

× Why is that my job???



● Laying the foundation  
for Employment By  
Using the tools of  
Discovery

# Agenda

- × Expectation Around Work
- × How we view business matters
- × Your role in Employment
  - × Your role in creating belief
  - × Your role in changing attitudes
- × A different way to build employment options
  - × Discovery

# Step One



## Creating Belief

Simple rule: No One Goes To Work Without People Believing in them.

Who believed in you? How many people?

If you can see it, you can believe it

Exercise – Pick a partner at your table

Envision everything you did or would need to do to assist a student having a work experience or going to work

Tell your partner: where the student is work,  
The tasks they perform, who their co-workers are  
And the time of day it is.

# Change Your Vantage Point

## Step 2: Creating Belief

- × We are taught to be critical, to analyze and view that as being:
  - × Realistic
  - × Smart
  - × Effective
- × Frequently we assume a person who is positive is just naïve.
  - × Play the yes but game
  - × The blame game
  - × Or the we tried that years ago
  - × Forget that in order to see possibilities, you need to think what if....?

# Changing How We View Students

## Step Three

- × Many students with significant disabilities are fragile and have limited belief in what is possible.
- × Frequently people in their lives do not believe they can work or/ or just can not see it.

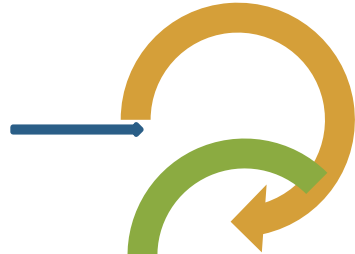
***“ All you can see is what you lack”***  
*Tom Waites, Come on up to the house.*

- × Our own assumptions can reinforce that employment may not be feasible
  - × We tend not to start with the positive
  - × Tend not to rephrase what is said about a student in a positive or neutral light.

Reframing- is the act of pulling out the strengths within a given behavior. Thinking where are those traits appreciated.

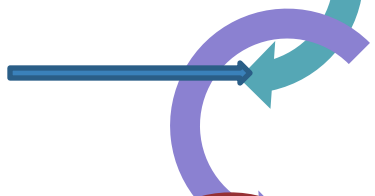
- × When I can not do something on the first try I get really anger.
- × Everyone knows in order to get a job you have to meet the qualifications in the job description.
- × Everyone says I talk too much.
- × My mom says I can't work because I take to long to finish tasks.
- × I want to work but I know I will fail.
- × I have to work on not being too demanding.

**CREATING  
BELIEF**



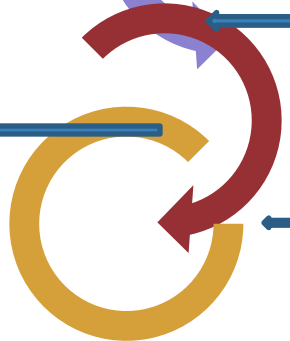
**Envisioning**

**CHANGE HOW  
STUDENTS ARE  
VIEWED**



**REFRAMING**

**Understanding  
how we view  
business**



**Possibilities**



# How We View Business

- × As a society we expect people to work.
- × What did you hear when you were little about people who didn't work?
- × Do you remember when the first time someone asked you what you wanted to be when you grew up?
- × When did you realize there were different rules around work?
- × Persons with significant disabilities didn't get to play by the same rules or have the same expectations.



× CHANGING OUR ATTITUDES ABOUT BUSINESS

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*B.A. Baldwin*




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“We want someone who can multitask. During our interview I’d like you to fill out those forms and have a physical.”

# How we view business impacts who we believe can work .

- × Make a list of your attitudes/ beliefs about business.
- × How many of those attitudes are a good fit for your students.
- × Together Reframe all your attitudes into positive or neutral statement.



*If we change how we view  
students and employers we  
change the equation of  
how to lay the foundation  
for successful transition for  
all students.*

# How Do You learn:

- WHAT YOUR STUDENTS BRING TO THE EMPLOYMENT TABLE?
- WHAT NEEDS TO BE EXPANDED TO BRING MORE TO THE TABLE?

