

Here at Acton Academy Amarillo,, we believe our words should intentionally reflect our purpose and philosophy. Some terms we use may initially sound strange. Over time though, they all start to make sense, and you will experience how our language reflects our promises and beliefs.

The following is a list of words and ideas that are commonly used at Acton Academies around the world:

HERO'S JOURNEY: The guiding structure of many of the greatest stories and myths in history. The structure describes the stages that hero's go through on their journey. This structure, which follows a set pattern, is a key principle in the Acton model.

HERO/EAGLE: These terms can be used interchangeably. We prefer to use these terms instead of "children" or "student," because we are all students on a learning journey.

LEARNERS: We prefer to use the term "learner" instead of "student." Learners take an active role in their education.

GUIDE: We believe that heroes need "A guide on the side" more than a "sage on the stage." This is our term for a "teacher," because it better reflects the role of adults in the school. The guide is not there to teach or to answer questions. A guide is there to be a gamemaker and storyteller, to offer choices and ask questions.

STUDIO: Studios are where collaborations happen and great exhibitions are planned. We use the term studio instead of classroom.

TRIBE: We are intentional about building trust and friendships between all of the Heroes in a studio. We refer to them as a "tribe" because of this level of camaraderie and vulnerability that is required to truly belong to the team.

CORE SKILLS: Reading, writing, and math are the foundational academic subjects that all Heroes work on individually and at their own pace.

D.E.A.R.: An acronym that stands for "Drop Everything and Read." Our goal is to have young Heroes who love to read. D.E.A.R. is a time for learners to read anything they enjoy – even comic books. Over time, Eagles naturally begin to read more and more challenging books – if they care about the subject.

QUEST: A quest is roughly equivalent to a unit in project-based learning. It represents a significant amount of work with a team and a high level of mastery to complete. Examples of quests would be Entrepreneurship, Architecture, Greek Mythology, or Electricity.

GROWTH MINDSET: According to Carol Dweck, author of *Mindset: The New Psychology of Success*, “In a growth mindset, people believe that their most basic abilities can be developed through dedication and hard work—brains and talent are just the starting point. This view creates a love of learning and a resilience that is essential for great accomplishment.”

JOURNEY TRACKER: The proprietary Learning Management System (LMS) built by and for the Acton network. Think of it like an Eagle’s educational plan, calendar, and record of work.

BADGE: One of the ways young heroes celebrate the mastery of tools, skills and character is by earning badges. Parents can use badges to track academic progress in core skills like reading, writing, math and character development in “Learn to Be” badges.

RUNNING PARTNER/SQUAD: Classmates who meet together regularly to set goals and hold each other accountable for meeting those goals. Running Partners encourage and inspire each other by asking good questions, listening and providing affirmation.

S.M.A.R.T. GOALS: Used to help guide goal setting. S.M.A.R.T. is an acronym that stands for Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, and Timely.

JOURNEY MEETING: The Acton equivalent of a “parent-teacher conference.” This meeting is led by the eagle, not by the parent or the guide.

LAUNCH: A Socratic conversation that is geared toward exploring deep and meaningful concepts or challenges. Every school day begins and ends with a “launch.”

SOCRATIC DISCUSSION: A formal discussion based on a defined concept or question that requires participants to clearly articulate their positions or arguments. A leader’s role in a Socratic discussion is to ask open-ended questions that will help the participants lean into deeper understanding.

MICRO-SCHOOL: A school where people are rethinking the traditional educational model to better prepare children for the future. They are small, private institutions where students are empowered to personalize their own education and are held accountable for their own progress.