



National Center
for
COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

**After-School Curriculum Planning
Resource Toolkit**

Overview

The curriculum planning resource toolkit is a compilation of tools and strategies for supporting after-school planning. This toolkit bridges best practices in school curriculum planning with the components of high quality after-school programming. In other words, it brings together the ideas of curriculum theory and practice¹, which argue for a learner-centered process and the research on high impact after-school programs² that define curriculum quality and staffing as critical to program impact.

The intent of this toolkit is to be a working resource for program directors, education coordinators, and program deliverers. The toolkit focuses on instructional strategies and designs that can be adapted to and implemented in the after-school setting. Also, the tools and strategies can be used in isolation or combination.

Toolkit Content

- ❖ **Club/Activity Profile:** *This form is to assist deliverers to do intentional curriculum planning using core features for creating highly dynamic programs/activities.*
- ❖ **Instructional Framework:** *This form is to assist deliverers to conceptualize each activity into five realms: essential learning; assessment; content; practice activities; and why do this.*
- ❖ **Using the Three E's to Prepare Activities:** *This form is to assist deliverers identify the ways each activity is **Entered**, **Engages** youth, and **Expands**.*
- ❖ **Strategies Series:** *This series is to assist deliverers in using various strategies to deliver a program or activity.*
- ❖ **After-School Curricula Structures:** *This form is to assist deliverers in identifying the instructional benefits and drawbacks of various after-school curricula.*
- ❖ **Glossary:** *This glossary serves as a reference for the content and language used throughout the resource toolkit.*

¹ Stenhouse, L. (1975) *An Introduction to Curriculum Research and Development*, London: Heinemann.; Freire, P. (1972) *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Harmondsworth: Penguin.

² Miller, Beth. (2003). Critical Hours: AfterSchool Programs and Educational Success. Nellie Mae Foundation.

Planning Frameworks

_____ Club/Program Name

Club/ Program Profile

Outcome/Goal:		
Aligned w/standard:		
# of sessions		
# of participants		
End Product(s):		

Session Plan I

Objective:		
Delivery Strategy(s)		
Learner Styles:		
Grouping used:		
Skills/competencies		
Procedure:		
Materials required:		
Discussion Q's		

Session Plan II

Objective:		
Delivery Strategy		
Learner Styles:		
Grouping used:		
Skills/competencies		
Procedure:		
Materials required:		
Discussion Q's		

Session Plan III

Objective:		
Delivery Strategy		
Learner Styles:		
Grouping used:		
Skills/competencies		
Procedure:		
Materials required:		
Discussion Q's		

