

Sociology of Education

Section Newsletter

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A Note from the Chair, Doug Downey



I'm very excited about a new section of our newsletter: "Room for Debate: Sociology of Education" section. New York Times readers will be familiar with their "Room for Debate" section—I'm hoping to produce similar discussions in our newsletter, but

focused around education topics. For the first attempt I've asked Kevin Dougherty, Michael Hout, Josipa Roksa, Jennifer Jennings, Michael Sauder/Wendy Espeland, and Jim Rosenbaum to discuss how President Obama's new College Scorecard will matter. Their discussion is first-rate, noting how the President's website will provide greater information to those considering college, questioning the quality of that information, and assessing the big-picture consequences of the College Scorecard.

I'm very grateful to each of the participants for their thoughtful pieces.

I also have several section members to thank for their work. A big thank you to Susan Dumais for

chairing our nominations committee. They have already completed their work producing a strong group of candidates for the upcoming ASA elections. Other members of the committee included Will Tyson, Ben Gibbs, Brian Powell, and Regina Deil-Amin. Well done!

And the awards committees will begin their work after the February 1st nominations deadlines. The David Lee Stevenson Award is chaired by Paul von Hippel (other members are Geoffrey Borman, Allison Attebury, Jennifer Jellison Holme, and Joe Merry). Scott Davies chairs the Pierre Bourdieu Award (other committee members include Jenny Stuber, Michael Olneck, Ann Mullen, and Jessica McCrory). And Jennifer Jennings is chairing the James Coleman Award (with help from Jenny Brand, Michael Gaddis, and Aaron Pallas). The papers for the Sociology of Education section sessions at next year's ASA will be organized by Amy Langenkamp and Kim Goyette. Jennifer Pearson and Anna Mueller will handle the roundtable submissions.

I appreciate the contributions of all of these section members.

Finally, as our newsletter is going to press it is with great sadness that I learned that Doris Entwisle passed away. Some of you may recall that I wrote a note in a previous SOE newsletter about the 1992 Entwisle and Alexander "Summer Setback" article, arguing that it should have been a classic. It may have seemed odd to posit that this heavily cited article published in the *American Sociological Review* should have received even greater visibility, but after reading it, my own research was never the same.

Karl Alexander knew Doris both professionally and personally and he has graciously shared the obituary he wrote for the Johns Hopkins community.

Sincerely,

Doug Downey

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Obituary: Doris Roberts Entwisle



Sociology at Hopkins and the entire University community lost one of its most cherished faculty earlier this week when Doris Roberts Entwisle succumbed to cancer. Doris's Hopkins career spanned more than a half century. She was a towering figure in sociology and child development, but her path into and through academia was an uncommon one. Early in her married life while a stay-at-home mom, Doris entertained herself working the problems in the back of statistics books. Her first professional appointment was as assistant to the eminent Harvard statistician Robert Mosteller. It was Hopkins' good fortune that her husband George took an appointment at the University of Maryland School of Medicine, as that brought her to Baltimore. Upon completing her PhD, Doris's first Hopkins

appointment was as a research associate in electrical engineering, where in 1963 she wrote one of the first books on programmed instruction, "Autoprimer in Computer Programming" (Blaisdell Publishing). That was the first of eleven books, with a twelfth scheduled for publication this spring.

From 1964 through 1998 Doris held joint appointments Sociology and Engineering, but for most of that time her primary affiliation was Sociology. Her early studies in sociology focused on developmental sociolinguistics, early child development and family processes. I first came to know Doris when I arrived at Hopkins in 1972, fresh out of graduate school. The department's faculty at the time (then named the Department of Social Relations) included two giants in the field, Jim Coleman and Pete Rossi. They were the big names, but I quickly came to understand that the Department's real leadership rested in the hands of two of its other senior faculty, Doris Entwisle and Ed McDill. Neither at the time had the stature of Jim or Pete, but they had something else: a deep commitment to the department, a commitment that held us together during some very lean and challenging times. Mac (to his friends) was chair when I arrived and he remained chair for the next ten years until I was promoted to Full Professor and succeeded him. Doris somehow managed to avoid taking on the duties of Chair over all her many years in the department – how she did that is one lesson I never managed to learn from her – but it was clear to everyone that she led nonetheless, quietly but effectively.

"Quiet and Effective" characterizes Doris' leadership style more generally. Doris epitomized professionalism, in appearance and in the way she carried herself. And as one of the few senior women on the faculty at the time, she felt a special obligation to help smooth the path for those that would follow. Doris mentored more junior faculty than could be counted – not just women and not just in Sociology, but especially women new to the faculty. It is certain that she ran up huge bills at the Hopkins Club for the many lunches she hosted to welcome newcomers, and often those lunches were followed by a small but meaningful token, a book or a gift for a child. Doris was a private person. She never sought attention, but those many gestures over many years came from the heart and they convey a sense of the very special person Doris was.

I respected Doris from the outset, but our relationship deepened when she invited me to assist her as Deputy Editor of the journal *Sociology of Education* during her term as editor, 1976 to 1979. When that work concluded, we began exploring opportunities to collaborate on a research project. The result was the Beginning School Study, launched in the summer of 1982 and intended to run three years – two years gathering data and a year of analysis. The project instead remained active in the field until 2006 and our collaboration continued until her passing, when we completed work on our fourth book, scheduled for publication this spring. It is impossible to convey what it has been like to work closely with such an extraordinary scholar and such an extraordinary person for over thirty years. Or the loss when it comes to such an abrupt end. To say that Doris was my mentor and inspiration I suppose is the sense of it, but it's more than that, and deeper.

The Beginning School Study is the capstone of both our careers. Our goal was to understand how children acclimate to their initial experience of schooling, the transition from “home child” to “school child” is how we put it in some of writing. Toward that end we selected a representative random sample of just under 800 children who were starting first grade in fall 1982 in 20 public schools scattered throughout Baltimore. The idea was to watch on carefully during the first grade year to understand why it is that some children have a smooth and successful transition, while for other it is much bumpier. Our interest centered on conditions at home and at school and on differences across social lines, by race, gender, and family socioeconomic standing. At first it was with an eye toward implications for schooling; over the later years, it extended to their lives beyond school. Though the project evolved, its agenda remained the same all throughout the quarter century spent interviewing the study participants, first as children, then as adolescents and concluding close to the end of their third decade as young adults (their parents and teachers as well).

Doris “retired” in 1998, but her career ended the way it began, unconventionally. She stayed on as an Emeritus member of the faculty and as Research Professor to continue our work on the Beginning School Study. She did ratchet back a notch, taking up windsurfing and investing more time in her love of bridge, but Doris remained sharp and productive to the very end. In 1997 her scholarly contributions were recognized by the Society for Research in Child Development through its Award for Distinguished Contributions to Child Development. For most recipients, that honor is a lifetime achievement award. For Doris, it came mid-stride.

Doris will be missed by many, but her legacy lives on in the many students and colleagues she mentored and in the research agenda she established – to understand better the early period of schooling from a sociological perspective. Personally, I will be forever grateful for having had the rare opportunity to know her so well, and to have learned so much from her.

Doris was the widow of George Entwisle, who died in 1990, and Donald Roberts, who died in 2002. She leaves her three children and their families: Barbara Entwisle, Ken, Kerry, and Paige Bollen of Chapel Hill, North Carolina; BJ Entwisle, Rachel Eades, and Paxton Hill of Canterbury, New Hampshire; and Hank, Amy, Charlie, and Nathan Entwisle, of Ruxton, Maryland. She also leaves her sister, Jean Roberts Hunter, of Concord New Hampshire.

By Karl Alexander

Room for Debate: Sociology of Education

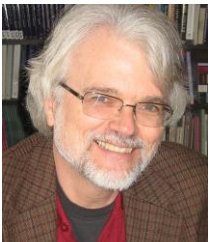
In his 2013 state of the union message, president Obama promoted “a new 'College Scorecard' that parents and students can use to compare schools based on a simple criteria — where you can get the most bang for your educational buck.” The scorecard is up and running at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/issues/education/higher-education/college-score-card> where students can find information regarding net price, graduation rate, loan default rate, median borrowing, and employment outcomes.

How will the new "College Scorecard" matter?



“The new college scorecard... will certainly matter, in ways both good and bad.”

Kevin J. Dougherty, *Teachers College Columbia University*



“We need more than a cool website to boost the graduation rate”

Mike Hout, *New York University*



“What can higher education learn from performance measurement in Health Care?”

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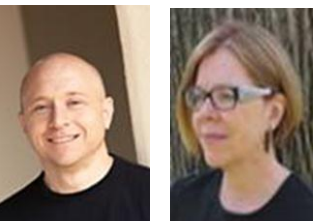
“Sociology can have an impact in making (the scorecard) effective.”

James E. Rosenbaum, Caitlin Ahearn, Kelly Becker, *New York University*



“The College Scorecard and soon to be developed institutional ratings have high symbolic value.”

Josipa Roksa, *University of Virginia*



“We remain skeptical that this form of performance evaluation will address fundamental problems of inequality.”

Michael Sauder, *University of Iowa*, **Wendy Espeland**, *Northwestern University*

How Will New College Scorecard Matter: The Benefits, Limits, and Costs of the Federal Push for Greater Consumer Information and Institutional Accountability*

Kevin J. Dougherty, *Teachers College Columbia University*

The new College Scorecard announced by President Obama earlier this year will certainly matter, in ways both good and bad. As we know, the Scorecard consists of a website that will provide data for individual institutions on their average net price, graduation rate, loan default rate, median borrowing, and employment (as yet unspecified but likely to include median earnings and perhaps job placement rates). The College Scorecard is part of a package of proposals that President Obama has made to increase student information about college performance and to push higher education institutions to become more accountable (<http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2013/08/22/fact-sheet-president-s-plan-make-college-more-affordable-better-bargain->). Besides providing college “consumers” with information on college performance through the Scorecard, President Obama has called for tying federal aid to a new institutional performance ratings system to be developed by 2015. The College Scorecard appears to be the germ of this rating system. Moreover, the President has called for a Race to the Top competition for higher education funding that, among other things, would push states to adopt performance funding (in which state funding to higher education is tied to institutional performance indicators). This growing federal push for greater institutional accountability deserves very careful scrutiny. It promises important benefits but it also carries considerable dangers that need to be thoughtfully anticipated and countered.

