International Journal of Inclusive Education

Publication details, including instructions for authors and subscription information:
http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/tied20

Challenging the ideology of normal in schools

Subini A. Annamma[a], Amy L. Boelé[b], Brooke A. Moore[b] & Janette Klingner[b]

[a] School of Education, Indiana University-Indianapolis, 902 W, New York Street, ES 3116, Indianapolis, IN 46202, USA

[b] Educational Equity and Cultural Diversity, University of Colorado Boulder, 249 UCB, Boulder, CO 80309-0249, USA

Published online: 05 Dec 2013.

To cite this article: Subini A. Annamma, Amy L. Boelé, Brooke A. Moore & Janette Klingner (2013) Challenging the ideology of normal in schools, International Journal of Inclusive Education, 17:12, 1278-1294, DOI: 10.1080/13603116.2013.802379

To link to this article: http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/13603116.2013.802379

International Journal of Inclusive Education, 2013
Vol. 17, No. 12, 1278–1294, http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/13603116.2013.802379

Challenging the ideology of normal in schools

Subini A. Annamma[a]*, Amy L. Boelé[b], Brooke A. Moore[b] and Janette Klingner[b]

[a]*School of Education, Indiana University-Indianapolis, 902 W. New York Street, ES 3116, Indianapolis, IN 46202, USA;* [b]*Educational Equity and Cultural Diversity, University of Colorado Boulder, 249 UCB, Boulder, CO 80309-0249, USA*

(*Received 7 November 2012; final version received 26 March 2013*)

In this article, we build on Brantlinger's work to critique the binary of normal and abnormal applied in US schools that create inequities in education. Operating from a critical perspective, we draw from Critical Race Theory, Disability Studies in Education, and Cultural/Historical Activity Theory to build a conceptual framework for examining the prevailing ideology of normal found in US schools. We use our conceptual framework to *deconstruct* the current, westernised, static ideology of normal. Once deconstructed, we explore current iterations of the ideology of normal in schools. Finally, we suggest using the conceptual framework as a tool to *reconstruct* the ideology of normal as something more dynamic and inclusive.

Keywords: Critical Race Theory; Cultural Historical Activity Theory; Disability Studies; normal

The idea of normal most often ascribed to in schools in the USA is based on the Gaussian, normal distribution, bell-shaped curve that has been used to characterise the measurement of achievement (Glass and Smith 1979) and ability (Shaywitz et al. 1992). Although the Gaussian curve as a statistical measurement tool is reliable and valid for measuring the distribution of random events, its application to humans is erroneous as human behaviours and experiences are far from random (Dudley-Marling and Gurn 2010). This problematic, yet commonsense belief about the normal distribution curve promotes the notion that some students will excel, most will be average, and some will fail (Fendler and Muzaffar 2008).

The concept of normal pushes humanity towards the average as ideal (Davis 2006). The word normal continues to imply *good* across multiple social disciplines, such as psychology, medicine, economics, history and education. Yet, conceptualising normal as a phenomenon desired by these powerful disciplines maintains that difference is conceived as deviance, an analogy that is fundamentally problematic. In US schools, concepts of normal create boundaries in which some students fit and others are marginalised based solely on issues of race, language, and perceived ability (Prichard et al. 2010). Furthermore, it creates a hierarchy of characteristics commonly assumed to fall along the bell curve (e.g. intelligence, ability, achievement, behaviour).

Normal is steeped in unexamined, westernised,[1] ideological assumptions. As Brantlinger (1997) stated, 'Ideologies are systems of representations (images, myths, ideas)

*Corresponding author. Email: sannamma@iupui.edu

that in profoundly unconscious ways, mediate one's understanding of the world' (438). Additionally, ideology 'is determining of people and is determined by people; ideology both structures and is structured by social practices' and ideology is constructed and perpetuated through language (Leonardo 2003, 210). When the ideology of normal exists as unexamined common sense, it creates the inherent binary of abnormal. Brantlinger (2006) notes,

> Individuals and groups who fail to achieve dominant standards are identified (marked, labeled, branded) with stigmatizing names (e.g. failure, disabled, at-risk) and sent to separated locations (special education rooms, low tracks, vocational schools). These distinction-making processes create a binary of (dominant) insiders and (subordinate) outsiders.

Instead of this limiting binary in which all students are expected to fit into one of two categories, there is diversity in human capabilities and therefore there is a need to reconstruct the ideology of normal into a more expansive understanding of human variability. As Baglieri and Knopf (2004) note, 'The question is not whether we perceive differences among people, but, rather, *what meaning is brought to bear on those perceived differences*' (525, italics added for emphasis). An ongoing problem is that many educators subscribe to the often utilised yet rarely examined concept of normal which contributes to educational inequities that are based on race, cultural practices, language, and perceived ability.

Many scholars engage in critical examinations of educational inequities; however, we offer a new contribution to such critiques by combining Critical Race Theory (CRT), Disability Studies in Education (DSE) and Cultural/Historical Activity Theory (C/HAT) to create a conceptual framework for examining the ideology of normal. CRT is useful in deconstructing normal because as a theory, one of its main tenets is to challenge Whiteness as the unmarked norm (Gillborn 2005; Ladson-Billings 1998). Teachers often define students in relation to racial dimensions of normality, so that students who are not White are often constructed in the mind of educators, consciously or not, as abnormal. Statistically, the majority of the teaching population in the USA is White (Hodgkinson 2002). Yet, even teachers of colour typically are trained through teacher education programmes that often construct students of colour from a deficit perspective (Escamilla 2006), thus marking White students as the cultural standard. CRT exposes how this limited definition of normal operates in US schools and also provides tools to expand normal to include those who have been traditionally seen as deviant due to the colour of their skin. By recognising intersectionality and utilising counter-narratives, this narrow ideology of normal can be redefined and difference can be valued by including the voices and experiences of people of colour (Matsuda 1987).

DSE serves as a useful lens to examine the concept of normal because it considers how 'able' is taken for granted as being normal. 'Ableism' is a set of beliefs that guide cultural and institutional practices ascribing negative values to individuals with disabilities[2] while deeming able-bodied and able-minded individuals as normal, therefore superior to their disabled counterparts (Gabel 2005). In US schools, ableism promotes the idea that students with disabilities are unable to attend to their own needs and learning. This leads to paternalistic notions that students with disabilities should be segregated, managed and monitored by adults for the good of all (Ware 2002). Education within a DSE framework should be 'about critiquing social, economic, and political structures that have constructed the concept of normal, average, equal, and standard'

(Nocella 2008, 89) while also valuing and promoting the role of diversity within schools (Slee 2001). DSE urges society to recognise the ways in which such hegemonic ideas and practices reify the ideology of normal. As Kudlick (2003) states, until a less paternalistic view of disability is adopted, it 'will lead to stigma and isolation as long as our culture consciously or subconsciously equates dis-ability with in-ability' (769).

