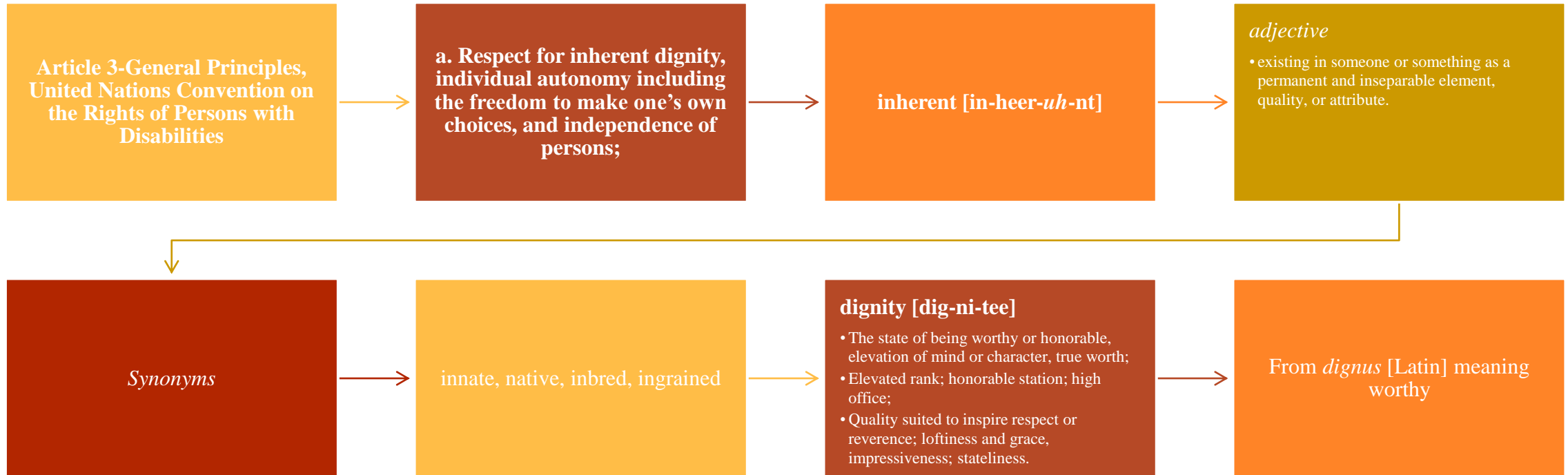




**Best Practices Forum:
Transition and Self-Determination, ASPIRE, and
the Self-Determined Learning Model of Instruction**

Self-Determination and Its Importance to Students with Disabilities

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Chair, Department of Special Education
Senior Scientist and Director, Beach Center on Disability
University of Kansas



Inherent Dignity



THE STORY OF INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY

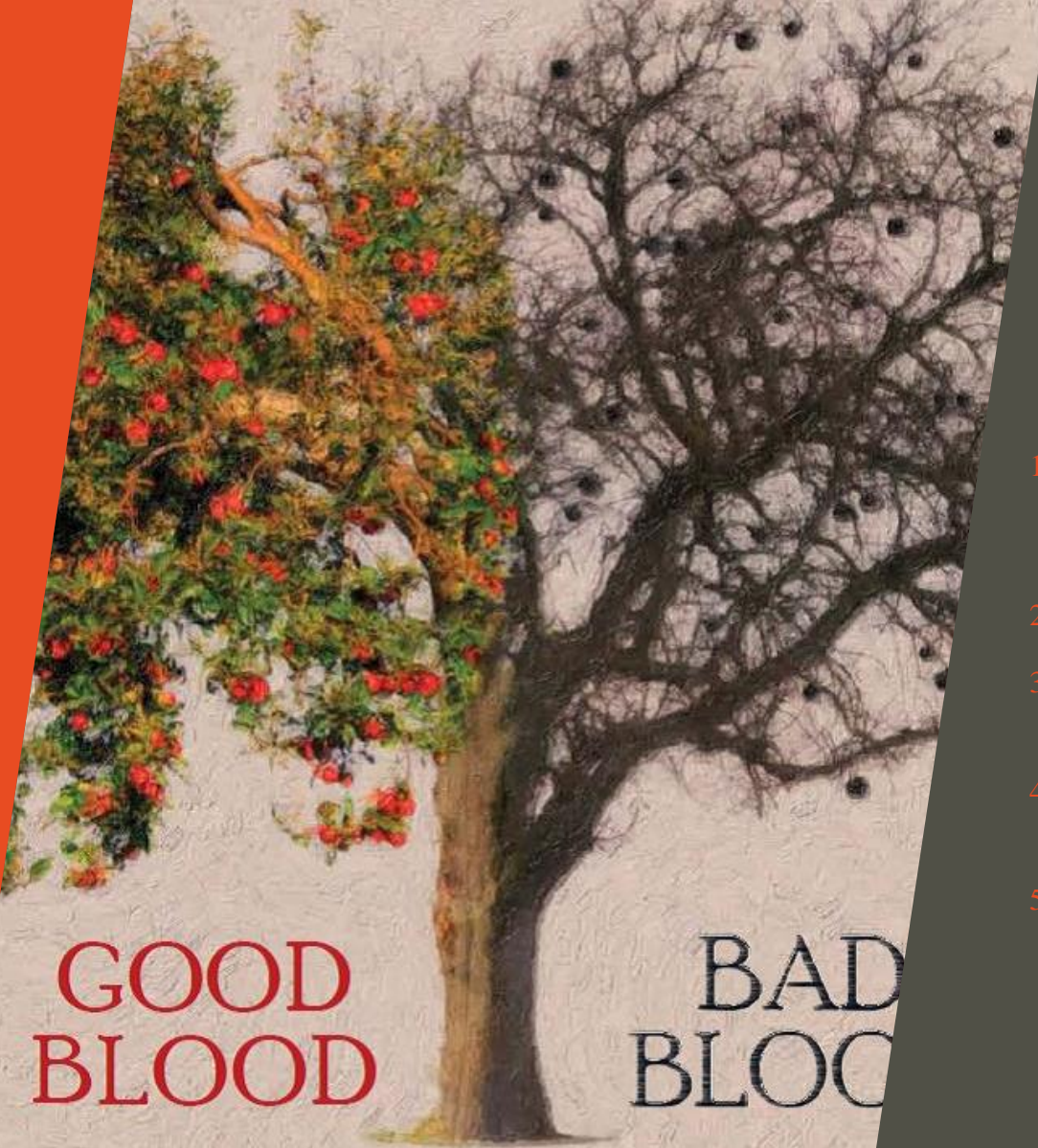
AN EVOLUTION OF MEANING, UNDERSTANDING, & PUBLIC PERCEPTION

MICHAEL L. WEHM

WITH INVITED CONTRIBUTORS

Historic Understandings of Disability

- ▶ Historically, disability was understood within a model that was an extension of the medical model, which viewed health problems as an *individual pathology*; a problem within the person.
- ▶ Within such a context, disability was understood as a characteristic of the person; as residing with the person.
 - ▶ The person was seen as broken, diseased, pathological, atypical, or aberrant; as outside the norm.
 - ▶ Perhaps unavoidably, people with disabilities were, consequently, associated with numerous negative stereotypes.
 - ▶ The advent of intelligence testing, particularly with the introduction of ‘Mental Age’ estimates, led to “infantilization” of people with disability.



