

EL Glossary for Parents

Authentic audience – An audience beyond the classroom teacher that helps students care about purpose and quality of their work.

Crew: Time taken each day to build classroom community and teamwork. Crew may be in the morning to set the tone for the day or in the afternoon to reflect on how the day has progressed.

Craftsmanship – “Doing things well”; In EL schools, teachers create craftsmanship targets to help students create high quality work. Students revise their work and persevere to make their best even better.

Exhibition/Gallery – One type of product/performance in which students display selected work in a formal way, as in a museum or gallery. In many EL schools, EL **gallery nights** are periodically scheduled to share the work of expeditions with parents and community. These evenings often include student demonstrations, presentations and student led interactive experiences to show visitors what teaching and learning looks like in an EL school.

Experts – People skilled in a particular field of study. Teachers utilize experts to support authentic research, critique student work, model, and provide guidance in expedition development. The EL approach encourages the regular use of experts in the classroom and in the field, not just as “presenters” but as active partners in enriching the quality of student thinking and work.

Fieldwork – Field research done by students. EL distinguishes *fieldwork* from “*field trips*.” In fieldwork, students are active researchers and not passive observers of a prepared experience. For example, a *field trip* might involve elementary school students taking a guided tour at a restored colonial village. *Fieldwork*, on the other hand, might have those students “apprentice” themselves to a particular craftsman at the village, helping with the work, interviewing, and taking photos, becoming an “expert” in that craft. Fieldwork in EL schools often involves service learning, such as testing local water sources for pollutants. Fieldwork is often done at or near the school to keep transportation and other costs to a minimum.

Learning Expeditions – The major curriculum unit in EL schools. They are multi subject studies, usually lasting 6-12 weeks, led by a teacher or teaching team. Learning Expeditions are based on state standards and local curriculum maps and focus on what teachers determine to be essential content and skills. They use interesting case studies to make content come alive for students. They involve students in fieldwork (field research) and service learning and connect them with local experts.

Learning Targets – Goals or objectives for lessons written in concrete, student-friendly language. They are shared with students, posted in the classroom, and tracked carefully by students and teachers during the process of learning. Learning targets are most often written as “I can” statements. EX: “I can explain the life cycle of a butterfly.”

Products and Projects: Student products are the tangible results of the expedition’s learning and one of the ways students “show what they know” in EL schools. Formats include things like: scientific reports, field guides, blueprints, business plans, anthologies of writing, models, or instructional posters. Most products in EL schools are created for audiences beyond the classroom. Products are intended to increase motivation by engaging students in real work with authentic purpose, and they require students to apply key academic skills while thinking creatively and critically. Major EL projects are generally worked on in school, not as an out-of-school assignment, though they may involve homework.

Service learning – Active participation in organized experiences that meet authentic community needs. Service learning provides students with opportunities to use their acquired skills and knowledge in real-life situations, extending student learning into the community and instilling an ethic of stewardship. Service learning is not simply charitable work; the learning (linked to expedition content) is just as important as the service.