From a C/HAT perspective, cultural artefacts and practices mediate interactions with the social world, and those interactions should be understood in both cultural and historical terms (Cole and Engeström 1993). For example, Brantlinger (2009) referred to individualised instruction and developmentally appropriate practice, both common cultural practices occurring in schools for students considered 'at-risk', as the 'slippery shibboleths' of special education because they perpetuate segregation and marginalisation and can lead to differentiated *expectations* of students. Differentiated instruction, as a research-based pedagogical practice, is designed to help teachers understand the diverse ways in which students learn and to provide differentiated supports across students so that all reach the same high expectations. However, as Peterson and Hittie (2010) noted, differentiation practices in US schools can inadvertently be misused by teachers in ways that lock students into rigid ability levels. Assumptions about what students can or cannot do, enhanced through the creation of differentiated activities that are assigned to particular groups of students, can lead to differentiated expectations, and the segregation and marginalisation of students.

Cultural and historical practices inform teachers' conceptions of what it is to be considered normal, and through reflective analysis, teachers working within the activity system of school can 'violate existing practices' by externalising new ones that are more inclusive and welcoming of diversity (Cole and Engeström 1993, 40). A primary focus of C/HAT is to understand both homogeneity and heterogeneity within the practice of schools, rather than characterising students through static traits. Additionally, diversity is considered to be *the* primary source for development and learning (Gutiérrez, Baquedano-Lopez, and Tejeda 1999). Therefore, C/HAT seeks to challenge monolithic views of normalcy by valuing students who differ from the norm, including consideration of race, ability, language and cultural practices.

In the following sections, we critically deconstruct the ideology of normal through our conceptual framework, considering (1) the underlying, historically driven conceptions of normal and (2) how normal is manifested in society schools. Working together as critical theories, CRT and DSE expose the structural inequities in schools supported by racism and ableism. Weaving in C/HAT allows the consideration of the mediating role of ideology among individuals, while critically examining contradictions within the activity system, which undergirds the sorting of students in schools.

Critical examinations of normal: deconstructing normal from past to present

In order to 'lift the veil of common sense to arrive at underlying interests and agendas' surrounding normal (Leonardo 2003, 208), we must first deconstruct the meaning of the word. Deconstruction is 'an aggressive, political mode of critical analysis that strips conventional and assumed truths down to the logically insubstantial bare bones' (Danforth and Rhodes 1997, 358). Derrida (1967) argued through deconstruction that one could break through the assumed attached meanings to words that have accrued historically. A word is a symbolic representation of an object, which contains meaning and becomes ideational (Vygotsky 1986). Behind the meanings lie the socially developed methods of thinking and actions that shape society (Leont'ev 1978). This

bond between a word and its meaning is created over time (Vygotsky 1986), but is situated within the moment of discourse (Derrida 1967). A critical examination of a word cannot 'wrench the concept' attached to the word itself (Derrida 1967), but must work to expose the contradictions within the meaning of the word as it has evolved over time.

By unveiling current notions of common sense, we can deconstruct ideologies of normal in which systems of power prevail in their various forms of reification. Yet, problematising what is readily accepted as common sense is not popular or easy. The concept of the word itself becomes so large as to seem 'unpeopled' and seemingly unchangeable by the influence of single individuals (Danforth and Rhodes 1997). Leonardo (2003) stated, 'It is at the reification state where ideology is everywhere yet seemingly nowhere because reality appears as natural or pre-ordained' (205). Deconstruction of the *word* alleviates the seeming power of the 'unpeopled' ideology behind the word, granting us the ability to reveal, examine and potentially change the meaning of the word. We critically examine and deconstruct normal by first contextualising it, both culturally and historically.

Historical contextualisation of normal

The US educational system's narrow notion of what constitutes ability has evolved through culture, which is the reproduction of historical practice that is perpetuated in institutions such as schools. Culture is 'social inheritance', the way that human beings develop meaning as the accumulation of the prior generations' practices and beliefs (Cole and Levitin 2000). Specifically addressing power, race, and ability within C/HAT, Trent et al. (2002) explain how historical practices 'may result in the perpetuation of hierarchical relationships where power is amassed and maintained by some and denied to others based on characteristics that have historically relegated individuals and groups to dominant or subordinate status' (15). Through cultural practices that have become 'second nature' (Cole and Levitin 2000) in education, ability has become a perceived neutral means of placing value judgments on individuals in order to justify the existence of dominant or subordinate groups, even though conceptions of ability are biased (Harry and Klingner 2006). Artiles (2009) suggests that researchers must 'adopt an emic perspective; that is, to understand school and everyday events as mediated by cultural assumptions and artifacts/tools, and as situated in cultural contexts' (26). In other words, the culture of schools – like all cultures – is not a static, monolithic entity but instead manifests itself in everyday practices that reveal themselves in commonsense discussions of normal.

DSE illuminates the historical justification for the positioning of those who did not fit this narrow concept of normal by exposing how the difference/deviance of a person allegedly originates inside of that person and not in the society that labels them. In contrast, Disability Studies scholars view society as obsessed with disabling practices that ultimately are inscribed upon individuals who do not or cannot conform to culturally established standards of normalcy (Baynton 2001). As Nocella (2008) writes, 'Ability is the foundation of the justification of the term and philosophy of disability, while disability has been the justification to kill, test on, segregate, abort, and abandon' (77). This discourse around disability was supported by the Eugenics movement during the mid-1800s which, along with the birth of the statistical bell curve model that followed, suggested ability and intelligence fell along a normally distributed, bell-shaped continuum (Davis 1999). Those individuals falling at the edges of the bell curve were seen to deviate from the norm, which promulgated the idea of a

'deviant' body compared to an 'ideal' or 'normal' body (Davis 2006). Consequently, individuals with disabilities were seen as a menace to society and in need of institutionalisation for their own protection and benefit (Atkinson and Walmsley 1999). The average oddly became the ideal. Baynton (2001) wrote:

> Although normality ostensibly denoted the average, the usual, and the ordinary, in actual usage it functioned as an ideal and excluded only those defined as *below* average. 'Is the child normal?' was never a question that expressed fear about whether a child had *above*-average intelligence, motor skills, or beauty. Abnormal signified the *sub*normal. (36)

On one hand, special education in the USA was founded on principles of inclusion and a right to free and appropriate public education. Special education and civil rights for people with disabilities were hard fought rights won through rallies, sit-ins and other protests common of the Civil Rights Movement by people with disabilities (Cone 1997). Yet on the other, special education enacted and institutionalised paternalistic notions of separating and rehabilitating individuals who are not able to conform to desired standards by those who did (Erevelles 2000). In other words, it was people without disabilities that began to use special education as a route to segregate and cure those with disabilities. In studying American special education, Milofsky (1986) highlighted ways in which different groups have historically been marginalised and segregated based on differences. In the early 1900s, children of Eastern European immigrants whose language and customs differed vastly from most Americans were labelled 'morons' and 'idiots' and placed into special education (Milofsky 1986). Following desegregation into the 1960s, White teachers faced with African-American children for the first time found them to be 'unacceptable and threatening' (Milofsky 1986, 318). Many were labelled mentally retarded and placed into isolated special education settings. Currently, special education is seeing a growth trend in the Hispanic population throughout the USA, often based on speaking a language other than the unmarked norm of English (Sullivan 2011). Throughout history, children have been placed in special education based on cultural and linguistic differences deemed deviant from the norms of 'regular' education.

