

GLOSSARY FOR REFLECTIVE PRACTICE

academic games. Games that use inconsequential competition and mild pressure to focus students' attention on content.

activity. A task used to help students achieve a stated learning goal. Activities are usually completed in class with guidance and help from the teacher. Each activity used in class should be linked to a specific learning goal.

ad hoc group. An impromptu group formed for a specific purpose that disbands once the purpose is accomplished.

affection. Students' sense about whether a teacher likes them and cares about them.

argument. A set of compiled premises that lead to a conclusion.

artifact. A tangible product of learning. Student artifacts may take the form of notes, reports, organizers, recorded performances, multimedia presentations, or scripts from dramatic presentations.

assessment. An evaluation that is used to gather information about a student's knowledge or skill relative to a specific learning goal.

assignment. A task used to help students achieve a stated learning goal. Assignments are typically completed outside regular class time, although students might begin an assignment during class and complete it as homework. Each assignment used in class should be linked to a specific learning goal.

attention. A student's response to classroom stimuli. Attention can be affected by a student's feelings and interests. For example, a student who feels accepted by his or her peers or who is highly interested in the content is likely to have high attention. In contrast, a student who does not feel respected or valued or who is not interested in the content may exhibit low attention.

clarification questions. Questions that help students clear up misconceptions, reveal errors, or sharpen focus.

classroom layout. The physical arrangement of furniture, technology, centers, decorations, equipment, and materials in a classroom.

climate. The general tone and feel of a classroom. The climate of the classroom can be affected by many variables, including the teacher's demeanor, the physical layout of the room, the engagement of students, and the pacing of instruction.

cognitively complex tasks. Tasks that ask students to make decisions, solve problems, experiment, or investigate.

competence. One's ability to properly perform a skill, strategy, or process.

confidence. One's level of certainty about one's abilities, effectiveness, or knowledge.

critical information. The segments of content associated with each learning goal that are critical to a student's ability to achieve the learning goal. There are usually only two to three segments of critical information per learning goal.

critical-input experience. A lesson designed to present critical information to students.

cue. A verbal or nonverbal teaching device that creates a link to previously-taught content. For example, if a teacher has previously taught a procedure, he or she might use a hand signal as a cue to help students remember to apply the procedure in a specific situation.

declarative knowledge. Information such as vocabulary terms, facts, time sequences, generalizations, or principles. The definition of mitosis, the text of the Gettysburg address, the order of events during World War II, common characteristics of all cells, or rules by which a game is played are all examples of declarative knowledge.

demonstration. The teacher shows content to students rather than telling them about it.

digestible bites (small chunks). Discrete instructional segments within a critical-input experience. Based on students' prior knowledge about a topic, the size of these chunks can be adjusted, but students should have an opportunity for processing after each chunk.

distributed practice. Practice sessions that have relatively longer intervals between them (that is, weekly practice). Distributed practice is necessary during the later phases of skill development in order to develop and maintain fluency with a skill or process.

dyad. A group of two.

elaborative inferences. Explicit statements, elicited using elaborative interrogation, which a student makes about the reasoning behind his or her answer to a question.

engagement. A student's level of attention to and interest in the content.

enthusiasm. The teacher's communication to students of his or her personal interest and sense of importance about a topic.

errors in reasoning. Inaccuracies that can reduce the truth and validity of an argument. Common errors include faulty logic, attack, weak reference, and misinformation.

explicit questions. Questions that help students articulate the generalizations and principles that underlie their logic and reasoning.

feedback. Information provided to students about their performance or progress.

fluency. Ability of a person to perform a skill or process without giving it his or her full attention. Most adults, for example, have achieved fluency with the process of driving a car.

formal means of assessment (obtrusive assessment). An assessment that interrupts the normal flow of activity in the classroom. Examples include a paper-and-pencil test, a demonstration, or a performance.

formative approach to assessment. Process that involves the teacher gathering data over the course of a unit, semester, or year about a student's level of performance relative to specific learning goals. At the end of the unit, semester, or year, the teacher assigns final scores that best represent each student's final knowledge status for each learning goal.

friendly controversy. Activities that engage students in dialogue regarding topics about which they have differing opinions. The teacher should ensure that the dialogue does not become overly heated and should try to engage as many students as possible in the discussion.

