

Disproportionate Labeling of Learning Disabilities: Race and Socioeconomic Status

Dara Shifrer, Department of Sociology
Chandra Muller, Department of Sociology
Rebecca Callahan, Department of Curriculum and Instruction
The University of Texas at Austin

Abstract (148 words). Labeling theorists argue that racial minorities are disproportionately labeled with learning disabilities because of direct racial discrimination. In contrast, structuralists counter that racial minorities have higher rates of being labeled because they are more likely to have low SES, and having low SES is associated with a multitude of learning difficulties. The distinction matters because the target for policy reform has been left unclear: 1) strip referral and diagnostic processes of racism, or 2) explore why students who have low SES are more likely to experience or be labeled with LD regardless of race. This study is among the first to use student and school level measures from a national dataset, The Education Longitudinal Study of 2002, to explore how differences in SES and academic ability are implicated in racial disproportionality, and whether minorities' odds of being labeled vary depending on the racial composition of their high school.

September 2011 extended abstract submission to present at the 2012 annual meeting of the Population Association of America. Direct all correspondence to Dara Shifrer, Population Research Center, The University of Texas at Austin, 1 University Station, G1800, Austin TX 78712 or email: dshifrer@prc.utexas.edu.

This research was supported by grants from the National Science Foundation (HRD-0834177, Chandra Muller, PI, and HRD- 0965444, Rebecca Callahan, PI). This research was supported by grant, 5 R24 HD042849, Population Research Center, awarded to the Population Research Center at The University of Texas at Austin by the Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Health and Child Development. This research has received support from the grant, 5 T32 HD007081, Training Program in Population Studies, awarded to the Population Research Center at The University of Texas at Austin by the Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Health and Child Development. Opinions reflect those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of the granting agencies.

In contrast to all other racial groups combined, American Indian/Alaska Native students were 1.8 times as likely, black students were 1.4 times as likely, and Hispanic students were 1.1 times as likely to receive special education services for a learning disability (LD) in 2003 (Office of Special Education Programs 2007). Statistics like these raise concerns that students are labeled with a learning disability and placed into special education through inequitable or inaccurate processes, or that the label of LD is a subjective classification rather than a medical diagnosis. The evidence used in support of a diagnosis of LD is less objective, for instance, than the evidence for 'hard' disabilities (e.g., blindness, deafness). The disproportionate labeling of racial minorities with LD furthermore troubles researchers because of the widespread assumption that placement in special education is not entirely a positive or beneficial occurrence, but rather associated with stigma, segregation, and limited educational opportunities (ERIC/OSEP 2000; Lester and Kelman 1997; Ong-Dean 2006). There are misperceptions that a learning disability diagnosis is equivalent to a low IQ, but learning disability diagnoses are meant to describe students who have trouble learning and achieving, relative to their intelligence level (Daniels 1998; Fletcher, Denton and Francis 2005; Levine and Nourse 1998). If the negatives of the label do outweigh the positives (MacMillan and Reschly 1998), the students who are being negatively impacted by the label may be students who had learning potential.

Although other medical conditions disproportionately experienced by racial minorities, such as certain mental illnesses, cardiovascular disease, arthritis, and diabetes, are described as medical conditions with social roots (Aneshensel 2005; Blackwell, Hayward and Crimmins 2001; Brown 2003; Galobardes, Smith and Lynch 2006; House 2001; Karlamangla et al. 2005; Thoits 2005), there has been a reluctance to classify LD similarly. While structuralists do argue that racial minorities have higher rates of being labeled with LD because they are more likely to have low SES (and having low SES is associated with a multitude of learning difficulties), labeling theorists maintain that disproportionate labeling is due to direct racial discrimination. The debate becomes contentious when labeling theorists' dismiss structuralists as functionalists (Blanchett 2006; O'Connor and Fernandez 2006; Patton 1998; Reid and Knight 2006). It is important to point out that structuralists' perspective of racial disproportionality arises from a conflict perspective as well, with the inequity being that racial minorities are disproportionately of a low social status. Furthermore, from an analytical viewpoint, the mechanisms whereby racial minorities are disproportionately labeled with LD cannot be well understood without consideration of all individual characteristics that might be correlated with both race and the label (such as poverty and low achievement) (Lee 2009; Takeuchi and Williams 2003; Tilly 1998). This study uses student and school level measures from a nationally representative dataset, The Education Longitudinal

