




Strategies to Meet the Needs of **Twice/Multi-Exceptional** Learners in Today's Classroom

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Who Are Twice/ Multi-Exceptional Learners?

A **twice-exceptional learner** performs at a remarkably high level compared to others of the same age/experience, and:

- exhibits high performance capability in an intellectual, a creative, or an artistic area
- possesses an unusual capacity for leadership
- excels in a specific academic field
- *also* faces challenges in one area

A **multi-exceptional learner** has more than one area of challenge along with his or her gifted capabilities.



Twice/Multi-Exceptional Learners

Show evidence of one or more disabilities, such as:

- a learning disability
- a speech and language disorder
- an emotional/behavioral disorder
- a physical disability
- a traumatic brain injury
- autism spectrum disorder
- other impairments like ADHD



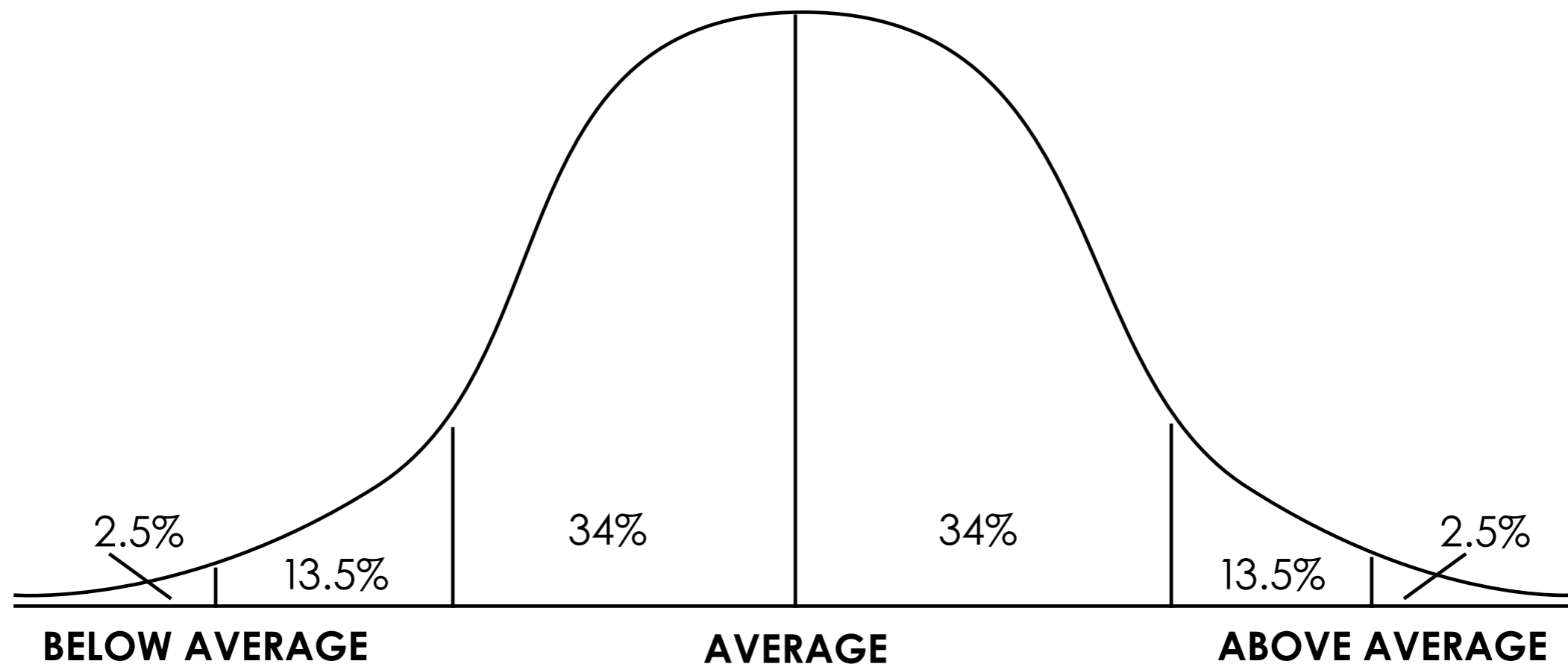
To Be Absolutely Clear . . .

A student *cannot* be twice- or multi-exceptional if she or he has no advanced abilities in an area of learning.

However, a twice/multi-exceptional student must have a significant learning difficulty in some area of learning that coexists with gifted abilities.

The Bell Curve and Twice/ Multi-Exceptional Students

On the bell curve, these students are below average in areas of weakness *and* above average in areas of strength.





