

Glossary of Terms Used in Gifted Education

Ability Assessment

An ability assessment measures a student's performance on a nationally-normed intelligence instrument. There are group ability assessments (e.g., Cognitive Ability Test, Terra Nova) and there are individual ability assessments (WISC-IV, WNV, Stanford-Binet V). Ability measures the capacity to do something. Ability is different from achievement. Ability measures how a student learns while achievement measures what a student has learned.

Acceleration

Faster presentation of content to more closely match the speed at which gifted students learn. Acceleration options include early entrance to Kindergarten or 1st grade, subject acceleration, whole-grade acceleration, dual enrollment programs, and early entrance to college.

Achievement Assessment

An achievement assessment measures how much a student has learned or acquired learning. There are group achievement assessments (e.g. ITBS, MAP) and individual achievement assessments (Woodcock-Johnson-III NU). Achievement is different from ability. Achievement measures what a student has learned while ability measures how a student learns.

Advanced Placement

This refers to a program of college-level courses offered through CollegeBoard. Many high schools throughout the country offer AP courses in various subjects. Students may take a test in that subject in May to potentially earn college credit. Some colleges accept AP credit while some do not.

Asynchronous Development

Differing rates for physical, cognitive, and emotional development. For example, a gifted child may be chronologically 13 years old, intellectually 18, emotionally 8, and physically 11. The discrepancies are greatest for children at the chronological age of about 13, but the extremes displayed by gifted children have led some experts to define giftedness itself as asynchronous development.

Bloom's Taxonomy

Benjamin Bloom's taxonomy (1956) is often used to develop curriculum for students. Bloom's levels of thinking include: knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation. Gifted students typically need instruction at the highest levels of Bloom's taxonomy which promote higher level thinking skills.

Cluster Grouping

Placing a group of five to ten identified gifted students in a classroom with other students of mixed abilities. Instruction can be targeted to the cluster groups within the classroom.

Creative Thinking Ability

Ohio recognizes creative thinking as a category of giftedness. A child with creative thinking ability is one who consistently engages in divergent thinking that results in unconventional responses to conventional tasks to the extent that s/he needs and can profit from specially planned educational services beyond those normally provided by the standard school program.

Curriculum Compacting

Adapts the regular curriculum to meet the needs of advanced students by eliminating work that has already been mastered or condensing work that may be mastered at a pace more appropriate for the student's ability level.

Differentiated Curriculum

Refers to a process by which the standard curriculum is modified in content, process, product, and/or environment to meet the needs of high ability students. Modifications relate to the quality of work as opposed to the quantity.

Dual Enrollment

Taking upper-level coursework concurrently with grade-level coursework.

Early Entrance to Kindergarten/1st grade

Some children need to start Kindergarten or 1st early because they are ready. Early entrance is designed for the exceptional child who is both academically ready as well as developmentally mature when compared to others his or her chronological age.

Enrichment

The curriculum is modified to provide greater depth and breadth than is generally provided, resulting in a richer and more varied educational experience. The term enrichment may also imply activities which are conducted outside of the regular classroom, such as participation in a math or geography contest.

Flexible Grouping

Students are grouped and/or re-grouped for instruction differentiation. True flexible grouping allows students to move in and out of various groups.

Full Scale

The Full Scale IQ refers to the sum of the parts on an intelligence test. For example, the full scale IQ on the WISC-IV is a composite of these parts: Verbal Comprehension, Perceptual Reasoning, Working Memory and Processing Speed. IQs between 85 and 115 are considered within the "average range" in that they are one standard deviation above and below the mean (100).

Giftedness

Giftedness refers to distinctly above-average competence in intellectual, creative, socioaffective (leadership, empathy, self-awareness) sensory motor ability (strength, fine motor control, endurance), or other areas (extrasensory perception, healing) [Gagne].

Gifted staff

In Ohio gifted programs are typically overseen or managed by coordinators. Teachers for gifted students are often referred to as Gifted Intervention Specialists (GIS's). Support staff is also important in order to maintain a gifted program.

Heterogeneous Grouping

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

Homogeneous Grouping

Grouping students by need (*e.g., special units such as Autism units or self-contained gifted classes*), ability (*e.g., self-contained gifted classes or a higher math class*) or interest (*e.g. self-selection courses within a student's schedule*). The goal of a homogeneous grouping is for the teacher to be able to target instruction to the specific needs of the students.

Intelligence

As a concept or psychological construct, it has no universally agreed upon definition among psychologists and educators. Many people do agree that "ability to learn, reason and problem-solve" is a part of the accepted working definition. However, some contend that intelligence is "whatever the test measures." IQ is not the same as intelligence.

Iowa Acceleration Scale (IAS)

This is the instrument that is required to be used in evaluating whole-grade acceleration candidates (early entrance as well as other whole-grade candidates). The assessment involves school history, evaluation of a student's ability, aptitude and achievement, developmental factors, interpersonal skills, parental/school attitude and support, as well as critical items.

IQ

Intelligence Quotient. This is a numerical representation of intelligence. IQ is derived from dividing the mental age (based on an intelligence test such as the WISC-IV or the Stanford-Binet V) by the chronological age; times 100. An average IQ is considered to be 100 (the mean).