- × What Supports Do Employers Need to understand the contributions of your Students?
- × How do you present your students to the community

# We Need to Start Asking Different Questions

- × What would it take to jump start a new vision for our students to see possibilities?
- × What baseline strengths can be built on for sustained growth?
- × What kind of support needs to be in place for success both for the student and the teacher?

# Discrepancy Model

- × Education uses a discrepancy model when it comes to determining:
  - × eligibility for special education services
  - × in the creation of the IEP.
- × The discrepancy model tends to look at students from the perspective of how they are falling behind other students, not how to build on their strengths to help students move forward.
- × Only 54% of special education teachers report high competence in strength-based assessments (Fowler, Coleman, Bogdan, 2019).

# PROCESSING DEFICIT APPROACH

- × Need to focus on the student's strengths first.
- × The “processing deficit approach.” Provides teachers with information to understand students 'patterns of strengths and weaknesses allowing teachers to amend teaching strategies and modifications to meet students needs.
- × This approach aligns with Customized Employment that starts with the strengths and contributions a student brings to the table, and then looking at what needs to be highlighted to reinforce and build on their strengths.
- × **Problem is teachers have so little time.**

# The Division on Career Development and Transition (DCDT) of the Council for Exceptional Children

## Defines transition assessment as an:

ongoing process of collecting data on the individual's needs, preferences, and interests as they relate to the demands of **current and future working**, educational, living, and personal and social environments.

Assessment data serve as the **common thread** in the transition process and form the basis for defining goals and services to be included in the Individualized Education Program (IEP)" (p. 70-71)

**Discovery can be part of the transition assessment**





On the upside, at least Rob had completely forgotten about his fear of elevators.

## Discovery Is Another Options

- Discovery teaches us to see the positive. When we do that, we see possibilities.
- It changes the equation we are using; seeing what is wrong and providing a solution. [It helps us see what is right and build on it.](#)
- That is a major shift in thinking. If you can make that shift it changes everything; the questions we ask; the assessments we do; our assumptions; how we think about the job seeker changes.

# Why Discovery



- × What we usually know about our students with significant disabilities is just the tip of the iceberg.
- × Frequently Vocation Evaluations or assessments do not highlight what a person with a significant disability can do in the workforce
- × Discovery allows us to know more about the student so we can find a direction to build on for a transition path.

# What is Discovery

- × A common sense approach that looks at all aspects of a students life to **facilitate successful transition.**
- × Allows us to gain insight or knowledge of something previously unseen or unknown; to notice or realize; to make known, reveal, disclose.
- × It allows us to see the student in a different light.

# Why Use Discovery

- ❖ Expects employment is in the student's future.
- ❖ Learns what makes sense for students' lives rather than predicting success based on testing.
- ❖ It can help the student and family be more involved.
- ❖ Observations of students in a variety of settings results in a more robust picture of who that student is.
- ❖ Using descriptive Language shows possibilities.
- ❖ Looks at when students are at their best.
- ❖ Looks for the unique contributions the student has to offer or could offer to an employer.

# Discovery

- × Finds the direction to facilitate successful employment or age appropriate work experience.
- × Allows us to gain insight or knowledge of something previously unseen or unknown.
- × Requires letting go of assumptions and labels or at least holding them at bay.

