

Dictionary of Education Language

One way to improve the quality of a professional experience placement is for all key stakeholders to understand the language and acronyms used in public schools



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Respectful Person - Centred Language

Inappropriate Term	Respectful Language	Context/additional information <i>Students and families will have terminology they are comfortable with</i>
Special Education	Inclusive Education	Inclusive education means all students can access and fully participate in learning, supported by reasonable adjustments and teaching strategies tailored to meet their individual needs.
Mentally handicapped/ retarded	Intellectual disability Cognitive disability	Or 'intellectual disability'
Disabled child/ren	Student with a disability or additional learning and support needs	Or 'student' Our emphasis is on the child or student. As such the word child, student or their name always comes first. The disability is secondary to the individual.
Cripple/d; spastic	Student with a physical disability/ cerebral palsy	As above
Down's girl; Mongol	Girl/ Student with Down Syndrome or Trisomy 21	As above
"S/he's got Down's"	Child who presents with... (syndrome)	
Wheelie; wheelchair bound	Student who uses a wheelchair	Wheelchair user
Confined to a wheelchair	Uses a wheelchair	Or wheelchair user The word "confined" infers limitations and barriers
....suffers with...	...presents with... ...experiences...	syndrome
Psycho; crazy;	Student with mental health needs; Student is anxious or highly anxious	Erratic/ unpredictable/ challenging

Disabled	Accessible	Flip the reference eg parking/ toilet
Normal children; healthy children	Children/ Students	Refer to children as a general rule when referring to neurotypical children or children that do not present with additional learning and support needs
Terminally ill	Life limiting	
Fit; fitting; attack	X (name) is having a seizure	Refers to ictal activity
Feeding time	Mealtime support programs	
Tantrum; lost-it	Mental health needs; sensory overload, emotional dysregulation	Escalating behaviour; highly anxious, requires support to regulate emotions
Nappies	Incontinence pads/ products	Respecting our older students
Nappy changing	Meeting hygiene needs/personal care/personal hygiene program	
Bib	Apron/ tabard	Respecting our older students

Communication terminology

Term	Definition
Augmentative and Alternate Communication (AAC)	Communication devices, systems, strategies and tools that replace or support speech/communication are known as (AAC). These tools support a person with complex communication needs.
assume competence	Assume students understand everything you say, do and teach.
attribute meaning	Verbalising the meaning you are attributing to a student's response. This teaches a student how their actions are perceived by another person. Eg "You are smiling. I can see that you like this song" or "You are looking at the red paint. You would like to paint your flower red"
eyegaze technology	An emerging technology that allows students to use the movements of their eyes to control a computer or communication device.
expressive communication	Refers to the ability to communicate thoughts, feelings, needs and wants to another person using verbal language/non-verbal cues/AAC
communication partner	The person receiving the message The person who assists an AAC user to construct a message.
core vocab/core words	Core words are the words that make up the majority of everything we say. They include pronouns, verbs, adjectives and prepositions. Core systems are considered best practice in special education.
LAMP	Language Acquisition through Motor Planning. A high tech AAC that incorporates core-words and consistent placement of symbols so users can become autonomous and fluent in communicating
latency	Also known as 'processing time' and 'wait time'. Providing enough time for a student to process the information before asking/commenting again. Students may require students between 3 and 30 seconds to process instruction/expectation. Some students may require longer
minimal verbal	An approach which aims to reduce verbal output by educators. The idea being that the longer a sentence/instruction is, the more time a student requires to process the message.
modelling	Demonstrating expectations demonstrating how to navigate AAC to locate core words as you 'think out loud'. Also showing students correct responses. Is occasionally referred to as Aided Language Input. The idea is that you can't expect a student to learn a system without first showing them how.