Session Plan IV

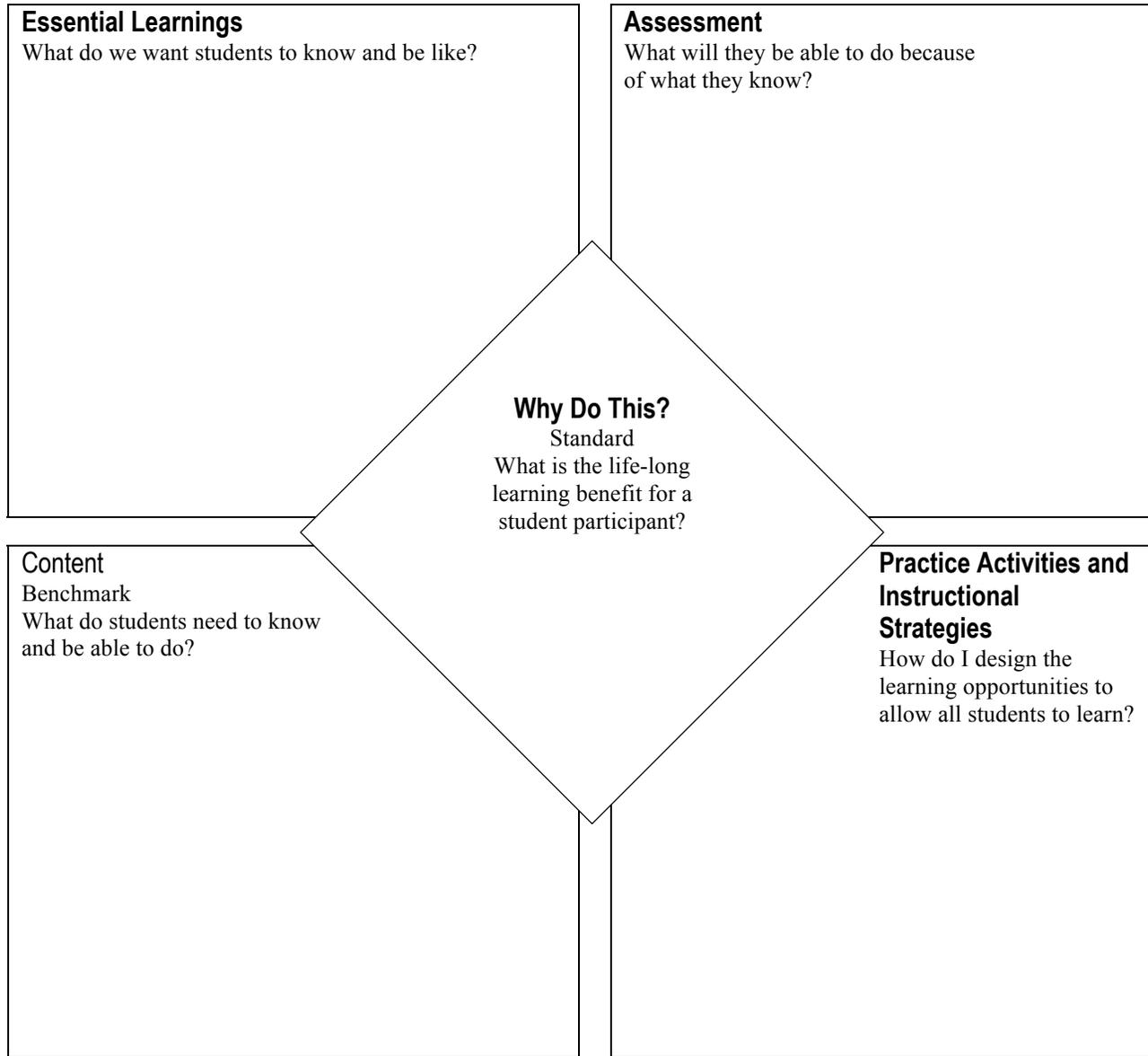
Objective:		
Delivery Strategy		
Learner Styles:		
Grouping used:		
Skills/competencies		
Procedure:		
Materials required:		
Discussion Q's		
Club Wrap –up		

Instructional Framework

Class _____

Unit _____

Teacher _____



Complex Thinking Skills

Delivery Strategies

Using The Three Es To Prepare Activities

Enter



Each day's activity needs to have a way of beginning or entering. The strategy varies with each age group/grade level, e.g., adolescents need to feel a sense of co-lead in how they engage a new activity or topic while elementary age youth engage a topic or an activity by mining what they already know about the topic or activity (i.e., what do you know or remember). What is common with each age/grade group is providing youth an opportunity to tap into their own knowledge base or mastery level. The following are things to consider in entering an activity or topic:

- **Room set-up and structure**
- **Content** - intro of topic, prep of topic
 - **Intro of topic:** question (what do you know about this) or declarative (we're going to do this today) statements.
 - **Prep of topic:** group leader's training and research on topic or activity.

Engage

Engaging youth in an activity or topic is not an easy feat, thus having an intentionality to capturing their interest takes planning. The key to engaging youth in after school is maintaining their interest or curiosity. Youth are self-selecting to participate in after school because they consider that experience as different from school and an opportunity for them to tap into their talents. Our strategies for engaging youth and keeping their interest or curiosity high is to draw them in through high octane curriculum. The following are key strategies for engaging youth:



- **Learning styles** - melding topic to the three learning styles and its dimensions.
- **Youth - centered** - emphasize youths' self-initiated engagement in activities; promote opportunities for youth to interact with each other and positive adults
- **Delivery styles** - adapting topic or activity to how youth learn and how the topic can be learned.

