Definition of Terms

Learning Environment

AP courses
The Advanced Placement program, sponsored by the College Board, offers capable high school students the opportunity to take college-level courses and to receive college credit or advanced placement through examination. Teachers usually receive AP training and follow a course description established by the College Board. These courses are designed for ambitious students who meet entry criteria.

Cluster grouping
A cluster group of gifted students is assigned to a regular heterogeneous class. The classroom teacher receives training in gifted education and works closely with a gifted specialist for both resources and teaching strategies.

Cluster within a team
AIG students within each team are reassigned to one or more teachers for a specific block of instructional time. Placement within this group is flexible, based on student need.

Cross-age grouping
Students from more than one grade level may be grouped for nurturing or enrichment.

Cross grade grouping
Multi-age/multi-grade students are grouped within a school by interest or skills. Highly capable students are allowed to attend a higher grade for specific subject areas in which the students show a need for acceleration. This allows the students to remain with their age appropriate peer group while receiving a differentiated curriculum.

Cross team grouping

Each team identifies students performing at an advanced skill level. Such students are pulled together during an instructional period and taught by one teacher. The group usually stays together for a specific grading period or instructional unit. At the end of that time, the group may be reconfigured, thus keeping the grouping flexible. In order for this to work effectively, teams must meet regularly and plan collaboratively.

Dual enrollment

This option allows students to be enrolled in two levels of schooling at the same time. Students may remain at one level and attend another level for a specific course or period of time. This is an appropriate option for secondary students that might be enrolled in courses at post secondary institutions. Through dual enrollment, students may receive college and high school credit for courses taken while still in high school.

Enrichment groups

Highly gifted students are grouped for enrichment based on their aptitude and/or performance.

Flexible grouping in regular classroom

Students in each class are assigned to a small group for instruction. To be effective, grouping should be flexible and fit the instructional purpose.

Grade level acceleration

Highly capable students who show mastery of basic skills for one particular grade level may have their needs met in a higher grade level.

Honors courses

Honors courses cover traditional content at an advanced level with emphasis on issues and themes related to topics. Although these courses are not limited to gifted students, they have clearly defined entry and exit criteria.

Interest Groups
Students are grouped based on their aptitude and/or performance for enrichment. Grouping may be limited to identified gifted students; however, the groups may include other high achievers.

Nurturing Groups
Students from under-represented populations may be grouped for enrichment. Inclusion is based on observed potential rather than on identification.

Part-time class
Part-time classes may be available for students on a periodic basis to provide enriched experiences which complement differentiation within the regular classroom.

Regular heterogeneous classroom
Students of varying abilities are assigned to grade level classes by administrators and teachers to create a balanced learning environment.

Resource class
Highly capable students are assigned to a small group for instruction. Resource classes meet on a regular basis, focusing on a specific content area, usually reading, writing, or mathematics.

Separate class
Highly capable students are clustered together and are taught by a regular classroom teacher who has certification in gifted education and/or knowledge of curriculum differentiation for gifted students. The instructional pace is accelerated, and the content is more in-depth.

Subject grouping
Students who have similar strengths and needs in a given subject are grouped for instruction.

Subject acceleration

Highly capable students who show mastery of basic skills for one particular subject may have their needs met in a higher grade level.

Zero period

Zero period is the additional period before school created to give students the opportunity to enroll in courses based on their interest and need.

Content Modification

AP courses
Advanced placement classes are available. The College Board Curriculum Guide is used for the advanced placement classes. Students may take the AP exams and receive college credit.

Computer based learning
Computer based learning can be used to enrich the curriculum and remediate specific skill deficits. Students may use computers and/or multimedia to study advanced content, develop research skills, participate in competitive activities, and refine technology skills. Software is selected for enrichment that challenges thinking, problem-solving, and decision making.

Content acceleration
Highly capable students who show mastery in an area may be given time to work on independent interest projects or to advance in the content area. Content covered in specific classes is at an advanced level. Course objectives go beyond standard content.

Content enrichment
Highly capable students can benefit from the extension of the curriculum to include depth and complexity. These types of activities may be offered in the regular classroom and in special interest groups.

Contracts
Learning contracts are agreements made between teacher and student that allows a student to work independently on accelerated materials related to a unit of study. The teacher meets with the student on a regular basis to review the student's progress.

Curriculum compacting
Compacting is modifying or streamlining the regular curriculum to eliminate repetition of previously mastered material. This may provide time for enrichment and/or acceleration activities while insuring mastery of basic skills.

Differentiated instructional units

Teaching/learning units are designed to incorporate individual learning abilities and mastered skills with levels of content. The units may be developed by the classroom teacher and/or the AIG specialist.

Distance learning

Distance learning includes video or on-line courses offered to high school students. This provides students more options in course selection. Televised courses are available to high school students in North Carolina through TI-IN and the North Carolina School of Science and Math. Students sign up for specific courses and attend classes at their base school or at a central facility.

