
Schools as Sites for Transformation: Exploring the Contribution of Habitus

Youth & Society
XX(X) 1-29
© 2010 SAGE Publications
Reprints and permission: <http://www.sagepub.com/journalsPermissions.nav>
DOI: 10.1177/0044118X09358846
<http://yas.sagepub.com>



Erin McNamara Horvat¹
and James Earl Davis¹

Abstract

Schools are often criticized for their role in creating the dropout problem. This article illustrates that with the right resources and approach, educational programs could become sites of transformation rather than reproducers of social inequality. Narrative and thematic analysis of in-depth interviews with graduates of a nationwide program that serves high school dropouts reveals that its asset-based, mission-driven approach touched many aspects of these students' lives and produced changes in elements of their habitus. Aspects of the program that appeared to be central in changing participants' habitus include the development of self-esteem, the ability to accomplish something of value, and the capacity to contribute to the welfare of others. Implications of these findings for influencing the habitus of school dropouts and improving upward social mobility are discussed.

Keywords

school dropouts, habitus, socioeconomic mobility

The problem of high school dropouts, which has remained relatively consistent for the last 20 to 30 years, has worsened recently according to many accounts (e.g., Barton, 2005; Warren & Halpern-Manners, 2007). Nationally,

¹Temple University, Philadelphia, PA

Corresponding Author:

Erin McNamara Horvat, 420 Ritter Hall, 1301 Cecil B. Moore Ave., Philadelphia, PA 19122
Email: horvat@temple.edu

one in four high school students fails to graduate (Haney et al., 2004). In our urban centers the problem is far worse; inner-city students have a roughly 50/50 chance of graduating from high school (Swanson, 2008). The costs of dropping out are significant. Those who leave school with few skills and no diploma are far more likely than their peers to become parents at an early age, to have trouble finding and keeping a job, to have reduced occupational expectations, and to have lower projected future income (Croninger & Lee, 2001; Mishel, Bernstein & Schmitt, 1999). Dropouts lack the skills employers in a postindustrial global economy expect of workers, making it more likely that they will live in poverty and suffer its negative consequences, including arrest and incarceration (Orfield, 2004; Witte, 1997).

Many scholars have documented the ways in which schools serve as potent sites for social reproduction that contribute to high dropout rates and further expand entrenched poverty (MacLeod, 1987, 2004; Mehan, Villanueva, Hubbard, & Lintz, 1996; Oakes, 1995; Stanton-Salazar, 2001; Willis, 1977, 1983). Yet schools also have been portrayed as sites of liberation and possibility (Freire, 1970; Mehan et al., 1996). Schools are complex systems. They can be sites where existing hierarchies are reproduced *and* they can be places where these very same hierarchies are disrupted and possibilities for class mobility are created. How schools accomplish these roles and which role predominates is unclear, however. Equally uncertain is how capable schools are of providing a solution to the dropout problem (Tilleczek, 2008). This article offers insights that may help schools better fulfill their transformative mission.

We present findings from a study of YouthBuild, a multisite educational program that serves high school dropouts. Our evidence suggests that with the right resources and approach, more schools and other educational programs can serve as sites of possibility and transformation rather than as reproducers of social inequality. We use the lens provided by the work of Pierre Bourdieu to examine how YouthBuild alters the social class trajectory of its participants and provides an example of an educational program that breaks the cycle of social reproduction. As Young (1999, p. 201) has noted, there has been an effort to “build formal theory” around the topics of social mobility and inequality. Like Young, we find Bourdieu’s concept of habitus to be a useful tool in this regard and, especially, in understanding how the structure of schooling shapes individual students’ social trajectories.

Bourdieu (1977, pp. 82-83) explains habitus as a “system of lasting transposable dispositions” that guides individuals’ actions in social space. (We discuss habitus and Bourdieu’s model further in the theoretical section below.) Though some scholars have found the concept of habitus useful, others have

criticized it, and Bourdieu's theoretical enterprise more broadly, for neither accounting nor allowing for the possibility of movement between classes, or for alteration or modification of an individual's habitus (Aries & Seider, 2005; King, 2000). In short, critics deem Bourdieu's approach overly deterministic and poorly articulated (Adams, 2006; Reay, 2004). We suggest that these criticisms are misplaced. We argue that Bourdieu's concept of habitus allows for continual reformulation as new experiences, including pedagogical ones, are incorporated. This clarification, by focusing attention on the potentially fluid nature of movement through the status hierarchy, contributes to efforts to theorize about social mobility.

We begin by providing some theoretical background. We then move on to describe YouthBuild and the methods we used in the study. We divide our findings into two subsections. The first documents the changes to the habitus of students as they participated in YouthBuild; the second examines three dimensions that appeared to be central to the changes the students reported.

Theoretical Background

Habitus lies at the heart of Bourdieu's theoretical enterprise. It can be understood "as a system of lasting, transposable dispositions which . . . functions at every moment as a *matrix of perceptions, appreciations, and actions*" (Bourdieu, 1977, pp. 82-83, italics in original). These perceptions and actions are "derived from the predominantly unconscious internalization, particularly during early childhood, of objective chances that are common to members of a social class or status group" (Swartz, 1997, p. 104). In determining how to navigate in social worlds, individuals follow their own internalized interpretation of societal rules. These rules are determined within particular fields of social interaction (Bourdieu, 1993). The habitus provides a subconscious understanding through time of the rules of social interaction in a particular field. It is the basis of our "common sense" way of operating in the world.

Bourdieu and Passeron's (1977) contention that the habitus is rooted in family history and early schooling experiences has led some scholars to view the model as void of opportunities for movement among social class positions. This is not the case. Bourdieu and Passeron do maintain that learning cannot be undone (it is the stable element of the habitus). Individuals carry with them the habitus from previous experiences and incorporate into it their current experiences, effectively altering the habitus. However, Bourdieu and Passeron also acknowledge that certain educational institutions "organize the social conditions of their performance with a view to killing off the 'old man' and

engendering the new habitus ex nihilo” (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977, p. 44). They argue that this is what happens in military basic training, boarding schools, and other total institutions.

