UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, SAN DIEGO

It Takes Two to Struggle:
Teachers, Students, and the Co-production of (Dis)respect in an Urban School

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

in

Sociology

by

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The Dissertation of Heidi L. Schneider is approved, and it is acceptable in quality and form for publication on microfilm and electronically:

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DEDICATION

For Ariana and Isaac

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

It Takes Two to Struggle:
Teachers, Students, and the Co-production of (Dis)respect in an Urban School

by

Heidi L. Schneider

Doctor of Philosophy in Sociology

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Professor Ivan Evans, Chair

This dissertation researches how educational inequality is reproduced by the intersection of identity, face-to-face interaction and the politics of contested meaning. Using ethnographic field methods, I explore how a disrespectful classroom culture is initiated by societal forces such as racism, classism, anti-immigrant beliefs, community narrative, and neighborhood context, but more importantly co-produced by teachers and students inside the classroom.

To uncover the dynamic role (dis)respect plays in schooling, I draw from theories of symbolic interactionism to examine teachers' and students' divergent

interpretations and meanings of (dis)respect. In doing so, I offer a theoretically grounded and evidence-based argument of how meanings and practices associated with (dis)respect matter to student engagement and teacher-student relationships. As this project demonstrates, student-teacher conflict does not arise from students' oppositional attitude to education or authority, or stem from a warped sense of respect, but occurs as a reaction to feeling disrespected by their teachers. In response, students use a "reprisal process" as a strategy to protect their identities and retain the respect of their peers, which many teachers interpret and label as disrespectful.

Data suggests the vast majority of students do respect and accept the authority of teachers and desire, even crave respect from their teachers, however, teachers' ideas of (dis)respect are also mediated by their identities and a belief that respect is asymmetrical. In turn, the struggle for respect ensues leaving teachers and students feeling equally wounded, unrecognized, and suffering from the politics of contested meanings of (dis)respect. Together, this influences a disrespectful school culture that contributes directly to failure for some students and indirectly to a sense of alienation for all students. As defined in this study, the meaning students and teachers attach to (dis)respectful interaction is both shared and contested, but ultimately driven by identities that intersect with face-to-face interaction that impacts the everyday lives of the individuals I studied. Thus, the central contention of my doctoral work is that the concept of respect holds theoretical and social significance as it is co-produced within the school setting.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

"Lack of respect, though less aggressive than an outright insult, can take an equally wounding form. No insult is offered another person, but neither is recognition extended; he or she is not seen – as a full human being whose presence matters"
Richard Sennett 2003

It is the end of the school year and the 7th grade students at Jackson Middle School (JMS) have a final Language Arts assignment. The students were instructed to write a letter to anyone on campus; a teacher, a staff member, or even a friend. The directions were simple: the student may either thank an individual for a kind act, or they may write an apology letter for acting inappropriately. Twenty-six out of the thirty letters were an apology to a teacher for "disrespecting you" or "not respecting your rules." One female student explicitly stated, "I'm sorry for disrespecting you and taking away your power. I'm sure that it didn't feel good." Clearly, students were aware that they should respect their teachers and felt compelled to apologize for breaking the rules of respect at Jackson Middle School.

It was not surprising to read students' letters apologizing for infractions of disrespect because there is a culture of (dis)respect that circulates throughout the school. For example, the school's mission statement cites respect as a key variable to success and a necessary value to becoming an upstanding citizen. The institutional push for respect becomes evident when walking the halls; a mural was designed and painted by a local artist and a few students and the only word painted multiple times throughout the mural is "respect." Posters adorn the walls of every classroom detailing the need for students to have respect for yourself and others and linking "respect" as

the key to academic and personal success. The policing of respect is not restricted to the school context; it makes its way into the curriculum as well. Respect is a central concept found within lesson plans, homework assignments and all disciplinary write ups. In fact, instilling respect in JMS students is crucial enough that the district purchased a character building program to instruct students on the value of respect. The daily lessons on morality and civility are intended to teach JMS students that practicing respect for authority is necessary to prevent "bad behavior" and become a "model citizen." As this doctoral project demonstrates, the school site is saturated with contested meanings and practices associated with (dis)respect.

One common way respect becomes institutionalized within the urban school setting is from the popular assumption that minority students from urban neighborhoods do not know the "real" meaning of respect or are prone to disrespectful behavior. As I will demonstrate, it is this commonly held belief that bleeds into the school setting. For example, many teachers and school officials explained that student misconduct or any behavioral issues stemmed from students' "lack of respect for authority" or "poor self-respect." During one conversation with a JMS teacher, she said, "these types of kids[1] . . . don't even know the meaning of respect." Statements such as these underscore that JMS students are viewed as deficient in the fundamental ethos of respect and civility. The following dissertation will highlight how manners, civility, displays of (dis)respect and even styles of dress or mannerisms may operate at

1 Although the phrase "these types of kids" does not explicitly point to a particular group of students based on race, class, nationality, and immigration status. I argue that many individuals intuitively understand that the teacher is referencing any student who fits in "the other" category. That is, anyone who does not fit into the dominant, white, middle class model. The implicit understanding of the "other" implies a deeply embedded micro-level force that is responsible, in part, for reproducing inequalities within schools.

the surface, but they are also powerful statements about the hidden systemic structures that shape beliefs, motives and the unspoken aspirations and success of teachers and students.

Sociological research that explores the meanings of respect for urban youth have traditionally reduced the search for respect as the pursuit of "street cred" in the "hood" (Ogbu 1987; Bourgois 1999; Anderson 2000). Relying on explanations of urban youth and their "campaign for respect" to answer questions about the role of respect in schools is problematic. These accounts suggest that schools are overpowered by a youth culture that undermines education as a whole (Anderson 2000, 94-97). These claims diminish the school context to nothing more than a platform for marginalized youth to engage in street culture, which flattens the experiences of urban youth into a single, negative narrative.

There is more going on in urban schools then students simply resisting middle class culture. Marginalized youth are not always in opposition to education or authority; they are willing and want to learn, but a tenuous connection to the education system and its actors sabotages their success. Minority students are individuals with complex identities, histories and preferences that should be recognized and valued. They attend churches; love diverse styles of music, dance, clothes and popular culture; look after siblings or ailing family members at home; identify with American heroes; play sports and are supportive teammates; love their girlfriends or boyfriends; defend one another against authority figures such as parents, teachers or the police; and *do* desire to learn and aspire to achieve success. Yet, too often it is the voices of this

particular group of students that are silenced in favor of explanations of a subversive and resistant student subculture.

Depictions of minority youth from urban neighborhoods as (dis)respectful, uncivil, lazy and deviant is counter-productive: they perpetuate stereotypes and do nothing to create a more equitable education system. Furthermore, these depictions are sociologically inaccurate because they are based on theories of "oppositional culture"[2] that do not stand the test of scrutiny. Also, this approach reinforces the achievement gap in education as many proposed solutions focus on trying to "fix" poor, Students of Color, instead of examining the ways in which our schools perpetuate classism, racism and societal inequities (Ladson-Billings 2006). To define students by their weakness suggests that they are unsuccessful due to their own moral and intellectual deficiencies. This is referred to as the "deficit perspective," a commonly held belief among educators and the wider community as it draws on well-known stereotypes that work to ignore the inequities embedded in our education system (Collins 1988). Consequently, this approach identifies and stigmatizes one framework of respect-that of the students–and ignores that (dis)respect is a co-produced in interaction. Moreover, portrayals of teachers as an offended party strongly suggests that students are solely responsible for initiating moments of disrespect in the classroom (Payne 2014).

2 The theory of "oppositional culture" argues that minority students perceive the educational system as an extension of the white dominant values and norms. In response, students underachieve academically and display behaviors that challenge, reject and resist the dominant white groups culture and norms and education in general (Ogbu 1986, 2008). This argument aligns with cultural deficit theories that views the culture, values and peer groups of urban, immigrant, and minority youth are the culprits of their low academic achievement (Bowles and Gintis 1976; Willis 1977; Fordham and Ogbu 1986; MacLeod 1987; Portes and Zhou 1993).

Sociological analysis of urban youths' search for respect has been restricted to studies outside of the classroom and are thus unable to explain how disrespectful interactions between teachers and students spark conflict which fuels students' alienation from school. I offer a sharp contrast to studies that center on a deficiency of respect among students by focusing on how (dis)respect is a shared discourse that becomes confused in face-to-face interaction between teachers and students. A central claim in my dissertation is that minority, poor, and working class students on the one hand and middle-class teachers and school authorities on the other share a great deal in common, but are divided by contrasting orientations of the culture of (dis)respect. This means the vast majority of students *do* respect and accept the authority of teachers *and* share mainstream views with their teachers, including the importance of "respect." However, when students perceive their teachers as treating them with disrespect, they feel threatened and withdraw their consent and often react to protect their identities. Neither cooperation nor opposition forms a one- dimensional "culture:" students actively seek to hold teachers to principles and norms that both view as acceptable. It is the clashes of meanings that doom teachers and students to recreate chasms of misunderstanding that thwart even shared educational goals. Thus, I demonstrate that the contested meanings surrounding students' attempt to express or receive respect is interpreted as opposition, but in actuality is a response to the wounds experienced due to disrespectful treatment by teachers within school classrooms.

Research has established that teachers play a pivotal role in training young students about, among other things, the value of respect. Furthermore, interaction between a teacher and student will result in either strong or weak bonds that impact

student success or a sense of alienation from the schooling process (Valenzuela 1999; Crosnoe, Kirkpatrick-Johnson, and Elder 2004). Sadly, sociological studies have surprisingly little to say about how the "culture of disrespect" bedevils student-teacher relations or how it is co-produced in the classroom. However, my doctoral research provides an understanding of how (dis)respect works in the classroom as I examine how disrespectful interaction unfolds and corrodes the precious student–teacher relationship. We know from existing research that schooling has the ability to, "fracture students" cultural and ethnic identities, creating social, linguistic and cultural division among the students and between the students and the staff" (Valenzuela 1999: 5). I find the intersection of identity, face-to-face interaction and contested meanings of (dis)respect impact students future academic trajectory and thereby reveal a nuanced explanation for students' alienation from school, one that counters theories of student opposition, resistance, and/or deficiency.

The Transmission of (Dis)Respect in the Classroom

During my preliminary research I realized that respect entered the classroom in overt and subtle ways. For example, when the discourse of respect was used subtly, it was in the form of a simple reminder from a teacher that, "no one is invisible, when I am teaching and speaking you should automatically be looking at me" or "if my voice is on, your voice is automatically off." Although this teacher did not use the exact word "respect" it is clear she was admonishing students to adhere to behavior that aligned with acts associated with respect. On the other hand, I observed respect enter the classroom in overt ways as a teacher's tool of discipline. For example, I observed

teachers spending large quantity of class time redirecting students engaging in side conversations or not paying attention by saying, “Look at me! You are taking away from class time to teach you, look at me. I give you respect! You should give me the same respect I give you!” This same teacher detained two students after class because they were talking during her lecture. As I sat in the back of class, I overheard her say to the students, “You didn’t follow my direction and it takes a lot to get me frustrated. The bottom line is that I give you guys respect and you are being defiant.” In this case, the teacher explicitly used the word respect as a tool of discipline, however, this excerpt also highlights that teachers attach meaning to the acts they perceive to be disrespectful. For this teacher, the meaning she attached to an act of disrespect was defiance. We can extract from this exchange that some teachers react to what they perceived as acts of disrespect with reprimand and discipline.

After I completed my preliminary research the question remained unanswered: under what conditions do *students* report feeling (dis)respected by their teachers? I recognized that in order to answer this question, I must conduct additional research that prioritized the student definition of (dis)respect in order to understand aspects of their lived experiences that often remain invisible. The student perspective of (dis)respect is central to my study because most often it is the voice of adults that determine the meanings of (dis)respect. Moreover, educators and teachers’ meanings are privileged in educational research, and in instructional discourse and practices. On the other hand, I approach the social code of respect as a concept full of meanings for both teachers *and* students in which they attach to behavior and use to inform their interaction with one another.

Overall, this doctoral study will answer the above question as well as identify how teacher and student meanings of (dis)respect differ in order to explain how (dis)respectful exchanges effect the teacher-student relationship. By decoding and mapping the everyday use of "respect" and the meanings teachers and students attach to the acts associated with (dis)respect we will be able to understand its sociological significance within the school setting. As this dissertation will demonstrate, respect is a foundational aspect of all human interaction and outlining what respect means to divergent groups of people will be of practical use to teachers, principals, and school administrators who value a school culture that stimulates teaching that encourages student learning and retention.

Factors Contributing to the Collision of (Dis)Respect in the Classroom

Examining structural factors and how macro-level institutions influence our experiences is crucial. However, this dissertation focuses on how we interpret the world and our reactions as shaping our society. I examine human (inter)action and interpretation of meaning as a way to compliment the ample research on the social structure of education. I believe an analysis into both factors is crucial if we aim to understand the social phenomenon of educational inequality. There is already an overwhelming amount of sociological theories that approach schooling as a "black box," and fail to give attention to its inner workings and logics. Any educational research that draws strictly from macro-level explanations runs the risk of being too simplistic by ignoring the cultural level of schools and the processes, such as human agency and the instrumental ways teacher and students are active participants in the

structuring and building of meaning within schools. Deterministic theories leave little room to critique teacher-student relations and its influence on educational inequality, which is why I look at the school setting as more than a dot on an institutional map. Instead, I look at a school's boundaries as porous and unable to resist neighborhood effects and the agency of individuals who enter into its space everyday.

Thus, my dissertation draws from scholarship focused on the micro-level practices such as day-to-day activities, and interpersonal relationships within the school setting (Metz 1978; Mehan 1980; Apple and Weiss 1983; Birch and Ladd 1997; Valenzuela 1999; Crosnoe, Kirkpatrick-Johnson, and Elder 2004; Suarez-Orozco, Pimentel, and Martin 2009). Looking at the inner workings of interaction within the classroom provides a nuanced approach to studying how inequalities are sustained in face-to-face interaction. More specifically, I am better able to explain the break between teacher and student meanings and practices of respect. To do so, my research extends theories of "cultural mismatch," [3] to illuminate how the differences over (dis)respect are intrinsically rooted in social distinctions such as class, race and ethnicity (Oakes 1985; MacLeod 1987; Valenzuela 1999).

Teachers adhere to hegemonic understandings of respect and as a result, many teachers feel that by virtue of their status, they are the only individuals in the classroom owed respect. Plainly put, students are expected to respect teachers and if a student does not follow the expectations of bestowing respect[4] or even worse, contests

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3 A cultural mismatch refers to middle class educators who peg urban minority students' speech, tastes and style among other cultural factors as dysfunctional or as a sign of low motivation.
4 To "bestow respect" involves adhering to a certain tone of voice, appropriate language, and mannerisms. At times, a teacher may have subjective norms of respect, such as the student's style of dress or even the way a student sits in the chair.

the teacher and schools notion of respect, the consequences are severe. Accordingly, I witnessed many teachers feeling challenged and confused by what they felt was a student's disrespectful behavior. In response, some teachers demonstrated extreme intolerance and refused to validate the worldview of their students, which only contributed to further disconnect between the teacher-student. The conflict was only amplified by the ambiguity and contestation surrounding the actions and words that constitute disrespect. In these moments, I witnessed the consequences of the politics of contested meanings, a concept that I use to explain how divergent understandings and meanings associated with respect will lead to conflict that ultimately results in students feeling a general sense of alienation from their teachers and school.

Only by exploring the value of perceptions, feelings and emotions of all involved will we begin to formulate a new understanding of why minority, working class students may *appear* to be rejecting education. Again, I do so by examining the micro-operations and/or what is *absent* within the classroom in order to illuminate how human sabotage enters in through the back door. The following dissertation prioritizes attention on the interactions and experiences *inside* the classroom to give voice to the actors and the meanings *they* attach to their behavior. My central argument is that the concept of respect is one of theoretical and social significance because it is co-produced by teachers and students on the day-to-day basis within the school site. Teachers and students each bring their own interpretations and biases into the classroom. Thus, a so-called disrespectful student body should not be over-simplified as a symptom of students' culture, background, and family structure etc. Instead, (dis)respect is a variable that is also informed by *teachers'* culture and background,

and always (co)produced through interaction between teachers and students. Moreover, I find that the meaning students and teachers attach to (dis)respectful interaction is both shared and contested, but ultimately driven by identities that intersect with face-to-face interaction, which impact the everyday lives of the individuals I studied.

Preview of Dissertation

What follows is a glimpse into the theory and methods I used to collect data and a snapshot of my findings that map the multiple meanings that inhere in the phenomenon of respect. In Chapter 2, I outline the theoretical framework I used to inform my research. I pay specific attention to the literature that focuses on the structure and function of schooling and its connection to the reproduction of inequality. In doing so, I am able to highlight what is left out when we focus only on societal level explanations for educational inequality. In order to better understand the interpersonal relationship between teachers and students and how they negotiate contested meanings, I draw from symbolic interactionist Erving Goffman's theories of face-to-face interaction. Consequently, my study is largely informed by symbolic interactionism perspective because of its emphasis on understanding how teachers and students interpret and define each others actions as (dis)respectful. I argue that students are not merely reacting to teachers' actions and vice versa, but instead each group is filtering the actions they attach to a particular set of meanings. Hence, my approach follows a symbolic interactionism model that views human behavior and interaction as a dance of stimulus-interpretation-response (Blumer 1969; Wallace and

Wolf 1995:206). Therefore, I am able to explain how face-to-face interaction between teachers and students can contribute to a disrespectful school environment that affects students' success in school.

I conclude Chapter 2 with a review of classical and contemporary literature that outlines the politics of respect in society. In doing so, I blend theories of the larger structure of education with notions of power, practice, ideology, discourse, human interaction and recognition. This approach provides a nuanced understanding of the relation of schooling to society by building a conceptual bridge over the theoretical rift between structure and agency. By building from the ground up, I aim to explain the factors, reasons and implications of the contested meanings of (dis)respect in the classroom.

In Chapter 3, I review my ethnographic methods. I provide a brief outline of the history of the surrounding community and the school site for context. There may be concern for methodological complications when studying what is typically unspoken, absent and ambiguous, or considered too subtle to recognize at first glance. However, I am able to draw conclusions based on my in-depth, multi-pronged ethnographic methods. Because I used a multi-ethnographic approach to study subtle contested meanings, I offer in-depth detail of my data collection and analysis. I also offer the reasons behind my decision to research a single case as opposed to a comparison case. Finally, I reflect on the intersection of my biography with the trajectory of my academic work. I conclude Chapter 3 with a discussion of my positionality and the challenges I faced conducting research.

In Chapter 4, I turn my attention to the students' voice. This chapter argues that the vast majority of students do respect and accept the authority of teachers and at the same time students desire, even crave respect from their teachers. Even so, teachers and students struggle for respect, which results in conflict. Contrary to established literature, the conflict in the classroom does not arise from students' oppositional attitude to education or authority, or a warped sense of respect, but occurs as a reaction to feeling disrespected and shamed by their teachers. I use Erving Goffman's (1967) rituals of face-to-face interaction as a theoretical lens through which to propose a third process in face-work; a "reprisal process."[5]

Understanding how this reprisal process works is extremely important because it allows researchers and educators to interpret student behavior as not arising from an oppositional attitude to education or authority, but a reaction to feeling disrespected, shamed and uncared for by their teachers. Chapter 4 also explores how students and teachers' definition of respect is intertwined with issues of power, authority, coercion, domination, dignity and recognition. Examining the meaning students attach to practices of (dis)respect allows for a thorough analysis of what students want from their teachers. This discussion opens the door for practical suggestions for educators as to how they can invite the respect of their students and be successful in reaching their students.

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5 Informed by my data, I found a "reprisal process" that refers to a reaction students' use when a teacher commits a face threatening act. I find that the reprisal process is used by some students who feel that they lost face from a teacher's sarcastic, teasing or mean comment and/or from being put on the spot in front of their peers. In order to "save face" the student will "one-up" the teacher and respond with a sarcastic, witty, or "disrespectful" comeback. It is these moments that contribute to some students being labeled by their teachers as inherently disrespectful and willfully defiant. In reality, it is the teacher who has initiated the struggle for respect.

Chapter 5 moves on to consider how a disrespectful school culture is negotiated between teachers and students and demonstrates with data that (dis)respect is not simply an element of student culture, but is produced through interaction that influenced by unequal power relations. The data suggests that it takes two to struggle and teachers share half of the responsibility in engaging in conflicts over (dis)respect in their classroom. I examine how teachers' ideas of (dis)respect are mediated by their cultural capital and identity and the consequences of this "cultural mismatch" leaves both teachers and students feeling wounded and unrecognized. However, I also provide empirical evidence that confirms that teachers can create a respectful classroom climate while maintaining their authority. I explain that successful teachers view respect as part of a reciprocal relationship, one that must be sincere and earned. These teachers acknowledge that the recognition of respect is *not* contingent on the ideal "good" student, but view their students holistically. Teachers do not have to sacrifice their authority to gain students respect, on the contrary, successful teachers were able to use respect, as a means of authority and classroom management, but only *after* they developed a connection by employing the students' notion of respect.

Chapter 6 turns our attention from face-to-face interaction to exploring how a disrespectful school culture is reinforced by the school setting, neighborhood effects and teacher fatigue. I examine how these factors converge with racism, classism and prejudice against immigrants to create the perfect storm of a disrespectful school environment. By illuminating the forces, above and beyond the individual, I am able to demonstrate how a pervasive disrespectful classroom culture is reinforced by factors

outside of the school, which contribute directly to failure for some students and indirectly to a sense of alienation for all students.

The dissertation concludes with a summary of my findings, consideration into the limitations of my research, proposals for future research and further suggestions for educators to foster a respectful relationship with their students. Finally, it is my hope that my doctoral work will serve as a field guide into the misunderstandings and consequences of the contested meanings of (dis)respect. From the start of this project, the goal for my doctoral work has been to offer practical solutions to improve teacher-student relations and increase student engagement in the classroom. It is my sincere wish that this dissertation will result in published work that will be of everyday use to teachers, educators and students alike.

CHAPTER 2

THEORHETICAL FRAMEWORK: SOCIOLOGY OF EDUCATION AND THE POLITCS OF RESPECT

In this chapter, I begin with a brief review of the cannon of sociology of education literature as it pertains to the function of schooling and the reproduction of inequality. I outline the flaws and oversights of existing scholarship and contrast macro-sociological theories of education with the micro-approach in order to illuminate the importance of understanding how face-to-face interaction inside schools also work to reproduce inequality. I then review literature that focuses on the politics of respect to demonstrate how it is a process of communication, interaction and discourse. Together, this particular scholarship will illuminate how and why the meanings and practices of (dis)respect matter student to engagement. Finally, I conclude this chapter with a short summary of research that informs my study; this includes research from education studies such as cultural mismatch and studies of racial microaggressions (Solorzano, Ceja, and Yosso 2000; Allen, Scott, and Lewis 2013; Huber and Solorzano 2014). Throughout this chapter, I weave a review of the literature with ethnographic data to outline the argument and theoretical framework for my dissertation.

Sociological Perspectives of Schooling and Inequality

Sociologists agree that the primary function of United States schooling is the socialization and preparation of students for adult life (Durkheim 1915; Parsons 1959;

Arronowitz and Giroux 1985; Arum and Beattie 1999). However, sociologists understand "socialization" in varying degrees, including preparing individuals to engage in a meritocratic system that promotes social mobility, or as socializing individuals to become pawns in the reproduction of the capitalist system thereby reproducing social inequalities (Weber 1946; Sorokin 1959; Bowles and Gintis 1976). Functionalists argue that the role of education is social integration, consensus, equilibrium, value integration, and role allocation. This is accomplished by establishing a vital link between society and the individual to maintain social order (Morrow and Torres 1995). Here, the belief is that the system of education operates best as a meritocratic institution, as individuals are assigned to their role in society in response to their ability. This encourages a strong and stable division of labor in which each person serves a particular and necessary niche. For functionalists, the allocation of roles was never viewed as contributing to social or economic inequality. Instead, functionalists argue that a certain amount of inequality is vital since it encourages a healthy social system. Thus, for functionalists, education and schools primary function is to encourage students to internalize social goals by pursuing personal interests, for the greater good of society.

In contrast to functionalism, Marxist based theories contend that education's role in society is not to maintain stability. Rather, education is part of the system of social control, encouraged by the bourgeois hegemony, meant to teach the dominant ideology of the capitalist state. Marxist theorists argue that the central role of education is to promote and preserve the system of class inequality and the structure of the capitalist state. For example, Samuel Bowles and Herbert Gintis (1976) argue that

schools reproduce and reinforce the structure and economic values of the larger, dominant society. Unlike Durkheim and Parsons, Bowles and Gintis view the economic inequality that education facilitates as a major social problem (1976:49). For Bowles and Gintis, the driving force that legitimates and reproduces the system of education is capitalism. In turn, the perpetuation of the class structure and the capitalist division of labor is supported by the educational system. It is through schooling, that individuals' capabilities, expressions, and needs are fostered. Yet, at all times, these are related to class identifications and the requirements of the division of labor (Bowles and Gintis 1976:129). Here, education serves the needs of the larger occupational structure by first, socializing individuals to accept their place in the social structure, and second, by integrating individuals into an unfair capitalist society. In the analysis of the education system, the strength of Bowles and Gintis' work is that it privileges issues of authority, control, power, and domination. Yet, Bowles and Gintis work is a simplistic model, as it leaves out the cultural level of schools and the processes involved in working class kids, getting working class jobs (Willis 1977). Contrary to the Marxist approach to education, there is more going on in schools then simply teaching students to join the workforce or to climb the economic or social ladder.

The problem with macro-theories such as the functionalist and Marxian approaches of education is that they gloss over cultural dynamics and little attention is given to human agency or transformative action (Apple and Weis 1983:7). Such a claim reduces face-to-face interactions to the power and privilege wielded in the economic realm and as part of the structural organization of schools and ignores the

intentions of the teachers, administrators and school staff (Oakes 1985:200). Macro-theories ignore the instrumental ways teacher and students are active participants in the structuring and building of meaning within schools. Indeed, relying solely on macro-theories is problematic because they do not explain the relations inside the school. Marxian theorists maintain that the overall function of schools takes precedent over the daily going-on within the classroom and leave little room to critique teacher-student relations or student-student relations. Thus, there is no investigation into how interaction is a feature of the social reproduction of inequalities. More importantly, the Marxian model limits the autonomy of individuals by restricting theorizing within the economic sphere and views humans as passive subjects shaped by the demands of capitalism.

My dissertation challenges any approach to studying education that only analyzes the larger social forces. I argue that this approach reduces individuals who inhabit the educational institution to stick figures enacting over-socialized roles. The danger of exclusively focusing on the "function" of education in society is evident when reviewing each of the classical theories; for they ignore the micro-level and mundane, yet important, activities within the classroom and teacher-student interaction. More importantly, the effects of schooling on individuals are left unexplored. Instead, my dissertation follows sociologists in the field of education who argue for an approach that combines the day-to-day activities and curriculum, with pedagogical and generative theories of education and its role in our society (Apple and Weiss 1983:4). In this case, to talk of micro-processes does not require the rejection of the larger social structure, however, it does require the folding of the social situation

with human (inter)action in order to understand the presentation, interpretation, and transmission of knowledge within schooling.

My research finds that many teachers' ideology fits within a functionalist framework. They believe that education is the primary socialization agent responsible for instilling proper manners, values, and basic civility in students. Many teachers expressed a strong belief that the family is in decline and parents are unable, unwilling or incapable of teaching their own children ethos, such as respect and as such teachers have replaced the family as the primary source of socialization. I do not dispute that the manifest function in U.S. society is that schools operate as an agent of socialization. In fact, the profession of teaching originates with the idea that the role of teachers is to be the educators and leaders of our society. This project is not critiquing education as a socialization agent or the teaching profession. Instead, it analyzes how the dominant ethos of respect and civility are brought into the school setting to instruct students who are perceived as deficient in proper American values. The assumption that certain students (Students of Color, working class, immigrants etc.) are in need of specialized lessons in values, such as respect, is interpreted by students as an act of misrecognition and disrespect to their identity, culture, and neighborhood. It is this type of assumption that sparks conflict and struggle between teachers and students, which impact students' feelings about school.

I agree that a macro-level approach is necessary for understanding the structure of society, but it can not be the single model used to explain the process of schooling and the experience of individuals inside the school setting. Arguably, paying greater attention to the micro-processes within the classroom will demonstrate how much

influence teachers' perceptions of their students can have on their future success and this is where the following dissertation will place its attention.

Focusing the Lens: A Tighter Look at Education in Society

The micro-level approach to understanding schooling focuses on the processes such as, school practices, content and culture within the system of education. This method interrogates the relationship of individuals, which adds another dimension to the link between educations role in social stratification. Sociologist Hugh Mehan (1980) urges scholars to examine the educational practice *within* the classroom in order to understand the role of education in relation to larger society. Arguing against Durkheim's notion of socialization as a unidirectional process, Mehan successfully illustrates how students and teachers mutually influence each other and their environment (1980:148). According to Mehan, classrooms are examples of small communities, in which children teach their teachers, just as much as teachers teach the children.

Sociological studies that focus on the relationship between students and teachers and their impact on student achievement and inequality are limited. A large portion of sociological focuses on the broad nature of the teaching profession and the central characteristics and ethos of teachers (Lortie 1975; Alexander, Entwisle and Thompson 1987; Wayne and Youngs 2003). Simply analyzing the organization of the teaching profession, or individual characteristics ignores the importance of how face-to-face interaction results in strong bonds between teachers and students. The interaction between students and teachers create bonds that have an impact on

academic achievement (Valenzuela 1999; Crosnoe, Kirkpatrick-Johnson, and Elder 2004). Students who feel "uncared for" and lack strong bonds with their teacher will feel a sense of alienation from the schooling process that then translates into academic success (Valenzuela 1999). We do not act in isolation and as such our identities are shaped by interaction through which our selves emerge. Thus, a student's identity is formed in relation to their interaction with other students and their teachers.

My research finds that a student's outlook on schooling hinges on successful negotiation of the teacher's conception of (dis)respect. If a teacher views a student as disrespectful, he or she may withhold social bonds and resources that assist students to address structural barriers. For example, I observed a 7th grade Language Arts teacher, Ms. Jefferson, and her students for three months. On this particular day, the teacher was clearly agitated with her students. Although I did not observe any ill behavior from the students, the teacher was clearly upset with one particular student. She continuously admonished Evan, a Latino boy to: "be quiet!" and "pay attention!" In my observation of the student's behavior, I did not notice any defiant, loud, or distracting behavior. Instead, what I witnessed was a 7th grader who did not understand the directions he was given. He was asking the students around him for help to explain what he was supposed to be working on. Finally, Ms. Jefferson shouts, "I will put you out of my classroom. I've had to deal with you for a third of the school year. You have been disrespectful, rude, shoving your hands in my face and I'm tired of it! If you can't learn to how to be a respectful, a good student, from me maybe someone else can teach you."

Ms. Jefferson turned to the teacher's aide and said, "if he says anything to you that is not polite and respectful, you let me know right away and I will have him removed" the aide nods her head and simply says "ok." Evan genuinely looked confused because he was asking for some extra guidance from his peers. Actually, Evan needed one-on-one instruction from the teacher or her aide. Here, Evan's lack of engagement in the class was viewed as a sign of disrespect; not only did the teacher shame him in front of his peers, but she withheld the help Evan needed to successfully complete the assignment. Additionally, the teacher actually threatened to have him removed from the classroom for being disrespectful. Evan was a reserved student, he did not retaliate or push the issue, but he sat for the remainder of class unaware of what he is supposed to do and so, did nothing. He appeared to be too scared to ask for help from the teacher or the aide. It is these types of interactions that must be examined to understand the teacher's role in co-producing what appears to be student disengagement in the classroom. Furthermore, here is an example of the miscommunication that arises over what constitutes (dis)respect, and leads to conflict that disrupts students' engagement and contributes to teachers' frustration and burnout or teaching fatigue.

Evidence of the extraordinary impact of teachers on students suggests that continued ground level research of the mechanisms inside of schools is necessary. In everyday interaction, students and teachers co-create the classroom environment, but the teachers are always in the position of power and authority. In a traditional classroom, it is the teacher who determines how classes are run, the way in which a student can participate and what constitutes acceptable behavior. This approach

facilitates the use of power to shape interaction and communication. The power imbalance in the classroom ensures that any cooperation or disagreement cannot take place on the basis of equality. Teachers' and students' distinct understandings are equally valid, but most often it is the teacher who gets to determine what constitutes (dis)respect.

My research explores if/when teachers consider that their interpretation of respect is the appropriate form students should possess. As I discuss later in this chapter, respect is structured and sustained by the interpretation and action of individuals. The structural factors, or power dynamics within the school, intervene and disrupt the process of reconciling the contested meanings of (dis)respect. It is as if teachers are the gatekeepers of a "culture of power"[6] because they uphold the expectations that students follow the (un)spoken rules that demand a certain style of respect. Most often, when a student's behavior does not display an adequate amount of "respect" for their teacher their entire culture, racial or ethnic group is blamed as deficient. Therefore, matters of respect are inseparable from power, domination, privilege and identities such as race, class and immigration status, which I will discuss in Chapter 6.

Bidwell, Frank and Quiroz (1997) incorporate the issue of power relations among the administration, parents, and students, to examine how factors such as "control" and the division of labor inform methods of teaching and classroom practices. By looking at the relational processes within a school, the authors are able to

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6 Lisa Delpit explains schools have their own "culture of power" which embodies, "taste, styles, dispositions and preferences of the most dominant social groups in society- -or the cultural knowledge that is required for moving up the social ladder" (2006:147).

conclude that the structural organization of the school influence a teacher's pedagogy. Even so, the literature reviewed is unable to explain the micro-processes involved with the culture of respect in schools. Too often, the literature on teachers has a tendency to causally dismiss the quotidian activities or the circulation of invisible power relations within the classroom. However, we must interrogate the way a teacher's power is framed, used and/or misused within the classroom because it may illuminate the systemic connections between education and the reproduction of inequality.

School: The Transmitter of Symbolic Power, Violence and Inequality

Sociologist Pierre Bourdieu examines how education reproduces inequality and individuals use of agency within the structural constraints. In contrast with functionalist and Marxist theories, Bourdieu does not restrict the analysis of education to the economic sphere, nor does he consider the purpose of education as maintaining societal equilibrium. In contrast to the Weberian perspective, which viewed the purpose of education as one of social mobility and status attainment, Bourdieu's perspective of education is primarily exclusionary. Here, education is the central agent that facilitates the transmission and distribution of cultural capital,[7] the reproduction of power and the symbolic relationships between the classes (Bourdieu and Passeron 1977; Bourdieu 1986:287).

7 Cultural capital is a term coined by Bourdieu that has become widely popular and used to refer to a variety of cultural resources. For Bourdieu, cultural capital refers to more than cultural resources, but includes, a "style of expression," "a durable way of standing, speaking, walking" (1990:70). This means cultural capital is embodied expression that is acquired throughout life and becomes a part of an individual's (un)conscious interactions.

The educational system employs, exerts and maintains its resonance through the ideology that school is a natural, neutral and an objective institution (Bourdieu 1990). This belief conceals the ways education facilitates the reproduction of power and privilege and is thus able to exercise what Bourdieu refers to as, "symbolic violence."[8] Symbolic violence occurs when dominant beliefs become embedded in structure (i.e. education system) and practices, and individuals believe and accept the imposed social order as legitimate (1990:1-69). Here, all pedagogic action seeks to reproduce the dominant class culture and works to secure the monopoly of symbolic violence (Bourdieu 1990:6). Bourdieu suggests that the legitimatization of schooling is essential in the reproduction processes since it allows the system to remain virtually unseen and unchallenged. According to Bourdieu the system of education operates as the "social function of the legitimization of culture" (1990:127). Clearly, education is the traditional mechanism of the transmission of capital and reproduction of social class. However, the system rewards those who adhere to the dominant views of society and penalize those who do not fit in.

Bourdieu contests that idea that education is a meritocratic institution. Instead, he argues that what seems like individual ability and talent is really the product of the investment of time and cultural capital, which only further perpetuates inequality (Bourdieu 1986:282). Bourdieu warns against reducing educational inequalities to

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8 In his studies of education, Bourdieu examines the relationship between pedagogy and power. He concludes that the most often concealed, "pedagogic authority (PA)" creates and reproduces symbolic violence within the institution of education. He states, "Insofar as it is a power of symbolic violence [PA], exerted within a relation of pedagogic communication which can produce its own specifically symbolic effect only because the arbitrary power which makes imposition possible is never seen in its full truth" (Bourdieu and Passeron 1977:11).

social inequalities for the reason that it ignores the specific form and logic of the educational system (1990:155,181). Education and social inequalities form a dialectic relationship in which the educational system works as both the independent and dependent variable for students' educational outcomes. For instance, the education system has demands and values that are set and expected from everyone, but the tools for academic success are not widely or equally available for all. As Bourdieu and Passeron (1977) remark:

> By doing away with giving explicitly to everyone what it implicitly demands of everyone, the education system demands of everyone alike that they have what it does not give. This consists mainly of linguistic and cultural competence and that relationship of familiarity with culture which can only be produced by family upbringing when it transmits the dominant culture (494).

A central concern of Bourdieu is that the system of education presupposes the cultural possession among students is equal. On the surface, the system of education *seems* to provide an equal opportunity to all students, from every social class, yet it privileges the students of higher social classes and neglects working class and minority students. The seemingly unbiased organization of the system of education is why and how inequality remains unseen and more importantly, unchallenged.

In order to explain the space between social structure and individual practice, Bourdieu's theory centers on the concept of the "habitus" which he defines as a socially constituted system of dispositions that orient "thoughts, perceptions, expressions, and actions" (Bourdieu 1990:55). The internalization of predispositions is first acquired and nurtured in the individual's family of origin, and "depend on the cultural capital embodied in the whole family" (Bourdieu 1986:282). Numerous

educational studies have shown how middle class children with the same cultural capital as their teachers get preferential treatment through the placement in top tracks, receive higher grades, less punishment, experience higher expectations and obtain better rewards from teachers (Rist 1973; Persell 1977; Oakes 1985; Foley 1990). On the other hand, working-class children operate with a "sense of constraint" in which institutional authority is considered legitimate and accepted. Consequently, the "rules of the game" are often dismissed, never questioned and the end result is a lack of capital gain (Lareau 2003:7).