Study of 2002 (ELS), to explore whether 1) differences in students' SES are implicated in the disproportionate labeling of racial minorities with LD in high schools, 2) the racial composition of the high school is associated with the likelihood that a racial minority will be labeled with LD, and 3) differences in academic ability are implicated in the disproportionate labeling of racial minorities with LD.

Theoretical Focus

Labeling theorists emphasize how labels are assigned in the interests of the powerful and often have a stigmatizing effect on peoples' lives. Although labeling theory has been used to understand the social and social psychological experiences of groups as diverse as the mentally ill, the homosexual, and the colonized (Hooker 1961; Memmi 1965; Scheff 1966), labeling theory was popularized with the sociologist Howard Becker's (1997 [1963]) study of deviance and 'outsiders.' Building on the idea that labels are socially constructed and arise from society's need to control behavior (Durkheim 1997 [1897]), Becker described deviance as a matter of perception controlled by the socially powerful. Disability researchers describe the labeling of students whose style of learning deviates from the norm as a product of Western capitalistic prioritization of speed, literacy, and numeracy (Baron, Riddell and Wilson 1999; Chappell 1992; Dudley-Marling 2004; Jenkins 1998). In addition to criticizing the process of labeling students with LD as subjective and unstandardized, some researchers demonstrated that the differences between low-achievers and students labeled with learning disability are not always clear (Fletcher, Denton and Francis 2005; Shinn 2007). Labeling theorists describe visibly distinctive people as being at greater risk of receiving a stigmatizing label (Becker 1997 [1963]; Goffman 1963). Similarly, disability researchers describe the label of LD as discriminatory and oppressive because it is disproportionately assigned to racial minorities (Blanchett 2006; Ho 2004).

Labeling theorists attribute the disproportionate labeling of racial minorities with LD to direct racism tied to skin color, or a lack of cultural sensitivity within educational processes. They focus on racial biases in the assessments and methodology used to diagnose learning disabilities (Edwards 2006; McLeskey, Waldron and Wornhoff 1990; Salend, Garrick Duhaney and Montgomery 2002), or argue that racial minorities are over-labeled with learning disabilities because their behaviors don't align with school norms (Anyon 2009; Patton 1998; Skiba et al. 2003). From the perspective of labeling theorists, racial minorities will have a higher odds of being labeled with LD than white students, regardless of differences in SES, because disproportionality results from bias against certain skin colors (Hyp. 1₁). In contrast to this perspective, structuralists attribute disproportionate labeling of racial minorities to the greater likelihood of minorities to have low SES (Daniels 1998; ERIC/OSEP 2000; Gelb and Mizokawa

1986; Hosp and Reschly 2004; Lester and Kelman 1997; MacMillan and Reschly 1998; Skiba et al. 2008). There is a long history of research on the general ties between having low SES and experiencing a variety of academic difficulties, whether diagnosed as a condition or not (Cheadle 2008; DeLuca and Rosenbaum 2001; DSM-IV 2000; Massey et al. 2003; Shonkoff and Phillips 2000; Skiba et al. 2006). Structuralists posit that there will be no independent effect of race after accounting for differences in SES across racial groups (Hyp. 1₀).

The disproportionate identification of racial minority students with LD cannot be understood outside of the social context in which it is occurring. Racial minorities continue to experience residential and school segregation, and a hallmark of segregated schools is poorer academic performance (Orfield 2002; Riegle-Crumb and Grodsky 2010). The school label of LD is predicated on lower levels of achievement, and some structuralists posit that racial minorities are disproportionately labeled with LD in part because of schools' inability to provide equitable opportunities to learn (Blanchett, Mumford and Beachum 2005; O'Connor and Fernandez 2006; Skiba, Knesting and Bush 2002; Skiba et al. 2003; Sullivan et al. 2009). Structuralists would expect that racial minorities who attend high-minority high schools are more likely to have lower achievement than other racial minorities, and so will have higher odds of being labeled with LD than racial minorities who attend low-minority high schools (Hyp. 2₀).

