

The Exploris Glossary

Common language for a rigorous, relevant, relationship-based education

Achievement Report - The Achievement Report takes the place of traditional “report cards.” Achievement Reports are printed and distributed 3 times per year, at the end of each trimester. The Achievement Report includes narrative comments from the student’s teachers, as well as grades for each subject. (See Standards Based Grading)

Ago! Ame! - This is the school-wide call and response. The teacher says “Ago!”, The students say “Ame!” in the same style/volume that the teacher said “Ago!” Ago basically means “listen” and Ame “I am listening.” When students say “Ame!” they should stop talking and turn their attention to you.

Case Study - Case studies break the broader Expedition into smaller, related pieces. They build knowledge and skills to answer the driving question. Typically there are 2-4 case studies in each Expedition. Case studies often have their own launches and products.

Community Circle - Each Friday, all of the students and faculty in K-5 sit together in a large circle to focus on our core values, celebrate one another, and build community. Sitting together with their crews, the students sing songs, celebrate birthdays, share learning products, and spotlight students and faculty who demonstrate our core values.

Connected World - This global arts class is taught at the elementary campus. It is a partner class with World Cultures. Connected World is a fusion of exploratory language, technology, and world cultures.

Core Values - Everything we do is grounded in these values. Our ten core values are: Balance, Collaboration, Connections to Nature, Craftsmanship, Curiosity, Engagement, Innovation, Reflection, Relationships, and Social Empowerment. You can read more about each one on our website.

Crew - This term is based on the phrase, “We are crew, not passengers.” This metaphor emphasizes the importance of each member of a ship’s crew in keeping the boat moving forward on a voyage. A crew teacher meets with the entire crew regularly for work that aligns closely with our core values. This includes relationship-building, reflection, celebrating success, expanding thinking, service, portfolio work, etc...

Crew teacher - Students have several teachers. Their main classroom teacher is their crew teacher. The primary contact for a parent/guardian is their child’s crew teacher.

Driving Question - Writing the driving question is one of the hardest parts of Project Based Learning. The driving question goes through many drafts throughout the planning process. It’s role is to focus the inquiry. For example, students aren’t solving world poverty, but they may be addressing a particular aspect of

poverty in the local community. A driving question is not “Googleable” and requires inquiry to get at unique answers. The driving question captures and communicates the purpose of the expedition, rather than rephrasing a curricular standard. When communicating with students, it helps create interest and answer the “why are we doing this” question.

Electives - As used at the middle school, these are 4-6 week interest classes that are selected and taught by teachers and parents. Students choose from this list of topics and meet with the class once per week.

Exceptional Children - Instead of Special Education (SPED), we have Exceptional Children (EC). Students with IEPs work with EC teachers and EC teaching partners both in the EC classroom and in the crew/pride classroom.

Expedition - Long term, in-depth studies centered around a global issue and focused on how it impacts our local community. Expeditions at Exploris are integrated among all subject areas, although they are most strongly aligned with science and social studies content. Expeditions typically last one trimester and are divided into several case studies. An expedition focuses on a driving question and includes field work, experts, products, and a culminating event.

Explorations - Explorations is a weekly experience that invites K-5 students to choose from a variety of enrichment activities beyond their typical classroom. Students select new classes every six weeks (or so). Explorations is community-led.

Explorisy - Exploris does and says things in our own unique way. We sometimes call this “Explorisy”.

Field Experience - Some schools use the term “Field Trip,” but we prefer “Field Experience” because it highlights the active learning that our students engage in out in the community. Our philosophy is that field experiences are important because they are “a shared social experience that provides the opportunity for students to encounter and explore novel things in an authentic setting” (informal.science.org).

Global Arts - This term is similar to what other schools refer to as Specials. Students participate in the following global arts:

Elementary: Art, Music, Movement, Connected World

Middle: Art, Wellness, World Cultures

Global Issue - The lens of an Expedition, and usually the starting place of the planning process. This lens of global issues and their impact on our local community is one thing that separates Exploris from other schools. Global issues include: population, poverty and equity, consumption, conflict and peace, basic human needs, discrimination and justice, environment, renewable and nonrenewable resources, and human migration.

Health and Wellness - Often abbreviated to just “Wellness.” This global arts class at the middle school is similar in many ways to traditional Physical Education (PE). In addition to sports and games, students engage in many other aspects of physical activity including urban hiking, circuit training, running, aerobics, and cooperative games.

JumpRope - This is the website that we use to keep track of student data including behavior, grades, and narrative comments. JumpRope generates the Achievement Report each trimester and emails it to families.

Literature Circles - As used in grades 6-8, whole school literature circles may occur once per year for approximately 5 weeks. They are teacher-led, multi-age book clubs. ELA teachers may also use in-class literature circles that serve as structured small group book studies.

