

High Expectations & Presuming Competence

Presented by
Project SUCCESS

September 16, 2020

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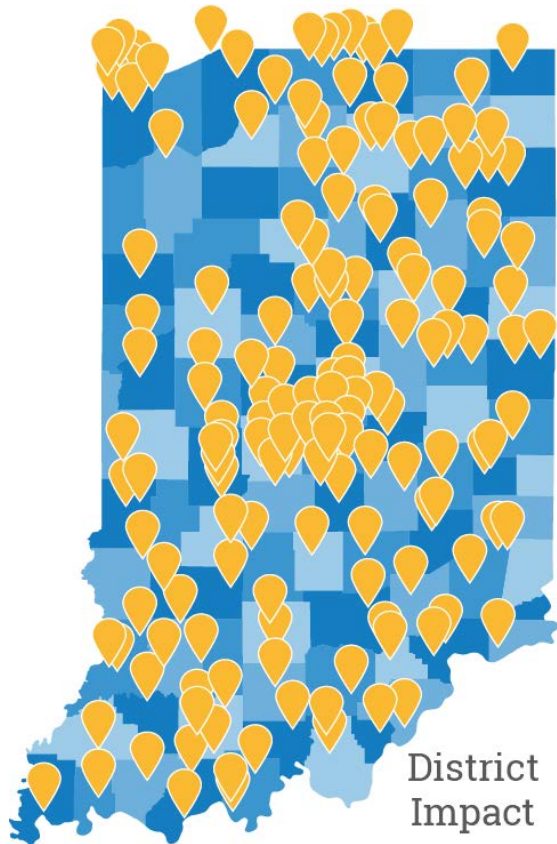
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Project SUCCESS

Project **SUCCESS** supports districts to ensure that students with significant intellectual disabilities achieve increasingly higher academic outcomes and leave high school ready for post-secondary options by providing ongoing and job-embedded professional development focused on academic instruction, communication, and employability skills.

Topics Frequently Covered:	● Unpacking Standards	● Curriculum Mapping	● Goal Writing	● Formative Assessment	● Certificate of Completion
Types of Support:	● On-site FD	● Summer Institutes	● Webinars	● State/National Conferences	● Online Tools and Resources





 **441** participants at our 2019 Regional Trainings

 **11** schools selected as 2019-2020 Model Sites

 **32,515** views/downloads of Content Connector resources

36,112

 **8,987** Attend or view webinars

 views/downloads of curriculum and instructional resources

“As a result of partnering with Project SUCCESS, my students are achieving at a much higher level as I am providing access and exposure to grade-level content connectors and curriculum.”

Session Overview

Effective Communication & Collaboration

September 2, 2020

Today's Objectives

Examine the benefits of inclusive practices for all students.

Discuss three elements of the inclusive mindset framework in schools and classrooms:.

- Presuming Competence
- Least Dangerous Assumption
- High Expectations

Apply the inclusive mindset and framework to a case study of a student with significant disabilities.

Webinar Activities Form #3

Webinar Activities #3: High Expectations & Presuming Competence

Please complete the following questions below to receive a Professional Growth Points (PGP) certificate for today's webinar.

* Required

Email address *

Your email _____

Participant Name *

Your answer _____

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Pre-Webinar Assessment

Rate the following statements on how much you agree or disagree:

- I expect that students in my class can engage in activities that are aligned with grade-level standards.
- There is more harm than good that can come from having students engage in the same content as their general education peers.
- There is little or no benefit to students in my class learning subjects that they will not use in future.
- It's okay to have lower expectations for students with disabilities than we do for their general education peers.
- My students should be working on content that is below grade level so they can understand it.

Inclusive Mindset Framework

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**Building
Blocks
of an
Inclusive
Mindset**



Inclusive Schools



Inclusive Schools

Inclusive Practice

- Differentiated Instruction
- Academic Supports
- Behavioral Supports
- Respect for Diversity
- Inclusive Education

Benefit to Students

- Increases student engagement
- Helps students access full curriculum
- Help maintain positive learning environment
- Creates a welcoming environment for all
- Make effective use of a school's resources

Source: "Together We Learn Better: Inclusive Schools Benefit All Children (2015)



Inclusive Classrooms

- Decisions are made on the basis of student needs and not on labels and places
- The general education classroom at the student's enrolled grade level is the reference point for student-specific planning.
- Expectations are high.
- Instruction is based on the curriculum standards adopted by the school or state. There is not a separate curriculum.
- Individualized supports are available when needed.
- **ALL students belonging!**

Source: "What Does an Inclusive Classroom Look Like" (2019)



Checking in...