CRT and other social justice-oriented scholars exposed how people of colour have been seen as different (and therefore deviant) throughout American history (Gotanda 1991). From the systematic extermination of Native Americans as the country was being conquered, to the abhorrent practice of slavery, to the constitution which declared African-Americans as three-fifths of a person, Americans have consistently declared their beliefs that people of colour were abnormal (Bell 1980). Americans have utilised God in Manifest Destiny and Jim Crow Laws (Zinn 1980), science in Craniology (Menchaca 1997), Eugenics (Valencia 1997), culture in The Culture of Poverty (Gorski 2008) and The Moynihan Report (Moynihan 1965; Tyack 1974) in order to prove the inferiority of people of colour. McDermott, Goldman, and Varenne (2006) state:

> For 150 years, the West has been rife with rumors about intelligence, primitive minds, and inherited genius, all differentially distributed across kinds of people by race, class, gender and national character. The rumors have encouraged oppression by explanation: Some can, some cannot, and this is why some have and some have not. (13)

History offers evidence of attempts throughout the years to characterise people of colour as inferior and therefore abnormal (Gould 1996). This trend continues, reflected in current educational inequities that negatively impact students of colour (Ferri and

Connor 2005). Yet, race simply represents ordinary human variance and dividing people along racial lines is 'at best imprecise and at worst completely arbitrary' (Omi and Winant 1994, 55). Any number of markers could have been chosen to categorise people, such as eye colour, shape of nose or blood type, but once skin colour became a social marker, it became a significant way of separating, identifying and punishing social/ethnic groups for differing from the norm in ways that have, and still have, life impacting consequences (Bell 1987).

Viewing difference as deviance has both historical *and* cultural foundations, and these underlying beliefs continue to inform the discourse surrounding the current ideology of normal. Below we examine the ways in which an ideology of normal permeates thinking and actions in westernised society, which currently manifests itself in schools.

Current ideology of normal in westernised society

Unfortunately, despite incremental societal advances away from the demons of our past,[3] the ideology of normal still prevails in schools and society and this reinforces power structures. 'To gain a monopoly of winning positions, dominant groups must set, get consensus for, and enforce normative standards that are used to designate themselves as competent and Others as inadequate' (Brantlinger 2006, 200). However, efforts to reinforce these power structures are not explicit. Instead, the ideology of normal is 'embedded in cultural milieus and connects local actions to larger historical processes' (Artiles 2009, 26). The macro-discursive structures surrounding the ideology of normal have become inscribed upon the micro, localised practices and beliefs that often are left unquestioned. The outcome is the unconscious division of the total population into those who are normal and those who are not (Davis 2006). When normal is held as the standard, our systems and structures impose oppressive practices on deviance from the norm (Connor 2008). Furthermore, the richness of diversity is detrimentally lost.

Current ideology of normal as reified in schools

The current ideology of normal contradicts ideas of equitable education. These prevalent conceptions of normalcy influence where students are socially positioned in a school and how they are treated. McDermott, Goldman, and Varenne (2006) argue that because of the competitive nature of US schooling, students are subjected to hierarchical patterns of those who can, and those who cannot achieve, 'Hence American education is well organised to make hierarchy out of any differences that can be claimed, however falsely, to be natural, inherent, and potentially consequential in school' (12). The following section contains examples of ways that the ideology of normal has led to marked educational inequities.

Education policy

Since 2001, No Child Left Behind (NCLB) has had a profound impact on the ways children are being educated in the USA. NCLB has been shown to limit the curriculum, including reducing exposure to subjects that are not tested and limiting instructional strategies through a narrow definition of research-based instruction (Fusarelli 2004). Additionally, NCLB has the potential to increase dropout rates and decrease graduation rates (Voltz and Fore III 2006) and these practices driven by NCLB are most likely to

disproportionately affect students of colour in urban schools (Goodrich Ratcliffe and Willard 2006). For all of the intentions that informed NCLB (positive or not), NCLB perpetuates an ideology of normal through its narrow definition of success: achievement on a standardised test. Cole (2006) noted, 'The tendency to force a single academic curricular focus and devalue other types of learning may limit the opportunities for students with disabilities to excel' (4). These negative effects also disproportionately impact students of colour, students who speak a language other than English and others positioned as abnormal.

As Response to Intervention (RtI) becomes more prevalent in the identification of students with disabilities, so does the concern for lack of attention towards culturally and linguistically diverse learners. Evidence-based interventions are typically evidenced based only for students who fall in the norm, and the implementation of such interventions is done without consideration of what works with whom, by whom and in what contexts (Klingner and Edwards 2006). Despite being a framework that attempts to contextualise a learning problem by promoting a change in environmental factors (i.e. instruction), RtI still does not include practices that consider the full cultural–historical contexts that shape learning. A learning problem is characterised as either inadequate instruction or a disability, and broader contextual factors (e.g. classroom learning environments, funding distributions and professional development) are not systematically examined (Artiles, Ball, and King Thorius 2010). Even though RtI purports to privilege the instructional context, typical RtI practices still locate the deficit within the child through its attempts at *treating* difficulties through increasing practices of *removal*, along with overconfidence in unquestioned research-based contexts (Ferri 2011).

English-only initiatives

Monolingual English speakers are the unmarked norm in America (Gutiérrez et al. 2002). Crawford (2004) points out that '[B]ilingualism has proved jarring to many Americans … Hearing other languages spoken freely in public has fostered the perception that English is losing ground that newcomers no longer care to learn the national tongue' (14). Additionally, language can be seen as a proxy for race, and English-only movements often have a racial undertone as they have mostly occurred in states with largely Spanish-speaking populations (Revilla and Asato 2002). When students speak a language other than English, it is easier for educators to think of them as different, even deficient. In considering stages of language acquisition, for example, the silent period and linguistic errors can be mistaken for a lack of intelligence (Baca and Cervantes 2004; Hakuta 1990). Additionally, limited assessment measures that inadequately gauge or even ignore the skills of emerging bilingual students contribute to seeing these students narrowly as limited in English and therefore encourage deficit thinking (Escamilla 2006).