Bourdieu developed the concept of symbolic power to examine how power operates at the macro-institutional level (i.e. fields) and at the micro level via the habitus (Bourdieu 1990). Symbolic power is bestowed upon those with the dominant forms of (i.e. social, economic, and cultural) capital. In turn, they use this power to define reality and continue to advance their interests (Bourdieu 1991). Thus, the definition of reality as set forth by those with power becomes the taken-for-granted ideas that are misrecognized as the natural order of social action. The connection of power to the education system has been discussed at length by critical theorists who established that schools are sites of power at work (Friere 1967; Giroux 1992; Apple 1993) and places where symbolic violence and power are present and social and cultural capital are reproduced (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992; Thomason and Holdsworth 2003; Gibbs and Garnett 2007; Azaola 2012). It has been argued that schools are locations where identities are shaped, formed and governed by disciplinary practices (Foucault 1977, 1982, 2003). Theories that explore the relation between education and power were extremely useful in analyzing my data. In fact, I use

Bourdieu's concept of "symbolic power" to explain how teachers attempt to convert their cultural capital into symbolic power that forces students to respect them. At I discuss in detail in Chapter 5, this is not always a smooth process. In fact, the struggle for respect is often misrecognized or mislabeled as evidence of an "oppositional culture" or students' lack of academic aspirations. The next section reviews literature that argues educational outcomes are mediated by aspirations, behavior and student subcultures.

Student Aspirations, Behavior and Subcultures

Countless studies conclude that an individual's education level and experience affects their life course (Blau and Duncan 1967). For example, the high school setting can influence whether a youth develops delinquent behavior, the likelihood of teenage pregnancy and even incarceration (Crane 1991; Arum and Beattie 1999). In sum, research has shown that schools do much more than provide skills to enter the workforce or prepare youth to earn a higher education. Schools and teachers also shape attitudes and behavior that have a long lasting effect on students and their overall life outcomes. Frequently, researchers explain educational outcomes by beginning with the students themselves. The focal point is either the structure of the student's home life, the neighborhood they live in, the language they speak, their culture and even genetics (Arum and Beattie 2000). In part, this stems from America's meritocracy ideology that promotes the belief that society provides equal opportunity for all to move up the social ladder. The American Dream promises people either get ahead or fall behind based on how hard they work rather than the conditions they were

born into (Johnson 2008). Therefore, if a student is not successful in school, then it is due to individual failure and not the fault of the education system. This belief lends to placing the blame on students for their lack of success instead of looking at factors such as poverty and race relations, just to name a few (Willis 1977).

Many scholars examine how individual circumstances shape individual action and life chances within the structure. One notable example is in Jay MacLeod's (1987) ethnography "*Ain't no Makin' It Aspiration and Attainment in a Low Income Neighborhood."* MacLeod follows the life trajectories of two different peer groups[9] and applies Bourdieu's (1991) theory of class reproduction and the habitus to understand how access (among other things), or lack thereof, influence youth's occupational aspirations. Scholars who developed social psychological models for explaining educational attainment have used "aspirations" as an explanatory variable. These statistical analyses have found that students' aspirations have an influence on educational attainment[10] (Sewell, Archibald and Portes 1969:82). In contrast, from the perspective of the working class youth, MacLeod revealed how low-income youth feel, think, and truly experience education and social reproduction in America.

Interestingly, the Hallways Hangers articulate outside forces, such as inept teachers, as responsible for their lack of success in school. On the other hand, the Brothers accepted the dominant cultures definition of success and judged themselves by that standard (MacLeod 1987:45). Even though the Brothers believed in America's "achievement ideology" and the "sky is the limit" for their future job opportunities, in

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9 Both peer groups resided in the Clarendon Heights, a low-income housing development in a Northeastern city, in Chicago (MacLeod 1987:3-5). The "Hallways Hangers" are comprised of mostly Caucasian youths and the "Brothers" are predominately an African American youth.
10 This is in addition to having a sponsor or a significant other to mediate aspirations.

the end, aspirations were simply not enough to break through structural inequality for either group of youths (MacLeod 1987:3). Research like MacLeod's documents the pervasive effects of class and race on students' experiences in school. Again, by brilliantly linking the macro with the micro, MacLeod is able to analyze how the structure of opportunity dictates an individual's preference for the future and demonstrates that occupational aspirations alone are unable to cut across class lines (1987:4- 8).

An individual's background influence among other things how students and parents interact with school officials and even their understanding of the role of education in their lives. Aspiring to succeed, or simply possessing 'motivation' is not enough to attain success in the formal educational system. Rather, the achievement ideology in America or the "pull yourself up by your bootstrap" mentality work as a powerful mechanism of class reproduction. Furthermore, MacLeod's research reveals the ways in which individuals live under the shadow of institutions. He further questions the social psychological models that imply attitude can inform behavior, and in turn overcome unequal structural barriers (Sewell, Archibald, and Portes 1969:82-92). I stand in opposition against models that imply aspirations can counteract structural barriers such as poverty, and/or being a minority or immigrant, not to mention living in a neighborhood with a history of violence and an unwelcoming attitude of anyone other than mainstream white, Americans.

There are various factors outside a student's control that can prevent them, even with the best aspirations, from being successful in school. For example, I interviewed, Chad a 13-year-old, 8th grader whose favorite subjects are math and

science. He loved to play the violin. Chad wanted to do well in school and acknowledged the benefit of education to his future success. He was unhappy with the grades he was earning, but when I asked him if he had an idea of why he is doing poorly in school, he had an answer for me. Chad claimed he was suspended seven times in the beginning of the year for getting into "fights, [using] profanity to others and principals and—[for] disrespect and stuff."

> Heidi: So you think the reason why you were—well, let me ask you, why do you think all that stuff happened in the beginning of the year?
>
> Chad: Because of what I was going through then. Like, I was going through like—I had no water. I had no power. I just—my parents couldn't afford because they just couldn't afford, but now they can I guess. Because my landlord was like, out to get us and was raising the rent and raising the water to $900. When we have HUD, I don't know if you know that. We have HUD and he kept raising it to almost the normal thing and it was like, what's the point. So, we just moved—moved here and I've been good ever since.
>
> Heidi: Oh, okay. So, you're saying that things that were going on in your home were like, upsetting you and when you came to school, it came out in other ways?
>
> Chad: Yeah. And my tardy—I mean, my tardiness and my absences were really affecting that because I didn't have a car, I didn't have money to transportate on the bus. I used to like have to ask the bus drivers if I could get on. They usually say no and that's why I was late and--
>
> Heidi: Oh, did you tell the school about your circumstances?
>
> Chad: Yeah, they tried to give us a bus pass but they did it one month and then they said they were going to buy us bikes but that was sixth grade and I don't got a bike yet.
>
> Heidi: So, when they would bring you in and say, why are you acting this way, and you would tell them that things were hard at home and it was difficult to get here?
>
> Chad: Uh huh.

Heidi: That they—what would they say?

Chad: They said, that doesn't give you the excuse to be late and stuff. You should leave earlier.

Heidi: So, did you tell Ms. Martinez, the math teacher what was going on in your life?

Chad: Yeah.

Heidi: Okay. Because you always—you would come in and be late in her class and stuff? And was she supportive?

Chad: Yeah.

Heidi: Yeah. So when you told her about the things that were going on, what did she say to you?

Chad: She said, I'm sorry that that's happening in your life. Just—if you need to talk, come talk to me after class or before class, after school or before school. Yeah.

Heidi: And, how did that make you feel?

Chad: I don't know, it just like, it felt like someone cared about me.

According to Chad, the reason he was doing poorly in school and displaying bad behavior was because he lived in extreme poverty. He noted the structural barriers he faced to attend school, such as being unable to find reliable transportation. Later in our interview, Chad confided that he often comes to school hungry because there is no food in his home and he finds it difficult to concentrate on an empty stomach. It is obvious that Chad faces external circumstances that are beyond his control and these not only affect his grades but also contribute to his so-called defiant and disrespectful behavior. However, Chad is not resisting school or middle class culture, nor does he have low aspirations that are bringing his grades down. Indeed, some may argue that a

student who is consistently tardy, getting in fights, or using profanity against adults has subscribed to a rebellious oppositional culture (Fordham and Ogbu 1986). According to these scholars, an oppositional culture is made up of - primarily racial and ethnic groups- who perceive the educational system as an extension of the dominant values and norms. In response to a perceived threat to their culture, these groups underachieve academically and display behaviors that challenge and reject the dominant groups culture. But Chad is not the only student I interviewed who articulated an astute awareness of the value of education. In fact, every student I interviewed felt that attending and completing school was important to their future success. Many of the students I interviewed had high aspirations of becoming successful in prestigious professions. The data revealed that in order to prevent student disengagement in school, teachers, staff and principals must treat the students with care and respect. As noted by Chad's final comment about how it felt to have a teacher ask him about his home life, he said it made him feel "like someone cared about me."

My research contradicts not only Ogbu's findings, but also contemporary scholars such as Elijah Anderson's (1999) ethnography of interpersonal violence between and among urban youth. Anderson attempts to link the problems within schools as the by-product of a street culture. For Anderson, this street culture permeates and overpowers the schools mission, thereby undermining education as a whole. At the same time, Anderson argues that when a street culture clashes with a school's mission because students embrace a so-called "oppositional culture." However, Anderson does not adequately investigate the seriousness of this so-called "oppositional culture" within the classroom setting. He assumes that an "oppositional

culture" is a social fact, which operates independently and fails to clarify any distinction among individuals.

Consequently, Anderson reduces urban youth's identity formation to strictly negative terms. The outcome of Anderson's distortion is that it ignores urban youths' culture as part of a genuine identity that is simultaneously filled with positive ways of being. The students I met at Jackson Middle School described themselves as talented, athletic, smart, funny, creative, kind, sensitive and artistic, just to name a few. They enjoy everything from playing league soccer to performing with the school choir and band. In the 400 hours at my field site there was not one student who appeared or confessed being oppositional to education and its middle class norms. My findings suggest that youth do not oppose education, nor are they uniformly hostile to the fact that education leads to upward mobility. Instead, what they "reject is schooling—the content of their education and the way it is offered to them" (Valenzuela 1999:19). Often, the way education is offered to these students presupposes they are oppositional and that they do not care about their future. As I the data suggests, students are keenly aware which teachers enter the school site with preconceived notions that their students will be unsuccessful in school and life.

My findings challenge the simplistic models that view "oppositional culture" of urban youth as the product of their poor upbringing and rebellious peer group. Instead, I make a solid case that urban youth are willing and want to learn, but a fragile connection to the education system- and its actors- sabotages their success. In fact, schools are sites where teachers and students work with different understandings of respect, which contributes to a tenuous relationship that affects student engagement.

My dissertation offers insight into the meaning of (dis)respect and its relation to schooling. I do so by blending the macro theories of education that focus on the social structures with literature on micro processes and individual practice to explain how misunderstandings of respect contribute to the reproduction of educational inequality. In the following section, I review research centered on respect as a theoretical, analytical and practical concept. I address why studying respect should matter to sociologists of education and more broadly, to the discipline of sociology. In order to operationalize "respect" I draw from a variety of social theories on respect, recognition and face-to-face behavior in order to parse out its social meaning.

The Politics of Respect

The average person uses the term "respect" on a daily basis. Yet the term itself lacks operational meaning so much so that the audience and actor alike may be uncertain as to its significance and the implication of its use. Therefore, it should not be assumed that respect is comprised of universal meaning or practices that will be understood by diverse individuals in the same exact manner. Respect has been conceived as a matter of etiquette that dictates behavior expected from interacting parties. To be respectful, encourages interaction that is controlled and occurs in an orderly way, which is meant to minimize uncertainties or conflict (Geertz 1961:19). But there is a difference between the application of respect, as "proper behavior" and its conceptualization, as is found in Bourgeois' (1999) ethnography of Puerto Rican crack dealers and addicts in East Harlem, New York. Bourgois does not define the term "respect," in fact, it seems as if other terms such as status, power, authority,

superiority, deference and fear could have been used. In this context, respect is a form of social capital on the streets, referred to as having the "juice" (translate: fear) of your peers, neighbors, and enemies (Bourgois 1999). If an individual has this type of respect in the "hood" then they are able to freely roam the streets and operate their business with little to no interference. In inner city streets, to have respect is a valuable form of social capital that not only protects individuals, but also forms their self-esteem and denotes a level of achievement, recognition and deference (Morris 2009:28). However, respect in urban areas is not limited to street gangs. Scholars have demonstrated that respect was a fundamental value, a cultural code used by the Sicilian mafia that imbued the organization with a competitive character that allowed it to flourish for centuries (Catanzaro 1988). For the Mafia, aggression and violence determines the level of respect an individual is owed and this is celebrated, idealized and rewarded. This points to the fact that respect is contingent on the scenario and its actors, for example, certainly the "respect" the Mafia adheres to is not identical to the respect that a teacher requires from his or her students.

Definition and Allocation of Respect

Sociologists use synonyms for respect such status, prestige, recognition, honor, dignity, but these also are often used by sociologists as abstractions and do not tell us anything about the everyday use of (dis)respect. An array of social theorists explain respect as everything from "proper etiquette" (Geertz 1961) to having "the juice" on the streets (Bourgois 1999). Psychologist Stanley Gaines defines respect in a humanistic sense as "the social acceptance of another person" (1995:57). Psychologist

Carl Rogers (1959) argues that all individuals have a need for respect and a desire to be valued by others. German Philosopher, Immanuel Kant's view of respect was that it is morally unconditional- it was an end in itself- a fundamental aspect of recognition, regardless of "social position, moral accomplishments or faults, prestige, or personal merit" (Hudson 1980: 69). Similarly, Hegel reasoned that every struggle was a struggle for mutual recognition and respect, both of which were necessary for a fulfilling individual life (1971:1977). American Philosopher, John Rawls (1971) spoke of recognition as respecting the needs of those who are unequal to us whereas Jurgen Habermas (1987) argued that recognition means respecting the views of those whose interests disagree. Moreover, Charles Taylor states that, "recognition is a vital human need" (1993:26). Taylor (1993) argues for equal, positive rights as the only way to institutionalize recognition, which he considers a public good for all. Sociologist Richard Sennett devoted an entire book to the concept of respect and aligns the allocation of respect to "honor" because it, "signals a kind of erasure of social boundaries and distance" (2003:55). Clearly, respect is an amorphous concept, but social theorists agree that respect operates at the level of interaction and is a guiding principle in maintaining productive relationships (Finkelstein 2008).

Thus, the social setting and its actors co-produce and influence the meaning of respect and how it is understood, exchanged and communicated. We can find similarities between the discussions of respect as "proper etiquette" (Geertz 1961) to whether an individual has "the juice" (Bourgois 1999) on the streets. Both forms of respect involve face-to-face interaction and involve the process of giving and receiving recognition of individuals' worth or value. Even so, a few questions remain: who

deserves respect? Is respect tied to resources? Is it a matter of earning or demanding respect, or is every human entitled to equal amounts of respect regardless of their social status in life?

The Unexpected Perils of Showing Respect

Although, I use respect as a key element to all-human interaction as the starting point for my research, I also note that there is less agreement as to what the expected gestures that convey respect entail. For example, my research finds that when students attempt to show respect at school it is often viewed as a display of *disrespect*. In response to students' perceived defiance, authority figures, such as teachers attempt (deliberately, unwittingly or with good intentions) to strip the student of their notion of respect and in turn, the students' identity. During my observations of a lunchtime school activity, I noticed a male student approach a male teacher. As the student moved closer to the teacher he outstretched his hand as if to shake hands and at the same time with his other hand reached around to the teachers back and gave him a pat on the back. In response, the male teacher angrily growled, "don't ever touch me again!" The student was visibly taken aback by his teacher's response, but walked away nervously without a handshake. Although this subtle interaction may seem mundane to an outsider, there is an underlying significance to the shaking of hands, pounding fists, followed by a chest bump or a pat on the back: It is a matter of respect in many urban neighborhoods. In fact, if one denies or refuses this exchange of

greetings it is viewed as a matter of disrespect[11] and may result in a physical altercation to preserve respect in the neighborhood. Therefore, this student's attempt to show respect to his teacher was not only overlooked, but also interpreted by the teacher as defiant or disrespectful. Here, is evidence that contested meanings of (dis)respect exists and operate at school. Further, this example illustrates that the meaning, application and what constitutes proper respect all can be incompatible with another group's patterns of respect. In turn, this result in conflicts, misunderstandings, and/or stir up emotions such as, shame.[12] In order to ground my readers in a solid understanding of the multiplicity of meanings and actions associated with respect, I turn my attention to theories that govern the rules of face-to-face interaction.

The "Rules of Conduct" of Respect

To uncover the dynamic role (dis)respect plays in schooling and the meanings students attach to (dis)respectful interactions with their teachers, I draw from theories of symbolic interactionism such as Erving Goffman's theories of face-to-face interactions. Goffman theories of the rituals of face-to-face behavior, or as he states, "the traffic rules of social interaction" (1967:12) focuses on what is often invisible and overlooked, such as the glances, gestures, and body positioning that is intended or not. In face-to-face interaction it is the pattern of verbal and nonverbal acts that an individual expresses his opinion of the situation at hand and his/her thoughts of the

11 This is referred to as a "dis" or "dissing" taken from the word disrespect.
12 I will discuss the connection of shame to my research later in this chapter.

participants, including himself. It includes all acts and expressions used by an individual to encourage further communication.

Thus, the "rules of conduct" are a guide for (in)action that transform into expression and results in significant communication. Goffman points out that all societies have rules of conduct, a set of codes that guarantee that everyone acts appropriately. In Western society this is often referred to as etiquette (1967:55). Individuals enact the rules of conduct unconsciously in daily life. The only time one becomes aware of the rules are when they are prohibited from acting in accordance with them or the rules are broken. The "rules of conduct" fall under two categories, either "Deference" or "Demeanor." Deference refers to the acts used to convey appreciation and respect. For Goffman, respect is the main mechanism working to integrate society (Battershill 1990:176) and the acts associated with respect, or deference, are meant to establish interpersonal relationships and demonstrate a sense of regard for the recipient. On the other hand, demeanor refers to how one presents themselves to others, such as their appearance and mannerisms. An individual can alter their demeanor depending on the social setting or how they wish to be perceived by others.

Goffman argues that problems arise when the acts of deference and demeanor differ across cultures, such as Western culture versus Eastern culture, and the actor is unaware of these differences and results in a misunderstanding. The consequences of misinterpreted conduct can range from actors feeling a sense of uneasiness to a severe break in a relationship. Goffman argues that the goal of all social encounters is to

maintain your face[13] and not destroy the presented face of anyone in the group. His theory is especially useful to describe the strategies students use to protect their identities during interaction with their teachers. I apply Goffman's "rules of conduct" of face-to-face interaction, but I extend his ideas to explore how divergent groups within the same setting negotiate different understandings of respect and the consequences of this break

My research does not situate "respect" in a discussion of abstractions or normative categories, nor do I assign respect a single definition. Instead, I explore how diverse individuals embody, express and (un)consciously communicate their rules of conduct of respect within the institutional setting. As I discuss in chapter 5, teachers' view of respect is synonymous with deference,[14] which gives rise to conflict in the classroom. In contrast, the students' view of respect aligns with the Hegelian notion (1971, 1977) that all humans are due respect by virtue of simply being human. Although it appears that teachers and students may come to school with different interpretations of what respects means and the gestures that convey respect, my data

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13Whether a face is maintained or not depends on the actions of both the actor *and* the perception of others through social interaction.

14 Goffman's interpretation of deference is an, "activity which functions as a symbolic means by which appreciation is regularly conveyed to a recipient of this recipient or of something of which this recipient is taken as a symbol, extension, or agent" (1967:56). "Deference" is often considered the responsibility of the subordinate to extend first to his/her superior, but Goffman argues this idea of deference is limiting because there are many forms of symmetrical deference and even deference in which superior (i.e. clergy) show deference to subordinates (i.e. parishioners). I consider Goffman's interpretation of deference as an "ideal type" and not the definition that teachers use to explain students' issue with disrespect. Contrary to Goffman's understanding of deference, I find that teachers conceptualize deference as the respect owed to them as a superior from an inferior (i.e. the student). Thus, students are not considered co-creators in the classroom but are always in a subordinate position to that of teachers and because of this lower position are expected to always extend respect to their teachers. In addition, I find that teachers conflate "respect for directives" with "respect for individuals" and this is the primary mode of miscommunication and conflict over matters of (dis)respect in the classroom.

suggests that the discourse of respect is shared between the two parties. In fact, both parties also share identical sentiments to the other party refusal to extend respect; it results in feeling a deep-seated, wounding injustice. Thus, the exchange of respect is not always a smooth process or exchange and most often these are the moments that lead to conflict in the classroom and eventual student disengagement and teacher exhaustion.

Hegemonic Understandings of Respect

Respect can be intimate as in terms of self-respect and at the same time social, in terms of bestowing respect to another individual. Although, it may make sense to think of respect as strictly an interpersonal exchange, I argue that society is always the force that shapes the way individuals understand, earn, or fail to arouse respect from others. For example, the dominant society dictates the application and allocation of respect based on ideas of merit. One of the primary modes to earn or be deserving of respect is with the self-development of abilities and skills. This mode of respect applies well to teachers because specialized credentials are required to be employed as a teacher in the United States. Teachers are understood as intellectual experts who play a leading role in the institution of education. Popular belief follows that teachers should be able to demand a student's respect based on their status of being a master at their craft.

It is not only that respect is a social phenomenon that is worth noting. It is important to note the hegemonic view of respect. To fully understand the social phenomenon of respect, we must consider where the dominant worldview originated

and question how ideas of who is expected to give and who is expected to receive respect have historically shifted. In doing so, we will be able to uncover how ideas of respect may be tied to systems of inequality with deep roots in racism and class bias. There was a time when legal and moral authority demanded respect from those considered to be of lower status such as a serf to a Lord of the House. In the U.S., the Black Codes mandated African Americans perform acts of deference to all white people or face severe consequences. In some cases, African Americans were murdered for displaying insubordination such as "sassing" a white person (Rawick 1972). These (in)formal codes and the consequences were (re)constructed from and (re)enforced by the belief that whites were the superior race. As such, African Americans were obligated to bestow respect to whites, with no expectation that respect would ever be a mutually exchanged in return. Although it may seem extreme to draw a parallel with the Black Codes, I aim to show that the expectations associated with who is entitled to respect were built from a system of hierarchy, prejudice, oppression, and unequal power relations that continue today. The ideologies and practices that envelop respect are rooted in a system with a dark history of bias and belief systems that are difficult to eliminate. It is necessary to understand how ideas of who is obligated to give respect and to whom are historically situated in social constructions of race, class and nationality.

To highlight how our education system is structured in a way that perpetuates racism and other "isms" should not be shocking. Historically, it has rewarded the majority culture by prioritizing it and placing it at the top of the hierarchy (Woodson 1933; Oakes 1985; Bell 1992; Moule 2009). Even as we move into a generation that

boasts of a post-racial society, our education system still adheres to an assimilationist and racial hierarchy ideology in which Students of Color are expected to conform to hegemonic understandings (Kohli and Solórzano 2012). The struggle for respect in the classroom is fueled by the conflict between minority, working class students' ideas of respect and the teachers and institutions attempt to uphold hegemonic understandings of respect, which are founded in racial and class biases.

Education scholar Lisa Delpit (2006) points to how minority, working class families and students' ideas of respect vary from the dominant view; for them a teacher's authority and respect is earned and not automatic. For a teacher to earn respect from minority, working class families, he or she must continuously prove the characteristics that give them authority. A few of the abilities Delpit argues teachers must establish to earn respect and authority are to:

> control the class through exhibition of personal power, [that] establishes meaningful interpersonal relationship that garner student respect, exhibits a strong belief that all students can learn, establishes a standard of achievement and pushes the students to achieve that standard, and hold the attention of the students by incorporating interactional feature of black communicative style in his /her teaching (2006: 35-36).

My findings support Delpit's statement that successful teachers establish their authority in the classroom by first developing a close relationship with their students based on respect that flows between both parties. They understand that this sort of relationship must be sincere and earned by communicating high expectations, but by also demonstrating that they were ready to help the student to achieve these goals. On the other hand, any adherence to the belief that a teacher deserves respect simply because (s)he is the teacher creates an authoritarian culture in the classroom. An

authoritarian culture can be suffocating to the student, especially when the student is in need of help and dependent on the "master."

Education scholars warn that teachers should not be the only expert in the classroom and to deny students expert knowledge is disempowering to them (Delpit 2006:33). When a student feels disempowered, it stirs up feelings of unworthiness, it is these feelings that contribute to students reacting in ways that are interpreted by teachers as defiant or disrespectful. Thus, the very way society determines who deserves respect – the educated and specialized- places a large portion of society at the bottom of the hierarchy and sets the stage for respect to be viewed as a zero-sum game. I find that conflict arises when respect is viewed as a scant resource and thus withheld from students or is used by teachers as a display of power in the classroom.

Self-Respect: The Mantra of Meritocracy

Another dominant and popular use of respect is the belief that everyone should possess a hefty amount of self-respect in order to be successful in life. Self-respect may sound intimately personal, but I argue that even this form of respect is also explicitly tied to the social. More specifically, it stems from the U.S. meritocracy ideology. A person with self-respect is thought to possess a certain resilient character and a willingness to claim personal responsibility for slip-ups, failures and successes. A person with self-respect acts in his/her best interest, (s)he is disciplined and motivated into action and is not dependent on others for his/her needs or wants. On the other hand, in U.S. society, if an individual is said to lack self-respect then it is considered sinful. To view an individual as deficient in self-respect conjures up

thoughts of learned helplessness, a lack of confidence, and a dependency on the system. Any perceived failure due to a lack of self-respect is viewed as an individual's doing. This worldview coincides with the American meritocracy ideology that believes one gets ahead or fails in life strictly based on ability. This belief system is most notable in our schools as teachers/administrators (un)consciously blame students lack of success on a deficiency of self-respect. It is easy to explain behavioral issues, defiance or students lacking self-respect or respect for others as an internal issue for them/or their parents to fix. This should not be surprising, we live in a nation that glorifies the individual ability to create happiness and success. Individuality is worshiped and communal responsibility is synonymous with the dirty word: socialism. Even though our identity as Americans are shaped by group membership that defines our day-to-day life, the individual is either celebrated as the successor or blamed as the deviant.

My data suggests that the daily practices of giving or withholding respect are infused with ideas of meritocracy, which operates as a threat to solidarity that is felt by winners and losers. One way this occurs is by holding to a strict adherence to a discourse of self-respect that has become institutionalized within the school setting. For example, at JMS there were posters hanging on the walls of every classroom that reminded students of the importance of (self)respect. One stated, "This is our community. In order to function, we practice self-respect and respect for other." There was another poster that related a lack of self-respect to living in the "victim role;" this refers to individuals who do not take responsibly for the circumstances they created and instead blame others for their social standing.

The mantra of self-respect is evoked routinely by teachers and administrators at an alarming rate when explaining why minority youth are doing poorly in schools. If a student is struggling academically or behaviorally, teachers and administrators often blame it on their lack of self-respect. Most often, I observed teachers attribute this perceived lack of self-respect to cultural factors, such as students' immigrant status or parent inability to parent their children and teach them proper respect for themselves and others. Many school officials act as if they are the judge and jury of all matters related to (dis)respect, which only strengthens the imbalance of power and unequal relations in the classroom.

The popular belief is that you must give respect to get respect and so respect is earned by extending it to others. Sennett refers to this as "the most universal, timeless, and deepest source of esteem for ones' character" (2003:64). However, earning respect in this manner is not as simple as it may seem. Most often, actors who enter an institutional arena such as a school, enter with preconceived notions of their position and expect automatic respect based on their status etc. The expectation that an individual automatically deserves respect based on social status precludes a relationship built on the deepest form of mutual respect. On the larger scale, the call to "give respect, get respect" rings hollow when students feel that the "powers that be" do not recognize their basic needs and aspirations as deserving individuals. As I discussed in this chapter, there are multiple contrasting and underlying meanings embedded in the use of respect that attach to ideas of deservingness, power, and privilege. This is especially evident in relationships that are unequal from the beginning, such as the teacher –student relationship. The way the classroom is set up

does not support a two-way equal exchange of respect. Although students crave to earn the respect of their teachers and the teachers claim to respect their students, I find this is not entirely true. Instead, there is mismatch of mutual respect in the classroom that invites the misuse of power even from the purest of men and women.

"Cultural Mismatch" of Respect in the Classroom

The concept of "cultural mismatch" refers to middle class educators who peg urban minority students' speech, tastes and style among other cultural factors as dysfunctional or as a sign of lack of motivation (Oakes 1985). There exists a divide between school-based norms, values, teaching styles and curriculum with those of students from non-dominant cultures. Cultural bias in teaching is a mainstream ideology that adheres to the practice that students are to be seated independently, listening intently to the instruction given. In order to be successful, students must work quietly in a controlled environment. However, many educators point out that these norms and values are socially and culturally constructed by white, middle class educators in positions of power. Often, these norms conflict with the students' worldview. Both students and teachers' cultural identities inform how they understand the world around them and this includes their expectations of what is considered respectful or disrespectful.

Many students attend schools in which the dominant cultural codes differ from their teachers. The resulting cultural mismatch results in difficulties in communication between teachers and students that dampen student engagement (Delpit 2006:148). On the other hand, challenged and confused by students perceived disrespectful behavior,

some teachers respond with intolerance and a refusal to validate the worldview of their students. The consequence of the "cultural mismatch" of respect leaves both actors feeling wounded and unrecognized. On a larger scale, a cultural mismatch results in the school assessing poor, minority students as having an inability or lack of aptitude to learn, and thus being relegated to lower track classes (Oakes 1985:104). Similarly, this has been referred to as a "mutual misunderstanding" between teachers and students over what it means to "care about school" (Valenzuela 1999:22). MacLeod also addresses the notion of a mismatch, but from the *students'* perception and as hinging on the "social class disjuncture between themselves and the teaching staff" (1987:108). Hence, scholars are attempting in multiple fashion and at different units of analysis to explain the fuzzy area between structure and culture and how this works to mediate student's success or failure. MacLeod highlights the importance of this hazy space, by revealing that the only teacher the Hallway Hangers *respected* was Jimmy Sullivan, one who came from a similar class background (1987:108-109). So significant was a shared common life experience or history with "Jimmy the teacher" that he was credited with several of the Hallway Hangers school retention and eventual graduation from High School. The powerful influence that "Jimmy the teacher" had on his students highlights the the need to reveal patterns that can be changed (or reinforced) by raising awareness of the importance of respect in the classroom.

A cultural mismatch includes more than varying class background; it also includes a mismatch between teachers and Students of Color and/or varying immigration status. As discussed earlier in this chapter, our system of education is constructed on ideas of racial inferiority and assimilationist ideology, which means the

institution itself reinforces inequities in our society. Yet, social interactions construct and maintain our social world, which means that inequities are not only reinforced by the institution, they also rely on daily, face-to-face interaction to uphold the biases.

Today, and for the most part, *overt and direct* racism is less accepted in the U.S. then in the past hundred years. This does not mean, however, that racism has been abolished. Clearly, structural and individual racism are very much alive and many individuals act on their racists beliefs. However, the acts of racism have taken a new and insidious form referred to by many scholars as "microaggressions." My research draws from the scholarship that points to the subtle, daily and cumulative forms of racism that negatively affect minority students (Pierce 1970). Incidents of racial microaggressions can be thought of as an act of cultural disrespect that work to "support a racial and cultural hierarchy of minority inferiority" (Kohli and Solórzano 2012:1) inside our schools. This literature is extremely important to my research because it connects the subtle microaggressions such as labeling minority, working class students as "disrespectful" to the reproduction of educational inequalities.

For many years, sociologists have examined the trajectories of categorically defined groups to identify the role of schools in reproducing or deepening social inequality. It is reasonable to state that the race, class, and gender of actors within the education setting have an influence on their experiences, outcomes, and possibilities. Moreover, by extending "cultural mismatch" theory to include understandings of respect and by delving deeper into MacLeod's assertion of urban youth's lack of respect for teachers, my research highlights how influential emotions, perceptions and the use, promotion and adherence to respect within the school and classroom affect

student engagement. To focus on the use of respect within schools seems most logical as the issue of "respect" involves the assumption that its meaning is part of a collective consensus. However, this is only partially true since there are certain aspects of the meaning of respect that are shared, but there is also quite a bit of contested meanings associated with (dis)respect in the classroom. The moments of contested meanings gave rise to explain how the break between the student-teacher relationships occurs and how this relates to student engagement. Likewise, by highlighting how the microaggressions associated with the struggle for respect in the classroom are partially responsible for alienating millions of U.S. students from the schooling process we can begin the task of improving classroom dynamics.

Conclusion

The existing literature on respect covers a wide range of empirical and philosophical ideas, but there are many questions still unanswered. For example, the powerful social forces that shape the discourse and culture of respect are left unquestioned. Scholars assume there is a universal sense of respect, one that is shared by all and ignores factors such as class, race and gender as driving the production of *multiple* meanings of respect. For example, what happens when respect conceptualized as "juice" on the street meets the form of respect idealized as "proper etiquette?" The social phenomenon of two divergent conceptions of respect colliding in one institution has not been discussed. The normative ideas of respect presuppose relative equality and theorization of respect and its relation to power and institutions is left unanalyzed. Moreover, an analysis of what respect means for diverse individual within the school

setting has not been analyzed and even less addressed is examining how a culture of (dis)respect is co-produced by students *and* teachers within schools.

The literature that deals with respect has an inadequate understanding of what respect constitutes and means for actors within the school setting. Rather then focusing on how respect or lack thereof builds character, the following dissertation supports existing literature by questioning how respect emerges through actors by interaction and embodied discourses. At the same time, I allow for a possibility that respect encompasses different meaning for diverse individuals. Further, by limiting my case selection to the school setting, I glimpse into how individuals, such as teachers and students grapple with the implicit tension over the multiplicity of the discourse and definitions of respect. Thus, my research examines the multiple meanings and practices associated with respect to show how respect not only reflects, but also creates group boundaries or inclusivity.

The following chapters will demonstrate that students are expected to respect teachers and if a student does not follow the expectations of bestowing respect[15] or even worse, contests the teacher and schools notion of respect, the consequences can be severe. This study provides scholars with an additional lens to understand the reinforcement of educational inequality within predominately urban, low-income, high minority and immigrant populated U.S. public schools. I hone in on these particular schools because they are most often credited as the epicenter of emerging oppositional subcultures and disrespectful students who are said to resist the structure of U.S.

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15 To "bestow respect" involves adhering to a certain tone of voice, appropriate language, and mannerisms. At times, a teacher may have subjective norms of respect, such as the student's style of dress or even the way a student sits in the chair.

schools and education in general. In doing so, I demonstrate the flaws in these beliefs and illuminate the day-to-day interactions along with the societal forces that co-create a disrespectful school environment that is detrimental to our students' success.

CHAPTER 3

ETHNOGRAPHIC METHODS: RESEARCH QUESTIONS, SETTING, DATA COLLECTION, ANALYSIS AND POSITIONALITY

In March of 2006, approximately 300 students from Jackson Middle School and the adjacent high school organized a walk-out in protest of proposed federal legislation which would make it a felony to be an unauthorized immigrant in the U.S. As students attempted to walk off school grounds, they were met with police in riot gear stationed at every campus entrance and exit. In response to the police presence, students began shaking the closed gates to which the officers reacted by shooting them with pepper-spray filled pellets. Other reports stated the police were shooting middle school aged youth with beanbag bullets to prevent them from climbing the fence and running into the neighboring canyon. One local newspaper described the student walk out and the police response as a "mob scene." Students called the local newspaper from inside the school and reported that they were protesting because, as one female stated, "we want to show how we feel. If they're going to put our parents in jail because they are illegal, we are going to protest."[16] In the end, 10 students were expelled for "defiant and disruptive behavior"[17] and all district schools were closed for two days due to "racial tensions."[18] The visual of minor children, some as young as eleven, being shot with pepper filled pellets seems almost criminal. To justify their heavy handed response, the police force and school district used the student protest and behavior as evidence that Beachside's student body is defiant, disrespectful and

16 press release statement from the school district
17 quoted from local newspaper
18 press release statement from the school district

prone to violent behavior.

Reading the newspaper reports and hearing a first hand account from a student teacher who witnessed the student walk is what led to my preliminary investigation in 2011. My preliminary research for a graduate field methods course included a supplementary data discourse analysis of JMS Middle School's webpage and the School Accountability Report Card (SARC) followed by three months of preliminary research, which included participant observation and informal interviews. During the three months of preliminary research, I determined JMS was an appropriate case selection for my ground-level approach to study the significance of the divergent uses, meanings and co-production of (dis)respect within the school setting.

Following in the tradition of many sociologists (Willis 1977; Foley 1990; Valenzuela 1999) I conducted an in-depth ethnographic study at one school. One of my research goals was to give proper representation to the students' voice and honor them as whole individuals. Students have an insider perspective on learning, teaching, and schooling, however, one way they have been disempowered from the education process is by silencing their voices (Fielding 2004). Alternatively, I hope to present the youth I studied with dignity as I convey their narratives and interpret the meanings they attach to ideas of respect and school. This is not a novel approach; since the early 1990s education scholars and social critics have noted the exclusion of the students' voice in educational research and reform and called for a cultural shift. This call was answered by many education scholars (Kozol 1991; Shultz 1992; Erickson and Shultz 1992; Weis and Fine 1993; Oldfather 1995; Lincoln 1995; Alvermann et al. 1996; Feldman 2002; Fielding 2004; Jones and Yonezawa 2002, 2006; Cook-Sather 2006).

