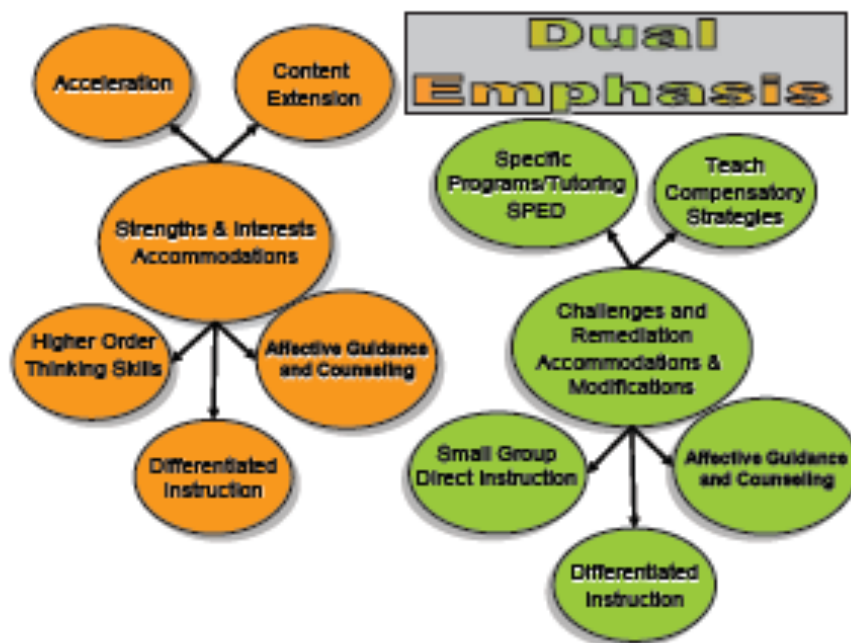


## Nurture Strengths and Interests While Addressing Challenges

When developing a comprehensive educational plan for a twice-exceptional student, a dual emphasis focusing upon a student's strengths as well as challenges is crucial.



All gifted students require balanced gifted programming over time. Programming components for gifted education include acceleration, content extension, higher-order thinking skills, affective guidance and counseling, and differentiated instruction. These components are based upon national standards, research, and best practices in gifted education. Implementing these strategies will improve students' motivation, develop confidence, and support student achievement.

# Acceleration

**Acceleration** is the appropriate movement of a student and/or curriculum by pace or place to match learning opportunities with student strengths, readiness, and needs.

- **Single-Subject Acceleration:** The delivery of curriculum by either moving the child into a higher grade level or providing higher-grade level curriculum in age-based classrooms.
- **Concurrent Enrollment:** Attending classes in more than one grade or building (e.g., a middle school student attends a class at the high school).
- **Post-Secondary Options:** High school students are allowed to spend part of their day attending classes at a local college or university and receive both high school and college credit.
- **Rocky Mountain Academic Talent Search:** Students take the SAT or ACT in middle school and can qualify for advanced-level courses at universities throughout the country.
- **Correspondence/Distance Learning:** Courses taken within or outside regular school time for personal interest or credit.
- **Advanced Placement/International Baccalaureate:** Students take AP or IB high school courses and take a test to qualify for college credit.
- **Independent Study:** Students pursue an area of interest in depth or required curriculum at a pace that meets their individual needs.

For more information on acceleration and the other programming components, see *Gifted Education Guidelines and Resources, Volume II: Programming*.



*Gifted students' learning and growth  
ensured by needed provisions and advocacy*

## Content Extension

Content extension is the process of extending the curriculum beyond what is typical or expected in a class or grade level. Content extension includes:

- Exposure beyond the regular curriculum — to new ideas, skills, and concepts not encountered before.
- Extension of the regular curriculum — going more broadly and deeply into the ideas already introduced in that curriculum. Extend learning beyond level through advanced content, materials, and complexity.
- Concept development — using a concept introduced within the regular curriculum and exploring its meaning and implications across the curricular areas.

Content extension requires depth, complexity, and novelty:

**Depth** encourages students to venture further, deeper, with greater elaboration, through quality of subject matter, rules and ethics, language, and patterns. It involves learning from:

- Concrete to abstract.
- Familiar to unfamiliar.
- Known to unknown.
- Literal to synthesized.

**Complexity** helps students make connections and identify relationships and associations between, within, and across subjects and disciplines. It focuses on:

- Varying perspectives.
- Issues, problems, and themes.
- Conceptual learning.

**Novelty** encourages students to create a personal understanding or connection to the subject area, thereby making content more memorable. It provides opportunities to:

- Interpret meaning and give personal insights.
- Use non-traditional study methods.
- Approach content through inquiry, experimentation, invention, and exploration.
- Synthesize information using irony, paradox, and metaphors.

It is important to realize that these components interact. For example, depth of learning at some point demands both novelty and complexity — a student cannot study extinction without recognizing the relationship between areas of biology, natural phenomena and man's influence. Personal interests may also come into play.

## Higher-Order Thinking Skills

Curriculum for twice-exceptional students should challenge their thinking and problem-solving skills. The Socratic questioning method helps students formulate questions and think through problems. Twice-exceptional students often struggle with executive processes. They have a difficult time organizing, prioritizing, and generalizing information. Teachers can help by modeling and teaching metacognitive skills. Use “think aloud” to help students develop their thinking language.

### Higher-Order Thinking Skills Include:

- **Analytical Thinking Skills** — Various cognitive processes that deepen understanding of knowledge and skills.
- **Critical Thinking Skills** — Various thinking skills that are used to analyze and evaluate in order to respond to an argument or position.
- **Executive Processes** — Various cognitive skills involved in organizing, synthesizing, generalizing, or applying knowledge.
- **Creative Thinking Skills** — Various cognitive skills that are involved in creative production.
- **Creative Problem Solving** — Provides an excellent structure for helping twice-exceptional students learn how to creatively solve problems.



## **Social/Emotional Support**

Twice-exceptional students need a nurturing environment that supports the development of the students' potential.

Teachers provide a nurturing environment when:

- They value individual differences and learning styles.
- The development of students' potential is encouraged.
- Students' readiness, interests, and learning profiles shape instruction.
- Excellence is defined by individual growth.
- Flexible grouping is used for instruction.
- Students are assessed in multiple ways.
- Instruction includes activities for multiple intelligences.

## **Social/Emotional Issues**

Making friends can be difficult for twice-exceptional students. They may need help developing peer relationships and opportunities to work with peers of similar abilities and interests. Friendship groups help twice-exceptional students learn how to make and keep friends.

Twice-exceptional students can be very self-critical and this can lead to dysfunctional perfectionism. Counseling is needed to address their unique needs and should be available on an as-needed basis.

Developing an awareness of their strengths and challenges is beneficial for twice-exceptional students. Role-playing can help students learn how to become self-advocates and how to ask for help when it is needed.

Lack of organizational, time management, and study skills can have a negative impact on the emotional well-being and school performance of twice-exceptional students. They need explicit instruction to develop those skills and specialized intervention services related to challenge areas.

Learning how to set personal goals and how to develop sequential steps or a series of short-term goals to achieve long-term goals can be beneficial for twice-exceptional learners. Career and college guidance is essential for these students.