
CalTPA Glossary

This glossary contains terms as used in this version of the CalTPA Performance Assessment Guide. Reference this glossary to determine if you are using the terms appropriately in your responses to the cycle directions.

504 Plan. Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, a federal civil rights law that prohibits discrimination against individuals with disabilities and protects students from being denied participation in school programs, services, or activities solely on the basis of disability. Much like an IEP, a 504 Plan is a written document detailing the services, accommodations, and modifications that can help students with learning and attention issues learn and participate in the general education curriculum. Section 504 defines disability on a broader basis than does IDEA. That is why students who are not eligible for an IEP may qualify for a 504 Plan. Students who meet the definition of a person with a disability under Section 504 are those who have a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities, have a record of such an impairment, or are regarded as having such an impairment. The 504 Plan should include a description of the disability, the major life activity limited, the basis for determining the disability and its educational impact, necessary accommodations, and placement in the least restrictive environment.

Academic language development. Refers to the oral, written, auditory, and visual language proficiency required to learn effectively in schools and academic programs—in other words, it is the language used in classroom lessons, books, tests, and assignments, and it is the language that students are expected to learn and achieve fluency in. Frequently contrasted with “conversational” or “social” language, academic language includes a variety of formal-language skills—such as vocabulary, grammar, punctuation, syntax, discipline-specific terminology, or rhetorical conventions—that allow students to acquire knowledge and academic skills while also successfully navigating school policies, assignments, expectations, and cultural norms. Even though students may be highly intelligent and capable, for example, they may still struggle in a school setting if they have not yet mastered certain terms and concepts, or learned how to express themselves and their ideas in expected ways.

Accommodation. Service or support related to a student’s disability that allows the student to fully access a given subject matter and to accurately demonstrate knowledge without requiring a fundamental alteration to the assignment’s or test’s standard or expectation.



Adaptations. Changes made by a teacher to lesson or assessment components, usually to the lesson format or to a test, that allow students to participate effectively in the lesson or the assessment. For example, adaptations can include use of different or additional resources, assistance from another student or adult, or additional time.

Annotations. Notes added by way of comment or explanation.

Assessment. The formal or informal process of collecting evidence about student progress, analyzing and evaluating progress, communicating about progress, and adjusting teaching practices based on reflection on a teacher’s practice. There are multiple forms of assessment, including achievement or other standardized tests, exercises or assignments that enable teachers to measure student progress, and student work, and assessments may include feedback from parents or other family members. For additional information, see “Assessment” on the [California Department of Education website](#).

Asset. An asset-based approach focuses on strengths. It views diversity in thought, culture, and traits as a positive asset. Teachers and students alike are valued for what they bring to the classroom rather than being characterized by what they may need to work on or lack, and therefore are considered assets. Student assets include diversity in **thinking** (e.g., critical, creative, inductive, deductive, holistic, detail focused), **culture** (e.g., ethnic, racial, gender-identity), **traits** (e.g., temperament, introversion/extroversion, social and emotional strengths, creativity, leadership/collaboration ability), and **intelligences** (e.g., musical-rhythmic, visual-spatial, verbal-linguistic, logical mathematical, bodily-kinesthetic), **as well as unique experiences or skills** (e.g., travel, outside projects, relevant talents/skills).

Assistive technology. Any item, piece of equipment, software program, or product system that is used to increase, maintain, or improve the functional capabilities of persons with disabilities.

California Content Standards and/or Curriculum Frameworks.¹ These specify and define the knowledge, concepts, and skills that students should acquire at each grade level in each content area. California English Language Development Standards (CA ELD Standards) are included in the California Content Standards.

