

## High Ability Glossary of Terms

**Ability Grouping:** Students are grouped by ability and readiness level. Groups can be formed and reformed to meet varied instructional purposes. Ability grouping is NOT synonymous with "tracking."

**Ability Test** (also called a measure of reasoning, potential or aptitude): Evaluating the potential performance of high ability students usually through the use of reasoning tests that test more than one reasoning ability: verbal, quantitative and nonverbal. Note: Nonverbal measures cannot be used to predict success in language arts and can only be used in combination with quantitative ability measures to predict achievement in math. Measures or scores of nonverbal reasoning should not be used alone in Indiana because by themselves these measures do not predict high performance in math or in language arts. Those are the required domains of service in Indiana.

**Academic Excellence:** Expecting each student to work at maximum level toward a set of external standards as defined by state, district, and/or school. Learning and performing for each student should be at a challenge level commensurate with each student's skills and developed abilities.

**Accelerated Learning:** Pacing students through the curriculum at a rate commensurate with their advanced ability. Students may or may not be formally identified as high ability to participate in some forms of accelerated learning. High ability students need more than just acceleration; they need enrichment of their learning experiences and an emphasis on the development of thinking skills.

**Achievement Test:** A test that measures the extent to which a student has mastered the skills and knowledge of a particular subject and/or grade level.

**Advanced Placement (AP):** Any of the approximately 35 classes endorsed by the College Board in which a secondary student can earn college credit by successfully meeting criteria established by higher education institutions on a nationally given and scored Advanced Placement examination. Students also earn high school credit upon successful completion of the course(s). AP Scores are in the range of 1-5, with scores of 3, 4, or 5 being highly correlated with college graduation. All Indiana students scoring 3, 4, or 5 on an AP exam will receive college credit at state supported universities.

**Affective Learning:** Incorporating into the curriculum opportunities for students to address social and emotional issues, attitudes, and appreciations of self and others.

**Alternative Assessment:** Assessments that provide additional information about a child's ability beyond what may be gleaned from traditional testing. Also referred to as other forms of assessment

**At-Risk:** Students who may underachieve or who may drop out of school. Unmet economic, physical, emotional, linguistic, and/or academic needs may inhibit a student's ability to learn or attend school.

**Authentic Assessment:** Process of evaluating student learning using student products or performance instead of traditional standardized tests.

**Behavioral Rating Scale/Checklist:** A checklist or scale that reports the frequency or extent to which an individual demonstrates specific actions or characteristics. Caution: When using these for identification, it is important that the items on the scale or checklist be relevant to the specific subject area and services to be provided.

**Between-Class Grouping:** The practice of “trading students” among teachers at a particular grade level so that each teacher has a narrower range of abilities for the chosen subject or topic.

**Cluster Grouping:** The practice of identifying a small group of high ability students at a grade level and placing them in the same classroom at that grade level with a teacher who is best suited and qualified to work with high ability students.

**Core Curriculum:** The common knowledge and skills to be learned by all students of a particular grade; reading, writing, mathematics, social studies, and science constitute the core curriculum.

**Creative Problem-Solving** — The act of working on challenging problems and projects through the use of six steps: mess-finding, data-finding, problem-finding, idea-finding, solution-finding, and acceptance-finding.

**Creative Thinking** — Involves creating something new or original. It involves the skills of flexibility, originality, fluency, and elaboration. Activities involving brainstorming, modification, imagery, associative thinking, attribute listing, metaphorical thinking, forced relationships, etc. promote creative thinking.

**Credit by Examination:** The student is awarded advanced standing credit or the ability to be placed in a higher-level class by successfully completing some form of mastery test or activity.

**Criterion-Referenced Test:** A test to determine whether the student has achieved specific skills or concepts, such as grade level standards. Each individual is compared with a preset standard for acceptable achievement, not compared to other students. This type of test may limit the demonstration of knowledge for students with high ability (“ceiling effect”)

**Critical Thinking** — Critical thinking is the intellectually disciplined process of actively and skillfully conceptualizing, applying, analyzing, synthesizing, and/or evaluating information gathered from, or generated by, observation, experience, reflection, reasoning, or communication.