# Assumptions About Your Students

Assumptions that Prevent  
You From Seeing  
Possibilities

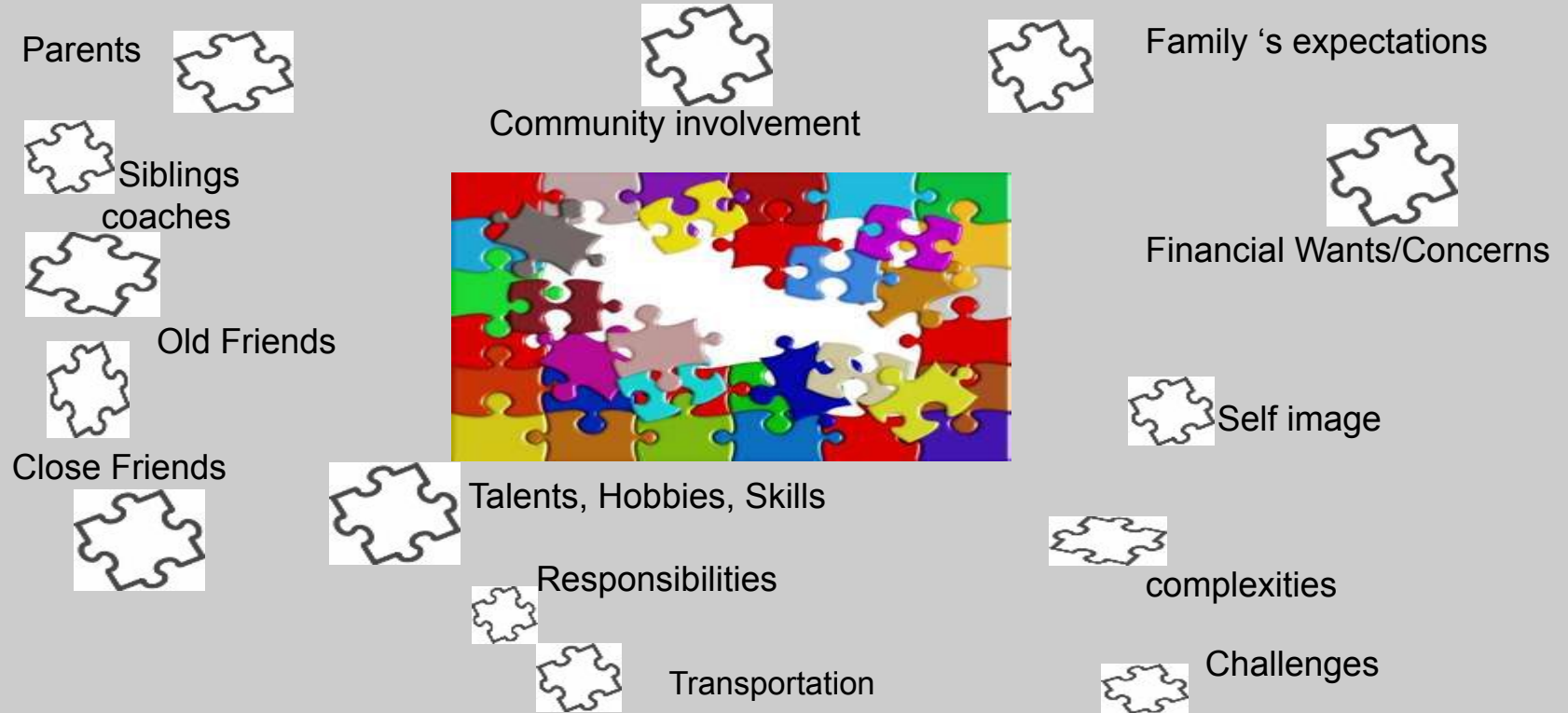
Assumptions That Help  
You See Possibilities



# Answers Different Questions

- ❖ Who is the student?
- ❖ What can be learned from individuals who know the student well?
- ❖ When is he or she at their best?
- ❖ What threads can be built on to secure employment experiences that fits the student?
- ❖ What needs to be learned now and in the future?
- ❖ What are the conditions that need to be in place for the student to succeed?
- ❖ What works for the student/what doesn't

# We are all like pieces in a complex puzzle





Communication -Expressive,  
receptive, new and familiar people

Daily Routine – What is important  
to him or her during the day, week

- ❖ Who is important in his or  
her life?
- ❖ What does he or she do  
without being asked?

What does he or she do without  
being asked?

When is he or she at his best?

What do they do? How do they do  
it? What does that look like?

Mobility -Pace, direction,  
supports

Tasks

Functional Academic -Reading,  
money, math, writing

Relationships -Family, friends,  
neighbors, Who is this person?