The Bell Curve and Twice/ Multi-Exceptional Students

(continued)

Students Learning Below Grade Level May:

- work slower
- need to move frequently
- learn to set own goals for specified time periods
- benefit from pairing with helpful students
- benefit from info from parents and former teachers

Students Learning Above Grade Level May:

- work faster
- need autonomy
- set own goals for specified time periods
- benefit from working with other advanced students
- benefit from info from parents and former teachers



Twice/Multi-Exceptional Students Need Help in Areas of Strength *and* Weakness

The strategies discussed in this presentation focus on these general areas:

- pace of learning
- learning modalities
- quantity of work
- peer interaction
- teacher interaction
- product types
- choice/extension menus
- project work
- creativity
- link to interests
- movement



What Gifted Students and Students with LD Have in Common

Risk-taking for learning progress is equally scary for both.

Both may be unwilling to show a less-than-perfect product.

Both share a strong fear of making a mistake in public.

To hide this fear, both may misbehave, blurt out, or engage in clowning behaviors.



Behaviors and Characteristics of Twice/Multi-Exceptional Students

- often struggle to learn basic skills
- may demonstrate high verbal ability but show difficulty in written language
- frequently show evidence of reading problems
- usually struggle with some executive functioning skills



Behaviors and Characteristics of Twice/Multi-Exceptional Students

(continued)

- may exhibit different behaviors in various environments
- often are unwilling to take risks
- may excel in solving real-world problems
- can pay attention to one interest for a long time
- are capable of asking endless questions
- may have vivid imaginations

The Magic of Maslow's Hierarchy

When a lower level need is not being met, all of a person's energy and attention are focused on that level until the need is met.

Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of Basic Human Needs





Carol Dweck's Mindset Theory

Ineffective “fixed mindset” praise for twice/multi-exceptional students:

- You are so smart!
- You are so good!
- You are the smartest kid I know!
- You could do much better if you only tried harder.



Carol Dweck's Mindset Theory

(continued)

Choose instead “growth mindset” praise, such as:

- You obviously worked very hard to get the outcome you wanted.
- I am impressed with your effort!
- Set just one goal at a time and celebrate your ability to achieve that goal.

Students will conclude that *hard work and effort* make a learning goal accessible and they are more willing to take learning risks.

Also see page 26 in *Teaching Kids with LD*.



Grouping for Active Engagement

Pairing twice/multi-exceptional students with high-achieving students in their areas of strength helps foster total active engagement, which includes:

- increase in achievement and motivation
- decrease in undesired behaviors
- students participating in *all* aspects of their learning experiences

When students disengage from tasks in *any* way, their mastery of standards is diminished.



Formative Assessment Methods for Twice/Multi-Exceptional Students

- **Numbered Heads Together:** Each student in a group is assigned a number but all members of the group collaborate on answers; the teacher asks a question and calls out a number—the person with that number answers for the group
- **Minute Paper:** Students take one minute to identify the most significant concepts learned
- **Muddiest Point:** Students identify the most confusing point in a lesson
- **Question Generator:** Students generate questions about content at various levels of rigor
- **OKAY Teach:** Pairs play roles of teacher and learner with questions generated



Strategy Implementation Planner (SIP)

Strategy Implementation Planner (SIP)

Teacher's Name(s):

School:

Directions: Fill out the first three columns near the end of most sessions. Complete the final two columns between sessions and bring the chart with you to every session.

Session Date	Target Strategy	Intended Goal for Students	Actual Outcome for Students	Notes for Next Session

See page 7 of the *Twice/Multi-Exceptional Learners PLC/Book Study Guide*.



Collegial Peer Coaching Process

- process leads to more effective teaching practices
- partners are at about the same level of expertise in using particular strategies
- partners should be from the same school, but ideally not the same grade level or subject
- partners plan mutual visits to each other's class for a specific purpose
- partners meet to plan the visit, and afterward, complete all columns on the Peer Coaching Log (see page 8 of the *Twice/Multi-Exceptional Learners PLC/Book Study Guide*)

See pages 190–192 in *The Cluster Grouping Handbook* (Winebrenner and Brulles, 2019).



Peer Coaching Log

Peer Coaching Log (PCL)

Partner One:

Partner Two:

School:

Directions: Form partner pairs with someone in this group from your school, preferably in a different subject area and/or grade level. Plan for mutual visits to each other's classes for a specific purpose. Complete one line of this form per visit.

Date	Time of Visit	Peer Coaching Level	Data Gathering Tools	Changes for Next Visit

See page 8 of the *Twice/Multi-Exceptional Learners PLC/Book Study Guide*.



