

School District of Greenfield Glossary of Standards-Based Terms: Curriculum, Assessment, and Instruction

Ability – An educational aim that involves the whole person; is an integration of skills, behaviors, knowledge, values, attitudes, motives or dispositions, and self-perceptions; is developmental and can be learned; can be assessed; transfers across settings; is continually re-evaluated and re-defined; is important to personal and/or professional situations in life; is appropriate to the mission/aims and educational philosophy of the institution or program *(Alverno College)

Academic Prompt – A form of assessment between an authentic performance task and a short-answer test or quiz. Academic prompts are open-ended written performances via essays or extended constructed responses *(Wiggins, G. and McTighe, J.)

Academic Standards – Standards that specify what students should know and be able to do, what they might be asked to give evidence of standards, and how well they must perform. They include content, performance, and proficiency standards *(Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction—WI DPI)

Accountability – The obligation of reporting, explaining, or justifying standards, making them responsible, explicable, and answerable *(Reeves, D.)

Action Research – Systematic investigation by teachers of some aspect of their work in order to improve their effectiveness. Involves identifying a question or problem and then collecting and analyzing relevant data. (Differs from conventional research because in this case the participants are studying an aspect of their own work and they intend to use the results themselves.) For example, a teacher might decide to give students different assignments according to their assessed learning styles. If the teacher maintained records comparing student work before and after the change, he would be doing action research. If several educators worked together on such a project, it would be considered collaborative action research. *(Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development—ASCD)

Active Literacy – The integration of critical language skills (i.e., listening, speaking, reading, and writing) into the daily curriculum in every class *(Jacobs, H.H. and Johnson, A.)

Alignment – The process of linking content and performance standards to assessment, instruction and learning in classrooms *(Department of Defense—DOD Schools)

Alignment (via Curriculum Mapping) – Agreement or coherence between the essential questions, content, skills, assessments, and standards adopted by the district. Maps allow us to see three types of alignment: internal alignment, external alignment, and cumulative alignment K-12) *(Jacobs, H.H. and Johnson, A.)

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Alternative Assessment – Any types of assessment in which students create a response to a question, as opposed to assessments in which students choose a response from a given list, such as multiple-choice, true/false, or matching. Alternative assessments can include short answer questions, essays, performance assessments, oral presentations, demonstrations, exhibitions and portfolios *(Michigan Curriculum Framework)

Analytic Scoring – Scoring method in which separate scores are given for specific aspects of the performance or product *(Adapted from Airasian, P.W.)

Anecdotal Record – A short, written report of an individual’s behavior in a specific situation or circumstance *(Airasian, P.W.)

Assessment – An ongoing process aimed at understanding and improving student learning

Assessment OF Learning – Those assessments that happen to make statements of student learning status at a point in time to those outside the classroom, as when making student referrals or making decisions about programs *(Stiggins, R.)

Assignment – A particular task or job given to a student for a specific purpose * (Reeves, D.)

Authentic Assessment – Assessment that both mirrors and measures student performance in “real world” task and situations

Backward Design – A process for designing curriculum by beginning with the end in mind and designing toward that end *(Wiggins, G. and McTighe, J.)

Balanced Assessment Model – An assessment model using a variety of assessment methods and processes to determine student progress toward reaching predetermined outcomes *(Stiggins, R.)

Benchmark – The designated points at which a student’s performance can be measured on the way to becoming proficient in a standard

Best Practice – Thoughtful, informed, proven, state-of-the art teaching *(Zemelman, S., Daniels, H., and Hyde, A.)

Big Idea – In Understanding by Design, the core concepts, principles, theories, and processes that should serve as the focal point of curricula, instruction, and assessment. Big ideas are important and enduring. Big ideas are transferable beyond the scope of a particular unit *(Wiggins, G. and McTighe, J.)

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Bi-Level Analysis – The examination of student work and performance data on two levels—the subject matter and concepts and skills, and the requisite language capacity (i.e., linguistic patterns, three types of distinct vocabulary, and editing and revising strategies) *(Jacobs, H.H. and Johnson, A.)