On the plus side, the federal government’s push to provide information on net cost is important. Students certainly need better cost information, particularly not just sticker prices but also net costs. Students too often focus on published tuition and fees and miss how much financial aid they might get. As a result, they frequently overestimate net prices and may end up not going to college or going to a lower quality college. Furthermore, if the President’s proposals make colleges perform better, this will certainly benefit the many students who enter college and leave without any degree, perhaps because they became enmeshed in ineffective developmental education and never were able to move to the college-credit side of the curriculum. However, problems with the College Scorecard’s other indicators illustrate the dangers that lie ahead as the federal government develops an institutional rating system to drive not just information provision to students but also federal student aid. The other indicators are inadequately measured and will provide information to students and to policymakers that may be quite misleading.

The principal measurement inadequacy lies in the lack of attention to student background and important institutional differences. The College Scorecard does not break down institutional information by type of student. Prospective students will learn what the graduation rate is for students generally but not what it is for students of a particular race, gender, or income. Moreover, the indicators will be benchmarked against the average for institutions offering the same level of degree, comparing a four-year college to other four-year colleges and a community college to other two-year colleges. This is far too crude a comparison. Institutional outcomes differ by college selectivity, student composition, degree/program mix, and location. Without controlling for these differences, institutions that admit less prepared and less advantaged students, offer less remunerative majors, or are located in parts of the country with poorer economies will be unfairly compared to institutions that are more advantaged. Hence, the College Scorecard should at the very

* My thanks to Floyd Hammack for his comments on this note.

Kevin J. Dougherty Continued...

least provide more finely grained comparisons than simply comparing the data for a college against all other colleges offering the same level of degree.

In addition to these general flaws, there are flaws specific to each indicator. The graduation rate is based on first-time, full-time entrants who graduate from that college 3 or 6 years later (depending on whether they entered a two-year or four-year college). This measure does not include part-time students, who make up one-third of all college students and three-fifths of community college students. Moreover, even students who enter full time often do not graduate within the allotted time, since they not infrequently go part-time in subsequent semesters. Graduation rates are particularly problematic for community college because many students transfer without first getting a community college degree. To address this, the College Scorecard will couple graduation rates with data on numbers transferring. However, will students and policymakers treat transfer numbers as part of the graduation rate for community colleges – which they should – or will they focus only on the nominal graduation rates?

The employment indicators are likely to be flawed as measures of institutional outcomes because apparently they too will not control for differences in student composition, program mix, and region. Colleges that enroll more advantaged students, prepare students for jobs that pay well, and are located in regions with strong economies will typically produce graduates who will earn more and have better employment rates. Finally, the median net borrowing and loan default indicators also do not control for the background of students. We can expect that colleges with many low-income entrants will typically have more borrowing and higher default rates than colleges whose entrants are better off. But does higher student borrowing or more loan default in and of itself indicate that a college is not performing well?

The College Scorecard is also missing indicators that might be very important to students as they think about colleges. For example, there is nothing in the Scorecard on the racial/ethnic and socio-economic diversity of colleges. This would be very important, particularly to minority and low-income students, in shedding light on how welcoming a college might be. Also, there are no indicators on the student academic experience. It would be very useful to know what percentage of the faculty is part-time and what the student/teacher ratio is. More generally, it would be interesting if the Scorecard could include measures similar to those in the National Survey of Student Engagement and the Community College Survey of Student Engagement. These kinds of data are harder to collect but it is important not to have the Scorecard focus just on the more easily collected data. Too often what is easily collected becomes reified as what needs to be collected.

The strong federal push for greater institutional accountability – as marked by the College Scorecard -- will bring benefits, but it could also produce substantial negative side effects. For example, if the indicators that are used do not take into account important institutional differences, will the federal government contribute to pushing mass-access colleges -- in order to generate better graduation rates – to admit fewer students who are less prepared and less advantaged and weaken their academic standards? There is already evidence that these negative side effects have occurred in the case of state performance funding programs (see [http://ccrc.tc.columbia.edu/ Performance-Funding.html](http://ccrc.tc.columbia.edu/Performance-Funding.html)). The magnitude of these negative unintended outcomes will depend greatly on how carefully and thoughtfully the federal government pursues its strategy of pushing colleges to become more accountable.

We Need More Than a Cool Website to Boost the Graduation Rate

Mike Hout, *New York University*

The White House College Scorecard website (<http://www.whitehouse.gov/issues/education/higher-education/college-score-card>) aspires to help young people find the college that best fits them on two important criteria: affordability and completion. Visitors to the website can type in the name of a college or university and see 1) the net price of attending, 2) how fast that increased between 2007 and 2009, 3) the six-year graduation rate for first-time freshmen, 4) the student-loan default rate, and 5) the expected monthly payment on a median loan among borrowers from that college. The website promises data on employment outcomes in the future.

If America's biggest higher education problem is that too many students attend the wrong college for lack of information about cost and graduation rates, then we would have to say that this is a terrific solution. The website presents reliable, objective information. It is easy to use and mostly easy to understand (why do they call degrees "awards"?). And it surely cost far less than giving money to students or colleges would have.

But really, could a mere website, no matter how clever, solve anything? The model is the *U.S. News* rankings. They stimulated competition. If colleges start competing on the scorecard measures, good things might happen. And the scorecard shifts attention away from exclusivity to cost and completion. They are better criteria. Cynicism vanquished, I remain skeptical.

The website's premise is that American students go to the wrong colleges. With better information, young people will make better choices and raise the nation's college graduation rate. Important research supports this premise. In *Crossing the Finish Line*, a study of the 1999 freshman class at public universities, William G. Bowen, Matthew M. Chingos, and Michael S. McPherson make the case that a certain kind of student would be better off attending a different college. They focused on college enrollment patterns among North Carolina high school seniors who had grades and test scores that predicted success in college but who lacked college background (neither parent had gone beyond high school). They found that "*only about one-third*" [their italics, p. 104] went to the top public universities. The rest went to less-selective colleges (43 percent), two-year colleges (9 percent), or no college (12 percent). They call the pattern "undermatching" and argue it reduces degree attainment because they would have a better chance of graduating if they chose to attend the top universities. They concluded, "The key is to find ever more effective ways of informing high-achieving students and their parents of the educational opportunities that are open to them" (p. 104).

The College Scorecard answers that call. Using the scorecard to compare colleges probably will lead some of the likely-to-succeed, first-generation youth that Bowen, Chingos, and McPherson worried about to choose colleges that give them a better chance at a degree. Table 1 shows what I got from searching the College Scorecard for information on BA-granting institutions in North Carolina (I picked that state because Bowen, Chingos, and McPherson discovered undermatching in North Carolina data).

Mike Hout Continued...

Table 1. Scorecard Output for Selected BA-Granting Universities in North Carolina by Sector

Name	Type	Net Cost	Grad Rate	Loan Default	Loan Monthly
Public					
UNC, Chapel Hill	Flag	\$ 11,028	89	<1%	\$ 197
NC state	Sel-A	\$ 9,947	72	3%	\$ 213
UNC, Asheville	Sel-B	\$ 9,131	61	6%	\$ 161
East Carolina	Sel-B	\$ 9,514	58	3%	\$ 210
Private, nonprofit					
Elon	--	\$ 28,208	82	2%	\$ 265
Duke	--	\$ 22,879	94	1%	\$ 102
Private, for-profit					
Phoenix (on-line)	--	\$ 16,585	17	26%	\$ 135
Phoenix, Charlotte	--	\$ 21,722	10	26%	\$ 135

Note: The types were defined by Bowen et al. (2007). “Flag” is the state’s flagship public university, freshmen entering “Sel-A” universities have SAT/ACT scores of 1150 or higher; freshmen entering “Sel-B” universities have lower SAT/ACT scores. Sources: Type: Bowen et al. (2007), Tables 1.1-1.2. All other columns: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/issues/education/higher-education/college-score-card>; accessed 12 September 2013.

UNC Chapel Hill looks very attractive in this comparison. The \$11,000 net cost is higher than other public universities in the state, but the 89 percent graduation rate is proportionally higher. NC State is easier to get into, and 72 percent earn their BAs. The two less-selective publics graduate only 60 percent of the students who start there. *U.S. News* ranked Elon University (in Elon, NC) as the South’s top regional university. Elon has a respectable 82 percent graduation rate but the highest tuition and monthly student loan payments in this group. Duke costs less than Elon because Duke offers more financial aid to offset the higher tuition there. Duke still costs twice what UNC costs. Even so, Duke students borrow much less than students at the other colleges. The scorecard does not elaborate so we have no idea if that is because the kind of young people who go to Duke save up in advance or because Duke does something to reduce students’ need to borrow that does not show up as lower net cost.

The for-profit colleges, represented here by the University of Phoenix, have higher net cost than the public colleges and even higher than Duke for the Charlotte campus. Among Phoenix students who enter with a goal of earning a BA, only 17 percent of on-line students and 10 percent of Charlotte students achieve that goal or transfer to a college that grants BAs. A quarter of Phoenix students default on their loans even though the monthly payments are lower, on average, than at state universities.

So the scorecard points the young would-be applicant at the two most famous universities in North Carolina: UNC and Duke. It marks NC State as the good safety school, possibly deflecting some students from UNC Asheville and

Mike Hout Continued...

East Carolina to NC State. Elon does not look quite as attractive on the Scorecard as in the *US News* ratings, but its 82 percent graduation rate is very good. The University of Phoenix looks expensive and risky. Real-life searches like this will probably result in different individual choices.