Early sociologists of education using a conflict perspective perceived public education systems as systems of social reproduction (Bourdieu and Passeron 1977; Bowles and Gintis 1976), in which the social structure of classes is perpetuated across generations. While the perpetuation of racial minorities' lower social status was accomplished through the explicit segregation of black students throughout the longer part of the 20th century (Massey and Denton 1993), this is argued to still occur through institutionalized segregation and within-school tracking of students of color (Mickelson 2001; Oakes 1985; Orfield and Eaton 1996). Labeling theorists perceive placement in special education, which can lead to placement into separate classrooms within the school, as a means of re-segregating minority students (Blanchett, Mumford and Beachum 2005; Ferri and Connor 2005; Reid and Knight 2006). This argument would be most applicable to racial minority students who are attending a school in which they are distinctive: a low-minority high school. Thus labeling theorists, perceiving the disproportionate labeling of racial minorities as resulting because of their distinctive skin color, would argue that racial minorities who attend low-minority high schools will have higher odds of being labeled with LD than racial minorities who attend high-minority high schools (Hyp. 2₁).

The lower average academic achievement of both racial minorities and students who have low SES (Cheadle 2008; MacMillan and Reschly 1998; Shonkoff and Phillips 2000) is likely to be a

confounding factor in the disproportionate labeling of racial minorities with LD. MacMillan and Reschly (1998) point out that black students are disproportionately represented in many educational intervention programs (e.g., Head Start, Chapter 1, Follow Through), just as they are overrepresented in special education programs. Learning disability diagnoses are not supposed to be correlated with “cultural factors,” “environmental or economic disadvantage,” or being of “Limited English proficiency” (Daniels 1998; Fletcher, Denton and Francis 2005; Levine and Nourse 1998), but it remains unclear how educators should distinguish learning difficulties that are due to background characteristics from learning difficulties that are due to a learning disability. Structuralists perceive racial minorities as disproportionately likely to be labeled with LD by the school because of their lower SES and subsequently poorer academic histories. They would predict that low SES students’ (and racial minorities’) higher odds of being labeled with LD will be accounted for by their poorer academic ability (Hyp. 3₀), or even that the odds of being labeled may be significantly lower for racial minorities than for white students after accounting for differences in academic ability. Labeling theorists perceive the label of LD as discretionary and based on subjective rather than objective differences. They predict that racial minorities will remain significantly more likely than whites to be labeled with LD by their school even after accounting for differences in academic performance (Hyp. 3₁).

Data and Research Methods

I will use data from ELS, a large nationally representative dataset administered by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). NCES first surveyed 16,373 10th graders enrolled in approximately 750 schools in 2002. NCES attempted to survey one of each student’s parents and each school’s administrator in the base year. Retrospective questions on the student and parent surveys provide important information on socio-demographic characteristics, family background, and academic history. NCES also administered standardized reading and math tests to each sampled 10th grader. After excluding students who had some other disability according to the school report (about 300), or who attended a school that did not provide Individualized Education Plan (IEP)¹ reports (about 4,200), my analytic sample includes approximately 10,650² students in 540 schools.

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act requires states to collect and examine racial disproportionality data at the state and district levels, resulting in the vast majority of studies on LD

¹ IEPs are enacted when students become eligible for special education services because of a qualifying ‘diagnosed’ disability.