- homework.** Any teacher-assigned task intended for students to perform outside school hours. Homework should be structured to ensure high completion rates, have a well-articulated purpose, relate directly to identified learning goals, and involve parents or guardians in appropriate ways.
- hypothesis.** A tentative argument or explanation that is usually confirmed or disconfirmed by an experiment or investigation.
- inconsequential competition.** Any activity which asks students to compete in the spirit of fun. Rewards should be minimal for this type of competition and team membership should rotate systematically so that all students are likely to be on winning and losing teams over the course of a semester or year.
- inference.** A statement in which some of the information required to understand it is not explicitly presented.
- inferential questions.** Questions that help students elaborate on information they have gathered through experience.
- informal fallacy.** An argument in which the stated premises do not support the conclusion.
- informal means of assessment (unobtrusive assessment).** Way of assessing that does not interrupt the flow of activity in the classroom. Examples include teacher observations and anecdotal notes.
- intensity.** The teacher's use of an excited tone of voice and style of communication when talking about a topic to students.
- knowledge gain.** The difference between a student's initial and final scores on a specific learning goal.
- learning goal (learning objective).** A goal that states what students should know or be able to do as a result of instruction. Learning goals are normally stated using one of the following formats:
- Students will understand _____ (used for declarative knowledge).
 - Students will be able to _____ (used for procedural knowledge).
 - Students will understand _____ and be able to _____ (used for declarative and procedural knowledge).
- levels of performance.** Descriptive statements, presented on a scale, that indicate what knowledge or skills are required for 2.0, 3.0, or 4.0 performance.
- linguistic representation.** Expression using words and language. For example, learning activities that ask students to read, write, or speak.
- link or linkage.** The connection that a student makes between new content and previously learned content.
- logic.** A stepwise progression used to reason toward inferences or conclusions.
- low-expectancy students.** Students for whom the teacher has low expectations.
- massed practice.** Practice sessions that occur frequently (that is, daily practice). Massed practice is necessary during the early phases of skill development in order to accurately learn a skill or process.
- misconception.** A mistaken belief or wrong idea.
- nonlinguistic representation.** Expression that does not require language or words. For instance, learning activities that ask students to draw, build, model, or dramatize, or to use graphic organizers, physical models, pictographs or pictures, flow charts, kinesthetic representations, and mnemonics.
- objectivity.** The teacher's projection of a consistent emotional tone in the classroom.
- pacing.** The speed and flow of classroom activities.
- practice.** The gradual shaping of a process or skill over the course of multiple repetitions. Practice involves three phases: (1) frequent structured practice, (2) varied practice, and (3) fluency practice.
- previewing.** A practice that prepares students to interact with new content more effectively.

procedural knowledge. The ability to perform skills, strategies, or processes. The ability to shoot a free throw in basketball, the ability to edit a piece of writing, and the ability to compose a symphony are all examples of procedural knowledge.

procedures. Specific, descriptive statements that articulate what actions a student must take to follow a rule. Procedures often describe what following a rule looks like, sounds like, or feels like.

process. A task that requires the use of multiple skills or strategies. The same process may be performed differently by different students and may lead to different products. Composing an essay is an example of a process.

processing. Students' interaction with new information to gain understanding. This might involve translating the information into a different form than the one in which it was first presented, as a student does when they create a nonlinguistic representation for information taken out of a text. It could also mean using the information to solve a problem, make a decision, investigate a hypothesis, or conduct an experiment.

reasoning. The cognitive process used to construct support for inferences or conclusions.

reflecting. The examination of a past experience with the goal of performing more effectively in the future. While reflecting on a learning experience, a student might examine his or her levels of clarity or confusion about the content, the quality of his or her products and performances using the content, or how his or her actions facilitated learning.

response rates. The speed, pattern, and nature of students' answers to questions.

reteaching. A practice required when students have not learned the content necessary to achieve the learning goal. When reteaching, the teacher should use different activities and assignments than those used when the content was originally taught.

revision. The process by which a learner corrects or augments his or her knowledge about a specific topic.

routines. Sets of rules and procedures that organize and expedite frequent tasks in a classroom. Passing out and collecting papers, moving into groups, or rotating through centers are all tasks that can be completed more efficiently if routines are in place.

rules. General expectations or standards for student behavior. A single rule can encompass a wide range of expected student behaviors.

scale (rubric). A continuum that articulates distinct levels of knowledge and skill relative to a specific learning goal. A scale is used to score assessments and measure student progress toward a learning goal.

score. A data point that represents a student's level of performance on an assessment.

skill. A discrete element of a larger process. For example, typing is a motor skill necessary to the larger process of conducting research on the Internet, and spelling is a mental skill necessary to the larger process of writing a book.

status. A student's current level of achievement for a specific learning goal.

strategy. A flow of techniques used to accomplish a process. For example, when dividing fractions, a student might use the strategy of inverting the second fraction and multiplying.

summarizing. The process of creating a personalized, pared-down version of information. Summaries are abbreviated or parsimonious versions of information stated in a student's own words.

transitions. The methods that a teacher uses to move students from one segment of a lesson to the next. Transitions should follow a logical pattern that facilitates student processing.

triad. A group of three.

wait time. A pause of at least three seconds that occurs after the teacher poses a question, while a student is responding, after a student has responded, or during the presentation of new information.

withitness. A teacher's awareness of potential problems in the classroom and his or her quick attention to those situations.