Bloom’s Taxonomy – A hierarchical listing of learning levels, from basic to challenging (knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, evaluation) *(Anderson, L. and Krathwohl, D.)

Centers – A component of an interactive, student-centered classroom, centers are meaningful learning spaces designed by teachers to immerse students as they uncover content or concept-based understandings and skills. Centers include experiences that tap into multiple modes; they are created to reach different learning styles and preferences. Centers are places where students work independently or collaboratively to meet instructional goals. Some centers include: close reading, statistics, image, parallel or paired text, listening, audiovisual/film, compare/contrast, geography/maps, write around. Centers include thoughtfully constructed prompts/questions and clear directions *(Adapted from Teachers College)

Checklist – A written list of performance criteria associated with a particular activity or product on which an observer marks the pupil’s performance on each criterion using a scale using a scale that has only two choices (for example, “met” and “not yet”) *(Airasian, P.W.)

Child-Centered – Educational programs designed around the assumed characteristics and needs of the child, rather than of parents, teachers, or society *(ASCD)

Classroom-Based Assessment – Ongoing assessment by the teacher of student learning during the course of instruction in the school *(WI DPI)

Cognitive Demand – The type of cognition required of the student defined in Bloom’s Taxonomy of the Cognitive Domain; reflects a classification of thinking rather than a sequential hierarchy *(Washington State)

Collaboration – A relationship between individuals or organizations that enables the participants to accomplish goals more successfully than they could have separately. Educators are finding that they must collaborate with others to deal with increasingly complex issues. For example, schools and school systems often form partnerships with local businesses or social service agencies. Many schools teach students how to work with others on group projects. Some educators call this collaborative learning, although it is more commonly known as cooperative learning *(ASCD)

Concept – An abstract idea that points to a larger set of understandings, (e.g., peace, democracy, culture, power, nationalism, imperialism, war, etc.) *(Reeves, D.)

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Concurrent Validity Tests – Comparison of district-wide tests (involving a sample of students) with the Standards Achievement Report for those students. If the teacher-designed assessments are based on the same standards of performance as the district assessments, the results should be consistent in a high percentage of cases. Any disparities should be investigated *(Reeves, D.)

Consensus Map – In curriculum mapping, the roadmap a group of educators agrees to after examining and discussing diary maps and student results. Consensus maps usually contain content, skills, assessments, and resources. Consensus maps reflect the key instructional targets agreed to by a professional staff in each discipline which are to be addressed with consistency and flexibility in a school or district; they are often called an essential or district map *(Adapted from Jacobs, H.H.)

Constructed Response – Test items on which students must provide an answer (short answer, explanation of the process for determining the answer, etc.) in contrast with items (known as selected response or multiple-choice) on which students choose from among answers provided. Some psychometricians say that selected response items are preferable because they are scored by machine and the results are therefore more reliable. Others, however, believe constructed response items are a better test of what students can actually do *(ASCD)

Content – Information or essential meaning students need to know in a given standard or component of a standard in a course of study *(Reeves, D.)

Content Standards – Statements that define what students should know and be able to do in various subject areas and at different points in their education

Context – Circumstances in which a particular event occurs; background information or structure to help make sense of new information *(Reeves, D.)

Cooperative Learning – Classroom activities in which students work together to achieve their individual learning goals *(WI DPI)

Criteria – A collection of qualitative descriptors of what is expected in a performance *(Alverno College)

Criterion-Referenced Grading – Determining the quality of a pupil's performance by comparing it to pre-established standards of mastery *(Airasian, P.W.)

Curriculum – The skills, performances, attitudes, and values pupils are expected to learn from schooling; includes statements of desired pupil outcomes, descriptions of materials, and the planned sequence that will be used to teach pupils *(Airasian, P.W.)

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Curriculum Map – A communication tool used to show what knowledge, skills and concepts, and assessments are included in students’ actual learning experiences; curriculum maps are used in both planning and revising curriculum, assessment, and instruction in order to attain and maintain optimal results in student learning and achievement *(Adapted from Jacobs, H.H.)

