

Microlearning Summary - Expectations Part 2: Clarifying Expectations from Others

Microlearning Summary

Expectations from others can significantly impact our wellbeing, especially when they are unclear, unspoken, or unrealistic. When expectations are misunderstood or assumed, they can lead to frustration, resentment, and compassion fatigue. This microlearning explores how to clarify expectations with colleagues, leaders, and those we support — and how to communicate in ways that strengthen relationships, reduce burnout, and promote shared understanding.

Why This Matters

- Unclear expectations are a major source of stress and conflict in schools.
- Misunderstood expectations cannot be met — even with the best intentions.
- Overextending to meet perceived expectations leads to burnout and resentment.
- Clarifying expectations strengthens trust, communication, and team culture.
- Healthy dialogue about expectations protects compassion for self and others.

Link to Microlearning Video

Expectations Part 2 [School Expectations - Part 2](#)

Expectations from Self and Others
Section 5



Tips for a Dialogue about Expectation Concerns:
Clarifying the Why, What and How

If you find you have an expectation that needs clarifying or are working with a coworker who is not fulfilling an expectation, utilize these tips to engage in a conversation for deeper understanding.

For those with:

More positional power communicating with those with less positional power: • Ask about others' ideas (positive and negative) before you give yours. Repeatedly invite concerns, questions, and ideas. • Explain the rationale for the expectation relative to how it fits with the vision. Be clear whether flexibility is possible or not. • Disclose your own fallibility, mistakes, and need for advice. Ask permission to offer advice on how to meet expectation. • Over-communicate your intentions for the type of relationship you want to build (your True NorthVision). • Summarize and repeat back what is decided.	Less positional power communicating with those with more positional power: • Avoid triangulation, always give feedback directly, if needed, get advice and help from others to prepare for a direct conversation. • Ask questions to seek the rationale for the expectation and to clarify what success in meeting the expectation will look like. • Assert personal views and need for support to meet the expectation with "I statements". • Ask permission to give positive and negative reactions. • Connect your ideas about modifying expectations to how they help with their goals and challenges.
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Micro-Reflection for after the micro-learning

- [Expectations Part 2 Reflection Questions for Staff](#)
- [Expectations Part 2 Leadership Considerations](#)



Signals to Notice

You may need to clarify expectations when you observe:

Signal	What It Might Mean
You feel unsure what someone wants from you	Expectations may be unspoken or vague.
You assume others expect you to “go above and beyond”	You may be inferring expectations rather than confirming them.
You feel resentful or taken advantage of	A boundary or expectation needs clarification.
You feel anxious about disappointing someone	Expectations may be unrealistic or misaligned.
You frequently redo work or miss the mark	The “why, what, and how” of expectations may be unclear.

What This Looks Like in Practice

A teacher believes her administrator expects her to take on extra duties because she has always said yes in the past. She feels overwhelmed and resentful but hasn’t communicated her limits. After learning about clarifying expectations, she schedules a conversation. She asks about the rationale behind the request, shares her current workload, and offers alternatives. Her administrator clarifies that the expectation was flexible and appreciates her transparency. Together, they agree on a sustainable plan. The teacher feels relieved, respected, and more confident in future conversations.

Grade-Band Strategies You Can Use Tomorrow

The following grade-band strategies offer quick, practical ways to apply this microlearning in your daily work. They are not required steps — simply additional options you can use to deepen the learning, strengthen resilience, and support students and colleagues in developmentally responsive ways. Choose the strategies that fit your role, your context, and your current needs.



K–2 Strategies

1. Clarify Expectations with Colleagues Early
Steps: Before co-teaching or sharing responsibilities, ask, “What does success look like for us today?”
Why it’s beneficial: Prevents misunderstandings and reduces stress.
2. Use Simple, Direct Communication
Steps: When unsure, ask, “Can you tell me exactly what you need and by when?”
Why it’s beneficial: Reduces assumptions and increases clarity.
3. Share Your Capacity
Steps: Say, “I can do ____ today, but I won’t be able to do ____.”
Why it’s beneficial: Sets realistic expectations and prevents overextension.
4. Reinforce Expectations with Families
Steps: Clarify communication times, homework routines, or classroom norms.
Why it’s beneficial: Builds trust and reduces repeated misunderstandings.

3–5 Strategies

1. Ask About the “Why” Behind a Request
Steps: When given a task, ask, “Can you help me understand the purpose?”
Why it’s beneficial: Aligns expectations and reduces unnecessary work.
2. Summarize What You Heard
Steps: Repeat back expectations: “So you’re asking for ____ by ____, correct?”
Why it’s beneficial: Ensures shared understanding.
3. Clarify Expectations with Students
Steps: Ask students to restate directions or expectations.
Why it’s beneficial: Reduces confusion and supports independence.
4. Communicate Limits Compassionately
Steps: Use phrases like, “I want to support you, and here’s what I can offer today.”
Why it’s beneficial: Protects wellbeing while maintaining connection.



6–8 Strategies

1. Avoid Triangulation
Steps: Address concerns directly with the person involved rather than through others.
Why it's beneficial: Builds trust and prevents miscommunication.
2. Ask Clarifying Questions
Steps: "What does success look like?" "What are the priorities?"
Why it's beneficial: Reduces ambiguity and increases confidence.
3. Share Your Perspective
Steps: Assert your views respectfully: "Here's what I'm noticing..."
Why it's beneficial: Encourages collaborative problem-solving.
4. Co-Create Agreements
Steps: Work with colleagues to define roles, timelines, and responsibilities.
Why it's beneficial: Strengthens team alignment and reduces conflict.

9–12 Strategies

1. Clarify Expectations with Leaders
Steps: Ask, "What is the rationale behind this expectation?" and "How will success be measured?"
Why it's beneficial: Reduces anxiety and prevents misalignment.
2. Ask Permission Before Sharing Ideas
Steps: "I have a thought — is now a good time to share it?"
Why it's beneficial: Builds psychological safety and mutual respect.
3. Communicate Your Needs Clearly
Steps: "To meet this expectation, I'll need ____."
Why it's beneficial: Ensures expectations are realistic and supported.
4. Overcommunicate Intentions
Steps: Share your plan, timeline, and reasoning.
Why it's beneficial: Prevents assumptions and builds trust.

*Refer back to the Compassion Resilience Schools Toolkit
(<https://eliminatestigma.org/compassion-resilience-toolkit/schools/what-is-compassion-resilience/>) to
explore more resources and information*