Showers and Joyce on Peer Coaching

Percentages represent teachers who try to use teaching strategies learned from a presenter at an in-service staff development event.

In-Service Event Type	1 Week Later	1 Month Later	3 Months Later
Lecture only	30%	20%	10%
Lecture with demonstrations	30%	20%	15%
Lecture with audience participation and practice	35%	30%	18%
Lecture with audience practice and on-site peer coaching	85%	81%	up to 95%

Bruce R. Joyce and Beverly Showers. *Student Achievement Through Staff Development* (ASCD, 2003).
Used with permission of Bruce R. Joyce.



Learning Modalities

AUDITORY

Logical, Analytic, Sequential

- learns by hearing; teaches by telling
- wants direction detailed verbally
- thinks logically and sequentially
- is organized and neat
- recalls names, facts, and dates



Learning Modalities

(continued)

VISUAL-TACTILE-KINESTHETIC

Global, Holistic, Contextual

- learns by seeing; teaches by showing
- wants directions shown on a map
- thinks randomly; may act impulsively
- appears disorganized and mismatched
- recalls faces, images, and patterns

Also see page 56 in *Teaching Kids with LD* and pages 143–145 in *Teaching Gifted Kids*.



Global Learners

- use visual pictures/symbols in text, videos, demonstrations, examples
- may not be morning learners
- often chew, eat, doodle, draw, or move while learning
- may experience executive functioning challenges
- appreciate concrete learning examples; learn by doing vs. listening
- learn from graphic organizers and mind mapping
- like excitement, humor, and interest in text and visuals



One Definition of “Gifted”

A student is considered “gifted” if she or he has exceptional ability in any area of learning that *significantly exceeds age-level expectations*.

Therefore, grade-level expectations in that area could not possibly be challenging enough.

Also see pages 12–13 in *Teaching Gifted Kids*.



Characteristics of Exceptionally Capable Learners

- highly verbal
- endlessly curious
- precocious reasoning ability
- prodigious memory; must share what he or she knows
- highly intense, sensitive, and emotional
- unusual interest in justice, ethics, and morality
- advanced sense of humor; often the class clown
- may prefer older or younger friends; may have issues with same-age peers
- may appear very “quick” in learning
- perfectionistic tendencies
- creative or nonconforming



Gifted Learners Are Different

They often:

- learn new material rapidly
- operate at complex and abstract levels
- remember what they've learned for a long time
 - review and reteaching is unnecessary
 - they may master standards before teaching begins
- operate on multiple brain channels simultaneously; can multitask effectively



Gifted Learners Are Different

(continued)

- can listen to and understand a speaker without watching him or her
- have passionate interests
- have fear of being imperfect
- find school painful due to being misunderstood



Motivation and Productivity

- Gifted students resist work that is repetitive and beneath their learning level, just as adults do!
- They will stretch themselves to do challenging work if they are convinced that:
 - they will not have to do *more* work than their classmates
 - advanced work will not lead to *lower* recorded grades for grade-level standards



Compacting and Differentiation Strategies

- Most Difficult First
- Learning Contracts
- Study Guides
- Extension Menus
- Independent Study



The Amazing Power of Short-Term Goal Setting

“The degree to which a student perceives she or he is in charge of the learning situation is positively correlated with motivation, productivity, and self-esteem.”

—Barbara Clark, *Growing Up Gifted*

The easiest way to convince students they are “in charge” is by giving them meaningful choices in setting their own goals.

See pages 61–63 in *Teaching Kids with LD* for more.



All Gifted Learners Should . . .

- learn something new every day in school
- feel accepted for who they are and for their advanced learning abilities
- understand that they can work hard and still be considered smart



What If Students Won't Do Their Work?

Twice/multi-exceptional students may:

- appear lazy or unmotivated
- daydream and have trouble getting started
- turn in work that is sloppy, messy, or inaccurate
- not finish work in time because of perfectionistic tendencies

Compacting and differentiating the curriculum can help solve these issues!



Compacting the Standards

- allows students to bypass curriculum they've already mastered
- may be offered to all students who can demonstrate they need less practice to master grade-level standards



Is Compacting Fair?

Fair does *not* mean giving all students the same learning experience.

Fair means making sure *all* students have what they need to make continuous forward progress.



Compacting Strategies for Pre-Assessable Work

- One Lesson at a Time
- Most Difficult First
- One Week at a Time
- Voluntary Pretest and Alternate Work
- One Chapter/Unit at a Time
- Learning Contract Pages

See pages 40–67 in *Teaching Gifted Kids*.