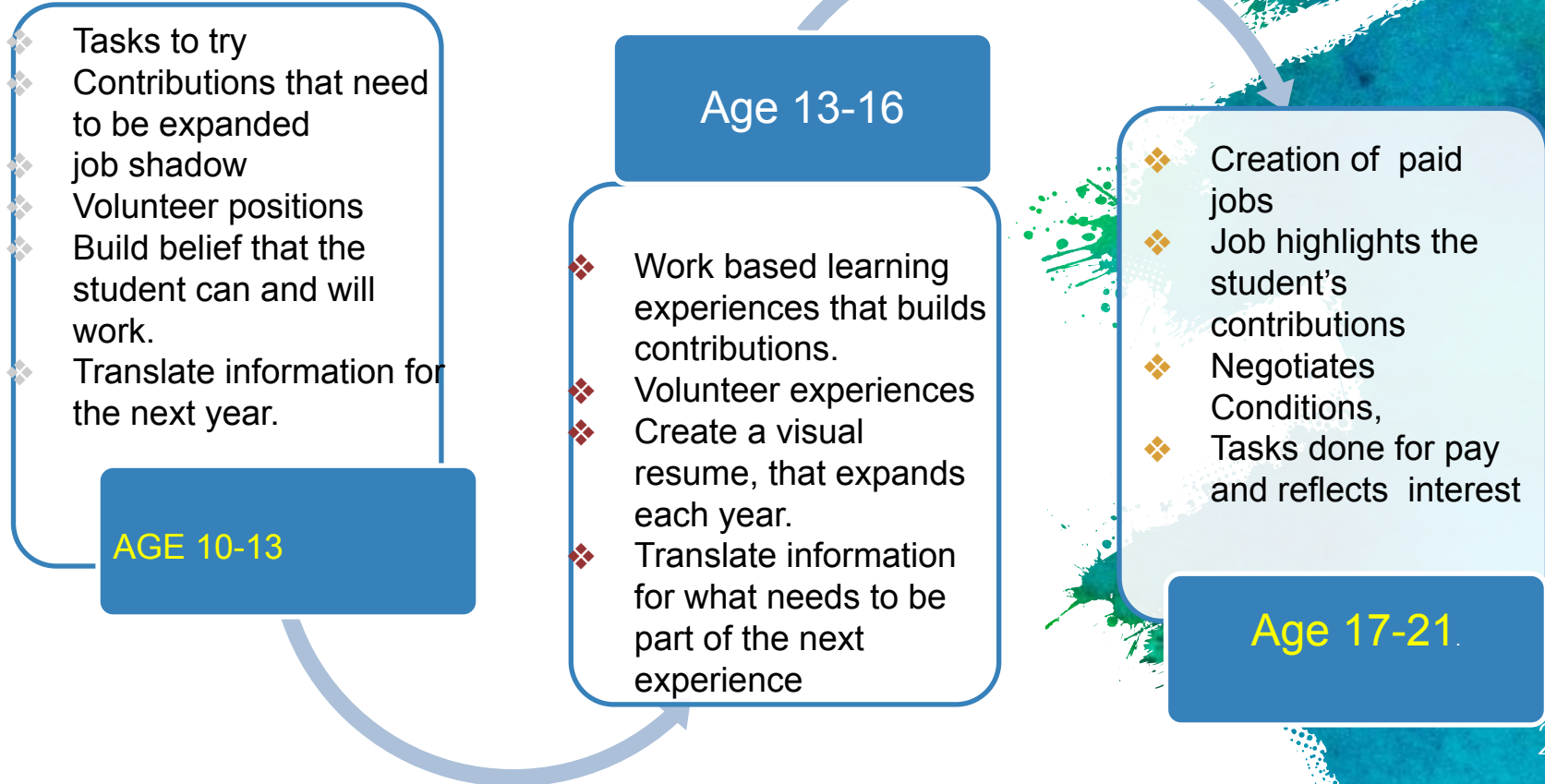
- ❖ What does the person  
look forward to?