Curriculum Mapping – A systemic process that can improve student performance by sharpening the alignment of all aspects of the curriculum to reduce repetitions and gaps, and strengthen the articulation of skills *(Jacobs, H.H. and Johnson, A.)

Depth of Knowledge (DOK) – The complexity or depth of understanding required to answer or explain an assessment related item. Originally developed for mathematics and science standards, the model has been used in language arts, mathematics, science, and history/social studies. There are four distinct depth of knowledge levels. Level 1 includes basic recall of facts, concepts, information, or procedures. Level 2 includes skills and concepts such as the use of information (graphs) or requires two or more steps with decision points along the way. Level 3 includes strategic thinking that requires reasoning and is abstract and complex. Level 4 includes extended thinking such as an investigation or application to real work *(Adapted from Webb, N.)

Diary Map – In curriculum mapping, an individual log of what actually happened in the classroom. The basic components of a diary map include content, skills, and assessments. A diary map is where data are entered on an ongoing basis. Periodically, whether every few weeks or trimester, you will stop and reflect on your work with learners and make an entry *(Jacobs, H.H. and Johnson, A.)

Declarative Knowledge – Factual knowledge available to be used by a learner *(WI DPI)

Deconstruction (of a Standard) – A multi-step process designed to specify the teachable components of a standard. The first step is to label the ultimate level of cognitive demand of the standard/learning target. Next is to use the language of the standard/target, as well as previous teaching and learning experiences, and list the knowledge, reasoning, skill(s), product/performance and/or dispositions needed to be successful in the expectation of the standard. Deconstruction is used to identify the type(s) of assessment needed to align to the cognitive demand of the standard/learning target (Stage II in UbD), as well as the instructional planning and experiences needed to equip the learner with requisite knowledge, skills, etc. (Stage III) *(Adapted from Stiggins, R.)

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Differentiation – Attending to the learning needs of a particular student or small group of students rather than the more typical pattern of teaching the class as though all individuals in it were basically the same. The goal of a differentiated classroom is maximum student growth and individual success. Common data to use to differentiate, according to student need, include: learning profiles, readiness levels, and interests. Common ways for teachers to differentiate include via process, product, and/or content *(Tomlinson, C.)

Differentiated Professional Development – Modified professional learning based on the level of understanding and application of the learners *(Adapted from Jacobs, H.H. and Johnson, A.)

Directions – A set of instructions that tells students what to do to complete a specific task

Disciplinary Literacy – In Wisconsin, disciplinary literacy is defined as the confluence of content knowledge, experiences, and skills merged with the ability to read, write, listen, speak, think critically and perform in a way that is meaningful within the context of a given field *(WI DPI)

Dispositions – [Learning] targets that reflect attitudes and feeling states, such as “I enjoy writing” and “I believe it is important to preserve the environment”. They represent important affective goals we hold for students as byproducts of their educational experience, and as such, are not assessed for the purposes of grading, but are still vital to student success. Therefore, they must be identified as goals, assessed using aligned tools, and purposefully included when planning learning experiences *(Stiggins, R.)

Enduring Understanding – The specific inferences, important ideas, or core processes that are central to a discipline and transferable to new situations; enduring understandings have lasting value beyond the classroom *(Wiggins, G. and McTighe, J.)

Engaging Scenario – The “hook” in a performance assessment designed to attract and hold student interest that sets the context for the set of tasks *(Reeves, D.)

Entry Question – A simple, thought-provoking question that opens a lesson or unit. It often introduces a key idea or understanding in an accessible way. Effective entry questions spur discussion about a common experience, provocative issue, or perplexing problems, as a lead-in to the unit and essential questions *(Wiggins, G. and McTighe, J.)

Essay – A relatively brief literary composition usually in prose, giving the author’s views on a particular topic *(Harris, T. and Hodges, R.)

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Essential Question – A question that lies at the heart of a subject or a curriculum (as opposed to being either trivial or leading), and promotes inquiry and uncoverage of a subject. Essential questions thus do not yield a single straightforward answer (as a leading question does) but produce different plausible responses, about which thoughtful and knowledgeable people may disagree *(Wiggins, G. and McTighe, J.)

