



Glossary of Terms – PGCert in University Learning and Teaching

NB: This is a live list which we will add to as the module progresses

Active Learning

A teaching approach that engages students directly in the learning process through activities, discussions, problem-solving, or projects, rather than passively listening to lectures.

Andragogy

A theory that purports that adult learning is distinct. Over the years, the theory has been added to and adapted. At its core, it contains five key assumptions about adult learners and four principles of andragogy.

Assessment

The process of evaluating a student's learning, skills, and understanding. Assessments can be formative (ongoing, to monitor progress) or summative (final, to evaluate overall achievement).

Assessment Criteria

Assessment criteria are the specific standards or guidelines used to evaluate and judge students' work, performance, or learning outcomes. They define what is expected in terms of quality, completeness, and accuracy and provide a framework for both instructors and students to understand how assessment will be conducted and how marks or grades will be assigned.

Authentic Assessment

Authentic assessment is a type of evaluation that aims to measure students' understanding and skills through real-world tasks and applications rather than traditional testing methods. It focuses on assessing students' ability to apply what they have learned to practical situations, often involving complex, open-ended problems or projects.

Behaviourism

Behaviourism in education, or behavioural learning theory is a branch of psychology that focuses on how people learn through their interactions with the environment. It is based on the idea that all behaviours are acquired through conditioning, shaping etc.

Blended Learning

An instructional approach that combines traditional face-to-face classroom methods with online educational materials and interactive online activities.

Bloom's Taxonomy

A framework for categorizing educational goals into six levels of complexity: Remembering, Understanding, Applying, Analysing, Evaluating, and Creating. It is often used to design curriculum and assessments.

Case Studies and Case-based Learning

Case-based learning (CBL) is an established approach used across disciplines where students apply their knowledge to real-world scenarios, promoting higher levels of cognition. In CBL classrooms, students typically work in groups on case studies, stories involving one or more characters and/or scenarios. The cases present a disciplinary problem or problems for which students devise solutions under the guidance of the instructor.

Chunking

Chunking in teaching and learning is a cognitive strategy that involves breaking down information into smaller, manageable units or "chunks" to make it easier to process, understand, and retain. This technique helps learners deal with large amounts of information by organizing it into more digestible pieces, reducing cognitive overload and improving memory and recall.

Cognitivism

Cognitivism concentrates on how a person's mind receives, organizes, saves and retrieves information. The cognitive theory believes that the human mind functions like an information processor or computer. Therefore, the cognitivist approach looks beyond noticeable behaviour, considering learning as an internal mental process.

Constructivism

A learning theory that suggests learners construct knowledge based on their experiences and interactions with the world. It emphasizes active learning and the importance of context in understanding.

Cooperative Learning

Cooperation is working together to accomplish shared goals. Within cooperative situations, individuals seek outcomes that are beneficial to themselves and beneficial to all other group members. Cooperative learning is the instructional use of small groups so that students work together to maximize their own and each other's learning.

Critical Thinking

Critical thinking is the ability to analyse, evaluate, and synthesize information in a reasoned and reflective manner. It involves questioning assumptions, identifying biases, considering alternative perspectives, and making well-informed decisions based on evidence and logical reasoning. Critical thinking is essential for problem-solving, effective communication, and making sound judgments in both academic and everyday contexts.

Culturally Responsive Pedagogy

Culturally responsive pedagogy is a student-centred approach to teaching in which the students' unique cultural strengths are identified and nurtured to promote student achievement and a sense of well-being about the student's cultural place in the world.

Curriculum

The structured set of courses, content, and learning experiences offered by an educational institution or within a specific program or course.

Differentiated Instruction

A teaching strategy that involves providing different students with different avenues to learning, often in the same classroom, based on their individual needs, abilities, and learning styles.

E-Learning

Learning conducted via electronic media, typically on the internet. It includes online courses, interactive lessons, webinars, and other digital learning resources.

Experiential Learning

Learning through direct experience, often outside the traditional classroom. This can include internships, service learning, fieldwork, and other hands-on activities.

Feedback

Information provided to students about their performance, intended to guide future learning. Effective feedback is specific, timely, and constructive.

Flipped Classroom

A pedagogical model where traditional lecture and homework elements are reversed. Students watch pre-recorded lectures at home and engage in hands-on activities in class.

Formative Assessment

An ongoing assessment that provides feedback to students and instructors about student learning progress. It is often used to improve teaching and learning during the instructional process.

Gamification

Gamification in learning is the application of game design elements and principles in educational contexts to enhance student engagement, motivation, and participation. By incorporating aspects such as points, badges, leaderboards, challenges, and rewards, gamification transforms the learning experience into a more interactive and enjoyable process, making it more appealing and effective.

