

# Principles and Practical Strategies for Promoting Students' Inclusion within the General Education Classroom



Cheryl M. Jorgensen  
Institute on Disability/UCED  
University of New Hampshire  
Pennsylvania Dept. of Ed.  
Conference  
April 7, 2010



Go Panthers!

Go Nittany Lions!



# Goals for Today



- To describe the principle of “the least dangerous assumption of presuming competence”
- To articulate the relationships among and provide examples of the core principles and practices of inclusive education
- To illustrate a planning process for designing instructional supports and show multiple examples



INSTITUTE ON DISABILITY  
UNIVERSITY OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

# Colleagues

Michael McSheehan,  
Rae M. Sonnenmeier, Laurie Lambert

Institute on Disability/UCED  
University of New Hampshire

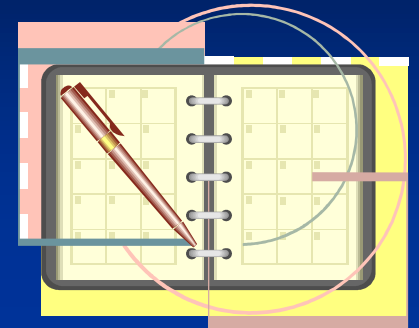
<http://www.iod.unh.edu>

Students, families, and members  
of the school communities in which  
we have worked



# Today's Schedule

- 1:45 Welcome
- 1:55 *Jack's Story*
- 2:15 Core Principles and Practices
- 2:30 Presuming Competence
- 3:00 Membership, Relationships, & Participation
- 4:00 Evaluation and Adjourn



# Jack's Story



- “Included” in grades 1 - 3
- Experiences autism
- Initial communication system:
  - gestures (2 finger pt.), some signs
  - vocalizations
  - Go-Talk (9 messages)
- Home - 3 sibs, active, interpret needs
- Described by team as “functioning at 2 yr. Level”