Evaluation – Making judgments about the quality of student achievement over a period of time, primarily for the purpose of communicating about student achievement *(O'Connor, K.)

Exemplar - Typical or representative; worthy of being imitated; term used to represent proficient student work *(Adapted from Reeves, D.)

Examples – Refers to samples of student work used to show other students what they are expected to do. An exemplar can also help teachers (and students themselves) evaluate student work when it is completed. For example, a teacher might have students write a letter suitable for publication in the local newspaper commenting on a community issue. The teacher could provide rubrics specifying the criteria for evaluating the letters, along with sample letters (exemplars) written by previous students on a different topic at each level of quality. The various levels would serve as anchor papers, whose purpose is to exemplify a variety of levels of performance. Those that demonstrate expected (proficient) performance would serve as exemplars. Exemplars are sometimes called model papers/products *(Adapted from ASCD)

Exhibitions – Demanding projects designed and conducted by students. Theodore Sizer, founder of the Coalition of Essential Schools, proposed the notion of exhibitions in his book *Horace's Compromise*. Noting that students in 19th century New England secondary schools were expected to present evidence of their learning as a requirement for graduation, he suggested that a similar procedure could make modern high school education more meaningful *(ASCD)

Externality – Achievement of distance from classroom learning experiences by various degrees; externality can be achieved by bringing in others not usually involved in the classroom to provide feedback to students, using common, public criteria *(Alverno College)

Facet of Understanding – A way in which a person's understanding manifests itself. Understanding by Design identifies six kinds of understanding: self-knowledge, empathy, application, perspective, interpretation, and explanation *(Wiggins, G. and McTighe, J.)

Feedback – Information provided by a teacher, peer or other on a person's performance in relationship to criteria, with the purpose of improving future performance *(Alverno College)

Feedforward – To employ effective feedback to improve the teaching and learning process; feedback is not valuable until the learner uses it to improve the next performance, and the teacher uses it to guide future instructional decisions *(Adapted from Davies, A.)

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Formative Assessment – Assessment for the purpose of learning

G21 – The School District of Greenfield’s 21st Century skills and dispositions identified by various stakeholders as vital to college, career and life success. They include: creativity, collaboration, communication, global competence, problem solving, self-directed learning and well-being. Students are able to demonstrate these abilities in a variety of ways in multiple content areas *(School District of Greenfield)

Genre of Performance – A type or category of intellectual performance or product *(Wiggins, G. and McTighe, J.)

GRASPS – In Understanding by Design, GRASPS are performance tasks found in Stage II. GRASPS is an acronym that stands for Goal, Role, Audience, Situation, Performance or Product, and Standards for Success. They are meant to be authentic, engaging experiences aligned to Stage I. (Identified Learning Goals) *(Adapted from Wiggins, G. and McTighe, J.)

Habits of Mind – An identified set of sixteen problem solving, life related skills necessary to effectively operate in society and promote strategic reasoning, insightfulness, perseverance, creativity and craftsmanship. The understanding and application of these Habits of Mind serve to provide the individual with skills to work through real life situations that equip that person to respond using awareness (cues), thought, and intentional strategy in order to gain a positive outcome. The sixteen Habits of Mind are: persisting; managing impulsivity; listening to others with understanding and empathy; thinking flexibly; thinking about our thinking (metacognition); striving for accuracy and precision; questioning and posing problems; applying past knowledge to new situations; thinking and communicating with clarity and precision; gathering data through all senses; creating, imagining, and innovating; responding with wonderment and awe; taking responsible risks; finding humor; thinking interdependently; learning continuously *(Costa, A. and Kallick, B.)

Higher-Order Thinking – Researcher Lauren Resnick has defined higher-order thinking as the kind of thinking needed when the path to finding a solution is not specified, and that yields multiple solutions rather than one. Higher-order thinking requires mental effort because it involves interpretation, self-regulation, and the use of multiple criteria, which may be conflicting. Teachers who seek to develop students' higher-order thinking abilities engage them in analyzing, comparing, contrasting, generalizing, problem solving, investigating, experimenting, and creating, rather than only in recalling information. Other terms used to refer to higher-order thinking include critical thinking, complex reasoning, and thinking skills *(ASCD)

Holistic Scoring – A scoring method in which a single score is given to represent the overall quality of the essay across all dimensions *(Airasian, P.W.)