To study the meaning of (dis)respect in schools required a research design that listened to the students speak. As discussed in the theory chapter, the very exchange of respect is an act of recognition that promotes communication and active engagement between individuals in school. Thus, the only appropriate research design for this study was to honor the centrality of students as the experts in their schooling process and as such this project is purposefully not a comparative case study. This does not imply my findings are limited. On the contrary, they are extremely relevant and will be instructive for many schools across the nation. It is true that there are certain aspects of my research site that are unique, such as the close proximity to a U.S. military base or U.S./Mexico border, but these factors do not dilute the study or its representativeness to other low-performing, high minority, urban schools. In sum, a central goal of this project was to gain an in-depth understanding of the meanings of (dis)respect to my study participants and this was accomplished by adhering to a strictly ethnographic, single case study approach.

Research Questions

During the beginning stages of my research, it became evident that the five research questions I proposed in my prospectus were in need of revision. I quickly realized that my original research questions were too broad and unanswerable for a dissertation project. Therefore, I began the serious process of reconstructing research questions that had clear units of analysis and did not suggest a simple yes/no answer, but instead allowed for multiple insights and robust findings. I also wanted the theoretical construct to contribute to the sociological literature by focusing specifically

on students' experiences along with a discussion of the effect of (dis)respect on student-teacher relationships.

I began the revision of my research questions by considering the theoretical constructs I was most interested in exploring, which included: 1) students' and teachers' meanings of (dis)respect; 2) the practices and co-production of (dis)respect used in the classroom; and 3) the effects of (dis)respectful interaction on student-teacher relationships. I also aimed for clear units of analysis, which are: individuals (students and teachers) and social interaction and behavior (practices and meanings) of (dis)respect. I needed a research question that would allow me to locate the exchange of (dis)respect and distinguish these events from other constructs that appeared in my data. To do this, I considered the types of data I would need to collect and analyze in order to uncover how individuals (students/teachers) used various forms of respect (discursive/interactional) at school.

By conducting interviews with teachers and students, I was able to analyze the discursive form of respect. However, respect is not strictly understood in discursive terms. The process of giving and receiving respect implies interaction, therefore observing and analyzing daily relations between students and teachers was also required. Table 2.1 gives a visual, two-by-two table of how I investigated and separated the data from discursive and interactional forms of respect.

Table 2.1: Research Data Collected to Analyze Various Forms of Respect

Units of Analysis	Teachers	Students
Respect: Discursive	(1) Interviews, text such as murals and classroom and school decor, and school mission statement	(2)Interviews, homework, essays
Respect: Interactive	(3)School interactions; teaching, colleagues, administration, and students	(4)Interactions with teachers/authorities and peers

After much thought, I developed research questions that have clear and concrete units of analysis, a theoretical construct and are answerable questions that allow for rich findings. My research questions are: How do teachers' and students' meanings of (dis)respect differ? Under what conditions do students report feeling (dis)respected by their teachers and how does (dis)respectful exchanges effect teacher-student relationships?

Research Setting: The Community and School Site

The following section provides rich detail of the school site to provide a solid sense of its history and culture. This dissertation project is based on data collected over the span of four years (2011-2015) from a public middle school (6^{th}, 7^{th}, 8^{th} grade), located in Beachside, California. All names, including the community, have been changed to protect the identity of the research participants. The Beachside district is classified as a large-scale district as it covers approximately 66 square miles and operates twenty-three school sites serving nearly 20,000 students (Table 2.2). There are sixteen elementary schools, four middle schools, two senior high schools and one alternative high school. The district employs more than 2,000 individuals in its

certificated, classified and administrative ranks and operates on a budget of nearly $174 million.

Table 2.2: Student Ethnic Distribution of Beachside School District
Data Source: CDE Website (Dataquest), Ethnic 2008 report

Ethnicity	# of Students	Percentage
Hispanic	11,330	55%
Caucasian	5,474	27%
African American	1,624	8%
Filipino	687	3%
Pacific Islander	541	2.6%
Asian	468	2%
Native American	147	1%

The 2013 Census data reports the population of Beachside as 172,794 with 35.9% Hispanic, White 48.4%, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander 1.3%, Asian 6.8%, Black, 4.7%, and Native American 0.08%. Approximately 20% of the population is foreign born and 13.3% live below the poverty level. This city is often referred to as "diverse" because of its pockets of ethnic enclaves, which include separate neighborhoods that are predominately Mexican, African American or Samoan. Interestingly, Beachside boasts of having the second largest concentration of Samoans in the United States.

My research site is in close proximity to what locals call "Southside," a historically large Mexican and immigrant neighborhood. This Barrio[19]dates back to the early 1900s when laborers and field workers settled in a remote area separated from the rest of the community by a large canyon. In the 1930s, children from the Southside neighborhood were sent to an Americanization School where they were immersed in English only instruction. Up until the late 1940s, the Southside neighborhood had dirt streets and no sewer system, whereas the rest of Beachside enjoyed paved streets and

19 Spanish word meaning neighborhood.

indoor plumbing. In the 1950s, Beachside built an elementary and middle school in the segregated neighborhood to strictly service the Southside community. Today, just as in the past, the Southside neighborhood is still suffering from being segregated from the rest of the community. This is evident by the condition of their schools and the well-known reputation of Southside students as "ghetto."[20]

JMS sits adjacent to the historically large Mexican population discussed earlier with vast generational diversity, including recent immigrants and first generation Mexican-Americans. Over sixty percent of JMS's students self-report being of Hispanic or Latino descent and eighty-six percent of the families reported being low income. In the wider community, JMS is notorious as a low performing school with a high expulsion and suspension rate and a large number of students who are assumed to be gang members. Along with a high population of minorities, Beachside has 11 documented gangs separated by neighborhoods and race. Mostly the rivals are Mexican gangs, but there are distinct lines between Samoans who claim "Bloods" and Blacks who claim "Crips." Due to the neighborhoods demographic composition, along with a history of heavy gang activity, JMS's students are slotted and stereotyped as ghetto, bad kids and often represented as lacking respect, civility and morals.

JMS was built in 1952 and many students and faculty lament on how the school campus resembles a prison. The school is deep set into a poverty stricken neighborhood, at the end of a cul-de-sac with only one way in and one way out. The school was built next to a canyon on one side and the old city garbage dump on the

20 Chapter 6 analyzes the consequences of the wider-community narrative and historical segregation of JMS students.

other. There are 6-foot steel fences all around campus that keep the students locked in. In 2006, a new two-story building was built and it has modern amenities like air conditioning, but the majority of the school is the original building or trailers scattered around the perimeter. Some portions of the school have been closed for years because they are so dilapidated and deemed unsafe by building inspectors for issues like asbestos and electrical failure. During my conversations with students they often pointed to the condition of their school as evidence that they were not respected and valued.

JMS may resemble a prison in its appearance and structure, but it also has been compared to a prison because of its long list of disciplinary actions [Appendix A] for which any school staff may assign "for a variety of student behaviors" (school website). As I detail later in the dissertation, the ambiguity of the statement "for a variety of student behavior" means teachers hand out disciplinary action for everything from profanity to gum chewing to disrespectful looks or mannerisms. This sets the stage for conflict between teachers and students over matters of (dis)respect because the definition of what constitutes a disrespectful look or action is often contested. My findings highlight that JMS staff and administrators rely on strict discipline to control the students because many believe they are deficient in values and need to be taught civility. In fact, "character building" is considered a priority at JMS over academics. This is evident in the mission statement posted on the school website, it states:

> The mission of [JMS] is to promote learning in a safe and supportive environment that encourages respect, develops critical thinking, prepares all students to be responsible citizens of any community and empowers them to fulfill their personal and academic goals.

The administration repeatedly emphasizes their commitment to teaching respect to JMS students as one of their primary goals. In 2011, the Principal's message to parents noted that, "a major focus for JMS staff and students this year has been on respect." Although the school transitioned through three Principals' during my fieldwork, each one continued to praise the newly implemented character development program that centers on lessons that focus on teaching students' values, such as integrity and respect in order to become productive members of society. I will discuss this character development program and its relation to my research in future chapters.

The following section discusses the methods I used to collect multiple sources of data. Because richer data is achieved using more than one research method, I used a multi-pronged ethnographic approach, which allowed for the analysis of the various uses of "respect" between actors within the school.

Data Collection and Analysis

The strength of my methods resides in linking classroom observations with in-depth interviews thereby tracing students' and teachers' actions and belief systems directly to their practices while not depending solely on self-reported data. I use ethnographic field methods that include observation, participant observation, student shadowing and tape-recorded and de-briefing interviews with students, teachers and staff. I also conducted discourse analysis of homework assignments and archives related to the history of the school and community.

I entered all observations and transcribed interviews into a data processing program called Atlas.ti. Atlas.ti is a grounded theory, qualitative analysis, data

processing program that allowed me to identify patterns and relationships within my data. I placed conceptual labels on responses that describe distinct events, experiences, and feelings reported in response to each interview question. I then analyzed individual interviews across all questions to identify themes and finally examined responses across all interviews.

Observations

I begin classroom observations in October of 2013. In order to gain access to observe classrooms the Principal sent all teachers a recruitment letter [Appendix B]. Initially, only four teachers responded to the letter. After the first round of observations, which lasted one year, I gained access into an additional seven classrooms through snowball sampling. Most of the long-term (over one month) observations took place in these eleven classrooms. The eleven classrooms included core classes, such as Language Arts/Humanities, History, Math, Science and PE. However, I shadowed individual students and thus gained access into electives as well. The electives I observed included: band, chorus, orchestra, computer applications, digital storytelling, and Spanish. I was unable to gain access to observe an AVID or ASB class.

From October 2013-June 2015, I logged over four hundred hours of observation time at JMS. I accomplished this by going to JMS at least twice a week, sometimes up to four times a week, for the entire school day. I ate lunch in the cafeteria and when school was over for the day I either conducted interviews or attended the after school program. I found it necessary to observe for a minimum of

one-month in each classroom to compare dynamics within and between classrooms and to understand how teachers and students create and or/contest an institutional culture of respect. By attending the same class for at least one month, the students and teachers become comfortable with my presence. I felt secure by the end of observations that all participants were acting natural and the data I collected was representative of their daily routine whether I was present or not.

As a social science researcher I am keenly aware that the act of engaging people in interaction influences the very activities being studied. This influence is not simply based on the presence of the researcher, but the type of presence they represent and I found this to be true in the classroom. Students immediately perceived me as an authority figure and so the first few days of observation I sat in the back of class and did not interact with the teacher or students unless they approached me. I wasn't unfriendly; I simply wanted the students to become familiar with me to the point that I was no longer a distraction. This tactic worked and within a few days the students paid little attention to me and acted "natural." For example, I witnessed students' frequent use of swear words, the sneaking of food and candy and chewing gum. I watched students make paper airplanes, wadded paper balls the size of soft balls and rubber band slingshots, which were used to hurl items across the room at other students. The students looked to see if I was going to tell on them, but I never did. One time a teacher directly asked me in front of students "did you see who threw that airplane?" I simply shrugged and made a face that conveyed confusion. The students soon learned that I was not an authority figure and I was uninterested in disciplining them. After observing for a few weeks in a 7th grade classroom, a young man leaned over and

whispered to me, “hey, your cool” and I said, “oh yeah, why’s that?” He responded, “because you never rat on us or get us in trouble when we do bad things.”

Looking back, I can see that beginning with observations provided me with the optimal opportunity to gain a rapport with the students. Also, I was able to observe how teachers and students grapple with the implicit tension over the multiplicity of the discourse and culture of respect. In listening to everyday experiences within the classroom, I was able to understand the students and teachers’ expectations and interpretation of respect and the feelings and emotions expended when one group failed to meet or acknowledge those expectations.

During observations, I took extensive field notes where I kept a record of sights, sounds, interactions and happenings. At the end of my data collection, I had over eight notebooks full of field notes. These field notes were an indispensable source of data. My observations were extremely helpful in formulating and re-thinking my interview questions. For example, I recorded moments of miscommunication and/or conflict between teachers and their students. At the same time, I made notes of when and how teachers and students communicate (dis)respect to one another. I recorded what appeared to be any and all exchanges of respect, subtle and overt. This allowed me to understand whether conflict over respect was as widespread as I imagined, or were there situational preconditions I should consider. I also made note of when matters of respect were successfully negotiated between actors. Because of the robust time I spent in multiple classrooms, with multiple teachers and across subject area, I was able to compare the same student’s behavior with different teachers. I was also able to observe teachers’ interactions with different students within the same classroom.

In addition to observing in the classroom, I observed during lunchtime and other organized school activities such as concerts, guest speakers, and BBQs. At lunchtime, I made a point to stand in line with the students even when the security guard tried to usher me ahead of everyone. I ate in the cafeteria or in the outside quad area. Sometimes I ate alone, other times students asked to sit with me and on occasion students would invite me to come sit with their group. Lunchtime ended up being the best time to build a relationship with the students and conduct informal debriefing interviews. Students asked questions about my personal and academic life and we discussed their feelings about their teachers and their thoughts on recent conflict I witnessed in class.

After four months of strictly observations, I began to conduct observations and interviews simultaneously, which I found fruitful for uncovering teachers' and students' definition, values, notions and actions associated with (dis)respect. For example, a student reported feeling disrespected when a teacher answered his question in a sarcastic tone of voice. Whereas, a teacher mentioned that when a student gets up to sharpen his or her pencil during lecture that this was a sign of disrespect. Then when I returned to the classroom for observations, these sorts of analogies provided a framework to identify moments of disrespect in the classroom for each group. During my observations, I gave equal investigatory weight to both teachers and students in order to understand how two groups of people, who share a strong desire for the same thing, are unable to communicate/interact effectively with one another.

Interviews

After the initial four-month period, I conducted participant observations for a minimum of two weeks in the classroom before I mentioned interviews to the students. It was only after I felt the students understood that I was not an employee of the school and had no power to affect their grade that I asked the teacher for a few minutes to address the students. At that time, I passed out parental consent forms to any student who was interested in being interviewed. I also gave students the option to approach me at any time for a parental consent form.

I conducted thirty-two, tape-recorded interviews with students that vary from 30-60 minutes. These interviews were structured, but open-ended. I used an interview guide [Appendix C] but focused first on casual discussions to build a relationship rather than immediately question students on matters of respect. Thus, my interview sheet was more of a guide and used to support a cohesive conversation. Often, I added additional questions based on what appeared to be an interesting or relevant topic to pursue and warranted further examination. There were many times I did not ask all of the questions on my guide, such as when students offered additional information without probing.

Table 2.3 shows the students' self reported gender and race and ethnicity by grade level. The students' I interviewed ranged in age from ten to fourteen years old.

Table 2.3: Students' Self-Reported Gender and Race/Ethnicity by Grade Level (n=32)

Grade Level	Male	Female	White	Mexican	Black	Asian
6th	2	6	1	6	1	0
7th	5	10	2	10	2	1
8th	5	4	1	7	0	1

I began all student interviews with the same series of questions: if you could describe yourself in three words how would you do that? This allowed me to ask probing questions about how the students' viewed themselves, which often led into discussions of their hobbies or likes and dislikes about school, or life in general. Then I moved on to more general questions about school, such as what class were they were taking, what were their teachers like, which class was their favorite and least favorite and whether or not they had been in trouble at school. More often then not, the students eventually brought up "(dis)respect" without me asking directly. This most often happened when discussing their least favorite teacher or when they described a moment they got into trouble. If the interviewee did not raise the issue of respect on their own, then I mentioned the mural painted on the side of the school, which said: RESPECT, RESPONSIBILTY AND SAFETY. I asked the student what they thought of the mural and did they have any thoughts as to why those words were chosen to paint on the side of the school. Often, this led into a discussion of what respect is, is not, and their ideas about how respect is (mis)used at school. The administration gave me permission to use an empty trailer on campus for my interviews and thus all student interviews were conducted on school grounds.

As of 2014-2015, there were twenty-five teachers employed at JMS, fourteen were women and eleven were men. The majority of teachers appeared to be white; there were seven teachers who appeared to be of a racial or ethnic category other than white. Table 3 details the demographic information of the seven teachers I conducted formal interviews with by grade level. I also conducted one structured interview with the school counselor who is a white, female and is not represented in Table 2.4.

Table 2.4: Teachers' Self reported Gender and Race/Ethnicity (n=7)

Grade Level	Male	Female	White	Mexican	Black	Asian
6th	0	2	2	0	0	0
7th	1	2	3	0	0	0
8th	1	1	1	1	0	0

I reserved in-depth interviews for the teachers who took on a more prominent role in the study since their classrooms became the focal points of my observations. I asked each teacher if they were available and agreeable to a 20 to 30-minute tape-recorded interview. Most of the teachers agreed and I conducted formal, tape-recorded interviews with six of the eleven teachers I observed. One teacher requested not to be tape-recorded for his formal interview. Instead, I took extensive notes during the interview and transcribed the notes immediately.

I began the teachers' interview by focusing on their background, how they became teachers, how the environment of the school shaped their practices, their beliefs about education, and what they thought of the students at JMS and their strengths and weakness. Again, I used an interview guide [Appendix D] but there were instances where I improvised and included questions not on the interview guide or did not ask questions if they seemed inappropriate or unnecessary in the moment. In addition to the formal structured interviews, at the end of each day, and sometimes in between class periods, I asked the teachers questions regarding a certain student or an incident that just occurred in class. The daily de-briefing interviews garnered natural responses from teachers because it was in a conversational moment that they answered my questions. The interviews with teachers were between 30-120 minutes, while the

de-briefing interviews varied in length from 5-30 minutes. All of the teacher interviews except one were conducted in the teacher's classroom.

I conducted one formal interview with the school counselor and one interview with the after school program coordinator/counselor, which were both tape-recorded and transcribed. I conducted one formal interview with a security guard who requested not to be tape-recorded and informal interviews with five additional teachers, two security guards, and three staff members. After each interview that was not tape-recorded, I wrote detailed field notes that I used to cross-analyze with notes from my ethnographic observations and transcripts of student and teacher interviews. All together, I conducted 52 formal and informal interviews at my research site.

Student Shadowing

In order to try to get a feel for the day-to-day life of a student, I shadowed two students for one week each. I chose these two students because I observed and interviewed them as 7th graders in 2013 and again as 8th graders in 2014. Also, they had a sustained interest in my research and we developed a friendly relationship throughout my two years at JMS. The day of shadowing, I met the student before the first bell rang and went to every class, every bathroom break, and sat with them at lunch. By focusing my eyes on one student, I was able to compare individual behavior in six class periods, with six teachers to investigate how an individual student reacts to teachers who encourage a respectful classroom culture versus teachers whose behavior at times is disrespectful. The data I gathered from shadowing students allowed for robust findings that corroborated student stories of disrespectful teachers. I was also

able to conduct informal interviews throughout the day to better understand, from the student's perspective, the culture of the school. I wrote detailed field notes that I later transcribed and used to cross-analyze with notes from my ethnographic observations and transcripts of student and teacher interviews.

After School Program

For six months, twice a week, I attended the on campus, after school program. The after school program is open Monday-Friday from 2:30pm-6:00pm and is available to any low-income family who fills out an application. It is located on campus, in the area of the school that has been closed to regular classes because of electrical issues. Some of the students reported they attended the afterschool program because their parents worked late and they did not want them home alone or "running the streets." Other students said their parents wanted them to stay after school because they received help with their homework, had access to a computer and were fed a snack. I decided to include the afterschool program in my research design for two reasons. First, it gave me the opportunity to connect with more students to interview. Second, I was able to observe student interaction with adults who were not teachers and compare how respect was negotiated in a non-classroom setting. There was considerably less restriction on students' movements and socializing. Thus, I was able to observe students interacting with their peers in a more social setting. Although the activities were somewhat structured and there were rules and a schedule to follow the students were free to mess around with their friends. Here, I observed, and at times joined in, with students laughing, joking around with friends, listening to music,

playing video games, pool, board games and Ping-Pong. Also, there were outside activities such as unorganized sports such as dodge ball and soccer. I wrote detailed field notes while observing the after school program, which I transcribed later and used to cross-analyze with notes from my ethnographic observations and transcripts of student and teacher interviews.

After School Activities

A few of the students in choir invited me to a December Christmas Concert and a Chili Cook-off Fundraiser. I attended both evening events, which gave me the opportunity to observe and mingle with the families of the students. Also, I attended the 2015, 8th grade promotion. I did not take any notes at these events, instead I observed the families' interaction with staff, administration and their children and took mental note of my observations. As soon as I returned to my vehicle, I wrote detailed notes and then transcribed the field notes at home to cross analyze with interview transcripts and observation field notes.

Archival Material and Homework Assignments

I conducted content analysis of the school's website on a regular basis. This included checking updates on their API score and daily bulletins etc. I also went to the Beachside Historical Museum and the City Library archives to gather data on the history of the community and Beachside School District. I poured over homework assignments, discipline reflection sheets and classroom and group projects that centered on the students' biography, culture and personalities. A few teachers allowed me to take home homework assignments and discipline reflections sheets to analyze. I

returned all homework assignments within one week. For all other archival material and homework assignments that stayed on campus, I recorded notes on my initial impressions and excerpts of the students work and then I transcribed my notes when I returned home.

Data Analysis

As stated earlier, I followed a grounded theory approach. I analyzed the transcripts, memos, field notes by immersing myself in the data and analyzing the data for patterns and themes. The broad themes that emerged from student interviews were students' feelings about their teachers, learning and school and teachers' use of shame as a function and shame as power. I also uncovered how students interpret practices and meanings associated with (dis)respect. I followed the same approach analyzing data from my interviews with teachers. I discovered that teachers comprise half of the struggle for respect in the classroom. Teachers bring into the classroom their own histories, ideas of meanings, and biases which converge with students' histories and meanings that together create moments of conflict and a classroom culture. My data also revealed the patterns successful teacher use to invite respect from their students and co-create a respectful classroom culture. When I begin this project I assumed this was a study of the micro-processes inside the classroom, however, as I coded my data it became obvious that there was a significant connection to the social context. In Chapter 6, I discuss the neighborhood boundaries and narrative that contribute to a disrespectful school environment and bleed into the classroom to impact the teacher-student relationship.

Research Challenges

The biggest research challenge I experienced was that my timeline did not account for the level of difficult in getting adolescents to return the parental permission form to conduct tape-recorded interviews. I passed out over *nine hundred* parental consent forms to students and only sixty-three were returned. This was not an indication of the students' lack of interest in participating in my study. They simply forgot to give the forms to their parents to sign, or they lost the forms. This was a constant source of frustration as I would pass out ninety forms and came to school the next day to only have one student turn in a signed form. In the end, out of the sixty-three students who turned in signed parental forms, only thirty-two committed to the interview. Due to this challenge, the data collection phase of my research was extended an entire school year to reach the minimum thirty research participants needed.

Another challenge I faced was uncomfortable moments during my fieldwork. For example, in Mrs. Wilson's language arts class a student was "being disruptive" and the teacher sent him outside. The student kept peeking inside the classroom through the crack in the door and the teacher called security. After a few minutes, no security guard arrived and subsequently the teacher instructed me to take the student to the office. This was an incredibly difficult situation because I wanted to observe in this classroom and I was afraid that if I refused that the teacher would not allow me to return for observations. On the other hand, I had made a point to reassure the students I had no authority or desire to punish them and yet this teacher placed me in a position of power. All student eyes were on me and although I agreed to walk the student to the

office, I voiced my concern to the teacher loud enough for the students to hear. I reiterated that I was not a school district employee and I did not want to get anyone in trouble. I also apologized to the male student personally and expressed that I was uncomfortable walking him to the office because I was neither a teacher, nor a security guard. This interaction did not have a negative impact on my relationship with students or the teacher.

Trajectory of Research: Positionality, Access and Biography

Although I worked to remain a neutral observer, I recognize that my identities as a white, female from a working class background and single mother of two bi-racial children turned graduate student impacted my research in fundamental ways. First, my positionality afforded insider and outsider status (Baca Zinn 2001; Lofland and Lofland1995:13; Thorne 1980, 1979). For example, I lived in Beachside for 20 years, which gave me critical insight into my research setting. Because I was familiar with the history, culture and diversity of Beachside community, it provided me with a "closeness necessary [for] understanding the setting in the way that participants do" (Lofland and Lofland 1995:61; Thorne 1980, 1979). As Baca Zinn states, the "unique methodological advantage of insider field research is that it is less apt to encourage distrust and hostility" (2001:160). The students were quick to accept me when they learned I grew up in Beachside. Interestingly, many of the students, staff and teachers assumed I was Latina. I was always honest about my race/ethnicity when participants asked, but I know from years of experience that many people believe I am of Mexican or mixed descent. Often, I wondered whether others perception that I was Mexican

gave me a pseudo-insider status. Eventually, most of the students became aware that I was not Mexican and they still welcomed "Ms. Heidi" into their circle because as they said, I was "cool as fuck." As discussed earlier in this chapter, it only took a few days for the students to realize that I was not a staff member and I did not have the authority to get them in trouble. After they realized that I was not there to punish them, I became one of their favorite visitors. I was readily accepted to sit with a few groups at lunch and visit after school.

On the other hand, I also felt like an outsider with the staff. It seemed as if some of the teachers were apprehensive of my research and interest in JMS. In some cases, I endured question after question about my research and methods. One male math teacher demanded to read my dissertation prospectus before he would allow me into his classroom and another female, a special education teacher critiqued my research design and ethnographic methods in general. I felt less accepted by the faculty then the students, as they always seemed to keep a suspicious eye on me. To be fair, there were four teachers who were quite welcoming and supportive of my research. They each took it upon themselves to recruit other teachers for observations and interviews and I am indebted to their kindness.

My broad interest in researching social inequalities can be explained by my biography. Long before I was a graduate student reading Richard's Sennett's work (2004) "Respect in a world of inequality," I felt a wounding sense of disrespect from society as a single mother of two bi-racial children living under the poverty line. The struggle to gain recognition and respect as an individual made me angry because I

knew I was treated differently than my middle class counterparts and looked down upon for my circumstances.

More specifically, my interaction as a single parent with children in the K-12 education system had a direct influence on my dissertation project. My eldest always had a difficult time in school, especially with *teachers* who "diagnosed" her with everything from learning disabilities to Attention Deficient Hyper-Activity Disorder. These diagnoses were never corroborated by the multiple therapists or tests my daughter endured to prove she was a normal elementary student whose only fault was a difficulty sitting for 7 hours a day or using the right amount of glue for a school project. For my daughter, she was constantly dodging the label of a learning disability, but my son was labeled as willfully defiant. Isaac suffered from the consequences doled out to small, Latino boys who demand a reason when they are being punished. I call my son "the negotiator" because since he was tiny, a simple "because I said so" would not suffice. He accepted punishment, humbly, but only if you explained how and why what he did was wrong. This characteristic may serve him well in his adult life, but it was not welcomed by his teachers in grade school. Consequently, every year Isaac was disciplined for disrespectful and willful defiance. In third grade, he came home from school with stories I found to be unbelievable. For example, he did his homework during "free-time" and when he tried to turn it in to his teacher, she ripped it up in front of the class and yelled it was HOME-WORK and must be completed AT HOME. He said she screamed at him and made him cry in front of the entire class. I volunteered in her class to see for myself what was going on and was horrified as I listened to her blatant racist comments as she referred to my son and other Mexican

boys as “cholos” and “wanna be gangsters” because they were wearing hooded sweatshirts in the winter. At one point she grabbed a pencil from a boy’s hand as he was sharpening it and said, “Give me that pencil! I know what boys like you do with sharp objects!” She was definitely implying that this boy meant to use the pencil as a weapon to hurt others. She angrily confided in me how disrespectful the students were and blamed everything from their parent’s immigration status to their lack of ability to teach their students manners. To control students’ movements, she placed masking tape on the floor, around their desk, essentially boxing them in to keep them captive. I immediately reported her behavior to the Principal and demanded that my son be moved into another class. As in every confrontation I had with teachers about my son, they pointed to his lack of respect for authority and willful defiance as the reason for their harsh response. Personally, I had no issues with my son being disrespectful, not to me or any other adult, so I found this description of him perplexing. How could my son be the same child strangers remarked as so well behaved be painted as a defiant demon child by his teachers? What was going on inside the classroom that was either encouraging my son to act out of character in disrespectful ways or what was the teacher seeing in him that no one else did? My questions went unanswered, but the seed was planted for my future project. A few years later, in Dr. Turner’s field methods class, my biography connected with theory and methods. It was then that with Dr. Turner’s guidance my dissertation project was born.

As I conducted preliminary research at JMS, my goal was to try and understand the interpersonal relationship between students and teachers. I hoped to get an answer to the questions that were plaguing me for years. I wanted to know what

was going on inside the classroom that caused conflict or intelligent students, like my son, to behave out of character in class and hate attending school. During the three months of field work, each time I reviewed my field notes I was struck by how often the word "respect" or "disrespectful" was used by teachers. My discussions with Dr. Turner led me to Richard Sennett's work on "Respect in a world of inequality," (2004) which together with his work on the "Hidden Injuries of Class" (1972) highlighted the struggle for respect linked to socioeconomic status and how a lack of respect can be a wounding injury one carries with them for life. At the same time, for another graduate course, I read Elijah Anderson's work, "The Code of the Streets" (1999), which linked the search for respect to an oppositional culture that rejects schooling all together.

As I continued to read articles on teacher-students interpersonal relationships and the importance of caring relationships to student success it became evident that there was a gap in the sociological literature. Respect was being discussed as something that working class adults chase and find difficult to receive. It was analyzed as social capital used by teens to evoke fear in the streets and to counter mainstream educational goals. But no one was connecting that this search for respect could have different meanings for different groups of people that were being misinterpreted in face-to-face interaction. There was no literature that considered that although everyone shared the desire to be respected that there may be contested meanings and ideas of respect not shared by everyone or that a culture of (dis)respect could be a product of co-production. It seemed to me that the search for respect in the classroom was devolving into a struggle for respect. I suspected that the struggle for respect in the classroom was affecting student engagement and students' negative feelings towards

teachers. I questioned whether students simply needed to feel respected in order to rise to teachers' expectations. This is how my history and biography collided with graduate school to develop a dissertation project that would not only attempt to make sense of my experience with the U.S education system, but explore how the struggle for respect within the classroom may be affecting students across the nation and to grapple with the theoretical meaning of respect.

I want to note that my experience conducting this research was incredible moving, illuminating, and informative, not simply in terms of gaining experience as a researcher, but it also improved my teaching practice. I learned from observing successful teachers the techniques necessary to build a respectful relationship with students. I also learned what not to do in the classroom. As instructors we must be hyper vigilant to refrain from acting in any sort of way that could be perceived as disrespectful to a student. For example, a snarky retort to a question raised or an incorrect answer can ultimately influence a student's motivation and eventual success in our class. I will offer more detail on what I learned from successful teachers, but overall I will take the lessons I learned from conducting this research and apply it in my classroom with the hope of being a teacher who is always respectful to her students.

CHAPTER 4

THE STUDENT VIEW: POWER, "FACE" AND RESPECT

[The teacher says] I'm defiant and disrespectful, but that's not true. Maybe I'm disruptive but I'm not defiant or disrespectful!" Don, 7th grader

Introduction

My doctoral project uses Goffman's rules of conduct of face-to-face interaction as an explanatory model of the differences and similarities between students' and teachers' experiences with (dis)respect and, in particular, how meanings and understandings derived from (dis)respect combine to affect students' relationships with their teachers. This chapter merges informal and transcribed interviews with field notes to prioritize the student view of (dis)respect and their relationships with teachers. I begin the empirical chapters of my dissertation with the student voice because too often it is the students who are disempowered and rendered invisible from conversations of the education system. Thus, my work views students as experts of their own experience inside the classroom. This may sound like a novel approach, but there is a number of social critics and educators who "identify student voice as helpful to understand structural and cultural problems within schools" (Soohoo 1993; Nieto 1994; Rudduck, Day and Wallace 1996; Mitra 2001; Shultz and Cook-Sather 2001; Silva 2001; Jones and Yonezawa 2002; Yoneszawa and Jones 2006). To keep authenticity to the student view, I purposefully coded, analyzed and penned this chapter before immersing myself in the teacher interviews. Throughout this chapter, I

sought to accurately represent the student narrative[21] with as little blemish of the teachers' opinions as possible.

Although my research site is at one physical location, it became immediately apparent that teachers and students were living each day together, but in separate worlds. As I coded the transcripts from the student interviews, stories of problematic relationships with teachers stemming from disrespectful interactions were unmistakable. However, I also found themes of what students' desire most in their relationships with teachers. With these considerations, this chapter seeks to answer the following questions: How do students interpret and define (dis)respect? Under what conditions do students' report feeling (dis)respected by their teachers? To answer these questions, I first examine how the meanings and definitions of (dis)respect are widely shared, but often confused in face-to-face interaction. After mapping out the meanings associated with the shared discourse of (dis)respect, I then turn my attention to the student view of feeling disrespected by teachers to explore how this impacts their experiences in school and relationships with teachers. Finally, I discuss the characteristics and practices students desire most from their teachers.

A Shared Discourse: The Rules of Respect

In general terms, respect has been described as everything from "proper etiquette" (Geertz 1961) to whether an individual has "the juice" on the streets (Bourgois 1999). One of the simplest and widely shared meanings of respect falls

21 Please note that on occasion I made minor changes to the interview excerpts to improve clarity.

under the, "Golden Rule."[22] The adherence to this belief demonstrates that respect is a fundamental aspect in all human interaction. However, it has been suggested that some students are unaware of the rules of respect and lack the proper upraising or culture that dictates respectful behavior (Payne 2014). In contrast, my findings demonstrate that the dominant beliefs and practices associated with (dis)respect are, in fact, shared by both teachers and students. For example, I asked students to explain what respect means and who they believe is owed respect and they answered:

> You should respect the teachers. Throughout life, there's always, most likely going to be someone higher than you, unless you're at the top of the game, but that might be a bit before that happens. And not respecting someone could result in bad consequences and won't get you too far. But respecting the people who are ahead of you, higher than you. And like, just people. It's a good thing to do. -Vivian, 7th grader

> I would have to say respect is [to] treat people how you want to be treated. If you were mean to them they will be mean to you. And if you were nice to them they would be nice to you. Just like listen and actually be nice and don't be mean. It's like the golden rule. –Lily, 7th grader

> Respect means giving attention to the teacher, not back talking or anything like that. –Kelly, 6th grader

The above quotes illustrate that students recognize that teachers are owed respect and that they believe showing a teacher respect involves paying attention and remaining quiet when the teacher is speaking. Many of the students reported the first act in extending respect is simply to "just be nice." Similar to Lily's ideas of respect, several students recited the "Golden Rule" or biblical scriptures as a model to explain the meanings and actions associated with respect. In fact, all of the 32 students I

22 The ideology that every individual should treat others with the same regard that they desire. Often the Golden Rule follows the common mantra, "Do unto others as you would want done to you."

interviewed recited mainstream meanings of respect and held firm to the belief that all humans deserve respect. Not only do students share a core belief that respect is central to successful interaction at school, but they can identify the dominant belief of what constitutes disrespectful behavior. Students freely articulated that to "talk back" or "be rude" or "not listen" or "not pay attention" to a teacher constitutes disrespectful behavior. Here is a sample of the students' responses to questions that asked them to consider what is disrespectful behavior:

> Ms. J. hates when people tap [their fingers on the desk] and if you know that and do it then that is disrespectful so yeah talking back is disrespectful. You have to know the person and get to know what pissess them off and then not do what pisses them off. –Zandra, 7th grader
>
> [Disrespectful students] don't pay attention. They talk whenever they want. They eat whenever they want. They are disruptive. –Laurie, 6th grader
>
> Instead of just talking with a group of friends, like they'll talk and when the teacher says, be quiet and instead [they] just keep talking, they would just talk back and say something rude. -Ruben, 7th grader
>
> Not listening, messing around and talking when [the teacher] is talking or walking around. –Don, 7th grader
>
> Disrespectful people are the kids who talk back to the teacher a lot and get in trouble. Like you know how to behave, just behave. Don't be rude, or disrespectful, it will get you in trouble. You shouldn't be disrespectful to older person. –Zandra, 7th grader

These excerpts reveal that students *do* share the mainstream definition of disrespect with authority figures. Interestingly, even though my data demonstrates that students adhere to the dominant discourse of respect, the reputation of JMS students is that they are deficient in respect and lack a measure of civility. During one debriefing interview with a teacher she referred to the students as "uncivilized beasts [who] have no

manners. It's like they were raised by wolves and haven't been around humans." Contrary to this teacher's opinion, my research shows that JMS students are keenly aware of the importance of giving respect to authority figures. My findings show that teachers and students share the dominant understandings and definitions related to (dis)respect, yet both groups feel as if they are not getting any or enough respect from the other. This suggests that although the meaning of respect may be a shared, its practices are not similarly expressed or shared by all.

To reveal how the process of (dis)respect works, I provide a coherent step by step guide of what it means to be disrespected from the student perspective. This will help us to understand how a discourse that is shared by two parties falls apart during face-to-face interaction. But, first I identify what lies beneath the surface of (dis)respect to uncover the beliefs and practices that organize this widely shared social convention. As I poured through my student-centered data, I found evidence of the affective dimension of being disrespected by teachers. I discovered nine reoccurring themes students reported as feeling disrespected by their teachers. I will highlight how each of these themes, or specific practices enacted by teachers, sparked what I refer to as a "reprisal process" in students. In no particular order the disrespectful practices include: 1) being put on the spot by a teacher; 2) teachers who make fun of students; 3) teachers who label students; 4) teachers who do not listen to their students; and on the flip side of the same coin; 5) a teacher who punishes students when they talk; 6) teachers who use exclusionary discipline; 7) a teacher who holds a grudge; 8) teachers who use physical and verbal intimidation; 9) and uncaring teachers.

I categorized five themes under the umbrella of "shame," but organized these practices into two smaller groupings. Table 4.1 separates the reported teacher practices that I separated into "shame as a function" and "shame as power." Informed by my data, I conclude that shame operates beneath the surface of disrespect and is at the heart of fractured teacher-student relationships.