# Jack's Communication Device – Pre-Intervention



# Pre-Intervention Membership and Participation



Jack with Assistant

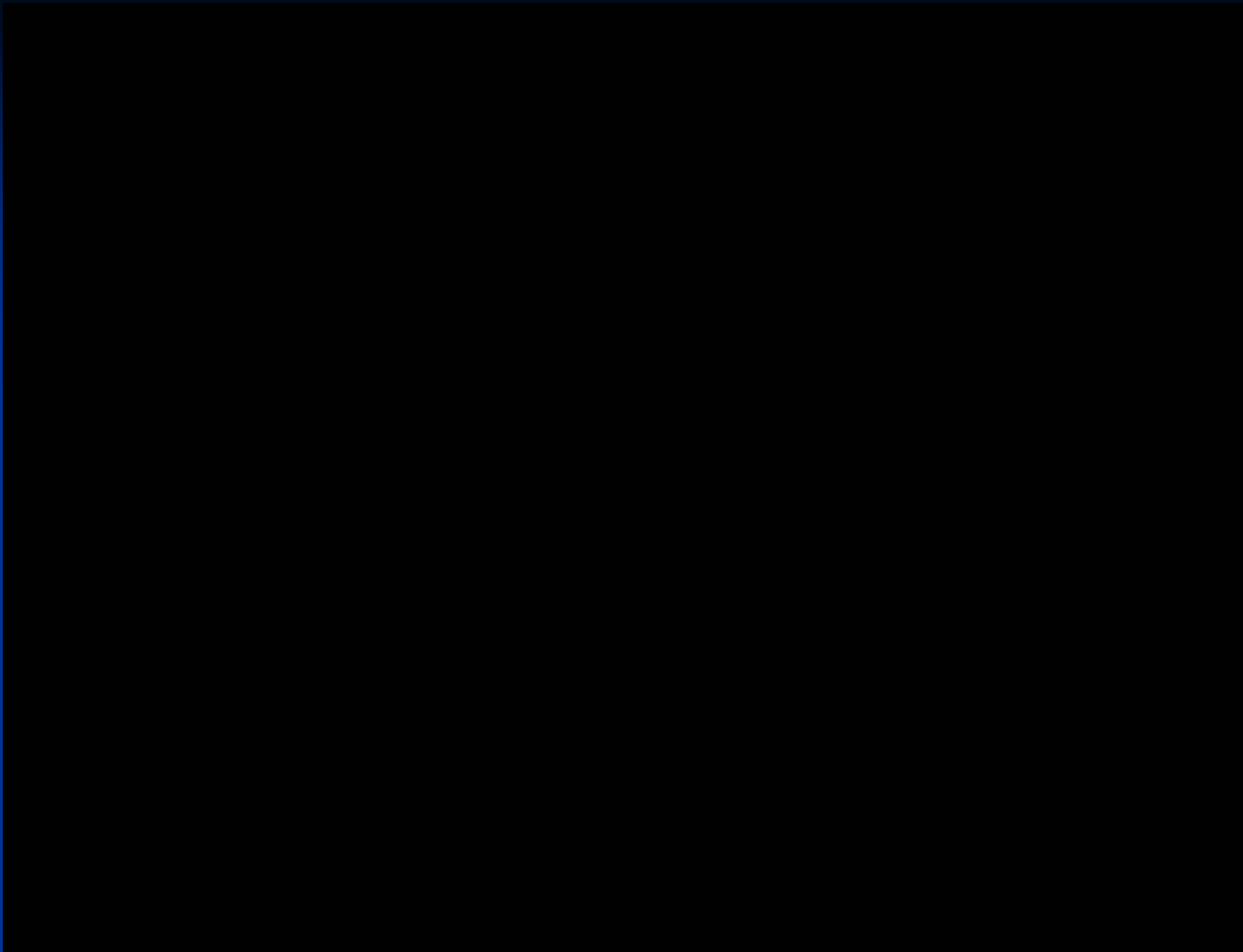


General  
Education  
Teacher

Jack's Desk

# Jack in Class - #1

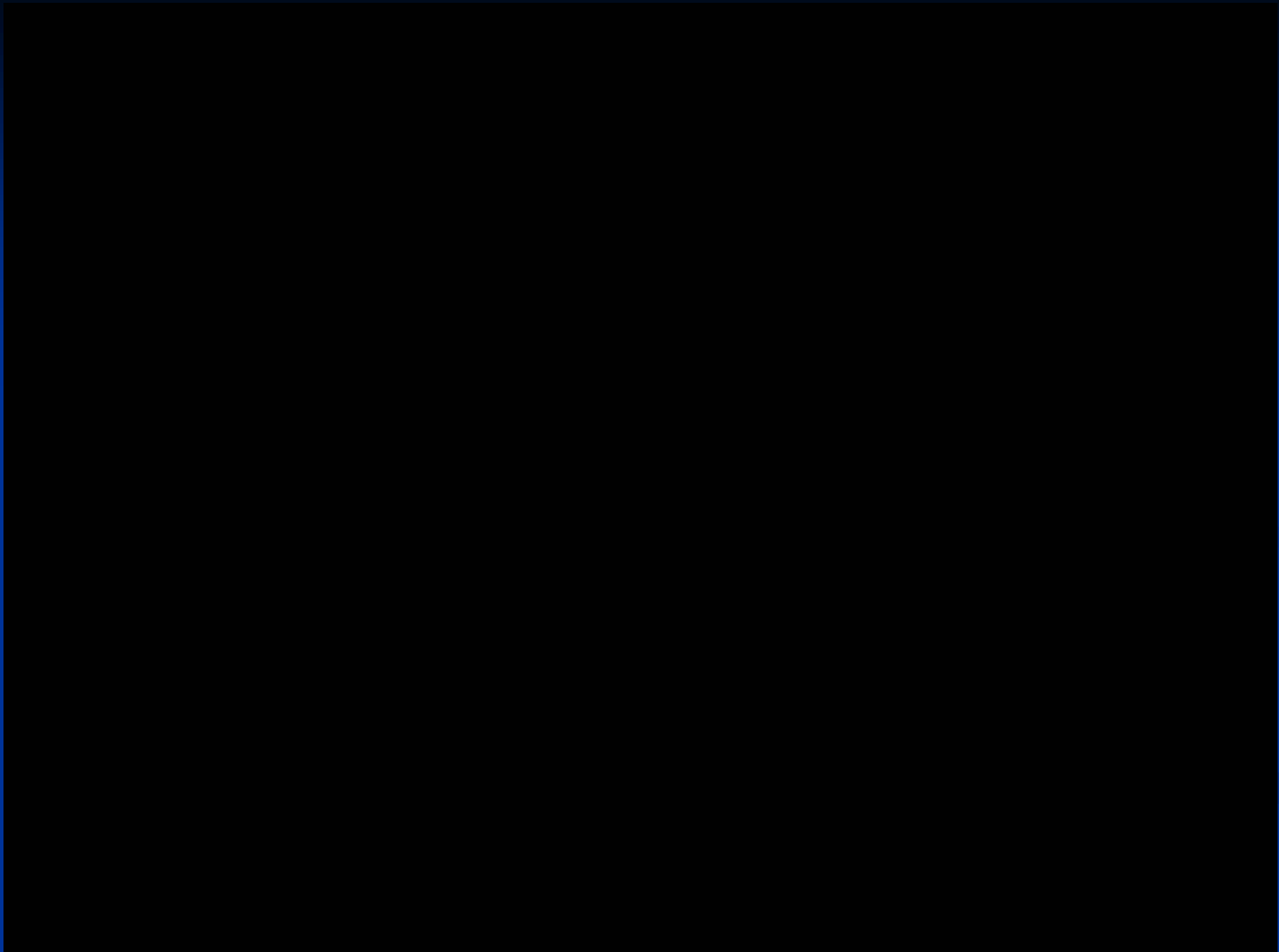
- What do you see?
- What's wrong with this picture? What would **you** do to make Jack's inclusion more effective?
- Think-Pair-Share
- Share with whole group