Unfortunately, few studies illustrate how the habitus can be changed. We seek to address the perceived weaknesses in Bourdieu’s concept by showing how an educational experience not involving a total institution also can alter the habitus of individuals. We argue that the changes our study documents are linked to students’ movement through the social hierarchy, indicating that Bourdieu’s overall model is less deterministic than others have argued. We suggest that positions within the status hierarchy can be altered by educational programs. Our study was not initially designed to investigate the theoretical issues addressed here. In analyzing program data and the narratives from the open-ended interviews we conducted with program graduates, we were struck by evidence of changes in the students’ dispositions, an element of habitus, and in subsequent actions they took based on these dispositions. Students typically describe their outlook on life prior to entering the YouthBuild program as pessimistic. They held out little hope for the possibility of achieving greater economic or personal stability. Participation in the program, they report, altered their outlook and inclination to act in particular ways. The material conditions of their lives changed as well.

It could be argued that YouthBuild does little more than provide working class jobs for working class people, reproducing inequality rather than providing an opportunity to transcend the class hierarchy. However, to understand the contribution YouthBuild makes to reducing class inequality, it is critical to distinguish between low income or working class students and the very poor students, many of whom are either headed into or out of prison, served by YouthBuild. As Western (2007) points out, these are very different populations. Although most YouthBuild graduates are employed in low skill, low wage labor on graduation, they are in the workforce rather than in prison or receiving public assistance. Their post-YouthBuild life trajectory is very different from their trajectory before YouthBuild. In addition, the YouthBuild philosophy clearly encourages continued education¹ and continued personal growth and development aimed at moving students up the social class hierarchy.

Some caveats are in order. Researchers have had difficulty designing operational definitions for the notion of habitus. It is a slippery concept that lends itself to tautological definitions. Thus demonstrating change in an individual’s habitus is difficult. We draw heavily on Bourdieu for our working definition of habitus as the fluid dispositions, appreciations, and actions of individuals in the social world. We use our data to show how what we

describe as elements of a student's habitus, his or her dispositions and experience of the world, and subsequent actions, are changed by participation in YouthBuild. We reproduce here examples of student narratives (drawn from interviews) in which students reflect on their views of the world and their place in it and recount how both their inclinations and their actions in particular situations ("fields of interaction") changed while they were enrolled in the program, and since. Students typically describe a life outlook that had little hope or possibility for economic opportunity or personal stability prior to their experience at YouthBuild. Their actions both prior to YouthBuild and postprogram reflect their outlook on the world. In YouthBuild, the students develop a different way of seeing the world, different behavioral tendencies, and different patterns of actions. We suggest that this reformulated outlook, or habitus, alters their educational and social class trajectory.

We do not argue that the data we present here prove that students' habitus has been entirely changed. Instead, we suggest that the changes we document indicate an alteration in habitus and provide a framework for further consideration of how schools can improve students' social class trajectories rather than reproduce inequality. Below, we provide a description of the YouthBuild program, followed by a discussion of our methodology.

YouthBuild: An Educational/Vocational Program for High School Dropouts

YouthBuild programs are based on an asset perspective. Program leadership and staff share the belief that all students come to the program with gifts and talents, and that given the right supports and the willingness to change, students can succeed in rebuilding their lives. The first YouthBuild program was founded in Harlem in 1979; today there are 200-plus YouthBuild sites in 44 states. Detailed information on YouthBuild can be found at www.youthbuild.org. Typically, programs are small, enrolling between 20 and 50 young men and women, aged 16 to 24. Participants remain in the program for 9 to 24 months. The largest program has capacity for 200 students per year; the smallest serves 20 per year.

The YouthBuild curriculum is a mix of job-site experience renovating a house, classroom work, and community service. Students also receive counseling and assistance in developing a personal growth plan. During the typically 10-month-long program, students alternate weeks at the job site with ones in the classroom. The specifics of the alternating schedule vary by program site. Some programs divide the students into two groups and provide alternating 6-week units of instruction in the classroom and at the work

site. Others alternate on a shorter schedule. Classroom work is based on a mastery system and includes a focus on basic skills. To the extent possible, classroom work in math, language arts, social studies, and science is linked to job-site skill development. As part of their hands-on experiences at a construction site, all students are issued work clothes (including boots) and tools and all learn basic carpentry skills. Typically, the students begin by participating in the demolition phase of a renovation project, work for which they usually are paid minimum wage.

In addition to differences in size, the YouthBuild programs vary with respect to the racial/ethnic composition of the student body, their status as a charter school or GED-granting program, and the way in which the academic program is delivered. There are, however, many common characteristics as well. At all YouthBuild sites

- The program involves young men and women who are trained in construction skills while they build or renovate affordable housing in their own communities. Programs sometimes purchase the project buildings but often they partner with local community development corporations or other nonprofits, acting as a general contractor on the jobs. Much of the work on a site is performed by the students, under the supervision of a trainer skilled in construction. Certain aspects, such as some electrical and plumbing work, often are subcontracted. When construction and/or renovation is completed, the houses usually are sold to a low-income, first-time home buyer from the local community.
- The program is comprehensive and includes job training at the building site, classroom-based instruction, and support in learning valuable life skills. Classroom work and achievement are not based on seat time but rather on performance-based assessments, often portfolios. All students are assigned a case manager who assists each in finding housing, child care, counseling as needed as well as help meeting other similar needs.
- The program begins with a version of mental-toughness training in which all students are required to meet specific, easily attained standards. During this initial period (which lasts from 2 days to 2 weeks, depending on the program) students who fail to meet these minimum standards are subject to dismissal. Typical standards include arriving on time for school and work, dressing in the YouthBuild-issued work uniform, remaining awake in class.

- The program uses an asset approach with students. Staff and administration at all sites communicate their belief that the students have valuable skills and talents that can and should be put to use in their program, family, and community. Students are actively developed as leaders and trained to be agents of change and growth in their own communities.