The achievement gap

While the achievement gap seemed to be closing in the 1970s and 1980s in the USA, that movement began to slow during the 1990s, causing alarm (Lee 2002). Some deficit-oriented theories attribute the gap to racial issues, while others point to issues of poverty and conditions in the home. Scholars such as Ladson-Billings (2006) and Noguera and Yonemura Wing (2006) suggest that this hierarchical rating of students

remains persistent over time because of ways in which students who fall outside the realm of 'normal' are tracked into remedial classes or special education and given less academically challenging coursework than their more privileged peers. However, 'hierarchies are not purposeless, passive rankings, but represent important interdependent relations among people of different ranks' (Brantlinger 2006). Instead, the achievement gap serves a purpose as superiority needs inferiority to reinforce its goodness.

The segregation of students with disabilities

The special education system has classrooms segregated from general education in order to house individuals deemed to have 'impairments' in environments ostensibly more suitable for meeting their 'needs' (Reid and Knight 2006). Despite the fact that the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act[4] explicitly stipulates that students with special needs be given access to the general education curriculum, placement into special education often excludes students from the general education curriculum, particularly if the instruction provided to students is only from a prescriptive, basic skills mastery approach (Gallagher 2005). When students are denied access to grade level, enriched curriculum provided in an environment with their general education peers, it can lead to economic hardships when students who have been tracked through special education struggle to find jobs in a competitive market (Barton 1993). Statistics from the World Summit on Social Development in 1995 noted that individuals with disabilities are the largest minority group facing poverty, unemployment and social and cultural isolation. Individuals with disabilities earn only 60% of the income of individuals without disabilities (Erevelles 2000). Once given a label of disability, students are subject to material consequences from being viewed as abnormal to having limited access to all aspects of society.

Disproportionate representation in special education

The disproportionate representation of students of colour in special education has been studied and identified as a cause of concern for years (Donovan and Cross 2002; Heller, Holtzman, and Messick 1982; National Education Association of the United States and National Association of School Psychologists 2007; Patton 1998). Disproportionate representation refers to whether the percentage of a group in special education is larger or smaller than the percentage of that group within the educational system as a whole (Harry 1994). Students of colour are over-represented in high-incidence disability categories (i.e. learning disability, emotional–behavioural disability and mild mental retardation), yet are *proportionately* represented in low-incidence disability categories (e.g. traumatic brain injury, deafness and blindness) (Albrecht et al. 2012; Harry and Klingner 2006). Even when students of colour have the same disability label as their White peers, research has found that they are more likely to be segregated, thereby limiting their exposure to the general education curriculum (Gandara and Bial 2001; Losen and Orfield 2002; Sullivan 2011). Though the federal government mandates special education funding, there continues to be a lack of resources for those in special education in high minority schools, which leads to a lack of access to equitable education. In other words, special education placement often excludes students, particularly students from high poverty, high minority schools, from the general education curriculum, which results in economic hardships when students struggle to

find jobs in the marketplace (Oswald, Coutinho, and Best 2002). The disproportionate representation of students of colour is a clear illustration of how once seen as abnormal, students of colour who utilise diverse cultural practices or may speak a language other than English are more likely to be seen as less capable than their White counterparts due to additive stigma. That is, these students would have not only the stigma of having a disability, but also the perceived problematic identities of minority racial status or linguistic practices that contribute to the ways others construct them as abnormal (Kertzner et al. 2009; Mostade 2004).

Unequal discipline practices

Another educational outcome directly tied to race and disability is disparate discipline practices in schools (Mendez and Knopf 2003). Statistics show that even when controlling for socioeconomic status, students in special education and students of colour are over-represented in all disciplinary actions (Skiba et al. 2000). This is important since discipline rates are directly tied to incarceration rates (Arcia 2006) and evoke the spectre of a school-to-prison pipeline. For example, Wald and Losen (2003) state, 'The "single largest predictor" of later arrest among adolescent females is having been suspended, expelled or held back during the middle school years' (4). Quinn et al. (2005) found that the 'number of youth identified and receiving special education services in juvenile corrections is almost four times higher than in public school programs during the same time period' (4). Once seen as abnormal by colour, language or ability, students are more likely to be constructed as deviant and even dangerous in behaviour (Annamma, Connor, and Ferri 2013).

Each of these examples of inequities stem, at least partially, from society's binaric conceptions of normal. By positioning students of colour, second language learners, those with diverse cultural practices and those with disabilities as abnormal, people are more likely to construct these students as having internal, individual deficits. Consumed with standardisation, educators are overly attentive to students who are not 'adequately developed'. Although all students possess differences, some differences are related to larger social, economic or academic disparities of opportunity that result from accumulative practices of oppression (Bruna 2009). Consequently, this leads to localised interactions that expect students to lose/change/remould part of themselves. The criteria for normal, and thus the accompanying deviations, are clear: the White, middle-class, monolingual English-speaking and average ability criteria for school success contributes to the reproduction of classism, ableism and racism in education.

'Who Benefits' under the ideology of normal?

Up to this point, we explored 'the how' of the ideology of normal and the ways this ideology is practiced in US schools and society. However, to finish the deconstruction of normal, we must move beyond 'the how' to 'the why'. *Why maintain the ideology of normal?* There are economic benefits for labelling others as abnormal, such as maintaining the status quo by keeping power nested in the hands of the few. When labelled disabled, individuals tend to experience limited access to equal education and jobs due to societal barriers, leaving more room for those considered normal at the top (Brantlinger 2006).

Drawing from Gramsci's call to ask, 'Who benefits?' when examining social actions, Brantlinger (2004) challenges her readers to ponder the question, *who benefits*

from high-stakes testing? As these tests rank, and categorise, all under the auspices of accountability, these sorting systems work to target those in need of treatment, or intervention, based on their 'Other' status. What is more, the tests remain attractive to all parties involved because, in Gramsci's terms, the dominant group strategically works to persuade the Others that the practice is in their best interest, to help them, all the while working to maintain evidence of their subordinates' inferiority. Of course, testing companies, the media, politicians and school administrators are among the constituents who benefit. However, the genius of the accountability and standards movement is in the 'ideologies that obfuscate power imbalances' (Brantlinger 2004, 3). In other words, the ideology of normal lures public education to embrace a system that contributes to its demise out of the fear of dwindling resources and the potential loss of professional legitimacy (Taubman 2009).

Brantlinger, Majd-Jabbari, and Guskin (1996) further explored this obfuscation of ideology in a study with middle-class mothers when she showed how these mothers were able to tout themselves as caring, compassionate and liberal, all the while using ideology to maintain a propensity towards the status quo, one that allowed them to preserve their power and privilege. The ideology of normal worked to create binaries of 'ordinary people and others' (Brantlinger, Majd-Jabbari, and Guskin 1996, 579) and although human variance was recognised, any associated hierarchies were claimed to be naturalised, even deserving.

