2010

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Abstract

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This research project investigates the presence and effect of scholastic capital at KIPP (Knowledge Is Power Program) charter schools, taking up issues concerning how scholastic capital is "fleshed out" and communicated at KIPP Scholar Academy, and to what effect on its underserved students. Through classroom observation and interviews, I analyzed the explicit transfer of scholastic capital in KIPP Scholar Academy classrooms, focusing specifically on KIPP's schooling ideology and classroom culture. My findings suggest that KIPP students successfully matriculate to college because they are explicitly instructed in the ways of scholastic capital via intentional use of language, comportment, and expectations. The end result of the transfer of scholastic capital at Scholar Academy is that these KIPP students' "native culture" lends itself to a rapport and cultural heritage that is closely related to all necessary indicators of academic success found in higher education.

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Introduction:

They say I'm not the future of this nation. I say stop giving me discrimination. Instead I'm gonna use my education to help build the human nation.
Diary #103, Freedom Writers (Gruwell 1999)

"Work Hard. Be Nice."; this is the KIPP Credo. KIPP, which stands for Knowledge is Power Program, is a national chain of open-enrollment charter schools that is gaining media attention across the United States for its exceptional academic results (Weir 2007). KIPP takes a 'no excuses' approach to education, proudly stating that "ALL students are climbing the mountain to college." In fact, KIPP students, called "KIPPsters", are doing are matriculating into college at an exceptional rate ("KIPP: Annual Report Card," 2009). A full 85% of "KIPPsters" will go on to higher education, while only one in five students who attend neighborhood public schools will do so ("KIPP: Annual Report Card", 2009). The achievement results of KIPP students rival those of students at affluent college-prep high schools throughout the country; KIPP, however, enrolls almost exclusively underserved students from historically poor areas.

In order to truly understand these underserved students and their success at KIPP, this research project will investigate the presence and effect of scholastic (academic) capital at KIPP – how it is "fleshed out" and communicated at KIPP Scholar Academy and to what effect. Paying particular attention to the academic community created by the explicit transfer of scholastic capital, this research is guided by the following research questions. What is the daily experience of a KIPP student and in what ways is KIPP pedagogy working successfully to alleviate the achievement gap for underserved students in ways that other school models are not? How is scholastic capital negotiated and communicated at KIPP; what forms of scholastic capital are fostered at KIPP, and to

what effect on students? Finally, how does the transfer of scholastic and cultural capital at KIPP help to propel students forward through high school and into college?

KIPP was created by Dave Levine and Mike Feinberg, two entrepreneurs managing a new way of educating a generation of underserved students. Two Teach for America graduates, Levine and Feinberg started KIPP one 1994 night in their Houston apartment out of shear frustration over the problems they were facing in their own classrooms ("KIPP: Reaching Underserved Middle Schoolers," 2003:66). Their product: a fifth to eighth charter school system that is innovative enough to educate underserved students beyond the bureaucracy of traditional public schools, but also routinized and rigorous enough to demand academic success for those children that traditional public schools may have left behind.

Essentially, KIPP schools are free, open-enrollment college-preparatory public schools that operate as charter schools. Their mission is to help underserved students "develop the knowledge, skills, and character traits needed to succeed in top quality high schools, colleges, and the competitive world beyond by providing a safe and structured learning environment, more time in school, and high-quality teachers" ("KIPP: Annual Report Card," 2009). This national program of charters seeks to plant schools in historically underserved urban and rural areas across the country. Ninety percent of KIPP students are African-American or Latino, and 80% qualify for the federal free/reduced lunch program. Fifty-three percent of KIPP teachers are White, while 47% are African-American, Hispanic or Asian (Headden 2006). As a franchise charter school, KIPP neither profits financially from its schools nor exempts students from state-standardized tests (as may be the practice in other charters).

The first KIPP Academy opened in Houston in 1994, and as of the 2009-2010 school-year, KIPP has opened 82 schools in 19 states and the District of Columbia, and serves over 21,000 students ("KIPP: Annual Report Card," 2009). The atmosphere of the KIPP schools truly is unique; you know something different is going on there from the minute you step inside the building. As one *U.S News & World Report* correspondent observed, "there are no locks on the lockers, [there are] quiet hallways, students stand in lines reading between classes, and students are all regarded as 'team members' and encouraged to spur each other on to success" (Headden 2006). There is a feeling that everyone at these schools—teachers, students, parents and school leaders—are all sharing in a commitment to a learning community where students can thrive. And thrive they do. As rephrased by one KIPP School Leader, "KIPP is a way of life that means going the extra mile in education to enable students' success". It is ideas articulated in phrases such as these that create what is a distinctly "KIPP culture" – a culture where students are told they are going to college, that they can and will achieve, and that they are a part of a team and a family.

This research, however, is much more than a descriptive account of the life and energy inside of the KIPP schools. It investigates issues of KIPP pedagogy and practice, but more importantly analyzes the intentionality behind these practices, paying particular concern to the ways in which the KIPP culture creates and perpetuates an explicit ideology surrounding student achievement and the transfer of scholastic capital. To this end, I take up a discussion of the KIPP schools that pertains less to student academic results (although these are significant nonetheless), but rather examines the intersection

of school ideology, scholastic capital, and higher education as experienced by the underserved students at KIPP.

Methodology:

Data Collection:

In order to best answer my research questions I decided to conduct my research as a participant observer at a KIPP charter school located in the Midwest. I chose this school as it is representative of most other KIPP schools throughout the nation. For the purpose of this study, the KIPP school wherein I observed will be referred to as KIPP Scholar Academy so as to maintain confidentiality. Throughout the data collection phase of my research, January 2009-March 2010, I visited Scholar Academy every Friday morning to observe classes, administrators, and teachers. I also interacted with students at the school, paying particular interest to students in the fifth grade (called freshman), and noting how they have assimilated into KIPP culture. Generally, I took field notes from the observation stations located in every classroom, although as the teachers and I began to feel mutually more comfortable I began to move around the classroom and interact more fully with both the teacher and students.

In light of the theory of Pierre Bourdieu (1986) I was particularly attuned to scholastic capital milieu in the school – how that capital is manifested and transferred from teacher to student. Specifically, I was interested in seeing how scholastic capital was "fleshed out" at Scholar Academy in the form of language use, comportment, and expectations at the school. The intangible nature of some of these scholastic capital

categories (such as expectations) made observation time in the school necessary so that I could experience the culture of the school as well as how ideas of scholastic capital and higher education are "fleshed out".

In addition to my observation, I also interviewed two Scholar Academy teachers. These interviewees were selected through a convenience sample as the teachers I interviewed were those with whom I spent the most significant time observing. It was my intent to interview more than two informants; however extenuating circumstances in the school mandated the number of interviews I could complete. In light of my small sample size, I realize that the views of two teachers at Scholar Academy can not and should not be understood as representative of the entire Scholar Academy staff, although they do reflect their own personal teaching experiences at the KIPP school.

The interviews were structured, although I was pleased that the familiarity that had been fostered between myself and my informants throughout the semester helped the interviews to be less formal and more comfortable for both parties. Each of these interviews took place during the school day at Scholar Academy, usually during the free period of the teacher. In these interviews I asked my informants questions about the culture of the KIPP schools, what their experience had been working there, and why, from their perspective, KIPP is successful (see Appendix A for Interview Instrument). The identity of my informants has been kept confidential, and they have been given pseudonyms for the purpose of this research project.

I was able to use this field experience to supplement my extensive review of the literature on a range of issues from the nature of the KIPP schools, to issues of the achievement gap, and the relationship between scholastic capital and higher education in

schools. Throughout the research process I reviewed a large amount of literature about schooling inequality in America – exploring questions about why the achievement gap exists, and how it should be resolved. I also read a great deal about issues of cultural and social capital in schools, as well as how issues of self-efficacy play out in classrooms. Many of my resources came from online sources such as the *Annual Review of Sociology,* and the U.S. Department for Educational Statistics. Other sources include ethnographic accounts (Prudence Carter's *Keepin' It Real* (2005), Jay Mathews *Work Hard. Be Nice.* (2009), and Jay MacLeod's *Ain't No Makin' It* (1995), as well as a variety of other resources. In addition to the review of the literature I read case studies that focus on KIPP schools and studied the annual reports produced by KIPP which compare students' achievement and attrition rates at KIPP schools to that of their public-school peers.

Ethics:

As a student researcher in the field of Sociology/Anthropology I recognize that issues around the ethics of research are of great importance – that I have a responsibility to relationships and communities beyond myself. Thus, I have to be both purposeful and mindful of how I conducted this research project, and have paid particular attention to issues of anonymity, confidentiality, and representation while writing both the Methodology and Data Analysis sections of this project. My primary ethical responsibility in this project involved finding a balance wherein I was best able to maintain the interests of my informants (teachers, faculty and students), while still developing a voice that spoke candidly about the KIPP schools and my observations there. Although this was a challenge, I feel that my findings honestly represent the

interworkings of Scholar Academy, and make neither a moral nor political decision concerning the pedagogy, structure, or ideology of the school.

Furthermore, I do not think that the findings or representations of my research are compromising to my informants. However, I took steps to ensure participant confidentiality nonetheless. In order to protect my informants' identities I used pseudonyms and intentionally excluded specific information regarding the grades and subjects individual informants taught. Due to the nature of my methodology (observation and field notes), I was unable to ensure the anonymity of individual adult informants at KIPP Scholar Academy. Confidentiality, however, is maintained throughout my project as the Ethnography and Data Analysis sections intentionally lack the details necessary to connect individual informants' responses to their identity. Furthermore and as previously mentioned, the pseudonym "Scholar Academy" is assigned to the Midwestern KIPP school wherein I conducted my observations to ensure that the identity and location of the school would not be compromised.

Concepts:

Many of the major concepts in my research have already been operationally defined in both previous educational and sociological texts. Others, however, I have operationalized myself for the purpose of my project. The first and perhaps most important of my concepts is the KIPP schools network itself. KIPP – the Knowledge is Power Program – is, as their website states,

> a national network of free, open-enrollment, college-preparatory public schools with a track record of preparing students in underserved communities for success in college and in life. There are currently 82 KIPP schools in 19 states and the District of Columbia serving around

> 20,000 students. KIPP builds a partnership among parents, students, and teachers that puts learning first. By providing outstanding educators, more time in school learning, and a strong culture of achievement, KIPP is helping all students climb the mountain to college ("KIPP: Annual Report Card," 2009).

Subsequently to understand KIPP and how it differs from its public school counterparts, one must understand the concept of a charter school. Charter schools are publicly funded, smaller schooling communities, which embrace alternative teaching methods and structures. They receive a per-pupil allotment from local school districts and serve more that 1.2 million students in 40 states. Charters are open to all students regardless of income, gender, race, or learning ability and many students enroll through a lottery system (Mooney 2007).

The charter school movement was initially built around two core assumptions about what charters are, and what they will accomplish. The first core assumption is that "freedom from bureaucratic rules and union contracts will foster innovation and improve academic achievement" (Mooney 2007). That is, charter schools which are generally free of teacher unions and state regulations will have the autonomy to create a specialized and innovative learning environment that is healthy for both the teacher and student. In an effort to foster innovation and creativity, charter schools are afforded less accountability to the State, meaning that these schools have more operational and funding leeway than is usually given to public schools. The second assumption put forth is that "the lessons from the charter movement's success will be used to improve public education overall" (Mooney 2007). Pushing public schools to improve through healthy competition is perhaps one of the loftier (and hotly debated) goals advocated by many charter proponents.

There are three main types of charter schools in the United States: stand alone, franchise and private charters (Mooney 2007). Stand alone charters are schools that are publicly approved and run, reflecting the teaching and learning values of a certain community (Dingerson 2008). For example, the Young Woman's Leadership School in Chicago is a successful charter that sends many students to prestigious colleges every year. Franchise charters are national networks of schools that are based on a particular model and are supported by non-profit organizations through grants and donations. KIPP (Knowledge is Power Program) schools are franchise charter schools. Private charters are schools run by for-profit firms, generally private corporations. These companies do not have local education boards and often are not required to report publicly on how they have spent funds. These charters are generally run by individuals with an agenda of moving public education into the private marketplace. The Edison Schools are an example of for-profit charters, as well as the charter schools run by White Hat Management group in Ohio (Dingerson 2008). Due to the haze of accountability surrounding private charters, these usually draw the most criticism from charter challengers.

Students at many charters nationwide, and specifically at KIPP, are generally identified as underserved students – a complex and diverse group. According to the National Postsecondary Education Cooperative, "underserved students" are generally from low-income households and grow up in poverty, living in resource-poor public school districts. These students may qualify for reduced or free lunches, and generally are potential first-generation college students (Rendón 2006). Almost all students at KIPP fall into the category of 'underserved' as 90% of KIPP students are African-American or

Latino, and 80% qualify for the federal free/reduced lunch program ("KIPP: Annual Report Card," 2009).

Underserved students have long fallen victim to what educators have deemed the 'achievement gap'. In the world of educational theory, the achievement gap is the idea that low-income students are not achieving as highly on standardized tests as their middle and upper-class peers. This gap has been analyzed both in light of students' racial background as well as family socio-economic status. Given the quite high achievement outcomes of students, KIPP offers an exemplary effective educational alternative to urban neighborhood children who are likely to fall prey to the achievement gap, by demanding a rigorous and transformative 'no-excuses' pedagogy to middle-school students.

While the achievement gap explores the discrepancy between students' academic performances, there also exists in education the idea of the 'attitude-achievement paradox' which examines students' attitudes towards school and their future. This paradox states that although traditionally underserved students have high aspirations for success and value school highly, they do not actualize and achieve these aspirations in their schooling environments. Many times students who have not fallen into this paradox are those with high levels of self-efficacy. Self-efficacy is the belief that one is capable of performing in a certain manner to attain certain goals. Particular to my research, self-efficacy is the belief among KIPP students that they are capable of achieving highly in school, eventually entering into higher education.