Note: Students can “buy back” time that would have been spent on grade-level content to instead spend on their choice work. Give students tools to help them spend their time wisely!



Compacting and Differentiating Forms

- Topic Development Sheet
- Study Guide
- Extension Menu
- Independent Study Agreement
- Daily Log of Extension Work

See pages 73–97 in *Teaching Gifted Kids*.



Daily Log of Extension Work

Student's Name:

Topic, Chapter, or Unit Name:

Date	What I Plan to Accomplish Today	What I Accomplished

Note: Use this tool to help a student stay on task and be less reliant on help from the teacher.



Extension Menu (blank)

	STUDENT CHOICE	

See page 79 in *Teaching Gifted Kids*.





Critical Thinking Methods

Use these models to design extensions or independent study experiences for advanced learners that take more than a few days to complete.

In *Teaching Kids with LD*:

- ThinkTrix, page 88
- Question Starters, page 126



Critical Thinking Methods

(continued)

Use these models to design extensions or independent study experiences for advanced learners that take more than a few days to complete.

In Teaching Gifted Kids:

- Kaplan Icons Model, page 160
- Bloom's for younger kids, page 162
- Bloom's for older kids, page 145
- ThinkTrix, pages 157–160
- Curriculum Differentiation Chart, pages 145–152



Special Considerations for Cooperative/Group Learning

- Advanced/gifted students should work together on advanced tasks.
- Tutoring or helping others should be voluntary and infrequent for advanced learners.
- Avoid giving group grades; find other evaluation methods.

See pages 15–16 in *Teaching Kids with LD* and pages 160–163 in *Teaching Gifted Kids*.



Questions for Your Technology Specialist


1. In what ways can students use technology for independent study?
2. What assistive technology is available to assist students in their challenge areas?
3. For students who need assistive technology, what are the most helpful websites to use for independent study?



Before Sending a Student Out of the Classroom, Ask Yourself:

- Do I know this student's strongest learning style?
- In what ways have I accommodated it?
- What evidence do I have that the work I am asking the student to do is neither too difficult nor too easy for him or her?


If you cannot answer these three questions, try other classroom interventions *before* asking for outside help.



Strategies for Teaching Twice/ Multi-Exceptional Students in ELA

From *Teaching Kids with LD*:

- use high-interest, predictable texts
- encourage close reading of rigorous materials differentiated by Lexile levels
- teach vocabulary and skills in context, never in isolation
- use the Language Experience Method (page 95)
- avoid assigning formal book reports; use book sharing methods instead




Strategies for Teaching Twice/ Multi-Exceptional Students in ELA

(continued)

From *Teaching Gifted Kids*:


- follow the Kaplan and ThinkTrix models (pages 157–160)
- use self-selected rigorous materials and independent pacing
- use compacting for all skill work; avoid more than two repetitions
- avoid assigning formal book reports; use book sharing methods instead



Strategies for Teaching Twice/ Multi-Exceptional Students in Math

From *Teaching Kids with LD*:

- use music, rhymes, raps, jingles
- tie to interests and real-life situations
- use hands-on activities
- show how a completed problem looks
- show the link to other subject areas
- never ask students to copy work from the board




Strategies for Teaching Twice/ Multi-Exceptional Students in Math

(continued)

From *Teaching Kids with LD*:

- allow students to use graph paper
- teach estimation
- review previously mastered concepts weekly
- change methods when learning is not demonstrated
- use technology resources (see pages 155–157)



Strategies for Teaching Twice/ Multi-Exceptional Students in Math

(continued)

From *Teaching Gifted Kids*:

- form groups that need acceleration only
- at lower grades, blend small groups with higher-grade students
- at upper grades, find teachers at higher grades to teach students outside of class
- offer compacting every day in every unit
- determine student's entry level for content and accommodate it
- give students full credit for already-mastered standards
- accelerate seriously advanced students



Strategies for Teaching Twice/ Multi-Exceptional Students: Informational Text

From *Teaching Kids with LD*:

- KWPL charts, page 128
- Vocabulary Attributes charts, page 133
- Content Organization Charts, page 144
- Survey-Skim-Study-Question (3S+Q), page 152
- Notecards with technology assistance, page 72
- Four-Step Research Method, page 147
- Recorded texts such as Learning Ally, page 101



Strategies for Teaching Twice/ Multi-Exceptional Students: Informational Text

(continued)

From *Teaching Gifted Kids*:

- challenging, rigorous content
- project-based learning, such as STEM/STEAM activities
- current, real-world media
 - daily/weekly magazines and newspapers
 - websites that provide virtual reality experiences
- contact with scientists and thought leaders
 - interviews
 - viewing and discussing programs such as TED Talks



The Schoolwide Cluster Grouping Model (SCGM)

The SCGM is a method for providing full-time gifted education opportunities *without* major budget implications and *with* the potential to raise achievement for all students.