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Interdisciplinary – Involving the integration or joining together of two or more branches of learning, i.e., history and English; science and art; math, music and physical education, etc.
*(Reeves, D.)

Information Literacy – The ability to access, evaluate, and use information from a variety of sources *(WI DPI)

Integrated Curriculum – A curricular organization intended to bring into close relationship the concepts, skills, and values of separately taught subjects to make them mutually reinforcing
*(Harris, T. and Hodges, R.)

Instruction – Classroom techniques and strategies of teachers, both planned and spontaneous, which foster student learning *(WI DPI)

Instructional Coaching – A partnership approach to continuous growth that provides intensive differentiated support to teachers so that they are able to implement proven practices. The key components of instructional coaching are: equality, choice, voice, dialogue, reflection, praxis, and reciprocity *(Knight, J.)

Inter-Rater Reliability – A term used to describe the relationship of the scores (ratings) between and among two or more judges (raters). This can be computed in a variety of ways from simple correlations to percentage of agreement. The larger numbers indicate a greater degree of agreement *(Reeves, D.)

Inquiry-based Learning – Describes a range of philosophical, curricular, and pedagogical approaches to teaching. Its core premises include the requirement that learning should be based around learners' questions. Pedagogy and curriculum requires students to work together to solve problems rather than receiving abundant direct instructions on what to do from the teacher. The teacher's job in an inquiry learning environment is therefore not to provide knowledge, but instead to help students along the process of discovering knowledge themselves. In this form of instruction, it is proposed that teachers should be viewed as facilitators of learning rather than vessels of knowledge *(Daniels, H. and Harvey, S.)

Iterative – Requiring continual revisiting of earlier work; an iterative approach is thus the opposite of linear or step-by-step processes *(Wiggins, G. and McTighe, J.)

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Learning Intention – The learning intention for a lesson or series of lessons is a statement which describes clearly what the teacher wants the students to know, understand, be able to do, and/or be like as a result of the learning experiences and activities designed by the teacher. The teacher knows why the students are engaged in a particular activity, but the students are not always able to differentiate between the activity and the learning that it is meant to promote. A carefully framed learning intention will direct students' attention to the learning. The learning intention emphasizes what the students will *learn*, rather than what they will *do*. Early in the lesson, the teacher shares this learning intention with his or her students, either orally or in writing. The learning intention is referred to throughout the lesson and revisited at the end of the lesson to allow the teacher to assess student performance in order to use the results to make instructional modifications in future lessons. Revisiting the learning intention also provides students with the ability to self-assess to see to what degree they have met the expectation(s) of the learning target by comparing their current performance to the expectations of the aligned success criteria *(Adapted from the Assessment Reform Group)

Learning Target – Standards-based, grade-specific statement of what students should know and be able to do in various content areas; learning targets are labeled as one of the following, based on the level of expectation: knowledge, understanding, reasoning (ability), skill, product or performance, or disposition; learning targets are the teachable components of the standard *(Stiggins, R.)

Like-Group Reviews – Read throughs [of curriculum maps] that focus on a specific curricular area. For example, all of the teachers in the language arts department might read through the course maps for their department to look for gaps, repetitions, and the articulation of skills *(Jacobs, H.H. and Johnson, A.)

Metacognition – The ability to be conscious of and, to some degree, control over one's own thinking. Educators have come to use the prefix "meta" to refer to the application of a process to the process itself. (For example, meta-analysis is analysis of a large number of research studies on a particular topic.) In this case, cognition is thinking, so metacognition means thinking about one's own thinking. You are using metacognition when you can track your progress is solving a multi-step problem or when you realize that you have been looking at a page in a book without following the meaning and backtrack until you find the place where your mind began to wander *(ASCD)

Mixed-Group Reviews – Read throughs of [curriculum] maps the involve teachers from different curricular areas. These types of reviews can help provide a better understanding of the curriculum across the school and district. They can also be used to identify where specific cross-curricular skills or specific school and district goals are included in the curriculum *(Jacobs, H.H. and Johnson, A.)

