

Glossary of Terms

This page is a glossary of terms associated with gifted education. This is not a complete list of terms and the definitions are generic in nature.

A | B | C | D | E | F | G | H | I | J | K | L | M | N | O | P | Q | R | S | T | U | V | W | X | Y | Z

Ability Grouping

Class assignment based on perceived ability of the students.

Ability Test

Instruments that measure a student's mental ability. Some examples are NNAT, Otis Lennon, WISC, CO-GAT, or K-Bit2.

Acceleration

A strategy 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 a student 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.

Advanced Level Courses

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

Advanced Placement Program (AP Classes)

A College Board program of college level courses taught by high school teachers; some colleges give credit for these courses upon successful completion of the AP exam. Students pay the exam fee, but the courses are free where they are offered.

Assessment

The act of evaluating performance of a task or project. This can be teacher-created, purchased materials, or formal/standardized.

At-Risk

A student who is: a) unable to handle the emotional, social, intellectual, or physical demands of life or school; b) in physical or emotional danger; or c) in danger of dropping out of school.

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.

Brainstorming

A group activity that stimulates creative and high level thinking. The word itself was developed

and named by Alex Osborn, an advertising executive. Children are usually given a topic and asked to come up with as many ideas related to that topic as possible. All ideas are accepted without criticism. Brainstorming is designed to generate creative ideas without immediate thought to right or wrong answers. It is the basis for many activities involving gifted children.

Cluster Grouping

Placing several identified gifted students in the same classroom. Clustering gifted students in the regular classroom allows the teacher to differentiate learning activities for a group of identified students rather than one or two students.

Collaboration

Teacher and gifted specialist work together to plan, prepare, and implement units of study for identified students. Classroom teacher and gifted specialists both work directly with students.

Compacting

A three step process that: 1) assesses what a student knows about content to be studied and what the student still needs to master; 2) plans for learning what is not known; and 3) plans for freed-up time to be spent in enriched or accelerated study.

Concurrent or Dual Enrollment

Students at any grade level may take classes at the next school level. For example, elementary school students take classes at junior high; junior high students take high school classes; high school students take college courses.

Consultation

Teacher and gifted specialists working together to plan and prepare materials for identified students. Only the classroom teacher works with the students.

Content

What teachers teach; what they want students to learn.

Continuous Progress

Students receive appropriate instruction daily and move ahead as they master content and skills.

Contracts

An agreement between the teacher and the student. The teacher grants certain freedoms and choices of how the student will complete tasks, and the student agrees to use the freedoms appropriately in designing and completing work.

Convergent Thinking

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

Cooperative Learning

An instructional method 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

A complex mental process that is very difficult to define or measure. Creativity is more than the ability to draw well, as many people believe. It involves putting together new, different, and unique ideas. It is found in all children to a certain degree. Creative thinking can be used in all content areas, not just art.

Cross Grade Grouping

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

Differentiated Curriculum

A set of activities, a program, or a plan of instruction that is designed to meet the unique needs of special children. Gifted children may not deserve more than other children in our public schools, but they do deserve different educational experiences. This means curriculum that allows for acceleration, stimulation of high level thinking, divergent thinking, and convergent thinking.

Differentiated Educational Plan (DEP)

A plan that is written by classroom teachers and shared with parents to provide information on how the school/teacher is working to meet the needs of an identified student. A DEP is written for identified students in grades K-8.

Differentiation

Varied approaches to what students need to learn (content), how they will learn it (process), and/or how they can express what they have learned (product) in order to increase the likelihood that each student will learn as much as he or she can as efficiently as possible.

Differentiation Implementation Report for Parents (DIRP)**Divergent Thinking**

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

Dual Identification or Twice Exceptional

Students who have more than one educational label, such as gifted and learning disabled.