Expand



The expansion of an activity or topic is a key opportunity for youth to take ownership of their current and future learning. Expanding an activity or topic builds on the prior set of experiences and activities, and asks youth “what else is important about this topic or activity?” It’s an opportunity for group leaders to use their delivery/facilitation skills to generate a new trajectory based on youth input. The following are key points to consider in expanding an activity or topic:

- **Make room for new ideas**
- **Shift gears** - get a new perspective (e.g., what would you do v. what do you feel)
- **Tap into their personal interests** (e.g., do you want to meet and talk to a professional dancer)

Strategies Series

Shared Inquiry

What is it?

- Shared inquiry is a distinctive method of learning in which participants search for answers to fundamental questions raised by a written text. It involves taking what the author has given us and trying to grasp its full meaning, to interpret or reach an understanding of the text in light of our experience and using sound reasoning.



Benefits?

- Develop self-reliant thinkers, readers, and writers.

Group Leader's Role?

- A shared inquiry leader, does not impart information or present your own opinions, but guide participants in reaching their own interpretations.
- The leader asks questions and is an active listener.

What does the shared inquiry process look like?

1. OPENING/INTRODUCTORY QUESTIONS (1 QUESTION):

A general question that directs students into the text for an answer. The question should get youth to begin exploring the main ideas, topics, or themes.

2. CORE GUIDING QUESTIONS (2-5 QUESTIONS):

Questions that are provocative and force youth to generate a list of issues that it raises for them. Also, extract a quotation and ask for interpretation.

3. CLOSING QUESTION (1 QUESTION):

A question that connects with youth's lived experience.

Example:

Racial Profiling Article

1. Opening question:
What was suspicious about the gentleman's behavior?
2. Core guiding questions: *When is it okay and not okay to racially profile someone? What does it feel like to be racially profiled?*
3. Closing question:
What would you do in this situation?

Anchor Activities

What is it?

- Anchor activities are ongoing activities that youth can work on independently throughout a year. Anchor activities provide meaningful work for youth when they finish their homework, when they first enter the classroom or when they are “stumped.”
- Provide ongoing activities that are tied to other enrichment activities.



Benefits?

- Develop individual and/or group working skills. Meets the needs of different readiness levels (i.e., youth that always finish early; groups that need a transition activity prior to working on homework).

How do you plan for anchor activities?

- Define academic skills activity will build; describe the anchor activity; how will it be introduced to youth; how will the activity be managed and monitored?

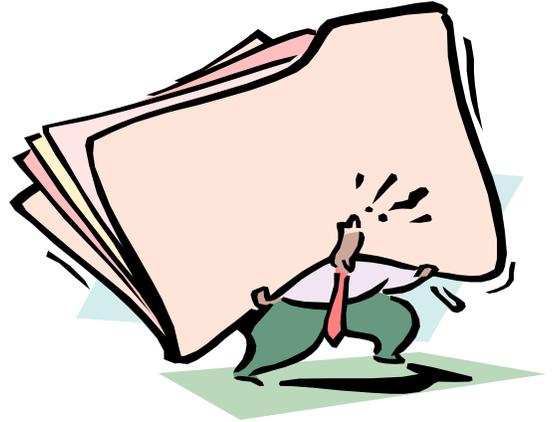
Some Anchor Activities

- ⊕ Brain busters: large jigsaw puzzles.
 - ⊕ Activity box:
 - ⊕ Youth vocabulary dictionary: slang words
 - ⊕ Magazine articles
 - ⊕ Commercial kits: youth create ads for products
-
- ⊕ Silent reading
 - ⊕ Listening stations
 - ⊕ Investigations: CSI-type activities
 - ⊕ Journals or learning logs

Chunking an Activity

What is it?