GOOD
BLOOD

BAD
BLOOD

Science, Nature, and the Myth of the Kallikrates

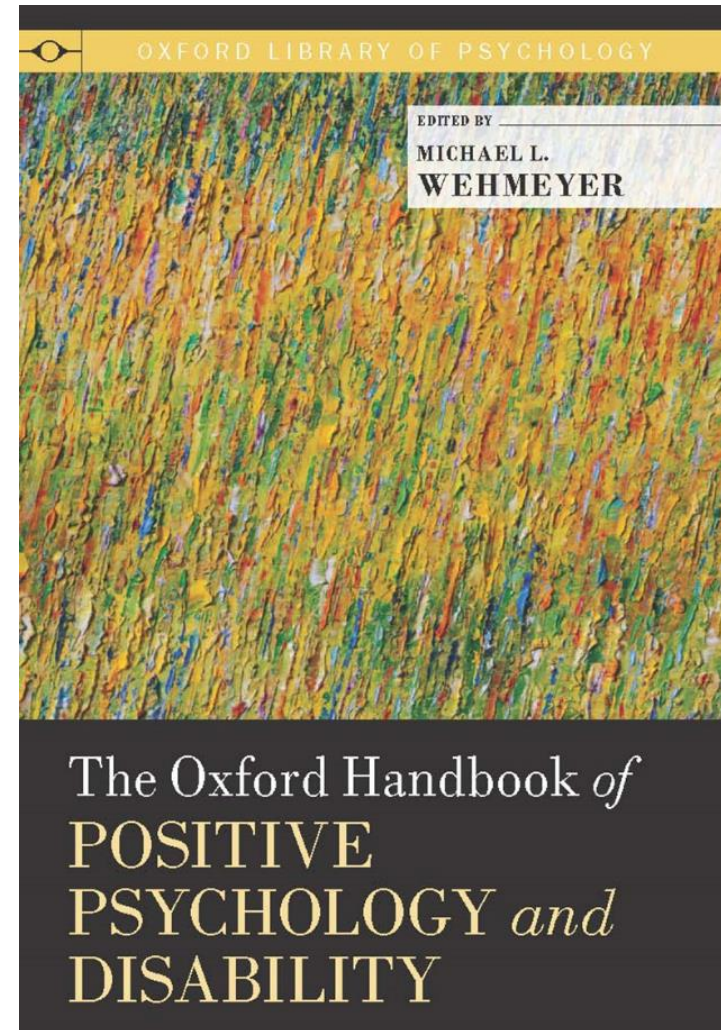
J. David Smith · Michael L. Wehmeyer

Historic Understandings of Disability

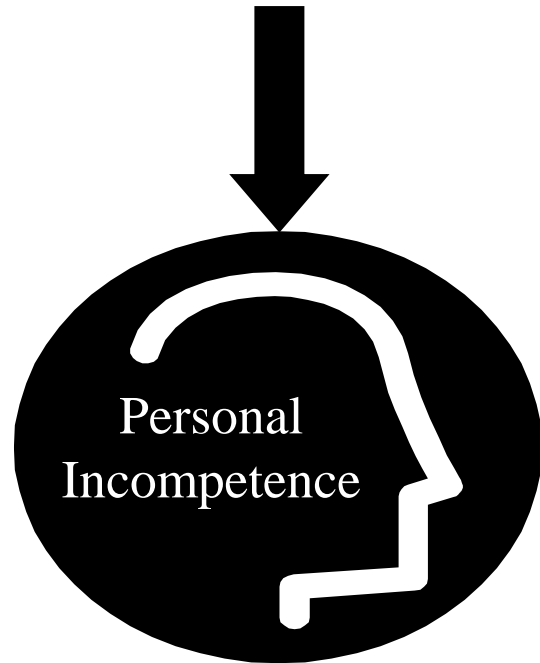
1. Understanding people as different soon becomes construed as inferior, leading to discrimination and maltreatment.
2. Separate is never equal.
3. We are constrained by our own lack of imagination.
4. We have always been wrong about what we believe people with disability can achieve.
5. The injustice committed against people with disability throughout time has been to deny them the dignity afforded to persons simply by their status as human beings.

The Emergence of Strengths-Based Models of Disability

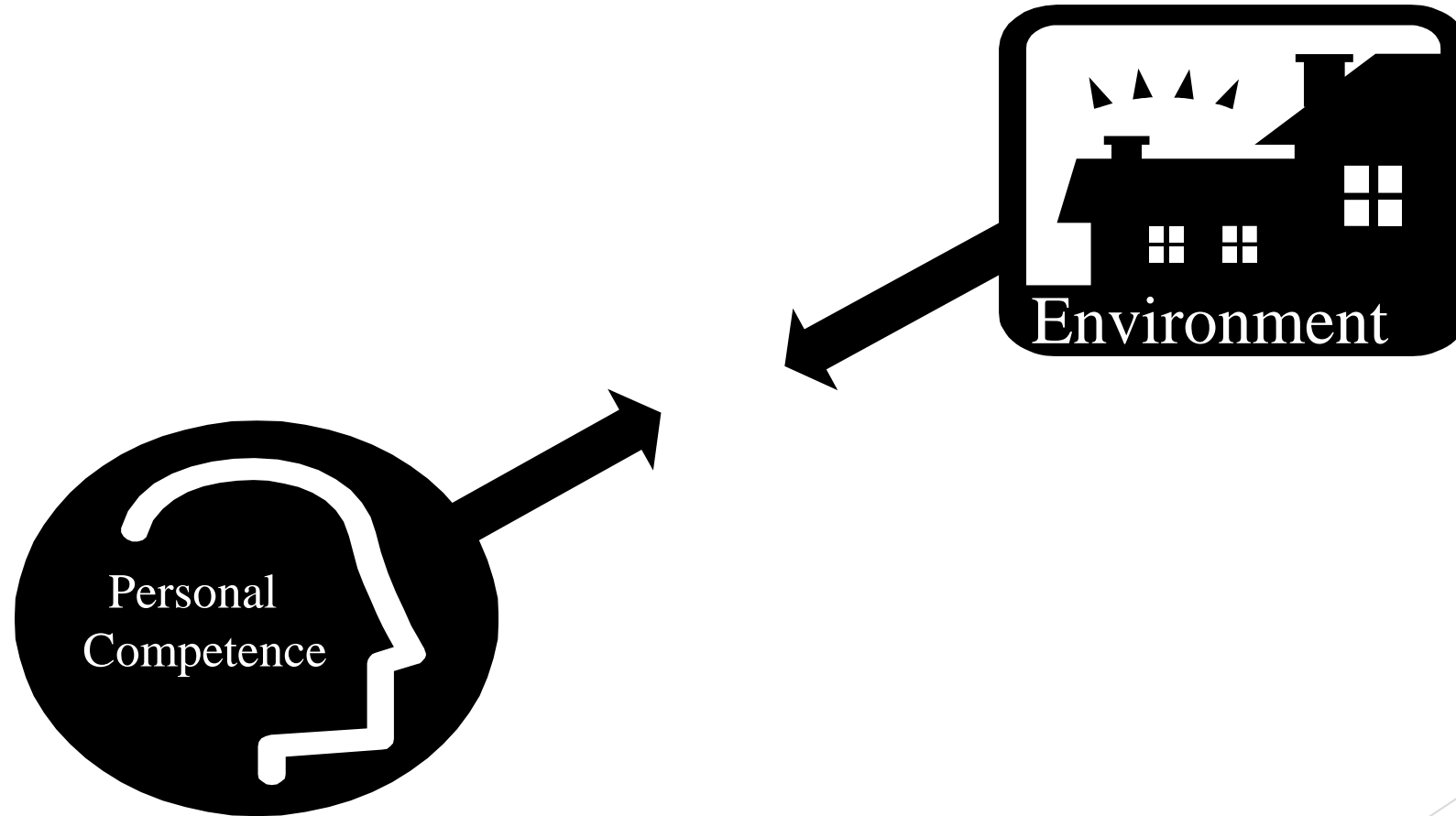
- ▶ 1980- International Classification of Impairments, Disabilities, and Handicaps (ICIDH)
- ▶ 2001- International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF)



