

Guide to Educational Terms

Ability/aptitude Testing – Tests that measure capacity for learning, natural ability, talent. (e.g.: CogAT – Cognitive Ability Test, WISC – Weschler Intelligence Scale for Children, K-BIT – Kaughman Brief Intelligence Test)

Acceleration – Any practices designed to move a student more rapidly through curricular material. These could include early admission to school, grade-skipping, advanced placement, credit by examination or going through the curriculum at a faster pace.

Achievement Testing – Instruments that measure convergent thinking and academic achievement. (e.g.: ITBS – Iowa Test of Basic Skills, Adams 50 Reading Battery)

Advanced learning plan - an individualized learning plan that outlines specific services for student advancement and success as well as their socio-emotional needs. The plan may include any of the program options described on the previous page.

Affective needs - socio-emotional needs of students. Gifted children may require support, including counseling, to deal with their unique socio-emotional needs.

Bloom's Taxonomy – A systematic approach to looking at thinking skills from the most basic to higher-level skills. This includes the six (6) levels of knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation.)

Content – Content refers to what is taught in the curriculum, i.e. what topics, in what sequence, in how much depth, etc.

Convergent Thinking – Systematic reasoning, focusing on one correct answer. This includes inductive and deductive reasoning, inquiry and logic.

Creative Thinking – Open-ended, divergent, imaginative thinking; includes fluency, flexibility, originality and elaboration.

Critical Thinking – Systematic and analytic reasoning; includes convergent and logical thinking and the high levels of Bloom' Taxonomy.

Differentiated Instruction - a variety of instructional and management strategies for the mixed-ability (regular) classroom. Teachers design differing levels of content, process, and product for differing levels of student abilities and interests. The use of differentiation in the regular classroom is designed to meet the needs of all students at all levels.

Enrichment - broadens the range of experience for all gifted and talented students by encouraging expansion of knowledge and skills in the regular curriculum. This is vital for students who may experience educational disadvantage due to cultural, language, or low socioeconomic background.

Extension - encourages expansion of knowledge and skills in the regular classroom. Learning new strategies for constructing knowledge is a particularly important goal for extension programs.

Fluency – The ability to give a number of responses or ideas in a situation; quantity is the goal. Studies show that generating a large quantity of ideas increases the likelihood of producing a useful and/or original idea.

Higher-Level Thinking Skills – Thinking skills that require a learner to analyze, synthesize or evaluate what is being learned. Some of these skills include forecasting, logical thinking, planning, decision-making, etc.

Mentor – A friend, wise advisor and teacher. A mentor is an expert in the community who is willing to act as a teacher with children and give advice in a specific area of interest.

Qualitative Data – A compilation of material that requires a judgment made on the basis of a perceived quality of work.

Quantitative Data – Data obtained on performance of a student which gives a number value to that performance.

Underachiever – A child whose academic performance is below what one would expect based on age, grade, IQ, achievement test scores and potential.