Enrichment Programs

Learning activities which go beyond the regular curricular activities. Enrichment programs usually take the form of special classes or special schools for the gifted. They might also involve itinerant teachers who provide regular classroom teachers with help for their gifted students. These special teachers might also pull out the gifted students from the regular classroom in order to involve them in special activities.

Evaluation

To make judgments about the value or worth of something.

Exceptional

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

Flexible Grouping

This occurs when students are part of many different groups and also work alone based on the match of the task to student readiness, interest, or learning style.

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

A student whose mental ability is 130 or above and whose academic ability is above age/grade peers by a significant amount (usually at least one to two years).

Heterogeneous Grouping

Grouping students by mixed ability or readiness levels. A heterogeneous classroom is one in which a teacher is expected to meet a broad range of student needs or readiness levels.

Highly/Extremely Gifted

Children who score 150 or above on a mental ability test. 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.

Homogeneous Grouping

One ability or achievement level in a class.

Inclusion

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

Independent Study

A self-directed style of learning. Independent study is usually done with the help of a teacher; however the role of the teacher is limited. 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.).

Instructional Level

Determined by diagnostic testing and full assessment of a child's rate of acquisition and rate of retention of skills. Diagnostic testing may include curriculum based assessment in reading and math and/or standardized normed tests.

Learning Styles

A term used to describe personality, psychological traits, social behaviors, developmental differences, communication styles, and environmental preferences. There are several learning style theories that try to match traits of the learner with teaching methods.

Level of Service

A variety of services available so that each student can be served as it fits her/his needs. The level of service for each student will be initially determined by the placement committee.

Mentorship

A program where students are teamed up with an expert who can help guide the student's growth in a particular area. The program concentrates on advanced projects, and exploration of work settings. The "expert" can be a teacher, media specialist, parent volunteer, older student, or community member.

Multiple Intelligence

Howard Gardner developed a theory that addresses seven major intelligence domains. Each person has a dominate intelligence. Schools/teachers need to develop lessons that teach through multiple intelligences to teach every student within their dominate intelligence

Overachiever

The overachiever is a child who performs at a higher level than would be normally expected.

Peer Tutoring

A program where students teach other students. When older students tutor younger children, it is usually referred to as cross-age tutoring. This is not to take the place of instruction for gifted students.

Problem Solving Method

Defined by the National Council of Supervisors of Mathematics as the process of applying previously acquired knowledge to new and unfamiliar situations.

Process

Taking new information or ideas and using strategies to make sense of it.
Product Assignments that help students rethink, use and extend what they have learned over a long period of time.
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 tool for assessment made by the teacher. This tool explains what is expected in the assignment and how each component of the assignment will be assessed or graded.
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.
Standards of Accreditation Guidelines for school districts and schools by which the State Department of Education will evaluate schools. If standards are met, accreditation will be awarded to schools.
Standards of Learning Curriculum guidelines produced by the Virginia Department of Education that are a standard of education across the state. These standards will be tested in grades 3, 4, 5, and 8 and as end of course tests in High School level courses.
Talent Pool The Talent Pool is a group of students in grades K-5 that are working above grade level and need additional enrichment activities. The activities are provided through differentiation by the classroom teacher(s) with the support of the gifted resource teacher. This Talent Pool placement will remain in effect until a re-evaluation in fifth grade is completed. During the fifth grade school year, all students in the Talent Pool are re-evaluated for eligibility in the academically gifted program. During this re-evaluation careful consideration will again be given to test data, checklists, portfolios, and other supportive documentation.
Talent Development Plan (TDP) A plan that is written by classroom teachers and shared with parents to provide information on how the school/teacher is working to meet the needs of students in the Talent Pool. A TDP is written for Talent Pool students in grades K-5.
Tiered Assignments Varied levels of activities for the same lesson or unit that ensure students explore ideas at a level that builds on their prior knowledge and promotes continued growth.
Twice Exceptional Students who have more than one educational label, such as gifted and learning disabled.
Underachiever A child whose school work or classroom achievement is not consistent with his or her ability to learn.