At the margin, a single student's choice cannot affect how the system works, but the administration hopes the College Scorecard changes tens-of-thousands of young people's college choices. Better choices will increase the nation's college graduation rate only if they raise some students' chances without diminishing any other student's success. That may be harder to do than it sounds. If the scorecard inspires better choices, then the yields (the fraction of admitted students who enroll) at colleges that look good on the scorecard will increase. After a year or two of higher yields, those colleges will either be more crowded, jeopardizing the high graduation rate, or more selective in future admissions, displacing students. By this reasoning, the College Scorecard, if it succeeds, cannot sustain its success. To increase college graduation we need more than a website that warns those who can avoid struggling colleges to do so.

To get more graduates, the higher education system will have to either increase capacity at the effective colleges or make the others more effective. Precedents exist in the private sector now and in the public sector of the past. New York University, where I teach now, has increased undergraduate enrollment by 23 percent in the last ten years. The six-year graduation rate has not fallen, it is up slightly from 84 to 86 percent. NYU has during the same ten years increased total faculty by 69 percent and full-time regular faculty by 36 percent. NYU has also raised both tuition and financial aid during this time. In doing what works at a bigger scale, NYU costs more but yields more graduates. Public universities grew dramatically in the 1960s before states cut investment. They raised graduation rates without increasing cost because states used to be committed to providing higher education.

To raise their graduation rates, UNC-Asheville, East Carolina, and similar colleges across the country will have to spend money to improve student-faculty ratios and academic services. Unlike NYU, they cannot just raise tuition. Success for them will come from a college scorecard reading that shows both low net cost and high graduation rate. In this sense, the College Scorecard helps by articulating the terms of comparison — cost and graduation. Acting alone, colleges trade one against the other. To raise graduation without increasing cost, the American public will have to invest in what happens at the nation's less selective public universities.

What Can Higher Education Learn from Performance Measurement in Health Care?

Jennifer Jennings, New York University

How will the Obama Administration's College Scorecard and associated policies that give its rating system teeth (i.e. tying financial aid to these ratings) affect higher education? Rather than prognosticate blindly, I instead propose that we turn to another field with more experience in this area - health care - to help us identify questions we should be asking about performance measurement in higher education.

Aren't health care and higher education too different to compare, though? I first want to argue that multiple measurement challenges are shared across both fields. I detail these similarities below:

- *Insufficient data:* In both higher education and health care, there are insufficient data systems in place for measuring outcomes and student/patient "inputs," and ensuring comparability across institutions and state boundaries.
- *Differences in the population served:* Health care providers serve patients with varying levels of disease severity, making it necessary to "risk adjust" outcomes to account for these differences. By the same token, colleges serve a heterogeneous student population with different goals and different propensities to be successful in college.
- *Incomplete control of providers in producing outcomes:* Most health care provision does not occur in the context of a hospital. As a result, patient treatment compliance and health behaviors play a large role in influencing outcomes, just as college students' study habits influence learning and credit accumulation.
- *Multidimensionality of outcomes:* Health providers aim to reduce mortality and morbidity, as well as to improve quality of life. They also attempt to achieve these goals while respecting patient treatment preferences and the importance that patients assign different outcomes. Similarly, higher education institutions have many goals, including increasing learning, completion, and employment outcomes. Just as patients may be willing to accept greater treatment risks in return for a better quality of life, students vary in their priorities, goals, and willingness to consent to different educational "treatments."
- *Reliance on proxy outcomes:* Health providers influence both short and long-term outcomes, but the field relies on short-term outcomes to measure quality. However, poor health care may not cause problems until far down the road, and care that is effective in the short-term may not be effective over a longer time frame. The same could be said for measuring college students' earnings after graduation; colleges may have different impacts on students' short and longer-term earnings prospects.
- *Multiple audiences:* Different stakeholders may require different types of information about institutional performance. Both hospital and college performance levels and their value-added may be relevant to patient and students' decision-making, whereas policymakers may be more concerned with cost-adjusted value-added measures.

This list is by no means exhaustive, but hopefully has convinced you that both fields share common performance measurement challenges. In what follows, I discuss two questions I believe to be central to assessing the potential impact of the College Scorecard.

Jennifer Jennings Continued...

What approaches to performance measurement are most likely to encourage desirable institutional responses?

A first consideration is how a given measurement approach is likely to affect institutional responses. Because it is not clear that higher education institutions know what practices to adopt in order to improve outcomes, an important consideration is how the College Scorecard and associated incentives may change institutions' selection of students. In an era of "big data," institutions can easily predict each students' odds of graduating and make admissions decisions accordingly.

The evidence on this issue in health care suggests that the publication of cardiac surgery report cards for doctors and hospitals led to avoidance of more sick patients and increased racial disparities in access to surgery. Just as doctors clearly have better information than any data collection system and can use this information to select patients that are likely to have better outcomes, so can higher education institutions.

Perhaps reducing higher education institutions' admission of unprepared students is a goal of measuring outcomes, but such a goal also conflicts with recent calls to substantially increase college graduation rates. The key lesson here is that the design of the Scorecard and the incentives attached to it can have profound impacts on organizational behavior, often in unanticipated ways.

What problems are we trying to solve, and how does the College Scorecard and the administration's associated policies address them?

From the Obama administration's perspective, the problem to be solved has at least three components. First, students have poor information about college outcomes, net costs, and their likely "return on investment." Second, policymakers lack information about relative performance for making decisions about governmental resource allocation and accountability. And third, institutions appear to lack motivation to improve performance in the absence of market or regulatory pressure. While these three problem conceptions are on the table in the health care measurement debate, identifying and scaling up practices associated with better outcomes is more central to the discussion. Because of the challenges inherent to outcome-based measurement, a significant fraction of performance measurement in health care has focused to date on providers' compliance with clinical practice guidelines, which outline best practices for treating particular conditions. Tools like "Hospital Compare," a Department of Health and Human Services website, track hospital performance on a subset of clinical practice indicators deemed most important for patient outcomes. For example, patients can determine that 90 percent of heart surgery outpatients at Columbia-Presbyterian Hospital received an antibiotic within one hour before surgery, compared with 92 percent in New York State overall. Though health care's focus on process clearly occurs for a number of other reasons, the knowledge base about what practices are associated with better outcomes paves the way for a different type of performance measurement.

I would like to suggest that the key issue missing in the higher education discussion is that we have limited knowledge about how to *substantially* improve student learning and persistence in higher education. This is a problem that the Scorecard does not address. To be sure, developing measures of higher education effectiveness has promise for identifying specific practices that lead to better outcomes. Comparing institutional performance is necessary to achieve this goal, but it is a starting point for improving practice, not an end in itself.

How Sociologists of Education can make the College Scorecard more Effective

James E. Rosenbaum, Caitlin Ahearn, Kelly Becker, *New York University*

Sociologists have long argued that education is a system, and the ways the various parts fit together determines how the system operates. Educational policy in the US tends to be fragmented and piecemeal, and policies tinker with isolated elements without regard for the larger system. Indeed, educational reform has often been characterized as Christmas tree ornaments hanging in isolation, connected only by thin tinsel. President Obama's scorecard represents an attempt at a welcome departure from such isolated policies, but it remains to be seen whether the scorecard is just another ornament, or whether it will be an instrument for creating an integrated effective educational system. As I will show, sociology can have impact in making it effective.

The scorecard represents a great opportunity in its potential integration of administrative data. Social scientists have long argued that states could greatly improve the effectiveness of institutions by creating integrated databases that reveal the outcomes of programs and institutions. These databases compile data from various administrative sources (payroll, unemployment, department of education) into one convenient place. Critics have worried about violating individuals' privacy, but several states have created good integrated databases with suitable protections. The fundamental problem is that without integrated databases, it is impossible to get systematic outcome information. Prior legislation (Workforce Investment Act) required reporting job outcomes, but most programs had to rely on alumni surveys, which had unacceptably low response rates. Administrative databases avoid those problems, and have relatively complete data at least for alumni who remain within state.

The traditional vague promises about the payoffs to college conceal a great deal of variation, and the scorecard provides a valuable set of indicators for students to assess differences across colleges. The President's Scorecard currently presents many important outcomes-- graduation rates, default rates, college cost, median borrowing amount. Eventually it will also include employment rates and average earnings of graduates who borrowed federal loans. The scorecard is also a great opportunity for a practical lesson -- teaching high school students how to analyze scorecard data for making college choices. Of course, choices of colleges and majors should not be made on the basis of just a few numbers, and the lesson will need to help students think about evaluating these numbers among many other considerations.

Educators have long assumed that students were somehow making their college choices based on some form of information like this, but in fact the information was not widely available. Further, students rarely knew how to access what little information they could. The college scorecard represents a substantial step toward providing the kind of information we always assumed students had.

Sociologists have a special burden to make sure this reform is beneficial, and not misused. Sociologists understand the limitations of pairwise comparisons (correlation is not causation). If the college has a lower graduation rate, sociologists know they need to adjust for confounding factors in assessing college impact. Politicians and the public don't see these nuances, and they risk creating policies that will hurt disadvantaged

Rosenbaum, Ahearn and Becker continued...

students. The information can become easily distorted. Moreover, if colleges are penalized for having poor completion rates, they may admit fewer students with low incomes because they have higher risk of dropout. Similarly, some state governors are pressuring colleges to guarantee credentials or job payoffs, and they might misuse the federal scorecard for this purpose. Some states have already created high stakes incentives, particularly in funding formulas. Although these efforts address very real concerns of students, holding schools accountable for outcomes they can't control leads to cheating and fraud. Although we learned that lesson with Educational Performance Contractin, which paid contractors for test score outcomes they couldn't control (Gramlich and Koshel, 1975), we seem to have forgotten it, so we had to learn it again with NCLB in the past decade (Sadovnik, et al., 2007). Instead of high-stakes punishments that require colleges to accomplish what they cannot control, providing information creates low-stakes incentives that are useful without forcing distortions. However, even with good information, the federal scorecard poses difficult issues of interpretation. Although society makes implicit promises about improved employment outcomes for those who complete higher education (Meyer, 1977), colleges rarely make explicit promises about career payoffs. Students are keenly concerned about employment rates and earnings, but employment rates and earnings may vary by local labor markets and by admissions criteria, and they may or may not reflect program effectiveness. Trade-offs may exist between employment rates and pursuing further degrees, and we don't want to punish schools that encourage graduates to pursue further education.