Method

The analysis in this article uses data from a larger, mixed-methods study of graduates of YouthBuild programs nationwide. Working with YouthBuild staff and our partners who carried out the quantitative portion of the study, we undertook a qualitative study, conducting open-ended interviews with 57 YouthBuild graduates. The interviews were part of 2-day site visits at eight YouthBuild sites: Boston, MA; Bloomington, IL; Brownsville, TX; Los Angeles, CA; Madison, WI; Philadelphia and York, PA, and Saint Louis, MO. These sites were selected in consultation with YouthBuild national staff. Our goal was to generate a diverse sample that would provide a snapshot of the program's 200-plus sites nationwide. We interviewed students from the largest site (Philadelphia) as well as from some of the smaller ones (e.g., Bloomington, Brownsville). Notably, the selected sites serve very different types of students. In Brownsville, for example, all the graduates with whom we spoke were Hispanic; in St. Louis, Boston, York, Los Angeles, and Philadelphia, most of the interviewees were Black.²

At each site, local staff generated a database of their graduates. In addition to the individuals' names and addresses, the local databases included information on students' graduation date, gender, race/ethnicity, age, marital status, current occupational/schooling status, and whether they had children. Based on the proportional representation of these characteristics at each site, we tried to identify a corresponding pool of potential interviewees. For instance, if 50% of the listed graduates were African American males, half of the interview group we selected from that site were African American men. The selection of specific individuals within each sampling category was random; we chose every *n*th student from the listed names. Lastly, to understand the program from the vantage point of students who had not been able to find work or continue their education on completion, we included two graduates at each site who were neither currently employed nor in school. (Local staff members identified the current school or work status of each potential graduate interviewee from their site.) We believe these procedures

Table 1. Interviewees' Self-reported Annual Income Data

Income range	US\$1- US\$5K	US\$5- US\$10K	US\$10- US\$15K	US\$15- US\$20K	US\$20- US\$30K	US\$30- US\$40K	US\$40K+
Graduates reporting this income ^a	8	8	5	4	9	8	9

Note: $N = 51$.

a. Six interviewees did not report income.

allowed us to draw a sample that accurately reflects the makeup of graduates from each of our eight sites.

Characteristics of the Sample

Of the 57 participants in the study, 41 were male and 16 were female.³ The racial and ethnic background of participants is as follows: Black/African American, 35; Hispanic, 9; White, 11; and Other, 2. Eleven graduates⁴ were married, 44 had never been married, 2 were divorced, and 36 had children. The majority of the sample (33) had left high school in either 10th or 11th grade; 9 had left in 9th grade, 1 in 8th grade, and 8 in 12th grade. Six reported having earned a GED or high school diploma prior to entering the program. Although most students were drawn to YouthBuild by the opportunity to receive their high school diploma or GED, it is program policy not to exclude those who stand to benefit from the YouthBuild experience, even if they are already high school graduates.

As Table 1 shows, reported annual incomes among our sample ranged widely, from more than US\$40,000 to US\$5,000 or less. It is important to keep in mind, however, that self-reported data tends to be inflated.

The study participants also varied with respect to current employment status (see Table 2). Among our sample of 57 graduates, 38 were currently working and 3 were enrolled in school. Of the 16 graduates who were not currently employed, two thirds had held a job since graduating from YouthBuild, and many were actively looking for work. Typically, most graduates are employed immediately after completing the program; others usually are able to find work within a few months. Our interviewees completed their programs during the years 1988 through 2002. Because graduates entered the job market at different points over this period and in different locations, the availability of employment opportunities may have varied. About 50% of those we

Table 2. Interviewees' Employment and Education Status

	Working	Not working	Enrolled in school	Total number of interviewees
Bloomington, IL	7	3	0	10
Boston, MA	3	3	1	7
Brownsville, TX	5	1	0	6
Los Angeles, CA	5	3	0	8
Madison, WI	7	0	0	7
Philadelphia, PA	6	1	0	7
St. Louis, MO	4	2	0	6
York, PA	2	2	2	6
Total, all sites	38	16	3	57

interviewed were recent graduates (2000-2002), and about 20%-25% had finished in 1997 or earlier. Income levels are more than likely associated with the number of years graduates have been in the job market and their ability to advance. Although the average age of our interviewees was between 23 and 25 years, several were in their 30s.

Data Collection

The first author, a White woman in her early 40s, and the second author, a Black man in his early 40s, each conducted half of the interviews.⁵ Approximately seven interviews with graduates were conducted at each of the eight sites. The interviews lasted about 1 to 2 hours and were audiotaped.

Following a written protocol, the interviews were divided into three sections. The first section explored what had led the individual to enroll in YouthBuild. We opened the interview with a broad question about obstacles the graduate had faced in personal life and in YouthBuild. This question proved to be a very useful and nonthreatening way to get the interview moving smoothly. The second section of the interview focused on the YouthBuild experience; the final section addressed the interviewee's life experiences since graduating, including transitions to work and postsecondary education.

We designed the study to gain an understanding of the YouthBuild experience and its impact on students' lives. We diligently searched for disconfirming evidence of the generally positive outcomes that were reported to us. Two key desired program outcomes are that graduates be employed or be enrolled in further education. This is why, as noted above, we deliberately included graduates who were neither working nor in school at the time of the

interview. In addition, in the interview protocol and follow-up questions, we probed for reports of negative YouthBuild experiences. We asked specifically about problems graduates might have had with staff and/or with program activities. (Some of these questions resulted from discussions with a focus group of YouthBuild graduates we convened prior to the start of the study, as we were developing the interview protocol.)

Data Analysis

All of the interview audiotapes were transcribed and coded, resulting in more than 1600 pages of data. Our coding scheme focused on specific areas of interest to YouthBuild, such as the transition to school or work as well as barriers to completing the program. We were also interested in documenting the changes that graduates reported in themselves and their life circumstances following program completion. Specifically, we wondered how their dispositions, those behavioral tendencies that in part make up the habitus, had changed over time. Thus many of our codes focused on changes. In addition, some codes emerged from the data itself, including the impact that YouthBuild had on graduates' life expectancy, the role of faith in their lives, and the role their children played in motivating change.