Table 4.1: Identifying and Categorizing Shame

SHAME AS FUNCTION	SHAME AS POWER
• Teacher puts student on spot • Teacher uses exclusionary discipline	• Teacher makes fun of students • Teacher labels students • Teacher uses physical intimidation and verbal abuse

Shame is separated into two categories in order to illustrate how it is used by teachers as a method of conformity *and/or* a mechanism of power. Although shame is separated into two smaller groupings for the purpose of this analysis, this does not imply that the practices are detached. In fact, I recorded many incidents where "shame as function" overlapped with "shame as power." Consequently, teachers often consider shame a necessary tool of re-direction for student misconduct. However, I also observed teachers using shame as a mechanism of governance and authority.[23] Therefore, I use "shame as function" and "shame as power" to refer to the practices I either witnessed or from the examples students shared with me. "Shame as function" refers to the moments when teachers used shame as a tool of classroom management, such as arranging student seating to encourage student participation and attention. In contrast, "shame as power" refers to moments when teachers utilized shame to reaffirm their

23 This chapter will not explore the teachers' intentions behind using shame because the focus here is to identify the affective dimension of disrespect for the students.

power in the classroom. It is important to note that shame used as a mechanism of function and as a form of power can be perceived by students as either a form of abuse or at the very least, a disrespectful act.

Respect involves the act of recognition and social honor and signifies having esteem for another human being, whereas shame is an act of humiliation and dishonor. Shame can be thought of as, "a class name for a large family of emotions and feelings that arise through seeing self negatively, if even only slightly negatively through the eyes of others" (Sheff 1988:255). To shame another person is to regard them as less than or to treat them with contempt. Thus, feelings of disrespect are tightly woven into the act of shaming. Consequently, the connection between shame and disrespect is vital to explore because it helps to explain how teachers and students co-produce a culture of disrespect through their social interactions. Examining the role "shame" plays in impacting relationships is not a new proposal, in fact, sociologists Mead (1934), Cooley (1922) and Goffman (1967) each used "shame" to explore the construction and presentation of the self, the study of emotions and its threat to the social bond. Yet, connecting a teacher's act of shaming to a student's feeling disrespected is a novel approach; one that is necessary in order to fully understand student behavior without resorting to "blaming the victim" theories, such as oppositional culture. Furthermore, I find that the practice of shame operates beneath the surface of disrespect and is at the heart of fractured teacher-student relationships. It is the power dynamics that drives this particular face-to-face interaction. (Dis)respect is more than an aspect of culture; it is produced through interaction, reinforced by communication and driven by unequal power relationships. For example, in a

traditional classroom, it is the teacher who determines the topic of discussion, and the way in which a student can participate or reconcile a disagreement. Thus, the rules of respect, although a shared discourse, are not shared equally in practice and shrouded in contested meanings. In fact, it is the teacher's use of power that shapes interaction and initiates (dis)respectful communication in the classroom.

The Process of Face-Work in the Classroom

I use Goffman's concept of face-work[24] to explain how the shared discourse of (dis)respect becomes confused in practice and to explain the potential breaks in teacher-student interactions. Goffman's theory is simple; he argues that the goal of all social encounters is to maintain your face[25] and not destroy the presented face of anyone in the group. I find Goffman especially useful to describe the strategies students use to protect their identities during social exchanges with teachers. On the other hand, the corrective process occurs when someone attempts to "correct for [their] offense and re-establish the expressive order" (Goffman 1967:305). For instance, the perpetrator of the face-threatening act has to correct their action by apologizing or retracting their comment. However, in order for any social exchange to continue, this corrective action must be acknowledged by everyone; this means the apology must be accepted by the wounded party. If the corrective action is not accepted, it will result in

24 Goffman theories of social interaction includes the term "line,' which refers to a "pattern of verbal and nonverbal acts by which the actor expresses his view of the situation and through this his evaluation of the participants, including himself" (1967:5). The aforementioned "line" is what we project to others when we interact socially. This includes everything a person says and does to show they understand the social cues while also inferring the actor's evaluation of the interaction. Goffman notes that the line presents a view of the self, but this line must also deal with how others view the actor. This means the process of face work is a theory that explains how the individual self is maintained or damaged through social interaction.

25 Whether a face is maintained or not depends on the actions of both the actor *and* the perception of others through social interaction.

the harmed party continuing to be "in wrong face,"[26] which results in a range of emotions from extensive shame to a sense of inferiority (Goffman 1967; Gardner and Gronfein 2005). At this point, to save face[27] and re-establish the line, Goffman asserts that the actor reacts with avoidance or begins the corrective process.

The excerpt below offers further explanation of the corrective process. It clearly outlines how a face threatening act can be perpetuated by a teacher on a student and also demonstrates how the corrective process unfolds. The following excerpt was taken from a formal interview with Jesus, an 8th grader. He is well-known at JMS as smart, athletic, charismatic, talented, and handsome; teachers, staff and students adore him. Below is the only example of the corrective process I witnessed during my observations, however, it provides a much needed comparison to the "avoidance" and "reprisal" process. As you read the excerpt below, pay attention to the face-threating act and how the corrective process was accomplished.

> Jesus: I just got an award for Student of the Month for the Kiwanis Club. It was like a big deal because it's like, at Beachside [High School]. I got like a plaque and went to go get breakfast. My mom took the day off and the Principal was there, so she was like, oh it's okay just don't come to school, she already took the day off. So, [my math teacher] commented and said that I shouldn't have gotten the award. He said that another student should've gotten the award. So, I was like really insulted. So, I wrote him a letter because I'm not that good at public speaking. So, I just wrote him a letter and then like, he apologized after lunch.
> Heidi: So, he announced it to the class or just to you directly?
>
> Jesus: Kind of directly, but he said it loud enough so that other kids could hear him.

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26 According to Goffman, "wrong face" often occurs when another person discredits the face of the actor by presenting information that does not fit with the line being presented or there is some sort of misinterpretation of the actor's intentions (1967:8).
27 To "*save face"* involves actions one may use to defuse situations that result in feelings of shame or embarrassment.

Heidi: Okay. And he named the other student that he thought should get it?

Jesus: Yeah.

Heidi: So, what did you—if you don't mind, what did you write to him?

Jesus: I—I'm—I don't remember word for word, but generally like, oh you shouldn't say that, especially in front of other kids. Education isn't a competition. I said—I made a really good point. I loved that letter, I should've kept it.

Heidi: And then he came up to you personally after lunch--

Jesus: It was like during lunch and he apologized.

Heidi: And what did he say?

Jesus: He was like, oh I'm sorry, you were right, education isn't a competition. Yeah, he apologized.

Heidi: And, how did that make you feel?

Jesus: It made me feel better. He like understood it, because there's no point in just me being mad at him unless he understands why.

This exchange first demonstrates how the teacher threatened Jesus' face by shaming him, a disrespectful act, in front of other students. This took place the moment the teacher questioned the validity of the award he won and named the student he felt was more deserving. Secondly, the act was acknowledged by both parties. Jesus did not avoid the threatening act or seek immediate reprisal. Instead, he wrote the teacher a letter to reconcile the social exchange. Finally, the teacher extended an apology which Jesus accepted. Here, Jesus' face was saved and in the end, he no longer felt disrespected. On the contrary, he felt a sense of pride. This is clear by his comment, "I made a really good point. I loved that letter, I should've kept it." For Jesus, the

corrective process "made him feel better" because he was able let go of the feelings associated with being disrespected. Partially, this is also because the teacher was willing to extend an apology and admit he acted inappropriately. While this comparison example offers insight into how students and teachers can reconcile face threatening acts, it must be noted that this is the only instance of the corrective process I could find in my interview and field notes. Most often, after a disrespectful exchange between a teacher and student, I observed either the "avoidance process" or what I explain as a "reprisal process."

A person uses the avoidance process when their face is likely to be threatened or wronged. For example, an individual may withdraw, ignore or lie to escape from a threatening situation. In an interview with a 7th grader Kayla, she details her frustration with how the teachers treat her, but it is evident that she practices the avoidance process to save face. Kayla is the ASB president and identifies herself as a "good" student who would not dare speak out against a teacher, even if she felt she was being treated unfairly. Yet, during our interview Kayla makes the following statement:

> It's not fair the way teachers treat us. One day we will turn around and treat [them] the same way [they] treat us. I don't say anything to her because I will get in trouble but maybe one day we won't care if we get in trouble and just say something.

On the surface, it appears Kayla is avoiding confrontation because she fears discipline and losing her reputation as a good student, but there is more to this excerpt then a quick glimpse reveals. Kayla warns that one day students may "turn around and treat the teachers the same way they treat us." Although Kayla routinely practices the avoidance process, she is dreaming of a day when she and other students can get their

comeuppance on teachers. A desire for revenge implies that the wounded party feels they have suffered such a deep infliction that it is their right to react to a perceived harm or injustice (Stuckless and Goranson 1994). This sentiment is critical to acknowledge because it does not fit with Goffman's typology of either an avoidance or corrective process and again highlights the importance of incorporating the "reprisal process" into discussion of face-to-face interaction in the classroom.

My research uncovered that students resort to "reprisal process" as an additional strategy to protect their identities and to retain the respect of their peers. Goffman writes that an offended person may react in "violent retaliation, destroying either themselves or the person who had refused to heed their warning" or leave the interaction "in a visible huff" which denies the offenders' authority and judgment in the situation (Goffman 1967:306). However, Goffman does not include additional analysis of this sort of "retaliation" reaction into his model of face-work. Instead, he assumes that any negative interaction will eventually be resolved with either the avoidance or corrective process. To limit face-to-face interaction into two binary categories ignores the fact that many students do not respond to negative attention as Goffman predicts, but instead respond to a face-threatening act with a snappy, sarcastic, or flippant comeback. I argue that this response constitutes a "reprisal process" which is an additional strategy that students use to protect their identities, "save face" and retain the respect of their peers. It is the use of the "reprisal process" as a face-saving strategy that also contributes to students being labeled as disrespectful.

This third process in face-work is extremely important because it allows for

researchers and educators to understand student behavior as not stemming from an oppositional attitude to education or authority, but a reaction to feeling disrespected, shamed and uncared for by their teachers and how this impacts their future academic trajectory. Goffman's theory of face-to-face interaction offers a powerful insight into the interpersonal dynamics between students and their teachers. However, Goffman limits his analysis of social interaction to a shame/pride axis with discrete attention to the preemptive acts individuals use to avoid feeling ashamed or threatened. Goffman relies on "poise"[28] or "tact" to explain how individuals maintain social bonds to avoid losing face (Meyrowitz 1990:73). Unlike Goffman, I consider what happens when these strategies are misinterpreted and conflict ensues over contested meanings. I find that most often teachers view students use of the reprisal process as oppositional, which then results in conflict in the classroom and broken relationships with teachers. To examine the behavior of students as a process of face-work, I contribute to conversations that focus on how to improve the educational experience for "at-risk" youth without lapsing into discussions of culture deficiency or lack of values or civility. Instead, I am able to reveal how a disrespectful student body/school culture is actually co-produced by students *and* their teachers.

(Dis)respect and Face-Work: A Conversation with Students

To name the practice of shaming as an act of disrespect and to link this practice to classroom face-to-face interaction is an original approach to understanding student

28 Poise is described as being very important in face-work because, "through poise the person controls his embarrassment and hence the embarrassment that he and others might have over his embarrassment" (Goffman 1967:13).

behavior and their experiences in school. In the following sections, I map out the actions of teachers that students identify as disrespectful. This allows for a better understanding into the break in teacher-student relationships from the student perspective.

Being Put on the Spot by a Teacher

The first reoccurring theme I analyze is that students reported feeling disrespected by teachers who "put [them] on the spot" or shamed in front of their peers. For many teachers shame served a particular function such as a mechanism of re-direction or discipline. However, according to students this practice was interpreted and identified as disrespectful. For example, Carla, a 6th grader, shared reasons why a specific teacher was her least favorite; Carla said, "because whenever someone does something she blasts out at them and even a good kid does something she blasts them out." Many students used the phrase "put on blast" to explain moments when teachers pointed out errors, missed homework assignments or inappropriate behavior in front of their peers. Carla went on to describe a moment when she was "put on blast," she states:

> She'd look at you, call you out, and embarrass you and make you responsible for getting the whole class in trouble. Now because of you the class owes ten minutes after school. That actually happened. And everyone was mad at me. It's the fact that she just calls you out and then makes you responsible for everyone being in trouble. It just feels like everyone is staring you down and gonna talk about you. It's just like you start thinking of all this negativity when really I should just be thinking about the positive.

As illustrated by this quote, the student is communicating the affect of being "called out" or "put on the spot" by her teacher. The teacher's use of "shame as a function"

made Carla feel embarrassed and caused her to think "negatively" about herself and school. Often, teachers put students on the spot who were not doing their work correctly or were not turning in assignments. Another notable example is when Ms. Jefferson announced to the class that there were 12 students who did not turn in the required essays for the course and were failing the class. She instructed everyone from the middle section of seats to stand up and move to the side of the classroom while she called out the names of the 12 students who were missing essays. Ms. Jefferson then made the 12 students move to the center of the room, where they were put on full display for all to see. This elicited "ooo" and "awes" and laughter from the other students as they found out which one of their peers was earning an F.

Throughout my observations, I witnessed countless occasions when a teacher shamed students by calling them out for answering incorrectly or being unable to read the assignment aloud. Likely, the teacher's goal is to shame the student into conformity, but instead, openly scolded, the student finds (s)he is on trial in front of his/her peers. For some students, the practice of shaming may stir feelings of guilt that motivates action to change behavior, however, a more common reaction from students was to seek reprisal and save face. Typically, this sort of interaction led to escalated conflict between the teacher and student, and resulted in the student being disciplined. Another example of "shame as function" was detailed by Sami, an 8th grader, who told me of an incident she witnessed in class, she states:

> [The student] just like stayed quiet but at the same time everybody was like laughing so she was like, okay… she just like stayed quiet and looked to her paper, like she was doing her work. And then the teacher was like, I'm not trying to like make fun of you or anything but you know, five times you haven't brought your homework, you have to—

> we're supposed to say something you know. And then, like after that, the girl like, she was—most of the time she was pretty quiet, but then once she started like crying.

As Sami recalled this experience, she became emotional remembering her friend softly crying as a result of a teacher's shaming. Reading through Sami's narrative we can gather that it is likely the teacher had no intention of making her student cry. In fact, Sami recalls the teacher says, "I'm not trying to make fun of you" and then further justifies her actions as part of her job when she says, "we're supposed to say something." However, hearing the teacher's motive did not stop this student from feeling shamed, in fact, even Sami was deeply troubled by witnessing the interaction. What this excerpt illustrates is how shame is a feeling of "nakedness which occurs when someone is rendered visible and yet is not ready to be visible" (Erickson 1980:71). In contrast to the misguided, but well-meaning teacher above, Ruben, a 7th grader, explains how some teachers put students on the spot by actually making fun of them. During our interview, I asked Ruben whether or not he ever felt disrespected by a teacher and he responded:

> Yes, they would put students on the spot. I mean they give them attention and everyone is looking at you. There was this girl and she was next to me and I was trying to open the door and she was trying to open it too and Ms. Lara looks at us and says, "oh, how cute" and that just annoyed me. I felt disrespected because she made it seem like sarcastic, that we were flirting and everyone thought that about us too.

Although this interaction may appear harmless, clearly Ruben felt "annoyed" and "disrespected" by his teacher's use of sarcasm. The above excerpt indicates students do not enjoy being the butt of teacher's jokes and are sensitive to being "put on the spot" in front of their peers. Throughout my field research, I observed teachers put

students on the spot for not completing homework or for failed assignments, but teachers also put students on the spot in a much more damaging way. The next section discusses students' feelings of being disrespected by teachers who make fun of them.

Teasing or Bullying Teachers: Making Fun of Students

I observed teachers making fun of students on a day-to-day basis. For example, one day I heard Ms. Jefferson, a 7th grade teacher giving vague and unclear instructions to the students. Although, I was paying attention, I had no clue what the students were supposed to do. When Ms. Jefferson realized that no one was following her directions, she addressed the entire class with, "flip to the next page, if you can't figure that out you don't belong in middle school. You're pretty dumb." On another day, Ms. Jefferson said loudly to a student named Carlos, "it gets really old telling you how to do every little thing. I wonder if I didn't tell you to breath in and out, I wonder if you'd forget to breath and die." The classroom erupted into laughter and the teacher cautioned the students to be quiet and get back to work. This student, a 7th grade male, continues to interrupt the teacher to ask questions and the teacher snaps back, "Stop acting like its hard, just so you know, they don't like babies in 8th grade." Again, the other students chuckled and drew attention to the shaming of the student by making "ooooo" and "ahhhhhhh" sounds, while others said, "she burned you!" I happened to be sitting next to the student who was shamed and I watched him doodle on his page for the remainder of class. When Carlos finished doodling, I looked over at his paper and this is what he had written:

4th grade	As
5th grade	Bs

6th grade	Cs
7th grade	Ds
8th grade	Fs
9th grade	I just left

In this example, the first act of shaming occurred when the teacher put Carlos on the spot for not understanding the instructions. The second act of shaming continued when the teacher made fun of Carlos by calling him a "baby" in front of his peers. In this instance, the teacher used shame as function *and* as a display of power. Carlos responded to these face-threatening acts by using the "avoidance process:" he ignored and internalized the teacher's shaming. As evident by Carlos' doodle, he is deeply affected by the teachers comment, so much so that he gives up on the rest of the lesson and thinks about withdrawing from school. These excerpts and observations underscore how vulnerable students are to disrespectful treatment, such as shaming.

As established, most students understand the importance of respecting authorities and they desperately want the approval of their teachers. Yet, teachers overwhelmingly disciplined students for being defiant, disrespectful, and/or disruptive. At the same time, students explained that they did not understand what action or behavior qualified as such. At first glance, it appears there is a misalignment of meaning between students and teachers definition of (dis)respect. However, this would be an incorrect assumption. Students' gripe with teachers can not be reduced to a simple explanation of misaligned meanings. Instead, it reflects a fundamental power struggle over who has the right to speak and who should listen.

The Politics of Talking and Listening

> Because the first day of school, all the students are going to be quiet. They're quiet. Even quieter than a cricket. Seriously, they're too quiet. We're all quiet, we're all shy and the teachers are like, come on, talk. Later on in the year, [teachers] are like, please be quiet, just shut up you guys, shut up! They're tired of us because we got comfortable with them and they're over here saying, come on you guys, talk, talk— because they want us to talk and because they want to meet us and get to know us. Then later on in the year, they're like, please just don't talk. –Kayla, 7th grader

Kayla reveals the dynamics of the politics of talking and listening. Here, Kayla points out that at the beginning of the year teachers work diligently to get students to participate and open up. But later in the school year, the same teachers are "tired of us" and tell the students to "please be quiet [and] shut up." According to Kayla, as the school year progresses there is a reversal of expectations, it is as if some teachers are no longer interested in getting to know their students or in listening to them speak. Kayla was not alone in expressing these sentiments. For many of the students, rooted in feelings of disrespect were issues related to talking and listening. For example, many students felt unfairly targeted and disciplined for simply asking their teacher a clarifying question. I witnessed one such instance in Mrs. Wilson's 7th grade classroom. I watched Mrs. Wilson hand two male students a detention slip after they did not comply with her demand to stop blurting out questions. One of the students read the slip and said aloud, "why does it say I'm defiant and disrespectful? I wasn't being disrespectful. What did I do that was disrespectful?" Mrs. Wilson curtly responds, "you're still talking and I asked you not to, that is disrespectful." The student snaps back, "How is that disrespectful? I'm only asking a question." The

teacher dramatically ignores him by tossing her head and rolling her eyes.[29] The student continues to press for an explanation of what he did that deserve lunch detention for one-week; he is loudly demanding, "What does defiance mean? What does disrespectful mean?" The teacher responds sharply with, "Get out! You aren't welcome in my class! Go home!" On the way out the student said loudly, "This class sucks." Later, the student confides in me, "she always kicks me out for no reason. She says I'm defiant and disrespectful, but that's not true. Maybe I'm disruptive but I'm not defiant or disrespectful!"

Students share the dominant discourse of respect with teachers, so the first moment of conflict was not about meaning per se but a struggle over who has the authority to demand silence, ask questions and who has the right to speak and when. Furthermore, the conflict escalated when the student felt unjustly disciplined for simply "asking a question." This particular student reacts with the "reprisal process," to save face. He feels he lost the respect of his teacher and was disrespected in front of his peers. The threat to his face initiated his desire to regain the respect of his peers by denouncing the class. In turn, the teacher interprets this as yet another disruptive, defiant and disrespectful act and punishes him for it. I witnessed many instances of teachers and students struggling over talking and listening in the classroom; most ended in conflict or at the very best, confusion. It became evident during my research that many teachers feel entitled to hand out discipline to students for talking out of turn

29 My description of the teacher's body language is important to note because many students referred to this behavior as disrespectful. You see the other students in the classroom are voyeurs to this interaction and when the teacher is emphatically rolling his or her eyes or displaying body language that communicates disdain for the "problem student," it invites confrontation between the teacher and student.

because they are the authority figure in the classroom. However, students also felt entitled to inquire as to why they are being disciplined and in some cases, they want the opportunity to state their case of innocence. Mainly, students want to be heard, they want their voice validated and they want to be treated with dignity and respect.

The data suggests that students are most likely to be sanctioned for asking clarifying questions or for inquiring as to why they are being disciplined. As the student demands an explanation for being disciplined, the common response from the teacher is to accuse them of being disruptive, disrespectful or defiant and then administer discipline. The forms of discipline most often dispensed for talking too much is a referral, detention or a visit to the Principal's office. Commenting further on the classroom politics of talking, Aden a 7th grader states:

> Well I don't get how they say that [you're being disrespectful] when they say that you're talking back if you are only answering or asking the question. Because they're always like saying why do you do that, and then you answer and they're like stop talking back to me. Then you say I'm not talking back to you and then you get in trouble.

Importantly, this quote highlights students' feelings of frustration and confusion surrounding matters of (dis)respect. Here, we see the student making an effort to reconcile or clarify his behavior, but instead the teacher interprets this as "talking back," which she considers to be an act of disrespect. Most often, the students' voices are rendered powerless when confronted with teacher accusations of disrespect. Some students grudgingly accept the discipline to avoid further confrontation (i.e. avoidance process) while others seek reprisal to save face. By extending Goffman's theory of face-to-face interaction and blending ideas of conflict and shame, it allowed me to understand students' willful defiance or acts of disrespect as an act of "saving face," or

being "in wrong face." For example, when a student blurts out a question to their teacher without raising their hand, the student may be attempting a line that communicates, "I am a dedicated student" but the teacher interprets it as a disrespectful outburst. In turn, the teacher responds to the student with a, "Don't talk out of turn! SHHH! Why do I always have to tell you to be quiet when I'm talking" which results in the student being in "wrong face" and feeling as if his or her social worth is challenged. The emotions attached to this interaction will stir feelings of shame or embarrassment in the student and in turn, contribute to the student's poor development of self.

There are two significant points to draw from the data presented thus far. First, the culture of (dis)respect is a process of interaction between individuals and should not be studied as endemic to the student population. Second, it should be noted that the corrective process is a successful remedy to miscommunication in the classroom,[30] while the avoidance process leads to disengagement and the reprisal process contributes to disciplinary actions. Although the corrective process is the best response to a face threatening act, it requires action from teachers to heed the students call to "listen to me." Here, we see the struggle for respect in the classroom is also a struggle over who is allowed to talk and who is supposed to be listening. In general, students want the respect to be heard, they want their voice validated and they want to be treated with dignity. On the other hand, teachers who do not listen to their students is

30 Recall the previous example of Jesus and his teacher reconciling the teacher's face threatening act. This "corrective process" only worked because the teacher listened to Jesus' complaints and reasoning, and then apologized for disrespecting Jesus.

another practice that students identified as disrespectful. Below a few students explain the politics of talking and listening:

> When [the teacher] calls on me and I'm trying to tell a story, she is talking to the [assistant teacher] and so she's talking to her when I am trying to tell her my story not [the other students]. –Don, 7th grader

> Ms. Laura, she never listens to us. We try telling her things and she just—like, she doesn't let us speak. She just—how can I say this, like—she just puts a lot on us, it's like putting masking tape on us, or on our mouths. Like, that's—like, can you please listen to us? Like, treat us like you want us to treat you. –Carla, 6th grader

> She doesn't understand when we tell her stuff. She cannot last five seconds without talking. Like, we're trying to write something down because we're watching a video and during the video, she starts talking. We're like, if you want us to write notes, can you at least let us hear the video. And she doesn't understand when we try telling her stuff. Like, she just denies it like—I'm always like—you know when adults say, I'm the oldest one, I know more than you? –Jessica, 7th grader

What is particularly striking about Don's statement is that he is critiquing his teacher for being hypocritical. Don reports that his teacher frequently yells and disciplines him for talking out of turn, or talking while she is trying to speak. Yet, he is upset because when he answers the teacher's question, she begins to talk to her assistant-teacher about non-related issues. Don wants to tell his teacher - not the other students- his story, but she is interrupting him and carrying on another conversation. According to what Don has been taught in school and by his family, talking while another person has the floor is disrespectful. Don recognizes an inconsistency between what teachers expect from their students and the fact that teachers do not model the behavior they demand. Plainly put, teachers expect students to listen to them, but many times it is the teachers who do not listen to the students.

In similar vein, students contest the idea that teachers are allowed to interrupt or ignore their voice simply because they are the teacher. Once again, this underlines the students overwhelming belief that respect should be extended to *all* people equally, regardless of age or status. Furthermore, it points to the struggle over talking and listening as more than a misunderstanding of meaning, or that students' are deficient in respect. Rather, it demonstrates the linkage between respect and power and who has it in the classroom. So much so, that Carla a 6th grader likens teachers not listening to her as being stifled by masking tape placed on her mouth. This vivid analogy signifies the depth of conflict and power dynamics that occur over talking and speaking in the classroom.

The above interactions indicate that students want to talk and be heard, yet teachers often react as if talking is a crime worthy of punishment. Remember, the act of bestowing respect on another individual involves recognition, yet to muffle another's voice is to ignore their personhood, an act of dishonor. It should not be surprising then that students report feeling disrespected by teachers who punish them for talking or that students feel disrespected when a teacher does not listen. Instead of confirming that students are prone to disrespectful behavior, this finding actually verifies that students share the dominant discourse of respect and hold their teachers accountable to it, as well. A student who struggles with a teacher over the politics of talking and listening is likely to be labeled a "troublemaker" by their teacher. This label may follow the student into multiple classroom and throughout the three years they attend Jackson Middle school.

Teachers Labeling Students

One of the first interviews I conducted was with Tania, a 7th grader. I observed Tania in class for over three months before our interview and I could see that Tania struggled academically and needed more direction than her peers. She often dazed off or whispered with friends during class time. As a result, Tania was frequently disciplined by her teachers and labeled as a "bad" student. It was during my interview with Tania that I first became aware of how deeply students suffer from teachers who label students as the "bad kid." As Tania explains:

> The good kids don't get in trouble, the ones that are always quiet, they like never talk, they just sit there, but they don't even finish their work, they're just quiet and me, even when I'm loud I still get my job done. Like today, Ms. Laura likes the quiet kids better and today she said, all of my good students are in the inner circle and the bad kids are in the outer circle and none of the quiet kids finished their work. I got my work done. Like it made me feel bad, like I'm not even going to try then.

The above excerpt helps to explain how the teacher-student relationship is damaged when Ms. Laura declares that the set up of the classroom is a direct reflection of who is a good and bad student. Also, this excerpt reveals how deeply Tania was affected by Ms. Laura segregating the so-called bad students to the outskirts of the class. It made Tania "feel bad," she was labeled a "bad kid" and physically separated and singled out from other students. The act of being labeled "bad" and segregated from the rest of class influenced Tania's motivation to try at school. Tania is sensitive to the fact that Ms. Laura likes the quiet students because she views them as "the good students." Tania takes issue with the definition of good as synonymous with quiet. For example, she protests, "[the quiet students] don't even finish their work." For Tania, being a

good student should include finishing all of the assigned work, which she claims she does regardless of whether she talks loudly. It is a common practice at JMS for teachers to conflate quietness with being a good student. In fact, my data suggests the primary source of teacher-student conflict is over matters of who was speaking and who was not listening. Consequently, I observed some of the brightest students disciplined for interrupting class because they had questions about the lesson or wanted to share their thoughts on a reading or problem. I witnessed brilliant students labeled as "bad" because they impulsively talked out of turn or their behavior was branded as disruptive instead of inquisitive. Again, the practice of "shame as function" may be to push students into conformity, but it does not work. According to my data, shame dampened students' aspirations and left many feeling hopeless about whether they could succeed in school. My findings demonstrate that the students who struggled with teachers over issues of talking and listening were often labeled as bad students and subsequently reported feeling that their teacher held a grudge against them.

Teachers who Hold a Grudge

Try to imagine what it may be like for a student who has to come to school each day and attend the class of a teacher who holds a grudge against them for prior misconduct. This means every day is not a fresh start. Instead, each day is pre-determined no matter the present behavior. My observations support students' claims that some teachers hold grudges and target specific students. I witnessed teachers who identified a "problem student" early in the school year and then continuously blamed this student for all misbehavior in the classroom. A student does not have the power to

get out from under a teacher's grudge and so, most often they suffer in silence (i.e. avoidance process) or seek reprisal. For example, as I sat in the back of a 7th grade class, I overheard two boys making fun Jaime for being an "illegal" immigrant. Apparently, Jaime was absent for one week and the students were teasing him that he must have returned from Mexico after being deported. Jaime blurts out, "that's messed up you're all talking about me." Mrs. Wilson did not hear the teasing and so she harshly reprimanded Jaime for talking out of turn. I already noticed throughout my observations that Mrs. Wilson used students' history and patterns of behavior as a weapon, which only reinforced the very cycle she was trying to curtail. On this particular day, Mrs. Wilson was upset at Jaime for blurting out during class. However, when Jaime tried to explain that his peers were the instigators and should be disciplined for teasing him, Mrs. Wilson responded with, "Jaime, you have been doing this all year long." The teacher assumed Jaime must be the guilty party based on prior behavior. In response, Jaime tried to protests his innocence by explaining that other students are whispering about him, but to no avail, the teacher now thinks he is arguing with her and she has had enough. Mrs. Wilson asks her teaching assistant to go get security, quickly. The other students giggle and whisper with excitement that Jaime is going to be escorted out by security. Jaime responds loudly with, "I don't give a fuck." It should be noted that Jaime was directing this statement to his peers, not his teacher, because they were relentlessly teasing him about the teacher calling security. Mrs. Wilson yells at him to "get out of my classroom" and he gathers up his things loudly and hurls his reading journal into the cabinet. Even though Jaime's peers were

ruthlessly teasing him about his immigration status, the teacher refused to believe that he was not the instigator based on his past experiences.

Jaime was disciplined with a 3-day in school suspension for this outburst. The next time I saw Jaime, I asked him about this episode and he told me, "I don't care [about always getting kicked out of class] because school is a waste of time [and] doesn't matter." The above interaction highlights two things; first that Jaime's resignation is a symptom of feeling powerless to get out from under his teacher's grudge. And secondly, that a teacher who holds a grudge has the power to negatively impact a student's engagement and feelings about school.

Similarly, the excerpts below highlight students' feelings about being disrespected by a teacher who holds a grudge.

> Like, if I get in trouble the day before, she would like, not give me work to do and say what's—what's the point, you don't do it anyways. She's like, you have no brain, you're not going to go anywhere in life and stuff like that. – Chad, 8th grader

> When he gets angry, he like jumps up and down and he'll yell at the kids. And we're all just kind of like, we don't even understand what you're yelling about. He'll just like pull bits and pieces of other things we did and just bring back the past that we don't remember quite too well. And he'll be yelling and jumping. And with his accent, and we're just kind of like, what's he yelling about? We just all kind of like be quiet. And we're like, okay, we're sorry. –Jason, 8th grader

For Chad, the daily disrespectful interaction with a teacher who holds a grudge further complicates his feelings about attending school. Chad was failing most of his classes and remarked throughout our interview that he felt worthless and hopeless, mostly due to the words of a select few teachers who he felt did not care for him or his well-being. It is very clear which students the teacher identified as the "problem student" and I

witnessed other students use this student as a scapegoat to avoid getting in trouble. Other students laughed as they shared memories of how a teacher blamed the "bad" student for another student's infraction. In this case, the "bad" student is not only disrespected by teachers, but by his or her peers and suffers considerably for it. The students who were labeled as the bad students for behavior such as talking too much also experienced higher instances of exclusionary discipline; a practice named by students as a disrespectful.

Exclusionary Discipline

Students identified teachers who were quick to hand out referrals and send them to administration for perceived misconduct as disrespectful. This practice is known as "exclusionary discipline" and research shows that it is disproportionally used on minority students (Fenning and Rose 2007; Gregory, Bell and Pollock 2014). Exclusionary discipline refers to any sort of disciplinary action that removes or excludes a student from the classroom or traditional educational setting. The most common uses of exclusionary discipline practices that I witnessed included in-school suspension and lunch detention. Exclusionary discipline is designed to punish students who display unsatisfactory behaviors or it is used as a tool of deterrence or to promote more "appropriate" behavior from the student body.

JMS is no different from the national statistics on exclusionary discipline; it is the go-to method for attempting to control and teach JMS students proper behavior [Appendix A]. I observed numerous incidents in the classroom that disintegrated into exclusionary discipline, but most often, this occurred *after* the teacher made a

disrespectful comment or gesture towards a student. For example, I observed numerous conflicts in Mrs. Wilson's 7th grade humanities classroom. Mrs. Wilson spent the majority of class-time yelling at her students for blurting out the answer instead of waiting to be called on. She became overly agitated when students answered out of turn and reacted harshly by yelling and generously handing out detention slips. According to my field notes, Mrs. Wilson handed out more referrals for minor infractions than any other teacher I observed at JMS. She was not embarrassed or troubled that she had a reputation of being heavy-handed. In fact, I believe it was a source of pride as she often announced to incoming students how many referrals she handed out to her previous class, "Welcome class, I've already handed out seven referrals in period 5 so that should give you an idea of my threshold today."

Perhaps, Mrs. Wilson felt this was a deterrent from bad behavior, but many students told me that they felt she was bragging about disciplining students and threatening them. Students felt this was disrespectful and mean spirited. For students, it seemed as if Ms. Wilson relished administering discipline. Among the chief complaints from the students I interviewed was that certain teachers' heavy handed approach was in fact, uncaring and disrespectful. Students reacted differently to exclusionary discipline; some retreated physically,[31] while others strategy was the "reprisal process" to save face in front of their peers.

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31 The students who retreated physically literally made themselves smaller by hunching over their shoulders, hanging their heads low and not speaking up in class. Recall the example related by Sami of the student who was shamed by a teacher and recoiled, cried and looked down at her paper. I observed girls who often hid behind their hair to avoid being seen or many held their backpacks in their laps to cover their bodies.

Teachers who use Physical Intimidation and Verbal Abuse

Although shocking, students shared with me that teachers show students disrespect when they use physical intimidation and verbal abuse while interacting with students. Below are a few excerpts that highlight how this practice of disrespect occurs in the classroom:

> She pushes people and takes their chairs to make them get up. She's rude to everyone and she wont help us with our work. She doesn't physically hit them but to get them out of the way she will pull them by their shirts. - Lily, 7th grade

> Ms. Laura and Ms. Mesa tell people they're fat. Ms. Mesa told William that once and he sort of went into a great depression. And she tells people they wont make it in life and they are going to end up like pot heads, like their parents. She told Ruth, why don't you ever stop eating and well Ruth is kind of fat. She's like no wonder why you're so big. - Ashley, 8th grade

It is clear from the student perspective that teachers' use of physical intimidation and verbal abuse are interpreted as being treated as less than equals. I witnessed firsthand a teacher's use of physical intimidation and verbal threats during my observations in a 7th grade classroom. On this day, a typically quiet student named Ariana was whispering to her neighbor. Ms. Jefferson noticed and said, "Ariana stop talking." To justify why she was talking, Ariana responds, "I was just telling my friend something." Ms. Jefferson then turns to a random student and in an overly exaggerated sarcastic tone of voice says, "Did you know Ariana likes to talk when the teacher is talking. She is soooo disrespectful." Ms. Jefferson turned to Ariana and said, "How do *you* like it?" Ariana replies, "But I wasn't doing that, I was telling her how my friend got shot last night. It just came to my mind." At this point, Ms. Jefferson walked over to Ariana and leaned within four inches of her face and growled, "What if what comes to my mind

right now is to smack you, should I do it? Would that be ok?" Ariana was visibly embarrassed and upset. Ms. Jefferson had been unsuccessful in trying to get all of the students to pay attention to her lecture, but now they are intently paying attention to this interaction. However, this is unwelcomed attention for Ariana; she has now been put on the spot, shamed for talking *and* is the target of physical and verbal intimidation by her teacher all in front of her peers.

As a side note, the gang related shooting death was the topic of discussion among the students; it occurred down the street from the school in the Southside neighborhood. Many of the students knew the victim or his family, some were witnesses to the shooting or immediate aftermath. Ms. Jefferson is either unaware or insensitive to the students' day-to-day life experiences. To make matters worse, Ms. Jefferson's use of physical intimidation and verbal threats was without a doubt a disrespectful act. Perhaps, Ariana was hoping that by explaining why she was talking that the teacher would recognize she suffered a traumatic loss and treat her with respect, dignity and compassion. Instead, Ms. Jefferson used the opportunity to re-establish her power in the classroom by identifying Ariana as disrespectful and further shaming her for attempting to justify her actions.