It is clear that when we enact the ideology of normal, particular populations are subject to oppression and that is not accidental. 'The historical debt was not merely imposed by ignorant masses that were xenophobic and virulently racist. The major leaders of the nation endorsed ideas about the inferiority of Black, Latina/o, and Native peoples' (Ladson-Billings 2006, 6). Controlling those who were different became the task of the experts in the jurisprudence and medical fields. The rise of hospitals, mental asylums and penitentiaries is no simple coincidence of historic time periods; these institutions served the purpose of separating the masses into those who belonged and those who did not (Foucault 1995). Historic inequities that formed around differences from the norm in race, class, language, gender and perceived ability continue to persist today. Due to this belief in inferiority, traditionally those in power – male, able-bodied, monolingual, English speaking, Whites – have had little interest in investing in the education of those who are different. Even today we see funding inequities, which correlate with racial, ethnic and socioeconomic differences. School funding has been shown to rise with an increase in White populations. Though correlation is not causation, these inequities imply a refusal to fund education for those who fall outside of normal (Ladson-Billings 2006).

In an arena in which test-measured ability is the highest commodity (Brantlinger 2006), rich and true learning becomes cheap and scarce. Students will do what they can to avoid getting 'caught not knowing something and/or getting caught knowing something at just the right time' (McDermott and Raley 2011). Yet still, the ideology of normal continues to persuade others of its rationality, when truly 'the requirement of all children to be average is illogical' (Brantlinger 2006, 237), and by definition, impossible. Certainly, removing the high-stakes tests will not eliminate the ideology of normal in schools, for it is far too pervasive. As we have seen through CRT, DSE and C/HAT, ideologies are powerful mediators that are always imbued with power. And paradoxically, those in power (e.g. stakeholders in education) work to fix the powerless (Brantlinger 2006) or to make the abnormal normal, which in actuality preserves existing power structures, along with the ideology of normal.

Yet in the spirit of deconstruction, we draw inspiration from Brantlinger (2006) as she seeks to upend existing hierarchies: 'Rather than insisting on normal, routine, and homogenous academic outcomes, it seems that a realistic problem-solving curriculum focused on actual social, medical, and environmental issues would be far better' (241). To overturn the binary of normal and abnormal requires a demarcation of power structures, with the help of CRT and DSE, as well as an examination of contradictions that keep the hierarchies in place, as C/HAT strives to do. The normal practices of creating winners and losers (Brantlinger 2006) should be replaced with more abnormal practices of egalitarianism, interdependence and community. Instead of a single narrative by which to aspire and thus assimilate (Slee 1997), heterogeneous narratives, especially counter-narratives, are privileged.

Challenging the ideology: reconstructing normal as variability

A critical deconstruction of the ideology of normal, driven by historical and cultural discourse and definitions, makes visible the problematic nature of the current ideology of normal in its binaric construction and in the limited ways it works to position students. Variability exists, which creates contradictions; consider the goal of NCLB to have all third-grade students proficient in reading by 2013–2014 (Department of Education, Federal Register 2002). As Ball and Harry (2010) suggest, 'We would ask whether the educational establishment in the US could stand to have the level of success reach 100% if the belief in a normal distribution so permeates our beliefs about achievement and other human traits' (115)? If anything is to be considered normal in schools, it should be the existence of variability.

Valuing diversity

Through statistics that show people of colour lagging behind in virtually all facets of life in the USA (Bonilla-Silva 2006), we see evidence that diversity is not truly valued in our society because of the perpetuation of the ideology of normal. Since our societal institutions reflect our cultural values and practices, we see our current education system as one that rewards conformity to cultural standards and punishes and segregates difference from those norms. Incremental steps like African-American History Month can encourage a slow growth approach, allowing US society to avoid making more substantial changes that could truly affect the life outcomes of those who do not fit the cultural norm (Bell 1987). Ignoring diversity is akin to colour-blind racism to us and so we reject it as well (Bonilla-Silva 2006). Instead, we argue that valuing and accepting diversity is a complex cultural process of change. Not only do we need to think differently (interpersonal), but also our media and our institutions (e.g. schools, medical industry and jails) need to change by rejecting the ideology of normal. In order to promote a substantial process of change, the interpersonal and institutional must inform each other. When we argue that we need to accept and value diversity, we are suggesting a fundamental societal shift, and there is nothing trite about changing the way we speak, think and act as people and as a society. Using our conceptual framework of CRT, DSE and C/HAT, we are provided with tools to authentically value diversity which we hope to explore in the future.

Brantlinger has heavily influenced our thinking on the ideology of normal that is pervasive in schools and society. Since we read Brantlinger's (1997) 'Using ideology: Cases of nonrecognition of the politics of research and practice in special education',

we have journeyed on a three-year exploration of what the ideology of normal is, who it affects and how we can uncover the way it works to maintain power relations. It is Brantlinger we have in mind as we consider the future work we want to do with this new theoretical framework. Combining CRT, DSE and C/HAT provides us with tools not only to deconstruct the ideology of normal but also to reconstruct it in the future. This constant dialectic between larger, macro, societal discourses and beliefs about what is normal and what is deviant and smaller, micro, localised practices and actions provides fertile ground for us to critique, challenge and reconstruct our ideology of normal. Drawing on the work of Barrett, Brantlinger argues that organic ideologies are more useful in dismantling oppressive social forces than polemic ideologies that rely on rhetoric to reify existing social structures (as cited in Brantlinger 1997, 448). She states, 'Arriving at organic ideologies means struggling to intervene in the terrain of common sense by taking steps to counteract familiar, taken-for-granted practices . . . and treating the regularities of everyday life as problematic' (Brantlinger 1997, 448). By reconstructing commonsense perceptions about what is normal, we stand to create more equitable learning environments for students who have been marginalised and segregated based on perceived differences in cultural practices, race, language use and ability.

Notes

1. Although our discussion of normal is grounded in westernised ideology, particularly as enacted in US education system, we recognise how normal can be conceptualised in other cultures. For example, Serpell, Mariga, and Harvey (1993) noted that intelligence in a Zambian community is often characterised by moral abilities rather than cognitive abilities. Congenital hip deformities among the Navajo are not always seen as a disability because they are accommodating for the individual in riding a horse (Locust 1988). And, at times, epilepsy in a Hmong community is not viewed as a disease or a handicap (Fadiman 1997). However, in each example a concept of normal continues to exist, though defined by different parameters.
2. Despite the negative assumptions embedded within the term 'disability', many disability rights activists have adopted the term, continuing its usage as a way to push society to recognise the stigma and implications associated with the term and to consider how those with disabilities are treated in society (Nocella 2008).
3. We have moved past some of this historical, overt discrimination through legislation such as the Civil Rights Act (1964), the Americans with Disabilities Act (1990), and court cases such as Diana vs. State Board of Education (1970) in which the court ruled that schools could not place a student in special education without testing in their native language. Yet inequities in society based on race still exist.
4. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, originally passed in 1990 and reinstated in 2004, is a US federal law that governs how states provide special education services to students with disabilities.