The federal scorecard pertains to the entire college, which indicates an important limitation, since much variation may exist between programs in the same college. In contrast, Florida is one of the few states that have integrated administrative records from education and employment sources. On its website <http://smart-college-choices.com/>, Florida presents an array of data on many academic and occupational programs in each college and allows comparison across programs and across colleges. This kind of information is potentially very helpful in warning students about unexpected outcomes. In our studies in community colleges, for example, we have interviewed students studying early childhood education who only discovered the low employment rates and low earnings in their second year of college.

In our current analyses of the Florida data, we find important complexities that highlight potential issues with the scorecard. We see some large differences in outcomes across schools. For instance, Miami-Dade College nursing program has a lower employment rate than many other state colleges (78% versus 90-95%) but in several other fields (EMS, paralegal, network services technician, accounting Tech), Miami-Dade has employment rates similar to other colleges. Earnings is quite similar across many colleges, but associate degree graduates of nursing programs in Tallahassee earn \$12,000 less than in Miami (\$40,000 v \$52,000). These differences may reflect program effectiveness, program specialty, local labor markets, selectivity, or other factors and interpretation requires more research on these topics (which we are currently doing). Despite the specificity of Florida's data, we still see shortcomings. The data alone won't tell us what to infer from the numbers. Similarly, the scorecard provides potentially useful information about college outcomes, but this is only the first step. Interpretations will be difficult, and students need to know this when evaluating the numbers provided.

Rosenbaum, Ahearn and Becker continued...

Is the college scorecard just another ornament on the Christmas tree of educational reform, or is it a powerful instrument for creating an integrated educational system? We see signs of the latter. The information provided is important, and it can be used to inform high school students about available options and how their college options can lead to productive adult roles, and indeed also onto higher degrees. Indeed, if like Florida, the college scorecard includes data on the rate of students who continue their studies, it can indicate degree ladders in which students proceed from certificates, to associate degrees, to bachelor's degrees, getting pay raises along the way.

Of course, reducing college outcomes to three numbers may distort students' perceptions of life after schooling. Although James Coleman (1973) noted the woeful lack of information about jobs among all American youth, and William Wilson (1996) noted the additional difficulties for those living in concentrated poverty neighborhoods, American society continues to assume that youth can make decisions among jobs. Earnings and employment rate are important, but jobs differ in other ways that young working adults consider important. Research indicates that young adults (age 25-32) consider jobs that offer autonomy and career preparation as even more satisfying than jobs with higher pay. Moreover, BA degrees are not the only way to get such jobs; certificates and associate degrees also lead to jobs with these characteristics (Janet Rosenbaum, 2012). Indeed, many jobs pay more because they have disagreeable working conditions: dirty, dangerous, unhealthy, strenuous, or dead-end (Ibid.). The college scorecard presents a few key indicators, but youth need to know more about the job world than just earnings.

Students have long doubted that high school does anything to help them get a good job. The fragmented character of American education erodes students' confidence that high school is relevant to anything they do afterwards. In recent research, we were surprised to discover that many students lack confidence that college will provide timely progress, relevant skills, and employment payoffs (Becker et al. 2014). The college scorecard has the potential to show high school and college students what real options they can consider. High schools and colleges can be instrumental in helping them understand these data, consider their options, and perhaps make choices that lead to higher success rates. This information could be an important first step towards greater integration of the educational system. However, these numbers alone are only the beginning. Students need a great deal of help to understand the numbers and make good choices. By providing careful analyses of the appropriate uses of these data, sociologists of education can help make this happen.

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From Individual Empowerment to Institutional Accountability

By Josipa Roksa, University of Virginia

The College Scorecard has two overarching purposes. The first is to provide information to student consumers, which is of little consequence. The second is to serve as a baseline for institutional accountability, which is potentially quite powerful. Apart from any tangible effects of the accountability component, the College Scorecard and soon to be developed institutional ratings have high symbolic value. They affirm the consumer logic permeating higher education and usher a new era of federal oversight. I will consider each point in turn.

Providing information to students and parents in order to facilitate wise decision-making sounds appealing. However, I hardly need to enumerate to sociologists the reasons why this approach is likely to have limited effects. I will make just a few points in this regard. First of all, most of the information provided in the College Scorecard is already available on line and savvy consumers can gain access to it through various sources. In some cases, the information is even provided in a better format and with more detail, such as the U.S. Department of Education's own College Navigator. For example, the College Scorecard provides only the six-year graduation and transfer out rate while the College Navigator provides additional information on first-to-second year retention, graduation rates within different timeframes (4, 6 and 8 years) and for different racial/ethnic groups.

This leads to the second point, which is that simplicity may be appealing but is often misleading. Knowing the average graduation rate at an institution says little about the individual's probability of graduating. This is especially the case since the graduation rates are calculated for first-time full-time students, who represent an ever-shrinking proportion of students in higher education. Moreover, the average graduation rate says more about the students the school admits than about what the school does. The average graduation rates are thus at best not helpful and at worst misleading as tools for individual decision-making.

Other measures provided in the College Scorecard face additional challenges, and if indeed used to choose colleges could have adverse effects. For example, default rates report the percentage of borrowers who default but do not take into consideration the proportion of students at the institution who borrow. Moreover, median borrowing reports the amount borrowed "for students' undergraduate study" at the institution, whether the student dropped out after a semester or graduated in six years. This can make schools with high dropout rates look like good choices. The only piece of information that avoids glaring issues and provides individualized information is not actually provided on the website – it's the net price calculator, which can be linked to from the College Scorecard, as well as a number of other sites.

Even if the information provided in the College Scorecard were useful for individual decision-making, would students use it? Public Agenda just released a survey of adults who were considering enrolling in college. Sociologists will not be surprised to learn that few prospective adult students surveyed knew about or consulted the College Scorecard, instead most gained information about colleges from family, friends and colleagues. Moreover, only half of the respondents believed that knowing information about graduation rates or borrowing was essential before

Roksa continued...

enrolling. I am not aware of such a survey of 18 year olds attending college right after high school, but it is doubtful that they would be any more rational (or at least rational in the terms defined by the College Scorecard). And even if students used the College Scorecard, given social class differences in cultural capital and college-search processes, the most likely users would be students from more advantaged backgrounds. But those students already have access to this (and other) information through parents, high school counselors and personal college advisors, and later in the process through campus visits and meetings with admission and financial aid officers. Notably, socioeconomically advantaged groups of students are not only more likely to use the information but also more likely to have adequate support to understand the meaning of specific metrics and avoid becoming confused and misinformed. As a source of information, thus, the College Scorecard offers little value.

But providing information is not the sole purpose of the College Scorecard. In the sentence preceding the one announcing the College Scorecard and used as a prompt for this essay, President Obama stated: "I ask Congress to change the Higher Education Act, so that affordability and value are included in determining which colleges receive certain types of federal aid." This statement foreshadowed the second purpose, which is to develop an accountability system. Although Richard Arum and I, among many others, have argued against federal accountability in higher education, the Obama administration is currently working on developing a rating system of postsecondary institutions. The rating system is expected to be based primarily on the information currently provided (or to be provided in terms of earnings) in the College Scorecard, and is intended to be tied to federal financial aid. The College Scorecard is thus just the first step in the march toward accountability.

Whether and how much institutions will be affected will depend on the details, on both how the ratings are developed and whether all or only a portion of financial aid is tied to the ratings. There are many considerations involved in this process, from what outcomes will be considered to how "value" will be estimated. It is not clear how ratings across different outcomes will be aggregated, as recent work using state data from Texas indicates that institutions do not perform equally well across different outcomes. And of course, outcomes currently reported in the College Scorecard say nothing about educational quality or development of either general collegiate skills or subject specific knowledge. Indeed an emphasis on graduation rates and earnings could have adverse effects on those outcomes.

Deciding what outcomes to consider is only the beginning of the conundrum. There is currently no indication of how "value" will be estimated other than to note that institutions of "similar missions" will be compared. But institutions vary in many more ways than their missions, from different characteristics of their student bodies to resources available. Estimating value based on labor market outcomes raises even more concerns, from local labor market conditions to discrepancies in pay between women and men (and that is after getting beyond the crucial question of whether it is sound to hold institutions accountable for outcomes over which they have limited control). The challenges of estimating "value" with currently available tools and data are far from being adequately appreciated.

Apart from how the ratings system may affect the distribution of financial aid, development of the College Scorecard and the associated rating system has high symbolic value. The information provided in the College Scorecard and even the ratings arguably matter less than the messages they convey to higher education institutions. The rhetoric

Roksa continued...

surrounding the College Scorecard clearly treats students (and their parents) as consumers and institutions as service providers, reaffirming the consumer logic already permeating higher education. Empowering consumers and further undermining the authority of institutions may in many ways produce the effects contrary to those intended. From *Campus Life* to *Academically Adrift*, research provides ample reason for concern about the choices traditional-age student consumers make in higher education. Indeed, a recent NBER paper reports that in a true consumer spirit, recent high school cohorts value college consumption amenities, with only high-achieving students having a taste for academic quality.

The College Scorecard and associated endeavors also have a high symbolic value in conveying to higher education institutions that the federal government is taking an unprecedented interest in the operation of postsecondary institutions and expects them to justify their actions and performance, if not their sole existence. The administration is putting higher education on notice that “business as usual” is no longer satisfactory. Perhaps it is particularly notable that the discussion of the rating system in the press release by the White House is followed by a consideration of competency-based education and technological innovations, particularly in the form of online courses and degrees. Even if students do not change their enrollment patterns based on the information provided in the College Scorecard, and even if the development of the rating system fails due to technical challenges, the message of these endeavors should not be lost on higher education institutions or those of us whose livelihoods depend on them.