Clearly, this interaction demonstrates that there is little to no consensus on the actions associated with respect or mutual understanding of who deserves respect. Teachers and students' distinct understanding of respect are equally meaningful, but often the students' version of respect is not viewed as legitimate. Therefore, respect is something that is structured and sustained by power and the interpretation and action of individuals. However, it is the teachers who determined which interpretations are

deemed appropriate and signify legitimate respect. At first this may appear contradictory, for how can respect be co-produced, yet one individual (the teacher) holds the power to determine legitimacy? This answer is simple; a reciprocal relationship, one of co-production, does not denote equality in said relationship. Instead, the co-production of respect should be considered one of asymmetrical reciprocity.[32] This means respect may be co-produced, but it is not shared equally. It is this inequitable relationship that contributes to the break in face-to-face interaction between a teacher and their students.

Although I did not interview Ariana, I can imagine she felt disrespected by her teacher's response to a traumatic experience and likely victimized by the teacher's hypothetical use of violence to silence her. I can make this assumption with confidence because every student I interviewed understood respect as an expression of equality and dignity afforded to all humans regardless of age, race, or nationality. In this instance, Ariana was not being treated with dignity, her pain and loss went unacknowledged and therefore she was disrespected by her teacher. Over the next few months I kept a close eye on Ariana who was disengaged in class. She did not complete her work or participate in class. This interaction demonstrates how a disrespectful teacher who uses physical and verbal intimation can have an ill effect on the student-teacher relationship.

32 I will outline the dynamics of the asymmetrical reciprocity of respect in Chapter 5.

Uncaring Teachers

An overwhelming majority of students confided in me that teachers treated them with such disrespect, even contempt, that they felt as if they were not treated as human beings. Here is an example of such a statement:

> Teachers sometimes just treat us like if we're—they treat us like we aren't equals. Like, I know we're younger than you but that doesn't give you the right to treat us how you treat us. We're human—I know we're younger than you but we're still—we're still people. –Danielle, 7th grader

Here, Danielle's remark highlights students desire to be treated like an "equal," for her that means acknowledging that she is "human" and that students are "still people." This is obviously one way teachers can show they care about students, conversely the absence of treating them as equals demonstrates, according to students, that teachers do not care about them as people. Teachers' use of sarcasm emerged as another way students felt disrespected and uncared for by their teachers. The excerpt below highlights how sarcasm is interpreted by students as uncaring:

> Angel: One-time last year, this teacher—it was like, he always like pissed me off and stuff because he'd be like, you're always going to the bathroom. I'm like, well when I got to go, I got to go. And then—then this one day he said that to me too and then, when I went to the drinking fountain, it tasted like dirt, but it was inside, it tasted like dirt, dirt. And, I'm like—I told the teacher, I'm like, the water tastes like dirt and he's like, well minerals are good for you and that just pissed me off.
>
> Heidi: Okay. Why did that piss you off?
>
> Angel: Because, I'm telling him that like, the water tastes bad and he needs to do something about it, because what if we're like drinking something that could like, make us sick and all that. Then he's just saying that like, he doesn't even care.

This quote illustrates the relationship between disrespect and uncaring student-teacher relationships. Students often interpret teacher's sarcasm as mean spirited. In fact, Angel felt this particular teacher did not care about his well-being and health. Again, this stresses students' common complaint that teachers do not care about their students because they do not treat or view students as "humans" or "equals." For students, a teacher who does not care about them is considered disrespectful.

Another complaint I heard from students was that teachers who call them by the wrong name, even after being corrected, are disrespectful. According to students, this signifies that teachers do not care about their feelings, or have enough respect for their students to call them by their first, true name. Research shows that Students of Color encounter a "cultural disrespect" in regards to their names being mispronounced by teachers who make little to no effort to learn the correct pronunciation (Kohli and Solorzano 2012). The following excerpts substantiate this research but also shows that some teachers do not take the time to learn a student's name.

> They always say that they want respect from us and then—and then they say that, if we give them respect, they'll give us respect. But, I have this teacher that like, that like—we always have to be respect for him—or, else he always like punishes you or something. And then, whenever he calls our names, he like, says it wrong and he's like, I don't care. He's like—I say like, Abigail or something like that and then he'll say like, Abagawl and then she'll say, that's not how you say my name, it's Abigail. And he's like, I don't care. That's disrespectful. Why should we show him respect when he doesn't show respect to us? – Sami, 8th grader

> Mrs. Wilson calls me by my last name a lot and I tell her not to and she keeps calling me it. It's annoying. If she wants us to respect her then she should treat us with respect too. Mrs. Wilson doesn't respect me. – Don, 7th grader

This seems like a simple request for a teacher to honor, but unfortunately, too many times I witnessed teachers refusing to comply with students' request for teachers to pronounce their name correctly. This stresses how important it is to students to have a teacher who care about them as individuals and their feelings. Students desire a teacher who treats them with enough respect to know and use their name correctly. In the next section, I identify what students want and need most from teachers to be engaged at school.

Respect and Dignity: What Students Want from Teachers

As stated, students desire a respectful relationship with their teachers. The teacher can make a difference in whether or not a student likes a subject, or class, or even school. In order to understand what students want from teachers I asked them to tell me about their favorite teacher and to explain why (s)he was their favorite teacher. After comparing student responses, I identified at least 7 basic characteristics students desire most from teachers. They include: a teacher who they can trust and who will listen, a teacher who is respectful and possess integrity, and finally, a teacher who is calm, encouraging, fun, and kind. In the following section, I rely heavily on student excerpts to support my findings. Here is a sampling of students answer to the question: why is he/she your favorite teacher?

> Because how she teaches. It's like so fun. And, we can trust her with anything. She doesn't treat us like, the age we are. She treats us like equals. She understands that we have problems also, we're not just amateurs that—she knows that we have our life and she understands us and she listens to us. And, how she teaches is so fun. She makes teaching fun. It was the actual year I liked language arts. She makes me want to participate, want to raise my hand to answer questions or whatever she wants. –Dania, 7th grader

> She's always very, very calm, very—very mannered, like she has very good manners and—she's always putting us in perspective. She's—she always has really good ideas and she—she encourages like us to learn, not just memorize. -Abby, 7th grader
>
> She has integrity and she has honor in her job and she just cares so much about kids. –Jesus, 8th grader
>
> She's nice and she respects us. You can talk to her. You can tell her anything. –Sami, 8th grader

Students desire and welcome a calm teacher who they can trust and respect. They appreciate a teacher who they can share their problems with and who cares for them as individuals. Again and again, I heard from students that they want teachers who like teaching and make learning fun. There were teachers at JMS who fit this model and overwhelmingly they were named as a favorite among the students. Also, continue to note how many students want a teacher who will listen to them; this is not surprising as we already discussed the politics of talking. It goes without saying that if the students are consistently shut down for talking then there is not much adult listening going on in the classroom. Overall, students want their voices to be heard and the perfect teacher allows the space for students to speak of what is on their mind.

Some students responded that they did not have a favorite teacher, or did not like any of their teachers. At that point I proposed a hypothetical question, "if I gave you a magic wand and you could create the perfect teacher, what would that teacher be like?" This question was a favorite among students; many students giggled and became quite creative and dramatic as they detailed the "ideal teacher." Although the responses varied, there were similar characteristics students wanted in a teacher, such as respect, trust, caring and helpfulness.

> The teacher that gives you confidence and gives you trust and, like, makes you trust them. I feel like the most important thing is trust in like everything because if you can trust a teacher, you can probably tell them why you're not doing the things, why you don't get something because like, if you're scared of a teacher and you're like—you—like, for example, you didn't do your homework and you know the teacher is going to yell at you in front of everybody, it's like no trust, you don't trust them, but if you go to the teacher and be like, I'm sorry, I couldn't do the homework, I was in the hospital or anything, I will bring it for tomorrow. I think that's what makes a good teacher, communication. -Sherry, 8th grader

For this student, trust and communication is a key component in creating the perfect teacher. We already know that established trust between a teacher and student creates a positive educational experience (Erickson 1987). Although this particular student did not explicitly suggest "respect" as the central characteristic for an ideal teacher, I contend that respect is necessary, first, to establish trust and communication. Let me explain: trust operates below the surface level of respect. Establishing trust in a relationship involves believing the other person is inherently good, honest, and reliable; it takes time to determine if a person fits this criterion. As discussed in Chapter 2, respect operates on many levels, including instances when respect is exchanged strictly on the surface level. For example, one can respect a co-worker or boss, but not trust them with personal and private information. On the other hand, it is unlikely that one will profess to trust an individual they do not respect. Thus, I argue that establishing mutual respect is the first step to developing a trusting relationship. The bottom line is that students feel that in order for trust to exist with their teacher, a mutually respectful relationship must be established first. To further prove my point of the foundational importance of respect, I offer a few excerpts where students' explicitly name respect as the most desired characteristic of an ideal teacher:

> The perfect teacher would have respect and honor and integrity. A teacher has to be respectful to students in order to have a comfortable learning environment. –Jesus, 8th grader
>
> Well, she'd make a good quality teacher by showing us respect so we can give her respect too. She'd always let us know—treat people how you want to be treated. And have some good sense. –Zandra, 7th grader
>
> To show respect when they're teaching and if the student needs help then they help them. And, if they need help with homework or something then the teacher will be there afterschool or at lunch for them to help them. - Chad, 8th grader
>
> She would be very respectful to students and very encouraging like if someone says I want to be an artist not say oh that's going to take a lot of work but to be encouraging and for them to be involved in the students' life and classroom and to have boundaries, but be involved in their students' life. And to understand that if a student is being bad that there is something going on in their lives outside of school and to know what that it is so they can help them and then no one would be bad. It is something they have within themselves to be encouraging and nice to get involved and actually help. - Kayla, 7th grader

The data suggests that students place the ultimate responsibility on the teacher to initiate a respectful two-way relationship. According to these students, a respectful teacher is understanding of students lives outside of school. This means that teachers need to be sensitive to the students' day-to-day life and take an interest in getting to know them personally. It was very important to students that a teacher makes themselves available and is sincere about helping, either with homework or personal issues. The qualities of being sincere, helpful, encouraging, and caring all signify students yearning for a teacher who treats them with a dose of respect.

Another common theme that students mentioned was the desire for a fun teacher, one who doesn't yell and can take a joke. For students, the perfect teacher is:

> Fun. Doesn't take everything too seriously. Doesn't act like a

> commando. Doesn't get you in trouble for everything you do. Makes it so that everything that you're having trouble with just goes away. Something like that. A really smart teacher. Yeah. Yep, that. –Jessica, 7th grader

> A teacher that doesn't always yell at you. Like, can take a harmless joke. And like, yeah—and like, a teacher that teaches you well and teaches with like funny stuff and all that. –Abby, 7th grader

> She would be funny and like, knowledgeable about what she's teaching. And then, she would make constant—well, not constant, but jokes about stuff and all that. –Courtney, 6th grader

It is important to note that "fun" does not imply students want a teacher who has no rules and tells jokes all day. What students meant by "fun" is that they want to learn, but they want someone who will make learning fun. Students told me of how they want a teacher who approaches teaching creatively and will connect projects to events or topics that are relevant to their life. In fact, out of the 32 formal interviews I conducted, only one student said the ideal teacher would not assign homework. Instead, many of the students critiqued the type of classwork they were given as boring and unchallenging and thus a "fun teacher" is imaginative and assigns work that is applicable to their interests and life. A "fun" teacher respects that students learn in varying and multiple ways and shows respect by giving challenging work and having high expectations. Don, a 7th grader spent a good portion of our interview complaining about worksheets and he was quick to name the ideal teacher as one who wouldn't give worksheets or copy work from the book. Similarly, Jason and 8th grader states:

> They would try to make things more fun. Uplifting and be really energetic. Ready to ask questions serious enough to where you would learn. And they would have different ways of teaching; one day we'll do this and learn something, and the next day we might learn the same thing, go over it, but in a different way. So that you have more ways to kind of think about it if you didn't get the first one. And just be more

> open to learning from us, too, than just being the only person who could teach. –Jason, 8th grader

Again, this quote highlights that students want to exercise their voice, they preferred question and answer discussion or group projects to handouts and copying notes off the board. Clearly, students want to learn in a way that encourages participation; they want to talk and they want their teachers to listen to them. Ultimately, many of the students were bored with school. One of the most interesting moments during my formal interviews was when Don linked his "bad" behavior in the classroom to the fact that he always finished his work before everyone else. Don admitted that he got into trouble when he felt unchallenged or bored in class. Under these conditions, Don said he would start to "mess around" or talk to classmates. I observed Don for three weeks and I agree with his assessment. Also, I can corroborate Don's logic that extreme boredom leads to so-called deviant behavior. Many of the teachers I observed presented mind numbingly boring lectures. In fact, during one humanities class I found myself unconsciously doodling a butterfly, with a pen, on the desk. If I were a student, and if I were caught, I would have received an automatic referral for defacement of school property. My only excuse is that I was so bored with the teacher's lesson plan that I mindlessly began drawing on my desk to pass the time.

In general, students felt respected by teachers who held high expectations and presented challenging work, yet also helped students when needed. Most of the students responded with either an explicit or implicit version of respect as the most necessary quality for the perfect teachers. I followed this up by asking students: what

could a teacher do to show students respect? Along with, what could a teacher do in order to gain their students' respect? Their answers were revealing:

> At the beginning of the year, put boundaries and keep them throughout the year. Teachers should be comfortable with [students], get their trust, but also keep those boundaries up. –Zandra, 7th grader
>
> I think the teachers should be a little stricter so they can earn [students] respect. –Tania, 7th grader
>
> Teachers show respect to students by helping them. If [students] raise their hand, [the teachers] will come. –Angel, 7th grader
>
> I think teachers should be respectful to students if the student is being disrespectful to you I would treat him with respect to get him down to my level to get him to respect me. Let's say I was the teacher and if I were to say a kid did something bad I would send him outside and then lecture him and then bring him down to a respecting level. –Courtney, 6th grader
>
> I think [teachers] should respect a kid because the kids may say oh well we can treat other people like this since they treat us like this. –Albie, 8th grader
>
> Teachers have to be respectful of students. It's because the students, they feel more comfortable. They'll have a better learning environment. So, if they feel comfortable, they don't have to be worrying, just like stressing out. And, if they're not stressing out, they can work calmly. Leave their mind open. –Sherry, 8th grader

Often, it is assumed that middle school aged students are anti-rules, resistant to all authority and oppositional to education, yet another common belief is that they hate boundaries and will always push against them. While I don't reject the idea that teens push against the boundaries, I must acknowledge the common thread expressed by most of the students I interviewed, that is that a teacher with no boundaries is an ineffective teacher. According to students, boundaries should be established and upheld consistently and fairly in order for the teacher to earn the respect of students.

This means that the culture of (dis)respect in the classroom, from the student perspective, begins with the teacher and his or her approach to students, schooling and learning. In the following section, I discuss how teachers matter to the culture of (dis)respect in the classroom.

The Culture of (Dis)Respect: How Teachers Matter

Teachers play a pivotal role in training young students about, among other things, the value of respect. The face-to-face interaction between a teacher and student will result in either strong or weak bonds that impact student success or a sense of alienation from the schooling process (Valenzuela 1999; Crosnoe, Kirkpatrick-Johnson, and Elder 2004). Sadly, sociological studies also have surprisingly little to say about how the "culture of disrespect" bedevils student-teacher relations or how it is co-produced in the classroom. My data suggests that teachers share a large responsibility in either making or breaking students' engagement in class. Below, I compiled a few student responses that highlight the importance of teachers to student engagement:

> If I like a subject and the teacher is like real ass, I'm not going to like the class that I'm taking anymore because the teacher is mean and all that. You're not going to like something that someone who is teaching it is always yelling at you. –Zandra, 7th grader

> I don't do well in her class. I don't want to do well in her class. I don't know, what's the point? She doesn't want me to do well so I don't want to do well. –Chad, 8th grader

> I like Ms. Laura but she doesn't teach us anything, she doesn't teach us she just shows us video. Like for Japan, we watched Mulan. We're supposed to learn about the culture and we haven't learned anything. – Danielle, 8th grader

> Well, it makes me like, you don't want a challenge, like—they just don't care. Like, if the teacher is not trying, then I'm—I'm just going to like, stay in class and do—do the bare minimum. I don't feel challenged so why even try. –Diego, 7th grader

From these quotes one should gather that a student's decision to "do well in class" is mostly dependent on the teacher. If the teacher is a "real ass" and "always yelling" then the student may show disinterest in the the class. Again, to disrespect another is to hold little regard for them, to think little of them and their capabilities. Likewise, if a teacher is outright telling a student that they will not succeed or implicitly expressing low expectations by showing a Disney cartoon to teach Japanese culture, in either scenario, the students feel disrespected.

The quotes above emphasize that there is more going on for students then a lack of interest in school or learning. Instead, I heard countless stories from students who want to learn and understand the value of education, but find it difficult to feel connected to the schooling process as it is presented to them. Even compassionate, well –meaning teachers, as I discuss further in Chapter 5, can wound students through shaming and other acts of disrespect and damage the precious teacher-student relationship. However, my work reveals aspects of (dis)respect that have not been explored. I find that (dis)respect is an interactional, co-produced process and therefore to understand how it works in the classroom will improve teacher-student relationships.

One of the main take-away points from this chapter is that students react differently to being disrespected by teachers; some give up on school, others retreat and become quiet and disengaged, while others retaliate and seek reprisal to save face.

It should not be surprising that students react negatively to feeling disrespected by their teachers. All humans search for and desire respect because it comprises recognition and results in feeling pride in oneself. On the other hand, the outcome of shame and disrespect is feelings of inadequacy and a stunted development of self (Scheff 1988, 2000). Sociologists Sennett and Cobb (1972) explain the connection between the search for respect to the emotional injuries of class background. In doing so, they find that a lack of respect from teachers, bosses and even family members can penetrate the development of the self and lower self-esteem. The intention of the education system is to develop a child's abilities and self, however, most often it is within the classroom where working class and minority youth are first burdened with feelings of disrespect, rejection, inadequacy and shame. Thus, it is vital to continue research on how and what educators can do to create an inclusive, respectful classroom culture.

Conclusion

This chapter prioritized the student voice to gain a better understanding of how students interpret and define (dis)respect. I also uncovered the conditions by which students' report feeling (dis)respected by their teachers and how this affects their experience at school. Finally, I revealed the characteristics and practices students desire most from their teachers. I accomplished this by listening and observing moments of conflict and compromise in the classroom because it allowed me to "generalize about the ways in which interaction can go awry and the conditions necessary for interaction to be right" (Goffman 1967:99). I extended Goffman's ideas

of "line" and "face-work" to include feelings of "shame." This model allowed me to understand the quiet and discouraged students who disengage from learning and the schooling process. It also helped me explore how the successful students maneuver difficult situations with poise, but I also discovered how some students engage in face-work that does not follow the "rules of conduct" as set forth by Goffman. As this chapter has shown, by introducing the concept of "reprisal process," I provide scholars with a new lens to explain student behavior that is often explained as resistant or oppositional to education. Instead, I argued that many students who are labeled as disrespectful are actually reacting to teachers face-threatening acts.

My work draws from symbolic interactionists argument that actors' self conceptions and (re) actions are highly shaped by their interactions with others (DiMaggio 1988:1; Fligstein 2001:112). This is vital work because as Goffman argues, face-work is an integral part of our identities and feelings of social worth and cooperation in face-saving acts is vital to maintaining social order (Goffman 1967:307). Clearly, most teachers desire social order in their classroom, at the same time, students are forming their identities and seeking social worth and validation from peers and authority figures. Thus, the findings detailed in this chapter will work to improve the day to day experiences for students and teachers. But this chapter only tells one half of the story of how respect works in the classroom. Teachers also play a crucial role in formulating, interpreting and regulating and co-production of the culture of (dis)respect in school. Teachers enter school with their own, equally compelling, understandings and practices of respect.

Students dislike when teachers demand their respect and do not reciprocate or model the behavior they demand. As Sennett states, “treating people with respect cannot simply occur by commanding it should happen. Mutual recognition has to be negotiated; this negotiation engages the complexities of personal character as much as social structure” (Sennett 2003:260). Respect will not spread through a school by a teacher’s demands, speeches or posters hanging on the classroom walls. Teachers and administrators must first extend respect to their students and model how a respectful relationship is nurtured. As educators, we must recognize that students react differently to being disrespected by teachers; some give up on school, others retreat and become quiet and disengaged, while others retaliate and seek reprisal to save face. By examining the multiple ways students respond to feeling disrespected by their teachers we will recognize the interactions between teachers and students that spark conflict and fuel contrary behavior. In the following chapter, I turn my attention to the teacher perspective to examine their feelings on matters of (dis)respect, schooling and their students.

CHAPTER 5

IT TAKES TWO TO STRUGGLE: DISREPECT AND DEFERENCE IN THE CLASSROOM

"They are uncivilized beasts. They have no manners. Its like they haven't been around humans. It takes all I can, not to say, listen here, you little prick! Fucking idiots! If those kids were gone, my life would be so much easier"
Ms. Jefferson, 6th and 7th grade Language Arts Teacher

Introduction

A substantial barrier to teacher-student relationships is a classroom culture rooted in widespread disrespect, which includes a broad range of conduct enacted by students and teachers, alike. Arguably, paying greater attention to the micro-processes and conduct of both teachers and students will shed light on identifying how a disrespectful culture develops and affects the teacher-student relationship. Scholars have already established that classrooms are co-created through the face-to-face interaction between students and teachers (Metz 1978; Mehan 1978, 1980, 1993; Cook-Sather 2001; Bovill and Cook-Sather and Felten 2011; Bryson 2014). Therefore, it is not a far stretch to assume that a (dis)respectful culture is co-created, as well. Yet, even as (dis)respect may be co-produced, it is not shared equally. An inequitable relationship of respect is common in the classroom as teachers hold the position of power and authority. Consequently, it becomes necessary to examine the "power that teachers carry to influence a student's sense of self and worldview" (Kohli and Solorzano 2012:19). Investigating how a teacher's power is framed and used for positive or negative will clarify additional systemic connections between education and the reproduction of inequality.

In the following chapter, I examine how teachers influence and negotiate the culture of disrespect. Devoting a chapter to the meanings teachers attach to (dis)respectful behavior and their subsequent reaction is an important phenomenon to study as well. Consider this: if one did not include the acts of disrespect perpetuated *on* students *by* teachers, then the results would guarantee that only the students would be guilty of disrespect. In effect, this would be a one sided analysis that would incorrectly correlate disrespect with urban communities, Students of Color, poverty and its accompaniments. To study disrespect in this manner would produce a flawed concept, one that left out a large portion of the narrative (Becker 1998:117). Popular accounts, movies and mountains of research focus on disrespect as a concept that applies to students and more specifically, urban youth as the culprit and transmitter of this culture in the classroom (Appleby 1990; Amada 1999; Feldman 2002; Braxton, Hirschy and McClendon 2004; Baker, Comer and Martinak 2008). On the contrary, this chapter seeks to explain how teacher beliefs and practices have the power to permeate student subjectivities and feelings and in effect, contribute to a disrespectful classroom climate.

Teachers' understanding of (dis)respect is a complex interpretation of connected factors such as students' race, immigration status, poverty level and language; all together, each give disrespect meaning within the context of school. My findings confirm there is a tangible culture of disrespect perpetuated by teachers. Naturally, there are students who are disrespectful to their teachers and authority figures. In fact, I witnessed many occasions where students acted disrespectfully towards teachers and staff. However, educators must be warned against reducing

student misconduct as evidence of "a few bad apples in every barrel." This argument is designed to counter the likelihood that it could be the barrel making the apples rotten (Becker 1998:118). Likewise, this approach ignores the possibility that the school context, culture and teachers may be contributing to students' disrespectful acts. This chapter pulls apart what happens inside the classroom to explore the teacher (re)actions that are *producing* disrespectful students. This is of social significance because students identified as disrespectful are more likely to suffer poor relationships with their teachers, to be disciplined, removed from the classroom, and become less engaged in school.

The connection of disrespect to other social arrangements such as, authority and power must be considered in order to examine how it is sustained by a set of relations in the classroom. I do so, by using data collected from formal and informal teacher and staff interviews along with observational data to examine the processes that contribute to a disrespectful classroom culture. Overall, this chapter will focus on how teachers are one half of the struggle for respect in the classroom. My findings indicate that teachers' ideas of (dis)respect are mediated by their cultural capital and identity, which in turn, influence the teacher-student struggle over matters of disrespect. Moreover, the themes that emerged from teacher and staff interviews and observations indicate that a disrespectful culture is reinforced by teachers.

The struggle for respect is also a product of the tension between the authority of knowledge and (dis)respect. A teacher has the professional responsibility and obligation to teach students and maintain authority in the classroom. Yet, many teachers are unable to exercise authority in a respectful manner. Respect and authority

are not mutually exclusive; a classroom can be respectful *and* the teacher can maintain his or her authority. To disentangle this tension, this chapter provides analysis of the relationship between respect, authority, power, equality and caring. I do so by providing evidence of successful teachers who are able to foster a mutually respectful classroom, while still maintaining their authority. I find at least 5 strategies teachers used to establish a respectful relationship with their students; successful teachers: 1) co-create with their students a classroom culture and rules; 2) have good classroom management; 3) are willing to share a personal connection with their students; 4) demonstrate with action and words that they care about their students' life, feelings, fears and future success and; 5) deal with moments of student disrespect in an equitable and respectful manner. Each of these strategies and practices are used by successful teachers to create a respectful classroom culture *and* maintain their authority.

A Review: The Struggle Over Meanings of (Dis)Respect

To briefly review, teachers and students agree that respect is fundamental and necessary to establish a working relationship. Students overwhelmingly shared the belief that everyone deserves respect. Students know they are supposed to respect teachers and they know the actions associated with displaying respect in the classroom (i.e. not talking while the teacher is talking, raising their hand, listening to the teacher and not talking back etc.). Similarly, many of the teachers recognized the importance of nurturing a respectful classroom culture. In fact, the school counselor, Mrs. Meyers says that for a teacher to be successful, "respect is the bottom line and if that respect

isn't here then you don't have much else." Every teacher I interviewed mentioned "respect" as a key variable to having a well-run classroom, but many laid the responsibility of disrespectful conduct on the students, thereby absolving themselves from any responsibility in co-producing a disrespectful culture.

Although, both students and teachers agree on the importance of respect, there are some significant differences between understandings of who should be obligated to give respect, first. For example, teachers are more likely to believe in hegemonic understandings of respect. Students recognize that adults and teachers are owed respect, however, they do not always adhere to hegemonic understandings in which individuals with credentials or appointed authority are automatically entitled to their respect. Instead, I find the student view of respect aligns with the belief that respect is morally unconditional- that all humans are entitled to it regardless of their social positon or personal merit (Hudson 1980:69). For students, respect from another individual signifies a recognition of their personhood, it provides them with dignity in a space where many feel powerless. Therefore, the classroom is a site of ambiguity and contested meanings which lead to conflict over notions of power, authority, and equality as everyone is battling for respect. As in all situations of hegemonic domination, contests over (dis)respect result in struggle. Data suggests that for respect to work well, it must be part of a reciprocal exchange, given both willingly and wholeheartedly. If a mutually respectful relationship is attained, then a teacher is able to maintain authority and students remain engaged. But how is this possible? The next section will discuss how teachers can co-create a respectful relationship and classroom culture.

Respect or Deference? What Teachers Want and How They Can Get It

Teachers and students may share understandings of the dominant discourse of (dis)respect, but there is a gap between their beliefs of the obligations and expectations surrounding giving and earning respect. To better explain this break, I will return to Goffman's theory of face-to-face interaction. According to Goffman, there are direct and indirect rules that govern interaction, such as the differences between obligations and expectations. The difference is between how one is morally constrained to conduct themselves versus how others are bound to (re)act in regard to such person. For example, in our education system teachers are obligated to teach and share knowledge with their students, while the students are expected to sit and learn from the teacher. The obligations and expectations mark the boundaries around individuals which are typically asymmetric. An asymmetric expectation of respect is where one group (i.e. teachers) has authority or precedence over the other (i.e. students). In rituals of respect, deference[33] is given from one *under* authority to someone *in* authority and any omission of deference, according to Goffman, implies destructuralization and rebellion (1967:60). Thus, the relationship between deference and respect is that the expressed act of deference signifies respect of another person.

Although I use Goffman's theory to understand the face-to-face interaction and the breaks in student and teacher relationships, I argue that Goffman's interpretation of deference is more of an "ideal type" and not the hegemonic model followed by

33 Goffman's interpretation of deference is an, "activity which functions as a symbolic means by which appreciation is regularly conveyed to a recipient of this recipient or of something of which this recipient is taken as a symbol, extension, or agent" (1967:56). Therefore, deference refers to a sense of appreciation that is expressed in a way that affirms the relationship. Expressions such as salutations, apologies and compliments are examples that can (re)connect social intercourse (Goffman 1967:57).

teachers. I find that many teachers conceptualize deference as the respect owed to them as a superior from an inferior (i.e. the student) and not an act meant to convey appreciation, but student submission to their power and authority. In contrast, students desire symmetrical deference or symmetrical reciprocity; they want a relationship that does not follow strict "rules of conduct" that dictate boundaries of class, separation and precedence. Goffman briefly acknowledges that there are forms of symmetrical deference and even deference in which a superior (i.e. clergy) shows deference to subordinates (i.e. parishioners). However, these acts of deference are ceremonial and not what one would expect in a classroom between a teacher and student. I find many teachers hold onto the hegemonic model of respect; they adhere to the worldview that students should defer to their authority as the teacher and this belief directly contributes to the struggle that ensues.

Consequently, I question Goffman's conclusion that any omission of deference is an act of rebellion; by categorizing any diversion from deference as "rebellion," Goffman's theory appears normative and runs the risk of not exposing unequal relations in the classroom. Moreover, I argue that the reproduction of inequality is maintained by face-to-face interaction in the form of disrespectful exchanges (i.e. unequal power relations) that stem from hegemonic understanding of respect and deference. To prove this point, I investigate how deference is exchanged through social interaction, and consider that when a teacher's demeanor communicates interest in a symmetrical relationship, they are more likely to receive the respect of their students. Only then are teachers better equipped with the power to maintain their authority in the classroom. This means that in order for a teacher to earn their students

respect, they must be the ones to *first* display appropriate demeanor and offer deference to the students. This may sound appalling, as if I am encouraging teachers to turn the reins over to the students and simply allow them to do as they please. This is not what I am implying. Instead, I find that for teachers to fulfill their professional obligation in a manner that benefits both teachers and students, it is necessary that teachers exercise their authority in a respectful manner. The first tactic a teacher can use to build a respectful classroom culture is to express appropriate demeanor.

Demeanor refers to ceremonial behavior that is usually conveyed through dress, attitude, mannerisms, to express that a person has certain (un)desirable qualities that will either push or pull others to him or her (Goffman 1967:58). As a result, "individuals must hold hands in a chain of ceremony, each giving deferentially with proper demeanor to the one on the right what will be received deferentially from the one on the left" (Goffman 1967:85). Goffman is illustrating that the exchange of demeanor and deference is a process of social interaction, everyone's cooperation is needed in the classroom; even the teachers. Thus, a teacher's mannerisms must be one that expresses desirable qualities that will pull the students towards them. This means that a teacher who expresses appropriate demeanor, which I will highlight throughout this chapter, will build a sturdy amount of "classroom capital" to frame their actions in ways that induce continual respect and support from their students. I use the term "classroom capital" to refer to a source of symbolic power teachers need in order to be successful in eliciting the willful respect and support of their students.

Research has examined how respect is garnered on the streets in the form of "stred cred" which refers to the credibility that is earned by dope slangers and gang

bangers. A sturdy supply of street cred allows the person to walk the street and not be robbed or messed with by rivals (Bourgois 1999). This is a form of symbolic power that is first earned by adhering to the informal rules of the street and then by putting work in (selling drugs, committing murder or assault, robberies etc.). After one has proven themselves worthy, then their street cred can be levied to control the neighborhood for the good of the dope man's business or the gang. Similarly, I argue that a certain amount of "school cred"[34] forms the much needed classroom capital. For example, Mrs. Meyers the school counselor said, "when you are the classroom teacher you can win them over, you can get them on your side, give them attention and then they can be a part of the positive stuff." This is an oversimplified suggestion that doesn't examine the nuances of how to "get students on their side," however, it does provide some insight into the importance of teachers expressing a demeanor that welcomes a respectful classroom culture.

As discussed in the Chapter 3, symbolic power is a concept developed by Bourdieu (1990) and used to examine power at the macro (fields) and micro-level (habitus) processes of the reproduction of domination and the maintenance of social inequality. Sociologists have explored at length how power relations operate in institutions and through discourse, but power in face-to-face interaction is less examined (Hallett 2007). My research fills this gap by looking at how power is used in

34 I use "school cred" to refer to teachers who garner the respect of students by expressing appropriate demeanor. The following is not a comprehensive list, but teachers with "school cred" display the following characteristics: they are knowledgeable in the subject they teach, they have a passion for teaching, they are considered patient and fair, they offer students help when needed and demonstrate care and concern for their well-being and future success. A teacher with "school cred" will earn classroom capital in numerous ways, but only if they sustain a mutually respectful relationship with their students. A teacher earns (and loses) classroom capital based on daily interaction, but overall, a certain level must be earned for a teacher to keep their "school cred."

interaction between teachers and students within the classroom, but I also examine how power can be used as a force for good and not simply domination. Let me explain: I find that if a teacher is able to gain the respect of their students, willingly and not forcibly, then he or she has a form of "classroom capital" (i.e. demeanor=school cred + classroom capital=symbolic power/authority) to exchange later on when needed. A teacher's school cred is an implicit tool that is presented during interaction with students. Depending on how this is perceived and valued by the students, it can either generate deference or create contempt. Thus, the struggle for respect in the classroom begins and ends with the teacher.

School Cred and Classroom Capital: How a Teacher Can Get it and Keep it!

A teacher may have the authority in the classroom, however, it should not be assumed a teacher holds the power to force students to respect them. A teacher will need to present a demeanor that *invites* and not demands deference. By doing so, a teacher will need to develop classroom capital, which can be done in a few ways; the first way I witnessed teachers present a demeanor that invited deference was by initiating and modeling a respectful relationship. For example, Mr. Gilbert offered his thoughts on how he builds a respectful relationship. He said:

> I treat them, you know, like mature adults. I don't treat them like babies. Children, you sit down children—I don't do that. You know, some teachers like to ring a bell. [claps] it's like elementary school. And they're not in elementary school, okay. And you can see it, you can tell that some teachers here, their background is elementary school, very few teachers here have a background in secondary, have a secondary credential, I think I'm one of the few. And, elementary school is completely different than middle school. It's two completely different environments. You know, things you do in elementary school like the bell or countdown 4, 3, 2—in high school, they would just

> laugh at you, you would never do that. You know—it's more like a—like a college environment. The professor in college would never ring the bell or countdown, okay, or start naming names or all those other things they do in elementary school that work. You don't do that in high school. I think in 8th grade, you don't do it any more either. You know, maybe 6th or 7th, because they're still—they're still making that transition from elementary school to middle school, but 8th grade, you know, they're ready for high school, treat them as adults.

Mr. Gilbert explains that he doesn't treat the students "like babies" instead he focuses on treating his students "like mature adults." Although, Mr. Gilbert is the authority figure in the classroom, he is not exercising said authority in a manner that demands respect from the youth. Instead, Mr. Gilbert treats his students as his equal and models respectful behavior. As we learned in Chapter 4, this is exactly what students want; they want to be treated with dignity afforded equals. Therefore, because Mr. Gilbert treats them as mature equals, they are more likely to respond to him in a mature, respectful manner. I observed for almost three months in his classroom and I witnessed a classroom that was run efficiently. Students were actively learning and engaged from the beginning of the bell to the end of class period. I credit Mr. Gilbert's success to the hefty amount of school cred and classroom capital he built up.

Mr. Gilbert maintained his authority by exercising it with respect and in turn, it was repaid and sustained throughout the year. He made frequent deposits into his classroom capital because of how he handled students who acted disrespectfully towards him or another student. I witnessed Mr. Gilbert utilize another practice to establish a respectful bond with his students and maintain his school cred. Mr. Gilbert handled any student misconduct in-house; quickly, effectively and in a respectful manner. For example, Mr. Gilbert waited to speak to the student privately after class

when no one was around or he would take the student outside for a private conversation. In contrast, teachers with little classroom capital immediately lost their temper, yelled at the student in front of his or her peers (thereby initiating the "reprisal process") or called security to accompany the offending student to the Principal's office.

We learned in Chapter 4 that students find being put on the spot by their teachers an extremely disrespectful act. Although it may be well within a teacher's authority to refer students to the Principal or security in front of the entire class, my point is that Mr. Gilbert was able to retain his school cred and bank classroom capital because he had earned his students respect by exercising his authority in a respectful manner. He did this by addressing the offending student directly, face-to-face, privately and thereby communicating that he respected his student enough to fix the problem together, as one would do with a relationship they cared about maintaining. This is how successful teachers dealt with students who acted in disrespectful ways.

Yet, another way I observed teachers foster a respectful relationship with students who acted in disrespectful ways, was to model respect for their students. Instead, of disciplining them harshly for acting inappropriately, the teachers used their classroom capital to make it a teachable moment. Once again, successful teachers initiated the respectful relationship and did not expect or place the responsibility on students to begin the process. Mrs. Chong is an ideal example of modeling, she explained:

> Well, if kids are not respecting me, one way is to show them. I show them how they need to approach it. I'll say, you know what, is that the best tone of voice—you know, think about your tone of voice. Think

> about how your talking because would you like me to speak to you in that manner? The other thing is, some of these kids have hard lives at home. Once they know that you're not going to back down or go away and you are there for the long haul, in the end they will turn around and respect you.