Notes on contributors

Subini A. Annamma is an assistant professor of Special Education at the Indiana University-Indianapolis. Before entering graduate school, she was a special education teacher working with culturally and linguistically diverse students with emotional, behavioural, and learning disabilities in public schools and juvenile justice. All of her work, in teaching and the academy, focuses on increasing access to equitable education for historically marginalised students and communities, particularly children identified with disabilities. Her research commitments emphasise an interdisciplinary approach using Disability Critical Race Theory (DisCrit) that centres race and ability. Ultimately, Subini focuses on how student voice can identify exemplary educational practices.

Amy L. Boelé, MA, is a doctoral candidate at the University of Colorado, Boulder, in the Department of Educational Equity and Cultural Diversity. She is studying the intersections of disability, literacy, and discourse, as manifested in teacher–student interactions during small group reading instruction.

Brooke A. Moore, Ph.D., is a post-doctoral research assistant at the University of Colorado, Boulder. Prior to earning her doctorate, Brooke was a K-8 special education teacher for 12 years. Her research interests focus on revealing the ideology of normal in schools in order to make learning environments more encompassing of diversity. Recent publications include a chapter in the *Handbook of Learning Disabilities, Second Edition*, with Janette Klingner and Beth Harry that provides an overview of the qualitative learning disabilities (LD) research coming from the related fields of LD and disability studies.

Janette Klingner is a professor of bilingual special education at the University of Colorado, Boulder. She was a K-8 bilingual special education teacher for 10 years before earning a Ph.D. in Reading and Learning Disabilities from the University of Miami. Recent publications include 'What does it take to scale up and sustain evidence-based practices?' in *Exceptional Children*, with Alison Boardman and Kristen McMaster, and "Addressing the 'research gap' in special education through mixed methods," in *Learning Disability Quarterly*, with Alison Boardman. In 2013, she received the Distinguished Researcher Award from the Special Education Research SIG at AERA.

References

Albrecht, S. F., R. J. Skiba, D. J. Losen, C. Chung, and L. Middelber. 2012. "Federal Policy on Disproportionality in Special Education: Is it Moving us Forward?" *Journal of Disability Policy Studies* 23 (1): 14–25.

Annamma, S. A., D. Connor, and B. Ferri. 2013. "Dis/ability Critical Race Studies (DisCrit): Theorizing at the Intersections of Race and Dis/ability." *Race Ethnicity and Education* 16 (1): 1–31.

Arcia, E. 2006. "Achievement and Enrollment Status of Suspended Students: Outcomes in a Large, Multicultural School District." *Education and Urban Society* 38 (3): 359–369.

Artiles, A. J. 2009. "Re-framing Disproportionality Research: Outline of a Cultural–Historical Paradigm." *Multiple Voices for Ethnically Diverse Exceptional Learners* 11 (2): 24–37.

Artiles, A. J., A. Ball, and K. A. King Thorius. 2010. "Back to the Future: A Critique of Response to Intervention Views." *Theory into Practice* 49 (4): 250–257.

Atkinson, D., and J. Walmsley. 1999. "Using Autobiographical Approaches with People with Learning Difficulties." *Disability & Society* 14 (2): 203–216.

Baca, L., and H. Cervantes. 2004. *The Bilingual Special Education Interface*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education.

Baglieri, S., and J. H. Knopf. 2004. "Normalizing Difference in Inclusive Teaching." *Journal of Learning Disabilities* 37 (6): 525–529.

Ball, E. W., and B. Harry. 2010. "Assessment and the Policing of the Norm." In *The Myth of the Normal Curve*, edited by C. Dudley-Marling and A. Gurn, 105–122. New York: Peter Lang Publishing.

Barton, L. 1993. "The Struggle for Citizenship: The Case of Disabled People." *Disability, Handicap, & Society* 8 (3): 235–48.

Baynton, D. C. 2001. "Disability and the Justification for Inequality in American History." In *The New Disability History: American Perspectives*, edited by P. Longmore and L. Umansky, 33–57. New York: New York University Press.

Bell, D. 1987. *And We are not Saved: The Elusive Quest for Racial Justice*. New York: Basic Books.

Bell, D. A. 1980. "Brown v. Board of Education and the Interest Convergence Dilemma." *Harvard Law Review* 93: 518–33.

Bonilla-Silva, E. 2006. *Racism Without Racists: Color-blind Racism and the Persistence of Racial Inequality in America*. 3rd ed. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.

Brantlinger, E. 1997. "Using ideology: Cases of Nonrecognition of the Politics of Research and Practice in Special Education." *Review of Educational Research* 67 (4): 425–59.