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How Sociologists of Education can make the College Scorecard more EffectiveMichael Sauder, *University of Iowa*, Wendy Espeland, *Northwestern University*

When President Obama announced plans to create a federal scorecard that would rate colleges and universities, our antennae shot up. We have spent ten years studying the effects of performance measures on higher education, and it was difficult not to imagine the unintended consequences that even a well-intentioned federally-based rating system might produce: cutting costs by implementing more online teaching; streamlining curricula so that fields that quickly produce high paying and steadily employed graduates are given precedence over those—like philosophy, literature, and the arts—that do not; promoting grade inflation, watered-down courses, and easy majors to improve graduation rates; admitting fewer disadvantaged students for fear of falling behind their peers on these same graduation measures. In short, it was easy to imagine the proliferation of gaming strategies as schools clambered to optimize their appearance in the public's eye.

The actual scorecard, however—at least in its present iteration—allays some of these concerns by not actually rating colleges and universities. The scorecard itself consists of five very general, though useful, measures of college and university performance: costs, graduation rate, loan default rate, median borrowing, and employment. Along with each of these measures, it provides gauges showing roughly how each school's performance on these measures compares with all others. So if you'd like to see how much debt the average student borrows from the federal government for their undergraduate education at, say, DePauw University, you see that the total is \$18,938 as well as a gauge that shows DePauw rates medium (as opposed to high or low) compared to other schools on this measure.

Significantly—at least if you are concerned about school reactions to these measures—the scorecard makes no direct hierarchical comparisons among schools. If a user wants to see how DePauw compares to the Indiana University or Oberlin, they will have to make this comparison on their own. No tables are provided that divide schools into groups or stratify high performers from low ones. Of equal importance, the scorecard makes no attempt to combine the five factors into any kind of weighted formula. All factors are treated independently and, once again, specific comparisons must be initiated by the person searching for the information. The decision by the architects of the scorecard to not directly compare schools or combine factors is, in our view, a wise one. It helps to ensure that the scorecard will be more about information than assessment and minimizes the risks of schools reacting to these measures in unproductive ways.

More generally, higher education represents a market in which the product is very expensive, most “consumers” only participate a few times in their lives, and the choices are so extensive that it is difficult to learn enough about the full range of opportunities to make a fully educated decision. In this environment, another good source of information seems unambiguously valuable. The true impact of this information will ultimately depend upon its reach. Will students and their parents pay attention to these numbers and use them to guide their choices? How important will this information be in comparison to, say, the U.S. News rankings, Princeton Review, Barron's guidebooks, and colleges' own websites? If these scorecards are widely consulted by prospective students and help them make better decisions about what college is right for them, then these measures would be a valuable public resource. Despite the benefits that these scorecards may provide—and keeping in mind that our intensive study of social

Sauder and Espeland continued...

measures has made us more than a little jaded about their effects—there are still reasons to be vigilant. We know that, even with the best intentions, an intervention of this magnitude will produce effects that no one anticipated, effects that are not necessarily welcome. This is, of course, true of most public policy, especially when it is done on a broad scale and serious resources are on the table—as they will be if federal and state funding for education gets linked to school scores. Likewise, if these scorecards do become popular enough to affect public decision making about college attendance, this popularity will carry its own risks. Colleges may be tempted or pressured to do whatever they can to move their gauges into new parts of the dial. As nearly all research on quantification as a social and political process testifies, when numbers start to matter, they also start to get managed.

It is also worthwhile to take a step back and consider the broader cultural and political implications of these types of public evaluations. Scorecards are part of a global trend to make people and organizations more accountable and certain activities more visible. Increasingly, we live in what scholars such as Michael Power and Marilyn Strathern have depicted, respectively, as an “audit society” or a “globalizing audit culture” in which actions are surveyed, practices are counted, and assessments are produced in continuing and expanding processes of governance. As we assess the value of each new measure, it is important to consider carefully the social relations that are made invisible as others are made transparent, who is doing the auditing and how the auditors themselves are held accountable, and whether the benefits generated by these measures outweigh the less obvious costs. What sounds appealing on the surface may obscure more than it reveals. As scholars we are obliged to investigate the causes and consequences of such taken for granted practices and how they carry with them assumptions about the social world—in this case, what colleges and universities are, what they should be, and how we should evaluate them.

Obama is right. Everyone deserves the opportunity for higher education. Everyone should have access to the information they need to make good decisions about where to go to college. And everyone should be able to earn a degree without overly burdensome debt. But we remain skeptical that this form of performance evaluation will address fundamental problems of inequality. Let's hope we're wrong.

Scholars on the Job Market



Gary Coyne,
Ph.D. Sociology
University of
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Research: My research investigates the origins and

consequences of cross-national variation in the structure and content of educational institutions, with a particular focus on language education policies. While much of my focus is on the period from 1980 to the present I frame this in the longer historical arc of global integration. Much of the variation in education systems can be explained in terms of the dynamics by which individual nations have been integrated into the global economy, transnational political

institutions, and cultural flows. I use quantitative methods to address how cross-national variations in curricular contents impact national level outcomes, such as development and inequality. In terms of development I find that the position of English as global *lingua franca* means the language can be understood as a kind of human capita and that teaching more English as a second language is associated with higher level of economic development. In terms of inequality, I find that African countries that continue to use the languages of former colonizers as the medium of instruction have higher levels of economic inequality. In a more general way, I seek to shed light on the relationship between education and national-level outcomes by disaggregating the curriculum and placing contemporary policies in a larger historical context.

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Audrey Devine-Eller
PhD, Rutgers University

Current Position: Visiting Assistant Professor,
Sociology Dept. Grinnell College

Dissertation committee:
Patrick Carr, Karen Cerulo,
Phaedra Daipha, Arlene Stein, Jennifer Jennings (NYU)

Research: My research focuses on how social structures are produced and reproduced through peoples' daily interactions. A monograph-in-progress examines the interactional processes that lead to stratified post-secondary planning and outcomes for high school students. An NSF Doctoral Dissertation Improvement Grant funded two years of fieldwork in one racially and socioeconomically diverse high school. I studied "average" students at an "average" high school to maximize diversity of post-secondary outcomes. I draw on a variety of qualitative data to show the patterns of daily life in the school, and how they contribute to post-secondary planning. I also include follow-up interviews with the focal students two years post-high school (with another wave planned at five years out). One central finding is that post-secondary planning became structured by a number of key paradoxes. School officials felt bound to promote

college-for-all, yet only a minority of their students attended four-year colleges. School officials therefore pushed an implicit "no-college-for-some" message alongside the explicit "college-for-all" message, which contributed to a cooling-out process whereby some students adjusted their aspirations away from college. A paper in progress (to be presented at the upcoming ASA meeting) examines teachers' ambivalence about promoting college for all their students. A second central finding of my work highlights the importance of *timing* in post-secondary planning. In my *Sociological Forum* article, I use the National Household Education Survey (2007) to show race and grade-level patterns in test prep. In a working paper, I show that some high school guidance offices deploy a complex, extended planning timeline that allows them to more successfully negotiate the college admissions process. At Grinnell, I've developed a Sociology of Education course that incorporates a community-based research project in which students gather post-secondary planning data at the local high school. These data will be used by the high school to evaluate and improve their post-secondary planning. This project adds a comparative case study to my dissertation work. I am also supervising a senior thesis that examines tracking and race talk among students and teachers in my data.

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Karly Sarita Ford,
New York University
(Ph.D)

Ford's research tracks how variation in college characteristics shape life course outcomes. Her work demonstrates that college size, selectivity, religious affiliation, and

gender ratio are associated with marital partner selection and college attendance of the next generation. Ford collaborated with the Panel Study of Income Dynamics (PSID) to data-enter and code a variable that the survey had collected since 1975, but had never processed or released. Ford went to the PSID basement in Michigan, opened dusty boxes,

handled yellowing paper surveys, and entered in the names of institutions that respondents had attended. She did this for some 16,000 cases. Now, any social science researcher can use the data Ford coded by merging them with forty-two years of longitudinal, nationally representative PSID data. She has presented versions of this work at the 2012 conferences of the American Sociological Association meeting in Denver, The Sociology of Education Association meeting in Monterey (where it was awarded the Graduate Student Award) and the International Sociological Association, Research Committee on Social Stratification meeting in Charlottesville. Ford's research interests include stratification, higher education, international education and quantitative research methods.

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Jeffrey Grigg
Department of Sociology,
University of Wisconsin-
Madison
Dissertation committee:
Adam Gamoran (Chair),
Geoffrey Borman, Eric
Grotsky, and Judith
Harackiewicz
(Psychology)

Research: My dissertation addresses whether and how changing schools influences student academic and non-academic outcomes and evaluates the impact of a promising strategy—self-affirmation—that may help students negotiate challenging situations. When students change schools, their uncertain social standing may induce a “situational” social identity threat, which may in turn influence student well-being and academic performance. I first compare students who changed schools at the beginning of seventh grade to peers who experienced a similar unscheduled move two years earlier, which allows me to compare students with similar unobservable characteristics that lead to unscheduled school changes. I find that past and

recent movers have similar academic performance in seventh grade, but that recent movers report lower values of social belonging and locus of control than the “past mover” comparison group.

Using data from a district-wide experimental evaluation, I also produce the first estimates of the causal effects of self-affirmation on students who have recently experienced an unscheduled school change. I find that self-affirmation has little impact on student academic performance and may in fact degrade it. This counterintuitive finding can be explained in part by the fact that mobile students who chose to write about their friends and family fared worse than mobile students who wrote about other topics. Directly confronting one's ambiguous social standing, as encouraged by the experiment, may exacerbate the social uncertainties mobile students face. These results demonstrate not only the social and psychological consequences of school mobility but also reveal how challenging these processes are to address.

