

**THE INVISIBLE
MINORITY**

**DO YOU
HELP THEM
OR
HURT THEM
IN YOUR SCHOOL ?**

PLAN FOR SESSION

- 1. WHY USE “INVISIBLE MINORITY”**
- 2. REVIEW NATURE OF THE PROBLEM**
- 3. EXPLORE OPTIONS FOR HELPING
INSTEAD OF HURTING**
- 4. LOOK AT MAJOR OBSTACLES TO
HAPPIER ENDINGS**

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TERMINOLOGY:
WHY “INVISIBLE”

- ❖ **EVERY SCHOOL THAT LOOKS CLOSELY FINDS MORE STUDENTS THAN THEY EVER IMAGINED STRUGGLING WITH THE EFFECTS OF LEARNING DIFFERENCES**
- ❖ **COMMON SCHOOL EXPECTATIONS AND ASSUMPTIONS CLOAK THEM IN INVISIBILITY**

WHY “INVISIBLE”

- ❖ **THEY TEND TO BECOME VISIBLE ONLY AFTER THEY BECOME AN ACADEMIC OR EMOTIONAL CASUALTY**
- ❖ **THE TROUBLE ASSOCIATED WITH THE CASUALTIES MAKES THEM VISIBLE**

WHY “INVISIBLE”

❖ MOST ENTER UNDETECTED IN EARLY GRADES BECAUSE:

- ADMISSIONS TYPICALLY DOES NOT USE SCREENING TEST TO IDENTIFY THEM**
- ADMISSIONS TYPICALLY DOES NOT REQUIRE COGNITIVE TESTING (WISC, CAS) THAT WOULD IDENTIFY RISK PATTERNS**
- K-1-2 EXPECT TO SEE DIF. DEVELOPMENTAL RATES – NO CAUSE FOR ALARM**

WHY “INVISIBLE”

❖ MOST REMAIN UNDETECTED IN EARLY GRADES BECAUSE:

- **GOOD VERBAL SKILLS ARE ASSUMED TO PREDICT GOOD READING WRITING ACQUISITION**
- **EVIDENCE OF INTELLIGENCE, CREATIVITY, QUICK LEARNING IN SOME AREAS SEEN AS PREDICTORS OF SUCCESS IN READING, MATH**
- **“SLOW START” SEEN AS NORMAL DEVELOPMENTAL VARIATION**

WHY “INVISIBLE”

❖ MANY REMAIN INVISIBLE IN LATER GRADES BECAUSE GAP BETWEEN ABILITY AND ACHIEVEMENT GOES UNNOTICED

➤ COMPETITIVE GRADING REQUIRES SOME GRADES IN MIDDLE AND LOW RANGES

➤ TIME LIMITED LEARNING CREATES BIAS FOR FASTER, AGAINST SLOWER

- prevalence of low processing speed**

➤ SELF FULFILLING LOOP

- instructional mismatch = low expectation**

WHY “MINORITY”

- ❖ **NAIS & ISACS COMMITMENT TO EQUITY FOR DISADVANTAGED MINORITIES**
- ❖ **DRIVEN BY SENSE OF THE ETHICAL AND MORAL DUTY OF INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS**
- ❖ **SPAWNED PROGRAMS TO ADDRESS ISSUES OF**
 - **RACIAL EQUITY**
 - **GENDER EQUITY**
 - **ECONOMIC DISADVANTAGE**

WHY “MINORITY”

- ❖ BEFORE INEQUITY IS IDENTIFIED & EXAMINED, SYSTEM SERVING DOMINANT MAJORITY WAS (IS) ASSUMED TO BE FINE**
- ❖ STRUGGLE TO CHANGE ATTITUDES & PERCEPTIONS OF DOMINANT MAJORITY LONG & UNCOMFORTABLE**
- ❖ CHANGE PRODUCES CONFLICT OF VALUES AND DISLOCATION OF TIGHTLY HELD CONVENTIONS**

WHY “MINORITY”

**EFFORT NEEDED TO GET SCHOOLS TO
CHANGE RESPONSE TO STUDENTS WHO
CAN'T LEARN READING, WRITING, MATH,
OR SELF MANAGEMENT IN TRADITIONAL
SYSTEM IS PARALLEL TO EFFORT
REQUIRED TO CHANGE SYSTEM TO BE
MORE HOSPITABLE FOR RECOGNIZED
MINORITIES**

