

# Rhode Island Professional Learning Standards - Glossary of Terms

**Student outcomes** can be expressed as the desired knowledge, skills, attitudes, and beliefs that students need to achieve at their given grade level. They are measured through growth, proficiency, or mastery.

**Qualitative data** is non-numerical data. It answers “why” questions by describing, explaining, or characterizing what is being analyzed using words, rather than numbers. Analysis of this type of data focuses on finding themes.

**Quantitative data** is numerical data. It answers “how much” or “how many” questions through counting or expressing what is being analyzed numerically. Analysis of this type of data focuses on statistical relationships (e.g. counts, averages, etc.) and is visually represented in tables or graphs.

**Sustained** professional learning typically spans weeks, months or academic years. It is comprised of a coherent sequence of embedded learning experiences over time that lead to intended outcomes.

**Formative evaluation** is a process designed to measure the progress of PL initiatives *during* the learning process so that adjustments can be made accordingly.

**Summative evaluation** is a process designed to measure the impact of PL initiatives and the PL system as a whole *after* the learning process so that adjustments can be made accordingly.

**Adult learning strategies** are rooted in Malcolm Knowles’ principles of adult learning<sup>1</sup>:

- Adult learners **need to know why** the new information is important to them.
- Adult learners build on their **previous experiences** to construct new understandings.
- Adult learners engage best with **material that they are ready for**, based on their current role and skills.
- Adult learners are motivated by learning that is **directly relevant to tasks and problems** they confront in their daily life.
- Adult learners respond best to **intrinsic motivations** to learn new material.
- Adult learners should be supported over time to **transition from dependence to self-direction** in their learning.

<sup>1</sup>Knowles, M. S., Holton III, E. F., & Swanson, R. A. (2012). *The adult learner*. Routledge.