



GT Parent Connection
4790 Caughlin Pkwy #406, Reno, NV 89519
(775) 835-1054 phone (775) 201-0002 fax
info@gtparentconnection.org
www.gtparentconnection.org

Gifted Education Glossary

Compiled by GT Parent Connection

Ability Grouping

A classroom strategy for grouping students by need, interest, or ability. Groups can be formed and reformed to meet varied instructional purposes. Ability grouping is not synonymous with "tracking."

Ability Test

Instruments that measure a child's mental ability. Some examples are Stanford-Binet Intelligence Scale, Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children (WISC), Otis Lennon, CO-GAT, or K-Bit2.

Acceleration

A strategy of progressing through education at rates faster or ages younger than the norm, which is used when a student demonstrates competencies, knowledge, abilities, and/or skills which exceed that which is outlined in the planned course or text for his/her chronological or grade placement level. This can be determined by advanced work demonstrated in the classroom and pre or diagnostic tests in the skill areas.

Achievement Test

Instruments that measure what your child knows academically and what he/she can do academically. Examples: California Achievement Test, Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT), American College Test (ACT). These tests reveal strengths and weaknesses in your child's academic abilities. They should also help educators improve instruction, aid in forming goals and objectives for the curriculum, and determine content and skills.

ACT (American College Test)

Test designed to assess high school students' general educational development and their ability to complete college-level work. Covers four skill areas: English, mathematics, reading, and science reasoning. Some Talent Search programs use the ACT as an out-of-level achievement test for gifted 7th-8th graders. The Explore elementary talent search test (part of the American College Testing Program), often given to 3rd-6th grade students, is also a part of Talent Search Programs.

Advanced Level Course

Students receive course content normally taught at a higher grade level.

Advanced Placement Program (AP Classes)

A program developed by the College Board where high schools offer courses that meet criteria established by institutions of higher education. In many instances, college credit may be earned with the successful completion of an AP exam in specific content areas. Students pay the exam fee, but the courses are free where they are offered.

Affective Curriculum

Curriculum that focuses on personal/social awareness and adjustment and includes the study of values, attitudes, and self.

Aptitude

The inclination to excel in the performance of a certain skill.

Asynchrony

A term used to describe disparate rates on intellectual, emotional, and physical rates of growth or development often displayed by gifted children.

Autonomous Learner Model (ALM)

Delivery model of instruction specially designed to meet the needs of gifted learners. ALM was created by George Betts over 25 years ago, and Betts and Jolene Kercher revised it in 1999. The ALM model emphasizes meeting the individualized needs of students, and incorporates affective as well as cognitive components. Students in ALM advance through the standard curriculum at a faster pace than in regular classes, with greater depth and complexity. This enables students to work on activities in the five dimensions of the model: orientation, individual development, enrichment, seminars, and in-depth study.

Bloom's Taxonomy

Hundreds of gifted programs in this country use Bloom's Taxonomy as a model for developing curriculum for gifted children. Benjamin S. Bloom and others developed the taxonomy for educational objectives in 1956. They divided learning into three parts or domains: cognitive, affective, and psychomotor. Each domain was then divided again. For example, the cognitive domain was further broken down into activities involving: knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation. The last three are considered high-level thinking domains.

Cluster Grouping

A grouping assignment for gifted students in the regular heterogeneous classroom. Typically, five or six gifted students with similar needs, abilities, or interests are "clustered" in the same classroom, which allows the teacher to more efficiently differentiate assignments for a group of advanced learners rather than just one or two students.

Compacting

A strategy used to give students the opportunity to demonstrate mastery of skills and concepts required in the regular curriculum rather than forcing them to repeat already learned material. By demonstrating the level of proficiency in the basic curriculum, the student can then be allowed to omit portions of assigned curriculum, or to move more quickly through curriculum than would be typical. Students are thus able to use instructional time to engage in more appropriate and challenging learning experiences.

Concurrent or Dual Enrollment

Most often refers to high school students taking college courses, often for college credit. Dual enrollment is viewed as providing high school students benefits such as greater access to a wider range of rigorous academic and technical courses, savings in time and money on a college degree, promoting efficiency of learning, and enhancing admission to and retention in college. The term also refers to students at any grade level taking classes at the next school level. For example, elementary school students who are taking classes at middle school; middle school students who are taking high school classes.

Convergent Thinking

Convergent thinking focuses on a single answer. Most intelligence tests require convergent thinking.