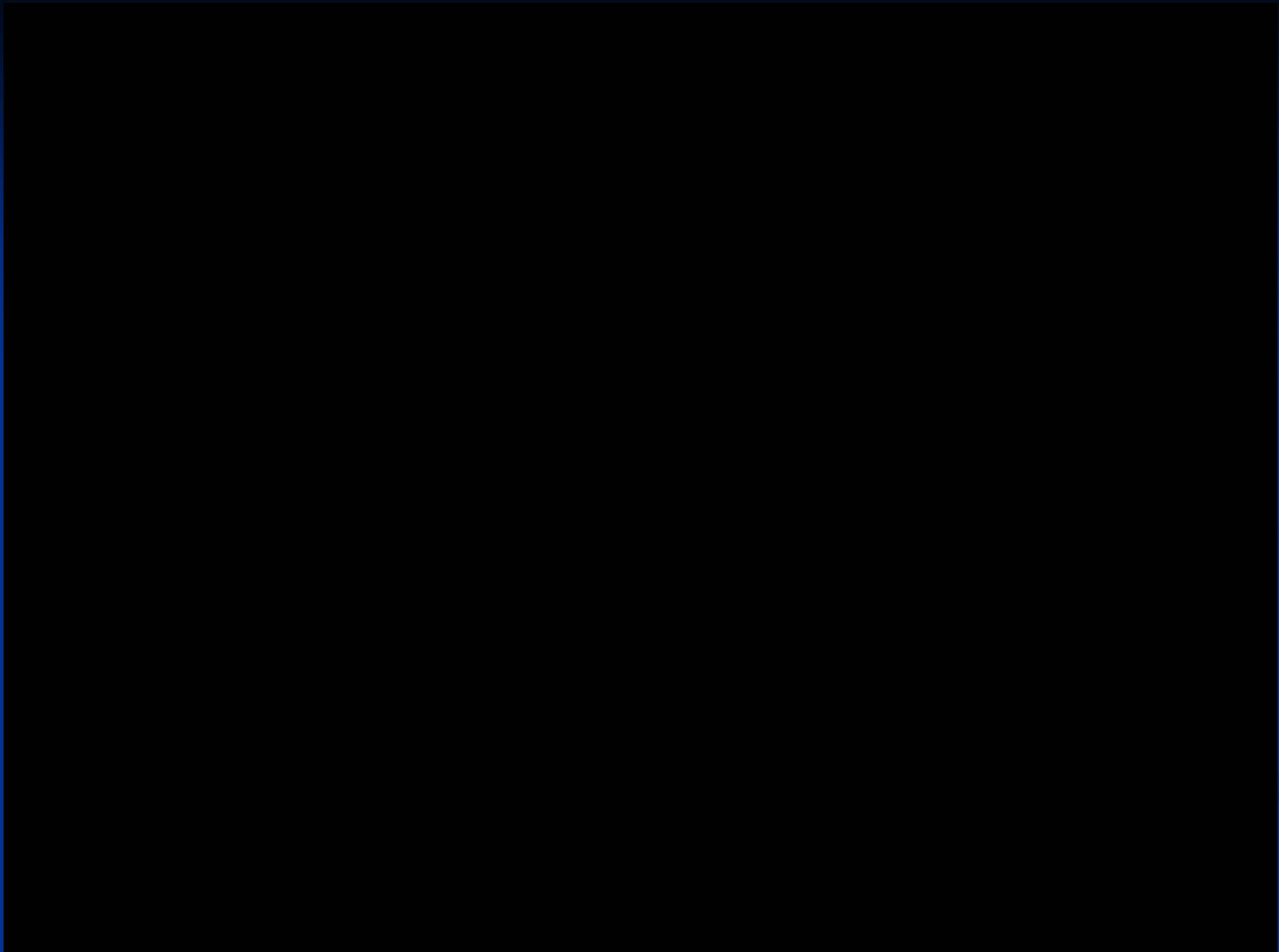
# Jack in Class - #2

- What do you see?
- What do you think was in the minds of Jack's team that led them to conduct this lesson, this way?
- Do you think Jack is "included?"
- How do you know?
- What could be done to improve his participation?

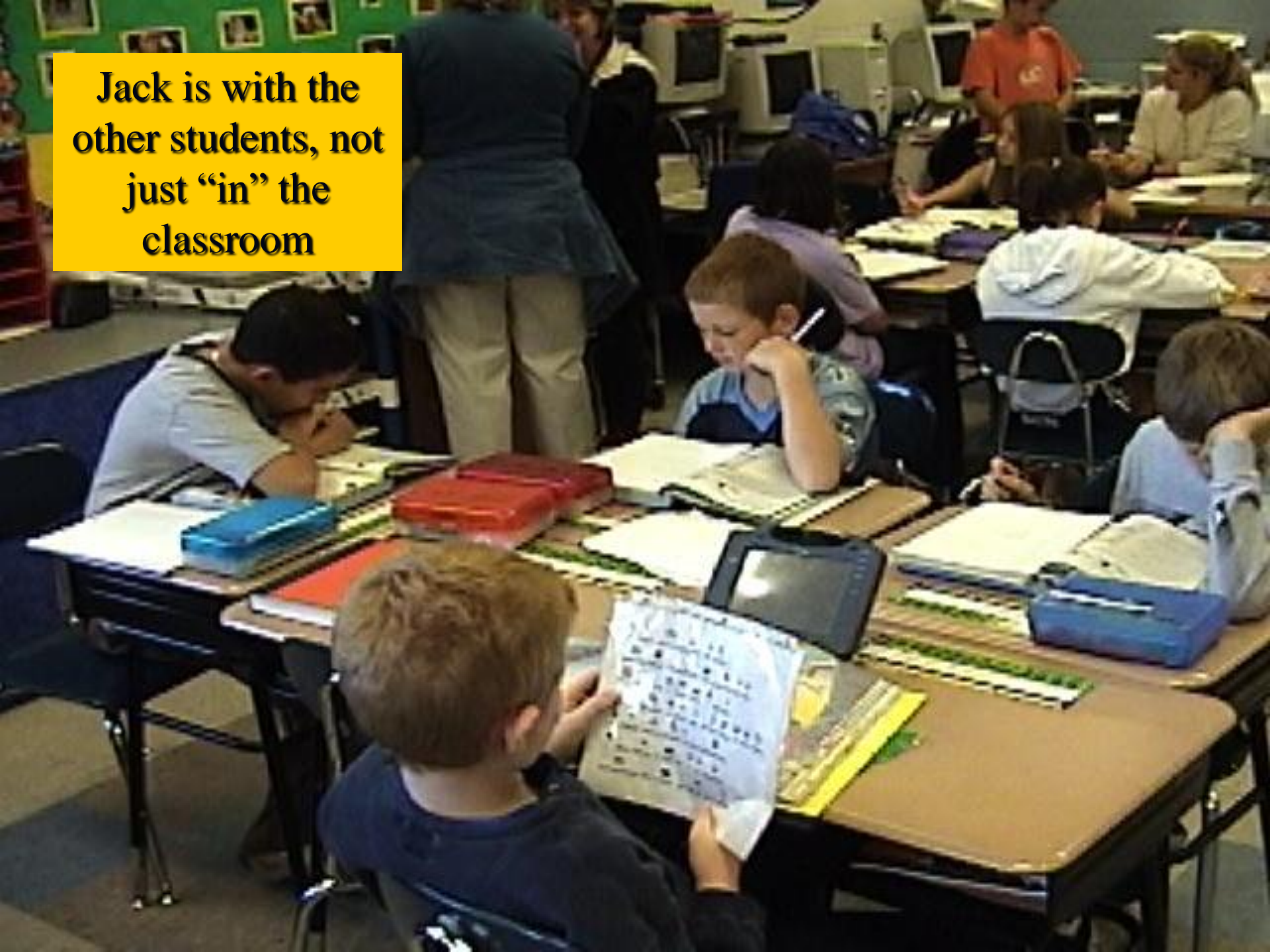


# Jack in Class - #3

- What do you see?
- What's **different** in this video?
- “Standing Groups of 3” discussion
- Share with whole group