All students at a grade level are purposefully placed into classes based on their current abilities and performance.



Suggested Classroom Composition for SCGM

The chart shows the cluster composition of three classrooms in the same grade level with 30 students in each class. Twice/multi-exceptional students are placed in the Gifted cluster.

Classroom	Gifted	High-Achieving	Average	Low to Average	Far Below Average
A	6	0	12	12	0
B	0	6	12	6	6
C	0	6	12	6	6

From *The Cluster Grouping Handbook* by Susan Winebrenner and Dina Brulles (Free Spirit Publishing, 2019)



Reasons for Including Twice/Multi-Exceptional Students in Gifted Cluster Classrooms

Twice/multi-exceptional nonproductive students:

- may not see the need to complete assignments
- may feel unmotivated by required work that does not hold their interest or challenge them
- may be afraid to fail, so they never *begin*



Reasons for Including Twice/Multi-Exceptional Students in Gifted Cluster Classrooms

(continued)

Gifted-cluster teachers can:

- give credit for previously mastered content *before* teaching it
- allow students to do more challenging work
- teach students to set their own goals
- acknowledge and show appreciation for effort
- allow student-directed learning based on interests and strengths



Including Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CLD) Gifted Students

- use “nonverbal” tests of general ability that do not rely solely on language
- use multiple measures that examine:
 - cognitive abilities
 - achievement
 - classroom performance
 - teacher and parent observations
- evaluate learning behaviors, motivation, social abilities, leadership, creativity, and problem-solving abilities



Some Advantages of Cluster Grouping

- provides social, emotional, and academic advantages to all grade-level students
- teachers transfer gifted-education strategies to other classes
- with a smaller range of levels, teachers can better focus instruction
- schools can offer full-time gifted services with few additional costs
- achievement levels increase for most students
- improve chances of meeting learning needs of twice/multi-exceptional students



Possible Challenges of Cluster Grouping

- parental pressure to place non-identified children into the gifted-cluster classroom
- difficulty of placing students who enroll during the school year
- challenge of ensuring compacting and differentiation occur in the gifted-cluster classes



Effective Curriculum Materials for Twice/Multi-Exceptional Students

- are aligned to required standards
- incorporate rigorous activities that stretch the minds of all students
- include strategies for various learning modalities
- provide preassessment to determine all students' entry levels
- include differentiation options for content, process, and product



What Do Twice/Multi-Exceptional Students Need from You?

- engaging classroom experiences
- active learning environments
- flexible grouping arrangements
- nurturing of social and emotional development
- executive functioning skill development
- assistive technology
- help in transferring learning to other settings



Teaching Twice/ Multi-Exceptional Students

- Use **compacting and differentiation** in advanced areas of learning.
- **Never** take time away from strength areas to remediate areas of weakness.
- **Guarantee** extension work will never be used to lower recorded grades.
- Provide students **choices** of task, methods, and products to demonstrate what they know.
- Connect students' work to areas of **personal interest** whenever possible.
- Find and use the most helpful **technologies**.
- Teach students to adapt tasks to their learning modality **strengths**.
- Support **risk-taking** and **hard work**.



Tips for Teaching Twice/Multi-Exceptional Students

1. Make certain they know they are liked and/or accepted.
2. Consistently expose them to rigorous learning experiences.
3. Keep communication open between adults and students, home and school.
4. Group with advanced learners when working in their areas of strength.
5. Use technology to record learning and assist with executive functioning needs.
6. Use active games and learning experiences to allow for movement.
7. Teach them the meaning of twice/multi-exceptional.
8. Share biographies of famous twice/multi-exceptional people.



Differentiating for Twice/Multi-Exceptional Students

“If they can’t learn the way we teach them, let’s teach them the way they learn.”

—Kenneth Dunn

Don’t remediate their weaknesses until you teach to their strengths!



References

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Winebrenner, Susan, and Lisa Kiss. *Teaching Kids with Learning Differences in Today’s Classroom*. Minneapolis: Free Spirit Publishing, 2014.



Helpful Websites

Supporting Emotional Needs of the Gifted: sengifted.org

The Davidson Institute: davidsongifted.org

Hoagies' Gifted Education Page: hoagiesgifted.org

The Belin-Blank Center for Gifted Education and Talent Development: belinblankeducation.uiowa.edu