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Paul Hanselman

Ph.D. candidate in Sociology
at the University of
Wisconsin-Madison.

Research: Paul's research centers on processes of social stratification in primary and middle schools, asking how specific aspects of schooling

exacerbate or mitigate racial and economic disparities in school performance. His dissertation considers how opportunities to learn related to individual teachers—as measured by value-added models of student

achievement—contribute to educational disparities through differential access and benefits, and through the cumulative effect of teacher assignments over time. Other current work investigates heterogeneity in randomized field trials in education (such as professional development initiative in elementary science) to reveal differences in school context (such as the social resources among staff) that contribute to students' educational experiences. In addition to these substantive areas, Paul's teaching experience and interests also center on quantitative methodology.

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Elizabeth Covay Minor

PhD, University of Notre Dame

Current Position:

Research Director of the Michigan Consortium for Educational Research (MCER) at Michigan State University

Research: Elizabeth Covay Minor's research focuses on education and stratification. More specifically, she examines the emergence and persistence of inequalities in opportunities to learn and their relationship with both achievement and behavioral outcomes. Student opportunities to learn come in a variety of forms and may compound to form a cumulative advantage for some students and a cumulative disadvantage for other students. Policies and intervention can be directed at disparities in learning opportunities and may be able to reduce inequalities in education. Covay Minor operationalizes opportunities to learn in multiple ways including extracurricular activities (Covay & Carbonaro 2010), high school math course taking (Carbonaro & Covay 2010), elementary school instructional practices, and high school math content

coverage and instructional tasks.

Covay Minor's most recent research examines instruction and instructional content as a mechanism to explain inequalities in returns from student opportunities to learn. In a recent paper, she studies the organization of the learning environment in advanced math classrooms. Using the Survey of the Enacted Curriculum (SEC), she tests for classroom racial composition differences in the math content that is covered as well as the instructional tasks that are asked of the students.

Covay Minor received one of ten MET Early Career Grants, which includes the use of the Measuring Effective Teaching (MET) Longitudinal Database. She is in the process of starting a new project using the MET data to examine whether different types of instruction are more or less effective for different types of students. This project will provide detailed information about student access to opportunities to learn and the differential effects of those opportunities to learn on student achievement.

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**David S. Morris**

PhD, University of Virginia,
2013

Dissertation Committee:

Paul Kingston, Josipa Roksa,
Milton Vickerman, and Dick
Reppucci.

Research: Dave Morris is
primarily interested in

educational inequality, behavior and discipline in school, family dynamics, social stratification, and political behavior. Morris completed his doctoral dissertation, "Enduring Disruption: The effect of peer behavioral disruptions in school on educational and social inequality" in May of 2013. His dissertation focuses on the effects of peer behavioral problems in high school and the consequences they have on academic achievement, social capital, educational attainment, and future life chances. Drawing on data from NELS and ELS, findings from his work suggest

that economically disadvantaged, female, Asian, and academically ambitious students are more likely to experience personal disruptions. Results also suggest that the various forms of disruptions in school negatively associate with cognitive skill, noncognitive skill, and social capital at the end of high school. Disruptions appear to have lasting effects as well, negatively impacting post-secondary, occupational, and economic attainment nearly ten years after high school. Morris is also interested in the relationship between school disciplinary practices and educational and social inequality, and the relationship between family dynamics and academic achievement. In addition to studying education and stratification, he is interested in the interrelationship of social class, the use of new media, and political behavior and participation. Morris's work has been published in *Youth & Society* and *Social Science Computer Review*. He is currently a visiting assistant professor at College of Charleston.

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**Maria Paino**

Department of Sociology,
University of Georgia

Dissertation

Committee: Linda
Renzulli, Jeremy
Reynolds, and Elizabeth
DeBray

Research: My research interests include education, organizations, inequalities, and quantitative methods. My dissertation investigates how public schools are organized. In particular, I examine how external environments coerce public school actors to create specific organizational features. I find that policy eras shape the interactions and connections between teachers and principals. These links are not constant over time and thus show how macro policies shape the micro interactions of everyday schooling. I also consider the role of principal's gender in shaping the organizational structure within schools. I analyze how teachers respond and feel about their work as a result of the organizational structure in which they are embedded. Finally, I synthesize neo-institutionalism and control theory to assess the ways in which organizational structure affects students. I focus on

deviance, such as physical violence, property crime, and verbal altercations.

Another prong of my research looks at the mediating role of teachers in the relationship between computer proficiency and academic achievement. In my *Sociology of Education* article, I draw from existing cultural capital, information technology, and teacher expectancy literatures, and extend the theoretical understanding of cultural capital by demonstrating how the "digital dimension" of cultural capital serves to create academic inequalities in both math and reading. Findings suggest important inequalities across gender, race, and socio-economic status.

The final component of my research, with my dissertation advisor Linda Renzulli, focuses on how and why charter schools experience closure in their institutional environment. Drawing on educational accountability literature, we assess the precipitating factors that lead to charter school closure and have found that the school's academic achievement and financial status both influence charter school closures.

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**Jane Rochmes**

Ph.D. candidate in Public Policy and Sociology at the University of Michigan

Dissertation Committee:

David K. Cohen, David J. Harding, Elizabeth A. Armstrong, Karyn Lacy, and Mary Corcoran

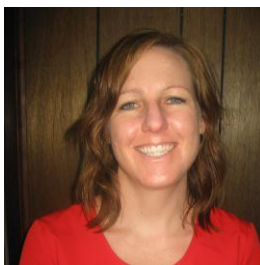
Research: Jane's research integrates interests in social context, racial/ethnic and socioeconomic stratification, and education. She studies the ways in which schooling perpetuates or ameliorates racial and socioeconomic inequality during the early life course.

Jane's dissertation focuses on teachers' beliefs about the extent to which they can overcome social disadvantages in students' lives. She draws on accounts of so-called "transformational" schools, which have highlighted beliefs among teachers of empowerment to ensure that social disadvantage doesn't preclude students from reaching their full potential. Jane aims to gain a more generalizable understanding of teachers' beliefs outside of these specific contexts by using nationally representative data to explore teachers' beliefs of empowerment (or, conversely, helplessness) to overcome students' social disadvantage. The chapters of

Jane's dissertation examine the prevalence of more helpless and more empowered attitudes and use multilevel models to test how these beliefs relate to teachers' human capital characteristics, features of the high school context, and students' educational outcomes, with a focus on implications for racial and socioeconomic inequality.

In a second project, Jane analyzes how school-based provision of preventive and physical health services relates to adolescents' academic performance. This paper tests whether increasing youths' access to services by providing them at school improves opportunities to learn and academic performance using a national sample of schools and students. Jane is also collaborating with David Harding and Diego Torres to study the for-profit college sector, the fastest growing sector of U.S. higher education. This project uses a national cohort study, hazard models, and inverse probability of treatment weighting to understand the consequences of attending a for-profit college for degree receipt, considering implications for educational and labor market inequality.

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Dara Shifrer, Postdoctoral Fellow, Houston Education Research Consortium (directed by sociologist Ruth López Turley and housed in Rice University's Kinder Institute for Urban Research)

Dissertation Committee: Chandra Muller, Catherine Riegle-Crumb, R. Kelly Raley, Robert Hummer, Debra Umberson

Research: Shifrer focuses on structural responses to diversity within schools and the social psychological implications of diversity for youth's outcomes, with a particular emphasis on understanding the educational disparities of racial minorities and economically disadvantaged youth. The first strand of Shifrer's research explores the placement of students into special education for a learning disability (LD), a structural response to distinctive learners. Economically disadvantaged youth and racial

minorities are disproportionately labeled with LDs. Shifrer has been the lead author and primary analyst for a series of studies on the social roots and subjectivity of the LD label (*Research in Social Science and Disability Series*, 2010; *Journal of Learning Disabilities*, 2011; *Sociology Compass*, 2013), labeled adolescents' poorer social psychological and academic outcomes relative to otherwise similar peers without a disability label (*American Educational Research Journal*, 2013; *Journal of Special Education Technology*, 2010), and stigmatizing processes related to the LD label (*Journal of Health and Social Behavior*, 2013). Shifrer's second strand of research focuses on teacher merit pay programs, an institutional intervention primarily targeting the low achievement of diverse students. Merit pay programs typically financially reward teachers whose students experience the highest test score gains. Over the last year, Shifrer has used data describing students, teachers, and schools in the Houston Independent School District to explore the efficaciousness of the district's teacher merit pay

program. One of the more interesting findings is that teachers in the highest need schools are less likely to receive or benefit from an award.

Other Professional Skills and Interests:

Shifrer and Muller wrote two grant proposals which were successfully funded by the National Science Foundation. As a result of her training at UT Austin's Population Research Center and Bachelor's degree in mathematics, quantitative research is a personal strength; Shifrer is competent in propensity score matching,

regression discontinuity design, decomposition, and multiple imputation. Shifrer's research is also informed by her experience teaching middle school math, two years at a school predominantly serving wealthy white students, and two years at a school predominantly serving poor Hispanic students.

Email: Dara.Shifrer@rice.edu

Website: <http://kinder.rice.edu/herc/>



Megan Moriko Shoji

Ph.D. Candidate,
Department of
Sociology, University
of Wisconsin-Madison

Research: Megan
Shoji's research
centers on

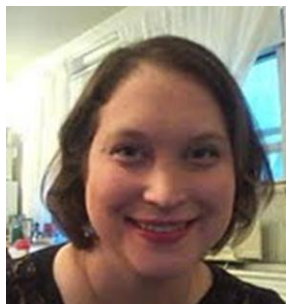
understanding the production of racial and ethnic inequality in U.S. schools and how these can be addressed. She has examined the role of two main mechanisms—social relationships and culture—in generating unequal schooling experiences for children, with a particular emphasis on the experiences of Latino students. Her dissertation asks how parent-school connections develop in predominantly low-income Latino communities during early elementary school, and how a family engagement program intervenes in this process. To answer these questions, she combines survey data from the Children, Families, and Schools (CFS) study, a cluster-randomized control trial of

a popular family engagement program, and in-depth interviews with parents. In other work, Megan considers cultural mechanisms in the (re)production of inequality in schools. In an on-going collaborative project, she explores the role of parenting practices in the production of inequality at the intersection of ethnicity and social class. Using interview data on Mexican American parents, including separate interviews with mothers and fathers of the same families, Megan and her co-author show how the link between class background and childrearing is complicated by intragenerational changes in parents' social class and differences between mothers' and fathers' class origins.