**Jack is with the other students, not just “in” the classroom**



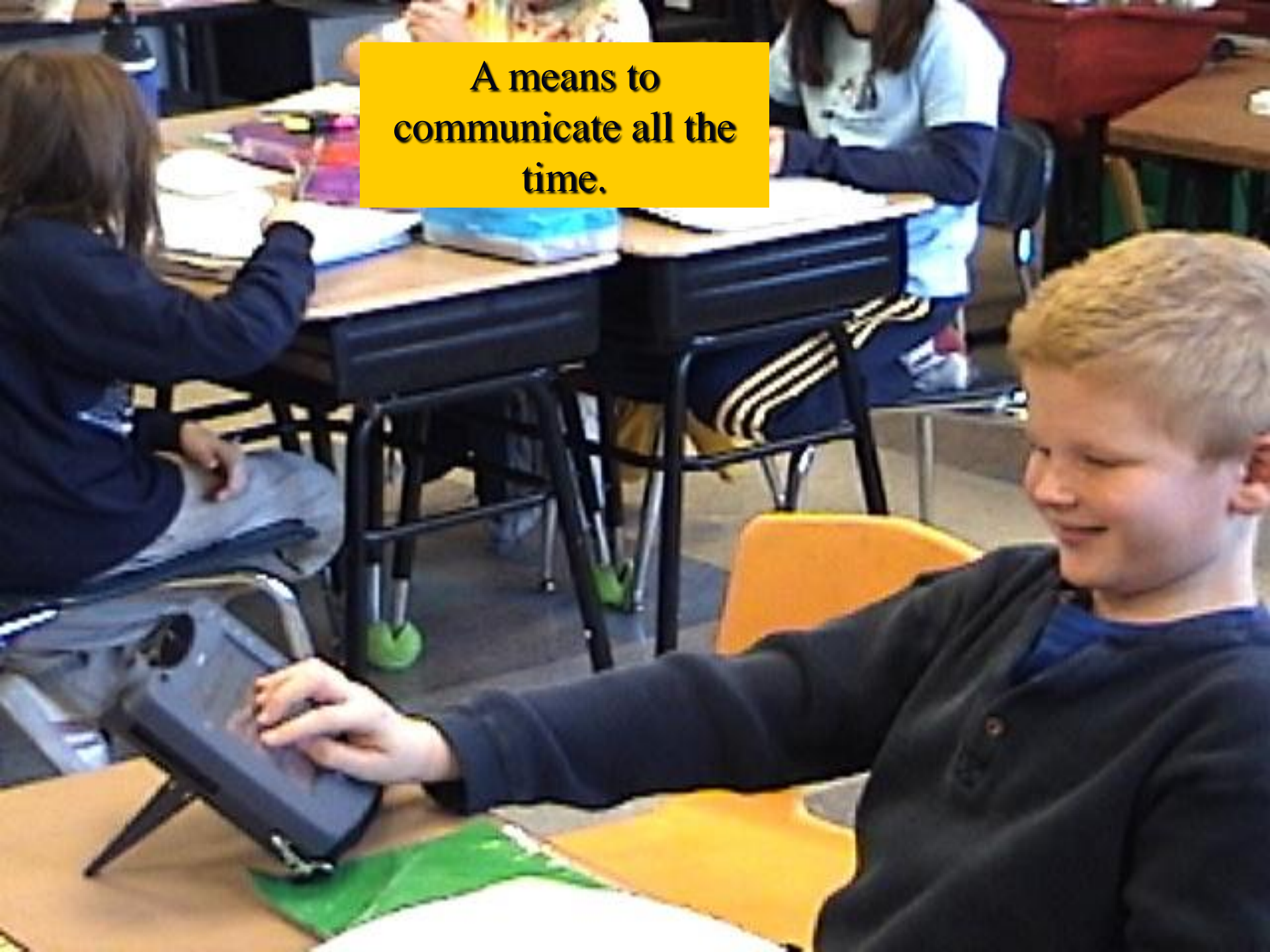


**Gen. Ed.  
Materials**





**A means to  
communicate all the  
time.**



controls

clear



I



me



my



go



like



want



play



get



you



he



she



can



try



feel



eat



finished



not



here



there



need



have



listen



read



help



bathroc



this



that



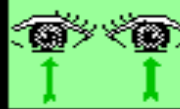
do



stop



look



work



open



hi



yes



no



bye



Main

More  
Frequent  
Words

Dictionary



Keyboard

# Embedding AAC into the Whole Class

- 5th grade classmates all had and used his main communication board

Frequently  
Occurring Words

+peers modeled use  
+teacher used during  
instruction

Sample Message Text

I, me	I, me	my	go	I like that	want	play	go	
you	he, him	she, her	can	try	feel	eat	(finished)	
who	here	there	I need help	have	listen	read	help	
what	this	that	do	stop	look	work	open	
what?	no	yes	more	less	comment	no		

# System for Augmenting Language (SAL)

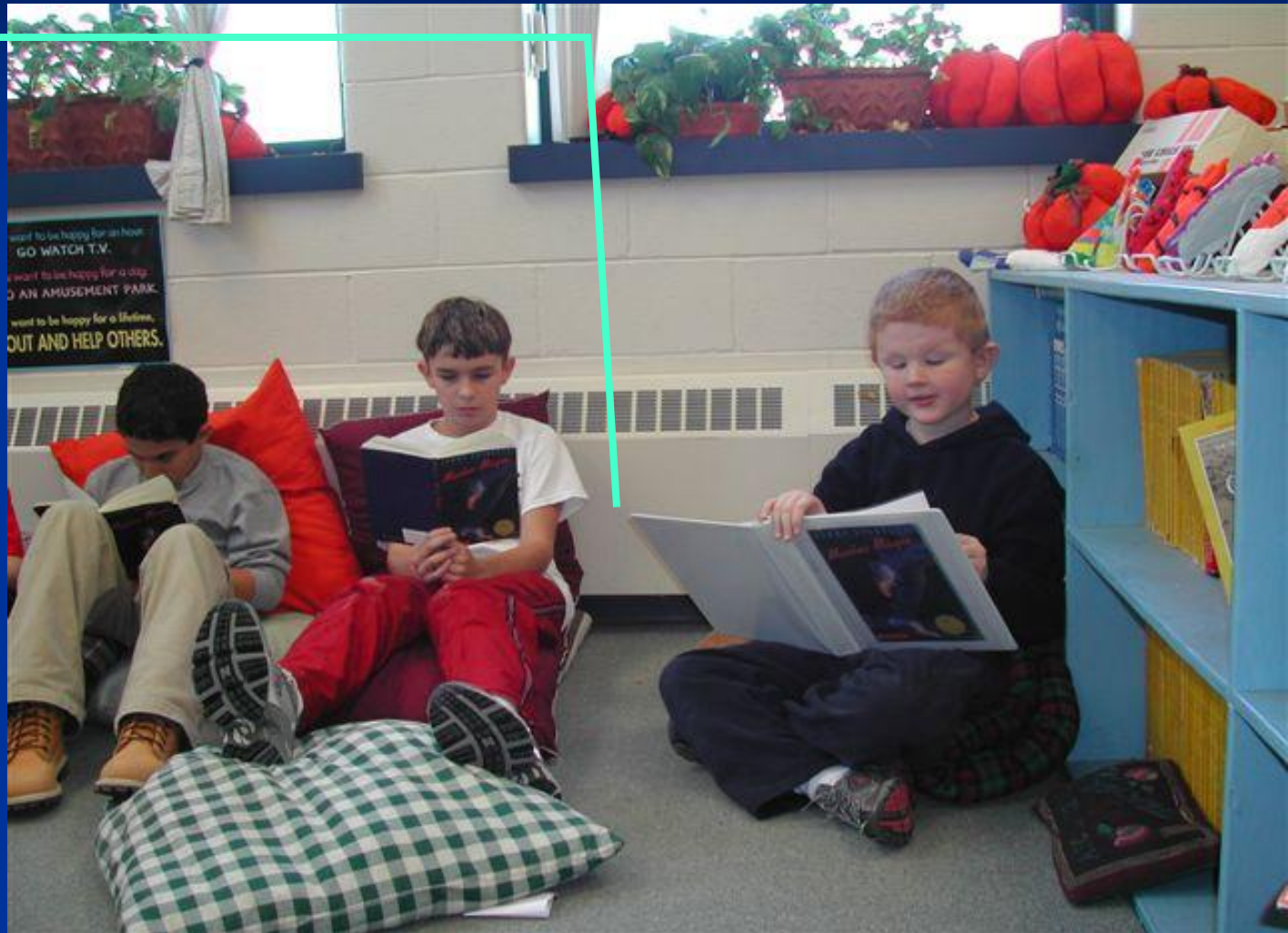
(Ronski & Sevcik, 1992, 1996)