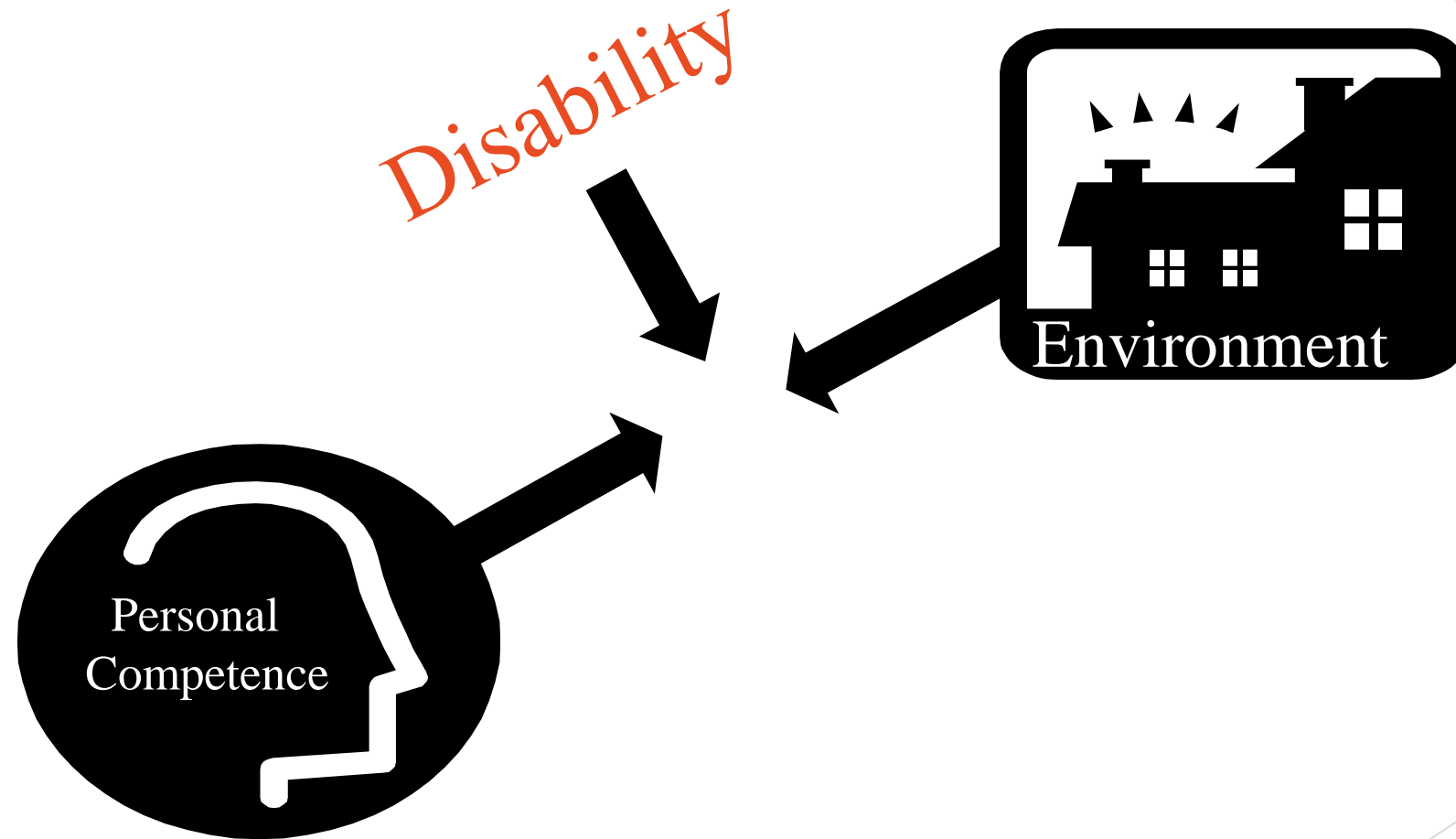
Changing Understandings of Disability

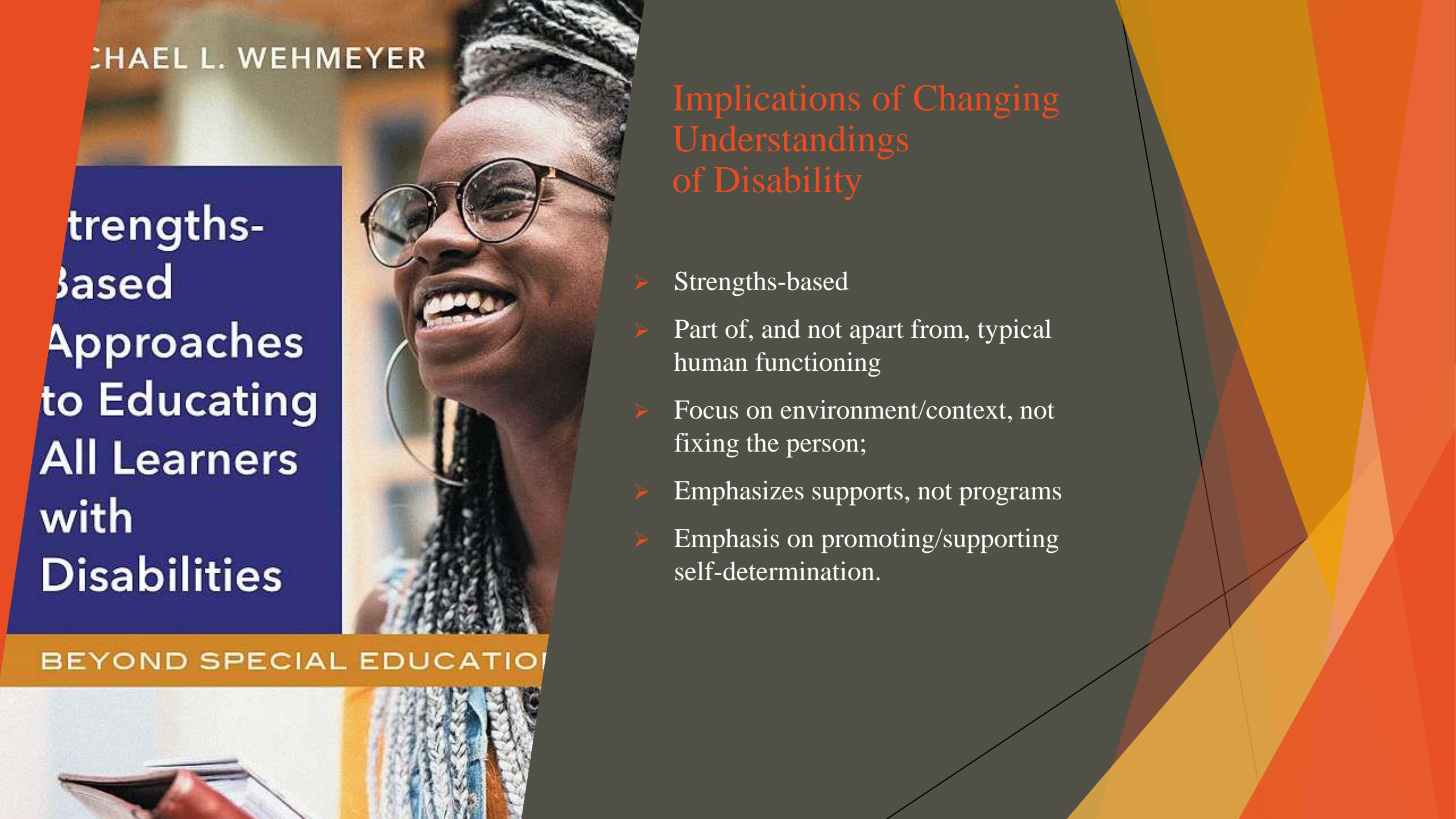


Changing Understandings of Disability



Changing Understandings of Disability





MICHAEL L. WEHMEYER






Strengths- Based Approaches to Educating All Learners with Disabilities

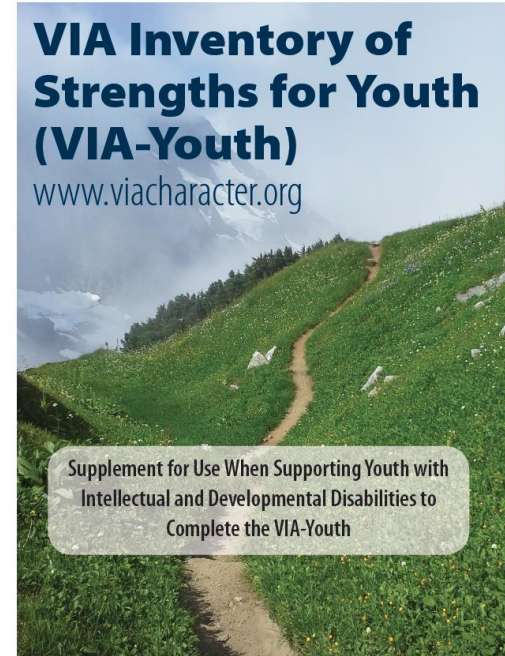
BEYOND SPECIAL EDUCATION

Implications of Changing Understandings of Disability

- Strengths-based
- Part of, and not apart from, typical human functioning
- Focus on environment/context, not fixing the person;
- Emphasizes supports, not programs
- Emphasis on promoting/supporting self-determination.

VIA Classification of Strengths

WISDOM	CREATIVITY • Originality • Adaptive • Ingenuity	CURIOSITY • Interest • Novelty-Seeking • Exploration • Openness	JUDGMENT • Critical Thinking • Thinking Things Through • Open-mindedness	LOVE OF LEARNING • Mastering New Skills & Topics • Systematically Adding to Knowledge	PERSPECTIVE • Wisdom • Providing Wise Counsel • Taking the Big Picture View
COURAGE	BRAVERY • Valor • Not Shrinking from Fear • Speaking Up for What's Right	PERSEVERANCE • Persistence • Industry • Finishing What One Starts	HONESTY • Authenticity • Integrity	ZEST • Vitality • Enthusiasm • Vigor • Energy • Feeling Alive	