Dissertation Committee: Adam Gamoran, Eric Grodsky, Geoffrey Borman, Carmen Valdez

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Website: www.ssc.wisc.edu/~mshoji/



Jill M. Smith recently defended her dissertation on the role of independent educational consultants in the college application process. She will receive the PhD in Sociology

from Brandeis University in February 2014. Besides sociology of education, her scholarly interests include stratification/mobility,

sociology of culture, social theory, and qualitative methods. Jill has accepted a position as a Visiting Assistant Professor in the Department of Sociology at Saint Anselm College (Manchester, NH) for the Spring 2014 semester. Jill is seeking a teaching position for the 2014-2015 school year, preferably at a small liberal arts college or other institution that highly prioritizes teaching.

Email: jmsmith@brandeis.edu



William C. Smith,
Dual Title PhD Candidate
Education Theory and Policy
and Comparative
International Education
The Pennsylvania State
University

Dissertation Chair:
David P. Baker

Research: My research interests include sociology of education, population health, international organizations, and quantitative methods. My research agenda is fueled by the belief that the power of education as an institution is immense, allowing it to be both a tool for upward mobility and for social reproduction. My dissertation examines how the global expansion of testing policies affects school structures and student outcomes. Recently I was awarded a Thomas J. Alexander Fellowship from the Organization for Economic Co-Operation and Development to support this cross-national study which expands previous research by classifying the participating countries in the 2009

PISA into four national testing policy categories: Formative, Summative, Evaluative, and Punitive. Using hierarchical linear modeling, specific questions addressed by my dissertation include: (1) How is national testing policy related to the degree schools incorporate testing into their structures and policies? (2) Does the incorporation of testing into a school structure vary by the school's economic and/or academic composition? And (3) How does the national testing policy and corresponding policy coupling influence student outcomes?

With a team of collaborators at Penn State University I have authored a series of papers that investigates how the cognitive and preventative health effects of education are not only national context dependent, but shift over transitions in population demographics, disease prevalence, and information quality. Additionally, I investigate how the lending practices of International Finance Institutions affect national education policy. My work has resulted in 11 publications including articles in *Social Science and Medicine* (forthcoming) and *Health Education Journal*.

Email: wcs152@psu.edu



Emily Smith-Greenaway
PhD Candidate in
Sociology and
Demography, Penn
State

Emily's research explores how social inequalities influence individuals' health and wellbeing across stages of the life course and cultural contexts. She is particularly interested in the health benefits of basic literacy skills in low-income settings wherein the transition to mass schooling is still underway, and such skills remain rare. In her master's thesis, she used direct assessments of women's literacy from the Nigerian Demographic and Health Survey to show that literacy skills *fully* explain the association between maternal education and child mortality in this context, and have their own strong and independent relationship to child survival (Smith-Greenaway 2013). Interested in the potential interplay between individuals' skills and social

structure, in a follow-up study, she shows that the relationship between mothers' literacy skills and child survival is conditional on mothers' decision-making power, a key artifact of the structural constraints many Nigerian women encounter (Smith-Greenaway 2013). In her dissertation research, funded by a fellowship from the American Association of University Women, Emily is analyzing the associations between mothers' formal education, literacy skills, and child health across 30 sub-Saharan African countries to assess how these associations vary across the subcontinent's diverse contexts. Her dissertation further makes use of primary data that she collected in a rural village in Malawi to analyze whether young adult women's and men's literacy skills influence their own health and wellbeing. Her research has been published in *Demography*, *Demographic Research*, *Population and Development Review*, and *Social Science & Medicine*.

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Joseph Workman,
Department of Sociology,
University of Notre Dame

Dissertation Committee:
William Carbonaro
(advisor), Mark Berends,
Richard Williams, and
Amy Langenkamp.

Research: My research interests are sociology of education, social stratification, sociology of the family, and quantitative methods. My dissertation focuses on the ways family structure influences the availability and flow of educational resources among family members. In one chapter, I find the degree to which siblings reduce a child's access to family resources may be over-stated due to unobserved differences between families. Using within-child fixed effects models I find changes over time in the number of siblings in a child's family are not significantly related to a child's rate of cognitive development. Although the presence of siblings impacts some dimensions of home life during early childhood, they are not the dimensions that are highly related to development. This paper was

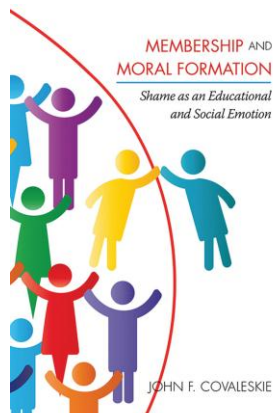
awarded the Maureen T. Hallinan Graduate Student Paper Award by the AERA Sociology of Education SIG. In a paper with Douglas Downey and Benjamin Gibbs we examine how social policy influences the financial constraints faced by parents of large families in providing for their children's education. Using the General Social Surveys 1972-2010, we find the relationship between educational attainment and the number of siblings in an individual's family weakened over the first half of the 20th Century as the United States implemented more progressive social policies. A second strand of my research, with my dissertation advisor William Carbonaro, identifies the important roles of students' distant friends and second-degree peers in shaping students' social identities. By shaping the behaviors students see as normative, distant friends and peers influence important educational outcomes, including whether students complete high school or drop out.

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News from Section Members: Books and Reports

Membership and Moral Formation: Shame as an Educational and Social Emotion

by John F. Covaleski, (*Information Age Publishing*)



This book is an attempt to relate moral formation to democratic life and to the emotional emotion of shame. The argument is that shame is essential to moral formation, that it tells us when we are violating our own moral norms. Contrary to common belief, I argue that shame is neither imposed on us by others (though it is certainly a product of our communal memberships) nor necessarily harmful. In fact I argue that shame not only can be beneficial for us, but that moral formation and growth are both inextricably linked to a proper sense of shame, a properly formed conscience. The process of moral formation is an important one for any society, but perhaps most of all for a democratic society. The foundational premise of democratic life is that we have the capacity to be self-governing, the desire to do the right thing, and the wisdom to discern what the right thing is. This is unlikely to happen unless there is a conscious effort to

form the conscience of the young so that they can become democratic citizens.

Which brings up, then, the question of moral education. Whatever it is that a particular society or community considers to be “moral,” the question of moral education is how do members of the community come to be moral? Given that moral formation of the young is necessary, this discussion ends with a look at the practice of two exemplary democratic moral practitioners, Vivian Paley and Deborah Meier, whose pedagogy shows how formation of young consciences can be done by thoughtful adults with integrity.

John F. Covaleski is Associate Professor of Educational Studies at the University of Oklahoma

Marketing Schools, Marketing Cities: Who Wins and Who Loses When Schools Become Urban Amenities. by Maria Cucchiara (*University of Chicago Press*)



Discuss real estate with any young family and the subject of schools is certain to come up—in fact, it will likely be a crucial factor in determining where that family lives. Not merely institutions of learning, schools have increasingly become a sign of a neighborhood’s vitality, and city planners have ever more explicitly promoted “good schools” as a means of attracting more affluent families to urban areas, a dynamic process that Maia Bloomfield Cucchiara critically examines in *Marketing Schools, Marketing Cities*.

Focusing on Philadelphia’s Center City Schools Initiative, she shows how education policy makes overt attempts to prevent, or at least slow, middle-class flight to the suburbs. Navigating complex ethical terrain, she balances the successes of such policies in strengthening urban schools and communities against the inherent social injustices they propagate—the further

marginalization and disempowerment of lower class families. By asking what happens when affluent parents become “valued customers,” *Marketing Schools, Marketing Cities* uncovers a problematic relationship between public institutions and private markets, where the former are used to leverage the latter to effect urban transformations.

Les Maria Cucchiara is Assistant Professor of Urban education at Temple University.

For more information: <http://press.uchicago.edu/ucp/books/book/chicago/M/bo15112913.html>

Playing to Win: Raising Children in a Competitive Culture

by Hilary Levey Friedman, (UC Press)



Why do American children participate in so many adult-run activities outside of the home, especially when family time is so scarce? By analyzing the roots of these competitive afterschool activities and their contemporary effects, *Playing to Win* contextualizes elementary school-age children's activities, and suggests they have become proving grounds for success in the tournament of life—especially when it comes to coveted admission to elite universities, and beyond.

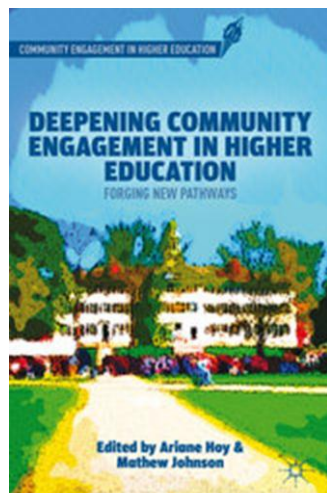
Hilary Levey Friedman, PhD is an affiliate of the Malcolm Wiener Center for Social Policy at the Harvard Kennedy School. She recently completed a postdoctoral fellowship at Harvard University as a Robert Wood Johnson Scholar in Health Policy and she received her PhD in Sociology from Princeton University.