A third way teachers invited respect was to demonstrate that they cared for their students. Research illustrates that the interaction between students and teachers create bonds that have an impact on academic achievement (Valenzuela 1999; Crosnoe, Kirkpatrick-Johnson, & Elder 2004; Suarez-Orozco, Pimentel and Martin 2009). Furthermore, students who feel "uncared for" and lack strong bonds with their teacher experience a sense of alienation from the schooling process, which can translate into poor academic success (Valenzuela 1999). On the other hand, a student who feels a caring connection with their teacher will want to be successful in class and may actually put more effort into school. As Mrs. Miller told me, "when these kids have a really deep connection with their teachers, they work hard for you. They will work until hours into the night if you really told them this matters, do this for me, they would do it." One way teachers demonstrate they care for their students is by remembering their name; this small act demonstrates respect for students as individuals. This may appear of little or no significance, but remember in Chapter 4 one of students' main grievance was with teachers who mispronounce or refuse to learn their name. Thus, being conscious of how important this is to students is crucial in establishing classroom capital, students' respect and cooperation. Mrs. Lyon appreciates how important it is to make a personal connection such as remembering a student's name, she shares that she gives respect to her students "by *engaging* in conversations with them. By talking to them about their lives and being a daily part of

their life. They know that this hour that they spend with me, I expect it to be the best hour of their day. So, and—[pause] knowing their names, means everything. You know, our name is everything to us, so by remembering their names and calling them by name, it's important to them." Something as simple as a teacher remembering their students' name or engaging in conversation about their lives can be an act of deference, an expression that signifies a sense of respect for the students as equals. This practice works to build a mutually respectful relationship and classroom culture.

Some students complained that Mr. Gilbert and Mrs. Chong expectations were too high, but even so, they always mentioned how much they cared about their students' success and outside lives. The successful teachers expressed understanding and concern that students faced trials and struggles outside the classroom. For example, I repeatedly heard from teachers that students at JMS suffered from "abandonment issues." Teachers told me that students had a tendency to become angry at them if they took a day off because they felt abandoned. According to teachers, this reaction stems from "parents who have died young in these kids lives" or "parents in prison or on drugs" or "the constant rotation of teachers and substitutes filtering in and out of JMS." Mrs. Chong is a teacher willing to respect that students have outside lives that may be impacting their performance or behavior in class, "they have a weight on their shoulder that I didn't even have to really encounter when I was growing up. So, you got to take that into account sometimes is where are these kids coming from and what their background is. And sometimes if you just give them a little empathy, it goes a long way." This was the fourth approach I witnessed successful teachers use to establish a respectful classroom; by showing students that they cared (i.e. empathy) for

them and their future successes. In contrast, I had some teachers communicate to me that they simply "did not care" what happened in the students' home life and this should not be used as an excuse for their behavior or attitude. These teachers expressed to students a sense of disrespect for their feelings and outside lives.

Mrs. Lyon is another example of a teacher who clearly cares for her students and communicates this feeling to them. During our interview she stated, "my relationship with my students is one of mutual respect. I feel like we have to have a really strong foundation and excellent rapport or nobody is going to learn anything." I went on to ask how she gained respect from her students, she replied:

> At the beginning of the year, when I talk to my students, I introduce myself as a person, not just as their teacher but as a person. Some of my life experiences, some of the things that I've been through. I talk about my children. I talk about my pets. I talk about hardships that I've had to overcome. So that we're able to build some rapport. And whether it's the loss of a parent or you know, the loss of a sibling or whatever, there's things that you can—that have happened in your life and we don't know the external stressors that our children experience, but somehow, someway, you touch them. You know, whether it's through a pet or a parent or a sibling or whatever. So, it's really building that rapport. And I find that if I do it at the beginning of the year, the first day, if I introduce myself, and I always let them know, you know, these are my expectations, and we're going to learn about history but the most important thing for me is for them to be kind, compassionate human beings by the end of this year. I care about them. They know that I love them a great deal.

This excerpt is an excellent example of the fifth strategy teachers can use to express demeanor that invites respect from their students; it involves sharing a piece of themselves. Actually, Mrs. Lyon's statement illustrates a few strategies being used at the same time; on the first day of school she shared her personal life stories with her students. This the one of the first techniques a teacher must do in order to build

"school cred" and increase their classroom capital. Students want a connection with their teachers; this means a teacher must be willing to share a piece of themselves. Secondly, Mrs. Lyon expresses her high expectations to the students, which conveys respect for her students' abilities and her desire to be their guide in the schooling process. Together, this expresses that she "cares" for her students.

Successful teachers work on building a mutual relationship with their students, but that does not imply they are soft on rules or give up their authority. A well managed classroom does not have to be heavy handed *or* lackadaisical. In fact, Mrs. Chong and Mr. Gilbert were well-known as being extremely strict teachers with excellent classroom management, at the same time they were known for being the "cool" teachers who care about their students. Classroom management is key to creating a respectful classroom, which is vital for both students and teachers to be successful. However, there is a specific way classroom management must be established. The best managed classroom was when the rules for behavior were developed as a class; students must be invited to participate in the creation of class rules. When students are a part of the process they will feel that they are more entitled to live by the rules which they themselves have made, rather than rules that have been put in place by the teacher (Baker, Comer and Martinak 2008:73).

The belief that classroom rules are more likely followed by students if co-established was echoed by more than a few teachers. An outstanding example of how classroom rules and authority are created in a democratic fashion was in Mrs. Miller's classroom. I had the privilege of observing the first few weeks of school and watched as she worked systematically to build strong interpersonal relationships with her

students. The excerpt below is from our formal interview where she describes how she creates a classroom culture and rules in a democratic fashion:

> Mrs. Miller: For the first six weeks we dedicated to just creating a class room culture. At the same time, we're applying a lot of our learning especially for common core because it was my chance to really start applying some of those strategies in speaking and listening. It's where we've gotten most of our foundations in that too. It was a great opportunity to get kids to create what they wanted out of a class room. I think the fact that anybody had given them license to do that freaked them out. But now I can say, okay what are your expectations of each other? And they create their own contract and sign it. It's cool that's where we need to be at.
>
> Heidi: So what kind of things did you do then to build a relationship with the students in that first couple of weeks?
>
> Mrs. Miller: One of the things we did is an assignment at the beginning of the year. I call it cultural narrative. You've seen them in my class room where I have those cultural flags. What I do is I have them work on a narrative of themselves. We did, what is culture? where does it come from? and how is it formed? First step, of course, is to think about what is your own culture and to build from that diversity. Because we are who we are, and we don't fit into a box, nobody ever does, and our stories are so much deeper than what we see. That kind of builds a lot of empathy. They wrote a narrative that introduced their lives and where they came from; it was so powerful.
>
> Heidi: Did you share with them your narrative as well?
>
> Mrs. Miller: Yeah I sure did. I have my own little flag, and I change my narrative every year, which I think is cool, I always find something else I forget about. I think sharing that part of yourself is good. Some people are very wary of it; they like to keep that separate. I don't think you can do that, personally I just can't. I think it really, it lets them know that I trust them, and I have to take the first step in building that I think. I'm happy to do that I'm a pretty open person Heidi, I don't have a lot to hide. This is who I am and this is what I do, and I wouldn't be here without it.

Here, Mrs. Miller is simultaneously utilizing multiple strategies. She is co-creating classroom rules and expectations while also co-creating a classroom culture. She is

deliberate about the culture being one of celebrating diversity, advocating for inclusivity and acknowledging individual struggle. This is a classroom culture built on respect of others experiences and identities. At the same time, she is also sharing a part of herself with the students. This project is not just about students learning about the concept of culture; it also involves the students learning about their teacher. By incorporating her students into her life-history she is treating them as equals, offering a demeanor that invites deference and builds a respectful relationship and her classroom capital. I conducted periodic observations in Mrs. Miller's classroom for an entire year, and as such, I can testify that Mrs. Miller's tactics were successful.

I also witnessed the use of Mrs. Miller levying her "school cred" with students. In moments of potential conflict between her or other students, Mrs. Miller was able to solicit cooperation by reminding students of other times she deferred to their wishes. For example, one day Mrs. Miller reminded students, "remember when you all wanted to work on your flag project instead of your essay, and I let you? Well, today we are going to work on our essays and give 110%, right?" Students responded well to being directed to give 110% because they were given agency to choose what to work on at a prior time. Students in Mrs. Miller's were agreeable whenever she drew a hard line (which was rarely needed) because she was able to draw from her classroom capital by reminding them that on most days she offers them choices. Thus, in moments of conflict between the student and teacher, a teacher who has established a mutually respectful relationship with his or her students is able to withdraw from their classroom capital and enlist the support of the student.

On the contrary, Mrs. Wilson established classroom rules, but her rules were not co-created with her students. Mrs. Wilson explains how she sets up her authority in the beginning of the year:

> Well, I definitely had to for this year, because I knew what I was up against. I had my rules that kind of—they correlated with the school rules. I had my consequences up. I had a syllabus that we went through all the rules and went over the expectations. This is how you're graded. I mean, everything is laid out, they had to sign it. I had a no electronic policy form that they filled out, their parents signed it. You know, it also has the heading, how the heading should be on their paper. So, all of the procedures that we have in our classroom and what my expectations were, were definitely addressed the first week of school. And so, I've had to go back to that. Get out your syllabus, maybe we're just not understanding about the rules. We'll do a syllabus check.

Here, Mrs. Wilson enters the classroom with pre-established rules and consequences; there is no co-creation in the process. In fact, Mrs. Wilson has the parents sign a contract to bind them to her rules, as well. What is also interesting to note is that this was Mrs. Wilson's first year teaching at JMS, previously she taught at a suburban, predominately white, middle class, school. Mrs. Wilson's bias and assumptions coming into JMS is obvious by her remark that she "definitely had to [establish her authority] for this year, because I knew what I was up against" which indicates that her biases informed her classroom rules. A teacher's racial and class bias will influence their methods and discipline practices, which translate into microaggressions and a disrespectful classroom culture. I will return to race and class bias etc. in the final empirical chapter of the dissertation.

Based on my observation and after reviewing my field notes, and informal and formal interview transcriptions, I can say confidently that Mrs. Wilson did not

cultivate a respectful classroom culture. In fact, she required and demanded the hegemonic understanding of respect from her students. Mrs. Wilson had no classroom capital to draw from when conflict arose. Small issues in her classroom escalated quickly into full-blown battles; most of the struggles were initiated by an unrelenting Mrs. Wilson who explicitly ordered the students to respect her. Yet, throughout my time with Mrs. Wilson she lamented about how her students treated her with such disrespect. This came to a head mid-year when Mrs. Wilson's phone was stolen from her desk. I was surprised to hear of the theft; it was the only time I heard of teacher's possession being stolen. I asked around the school and I heard from students and other teachers, including reports from Mrs. Wilson's student teacher, that the theft was in retaliation for Mrs. Wilson angrily calling a Student of Color, "a terrorist." It was reported to me that this comment was too much for the students to handle and so it was decided that Mrs. Wilson must pay for her treatment of students.

Unfortunately, the theft of her phone only solidified for Mrs. Wilson that the students at JMS were extremely disrespectful. During our formal interview she compared JMS students with students from her prior school, she said, "it was that understanding that under level—that respect that says, you know what, I don't necessarily care for this class, but I would never steal your phone because I know you'd never do that to me. They just got that. And, I do something for you, you do something for me, *I don't think they get it here*." While I do not condone stealing phones as retaliation for feeling disrespected, I find it telling that Mrs. Wilson is unable to recognize how her demeanor and name calling of a student was interpreted as a disrespectful act in itself. Clearly, Mrs. Wilson subscribes unreflectively and

unapologetically to the hegemonic view of respect and as a result she engages in daily struggles over respect with her students.

The idea that teachers must be mindful of their demeanor and also extend deference to their students may be difficult for teachers to agree with. One reason is that they subscribe to hegemonic understandings of respect, another being that their identities and life histories complicate their relationships with and cloud their perceptions of students. In the following section, I discuss how a teacher's cultural capital, identity and biography influence their interpretation of students' demeanor and (dis)respectful behavior.

Is it Rotten Apples or the Barrel? How Teacher Identity and Cultural Capital Shape Perspective and Practices

Applying Bourdieu's concept of cultural capital and connecting it with Goffman's theory of face-to-face interaction helps explain the struggle for respect in the classroom. By doing so, we are able to see how a teacher's cultural capital and identity informs their perception of what constitutes disrespectful student behavior and how the struggle ensues. For example, one day while observing a 7th grade classroom, I witnessed approximately 8 to 10 students running into the classroom at the same time the bell was ringing. Ms. Jefferson yelled loudly, "How dare you run past me as if I'm not even here! That is so disrespectful!" She is notably upset. Ms. Jefferson is upset because she interpreted the students running past her as the refusal to acknowledge her existence. For Ms. Jefferson, this act was considered disrespectful. As an observer it seemed to me that the students were hurrying past her in order to get to their seats before the bell stopped ringing. I mention this because the tardy rule states that one

must be in their seat when the bell stops ringing or else the student should expect a detention slip. In fact, I would point out that the students were attempting to avoid offending the teacher and evoking the consequences for being late. The fact that the students are trying to comply with a teacher's and school rules could be interpreted as a sign that the students respect the teacher's authority. However, for Ms. Jefferson the act of not acknowledging the presence of an adult in the room was an act of disrespect. Ms. Jefferson's cultural capital is of a middle to upper class, middle aged, Christian, white woman; her upbringing informed the belief that youth must respect their elders (i.e. acknowledge them when entering a room). Any misbehaviors that countered her cultural capital were extremely annoying to Ms. Jefferson, she often mentioned how "she wasn't raised like them" and realized she was "no longer in Kansas anymore" because the students are "classless." She provided evidence of this statement by saying that, "for them a classy restaurant is Sizzler because they get served." She often referred to the students as "wild beasts" "raised by wolves" "with no manners." Thus, this teacher's ideas of right and wrong demeanor and meanings of (dis)respect were informed by her cultural capital (and race and class bias) and then used as the baseline to define students as disrespectful. Here, we witness the consequences of the politics of contested meanings within the confines of the classroom.

However, not all teachers operate from the assumption that the students culture is deficient and they must rise to meet the teacher's station. For instance, Ms. Marie, the "at risk" school counselor, addresses this cultural mismatch as she relays some of the issues she experienced when she first started work at JMS:

> I think we talked about looking kids in the eye, how I used to do that when I first started and kids would be like, stop staring at me. I explained that I was looking them in the eye because it was a sign of respect and they would say it's like you're mean-mugging me, they saw it as a challenge and I had to be like, oh okay. I won't look you in the eye then. That was a cultural difference that I had to adjust to. As an adult, I can understand it's not that big of a deal, so I can change my behavior, but as a kid, that's a big deal to them and I need to respect that.

The difference between Ms. Jefferson and Ms. Marie is that Ms. Marie feels it is her responsibility to adjust to the students' comfort level to initiate a working relationship. It would not have served Ms. Marie any good if she immediately countered students and insisted the proper way to interact is to look someone in the eye. Unlike Ms. Jefferson, Ms. Marie is not condemning the students for a cultural deficiency or disrespectful behavior, instead, she recognizes that there are moments when her understanding of what constitutes acts of respect and the students' ideas may differ. She recognizes that as an adult, in this case, she should adjust her demeanor and extend deference to the youth. That is, if she wants the relationship to be maintained and progress, then she may have to avert eye contact for a while. For Ms. Marie, her initial goal is to make the students feel more comfortable with her. This is an example of how a teacher develops school cred and deposits into their classroom capital. Afterwards, Ms. Marie is able to draw on her classroom capital and return, at a later time, to the "issue" of eye-contact and explain to students the alternate view that some interpret eye-contact as a respectful act.

When a teacher is able to have a connection with their students, whether it be a shared background or a hobby; a respectful relationship is quickly fostered. For example, the importance of a strong connection built on commonality is found during

a conversation with a sixth grade math teacher, he described a good day as, "when I made a connection with my students beyond academic learning so that I connected to them in a way that was meaningful to them and to me . . . I feel my students learn best, or really can only learn when they feel connections between me or really any teacher." A shared connection implies that a teacher *cares* enough to attempt to build a relationship with his or her students; this is an act of respect and helps develop a sense of mutual respect between the teacher and student. The following excerpt illustrates the link between credibility (school cred), shared connection, authority and respect.

> Heidi: When you say build a connection, can you give me an example?
>
> Mr. Copper: Sure, it depends on the students. Some students make connections when they realize that you really understand what you are talking about. Um, teenagers are quick to smell out someone who is actually not very good at their subject. So for those top students, when they realize that I know much more mathematically then them, and I show them a clever way of doing a problem, we make a connection on an academic and social level. For some students, just me being a minority is an opening to making a connection with them, then they may probe me, or test me, in a way, such as goofing off to see if my reaction is unfair, fair but firm, or if I just let it slide. All those things are sending different messages to my students, and it is further complicated by race so I think I get a better benefit of the doubt from a student because of my race. But it doesn't automatically mean they will respect me. By no means does your race get you respect from anybody, no matter what ethnicity or race that you are dealing with.
>
> Heidi: Do you think having a shared experience with your students make a difference?
>
> Mr. Copper: I think that students can tell the difference between the teacher that has empathy because they are the white lady who wants to save the Black children as opposed to the person who has been in their shoes and wants to help them. They don't like to be patronized and they appreciate someone who really wants to help them.

For this teacher, the connection between his students stems from a mutual respect that is first, earned and based on his abilities to perform as a math teacher and second, a shared commonality with the students. Respect is further gained either by identifying as a minority or having a similar class background -evident by the fact he attended JMS as a child- and then sealed by the teacher's (re)action to the students' "test" or probing. This teacher is not offended by the students' testing, in fact, he welcomes it and defers to the prodding. In doing so, he gains school cred and classroom capital that can be levied in future moments of conflict.

Mr. Copper unknowingly raises an interesting dilemma, that is, is it possible for teachers and students to share commonalities and respectful relationships across race, gender, and class lines? Throughout my field research, the race and class of the teachers and students was a salient issue that kept coming up as a potential block to a successful, respectful relationship. Mr. Gilbert agreed that his ethnicity and class background positively influenced his relationships with his students, he shared:

> Kids related to me a lot more than say a 'white teacher' because we had similar backgrounds. And I tell them, my dad was a landscaper, their dad is a landscaper, my mom is a waitress, their mom is a waitress. You know, I was the first one to go to college, they want to be the first one to go to college. So, my story—they can relate to my story.

Likewise, we can see that the students value Mr. Gilbert's cultural capital and identity because they identify with his race, experiences and biography. Therefore, he is able to generate deference and school cred easier, than say a white teacher, because his demeanor and outside appearance expresses to the students "I'm just like you." However, Mr. Gilbert is one of the successful teachers I feature not simply because he is Mexican, but because he was able to create and sustain a mutually respectful

classroom. I do not believe he could only rely on his racial and class background to sustain his authority or maintain the respectful relationship he had with his students. I witnessed that he had to work diligently to earn and keep his classroom capital.

Mr. Gilbert expresses his attitude towards the students and teaching in the following statement, he said, "students here have a lot of potential, but it's a lot of hard work to get it out. But you know, you've got to be willing to do that, I mean, that's why we're teachers, right?" At first glance it may seem as if Mr. Gilbert's shared experience, cultural capital, race and ethnicity makes it easier for him to share a connection with his students, but this alone is not enough to maintain a respectful classroom culture. Mr. Gilbert worked hard to help students live up to their potential and his students recognized this and so they responded well to his instruction and discipline.

On the other hand, the majority of teachers at JMS were white, middle aged, and middle class women. It was interesting that when I asked them whether or not their race and ethnicity, class background and/or gender influenced their relationship with their students, most answers exhibited a hesitancy to admit disconnect. I asked every teacher at Jackson Middle School whether or not they felt their race and/or ethnicity, gender and class background affected their relationships with their students. A summary of selected answers and my analysis is below. I start with the school counselor, Mrs. Meyers responded:

> No, my mom raised me that it's the value of the character of the person. I happen to be married to an African American, not on purpose but because of his character. In fact, sometimes I look in the mirror and I think, God you're pale. I speak Spanish so well and I'm comfortable in my own skin whether I'm old, young, fat or skinny and the kids realize

> that, they know I love them and care about them even when they're being teenagers. I feel like I'm kind of a bridge so they know there are mainstream white people that care and accept and value them.

Mrs. Meyers was visibly uncomfortable answering my question, she appeared to be grasping to find the right words to answer. As evident by her reference to being a "bridge between mainstream white people and the students" Mrs. Meyers expressed a sort of condescension when speaking of students, although she was one of few champions of the students and their families at the institutional level, Mrs. Meyers was still influenced by bias. All the same, the students often told me how much she loved them; to the students, Mrs. Meyers was the older, white lady who was really sweet and cool. The fact that she cared for them and outwardly expressed this- she was known for her hugs- meant that in this case, respect was able to transcend race and class lines.

There was a scale of bias among the teachers, for example, Mrs. Meyers attempted to balance a recognition that whiteness and privilege exists, yet also evoked ideas of a post-racial society, whereas Mrs. Wilson's response to my question is riddled with racial undertones, she said:

> I'm white, so it's something that I've worked at because this population is mostly Hispanic. And, I do speak a little bit of Spanish, but it's not my culture. So, I've learned as I've gone—I actually am half Italian and my sister-in-law is Mexican and we do have it in our family and so, I'm aware of the culture and their differences and some of the things that are unique to this, but—so, I'm sensitive of those needs. At this school it's primarily Hispanic. That it definitely, I think at first could be a barrier. I think that, you know, that right off the bat, maybe they don't trust you as much. They don't really know you that well and you not being one of them or they don't think you're one of them, I think there is a little bit of a barrier. So, I think we have to work harder to break down the barriers and really get to know the students. – Mrs. Wilson, 7th grade Humanities Teacher

Mrs. Wilson uses the student population as predominately "Hispanic" as a "barrier" to developing a relationship. She is quick to point out that there are "differences" to this population's "unique" culture and positions herself as the virtuous teacher who is, "sensitive to their needs." At the same time, she places the responsibility of the "barrier" on the students' race (i.e. white race is neutral) and ideas that "they don't think you're one of them" or that "they don't trust you as much." It should be pointed out once again that Mrs. Wilson struggled daily for her students' respect and to keep authority in the classroom. As we can pull from this excerpt, that struggle is in part because she viewed the relationship as one-sided, it is their race and culture that created a barrier and thus the only issue in need of addressing is the students.

In contrast, Ms. Marie did not feel that the student demographics created a barrier to their relationship, instead she built successful relationships by finding other common ground with her students, she said:

> I think a lot of the things that the kids have gone through is stuff that I went through when I was younger. I think those are certain things that transcend race, gender, socioeconomic status. So I know I may not choose to tell the kids everything that's happened to me or how I know about something, but it's something that my past experiences have enabled me to talk to them about it. –Ms. Marie, "At Risk" School Counselor

For Ms. Marie, it is shared trauma that transcends all other identities. She was able to make a connection with students because of experiences such as her parents divorce, a death of a family member, and abuse as a minor. She pulled from these experiences to show students that she understands hardship and more importantly that she cares for them. This was done not in a patronizing way, but the extension of recognizing their personhood and extending them the respect they deserve as such. I know Ms. Marie

was a favorite among the "at risk" students, even though she is a fair skinned white with almost white, blonde hair and was raised in a middle class family in the South.

Even as each teacher denied that (theirs or the students) race, class, and gender affected their relationship, they all searched for an explanation that highlighted how they were able to transcend race, class and gender in the classroom. Pay attention to how Mrs. Lyon explains her shared experiences with students:

> As soon as I figure out what [race and ethnicity] is, I'll let you know [laughs]. I think my race and ethnicity have very, very, very little to do with—I think it's me as a person and I just—you know, I don't even—I will say this, it does help me build rapport with my students who are first generation American because I am a first generation American. And it's—it's hysterical at the beginning of the year when I tell my students, my parents are immigrants and they're like, well you're not Mexican. I'm like, well not every person who immigrated to the country was a Mexican, so. And it's funny—I—you know, it's like, you don't have to be Mexican to be a child of immigrants. And I've had students before that have said things like, you know, oh you're just treating me like that because I'm black or you're treating me like that because I'm Mexican, you know, and then one of my sons will walk in and my husband was African-American and so, when my son walk in and they're like, mom and the kids see him they're like, okay so it wasn't because I was black. [laughs] – Mrs. Lyon, 8th grade History Teacher

Here, we see Mrs. Lyon denying that she identifies with any race or ethnicity, then moves on to explain how immigration status is a way she connects to her students. She then shares how she side-stepped students' accusation that she is racist with the fact that she was married to an African-American and has bi-racial sons. All together, the denial and then presentation of race provides an excellent example of how teachers are in constant negotiation of their identities to build a respectful relationship with their students.

Race was not the only salient identity teachers focused on to establish commonality with their students. A shared class background, gender, and even age became a way for teachers and students to understand each other in spite of racial and ethnic differences, for example, Mrs. Miller said:

> I'm very aware of who I am and how people see me. Class has definitely been an asset in some respects, gender has been as an asset, my country of origin will always be an asset, and my age is an asset. That connection is a little bit closer to the reality of what my students' lives are like. It builds a lot of our rapport and our conversation. My country of origin being somewhere completely different really builds a lot of relationships with kids who are dealing with the same thing. My gender, being a woman, I'm able to connect with my younger, smarter, intelligent young ladies who are always overlooked because of the loud brazen young gentleman in our class. I think that all of those things come together to work for me; they also work against me. So I'll tell you straight off that I've had parents come in, and because I'm white and they assume I'm middle class they think I don't know what's going on. They think I'm totally blind to their experience, I can't possibly know what life is like. I go to the laundry mat same as you. – Mrs. Miller, 7th grade Humanities Teacher

Mrs. Miller expresses frustration with being grouped with the other white teachers who were not working class, ESL, and first generation American. In part, this frustration is because she is proud of her identities and experiences. She consistently uses them to build a connection with her students because she understands that commonality builds rapport.

Finally, Mrs. Chong is a white, middle class, woman married to an Asian-American with two bi-racial children. However, she denies that race, gender or class influence her relationship with her students at all. Instead, notice what she thinks works to transcend these lines.

> I don't think it affects our relationship because I'm aware of their culture and where they came from. So, I think I have an in there. I also

> speak Spanish. So, they kind of correlate with me well. I never talk down to them. I think if you respect no matter what, for children no matter what race they are, it doesn't matter as long as you talk to them in a respectful way and treat them at the age appropriateness that they are, they'll rise to the occasion and do what you ask of them, rather than outbursts. –Mrs. Chong, 6th grade Humanities Teacher

For Mrs. Chong, it is the act of extending respect to students that works to alleviate any disconnect between teacher and student identities and cultural capital. Overall, these excerpts demonstrate that teachers are desperately trying, in their own ways, to find a common ground with their students in spite of dissimilar cultural capital, race and ethnicity and other identities and experiences. In some cases, these teachers have been successful by building a bridge with their experiences as immigrants, a shared class background, being bi-lingual, or parents of bi-racial children, or that they live in the local community. I believe the successful teachers attempted to find any way possible that they were connected to their students through similar life experience. This is a sign that they were reflective enough to understand how race, class, gender can create barriers and the importance of a shared connection. For others, race and a dissimilar culture is used as a justification to explain the perceived impenetrable barrier between the teacher and student relationship and even worse it was used as an excuse to explain why they are failing some of their students.

As discussed in Chapter 6, racism and classism -among other outside forces- can complicate teachers' relationships with their students. However, this is does not imply that all is lost if a teacher's cultural capital, race and ethnicity is not identical to their students. I observed white, middle class, teachers working conscientiously to establish shared commonalities with their students, regardless of a dissimilar identity

and/or cultural capital. For example, one day while observing in a 7th grade Language Arts class, the teacher was lecturing on the need to focus and concentrate during STAR testing; most of the students were not paying attention. Instead, they were whispering and shifting in their seats. Some students were up and walking around the classroom. In fact, one group of students were intently making a giant paper ball that was the size of a tennis ball. As the teacher realized that she was losing control of her class, she said, "Hey listen, I know that some of you have a difficult home life and things may be going on at home that make it hard to concentrate." At this point, all of the students were listening and looking intently at their teacher. She continued on, "I know when my parents got divorced it was very hard for me to concentrate at school. I remember thinking oh my god you want me to pay attention and do schoolwork right now? My life is falling apart! Life is not always the way we want it but what we do have control over is our homework."

After class, I mentioned my surprise at how quickly the students paid attention once she revealed a personal experience. She sheepishly grinned, turned her head to the side and admitted that sometimes she "makes things up" in order to build a connection so that they feel as if someone "like them" understands what they may be facing in their daily lives. In reality, her parents divorced when she was two and she has no recollection of the divorce. According to this teacher, this is not the only time she has "made things up" in an effort to match her past experiences with her students. A common, or shared experience is vital for students to have respect for their teachers and remain engaged in class.

Successful teachers are self-reflective enough to know that their cultural capital differs from their students. They also acknowledge that their experiences as a white, middle class woman puts them in a position of power and privilege, a position that affords them the gift to be an ally to the students. To be an ally requires teachers to first develop a great deal of self-examination into their privileges and then a willingness to use and share their privilege, power and resources to improve students' experiences. This requires teachers to share the lead rather than placing themselves as the central key to fix the "poor Students of Color," thus students must be co-creators in this process. Furthermore, a teacher can become an ally by being involved in the local community, which may also work to clear assumptions they hold about their students' behavior and lives (Sleeter 1996).

Teacher Practices: Factors Contributing to a Disrespectful Classroom Culture

In Chapter 4, students reported that disrespectful teachers made fun of them and held a grudge; my interviews with teachers and staff supports the students' claim. For instance, Anna is a security guard at JMS for over twenty years, a former student of JMS and a parent to four former JMS students. As such, she is familiar with the school culture. One day I asked her to tell me what she thought of the students' relationships with the teachers at JMS and she shared:

> Some of the teachers hold a grudge and it impacts their relationship with the students. Then there are the teachers who smash the students down and only discipline [them] and that doesn't work either because the students just come out here [outside] and I hear them oh she's such a bitch or he's such an asshole and then they don't learn anymore.

Anna views teachers who use excessive discipline and holds a grudge as unsuccessful. She goes on to say that teachers who hold grudges or "smash the students down" lose control of their classrooms because the students refuse to listen to them. For Anna, it is how a teacher treats a student that directly impacts not only the teacher-student relationship, but also the students' desire to learn. I asked Anna if the students liked her, she responded, "they love me." And I agree, all of the students loved Anna. Even as she handed out referrals and detention slips, the students still respected her. I asked Anna, "how do you get them to love you?" She answered:

> I talk to them. If I do discipline them, then I move on. I don't hold a grudge. Its like a parent, you discipline your kids and then the next day you start fresh. Some of these kids come up to me the next day after I discipline them and they ask, Oh, Ms. Anna are you mad at me? And I say No, I'm not mad at you. Today is a new day, we're starting fresh, we're moving on.

Anna explained how she is able to foster a solid, respectful relationship with the students. The recipe is quite simple; communicate, discipline when needed, but move on to allow for students to start fresh and don't hold a grudge. I found that teachers who held grudges also make fun of the students they hold a grudge against. This is one of the ways a disrespectful classroom culture is cultivated. During our interview, the "at risk" school counselor confirmed that teachers make fun of students, she shared:

> Ms. Marie: They make fun of the kid in front of all their friends. Yeah, do not do that. If you—do not make fun of the kid if front of all their friends. That's the biggest one that I see happening. Like if a kid wants to answer a question and you don't want that kid to answer the question, don't say, no Timothy, you don't get to answer that question because you're always wrong. Don't say that. Don't call the kid names in front of everyone. Yeah, that's the biggest thing. Don't do that.
>
> Heidi: Do the kids come in and tell you this happens or you've seen it when you go into the classroom?

> Ms. Marie: Both. I've seen it happen and I'm just like, what did you just do? Did you do that? Why did you do that? Why did you do that? That's a huge thing. It's hard for the kids to get past. That kid is going to remember that feeling, and it's a horrible feeling and the teacher's already forgotten. So next time the kid acts up, that teacher's like, oh, this kid's misbehaving. It's like, you started that fire. You started it.

Teachers who make fun of their students lose their students respect and worse off, initiate the reprisal process and the cycle of disrespect ensues. No doubt, the implicit message of a teacher who makes fun of their students is that they do not like teaching and/or dislike the students.

Throughout my observations, more than a few teachers referred to the "culture of Jackson" as being one in which many of the teachers do not like their students and openly speak negatively about them. There is an understood feeling that many of the teachers dislike the students. A few teachers confided in me that the teachers' lounge is the place to avoid because of the swirling negative and patronizing comments about the students. Unfortunately, the reputation of the students and of the teachers' perception of them is not contained within the teachers' lounge. Students are painfully aware that some teachers do not like them. I heard from numerous students that they knew which teachers didn't like the students or teaching at JMS because all they do, "is complain about the school and the students." During an interview with Ms. Marie, I asked her the most frequent complaint she heard from the students about the teachers? Her response was telling:

> Ms. Marie: The most common one is that, oh, so-and-so doesn't like me. And that's a hard talk to have with kids, because I sit there and I'm like, oh no, they like you. But then I also have to sit there and be like, you know what? Not everyone's going to like you and you're not going to like everyone. That's fine, but while you're here, you have to

> act a certain way. So that's very common. Which probably, the teachers don't like those kids. But when you're at this age, social acceptance is your number one priority. To be ostracized, that's the worst thing that could happen to you. So when teachers ostracize the student in the school setting, that's horrible to them. Ideally, you want every day to be a fresh start, but that doesn't happen because people reach their limits and their fed up, like, you sit in the corner. You know what I mean?
>
> Heidi: Yeah. When a teacher ostracizes them in class, have you noticed the reaction students give back to teachers?
>
> Ms. Marie: F-you then. You don't like me, that's cool. I'm going to make your life hell. They may not say that. It's very—okay. Have you ever had a guy hit on you and you say no, and he's like, fuck you then, you're ugly? You know what I mean? That's what it is. If you don't like me, F-you then, I don't like you. It's a retaliatory thing where these students decide—because they see it as the teacher not liking them for no reason. The students themselves don't see them disrupting the classroom, so they think that this teacher doesn't like me, then that's fine. I'm going to show them. They have to protect their self-image. It's a power struggle, is what it comes down to. That teacher takes away power from the student. That student has to regain that power by re-crafting their behavior, I guess. I don't know how to say it better.

Again, we see that a students are sensitive to a teacher who makes fun of them. A teacher who ostracizes a student in front of his or her peers presents a demeanor that communicates "I don't like you" and in turn initiates the struggle for respect. Unfortunately, it is these moments that devolve into conflict and disorder in the classroom. Ms. Marie goes on to say that the, "the number one thing my gang members are called out by teachers for is for being disrespectful." However, she continued to tell me that students are "most interested in peer validation, to be respected by their peers." And so when a teacher calls them out in front of their peers, students are afraid if they don't retaliate then they will be disrespected and "punked" by the entire classroom. Once a disagreement arises, it would serve the teacher best if

he or she spoke to the student in private. Mistakenly, teachers try to make an example out of the disrespectful student as a warning to all other students, but as you will recall from Chapter 4, this tactic does not work, it only sparks the reprisal process.

Hannah Arendt (1970) argues that the personal authority that exists between teacher and pupil is secured and maintained by neither coercion nor persuasion, but for a teacher to remain in authority requires respect for the person. She goes on to say that the "greatest enemy of authority there is, is contempt and the surest way to undermine it is laughter" (Arendt 1970:45). This should be interpreted as extending to both teacher and student. A teacher is not excused from laughing at a student or displaying contempt for teaching or the student body. A teacher is able to maintain symbolic power and authority in the classroom only after he or she gains the students respect and support, but to do this a teacher can not make fun of the students.

I asked Mr. Gilbert if he believed the student population was respectful at JMS, his answer outlines the tension teachers face with expectations that students respect them as the authority figure, yet realizing there are limits placed on teachers to be respectful too.

> Kids love to go to the office and say, why are you here, oh teacher sent me here. Oh, why did the teacher send you here? Because—well, because I called him this or that. They go, why did you call him this or that? Because he disrespected me. And, it's so funny—it's so funny because it's like, really? You're not an adult, you're a middle schooler and the teacher has to show you respect? I mean, like what have you done to earn that respect? Hmm, let me think, yeah, you haven't done anything to earn that respect. That being said, yes, you do have to show kids respect. You can't make fun of them. Especially at this age because it hurts them. A teacher might say, you know, you're a loser, or you're stupid, sit down. Then, they battle—some students just sit down and do it, others will say, F you or, I'm not doing that. Or, you know, say something back.

This excerpt underscores the struggle teachers face everyday; how to establish and retain authority, yet do so in a respectful manner. Many teachers are trying to balance the hegemonic view of respect, which tells them students haven't "done anything to earn that respect." At the same time, as Mr. Gilbert points out that just because the students are middle schoolers, this does not give him the right to deny them the respect owed to them as humans, or belittle them. He understands that if he were to make fun of his students or call them names, that in actuality, he loses power in the classroom because he would start a battle where there are no winners. Most often, I witnessed teachers mistakenly assume they must counter an act of perceived disrespect with crushing authority, in order to maintain their authority. However, this only escalated moments of conflict and guaranteed the struggle for respect continued.

Certainly, I am not implying teachers must adore every one of their students or simply give into inappropriate student behavior. Nor am I suggesting that using Goffman's theory as an instructive model will create a near perfect utopian classroom. As Mrs. Chong said, "there's certain people with certain personalities that can handle [disrespectful students] and certain people that can't. It just teachers—you know, just like you have people that you like and people that you don't like, you do that with your students as well, but knowing how to overcome that, is what makes you a successful teacher." No doubt personalities will clash in the classroom from time to time, but how a teacher responds to this clash is what is most important. On the other hand, a successful teacher is cognizant of the potential for personality clashes and understands how and why the reprisal process works; they will seek ways to overcome

the struggle, or at the very least not initiate it. My observations confirmed that teachers who refuse to see their part in the struggle are guilty of "student profiling." The next section will discuss how some teachers' biases (unconscious or not) influence their perception of the students and in turn, create a disrespectful classroom culture.

Student Profiling: Is it Stealing or Seconds?

