

Glossary Terms

- 1) **alternative assessments**
Ways other than standardized tests to get information about what students know and where they need help, such as oral reports, projects, performances, experiments, and class participation.
- 2) **assessment**
Teacher-made tests, standardized tests, or tests from textbook companies that are used to evaluate student performance.
- 3) **authentic assessments**
Assessments that attempt to test students in a manner that replicates a real life situation.
- 4) **cooperative learning**
Set of instructional strategies which employ small teams of pupils to promote peer intervention and cooperation. These teams can be determined by ability or they may be heterogeneously mixed. Cooperative learning is based on the belief that all students are capable of understanding, learning and performing leadership tasks. The most effective student groups are heterogeneous. All students need to learn to interact and work with other students of varying abilities and interests. Cooperative learning groups should emphasize not only academic content, but also social/group dynamic skills, group goals with individual accountability for mastery of material, face to face interactions and involvement with other students.
- 5) **curriculum**
A plan of instruction that details what students are to know and what teachers are to teach. The curriculum describes what is taught but does not prescribe how that content is taught.
- 6) **developmental**
Describes an approach that recognizes that children grow through a series of definable stages and varying rates.
- 7) **interdisciplinary curriculum**
A curriculum that consciously applies the methodology and language from more than one discipline to examine a central theme, issue, problem, topic, or experience.
- 8) **portfolio**
A collection of various samples of a student's work throughout the school year that can include writing samples, examples of math problems, and results of science experiments.
- 9) **standards**
Statements of what students should know and be able to demonstrate. New York State has developed a set of standards that describe what students should know and be able to do in core academic subjects at each grade level.
- 10) **thematic units**
A unit of study that has lessons focused on a specific theme, sometimes covering all core subject areas. It is often used as an alternative approach to teaching history or social studies chronologically.