partner assisted scanning	A method in which a communication partner attributes meaning to the message expressed using eye gaze to guide the communication. eg, using core vocab, a student looks at the symbol for more. The partner verbalises the message they received. 'You want more'
PECS	Picture Exchange Communication System. A process that involves teaching communication initiation by exchanging visual pictures.
PCS	Picture communication symbols. Also referred colloquially as 'visuals.' Any image that is used to convey a message. Most PCS are Boardmaker symbols or Symbol Stix
PODD	Pragmatic Organisation Dynamic Display. A low-tech AAC book which is organised through pragmatics- the ways that we use language socially and with purpose. There are many different versions of PODD
Proloquo2Go	A high tech AAC that incorporates core-words and consistent placement of symbols so users can become autonomous and fluent in communicating. Usually presented in the 7x11 format
receptive communication	The language a person receives, hears and processes. May require strategies to support understanding, such as PCS, minimal words, KWS. A person can understand and process more words than they may express. Relates to expressive communication and assume competency
switch	an AAC in which a student presses a button to operate another tool or to play a pre-recorded message.
think out loud	verbalising your thoughts to teach students your thought processes or alternate thought processes
visuals	provide a constant point of reference for students. The instruction on a visual is clear, consistent and requires less time to process the expectation.

Emotional and Sensory Regulation Terminology

Term	Definition
alerting strategy	a strategy or activity used to stimulate a student's level of alertness.
calming strategy	a strategy or activity that reduces the student's level of stimulation.
co-regulation	an adult initiating a strategy to help a student regulate their emotions. This may include providing a quiet space, a drink of water, a sensory activity
In the Zone	In order to engage learners within classrooms; educators require specific knowledge and understanding, tools and strategies. The latest research and literature indicate that an individual's brain needs to be in a regulated/calm yet alert state in order for functional learning to take place. In other words, the student has to be In the Zone for Learning in order for higher order processes such as attention, reading, writing, critical thinking, problem solving, reasoning and decision-making to occur
self-regulation	a student is aware of their emotional state and independently selects and implements a strategy to regulate their emotions.
sensory system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visual • Auditory • Tactile • Olfactory (smell) • Gustatory (taste) • Vestibular (sense of head movement in space) • Proprioception (sensation from muscles and joints) <p>Interoception (refers to sensations related to the physiological/physical condition of the body) Interoceptors are internal sensors that provide a sense of what our internal organs are feeling. Hunger and thirst are examples of interoception</p>
sensory break	Providing time, activities and items for students to have their sensory needs met in order to be in the zone for learning. Many students require multiple sensory breaks throughout the day.

Education Strategies Terminology

Term	Definition
ABC	<p>Antecedent, Behaviour, Consequence an assessment tool which examines the behaviour from a person-centred perspective. The aim of this type of approach is to help us understand the reason for the behaviour and develop a suitable, consistent response for ongoing support.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A: Antecedents / Activating Event – What led to or caused the behaviour? • B: Behaviour – What is the behaviour? • C: Consequences – What is the result of the behaviour? <p>D: Decide and Debrief - What will be done differently to disrupt the behaviour?</p>
adjustments	<p>changes made to curriculum, assessment or the environment to ensure all students with complex learning support needs can access and participate in education on the same basis as their peers without disability.</p>
classroom organisation	<p>the environment considerations to establish an effective learning environment where time on learning is maximised. Arranging classroom for special education can take on a variety of factors including but not limited to: areas for different/designated teaching, areas that minimize distraction, break out spaces for sensory breaks and different types of furniture that allow students to access work.</p>
differentiation	<p>providing students with learning activities for their individual level of development that support the same syllabus outcomes and content</p>
FBA	<p>Functional Behaviour Assessment a systematic approach that helps identify and understand the following aspects of behaviour:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Form: the observable behaviour – what are they actually doing? • Function: the underlying cause – what is the goal of the behaviour? • Context: the setting – where does it occur? What happens immediately before and after? <p>FBA can help:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identify the triggers and the goal of disruptive behaviour • decide on a new approach to try • set targets, benchmarks and evaluation strategies • implement and monitor progress <p>assess outcomes.</p>
prompt hierarchy	<p>refers to the order and different levels of support required for a student to learn a skill or complete a task. The idea is that the level of support is faded so students become independent</p>