**Cross-Grade Grouping:** The practice of placing students in a particular subject so that they are with other students who are ready for instruction at that particular grade level, regardless of their current grade in school.

**Curriculum Compacting:** A process used to give students validation for what they already know. It allows students who demonstrate mastery to omit portions of assigned curriculum, or to move more quickly through curriculum than would be typical. Students are thus able to "buy time" which can be used to accelerate content or to pursue enrichment activities while the unit is being taught to other students.

**Curriculum & Instructional Strategies Plan:** A plan that details how the curriculum and instruction are differentiated in breadth or depth of content to meet the needs of one or more high ability students in each grade level, K-12. It also indicates how the curriculum for high ability students is differentiated from the general education curriculum to promote such things as higher order thinking, decision-making, creative problem solving, and effective researching. This should include a Scope and Sequence or Curriculum Map to show the K-12 articulation of the curriculum for high ability students.

**Differentiation:** Adapting the curriculum to meet the unique needs of learners by making modifications in complexity, depth, and pacing. It may include selecting, rather than covering all, the curriculum areas dependent on the individual needs of students. When differentiating for students with advanced potential, curriculum and instruction should be at an appropriately high level of challenge first, and then can be further differentiated along other dimensions.

**Disaggregated Data:** Data that is separated by race, ethnicity, free/reduced lunch, language proficiency, gender, high ability, presence of an IEP, or accommodations.

**Domain:** "Domain" includes the following areas of aptitude and talent frequently covered in state definitions: general intellectual, creativity, specific academic, visual and performing arts, and leadership. Additional domains of talent may be mentioned in specific state definitions.

**Dual/Concurrent Enrollment:** This practice allows a student of high ability to attend classes in more than one building level during the school year and receive credit for a parallel course at a higher level. This can also be when high school students take high school and college classes simultaneously.

**Early Entrance:** Students begin their elementary school or college education prior to the designated chronological age of entrance.

**Early Graduation:** Acceleration options have allowed the number of years a student spends in mastering the K - 12 curriculum to be shortened and makes early high school graduation possible.

**Early Matriculation:** Enrollment in college before completion of the usual seven or eight semesters of high school. This usually involves meeting diploma requirements through a combination of course completions and demonstration of proficiency in one or more required areas.

**Enrichment:** Activities that supplement the core curriculum. Such activities may or may not be specified in the curriculum; they are frequently selected by the teacher and/or students in a given classroom. Enrichment, by itself, is not enough for high ability students. However, both enrichment and acceleration are elements of a good curriculum for high ability students.

**General Intellectual:** “General intellectual” means understanding facts and concepts, developing skills and generalizations, and evaluating their relationships as they apply to a broad array of disciplines. In Indiana, the term is used for those high ability students who qualify for services in both Language Arts and Math.

**Gifted and Talented:** There is no single, widely accepted definition of “gifted” or “talented.” Identification criteria used to determine who participate in services or programs may vary by state and/or by local district.

**Governing Body:** Local Education Agency or board of education (school board).

**Grade Skipping:** Students progress through grade level instruction skipping one or more grades.

**Guidance and Counseling Plan:** The plan outlines the differentiated services within the district to meet the specific affective needs and educational career plans of the students of high ability. It may include topics such as:

- academic program planning,
- career & life planning,
- organization & management skills,
- the meaning of giftedness,
- stress management, and
- individual-, small-, or large- group counseling sessions.

**Heterogeneous/Homogeneous Grouping:** Grouping heterogeneously generally occurs by chronological age level and without regard for the diverse needs of students. Homogeneous grouping is based on common criteria such as the students' interests, special needs, or academic abilities.

**High Ability Student:** In Indiana this is defined in this way: "high ability student" means a student who performs at, or shows the potential for performing at, an outstanding level of accomplishment in at least one (1) domain when compared to other students of the same

age, experience, or environment; and is characterized by exceptional gifts, talents, motivation, or interests.

**Honors Class:** Classes at the middle school/junior high or high school level in which content, pace, or depth of instruction is accelerated and/or enriched when compared to the general education curriculum. Traditionally, students who meet prerequisite criteria are accepted into these courses. These courses may include students other than those identified as high ability by the school district. When this is the case, the teacher should further differentiate within the class so the curriculum and instruction are appropriately challenging for students with identified high ability in that academic domain.