¹ California Content Standards: <https://www.cde.ca.gov/be/st/ss/>; California English Language Development Standards (CA ELD Standards): <https://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/el/er/eldstandards.asp>



California English Language Development Standards (CA ELD Standards). The CA ELD Standards describe the key knowledge, skills, and abilities that students who are learning English as a new language need in order to access, engage with, and achieve in grade-level academic content.²

California English Language Development Test (CELDT). An examination for K–12 students administered through the California Department of Education. The purpose of the CELDT is to identify students who are English learners, determine their level of English proficiency, and annually assess their progress in learning English. Four skill areas are measured: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. There are five levels of proficiency: beginning, early intermediate, intermediate, early advanced, and advanced. NOTE: California has transitioned from the CELDT to the English Language Proficiency Assessments for California (ELPAC, see definition below).

California Teaching Performance Expectations (TPE).³ TPE are the expectations for knowledge, skill, and ability that a new teacher should be able to demonstrate upon completion of a California-accredited teacher preparation program. The TPE have six domains including Engaging and Supporting All Students in Learning, Creating and Maintaining Effective Environments for Student Learning, Understanding and Organizing Subject Matter for Student Learning, Planning Instruction and Designing Learning Experiences for All Students, Assessing Student Learning, and Developing as a Professional Educator. These are identical to the six domains of the California Standards for the Teaching Profession (CSTPs) used to guide induction programs, leading to a clear teaching credential.

Content-specific instructional strategies. Instructional strategies that are effective for the content area as defined by the Teaching Performance Expectations (TPE) and the State Board of Education framework and/or equivalent.

Content-specific pedagogy. Content-specific pedagogy is the specific methods or practices that are used to teach a certain subject. Its focus is on the best-practices for that subject, which are most likely derived through research of the methods or practices.

Co-teaching. When two teachers (teacher candidate and cooperating teacher) work together with groups of students, sharing the planning, organization, delivery, and assessment of instruction, as well as the physical space.

² <https://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/el/er/documents/eldstndpublication14.pdf>

³ <https://www.ctc.ca.gov/docs/default-source/educator-prep/standards/adopted-tpes-2016.pdf?sfvrsn=0>



Deep learning. Knowledge that is beyond attending to or recalling factual pieces of information and, instead, is characterized by the ability to put those pieces together to evaluate, solve complex problems, and generate new ideas. See also “[higher-order thinking skills](#).”⁴

Deficit thinking. Deficit thinking refers to negative, stereotypical, and prejudicial beliefs about diverse groups.⁵ According to Valencia (1997), “the deficit thinking paradigm posits that students who fail in school do so because of alleged internal deficiencies (such as cognitive and/or motivational limitations) or shortcomings socially linked to the youngster—such as familial deficits and dysfunctions.”⁶

Demonstrations. Refer to a wide variety of potential educational projects, presentations, or products through which students “demonstrate” what they have learned, usually as a way of determining whether and to what degree they have achieved expected learning standards or learning objectives for a course or learning experience. A demonstration of learning is typically both a learning experience in itself and a means of evaluating academic progress and achievement.

Designated English Language Development. A protected time during the school day when teachers use the California English Language Development Standards (CA ELD Standards) as the focal standards in ways that build into and from content instruction.⁷

Developmental level. Refers to the stages or milestones in children’s/adolescents’ cognitive, psychological, and physical development. While children/adolescents may be expected to progress through the same specified stages and in the same order, they proceed at different rates through these stages. Thus, children/adolescents of the same chronological age may be observed to be at different “levels.”

Differentiate. Differentiated instruction and assessment (also known as differentiated learning or, in education, simply, differentiation) is a framework or philosophy for effective teaching that involves providing different students with different avenues to learning (often in the same classroom) in terms of acquiring content; processing, constructing, or making

⁴ Darling-Hammond, L., Oakes, J., Wojcikiewicz, S., Hyler, M. E., Guha, R., Podolsky, A., Kini, T., Cook-Harvey, C., Mercer, C., & Harrell A. (2019). *Preparing Teachers for Deeper Learning*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Education Press.

⁵ Constantine, M.G., & Sue, D.W. (2006). *Addressing racism: Facilitating cultural competence in mental health and educational settings*. New Jersey: Wiley & Sons.

⁶ Valencia, R.R. (1997). *The evolution of deficit thinking: Educational thought and practice*. Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge Falmer.