HUMANITY	LOVE • Both Loving and Being Loved • Valuing Close Relations with Others	KINDNESS • Generosity • Nurturance • Care & Compassion • Altruism • "Niceness"			SOCIAL INTELLIGENCE • Aware of the Motives/Feelings of Self/Others • Knowing what Makes Other People Tick
JUSTICE	TEAMWORK • Citizenship • Social Responsibility • Loyalty			FAIRNESS • Just • Not Letting Feelings Bias Decisions About Others	LEADERSHIP • Organizing Group Activities • Encouraging a Group to Get Things Done
TEMPERANCE		FORGIVENESS • Mercy • Accepting Others' Shortcomings • Giving People a Second Chance	HUMILITY • Modesty • Letting One's Accomplishments Speak for Themselves	PRUDENCE • Careful • Cautious • Not Taking Undue Risks	SELF-REGULATION • Self-Control • Disciplined • Managing Impulses & Emotions
TRANSCENDENCE	APPRECIATION OF BEAUTY & EXCELLENCE • Awe • Wonder • Elevation	GRATITUDE • Thankful for the Good • Expressing Thanks • Feeling Blessed	HOPE • Optimism • Future-Mindedness • Future Orientation	HUMOR • Playfulness • Bringing Smiles to Others • Lighthearted	SPIRITUALITY • Religiousness • Faith • Purpose • Meaning



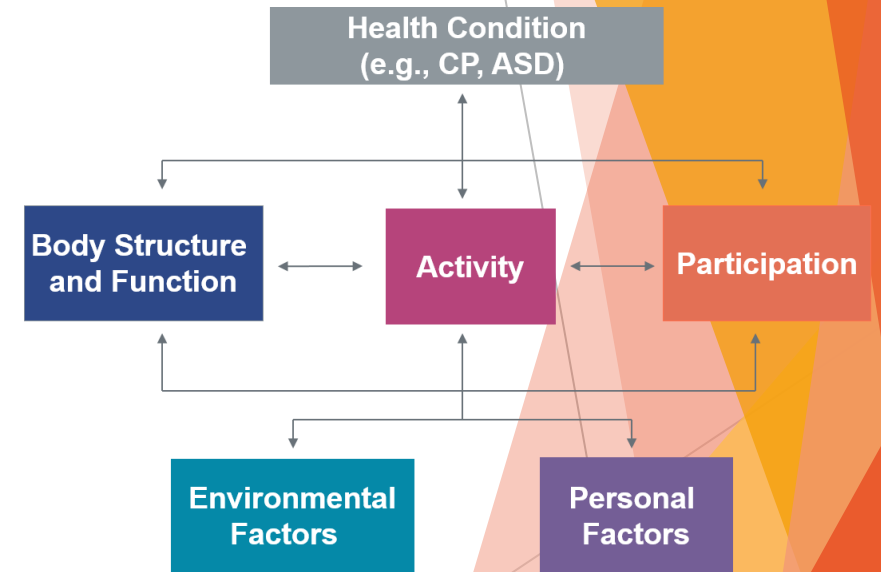
Participation

ICF

- **Activity:** Execution of a task or action by an individual.
- **Participation:** Involvement in a life situation.

Participation is a person's self-determined involvement in a pattern of life (i.e., roles, life situations, and activities).