Brantlinger, E. 2004. An application of Gramsci's 'Who Benefits?' to High-stakes Testing. *Workplace*, *6.1*. Accessed February 23, 2005. http://www.cust.educ.ubc.ca/workplace/issue6p1/brantlinger.html.
Brantlinger, E. 2009. "Slippery shibboleths: The Shady Side of Truisms in Special Education." In *Disability Studies in Education: Readings in Theory and Method, Vol. 3*, edited by S. L. Gabel, 125–38. New York: Peter Lang Publishing.
Brantlinger, E., M. Majd-Jabbari, and S. L. Guskin. 1996. "Self-interest and Liberal Educational Discourse: How Ideology Works for Middle-class Mothers." *American Educational Research Journal* 33 (3): 571–597.
Brantlinger, E. A., eds. 2006. *Who Benefits from Special Education? Remediating (fixing) Other People'S Children*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Earlbaum Associates.
Bruna, K. R. 2009. "Materializing Multiculturalism: Deconstruction and Cumulation in Teaching Language, Culture, and (non)Identity Reflections on Roth and Kellogg." *Mind, Culture, and Activity* 16 (2): 183–190.
Cole, C. 2006. "Closing the Achievement Gap Series: Part III What is the Impact of NCLB on the Inclusion of Students with Disabilities?" *Education Policy Brief* 4 (11): 1–12.
Cole, M., and Y. Engeström. 1993. "A Cultural–Historical Approach to Distributed Cognition." In *Distributed Cognition: Psychological and Educational Considerations*, edited by G. Salomon, 1–46. New York: Cambridge University Press.
Cole, M., and K. Levitin. 2000. *Being Humans: Anthropological Universality and Particularity In Trans-Disciplinary Perspectives*. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter.
Cone, K. 1997. *Short History of the 504 Sit in*. Accessed October 3, 2011. http://www.dredf.org/504site/histover.html.
Connor, D. J. 2008. *Urban Narratives: Portraits in Progress: Life at the Intersections of Learning Disability, Race, & Social Class*. New York: Peter Lang Publishing.
Crawford, J. 2004. *Educating English Learners: Language Diversity Ill the Classroom*. Los Angeles: Bilingual Education Services.
Danforth, S., and W. C. Rhodes. 1997. "Deconstructing Disability: A Philosophy for Inclusion." *Remedial and Special Education* 18 (6): 357–366.
Davis, L. J. 1999. "Crips strike back: The rise of disability studies." *American Literary History* 11 (3): 500–512.
Davis, L. J. 2006. "Constructing Normalcy: The Bell Curve, the Novel, and the Invention of the Disabled Body in the Nineteenth Century." In *The disability studies reader*, edited by L. Davis, 2nd ed. 3–19. New York: Routledge.
Department of Education, Federal Register. 2002. No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001, Pub. L. No. 107–110, § 115, Stat. 1425 (2002).
Derrida, J. 1967. *Of Grammatology*, trans. by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.
Donovan, S., and C. T. Cross. 2002. *Minority Students in Special and Gifted Education*. Washington, DC: National Academy Press.
Dudley-Marling, C., and A. Gurn. 2010. "Troubling the Foundations of Special Education: Examining the Myth of the Normal Curve." In *The Myth of the Normal Curve*, edited by C. Dudley-Marling and A. Gurn, 9–24. New York: Peter Lang Publishing.
Erevelles, N. 2000. "Educating Unruly Bodies: Critical Pedagogy, Disability Studies, and the Politics of Schooling." *Educational Theory* 50 (1): 25–47.
Escamilla, K. 2006. "Semilingualism Applied to the Literacy Behaviors of Spanish Speaking Emerging Bilinguals: Emerging Biliteracy or Biliteracy?" *Teacher's College Record* 108 (11): 2329–2353.
Fadiman, A. 1997. *The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down: A Hmong Child, Her American Doctors, and the Collision of two Cultures*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux.
Fendler, L., and I. Muzaffar. 2008. "The History of the Bell Curve: Sorting and the Idea of Normal." *Educational Theory* 58 (1): 63–82.
Ferri, B. A. 2011. "Undermining Inclusion? A Critical Reading of Response to Intervention (RtI)." *International Journal of Inclusive Education* 16 (8): 1–18.
Ferri, B. A., and D. J. Connor. 2005. "In the Shadow of Brown: Special Education and Overrepresentation of Students of Color." *Remedial and Special Education* 26 (2): 93–100.
Foucault, M. 1995. *The Archeology of Knowledge and the Discourse on Language*. New York: Pantheon Books.

Fusarelli, L. D. 2004. "The Potential Impact of the No Child Left Behind Act on Equity and Diversity in American Education." *Educational Policy* 18 (1): 71–94.
Gabel, S. 2005. *Disability Studies in Education*. New York: Peter Lang Publishing.
Gallagher, D. J. 2005. "Searching for Something Outside of Ourselves: The Contradiction Between Technical Rationality and the Achievement of Inclusive Pedagogy." In *Disability Studies in Education: Readings in Theory and Method*, edited by S. L. Gabel, 139–154. New York: Peter Lang Publishing.
Gandara, P., and D. Bial. 2001. *Paving the Way to Postsecondary Education: K-12 Intervention Programs for Underrepresented Youth*. Washington, DC: National Center for Education Statistics, Office of Educational Research and Improvement, US Department of Education.
Gillborn, D. 2005. "Education Policy as an Act of White Supremacy: Whiteness, Critical Race Theory and Education Reform." *Journal of Education Policy* 20 (4): 485–505.
Glass, G. V., and M. L. Smith. 1979. "Meta-analysis of Research on Class Size and Achievement." *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis* 1 (1): 2–16.
Goodrich Ratcliffe, K., and D. T. Willard. 2006. "NCLB and IDEA: Perspectives from the Field." *Focus on Exceptional Children* 39 (3): 1–14.
Gorski, P. 2008. "The Myth of the Culture of Poverty." *Educational Leadership* 65 (7): 32–37. http://www.ascd.org/publications/educational-leadership/apr08/vol65/num07/The-Myth-of-the-Culture-of-Poverty.aspx
Gotanda, N. 1991. "A Critique of 'Our Constitution is Color-blind'." *Stanford Law Review* 44 (1): 1–68.
Gould, S. J. 1996. *The Mismeasure of Man*. New York: W. W. Norton.
Gutiérrez, K. D., J. Asato, M. Santos, and N. Gotanda. 2002. "Backlash Pedagogy: Language and Culture and the Politics of Reform." *The Review of Education, Pedagogy, and Cultural Studies* 24 (4): 335–351.
Gutiérrez, K. D., P. Baquedano-Lopez, and C. Tejada. 1999. "Rethinking Diversity: Hybridity and Hybrid Language Practices in the Third Space." *Mind, Culture, and Activity* 6 (4): 286–303.
Hakuta, K. 1990. *Bilingualism and Bilingual Education: A Research Perspective*. Washington, DC: George Washington University, Center for Applied Linguistics.
Harry, B. 1994. *The Disproportionate Representation of Minority Students in Special Education: Theories and Recommendations*. Washington, DC: National Association of State Directors of Special Education, US Department of Education, Office of Educational Research and Improvement, Educational Resources Information Center.
Harry, B., and J. Klingner. 2006. *Why Are so Many Minority Students in Special Education?*. New York: Teachers College.
Heller, K. A., W. H. Holtzman, and S. Messick. 1982. *Placing Children in Special Education*. Washington, DC: National Academy Press.
Hodgkinson, H. 2002. "Demographics and Teacher Education: An Overview." *Journal of Teacher Education* 53 (2): 102–105.
Kertzner, R. M., I. H. Meyer, D. M. Frost, and M. J. Stirratt. 2009. "Social and Psychological Well-being in Lesbians, Gay Men, and Bisexuals: The Effects of Race, Gender, Age, and Sexual Identity." *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry* 79 (4): 500–510.
Klingner, J. K., and P. Edwards. 2006. "Cultural Considerations with Response to Intervention Models." *Reading Research Quarterly* 41 (1): 108–117.
Kudlick, C. J. 2003. "Disability History: Why We Need another 'Other'." *The American History Review* 108 (3): 763–793.
Ladson-Billings, G. 1998. "Just What is Critical Race Theory and What's it Doing in a Nice Field Like Education?" *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education* 11 (1): 7–24.
Ladson-Billings, G. 2006. "From the Achievement Gap to the Education Debt: Understanding Achievement in US Schools." *Educational Researcher* 35 (7): 3–12.
Lee, C. D. 2002. "Interrogating Race and Ethnicity as Constructs in the Examination of Cultural Processes in Developmental Research." *Human Development* 45 (4): 282–290.
Leonardo, Z. 2003. "Discourse and Critique: Outlines of a Post-structural Theory of Ideology." *Journal of Education Policy* 18 (2): 203–214.
Leont'ev, A. N. 1978. *Activity, Consciousness, and Personality*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