In coding the interview data, we continued our efforts to ensure that we did not overlook disconfirming evidence. As in our protocol design and sampling procedures, we actively searched for evidence that changes in a graduate's habitus or social trajectory might have occurred without enrollment in the program or were the effect of other involvements or contact with nonprogram individuals. This led us to code for the influences of family, parents, and peers. We also collected and analyzed data on interviewees' previous schooling experiences.

Our interest in potential familial impact also is consistent with our theoretical focus on habitus, which is rooted in these early and close influences (Bourdieu, 1977). In an effort to understand each graduate's habitus, we delved into familial education patterns and expectations and also looked for evidence of other transformative influences provided by those close to the graduates. We were particularly interested in how graduates viewed opportunity and their own place or position in the world as well as the actions they took. For instance, many graduates said that before entering YouthBuild they lacked the ability to work well with others; they described themselves as having explosive tempers or as lacking tolerance or patience when dealing with others. After program completion, these graduates reported, they had an increased

level of patience and an increased capacity to work with others. For many, this dispositional change is linked to improved material conditions, especially the development of job skills and the prospect of getting a job or actually getting a job. Although we cannot directly link program participation and dispositional and behavioral change empirically, our interviewees' narratives reveal a connection in their own minds between their ability to improve the material conditions of their lives and dispositional changes in the way they see the world and how they interact with others.

One potential limitation of the study design should be noted: We interviewed only students who had graduated. Because of the high demand and potential benefits of program participation, relatively few students (5%-10%) drop out after they are admitted. It may be argued that our study focuses only on success stories. Nevertheless, our interviewees' experiences during the program and after they had graduated offer a unique glimpse into how and to what extent YouthBuild influenced their life course.

Findings

Bourdieu's theoretical enterprise has been criticized for being overly deterministic and not paying sufficient attention to the way in which social class trajectories can and do change. This critique, however, has itself failed to attend to the ways that Bourdieu suggests the habitus does evolve over time, opening the possibility for change in social class position. To be sure, when such evolution occurs, it is usually gradual and results from the incorporation of new experiences into the habitus. Still, it is clear from Bourdieu's writings (1977, p. 44) that change to the habitus is part of the model, particularly in pedagogic institutions, and that habitus alteration also can result in a change to the social class trajectory of an individual. Bourdieu indicated that change such as we document here was most likely to take place in "total" institutions—the military, for instance, or convents or prisons. Here we show how a pedagogic institution that is not total, but which is similar in so far as it is mission driven and touches many aspects of students' lives, produces changes in elements of the habitus of enrollees.

Changes in Student Dispositions, Behaviors, and Outlooks

In this section of the findings, we present a selection of narratives typical of the whole sample. The graduates reported a change in their self-esteem, in their belief in their own ability to accomplish something, and in their belief

that they could be of value to others. They were also quite articulate in reporting how their inclinations to act and react in particular ways changed over time, as did their visions of the future and the real material conditions of their lives. To us, these reports suggest a change in the students' habitus.

In the second section of the findings, we identify elements that appeared to play a central role in creating this change, especially with respect to the development of self-esteem, the ability to accomplish something, and the ability to contribute to the welfare of others.⁶

The impression YouthBuild made on the lives of its participants was personal, deep, and undeniable. It affected how they saw the world and their place in it. Consider Tom, a White 25-year-old male.⁷ Growing up in a close-knit, conservative Christian family in a small Midwestern town did not shield him from an early involvement in gangs and drug dealing. He was initiated into a gang at the age of 13 and quickly became an effective drug dealer for older gang members. His street and school smarts, natural leadership abilities, and personality were responsible for a growing positive reputation in the gang. Meanwhile, Tom was also leading a normal life as a student—getting good grades and playing high school football. During his senior year, Tom moved with his mother and stepfather 150 miles away. This move upset him, and he was very displeased with his new school. Before graduation, his behavior there led to expulsion. However, Tom used his previous connections to continue his gang activities in his new hometown.

As a young teenager, Tom had accumulated a long list of juvenile offenses and convictions for petty crimes like shoplifting. He was convicted of his first crime as an adult after he turned 17. His “starter” sentence was probation. Shortly after this initial conviction, Tom was arrested and convicted again, but this time he was sent to prison. After serving 5 months, he returned to his familiar world of gang banging and drug dealing. That decision led to an arrest and conviction for cocaine drug trafficking (9 ounces) which, coupled with probation violations, resulted in a prison sentence of 4.5 years.

At the time of his interview, Tom had been out of prison for about a year. He credited YouthBuild with changing how he reacts to his environment and with bringing about changes in his personal dispositions. Reflecting on his new sense of maturity and responsibility, he said

I needed to stop. I learned that, I got to stop relying on other people. . . . and humble myself instead of trying to fight the system, because it was all about me fighting the system. They [YouthBuild] made me understand it's not like that.

Continuing his reflections, he focused on how learning the principles and practices of YouthBuild not only transformed his view of himself but also the way he perceives and reacts to the world around him:

I learned to be humble, that was my biggest thing. When I was in the street and I got into it with somebody—before, I’d be ready. We would be ready to go, right there. Ready to fight right there, whatever. And I learned to humble myself. . . . Before I would have probably hit him first. But now it takes a lot for me to even get mad about anything.

In the first quote, Tom’s reference to fighting the system and to the fact that he learned from YouthBuild that “it’s not like that,” indicate that he saw the world as his adversary. He had to fight to get attention or respect. He indicates that he now understands that the world is not like that. In the second passage, we see how his altered view of the world and his place in it leads to changes in how he reacts to situations. By learning to be humble, that is, changing this aspect of his disposition, Tom is able to change his behavior. He can now simply ignore a variety of slights.