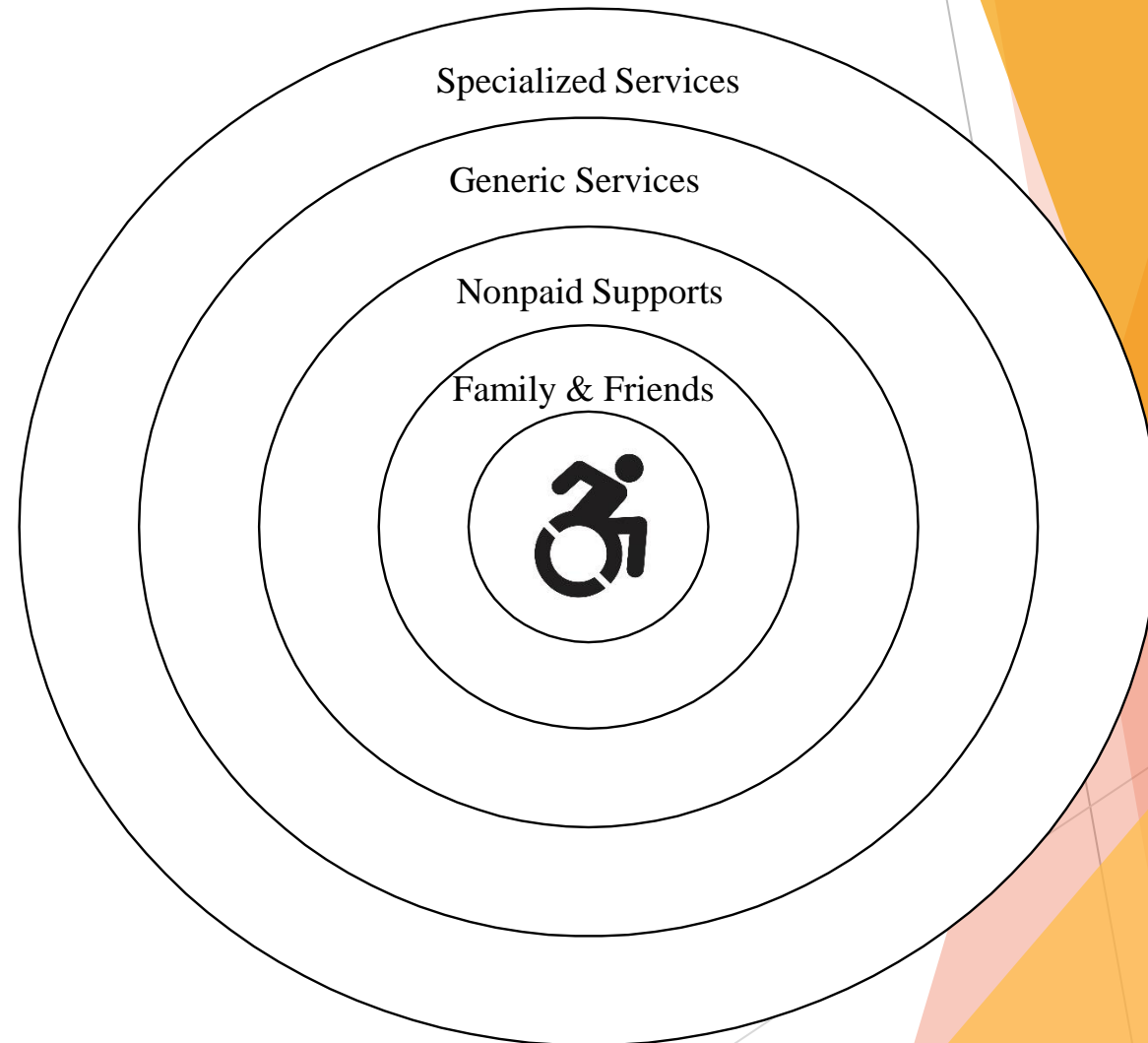
- Self-determined involvement, as such, refers to a person's active, intentional, volitional, goal-directed, sustained, and connected engagement in a pattern of life.
- Pattern of life represents the roles, life situations, and activities that comprise daily life. In general, patterns of life represent socially defined sets of behavior that support participation.



Supports are resources and strategies that...

- promote the interests and causes of individuals with or without disabilities;
- enable them to access opportunities, information, and relationships inherent within integrated work and living environments;
- result in enhanced interdependence, productivity, community inclusion, life satisfaction, and human functioning.

In other words, anything that enable a person to live a self-determined life.



Dignity, Respect, Equality...



"People with autism should be treated with the same dignity, respect, and equality as people without autism."

Jean-Paul Bovee



"We don't have to be told what self-determination means. We know it is just another word for a life filled with rising expectations, dignity, respect and opportunities."

Robert Williams



The Right to Self-Determination

Bengt Nirje (1972)

► One major facet of the normalization principle is to create conditions through which a disabled person experiences the normal respect to which any human being is entitled. Thus, the choices, wishes, desired, and aspirations of a disabled person have to be taken into consideration as much as possible in actions affecting him. To assert oneself with one's family, friends, neighbors, co-workers, other people, or vis-à-vis an agency is difficult for many persons. It is especially difficult for someone who has a disability or is otherwise perceived as devalued. But, in the end, even the impaired person has to manage as a distinct individual, and thus has his identity defined to himself, and to others, through the circumstances and conditions of his existence. **Thus, the road to self-determination is indeed both difficult and all-important for a person who is impaired.**

The Right to Self-Determination

Bengt Nirje (1972)

- ▶ clearly articulates the importance of this personal self-determination to all people, not excluding people with intellectual and developmental disabilities;
- ▶ equates self-determination with the respect and dignity to which all people are entitled;
- ▶ recognized that people define themselves, and others define them, by the circumstances and conditions of their lives.
- ▶ This recognition that self-determination is fundamental to attaining respect and dignity and to perceiving oneself as worthy and valued is a major reason people with disabilities have been unequivocal and consistent in their demand for control in their lives.



The Dignity of Risk

Robert Perske(1972)

The world in which we live is not always safe, secure and predictable.... We must work to develop every human resource within us in order to prepare for these days. To deny any person their fair share of risk experiences is to further limit them for healthy living. (p. 199)



**self-
determination:**
noun
(sèlf´dî-
tûr´me-
nâ´shen)

Determination of one's own fate or course of action without compulsion;

Freedom of the people of a given area to determine their own political status; independence.

self-determined, adj.-- self-determining, adj.

The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language, Third Edition (1992). Houghton Mifflin Company.

Self-Determination and Disability

Within the context of the disability rights and advocacy movement, the construct as a personal characteristic has been imbued with the empowerment and “rights” orientation typically associated with the sense of the term as a national or political construct.

Empowerment is a term usually associated with social movements, and the struggle of marginalized people for equal rights.





Self-Determination and Determinism

- ▶ The philosophical doctrine of determinism posits that actions are *caused* by events or natural laws that precede or are antecedent to the occurrence of the action. Behavior, then, is governed by these other events or natural laws.