The practice of student profiling signifies that teachers rely on stereotypes to justify their hard-handed, dismissive and disrespectful treatment of their students. The profiling of students impedes the successful development of school cred and classroom capital because students are extremely aware which teachers profile them. I observed first-hand the assumptions and labels or "student profiling" teachers place on the student population. Student profiling of course includes racial and classist stereotypes of students, however, I am not implying that teachers are responsible or the root cause of institutionalized racism or classism within schools. Many of the teachers I came into contact with operate with unconscious bias[35] (Haller 1985; Gutmann & Ben-Porath 1987; Atwater 2008; Corrice 2009; Moule 2009) which informed their demeanor towards students. Unconscious or not, to profile students based on assumptions related to race, class or immigration status and then act on these biases qualifies as "microaggressions"[36] that negatively affect the student experience at school (Kohil and Solorzano 2012:19-20). I will speak more on the impact of racism, classism and prejudice towards immigrants in Chapter 6. In this chapter, I focus on

35 Unconscious bias refers to "social stereotypes about certain demographic or groups of people that individual form outside of their own conscious awareness" (Corrice 2009:323).
36 Microaggressions include the subtle, daily and cumulative forms of racism and classism that negatively affect minority students (Pierce 1970).

student profiling that includes the pattern of teachers viewing non-white, poor students as deficient in respect and therefore needing education and discipline to become "normal" and "civilized" for mainstream society.

For example, at the first annual Spring BBQ, which was a celebration meant to inspire students to increase their performance by feeling the rewards of academic success. At the conclusion of the BBQ, I witnessed an altercation between an 8th grade teacher that I did not interview, Ms. Lisa, and a female student. Even though there was a large surplus of leftover food, the students were only allowed to have one of each item: hamburger, chips, apple and cookie. As Ms. Lisa witnessed a female student reach for a second cookie, she screamed loudly, "Put it back! How dare you steal from us?" Ms. Lisa's words were loud enough to startle me, and many students stopped to watch the commotion. Campus security was immediately involved and the student was escorted off the field. Afterwards, Ms. Lisa walked over remarked, "I can't believe this girl stole from us especially after all we did to put this on." She went on to say, "See what happens when you do something nice for these kids, they go and steal from you, unbelievable!" The negative sentiments expressed by Ms. Lisa reveal the underlying belief that "these kids" do not deserve rewards because they lack proper appreciation and respect for authority. It also demonstrates there is a clear separation between "us" and "them" a feeling that was repeated by more than a few teachers throughout my research.

I observed at least four teachers standing together and speaking poorly about the students' behavior, at times even making fun of some of the students. Much of the conversation among the teachers centered on what mechanisms of control could be

implicated for the BBQ the following year, and at the school in general. At one point, a discussion arose among the teachers about a male student who had been suspended, Ms. Lisa stated, "I don't mind suspending him if it means I have three quiet days of teaching." The other teachers laughed. I heard from other teachers that confirmed there was a practice of suspending a particular student because the teacher wanted a "timeout." For example, during our discussion of notifying parents of their child's suspension, I asked Ms. Jefferson "what is the parents response?" She replied:

> I don't really care what they say. You know, I put it in a position where they need to—I'm informing them because what it—it's a done deal already, I'm not gonna be changing my mind. And it's one of those things that I have the legal right to do under the Ed Code law. And mostly I just—I want a timeout from that kid and the class—the other kids need a timeout from that particular kid. That's why I would choose to suspend them for a couple of days.

This idea that the teachers are somehow martyrs for putting up with a so-called disrespectful population of students paints a picture of the students as the antagonist and the teachers as the protagonist. Furthermore, a school culture that supports teachers suspending students in order to "get a timeout" from a particular student is a disrespectful act in itself. There are real consequences for the student and the family when a student is suspended and for a teacher to use administrative type discipline because she wants a "timeout" from the student should be criminal. Yet, because the profiling of JMS student is widely, yet implicitly accepted, this sort of action was not addressed. The martyr syndrome was further confirmed by an informal discussion with a math teacher, he stated that many of the teachers at JMS, "feel that the students come to them uncaring and unwilling to learn . . . [this] means [the teachers] feel semi-justified by not doing their best on a day-to-day basis." Here, we see that the

assumptions made about students being translated into how much effort some teachers put into teaching, which appeared to be very little. Therefore, student profiling is damaging not only to the precious teacher-student relationship, but to students' future academic success.

Overall, my findings highlight how the framing of students as a problem population allows many teachers to profile students as needing a moral education, which only reinforces the belief that demanding respect, executing discipline and rigid rules is the only way to get through, control, or interact with the students at Jackson Middle School. Furthermore, the assumption that students are lacking fundamental values only advances the student body reputation as "ghetto" and "bad apples" who are unteachable thereby alleviating teachers from any shared responsibility of contributing to the disrespect culture. Student profiling is especially damaging to the teacher-student relationship and as such, teachers must work hard at countering any (un)conscious bias that may be bleeding into their practices and affect the classroom culture.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I demonstrated that a teacher who demands respect from his or her students, without earning it, may initiate and engage in the struggle for respect with their students. Remembering that it always takes two to struggle, I argued that a solid relationship between teachers and students must be established in order to have a culture of respect in the classroom. To explain how this process works, I applied Goffman theory of face-to-face interaction with Bourdieu's understanding of cultural

capital and symbolic power. By doing so, I explained how teachers must display a demeanor to students that conveys a sense of "school cred" and *invites* the students respect. This "school cred" translates into students' respect for a teacher's authority, which then allows said teacher to deposit into their classroom capital and make withdrawals during moments of potential conflict. All together, I explained the tension between authority, respect, and equality to illustrate that the three can co-exist nicely inside the classroom. This means that successful teachers can maintain their professional obligation as the authority figure, yet do so in a way that expresses respect to their students as fellow humans. But, this requires teachers to come face-to-face with some of their previously held misconceptions that contribute to profiling students. Additionally, teachers must recognize when they are engaged in a struggle for respect. To end this battle, teachers must shed their belief in hegemonic understandings of respect and appreciate students desire to be treated with dignity and display a sense of respect for their feelings and an appreciation for their potential success.

In the final empirical chapter of this dissertation, I turn my attention away from an interactionist approach to examine how the sociological meta and macro forces are seeping into the classroom and muddling the teacher-student relationship. I discuss how the history of a neighborhood and community narrative, the school context, administration and race and class bias converge in the school setting to play a central role in facilitating a disrespectful school culture; one that negatively affects teachers and students, alike.

CHAPTER 6

THOSE KIDS, FROM THAT NEIGHBORHOOD: THE INTERSECTION OF IDENTIES, FACE-TO-FACE INTERACTION AND CONTESTED MEANINGS

"They call this ghetto town, and that's called shit town over there." Eden, 7th grader

Introduction

The exchange of (dis)respect between students and teachers is a continuous, subtle and often unconscious and unreflective act. However, the negotiation of respect between students and teachers is not determined by personal attributes or simply random. Instead, it is shaped and mediated by social and cultural differences that distinguish middle class, (predominately white) teachers from their working class, immigrant, Students of Color. Therefore, schools are locales where complex individuals are closely interacting with the expectation that their meaning and practices of respect will align with the other, but often result in conflict and troubled relationships. At the same time, a disrespectful school culture is not *only* sustained through face-to-face interaction. With that said, this chapter serves as a reminder that my findings do not suggest a simple story of mean teachers or "rotten apple" students, but one of sociological significance. The data presented in this dissertation echoes research that demonstrates how schools are inhabited by individuals and a culture that operates to impact failure or success of its students (Conchas 2001). Similarly, I find that there are factors outside of the classroom and even the school site that contribute to a (dis)respectful school environment.

In the final empirical chapter, I re-visit the history of a bounded neighborhood to explain how the reputation of JMS students is entrenched in racism, classism and anti-immigrant beliefs. I will review key historical and contemporary moments within Beachside that send the message to JMS students and their families that they are not welcome by the wider community. Moreover, I argue that the clear physical and cultural boundaries that have segregated this neighborhood for generations influence the treatment of JMS students by their teachers. All of the teachers I interviewed do not live in the same neighborhood as their students, yet they cross into this bounded neighborhood everyday and bring with them their own biases that they (un)consciously present to their students. Some of the teachers wish to help the students overcome their unfortunate circumstances, whereas many of the teachers view the students at JMS as a waste of their time. Each response carries with it an underlining belief that the youth are missing fundamental values, which informs teachers treating students as if they are broken goods in need of repair. This is no secret, as the data suggests, the students are keenly aware that they are viewed in a negative light by the community of Beachside and many of their teachers. On the first day of school, teachers and students meet in the classroom each armed with their preconceived ideas of the other. This is just one of the ways the "outside" enters into the "inside" creating a school environment that leaves both parties feeling disrespected. This chapter is devoted to a discussion of the factors outside the school site that influence the school environment.

Situating a (Dis)respectful School Climate in Historical and Contemporary Context

Before I provide data that explains the neighborhood effects impacting the culture of JMS, I wish to provide a rich, description of the physical and geographic boundaries of Beachside. I believe by providing my readers with a flavor for the community they will be better equipped to understand how the community context influences the school site, the teachers and the students. I am able to speak on the conditions of Beachside because I lived within JMS school boundaries for 25 years. Therefore, I am well aware of the wider community's impression of the people living inside the Barrio.[37] Therefore, I will speak from first-hand knowledge while complimenting this chapter with historical and legal facts to support my memory.

For 6 years I lived in the Barrio known as Southside and "Menudo," which has a historically large Mexican and immigrant population. It was around 1910 that one of first residents of the Southside neighborhood begin to supplement her family's income by making Menudo, a traditional Mexican soup. The story goes that she would put her large pot of soup in a little red wagon and walk through the barrio calling out "Menudo, Menudo!" Soon, everyone began to refer to the neighborhood as "Menudo" and the nickname is still used today and throughout Beachside. As already stated in Chapter 3, this neighborhood dates back to the early 1900s when laborers and field workers settled in a remote area segregated from the rest of the community.

In the 1930s, children from the Southside neighborhood were sent to an Americanization School where they were taught by a teacher who only spoke English.

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37 I will interchangeably refer to this specific area of Beachside as Southside (the term residents now prefer) and Menudo (the nickname appropriated by the local street gang).

For years, the Southside neighborhood was neglected by its city leaders, it was often referred to by outsiders as “Mexican Town.” Up until 1947, the Southside neighborhood had dirt streets and no sewer system, residents were forced to dig holes in their backyard to relieve themselves, whereas the wider Beachside community enjoyed paved streets and indoor plumbing. Originally, Southside was separated from Downtown Beachside by two canyons; one to the West and one to the North, both of which were eventually filled in with freeways that continued to isolate the residents. Instead of making the long walk to Downtown, Southside residents purchased their goods from two “Mexican” markets that were owned and operated by families from the Southside neighborhood. The segregation continued well into the 1950s, when Beachside built an elementary and middle school in the Southside neighborhood to strictly service their children.

Today, just as in the past, the Southside neighborhood suffers from being separated from the rest of the community. As you exit the freeway and make a right turn onto Main Street, you are immediately on the periphery of the Southside neighborhood. As you drive along the portion of Main Street that runs parallel to the Southside, you will find a few Mexican markets, small furniture shops, multiple check cashing stores and auto-parts and mechanic shops, two indoor swap meets, a Head Start pre-school facility, a few taco shops, liquor stores, a community health clinic, an adult education center, two convenient stores, family-owned beauty shops and a Panaria. It is obvious that the stores lined up on Main Street along the periphery of Southside cater to its immediate residents. However, it also means that there is no need for them to enter into other areas of Beachside and so they remain an isolated

neighborhood. The bus stops frequently on Main Street and there is always a steady stream of people who walk from deep within Menudo to catch the bus or go to the stores located on Main Street.

California Street is the only street that grants access into and exit out of Southside; it is the original street from the 1900s. The first block of California Street is where you will find the “Mexican Markets” and a few more taco shops, the next block is a park and community center, if you continue past the first two blocks you will find a strictly residential neighborhood. The spatial configuration of the neighborhood is disorganized and it becomes obvious that there was very little city planning involved in its design. From California Street, which runs North and South, there are numerous streets running East and West but they mostly dead end. A few of the streets wrap around and lead onto other streets, but driving through Southside can feel like you are a mouse running a maze. Residents are able to recognize who doesn’t belong in Southside because the outsiders look confused as they drive up and down the same street, making multiple U-Turns trying to find California Street, the only street that allows drivers to exit the neighborhood. As you drive around Southside you will see houses of various age and size; there is no uniformity to the structures, yards or color of the homes. Most homes have bars on the windows and metal, rod iron fences surrounding the yard. You will notice multiple cars in the driveway and parked along the streets. Many of the front yards are full of dismantled vehicles being worked on. It is obvious that most of the homes hold multiple families or have been converted into several units with garages doubling as studio apartments. Since many residents use

public transportation and the bus does not enter into Southside, there is always a steady stream of pedestrians heading towards Main Street.

Many residents of the wider Beachside community use Main Street as the demarcation of sub-neighborhoods. For example, to live either North or South of Main Street can say a lot about the pocket of Beachside you reside in; it has become the borderline between many ethnic enclaves, gang territories and the poor versus wealthier areas of Beachside. Every JMS staff member and teacher must drive on Main Street to get to work each day and return home. As teachers pass California Street on their way to work, they can turn their head and look into Menudo but because the community is set so far back it is unlikely that any teacher is able to fully appreciate the community from which their students reside. Likewise, unless you actually live in Southside or have friends or relatives who live there, it is considered unsafe to enter into the neighborhood. The reputation of Southside means most residents of Beachside pass by this neighborhood on a daily basis, but are too scared to enter and have no first hand experience with this particular part of their community or its residents.

On the other hand, as you exit the freeway and head towards downtown Beachside you will find a cute, little beach town. The city has been working towards revitalizing the downtown area to attract tourists for at least twenty years. Beachside is well-known for its beautiful beaches and since the late 90s the city has courted developers to build vacation rentals and time shares. The previously family-run stores in the downtown area have been replaced with a smattering of hipster coffee shops, breweries, upscale dining, and new millions dollar beachfront properties. The

discrepancy in city funding and the living conditions within a two-mile distance is shocking, however, it remains unnoticed to the majority of citizens who refuse to even drive into the Southside neighborhood.

At the same time as the developers arrived to rebuild Beachside in the late 1990s, the city began instituting measures that made the trip to downtown Beachside quite unpleasant for Southside residents, especially the youth. It was around the 1930s, that the nickname "Menudo" was appropriated by teenage residents who claimed their gang to be, "Varrio Menudo Locos." In the early 1990s, Beachside garnered much attention in the media due to an increase in gang violence and in 1997, one of the first gang injunctions[38] in San Diego was filed against the "Varrio Menudo Locos." Those named in the court order could now be arrested for anything from wearing the wrong type of clothing to associating with their friends; many of whom were family members and neighbors that had lived next to each other for multiple generations. In fact, the court order stated that even siblings were not allowed to appear in public unless they were accompanied by their parents.

Countless activists, non-profit community organizations, legal scholars, criminologists and other scholars have already conducted research and provided evidence of how these injunctions are ineffective and result in collateral damages

38 As quoted from the ACLU of Northern California's Fact Sheet on Gang Injunctions it states that, "Gang injunctions are civil court orders that attempt to address crime by using a lower legal standard than required by the criminal justice system, resulting in serious civil liberties violations. Law enforcement use them as a tool to label people gang members and restrict their activities in a defined area. Gang injunctions make otherwise legal, everyday activities–such as riding the bus with a friend or picking a spouse up from work late at night–illegal for people they target. A gang injunction is obtained by the City attorney or District attorney who asks a judge to declare that a particular gang is a "public nuisance" and impose permanent restrictions on the targeted individuals' daily lives." (ACLU, May 2010).

while also criminalizing youth of color.[39] I will not provide an analysis of gang injunctions in my doctoral work. However, I use it to illustrate how policing measures can be interpreted and used by the wider community to further stereotype and stigmatize a particular youth group, whether or not they even are gang members or simply live in the neighborhood. The important connection to consider as you read this chapter is that the stigma associated with a particular neighborhood sustains a narrative about a particular group of youth that works its way into policing measures and city policy, which then bleeds into the school environment. Anyone who resides or has worked in Beachside for any length of time may not be aware of the historical trajectory of othering Southsiders, but I can confidently posit that if you ask any local (non-Southside resident) about JMS's students you will get a response that somehow identifies them as, "those kids, from that neighborhood."

In the remainder of this chapter, I will demonstrate that the well- known entrenched community narrative is that this particular youth group is "ghetto." They are known as the bad kids who lack respect for authority and basic civility. It is this belief that has made its way into the minds and hearts of some teachers and the curriculum of JMS. Similar as in the 1920s when Southside children were sent to the Americanization school, Southside youth today are approached as in need of proper socialization. One of the ways the school district communicates an adherence to the community narrative is by using curriculum that focuses attention on teaching morals and civility rather than academics.

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39 For further reference, see ACLU of Northern and Southern California's websites and research conducted by Criminologists Maxson, Hennigan and Sloane 2003; Hennigan and Sloane 2013 and Grassroots Organizations, such as Youth Justice Coalition.

Community Narrative: JMS Students Lack Morals and Civility

The wide-spread belief that JMS students are deficient in core values is further evident by the character education program purchased by JMS for $10 a student from a corporate business in 2011. This business and program is the creation of a former teacher and long-time resident of Beachside; no doubt its development was informed by this individual's residency in the community and an awareness of the community narrative of JMS students. It is also noteworthy that JMS is the only middle school out of 4 in the Beachside district to passionately adopt this program that one skeptical teacher referred to as "packaged morality." This character building program's mission loosely states that its meant to inspire students to make "positive choices and become productive members" of society in order to prevent "bad behavior." To accomplish its mission, this for-cost program includes lesson plans and advice for teachers, families and the community on how to teach values, such as respect to students.

Attitudes that JMS students need extra moral support extends beyond the steel fences that surround the school; even the Beachside community assumed the school's mantra of developing JMS students into civilized members of society. A teacher who supports the program, proudly said, "if you look in our community, our community has now adopted it, so you will see it going through downtown Beachside, by the library. They have banners of it. If you look at certain businesses, they have posters inside." She stated later in our conversation that she felt "empowered because the community was helping" the teachers to instill values in the students. She went on to say "as our kids are walking around the community and they see it, they're like, oh, yeah, this is a reality, this is what people need to be successful." It is not only the

students who take notice of the banners hung around the community, no doubt the citizens who walk the streets begin to perceive JMS students as requiring special attention that focuses on moral character. Interestingly, the businesses that have bought into the character building program are located in the areas of Downtown Beachside, which are mostly frequented by tourists and residents outside of JMS boundaries. There are no businesses owned and operated by Southside locals or on the immediate periphery that display banners in support of the character building program. You will not find evidence of the "keys to success" hanging inside the indoor Swap meet or at the corner Mexican markets where most of the locals' have shopped since the early 1930s.

Therefore, it is safe to assume that this is not a program initiated and sustained by the "insider," instead, this character building program comes from outside the boundaries of Southside. In effect, this is a program that is being done to the students as opposed to occurring organically and created with consent of the community it is meant to serve, or as some may argue, change. Consequently, the teachers jump the outside boundary into JMS every day and bring with them the attitude that the students are in desperate need of their help. You may be thinking but "what's wrong with teachers wanting to help their students? After all this is what the teaching profession is for, to educate those who are in need of being educated!" To the skeptics, I would like to point out that packaged morality brought into the classroom each day approaches the students as if they are defective and in need of fixing. For a teacher to carry this assumption of their students conveys a lack of recognition and stunts the teacher-student relationship. As we already learned, students want their teachers to recognize

and respect them as whole individuals, while also guiding them through life, but certainly not taking a paternalistic, patronizing approach that they are in need of "fixing." The intention of this program may be virtuous, but the unintended consequence of the community wide character building program is that it solidifies the reputation of JMS students as deficient in values and reinforces the hegemonic views of (dis)respect. The idea that mainstream individuals should bring proper respect into this neighborhood otherwise they will continue to be unsuccessful in school and life.

Another point to address is that this approach supports the narrative that the Menudo neighborhood is simply a gang-bangers delight, which ignores the fact that many of the residents welcome and work hard to transform their community. In fact, there has been substantial change that has arisen from *within* Menudo. In response to the increase in gang violence in the early 90s, a coalition of four Southside grassroots organizations worked to address the concerns of the residents and improve their neighborhood. They were successful in re-building the community center that offers resources that range from childcare, to after -school day care, to a teen center, counseling services, food distribution, legal advice, citizenship classes and a local NAACP chapter. However, it is this rich history and a wealth of community activism that is often overlooked by the wider community. Unfortunately, this positive behavior and history of community involvement is overshadowed in favor of the negative reputation assigned to Southside residents.

Furthermore, the corporation that developed and markets this character program also advocates a family program, which teaches parents how to strengthen their children's "character core" so they learn to make better decisions and combat the

"excellence deficit" that is found in peer groups "that don't have positive values." The assumption that informs this program is that immigrant, minority, working class parents are ill equipped to teach proper values, such as respect to their students without outside help from experts. As evident by one teacher who is an advocate for the character building program said "where else are they going to get it? I mean, they're not getting it at home." To discount particular families as vacant in morality is disrespectful in general, but it also sets up the teacher-student relationship to be threatening instead of supportive.

We can agree that U.S. education operates as a socialization agent and teachers are often responsible for instructing American values. Yet, there is an issue with teachers using pre-packaged morality like this character building program, for one, it unfairly targets Students of Color and immigrants as evident by its central role in JMS curriculum versus the secondary role it assumes at the other middle schools in the district. The assumption is implicit (and often explicit) that JMS students are in need of a special kind of socializing that students in the other neighborhoods of Beachside do not need.

Moreover, the wider Beachside community pushing this morality program on JMS students only asserts a hegemonic view of respect, thereby forcing students into conformity or risk being labeled as deviant or "ghetto." As evident in the epigraph of this chapter, students know that members of the community refer to Southside as "Ghetto Town" or "Shit Town." The reputation of JMS students saturates the entire community and this became clear during my formal interviews; I asked every teacher what they heard about Jackson and its students before they started working there.

Every teacher responded with the phrase "ghetto," but many of them did not limit the reputation to only the physical conditions of the school, instead they heard the student population was "ghetto." The following excerpts give a summary of the characteristics used to explain JMS students as ghetto:

> I heard about Jackson was that it was a school that served a population of working-class people. Depending on the people I talked to you'd hear the usual things like "oh my God it's a bad school" "it's a rough school" "these kids have a lot of problem's," blah, blah, blah. You know typical conversations of waspy middle class suburbanites. A lot of the teachers were there because they had to be either for their retirement or because that was where they had their contracts, and they had no desire to continue working with a population that was so disenfranchised from the educational institution. – Mrs. Miller

> Well, I subbed at Jackson beforehand so I kind of knew the clientele that was here. I usually hear that it's the rough group of kids, the hardest students to deal with. A lot of problems with the gangs and stuff like that, but in knowing that I was stepping into that and really even coming in, it's not like that at all. –Mrs. Chong

> I think Jackson actually really gets a bad rap and it's been known to be the gang school. It's been known to be the school where, you know, the kids go that can't do well anywhere else and it's certainly not that by any means. So I know that we do have a reputation. I hope to believe it's improving, but I know that over the years it's had a bad reputation. Right now we are really predominately Hispanic and we have a large, large percentage of English language learners. – Mrs. Lyon

These excerpts illustrate that the characteristics of the student body as they are used to explain the school's reputation of "ghetto" and the practice of explaining that JMS students are "the hardest students to deal with" because of being "working class" "Hispanic" or "English Language Learners." Clearly, JMS students are well-known in the surrounding community as deficient in multiple ways.

The character building program may have the intention of teaching students how to become civil members of society, but its latent function reinforces the community's perception of JMS students as "ghetto" and in need of learning proper respect, which bleeds into the school environment. The teachers are aware of the community narrative and enter into their classroom with preconceived ideas that the students are disrespectful gangbangers. Whereas, the students enter the classroom knowing that the teachers have heard they are disrespectful, no good gang bangers and many arrive on the first day of school defensive and feeling as if the teachers discount their abilities and worth. The situation is made worse by the fact that while the community and school is preaching the message of values and respect to the students of JMS, the condition of the school communicates a lack of respect for the students' identities, race, ethnicity, language and culture.

School Context: The Writing on the Wall and its Presentation of Disrespect

The school context includes factors found inside and outside the school setting; it is everything from the broken down conditions of the actual building to the reputation of the school in the outside community. In the 400 hours I spent at JMS, I learned students attach meaning to everything from the posters adorning the walls, to the set up of the classroom, to the food served at lunchtime, to the after school sports programs available. The posters were predominately admonishments to be respectful, responsible and safe, which signified to the students that they were rude, risk takers who acted disrespectfully. Students complained that the "food sucked" and they told me of how they heard the food was "way better" at the schools in the rich, white

neighborhoods. Also, they expressed that they felt slighted because they there were more after-school sports programs at the school across town. Again, according to Zandra this was proof that, "no one wants to coach us because we're ghetto and Mexican." For students, the physical condition of the school and its lack of resources was further evidence that white, rich students were treated better and that JMS students were given their left-overs. Students were profoundly aware of their lack of power and agency within the school setting. They were also painfully sensitive to how racism and classism supported a disrespectful school culture at JMS.

The following narrative is one my favorite excerpts because it so honestly demonstrates that students are hyper-aware of how "isms' and power work within the institution. They recognize how little power they have because they are minors and Students of Color; they also connect this to the school context and the larger world. I interviewed Danielle and Zandra a few times throughout my field research, but during our first interview, I brought up the mural that covers a huge wall on campus. The style of painting is street, graffiti art and it's entitled: "An Image of Jackson Youth." By all accounts, it is a very cool mural. And so, I asked Danielle and Zandra:

> Heidi: What do you think of the school mural?
>
> Danielle: We were just talking about that! I showed her that the girl on the mural, she's blonde and fucking skinny and I was like why didn't they put a fat, Mexican up there?
>
> Zandra [laughing]: I know! I hate it how they just put white people in there, and a skinny one! It should be a fat Mexican in there. It's all racist and shit.
>
> Danielle: I mean, it's an all Beaner school. They should have some Mexicans in there. Some tacos in there.

Heidi: So, why do you think they put a white girl in there?

Zandra: Because that's what you would think a good student would be. That's the image of a good student.

Heidi: So then, blonde, skinny white people are considered good students?

Danielle: Yeah. Yeah. well, they don't have to be blonde

Heidi: Ok, so just skinny and white?

Danielle: Well, not even skinny, sometimes just white.

Heidi: Well, there's not a lot of white people here, so what does that make Jackson?

Danielle: A bad school.

Zandra interrupts: Like being hypocrites and stuff!

Heidi: What do you mean?

Zandra: They always say there is diversity, but then they put up a white person, they're just being hypocrites, that's not diversity!

Heidi: What would you say if I told you it was students who painted the mural?

Danielle: Even if they painted it, they had instructions from adults.

Zandra: Yeah. Like they just couldn't put a dick up there.

Heidi: So someone in authority told the students what to paint?

Zandra: They had to follow the rules. It probably was a skinny white person who told them to put her up.

The mural was a collaboration of educators, artists and students in an effort to bridge JMS with the adjacent historically Mexican Immigrant Barrio. It was meant to celebrate Beachside's rich cultural history. Truthfully, up until the day Zandra and Danielle pointed it out, I did not notice that in the center of the mural, the main

character, was in fact, a skinny white girl. This makes the title of the mural, "An Image of Jackson Youth" all the more offensive, especially since the school is predominately non-white and overwhelmingly Latino/a. The definition of microaggressions is, "subtle, daily and cumulative forms of racism and classism that negatively affect minority students" (Pierce 1970). I ask: is it subtle that students who attend a school, 5 days a week, for 8 hours a day, for 10 months out of the year, must walk by a mural between 7 class periods, that is meant to represent the student body, yet fails miserably? These same students are then expected to walk into class and bestow respect on the very authority figures they identify as "racist" and "hypocritical." For Zandra and Danielle, the presentation of the school context valorizes a certain type of student (white=good) while offering them the ultimate form of disrespect; non-recognition. This passage serves as a reminder that students, even as young as 6th graders are cognizant that the school site does not reflect or welcome their culture, experiences, perspective and identity.

The physical condition of the school along with the school's well-known reputation in the community as "ghetto" penetrated the day-to-day life at JMS. Teachers reported that the reputation and the material conditions of the school conveyed (dis)respect to the student body and consequently, affected student engagement in class. In particular, the run-down physical conditions of the school communicated to the students, parents, teachers and surrounding community that JMS was a "ghetto" school. I asked Mr. Gilbert for reasons why JMS had such a bad reputation, he answered:

> I think perception is everything. I've actually read where if a student sees their school as say, ghetto, they're going to act ghetto and—I totally believe that. When I first got there, that school was like the second oldest school in San Diego County. It was completely rundown. It was ghetto. They didn't have enough room—I didn't have my own classroom. I had a shopping cart and I had to carry all my text books from class—four different classrooms that I used so I had to move around from classroom to classroom, it was so ridiculous. You know, the ceiling panels were falling off. The electricity didn't work. The water fountains didn't work. It was a rundown school. And students, the first thing they said, this school is ghetto. In their essays they would say, this school is ghetto, blah, blah, blah, and they'd act ghetto. I say you know what, the facilities are ghetto. They are beat up and rundown. I mean, it smells like mold. I couldn't wait to get out of there because it was just—it was a terrible classroom. I mean, that side of the campus is really rundown and ghetto. So, I think students—if they act ghetto, it's because they—I think part of it is they think the school is ghetto, so they act like the way the school looks. – Mr. Gilbert, 8th grade Language Arts Teacher

In this excerpt, Mr. Gilbert focuses on the material conditions of the school; he sees the outside and inside condition as influencing student behavior. Mr. Gilbert's sentiments mirror students' comments that the condition of the school is evidence that no one cares about them. I agree with Mr. Gilbert's rendition of the school grounds. In fact, during the final year of my observations, the school had to shut down three separate buildings due to being structurally unsafe. These old classrooms became storage units of old, broken desks and furniture that one could barely see through the dust-caked windows. There is already substantial educational research that finds a correlation between deteriorating schools and poor student performance and behavior (Lackney 1994; O'Neill and Oates 2001). Even so, expressions like Mr. Gilbert's reaffirm that a disrespectful student culture is not entirely that of the students doing, but is also co-produced by the physicality of the school setting and the amount of resources the district puts into it. Beyond the physical or geographical location of the

school site, there are other inside/outside factors, such as teachers' biases that invite the label of disrespect.

The Intersection of Immigration, Race, Class, "Gangbangers" and the Label of "Disrespectful"

As already discussed, JMS is situated in an immigrant community and serves a large population of first and second generation immigrants from Mexico, Central and South America. It has been hugely researched and established that we are living in a current era riddled with anti-Latino sentiments that are influencing not only immigration policy, but individual beliefs and an increase in nativist groups (Portes and Rumbaut 1996; Johnson 1997; Sánchez 1997; Kanstroom 2007; Varsanyi 2010; Martin 2011; Garcia 2012; 2013; Holmes 2013). Immigration scholars found that 50-70% of Americans oppose Latino immigration for noneconomic reasons, and instead fear that Latinos are diluting America's core culture with their food, culture, and language (Cornelius, Suárez-Orozco and Páez 2002). The history of the United States forced and voluntary immigration coupled with, and at times overshadowed by, strong anti-immigrant attitudes and actions; it is not surprising that teachers are not immune from biases against students' racial and ethnic identity and immigration status. This was made evident by many of the teachers at JMS who explicitly displayed negative beliefs about immigrants of Latino descent. For instance, Ms. Jefferson made explicit comments about students' race and immigrant background throughout my field research. The following excerpt is just one of many in which she explains her ideas on immigrant students' behavior. I asked her to give me an example of disrespectful behavior students display, she said:

> Ms. Jefferson: [The students] were throwing carrots a lot last year. That was annoying and that was the first generation, which is really unusual because usually first generation is working harder. And then second generation is where the behaviors start.
>
> Heidi: Oh that's interesting, why do you think that is?
>
> Ms. Jefferson: It's been my experience with first generation immigrants from all over the world that they have more of a vision of the American dream and the education is the way to get there.
>
> Heidi: And the what happens to the second generation that they—you're saying that they don't like—
>
> Ms. Jefferson: They become complacent. I probably sound like a racist. But we have kids that were born and lived in Beachside their whole life and still could not speak English. And to me that's just tragic because I think it's really good to keep your home language but I think that it's really important that you learn the language of the country. And this is—the Latino group, and you'll have to do research on this if you're interested, is the one that expects Spanish to be accepted all the way across the country and—rather than have them imposed on that they're speaking English. You know, that didn't happen with the Greeks or the Chinese or the Italians or the Spaniards, the Irish. I think there's a real lack of exposure to culture other than the home culture, but I'm talking about the experiential—the quality of experiential opportunities, going to cultural museums, hearing different kinds of music, seeing people dress differently, going to a symphony, going even to Sea World on a more regular basis than once in a lifetime gives kids an opportunity—it broadens their horizons and lets them see what else there is in the world. There are kids here who have never been to the beach. Their parents are too busy working or they have so many kids they don't want to pack them all up and take them to the beach. It's shocking.
>
> Heidi: And do you think this affects their behavior in the classroom?
>
> Ms. Jefferson: I think it's harder for them to behave they feel locked into Beachside.

This excerpt is riddled with race, class and immigrant stereotypes that influence the decisions Ms. Jefferson makes in how she manages her classroom and interacts with

her students. Here, we find evidence of her belief that the student (and parent) population is lazy and culturally deficient, which she sees as having a direct effect on their behavior in school. Furthermore, Ms. Jefferson reflects an assimilationist ideology that presupposes that success is only achieved when immigrant children no longer speak their native tongue and assimilate to the dominant white culture (Carter 2006). This approach denies Student of Color and immigrants the ability to express their culture and language, which together alienates them from the educational experience.

Consider the other factors that Ms. Jefferson is not taking into account when she blames the parents and youth for having, "never been to the beach" as a cause for their deviant behavior. As already discussed, since the mid 90s the Beachside community actively worked and succeeded with legal restraints to keep the Southside youth out of the potential tourist locations (i.e. the beach). The gang-injunctions have been successful in keeping the youth and their family from enjoying a day at the beach as many of the Southside residents were met with police harassment. The "Safety Zone" or the area that named defendants are not allowed to "loiter" extends all the way to the Ocean. Moreover, the students of the current generation are the children of the first round of named defendants in the injunction and as such their parents were legally restricted from taking them to the beach. It should be of no surprise then that these children feel disrespected by a community climate that communicates they are unwelcome in the areas designed for the better paid, whiter residents and visiting tourists. As obvious by Ms. Jefferson's statement, many of the teachers are unable to situate their students' behavior within the context of the history of Beachside's

exclusion of Southside residents either because of a lack of knowledge of the students lives or an unwillingness to be reflective of their own biases. Either way, this attitude creeps into the school environment and creates a disrespectful school culture that increases student alienation from the schooling process.

Some of the teachers excused moments of disrespect as a "cultural" misunderstanding between teachers and students. For example, when I asked the school counselor whether or not the students at JMS are disrespectful, she responded:

> There's different sides and meanings and levels of words, so I think the meaning of respect means, I mean if you just asked, "are the kids disrespectful here?" Yeah a lot of them are if you're defining disrespect as they don't say "yes, ma'am" or "no sir" or "please and thank you." You know sometimes they will run in front of you in the hall or something like that. I mean when I was teaching ESL and I'd have papers to pass out and they'd run up and grab them from my hands or if I brought in treats they'd run up and try to get as many as they could. At first, I thought they were being disrespectful, but I learned that it is cultural because if you didn't do that in their families, because they are so many people, you may not get anything to eat. A lot of that is, they haven't learned socially acceptable responses that [gesturing air quotes] "Mainstream" or "White America" understands as the manifestation of respect. Therefore, they are disrespectful. And to me that is just crazy.

Here, Mrs. Meyers communicates that disrespect is a term defined by White, Mainstream America; a hegemonic view that is used to uphold their version of what is considered socially acceptable. Although Mrs. Meyers is attempting to explain how the dominant definition is used to define and interpret students' behavior as disrespectful, she is also evoking racial and immigrant stereotypes to explain why students act the way they do. The practice of "student profiling" and reducing misbehavior or disrespectful attitude as an indication of a "culture of poverty" is often used by teachers to explain a pathology among poor students. In turn, teachers use this

as an excuse for why they are not successful with certain students (Ladson-Billings 2006, 104). The counselor's perspective goes unchallenged and is reinforced by the community and school narrative that identifies certain students as doomed for failure based on their race, class or immigration status. This community-wide narrative permits teachers' racial and class bias to be used in the classroom to reinforce hegemonic ideas about students' demeanor and acts of (dis)respect, which result in more class time spent on behavior and disciplinary action and a loss of learning.

As I have pointed out, one of the ways racism and classism enter into the school environment are through the teachers' beliefs and actions. The individual histories and beliefs that teachers bring into the classroom matter for a few reasons. For instance, teachers make decisions on how to instruct and respond to their students informed by the models they learned throughout their life. Teachers are responsible for planning lessons, curricula, and ongoing classroom routines based on assumptions about what their student already know or what the teacher feels they are capable of learning. Also, teachers carry assumptions about the kinds of language they should use with their students and what they may or may not have in common with their students. Similar to how all people make sense of the world, teachers make decisions informed on their belief system. The bottom line is clear: these decisions based on their worldview do have an impact on their teaching and on their students' learning.

The excerpts shared throughout this dissertation provide evidence of even well-intentioned teachers' implicit and explicit racial and class bias. Day after day, I witnessed teachers makes assumptions about students' motives, actions and ability based on racial and class-based stereotypes. For the most part, teachers believe they

are being unbiased and fair to all student regardless of class, race, ethnicity or gender. However, it became evident that in particular, the gangbanger identity intersects with assumptions about race, class and immigration status and teachers' ideas of gangbangers are fueled by the larger stereotype of Latinos, generally. For example, the discussion of JMS students as gangbangers was brought up frequently throughout my 3 years at JMS. Most often, the information that a student was from a family known to have gang affiliations meant they were described as "not amounting to much."