**Independent Study or Self-Directed Study:** Allowing students to follow individual or self-selected areas of interest and specific aptitude by designing and implementing their own study plans. Close monitoring by teachers is an essential component of independent study. It is good to have carefully constructed outlines of expectations and product rubrics to ensure rigor and the meeting of program goals.

**Individualization:** Providing a specific program that meets the particular needs, interests, and/or abilities of an individual student for some part of his/her educational experience. It does not mean, however, that every child is working in isolation on a different level or a different subject at all times. It does mean that students are working on levels commensurate with their assessed ability, needs, and/or interests.

**Individualized Education Plan/Program (IEP):** A written document that describes how a student will access a variety of high ability services that may include the use of several service options.

**Intelligence Quotient (IQ):** A measure of ability or aptitude at a given point in time, comparing children of the same chronological age. It is a test designed to measure one's potential for learning including abstract thinking and reasoning, knowledge acquisition, and problem-solving abilities. Originally it was considered to be the sole way of measuring student ability. Current thinking now accepts IQ as one of the many ways to measure a student's academic potential.

**International Baccalaureate (IB):** A rigorous international pre-university course of study, leading to examinations, that meets the needs of highly motivated and academically superior secondary school students. IB has a comprehensive classics curriculum (languages, sciences, mathematics, and humanities) that allows its graduates to fulfill education requirements of various nations. Only schools approved by the IB organization may offer the program. Also, school fees are charged by the IB organization. Programs are available for elementary and middle school, but these are not part of the diploma program.

**Magnet School or Magnet Program:** Many school districts, especially those with large student enrollments, select individual schools to emphasize particular programs or services. 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 high ability students. Since space is usually limited, special entrance requirements may apply.

**Mandated Program:** A legally required program or action authorized by law.

**Mentorships:** The practice of placing a student with an expert or practicing professional in a particular area of interest to the student. The student would learn about or study the interest area intensely with the mentor. This is an option that may occur outside of the normal school day.

**Metacognition** — The process of understanding one's own thinking abilities, and understanding what one does and does not know, as well as reflecting on learning plans and strategies, and monitoring interpretations, perceptions, decisions and behaviors.

**Multifaceted Assessment:** means collecting and analyzing data to identify the educational needs of high ability students through the following:

- Performance-based assessment, which includes evaluating the performance of students involved in complex learning opportunities usually through the use of achievement tests.
- Potential-based assessment, which includes assessing verbal, quantitative, and nonverbal reasoning to evaluate the potential performance of high ability students. This evaluation can be through the use of instruments, such as standardized reasoning or cognitive ability tests.
- Other forms of assessment, frequently descriptive in nature and known as qualitative assessments. Qualitative measures such as rating scales, portfolios, structured observations or interviews can provide important information about advanced performance or advanced ability if they are selected/designed to provide information about abilities in areas of services provided.

**Multifaceted Assessment Plan:** outlines the instruments used to identify students of high ability and must include at least one norm-referenced performance-based measure, one norm referenced potential-based measure, and one other form of assessment.

**Nomination:** A referral process for consideration of a student into a specialized program.

**Norm-Referenced Test:** A test used to determine an individual's status with respect to the performance of other individuals on that test. A "norm" group is the large number of examinees who have taken a particular test and whose scores form the basis of the norms. Such a test may be based on national norms, state norms, or local norms. At every level of educational test usage, it is necessary to match the scope of the test with the purpose that test is supposed to perform.

**Off-Grade Level Tests:** A test that is one or more grade or age level(s) above the student's actual grade placement or age used to assess a student's ability or achievement.

**Performance-Based Assessment** — Forms of assessment that require students to demonstrate skills and understanding by active means, including written elaborated responses, physical manipulation, oral reports and presentations, and products of various types.

**Portfolio Assessment:** A portfolio is a collection of student products used to measure student progress and achievement. A collection of student products is often used to determine the appropriateness of placement. This practice allows students to demonstrate a wide variety of abilities and talents that traditionally are not measured well by standardized tests. Material in a portfolio may be student selected.