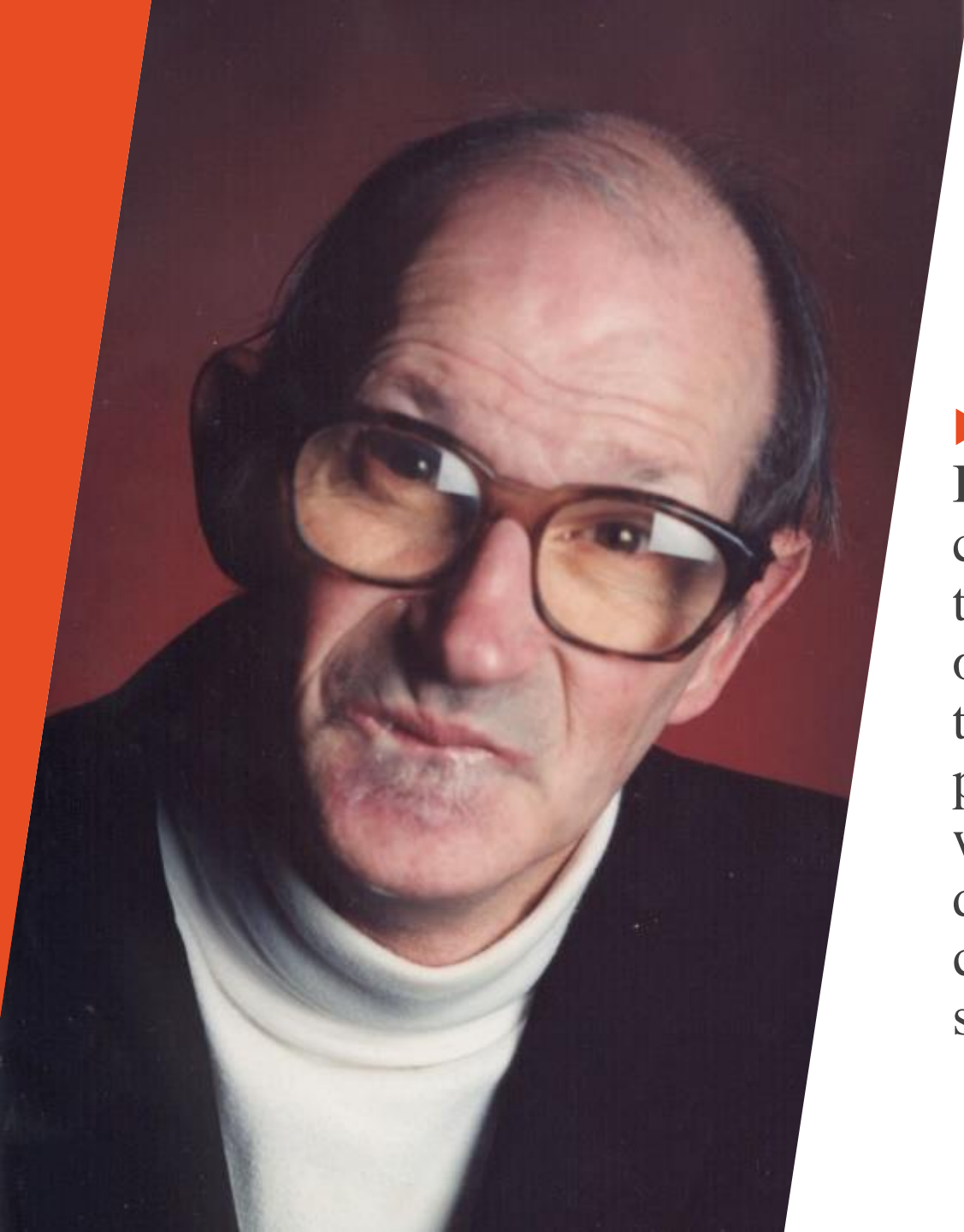
Self-Determination and Determinism

- ▶ Self-determinism, or self-determination, implies that individuals *cause* themselves to act in certain ways, as opposed to someone or something else ‘causing’ us to act in certain ways
- ▶ People who are self-determined embody the characteristic or quality of ‘self-determination,’ a noun referring to the degree to which that person acts or behaves in ways that are self-(instead of other-) caused.

What is Self-Determination?

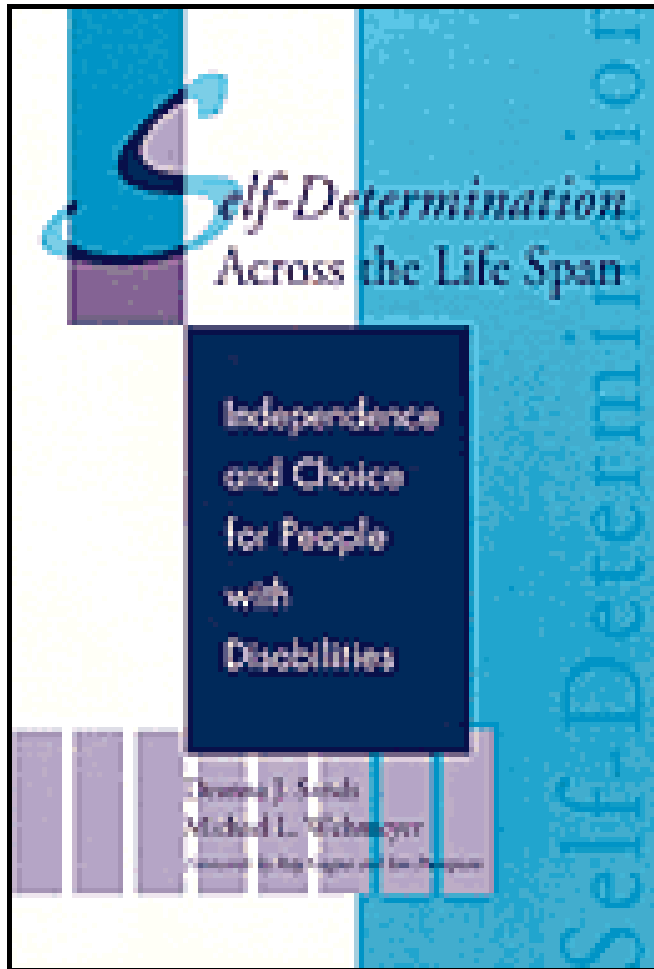
- Self-determined behavior refers to *volitional* actions that enable one to act as the primary *causal agent* in one's life and to maintain or improve one's quality of life.
- *Causal agency*: To make or cause something to happen in one's life.
- *Volitional action*: Making a conscious choice or decision with deliberate intention.