What is one way that inclusive education practices benefit all students in the school?

Which of the inclusive practices mentioned in the previous slide have you observed in your classroom or school?

Presuming Competence

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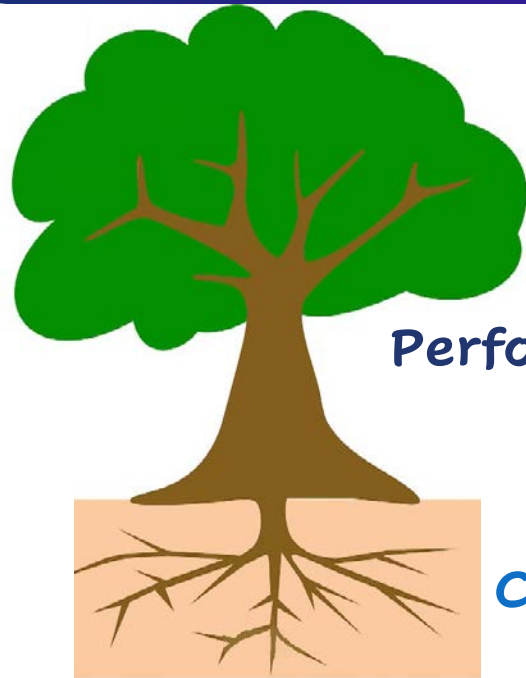


“When it comes to our students with significant disabilities, we don’t know what we don’t know.”

~Ashley Quick, Project SUCCESS

Presumed Competence

Presumed
Competence



Performance

Competence

**ABSENCE OF
EVIDENCE IS NOT
EVIDENCE OF
ABSENCE.**

Accommodations & Modifications

	Accommodations	Modifications
Classroom Instruction	Accommodations can help students learn the same material and meet the same expectations as their classmates. If a student has reading issues, for example, she might listen to an audio recording of a text. There are different types of classroom accommodations, including presentation (like listening to an audio recording of a text) and setting (like where a student sits).	Kids who are far behind their peers may need changes, or modifications, to the curriculum. For example, a student could be assigned shorter or easier reading assignments. Students who receive modifications have had the learning target moved as compared to their peers.
Classroom Assessments	Testing accommodations can be different from those used for instruction. For example, using a spell-checker might help a student with writing difficulties take notes during class but wouldn't be appropriate during a weekly spelling test. However, this student might benefit from having extra time to complete the spelling test or using typing technology if the physical act of writing is difficult.	Modifications in testing often involve requiring a student to cover less material or material that is less complex. For example, in the case of the spelling test, if the class was given 20 words to study, the student with modifications might only have to study 10 of them. Or she might have a completely different list of words. With the modification, what or how much the student is tested on is different.

Checking in...

Give one example of an accommodation.

Give one example of a modification.

Least Dangerous Assumption

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Regarding Least Dangerous Assumption...

““””

“If a student does not learn, the **quality of the instruction** should be questioned before the student’s **ability to learn.**”

Cheryl Jorgensen (2005)



WARNING

**ASSUMPTIONS
AHEAD**

Flawed Assumptions

- Intelligence is something that can be reliably measured. **(false)**
- Students with intellectual disabilities cannot learn general education academic content... **(false)**
- ...so there's no benefit to being in gen ed classes. **(false)**
- The choice between a student being in general education or getting their needs met is an *either/or* situation. **(false)**

Jorgensen, C. M. (2018). "It's More Than 'Just Being In': Creating Authentic Inclusion for Students with Complex Support Needs."



