Rivet MLL Badge: Glossary of Terms

Academic language refers to the language of the discipline that students need to participate and engage in meaningful ways in the content areas.

Adapt refers to adjusting the process for learning, the product, or the materials in a way that aligns with a learner's individual strengths while preserving the depth, complexity, and expectations of the standard..

Amplify refers to anticipating where students may need additional support in accessing the content, and/ or developing key skills and language by providing multiple entry points to do so as opposed to simplifying the text or content. Amplification can include organizing information in a clear and coherent way, creating additional opportunities for interacting with concept skills and language, providing visuals or manipulatives, modeling problem-solving, engaging in think-alouds, and offering further context to aid understanding, etc.

Asset-based approach recognizes and builds upon the cultural, linguistic, and experiential strengths students bring to school, especially multilingual learners, rather than focusing on perceived deficits or gaps.

Cross-functional Team is a collaborative group composed of professionals from different roles, departments, or areas of expertise who work together toward a common goal—in this case, the academic and linguistic success of multilingual learners (MLLs). These teams are composed of (but not limited to) Special Educators, Multilingual Specialists (ESL/ELD), General Ed/Core, and Content Teachers, coaches and leaders; who integrate knowledge and resources across silos to align instruction, language development, and language supports.

Culturally relevant pedagogy is a philosophical outlook and pedagogical approach that centers the students and empowers them intellectually, socially, emotionally, and politically by using cultural referents to impart knowledge, skills, and attitudes.

Culturally responsive pedagogy refers to bridging students' prior

experiences and knowledge with school experiences and aligning teaching styles to and through the strengths of students.

Culturally sustaining pedagogy extends the asset-based approach of culturally relevant/responsive pedagogy that affirms, connects, and utilizes the prior experiences, backgrounds, and frames of reference of students in their learning and teaching processes and situates schools as a place where all students' cultural ways of being are sustained and valued.

Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Curriculum Literacy is the knowledge and ability educators need to use high-quality instructional materials (HQIM) in ways that meet the needs of all multilingual learners, including newcomers. It involves three core practices **(1) Determine Quality** – Evaluate whether the materials support culturally and linguistically responsive instruction. **(2) Integrate Language & Content** – Identify the content goals and the language skills embedded within the materials. **(3) Prepare Responsibly** – Deliver instruction using the materials in ways that promote access for multilingual learners.

Enabling Conditions are school-based systems, structures, and cultures that make it possible for teachers to engage inclusive practices. These conditions foster coherence and build the capacity needed to implement strategies that advance equity and access.

English Learner Typologies English Learner (EL) Typologies refer to distinct categories used to describe the diverse experiences, language proficiencies, and educational assets and needs of students who are learning English as an additional language. Understanding these typologies helps educators tailor instruction and support more effectively. Here are three commonly used typologies:

Typology	Definition	Key Characteristics	Instructional Needs
Newcomer ELs	Recently arrived (typically <2 years in U.S.); beginning stages of English)	Emerging English proficiency (WIDA Level 1–2) Need for cultural/social integration support	Foundational English instruction should emphasize oral language, everyday academic functions; supported by visuals, structured routines, and peer interaction.

SIFE/SLIFE (Students with Interrupted or Limited Formal Education)	English learners with gaps in schooling and literacy in any language.	Limited or interrupted schooling in home country Low literacy in L1 and/or L2 Trauma and displacement common	Scaffolded instruction that builds oral language, literacy, and numeracy while addressing content gaps. Instruction should be hands-on, culturally responsive, and trauma-informed, with flexible pacing and integrated language and academic goals.
Developing ELs	In U.S. schools (typically 2–5 years; progressing in English proficiency)	Socially proficient but struggle with academic language- Mid-level proficiency (WIDA Level 3–4)- Need for academic discourse practice	Continued support in academic language, including vocabulary, complex syntax, and discourse patterns. Instruction should balance content rigor with strategic scaffolds, interactive routines, and formative feedback. Opportunities to speak, write, and explain thinking across subjects are key to growth.
Long-Term ELs	In U.S. schools (typically >6 years; not yet proficient in academic English)	Plateaued at intermediate levels Gaps in academic literacy Potential disengagement or lack of confidence	Targeted instruction in advanced academic language, with a focus on reading comprehension, writing, and oral-to-written transfer. They benefit from identity-affirming pedagogy, consistent feedback on language use, and structured opportunities to engage in extended discourse.

Formative Assessment refers to various on-going methods to evaluate students' understanding, learning needs, and academic progress in language and content during a lesson, unit, or course. This is in contrast to summative assessments which are used to evaluate student learning, skill

acquisition, and academic achievement at the conclusion of a defined instructional period.

Funds of knowledge describes the life and academic bodies of knowledge, world views, skills, and cultural ways of being that students, their families, and their communities possess that can be used as resources to enhance students' learning and ability to make connections between what they are learning and what they already know.

Integration [of Content and Language]: Teaching academic language and content together so that language skills are developed in context and aligned to the lesson's concepts, tasks, and standards.

Language Demands refer to the specific ways that vocabulary, discourse, and syntax is used in receptive language skills (listening, reading) and productive language skills (speaking writing) to engage in and successfully complete the communicative or academic task at hand.

Language Development is the ongoing process through which multilingual learners build their ability to comprehend, produce, and use language in academic contexts. This includes the development of vocabulary, grammar, and discourse patterns needed to engage in grade-level content instruction across listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

Language Functions capture what one does with language (i.e., the objectives and purposes of language use); in other words, it explains why someone says something (e.g., persuading, expressing cause and effect, elaborating, making a hypothesis/prediction, giving instructions • introducing ourselves • making requests, describing processes • comparing or contrasting things or ideas, and • classifying objects or ideas).

Language Modalities in education refer to listening, speaking, reading and writing modes of communication.

Language Objective is a clear statement that identifies the language skills (e.g., vocabulary, sentence structures, language functions) students need to develop and use to successfully access and engage with academic content. Language objectives support multilingual learners in using language to learn and demonstrate understanding across content areas.

Metalinguistic Awareness is the ability to think about, reflect on, and manipulate language as a system. It involves recognizing how language works—its structure, rules, and uses—and being able to talk about language itself rather than just using it. This includes understanding things like grammar, word meanings, language choices, and differences between languages or registers (e.g., formal vs. informal).

Oral language development is foundational to literacy and academic success. It supports multilingual learners in building background knowledge, accessing complex texts, engaging in peer collaboration, and expressing understanding across content areas. Strong oral language skills also serve as a bridge to reading comprehension and written expression.

Translanguaging is the process by which multilingual speakers fluidly use their languages as an integrated communication system in order to maximize their communicative potential. For teachers, translanguaging refers to the pedagogical practice of enabling students to utilize their full linguistic repertoire so that they can learn content, make meaning and communicate effectively.

Scaffolding refers to instructional techniques that support students to be able to access content and engage in tasks to move them toward stronger understanding and greater independence in their learning.

Schema refers to the mental structure or cognitive familiarity with categories of information and relationships among them, preconceived ideas, frameworks of some aspect of the world.

Student Agency refers to the ability for a student to have a voice in an educational setting.