In view of my research questions, the relationship between schooling and self-efficacy at KIPP is closely tied to what I will call "scholastic" cultural capital. Many sociological educators have investigated the connections between capital and schooling.

Notable among these are the early Pierre Bourdieu (1984), Prudence C. Carter (2005) and Jay Mathews (2009). Bourdieu (1984) and his contemporaries understood cultural capital as one of four distinct forms of capital (symbolic, economic, or social) that when combined with cultural knowledge acted as "scholastic capital" (Calhoun 2002). Scholastic capital, then, can be "purchased" with time, energy, and money and then exchanged for higher education or occupations with high status (Swartz 1997:198). In order to address my research question pertaining to the employment of cultural "scholastic" capital at KIPP schools, I have broken down scholastic capital into three separate but related categories so that I will be able to tangibly identify the capital when I see it at the schools.

The first of these sub-categories of cultural capital is language. While observing in the schools I experienced scholastic capital conveyed through language in multiple ways: in the register teachers communicated with students, in the tone and emotion which students and teachers communicated, as well as in the words and phrases spoken or written around the school. The second sub-category of scholastic cultural capital is comportment: how teachers and students physically behaved in the classrooms and hallways of the school, as well as how they behaved in relation to each other. Finally the third subcategory is expectations: the expectations that teachers have of students, the expectations students have of teachers, as well as how frequently and with what fervor these expectations are communicated.

Significance:

During the summer of 2008 I conducted a summer-long research project through the Denison University Young Scholars program entitled "KIPP and the Nation: Educating the Underserved in U.S. Public Schools" with Dr. Karen Graves in the Education Department (Leary 2008). This project investigated KIPP, the different ways that students across the nation navigate their school culture, peer group, and social and cultural capital, and how the intersection of these factors contribute to students' educational attainments. Much of this project considered KIPP on a national scale – whether this charter model was effective, and what this success meant for public schools. It finally concluded that lessons from the KIPP schools pedagogical and philosophical approach to schooling have the potential to serve as a strong model from which other schools may learn and advance student achievement. This research project was evaluative in that it considered where KIPP schools should fit into the national discourse on education, recommending that public schools may benefit from adopting some of the KIPP approach.

A discussion surrounding the KIPP schools is also significant as it sheds light on the heterogeneous experiences of charter students across the country. High diversity in student demographics makes it difficult to construct a representative sampling of charter school students nationwide. However, it is still important to understand their educational experiences. A 2003 study by the National Education Association found that there were no measurable differences in performance between charter school students in the fourth grade and their public school counterparts as a whole on reading scores, nor did charter

students score as well as their public-school counterparts in mathematics (U.S. Department of Education, 2004).

Regardless of national statistics, however, the state of Ohio has been identified as having exceptionally troublesome charter schools. The story of charters in Ohio is one of rapid growth, expansion and mismanagement. Within a decade Ohio's charters grew from a pilot group of 20 schools to an industry of 313 schools receiving more than $600 million annually in state and federal dollars, and enrolling more than 75,000 students. Charters have grown so quickly that in the 2006-2007 school year, six Ohio cities reported over 13% of their students to be enrolled in charter schools (Dingerson 2008:35). Subsequently for schools that issued report cards in 2007 just one third of charter schools made Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) while two thirds of public schools did so (Dingerson 2008:37). This grim number is, in fact, an improvement for charters from 2006, when even fewer charters met AYP.

The story of Ohio charters does not stop there though. Only 8% of Ohio charters received an excellent rating in the 2006-2007 school year, while 63% of public schools did. More than two thirds of charters (43%) received a rating of academic watch or emergency, compared to just 11% of Ohio public schools (Dingerson 2008:38). Considering all state standardized scores together, public school students scored an average of 19.3 points higher than their charter counterparts when controlling for both similar economic backgrounds and race (Dingerson 2008:40).

While mismanagement and the privatization of charters can account for much of the discrepancy between charter and public school achievement, the fact the gap exists so significantly in Ohio makes a Midwestern charter school like KIPP Scholar Academy an

interesting case study. It is important to keep in mind that, although many of Ohio's charters are mismanaged, many are not; and although many national charter students perform at or below their public school peers, some do perform above. As noted previously the franchise KIPP charters are one exception to the charter stigma, as their students exceed not only AYP benchmarks, but also the standardized test scores of their peers (kipp.org, Annual Report Card).

Personally, as my interest in 'no-excuses' urban education has grown, I have been continually interested in KIPP's pedagogical approach and demand for excellence in the classroom. As an Educational Studies minor, issues of social justice, equity and high expectations in urban classrooms are important to me. In this way I understand KIPP as an exceptional charter school model for underserved and low-income students, and I think that high achievement outcomes of 'KIPPsters' is of national significance. It is my hope that my investigation into scholastic capital at KIPP schools will lend itself to a further discussion of how scholastic capital aids students in their pursuit of higher education. Ultimately, this discussion will contribute to a better understanding of the academic achievement gap, and will aide in understanding how underserved students in the United States can better reach and succeed in higher education.

Theory:

An ethnologist should not domesticate the exotic, but rather should exocitize the domestic through a break with his initial relation of intimacy with modes of life and thought which remain opaque because they are too familiar.

- Pierre Bourdieu, *the State Nobility* (1989)

French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu has written prolifically on what he calls "scientific analyses" of the academic world – analyses that take up habitual topics and examine them beyond their understood familiarity and operation. In his scientific analysis of the academic world, Bourdieu's domestic object is academic institutions – schools which have all been socially licensed as universally objective (Bourdieu 1984:xii). Looking mainly at the French tradition of schooling, in his research Bourdieu considered the many forms of capital that exist within schools, and how this capital, along with merit, push some students to the "top" over others. His analysis of schools offers a theoretical framework which can be used to articulate the different ways in which culture can be used to understand underserved students' school engagement and their academic and socioeconomic attainment (Carter 2005: 7).

As it pertains to this research, Bourdieu's ideas surrounding cultural and social capital aid in my analysis of the KIPP charter schools "culture" by speaking to questions of students' & faculty's' scholastic capital, and how the transfer of this capital from teacher to student affects students' attitudes about higher education. Nationally, KIPP has been recognized as a charter school program that offers students more than just extra time in the classroom. KIPP is a place where students experience a schooling culture that is markedly different than that of their neighborhood schools. The "KIPP culture" is unique and is one that communicates to students ideas of self-efficacy, middle-class norms, and

the pursuit of higher education. It is a culture that sets KIPP apart from other charter schools because of the scholastic capital that it utilizes and communicates to its students.

In his 1986 publication, *Forms of Capital*, Bourdieu elaborates over distinct forms of capital: economic, symbolic, social and cultural capital. He argues that each form of capital is specific to the system in which it is defined, and can be exchanged for other forms (Calhoun 2002). Cultural knowledge and capital act as "scholastic capital" that can be purchased with time, energy, and money and then exchanged for occupations with high status and incomes (Swartz 1997:198). Bourdieu's idea of cultural capital explains how the cultural codes and symbols of high status or dominant social groups become "integral in practices and sensibilities of schools and other social organizations and consequently how these cultural practices yield advantages disproportionately to members of those particular groups" (Carter 2005:15). For example, many have argued that discussions around higher education are largely guided by undertones of middle class cultural capital – rendering some students without the cultural knowledge to talk about higher education, or an understanding of how to go about pursuing a degree after high school.

Bourdieu notes that schools are neither neutral nor merely reflective of broader sets of power relations, but rather they play a complex and indirect role in mediating, maintaining and enhancing power relations within schools (Swartz 1997:191). In this way, the 'elite of the elite' within the academic system possess not superior academic knowledge, but rather the types of traits that are recognized by the educational system (Bourdieu 1989:16). Bourdieu speaks of these 'elite' as students who display the "clearest attestations of the privilege that is granted to charismatic values" which leads

educational institutions to disregard strictly scholastic learning and valorize as well the "gifts" which he calls precocity. These "gifts" are not achieved but rather are subscribed to, and in reality are a manifestation of a cultural heritage that is closely related to all indicators of success (Bourdieu 1989:20).

These demarcations of success are deeply hidden within a society's idea of culture as they bear no mark of the effort, and no trace of the work, that goes into their acquisition (Bourdieu 1989:21). However, as Bourdieu points out, the nuances that understand "talent" really refers to a particular mode of acquisition:

> what we call ease is the privilege of those who, having imperceptibly acquired their culture through a gradual familiarization in the bosom of the family, have academic culture as their native culture and can maintain a familiar rapport with it that implies the unconsciousness of its acquisition (Bourdieu 1989:21).

Therefore, as cultural capital may be unconsciously acquired, it is actively constructed inside schools. In fact, the cultural capital in schools is received with an unending confirmation because the social universe around which the school is constructed is fashioned according to the same cultural principles. Therefore, the cultural taxonomies that are implemented are done so with a sense of "self-evidence" that characterizes ones' experience of the social world (Bourdieu 1989:39).

These "cultural taxonomies" or hierarchies of cultural capital filter down throughout all parts of the schooling process. For a student to succeed academically, he or she must reproduce the academic content presented them in a way that utilizes the previously ascribed cultural capital in the academic world. This requisite of capital, however, permits an arbitrary evaluation of knowledge because to succeed academically is to simply reproduce the very structures of capital present in school. To this point,

Bourdieu notes that academic achievement becomes "self-evident" in that institutions are evaluated based on the very cultural structures that have organized them. Beyond the power of pedagogical or political vigilance, "the academic taxonomy, through the traditional vocabulary that conveys it…exercises its power of social discrimination" (Bourdieu 1989:22). In this way schools can unconsciously mask social prejudices by claiming neutrality in the grading process while making academic judgments based on presubscribed cultural capital within the school (Bourdieu 1989:22). Functioning within a logic where teachers and school systems deny evaluating students based on class distinctions, the cultural taxonomy within the schools exists nonetheless and permits the "realization of a social classification in guise that allow it to be accomplished invisibly" (Bourdieu 1989:36).

Parental support of students and involvement in schools has also long been understood as one of the contributing factors to student academic success. To this theme Bourdieu identifies how the support families provide to students can be understood to take on different forms through different milieu. Upper class children, he purports, receive both direct and explicit support from their families through what may be cultural experiences or verbal communication. Subsequently middle-class children receive mostly direct support whereas lower-class children, with few exceptions, can not count on either form in relation to direct academic returns (Bourdieu 1989:21-22). The effect of this support can be seen in students' academic returns as well as their school engagement and socioeconomic attainment. In this way, a students' relationship to both language and culture is formed through their parents who often act as a "relay/screen that both

establishes and obscures the relationship between students' social origins and their grades" (Bourdieu 1989:22).

Additionally Bourdieu notes a high correlation between students' subjective hopes and their objective chances – that is, a child's ambition and expectations with regard to education are "structurally determined products of parental and other reference-group educational experiences and cultural life" (Swartz 1999:197). In congruence, this is why working-class students may not aspire to high levels of educational attainment – because they "have internalized and resigned themselves to the limited opportunities for school success that exist for those without much cultural capital" (Swartz 1999:197). Contrastingly, students from upper-middle class socioeconomic backgrounds internalize their social advantages and expectations for academic success and thus they stay in school, perhaps continuing on to higher education. In this way Bourdieu demonstrates how educational selection in fact occurs through a milieu of what can be understood as self-selection (Swartz 1999:197).

Ultimately, Bourdieu draws a metaphor between educational institutions and an "immense cognitive machine" (1989:52). He understands each to operate through classifications that although neutral, reproduce preexisting social classifications without the intent of the agents who assign its objectives, or those who are supposed to realize them (Bourdieu 1989:52). In the cognitive machine metaphor, Bourdieu summarizes his key social reproduction theory that has lead many sociologists and educators alike to recognize that "in spite of formal meritocratic practice, educational institutions can actually enhance social inequalities rather than attenuate them" (Swartz 1997:191).

The intersection of cultural capital, scholastic capital and social reproduction taken from Bourdieu's theory especially informs my research as it speaks to questions addressing how scholastic capital is transferred within schools, and to what end. In this research, Bourdieu's distinct ideas about scholastic capital work in conjunction with my methodology to highlight the gradual familiarization process by which KIPP students come to understand scholastic capital (and middle-class norms and culture) as their "native culture". As can be extrapolated from Bourdieu, this transfer of scholastic capital is imperative to understanding how the KIPP "culture" socially reproduces students to a familiarization with scholastic capital, and ultimately a familiarization with academic achievement and higher education.

Review of the Literature:

Educators, policy makers, and sociologists alike are consistently concerned about the disparity of academic achievement between students of low and high socio-economic status in the United State's public schools. Identified more specifically as the 'achievement gap', researchers across the country have published a wide range of literature exploring this issue and investigating possible causal factors including issues of cultural capital, politics, pedagogy, school-attitudes and school resources. In order for educators to tackle achievement gap issues in America's public schools, the reasons why students are dropping out and being pushed out of schools must first be understood. From a sociological approach, the many attitudes, cultural practices, and socio-economic realities that affect students' ability to learn in any environment must be explored. This

review of the literature will investigate the current debates surrounding why underserved students do more poorly in schools than their more affluent counterparts, while considering how some scholars have come to understand students' use of cultural and scholastic capital in schools, and its relationship to ideas of self-efficacy. Finally the review will consider how the KIPP schools fit into the national landscape concerning the current state of public education in the United States today.

In this discussion it is important to understand who the underserved students of today are. According to National Center for Educations Statistics, enrollment in America's public schools is rising to an all-time high, and the nation's student body is becoming more diverse (National Center for Education Statistics, 2008b). In the 2006-2007 school year there were 73.9 million children in the United States, 1.5 million more than at the turn of the century (National Center for Education Statistics, 2008a). Of these, 57% were White, non-Hispanic, 21% were Hispanic, 15% were Black, 4% were Asian, and 4% were of other races (National Center for Education Statistics, 2008b).