² NCES requires unweighted sample frequencies to be rounded to the nearest 50.

using aggregate rather than student level data (Coutinho, Oswald and Best 2002; Hosp and Reschly 2004; Lester and Kelman 1997; Oswald et al. 1999; Skiba et al. 2005). Two exceptions include Hibell, Farkas, and Morgan (2010), and Strand and Lindsay (2009) who used a British sample. This is problematic because schools within the same district have diverse characteristics. Furthermore, without controls for the SES of the student, it's impossible to know whether it is the student- or aggregate-level poverty driving results. Associations that are found at the aggregate level are even sometimes opposite to relationships found at more micro levels of analysis; for example, high SES countries have a higher prevalence of diabetes, but within countries, it is the poor who are more likely to get diabetes (Johnson-Hanks 2009). This study will be among the first to use student- and school-level data of the American population and sophisticated analyses to better understand the associations among race, SES, academic performance, and being labeled with LD by the school.

We estimate logistic regression models predicting 10th grade school label of LD. If the estimated effects of race/ethnicity are reduced to not being significant differences after including SES tertiles in the second regression model, it suggests that the average lower SES of racial minorities plays a role in their disproportionate labeling (RQ 1). To facilitate interpretation, we will present these results with multiple pie charts showing the SES breakdown of each racial group. Each pie piece (low SES blacks, for example) will be marked with a predicted probability of being labeled with LD, enabling the direct comparison of different probabilities of being labeled between students of a different race but comparable SES. In the next logistic regression model, we include school level measures of the percent of the student body who are racial minorities, using HLM software to conduct a cross level interaction between this measure and student level measures of race; if these interactions are significant, it would suggest that there are differences in racial minorities odds of being labeled with LD depending on the racial composition of the school they attend (RQ 2). Lastly, we include a measure of each student's score on the 10th grade reading test and compare the race coefficients in this model to those in the previous model to determine whether differences in academic ability are implicated in racial disproportionality (RQ 3).

Expected Findings

RQ 1: Are differences in students' SES implicated in the disproportionate labeling of racial minorities with LD in high schools?

Hypothesis 1₁ → Racial disproportionality will not be accounted for by differences in SES.
(Labeling Theory)

Hypothesis 1₀ → Racial disproportionality will be accounted for by differences in SES.
(Structuralism)

RQ 2: Is the racial composition of the high school associated with differences in racial minorities' odds of being labeled with LD in their high school?

Hypothesis 2₁ → Racial minorities who attend low-minority high schools will have higher odds of being labeled with LD than racial minorities who attend high-minority high schools. (Labeling Theory)

Hypothesis 2₀ → Racial minorities who attend high-minority high schools will have higher odds of being labeled with LD than racial minorities who attend low-minority high schools.
(Structuralism)

RQ 3: Are differences in academic ability implicated in the disproportionate labeling of racial minorities with LD in high schools?

Hypothesis 3₁ → Racial minorities' higher odds of being labeled with LD will not be accounted for by their poorer academic performance. (Labeling Theory)

Hypothesis 3₀ → Low SES students' (and thus racial minorities') higher odds of being labeled with LD will be accounted for by their poorer academic performance. (Structuralism)

References

- Aneshensel, Carol S. 2005. "Research in Mental Health: Social Etiology versus Social Consequences." *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 46(3):221-28.
- Anyon, Yolanda. 2009. "Sociological Theories of Learning Disabilities: Understanding Racial Disproportionality in Special Education." *Journal of Human Behavior in the Social Environment* 19(1):44-57.
- Baron, Stephen, Sheila Riddell, and Alastair Wilson. 1999. "The Secret of Eternal Youth: Identity, Risk and Learning Difficulties." *British Journal of Sociology of Education* 20(4):483-99.
- Becker, Howard S. 1997 [1963]. *Outsiders: Studies in the Sociology of Deviance*. New York, NY: The Free Press.
- Blackwell, Debra L., Mark D. Hayward, and Eileen M. Crimmins. 2001. "Does Childhood Health Affect Chronic Morbidity in Later Life?" *Social Science and Medicine* 52(8):1269-84.
- Blanchett, Wanda J. 2006. "Disproportionate Representation of African American Students in Special Education: Acknowledging the Role of White Privilege and Racism." *Educational Researcher* 35(6):24-28.

