

Tapping Into Potential with Expectations: *Making Employment and Post-Secondary Education the New Norm for Individuals with Disabilities*

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In her keynote address from the University of Maine World Usability Day Conference on November 8, 2018, Dr. Kelly Nye-Lengerman discusses how large numbers of people with disabilities can't access the typical trajectory for economic well-being.

“What is it about our educational settings or employment settings that are not making these spaces available or accessible to people with disabilities?”

Nye-Lengerman identified six steps to address the disparities:

1. **Full inclusion:** Make education and employment the new normal. Pursue, support and vigorously defend inclusion for all people.
2. **Language of expectations:** Raise expectations and use words that convey positivity and expectation.
3. **Presuming competence:** People with disabilities can be successful in post-secondary education and employment.
4. **Power of experiences:** Human beings need experiences, the willingness to try, opportunities to take risk, and a little bit of failure to develop self-awareness. Offer the same experiences in education and employment to people with disabilities.
5. **Starting early:** Invest in the social-emotional development of young children and family support.
6. **Universal design for learning:** Make classroom spaces universal so everyone benefits from the different styles of learning students have, with different types of assignments that measure knowledge, skill and ability.

Dr. Nye-Lengerman's keynote address was sponsored by the University of Maine Center for Community Inclusion and Disability Studies. Visit us online at ccids.umaine.edu