

Frequently Used Terms in Gifted Education

Ability Grouping	Class or group assignment based on observed behavior or performance. Ability grouping is not the same as tracking. Click here for NAGC position statement on ability grouping.
Accelerated Learning	A strategy of progressing through education at rates faster or ages younger than the norm. Click here for more information.
Accountability	Holding students, teachers, administrators, and other school personnel responsible for instructional outcomes. Click here for more information.
Advanced Placement (AP)	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. (Note: Individuals interested in policies related to earning college credit should contact the college or university of their choice for specifics.)
Affective Curriculum	Curriculum that focuses on person/social awareness and adjustment, and includes the study of values, attitudes, and self. Click here for more information.
Aptitude	An inclination to excel in the performance of a certain skill.
Asynchrony	A term used to describe disparate rates of intellectual, emotional, and physical rates of growth or development often displayed by gifted children. Click here for more information.
At-Risk	A term used to describe students whose economic, physical, emotional, or academic needs go unmet or serve as barriers to talent recognition or development, thus putting them in danger of underachieving or dropping out. Click here for more information.
Authentic Assessment	Evaluating student learning through the use of student portfolios, performance, or observations in place or in conjunction with more traditional measures of performance such as tests and written assignments. The process allows students to be evaluated using assessments that more closely resemble real world tasks, such as a scientific experiment to demonstrate understanding of the laws of motion.
Bloom's Taxonomy	Developed in 1956 by Benjamin Bloom, the taxonomy is often used to develop curriculum for gifted children. There are six levels within the taxonomy that move from basic to high levels of thinking. These include knowledge, comprehension,

application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation. [Click here](#) for more information.

Brainstorming

Brainstorming is an activity used to generate many creative ideas that have no right or wrong answers and are accepted without criticism. Effective brainstorming is characterized by fluency and flexibility of thought.

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. [Click here](#) for more information.

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 terms may also be used to refer to middle grade students taking high school courses and earning credit towards graduation. [Click here](#) for more information.

Cooperative Learning

An instructional method that allows students to work in small groups within the classroom, often with a division of assignment of several specific tasks or roles. This group strategy allows students to practice working in a group and taking leadership roles. However, when gifted students participate in cooperative learning groups intentionally clustered by mixed ability students, special care must be taken to differentiate tasks appropriately. [Click here](#) for the NAGC position statement on cooperative learning.

Creativity

The process of developing new, uncommon, or unique ideas. The federal definition of giftedness identifies creativity as a specific component of giftedness. [Click here](#) for more information about creativity in young children.

Criterion-Referenced Testing

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. [Click here](#) for more information.

Curriculum Compacting

After showing a level of proficiency in the basic curriculum, a student can then be allowed to exchange instructional time for other learning experiences.

Differentiation	Modifying curriculum and instruction according to content, pacing, and/or product to meet unique student needs in the classroom. Click here for more information.
Enrichment	Activities that add or go beyond the existing curriculum. Activities may occur in the classroom or in a separate setting.
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. Click here for more information.
Gifted and Talented Students	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. Click here for more information.
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. Click here for NAGC position statement on ability grouping.
Homogeneous Grouping	Grouping students by need, ability, or interest. Although variations between students exist in a homogeneous classroom, the intent of this grouping pattern is to restrict the range of student readiness or needs that a teacher must address. Click here for NAGC position statement on ability grouping.
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.
Individual Education Plan (IEP)	An IEP is a document that delineates special education services for special-needs students. The IEP includes any modifications that are required in the regular classroom and any additional special programs or services. Federal law and the majority of states do not require IEPs for gifted learners. Click here for more information.
Intelligence	The ability to learn, reason, and problem solve. Debate revolves around the nature of intelligence as to whether it is an innate quality or something that is developed as a result of interacting with the environment. Many researchers believe that it is a

combination of the two. [Click here](#) for more information.

Intelligence Quotient (IQ)

A numerical representation of intelligence. IQ is derived from dividing mental age (result from an intelligence test) by the chronological age times 100. Traditionally, an average IQ is considered to be 100.

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.

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.

Magnet Schools

A public school program that focuses on a specific learning area such as math, science, technology, or the performing arts. Magnet schools have been established to meet the specific learning needs of the gifted.

Mentor

A community member who shares his or her expertise with a student of similar career or field of study aspirations. [Click here](#) form more information.

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. [Click here](#) for more information.

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 or Practice, and the Curriculum of Identify.

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. [Click here](#) for more information.

Pull-out Program

A program which takes a student out of the regular classroom during the school day for special programming.

Rubric	A rubric is a chart composed of criteria for evaluation and levels of fulfillment of those criteria. A rubric allows for standardized evaluation according to specified criteria, making grading simpler and more transparent.
Social-Emotional Needs	Gifted and talented students may have affective needs that include heightened or unusual sensitivity to self-awareness, emotions, and expectations of themselves or others, and a sense of justice, moral judgment, or altruism. Counselors working in this area may address issues such as perfectionism, depression, underachievement, or career planning. Click here for more information.
Talent Development	Programs, curricula, and services for gifted and talented students that can best meet their needs, promote their achievements in life, and contribute to the enhancement of our society when schools identify students' specific talent strengths and focus educational services on these talents. Click here for more information.
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	A differentiated instructional strategy in which all students work toward the same goal, but activities are geared toward each student's level of understanding.
Twice Exceptional	A term used to describe a student that is both gifted and disabled. These students may also be referred to as having dual exceptionalities or as being GT/LD. Click here for more information.
Underachieving or Underachievement	A term used to describe the discrepancy between a student's performance and their potential, or ability to perform at a much higher level. Click here for more information.

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