- Chunking a lesson is an informal term used to describe instruction taught in segments while stopping frequently to check for comprehension before moving on to new concepts. Chunking could be used in afterschool during study hall and/or academic enrichment when doing complex tasks/activities.



Benefits?

- Chunking helps youth retain information and strategies for remembering information.

American Ballet Theatre

At IS 218, the ABT teacher creates a print rich environment for youth participants. A new list of terms is placed on the wall every month; meanwhile, the previous month's terms are continuously used. Youth are able to build their vocabulary through continuous use and learn spelling of terms.

Chess in the Schools

At IS 90, the Chess instructor teaches about one move and power/influence of one chess piece every week. Youth get an opportunity to continuously practice the new move along with previous weeks moves. Instructor also talks about each move in mathematical terms.

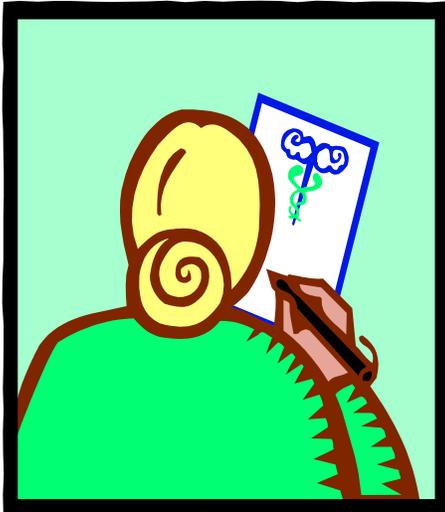
Examples?

1. Oral Directions (Slow down your speech and supply visual examples of the end result and the activity step by step. Instead of saying everything at once and creating a linguistic overload, give shortened instructions in chunks.)
2. Written Directions (Avoid too many prepositional phrases and complex word choice. Choose common words that are consistent with your oral directions.)
3. Chunk Matching Vocabulary (Simplify text in number of choices and use wording consistent with classroom instruction. For example, if you want to expand their vocabulary by 20 words, then chunk the choices in groups of 5 and continuously use the words and provide them an incentive to use the words throughout a program week/month.)

Creative Response

What is it?

- Creative response is a delivery strategy in which you focus on youth describing their own meaning and/or interpretation of any text (e.g., reading material, a piece of art, etc). It's an opportunity for youth to grow in their thinking and imagination through the expression of what is meant by a text and how do they interpret the words.



Benefits?

- Creative response is an opportunity to practice youth voice in the classroom setting. It encourages youth feeling valued and their contributions as worthy.

Examples?

- Model and think aloud creative responses so students can see the range of responses.
- Explain that thinking beyond reading material or what they see improves their understanding and recall.
 - Sharing of personal experiences as part of the response.

After-School Curricula Frameworks

COMMON CURRICULA STRUCTURES

Characteristics and Goals of Learning In After-School:

Learning should be...

1. Experiential, focused on relevant, exploratory, and hands-on experiences.
2. Centered on engaging topics that capture youth imagination.
3. Multifaceted and allow for every type of learner to have an outlet.
4. Attentive to each child's developmental needs.
5. Concerned with basic academic skill development (i.e., literacy and numeracy) and "soft" skills related to school and job readiness (i.e., working with others, planning and organizing resources).