While demographics of race and ethnicity are important for understanding the profile of public schools today, they do not tell the entire story. The demographics which make this picture more complete are those which demonstrate the socio-economic conditions of students. Sixteen percent of school-aged students lived in poverty in 2006. The poverty rate was higher for Black and Hispanic children than White children, with 27% of all Hispanic children and 33% of all Black children living in poverty, compared to only 10% of White children (National Center for Education Statistics, 2008a). Schools offer free and reduced-price lunch programs for children living in poverty, offering another demographic marker. According to the National Center for Educational Statistics,

Black, Hispanic, and American Indian students were more likely to be eligible for free and reduced-price lunch programs than were their White and Asian/Pacific Islander peers (National Center for Education Statistics, 2008c).

Disparity does not stop there, however. Public school funding is extremely disproportionate and reflects the socio-economic status of the community that a school district serves. The wealthiest U.S public schools spend *at least* ten times more than the poorest schools – $30,000 compared to $3,000 per pupil (Darling-Hammond 2004:6). This means that public districts that already benefit from socio-economic resources are better equipped to educate and provide opportunities for their students, while poorer neighborhoods are left to make do with what they can in their own funds.

Understanding who underserved students are sets the stage for a more critical look at why they are struggling in schools. According to anthropologist John Ogbu (Fordham 1986), many racial and ethnic minorities do not perform well in school because they actively avoid the burden of "acting white" – more formally known as oppositional culture theory. Instead of understanding racial and ethnic gaps in schooling as a product of disadvantage alone, oppositional culture theory emphasizes minority groups' agency in contributing to their own destiny by developing a culture that stands in opposition to schooling (Downey 2008:107). "Acting white" can be understood in a multiplicity of ways as each student understands the word subjectively. However, "acting white" is generally understood to encompass students' behaviors which resemble prescribed white or middle-class culture, behaviors or practices.

In other words, although oppositional culture theory recognizes the many obstacles that blacks have faced as involuntary minorities (e.g. the historical legacy of

slavery, segregated neighborhoods, racial discrimination); it also posits that an additional problem is how blacks have responded to these challenges, especially in light of schooling (Downey 2008). Although this theory does not blame minorities for their educational achievement disparity, it does offer a historical vantage point from which the current state of minority education can be considered. According to Ogbu (1978), the history of the relationship between minority students and the dominant group plays a significant role in determining how group members' views about schooling will be shaped (Ogbu 1978). Voluntary minorities, who have historically migrated on their own will, will generally compare their condition to that of their homelands and find the comparison favorable – embracing the notion that school efforts pay off. Adversely, involuntary minorities, such as African-Americans, have experienced a historically antagonistic relationship to schooling when compared to those of the dominant group in the United States, and thus develop anti-school attitudes (Ogbu 1987).

Psychologically, as Ogbu understands it, involuntary minorities adapt protective methods by embracing a collective identity that defines their ethnic group in opposition to current white-controlled institutions, like schools (Downey 2008:109). In this way blacks have developed a separate system of behaviors, attitudes and traits that are appropriate for themselves and that fall into an oppositional culture frame of reference (Downey 2008:110). To engage in behaviors outside of this prescribed script, then, would be to 'act white'. As stated by Fordham and Ogbu (Fordham 1986:181), "to behave in a manner defined as falling within a white cultural frame of reference is to 'act white' and is negatively sanctioned". In practice this means that blacks actively demarcate and maintain a cultural boundary between themselves and whites that may lead group

members to avoid speaking standard English, dressing in certain fashions, or listening to particular music (Downey 2008:110).

Perhaps the oppositional cultural boundary with the most consequence would be that drawn around blacks' rejection of schooling. Due to the historicity of the involuntary minority status, Ogbu posits that the social reality surrounding education has lead some blacks to culturally question if schooling is necessarily something that 'pays off'. Schooling is something that is run by the dominant group – which blacks are not part of – that has historically denied them not only educational but also employment opportunities. As a result, academically successful blacks are sanctioned by black peers for "selling out to whites" (Downey 2008:110). In order to evade chastisement from their peer group, black students, the argument goes, will disengage from school and develop anti-school attitudes. Downey points out the conceptual appeal of oppositional culture theory, attributing its popularity to the fact that it, "rebuffed genetic explanations [of poor schooling performance], acknowledged the historical significance of slavery, and explained why some minority groups excelled in schools (e.g., Asian Americans) whereas others did not (e.g., blacks)" (Downey 2008:110).

While Ogbu's conceptual model has confronted some difficult to explain phenomena, and sparked much interest in the field, educational researchers today have not reached a consensus with Ogbu and many are taking up their research where his left off (Carter 2005:5). Many researchers are abandoning Ogbu's functional model in lieu of one that posits a more cultural explanation – a thesis that understands the achievement gap through more than simply an investigation of race and reactionary behavior. As Garvey F. Lundy and others of his contemporaries have pointed out, cultural agency is at

the heart of Black students' academic success, not a rejection of academic success as an ideology (Lundy 2003:450). Lundy names Ogbu's acting white thesis a "convenient posture" that has "undermined the possibility of viewing any critical and complex position on the part of Black students to interpret their world and has shifted attention away from the social reality of White supremacy to an erroneous belief that Black students are rejecting academic success en masse" (2003:451).

Prudence L. Carter is another academic who has applied a cultural perspective to Ogbu's work, challenging the belief that African American students have rejected the idea of academic success (Carter 2005). Carter found that black students in her ethnographic research of Yonkers, New York did not necessarily equate studying hard and excelling in school with notions of whiteness. Instead, she observed that students were encouraged to embrace "acts" (language, comportment, dress, etc.) associated with racial or ethnic identities, noting that these ideas of "acting white" also "signaled various dynamics about social power and control among students *within* their ethnic, racial, and gendered communities" (Carter 2005:5). That is, students' behaviors, which can be understood through different racial lenses, are not necessarily homogenous, neither are their "acts" necessarily indicative of notions of "white culture" or "success".

In her book *Keeping It Real: School Success Beyond Black and White* (2005), Carter challenges Obgu's oppositional culture theory that African American and Latino students have created a reactive culture that inhibits their academic achievement. Rather, she argues that these students' ethno-racial cultures serve *positive* functions – including a sense of belonging, distinction and support in the face of inequality (2005:6). Carter further posits that the principle components of these students' cultures is neither

oppositional nor deviant, but rather a practice of distinction through the employment of cultural capital (Carter 2005:6). These ideas challenge Ogbu's thesis of "acting white" in that they propose that students' ethno-racial cultures do not necessarily need to be understood as producing negative outcomes, but rather students' ethno-racial communities and their cultural capital may act as a source of support, motivating students towards pro-school attitudes.

Of central importance to Carter's argument is the idea of cultural capital – one of Pierre Bourdieu's three forms of capital (Bourdieu 1986). According to Bourdieu, cultural capital is accumulated cultural knowledge that confers power and status on the individual, and may be used within a system of exchange (Bourdieu 1986:21). In this way, Carter investigated the ways in which students 'cashed in', navigated and exchanged their cultural capital through their peer groups in a schooling environment. Carter identified three main groups of students through her study – noncompliant believers, cultural straddlers, and the cultural mainstreamers. In this Carter posits her belief that students' academic, cultural and school experiences are heterogeneous – this variety directly challenges Ogbu's 'acting white' thesis (Carter 2006:304). Students' experiences are heterogeneous because they all employ their cultural capital differently. The most successful students– the cultural straddlers – abide by school cultural rules, but not passively. They have substantial exchange with their co-ethnic peers and successfully juggle multiple forms of cultural capital (Carter 2005:13). The less successful cultural mainstreamers comply with the mandates of schooling, even if it means chastisement by fellow co-ethnic peers for failing to embrace a common ideology. On the other end of the

spectrum lie noncompliant believers who refuse to accept cultural capital and codes necessary for achievement within schools (Carter 2005:12).

Much research has also been done in relation to another of Bourdieu's forms of capital – social capital. Social capital as it is understood is the "aggregate of the actual or potential resources that are embedded in social networks that may be converted into other manifestations of capital, including material capital, human capital, and civic participation" (Ream 2008:113). In many schools social capital is understood through a students' peer group. Like Carter's study of cultural capital in schools, Robert Ream (2008:115) applied a localized approach to test Ogbu's acting white thesis by investigating the relationship between Latino students' social capital and dropout rates. Ream found that even after socioeconomic status, grades, and other background factors are controlled for, engagement behaviors of students are still "significant and positive predictors of school-oriented friendship networks and school completion for Mexican American and non-Latino white students" (2008:125). Similarly, students who are more involved in extracurricular school activities are more integrated into school and tend to be friends with other students who share a similar activity and attitude profile (Ream 2008:125).

An analogous study conducted by Erin McNamara Horvat and Kristine S. Lewis (2008) demonstrated that students respond directly to the particular social culture that they encounter in their schools, and subsequently do not bear the burden of 'acting white' because of the large diversity within the black peer group (Horvat & Lewis 2008:262). Upon finding many African American peer groups that encourage school achievement, Horvat & Lewis found further issue with Ogbu, positing that his "acting-white thesis does

not support the existence of clusters of aspiring black students who encourage and support one another's academic aspirations" (2008:269). As the literature demonstrates, many times students are not cast out of their peer groups because of their academic success, because this academic success is only one part of their peer group culture and identity – it offers not only agency but the sense of community necessary to achieve. In opposition to Ogbu's "acting white" thesis, being smart and being black are not as incongruent as they once were thought to be (Carter 2005, Downey 2008, Horvat & Lewis 2008).

Another point of interest in the literature is the way in which African American and other racial minority students think about and understand schooling. The evaluation of oppositional culture theory has lead researchers to consider a nationally puzzling pattern called the Attitude-Achievement Paradox: the idea that black students report more pro-school attitudes, but achieve academically at lower levels than white students do (Downey & Ainsworth-Darnell 2002). In fact, in a study conducted by Prudence Carter (2006:312), "97% of the students agreed that high achievement in school pays off in the future for young black and Hispanic youths, and 94% believed that education is a practical means to success". This paradox is intriguing because it disavows oppositional culture theory's view that blacks should disdain schools. In fact, it is so controversial that some theorists like John Ogbu, do not believe that one can accurately learn about blacks' attitudes about school by simply asking them as they, like any group, may be poor self-reporters (Downey 2008:117).

Disenchantment over the issue of the attitude-achievement paradox led Roslyn Mickelson to publish her highly influential research concerning the attitude-achievement

paradox amongst black adolescents (Mickelson 2007:46). Disillusioned by the contradiction, Mickelson set out to understand "why blacks continue to say that education is important to them [while they] behave in ways that have little relationship to their stated attitudes" (1990:46). That is, these students profess to value education, but do not display pro-school attitudes and actions. A key component to her solution, which has been accepted amongst the academic community, is that students have two different kinds of attitudes towards school: abstract and concrete attitudes. Abstract attitudes are influenced by the 'American dream' – by the idea that education is the solution to social problems; the normative belief that education is a means to social and economic mobility (Carter 2006:312). Concrete attitudes, adversely, are race and class specific – they speak to the different material realities students face that may or may not be similar to the dominant belief system (Mickelson 1990:46). Therefore the paradox has best been understood in the observation that African American adolescents seem to embrace high abstract ideals and low concrete goals when it comes to educational achievement.

Many psychologists such as Erik Erikson, would argue that black adolescents who achieve the most in schools have a high sense of self-efficacy. Perceived self-efficacy refers to "beliefs in one's capabilities to organize and execute the courses of an action required to produce given attainments" (Grabowski 2001:164). In terms of schooling, self-efficacy means students believe that they are both skillful and knowledgeable enough to achieve in the classroom. Self-efficacy has little to do with self-esteem – an evaluation of goodness or personal worth – because it does not directly address competence or effectiveness (Grabowski 2001:164).

Students may generate feelings of self-efficacy in a myriad of ways. To begin with, social background and personal achievement both influence economic self-efficacy, which in turn fosters education aspirations and attainment (Grabowski 2001:164). In terms of performance, students may gain self-efficacy by observing their own success (personal performance accomplishment), watching others whom they emulate (vicarious experience), through encouragement and reflected appraisals of others (verbal persuasion), and judged low physiological stress levels in relation to performance demands (physiological state) (Grabowski 2001:166). Self-efficacy is crucial for the goal setting that is necessary to propel students to higher education (Grabowski 2001:166). Similarly, Grabowski found that "academic self-efficacy is related positively to academic goal setting among high school students, as well as to the academic performance and achievements of middle and high school children" (2001:165). That is, self-efficacy and goal setting are part of the "no-excuses" ideology that KIPP charters emphasize. The employment of these expectations sets students up for success in that when scholastic expectations are high, and students are equipped to meet them, students' self-efficacy increases in an upward cycle.

For underserved adolescents, self-efficacy is an important issue because students who feel a strong sense of efficacy are more likely to "select challenging goals, and form well-structured sequential plans" (Skinner, Zimmer-Gembeck, and Connell 1998:11). In this way the probability of students continuing to higher education is a result of their ability to set goals and plan from an academically early age. At least during adolescence and the middle school years, a domain-specific sense of efficacy, particularly with respect to future labor market success, is beneficial to future educational attainment in a way that

overall efficacy beliefs can not compensate for (Grabowski 2001:175). Specifically to this research, the KIPP network is made up of middle schools that educate students while developing their sense of self-efficacy in these crucial adolescent years.