Many of the teachers use the students' biography, and in some cases, their parents' biography, to profile students and assess their abilities or potential for success. One such example occurred in the beginning of my field research, I noticed a girl who was "acting out." Her name was Bernadette and she was not doing any work, she got up and walked around the classroom with no regard for lecture or assignment. Bernadette was loudly talking to friends and in my opinion was being disruptive. I noticed that Ms. Jefferson completely ignored Bernadette's behavior, there was no re-direction or discipline. It was as if Bernadette was invisible and Ms. Jefferson had given up all hope and just did not care. After class, I approached the teacher to ask if my presence in class was contributing to Bernadette's behavior and the teacher's immediate response was, "NO, she's just a bitch!" I must have looked shocked to hear a teacher call a student a bitch, because she quickly tried to solicit sympathy from me by saying, "I mean, she is Menudo, her parents are from Menudo and her grandparents are Menudo. If you add that together with a learning disability and ESL then you have a real mess."

This exchange demonstrates that when a student has been labeled a gang member many teachers will use this information to put significantly less effort into their instruction. The profiling of students believed to be gang members was confirmed by Anna, the security guard at JMS for twenty years. One day, I watched her interact with a group of boys considered the gang-bangers at school. She gave one of the boys after school detention for eating on the blacktop. The walked over to us and were posturing as tough guys. They said, "oh come on Ms. Anna, don't be like that" and "oh that's messed up" and Anna simply laughed, rolled her eyes and said "knock it off, guys." And because Anny had "school cred" they stopped and politely asked her how she was doing and even gave her a hug. There was no escalation of conflict. After a few moments, she pulls one boy aside and I head her say in a concerned tone of voice, "Hijo, how are you doing?" When she returned from speaking with the young man, she turned to me and said:

> You don't tell people that he's a little shit – even though they do bad things they aren't bad kids. You have to get to know them, you have to care enough to know that they have good hearts. I hear some of the teachers talk about this one kid who is a supposed gang member and but I've talked to him and he has a good heart. He's a good kid, its not his fault his grandparents and parents are in a gang and even if he is a gang member you don't give up on him you have to see that he is a good kid. He still has a good heart, but all they see is he is a gang member and they assume he isn't going to amount to anything.

Anna is able to see past the "gangbanger" label because she was born, raised and still resides in Southside. Unlike the other teachers, Anna does not have to jump the outside boundary to enter JMS and therefore she recognizes that simply because a student grew up in "Menudo" that does not make them "bad kids." The two identities are not mutually exclusive. The students loved Anna and most importantly they

respected her because she sees them as having potential beyond the label of a gangbanger. Here, Anna handed out a detention slip to a student and in the next moment she was hugging the same student who other teachers labeled a disrespectful, gangster and a waste of time. Anna is able to traverse any boundary as an authority figure because she treated every student as much more than a "Menudo."

The criminalization of youth, especially Latino youth, occurred daily at JMS. Teachers profiled students as deviant gang members from their style of dress, everyday behavior and language. Sociologist Victor Rios (2011) refers to this as "the youth control complex, a system in which schools, police, probation offices, families, community centers, the media, businesses, and other institutions systematically treat young people's everyday behaviors as a criminal activity" (xiv). Noting that the micro-powers and the macro forces converge at school to sanction students because of any misbehavior or perceived disrespect to authority, Rios is able to show how students viewed as gangsters are harassed, profiled and disciplined at young ages, before they were ever arrested or committed any crimes and how this impacted their view of school and life outcomes (2011: xv). I witnessed the consequences of this stigma for students who had an older brother who was a known gang member, or as in Bernadette's case, the legacy of her parents who attended JMS years before. I witnessed the cycle of "hypercriminalization" (Rios 2011) beginning as early as 6th grade as Latino youth who grew up in Menudo's neighborhood were constantly fighting the stigma associated with the gang territory. As discussed in Chapter 4, students felt helpless to get out from under a teacher's grudge. Similarly, students were labeled a gang member because of their last name or where they lived or the types of

clothes they wore; this had a profound negative impact on the teacher-student relationship.

The stereotype of Latino youth as "gangbangers" intersected with the label of "disrespectful" so much so that it became a proxy for all marginalized identities. Most teachers did not draw on overt racial stereotypes to explain student misbehavior. Instead, many used the blanket term of "disrespectful" to justify the harsh discipline of students who fit the criteria of Latino youth presumed to be a gang member. To explain that the student was "disrespectful" and thus deserved a referral or suspension allowed teachers and school authorities to target specific youth unapologetically. In fact, they actually gained the support of other staff members instead of being forced to check their own biases and be reflective on why they assumed this student was a waste of their time.

Throughout my field research, I observed teachers negotiating their biases of students. Some used their bias to categorize students as a waste of time and others were able to withstand outside pressure to view them as gangbangers. For example, Mrs. Chong worked for one year at the continuation school attached to JMS, this school enrolls students who did not pass the 8th grade exit exam. She unknowingly testifies to the practices of teachers profiling students, and how this affected them, she stated:

> They were over there because they failed the 8th grade exit exam and most of them were discipline issues. They were all the kids that were taken out of class because they were written referral after referral. The teachers gave up on them. They just didn't have the confidence to go on anymore.

Mrs. Chong spoke at length about her experiences at the continuation school. She mentioned how deeply affected her students were by teachers who had given up on them or only saw them as gang-bangers. The students had lost all confidence in themselves and the will to continue with school. She expressed that because of the students' previous bad experience with teachers from JMS, she had to work doubly hard to earn their respect, she said:

> I think it took me two and a half months just to get their respect. Just to get them to realize that I wasn't going anywhere, I wasn't going to be the teacher that gave up on them, I was going to go come to their house. I was dragging them out of bed to come to class. Whatever I had to do to prove to them that I was there and not giving up on them. So, you know, once they got on board and you taught them respect and they treated you with respect, they were in the palm of my hands, I could do anything I wanted with them. They would listen and do it.

This excerpt underlines the necessity that a teacher extends deference to students first in order to earn their respect. Mrs. Chong had to prove to them that she "wasn't going anywhere" and "wasn't going to be the teacher that gave up on them." She went so far as to go to their house and wake them up in the morning when they did not show up for class. The demeanor she crafted showed her level of commitment and supplied her with a sturdy amount of school cred. In turn, she was able to withdraw from her classroom capital, and the students who were kicked out of middle school and profiled as "discipline issues" were putty in her hands. Mrs. Chong did not profile students as hopeless, "gang bangers who never amount to anything" but recognized their potential. As such she initiated a relationship built on respect and she proudly relayed stories of former students who returned years later to thank her for not giving up on them. Obviously, not every teacher will be committed to drag truant students out of their

bed, but I contend that this sort of drastic behavior would not have been necessary if the JMS teachers had refused to succumb to the narrative that all students living in Menudo territory were gangbangers and a waste of time. These teachers had given up on their students and discouraged them to the point of feeling as if there was no use in attending school. As Chapter 5 demonstrated, a labeling attitude and the behavior that follows can be avoided, but it must be addressed on day one of school. Teachers must express respect and invite that respect from their students to sustain a workable relationship that encourages mutual respect.

On the other hand, it must be acknowledged that being a teacher is not easy work. It is notoriously a low-paying profession with long hours of preparation and work outside of class-time. However, this does not excuse racial and classist microaggressions being perpetrated by teachers on students everyday. Yet, it does point to exploring how the profession itself is structured to facilitate a disrespectful culture. The next section will briefly connect how the pressure of teaching contributes to what I refer to as teaching fatigue. As my data suggests, teaching fatigue may also influence a disrespectful classroom culture.

Teaching Fatigue

I use the term "Teaching Fatigue" to encompass a few reoccurring themes that emerged from my data. I categorize teacher fatigue as any admission by teachers that signifies they are unhappy with teaching. However, it is much more than teachers are just unhappy with teaching; my findings illuminate that teachers are the mirror image of their students. Similar to the students who crave respect from their teacher, teachers

crave respect from school administrators, the state and the parents. For students, the struggle to earn respect from their teacher is demeaning to their human dignity and creates a sense of alienation from the schooling process. For teachers, the struggle to earn respect from their students and school authorities creates a sense of fatigue that drains their relationship with students and sometimes their original love for teaching.

The rise of accountability policies, such as the No Child Left Behind to the newest Common Core, has shifted public K-12 education from a situation in which schools and teachers had more autonomy to a more formal, hierarchical, authoritative setting (Ladd 1996; Dee and Jacob 2010). And many of the teachers were not shy to express that they were unhappy with administration, the State and other changes being forced upon them. They complained of strained communication with administration, which contributed to changes being made too slowly. Some felt they were not recognized for their hard work and as one teacher confessed that it was "very difficult to keep your passion when you don't feel appreciated or valued." Many of the teachers I met had a "I just work here" attitude and actually responded with that exact phrase when asked about school policies or bureaucratic details. In part, this was due to the feeling that they had no control in the classroom or where they were placed. In fact, one teacher stated "we are at the whim of administration." Feeling as if they have no control within the institution signifies that teachers feel a lack of recognition from their administrators and a sense of powerless.

In the three years it took to complete my field work, three Principals filtered in and out of JMS and many teachers complained that each new administrator, "has their own vision to the school and they change the rulebook and you don't know the

rulebook's been changed unless they really make their desires known." Another teacher believed the issues in education were a result of being "top heavy" she went on to suggest that "if we had more people in the trenches, California education would be a lot different." The two male teachers I spent most of my time with both had a distaste for administrators for other reasons, which including having little respect for administrators they claimed earned their EDDs and Ph.D.'s from online universities. In particular, one teacher was very vocal that college degrees from such universities "mean nothing" because "they simply bought their degree" and "have no real practice in the educational world." His facial expressions communicated disgust as he loudly complained that he "finds it difficult to respect administrators who did not have an education from accredited universities." This statement highlights the importance of cultivating a respectful school culture in order for teachers to transfer this feeling into their teaching and model it for their students.

One teacher actually broke into tears as she spoke of her relationships with the administrators. She complained of being micro-managed to the point of the Principal telling her how to arrange her classroom desks. She interpreted being micro-managed as evidence the administration did not trust her or have faith in her ability even though she had been a teacher for 33 years. As she choked back the tears, she confided that the administration's tactics, "doesn't make a person want to do their very best, or even try, when you act like you don't have faith in them." About 6 months later, during our formal interview, the same teacher brings this issue up again, she said:

> It's very frustrating because you don't want to be at someone else's whim, you know, you'd like to think that you have some sort of autonomy or you had at least a say and there should be mutual respect

> for the position as administrator and for the position as a teacher that you are the expert within your room. And if you're highly competent then you should be allowed to teach maybe what your preference is, as long as it's not in conflict with someone else, if it needs to be done, that you'd have a say in that. I don't recommend anybody go into teaching anymore. I've actually told people who say that want to go into teaching and I'll say it has to be a calling, a really has to be a soul path if you wanna survive it because it's gotten so difficult and frustrating from the administration and legislation that it's very disheartening if you're in it and you don't have the passion to carry it through. You'll burn out.

Interestingly, teachers are looking for the same type of respect from their Principal that I observed many of them unwilling to give to their students. This teacher was driven to tears because she felt as if she was treated with such little respect. In her own words, she said it is "disheartening" and difficult to "carry through." Yet, she was unable to see that she acts in a very similar way towards her students and non-reflective to admit that perhaps her students feel disheartened by her disrespectful acts.

It is possible that teachers who view their authority and relationship with administration as tenuous may feel powerless. Furthermore, if a teacher is feeling unappreciated and disrespected by their administrators then they may try to force deference from their students to fill the power void. The problem is that respect, as we have seen, can not be forced and the practices of excessive discipline, making fun of students, holding grudges and allowing biases to creep in will not enlist respect from students. Instead, it will only leave teachers feeling doubly disrespected by administrators and students alike.

Teachers also felt unsupported by parents and this caused additional fatigue with teaching. For example, Ms. Marie confided that she thought the biggest issue at JMS was, "No parent response. I think that's a huge problem the teachers have too. I

don't know if it's socioeconomic, but calling parents and their phones aren't on or they don't answer their phones. They're working two, three, four jobs just to make ends meet. They're stressed. These parents are having a hard time getting involved because there's too much other stuff going on. Their kid getting suspended is the least of their worries." Although Ms. Marie recognized that parents in this neighborhood were overwhelmed with working multiple jobs to support their family, she still finds the lack of communication with staff a huge problem that makes her and the classroom teachers job difficult.

Other teachers commented on how the lack of support from parents puts more pressure on the teachers, for example, Mrs. Chong discusses how she has to provide positive reinforcement and constant encouragement to her students because "sometimes at home, they're not getting that. You know, mom and dad are out working and can't provide that extra encouragement. They're home a lot by themselves or maybe both parents just really are not there at all. They're not checked into their kid. They don't ask them what they've been doing all the day. They come home at 9:00, 10:00 at night and they go to bed. At least they have a place to stay, but that's really—that's about their conversation." Other teachers complained that there has been a shift in support from parents over the years, Ms. Jefferson states:

> Yeah. I think a lot of parents are so busy just trying to make a living that they don't have the energy left over to do the discipline that they need to be doing or to focus on the schoolwork like they need to be doing. And now it's shifted from the parents supporting the teachers and not even questioning if you call, to some parents who believe their kid over the teacher and I just have to say things, you know what, I have better things to do with my life than make up stories about your child. I mean truly. You know, I'm 57 years old, I don't need to make up stories about a kid.

Interestingly, Ms. Jefferson is remembering a time when parents deferred to teachers and accepted that they were experts and knew best. In thirty years the conditions outside of the classroom have changed, the wider society has transformed. For one, race and class based microaggressions are no longer widely accepted by the powerless as the status quo. For an "old-timer" like Ms. Jefferson, the new policies, both formal and informal had changed her relationship with parents and this also contributed to her unhappiness and teaching fatigue.

Teachers routinely complained that they were "burnt out" with teaching at JMS. In fact, one teacher frequently referred to working at JMS as "doing time." To relate teaching at JMS to a phrase most often used to explain serving a prison sentence seems extreme, but a few teachers voiced this severe state of fatigue. Even though all of the teachers I interviewed shared their experience with teaching fatigue, the successful teachers who maintained a respectful classroom culture also looked for ways to combat the fatigue. The strategies they used to stop feeling unchallenged or bored or burnt out included: going back to school to earn a Master degree to move out of the classroom and into the administrator career path. Others asked for transfers to another school or to be moved grade levels to try something new. For example, Mr. Gilbert worked at the local high school for 17 years before requesting a transfer to Jackson. He shared with me:

> It had become too routine. I'd done it for so many years that I was starting to become complacent. I would assume students knew this and that, it's not like a first year teacher where you assume students know nothing so you teach them everything. I assumed the students knew more than they really did so I didn't really teach it—I could see that. I could just show up at 7:15, leave at 2:45, I knew exactly, today is

> Monday, January 26th, this is what we're going to do—I just, you know, because I had been doing it for five years, it had become routine. And it was good because you know, I didn't have to prepare. Everything was done. But, it got to the point where, like I said, you know, it wasn't a challenge, I would just show up and do my job and go home.

Mrs. Chong changed her curriculum to counter the fatigue from teaching the same grade for 5 years. She said, "I constantly changed my lesson plans so I wouldn't be bored and then therefore the students wouldn't be bored. So, continually adapting to what the needs of the students are, it makes you change what you're going to deliver and present which makes it a lot more fun than just doing the same thing every year and year in and year out." Here, we see that Mrs. Chong not only attempts to curb teaching fatigue for her benefit, but she also realized that if she was feeling fatigued then this could translate over to her students. She strategizes how to keep her teaching fresh and fun for her and her students. Feeling unsupported, unappreciated and disrespected by their administrators and parents made many teachers unhappy with their job. However, successful teachers who feel unhappy with their positon make changes to their curriculum, pedagogy, goals or become involved at the institutional level to make changes happen at the school.

Conclusion

Overall, the final empirical chapter illuminated complexities involved beyond individual level, face-to-face interactions that support a disrespectful teacher-student relationship. The complexities this chapter revealed centered on how the community, school site and factors such as racism, classism and prejudice against immigrants all collide and may interact to create a deeply challenging school environment. These

forces, above and beyond the individual, encourage a pervasive disrespectful classroom culture that contributes directly to failure for some students and indirectly to a sense of alienation for all students.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION

"Respect is an expressive performance. That is, treating others with respect doesn't just happen. . . to convey respect means finding the words and gestures which make it felt and convincing" Richard Sennett 2003

My doctoral work researched how educational inequality is reproduced by the intersection of identity, face-to-face interaction and the politics of contested meanings. Throughout this dissertation, I explored the ways in which teachers and students' meanings of (dis)respect differed and aligned. I also examined under what conditions students reported feeling (dis)respected by their teachers and how these (dis)respectful exchanges impact teacher-student relationships. To answer these questions, I used empirical data collected from over 400 hours of participant observation and 52 in-depth interviews at a public middle school grounded in theories of symbolic interactionism to discover the meanings individuals attach to the everyday use of (dis)respect. Using symbolic interactionism as my theoretical foundation, I formulated a model to explain the factors, tensions, and implications of the contested meanings of (dis)respect in the classroom.

My research challenges structural based literature focused on the function of education and how it connects to the reproduction of inequality. Instead, I explore interpersonal relationships between teachers and students to better understand how they negotiate contested meanings of (dis)respect and together influence educational inequality by alienating students from the schooling process. Contrary to established literature, I find that conflict in the classroom does not arise from students'

oppositional attitude to education or authority, or a warped sense of respect, but occurs as a reaction to feeling disrespected and shamed by their teachers. Specifically, I use Erving Goffman's (1967) rituals of face-to-face interaction as a theoretical lens to propose a third process in face-work, a "reprisal process."[40] I argue that understanding how the reprisal process works is extremely important because it allows researchers and educators to interpret student behavior as not emerging from an oppositional attitude to education or authority, but a reaction to feeling disrespected, shamed and uncared for by their teachers. The "reprisal process" is one strategy students use to protect their identities and retain the respect of their peers, however, the reprisal process is often misunderstood by teachers as an act of disrespect and not one of "saving face."

Contrary to popular belief, my project finds that (dis)respect is not simply an outgrowth of juvenile student culture, but is produced through interactions with teachers that uphold unequal power relations. This finding is important, as it demonstrates that teachers' definition of respect is intertwined with issues of power, authority, coercion, and domination and also how their ideas of (dis)respect are informed and mediated by their cultural capital and identities. Focusing on how teacher and student interaction is rooted in hegemonic understanding of (dis)respect exposes how inequality is also reproduced in everyday activities.

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40 The reprisal process is a strategy used by some students who feel that they lost "face" from a teacher's sarcastic, teasing or mean comment or from being put on the spot in front of their peers. The reaction does not fall under Goffman's binary of "avoidance or corrective process." Instead, in order to "save face" the student will "one-up" the teacher and respond with a sarcastic, witty comeback. It is these moments, that contribute to some students being labeled by their teachers as disrespectful and willfully defiant. In reality, it is the teacher who initiated the struggle for respect by treating the students with disrespect.

As with my analysis of students, I also sought patterns among teachers' view of (dis)respect and found that when a teacher's demeanor communicated interest in a symmetrical relationship they were more likely to receive respect from their students. My study found that successful teachers used respect to develop a connection with their students while maintaining their authority in the classroom. On the other hand, the data suggested that a teacher who demands respect from their students, without themselves first earning it, may initiate and engage in the struggle for respect. Importantly, my doctoral work is the first to outline the dynamic role (dis)respect plays in determining whether a student offers cooperation or engages in conflict based on their teachers (re)action to misconduct. To explain how this co-constitutive process worked, I returned to Goffman theory of face-to-face interaction and incorporated aspects of Bourdieu's understanding of cultural capital and symbolic power. I argue that teachers with "school cred" earned classroom capital, which could be used as a source of power to bargain with students during moments of conflict. However, teachers who demanded respect from their students and outsourced discipline to security or the administration depleted any school cred or classroom capital they may have earned. Overall, these findings provide concrete suggestions to educators on how to facilitate a respectful and caring relationship with their students from day one.

Finally, my analysis demonstrates how a disrespectful school culture is informed by neighborhood effects and reinforced by the community narrative. I examine how these factors converge with racism, classism and prejudice against immigrants to create the perfect storm of a disrespectful school environment. By illuminating the forces, above and beyond the individual, I am also able to determine

how a pervasive disrespectful classroom culture is reinforced by factors outside the classroom, all of which contribute directly to failure for some students and indirectly to a sense of alienation for all students.

The central contention of my doctoral work has been that the concept of respect holds theoretical and social significance as it is co-produced within the institutional context of school. As defined in this study, the meaning students and teachers attach to (dis)respectful interaction is both shared and contested, but ultimately driven by identities that intersect with face-to-face interaction that together impact the everyday lives of the individuals I studied.

Contributions to the Field

Theoretically, this dissertation fills the gaps left by sociologists of education who have been more oriented towards explanations of the macro-level forces responsible for educational inequality. Similarly, sociologists have explored at length how power relations operate in institutions and through discourse, however, power in face-to-face interaction is less examined (Hallett 2007). My research addresses both gaps by considering how inequality is reproduced in the school setting by teachers' use of power and their meanings of (dis)respect colliding with students' meanings which sparks conflict and stunts the student-teacher relationship.

Importantly, this dissertation also contributes to the field of education by pinpointing specific actions that give rise to conflict in the classroom and work to destroy the precious teacher-student relationship. By isolating the source of these conflicts, I am able to offer practical solutions for educators to invite and co-create a

respectful classroom culture. Furthermore, my in-depth analysis of the interactional dynamics and social processes associated with (dis)respect provides valuable insight that is also applicable to other contexts and generalizable to a larger audience.

The questions raised and answered throughout this dissertation are not only significant within the confines of the educational institution. In fact, school may simply be a laboratory for studying the processes involved in what I refer to as, "doing inequality." Adapted from West and Zimmerman (1987) theory of "doing gender" which provided a theoretical reconceptualization of the distinctions of sex, sex category and gender by pointing to the ways in which gender is a "routine accomplishment in everyday interaction" (1987:125) by exploring how gender is a "powerful ideological device," West and Zimmerman argued that gender is produced and reproduced in social situations (1987:147). Likewise, the concept of "doing inequality" requires, first, the construction of differences (race, class, gender etc.) among individuals such as students, and second, the reinforcing of these differences by engaging in ongoing activities that are embedded in everyday face-to-face interaction (West and Zimmerman 1987:150). Broadly speaking, I propose that "doing inequality" is perpetuated by those in a position of authority and power who (re)actively withhold respect from marginalized populations. To withhold respect from minority groups is to reinforce social boundaries that dictate who is deserving of power, privilege and resources, thereby promising social inequality will continue regardless of the social structure. Evidence of "doing inequality" is found in the negative perceptions and absence of respect through the shaming of "others" which can be found in institutions outside of education, such as the welfare office (i.e. how case workers interact with

welfare recipients). Another example can be found in recent research which has identified an analogous "culture of disrespect" in the medical field. One study even describes physicians' disrespect of patients as a "poison" that "inhibits collegiality and cooperation essential to teamwork, cuts off communication, undermines morale, and inhibits compliance of new practices" (Leape et. al 2012:1).

Overall, my contribution to sociology is a deeper understanding of the co-production of (dis)respect and its multiple meanings, which not only illuminates the importance of (dis)respect at school, but within other institutional settings. Thus, understanding the theoretical and social significance of respect for diverse individuals and the allocation of who is "deserving" of respect is necessary to reduce unequal power relations not only in the classroom, but for society as a whole.

Limitations of Study and Suggestions for Future Research

I wish to acknowledge a few limitations to this study. I conducted an in-depth ethnographic study at one school in order to examine the complexities of (dis)respect. Because I was interested in privileging those most silenced, I believed the only appropriate research design for this study was to honor the centrality of students as the experts in the schooling process (Rodriguez 2011). In doing so, my study was able to attest to the multiple meanings that inhere the concept of (dis)respect, whereas, a thorough understanding of the meanings individuals attach to patterns of (dis)respect may have been lost in a comparison case. At the same time, because only one case was studied, I recognize that a future study that compares multiple school sites might produce different results worth noting.

Another area of concern may be that the data analyzed represents an "outsider" perspective, and strictly an "insider" perspective may have generated different analysis or results. I attempted to be a reflexive ethnographer and as such worked to be cognizant of this limitation. To become familiar with critical perspectives to enhance my interpretation of data I read an extensive amount of literature including, but not limited to Critical Race Theory (Grillo and Wildman 1991; Aleinikoff 1992; Bell 1992; Delgado 1993; Bonilla-Silva 1996 and 2006) Intersectionality (Crenshaw 1989; hooks 1990 and 1994; Collins 2000; Bettie 2002) and Culturally Relevant Pedagogy (Moll, Amanti, Neff and Gonzalez 1992; Ladson-Billing 2006; Morrission, Robbins, and Rose 2008). Coupled with my positionality as a both an insider and outsider –as discussed in my methods chapter- I believe I was able to offer a unique perspective. However, I acknowledge that an interpretation of the co-production of (dis)respect in the classroom from an individual who experienced education under these conditions would also be valuable.

These limitations are not problematic to the significance of the entire project. Instead, they are the focus of my suggestions for future research into the social and theoretical significance of (dis)respect. The results of this study have several implications for future research. First, a follow up study should include a case selection of multiple school sites. This study would allow for comparison across diverse student and teacher populations and examine if (dis)respect operates and is co-produced differently dependent on institution, and/or varying socioeconomic, race and gender diversity among students and teachers. Although, I am inclined to argue that my findings are indeed generalizable to many schools throughout the U.S. because, as

I have demonstrated, the politics and struggle for respect transcends class, race and gender boundaries. Everyone desires respect from others and most people feel slighted when disrespected. Thus, the opportunity for the struggle over contested meanings occurs everyday in multiple institutions. Either way, it would be of value to test my hypothesis to confirm that the search for and struggle of respect extends beyond the Barrio.

I suggest that future research is conducted with an eye related to theories of Culturally Relevant Pedagogy. In testing my propositions of "reprisal process" "school cred" and "classroom capital" future educational research will produce enriched analysis and findings that may provide suggestions for developing curriculum and specific lesson plans that mitigate the contested meanings of (dis)respect in the classroom.

Although I am urging future research to make practical suggestions, I feel this project already does make important empirical contributions to the field of sociology. My findings demonstrate that teachers can create a respectful classroom climate while maintaining their authority. I explain that successful teachers view respect as part of a reciprocal relationship, one that must be sincere and earned. These teachers acknowledge that the recognition of respect is *not* contingent on the ideal "good" student, but view their students holistically. Teachers do not have to sacrifice their authority to gain students respect. On the contrary, successful teachers were able to use respect, as a means of authority and classroom management, but only *after* they developed a connection by employing the students' notion of respect. This project can be used in teacher instruction to demonstrate the importance of co-creating a respectful

relationship while also providing suggestions as to how teachers can acquire respect from their students. Educating future teachers to use the strategies discussed in this dissertation will invite the respect of their students and contribute to a holistic classroom culture.

Overall, this dissertation demonstrated that evidence of a disrespectful student body should certainly not be over-simplified as a symptom of students' culture, background, and family structure etc. Instead, (dis)respect is a variable that is also informed by *teachers'* culture and background, but always (co)produced through interaction between teachers and students. Just as teachers and educators are quick to take credit for producing a successful student culture, they also share a responsibility in manufacturing a disrespectful one. Consequently, the dynamic role (dis)respect plays in the education system is of extreme importance to educators and scholars because as I argue the struggle for respect can either make or break the valuable student-teacher relationship, thereby impacting students' future success. In conclusion, this doctoral work serves as a map of the misunderstandings and consequences of the contested meanings of (dis)respect. It is my sincere wish that this project will be used as a guide to create an inclusive school culture in which teachers and students equally feel welcomed, recognized and of course, respected.

APPENDIX A
List and Descriptions of Disciplinary Actions

1. Campus Transformation

Assigned by school staff for a variety of student behaviors, i.e., tardies, classroom disruption and defiance, failing to adhere to class, school, or district policies, etc. During Campus Transformation students work for the first 20 minutes of lunchtime and pick up trash in and around the cafeteria.

2. Lunch Detention

Assigned by school staff for a variety of student behaviors, i.e., tardies, classroom disruption and defiance, failing to adhere to class, school, or district policies, etc. During Lunch Detention, students stay in the office for the first 20 minutes of lunch time.

3.After School Detention

Assigned by school staff for a variety of student behaviors, i.e., tardies, classroom disruption and defiance, failing to adhere to class, school, or district policies. After School Detention takes place Tuesday through Friday, immediately after school for 20 minutes. Failure to attend After School Study Hall will result in Thursday School.

4. Thursday School

Assigned by school staff for a variety of student behaviors, i.e., tardies, classroom disruption and defiance, failing to adhere to class, school, or district policies. Thursday School is from 2:20pm to 3:30pm. Failure to attend Thursday School can result in suspension from school.

5.Legal Suspension

Legal suspensions result when serious incidents are in violation of the school discipline rules.

- While suspended, the student must remain at home and off of school grounds and cannot participate in school activities.
- Any suspended student found, during school hours, roaming the community may be transported to the police station and detained.

APPENDIX B
Recruitment Letter

My name is Heidi Schneider and I am a PhD candidate at University of California, San Diego. The Beachside Unified School District has given me permission to conduct my dissertation research at JMS Middle School. My research focuses on the similar and different meanings that teachers and students attach to "respect." I am researching the moments when meaning, ideas, and feelings associated with respect either align or collide in the classroom and question whether students' ideas and (mis)use of respect has an impact on their academic performance.

My research intends to include participant observation of four classrooms, over the course of one year, as well as interviews with teachers and students.

If you agree to participate, I will conduct observations in your classroom, once a week, for approximately one year. At your convenience, we will schedule one CONFIDENTIAL interview that will last up to 90 minutes. My presence in your classroom will be unobtrusive and poses no risk to you and your students.

If you are willing to participate or have any questions regarding my research design please email me at hschneid@ucsd.edu (this email account is password protected and confidential). Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Heidi Schneider

APPENDIX C
Student Interview Guide

"Warm-up" Questions/Getting to Know the Student

In order to give the student an opportunity to share whatever was on their minds, I began every interview with: *I have some questions here, but first is there anything you want to tell me or want to say before I begin asking my questions?*

After their response I asked the following questions:

1. Will you tell me a little bit about yourself? How would you describe who ____ is?
2. What do you like to do for fun with your family? Friends?
3. What do you do outside of school?
4. Do you belong to any clubs, volunteer, attend church?
5. Do you play sports?
6. What do you plan to do in High school?
7. What are your plans after graduation? Are you planning on attending college? Do you plan on staying here in Beachside or do you plan on moving away?
8. What do your parents want you to do?
9. What do your parents think of your future plans?
10. What is your parents' occupation?
11. How is your relationship with your parents /guardians?
12. Do you have brothers/sisters? How is your relationship with them?
13. Did they go to JMS?
14. How do you spend time your time after school?
15. Who do you spend most of your time with?
16. How much time do you spend on homework/do they always do their homework?

Questions about School

1. Will you tell me about your experience in school? What is the meaning of school? Probing questions:
    a. How do you feel about school? What do you like/dislike?
    b. On a scale of 1-10, how much do you like going to school?
2. What is your favorite subject in school?
3. What is your least favorite subject in school right now? In elementary school? Last year?
    a. If it's different each year, then ask follow up questions to understand why it changed. If it's the same, then ask probing questions like: can you tell why [insert favorite subject] is your least favorite?
4. What is the hardest thing (ex: homework, assignment, project) you've had to do at JMS?
5. Can you tell me about a typically day at school?
6. What do you like best about school?
7. What do you like least about school?

8. Is there anything fun about JMS?
9. Are you happy with the grades you are earning?
10. If interviewee answers **yes,** ask what do you think makes a difference in earning good grades?
11. If interviewee answers **no,** ask: what is preventing you from earning grades that will make you happy? Note: is the reason on campus or off campus?
12. On a scale of 1-10, how well do you do in school? What do you like best about school what do you like least about school?
13. What elementary school did you attend?
14. Did you feel differently about school when you were in elementary? If yes, what changed?
15. When you first started at JMS, how did it feel compared to elementary school?
16. Were there any differences between elementary and middle school?
17. We all have good and bad days, please tell me what a good day at school is like? Allow for probes.
18. And a bad day?
19. Have you ever been in trouble while at JMS? Assigned to Campus Transformation? After school detention? Will you share the story with me?
20. Which kids/ "sort of" kids usually go to detention?
21. Do you think they deserve detention?
22. Which kids don't get sent to detention?
23. Which kids don't get sent to detention even when they do similar stuff?
24. Not all schools have a mural, what do you think of it? Do you know who made it? Why do you think JMS has a mural on its walls? Do you have favorite part of the mural?
25. What, if anything, would you like to see done differently at JMS?

Questions about Teachers

1. How important is the teacher in whether or not you like school?
2. How would you describe your relationship with your teachers now?
3. If interviewee states one/some of the relationship are good --follow up with:
    a. Why do you think your relationship is good with that particular teacher/s?
    b. If the interviewee states, the relationship is not good-- follow up with: Why do you feel your relationship is not good with that teacher/s?
4. Who do you consider your favorite teacher?
5. Why is he/she your favorite teacher?
6. What do you think makes a good teacher? Probing questions: if I was to ask you to explain a perfect teacher, could you?
7. Do you feel like you learn more from your favorite teacher?
8. What is your grade in [name of favorite teacher's] class?
9. Has a teacher ever pissed you off because you though she/he was unfair to you? How would you have handled the situation if you were the teacher?

10. Some students have told me that they like a certain teacher because she doesn't care if they swear. And a few students have told me that I'm cool because I don't tell on them when they swear. Is being able to swear without getting in trouble important to you? If yes, ask why.
11. If you were a teacher, what kind of teacher would you be?
12. I've heard a lot of students call other students the "smart kids" or the "bad kids." What does it mean to be one of the "smart kids"? Probe: what are the smart kids like? how do the teachers treat them? Do the other kids like them? Why do you think other students call them the "smart kids"?
13. What does it mean to be one of the "bad kids"? Probe: what are the bad kids like? How do the teachers treat them? Do the other kids like them? Why do you think other students call them the "bad kids"?
14. Have you attended any other middle school? If yes, ask questions about (a) name and class background of these schools and (b) any comparisons in treatment?
15. Did you ever not do something you were supposed to do in class? Can you give me an example? Why do you choose not to do something?
16. Have you ever been in trouble with the law? If yes, would you mind telling me about what happened?
17. Ask relevant social characteristics (age, sex, ethnicity).
18. Last question: is there anything else you want to tell me? Or what me to know?

Questions about (Dis)Respect

1. Personally, what does (Dis)Respect mean for/to you? Probing questions.
2. Is there anyone you feel you don't respect? Will you share with me why?
3. Does the school in general respect you?
4. Which kids do teachers respect the most? Why do you think that is?
5. Which kids do teachers respect the least? Why do you think that is?
6. Which teachers do students respect the most/least? Why do you think that is?
7. Do you think teachers are respectful of students? Why or why not?
8. Do you feel that teachers should be respectful of students?
9. Have you ever felt disrespected by a teacher? Will you tell me about it?
10. Who should show respect first? The students or the teachers? Probing questions.
11. How can a teacher get his or her students to respect them?

APPENDIX D
Teacher Interview Guide

Teacher Background

1. I would like to start with how you began thinking about becoming a teacher. When did you know you wanted to be a teacher? What influenced your decision to become a teacher?
2. When you first began your training to become teacher, what motivated you? Have these reasons and motivations changed at all or do they still drive you?

General Questions about Education

1. In your opinion what *should be* the purpose or goals of education? Do you think these goals are accomplished on a large scale?

School Context and Teacher's Relationship with Students and Administration

1. Ask about school/district location/ past employment. Are there any differences between past and present teaching experiences? Probing follow- up questions.
2. What is the history of this school?
3. How did you first hear about JMS? What prompted you to apply for a position here? Tell me about your first year here at JMS?
4. When you first started at JMS, how did the students treat you? How did you feel the students perceived you?
5. If she was at another school, ask him/her to compare the students to students at other schools.
6. What is your current relationship like with your students at JMS?
7. If interviewee states, the relationship is good --follow up with: How did you establish or foster an interpersonal relationship with your students? If the interviewee reports the relationship is not good-- follow up with: Do you think building an interpersonal relationship with the students at JMS is more or less difficult than other schools? If so, why?
8. Can you describe the characteristics of the ideal student?
9. We all have good and bad days at our place of employment, please tell me what a good day teaching at Jackson is like? Allow for probes.
10. And a bad day
11. Could you describe the school's mission?
12. How are these missions put into action? What are some of the structural supports?
13. What is the school culture or community like and how is that culture/community maintained?
14. What level of autonomy do you have at this school?
15. What are some of the strengths of the school?
16. What are some of the weaknesses?
17. How is your race and ethnicity an asset to your work, your students, and your classes?
18. Do you feel there any drawbacks, limitations or divisions between you and your students due to your racial and ethnic identity?
19. How is your social class background an asset to your work?

20. Do you feel there any drawbacks, limitations or divisions between you and your students due to your social class background?
21. How is your gender an asset to your work, your students, and your classes?
22. Do you feel there any drawbacks, limitations or divisions between you and your students due to your gender?
23. Do you consider yourself to be a part of the same community as your students?
24. Do students influence the way you teach them? If so, how? Ask for an example.
25. What are some of the obstacles that they experience in trying to learn? How do
26. you try to teach to these obstacles or help them overcome them?
27. What is your overall goal for these students? What are three of the most
28. important things you would want to see your students walk away with this past
29. year in terms of what they have learned in your classes?
30. What do you ideally envision for their futures?
31. What is it that you have and hope to receive from your experiences with JMS students?
32. What is the best part of the job/worst part?
33. What sort of reputation do JMS students have the community and here at JMS?
34. Do you think the students at JMS are disrespectful? Why or why not?
35. Do you think the students respect you?
36. How do you encourage respect in your classroom?

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