A Typology of After-School Curricular Options

Predefined Content

		High	Low
High	Prepackaged	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer structure through a set of sequenced activities and content. • Contain staff manuals, lesson plans, training, and materials. • Requires a solid program infrastructure and commitment. <p>Benefits: formalizes and maintains program content consistent; allows non-teachers to feel a sense of competence and professionalism.</p> <p>Drawbacks: scripted lessons could reduce spontaneous learning.</p> <p>Examples: Tribal Rhythms (Cooperative Artists Institute); Foundations; KidzLit (Developmental Studies)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer a general framework into which activities can be fit. • Provides a framework to organize activities, e.g., 3 hours of academic support and 5 hours of academic enrichment. • Requires a great deal of program planning, coordinating, and reflection on practice. <p>Benefits: allows room for staff to explore topics of interest.</p> <p>Drawbacks: without a strong program infrastructure (training and regular staff/committee meetings), implementation can be overwhelming.</p> <p>Examples: Project Learn (Boys & Girls Clubs of America);</p>
	Low	<p style="text-align: center;">Activity-based</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consists primarily of materials for hands-on activities. • Resources guides available but no sequencing of lessons. Could be an activity within a larger unit. • Strong focus on generating products. • Generally guided by the interest and creativity of youth. <p>Benefits: allows for youth to explore their creativity and build cooperative working skills.</p> <p>Drawbacks: requires staff with a great deal of knowledge or time to get trained.</p> <p>Examples: Lego; Museum kits</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Project-based</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An approach to teaching and learning that emphasizes collaboration and group determination. • Offers activities that are generated from youth interest and yields a product or performable skill or an exhibition. • An activity that sustains youth engagement. <p>Benefits: allows youth to lead a project; emphasizes small, cooperative groups; relationship building opportunities.</p> <p>Drawbacks: requires extensive planning and access to materials.</p> <p>Examples: poetry and drama groups; humanitarian fundraisers (AIDS Walk, Cancer Society).</p>

Adapted from Noam, G. (2003) Afterschool Education.

**Tailoring Teaching Style
to Improve Learning
STRATEGIES**

The Science of How We Learn

John Hattie and Gregory Yates. In their new book, *Visible Learning and the Science of How We Learn* (2014), Hattie and Yates go further to debunk the learning styles myth. Hattie and Yates wrote, "We are all visual learners, and we all are auditory learners, not just some of us. Laboratory studies reveal that we all learn when the inputs we experience are multi-modal or conveyed through different media."

Hattie and Yates go on to write,

"Claims such that 'some students learn from words, but others from images' are incorrect, as all students learn most effectively through linking images with words. These effects become especially strong when the words and images are made meaningful through accessing prior knowledge. Differences between students in learning are determined strongly by their prior knowledge, by the patterns they can recognise, and not by their learning style"

Other Tips³

- Novices learn better from studying examples, whereas those with more expertise learn better by solving problems themselves.
- Learning is improved (for most everyone) by combining different activities – [such as drawing](#) alongside more passive study.

Build learners' metacognitive skills and use formative assessment:⁴

- Marzano (1998) reported on the largest meta-analysis of research on instruction ever undertaken. He found that approaches which were directed at the metacognitive level of setting goals, choosing appropriate strategies and monitoring progress are more effective in improving knowledge outcomes than those which simply aim to engage learners at the level of presenting information for understanding and use." (p. 143)
- "Black and Wiliam (1998a) ... concluded from their study of the most carefully conducted quantitative experiments that: 'Innovations which include strengthening the practice of formative assessment produce significant, and often substantial, learning gains.... The formative assessment experiments produce typical effect sizes of between 0.4 and 0.7: such effect sizes are larger than most of those found for educational interventions.'" (p. 143)

³ <http://www.wired.com/2015/01/need-know-learning-styles-myth-two-minutes/>

⁴ <http://blog.cathy-moore.com/2010/09/learning-styles-worth-our-time/>

Learner Centered Teaching Strategies

Specific strategies to enhance learning, here are some more practical suggestions:



● **Visually Appealing: seeing...**

- visual displays including: diagrams, illustrated text books, overhead transparencies, videos, flipcharts and hand-outs. Visual materials such as pictures, charts, maps, graphs, etc.
- use colour to highlight important points in text (e.g. use a highlighter when reading a text book. The bright colour would appeal to your artistic sense and help you concentrate on the reading).
- take notes or ask your teacher to provide handouts
- illustrate your ideas as a picture or brainstorming bubble before writing them down
- write a story and illustrate it
- use multi-media (e.g. computers, videos, and filmstrips)
- read illustrated books
- visualizations help to picture which aids memorization

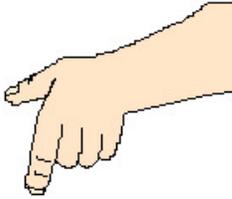
● **Audio Appealing:**



Importance of tone of voice, pitch, speed and other nuances.