Although only one factor contributing to a student's self-efficacy, pedagogy has a lot to do with how students perceive their abilities in their academic world. Pedagogy is a practice that has largely changed over time, and still looks different across U.S schools. Pedagogy as many students experience it includes lectures, notes, quizzes and tests. Rote memory is part of what Paulo Freire, perhaps one of the most influential thinkers on the topic of pedagogy, suggests to be the "banking method" – where students are nothing more that empty receptacles to be passively filled with knowledge (Freire 1998). Students have little agency in this pedagogical approach, and are seen as intellectually and experientially inferior to their instructors (Freire 1998).

Challenging inherent issues of power and curriculum, Paulo Freire (1998) is the leader of the critical pedagogy movement. Critical pedagogy abandons the banking method and begins with the premise that all "men and women are essentially unfree and inhabit a world rife with contradictions and asymmetries of power and privilege" (McLaren 2003:69). The critical educator endorses dialectical theories – which recognize the problems of a society as more than isolated events of individuals unaffected by the social structure. He or she paradoxically understands that the school "functions simultaneously as a means of empowering students around issues of social justice and as a means of sustaining, legitimizing, and reproducing dominant class interests directed at creating obedient, docile and low-paid future workers" (McLaren 2003:70). Critical pedagogy has become increasingly popular as it asks students to take a critical look at the

world around them –encouraging them to both name the problems of their community and then take action against them. Additionally, critical pedagogy must always involve a political project with the objective of dismantling oppressive structures and mechanisms (Freire & Macedo 1998:10).

KIPP embraces critical pedagogy in that although it makes "no-excuses" for students' academic achievement; it also recognizes the social reality in which low-income students live. KIPP understands that many low-income students are not afforded the academic or social resources necessary to propel them to higher education, and thus as a school system, KIPP works to ameliorate these discrepancies. Because KIPP does not believe students are necessarily products of their environment, they work relentlessly to ensure that their students spend more time in the classroom, critically thinking, and learning the scholastic capital skills they will need in higher education. In the philosophical style of critical pedagogy, KIPP refuses to accept that underserved students are only capable of underperforming – instead they have adopted a pedagogical technique popularized by Paulo Freire – they encourage their students to read not only the "word" but the "world" (1983).

Throughout the literature lie themes of politics embedded in the U.S public educational system – whether through school resource distribution or issues of curriculum. Every decision made in schools is inherently political as researchers and educators together consider what counts as knowledge in schools, and how that knowledge is assessed. Nationally the politics behind No Child Left Behind (NCLB) have certainly influenced the educational landscape – shifting our public schools to a place driven by high-stakes testing and results. The goal of No Child Left Behind is to set

a high national standard for education with increased spending for schools that serve the poor, hiring highly qualified teachers, and holding schools that draw federal funds accountable to the government through high-stakes testing (U.S. Department of Education 2008).

While some schools have benefited from the funds and benchmark test of NCLB, many have also struggled. In fact, literature is currently being published that investigates how NCLB is hurting the very schools it was created to help. According to Linda Darling-Hammond and other progressive educators (Wood 2004:46), NCLB penalizes schools that serve poor and minority students because the greater a school's diversity, the more likely the student subgroups will fail to meet Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) standards. This is problematic because if even one subgroup fails, the entire school put on probation and threatened by the withdrawal of federal funds (Wood 2004:46).

In view of a survey of this literature, it is evident that although much research has taken place in the field of the Sociology of Education, many scholars continue to hold differing views concerning the causes and effects of the Achievement Gap in the United States. Some believe that specific students and cultures should be help responsible for student achievement (or lack there of); still others blame achievement issues on NCLB and other governmental policies, arguing that they work as structural forces which keep students from achievement. Similarly, themes pertaining to pedagogy and the philosophy of education are also significant to issues of student achievement; literature on each of these themes presents educators with a critical look at the current pedagogy and 'best practices' in successful U.S. schools. Literature which takes up themes of cultural, social, and scholastic capital have also presented themselves throughout the literature in

reoccurring ways, demonstrating a new emphasis which is being placed toward an understanding how issues of capital affect the educational experience of underserved students in United States' schools.

In context of this review of the literature, then, my research on scholastic capital in the KIPP charter schools contributes to a burgeoning body of academic literature in the field of the Sociology of Education. Although case studies of many KIPP schools have already been completed, KIPP Scholar Academy is a recently new charter and has not been the subject of much study – ensuring that my analysis will supplement and not simply mirror previous work. My research will build upon the literature of cultural opposition theory, and the burden of "acting white", by rejecting the Ogbu's "acting white" thesis and using the lens of cultural and scholastic capital to understand the success of KIPP students in higher education. Finally it will consider previous researchers' work on the intersection of scholastic capital and academic achievement and what it means for KIPP Scholar Academy students and their journey towards higher education.

Ethnography:

"You gotta read, baby, read. You gotta read, baby, read. The more you read, the more you know. Knowledge is power, Power is money, and I want *it. You gotta read, baby, read. You gotta read, baby, read. No need to hope for a good-paying job. With your first-grade skills you'll do nothing but rob. You gotta read, baby, read. You gotta read, baby, read. You'll rob your momma, you'll rob your friends. Don't you know you can learn? Don't you know you can win? You gotta read, baby, read. You gotta read, baby, read."*

- KIPP 5th grade chant

Scholar Academy: A KIPP Profile

"Find Your Passion. INSPIRE Your Own Journey.": these words read boldface on a giant white banner plastered across a massive cement building in a Midwestern urban neighborhood. The building is the home of KIPP Scholar Academy; the banner, the credo demanded of all who enter through the main doors. Ordinary, even drab, in its outside appearance, an unknowing passerby would have no idea of the life, energy, and learning that take place behind those cement walls. And this is the picture of KIPP: a school building that *demonstrates* the rebirth of an urban learning community, students who *deserve* exemplary public education, and a school community that *demands* excellence in educational attainment for ALL of its students.

KIPP schools are an exceptional place; this is evident from the moment you walk through the main doors. What you find at Scholar Academy is not your typical middle school – there is something different here, and if the colors and posters jumping off of the walls do not assent you to this fact, the students will. An air of excitement infectiously grabs on to anyone who enters the building. Hallways are quiet. Students walk in straight lines; instead of horseplay they read silently while they walk to their next class. Every student sports the school t-shirt tucked into khakis that read "It's Your Journey: OWN IT". On the back of the green fifth grade shirts, the words "Class of 2017" are

emboldened; for the sixth graders, Class of 2016. These fifth and sixth grade "KIPPsters" are first and second-year students – they will graduate from college in 2017 and 2016 respectively.

As you walk past the main office you will notice that this school is teeming with visions of college. Every student here knows the year they will matriculate, as well as the alma mater of their teachers. In fact, classes here are named after teachers' alma maters: Denison University, Miami University, The Ohio State University, and Ohio University. Banners on the wall represent universities that previous KIPPsters are now attending across the country: Spellman, Harvard, Wake Forest, Georgetown. Other posters in the hallway show a huge mountain with the words emboldened: "**ALL** of Us Are Climbing the Mountain to College". And, in fact, they are: according to the KIPP foundation, 85% of KIPP alumni have gone on to college ("KIPP: Annual Report Card," 2009).

Bright fabrics and displays of student artwork adorn the halls of the school, as well as hand-made posters encouraging students to "Work Hard. Be Nice," reminding students that "There Are No Shortcuts". There are only two main hallways that hold the school's eight classrooms and each opens to a large common space that is utilized by both students and staff. In this space are a make-shift "KIPP Kitchen" and two lounge areas where students can come and work on assignments aided by the extra help of teachers and volunteers. At first glance, the whole corridor-lounge-area looks more like the living room in a college dorm than a school hallway, demonstrating that although things at KIPP are done on a budget, they are still done with excellence and innovation. In fact, it is the financial and bureaucratic limitations which necessitate and spark KIPP's knack for innovation.

The students and faculty of KIPP Scholar Academy are representative of those in similar KIPP schools across the United States. Throughout the country KIPP schools reflect the demographics of the communities they serve – the majority of students are African American and Latino. Similarly, most of Scholar Academy's fifth and sixth graders are African American, and few are Latino or Caucasian. Even though students at Scholar Academy are similar racially, these students are not homogenous; some have come from neighborhood public schools, referred to KIPP by teachers or parents, while others have been expulsed of their neighborhood schools and now call KIPP their second schooling home. Like in any public school, students enter into KIPP with varying levels of academic, social and behavioral abilities.

Faculty at Scholar Academy, however, are a bit more homogenous. Most if not all of the teachers and administrators at this school (and KIPP in general) are below the age of 35, with most of the teachers even younger than that. They are a young, ambitious group that teaches with high energy and expectations. Many are graduates of the Teach for America Corps and have less than five years of teaching experience under their belts. As Teach for America alumni, many of these teachers did not study Education in their Undergraduate studies, and have approached the field of teaching and education from a more liberal training and certification – they have been more instructed in the philosophical elements of education than in classroom management techniques, although they obviously have a grasp on these as well. Teachers here are a close group: united around common beliefs and the demands of the job, they all contribute to a vibrant teaching community that demands student achievement "without excuses". It is interesting, however, to note that in stark contrast to the demographics of the student

body, most faculty at Scholar Academy are Caucasian; only a few would identify as African American and Latino/a.

Scholar Academy, and KIPP schools in general, are unique not only because of their demographics, but also because of the structure of their school day. Every morning, school starts at Scholar Academy at 7:30am and the day does not end until 5:00pm – which means that Scholar Academy students are in school for 60% more time than their national public school peers. Additionally, many KIPP schools are in session for four hours every other Saturday. While most of the hours go to simply more time in the classroom learning, some of them also go towards giving students enrichment opportunities that other middle-class children already benefit from (e.g. some KIPP schools have orchestras). Adjusting to the rigorous demands of this schedule can be difficult for new 5th grade KIPPsters, so during the summer, KIPP holds a three week summer session where new students are "KIPPnotized". During this session students learn the basics about being a KIPP student as well as what will be expected of them during the academic school year.

The high demands placed upon Scholar Academy students means that there is a lot to be accomplished during the school day. Although the schedule at Scholar Academy seems to be more dynamic than static, the following is an example of a hypothetical day at KIPP. Every morning the school day begins at 7:25am and goes until 5:00pm, except on Fridays when school gets out at 4:00pm. Scholar Academy students begin their day with breakfast at the school, and then have 'Morning Affirmation' where they get a schedule for what they will be doing the rest of the day. This schedule gives students the

impression that "there are things to do here," and so there is not time to disrupt the scheduled progress (Robinson 2008).

Next, students will have a three-hour Language Arts/Social Studies block (or half might have that in the afternoon). In Social Studies, students learn "non-fiction studies" about cultures and histories around the world (Robinson 2008). Every other day (MWF), students spend 1 ½ hours on math and 1 ½ hours on science. Students also have Physical Education every day, and may also participate in after-school fitness programs. An enrichment block is scheduled for the end of the day, 3:45pm-5:00pm, when students spend time in a variety of extracurricular classes. Although Scholar Academy is not currently holding Saturday sessions, many KIPP schools across the nation do hold class on Saturdays to give students the opportunity to develop non-academic interests in a club-like atmosphere. The intentionality behind this is that KIPP desires to keep its students occupied with school aspirations even during time that is usually constructed as "free time" (i.e. the weekends). Additionally students may also participate in literacy circles on Saturday mornings. The silver lining to having class on the weekends? Students do not have to wear their school uniform on these days, although they are still required to wear jeans and a collared shirt.

The Scholar Academy school day speaks a great deal to the way that KIPP founders, administrators, and students live out the charter's ideals. With an emphasis on 'Team and Family' there is a palpable sense of cooperation inside KIPP Scholar Academy that creates a very focused learning environment. For example, when students at Scholar Academy disrupt class they stand up and apologize to their peers for the loss of "wasted time". Students read silently while walking in the hallways and they work

collaboratively as 'teammates'. Along with the 'Work Hard. Be Nice.' mantra, teachers embrace the importance of a consistent learning community. Clearly defined expectations are important at Scholar Academy, such as teaching students a uniform idea of "respect" so that every classroom has the same standard in mind. This consistent environment where expectations are known not only helps students learn, but it also helps them to feel safe and comfortable.

Ms. Bailey's Room:

We are on our way to college; you know we got the Knowledge! Class of 2017!

If the banner at the school entrance and the posters in the hall do not convince a visitor of the vision at KIPP, one step inside of Ms. Bailey's classroom will. In addition to the bright green paint the walls are thoroughly covered with posters, student work, and quotes that all remind students of their common purpose – going to college. WHAM (Work Hard Achieve More), reads one poster over the board, another BAM (By Any Means). Across the room a huge poster-board sheet reads "BIG GOAL: 100% of KIPPsters will score **proficient** or **higher** on the Reading Ohio Achievement Test". Posters regarding the OAT (Ohio Achievement Test) appear in every classroom and ask students questions like "how many pages a night do you need to read to reach the OAT score **YOU** want?". All of the posters in Ms. Bailey's room are homemade and are tailored towards KIPP students' specific goals and vision.

"Two feet, one square! We are going to do an art project. You have one more minute to finish your "Do Now" [worksheet] and then we are going to talk about the rest of the day". Ms. Bailey's directions to her 5th grade class project out of her classroom and

down the hallway corridor. The bustle from inside the classroom is indicative of a typical day at Scholar Academy; there are things to be done, and no time to waist. Ms. Bailey's bright green classroom can be found at the end of the main academic hallway, it is one of two Language Arts/Reading classrooms. As you enter, the 25 fifth-graders around the room notice you, but your presence gives them little pause. There are things to be done in this classroom, and visitors are such a normal occurrence that they rarely faze students. In fact, most rooms at Scholar Academy have a desk or table reserved for the explicit presence of visitors and observers. Visitors do not feel like a burden at this school, but rather, their presence is thought of as an opportunity for both students and teachers to grow. Any visitor who enters the classroom is greeted by a student who shakes their hand, saying "Hello, welcome to KIPP Journey Academy! My name is Melissa, and today we are working on vocabulary". In the moment, Ms. Bailey does not prompt her students to greet the guests; their presence is already so common that the greeting has become natural and genuine.

