Texas Center *for* Learning Disabilities

Prevalence and Identification of LD in the Population of EL Students

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About TCLD

The Texas Center for Learning Disabilities (TCLD) is a collaboration between the Texas Institute for Measurement, Evaluation, and Statistics at the University of Houston (TIMES); the University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston (UTHSC-H); and the Vaughn Gross Center for Reading and Language Arts at The University of Texas at Austin (VGC). This project is funded by the National Institute for Child Health and Human Development (NICHD). No official endorsement of any product, commodity, service, or enterprise is intended or should be inferred.

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Objectives

- Disproportionality – Sources and Definitions

- Primary Language and Reading Disability

- Past and Ongoing Prevalence Studies

- National Prevalence Estimates – Early Childhood Longitudinal Survey

- Implications

- Next Steps

Disproportionality – Sources and Definitions

- "…the extent to which membership in a given group affects the probability of being placed in a specific special education disability category"

- National Research Council Reports on Disproportionality
  – Donovan & Cross, 2002
  – Heller, Holtzman, & Messick, 1982

- Disproportionality by Race
  – African American
  – Native American

- Disproportionality by Level of Analysis
  – Local
  – State
  – National

Primary Language and Reading Disability

- Atiles, Rueda, Salazar, and Higareda (2005)
  - Urban Southern California
  - ELLs under-represented at elementary grade levels and over-represented at the secondary levels (6th grade and above)
    - Across disability categories
    - Across proficiency English levels
  - Patterns vary depending on the indicators used and the levels of analysis
  - Limitations
    - Regional
    - Non-proportional
    - Cross-sectional
    - Non-literacy specific
    - Confounding factors

Primary Language and Reading Disability

- Samson and Lesaux (2009)

  – Nationally representative, probability-based, longitudinal sample (ECLS)

  – Language minority learners under-represented in special education in kindergarten and first grade, and over-represented in third grade across all disability categories

  – Limitations

    - Third grade

    - Non-literacy specific

    - Analytic limitations (series of logistic regression models per grade level)

    - Language status as time-variant covariate

    - Kinder, 1st, and 3rd

Primary Language and Reading Disability

- Morgan, Farkas, Hillemeir…& Cook (2015)

  - Nationally representative, probability, longitudinal sample (ECLS), 8th grade, hazards modeling

  - *Racial- and ethnic-minority* children less likely to be identified as having learning disability though 8th grade (or at any point in time between k and 8th grade)

  - Limitations

    - Non-literacy specific

    - Kinder, 1st, 3rd, 5th, 8th

Primary Language and Reading Disability

- Roberts, Furman, Cho, Fall, and Vaughn (working paper)

  - Nationally representative, probability, longitudinal sample (ECLS), 5th grade, hazards modeling

  - Kinder, 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th

  - ELL modeled as time-invariant based on status in Kindergarten

  - "IEP Primary Goals"

Early Childhood Longitudinal Survey (ECLS)

- National Center for Educational Statistics survey program includes three longitudinal studies that examine child development, school readiness, and early school experiences

  - The kindergarten class of 1998-99

  - The first large national study focused on education that followed a cohort of children, their parents, and teachers from kindergarten entry to middle school

 - Restricted use versus public use data files

Data Analysis

- Survival analysis estimates the probability of event occurring during a given time interval
  - Identification as LD as the event
  - School year as time

- The ratio of the odds of an event occurring in one group compared to the odds of it occurring in another group is the odds ratio (essentially an effect size)

- Propensity score weighting

Probability of RD for ELL and Non-ELL

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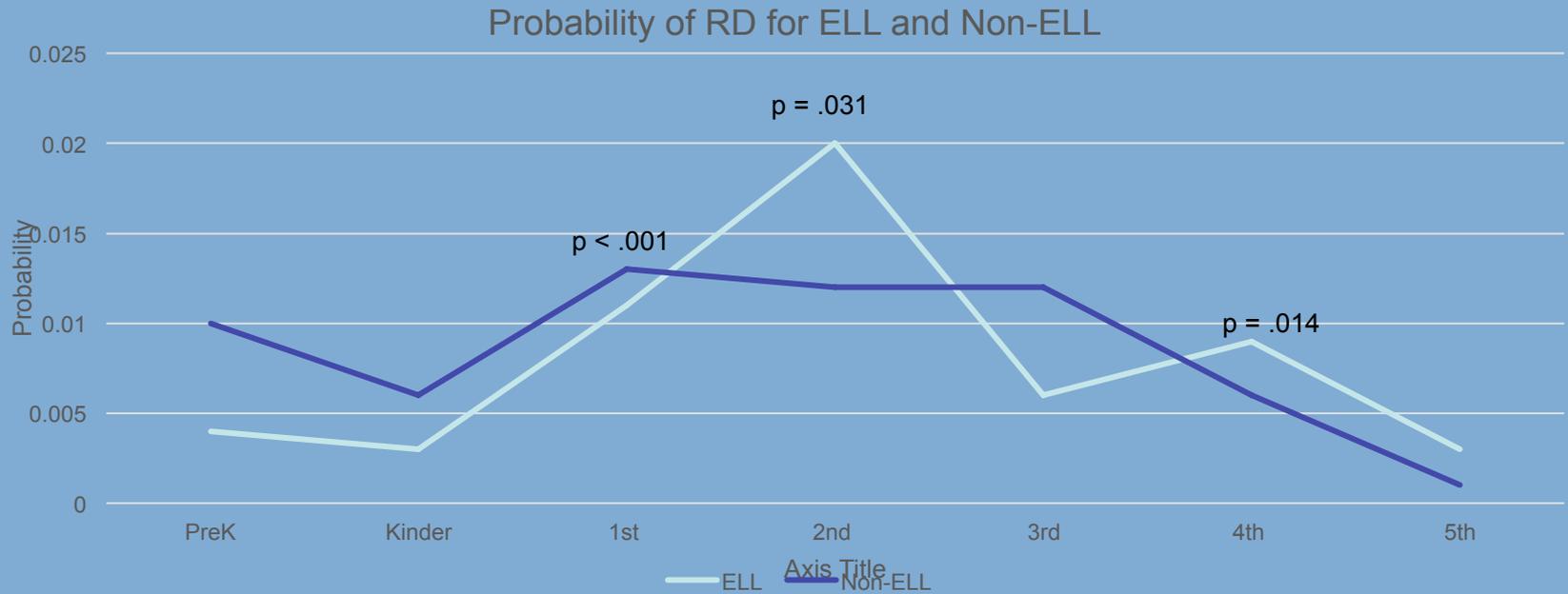
These findings are preliminary.
They should not be cited.

Implications and Considerations

- The ELL-related differences in identification can be described as differences in timing.

- Teachers may be more confident in recommending a non-ELL child for consideration earlier in his or her school career. ELL students may be less likely to be "referred" because of teachers' concern with the language/literacy confound.

- The findings should be considered in terms of the instructional aims that typify early reading instruction. In a response to instruction model, instruction in 4th grade is more language focused (reading comprehension) than 1st grade instruction which tends to be organized around phonemic learning, a skill that ELLs can master, even those with limited L2.

- This is a national, probability-based sample; if the data were evaluated at a different level (state or district), different patterns might emerge.

Next Steps

- Propensity score weighting to create comparable groups for purposes of comparing ELL and non-ELL when all else is "controlled"

- Covariate analysis to identify malleable factors that may alter probability of identification

  – Program type

  – EL proficiency at time of enrollment

  – School and classroom features