⁷ ELA/ELD Framework, 2014



sense of ideas; and developing teaching materials and assessment measures so that all students within a classroom can learn effectively, regardless of differences in ability.

Discrimination. Treatment or consideration of, or making a distinction in favor of or against, a person or thing based on the group, class, or category to which that person or thing belongs rather than on individual merit. Discrimination may occur, for example, on the basis of race, religion, gender, socio-economic class, physical ability, or sexual orientation.

Educational technology. Any digital/virtual tool used to impact the teaching/learning process within an educational environment.

English language proficiency. The level of knowledge, skills, and ability that students who are learning English as a new language need in order to access, engage with, and achieve in grade-level academic content. For California, these are delineated in the California English Language Development Standards (CA ELD Standards).

English Language Proficiency Assessments for California (ELPAC). California and federal laws require that local educational agencies (LEA) administer a state adopted test for English Language Proficiency (ELP) to K–12 students whose primary language is a language other than English. The ELPAC is the state-adopted model for assessing this information and is aligned with the 2012 California English Language Development Standards. This test consists of two separate ELP assessments: one for the initial identification (date of first entry into California public school) of students as English Learners (EL) and a second for the annual summative assessment to measure a student’s progress with learning English in four domains: Reading, Writing, Speaking, and Listening. While the families can opt their EL student out of support classes, they cannot exempt them from the state and federally required testing.

English learner. A student for whom there is a report of a primary language other than English on the state-approved Home Language Survey or district criteria and who, on the basis of the state-approved oral language assessment procedures, has been determined to lack the clearly defined English language skills of listening comprehension, speaking, reading, and writing necessary to succeed in the school’s regular instructional programs.

Evidence-based practice. The process in which the practitioner combines well-researched strategies with school-based experience and ethics, and educators’ preferences and cultures, to guide and inform how they address educational problems of practice.

Face-to-face classroom. A face-to-face classroom is where the teacher and students are in the same location together, and instruction occurs through face-to-face interactions between and among the candidate and students.



Focus Student 3. A student whose life experience(s) either inside or outside of school may result in a need for additional academic and/or emotional support and whose behavior in class catches your attention (e.g., does not participate, falls asleep in class, remains silent, acts out, demands attention). Life experiences may include, but are not limited to, challenges in the home, community, or school as a result of discrimination, bullying, illness, loss of parents, divorce, trauma, homelessness, poverty, or incarceration; or a student who has been negatively impacted due to their religion, racism, sexism, classism, ableism, anti-Semitism, or heterosexism, or as a result of needs as a student of color; a Standard English learner, migrant, immigrant, or undocumented student; a self-identified LGBTQ+ student; or a student in foster care.

Formal assessment. Refers to collecting and analyzing student assessment results to provide information about students' current levels of achievement or performance after a period of learning has occurred. Results of formal assessment are used to plan further instruction and provide detailed feedback to students to direct growth and development based on content-specific learning goal(s) of the instruction. Formal assessments use a [rubric](#), shared with students prior to the assessment, to gauge and evaluate student achievement or demonstrated performance. A formal assessment requires students to demonstrate the extent to which they have gained specific skills, competencies, and/or content knowledge through a product, process, or performance.

Funds of knowledge. Defined by researchers Luis Moll, Cathy Amanti, Deborah Neff, and Norma Gonzalez "to refer to the historically accumulated and culturally developed bodies of knowledge and skills essential for household or individual functioning and well-being" (Moll, Amanti, Neff, & Gonzalez, 1992, p. 133).⁸ When teachers shed their role of teacher and expert and, instead, take on a new role as learner, they can come to know their students and the families of their students in new and distinct ways. With this new knowledge, they can begin to see that the households of their students contain rich cultural and cognitive resources and that these resources can and should be used in their classroom in order to provide culturally responsive and meaningful lessons that tap students' prior knowledge.

⁸ Moll, L., Amanti, C., Neff, D., & Gonzalez, N. (1992). Funds of knowledge for teaching: Using a qualitative approach to connect homes and classrooms. *Theory Into Practice*, XXXI(2), 132–141.