The "Barack Obama Library" takes up the back corner of Ms. Bailey's room – furnished with lounge chairs and colorful rugs, this library contains books entitled Black Stars: African American Millionaires, Conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan, and Should Kids Play Video Games. KIPPsters are expected to always have a silent reading book with them, and many of them utilize the library as a source to draw from. There is another carpet square by the board that Ms. Bailey and her students use for reading. During the reading unit students who have "demonstrated that they are focused on reading" are invited by name to the carpet square to sit with Ms. Bailey while she reads the assigned class book aloud to them.

The bulletin board at the front of the room displays college posters from Capital University and a poster about an upcoming field trip. Students who have no pink discipline slips or tardys, and enough money on their "paycheck", are invited to go to the State House in February for a fieldtrip. The paycheck system is what Scholar Academy uses to reward and discipline its students. Students can have money added to their paycheck for exemplary behavior in class, just as money is subtracted from the paycheck when students misbehave or distract classmates. Money earned from the paycheck can go towards the purchases of school paraphernalia and apparel at the Scholar Academy store, or towards the field trips. What is important is that students recognize that they have a choice – not only a choice about how to spend their money, but a choice over how they behave in school in the first place.

Students who want to work towards this paycheck must follow Ms. Bailey's classroom guidelines. Ms. Bailey, like all other KIPP teachers, uses the acronym SLANT to communicate with her students. SLANT is a guide for students' posture in class: Sit up, Listen, Ask and Answer Questions, Nod, and Track. This last component, "tracking", is a key phrase that any KIPPster hears on a daily basis. Tracking means to sit forward in your seat, with your hands on your desk and your eyes following the speaker. Students may "track" the teacher, a guest, or each other. Ms. Bailey also has a system for class participation. Students who have a question for Ms. Bailey raise one finger into the air, students with the answer to a question raise two fingers, and those who need to use the restroom can raise their fist. All teachers also use the "KIPP Scholar Sound System" – during group work the classroom will be in one of three "zones". During Zone Two quiet

conversations amongst peers are permitted, during Zone One everyone must be at a quiet whisper, and Zone Zero demands silence.

The atmosphere in Ms. Bailey's room is one of focus, encouragement, and achievement. During her lessons Ms. Bailey is constantly walking around the room, weaving her way in and out of desks – providing vigilance and help to those in her classroom. She encourages student participation while also reminding her class that they must stay on track if they are going to cover all that is assigned to the day. Each class period starts with students working on their "Do Nows" – a work sheet that students pick up as soon as they enter the room. "Do Nows" usually only take up the first five minutes of a class; after a student finishes he or she is expected to silently read. Every class is dismissed upon students' completion of an "Exit Ticket" – a small worksheet that students must complete in the last five minutes of the class in an attempt to solidify and apply the day's material before going on to the next subject.

KIPP: 'Team & Family'

It is unusual to see fifth grade boys cheer each other on and encourage one another during a competitive game of Nerf basketball – especially if they are not on the same team. "Dang it! Nice try! Oh, snap!" students from one team encourage their opponents in a competitive, but friendly, game of vocabulary-based basketball during the end of a class period. These boys are a part of the KIPP Scholar Academy 'Team and Family', and they treat their peers and teachers as such.

- Fieldnotes 1/28/2010

Whether you are spending time in Ms. Bailey's room, or another down the hallway, there is a palpable sense of 'Team and Family' in the air at Scholar Academy. From the way that students interact with each other, to how faculty talk to students and each other, it is evident that 'Team and Family' places a pulse on what it means to flesh

out interactive learning at Scholar Academy. It is not that students at Scholar Academy just work in teams, collaborating on projects and questions; they do that, but they also do more. Students here encourage one another. When they are playing Nerf basketball in class, they cheer for each other. When a student sees that their peers do not understand a lesson, they ask the teacher for permission to help them. Scholar Academy students reprimand each other when they talk or act off-task, and they hold each other accountable to the ideals of the classroom team. Not only do students participate in collaborative and constructive learning, they are the initiators and keepers of this dynamic.

Ideas about 'Team and Family', though, understandably start with the teacher. Many of the teachers speak to students as they would peers, giving them choice and options, but expecting respect and achievement to be demonstrated on behalf of the student. One teacher shared with me a project that a few of the Scholar Academy teachers were taking on that was based on the idea of writing in journals as presented in the movie Freedom Writers (Gruwell 1999). In this journal project teachers take a break once a week from the demanding curriculum to give their students opportunities to respond to a personal question in a journal they have decorated. As one teacher put it, the intent behind the project is that "you can't teach them [the students] if you don't know them…if they know you're not invested in them". The project was so successful that students who were comfortable "shared out" during class, revealing personal information that none of their peers were aware of. In response, all of the students in the class decided to write letters to these two peers, apologizing for any time they had treated them poorly, and vowing to look out for them in the future. All of these letters were written without a teacher's prompting.

In sum, there is no single factor that defines the KIPP schools, or Scholar Academy as different from other charter or even public school; but rather there are a whole multitude of factors that work together to set KIPP apart from their respective community competitors. A combination of 'More Time' in school and 'no excuses' expectations, aided by an air of 'Team and Family', has been proven to produce quite a demanding culture of achievement within the KIPP schools. And although there have understandably been those who have challenged KIPP's success, the lessons that can be learned from this schooling model have implications for how underserved students across the country navigate their educational landscapes.

The 5 KIPP Pillars:

"KIPP is a way of life that means going the extra mile in education to enable students' success." – KIPP School Leader

KIPP schools are successful, partly because of their comprehensive vision and uniformity across the nation. Although every school is unique in its demographics and community, KIPP schools across the country share a core set of operating principles called the 'Five Pillars'. As the foundation of KIPP, these pillars help to create a feeling that everyone at the schools – teachers, students, parents, and school leaders – are all sharing in a common commitment to building a learning community where students can thrive. And thrive they do.

The first of these core pillars is 'High Expectations' – KIPP schools have clearly defined academic and behavioral expectations for their students and schools. KIPP makes no excuses for students' backgrounds, acknowledging that although growing up in poverty may be a deterrent to educational success it is not a barrier. Each KIPP school

communicates their 'High Expectations' through an emphasis on their culture of achievement and commitment ("KIPP: Annual Report Card," 2009). This culture is fostered through various formal (field trips, student paychecks) and informal (playing a game in class) rewards and consequences. One teacher at Scholar Academy communicates her high expectations in this way at the beginning of class: "so if at this point you [students] don't have a "Do Now", it is money off your paycheck. It's no longer a choice, its February; I don't need to tell you anymore".

'Choice and Commitment', the second KIPP pillar, is an equally significant part of the national charter school's foundation. The 'Choice and Commitment' pillar acknowledges that everyone who is at KIPP chooses to be there – that means both students and their parents. Coming to KIPP is very much a family decision as the school mandates core responsibilities to students, their parents, and the schools' faculty. All three of these parties sign 'Commitment to Excellence' forms (see Appendix C) acknowledging that learning at KIPP is a partnership between student, parent, and teacher ("KIPP: Annual Report Card," 2009).

In order to include families in the decision, KIPP faculty recruit door-to-door in the summer, meeting with families in their homes and at their convenience. Amongst the parent/guardian responsibilities include ensuring that student gets to KIPP every morning, checking their child's homework every night, and encouraging the student to call the teacher with a problem. In this, teachers commit to being available to students whenever they need help (they give out their cell phone numbers, and encourage students to call), and to teaching in the best way they know how while doing whatever it takes for their students to learn ("KIPP: Annual Report Card," 2009). Finally, amongst other

things, students commit to doing whatever it takes to learn; they commit to listening to their KIPP teammates and giving respect, and to being responsible for their own behavior.

As a part of KIPP's culture of high expectations and achievement, the third pillar is 'More Time'. From day one KIPP preaches to its students that "there are no shortcuts, and there are no excuses". KIPP students spend 60% more time in school than their public school peers and that is because KIPP believes that there is no substitute for more time in school. Longer school days at KIPP allow students more time to develop academic knowledge and skills that will allow them to compete at academically competitive high schools and colleges across the country. The extended school-day also affords students more time to develop extracurricular interests and engage in diverse nonacademic experiences ("KIPP: Annual Report Card," 2009). KIPP founders and designers Mike Feinberg and Dave Levine comment on the time commitment noting that "no 5th grade kid comes home from school 'beat' and says they want a nap – they are going to be doing something"— and with two hours of homework on top of a full work-day at school, KIPPsters have ample demands to keep them occupied (Weir 2007).

Although the KIPP school day does include some extracurricular activities, most of the day is intensely academically oriented. The fourth pillar at KIPP is a 'Focus on Results' – that is KIPP is focused on high student performance on standardized tests, like the Ohio Achievement Test (OAT). Because KIPP does not believe in shortcuts or excuses en route to their students' academic successes, they demand high performance on standardized tests from all their students. The belief behind this pillar is that students will

need to be able to succeed on standardized tests in order to compete with the nations' best high school and college students ("KIPP: Annual Report Card," 2009).

The last KIPP pillar, 'Power to Lead', is indicative of the freedom afforded to KIPP as a charter school. School Leaders (traditionally called principles) at KIPP have considerable autonomy at their schools. Not only do they have control over their school's budget and personnel, but they are also able to move funds and make staffing changes in order to best enable maximum academic effectiveness at their school ("KIPP: Annual Report Card," 2009). Additionally it is important to note that while KIPP teachers may be unionized in some states, they are not unionized throughout the country.

KIPP: A Healthy Skepticism

While national media outlets and politicians alike praise the KIPP schools, a dose of skepticism is always healthy. After all, KIPP schools have only been around for the last sixteen years (since 1994), making them a somewhat-recent experiment in charter education. It is difficult to find KIPP dissenters in academic circles, mostly because people *want* to believe in the power of KIPP to "save" children from educational inequality; however those academics and their critiques of the charter school do exist (Mathews 2009). One such vocal KIPP critic is Richard Rothstein from Columbia Teachers College and the Economic Policy Institute (EPI) (Carnoy 2005). As Rothstein summatively puts it, KIPP "scores are admirable but [they] do not prove that KIPP can get middle-class results from typical lower-class students without [first] addressing the social and economic causes of failure" (Carnoy 2005:33). Beyond this big-picture criticism, Rothstein and colleagues touch on other specific criticisms unique to KIPP,

namely: "creaming" and student demographics, student attrition, teacher autonomy (unionization) and teacher burnout.

The issue of student representativeness at KIPP is one of controversy. Many critics do not think that KIPP students are representative of their public school peers – that is, KIPP students may benefit from bolstered family support and pro-school attitudes at home. This criticism of student representation means that the KIPP approach may not really be effective for educating the most disadvantaged of the underserved students after all. Rachel Holovach, contributor to *Education Week*, notes that "the poor kids going into KIPP aren't a random cross-section of all poor kids" (2007:41). That is to say, KIPP students are not representative of the average student in their community – it can be understood that they may carry with them some additional social or cultural capital in the form of parent networks or academic skills.

Rothstein (Carnoy 2005) supports this criticism, arguing that KIPP students are not representative of all children in low-income neighborhoods, because they have more motivated parents and better test scores than their community averages. Critics argue that only the brightest students hear about KIPP, or enter into the lottery, either because they are recommended by their teachers (in acknowledgement of their exceptional academic skill) or their parents are invested in enrolling them in KIPP. In a study with the Economic Policy Institute, Rothstein found that elementary teachers whom he interviewed referred students to KIPP who were more academically able than their peers. These fourth grade teachers also noted that they felt that only "the most motivated and educationally sophisticated parents were those likely to take the initiative to pull children out of public school and enroll at KIPP at the end of fourth grade" (Carnoy 2005:58).

Thus, Rothstein concludes that the involvement and pro-school attitudes of students' families influences who has access to the program, and who enrolls.

This enrollment phenomenon is called 'creaming' – KIPP is enrolling the 'most advantaged' of the students in a disadvantaged area. While Rothstein points out the significance of this criticism, he does not think that it necessarily negates KIPP's success. Rather, it calls educators to reconsider whether the KIPP model is effectively educating whatever types of students enroll, those with and without family support. In the big picture, then, KIPP can not be praised as a model for educating *every* kind of underserved student without first addressing issues of economic and social depravity (Carnoy 2005:58). And what is KIPP's response to this criticism? In 2005 KIPP officials compared three of their earliest establishments to regular public schools in the same areas where KIPP schools also existed and found that KIPP students were indeed somewhat less disadvantaged, being 80% low-income versus 89% in local neighborhood schools. Additionally these KIPP students were somewhat more likely to be black or Hispanic (98% at KIPP compared to 86% in regular schools) (Mathews 2005).

Another question that critical observers have been asking is why KIPP schools are experiencing such high student mobility. Many educators are interested in issues of attrition as related to KIPP, why students leave or are pushed out, and who these students are. KIPP serves students in underserved areas where there is high student mobility. This has been the cause of scrutiny for many critics who claim that there is more to KIPP achievement scores than meets the eye. For example, students that leave KIPP schools due to high family mobility or disagreement with KIPP culture, for example are generally low-performing. Additionally, it is often hard to track students with high family mobility

across their educational paths. Chances that these students would relocate to another area KIPP school where their test scores could be included in a composite are slim since there are only 86 such schools nationwide.

This migration of low-performing students out of KIPP schools could inflate test scores so that the data does not accurately represent the school's success. "If a large number of students don't stay, how can we say this is a model for public education?" asks Alex Molnar, of the Education Policy Studies Center at Arizona State University in Tempe, Arizona (Holovach 2007:41). To address this issue of attrition and high family mobility, KIPP is working to convince families that the KIPP demands will pay off, hoping that the promise of higher education will be enough to keep them committed to the school's culture and high demands.