- Immersion in a Culture of AAC
  - Classmates, Teachers have and use AAC
  - Use Voice Output Communication Aids (VOCA)
- [Symbol + Word] + VOCA
  - to augment speech input, during naturally occurring communication interactions
- Encourage (not require) use across the day
- Ongoing, in Natural Settings



# Independent Silent Reading

Jack with modified text. Began showing more emergent reading skills, including vocalizing while touching individual words.



# Classmate Paired Reading



During paired reading, literate peers read aloud and silently with modified text



# Lessons Learned

- Presume Competence
- Focus on Membership & Participation First
- Provides Supports for the Student to Learn and Communicate about the Same Academic and Social Topics as Classmates without Disabilities

# First Core Principle: Presuming Competence

*It is the “least dangerous assumption” to presume that the student is competent to learn age-appropriate general education curriculum content in the general education classroom.*

# Defining Paradigm

Thomas Kuhn (1962) defined paradigms as shared world views that are so strong and institutionalized that only a sudden and dramatic break from them can bring on a positive revolution in thinking.



# Shifting Paradigms



What is the current paradigm about students with the most significant disabilities?

What is the influence of that paradigm on those students' educational programs?

If the current paradigm is based on flawed assumptions, what is a more defensible paradigm?

# The Prevailing Paradigm

- Intelligence is something that can be reliably measured.
- “Mental retardation” is defined as low intelligence.
- Many students with significant disabilities, including the majority of those with autism, are labeled as “mentally retarded.”

# The Prevailing Paradigm

- Students who have been labeled “mentally retarded” are thought unable to learn much general education curriculum content nor benefit much from being in general education classes.
- When we aren’t sure what students with disabilities know...understand...can learn...are communicating...we often presume that they are not competent.



# Influence of the Prevailing Paradigm

- These students often lack any formal means of communication or their communication systems have no academic or age-appropriate vocabulary on them.
- Most students with a label of “mental retardation” are educated outside the general education classroom for the majority of their school day, learning “life skills.” Even those who are included may not be expected to learn the general education curriculum.

# Influence of the Prevailing Paradigm

- The vision for these students' futures may be limited...characterized by no access to postsecondary education, and by sheltered work, segregated housing, and a lack of choice and control.



# Proposition

- Believing in the paradigm of “mental retardation” leads to low expectations for students.
- Low expectations lead to creating and placing students in segregated educational programs -- programs that do not focus on literacy or content learning, and programs that have narrow visions for students’ futures.

*Changing our beliefs about disability is necessary to promote students’ learning, inclusion, achievement, and quality of life during and after school.*

*We need a new paradigm to guide how we view students with disabilities based on “the least dangerous assumption.”*

# “Least Dangerous Assumption”

(Anne Donnellan, 1984)

“The criterion of LDA 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.”

*Furthermore*, “we should assume that poor performance is due to instructional inadequacy rather than to student deficits.”

*It is the least dangerous assumption to presume that all students are competent to learn age-appropriate general education curriculum content in the general education classroom.*



# Why Presume Competence?

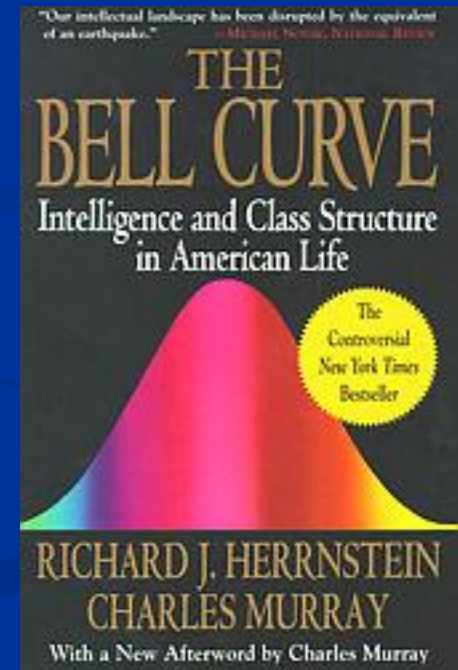
"Simply put, when teachers expect students to do well and show intellectual growth, they do; when teachers do not have such expectations, performance and growth are not so encouraged and may in fact be discouraged in a variety of ways."

James Rhem on the "Pygmalion effect."



# Why Presume Competence?

Norm-referenced assessments of students' "intelligence" and "adaptive behavior" usually measure what they **can't** do, rather than what they might be able to do with the right instruction supports.



# Why Presume Competence?

Intelligence and competence are complex phenomena. Ros Blackburn, a self-advocate with autism, describes how she cannot make a sandwich or get herself dressed, yet she is a talented public speaker with a particular aptitude for language and humor (Blackburn, 2006).



*Is Ros intelligent? Is she competent?*

# Why Presume Competence?

Thirty years of research studies show that a significant percentage of people labeled “retarded” are indeed more competent than thought when they have a means to communicate.



# Why Presume Competence?

*Only when Helen Keller had a means to communicate did she come to escape the pronouncement of being retarded.*

(Blatt, 1999 as cited in Taylor & Blatt, 1999, p. 79)





# Why Presume Competence?

To presume incompetence could result in harm to our students if we are wrong.