Locust, C. 1988. "Wounding the Spirit: Discrimination and Traditional American Indian Belief systems." *Harvard Educational Review* 58 (3): 315–330.
Losen, D. J., and G. Orfield. 2002. *Racial Inequity in Special Education*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Education Press.
Matsuda, M. J. 1987. "Looking to the Bottom: Critical Legal Studies and Reparations." *Harvard Civil Rights-Civil Liberties Law Review* 22: 323.
McDermott, R., S. Goldman, and H. Varenne. 2006. "The Cultural Work of Learning Disabilities." *Educational Researcher* 35 (6): 12–17.
McDermott, R., and J. Raley. 2011. "Toward a Natural History of Human Ingenuity." In *The SAGE Handbook of Visual Research Methods*, edited by E. Margolis and L. Pauwels, 372–391. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.
Menchaca, M. 1997. "Early Racist Discourses: Roots of Deficit Thinking." In *The Evolution of Deficit Thinking: Educational Thought and Practice*. edited by R. Valencia, 113–131. London: RoutledgeFalmer.
Mendez, L. M.R., and H. M. Knoff. 2003. "Who Gets Suspended from School and Why: A Demographic Analysis of Schools and Disciplinary Infractions in a Large School District." *Education and Treatment of Children* 26 (1): 30–51.
Milofsky, C. 1986. "Is the growth of special education evolutionary or cyclic? A response to carrier." *American Journal of Education* 94 (3): 313–321.
Mostade, S.J. 2004. "Components of Internalized Homophobia, Self-disclosure of Sexual Orientation to Physician, and Durable Power of Attorney for Health Care Completion in Older Gay Men". Dissertation Retrieved from OhioLINK ETD Center.
Moynihan, D. P. 1965. *The Negro Family: The Case for National Action*. Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office.
National Education Association of the United States, and National Association of School Psychologists. 2007. *Truth in Labeling: Disproportionality in Special Education*. Washington, DC: National Education Association.
Nocella, A. 2008. "Emergence of Disability Pedagogy." *Journal of Critical Education Policy Studies* 6 (2): 77–94.
Noguera, P. A., and J. Yonemura Wing. 2006. *Unfinished Business: Closing the Racial Achievement Gap in Our Nation's Schools*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
Omi, M., and H. Winant. 1994. *Racial Formation in the United States: From the 1960's to the 1990's*. New York: Routledge.
Oswald, D. P., M. J. Coutinho, and A. M. Best. 2002. "Community and School Predictors of Overrepresentation of Minority Children in Special Education." In *Racial Inequality in Special Education*, edited by D. Losen and G. Orfield, 1–13. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Education Press.
Patton, J. M. 1998. "The Disproportionate Representation of African Americans in Special Education." *Journal of Special Education* 32 (1): 25–31.
Peterson, J. M., and M. M. Hittie. 2010. *Inclusive Teaching: The Journey Toward Effective Schools for all Learners*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education.
Prichard, B., S. Annamma, A. Boelé, and J. Klingner. 2010. "Race, Language, and Ability: Deconstructing, Reconstructing, and Transcending Borders of Normal." *Teachers College Record*, June 22. http://www.tcrecord.org (ID Number: 16028).
Quinn, M. M., R. B. Rutherford, P. E. Leone, D. M. Osher, and J. M. Poirier. 2005. "Youth with Disabilities in Juvenile Corrections: A National Survey." *Exceptional Children* 71 (3): 339–345.
Reid, D. K., and M. G. Knight. 2006. "Disability Justifies Exclusion of Minority Students: A Critical History Grounded in Disability Studies." *Educational Researcher* 35 (6): 18–23.
Revilla, A. T., and J. Asato. 2002. "The Implementation of Proposition 227 in California Schools: A Critical Analysis of the Effect of Teacher Beliefs and Classroom Practices." *Equity & Excellence in Education* 35 (2): 108–118.
Serpell, R., L. Mariga, and K. Harvey. 1993. "Mental Retardation in African Countries: Conceptualization, Services, and Research." *International Review of Research in Mental Retardation* 19: 1–39.
Shaywitz, S. E., M. D. Escobar, B. A. Shaywitz, J. M. Fletcher, and R. Makuch. 1992. "Evidence that Dyslexia may Represent the Lower Tail of a Normal Distribution of Reading ability." *New England Journal of Medicine* 326 (6): 145–150.

Skiba, R.J., R.S. Michael, A.C. Nardo, and R. Peterson. 2000. "*The Color of Discipline: Sources of Racial and Gender Disproportionality in School Punishment*" (Policy Research Report). Bloomington: Education Policy Center, Indiana University.

Slee, R. 1997. "Inclusion or Assimilation? Sociological Explorations of the Foundations of Theories of Special Education." *Educational Foundations* 11 (1): 55–71.

Slee, R. 2001. "Driven to the Margins: Disabled Students, Inclusive Schooling and the Politics of Possibility." *Cambridge Journal of Education* 31 (3): 385–397.

Sullivan, A. L. 2011. "Disproportionality in Special Education Identification and Placement of English Language Learners." *Exceptional Children* 77 (3): 317–334.

Taubman, P. M. 2009. *Teaching by Numbers: Deconstructing the Discourse of Standards and Accountability in Education*. New York: Routledge.

Trent, S., A. Artiles, K. Firchett-Bazemore, L. McDaniel, and A. Coleman-Sorrell. 2002. "Addressing Theory, Ethics, Power, and Privilege in Inclusion Research and Practice." *Teacher Education and Special Education* 25 (1): 11–22.

Tyack, D. B. 1974. *The One Best System: A History of American Urban Education*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Valencia, R. R. 1997. "Conceptualizing the Notion of Deficit Thinking." In *The Evolution of Deficit Thinking: Educational Thought and Practice*, edited by R. Valencia, 113–131. London: Routledge Falmer.

Voltz, D. L., and C. Fore III. 2006. "Urban Special Education in the Context of Standards Based Reform." *Remedial and Special Education* 27 (6): 329–336.

Vygotsky, L. S. 1986. *Thought and Language*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Wald, J., and D. Losen. 2003. Defining and Redirecting a School-to-prison Pipeline. Retrieved from The Civil Rights Project at Harvard University website: http://www.woodsfund.org/community/Folder_1036081004377/File_1084877618748.

Ware, L. P. 2002. "A Moral Conversation on Disability: Risking the Personal in Educational Contexts." *Hypatia* 17 (3): 143–172.

Zinn, H. 1980. *A People's History of the United States: 1492 to Present*. New York: Harper Collins Publishers.