Beyond issues of student demographics and attrition, unionization (or lack of it) at KIPP schools became an issue of national debate in February of 2009 when KIPP began conversations that considered allowing certain KIPP schools to unionize. Amongst the dialogue, critics of unions note that KIPP schools (and other charters as well) were founded in opposition to teachers' unions – believing that teacher unions detract from administrators autonomy and enable ineffective teachers to maintain their jobs (Medina 2009). Despite of the freedom that non-unionization has afforded KIPP teachers and School Leaders, many are now pushing for unionization. Teachers at KIPP's AMP (Always Mentally Prepared) school in New York City note that they are in favor of unionization because it would establish clearer expectations for teacher performance and provide official procedures for how and why teachers are dismissed (Medina 2009). Holding to the founding principles of KIPP, co-founder Dave Levine has remained

opposed to the unionization movement, although he reports that is he staying open to his faculty's needs for more defined expectations and procedures.

The final critique of KIPP also is in relation to teachers, as teacher burnout is a substantial problem at KIPP. Similar to many teaching corps programs, faculty at KIPP are asked to give a lot of themselves to their students and to their schools. The average KIPP student puts in 60% more time than their neighborhood peers, and so teachers' hours are respectively proportional (about 80 hours/week). While KIPP teachers work weekends and extra hours for compensation, there is no question that they are being asked to do a lot. Richard Rothstein offers his perspective on the situation commenting that "[n]o education model can assume that all teachers will be forever young, working extraordinary hours and never expecting salary growth that typically comes with years of experience" (Carnoy 2005: 72). It should be noted then, that KIPP teachers generally remain no more than five years in the KIPP program.

All criticisms considered, the biggest point of skepticism is that KIPP is new. These charters have only been operating sine 1994 and few alumni groups exist which could even be studied. What is encouraging though, is that KIPP's 'no excuses' attitude toward doing whatever it takes to help underserved students succeed, really is applied beyond the clichés of success. In response to criticisms of their school, KIPP leaders have only reaffirmed their continual commitment to educating students who have fallen through the cracks. The KIPP credo states "If there is a problem, we look for a solution. If there is a better way, we find it. If a teammate needs help we give. If we need help, we ask" (Horsburch 2003). As one school leader commented "at KIPP we do not think we

have it all right, [and] if there is a better way, we want to find it" – for instance, by working with their critics.

Data Analysis:

There is a real sense in this room, and at KIPP in general, that there are important things going on here – there are things to be learned, an agenda to be kept. Wasted time results in lost opportunity – students know this.

Scholastic Capital at KIPP

Most students at KIPP are successful; most students "climb the mountain college". As a result of the hundreds of extra hours that KIPPsters put into their academic lives, over 85% of them, in fact, will matriculate into college ("KIPP: Annual Report Card," 2009). Only one in five of their neighborhood peers in public schools will do so ("KIPP: Annual Report Card," 2009). While spending 'More Time' in schools is a factor contributing largely to student success, there is more than this one key to understanding why the underserved students at KIPP are able to successfully navigate high school and advance to college. Beyond the additional classroom hours, KIPP prepares its students for higher education because it explicitly trains them in the acquisition and employment of scholastic capital. Through the language, actions, and expectations of both students and staff at the school, KIPP demands that all students subscribe to their regime of acquiring specific scholastic capital in both informal and explicit ways.

Pierre Bourdieu's conception of scholastic capital is interlinked with that of cultural capital, as cultural knowledge and capital frequently act as 'scholastic capital' within schools. Scholastic capital, then, is a more specified and finely attuned form of

cultural capital that pertains to certain academic and scholastic values. Where normally an exchange of cultural knowledge and skills is available to those who "cash in" their cultural capital, those with scholastic capital are able to exchange their time, energy, and money for college degrees, and occupations with high status and income (Swartz 1997:198). For this reason, students at KIPP devote a significant amount of their own time and energy to the KIPP 'scholastic capital' model, with the hopes that they will be able to exchange these efforts for academic success and a college education.

The purpose behind this analysis, then, is not to evaluate to what degree KIPP is successful (or not) at using scholastic capital as a tool to matriculate students into college, nor is it concerned with a moral stance on the politics and policy to this end. Rather, my discussion will take up the question of *how* scholastic capital is manifested at KIPP. I do this by analyzing explicit manifestations of scholastic capital in the following categories: language, behavior, and expectations.

Language:

Across the country, students in college-prep schools learn about language as they listen to their teachers interact with each other, as well as the other students in their classrooms. This process of learning language is similar at Scholar Academy, except here, the transfer of scholastic capital is explicit in the language heard and spoken at the school. Teachers at KIPP are continually in communication with students, using language that intentionally will work towards building students' scholastic capital. Although teachers communicate with students in a variety of registers, two of particular importance

are that KIPP teachers frequently communicate with students via commands, and as if teachers and students were peers.

One teacher charges her class, "following directions is an important part of being a 5th grader" – informal statements like these are how scholastic capital is fleshed out at KIPP via language. Generally, teachers speak to students in commands when introducing and concluding activities at the beginning and end of class. "You will do the first page and then you will ask questions", one teacher says to her class; "There are no shortcuts. Your name should be on it [the paper], the date…Clear everything else off your desk and make it quick", commands another teacher of her students. While there are multiple reasons why a teacher would communicate with his/her students in any given register, in at least some aspect teachers at KIPP speak to students in commands not only because their days are generally quite regimented, but also because students must learn to respect authority and follow directions as they accumulate the scholastic capital they will need in higher education. As they listen to their teachers, students at KIPP are constantly reminded that staying on task, staying focused, and working hard are some of the most important things they can do. These commands encourage pro-school attitudes in students and help to teach them the academic focus that they will need to succeed in higher education.

In contrast to commands, many teachers at KIPP also frequently talk to their students as if they were students' peers. There is a significant amount of respect communicated in the language use of teachers and students. As demanding as teachers are with their commands, faculty at KIPP make sure to build students up when they can, communicating with them so they are capable of thinking for themselves, making good

decisions, and most importantly succeeding. "Make your own decisions, be responsible for yourself" is a phrase commonly heard at Scholar Academy. When visitors are in the room, teachers frequently acknowledge their presence, reminding students that they are exceptional because they are choosing to work so hard at KIPP. "Look at the guest and track with her," one teacher says, "Now track with me. She has come here to see how KIPPsters work and how well you can perform…lets show her what we can do".

Teachers also encourage an air of camaraderie in their classrooms in their language. KIPP is somewhat famous for their "Read, baby, read!" chant, and when classrooms chant it teachers encourage their students to scream at the top of their lungs; "Sing louder!" shouts the teacher, "Show our guest what we do really well at KIPP…I want the class next door to hear it!". And while there is little time scheduled into the day for games and distractions such as these chants, teachers try to communicate student agency by giving them small choices. While giving a test, one teacher stops her students and advises them: "You can absolutely take a break [on the test] if you want, but I don't want you to rush through the writing. Make sure you do the best work you can". It is important that teachers at KIPP communicate respectfully to their students, as if they were peers, because this facilitates a learning space wherein KIPP students can learn how to communicate with adults. This ability to talk with adults is a scholastic capital skill that students will need as they enter into higher education and compete against their middle-class peers who have been raised communicating with more adults, generally with greater senses of entitlement.

Although teachers are the main models for language use, the way that students communicate with each other is also of significance as it is crucial to building the 'Team

and Family' credo of the KIPP schools. Teachers play a significant role in helping students to shape this atmosphere, and strongly encourage students to think of themselves as team members. The underlying message in this school is that KIPP is so challenging that students will be unable to pass through it without their "Team and Family". For this reason students feel a great sense of responsibility towards each other. During my time in the classrooms, I observed that student communication at Scholar Academy really does go beyond just group work. Students work collaboratively in class, directing questions to one another whilst also policing each others' behavior. "Did y'all hear what she [the teacher] said?" one boy questions the others at his table, "She said get your stuff and get back to your seat. Y'all do not follow directions". This boy's comment illuminates the focus that KIPP students have, and espouses the sense of collaboration that has been created and reproduced in the classroom. Similarly, while playing a small game of Nerf basketball, students all verbally encouraged every single one of their teammates when they both made and missed their shots – a sight uncommon in most middle school social circles. The way that students communicate with each other at Scholar Academy demonstrates that they are learning important scholastic capital skills that will enable them to work collaboratively in a team towards goals in higher education.

Comportment:

Beyond language use and practice, scholastic capital at KIPP is fleshed out in student comportment, or behavior. Students at KIPP all behave under an explicit code of behavior that includes following dominant group values, working collaboratively, demonstrating initiative, and following directions. Much of student behavior at Scholar

Academy is restricted in that students must behave in prescribed ways – they must walk in silent lines and follow an explicit model for raising their hands in class. Students must sit at a SLANT (sit up, listen, ask and answer questions, nod, track), and wear a tucked in uniform everyday to school. Most importantly, students must believe that they are going to college, and they must commit themselves to the daily behavioral regime prescribed by their teachers. Students who do not to act within these presubscribed roles are those who 'choose' to not participate in the "KIPP culture", and ultimately these students decide to leave KIPP, or are not successful at the school.

Students at KIPP are always expected to behave in a way that demonstrates self-control – this behavior is reinforced by the schooling model as well as the expectations of teachers. "Lets demonstrate some self-control after having some fun", suggests one of the teachers; another praises a student for "not reacting when they have made a bad choice". In these statements, teachers are communicating that KIPP students should demonstrate a sense of responsibility and ownership for their actions – they should calm down quickly after playing games; they should accept the appropriate punishment when they break the classroom rules. Students at KIPP behave in a way that demonstrates that they respect and comply with the ideology at KIPP; an expectation that is very controlled for the normal fifth-grade classroom. Although teachers are frequently disappointed when students "choose to react to poor decisions", in the context of any other 5th grade classroom beyond KIPP, the minor behavioral offenses of Scholar Academy students would never even be considered as such.

Additionally, it is exceedingly important that students at KIPP learn to "assign themselves". Immediately upon the completion of any assignment students take out their

independent reading books at their seats – some even read while walking in the hall to and from class. The language of "self control" and "self-assignment" necessitates an understanding of what adult behavior is. Students at KIPP are expected to learn to interact with adults by practicing these interactions. Anytime that an adult volunteer or observer walks into the room they are immediately greeted by a KIPP student who shakes their hand, introduces themselves, and explains the activities of the day. In this KIPP students are subscribing the cultural script of pleasantries within the world of scholastic capital. The importance of the personal introduction, a handshake, and the ability to articulate are all skills that will be expected of KIPP students upon their entrance into higher education, and so unbeknownst to them, they explicitly practice these skills as a part of the behavioral code at Scholar Academy.

Through these prescribed and regimented behavioral practices, students are learning to act as adults, even though they are only in the fifth grade. In this though, there is somewhat of a disconnect between the KIPP classroom and the 'real world' for which students are being prepared. As one teacher explained it to me, if the classroom is supposed to mirror the real world than it is ridiculous that KIPP demands that its students be in their seats for eight hours a day, only getting up to sharpen their pencils and to use the bathroom, given that no adult in the workplace is expected to sit in one place for that amount of time. Despite the rigor of the behavioral expectations, however, KIPP students still do "assign" and control themselves in a seat for numerous hours each day. What is important to take away from analyzing the behavior of students at KIPP schools, then, is that these students demonstrate their allegiance to the school ideology in their actions. They commit to learning the scholastic capital skills necessary when they choose to

practice "assigning themselves" while "not reacting" to poor decisions during the school day.

When analyzing student behavior in schools it is important to ask questions about student motivation – what motivates students to act in the ways they do, and what are the consequences for dissent? At Scholar Academy students are motivated to embrace appropriate behavior through a series of formal and informal punishments and rewards, the most prominent of these being the paycheck. When students at Scholar Academy are caught misbehaving (talking excessively, being off task, etc.) they loose money from their paycheck; adversely students may also have money added to their check for following directions or other exemplary behavior. The paycheck controls student behavior by creating a strong marketplace model in the school. In this students are not only motivated to subscribe to the school's ideology and behavioral code, but they also learn about the economics of the marketplace.

The paycheck system appears to be a harmlessly positive technique in that it gives students a sense of personal agency and teaches them about fiscal responsibility, a life-skill that students will need as adult. What is problematic, however, is that using the paycheck method to control behavior teaches students to be consumers at the most subconscious level. By bringing the marketplace model into the classroom, students are educated to behave in a way that encourages self-identification as a consumer. This model then, not only teaches "appropriate" student behavior, but it also reinforces the apparent necessity of the marketplace model and primes student behavior for their future lives.

Expectations:

The marketplace emphasis of KIPP is not surprising considering the explicit ideology and expectations surrounding competition and higher education at the school. In general, there seems to be a considerable overlap between how scholastic capital is fleshed out through student comportment, and how scholastic capital is transferred and communicated to students via expectations. The result of this overlap is that the ideology of Scholar Academy is strongly and explicitly felt as both student behavior and expectations are mutually reinforcing.

Expectations about student performance are high at Scholar Academy. Academic failure is literally not an option; going to college is inarguable and inevitable. As soon as students enroll at Scholar Academy they are reminded that "ALL KIPP" students are "climbing the mountain to college", and that all are striving for excellence. Expectations at KIPP are communicated in a number of ways – through language, posters, and school credos – making the expression of expectations perhaps the most explicit of the three distinctions of scholastic capital. Discussions around college are framed in the context of *when* students matriculate, not if. To that end, all students know what year they will enter into college and should they forget, this expectation is plastered on posters and in credos all around the school. "We're on our way to college; you know we got the knowledge! Class of 2017!", reads one classroom wall. "It's Your Journey: Own It", is printed on the back of every student's uniform t-shirt. Like many of their middle-class peers, students at KIPP are expected to go on to study in college; this expectation is so normalized within the ideology of the school that to behave in any way contrary to this expectation would be

to inadvertently remove oneself from the school culture and ideology completely and would not be tolerated.

