



## HELPFUL TERMINOLOGY

Like any professional field, education has its own unique terminology. The following list provides some of the most common terms. These terms may vary across geographical areas and even within states. In one part of the country an instructor might be referred to as a therapist and in another a specialized tutor. Sometimes different words are used to refer to the same things, such as academic language therapy, educational therapy, and multisensory structured language instruction from a qualified tutor.

### Academic Language

Academic language denotes that services offered to clients are educational and emphasize the teaching of reading, spelling, handwriting, and written expression. *Therapy* indicates that those services are intensive and therapeutic rather than tutorial.

### Academic Language Therapist

Academic language therapists (or academic therapists) have learned specific instructional strategies for teaching students with dyslexia—a language-based learning disability that affects some combination of oral language skills (speaking and listening) and written language skills (reading, spelling, handwriting, and written expression).

### Certified Academic Language Therapist (CALT)

Academic Language Therapy Association (ALTA) certifies academic language therapists. Certified Academic Language Therapists (CALT) have completed accredited courses of study that provide extensive training and practicum experiences in multisensory structured language teaching. Academic Language Therapists have knowledge of the logic and structure of English language systems: phonology, phonics, orthography, morphology-etymology, semantics, and syntax. They know how to deliver structured

language instruction using simultaneous multisensory teaching strategies.

### Academic Language Therapy

Teaching begins with the basics and rebuilds the learning continuum step-by-step. Academic language therapy starts from ground zero so that no gaps remain in the student's understanding of language structure. Students learn systematic strategies for decoding (word identification), encoding (spelling), and letter formation. Students' successes and challenges during one lesson inform the planning of subsequent lessons. Academic language therapy is cumulative, systematic, structured instruction that is written and planned for a particular student, or group of students, and is delivered by an educator with comprehensive training. Following the advice of Margaret Rawson, a pioneer in the field of dyslexia education, academic language therapists guide their students to progress "*as fast as they can but as slow as they must.*"

### Educational Therapist

An educational therapist provides individualized intervention, formal and informal assessment of academic skills, and case management for clients with a wide range of learning disabilities and learning issues.

An educational therapist has training in multiple types of learning difficulties, with additional training in assessment and intervention strategies that address the social-emotional aspects that have an impact on learning. An educational therapist sets goals and develops an intervention plan that addresses not only academic difficulties, but also social-emotional aspects of life-long learning through an eclectic combination of intervention strategies.

### Educational Therapy/Professional (ET/P)®

Professional membership in the Association of Educational Therapists (AET) is open to

educational therapists who have a master's degree (or who have met the requirements of graduate level and/or upper division level courses), are engaged in educational therapy in private practice, public or private schools, private clinics, hospitals, or public agencies, and who have met the direct service delivery minimum of 1,500 hours and have completed their Board Certified Educational Therapist (BCET) Supervised Hours.

### **Board Certified Educational Therapist (BCET)**

Board Certified ET membership is open to educational therapists who have a master's degree, have been ET/Professional members in good standing for at least one year, and have met additional requirements as specified by the AET Certification Board.

### **Educational Therapy**

Educational therapy considers the impact of school, family, and community in the client's learning, fosters communication with all significant members of the client's environment, and attends to socio-emotional goals as well as academic goals. With recognition that emotional, behavioral, and learning problems are often linked, an educational therapist works with all the significant people concerned with the student's learning; focus is not only on remediation but also on building underlying learning skills and helping clients become more self aware, self reliant, and efficient learners.

### **Tutor**

The term *tutor* is used in both general and specific ways to refer to volunteers and professionals with a broad range of skills and qualifications, so it is very important to ask and be clear about how the term is used with regard to the instruction your child receives. Tutors who lack the training described within IDA's *Knowledge and Practice Standards for Teachers of Reading*

(<http://www.interdys.org/standards.htm>) will lack the depth necessary to understand and address the needs of students with specific language-based learning disabilities, such as dyslexia. Some examples of the services you can expect from different types of tutors are outlined below. Most of us are familiar with the general use of the term *tutor*—an instructor hired to work with individual students or small groups. These tutors typically use traditional teaching methods to help with completing homework or projects in specific subject or curriculum areas that are causing them problems. Tutors may also be skilled at teaching time management, task completion, and study skills. These tutors provide important instructional assistance to students in helping them reach their academic goals; however, they may not be subject to standards or professional qualifications for a tutor and their background *may not* include comprehensive training in language learning disabilities, assessment, case management, and the structure of language.

Qualified multisensory structured language professionals sometimes refer to themselves as instructors or tutors, such as *Certified Orton-Gillingham Instructor* or *Wilson Certified Tutors*. These individuals have completed extensive accredited coursework and practicum experiences in multisensory structured language teaching. They have in-depth knowledge of the structure of English language and deliver language instruction using simultaneous multisensory teaching strategies. They are highly trained instructors who can deliver effective instruction to individuals with specific language-based learning disabilities, such as dyslexia.

### **Tutoring**

Tutoring may help students meet the demands of grade level expectations in a variety of required subjects, including basic study skills.

## Reference

International Dyslexia Association (2010).  
*Knowledge and Practice Standards for Teachers  
of Reading* ([www.interdys.org/standards.htm](http://www.interdys.org/standards.htm)).

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