In the next passage, Tom talks about how he is now able to plan for the future rather than living day to day, another example of dispositional change. Tom was participating in the YouthBuild program at the time of his second prison sentence. He had been in the program for about seven months and clearly made the connection between the support, mentoring, and encouragement he received and his survival and growth in prison, including the ability to plan for the future:

They [YouthBuild] taught me to set goals, but when I first came into YouthBuild I didn’t set any goals. You got to look for the day, you got to look in the future . . . When I was in prison, I was like, where am I going to be five years from now. I can’t do this the same way. I learned in YouthBuild what to do and how, and what I had to do. But it took prison to actually make that kick in. When I was in prison, YouthBuild was sending me their newsletters. They would write me, I’d write them. They always kept in contact with me, always. Every month I got at least one letter and I got a newsletter, I got something, pictures, and [Program Director] wrote me a few times. The only person I really had was my mother when I got locked up, and YouthBuild.

Many other graduates talked about how the YouthBuild experience prepared them to make it in the world of work. They discussed a transformation

in their view of the world as a day-to-day affair to one in which they were in control of planning for their future and of establishing their own goals. Graduates also pointed to their ability to actually get a job at the end of the program as a critical factor in their altered worldview.

James, a White 24-year-old male, felt YouthBuild had given him an opportunity to turn his life around. Like many other graduates, James came from a family with a history of drug abuse. His parents divorced when he was in grade school. He left school in 10th grade and moved to a nearby city to live with his father, whom he described as “a partier.” James and his father lived together for about a year, with James “partying” and working in a factory. He then returned to his hometown to be with his girlfriend. According to James, she “wanted someone with an education.” At her insistence, he began a 10-month YouthBuild program.

Again like many other graduates, James, a self-described former “heroin addict,” identified drug use as one of the primary challenges he faced. He reported being in jail “over 20 times.” The first time, when he was 13, he was jailed for shoplifting. This was followed by “a bunch of marijuana, narcotic charges.” Regarding high school, he said, “There was no connection to school. I did not like it and didn’t want to be there, you know, I’d rather party with my friends before school and say, ‘Well, you know, after school I’m gonna get messed up.’”

James lacked stable support from his parents, another characteristic he shared with other YouthBuild graduates. When he stopped living with his father and returned home, he moved in with his mother and stepfather, but only briefly. James reported

It don’t work between him and I. He’s a big, good old boy, you know? He has to have it his way or no way. . . . Me and him don’t get along because I’m outspoken. Plus, you ain’t my father, you know? So I always had that against him, so when he tried to act however he acted, you know, it was confrontation, definitely. Because I’m bullheaded and outspoken, and he likes getting his way.

James was 19 when he moved out of his mother’s home and began earning a living on his own. He worked as a roofer and continued partying until he began YouthBuild. During this period, his father committed suicide. James explained

[He] hung himself. Bad debts. People were mad and he had a bunch of problems, and money problems with people and health problems from

the drugs, and I guess that was enough. I would [have committed suicide] if I lived his life.

Though he was living with his girlfriend, James felt more on his own than ever. His assessment of the role YouthBuild played in the turnaround in his life at this time is typical of the graduates we interviewed:

[YouthBuild] changed my life one hundred, three-hundred-sixty degrees. Seriously. I mean, most definitely. Because I'd still be laboring, carrying peoples' bundles and strung out on heroin. I think about it all the time. Seriously. I mean, I, I got the cushiest job. I had to work for where I'm at now, but I mean, I got a cushy job, nice ride.

Now, 5 years after completing the program, James is making payments on the three acres where he plans to build a home. He and his girlfriend have split up, but he has custody of their 3-year-old daughter who, by his own admission, he "spoils rotten." He is raising her alone, with intermittent help from his mother. He has developed his career as a roofer, learning new techniques by attending trainings and is moving from doing residential work to larger, more lucrative commercial jobs.

James's life has changed dramatically. Rather than working day-to-day and earning barely what he needed to pay for necessities and drugs, he is now planning for his future, engaged in his community, and raising his daughter. If we consider *habitus* to be a sort of inner compass that directs action in the social world, James' *habitus* has been reoriented. When he began YouthBuild, he was concerned with his own immediate needs and the actions he needed to take to meet them. Today, his actions and his behavioral tendencies support his plans for the future, a vision that includes his daughter's life as well as his own.

Another graduate, a 20-year-old Black male named Richard, described the rocky home life he had struggled with following his parents' separation:

Ever since my father and her [his mother] split up when I was ten, I kind of went through dealing with moving back and forth, dealing with them. . . . I kind of jumped around, living with my sister, living with friends, and I mean it was just kind of rough because me and my mom didn't get along enough and her boyfriend kind of would get jealous of me [laughs]. . . . Um, I started working since I was thirteen. It was kind of rough to grab the concept of work, you know, and going to school and . . .

Richard dropped out of school in ninth grade. He continued working at restaurant jobs and fast food places, such as Arby's and Burger King, until he enrolled in YouthBuild. Losing his best friend to suicide over an unhappy love affair was pivotal in Richard's desire to try to lead a different life. When he began YouthBuild, Richard was 18 and living on his own, trying to earn a living. About the program's influence on his life, he said

[Before YouthBuild] I honestly didn't think I was going to live that long, probably twenty-one, twenty-two. . . . I just, I didn't think I was going to make it. I figured, you know, I was going to end up doing something crazy one night and it was going to catch up to me. But now, after Youthbuild I think I got my head on my shoulders pretty good. I'm twenty. I got my own place I'm buying. Got a daughter. A family.

Note that Richard's and James's life stories both are marked by unstable families and drug use. Both young men also credit YouthBuild with enabling them to change their behaviors as well as the material conditions of their lives: now they are able to earn a decent living, have stable housing, and develop sustainable family relationships. Richard went from worrying that he would do "something crazy" and end up dead or locked up to assessing himself as having "my head on my shoulders pretty good." This implies that his outlook on the world has changed and that he sees himself as being able to make decisions and take actions that will not bring him harm. These dispositional changes are matched by more stable living conditions.

As these narratives suggest, typically program graduates moved either from life on the streets selling, or doing drugs, or from living on government support to a stable existence that included a job or continued education, little drug use, and improved relations with family. These findings point to a change in the habitus of the students. There were students who relapsed into previous patterns of crime and drug abuse and dealing, but the program appeared to play a pivotal role in other graduates' lives. They reported changes in how they saw themselves and how they viewed and reacted to the world around them. They also reported that the material conditions of their lives had changed. In the next section, we look closely at three critical aspects of this change in YouthBuild graduates' habitus.