NUMATS (Northwestern University Midwest Academic Talent Search)

This is a talent search for students in grades 3-9 conducted by the Center for Talent Development at Northwestern University. Students participate by taking above-grade level tests (EXPLORE, ACT or SAT). Participation is optional. The highest students are invited to an awards ceremony at Northwestern University.

Post-Secondary Enrollment Option (PSEO)

Provides students with the opportunity to attend college courses while earning both high school and college credit. Tuition for the college courses is paid for with state education funds.

Pre-assessment

An assessment given at the beginning of a unit or lesson to determine how much content the student has already mastered. Instruction is then differentiated to meet the student needs.

Pull-Out Program

Program in which students are pulled out of the regular classroom on a scheduled basis to go to a resource room staffed by teacher(s) trained in the education of gifted children.

Reliability

This refers to the "repeatability" and stability of scores. Reliability refers to the consistency of a measure. A test is considered reliable if we get the same result repeatedly. For example, if a test is designed to measure a trait (such as introversion), then each time the test is administered to a subject, the results should be approximately the same. Synonym: Precision.

Self-contained classroom

A self-contained classroom is a classroom where the district places students in a classroom with other gifted students full-time, everyday. The teacher is a Gifted Interventional Specialist. The state of Ohio limits self-contained classrooms to no more than 20 students.

Services

Services for gifted students are determined by the local education agency or school district. Services vary among the Ohio school districts. A service must conform to the *Operating Standards for Identifying and Serving Gifted Students (OAC 3301-51-15)*. Districts are to apply service placement criteria consistently. Services typically involve a differentiated curriculum. A setting (AP course, resource room, Honors class) is not service without curriculum modifications that are specified in the Written Education Plan.

Socio-Emotional Needs

Many gifted students have affective needs that include heightened or unusual sensitivity to self-awareness, emotions and expectations of themselves or others, and a sense of fairness. Typical issues with gifted students include perfectionism, depression, underachievement, interpersonal relationships and career planning.

Specific Academic Ability

Ohio recognizes that some children have an aptitude in a specific subject or several subjects. A student who has specific academic ability is typically identified using an achievement test. Ohio requires performance of 95% or above at the national level on a standardized achievement test. The four areas recognized by Ohio are: reading and/or writing, mathematics, social studies and science. A student may be identified as specific academic but not superior cognitive. The reverse may also be true.

Standard Error of Measures (SEM)

The SEM is essentially the reliability of an instrument. For example, the SEM on the WISC-IV is 3.0. This means a child who scores 144 on the WISC-IV would most likely score between 141 and 147 if that instrument is used again. The higher the SEM, the less reliable the instrument.

Standardized Test

A test taken by many students under identical conditions which allows results to be compared statistically to a given standard. Popular standardized assessments include the ACT, SAT, PSAT, GRE, LSAT, MCAT, Iowa Tests of Basic Skills and the Cognitive Ability Test.

Superior Cognitive

In Ohio, a student must score two standard deviations above the mean (minus the standard error of measure) on an intelligence test (*e.g., WISC-IV, WNV or Stanford-Binet V*) or perform at or above the 95th percentile on a basic or composite battery of a nationally-normed achievement test (*e.g., ITBS*), or attain an approved score on an above-grade level standardized, nationally-normed test (*e.g., ACT, SAT or EXPLORE*).

Talent

Talent refers to performance which is distinctly above average in one or more fields of human performance. Some areas of talent include: academics, games of strategy, technology, arts, social actions, business, athletics. Individuals who are gifted may not necessarily be talented.

Telescoping Curriculum

To narrow the focus so that material may be covered in less time. The same content is covered, but at a much faster pace because less repetition is needed. By using telescoping and curriculum compacting with gifted students, there is more time for independent study or other needs.

Tiered Assignments

In a heterogeneous classroom, a teacher uses varied levels of activities to ensure that students explore ideas at a level that builds on their prior knowledge and prompts continued growth.

Twice Exceptional

This is a term used to describe a child who has two or more exceptionalities. For example, a student who is both gifted and hearing impaired.

Validity

Validity is the extent to which a test measures what it claims to measure. It is vital for a test to be valid in order for the results to be accurately applied and interpreted. Validity isn't determined by a single statistic, but by a body of research that demonstrates the relationship between the test and the behavior it is intended to measure. There are three types of validity: content, criterion-related and construct.

Visual or Performing Arts Ability

Ohio recognizes visual (visual arts) or performing arts ability (music, drama/theatre, dance) in students. The Ohio Department of Education has handbooks on the procedures to be used for each area posted on their web site. Typically, there is a checklist of behaviors related to a specific arts area. Experts in the field serve as the evaluators for Visual or Performing Arts Ability.

Written Acceleration Plan

Ohio requires a Written Acceleration Plan (WAP) for students who are accelerated (subject, whole or early entrance to Kindergarten/1st grade). The WAP specifies the accelerated placement, transition strategies, methods of monitoring progress and staff responsible.

Written Education Plan

Ohio requires that students who are reported as served have Written Education Plans (WEP's) to document the services provided, the goals for the students, methods for evaluating progress, method and schedule for reporting progress to parents, a list of the staff responsible to ensuring delivery of each service prescribed, policies regarding waiver of assignments and re-scheduling of tests and the deadline for the next review of the WEP. Some states use Individual Education Plans (IEPs) rather than a WEP. On Ohio, an IEP documents special education services for special needs students.