Cooperative Learning

Refers to a set of instructional methods in which students work in small, mixed ability groups. The students are responsible not only for learning the material, but also for helping their teammates learn.

Creativity

The process of developing new, uncommon, or unique ideas. The federal definition of giftedness identifies creativity as a specific component of giftedness.

Credit by Examination (CBE)

Students enter an advanced level course or receive credit upon satisfactory completion of a comprehensive examination or upon certification of mastery. For example, students receive high school credit for courses, such as Spanish or algebra, taken in middle school or online after passing an examination required by the school or district.

Criterion-Referenced Test (CRT)

A Criterion-Referenced Test is an assessment that compares a student's test performance to their mastery of a body of knowledge or specific skill rather than relating their scores to the performance of other students.

Critical Thinking

The use of analytical thinking for purposes of decision-making. This includes the development of specific attitudes and skills such as analyzing arguments and points of view, understanding different perspectives, and reaching sound conclusions. Critical thinking is often a component of standardized tests.

Cross Grade Grouping

The assignment of students to instructional groups based upon their achievement in a particular subject rather than their grade level placement.

Differentiation

Differentiation modifies curriculum and instruction according to content, pacing, and/or product to meet unique student needs in the classroom. Differentiated instruction is capable of being integrated into the school program and classroom, and the modification is dependent on the individual needs of the students. Teachers may make modifications for individual students and/or instruct at different levels to groups of students in the same classroom who need varied levels of depth or pace.

Divergent Thinking

Divergent thinking is the opposite of convergent thinking. Divergent thinking focuses on many answers to a single question or problem.

Enrichment

Enrichment activities supplement the core curriculum. Such activities are generally not specified in the curriculum and are selected by the teacher and/or students in a given classroom. Activities may occur in the classroom or in a separate setting.

Exceptional

Refers to those persons evaluated and found to be either mentally gifted or in need of Special Education services.

Flexible Grouping

An instructional strategy where students are grouped together to receive appropriately challenging instruction. True flexible grouping permits students to move in and out of various grouping patterns, depending on the course content. Grouping can be determined by ability, size, and/or interest.

Flexible Pacing

Any provision that places students at an appropriate instructional level, creating the best possible match between students' achievement and instruction, and allows them to move forward in the curriculum as they achieve mastery of content and skills. Flexible pacing may be achieved by a variety of methods.

Gifted Student

A gifted student is generally defined as a student whose mental ability is 130 or above as measured on an ability test, who exhibits evidence of high intellect, superior academic performance, and/or exceptional capabilities when compared to others of his/her age, experience, or environment. These students require special services not provided in a general school setting. Common terms include mentally gifted, intellectually gifted, highly intelligent, gifted and talented, and high ability.

Gifted and Talented Student Nevada Definition

The State of Nevada [NAC 388.440] defines a "gifted and talented pupil" as "a person under the age of 18 years who demonstrates such outstanding academic skills or aptitudes that s/he cannot progress effectively in a regular school program and therefore needs special instruction or special services."

Gifted and Talented Student Federal Definition

The federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act defines gifted and talented students as "Students, children, or youth who give evidence of high achievement capability in areas such as intellectual, creative, artistic, or leadership capacity, or in specific academic fields, and who need services and activities not ordinarily provided by the school in order to fully develop those capabilities." [Title IX, Part A, Definition 22. (2002)] Many states and districts follow the federal definition.

Heterogeneous and Homogeneous Grouping

Two strategies for grouping students in the classroom. Heterogeneous grouping refers to grouping students by age or grade level with no regard to demonstrated ability or level of knowledge. A heterogeneous, or mixed-ability, classroom is one in which a teacher is expected to meet a broad range of student needs or readiness levels. Homogeneous grouping refers to grouping by the demonstrated need, ability, or interest of the students. A homogeneous classroom is comprised of one ability or achievement level.

Highly/Extremely Gifted

Children who score at the third standard deviation or above on a mental ability test, usually at a score of 145+/- and above. These students are in the top 0.01% of the total population.

Higher Level Thinking

Emphasizes tasks and activities that involve analysis, synthesis, and evaluation from Bloom's taxonomy. It also includes creative thinking skills of fluency, flexibility, originality, and elaboration.

Honors Course

A secondary level course specifically designed to be advanced in content, process, and product. Traditionally, students who meet prerequisite criteria are accepted into these courses. Honors courses are one way to provide a more challenging and differentiated curriculum and should be available for, but not limited to, identified gifted students.

