

ALIGNMENT refers to the process of designing lessons and assessments which are directly in line with the NC Standard Course of Study.

BACKWARD DESIGN is an approach to lesson design that begins with the learning standards of a unit and then proceeds "backward" to create assessments of student learning next, and lastly, the planning of the learning experiences and instruction.

BLENDED LEARNING is learning in which technology is used as a tool to enhance instruction and assessment and allows some element of student control over time, path, or pace.

CULTURALLY RELEVANT & RESPONSIVE STRATEGIES are a pedagogy that empowers students intellectually, socially, emotionally, and politically by using cultural referents to impart knowledge, skills, and attitudes.

DATA TEAM is a grade level, department, or course-alike team that examines students' work and uses the results to drive instructional design, delivery, and assessment of learning.

DIFFERENTIATION is the tailoring of instruction and assessment based on individual student needs.

ENGAGEMENT is the degree of attention, curiosity, interest, optimism, and passion that students show when they are learning or being taught. This extends to the students' levels of personal motivation to learn and progress in their education.

EQUITY refers to the belief that all students, regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, disability, etc., receive high-quality and challenging learning opportunities, access to resources, and responsive school environments.

FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT is a range of formal and informal assessment procedures conducted by teachers during the learning process to modify teaching and learning activities to improve student attainment.

GRADUAL RELEASE is an instructional model where teachers strategically transfer the responsibility during the learning process from teacher to student. (I do, we do, you do.)

HIGH-YIELD STRATEGIES are identified instructional strategies that have a high effect size (at least a year's worth of growth) on student learning outcomes.

LEARNING TARGET(S) convey to students the destination for the lesson—what to learn, how deeply to learn it, and exactly how to demonstrate their new learning.

LITERACY SKILLS are the skills of reading, writing, language, speaking and listening taught throughout all content areas as defined by the NC Standard Course of Study.

NC STANDARD COURSE OF STUDY contains the content standards for each course as defined by the state of North Carolina to provide a uniform set of standards for every student. These standards define what students should know and be able to do.

OCS PRIORITY STANDARDS are a select subset of the total list of grade or course specific standards within each content. These standards were carefully selected by a focus group of stakeholders using the following criteria: endurance, leverage, readiness, and testing.

PERFORMANCE TASKS are defined as any learning activity, task or assessment that yields a tangible product and/or student performance that demonstrates evidence of learning.

RIGOR is educational expectations that are academically, intellectually, and personally challenging. Rigorous learning experiences help students understand knowledge and concepts that are complex, ambiguous, or contentious, and they help students acquire skills that can be applied in a variety of educational, career, and civic contexts throughout their lives.

STANDARDS BASED is defined as teachers and students having a clear understanding of the expectation for learning. They know what the learning target is, why it's important, and how to get there.

SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENT is used to evaluate student learning, skill acquisition, and academic achievement at the conclusion of a defined instructional period—typically at the end of a project, unit, course, or semester.

TIER I VOCABULARY are words used in everyday speech and are typically learned through conversation. These common words rarely require direct instruction. Examples: come, see, happy, table, etc.

TIER II VOCABULARY are high-frequency words that occur across contexts and are used more in writing than in everyday speech. Tier II words are important for students to know to enhance comprehension of selected texts and are the best words for targeted and explicit vocabulary instruction. Examples: arrange, compare, apply, hilarious, endure, global, etc.

TIER III VOCABULARY are low-frequency words and often pertain to a specific content area. These words are best learned within the context of the lesson or subject matter. Examples: atom, molecule, continent, precipitation, hyperbole, etc.