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Modeling – Teaching methods and resources that serve as an example for imitation and comparison *(Reeves, D.)

Multiple Measures – Assessment that measures student performance in a variety of ways. Multiple measures may include standardized tests, teacher observations, classroom performance assessments, and portfolios *(WI DPI)

Non-negotiables – The core elements that must be taught in the curriculum; often displayed in district or essential (curriculum) maps*(Jacobs, H.H. and Johnson, A.)

Needs Assessment – A broad-based appraisal of objectives and conditions in a particular situation as they interrelate; an attempt to relate goals to existing strengths, weaknesses, and feasible changes *(Harris, T. and Hodges, R.)

On-Demand Assessment – Measurement of learning, the timing of which is determined by the teacher, administrator, district, or state rather than as an ongoing component of the instructional process *(WI DPI)

Open-Ended – Question or task with no single “right” answer. Allows responses from multiple perspectives, understandings, and experiences *(Reeves, D.)

Outcomes – Statements that describe what students need to know, understand, be able to do and value as a result of deeply understanding the lessons in the unit *(Wiggins, G.)

Pathways to Success – Collaboratively developed by stakeholders within the School District of Greenfield, these nine essential outcomes, under the three themes of “Kids First”, “Engagement”, and “Teaching and Learning” focus and drive all educational aims across the district *(School District of Greenfield)

Pedagogy – The art, science, or profession of teaching; instructional strategies and activities *(WI DPI)

Performance Assessment – Direct, systematic observation of an actual student performance or examples of student performances and rating of that performance according to pre-established performance criteria

Performance Indicator(s) – Indicators that gauge the achievement of the outcome and provide evidence that help teachers and students understand and measure where students are (in relation to meeting the standard or target), where they are headed, and how far they are from where they want to be. Performance indicators can provide valuable information to determine next steps *(Adapted from Wiggins, G.)

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Performance Standards – Explicit definitions and concrete examples of how well students are expected to learn the material represented by content standards

Performance Task – An authentic, meaningful task that requires the students to synthesize knowledge and skills learned apply them to construct a response, create a product and/or performance that demonstrates understanding *(DOD Schools)

Portfolio – A well-defined, purposeful collection of pupil products or performances that shows pupil achievement of particular skills over time. Portfolios may be tangible or virtual/digital *(Adapted from Airasian, P.W.)

Prerequisite Knowledge and Skill – The knowledge and skill required to successfully perform a culminating performance task or achieve a targeted understanding *(Wiggins, G. and McTighe, J.)

Product – The tangible and stable result of a performance and the processes that led to it *(Wiggins, G. and McTighe, J.)

Professional Learning Community (PLC) – An organization whose membership strives to embody the following characteristics: a shared mission, vision, values and goals; collective inquiry; collaborative teams; action orientation and experimentation; continuous improvement; and results orientation *(Adapted from DuFour, R. and Eaker, R.)

Proficient – The level of performance students must meet to demonstrate competency in a particular standard or set of standards *(Reeves, R.)

Proficiency-Based Learning – A learning model in which student achievement is measured in relation to specific standards and outcomes *(CESA 1)

Proficiency Standards – Standards that describe the quality of student work in relation to a standard (i.e. minimal, basic, proficient or advanced) *(CESA 1)

Projected Map – In curriculum mapping, the planned roadmap; projected maps usually include content, skills, assessments, strategies, differentiated needs, and resources. They are often mapped out by using a calendar and are created prior to teaching a course or subject then revised on an ongoing basis as the learning progresses *(Jacobs, H.H. and Johnson, A.)

Read Through Process – The process following the development of [curriculum] maps in which teachers become editors of the maps, identifying overlaps and gaps, prioritizing, and taking action based on consensus *(Adapted from Jacobs, H.H. and Johnson, A.)