Developing Self-esteem, Accomplishing Something of Value, and Contributing to the Welfare of Others

Graduates consistently reported that they had higher self-esteem, believed that they were capable of accomplishing something worthwhile, and felt they had

something to offer the world. In combination, these three factors altered their view of the social space and their place in it. We link these reported changes to participation in the YouthBuild program, which brought about a profound shift in students' dispositions, one that went beyond mundane or short-term actions. For instance, students' recognition of and deepened capacity for accepting personal responsibility for their lives and their new understanding of themselves as capable of making unique positive contributions to the world around them were developed in YouthBuild's supportive community where they were given opportunities to lead, take risks, and produce results. Working in small groups and one-on-one with program staff, YouthBuild participants were encouraged and expected to think broadly and act out these new understandings about themselves and their environment. Structured and informal conversations, in addition to curriculum offerings, were designed to be non-threatening but at the same time communicated high expectations for students to excel at personal, work, and community levels.

Changes in graduates' habitus were associated with program components such as leadership congress, community service, on-site construction work, and academic skills development. Life and leadership skills were honed through students' participation in decision-making processes and structured learning activities. Opportunities to act as community leaders gave students a chance to identify their strengths and talents as well as learn how to be responsible and accountable. Because our claims of students' altered sense of the world and their place in it are drawn from their own narratives, we present below extracts from that data to illustrate each of the three key dimensions of change.

Establishing Self-Esteem: "I Do Count"

Martha, a 23-year-old African American mother of four, was barely able to talk in a group setting when she came to Youthbuild. She had suffered abuse in her family of origin and had little hope for her future. During her time at YouthBuild, she slowly became more confident and able to see herself as worthy of a good future. When asked what the difference is now in how she sees the world compared to when she began the program, she replied, succinctly, "I believe I am supposed to have something in life." Another young African American mother with a comparable background answered the same question similarly: "That I do have a place in the world, and that I do count." "Youthbuild was the difference of me being a somebody and a nobody," a young Black man who had spent his teen years on the streets stated. Students appeared to learn to value themselves. They talked about a recalibration of their view of their place in the world and what they might be capable of

accomplishing Willy's story, whose central lines we heard in various forms from many of the young people we interviewed, laid out this theme clearly.

Willy's life and neighborhood were turned upside down by the crack epidemic that hit urban areas in the early 1980s. Willy, an African American male in his early 20s, summarized his past this way:

I was born in nineteen-seventy-eight. It happened when I was in elementary, the whole projects changed. Right in front of my eyes. And I grew up right in it. I was ten years old, walking around, playing with toys and GI Joe men and the little thirteen-year-old boys talking about, "You want to sell this? You know you could make a hundred dollars." And this is back in the days when everybody used to show they [sic] money—you had it in your hand. And I was like, damn; I want to be like that. So now I got nine hundred dollars in my hand.

From this beginning Willy became successful on the streets, working with a gang selling drugs and guns. Although he also managed to succeed academically, his school achievements were not enough to keep him from the streets.

Having grown up poor in the projects, part of a family that could not make ends meet, he defined his own worth and existence in terms of the currency of the street: new clothes, new "Jordans" [sneakers], and the ability to buy what he wanted, when he wanted. Willy dropped out of school in the 10th grade, after fathering a child. Despite his life on the streets, and largely due to his significant academic ability, he was admitted to a youth training program. There, he earned his GED and was trained in word processing. After graduating from this program, he began to put his life back together. Stable employment and a good salary afforded him the opportunity to be self-sufficient without needing to risk the dangers of the streets. This turn-around proved short-lived, however. He was arrested on an outstanding drug charge, convicted, and sentenced to a 3-year prison term.

After getting out of jail, and being stunned by the violent death of his best friend, Willy found YouthBuild. Although he had not been involved in the incident that caused his friend's death, the loss affected him deeply. For Willy, the most fundamental change experienced during his time at YouthBuild was his realization that despite his past lifestyle and all of the "sins" he had committed, his life was important. When he first started YouthBuild, one of the staff gave him a chain to wear around his neck to remind him of "who he is"—a person of value. Willy recalled

When I first looked at him [the staff member], I read his eyes, you know what I'm saying. I seen stuff in his eyes that told me that he had lived before he came here. He could just see my heart, and he's like, "Wear this, this, um, this chain and every time anything happens to you during the day or, when you leave here, hold it and say, 'This is you. This is why you wear it.'"

Steps like this to rebuild a student's self esteem are typical of the programs we studied. The students usually begin the program battered by poverty and a dysfunctional family life that has left them with a very low opinion of their own worth. Typical of many graduates, when asked what was the most important thing he learned at YouthBuild, Willy said

I had to learn that I'm a valuable person. I'm saying my life is more important than what someone's telling me. They [YouthBuild] think my life is important, you know what I'm saying, how they think my life is, I know for myself, I gotta' prove it to myself that I can make something for myself, and [I] took that step up by going back to school.

Since finishing YouthBuild, Willy said, "I live with a positive attitude. I'm not ashamed of myself. I'm not ashamed of where I've been, where I'm going, you know what I'm saying. I'm proud to get up in the morning." Reflecting on these changes, he admitted, "I came here with a lot of doubt and a lot of stuff with me. I need to learn the gifts and talents I have. Now, I got more confidence. I got more knowledge of myself. And, I can be at rest, because what I want is so big." Willy's vision of the possible is completely different from that of his gang-banger days, when he immediately met his desire for things like "Jordans." Importantly, as he acknowledges, his vision of himself as a person who has worth on his own, cool sneakers or no, is a product of his time at YouthBuild.

Willy's new dreams are big ones:

I want to own real estate and mortgage companies . . . and make little homeless kids carpenters or whatever they can. Do the same thing that I always wanted somebody to do for me. . . . I'm working on buying my own tools, me getting my own van, me just basically coming to work, and people out there in the neighborhood seeing me working and pull[ing] me to the side and asking me if I can do side jobs for them.