Dual enrollment

This option allows students to be enrolled in two levels of schooling at the same time. It works best with content that is highly sequential. (Example: math, reading, foreign language). Through dual enrollment, students may receive college credit for courses taken while still in high school.

Honors classes

These classes are designed to challenge students in grades 9-12. They offer a more rapid and intense coverage of the curriculum.

Huskins courses

Huskins courses are a form of dual enrollment. (See above for the definition of dual enrollment.)

Independent study

Highly capable students choose an area of interest to do an in-depth study. The regular classroom teacher and the AIG specialist help the students with obtaining resources, organizing their time, and completing a product. Independent study requires research, data gathering and synthesizing information.

Individualized education program
The student is carefully assessed and follows an individualized instructional program. The student continues to participate in regular class activities and have an opportunity to work independently on higher level tasks or areas of interest. This is appropriate for young gifted students who need or desire to remain with their age group

Integrated units
Thematic units deal with information from various disciplines that are integrated under a broad-based theme such as conflict, power, patterns, etc. These units provide the opportunity to deal with content at a high level of sophistication.

Joint enrollment
Students may enroll in specialized courses at the community college, the university, or other agencies. Students do not receive high school credit for the course work.

Learning centers
Learning centers are workstations that provide differentiated activities for individuals or groups. Students may self-select centers or be assigned to centers on a rotation basis.

Mastery learning units
Teachers design units of instruction having enrichment activities that students pursue after they have demonstrated mastery of the basic material.

On-line AP courses
Distance learning can include Advanced Placement courses. (See the definitions of Distance Learning and AP courses.)

SAT preparation
Scholastic Aptitude Test preparation is available through the high schools.

Talents Unlimited

Talents Unlimited, a researched based program, uses specific lesson guides to teach students to identify and use the processes of thinking.

Telecommunications

Telecommunication involves communicating and accessing information from different sources and locations. Many services are available through the internet.

Enrichment/Talent Development

Academic competitions
Various competitive activities are offered in grades 4-12.

Advanced enrichment units
Units of study are provided for highly gifted students on specific topics allowing the students to extend their experiences through content, process, and product.

After school enrichment
After school enrichment classes may be offered after the regular school day. The classes vary according to interest and need.

Counseling
Individual and group counseling opportunities are available for highly capable students based on student need. Focus groups are also available on specific topics.

Creative problem solving
Creative problem solving is the action of solving real or simulated problems through various strategies and methods. The process may include fact finding, problem finding, solution generating, setting criteria, and evaluation of solutions. Emphasis is placed on creative and original ideas and solutions.

Exploratory activities
Activities are specifically designed to expose students to a variety of activities to expand their interests. Students often rotate between classes or stations for designated periods of time.

Field trips
Highly capable students have the opportunity to gain knowledge or experience in a particular subject by visiting a setting away from the school. These trips are directly related to the North Carolina Standard Course of Study.

In-class lessons

The AIG specialist conducts a lesson within the regular classroom which will include students of all abilities. The lesson is based on the standard course of study, higher order thinking skills, problem-solving strategies, topics of high interest, or exploratory activities.

Interest-based electives

Electives are courses offered at the high schools and middle schools. Students choose these courses based on their interest or need.

Interest units

Highly capable students are involved in units of study based on the students' interests.

Learning centers

A learning center is an activity area within a classroom that enriches or extends the standard curriculum. These centers may be set up by the classroom teacher and/or the AIG specialist.

Mentors/job shadowing

Mentors are professionals from the community who are matched with students who have interests in that particular profession or field of study. The mentor may act as a guide who shapes knowledge, demonstrates method of inquiry, gives direction, and provides continued support. A mentorship helps to bridge the gap between the educational world and its surrounding community

Mini-Units

A mini-unit is a course of study in a resource setting designed for the highly capable student that meets an academic need, enhances the regular curriculum, or develops a student's particular interest. A mini-unit is based on the standard course of study, enrichment, counseling, process skills, or exploration.

Nurturing units

Students who show potential, but are not identified as gifted, are involved in units of study. These students may be from under-represented populations such as minority groups, low socioeconomic groups, or students with English as a second language.

Resource pull-out units

Resource pull-out units are used with identified gifted students who leave the regular classroom for part of the school day to work with the AIG specialist. This curriculum material is designed to extend the content of the North Carolina Standard Course of Study.

Resources and materials

The AIG specialist works with the classroom teachers in providing resources and materials to use within the classroom to enrich the curriculum for highly capable students.

Seminars

Seminar learning includes discussions in which ideas, issues, or principles are examined using the Socratic Method or the Paideia Model of teaching.

Special presentations and activities

Highly capable students participate in programs or presentations from private or community sources. These programs or presentations are directly linked to the North Carolina Standard Course of Study.