While the expectation that all students are "climbing the mountain to college" is felt strongly at KIPP, the expectation of significant student responsibility is also strongly emphasized. There is a real sense at Scholar Academy that there are important things going on in the classroom – there are things to be learned and an agenda to be kept. Wasted time results in lost opportunity and students know this. Even though their school day is extensive, students are expected to waste little to no time while in attendance. Immediately upon entering class students start their "Do Now" worksheets, and as soon as any assignment is finished they must immediately begin to "assign themselves" to silent independent reading. This expectation that students would assign themselves is one explicitly reinforced through teacher-student communication. Students who fail to "assign themselves" lose paycheck money and are disciplined or reprimanded in other ways.

Surpassing all other expectations in importance though, is the expectation that all KIPP students will perform at a high academic level; this, after all, is a prerequisite a student must reach before they can even consider "cashing in" their scholastic capital in exchange for higher education. "Excellence is Our Aim", reads the overhead that shines in the math room while students practice problems. Instead of a "Name" line on students' papers, there is a blank line next to the word "Scholar". The credo "No Shortcuts. No excuses" is printed in the upper right-hand corner of worksheets, while "Work Hard. Be Nice" reads at the bottom of each page. A poster in an English room reads "ALL of us WILL EARN proficient or higher on the OAT (Ohio Achievement Test)". Explicit

statements of high performance expectations like these at KIPP teach students to embrace the challenge of obstacles, giving them a confidence and sense of self-efficacy that will be stored in their scholastic capital bank and utilized to succeed in higher education.

Each of these written credos and expressions are explicit, yet subconscious, reinforcers of the expectation for high student performance at KIPP. The sheer number and repetition of these messages around the school makes them impossible to ignore, and in effect these credos become the dominant ideology of the school. With this ideology firmly in place, student underachievement is beyond the discourse of the school, and therefore is an inconceivable option. "Hard work leads to success" is the only thing preached to Scholar Academy middle schoolers, and thus anything but exceptional academic performance is a rarity. The bottom line is that significantly more is asked of KIPP fifth and sixth grade students in the way of test scores, behavior, and self-efficacy than their national middle school peers. Through the use of both written and verbal expectations, KIPP reinforces the tenants innate to scholastic capital (proactivity, meritocracy, responsibility) and exposes them to the meritocratic discourse that they will enter into upon matriculation to college. High student expectations at KIPP mimic the dominant discourse and ideology around higher education at other college-prep schools, giving KIPP students the explicit exposure to the scholastic capital that will be vital to their success in higher education.

Discussion of Scholastic Capital:

The KIPP model and approach to schooling has been explicitly constructed with a specific type of scholastic capital in mind – the scholastic capital of those who attend

college. As a part of their mission, KIPP ascertains that one of their goals is to "help ALL of their students climb the mountain to college" ("KIPP: Annual Report Card," 2009). The "mountain to college" however, is almost insurmountable for those without access to the necessary scholastic capital; hence the KIPP model. The KIPP educational philosophy and pedagogical styles are crucial as underserved students who wish to compete in higher education must first be trained in a fashion similar to that of their national college-bound peers. The difference in the schooling models, though, lies in the fact that KIPP is so explicit with their scholastic capital transfers, while other college-prep high schools pay significantly less attention to the unspoken nuances of scholastic capital in their schools. This is because the scholastic capital explicit in KIPP's pedagogy exposes its underserved students to the cultural codes and symbols valued by the dominant social group. These codes are significant as they are reflective of an integral practice and sensibility which has come to be understood as 'innate' within schools and higher education (Carter 2005:15).

Consequently, schools whose philosophy and pedagogical styles mirror those cultural practices of the dominant group yield advantages disproportionately to students from these particular schooling models (Carter 2005:15). This means that if KIPPsters are going to compete against other students who have been educated with a certain set of scholastic capital, KIPP must shape its pedagogy in reaction to theirs, so as to matriculate as many students as possible. As scholastic capital pertains to a schooling model, it is not the 'elite of the elite' within the academic system who posses superior academic knowledge, but rather this group identifies with the types of traits that are recognized by those in power in the educational system (colleges and universities) (Bourdieu 1989:16).

Bourdieu describes these 'elite' students as those who display the "clearest attestations of the privilege that is granted to charismatic values" (Bourdieu 1989:20) as this "privilege" leads educational institutions to disregard strictly scholastic learning and valorize as well the "gifts" which Bourdieu names a "precocity". These "gifts" (an understanding of scholastic capital), are not achieved but rather are subscribed to and in reality are a manifestation of a cultural heritage that is closely related to all indicators of academic success (Bourdieu 1989:20). That is, part of the construction of talent at a rigorous college-prep school may not depend solely on a students' academic performance, but rather "talent" may be understood as the ability to articulate oneself, or the ability to make a first impression, coupled with superior academic strivings.

Scholastic capital in college-prep schools like KIPP should be understood in a context much larger than Scholar Academy, and necessitates a discussion of what the acquisition of "talent" at schools like KIPP really means. According to Bourdieu, "talent" really refers to a particular mode of acquisition, being less concerned with the actual ability of students to achieve in the classroom, than with the academic "rapport" necessitated by student exposure to scholastic capital (1988:21). In this, although KIPP students achieve and are set apart from their national peers because of their academic achievement in the classroom, a "talented" KIPP student is also one who has acquired the necessary scholastic capital skills that will give him/her a familiar "rapport" with the values of higher education. Apparent academic "ease", then, can be understood more completely as the privilege of those who have academic culture (i.e. scholastic capital) as their "native culture" and maintain a "familiar rapport" with it that implies the unconsciousness of its acquisition (Bourdieu 1989:21).

It is the model of the KIPP schools, and Scholar Academy in particular, then, to explicitly instruct students in the shadow of the scholastic capital and culture belonging to those in power. To this end, scholastic capital can be observed in three overlapping but distinct categories at the school: language, comportment, and expectations. The interweaving of these three scholastic capital demarcations at KIPP fleshes out what is a complicated web of academic and social "talents" which can be understood to function explicitly and advantageously under the guise of scholastic capital. Although in rhetoric the goal of KIPP is to help all of its students "climb the mountain to college", perhaps in an analysis of this ideology it can be further stated that the goal of KIPP is to explicitly instruct students in the ways of scholastic capital so that their "native culture" will reflect the rapport and cultural heritage so closely related to all indicators of academic success in higher education.

Conclusion:

My analysis of the scholastic capital and schooling ideology at KIPP, as shaped by the theoretical perspective of Pierre Bourdieu, has demonstrated that KIPP students are successful because the KIPP schooling model successfully socializes them to a familiar "rapport" with the ideology of scholastic capital in explicit ways. KIPPsters are more prepared for higher education than their national peers not only because they spend 'More Time' learning in the classroom, but also because this extended school-day affords them greater opportunity to exchange their time and energy for scholastic capital which can be "cashed in" upon matriculation into higher education.

Considering the achievement gap in the United States, and the disparity of educational attainment for those students living in poverty as compared to those in wealth, my analysis of the KIPP charter schools raises a discussion about education in a national context. Throughout this entire research project runs the underlying theme that public schools across the nation are failing their poorest students in large numbers, hence the necessitation of KIPP's creation (National Center for Education Statistics, 2008b). In many ways KIPP is a second-chance school for several of its students and despite its rigorous demands, the design of the KIPP schools provides many students with the structure and vision they need, but were not receiving in their home public schools.

Although many want to praise KIPP as the "savior of public education", it is dangerous to be disillusioned about the complete success of the KIPP charter schools. Although KIPP is undoubtedly educating students in innovative ways by helping its underserved students to significant academic gains, a more thorough analysis of KIPP has led me to join a growing group of researchers who are concerned about the sustainability of the KIPP model on a larger scale. KIPP necessitates that teachers put in anywhere from 60-80 hours a week into their job as not only is the school day nine hours long, but additionally school is in session during both the weekends and the summer. Although spending 'More Time' in schools is part of why KIPP is successful, I believe that the time and emotional labor demanded of students and teachers as a result of these extra hours would be unsustainable.

The implementation of KIPP as national model for education reform would necessitate that our nation first reconsider the ways in which we have traditionally understood the roles and expectations of both teachers and students. That is, more

autonomy would have to be granted to teachers; the commitment to education as a national priority would need to be renewed through a change in ideology that goes beyond just the implementation of educational policy. Considering what KIPP's success means at the national level reemphasizes that although the KIPP schooling model may work in individual cities and communities, KIPP may not be a realistic model that we can look to when considering national public education reform.

Personally, I began my research of KIPP as one who felt that the KIPP model was almost without flaw, that the results of pedagogy and philosophy at KIPP were a breakthrough for those in the field of education. Although I knew better than to believe the hype, I was initially unable to find voices critical of KIPP or skeptical of their results. This disillusionment was not killed quickly either. In fact, and it took until the end of my data collection phase before I was able to garner insights into some of the shortcomings and frustrations of those who work within the KIPP model. This conflict between the literature and my experience on-site made it difficult for me to write a truthful yet illustrious ethnographic section which not only recounted the overall KIPP experience, but also the daily frustrations I observed at Scholar Academy as well.

Other limitations in my research and data collection at KIPP included the issue of time. Although I was able to make a substantial number of visits to the school, the forty-five minute drive to and from Scholar Academy made it difficult for me to observe more frequently than once a week. Even during these visits unforeseeable circumstances such as sickness and snow days affected the consistency and quality of my visit at the school. Additionally, although I would have liked to begin my observations at Scholar Academy during the fall semester, my research plan was not fully formulated at that point and so I

was not able to begin observing in the schools until the second semester, limiting the number of visits I was able to make.

Limitations involving time and distance affected not only my observation time, but also the interviews I conducted. My goal had been to garner more interviews than actually became possible during the data collection process. My data collection phase relied more on my field observations than on interviews I conducted. A significant reason why it was difficult for me to interview teachers at Scholar Academy had to do with the structure and organization of the school. Time available to teachers is very limited as KIPP does not have outside substitutes, and when teachers are sick other teachers must fill in for them. Additionally, many teachers help struggling students during their lunch breaks or have to monitor the lunch period themselves. For these reasons, Scholar Academy teachers were not available to be interviewed during the school day, and I felt that it would be unreasonable to ask them to extend their school day past five o'clock for an interview. In accordance with the school's wishes, phone interviews were not an option.

Finally, my research was limited in that my findings do not actually include the thoughts or voices of students at Scholar Academy, but rather they analyze the broader implications of the ideology at their school. Due to IRB and other ethical stipulations I was unable to actually discuss with students their understanding of scholastic capital at their school. Still I feel that my observations and conclusions I have drawn honor the student experience and are representative of what students would articulate if asked.

A final reflection upon my research demonstrates the necessity to consider KIPP in a national context. I suggest that further research should examine the KIPP model as a

whole; paying particular attention to questions surrounding student achievement, college matriculation, and the sustainability of the KIPP model on a nationwide scale. As I have alluded to in my Ethnography, the results produced by the KIPP schools should be continually reevaluated. An air of healthy skepticism is not only necessary in further understanding this model, but it is also vital to keeping KIPP accountable to not only its students, but to the American public as well. In this a constant evaluation of KIPP over the next fifteen years will be essential to understanding whether and how this schooling model affects both students and the larger educational community in the United States. Further analyses of the KIPP model will hopefully lend themselves to a better understanding of the intersection between underserved students and scholastic capital, addressing further the questions that explore the role of schools in educating underserved students to a "familiar rapport" with scholastic capital and higher education.

Acknowledgements

First, I want to offer a huge thank you to KIPP Scholar Academy. To the faculty, staff, visit coordinator, and students there who let me interfere with their schedules and free time to show me more about what makes KIPP such a unique place to learn. Without your willingness to open your school and classrooms to an undergraduate researcher like myself, this project would have not been possible. The way you are educating students 'without excuse' is inspiring, and I sincerely thank you for sharing it with me.

Most importantly, thank you Dr. Diduk for advising my research project and embracing all of the time, conversations and emotions that came along with it. Thank you for all of the valuable feedback, for the critical thoughts, and for constantly reminding me that the research I did was meaningful. I know that the thought, energy and time you put into my project extended far beyond the hours you spent in your office, and I thank you so much for the ways in which you guided my research and cared for me through this process.

Thanks also to the entirety of the faculty in the Sociology/Anthropology Department for creating such a wonderful department that really cares deeply about all its students. Also, thank you to Dr. Graves, for nurturing my initial interest in KIPP, and for agreeing to read my final thoughts on the school – it is exciting to see our initial summer project has grown! Thank you also to the Provost Office at Denison University for providing me with the funds that made possible the many visits to and from Scholar Academy.

Finally, thank you to my wonderful family, friends and roommates. To all of the Soc/Anth. majors, thank you for your support – I can not imagine commiserating about Senior Research with anyone better than you all. To my wonderful roommates, thanks for all of the impromptu counseling sessions, and for listening to my research crises, despite your lack of interest in KIPP or knowing what scholastic capital even is. You Tiffs are wonderful. Thanks to Kristy and Rachel, for sharing in the craziness of the research process with me, and for always providing me with wonderful encouragement and some comical relief. And of course, to my Mom, Dad, and Emily, thanks for listening to me explain my project about 100 times, and for giving me the encouragement I needed to work on it another 100. Your support throughout my time at Denison, and in this project, has been instrumental to my success!

