. A form of study group in which teachers collectively design a lesson, watch each other teach that lesson, and then share in discussion of it.

**Locus of causality**. The location—internal or external—of the cause of behavior.

**Logical consequence**. Unpleasant consequence that follows naturally or logically from a student’s misbehavior.

**Long-term memory.**Component of memory that holds knowledge and skills for a relatively long time.

**Lower-level question**. Question that requires students to express what they’ve learned in essentially the same form as they learned it.

**Mastery goal**. Desire to acquire additional knowledge or master new skills.

**Mastery learning**. Approach to instruction in which students learn one topic thoroughly before moving to a subsequent one.

**Mastery orientation**. General, fairly pervasive belief that one is capable of accomplishing challenging tasks.

**Maturation.**Unfolding of genetically controlled changes as a child develops.

**Mean (M).**Mathematical average of a set of scores.

**Meaningful learning.** Cognitive process in which learners relate new information to things they already know.

**Median**. Middle score in a group of scores.

**Mental retardation**. Disability characterized by significantly below-average general intelligence and deficits in practical and social skills.

**Mentoring**. Formal and informal relationships between a beginning teacher and an experienced teacher that are sources of information and support for the beginning teacher.

**Metacognition.**Knowledge and beliefs about one’s own cognitive processes, as well as conscious attempts to engage in behaviors and thought processes that increase learning and memory.

**Mnemonic.** Memory aid or trick designed to help students learn and remember a specific piece of information.

**Mode**. Most frequently occurring score.

**Model.** Person who demonstrates a behavior for someone else.

**Modeling.**Demonstrating a behavior for another; also, observing and imitating another’s behavior.

**Motivation**. Inner state that energizes, directs, and sustains behavior.

**Multicultural curriculum**. Instructional concepts that integrate perspectives and experiences of numerous diverse groups and representing various cultures, ethnicities, ages, gender, and religions.

**Multiple Intelligences, Theory of**. A theory that claims people are “intelligent” in many different areas, including cognitive, emotional, and social domains.

**Need for autonomy**. Basic need for independence.

**Need for arousal**. Ongoing need for either physical or cognitive stimulation.

**Need for competence**. Basic need to believe that one can deal effectively with the overall environment.

**Need for relatedness**. Basic need to feel socially connected to others and to secure others’ love and respect.

**Need for self-determination**. Basic need to believe that one has some autonomy and control regarding the course of one’s life.

**Negative reinforcement**. Phenomenon in which a response increases as a result of the removal (rather than presentation) of a stimulus.

**Normal distribution (normal curve)**. Theoretical pattern of educational and psychological characteristics in which most individuals lie somewhere in the middle range and only a few lie at either extreme.

**Norm-referenced score**. Assessment score that indicates how a student’s performance on an assessment compares with the average performance of others.

**Norms**. In assessment, data regarding the typical performance of various groups of students on a standardized test or other norm-referenced measure of a particular characteristic or ability.

**Objective testing**.  Multiple-choice, matching, true/false, short-answer, and fill-in tests; scoring answers does not require interpretation.

**Operant conditioning**. Form of learning in which a response increases in frequency as a result of its being followed by reinforcement.

**Overgeneralization.**Overly broad view of the objects or events that a concept includes.

**Paper-pencil assessment**. Assessment in which students provide written responses to written items.

**Para-educator**.  Also known as a paraprofessional educator, a person who is trained to serve as an instructional assistant or teacher aide and is responsible for specialized assistance to classroom teachers or students.

**Paraprofessionals**. Trained (training may vary from state to state) classroom aides who assist teachers; may include parents.

**Pedagogical content knowledge**. Knowledge about effective methods of teaching a specific content area.

**Pedagogical knowledge**. Knowledge about effective methods of teaching.

**Peer tutoring.** Approach to instruction in which one student provides instruction to help another student master a classroom topic.

**Percentile ranking**. Test score indicating the percentage of people in the norm group getting a raw score less than or equal to a particular student's raw score.

**Performance-approach goal**. Desire to look good and receive favorable judgments from others.

**Performance assessment**. Assessment in which students demonstrate their knowledge and skills in a nonwritten fashion.

**Performance-avoidance goal**.  Desire not to look bad or receive unfavorable judgments from others.

**Portfolio**. Collection of a student’s work systematically compiled over a lengthy time period.

**Positive behavioral support (PBS)**. Systematic intervention that addresses chronic misbehaviors by (a) identifying the purposes those behaviors might serve for a student and (b) providing more appropriate ways for a student to achieve the same ends.