Morning Meeting - A critical part of the elementary school, Morning Meetings take place at the start of each day. The Morning Meeting is based on the philosophy of Responsive Classrooms. There are typically five parts to a morning meeting - Morning Message, Greeting, Activity, Share, and News/Announcements.

Morning Message: A morning message is a note to students that sets the tone for the day and provides academic practice.” It typically includes a greeting (Good morning, learners!), a focus or interactive task, and reminders, news, or directions. The morning message is referenced at some point during Morning Meeting.

Greeting: All morning meetings begin with a greeting. They are especially important because they acknowledge everyone and set the tone for the whole meeting (and the whole day.)

Activity: Everyone participates in a brief, lively activity that fosters group cohesion. This could be a game, song, dance, etc...

Share: Students share about things that are important in their lives. When listening, students learn to ask questions or offer empathetic comments.

News/Announcements: What’s coming up, recognize individual and group success.

Movement - This global arts class at the elementary school is similar in many ways to traditional Physical Education (PE). However, there are also ways that Movement differs from PE. Students are just as likely to participate in yoga or dance as they are in kickball or football.

Portfolio - Used in all grade levels, portfolios showcase growth, achievement, areas that are challenging, and goals. Students compile these portfolios and share them with families in a **student-led conference**. In 8th grade students complete a **Passage Portfolio** as a capstone to their Exploris experience. The portfolio includes a Statement of Self and specific evidence of an area of growth over the course of their middle school years. The Passage Portfolio is presented by the student to a small group that may include family, faculty, board members, and/or community members.

Prime Group - A term that was once used for Crew. We no longer use this term, but you may hear some Exploris veterans refer to their crew this way at times.

Project Based Learning - This is the instructional approach we use to structure our Expeditions, and often our work in other learning, too. In Project Based Learning, students use sustained inquiry to explore a topic in depth. In addition to standards-based content, student learning includes critical thinking, problem solving, collaboration, and communication. Projects are framed around a challenging problem that is meaningful both globally and locally. Students make their work public by explaining, sharing, or presenting to people beyond the classroom.

Standards-Based Grading - Standards-based grading makes grades more meaningful because they indicate progress made on specific learning objectives rather than simply calculating averages. It allows teachers, families, and students to keep track of the progress they are making on specific concepts. At Exploris, we use the following scale:

Accomplished - Student has a solid command of the knowledge and skills. He/she is ready to engage in further studies.

Developing - Student has a partial command of the knowledge and skills. He/she is likely to need additional support to reach grade level understandings.

Beginning - Student has a limited command of the knowledge and skills. He/she is like to need intensive additional support to reach grade level understandings.

Study Teams - Each teacher works on a Study Team. These teams meet throughout the year to work on topics that are most pressing and relevant. The topics are decided by the staff at the beginning of each year.

Teaching Partner - Invaluable members of our learning community. In other places they are referred to as teacher assistants.

Theme - a term that was once used for Expedition. We no longer use this term, but you may hear some Exploris veterans refer to Expedition this way at times.

Weighted Lottery - First implemented for the 2019-2020 school year, the weighted lottery allows an acceptance priority for students who qualify for free and reduced lunch. This is one strategy to help us meet our diversity goals.

World Cultures- This global arts class is taught at the middle school campus. It is a partner class with Connected World. World Cultures includes language study using digital platforms and projects centered around different regions of the world.

Standardized Tests Used at Exploris

	Acronym Stands For	What Grade Levels	What does it assess	How often	Where does it come from? Other notes
mClass	n/a	K-3	Reading comprehension, phonics, fluency	3 times per year	Nationally normed and standardized, given 1:1
MAP	Measures of Academic Progress	K-8	K-3 Math 4-5 Math & Reading 6-8 Math, Reading, Language	3 times per year	Nationally normed and standardized. Adaptive up to college-level, online
F&P	Fountas & Pinnell	K-5	Reading Comprehension	2 times per year & as needed	Given 1:1 with teacher. Optional in K-3 to triangulate data if mClass is unclear
EOG	End of Grade Tests	3-8	3-8 Math and Reading 5, 8 Science	1 time per year	Standardized, statewide, multiple choice, current grade curriculum only
EOC	End of Course Test	7-8	Math 1	1 time per year	Standardized, statewide, multiple choice, high school exam
NCFE	NC Final Exam	8	Math 2	1 time per year	Standardized, statewide, multiple choice, high school exam
WIDA	N/A	K-8	English Language Learning	1 time per year	Includes speaking, listening, reading, and writing
EVAAS	Education Value-Added Assessment System	K-8	This is a reporting tool that projects proficiency and calculates growth based on standardized test results.. This data also helps identify student achievement levels and how instruction impacts different types of students.		