**LAURELTON STATE VILLAGE**  
UNION COUNTY

Feeble-minded women are the special charge of Laurelton State Village in Union County, East Central Pennsylvania.

Established by Act of the 1913 State Legislature, Laurelton Village today serves the entire Commonwealth in this important field of social welfare.

Present population of the Village is 903 patients, and 133 on parole.

The Mental Health Act of 1923 changed the policies of the institution, making it a training school and permitting parole. The training program follows academic, industrial and social lines.

Laurelton Village's splendidly equipped gymnasium went unused during the 1945-46 school term because there was no physical education instructor to conduct classes.

*Training — Moral and Social*

26

ADMINISTRATION BUILDING

HOME TRAINING

RECREATION

PERSONAL HYGIENE



# Why Presume Competence?

Even if we are wrong about students' capabilities to learn general education curriculum content, the consequences of *that* presumption being wrong are not as dangerous as the alternative.



# Relationships Among Core Principles

# Presuming Competence

I  
communicate

I learn

## Membership & Relationships

I count

I belong

I have  
friends

## Participation

Instruction

Social &  
Other

## Learning

Academics

Everything Else

# Membership

# Membership Indicators

- The student attends the school he/she would attend if he/she did not have a disability.
- The student is a member of an age-appropriate general education class.
- The student's name is on all class lists, lists of groups put on the board, job lists, etc.
- Related services are delivered primarily through consultation in the classroom.
- The student receives the same materials as students without disabilities, with supports (i.e., accommodations and adaptations) provided as necessary.

# Membership Indicators

- The student passes classes with other students, arriving and leaving at the same time.
- The student has a locker/cubby alongside students without disabilities.
- The student rides the same school bus as his/her peers without disabilities.

Adapted from: McSheehan, M., Sonnenmeier, R.M., & Jorgensen, C.M. (2008). Membership, participation, and learning in the general education classroom for students with autism spectrum disorders who use AAC. In P. Mirenda & T. Iacono (Eds.), *Autism spectrum disorders and AAC* (pp. 413-442). Baltimore: Paul A. Brookes.



# Relationships



# All Students Can Have Real Friends When We Address The Attitudinal And Systemic Barriers That Keep Students Apart.



# Barriers to Social Relationships

1. Students being “partially included”
2. Not presuming competence
3. Over-reliance on 1:1 assistants
4. Mistaking peer support for friendship
5. Creating “friendship programs”
6. Seeing disability as “deficiency”
7. Parents and educators not working together
8. Thinking that friendship isn’t the responsibility of schools
9. Fewer opportunities as students get older
10. Inaccessibility of transportation and public spaces
11. Implementing strategies before eliminating barriers

# From a Website on a “Best Buddies” Program

## November Buddy Pair of the Month: Christine and Lesley

- Christine and Lesley have been friends for three years now. They share a beautiful relationship that truly illustrates the true meaning of friendship and serves as an example to all of us about the power of the Best Buddies Program.
- When we saw the two of them at this year’s Meet and Greet, it brought tears to our eyes as the two of them gave each other a real hug and asked how each other was after a summer apart. Every time I saw Lesley in the summer, all she could talk about was her “Best Buddy” and how excited she was to see her in the fall. It is times like this that we are able to really realize the importance of true friendship and the impact it has on both the Student Buddy and the Buddy.

# Questions We Should Ask

**Do typical kids get awards for being one another's friends?**

**Do 17 year olds call each other "best buddies?"**

**Do "best buddies" see each other once a year at a "Meet and Greet?"**

**Should we feel good when students with disabilities get "real hugs?"**

# Participation





# Participation Indicators

- The student participates in classroom and school routines in typical locations, such as the Pledge of Allegiance, lunch count, jobs, errands, eating lunch in the cafeteria, etc.
- The student participates in school plays, field trips, and community service activities.
- The student participates in classroom instruction in similar routines as students without disabilities; for example:
  - whole class discussions
  - at the board
  - in small groups
  - when called on by the teacher

# Participation Indicators

- The student has a way to communicate the same academic messages that are expected of other students in the above instructional routines. For example:
  - Whole class discussions: brainstorming, calling out answers, taking notes, social side talk
  - At the board: writing answers, drawing figures
  - In small groups: commenting to classmates, sharing information, taking notes, socializing
  - When called on by the teacher: sharing information

# Participation Indicators

- The student completes assignments and other work products (with adaptations and modifications) as students without disabilities.
- A high school student engages in outside-of-school, age-appropriate, and inclusive environments (e.g., service learning) in the same proportion as classmates without disabilities.

Adapted from: McSheehan, M., Sonnenmeier, R.M., & Jorgensen, C.M. (2008). Membership, participation, and learning in the general education classroom for students with autism spectrum disorders who use AAC. In P. Mirenda & T. Iacono (Eds.), *Autism spectrum disorders and AAC* (pp. 413-442). Baltimore: Paul A. Brookes.

# A 5- Step Planning Process to Enhance Participation

- Focuses on typical instructional routines
- Starts with “what is going on in the GE classroom”
- Maximizes peer models
- Emphasizes multiple forms of participation and demonstration of learning
- Specifies what the *adults* need to do to prepare supports prior to instruction

# Instructional Routines Planning

1 All students are... (e.g., reading books)

2 Students do \_\_\_\_\_ (e.g., look at books, answer questions)

3 Alternate form of “do \_\_\_\_\_” (e.g., point to answers)

4 What (*supports*) will it take for student to do \_\_\_?  
What will elicit #3?

5 What needs to be prepared and who will do it?

# Jack: 5th Grade

## What are all students doing?



2

## DO

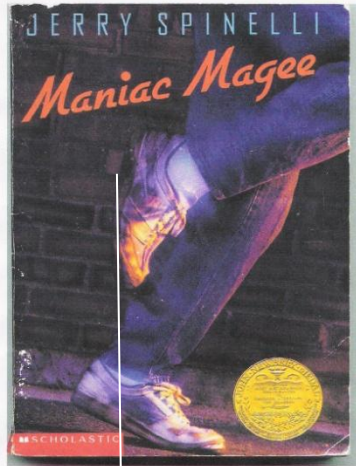
- Look at books
- Orient book
- Track (L → R; T → B)
- Turn pages
- Comment & Question
  - About the book content
  - About the reading process

## <sup>3</sup>Same / Alternate Form

- Same + adapted book
- Same? Observe.
- Same? Observe.
- Same
- Alternate form – AAC
  - Displays to comment and question



# Adapted Grade Level Novel



Jeffrey Magee lived with his Aunt  
& Dot and Uncle Dan. He was unhappy,  
so he ran away when he was eight  
years old.