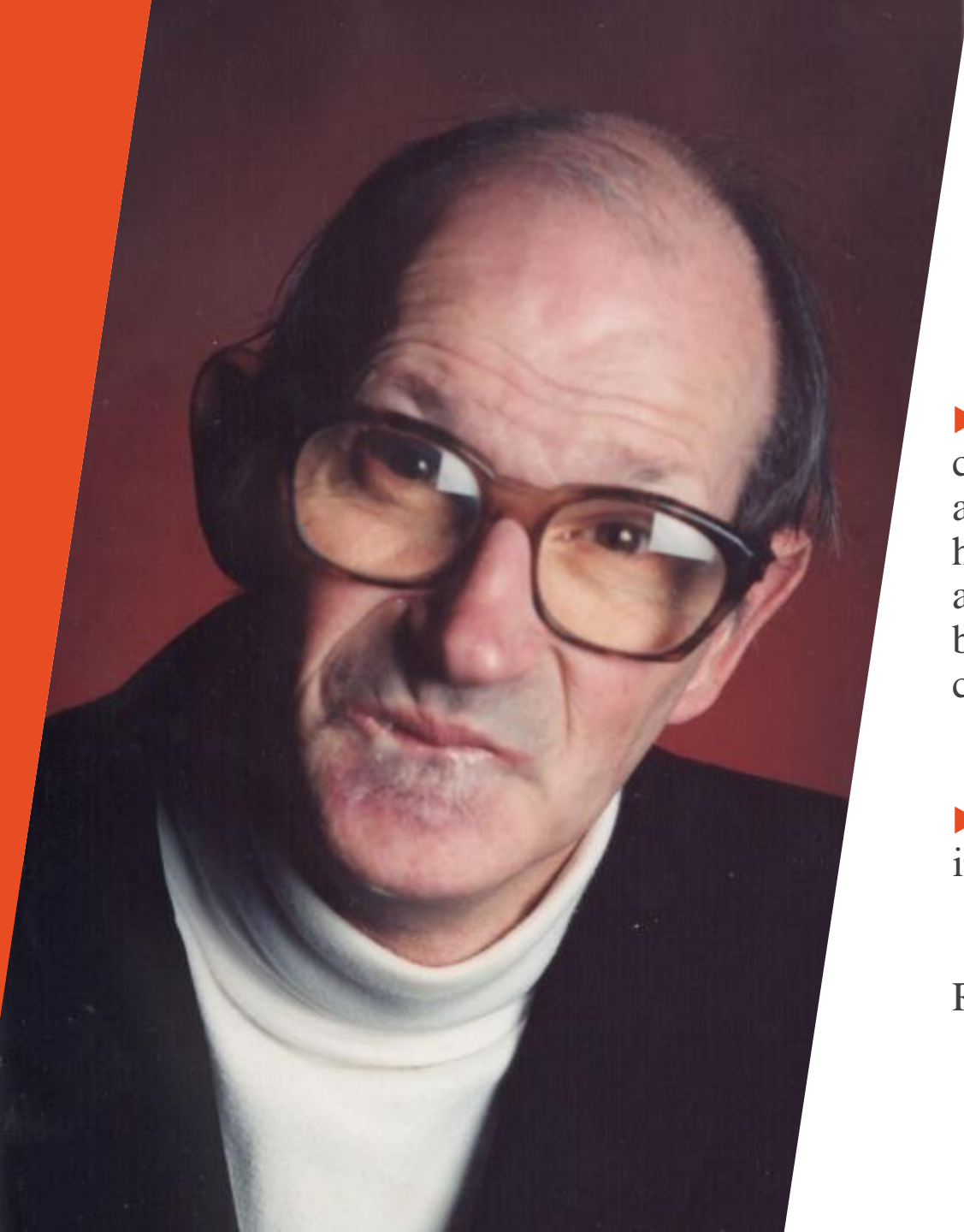
Why is Self-Determination Important?

▶ “When I moved to New Bedford, I wanted to open a checking account. I went over to the bank and gave the \$10 to open the account and asked them if there would be a problem. They said no. But, when I went back a couple of days later, they said they couldn’t understand my signature.”



Why is Self-Determination Important?

“I thought about this and realized that I had a checking account before I moved, and that had worked fine. The next morning, I put on a suit and tie and went down to the main branch. I asked to see the bank president. They told me he was in a meeting. I told them I would wait.”



Why is Self-Determination Important?

▶ “I waited for about 2 minutes and he came out. He brought me into a room and asked me what the problem was. I told him. I also brought my canceled checks and showed him that I had an account before. He apologized and I got my checking account.

▶ “That is why self-determination is important to me.”

Raymond Gagne

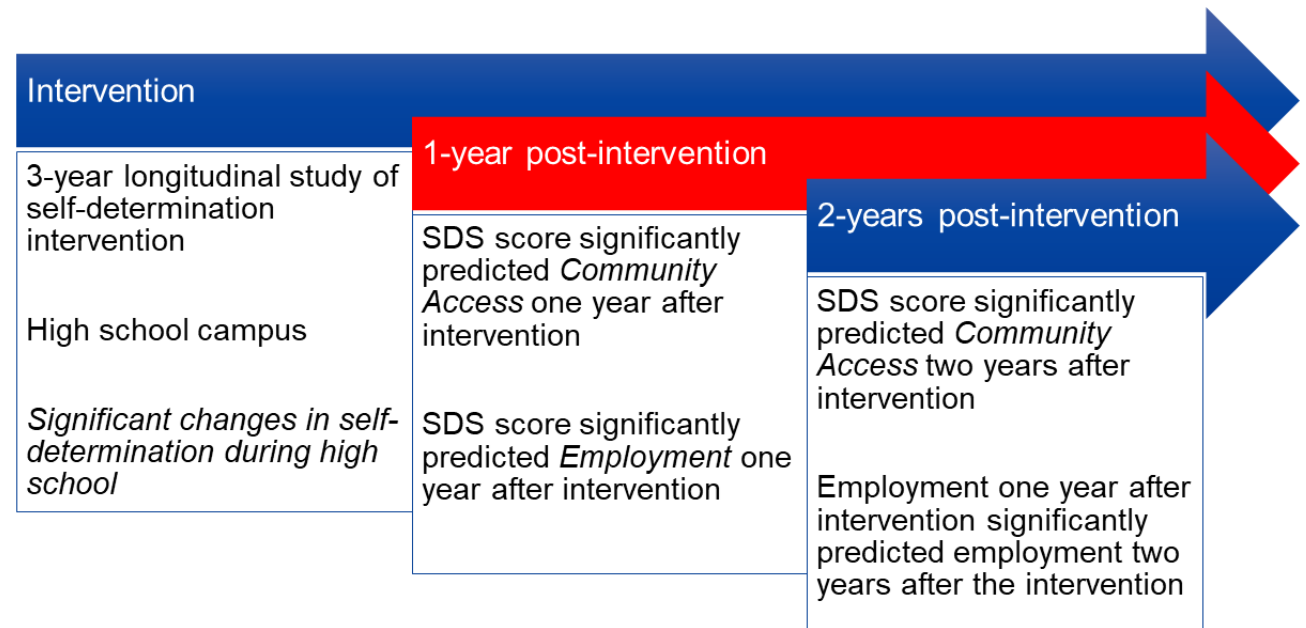


Pearl S. Buck,
1932 Pulitzer Prize,
1938 Nobel Prize

▶ "none who have always been free can understand the terrible fascinating power of the hope of freedom to those who are not free."

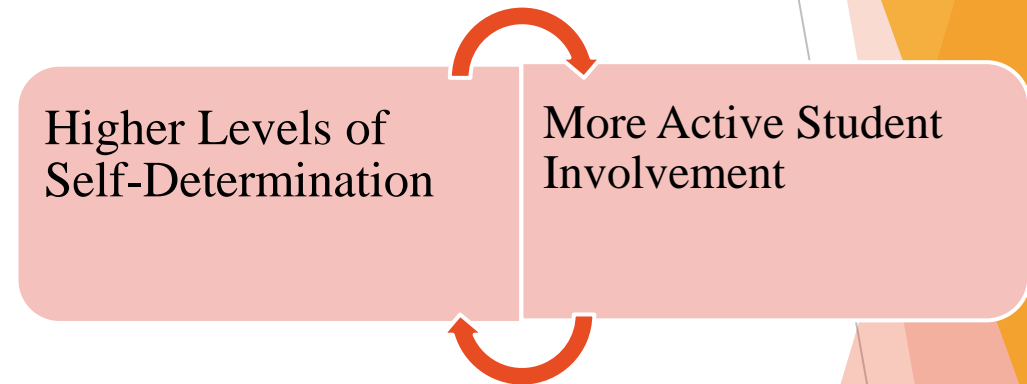
Why is Self-Determination Important?