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Recursive Processes – Characterized by moving back and forth through a document in either reading or creating it, as new ideas are developed or problems encountered. In creating a written composition, moving back and forth among the prewriting, drafting, revising, and editing phases of writing *(WI DPI)

Reflection – The process of thinking about one’s practice and experiences, whether by internal musing, dialogue, or expressive writing, as in a journal *(WI DPI)

Reliability – The extent to which an assessment consistently assesses whatever it is assessing; if an assessment is reliable, it will yield the same or nearly the same information on reassessment *(Airasian, P.W.)

Resultant Knowledge and Skill – Knowledge and skill that are meant to result from a unit of study. In addition to the targeted understanding, teachers identify other desired outcomes (for example, “skill in listening”) *(Wiggins, G. and McTighe, J.)

Rubric – An established set of criteria for scoring or rating students’ performance on assessments, portfolios, writing samples, or other performance tasks

Scaffolding – Instructional strategy used to offer students a system of support (e.g., a vocabulary list of definitions, a visual example showing how to design a word web, the use of both visual and verbal directions, etc.) for achieving competence in the learning task * (Reeves, D.)

SCANS (Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills) Report – A 1991 report from the Department of Labor identifying the knowledge, skills, and abilities that future workers would need to succeed in entry-level jobs. Competencies listed in the SCANS report included basic skills (reading, writing, mathematics, listening, and speaking), thinking skills (creative thinking, decision making, problem solving, visualizing symbols, reasoning, and knowing how to learn), and personal qualities (responsibility, self-esteem, sociability, self-management, and integrity) *(ASCD)

Scenario – An outline or dramatic plot or situation *(Reeves, D.)

School Culture – The sum of the values, cultures, safety practices, and organizational structures within a school that cause it to function and react in particular ways. Some schools are said to have a nurturing environment that recognizes children and treats them as individuals; others may have the feel of authoritarian structures where rules are strictly enforced and hierarchical control is strong. Teaching practices, diversity, and the relationships among administrators, teachers, parents, and students contribute to school climate. Although the two terms are somewhat interchangeable, school climate refers mostly to the school's effects on students, whereas school culture refers more to the way teachers and other staff members work together *(ASCD)

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Selected Response – Preferred by some testing specialists over the more common term "multiple choice" because it is more specific and contrasts with "constructed response," meaning items that require the student to provide an answer *(ASCD)

Self-Assessment – The process of doing a systematic review of one's own performance, usually for the purpose of improving future performance

Sizing-up Assessments – Assessments used by teachers in the first weeks of school to get to know pupils so that they can be organized into a classroom society with rules, communication and control *(Airasian, P.W.)

Spiral Curriculum – A curriculum designed to present important concepts, skills, topics, etc., for additional, more complex study at successive levels of student maturity *(Harris, T. and Hodges, R.)

Standard – Defines the level of skill students must demonstrate on the learning outcome

Standardized Tests – Assessments that are administered and assessed in exactly the same ways for all students. Traditional standardized tests are typically mass-produced and machine-assessed and are designed to measure skills and knowledge that are thought to be taught to all students in a fairly standardized way. Performance assessments can also be standardized if they are administered and assessed in the same way for all students. Standardization is an important consideration if comparisons are to be made between scores of different individuals or groups *(Michigan Curriculum Framework)

Standards Achievement Report (SAR) – One type of scoring guide designed to replace the traditional report card, consisting of the rubric (e.g., for English Language Arts, "read and recognize literature as an expression of human experience"), a description of the Performance Standard (e.g., 4=exemplary, 3=proficient, 2=progressing, 1= not meeting the standard), teacher and parent comments and a plan for meeting the standard *(Reeves, D.)