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REVIEW NATURE OF PROBLEM

- 1. FOCUS ON 3 MOST COMMON AREAS OF CONCERN**
- 2. LACK OF EARLY IDENTIFICATION & INTERVENTION**
- 3. MOST INTERVENTIONS INEFFECTIVE**
- 4. PROBLEM GROWS WORSE OVER TIME**

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REVIEW PROBLEM: FOCUS ON 3 AREAS

❖ WRITTEN LANGUAGE SKILLS

- EARLY READING, WRITING, SPELLING;**
- LATER HIGH LEVEL COMPREHENSION**

❖ BASIC MATH PROFICIENCY

- NUMBER SENSE, SPATIAL PERCEPTION**
- EXPERIENTIAL VS SYMBOLIC PREFS.**

❖ SELF MANAGEMENT SKILLS (ADHD)

- DISTRACTIBILITY**
- IMPULSIVITY**
- MOTIVATIONAL ISSUES**
- TIME MANAGEMENT**
- ORGANIZATION**

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LACK EARLY OF IDENTIFICATION, EARLY INTERVENTION

❖ BY TIME THEY ARE IDENTIFIED:

- DEFICITS HAVE GROWN LARGE**
- REMEDIATION IS MUCH HARDER**
- DAMAGED SELF IMAGE BECOMES A BARRIER**

**REMEDICATION DELAYED
IS REMEDIATION DENIED**

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MOST COMMONLY USED INTERVENTIONS ARE INEFFECTIVE

❖ AREN'T DESIGNED TO “FIX” PROBLEM

- not evidence based**
- accommodate instead of remediate**

❖ FOCUSED ON PROCEDURES, NOT ON PEDAGOGY

MOST COMMONLY USED INTERVENTIONS ARE INEFFECTIVE

❖ INTERVENTION SPECIALISTS LACK TRAINING IN METHODS PROVEN TO REMEDiate

- often from procedure-focused public sector**

❖ INTERVENTIONS OCCUR TOO LATE

- not in early grades**
- NICHD intervention studies**
- 30 min. per day w/4 vs. 120 min. per day w/1**

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PROBLEM GROWS WORSE OVER TIME

❖ DEVELOPMENT STALLS

- **vocab growth of 4th – 8th grade readers**

❖ EXPECTATIONS GO UP, SKILLS DON'T

❖ STUDENT'S FRUSTRATION GROWS

- **adopts defensive behaviors**
- **blames others**
- **avoids work**
- **reacts with anger**
- **stops trying**

PROBLEM GROWS WORSE OVER TIME

- ❖ **PARENT WORRY, FRUSTRATION, IMPATIENCE W/STUDENT & STAFF GROWS**
- ❖ **ANGER OF STUDENT (OR PARENT) MAKES BEHAVIOR, NOT TEACHING, THE PROBLEM**
- ❖ **SCHOOL ATTRIBUTES PROB. TO CHARACTER FAULTS IN STUDENT OR PARENT**
 - **lazy, unmotivated, doesn't care, undisciplined**
 - **LACK OF PARENTING SKILL** often cited as cause

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OPTIONS FOR ADMIN, BRD, FAC TO HELP INSTEAD OF HURT

❖ ADMIN, BRD, FAC CLARIFY MISSION AND POLICY ON THIS ISSUE

- does mission include students with learning differences?**

❖ SAME KEY QUESTIONS AS WITH VISIBLE MINORITIES

- do they belong?**
- are we committed to serving them?**
- what are their needs?**
- what needs will we serve?**
- what needs won't we serve?**

OPTIONS FOR ADMIN, BRD, FAC TO HELP INSTEAD OF HURT

- ❖ **ALIGN WITH ISACS ACCREDITATION STANDARDS ON STATEMENTS OF MISSION AND PHILOSOPHY**

- ❖ **DISCLOSURE:**
 - **state clearly who you will serve and how**

- ❖ **CONGRUENCE:**
 - **insure program services are congruent with guiding statements**

OPTIONS FOR ADMISSIONS TO HELP INSTEAD OF HURT

❖ ADMISSIONS

- screen for possible language learning problems at entry (CTOPP, DAR, PAR)**

❖ OBSERVE FOR DISTRACTIBILITY, IMPULSIVITY, DISORGANIZATION

- flag concerns**

❖ REQUIRE COGNITIVE ASSESSMENT FOR ENTRY

- WPPSI, WISC, CAS,**

OPTIONS FOR DEPARTMENTS/DIVISIONS TO HELP INSTEAD OF HURT

- ❖ **CAN OFFER INSTRUCTION PROVEN TO
REMEDiate DEFICITS**
 - **language skills**
 - **math skills**
 - **self management skills**