- ▶ Research has established that:
 - ▶ students across disability categories can acquire the knowledge and skills that enable them to become more self-determined.
 - ▶ there is a strong positive relationship between enhanced self-determination and more positive self-reported quality of life and life satisfaction.
 - ▶ students who are more self-determined:
 - ▶ achieve academic and transition goals at a higher rate.
 - ▶ are more involved in the general education curriculum.
 - ▶ achieve more positive independent living outcomes upon graduation.
 - ▶ achieve more positive employment outcomes upon graduation.
 - ▶ promoting self-determination raises teachers' expectations of students' performance.



Why is Student Involvement Important?

- Students participate in their planning more actively.
- Student involvement promotes self-determination (and students who are more self-determined are more likely to be involved in their educational planning).
- Student involvement results in enhanced transition knowledge.
- Students who are involved in their transition planning feel more empowered.



Promoting Self-Determination

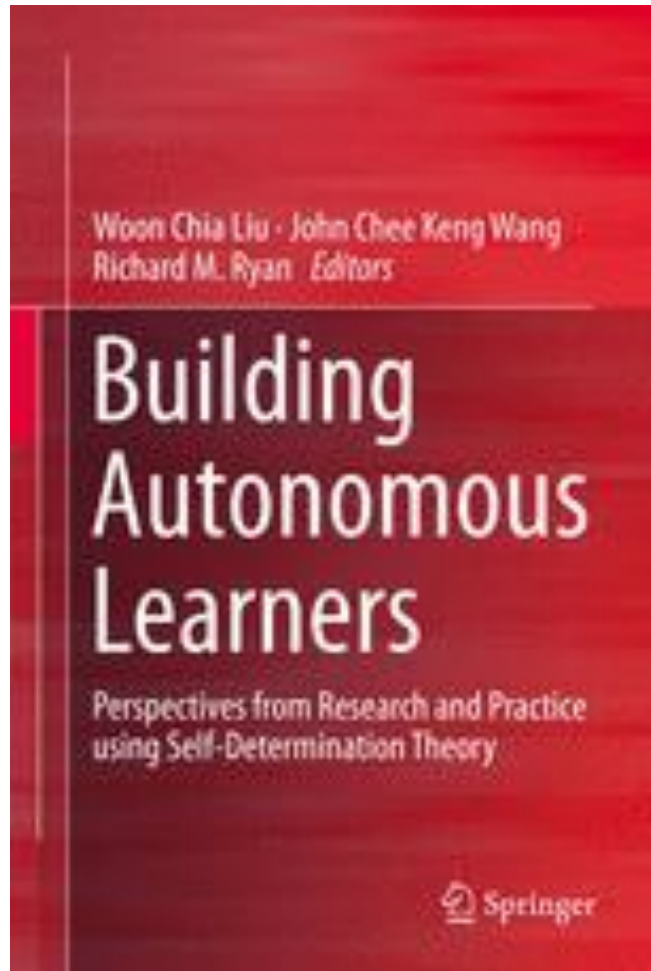
- Choice-making
- Decision-making
- Problem-solving
- Goal setting and attainment
- Self-advocacy
- Self-management and self-regulation
- Autonomous motivation
- Self-awareness
- Self-knowledge

Instructional and Assessment Strategies



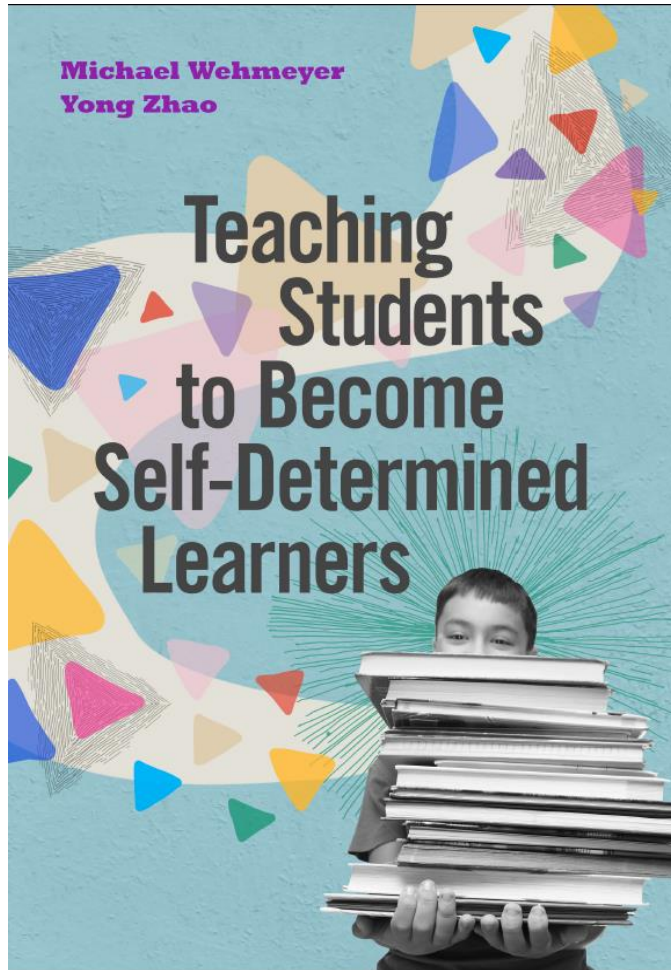
Todd D. Little - Shane J. Lopez Editors

Development
of Self-
Determination
Through the
Life Course



Autonomy-Supportive Classrooms

- ▶ Research in motivation has validated the importance of **autonomy-supportive classrooms** and described the characteristics of autonomy-supportive teaching practices, including:
 - ▶ Communicating frequently to present expectations and acknowledge students' feelings.
 - ▶ Offering more choices and removing controlling events in learning.
 - ▶ Allowing students to participate actively.
 - ▶ Providing positive and informational feedback.
 - ▶ Providing structured guidance.



In Self-Determined Learning:

- Teachers teach students to teach themselves.
- Students learn how to set and achieve goals and make plans.
- Teachers relinquish ownership for learning to the student by:
 - Creating autonomy-supportive learning communities and using teaching methods that emphasize students' curiosity and experiences;
 - Ensuring that learning is tied to activities that are intrinsically motivating or lead to the attainment of goals that are valued and based upon student preferences, interests, values.
- Teachers provide competence supports by emphasizing mastery experiences, using assessment (both teacher-directed and student-directed) to provide supportive feedback, and aligning instruction with students' strengths and abilities.
- Teachers provide relatedness supports by providing choice opportunities, supporting volition, and emphasizing the goal process and not just goal outcomes.
- Students take initiative in learning because learning is meaningful and of personal value to them.
- Students act volitionally because they are provided choices that are meaningful, meaningfully different, and autonomy-supportive.



Self- Determination: The Importance of Family

Self-Determination: The Importance of Family

Walk

- Walk the tightrope between protection and independence. Allow your son or daughter to explore his or her world.

Encourage

- Encourage your child to ask questions and express opinions. Involvement in family discussions and decision-making sessions is one way of providing this opportunity to learn.

Recognize

- Recognize the process of reaching goals, don't just emphasize outcomes.

Self-Determination: The Importance of Family

Schedule	Schedule opportunities for interactions with children of different ages and backgrounds.
Don't leave	Don't leave choice-making opportunities to chance. Take every opportunity to allow your child to make choices; what she wears, what is served for dinner, or where the family goes for vacation.
Have	Have high expectations for your child and don't be afraid to hope!

Positive Approaches

- Self-Determination
- Mindfulness
- Positive-Behavior Supports
- Quality of Life
- Friendships
- Well-Being
- Character Strengths
- Technology Supports
- High Expectations