- Blanchett, Wanda J., Vincent Mumford, and Floyd Beachum. 2005. "Urban School Failure and Disproportionality in a Post-Brown Era." *Remedial & Special Education* 26(2):70-81.
- Bourdieu, Pierre, and Jean-Claude Passeron. 1977. *Reproduction in Education, Society, and Culture*. London: Sage Publications.
- Bowles, Samuel, and Herbert Gintis. 1976. *Schooling in Capitalist America: Educational Reform and the Contradictions of Economic Life*. New York: Basic Books.
- Brown, Tony N. 2003. "Critical Race Theory Speaks to the Sociology of Mental Health: Mental Health Problems Produced by Racial Stratification." *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 44(3):292-301.
- Chappell, Anne L. 1992. "Towards a Sociological Critique of the Normalisation Principle." *Disability, Handicap & Society* 7(1):35-51.
- Cheadle, Jacob E. 2008. "Educational Investment, Family Context, and Children's Math and Reading Growth from Kindergarten Through the Third Grade." *Sociology of Education* 81(1):1-31.
- Coutinho, Martha J., Donald P. Oswald, and Al M. Best. 2002. "The Influence of Sociodemographics and Gender on the Disproportionate Identification of Minority Students as Having Learning Disabilities." *Remedial & Special Education* 23(1):49.
- Daniels, Vera I. 1998. "Minority Students in Gifted and Special Education Programs: The Case for Educational Equity." *The Journal of Special Education* 32(1):41-44.
- DeLuca, Stefanie, and James E. Rosenbaum. 2001. "Individual Agency and the Life Course: Do Low-SES Students Get Less Long-Term Payoff for their School Efforts?" *Sociological Focus* 34(4):357-76.
- DSM-IV. 2000. "Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fourth Edition." Washington, DC: American Psychiatric Association.
- Dudley-Marling, Curt. 2004. "The Social Construction of Learning Disabilities." *Journal of Learning Disabilities* 37(6):482-89.
- Durkheim, Emile. 1997 [1897]. *Suicide*. Florence, MA: Free Press.
- Edwards, Oliver W. 2006. "Special Education Disproportionality and the Influence of Intelligence Test Selection." *Journal of Intellectual & Developmental Disability* 31(4):246-48.
- ERIC/OSEP. 2000. "Improving Results for Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Students." in *Research Connections in Special Education, Number 7*. Reston, VA: ERIC/OSEP Special Project on Interagency Information Dissemination, The ERIC Clearinghouse on Disabilities and Gifted Education, The Council for Exceptional Children.
- Ferri, Beth A., and David J. Connor. 2005. "In the Shadow of Brown: Special Education and Overrepresentation of Students of Color." *Remedial and Special Education* 26(2):93-100.
- Fletcher, Jack M., Carolyn Denton, and David J. Francis. 2005. "Validity of Alternative Approaches for the Identification of Learning Disabilities: Operationalizing Unexpected Underachievement." *Journal of Learning Disabilities* 38(6):545-52.
- Galobardes, Bruna, George Davey Smith, and John W. Lynch. 2006. "Systematic Review of the Influence of Childhood Socioeconomic Circumstances on Risk for Cardiovascular Disease in Adulthood." *Annals of Epidemiology* 16(2):91-104.
- Gelb, Steven A., and Donald T. Mizokawa. 1986. "Special Education and Social Structure: The Commonality of "Exceptionality"." *American Educational Research Journal* 23(4):543-57.
- Goffman, Erving. 1963. *Stigma: Notes on the Management of Spoiled Identity*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.
- Hibel, Jacob, George Farkas, and Paul L. Morgan. 2010. "Who Is Placed Into Special Education?" *Sociology of Education* 83(4):312-32.
- Ho, Anita. 2004. "To be Labeled, or Not to be Labeled: That is the Question." *British Journal of Learning Disabilities* 32(2):86-92.