Humanism

Humanistic learning theory emphasizes the freedom and autonomy of learners. It connects the ability to learn with the fulfilment of other needs (building on Maslow's hierarchy) and the perceived utility of the knowledge by the learner.

Independent Learning

Independent learning is a process where individuals take responsibility for their own learning, setting their own goals, managing their time, and seeking out resources without relying heavily on a teacher or external guidance. It involves self-motivation, self-discipline, and the ability to reflect on one's progress and adjust strategies as needed.

Inquiry (led/based) Learning

Inquiry-led learning is an educational approach that centres on students' active exploration and investigation of questions, problems, or scenarios. Rather than passively receiving information from the teacher, students are encouraged to ask questions, conduct research, and develop solutions or insights through their own efforts. This method fosters critical thinking, creativity, and deep understanding by engaging students in the process of discovery.

Integrated Learning

Integrated learning is an educational approach that connects different areas of study by combining concepts and skills from multiple disciplines into a cohesive learning experience. Instead of teaching subjects in isolation, integrated learning aims to create connections across disciplines, helping students see the relevance and application of what they are learning in a broader context.

Learning Management System (LMS)

A software application or web-based technology used to plan, implement, and assess a specific learning process. Common LMSs include Moodle, Canvas, and Blackboard.

Learning Outcomes

The specific skills, knowledge, attitudes, or abilities that students are expected to achieve as a result of engaging in a learning activity or completing a course or program.

Metacognition

Metacognition is the awareness and understanding of one's own thought processes. It involves the ability to monitor, control, and plan one's cognitive activities, such as learning, problem-solving, and decision-making. Essentially, metacognition is "thinking about thinking."

Metalearning

Metalearning is the process of understanding and optimizing how one learns. It involves reflecting on one's learning strategies, techniques, and processes to enhance overall learning effectiveness. Essentially, metalearning is "learning about learning" and is closely related to metacognition but focuses more specifically on improving one's learning methods and practices.

Pedagogy

The art and science of teaching. Pedagogy involves methods, strategies, and techniques used to impart knowledge and facilitate learning.

Peer Assessment

A student-centred assessment approach where students evaluate the work of their peers, either anonymously, individually or in a group.

Peer Instruction

Peer instruction is an active learning teaching method that involves students working together to answer questions posed by the instructor. It can form an adapted version of Think-Pair-Share.

Peer Learning

A learning process where students learn from and with each other, often through discussion, collaboration, and group work.

Portfolio-based Learning and Assessment

A portfolio is a purposeful collection of student work that exhibits the student's efforts, progress, and achievements in one or more areas. The collection includes student's participation in selecting contents, the criteria for selection, the criteria for judging merit, and evidence of student's self-reflection.

Professional Learning (Development)

Ongoing learning and training for educators to enhance their teaching skills, stay updated with educational trends, and improve student learning outcomes.

Project-based learning

This involves students designing, developing, and constructing hands-on solutions to a problem. The educational value of PBL is that it aims to build students' creative capacity to work through difficult or ill-structured problems, commonly in small teams.

Problem-based learning

PBL is an instructional method in which students learn through the experience of solving open-ended, real-world problems. Instead of traditional lecture-based instruction, PBL places students in the role of active problem-solvers, where they must research, collaborate, and apply knowledge to address complex issues.

Reflective Practice

Reflective practice is the ability to reflect on one's actions so as to take a critical stance or attitude towards one's own practice and that of one's peers, engaging in a process of continuous adaptation and learning.

Rubric

Scaffolding

An instructional technique in which the teacher provides successive levels of temporary support to help students reach higher levels of understanding and skill development.

Self-Assessment

A student review of his/her own performance, for the purpose of assessment as/for learning.

Self-Directed Learning

An instructional strategy where the students, with guidance from the educator, decide what and how they will learn. It can be done individually or with group learning, but the overall concept is that students take ownership of their learning.

Social Constructivism

A theory that focuses on the social dimension of learning processes. This model stresses the importance of the cultural, language and environmental/relational context in which learning takes place.

Student-Centered Learning

An approach to education that prioritizes the needs, preferences, and learning styles of students, allowing them to take an active role in their learning process.

Summative Assessment

An evaluation at the conclusion of a unit, course, or program to assess student learning against defined standards or benchmarks.

Synchronous Learning

A learning event where all participants are engaged in learning at the same time, often via live online classes or in-person sessions.

Universal Design for Learning (UDL)

An educational framework that aims to optimize teaching and learning for all people based on scientific insights into how humans learn. It emphasizes flexibility in the ways information is presented, how students respond or demonstrate knowledge, and how students are engaged.

Virtual Classroom

An online learning environment that allows teachers and students to communicate, interact, and collaborate in real-time, often mimicking the experience of a physical classroom.

Work-Based Learning (WBL)

Learning that occurs in a real work environment, integrating academic learning with practical experience. Examples include internships, apprenticeships, and cooperative education programs.