# Appendix A:
# Definitions of Acceleration Interventions

*Adapted from* Southern, W. T., & Jones, E. D. (2015). Types of acceleration: Dimensions and issues. In S.G. Assouline, N. Colangelo, J. VanTassel-Baska & A. Lupkowski-Shoplik (Eds.), *A nation empowered: Evidence trumps the excuses holding back America's brightest students* (Vol. 2, pp. 9-18). Iowa City: University of Iowa, The Connie Belin & Jacqueline N. Blank International Center for Gifted Education and Talent Development.

1. **Early Admission to Kindergarten:** Students enter kindergarten prior to achieving the minimum age for school entry as set by district or state policy. The entry age specified varies greatly throughout the country and is generally stated in terms of birth date. For example, entry to kindergarten will be allowed for prospective students who will achieve the age of five years on or before September 30 of their entry year.

2. **Early Admission to First Grade:** This practice can result from either skipping kindergarten entirely or from moving a student from kindergarten into first grade in what would be the student's first year of school.

3. **Grade-Skipping:** A student is considered to have grade skipped if he or she is given a grade-level placement ahead of chronological-age peers. Grade-skipping may be done at the beginning of or during the school year. Radical acceleration is any whole-grade acceleration that is two (Stanley, 1976) or more (Gross, 2004) years above the student's grade based on chronological years.

4. **Continuous Progress:** The student is given content progressively as prior content is completed and mastered. The practice is accelerative when the student's progress exceeds the performance of chronological peers in rate and level.

5. **Self-Paced Instruction:** With this option, the student proceeds through learning and instructional activities at a self-selected pace. Self-paced instruction is a sub-type of continuous progress acceleration. Self-paced instruction is distinguishable from the more general continuous progress in that the student has control over all pacing decisions. Most self-paced instructional opportunities are provided within a larger instructional plan or Individualized Education Plan (IEP) for the younger student.

6. **Subject-Matter Acceleration/Partial Acceleration:** Also known as content-based acceleration, this practice allows students to be placed in classes with older peers for a part of the day (or with materials from higher grade placements) in one or more content areas. Subject-matter acceleration may be accomplished by the student either physically moving to a higher-level class for instruction (e.g., a second-grade student going to a fifth-grade reading group) or using higher-level curricular or study materials while remaining in the original classroom. Subject-matter acceleration may also be accomplished outside of the general instructional schedule (e.g., summer school or after school) or by using higher-level instructional activities on a continuous progress basis without leaving the placement with chronological-age peers. Often content-based acceleration is accomplished by a whole class where the materials are deliberately advanced by one year. Honors classes at middle and early high school may choose to provide such advanced learning.

7. **Combined Classes:** While not in and of itself a practice designed for acceleration, in some instances (e.g., a fourth- and fifth-grade combined classroom), this placement can allow younger students to interact academically and socially with older peers. It may or may not result in an advanced grade placement later.

8. **Curriculum Compacting:** The curriculum is adjusted so the student's instruction entails reduced amounts of introductory activities, drill, and practice. Instructional experiences may also be based on relatively fewer instructional objectives compared to the general curriculum. The time saved may be used for more advanced content instruction

or to participate in enrichment activities. Instructional goals should be selected on the basis of careful analyses for their roles in the content and hierarchies of curricula. The parsing of activities and goals should be based on pre-instructional assessment. Often the pre-assessment is accomplished through individual unit testing, followed by advanced activities for students who score near the ceiling.

9. **Telescoping Curriculum:** The student is provided instruction that entails less time than is normal (e. g., completing a one-year course in one semester, or three years of middle school in two years). Telescoping differs from curriculum compacting in that it involves larger chunks of time for the act of acceleration and the resulting time saved from telescoping always results in advanced grade placement. It is planned to fit a precise time schedule. Curriculum compacting, on the other hand, does not necessarily advance grade placement.

10. **Mentoring/Tutoring:** A student is paired with a mentor or expert tutor who provides advanced or more rapid pacing of instruction. The student may or may not receive credit for advanced work with a mentor.

11. **Extracurricular Programs:** Students elect to enroll in coursework, after school programs, or summer programs that confer advanced instruction and/or credit. Talent search programs are a good example of an extracurricular program offering accelerated classes during the summer. Most of these classes employ fast-paced learning and are content-based (Olszewski-Kubilius, 2015)

12. **Distance Learning Courses:** The student enrolls in coursework offered by an outside-of-school organization. Traditionally called correspondence courses and offered by mail, courses are increasingly offered online by a number of university-based and for-profit entities. The student may work on the computer at home or during school time. Local teachers are not responsible for instruction, although they may be responsible for supervising the students while they are working on the computer and are often

responsible for assigning grades and assuring credit. Parents often pay for these courses, and the typical goal is for the student to earn advanced credit for the work completed.

13. **Concurrent/Dual Enrollment:** The student takes a course at one level and receives concurrent credit for a parallel course at a higher level (e.g., taking algebra at the middle school level and receiving credit at both the middle school and the high school level). Another example of dual enrollment courses is provided by a College in High School program, where a high school student takes a class taught by a high school teacher who has been specially selected and trained by a local college or university; college credit is awarded to the student upon successful completion of the course. This option is most often used to compress high school and college coursework.

14. **Advanced Placement (AP™):** The student takes a course (usually while in high school) that may confer college credit or placement upon successful completion of a standardized examination (e.g., achieving a three or higher on a scale of one to five). High school teachers receive specialized training before teaching AP courses. Students may take an AP examination without first taking the AP course at whatever age they wish as long as prerequisites have been met for math and science courses.

15. **International Baccalaureate:** Schools are authorized by the International Baccalaureate (IB) program (see http://www.ibo.org/) to offer a specialized educational program. Students who successfully complete an IB high school diploma may receive advanced standing at selected universities worldwide if they perform well on the IB exams. Students may also select key courses for IB credit at some schools.

16. **Accelerated/Honors High School or Residential High School on a College Campus:** Students attend a selective high school program designed specifically for gifted students, which may be provided as a

residential program on a college campus or as a Governor's School. Both day schools like Thomas Jefferson High School in Alexandria, Virginia and residential schools such as The Illinois Mathematics and Science Academy offer advanced coursework that is often correlated to college level work, mentorships with scientists, and internships at national labs. Students may complete requirements for high school graduation at the same time as they complete college courses. The Texas Academy of Math and Science (https://tams.unt.edu/) is an example. Students enter after their sophomore year of high school; at the end of the two-year program, students have completed two years of college in addition to earning their high school diploma.

17. **Credit by Examination:** The student is awarded advanced standing credit (e.g., in high school or college) by successfully completing some form of mastery test or activity. The College Board's CLEP tests (see http://clep.collegeboard.org/exam) are an example of a national program available to students to earn college credit by examination. Students typically have mastered material through independent study or internship experiences and the tests document their level of mastery.

18. **Early Entrance into Middle School, High School, or College:** The student is provided an advanced level of instruction at least one year ahead of normal. This may be achieved with the employment of other accelerative techniques such as talent search classes for which they receive credit, dual enrollment and credit by examination, or by determination of teachers and administrators.

19. **Early Graduation from High School or College:** The student graduates from high school or college in three-and-a-half years or less. Generally, this is accomplished by increasing the amount of coursework undertaken each year in high school or college, but it may also be accomplished through dual/concurrent enrollment (see above) or extracurricular and distance learning coursework.

20. **Acceleration in College:** The student completes two or more majors in a total of four years and/or earns an advanced degree along with or in lieu of a bachelor's degree.