	<p>Least to most is providing support that is least intrusive to support success.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Independent – no support • Verbal – telling the student exactly what is required of them • Gestural – pointing, nodding • Modelling – demonstrating the action • Partial physical – touching elbow or shoulder to initiate action <p>Full Physical – hand under hand or hand over hand to guide student to complete step or activity.</p>
schedules	A visual or written timetable. Can be used to sequence a session, whole day or week. It is a reference point develop predictability in a set timeframe.
Social story	a story written in the student’s perspective which aims to teach a social skill by explicitly demonstrating appropriate behaviours and expectations.
SSP	School for Specific Purposes Specialised education settings that support eligible students with a diagnosed intellectual or physical disability, Autism Spectrum Disorder, mental health considerations, sensory processing disorder or behaviour disorders. Classes are reduced in size
strength – based approach	A strength-based approach is a positive psychology perspective that emphasises the strengths, capabilities and resources of a student. It focuses on what a student can do rather than limiting their development or opportunities by adopting a deficit model, focusing on what they can’t do (yet).
task analysis	the process of breaking a skill down into smaller, more manageable components. Once a task analysis is complete, it can be used to teach students a skill that is too challenging to teach all at once.
TEACCH	TEACCH is an evidence-based program used to promote learning and development – in particular, communication and social skills, independence, coping skills and skills for daily life like dressing, washing, cleaning teeth and so on. The way TEACCH is used depends on the age of the students.

Acronyms – Educational Settings

Acronym	Term	Notes
ACER	Australian Council for Educational Research	
AITSL	Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership	
AP	Assistant Principal	
APLaST	Assistant Principal Learning and Support Team	
ARC	Australian Research Council	
ASR	Annual School Report	
BSP	Behaviour Support Plan	
CESE	Centre for Educational Statistics and Evaluation	
CWU	Child Wellbeing Unit	
DCJ	Department of Communities of Justice	Formally DoCs and FaCs
DDA	Disability Discrimination Act	
DoE	Department of Education	
DP	Deputy Principal	
DSE	Disability Standards for Education	
EAL/D	English as an Additional Language/ Dialect	
ERN	Enrolment Registration Number	
HCP	Health Care Plan	
HSLO	Home School Liaison Officer	
IL	Instructional Leader	
LaST	Learning and Support Team	
LOTE	Language Other Than English	
NAP	New Arrivals Program	

NESA	New South Wales Education Standards Authority	
OOHC	Out of Home Care	
PBL	Positive Behaviour for Learning	
PD	Professional Development	
PDP	Professional Development Plan	
PL	Professional Learning	
PPA	Primary Principals Association	
RA	Risk Assessment	
SAM	School Administration Manager	1 per school
SAO	School Administration Officer	
SDD	School Development Day	SDD
SIP	Strategic Improvement Plan	
SLSO	School Learning Support Officer	Used to be called teacher's aides
SPA	Secondary Principals Association	
SRN	Student Registration Number	
ASTP	Assisted School Travel Program	Based in Wollongong
ATSO	Assisted Travel Support Officer	Supports students on transport
IEP	Individual Education Plan	
ILP	Individual Learning Plan	
ISTH	Itinerant Support Teacher- hearing	Specialist teacher
ISTV	Itinerant Support Teacher- vision	Specialist teacher
KWS	Key Word Sign	
OT	Occupational Therapist	
PECS	Picture Exchange Communication System	A prescriptive program to teach communication skills
PCS	Picture Communication Symbol	Any visual – not to be confused with PECS

PLP	Personalised Learning Plan	Also known as IEP or ILP
SEPLA	Special Education Principal & Leaders Association	Support organisation
SSP	School for Specific Purposes	Not always referenced

Disability Codes		
Code	Term	Notes
IM	Intellectual (disability) Mild	
IO	Intellectual (disability) Moderate	
IS	Intellectual (disability) Severe	
IN1	Intellectual (disability) Mild	
IN2	Intellectual (disability) Moderate	
IN3	Intellectual (disability) Severe	
PH1	Physical disability (at a) moderate (level)	
PH2	Physical disability (at a) severe (level)	
Au	Autism	
VI	Vision impaired	
HI	Hearing impaired	