MILD INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES (MID)

Given that all process of ‘Diagnosis’ and ‘Identification’ are socially, politically and administratively determined processes, driven by circumstance, subject to change, and ‘made up’ by various groups and societal bodies:

OVERVIEW AND DEFINITION of MID

- The term Mild Intellectual Disability (MID) is a category of ‘exceptionality’ or ‘identification’ from the Ontario Ministry of Education (2001). It is a learning disorder characterized by:
  
  (a) an ability to profit educationally within a regular class with the aid of considerable curriculum modification and supportive services (e.g. General Learning Program, Special Education Learning Centre, Sir Guy Carleton High School, Ottawa, Ontario)
  
  (b) an inability to profit educationally within a regular class because of slow intellectual development
  
  (c) a potential for academic learning, independent social adjustment and economic self-support

The Ministry of Education leaves it up to each school board to develop their own guidelines for identification. Identification is a legal process of determination of learning needs and deficits of students by which students are entitled to accommodation at the elementary and secondary levels. MID is not a recognized ‘diagnosis’ in many jurisdictions but is an identification and exceptionality in Ontario.

- Students within the Mild Intellectual Disability (MID) category may have Intelligence Test results (IQ’s) between 71 and 79 (2nd to 9th percentile). This category of exceptionality is included on the Identification, Placement and Review Committee (IPRC) document, and is developed during elementary and secondary school.
- Additionally, the term Mild Intellectual Disability may also be described as Borderline Intellectual Functioning (DSM-IV) or Slow Learner.
- Under 70 Full-scale IQ (+-5) an individual identified as MID might more appropriately be diagnosed as experiencing mild mental retardation provided there are also deficits in at least two areas of adaptive functioning and the onset is prior to age 18 (DSM-IV).
- At 85 Full-scale IQ or above there is a possibility of a diagnosis of LD learning disability by LDAO (Learning Disabilities Association of Ontario) standards.
- The DSM-IV diagnostic code for Borderline Intellectual Functioning is V62.89 and the IQ range is from 71 to 84 (2nd – 17th percentile). It is coded on Axis II.
• Students with Mild Intellectual Disabilities are above the Developmental Disability classification (Mild Mental Retardation), and below the Low Average range of intelligence.
• Students with MID usually have greater adaptive functioning skills. However, they tend to be concrete thinkers, have difficulty generalizing previously learned information, and may display poor judgment, poor concentration, and poor planning skills.
• Many students with MID present well, may have good verbal/conversational skills, and consequently, others may expect more from them than they are able to produce in the average academic situation without extensive supports.
• Typical areas of difficulty include literacy, numeracy, organization and memory functioning.

Findings of the College Committee on Disability Issues (CCDI) Focus Group on MID, November 2, 2006:

• Continued work towards developing guidelines for providing appropriate accommodations and services for students identified with Mild Intellectual Disabilities or diagnosed as Borderline Intellectual Functioning.
• Agreed that students with Mild Intellectual Disabilities or Borderline Intellectual Functioning (who are otherwise qualified for their programs) are entitled to academic accommodations.
• It may be necessary to update previous assessments when they are: out of date, inconclusive, and/or do not appear to represent the student’s functioning. Some students identified through the Identification, Placement and Review Committee (IPRC) process as MID may in fact be LD or Mild Mentally Retardation, while others identified as LD may in fact be MID.

• **Accommodations which appear to be helpful** with this group are the following:
  (a) Extra time for tests/exams
  (b) Reduced course load
  (c) Tutoring
  (d) Counselling to assist with appropriate program selection
  (e) Assistive technology (i.e. text to voice, voice to text, other reading or writing supports or organizational supports) for some students.

The CCDI focus group identified factors that may play a role in ensuring success for students with Mild Intellectual Disabilities. These include the following:

Adaptability factors:
• Social skills
• Self-awareness
• Flexibility
• Independence
• Motivation
• Attitude
• Attendance
• Previous Experience

Academic factors:
• Program choice
• Pattern of success/failure (characteristics of courses)
• GPA-course grades
• Timelines for completion
• Percentage of course load
• Number of years in program

Services and Accommodations:
• Testing accommodations
• Lab Access
• Tutoring (peer/specialized)
• Note-taking
• LS/AT training
• Counselling
• Reduced course load

The following Instructional strategies are recommended:
• Clarification of questions on assignments
• Give clear, specific written directions
• Use visuals, demonstrations, and practical examples to reinforce theoretical concepts.
• Introduce a variety of study strategies that will reinforce important concepts.
• Introduce key concepts and vocabulary at the beginning of new units of study.
• Provide structures such as outlines and advance organizers to lectures.
• Provide reading lists ahead of time.
• Allow time to review and clarify concepts presented in class as well as to answer questions prior to the student starting an assignment or task.

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