When we spoke with Willy, he was employed at YouthBuild as a staff construction trainer. His goal was to acquire more skills in rehabbing houses, and he also wanted to pass on what he had learned to others.

These young YouthBuild graduates had come to feel they had a place in the world and therefore could do something with their lives. In theoretical terms, this illustrates a change in their habitus. The way they see themselves, the world around them (for Bourdieu, the “field”), and their place in this social space all are now different. Their new recognition of their own worth and sense of themselves as worthy of attention and respect from others often contributed to an increased belief that they could accomplish something valuable.

The Ability to Accomplish: “Oh, I Did It!”

YouthBuild provided experiences that showed students they could start something and finish it. Students would often point with pride to a door they had framed or a floor they had built, noting how they had finished that part of the project. As David, a White 22-year-old male, stated, “They’ve made me less fearful of failure and more aware of what I can do.” David came to YouthBuild after dropping out in 11th grade and turning to a series of odd jobs to try to earn money to help with household bills. His parents divorced when he was young; he has no contact with his mother. Living with his father and two siblings, David spent his free time with friends, getting high, playing video games, and skateboarding. After graduating from YouthBuild, he took courses at a community college and got a full-time job at a nursing home. He described the impact of YouthBuild as follows:

Before I came into YouthBuild, I didn’t even think there was a remote possibility I was going to go to college. Well, I was always getting high and didn’t care about school. It was there, but I didn’t like going, so I just didn’t. I didn’t really have any way of getting money either. I just thought my financial place, my stature, I guess, would not allow it. YouthBuild hasn’t changed my financial stature that much, but they’ve given me other alternative routes of getting funding, so that way I can get in there. And they’ve just given me the chance.

He still lives with his father who relies on his help with the rent and household duties. David has not so far seen much change in his earning power, but he now feels he can accomplish things, like going to college.

YouthBuild students divide their time between working at a construction site and taking academic classes. Typically, the sheer physical labor it takes to renovate a house provides them with tangible proof of their ability to accomplish something. YouthBuild staff works with students on individual tasks and group assignments at the building site, helping students master specific aspects of home building, such as plastering, framing, putting up drywall, and installing electrical wiring. In addition to mentioning their particular contributions to a construction job, graduates talked about how building a house for a low-income family provides a tremendous social benefit for the entire community. Our interviewees would proudly insist that we drive by the house they had built; many told us that no matter how long ago they worked on a house, they continued to consider it “theirs.” Discovering their ability to finish something was an essential step that allowed these graduates to then envision themselves achieving other goals.

Jendeya, a 23-year-old Black woman, had left high school an angry young woman. Her home life had involved shuttling between her mother and father; in her junior year, she was expelled for fighting. One of her high school teachers recommended YouthBuild. Admitting that she had had a “bad attitude” when she started YouthBuild, Jendeya recalled that she had been suspicious of the staff and of her classmates’ motives. And, because she was unaccustomed to taking direction without a fight, initially she had kept to herself. As she learned to be more open with her YouthBuild teachers and classmates, she began to engage more with the program and have success. She became the leader of her crew on the job site and part of the program’s student council. Jendeya’s transformation was fueled in part by her growing ability to believe in herself and to believe in her ability to accomplish something, as the following quote illustrates:

But I would never thought, before I came here, I would’ve never thought I woulda gone to college. Would’ve never thought I would’ve built a house. That was so, like, so exciting for me [laughs], like, the first house, I was, like, “Oh, I did it! I don’t believe myself!!”

She continued, explaining how being in the program changed her view of herself and how she thinks others see her:

And so, but, I mean, this place here, it just, it brings the good out in your, whether you’re a bad girl, hard girl, or whatever. When you get here it, ’cause it makes you change who you are, to be a better person,

regardless. You feel like somebody important, that you can depend on them and they can depend on you.

Graduates like Jendeya frequently talked about the transformative power of accomplishment. Another young White woman told us, "I feel more of an adult and a responsible person because I came here. It just changed me. Like, I actually did it and it made me feel like I can do something and finish it."

The newfound ability to be productive and to follow through became part of students' habitus. It changed what they could aspire to and altered their vision of their place in the world. For those who cannot complete assignments and do not believe in themselves, schools are sites of failure and frustration. YouthBuild graduates learned that they were capable of accomplishment. A curriculum that included work on a job site, where progress is measured daily, seemed to be an important factor in students' ability to see and internalize their own accomplishments. Most building projects take a long time to complete and are often slowed by weather delays and other circumstances. YouthBuild students learn the value of time on the construction site and why it is so important to make optimum use of that time. They quickly become aware of the special learning opportunities provided on site and so use their time and that of the staff responsibly and intentionally. Their capacity to accomplish something on the work site fundamentally alters their orientation to many institutions in society, including school and the workplace. These fields become sites of possibility and provide opportunities for students to display dispositions and outlooks consistent with the institutions' norms. The community service portion of the program also contributes to this altered orientation, as the students we interviewed made clear.

The Power to Contribute: "Now I'm Helping People"

For the young people we spoke with, the ability to accomplish something was accompanied by an unanticipated realization that they could also help others. The power of this discovery cannot be underestimated. Indeed, we believe this is where the most enduring changes took place. The ability to help others fundamentally altered the way many students viewed their place in the world.

As previously noted, all YouthBuild programs take an asset-based approach: young people are not seen as a composite of their problems but rather as people with gifts and talents they can learn to develop and share with the program, their families, and the wider community. Accordingly, every student in the program undertakes community service. Being understood by others as someone who can offer a hand rather than as someone who

needs a handout profoundly affected the students we spoke with and contributed to changes in their habitus.