Identification

The process for qualifying a student to be eligible for gifted services. The criteria vary by district and program, and usually include factors such as scores on a mental ability test, scores on standardized achievement tests, parent and teacher recommendations, and student readiness. Current trends in identification consider multiple criteria for qualification.

Inclusion

Creating a regular classroom environment that meets the needs of all levels of students.

Independent Study

A self-directed learning strategy where the teacher acts as guide or facilitator and the student plays a more active role in designing and managing his or her own learning. Student and teacher identify problems or topics of interest to the student. They develop a plan for investigation and identify the type of product the student will produce (i.e. paper, presentation, etc.).

Individual Education Plan (IEP)

An Individualized Education Plan (IEP) is mandated by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and is reviewed annually. It describes the unique support and accommodations required by a specific student. A student who qualifies for an IEP has a documented disability which negatively effects learning at school and generally needs special classroom instruction. Students who do not need special education but do need accommodations because of disability generally qualify for a 504 plan rather than an IEP. Gifted students with disabilities would more frequently qualify for the 504 plan.

504 Plan

A 504 plan is described in the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and allows a child with a disability to receive accommodations to give them the opportunity to perform at the same level as their peers. A disability conferring eligibility for a 504 plan could be a physical impairment, an allergy, a chronic ailment such as asthma or diabetes, or a learning problem. Accommodations could range from physical accommodations such as wheel chair ramps or peanut-free lunch rooms to learning accommodations such as large type or extra time on assignments and exams. A 504 plan is reviewed annually and may be revoked if accommodations are not used.

Intelligence

The aggregate of an individual's cognitive, affective, physical, and intuitive brain functioning. It is enhanced or inhibited by the interaction between the genetic pattern of individuals and the opportunities provided by the environment for individuals throughout their life spans. High levels of intelligence may be expressed in a variety of ways such as academic aptitude, insight, innovation, creative behavior, leadership, personal or interpersonal skills, visual and performing arts, or any combination of such abilities.

Intelligence Quotient (IQ)

The result of a measure of ability or aptitude at a given point in time, comparing children of the same chronological age. Standardized tests resulting in an IQ (e.g., Stanford-Binet Intelligence Scale, Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children (WISC)) must be administered by trained psychologists to preserve the tests' validity and reliability. The IQ is computed by dividing the mental age (given by the result of an intelligence test) by the chronological age times 100. An average IQ at any age is 100. The beginning of the upper 2% on the Stanford- Binet Intelligence Scale is an IQ of 132. Originally the IQ was considered to be the sole way of measuring student intelligence. Current thinking now accepts the intelligence test with the resulting IQ as one of the many ways to measure a student's mental and/or academic ability.

International Baccalaureate (IB) Program

A demanding pre-university program that students can complete to earn college credit. IB emphasizes critical thinking and understanding of other cultures or points of view. A diploma is awarded at the completion of the IB program which allows graduates access to universities worldwide.

Iowa Acceleration Scale

A survey (not a test) that takes into consideration a child's existing test scores, plus many factors from size & age to school and parent support for acceleration, and determines the child's candidacy for full grade acceleration.

Learning Styles

Preferred way(s) in which individuals interact or process new information across the three domains of learning identified in the taxonomy of education objectives: cognitive (knowledge), psychomotor (skills) and affective (attitude). An individual's preferred learning style is how he/she learns best.

Level of Service

A variety of programs and services available so that each student can be served in a way that best fits his/her needs.

Magnet School or Magnet Program

A public school program that offers particular programs or services at selected individual school sites. Some magnet programs focus on specific learning areas such as math, science, or performing arts. Others are designed to serve a specific student population such as highly gifted students. Since space is usually limited, special entrance requirements may apply.

Mentor

A community member who shares his or her expertise with a student of similar career or field of study aspirations.

Multiple Intelligence

The theory that intelligence can be expressed in a variety of ways and is not limited to the rational linear mode first suggested by Guilford in his Structure of Intelligence model. The current theory, commonly associated with Howard Gardner, identifies at least eight intelligences: linguistic, musical, spatial, logical-mathematical, bodily kinesthetic, interpersonal, intrapersonal, and natural.

Norm-Referenced Testing

An assessment that compares an individual's results with a large group of individuals who have taken the same assessment (who are referred to as the "norming group"). Examples include the SAT and Iowa Tests of Basic Skills.

