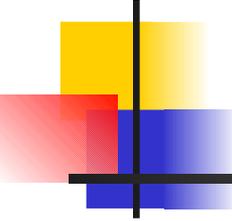


Putting Diversity Research to Work by Overcoming Practical and Political Challenges

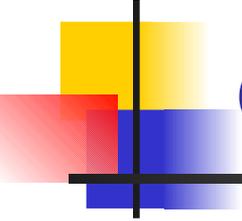
Roslyn Arlin Mickelson, Ph.D.
UNC Charlotte

This research is supported by grants to the author from the American Sociological Association, the National Science Foundation, and the Poverty and Race Research Action Council.



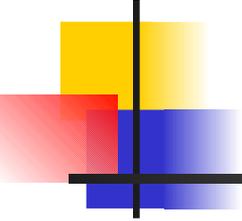
Desegregation

- In the Seattle and Louisville cases...
- US Supreme Court affirmed the importance of diversity in schools.
- But it made creating diverse schools much more difficult.



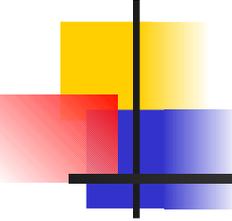
What are possible race conscious strategies now?

- **SES balance**
- **Language balance***
- **Test scores balance**
 - **Wake County, NC**
- **Targeting teacher resources**
- **Theme magnets**
- **Strategic siting of new schools**



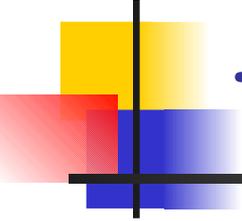
Detracking is a Diversity Tool

- **Detracking is the process of moving a school toward mixed ability classes**



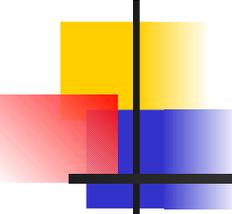
Detracking

- **Requires holistic approach**
 - **Institutional--plan carefully**
 - **Instructional--equip educators**
 - **Normative--change beliefs**



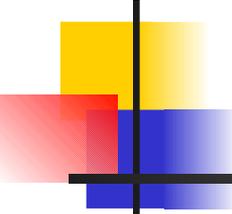
Challenge Teacher, Parent, and Administrator Beliefs about Tracking

- When do we begin to group students?
- How do we rationalize sorting students?
- How does sorting affect later opportunities?
- On what assessments do we base placement decisions?
- How accurate/valid are assessments
- Do we assess effectiveness of placements?



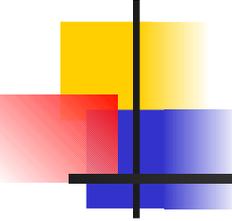
Challenge Teacher, Parent, and Administrator Beliefs about Intelligence

- **What is human intelligence?**
- **Is it one dimensional, multidimensional?**
- **Is intelligence fixed at birth?**
- **Is aptitude or hard work more important for successful learning?**
- **Is it possible to make lessons more accessible to all students?**
- **In what track do you want YOUR children?**



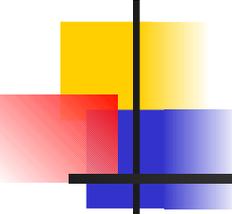
Classroom Practices

- Many educators want to but don't know how to teach in heterogeneous settings. Provide training for...
 - Complex instruction
 - Multidimensional classrooms
 - Intellectual role playing



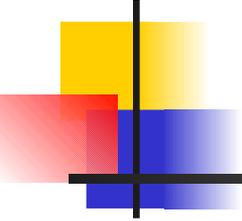
Institutional Arrangements

- **Detracking often meets resistance**
 - **Approach #1: Winning them over**
 - **Approach #2: Taking on critics**



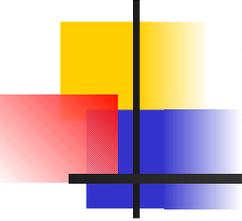
Winning them over

- **Stable and committed district leaders**
- **Collect and disseminate data**
 - **Teachers, parents, community**
- **First: eliminate the lowest track**
- **Support, train, and encourage staff**
- **Support for struggling learners**
- **Earnest response to parents**



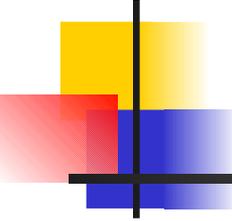
Taking On Critics

- Approach similar to “winning them over”
- Cultivation of Political Support
 - Build a political base for detracking among parents of low-track students
- Challenge Beliefs
 - Gifted, average, remedial are acquired, socially constructed labels



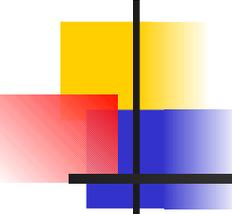
Acknowledge the 1000 lb. Elephants

- Elites like tracking because their children benefit from their privileged status in the tracked system
- Detracking opponents' fears of
 - Diluted quality of instruction
 - Undisciplined students
 - Cultural contamination
 - More competitors for top university seats



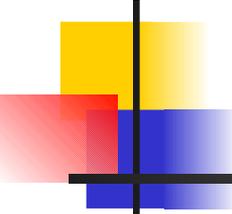
Navigating the Politics of Detracking

- **School board strategies**
- **Central office strategies**
- **Building level strategies**
- **Secondary school strategies**



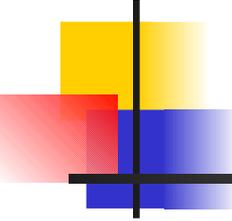
School Board Strategies

- **Commit to principles underlying detracking**
- **Develop comprehensive reform plan**
- **Engage the community so all have effective voice**
- **Public engagement about equity and excellence**
- **Have reasonable and rigorous detracking standards**



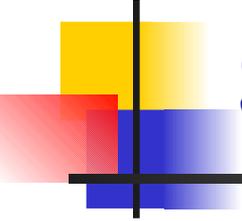
Central Office Strategies

- **Emphasize basis of detracking:**
 - All children can learn,
 - All are entitled to high quality education
- **Ensure every school has necessary support**
- **Incentives for teachers working with heterogeneous groups**
- **Work with local media**
- **Augment public relations office with office of community & parent relations**



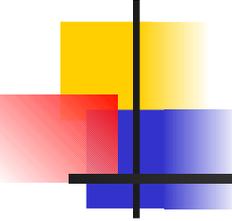
School-level strategies

- Provide teaching staff with knowledge and skills for heterogeneous classes
- Faculty study groups
- Parent advisory groups
- Disseminate information about detracking



Strategies for Secondary Schools

- **Create smaller, personalized learning environments**
- **Phase out all lower level classes**
- **Provide academic support for students ill prepared for rigorous classes**
- **Provide college counseling**



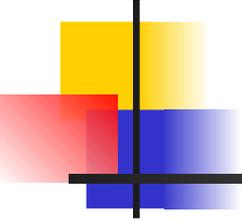
Practical Resources for Educators

- **Theory Into Practice**

2006 Special Issue devoted to

***Detracking and Heterogeneous
Grouping***

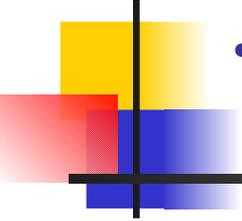
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By Kevin Welner & Jeannie Oakes

- Booklet available free
- [http://www.idea.gseis.ucla.edu/
publications/detracking/index.html](http://www.idea.gseis.ucla.edu/publications/detracking/index.html)



Thank you!