OPTIONS FOR DEPARTMENTS/DIVISIONS TO HELP INSTEAD OF HURT

- ❖ **CAN IMPLEMENT EDUCATIVE RATHER THAN PUNITIVE DISCIPLINE SYSTEM FOR ADHD**

- ❖ **T-W-A-B WON'T WORK FOR ADHD**
 - **can't punish impulsive distractible ADHD kid into having different neurology**

 - **can punish him into rebellion or depression**

 - **can educate him to control it better**

OPTIONS FOR CLASSROOM TEACHER TO HELP INSTEAD OF HURT

❖ DIFFERENTIATE TO LIMIT ONGOING DAMAGE

- time**
- amount**
- structure**
- grading**

OPTIONS FOR CLASSROOM TEACHER TO HELP INSTEAD OF HURT

- ❖ **CHOOSE ROLE : JUDGE? OR COACH?**
- ❖ **WILL YOU SEE STUDENT AS:**
 - **a problem**
 - **too much work**
 - **a disruptive influence**
 - **too slow**
 - **an impediment to class progress**
- ❖ **WILL YOU TEACH IN ONE SIZE OR ONE SPEED FITS ALL?**
- ❖ **CAN YOU RESPECT AND VALUE INDIV. AS STUDENT DESPITE DIFFERENCES?**

OPTIONS FOR COUNSELING/ADVISING TO HELP INSTEAD OF HURT

- ❖ **SET UP SYSTEM TO PROACTIVELY IDENTIFY STRUGGLING STUDENTS**
- ❖ **EXPLORE LEARNING DIFFERENCE FIRST**
 - **attribute characterological or parenting explanations as last, not first, resort**
- ❖ **PROVIDE SELF MANAGEMENT COACHING AND TRAINING**

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**MAJOR CHALLENGES:
GOOD INTENTIONS AREN'T ENOUGH**

- ❖ **WILL TAKE VERY HARD WORK TO**
 - **DEVELOP NEW ATTITUDES**
 - **LEARN NEW SKILLS**

- ❖ **WILL TAKE SERIOUS COMMITMENT OF INSTITUTIONAL RESOURCES**
 - **TIME**
 - **\$**
 - **PERSONNEL**

MAJOR CHALLENGES: PHILOSOPHICAL CONFLICTS

- ❖ **PHILOSOPHICAL BELIEFS ABOUT SCHOOL STRUCTURE AND PURPOSE**
 - **TIME AS THE CONSTANT; LEARNING AS THE VARIABLE**
 - **SHEEP & GOATS SORTING FUNCTION**
 - **SMART ONES & NOT SMART ONES JUDGED ON 20TH CENTURY MEMORY SKILLS**
 - **SLOWER = NOT SO SMART**
 - **COMPETITIVE GRADING SYSTEM; GRADES AS A PROXY FOR LEARNING**

MAJOR CHALLENGES: CONSTITUENT CONCERNS

❖ PARENTS, TEACHERS, BOARD MEMBER, ALUMS:

- TEACHING DIFFERENTLY FOR KIDS WHO
LEARN DIFFERENTLY = REDUCTION IN
RIGOR, ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE**
- WE WILL BE SEEN AS LESS COMPETITIVE
FOR THE “REALLY SMART” KIDS?**
- WILL LOSE RESPECT AND SUPPORT?**

MAJOR CHALLENGES

CONSTITUENT CONCERNS

- ❖ **FACULTY RESISTANCE TO USING MORE EFFECTIVE BUT MORE TIME CONSUMING AND LABOR INTENSIVE TEACHING METHODS**
- ❖ **RESTRICTS “COVERAGE”**
- ❖ **TEST PREP WORRIES**

CONCLUSION

- ❖ **CAN BE DONE**
- ❖ **SHOULD BE DONE**
- ❖ **WILL BE NO EASIER THAN PREVIOUS MOVEMENTS TO CHANGE PERCEPTION AND SERVICE TO OTHER MINORITIES WHOSE MISTREATMENT WAS ONCE ACCEPTABLE AND INVISIBLE**