Outcome-Based Education (OBE)

A theory of structured learning in which decisions about curriculum and instruction are based on desired competencies students should demonstrate at the end of their formal education. The outcomes may include not only grades or scores on reports or tests, but student demonstrated performance of real-life abilities such as planning and design, creation and production, leadership, and organization.

Parallel Curriculum Model

A curriculum modification strategy to meet the needs of gifted students in terms of depth, complexity, and novelty. This model has four simultaneous pathways of development: Core or Basic Curriculum, Curriculum of Connections, Curriculum of Practice, and the Curriculum of Identity.

Portfolio Assessment

An alternative or supplement to traditional measures of giftedness, portfolios offer a collection of student work over time that can help to determine achievement and progress. Many of the elements found in portfolios cannot be captured by a standardized test.

Pull Out Program

Any program which takes one or more students from the regular classroom during the school day.

Referral

The process of recommending a student to be considered for gifted services. This process can be informal (teacher, parent, and student participation) or formal (the use of formal standardized test scores).

Rubric

A guide or scale for scoring products or outcomes during the assessment process. Each interval along this assessment scale represents a specific level of learning from minimal to exemplary. The levels of learning are accompanied by specific descriptors of the type and quality of work expected in attaining the level of learning described.

SAT

Test administered by the College Board, measures verbal, mathematical reasoning, and writing skills students have developed over time and skills they need to be successful academically. SAT Subject Tests are required by some colleges and test in a specific academic area. Talent Search programs commonly use the SAT as an out-of-level achievement test for gifted 7th and 8th graders.

Screening

Screening is a first step assessment process aimed at selecting students who may have special needs. This can be done as a mass screening or on an individual basis.

Social-Emotional Needs

The affective needs of learners that include social relations, personal adjustment, motivation, emotional expression, values, and moral reasoning. Gifted students often experience unusual sensitivity to expectations and feelings of others, heightened self-awareness, early development of idealism and a sense of justice, emotional intensity, high expectations of self and others leading to perfectionism, advanced levels of moral judgment and profound level of altruism and global concerns. These and other areas of advanced or asynchronous social and emotional development can result in at-risk behaviors such as underachievement, symptoms of depression and/or create needs that can inhibit cognitive growth and contribute to feelings of insecurity and isolation.

Standard Deviation

The distribution of IQ scores fall into a normal bell curve, with the average tested IQ score computed to be 100. Most intelligence tests measure IQ scores up to four standard deviations above and below the mean, with each deviation representing approximately 15 points. About 70% of scores fall within one standard deviation above and one standard deviation below 100. The farther the score is from 100, the fewer the people will have that score. Unlike a "15 point difference" on an achievement test, a 15 point calculated standard deviation makes a strong difference in what a child needs. Many school districts use two standard deviations, or a score of 130 and above, as a "cut off" for qualification for gifted classes and services. Roughly 2% of the population tests above this number. The third standard deviation, or a score of 145 and above, is typically defined as highly gifted, representing about 0.01% of the population. The fourth deviation, or a score of 160 and above, is often referred to as profoundly gifted. These tests and ranges are guidelines as intellectual giftedness exists on a continuum and has many facets to be considered.

Talent Search

Academic programs across the country/world which use out-of-level achievement tests to identify gifted students and for the purpose of offering opportunities for high scoring students to participate in talent programs.

Telescope

To cover the same amount of materials or activities in less time, thereby allowing more time for enrichment activities and projects that better suit the interests, needs, and readiness levels of gifted students.

Tiered Assignments

The practice of providing different assignments that reflect the individual level of the student's knowledge of the content or skill in the core curriculum. While all students within the classroom work toward a common goal, tiered assignments allow each student to work at a level of difficulty, complexity, or depth appropriate to his or her understanding.

Twice Exceptional or Dual Identification

A term that identifies students with more than one area of exceptionality such as gifted, physically disabled, hearing impaired, visually impaired, learning disabled, or behaviorally disordered. An example would be a gifted student who is also diagnosed with Attention Deficit Disorder, a form of learning disability.

Tracking

An organizational practice in education that forms fixed groups of students that are rigidly maintained over time.

Underachievement

A discrepancy between recognized ability and actual academic performance. The causes of underachievement may be social, emotional, physical, and/or academic and may originate at home and/or at school.

Within class regrouping

Students are grouped together within a class for one or more subject areas (usually math and language arts) based on achievement or mastery of the content.