



We know from the research and our own lived experiences what the biggest barriers are to widespread, meaningful inclusion for students with service and support needs at school. The biases and beliefs we hold about disability, about who belongs, about "typical" and "atypical" prevents many kids from accessing learning. The language we use in assessment, Present Levels of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance, planning, and more aspects of education frames children through leveling and the things they cannot do, "struggle" with, or need support in. I work with my preservice educators on challenging deficit ideology and reframing our language to choose a constructive narrative about the child.

I put out a call on Instagram to crowdsource resources for challenging deficit ideology, choosing a constructive narrative, and reframing from an assets based perspective. In this newsletter, I will share those resources with you.

As always, let me know your thoughts!

*~Jen & Mira*

### **Assets-Based Approaches**

[Strengths Based Collective](#). The Strengths Based Collective website provides resources to guide kids and adults alike toward a strengths based approach to seeing ourselves and each other. They also provide access to research articles on deficit thinking, strengths based approaches, and positive psychology. I pulled some resources from here to use in my courses.

[Brainhighways: Dear Teachers: Heartfelt Advice for Teachers from Students](#). I don't know how I had never seen this, but now that I have seen it, I want others to see it too!

[Shelley Moore: Presuming Competence](#). I am a big fan of [all that Dr. Moore puts out into the world](#) and this is just one of the resources offered around assets and reframing. If you are new to Dr. Moore, check out her [website](#) and follow her on [Instagram](#).

[The Well Balanced OT](#) on Instagram posts about strengths-based reframes. Let's talk about [this one](#) specifically. She offers "self-directed" rather than "won't follow directions" - I'm not sure either of these are particularly useful. I may say "Benefits from visual support and prompts when given verbal directions" or something more strengths-based. We don't value "self-directed" any more than we value now following directions so I would reframe that further. Similarly, "can't make friends" does not necessarily mean the child "prefer(s) independent play." This is where we need to talk with the child and see what is going on! Maybe they do prefer independent play, which is cool! But maybe they really do need support making friends, and saying they "prefer independent play"

allows us to disengage from a child who may need support. The last three are excellent reframes though!

Gholdy Muhammad's webinar [Unearthing Genius and Joy](#) and pretty much everything Dr. Muhammad writes, focuses on the strengths and joys within each of us.

[Explaining Brains](#) offers free resources for helping kids to think about how they learn, as well as language for preparing students for educational assessments. I really like some of the reframes offered on this [Instagram post](#). I would push a little further on the first reframe: Jane has difficulty with . . . doesn't give me very much information since I don't know how "difficulty" is being used in this instance. Does it mean she is missing the prerequisite learning, or the fine motor skills, or the attention to task? Difficulty is too vague, but the post gives a lot of good examples to push our thinking.

[Hacking Deficit Thinking: 8 Reframes That Will Change the Way You Think About Strength-Based Practices and Equity In Schools](#) This is a pretty good introduction and gives action steps you can take today.



### Connect with us

- We finally have merch! You can get yours [here!](#)
- Is your school or organization looking for PD on moving toward inclusion? Book with Us! Email [Jen@TeachingIsIntellectual.com](mailto:Jen@TeachingIsIntellectual.com)
- I will be at the University of Wisconsin-Green Bay this month! If you want to come say hi, send me a message and I'll give you the details!
- I am offering College Teaching Office Hours! If you want to jump online and talk about teaching, pedagogy, inclusion, resources, anything, [sign up here](#) for April 4, 2024 12:00-1:30 ET or May 3, 2024 3:30-5:00 ET. It's free and you can come and go. Email or DM if you have a particular topic in mind!
- We can be found on [Instagram](#), [Facebook](#), [LinkedIn](#) @TeachingIsIntellectual