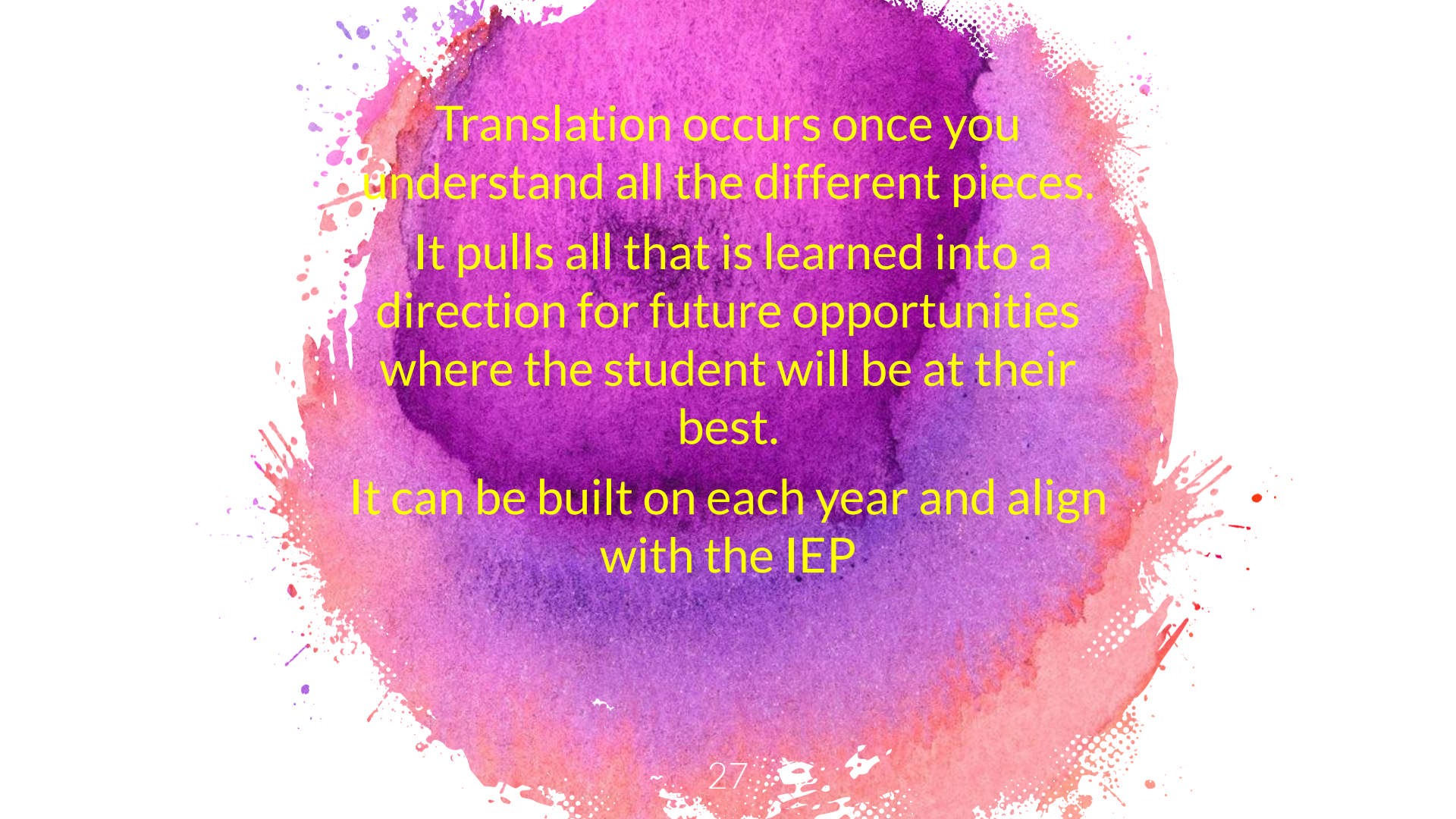
Who the person is when they are  
most who they are?

Impact of disability and barriers

Information  
Learned in  
Discovery

# Discovery Is A Process That Can Be Built on Each Year.





Translation occurs once you understand all the different pieces.

It pulls all that is learned into a direction for future opportunities where the student will be at their best.

It can be built on each year and align with the IEP

# Discovery

- × Creates a clear vision,
- × Understand the ongoing support needs,
- × Aligns and Connects existing supports, and potential services,
- × Supports the person to self manage and initiate as much as possible, AND creatively blend supports to meet those needs.

# Responsibility

Roles	
Schools	To use discovery as a age appropriate assessment to learn where a student is at their best in terms of employment. Provide numerous opportunities and exposure work settings.
Parents	To set the expectation that their student will work competitively. Create responsibilities at home, share where the student is at his or her best, take pictures of student doing tasks, share what works and doesn't work for the student to be successful.
VRCs	Share their expertise with schools and CRPs, participate in discovery, ask different questions at intake, understand Discovery should be part of Pre-ETs for kids with the most significant disabilities. Look for what a student can do in terms of tasks rather than job titles.





Thanks!

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