**Potential-Based Assessment:** Evaluating the potential performance of students of high ability through the use of instruments, such as: standardized intelligence tests or tests of verbal, quantitative and non-verbal reasoning.

**Problem Based Learning (PBL)** — A form of discovery learning where teachers give students a real world problem that they must work through by reflecting on what they know, what they need to know and then using appropriate resources to find out. Students learn about the subject area as they work toward the problem's resolution.

**Professional Development Plan:** The plan describes the opportunities provided by the school district to promote professional growth in all areas of high ability services. This plan may include:

- assistance for personnel to attain university coursework or licensure in gifted education
- district in-services for teachers, administrators, paraprofessionals, and volunteers;
- staff release time for attending workshops, seminars, conferences, etc;
- resources within the corporation; and
- study groups within the corporation.

**Program for Students of High Ability:** "Program" means the range of educational services differentiated in depth and breadth designed to meet the needs of one or more students of high ability through activities such as compacting, acceleration, enrichment, critical thinking, and problem solving.

**Pull-out Program:** Students with advanced potential are pulled from their regular classrooms to work with each other and a resource teacher to facilitate accelerated and/or enriched learning experiences. To be effective in increasing student achievement in a particular subject area, this option needs to replace the regular grade level instruction in one or more areas of core curriculum and occur on a daily basis.

**Qualitative Assessment:** Measures that provide more descriptive information about a child's ability or performance in a given area such as portfolio, rating scales. They are not tests.

**Reliability:** The consistency of an instrument/test over time; the accuracy and repeatability of a measurement.

**Scaffolding** — The support structures provided by teachers and others in supporting the learner's development and content mastery. For purposes of the High Ability Project, scaffolding refers to the deliberate use of graphic organizers for purposes of organizing information on relevant concepts, problems or ideas.

**Screening Measure:** A brief, less reliable instrument used to find the top 20-25% of each demographic subgroup that will take a longer identification measure. A screening measure cannot be used alone to identify students as high ability.

**Self-Contained Classroom:** A programmatic term defining a classroom in which all the students have been identified as high ability in math, language arts, or both. The class can include multiple grades or ages.

**Socio-emotional:** The social and emotional needs of the student; affective domain.

**Specific Academic:** One of the domains of high ability. "Specific academic" means understanding facts and concepts, developing skills and generalizations, and evaluating their relationships as they apply to specific disciplines, such as language arts, social studies, foreign languages, mathematics, and sciences.

**Stakeholder:** Persons with interest in the programming for students of high ability; e.g. administrators, school board members, community members.

**Stakeholder Planning Committee:** means a diverse group with representation from educators, parents, students, community members, and other stakeholders; organized for the purposes of planning and development of programs for students of high ability. In Indiana this is called the Broad Based Planning Committee.

**Standardized Test:** A standardized test is one that is administered under standardized or controlled conditions that specify where, when, how, and for how long children may respond to the test items. Standardized tests should meet acceptable standards for technical qualities in construction, administration, and use.

**Subject-based Acceleration:** Any option that allows a high ability student to gain exposure to advanced content and skills beyond the average curriculum standards that are expected for a certain age or grade.

**Subject Skipping:** Allows a student to be placed in classes with older students for part of the day (or with materials from higher grade placements) in one or more subject areas.

**Systematic Program Assessment Plan:** The plan shows the procedures for assessing the effectiveness of the district's program for high ability services. It may include topics such as:

- schedule for reviewing and updating the current program,



- instruments and methods for evaluating program effectiveness,
- procedures for data collection, and
- recommendations for change.

**Twice-Exceptional:** Students with needs and characteristics of more than one special population, e.g. gifted and learning disabled.

**Underachieving:** A discrepancy between recognized potential and actual academic performance. The causes of underachievement may be social, emotional, physical, and/or academic.

**Validity:** The degree to which a test/assessment measures what it purports to measure.

## **Reference**

Rogers, K. (2007). Lessons learned about educating the gifted and talented: A synthesis of the research on educational practice. *Gifted Child Quarterly*, 51(4), 382-396.