González, N., Moll, L., & Amanti, C. (2005). *Funds of Knowledge: Theorizing Practices in Households, Communities, and Classrooms*. New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Publishers.

Kasarda, J., & Johnson, J. (2006). *The economic impact of the Hispanic population on the state of North Carolina*. Frank Hawkins Kenan Institute of Private Enterprise Report. Kenan-Flagler Business School-University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.



Information that teachers learn about their students in this process is considered the student's funds of knowledge.

Gifted and Talented Education (GATE). Under this state program, local educational agencies (LEAs) develop unique education opportunities for high-achieving and underachieving students in the California public elementary and secondary schools. Each school district's governing board determines the criteria it will use to identify students for participation in the GATE program. Categories for identification may include one or more of the following: intellectual, creative, specific academic, or leadership ability; high achievement; performing and visual arts talent; or any other criterion that meets the standards set forth by the State Board of Education (SBE).

Graphic organizer. A visual communication tool that uses visual symbols to express ideas and concepts to convey meaning. A graphic organizer often depicts the relationships between facts, terms, and/or ideas within a learning task. The main purpose of a graphic organizer is to provide a visual aid to facilitate learning and instruction. There are many similar names for graphic organizers, including concept maps and story maps.

Heritage language learner. A student studying a language who has proficiency in or a cultural connection to that language.

Higher-order thinking skills (HOTS). A concept popular in American education reform that distinguishes critical-thinking skills from low-order learning outcomes, such as those attained by rote memorization. HOTS include analysis, synthesis, evaluation, interpretation, and transfer. HOTS are based on various taxonomies of learning, such as that propagated by Benjamin Bloom in his *Taxonomy of Educational Objectives: The Classification of Educational Goals* (1956).

Hybrid classroom. A hybrid classroom is where a student learns at least in part through delivery of content and instruction via digital and online media with some element of student control over time, place, path, and pace.

Inclusive learning environment. Inclusive teaching strategies refer to any number of teaching approaches that address the needs of students with a variety of backgrounds, learning styles, and abilities. These strategies contribute to an overall inclusive learning environment, in which students feel equally valued.

Individualized Education Plan (IEP). This written document is developed and required for each public-school student who receives special education and related services. The IEP creates an opportunity for teachers, parents, school administrators, related services



personnel, and students (when appropriate) to work together to improve educational results for students with disabilities.

Informal assessment. Observing and documenting student learning and adjusting instruction to provide in-the-moment feedback to students while teaching. Informal assessments may involve a range of strategies (e.g., purposeful questions to check for understanding during the lesson; observation notes taken by the teacher while students are engaged in instructional activities; student-created representations of learning [written work, visuals, graphics, models, products, performances]; student peer review and critique; student and group reflection on the qualities of their own product, process, or performance; homework; “do nows”; exit slips).

Integrated English Language Development. All teachers with English Learners in their classrooms use the CA English Language Development Standards in tandem with the CA Common Core State Standards (CCSS) for ELA/Literacy and other content standards.⁹

Language demands. Specific ways that academic language is used by students to participate in learning through reading, writing, listening, and/or speaking to demonstrate their understanding of the content.

Learning goal. Specific statements of intended student attainment of essential concepts and skills. The learning goal is the heart of assessment for learning and needs to be made clear at the planning stage if teachers are to find assessment for learning manageable.

Lower-order thinking skills. Lower-order thinking skills are reflected by the lower three levels in Bloom’s Taxonomy: Remembering, Understanding, and Applying.

Manipulatives. Physical objects that are used as teaching tools to engage students in hands-on learning. They can be used to introduce, practice, or remediate a concept.

A manipulative may be as simple as grains of rice, coins, blocks, and other three-dimensional shapes, or as sophisticated as a model of the solar system.