Amanda asked Jeffrey where he lives.  
She knew he couldn't live near her.  
Amanda lived in an all black  
neighborhood, and Jeffrey was white.  
Jeffrey asked to see what was in  
the suitcase. It was full of books! He  
asked Amanda if he could borrow one.  
He promised to give it back.

Rewritten by team members to late 1st - early 2nd grade level, **maintaining essential content for general education quizzes/test.**

# Classmate Paired Reading



During paired reading, literate peers read aloud and silently with modified text

# Independent Silent Reading

Jack with modified text. Began showing more emergent reading skills, including vocalizing while touching individual words.



# Participation: Match 3 with 2

- Identify ways students show participation
- Identify “alternate forms”



# Instructional Routines

- Teacher Directed Large Group / Lecture
- Teacher Directed Small Group
- Seatwork/Worksheets
- Independent Projects
  - Researching information
  - Selecting information/organizing
  - Presenting information
- Cooperative Learning Groups or Activities

# Teacher Directed Large Group

- Eye contact / face / track teacher (fidgeting)
- Look at materials
- Questioning
- Responding to questions
- Raise hand
- Take notes
- Stay seated

# Teacher Directed Small Group

- Wait turn
- Sit in designated area
- Interact with materials
- Share materials
- Turn taking
- Eye contact
- Hands to self – maintain space between students
- Monitor voice level
- Sharing information
- Ask questions



# Seatwork / Worksheets

- Interact with materials
- Stay in seat
- Writing
- Reading
- Review of answers -  
Visual scanning of  
worksheet
- Turn in the work
- Ask questions

# Cooperative Learning

- Face group
- Take turns
- Listen when peers talk
- Facilitator –
  - Call on students
- Illustrator
  - Product
- Researcher
  - Look up information
- Ask questions
- Time keeper – run stop watch
- Share information
- Interact with materials
- Remain within defined space

# DO – Turn in Work

## ■ Alternate forms

- Digital formats – email work
- Flash drive
- Voice output device
- Someone assigned job to collect up and turn in work
- “I’m DONE PLEASE COME GET MY PAPER”

## ■ Supports

- Sticker on the work that indicates the step/reminder to turn in work
- “I’m DONE PLEASE COME GET MY PAPER”
- Something that denotes a “FINISHED” worksheet

# DO – Asking Questions

## ■ Alternate forms

- VOCA with preprogrammed questions
- VOCA with SNUG
- Preprogrammed without speech
- Signing
- Writing / typing – attached to text to speech or visual display

## ■ Supports

- Eye gaze / blinking
- Pointing
- Real objects
- Photos or symbols
- Switches
- Positioning
- Programmed – vocabulary
- Prompt – “Ask me a question about \_\_\_\_\_”
- Expectant waiting
- PECS
- SAL – modeling, encouraging without requiring

# DO – Staying in Seat

## ■ Alternate forms

- Standing - Using a stander
- No require to sit

## ■ Supports

- Different type of chair – bean bag, ball
- Tape on floor, visual support
- Fidget tool
- Social story
- Carpet square – color coded, letter coded
- Visual schedule/ within event schedule
- Rocker chair

# DO – Sharing Information

## ■ Alternate forms

- Hold up a sign/card with answer
- VOCA / SGD –
- Signing
- Draw a picture
- Text to speech

## ■ Supports

- Any physical, verbal prompts
- Preprogrammed vocabulary

# DO – Worksheets/ Note-taking

## ■ Alternate forms

- MP3 format – hear the worksheet directions (not having to read them)
- Write in Rebus – symbol enhanced worksheet
- Digital format
- Type in the notes/answers
- Point to answers from an array
- Interactive notebook – cloze response

## ■ Supports

- Outline
- Blanks to fill in
- Graphic organizer
- Post it flags
- Highlighters on preprinted text/ outline
- Word processor



# Another Check on Step 3

- Matching the assistive technology with the learning objective and the student support needs
  - READING
  - WRITING
  - LISTENING
  - SPEAKING

# Fill in Supports:

## Communication Mode X Instructional Routine

	Large Group - TD	Small Group - TD	Seat Work	Project
<b>Speaking</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Share info</li> <li>•Ask questions</li> <li>•Request</li> <li>•Get teacher's attention</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Commenting on topic</li> <li>•Asking Questions</li> <li>•Clarifying</li> </ul>		SGD
<b>Writing</b>	SGD – Alt keyboard		Adapted worksheets	
<b>Reading</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Receptive</li> <li>•SGD or text-to-speech</li> </ul>			
<b>Listening</b>	•Attend to teacher and materials	Visual – task strip	Visual – task strip	Multiple, between and within event schedules

# Support Plan During Instructional Routines

When:	Typically, all students...	Jack can show this by...	Supports Jack may require or that may enhance her performance:	Preparation
<p>The teacher is lecturing or giving directions</p>	<p>Pay attention shown by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Eye contact</li> <li>• Sitting</li> <li>• Nodding head</li> <li>• Comment</li> <li>• Answer questions on topic</li> </ul>	<p>Listen:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Eye contact (intermittent, not on demand)</li> <li>• Sit (with breaks)</li> <li>• Comment</li> <li>• Answer questions</li> </ul>	<p>Provide sensory movement breaks (in or out of room)</p> <p>Modified materials such as enlarged text, re-written text, Co-Writer software, modified text o</p> <p>Teacher asks specific question of Jack.</p> <p>Teacher taps on Jack's desk to emphasize upcoming topic or transition.</p> <p>Classmates use "Shhh" sign to remind Jack to listen</p> <p>Paraprofessional points to teacher or text to focus Jack's attention.</p> <p>Paraprofessional highlights key words on note-taking sheet or laptop as teacher is lecturing.</p>	<p>Get vocabulary and materials from teacher a week ahead of time.</p> <p>Enhance materials with symbols or pictures.</p> <p>Scan materials into laptop</p>

# Student Outcome Indicators

## ■ Membership:

Percentage of the day the student is:

- In general education classroom
- Indicators of “counting” (e.g., desk, lunch count)
- Indicators of “belonging” (e.g., friends, social communication)

# Student Outcome Indicators

## ■ Participation:

Percentage of time student is:

- Present & an active participant in content areas (reading, writing, math, science, social studies)
- In the same instructional routines as classmates
- Has the means and supports to communicate about the same topics commensurate with classmates
- Has the means to meet communication needs for speaking, writing, reading, and listening

# Student Outcome Indicators

## ■ Learning:

In academic content areas (reading, writing, math, science, social studies):

- Opportunities student has to hand-in learning products in comparison to classmates
  - Number of assignments given to class
  - Number of assignments given to student
  - Number of assignments student handed-in
- Student proficiency relative to grade-level expectations / general education achievement standards



# Benefits of Inclusion

- Higher expectations
- Better performance on reading and math tests
- Fewer days missed from school
- Fewer problem behavior referrals
- Value-added benefits to the general education classroom
- Students “who receive their educational program with same age peers without disabilities will have greater access to the general curriculum” (Wehmeyer, 2003).
- Opportunity to develop social relationships
- Promotes the value of diverse community for all students
- Best preparation for adult life



# Negative Effects of Separation

- Poorer quality instruction in academic skills (NCLB; Wheelock, 1992)
- Poorer quality IEPs (Hunt & Farron-Davis, 1992)
- Lack of generalization of learning to regular environments (Stokes & Baer, 1977)
- Disruption of sustained opportunities for social relationships (Strully & Strully, 1992)

# Negative Effects of Separation

- Decrease in confidence that general education class teachers have for teaching diverse learners (Giangreco et al., 1993)
- Disruption of Maslow's theory that all human beings need to belong before they can achieve (Kunc, 1992)

# Research Citations

Baker, Wang, & Wahlberg (1994/1995)

Brinker & Thorpe (1984)

Broderick & Kasa-Hendrickson (2001)

Downing, Morrison, & Berecin-Rascon (1996)

Erickson et al. (1997)

Hunt et al. (1994)

Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004

McDonnell et al. (2002)

McGregor & Vogelsberg (1998)

National Longitudinal Transition Study (2004)

Ryndak, Morrison, & Somerstein (1999)

Sonnenmeier, McSheehan, & Jorgensen (2005)

Wehmeyer, et al. (2003)

# The Beyond Access Model:

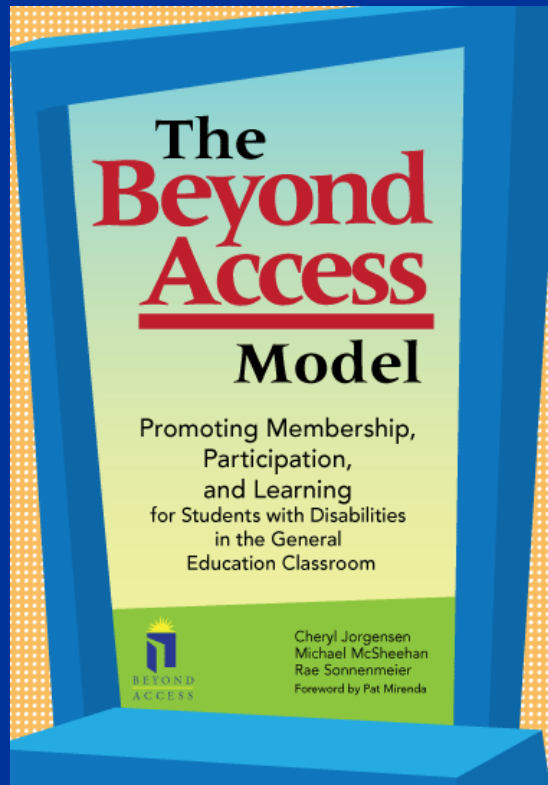
*Promoting Membership, Participation and Learning for Students with Intellectual and Other Developmental Disabilities*

Cheryl M. Jorgensen

Michael McSheehan

Rae M. Sonnenmeier

**Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co.**

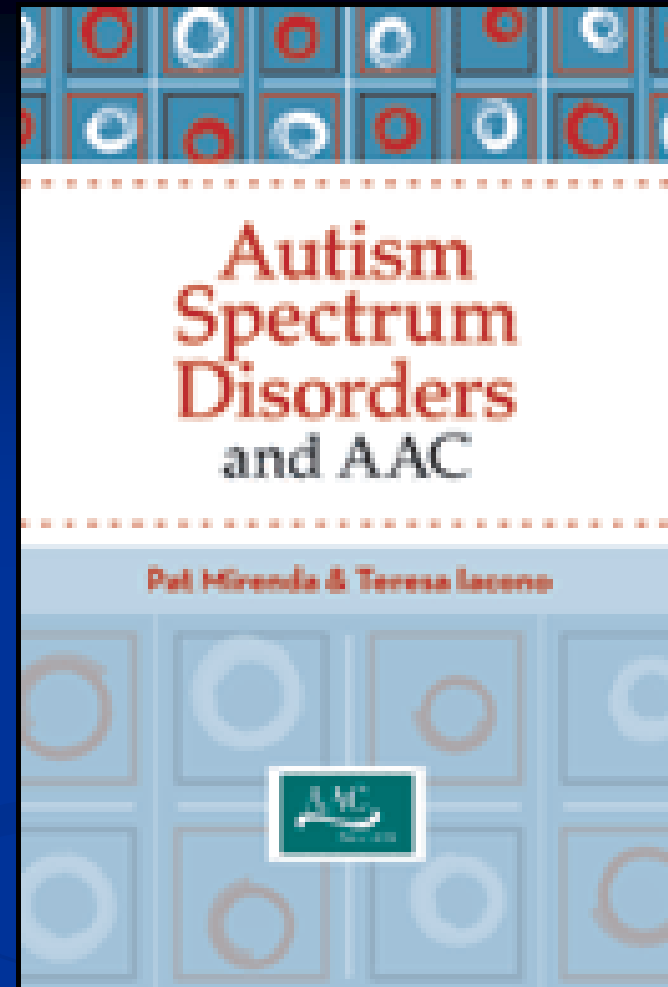


# Autism Spectrum Disorders and AAC

Edited by Pat Mirenda &  
Teresa Iacono

Paul H. Brookes Publishing  
Co.

<http://www.brookespublishing.com/store/autism.htm>



# Reflection



- What did you learn?
- What action are you going to take?
- Did you have any ah-ha's?
- What follow up support might you need?
  - Professional development
  - Technical assistance
  - Resources
  - Other

# ADJOURN!