- Hooker, Evelyn. 1961. "The Homosexual Community." Pp. 40-59 in *Proceedings of the XIV International Congress of Applied Psychology*. Copenhagen, Denmark: Munksgaard.
- Hosp, John L., and Daniel J. Reschly. 2004. "Disproportionate Representation of Minority Students in Special Education: Academic, Demographic, and Economic Predictors." *Exceptional Children* 70(2):185-99.
- House, James S. 2001. "Understanding Social Factors and Inequalities in Health: 20th Century Progress and 21st Century Prospects." *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 43(2):125-42.
- Jenkins, Richard. 1998. "Towards a Social Model of (In)competence." Pp. 222-30 in *Questions of Competence – Culture, Classification and Intellectual Disability*, edited by Richard Jenkins. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Johnson-Hanks, Jennifer. 2009. "Aggregation Problems." in *Population Research Center Brown Bag*. The University of Texas at Austin, Austin TX.
- Karlamangla, Arun S., Burton H. Singer, David R. Williams, Joseph E. Schwartz, Karen A. Matthews, Catarina I. Kiefe, and Teresa E. Seeman. 2005. "Impact of Socioeconomic Status on Longitudinal Accumulation of Cardiovascular Risk in Young Adults: The CARDIA Study (USA)." *Social Science & Medicine* 60(5):999-1015.
- Lee, Catherine. 2009. "'Race' and 'Ethnicity' in Biomedical Research: How Do Scientists Construct and Explain Differences in Health?" *Social Science & Medicine* 68:1183-90.
- Lester, Gillian, and Mark Kelman. 1997. "State Disparities in the Diagnosis and Placement of Pupils with a Learning Disability." *Journal of Learning Disabilities* 30(6):599-606.
- Levine, Phyllis, and Steven W. Nourse. 1998. "What Follow-Up Studies Say About Postschool Life for Young Men and Women with Learning Disabilities: A Critical Look at the Literature." *Journal of Learning Disabilities* 31(3):212-33.
- MacMillan, Donald L., and Daniel J. Reschly. 1998. "Overrepresentation of Minority Students: The Case for Greater Specificity or Reconsideration of the Variables Examined." *The Journal of Special Education* 32(1):15-24.
- Massey, Douglas S., Camille Z. Charles, Garvey F. Lundy, and Mary J. Fischer. 2003. *The Source of the River: The Social Origins of Freshmen at America's Selective Colleges and Universities*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Massey, Douglas S., and Nancy A. Denton. 1993. *American Apartheid: Segregation and the Making of the Underclass*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- McLeskey, James, Nancy L. Waldron, and Steven A. Wornhoff. 1990. "Factors Influencing the Identification of Black and White Students with a Learning Disability." *Journal of Learning Disabilities* 23(6):362-66.
- Memmi, Albert. 1965. *The Colonizer and the Colonized*. Boston, MA: Beacon Press.
- Mickelson, Roslyn Arlin. 2001. "Subverting Swann: First- and Second-Generation Segregation in the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools." *American Educational Research Journal* 38(2):215-52.
- O'Connor, Carla, and Sonia DeLuca Fernandez. 2006. "Race, Class, and Disproportionality: Reevaluating the Relationship Between Poverty and Special Education Placement." *Educational Researcher* 35(6):6-11.
- Oakes, Jeannie. 1985. *Keeping Track: How Schools Structure Inequality*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Office of Special Education Programs. 2007. *27th Annual (2005) Report to Congress on the Implementation of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, Vol. 1*. Washington, DC: Office of Special Education Programs, Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, U.S. Department of Education.
- Ong-Dean, Colin. 2006. "High Roads and Low Roads: Learning Disabilities in California, 1976-1998." *Sociological Perspectives* 49(1):91-113.