Least Dangerous Assumption

“The criterion of the **least dangerous assumption** holds that in the **absence of conclusive data**, educational decisions ought to be based on assumptions which, if incorrect, will have the **least dangerous effect** on the likelihood that students will be **able to function independently** as adults.” (Donnellan, 1984)

What if we assume students CAN learn, so we give them every opportunity, and it turns out they CAN'T?

vs

What if we assume students CAN'T learn, so we don't give them every opportunity, and it turns out they CAN?

The least dangerous assumption is to have high expectations for all students.



Least Dangerous Assumption

Students CAN'T learn

K – 3 Teachers assume student can't read.

Teachers don't provide reading instruction

Student is behind peers in reading

Student progress in other content areas is limited by lack of reading skills

Students CAN learn

4th Grade Teacher assumes student can read.

Presents student with reading instruction

Adapts instructional strategies based on student progress

Student continues to advance reading level

vs Student is able to participate in instruction alongside peers

Student experiences socio-emotional benefit of accomplishment

The least dangerous assumption is to have high expectations for all students.

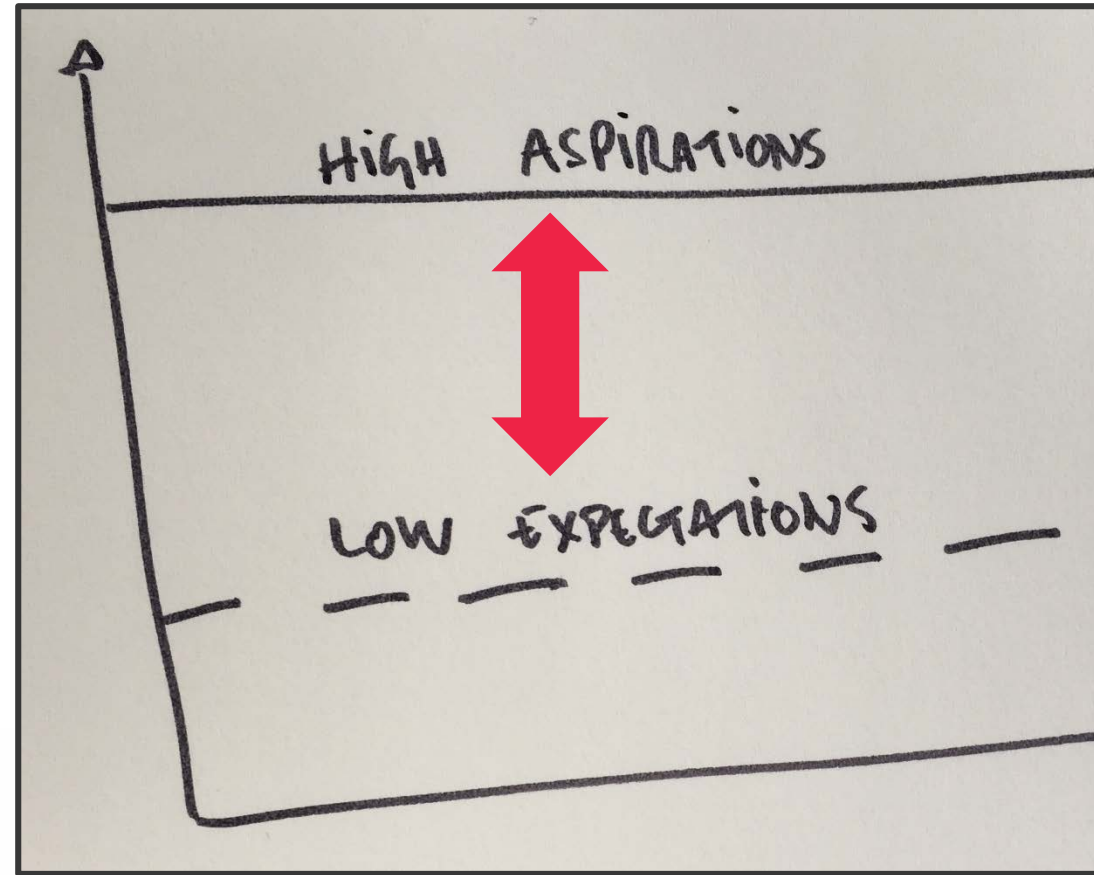
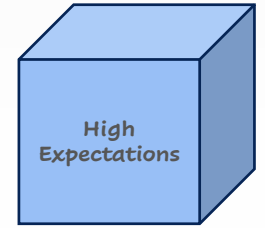


High Expectations

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High Expectations \neq Unreasonable Expectations



High Expectations, No Exceptions

As a paraprofessional, it is important that you maintain high expectations for students and provide just the right amount of support for their long-term success.