Strategy – A practiced but flexible way of responding to recognizable contexts, situations, or demands. Because no single study technique or writing process is best for all students, effective teachers design tasks to help every student to acquire a range of strategies and to learn how to choose and apply those that best fit their needs and the literacy situation at hand *(WI DPI)

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Stations – A station is a component of an interactive, student-centered classroom. Stations provide a variety of purposefully constructed experiences designed to deepen understanding and/or skill capacity. They offer various slices of learning experiences that combine to create a whole. For example, if a learning intention were focused on *independent delivery of proficient impromptu public speaking*, stations might include: video of a variety of examples of impromptu speeches, space to draft an impromptu speech, criteria to assess and revise, space for students to practice delivering a speech, practice providing feedback and applying audience etiquette. All of these stations would be important for students to experience; however, students could travel through in small groups to each, discussing what they have learned as they go *(Greenfield Public Schools)

Success Criterion/Criteria – A success criterion (plural = criteria) describes the expected degree to which the learner must reach in order to be successful in the learning intention. When quality is expected (vs. simple completion), success criteria are written using qualitative language designed to indicate levels of performance *(Adapted from the Assessment Reform Group)

Summative Evaluation – The final evaluation, usually quantitative in practice, of the degree to which the goals and objectives of a program have been attained *(Harris, T. and Hodges, R.)

Target-Method-Match – Selecting an assessment type based on the level of demand of the (learning) target *(Stiggins, R.)

Targeted Work Groups – Task forces that area organized flexibly to respond to specific emerging needs. When the work of the task force is completed, it is disbanded *(Jacobs, H.H.; Johnson, A.)

Teacher Self-Assessment –The process of making decisions about one’s own teaching performance based on evidence and reflection *(Airasian, P.W.)

Test – A formal, systemic procedure for obtaining a sample of pupils’ behavior; the results of a test are used to make generalizations about how pupils would perform on similar but untested behaviors *(Airasian, P.W.)

Transfer Goals – Identifies the effective uses of content understanding, knowledge, and skill that we seek in the long run, i.e., what we want students to be able to do when they confront new challenges—both in and outside of school *(Wiggins, G. and McTighe, J.)

Transferability – The ability to use knowledge appropriately and fruitfully in a new or different context from that in which it was initially learned *(Wiggins, G. and McTighe, J.)

Twenty-first Century Skills – Skills individuals need to be successful in the 21st Century; also called the “Seven Survival Skills”, they include: critical thinking and problem solving; collaboration across networks and leading by influence; agility and adaptability; initiative and entrepreneurship; effective oral and written communication; accessing and analyzing information; and curiosity and imagination *(Wagner, T.)

School District of Greenfield Glossary of Standards-Based Terms: Curriculum, Assessment, and Instruction

Understanding – An insight into ideas, people, situations, and processes manifested in various appropriate performances. To understand is to be able to make sense of what one knows, to be able to know why it’s so, and to have the ability to use it in various situations and contexts *(Wiggins, G. and McTighe, J.)

Understanding by Design – A flexible planning framework consisting of three stages: (1) Desired Results (2) Evidence (3) Learning Plan; Understanding by Design (UbD) is intended to be a collaborative and iterative process that prioritizes student learning, understanding, and transferability *(Wiggins, G. and McTighe, J.)

Uncoverage – A teaching approach that is required for all matters of understanding. To “uncover” a subject is to do the opposite of “covering” it, namely to go into depth with the purpose of maximizing student understanding and thereby increase the likelihood of transfer *(Adapted from Wiggins, G. and McTighe, J.)

Unpacking (Standards) – Dividing content or performance standards into the pieces listed in the literal and explicit language of the standard; may include knowledge, understanding, reasoning, skill, product or performance, and/or disposition *(Adapted from Stiggins, R.)

Validity – A reflection of the intended measure. Validity means that we are assessing what we think we are assessing *(Adapted from Reeves, D.)

Written Conversation – A high-leverage interactive strategy designed to maximize student engagement and participation. Written conversations take many forms but include all learners recording (including written words as well as graphical depictions) to respond to teacher, student, and/or curricular-generated prompts *(Adapted from Daniels, E. and Daniels, H.)

Zone of Proximal Development – The distance between a learner’s actual development level as determined through independent problem solving and (his or her) potential development (level) as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or a collaboration with more capable peers *(Vygotsky, L. in Harris, T. and Hodges, R.)

Resource: Weins, M.S. (1998). “A is For Assessment and Accountability.”
Research in Developmental Education, Volume 15, Issue 2.

* Indicates source other than Weins.