- Orfield, Gary, and Susan E. Eaton. 1996. *Dismantling Desegregation: The Quiet Reversal of Brown Vs. Board of Education*. New York, NY: The New Press.
- Orfield, Myron. 2002. *American Metropolitcs: New Suburban Reality*. Washington, DC: The Brookings Institution.
- Oswald, Donald P., Martha J. Coutinho, Al M. Best, and Nirbhay N. Singh. 1999. "Ethnic Representation in Special Education: The Influence of School-Related Economic and Demographic Variables." *The Journal of Special Education* 32(4):194-2069.
- Patton, James M. 1998. "The Disproportionate Representation of African Americans in Special Education: Looking Behind the Curtain for Understanding and Solutions." *The Journal of Special Education* 32(1):25-31.
- Reid, D. Kim, and Michelle G. Knight. 2006. "Disability Justifies Exclusion of Minority Students: A Critical History Grounded in Disability Studies." *Educational Researcher* 35(6):18-23.
- Riegle-Crumb, Catherine, and Eric Grodsky. 2010. "Racial-Ethnic Differences at the Intersection of Math Course-taking and Achievement." *Sociology of Education* 83(3):248-70.
- Salend, Spencer J., Laurel M. Garrick Duhaney, and Winifred Montgomery. 2002. "A Comprehensive Approach to Identifying and Addressing Issues of Disproportionate Representation." *Remedial & Special Education* 23(5):289.
- Scheff, Thomas J. 1966. *Being Mentally Ill: A Sociological Theory*. Piscataway, NJ: Aldine Transaction.
- Shinn, Mark R. 2007. "Identifying Students at Risk, Monitoring Performance, and Determining Eligibility Within Response to Intervention: Research on Educational Need and Benefit From Academic Intervention." *School Psychology Review* 36(4):601-17.
- Shonkoff, Jack P., and Deborah A. Phillips. 2000. *From Neurons to Neighborhoods: The Science of Early Childhood Development*. Washington, DC: National Research Council and Institute of Medicine, National Academies.
- Skiba, Russell J., Kimberly Knesting, and Lakeisha D. Bush. 2002. "Culturally Competent Assessment: More Than Nonbiased Tests." *Journal of Child & Family Studies* 11(1):61-78.
- Skiba, Russell J., Lori Poloni-Staudinger, Ada B. Simmons, L. Renae Feggins-Azziz, and Chung Choong-Geun. 2005. "Unproven Links: Can Poverty Explain Ethnic Disproportionality in Special Education?" *Journal of Special Education* 39(3):130-44.
- Skiba, Russell J., Ada B. Simmons, Shana Ritter, Ashley C. Gibb, M. Karega Rausch, Jason Cuadrado, and Choong-Geun Chung. 2008. "Achieving Equity in Special Education: History, Status, and Current Challenges." *Exceptional Children* 74(3):264-88.
- Skiba, Russell J., Ada B. Simmons, Shana Ritter, Kristin R. Kohler, and Tony C. Wu. 2003. "The Psychology of Disproportionality: Minority Placement in Context." *Multiple Voices for Ethnically Diverse Exceptional Learners* 6(1):27-40.
- Skiba, Russell, Ada Simmons, Shana Ritter, Kristin Kohler, Michelle Henderson, and Tony Wu. 2006. "The Context of Minority Disproportionality: Practitioner Perspectives on Special Education Referral." *Teachers College Record* 108(7):1424-59.
- Strand, Steve, and Geoff Lindsay. 2009. "Ethnic Disproportionality in Special Education: Evidence from an English Population Study." *Journal of Special Education* 43(3):174-90.
- Sullivan, Amanda L., Elizabeth A'Vant, John Baker, Daphne Chandler, Scott Graves, Edward McKinney, and Tremaine Sayles. 2009. "Confronting Inequity in Special Education, Part I: Understanding the Problem of Disproportionality." *Communique* 38(1):1.
- Takeuchi, David T., and David R. Williams. 2003. "Race, Ethnicity and Mental Health: Introduction to the Special Issue." *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 44(3):233-36.
- Thoits, Peggy A. 2005. "Differential Labeling of Mental Illness by Social Status: A New Look at an Old Problem." *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 46(1):102-19.
- Tilly, Charles. 1998. *Durable Inequality*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.