Maps. Types of visual/graphic organizers that are used to help students organize and represent knowledge of a subject. *Concept maps*, for example, begin with a main idea (or concept) and then branch out to show how that main idea can be broken down into specific topics. *Story maps* help students learn the elements of a book or story by identifying story characters, plot, setting, problem, and solution.

⁹ ELA/ELD Framework, 2014



Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS). An integrated, comprehensive framework that focuses on CCSS, core instruction, differentiated learning, student-centered learning, individualized student needs, and the alignment of systems necessary for all students' academic, behavioral, and social success. MTSS offers the potential to create needed systematic change through intentional design and redesign of services and supports that quickly identify and match the needs of all students.

Performance(s). A demonstration of competence or mastery that typically focuses on the student's ability to apply what he or she has learned to a realistic task—a problem or situation that might be encountered in real life.

Redacted. Edited especially in order to obscure or remove sensitive/personally identifiable information (text) from a document.

Rubric. A tool for scoring student work or performances, typically in the form of a table or matrix, with criteria that describe the dimensions of the outcomes down the left vertical axis and levels of performance across the horizontal axis. The performance being scored by a rubric may be given an overall score (holistic rubric scoring), or criteria may be scored individually (analytic rubric scoring). Rubrics may also be used for communicating expectations for performance.

Scaffolding. Refers to a variety of instructional techniques used to move students progressively toward stronger understanding and, ultimately, greater independence in the learning process. The term itself offers the relevant descriptive metaphor: teachers provide successive levels of temporary support that help students reach higher levels of comprehension and skill acquisition that they would not be able to achieve without assistance. Like physical scaffolding, the supportive strategies are incrementally removed when they are no longer needed, and the teacher gradually shifts more responsibility over the learning process to the student.

Social-emotional development. Includes the student's experience, expression, and management of emotions and the ability to establish positive and rewarding relationships with others (Cohen et al., 2005). It encompasses both intrapersonal and interpersonal processes.

Social identity. The cultural identities of students¹⁰ are constructed from their experiences with the 12 attributes of culture identified by Cushner, McClelland, and Safford (2000): ethnicity/nationality, social class, sex/gender, health, age, geographic region, sexuality,

¹⁰ Savage, S. (2005). The cultural identity of students: what teachers should know. Retrieved from https://www.redorbit.com/news/education/246708/the_cultural_identity_of_students_what_teachers_should_know/



religion, social status, language, ability/disability, and race. Students' cultural identities are defined by these experiences, and students learn these identities within a culture through socializing agents (Campbell, 2004). Therefore, teachers must understand that these cultural identities define who the students are.

Standard English learner. Students whose native language is English and whose mastery of the standard English language or academic English is limited due to their use of nonstandard English.

Student self-assessment. Refers to students evaluating their own learning, based on criteria, and objectively reflecting on and critically evaluating their progress and academic development in the content area.

Think-pair-share. A collaborative learning strategy in which students work together to solve a problem or answer a question about an assigned reading. This technique requires students to (1) think individually about a topic or answer to a question and (2) share ideas with classmates. Discussing an answer with a partner serves to maximize participation, focus attention, and engage students in comprehending the reading material.

Timestamp. A timestamp is a sequence of characters or encoded information identifying when a certain event occurred, usually giving date and time of day, sometimes accurate to a small fraction of a second.

Typical and atypical child/adolescent development. Parents and health practitioners often track and measure a child's/adolescent's developmental milestones from infancy to middle school. Developmental milestones include physical or behavioral signs of physical, social, and cognitive progress that lead to mastery over one's environment.

Universal Design for Learning (UDL).¹¹ A set of principles for curriculum development that give all individuals equal opportunities to learn. UDL provides a blueprint for creating instructional goals, methods, materials, and assessments that can be customized and adjusted for individual needs. UDL curriculum calls for creating curriculum that provides multiple means of representation to give learners various ways of acquiring information and knowledge; multiple means of action and expression to provide learners alternatives for demonstrating what they know; and multiple means of engagement to tap into learners' interests, challenge them appropriately, and motivate them to learn.

¹¹ <http://www.udlcenter.org/>