High Expectations, No Exceptions

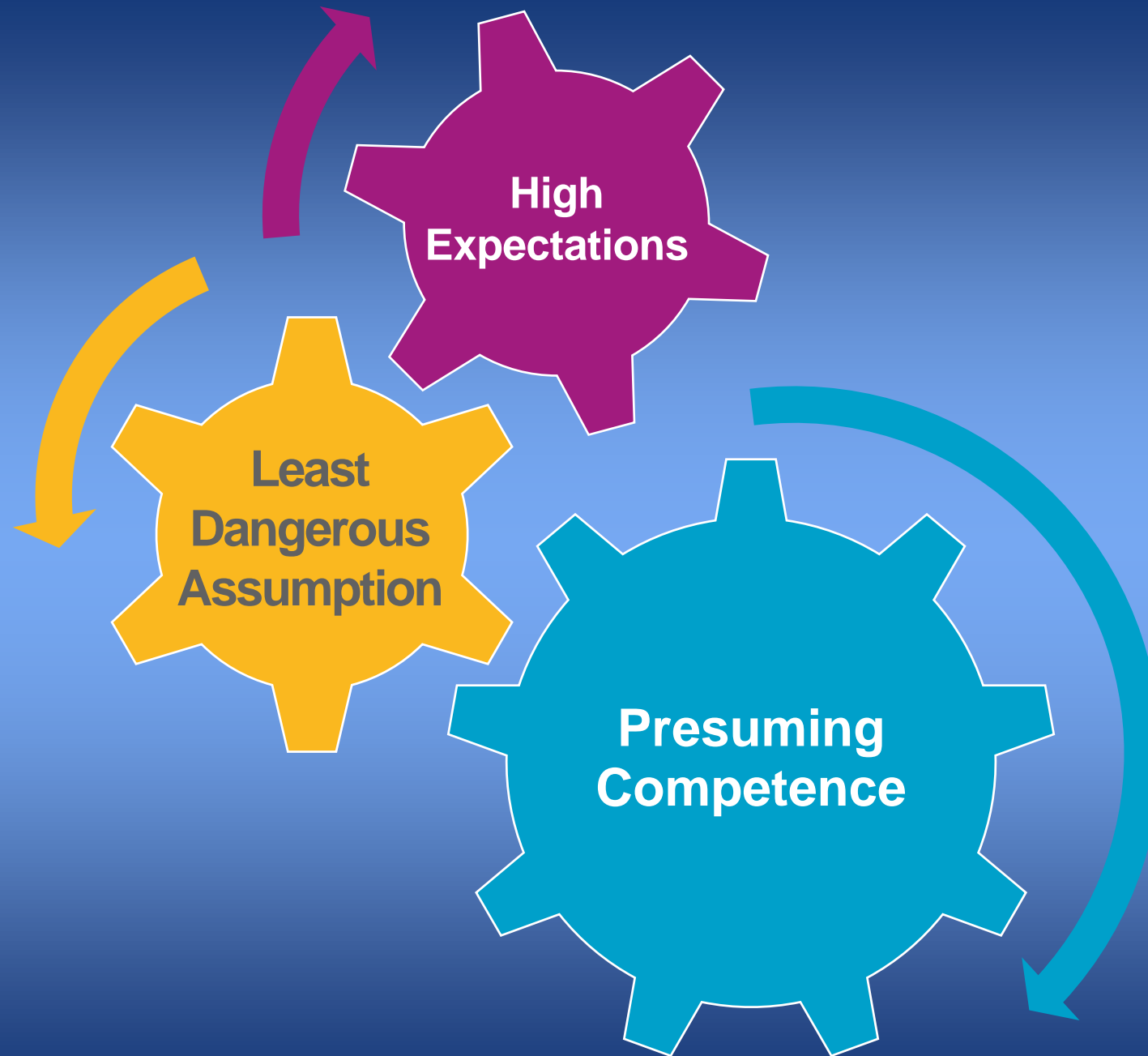
Supporting High Expectations

- ▶ Deliver clear instructions with fewer words.
- ▶ Positively narrate to everyone equally.
- ▶ Drop the label and put the person first.
- ▶ Use optimistic language.
- ▶ Focus on each child's assets.
- ▶ Focus on your relationship with the student.