**Positive psychology**. Theoretical perspective that portrays people as having many unique qualities that propel them to engage in productive, worthwhile activities; it shares early humanists’ belief that people strive to fulfill their potential but also shares contemporary psychologists’ belief that theories of motivation must be research-based.

**Positive reinforcement**. Phenomenon in which a response increases as a result of the presentation (rather than removal) of a stimulus.

**Practicality**. Extent to which an assessment instrument or procedure is inexpensive and easy to use and takes only a small amount of time to administer and score.

**Preoperational stage.**Piaget’s second stage of cognitive development, in which children can think about objects beyond their immediate view but do not yet reason in logical, adult-like ways.

**Presentation punishment**. Punishment involving presentation of a new stimulus, presumably one a learner finds unpleasant.

**Primary reinforcer**. Consequence that satisfies a biologically built-in need.

**Prior knowledge activation.**Process of reminding learners of things they have already learned relative to a new topic.

**Problem-based learning.** Classroom activity in which students acquire new knowledge and skills while working on a complex problem similar to those in the outside world.

**Problem solving**. Going beyond the simple application of previously learned rules to formulate new answers and achieve a goal.

**Procedural knowledge.**Knowledge concerning how to do something (e.g., a skill).

**Project-based learning.** Classroom activity in which students acquire new knowledge and skills while working on a complex, multifaceted project that yields a concrete end product.

**Prompting**. Questions that help students change a wrong provisional answer into the right final answer.

**Proximal goal**.  A concrete goal that can be accomplished within a short time period; it may be a stepping stone toward a longer-term goal.

**Punishment.** Consequence that decreases the frequency of the response it follows.

**Rating scale**. Assessment tool with which a teacher evaluates student performance by rating aspects of the performance on one or more continua.

**Raw score**. Assessment score based solely on the number or point value of correctly answered items.

**Reciprocal causation.**Mutual cause-and-effect relationships among environment, behavior, and personal variables as these three factors influence learning and development.

**Reciprocal teaching.** Approach to teaching reading and listening comprehension in which students take turns asking teacher-like questions of classmates.

**Reflections**. Students’ own evaluations and descriptions of their work and their feelings about their achievements

**Reflective listening**. A form of communication in which the listener paraphrases what the speaker has said, to check for understanding of content and emotional tone.

**Reflective practice**. The process of teachers’ thinking about and analyzing their work to assess its effectiveness.

**Rehearsal.** Cognitive process in which information is repeated over and over as a possible way of learning and remembering it.

**Reinforcement**.  Act of following a response with a reinforcer.

**Reinforcer**. Consequence of a response that leads to increased frequency of the response.

**Reliability**. Extent to which an assessment instrument yields consistent information about the knowledge, skills, or characteristics being assessed.

**Removal punishment**. Punishment involving removal of an existing stimulus, presumably one a learner finds desirable and doesn’t want to lose.

**Retrieval.**Process of “finding” information previously stored in memory.

**Rote learning.**Learning information in a relatively uninterpreted form, without making sense of it or attaching much meaning to it.

**Rubric**. List of components that a student’s performance on an assessment task should ideally include.

**Running record**. Narrative records of a child’s activities during a single period of time.

**Scaffolding.** Support mechanism that helps a learner successfully perform a task within his or her zone of proximal development.

**Schema.** General understanding of what an object or event is typically like.

**Scheme.**  In Piaget’s theory, organized group of similar actions or thoughts that are used repeatedly in response to the environment.

**Scope**.The breadth and depth of content to be covered in a curriculum over a certain period of time, e.g. week, grading period, year, or K-12.

**Secondary reinforcer**. Consequence that becomes reinforcing over time through its association with another reinforcer.

**Section 504 of the Vocational Rehabilitation Act of 1973**. A federal law that prohibits the denial of participation in, benefits of, or discrimination in any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance because of a documented disability, history of a disability, or the appearance of having a disability.

**Sequence**. The order in which content is delivered to learners over time.

**Self-determination theory**. Theoretical perspective proposing that human beings have a basic need for autonomy (*self-determination*) about the courses that their lives take; it further proposes that humans also have basic needs to feel competent and to have close, affectionate relationships with others. Also see *need for self-determination*.

**Self-efficacy**. Belief that one is capable of executing certain behaviors or reaching certain goals.

**Self-handicapping**. Behavior that undermines one’s success as a way of protecting self-worth during difficult tasks.

**Semantic knowledge**. Knowledge of the meanings of words and word combinations.

**Sensitive period.**Genetically determined age range during which a certain aspect of a child’s development is especially susceptible to environmental conditions.