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Appendix A: Sample Interview Instrument

1. How long have you been employed by KIPP? Where did you previously work before teaching at Scholar Academy?

2. Why do you think that KIPP schools have been successful?

3. What is the culture like at KIPP schools? How do you think students learn this culture and how well is it received?

4. How do students at KIPP think about educational achievement? Higher education?

5. What would you say are the attitudes Scholar Academy students have about school in general?

6. Do you have any criticisms or frustrations of the KIPP model as a teacher at Scholar Academy?

7. How long do you foresee yourself teaching at Scholar Academy or another KIPP school? Why?

8. Talk to me about KIPP's mantras of "Team and Family". How does the school communicate these ideas to students? Why is "Team and Family" important at KIPP?

9. Do you think KIPP is working to change public schools (or not)?

Appendix B: Field Notes Sample

9:00am-11:30am
12/17/2009
Visit #1: KIPP Scholar Academy

Today was my first visit at Scholar Academy. The school is set in a neighborhood park and looks pretty dead from the outside. There is a KIPP banner strung across the outside of the gym wall, and a run-down sign that reads KIPP Scholar Academy on the marquee out front. As soon as I walked up to the door I was greeted by the KIPP visit coordinator. In her 20's, Caucasian and blonde haired. She welcomed me to KIPP and explained to her that they were having a fire drill at nine so I could follow her around and see the school while they checked to make sure all had evacuated properly. The school looked how I had imagined – lots of bright colors, and posters hanging around. The building is only one story and the classrooms are all down one corridor. This corridor is filled with the banners of all of the teachers' alma maters and is a large open space.

After the fire-drill the visit coordinator walked me to Ms. Bailey's classroom and told me I could observe in the back. She explained that there is an observation desk in every classroom (because they have so many visitors…) and that she would be back in a ½ hour to lead me to the next room that I should visit. As soon as I sat down in the back one of the students, a Caucasian 5th grade boy, came over shook my hand and said "Welcome to KIPP Scholar Academy" and told me his name, which I now forget. One of the other boys that I was sharing a table with noticed my notebook and asked if I went to Denison with excitement in his voice. I said I did and that he knew another teacher who went there too.

The class I was sitting in was 5th grade and remedial English I think. The room was painted brightly and had tons of things going on on the walls and board. All the desks around the room were in clumps of three and this class was pretty small, only 8 students or so. Ms. Bailey was really very friendly and she came over multiple times to tell me what was going on in the class. She teaching style was very fast-paced and she did not give the students any time at all distract themselves. She was constantly walking around the room checking in with individual students, reprimanding those who talked out and insisting that students finish the worksheet, making sure everyone was on the same

page. When everyone had finished the worksheet they would go over it as a class and then move on the to subsequent sheet. Students seemed pretty eager to answer questions and sometimes Ms. Bailey would ask students to give 2 claps and 1 snap to students when they answered questions correctly. She would ask students questions like "Who can support Michael's decision to say fiction" and then when he got the question right, "give Michael 3 claps, 1 snap, 1 clap to support him". When students seemed to be off-task or distracted, Ms. Bailey quickly reminded them that "you're participation is not what I have asked of you. What should you be doing?" There was this constant conversation in the class about participation and what students were choosing to do and the expectations they had agreed to.

While sitting at the observation desk I noticed the library in the back of the room. There were books back there by the carpet square area entitled Black Stars: African American Millionaires, Conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan, and Should Kids Play Videogames: A Persuasive Text. I was impressed by the sophistication and critical nature of these books for a middle school classroom.

After 30 minutes this remedial orange English group left and a new 5th grade class came in for English. There were about 25 of these students and all were wearing green shirts their shirts said YOUR JOURNEY on the front and OWN IT on the back…KIPP Scholar Academy class of 2016. Most of the students in these classes are African American, although some are white an latino/a. Immediately the new class began their "Do Now" assignments which seemed to be assignments that all students start right away when they come into the classroom to help them jump right into the material and communicate that there is no time to be wasted here at KIPP. As some of the students were talking loudly and being more disruptive than what was apparently appropriate Ms. Bailey took out the pay check binder and deducted some money off of a few students' balances. The pay check binder seemed to be some sort of behavioral rewards/consequences system. As she saw that students were on task Ms. Bailey would say "thank you ___(Michael)". Another student who was sitting in a comfy chair in the front of the class had the chair taken from him as Ms. Bailey quickly reminded him that he would get it back when he earned it.

Whenever she needed their attention Ms. Bailey said that she needed the students to SLANT. All of the students responded fairly promptly to this request by stopping what they were doing and giving her their full attention. If kids at the table aren't slanting their peers will tap on the desk to remind them of where their attention should be and that they should be "tracking". When one student in the class continued to be disruptive, Ms. Bailey had him stand up, push in his chair, and apologize to the class for his disruption. She said "I'm expecting an apology from you Dante. Take your arms out of your shirt and apologize. You know better, you're at KIPP." The other kid who he was talking with then also had to stand up and apologize to the class for disrupting their time. This really created a significant sense of team and family in the room – that peers are teammates and that they will all work together. The ultimate punishment for misbehavior besides the pay checks is a silent lunch.

The kids had some pretty candid answers in class which made me laugh. They were learning about fiction vs. nonfiction and when asked what show on tv represents reality the little girl at my table with acrylic nails yelled out Family Guy! Ms. Bailey told me that I could rotate to the next class but first they were "going to show Ms. Leary what we really do well at KIPP, listen. The students did their "Read Baby Read" chant to show me, and who could do it the best would get to walk me across the hall. The kids immediately all start clapping in unison on their desks and chanting/singing "you gotta read, baby read. You gotta read, baby read! Say What?" Ms. Bailey encouraged them to sing it even louder and to really get into it, yelling "say what? I can't hear you!" After the chant was over the two little girls who had been at my table walked me across the hall showing me their art work as we went. They also told me that they will be in this reading class next semester because they are moving up "to the smart class" – they knew the unspoken difference of within-school tracking.

Next I observed Ms. Taylor's English class. The dynamic of this class was overwhelmingly different. When I walked in Ms. Taylor was standing on a chair, but talking a whisper. Students in the class appeared to be focused and comfortable and were working independently which gave me time to observe the classroom dynamics and set up. Ms. Taylor's room, like Ms. Bailey's was very colorful and had tons of things covering the wall. There was "the President Barack Obama Library" and a bulletin board

that read "Goal: All of Us Will Read 30 Books". The SLANT acronym was up on the dry-erase board: Sit up, Listen, Ask and Answer Questions, Nod, and Track. Another poster showed that raising 1 finger means you have a question, 2 fingers that you have an answer, and a fist means you need to use the restroom. Ms. Taylor did not stop class to acknowledge my presence when I entered – really gave me the impression that visitors are very frequent in classrooms – and the students hardly seemed disrupted. She is a very good listener and frequently speaks in a whisper to her students. There is classical music playing while the students silently read – they even continue to do so as they line up and walk out of the classroom. At the end of Ms. Taylor's class the students played the "2-minute drill" where they got to shoot nerf basketballs at a hoop in the front of the classroom. Ms. Taylor reminded the students that they should be encouraging and students clapped after their teammates shots and exclaimed in unison "oooh almost! So close!". Ms. Taylor told me that this reading class is 2 hours is 2 hours every MWF.

Next I went across the hall to a Math class (27 kids, orange shirts, 6th grade). The countdown on the overhead is for the "Do Now" that students are working on when they enter. Mr. L had a sense of humor but definitely meant business too he said "I crack jokes, you say haha and then you get back to it. If your "Do Now" is done, your homework is out and your eyes are in a book." Mr. L had missed class yesterday because he and another teacher, went to KIPP New York & Newark (2 of the KIPP best schools) to observe the classes and students there. He reported that these were 2 of the best KIPP schools, but "we're not very far [from them]". He said that these "kids tracked the best I've seen" and they "do not react when they make a poor choice". To make his point about tracking Mr. L literally ran out of the room and then back in to demonstrate where students' attention should still be – on him. He said "I'm telling you this not to intimidate you, but to show you what they do with practice". Mr. L really emphasized that what he saw was excellence, but that his students were not far behind and were definitely right on track as well. One student also mentioned that he had cousin at KIPP Newark…interesting connection?

He asked students how "yesterday went" and allowed students to answer with both their emotional reactions about the day as well as what they felt they learned and understood. He asked students to rate themselves on a scale of 1-4 regarding their

comprehension. Most students self-reported as 3 & 4 however he did not discourage those who reported to be 1 & 2s. He then asked students to go into Zone 2 (group whisper) to trade and check papers with eachother. Students were still persistent throughout the class with questions about KIPP Newark/NY and wanted to know if they also didn't have recess, how strict their teachers were, and how hard their work was. I was really impressed with the way Mr. L ran his classroom – there was definitely that feeling I got from Bailey – that there was no time for distractions, that there were things to be done – but he also talked to the students like peers and threw a little bit of slang in there to make himself approachable and to make fun of himself. He assigned very specific assignments in class "You will do the 1st page and then you will ask questions". During class the overhead projector read: "Excellence is our Aim".

The Agenda on the Board read

1) Do Now
2) Decimal to Fraction Review
3) Guided Practice
4) Independent Practice
5) Exit Ticket
6) 24/lineup

The poster in the back of the class read "6th Grade Math BIG GOAL: 100% of all KIPPsters will score proficient or higher on the Math Ohio Achievement Test."

The last class I visited was the "Special education" room, but it seemed more like a remedial English room so I was not sure. There were 6 students in this class, only 1 girl, and only 1 5th grader. Most students seemed to be reading at about a 3rd grade reading level. Once again as soon as I stepped into the room and found the observation desk I was greeted by "Hi I'm Mariah and welcome to KIPP, we are reading about American Boys…It's nice to meet you." Once again I was blown away by these kids and just the kind of things they have been taught – the skill of how to introduce yourself to someone professionally to an adult you don't know , and to shake hands when you are only in 5th grade is pretty impressive. These students were practicing reading out loud by taking turns reading out of a short novel. The teacher, Ms. S, walked around the class while the

students read, helping them to pronounce words that they got stuck on. Her phone number was written on the board. She would touch students on the shoulder as she walked around the classroom, encouraging them to continue reading and demanding gently that they all continuously sit up in their chairs and not slouch. This room had lower energy, but as Ms. S explained later this is because these students spend 3 hours in this room – practicing one of the things that is hardest for them – reading. She said she was so amazed by the students and their progress just this semester. Something quirky about Ms. S was that she was wearing a clip on the corner of her sweater with the word "quiver" and the definition – literally a walking reminder for students.

In the back of this smaller yellow & green room a poster that read BIG GOALS:

1.) ALL of us WILL EARN at least 80% mastery on all tests and quizzes
2.) ALL of us WILL EARN at least 2 years growth in reading.
3.) ALL of us WILL EARN "proficient" or higher on the Ohio Achievement Test

Overall I left with the impression that Ms. S is really patient and gentle with the students, and very proud of the progress they have made thus far. She sits down next to students as another reads aloud and encourages them to follow along, occasionally stopping for comprehension pauses.

Teachers' Commitment

We fully commit to KIPP in the following ways:

- We will arrive at KIPP every day by 7:15 am (Monday-Friday).
- We will remain at KIPP until 5:00 pm (Monday -Thursday) and 4:00 pm on Friday.
- We will come to KIPP on appropriate Saturdays at 9:15 am and remain until 1:05 pm.
- We will teach at KIPP during the summer.
- We will always teach in the best way we know how and we will do whatever it takes for our students to learn.
- We will always make ourselves available to students and parents, and address any concerns they might have
- We will always protect the safety, interests, and rights of all individuals in the classroom.
- Failure to adhere to these commitments can lead to our removal from KIPP.

Signed: .....

Parents'/Guardians' Commitment

We fully commit to KIPP in the following ways:

- We will make sure our child arrives at KIPP by 7:25 am (Monday-Friday) or boards a KIPP bus at the scheduled time.
- We will make arrangements so our child can remain at KIPP until 5:00 pm (Monday - Thursday) and 4:00 pm on Friday.
- We will make arrangements for our child to come to KIPP on appropriate Saturdays at 9:15 am and remain until 1:05 pm.
- We will ensure that our child attends KIPP summer school.
- We will always help our child in the best way we know how and we will do whatever it takes for him/her to learn. This also means that we will check our child's homework every night, let him/her call the teacher if there is a problem with the homework, and try to read with him/her every night.
- We will always make ourselves available to our children and the school, and address any concerns they might have. This also means that if our child is going to miss school, we will notify the teacher as soon as possible, and we will carefully read any and all papers that the school sends home to us.
- We will allow our child to go on KIPP field trips.
- We will make sure our child follows the KIPP dress code.
- We understand that our child must follow the KIPP rules so as to protect the safety, interests, and rights of all individuals in the classroom. We, not the school, are responsible for the behavior and actions of our child.
- Failure to adhere to these commitments can cause my child to lose various KIPP privileges and can lead to my child returning to his/her home school.

Signed: .....

Student's Commitment

I fully commit to KIPP in the following ways:

- I will arrive at KIPP every day by 7:25 am (Monday-Friday) or board a KIPP bus at the correct time.
- I will remain at KIPP until 5:00 pm (Monday - Thursday) and 4:00 pm on Friday.
- I will come to KIPP on appropriate Saturdays at 9:15 am and remain until 1:05 pm
- I will attend KIPP during summer school.
- I will always work, think, and behave in the best way I know how, and I will do whatever it takes for me and my fellow students to learn. This also means that I will complete all my homework every night, I will call my teachers if I have a problem with the homework or a problem with coming to school, and I will raise my hand and ask questions in class if I do not understand something.
- I will always make myself available to parents and teachers, and address any concerns they might have. If I make a mistake, this means I will tell the truth to my teachers and accept responsibility for my actions.
- I will always behave so as to protect the safety, interests, and rights of all individuals in the classroom. This also means that I will always listen to all my KIPP teammates and give everyone my respect.
- I will follow the KIPP dress code.
- I am responsible for my own behavior, and I will follow the teachers' directions.
- Failure to adhere to these commitments can cause me to lose various KIPP privileges and can lead to returning to my home school.

Signed