Learn more or request an exam copy:

<http://www.ucpress.edu/book.php?isbn=9780520276765>

Deepening Community Engagement in Higher Education: Forging New Pathways

edited by Ariane Hoy and Mather Johnson (Palgrave Macmillan)



Deepening Community Engagement in Higher Education demonstrates how colleges and universities can enhance the engagement of their students, faculty, and institutional resources in their communities. This volume features strategies to make this work deep, pervasive, integrated, and developmental, qualities recognized by the Carnegie Classification guidelines and others in higher education as best practice. The chapters share perspectives, frameworks, knowledge, and practices of more than a dozen institutions of higher education that practice community engagement in sustained ways, drawing on their connections to more than two decades' experience in the Bonner Foundation network. Perspectives from these campuses and respected scholars and practitioners in the field present proven models for student leadership and development, sustained partnerships, faculty engagement, institutionalization of campus centers, and changes to teaching and learning.

Ariane Hoy is Vice President at the Bonner Foundation, USA.

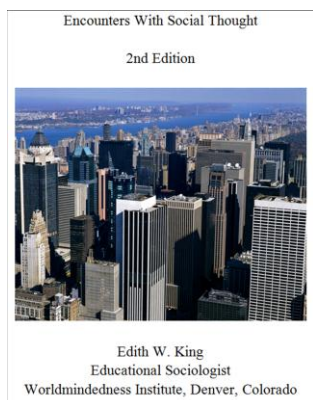
Mathew Johnson is Associate Professor of Sociology and Environmental Studies and Founding Director of the Academic Community Engagement office at Siena College, USA.

For more information:

<http://us.macmillan.com/deepeningcommunityengagementinhighereducation/ArianeHoy>

Encounters with Social Thought: Second Edition

By Edith W. King (Worldmindedness Institute), Available at Amazon: Kindle \$4.95



Do you wonder how to make sense of what goes on around you? Do you realize that we live in an invisible social world - a world of common occurrences along with international calamities, terrorism, and natural disasters? People often seek explanations for these events and happenings for many reasons, among them to deal with a crisis or to plan for the future. Any inquisitive person using social theory can gain insights into the world we inhabit. You can apply major social theories of sociology to experience and events happening every day. That's what *Encounters with Social Thought* is all about!

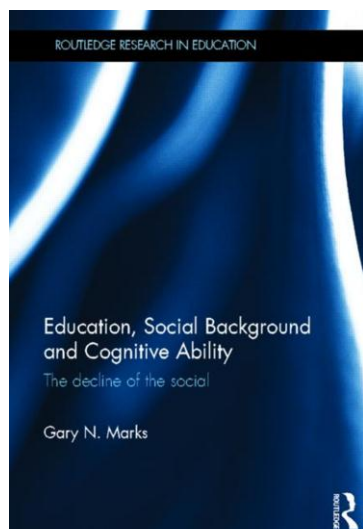
This book is for anyone who is seeking explanations for experiences of daily life, the "small things" like eating at a restaurant or going to a football game. More importantly, it's a way of coming to understand national and global happenings such as terrorism, earthquakes and tsunamis. This book is useful for a wide range

of readers including professionals and students in higher education. It's for anyone looking for meaning and consequences of social occurrences.

Edith W. King, Educational Sociologist, taught at the university level for over forty-five years. She is the author of more than eighteen texts, numerous articles, monographs, and multimedia materials on diversity, multi-ethnicity, gender issues, world awareness, global perspectives and peace building. Also by Edith King and available on Amazon: Kindle: *Teaching in an Era of Terrorism* (2013) and *Social Thought on Education* (2011).

Education, Social Background and Cognitive Ability: The Decline of the Social

By Gary N. Marks (Routledge)



Are socioeconomic inequalities in education declining? Is socioeconomic background becoming less important for people's occupational class or status? How important is cognitive ability for education and later occupational outcomes? How do countries differ in the importance of socioeconomic background for education and work? Gary N. Marks argues that in western industrialized countries, pervasive views that socioeconomic background (or class background) has strong and unchanging relationships with education and later socioeconomic outcomes, resistant to policy and social change, are unfounded. Marks provides a large amount of evidence from many countries showing that the influence of socioeconomic background for education is moderate and most often declining, and socioeconomic background has only very weak impacts on adults' occupation and earnings after taking into account education and cognitive ability.

Furthermore, Marks shows that cognitive ability is a more powerful influence

than socioeconomic background for educational outcomes, and that in addition to its indirect effects through education has a direct effect on occupation and earnings. Its effects cannot be dismissed as simply another aspect of socioeconomic background, nor do the usual criticisms of 'cognitive ability' apply. The declining effects for socioeconomic background and the importance of cognitive ability support several of the contentions of modernization theory.

Gary N. Marks is a Principal Research Fellow at the Melbourne Institute of Applied Economic and Social Research, the University of Melbourne, Australia.

For more information: www.routledge.com/books/details/9780415842464

Academic Profiling: Latinos, Asian Americans, and the Achievement Gap

By Gilda L. Ochoa (University of Minnesota Press)



Today the achievement gap is hotly debated among pundits, politicians, and educators. In particular this conversation often focuses on the two fastest growing demographic groups in the United States: Asian Americans and Latinos. In *Academic Profiling*, Gilda Ochoa addresses this so-called gap by going directly to the source. At one California public high school where the debate is lived every day, Ochoa turns to the students, teachers, and parents to learn about the very real disparities—in opportunity, status, treatment, and assumptions—that lead to more than just gaps in achievement.

In candid and at times heart-wrenching detail, the students share stories of encouragement and neglect on their paths to graduation. Separated by unequal middle schools and curriculum tracking, they are divided by race, class, and gender. While those channeled into an International Baccalaureate Program boast about Socratic classes and stress-release sessions, students left out of such programs often describe uninspired teaching and inaccessible

counseling. Students unequally labeled encounter differential policing and assumptions based on their abilities—disparities compounded by the growth in the private tutoring industry that favors the already economically privileged.

Despite the entrenched inequality in today's schools, *Academic Profiling* finds hope in the many ways students and teachers are affirming identities, creating alternative spaces, and fostering critical consciousness. When Ochoa shares her research findings with the high school, we see the new possibilities—and limits—of change.

Gilda L. Ochoa is Professor of Sociology and Chicana/o-Latina/o Studies at Pomona College. Her previous books include *Becoming Neighbors in a Mexican American Community* (University of Texas Press 2004) and *Learning from Latino Teachers* (Jossey-Bass 2007).

For more on the book, see <http://www.upress.umn.edu/book-division/books/academic-profiling>

Announcements from Members

Basis Policy Research seeks an Associate for our Midwest office in Grand Rapids, Michigan. The Associate will be responsible for conducting research on K-12 education policies and programs. Qualified candidates will have excellent communication skills and be capable of managing multiple projects through all phases of the applied research process. We are particularly interested in applicants with expertise in quantitative methods and interest in education policy and reform.

Requirements

- Background in quantitative methods
- Skilled writer and proofreader
- Ability to manage multiple projects
- Experience as Principal Investigator or co-Principal Investigator
- Effective communication and presentation skills
- Knowledge of K-12 education policy and reform

Qualifications

- Ph.D. or Doctoral Candidate in a social science field (economics, education, public policy, political science, psychology, sociology, statistics)
- Experience working with statistical programming software (SAS, STATA, SPSS, or R)

Preferred Experience: Applicants with experience in the following fields are strongly preferred:

- Experience analyzing student-level data
- Experience writing federal grant proposals
- Expertise in educational measurement

About Basis: Basis Policy Research is an independent applied research firm specializing in the field of K-12 education. Basis provides research and consulting services to government agencies, foundations, school districts, and non-profits throughout the United States. To learn more about Basis, please visit our website at www.basispolicyresearch.com

Location: Grand Rapids, MI

Compensation: Negotiable; commensurate with experience

To Apply: Please send cover letter, curriculum vitae, and three professional references to careers@basispolicyresearch.com.

Basis Policy Research seeks a Research Associate for our Midwest office in Grand Rapids, Michigan. The Research Associate will be responsible for conducting research on issues related to K-12 education policy and reform. Qualified applicants will have strong

communication skills and interest in public policy. Applicants with training in statistics and quantitative methods are encouraged to apply.

Requirements:

- Strong organizational skills
- Effective communication and presentation skills
- Strong writing and proof-reading skills
- Interest in K-12 education policy and reform issues
- Bachelor's degree

Preferred Experience:

- Experience managing and analyzing student-level data
- Training in quantitative methods/statistics
- Experience in grant and proposal writing
- Project management experience

Location: Grand Rapids, MI.

Compensation: Negotiable; commensurate with experience.

To Apply: Please send cover letter, curriculum vitae, and three professional references to careers@basispolicyresearch.com.

Roberto G. Sara Goldrick-Rab (University of Wisconsin-Madison) has a forthcoming book co-authored with Andrew Kelly of the American Enterprise Institute and published by Harvard Education Press, titled "Reinventing Student Aid for the 21st Century." In addition, she recently opened a new research laboratory, the Wisconsin HOPE Lab, endowed with a \$2.5 million philanthropic gift. It is the nation's first laboratory for translational research aimed at improving equitable outcomes in postsecondary education. Among the lab's projects are a new National Science Foundation-supported experiment titled "The Price of STEM Success: Explaining the Impact of Need-Based Financial Aid on STEM Student Behavior" and a new William T. Grant Foundation ethnographic study "Constructing Affordability: How Institutional and Relational Contexts Affect Retention of Undergraduates from Low-Income Families."

Roberto G. Gonzales has recently moved from my faculty position at the University of Chicago to the Harvard Graduate School of Education.

Maxwell G. Gonzales, Associate Professor of Sociology at Cameron University (OK) is now Director of Institutional Research at Black Hills State University (SD). Effective August 1, 2013.

Section Homepage
American Sociology Association
<http://www2.asanet.org/soe/>

Newsletter Editor
Katie Condit
University of Notre Dame
Kcondit1@nd.edu