Inclusive Assessment in the USA: Diagnosis, Instruction, & Accountability
Overview

- Diagnosis of mild LD
- Instructional decision-making
- Accountability
Some Lessons Learned about Assessing Specific LD in the US

• SLD varies as function of general instruction
• Assessment irrelevant to treatment
• “Wait to fail” diagnostic model
  – Discrepancy between IQ/achievement age-related
  – Diagnosis after critical period has passed
“Your feelings of insecurity seem to have started when Mary Lou Gurnblatt said, ‘Maybe I don’t have a learning disability—maybe you have a teaching disability.’”
Changes in Diagnosis

• Response to Intervention (RtI)
  – Assessment of current performance levels
  – Delivery of “scientific, research-based” intervention
  – Progress monitoring
  – Decision based on (lack of) progress

• Must allow RtI, may allow traditional approach
Problems with RtI

- Identifying “scientific, research-based” interventions.
- Building/sustaining capacity
  - Progress monitoring strong
  - Intervention integrity/delivery weak
  - Capacity unequally distributed across schools
- Logic
  - Response to aspirin ≠ aspirin insufficiency
Assessment for Instruction

Benchmarking, Progress Monitoring, and Treatment Integrity
Lessons Learned about Instructional Assessment

• Instructional decisions not linked to objective data

• Regular data useful for
  – Screening
  – Grouping
  – Changing

• Benchmark vs. Progress Monitoring

• However, assessment must be reliable & valid
Additional Concept: Instructional/Intervention Integrity

• Defined as
  – Specification ("Manualization")
  – Adherence to plan
  – Competence
  – Differentiation

• Overall: Doing intervention/instruction as intended.

• Why does it matter?
Accountability Assessment

Accessibility and Principles for Inclusive Outcomes Evaluation
Accessible Assessment

- **Target vs. Access Skills**
  - Target Skills: Those skills the assessment intends to measure.
  - Access Skills: Those skills needed to gain access to assessment content.

- **Performance influenced by differences in target skills = valid assessment**

- **Performance influenced by differences in access skills = invalid assessment**
This is a test of your reading comprehension. A __________ is somebody with expertise already shared by members of the organization, but who lives at least 100 miles away and owns a brief case.

a) Ostrich
b) Consultant
c) Nucleus
d) Teacher
Example

This is a test of your reading comprehension. A __________ is somebody with expertise already shared by members of the organization, but who lives at least 100 miles away and owns a brief case.

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Target vs. Access Skills?

• Identify Target vs. Access Skills
• Which accommodations are valid or invalid?
  – Enlarging text
  – Reading passage aloud
  – Reading individual words aloud
  – Providing text reader or Braille
  – Changing language of passage
Lessons Learned: Accountability Assessment

• No Child Left Behind (2002) mandated assessment of children to evaluate schools
• Annual testing in grades 3-8 and once in secondary school in Reading and Maths
• Initial efforts resulted in high rates of exclusion for students with disabilities
  – Make school look better
  – “Protect” students with disabilities from harm
Key Points

• That which is measured is valued
• Those who are counted, count
• It is better to fail a test than to be denied the opportunity to achieve
• High expectations necessary but not sufficient
• Consequences matter
  – Intended: Students supported to meet standards
  – Unintended: system corruption
Putting it All Together

Diagnostic, Instructional, and Accountability Assessment
Behavioral Systems

Intensive, Individual Interventions
• Individual Students
• Assessment-based
• High Intensity
• Of longer duration

High Intensity
• Targeted Group Interventions
• Some students (at-risk)
• High efficiency
• Rapid response

Universal Interventions
• All settings, all students
• Preventive, proactive

Academic Systems

Intensive, Individual Interventions
• Individual Students
• Assessment-based

High Intensity
• Targeted Group Interventions
• Some students (at-risk)
• High efficiency
• Rapid response

Universal Interventions
• All students
• Preventive, proactive

Seeing into the Future...
Some Questions for This Group

• Do we really believe all children can learn... The same thing? At the same rate?
• How do we reconcile high/common expectations w/ student needs?
• How do we identify access and target skills?
• How do we integrate assessment systems?
• How do we maximize intended consequences and avoid unintended consequences?
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