- encourage class discussion
- vary with speech
- use a tape recorder during lectures instead of taking notes
- read text out aloud
- create musical jingles to aid memorization
- create mnemonics to aid memorization
- dictate to someone while they write down your thoughts
- use verbal analogies, and story telling to demonstrate your point

Tactile/Kinesthetic Appeal:



moving, doing and touching,...

Incorporate a hands-on approach, physical activities, actively exploring the physical world around them. Don't let them sit still for long periods. Get up and do something physical (an energizer) or build an activity and exploration.

CAS Adapted from : <http://www.ldpride.net/learningstyles.MI.htm#What%20are>
The Vancouver Island Invisible Disability Association (VIDA) is a registered, non-profit Association located in Victoria, British Columbia Canada.

- doodle while listening
- taking notes to follow speaker
- take frequent study breaks , jumping jacks to stimulate brain
- move around to learn new things (e.g. read while on an exercise bike, mold a piece of clay to learn a new concept)
- work at a standing position (schools now have standing desks)
- chew gum or listen to music while studying (has been helpful for autistic children)
- dress up your work space with posters
- skim through reading material to get a rough idea what it is about before settling down to read it in detail.

Glossary

Delivery Strategies:

Lecture: Teacher-led instruction in which teacher delivers to students a prepared talk about a topic in order to transmit information to the students; limited opportunity for discussion or student interaction

Facilitation: Teacher acts as a coach, guiding student-led learning by asking questions and paraphrasing in order to get student to think more deeply or in a different way about a topic. Students may be working independently or in groups to explore a topic.

Scaffolding: Scaffolding instruction as a teaching strategy originates from Lev Vygotsky's sociocultural theory and his concept of the *zone of proximal development* (ZPD). "The zone of proximal development is the distance between what children can do by themselves and the next learning that they can be helped to achieve with competent assistance" (Raymond, 2000, p.176). The scaffolding teaching strategy provides individualized support based on the learner's ZPD (Chang, Sung, & Chen, 2002). In scaffolding instruction a more knowledgeable other provides scaffolds or supports to facilitate the learner's development. The scaffolds facilitate a student's ability to build on prior knowledge and internalize new information. The activities provided in scaffolding instruction are just beyond the level of what the learner can do alone

Chunking: The process of reading a story aloud to a group of students and stopping after certain blocks of text to ask the students specific questions about their comprehension of the story and some key features of the text.

Group Investigation: Students work in groups to research, investigate, problem-solve and create. Also referred to as collaborative learning, group work, etc. Group Investigation can be used to encourage students to share alternative viewpoints, support each other's inquiry processes, and develop critical thinking skills that include the ability to reflect and improve on their own learning. There are some principles that are common to any group learning approach:

- 1. a group-learning task is designed based on shared learning goals and outcomes;
- 2. small-group learning takes place in groups of between 3-5 students;
- 3. cooperative behavior involves trust-building activities, joint planning, and an understanding of team support conduct;
- 4. positive interdependence is developed through setting mutual goals; and
 - 5. individual accountability, role fulfillment, and task commitment are expected of students.

Independent Study: Student works independently to explore, in depth, a topic of his/her choice. Teacher helps to facilitate student learning by monitoring, asking questions, giving feedback, and helping to identify resources, etc.

Shared Inquiry: Shared inquiry is an approach that is based on teachers (and students) asking interpretive questions and allowing students the opportunity to discuss the question and ask follow-up questions to construct or extend meaning. The success of Shared Inquiry depends on a special relationship among participants. In questioning, you do not impart information or present your own opinions, but guide participants in reaching their own interpretations. You do this by posing thought-

provoking questions and by following up purposefully on what participants say. In doing so, you help them develop both the flexibility of mind to consider problems from many angles, and the discipline to analyze ideas critically.