**Sensorimotor stage.**Piaget’s first stage of cognitive development, in which schemes are based largely on behaviors and perceptions.

**Sensory register.**Component of memory that holds incoming information in an unanalyzed form for a very brief time (perhaps one to two seconds).

**Service learning.** Activity that promotes learning and development through participation in a meaningful community service project.

**Situated learning and cognition.**Knowledge, behaviors, and thinking skills acquired and used primarily within certain contexts, with limited if any use in other contexts.

**Situated motivation**. Motivation that emerges at least partly from conditions in a learner’s immediate environment.

**Situational interest**.Interest evoked temporarily by something in the environment.

**Spiral curriculum.**Bruner’s design for teaching that introduces the fundamental structure of all subjects early in the school years, then revisits the subjects in more and more complex forms over time.

**Standard deviation (SD)**. Statistic that reflects how close together or far apart a set of scores is and thereby indicates the variability of the scores.

**Standard English**. Form of English generally considered acceptable at school, as reflected in textbooks and grammar instruction.

**Standard score**. Test score indicating how far a student’s performance is from the mean with respect to standard deviation units.

**Standardization**. Extent to which assessments involve similar content and format and are administered and scored similarly for everyone.

**Standardized test**. Test developed by test-construction experts and published for use in many different schools and classrooms.

**Stanine**. Standard score with a mean of 5 and a standard deviation of 2; it is always reported as a whole number.

**Student at risk**. Student who has a high probability of failing to acquire the minimum academic skills necessary for success in the adult world.

**Student with special needs**. Student who is different enough from peers that he or she requires specially adapted instructional materials and practices.

**Social learning theory.**Theoretical perspective in which learning by observing others is the focus of study. Initially, this perspective focused largely on stimulus-response relationships. More recently, it has come to incorporate cognitive processes as well, hence its alternative name social cognitive theory.

**Social constructivism.**Theoretical perspective that focuses on people’s collective efforts to impose meaning on the world.

**Social negotiation**. Aspect of learning process that relies on collaboration with others to co-construct meaning while respecting different perspectives.

**Stage theory.**Theory that depicts development as a series of relatively discrete periods (*stages*).

**Subculture**. Group that resists the ways of the dominant culture and adopts its own norms for behavior.

**Summative evaluation**. Evaluation conducted after instruction to assess students’ final achievement.

**Task analysis**.  The process of identifying specific knowledge, behaviors, or cognitive processes necessary to master a particular subject area or skill.

**Teacher-directed instruction.** Approach to instruction in which the teacher is largely in control of the content and course of the lesson.

**Team teaching**. Teachers share the responsibility for two or more classes, dividing up the subject areas between them.

**Temperament**. Genetic predisposition to respond in particular ways to one’s physical and social environments.

**Transfer.**Phenomenon in which something a person has learned at one time affects how the person learns or performs in a later situation.

**Triarchic theory of intelligence**.  View of intelligence; proponents argue that that intelligent behavior arises from a balance between analytical, creative, and practical abilities.

**Unconditioned response (UCR).**  Response that is elicited by a particular (unconditioned) stimulus without prior learning.

**Unconditioned stimulus (UCS).**  Stimulus that elicits a particular response without prior learning.

**Undergeneralization.**Overly narrow view of the objects or events that a concept includes.

**Unit plan**.  A long-range plan covering one topic through multiple lessons and integrating the learning of skills and concepts for various subject areas including reading, writing, mathematics, science, social studies and the arts.

**Validity**. Extent to which an assessment instrument actually measures what it is intended to measure and allows appropriate inferences about the characteristic or ability in question.

**Variability**or**variance**.  Degree of difference or deviation from mean.

**Vicarious punishment.**  Phenomenon in which a response decreases in frequency when another person is observed being punished for that response.

**Vicarious reinforcement.**  Phenomenon in which a response increases in frequency when another person is observed being reinforced for that response.

**Visual imagery.** Process of forming mental pictures of objects or ideas.

**Visual-spatial ability**. Ability to imagine and mentally manipulate two-and three-dimensional figures.

**Wait time**. Length of time a teacher pauses, after either asking a question or hearing a student’s comment, before saying something.

**Working memory.**Component of memory that holds and actively thinks about and processes a limited amount of information.

***z*-score**. Standard score with a mean of 0 and a standard deviation of 1.

**Zone of proximal development (ZPD).**Range of tasks that a child can perform with the help and guidance of others but cannot yet perform independently.