Source: [High Expectations, All Students, No Exceptions](#)

Inclusive Schools





Case Study: Michael

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Case Study: Michael

When he begins the school year, at the age of 10, he has only slight movement of one hand. He is legally blind and has no communication system. That is, he does not talk or use picture symbols or signs or any other means of symbolic communication. In fact, his responses are inconsistent. It would be easy to assume that Michael is not learning the academic content because he has no way to show what he knows, but that would be unfair to Michael. Instead, we work together with a team- the general and special education teachers, speech therapist, and occupational therapist to plan ways for Michael to communicate. We begin by finding a response mode for Michael. Maybe he can hit a switch with his forearm or some other body part. We use AT-assistive technology and introduce some symbols.

(continued on next slide)

Case Study: Michael

(continued from previous slide)

For example, maybe he moves his forearm to hit a switch to select the picture that tells what a story is about. We also honor his non-symbolic communication. For example, if Michael leans towards the teachers and tries to move his arm when she asks a question, she will move to him to see if she can help him answer. The teacher can use all of Michael's abilities. She might help him engage with a story by using his sense of smell or touch. She might also use animate read-alouds with sensory input. When reading about an apple, she might have an apple for Michael to taste, smell, and feel. She might add in surprises to keep him engaged with the story like simulating the wind with a fan. These are just examples of the kinds of ideas the team might brainstorm for Michael.

Case Study: Michael

Overview:

- ▶ Quadriplegic with only slight strength/movement in one forearm
- ▶ Legally blind
- ▶ No current symbolic communication system
- ▶ Does not show consistent responses

Checking in...

What supports should we provide for Michael that are consistent with what we know about:

Presuming Competence?

Least Dangerous Assumption?

High Expectations?

Case Study: Michael

- 1. High Expectations:** Michael can participate in class activities and lessons, as well as communicate with teachers and classmates, with appropriate support and technology.
- 2. Presuming Competence:** Michael's gestures and body language are indicators that he is trying to respond to questions. Michael is able to engage in learning the academic content using senses other than sight and alternate means of communication.
- 3. Least Dangerous Assumption:** The least dangerous assumption is that Michael is able to communicate using non-symbolic communication. He can engage in learning, given the appropriate supports. Inconsistent responses are not an indication that he cannot or does not wish to communicate.

Case Study: Michael

Paraprofessional Supports:

- ▶ Support implementing assistive technology and picture symbols: For example, maybe Michael moves his forearm to hit a switch to select the picture that tells what a story is about.
- ▶ As a paraprofessional, honor his non-symbolic communication. For example, if Michael leans towards you and tries to move his arm when you ask a question, you may move to him to see if you can help him answer.
- ▶ You can use all of Michael's abilities. You might help him engage with a story by using his sense of smell or touch. You might also use animate read-alouds with sensory input. When reading about an apple, you might have an apple for Michael to taste, smell, and feel. You might add in surprises to keep him engaged with the story like simulating the wind with a fan.

Checking in...

Name three potential consequences of failing to presume competence and have high expectations for Michael in this scenario.

Think of the students in your classroom. What assumptions have you made about a student(s) that you will change after today?

Case Study: Michael

Questions to ask the cooperating teacher:

- ▶ How can I support a communication plan for Michael moving forward? Could you model/show the communication plan for me to assure that I'm implementing the strategies with fidelity?
- ▶ Could you show me how to use the visuals and assistive technology? Could you create videos modeling the assistive technology for my ongoing reference?
- ▶ Would you model a multi-sensory lesson and read-aloud?

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High Expectations

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Thank You!

High Expectations

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