Learner:

Passive: Teacher views the learner as a recipient of information presented by the teacher usually through a lecture, textbook, etc.

Active Learner: Student is actively involved in his/her own learning through hands-on experience, inquiry, questioning, etc.

Experiential: Experiential education is a process through which a learner constructs knowledge, skill, and value from direct experience.

Multiple Intelligences: Howard Gardner of Harvard has identified seven distinct intelligences. This theory has emerged from recent cognitive research and "documents the extent to which students possess different kinds of minds and therefore learn, remember, perform, and understand in different ways," according to Gardner (1991).

- **Visual-Spatial** - think in terms of physical space, as do architects and sailors. Very aware of their environments. They like to draw, do jigsaw puzzles, read maps, daydream. They can be taught through drawings, verbal and physical imagery. Tools include models, graphics, charts, photographs, drawings, 3-D modeling, video, videoconferencing, television, multimedia, texts with pictures/charts/graphs.
- **Bodily-kinesthetic** - use the body effectively, like a dancer or a surgeon. Keen sense of body awareness. They like movement, making things, touching. They communicate well through body language and be taught through physical activity, hands-on learning, acting out, role playing. Tools include equipment and real objects.
- **Musical** - show sensitivity to rhythm and sound. They love music, but they are also sensitive to sounds in their environments. They may study better with music in the background. They can be taught by turning lessons into lyrics, speaking rhythmically, tapping out time. Tools include musical instruments, music, radio, stereo, CD-ROM, multimedia.
- **Interpersonal** - understanding, interacting with others. These students learn through interaction. They have many friends, empathy for others, street smarts. They can be taught through group activities, seminars, dialogues. Tools include the telephone, audio conferencing, time and attention from the instructor, video conferencing, writing, computer conferencing, E-mail.
- **Intrapersonal** - understanding one's own interests, goals. These learners tend to shy away from others. They're in tune with their inner feelings; they have wisdom, intuition and motivation, as well as a strong will, confidence and opinions. They can be taught through independent study and introspection. Tools include books, creative materials, diaries, privacy and time. They are the most independent of the learners.
- **Linguistic** - using words effectively. These learners have highly developed auditory skills and often think in words. They like reading, playing word games, making up poetry or stories. They can be taught by encouraging them to say and see words, read books together. Tools include computers, games, multimedia, books, tape recorders, and lecture.
- **Logical -Mathematical** - reasoning, calculating. Think conceptually, abstractly and are able to see and explore patterns and relationships. They like to experiment, solve puzzles, ask cosmic questions. They can be taught through logic games, investigations, mysteries. They need to learn and form concepts before they can deal with details.

Grouping:

Heterogeneous: Grouping together students of varying abilities, interests, or ages.

Homogeneous: A way of organizing groups of students for instruction so that each group will have students with similar levels of achievement or ability, similar ages, similar interests, etc.

Curricular Options:

Project-based: A model for classroom activity that shifts away from the classroom practices of short, isolated, teacher-centered lessons and instead emphasizes learning activities that are long-term, interdisciplinary, student-centered, and integrated with real world issues and practices.

Theory Base:

Aligned with content standards: Activities support the Department of Education learning and performance standards for various subjects such as math or English language arts.

Academic enrichment: Unlike remediation and support, enrichment may or may not be directly linked to what children are learning during the regular school day. What makes this kind of programming academic in its focus (as opposed to social, cultural or recreational enrichment) is that it provides young people with an opportunity to practice their academic skills—such as reading, writing, speaking, mathematical calculation and scientific inquiry. Academic enrichment incorporates three major elements:

- *Exposure* – Introducing young people to new ideas, information, places and relationships.
- *Experience* – Providing opportunities for young people to apply their knowledge and skills through hands-on activities.
- *Engagement* – Encouraging young people to fully activate their minds, bodies and spirits (a key factor in genuine learning).

Academic Support: As the term implies, this category of programming is designed to support students' school success through such efforts as homework assistance and "test sophistication" training sessions.