One White male graduate told us that “there is no way I’d come out and paint nobody’s fence for free [laughs] until I come here [to YouthBuild]. Ain’t no way [laughter].” But now he is a volunteer fireman and is known around town for his service to the community. “Now I’m helping people. And I want to help someone, you know. Not just the financial thing, because I don’t have the money to help someone financially. But I have my personal being that I can help somebody with.” Another young man said

Helping others has helped [me] a lot. I was kind of a selfish person. You know, it teaches you about others and you need to reflect on what you have, you know? If you have a lot, help somebody else. Or it doesn’t always have to be about money. You know, just simple things that can help. You can give somebody a word of advice. Give somebody a meal, if they don’t have something to eat, you know.

YouthBuild programs typically provide multiple opportunities for students to see that they have something of value to contribute to their communities. Leadership opportunities are especially important. For instance, the chance to be Youth Congress members in their own programs or at the national level, where they lobby on Capitol Hill, is a powerful mechanism for helping students recalibrate their sense of their place in the world. One graduate, an African American married father in his late 20s, spoke of his troubled past and the impact of YouthBuild’s leadership opportunities on his life:

I kind of threw all my power away; I handed out all my power to, like, the judge, and the probation officer, and to all my friends that I was chasing. And now all of a sudden, I had took all that back, and, and had something to show for it, you know what I mean? Even though I didn’t get paid to be on the Young Leaders’ Council or nothing like that, it was just the fact that I was on the National Council, you know what I mean, that I was part of something. And that I was part of something that people had to pay attention to.

Even students who do not play a formal leadership role discover the ability to be leaders in their own lives, as one young White man explained:

I probably don’t get looked on as a bright shining star, but they definitely know that I’m ready and available in the community for whatever

needs to happen. But, I'm a leader on the roof. I'm a job site foreman. I do work, and that is one thing I do take seriously. I will be the top of anybody's crew when I get there. I will show you. I am a leader in roofing. I roof! YouthBuild taught me everything I know, I mean the person I am today. If you would have met me five years ago, you would be like, "Yeah, right. No way!" You definitely learn leadership values here.

In summary, these narrative data indicate that students who participated in YouthBuild revised how they saw themselves, their place in the world, and their ability to contribute to it. Although students do retain some of the dispositions from earlier socialization within their families of origin and the schools they attended, they have incorporated new beliefs, namely, that they are part of a community and that they can contribute to the well-being of others. It is important to note, however, that YouthBuild does not work for everyone. Some students leave the program because they cannot meet the expectations for performance, while others find abandoning old patterns and ways of living too difficult. Some students complete the program, but they do not undergo the kind of change we document here. For many students who are able to stay with the program, however, fundamental change does occur. They gain greater self-esteem, a newfound knowledge that they can set and achieve goals, and an understanding of themselves as capable of helping others.

Discussion

Finding effective ways of moving high school dropouts back into mainstream society and creating opportunities and experiences that do not contribute to the cycle of poverty are issues of urgent, national concern. We argue that lessons can be learned from the successful efforts of the YouthBuild program. Our findings show that by intentionally altering the habitus of students, the program both improves enrollees' social and economic position and provides graduates with diverse vocational opportunities.

Our study also shows that Bourdieu's model—and particularly the concept of habitus—is more fluid than previously understood. Despite some of the complexities of defining and using the concept in empirical research, habitus can be a useful theoretical tool for understanding and revealing the mechanisms of social reproduction as well as social change. Our analysis of the interview data we collected shows that graduates of YouthBuild programs from around the country incorporate new dispositions and practices into their habitus. We understand these students to have fundamentally altered how they view the world and their place in it. Moreover, this altered habitus was most often matched with an improvement in graduates' material conditions.

This study counters the critique of Bourdieu's model as overly deterministic. Although the habitus is rooted in early familial socialization experiences and change to the habitus is gradual, we argue that change is possible and that educational institutions such as YouthBuild can help bring about such change. Others have questioned the degree to which Bourdieu's model allows for the possibility of change in an individual's social class trajectory. We argue that the positive change in material conditions graduates reported and their new "hope for the future" constitute an altered social class trajectory. Rather than barely getting by, or spending time in jail, or risking early death, YouthBuild graduates are buying land, planning their careers, raising their children, and contributing to their communities. Thus both their dispositions (improved self-esteem, awareness of themselves as capable of accomplishing goals, and a belief in their ability to help others) and their material conditions changed.

Using habitus to understand students' experiences provides a tool, what DiMaggio (1979) called a theoretical *deus ex machina*, to relate the internal process of personal transformation, growth, and change over time to the experiences of individuals in educational settings. The habitus formed by early childhood experiences (either positive or negative) is not washed away, but new experiences can be and are incorporated into it. The YouthBuild programs we studied had been designed with a clear awareness of the array of experiences that would likely have shaped students' lives prior to enrollment and the profound deficits such experiences create. Thus, these programs provided students with opportunities and experiences that would help them incorporate into their habitus new visions of themselves and of the world around them. The changes we documented were both internal—greater self-esteem and self knowledge and external—improved material conditions, including in some cases enough money to buy a car or house, and enough financial security to plan for the future.

We acknowledge that YouthBuild is most successful for students who are ready to change. Not all graduates we interviewed were at the same level of readiness. In Tom's case, for example, it took spending more time in jail before he began to incorporate lessons learned at YouthBuild. Likewise, we are aware that YouthBuild is not a typical educational institution. It is a special program with an unusual approach that acknowledges the depth of the changes that must take place within students in order for real change to occur. To meet these challenges, YouthBuild takes a more holistic approach than do traditional schools, providing students with counseling, assisting them with childcare arrangements, and addressing their educational deficits. Still, it is not a total institution of the kind Bourdieu identified as the most likely to bring about change in the habitus. Thus, the success of the YouthBuild approach that we document here might be transferable to more traditional

educational settings. If schools are to be sites where similar transformations in students' fundamental beliefs about themselves and the world around them can occur, an approach like YouthBuild's, that meets students' myriad needs, may be required. Some researchers (Bundy, 2005; Dryfoos, 1994) have argued that to create environments where children can learn and be successful, schools ought to provide similar "full service" supports. Given current resources, the feasibility of doing so on a large scale is limited. But we would be well advised not to ignore the lesson apparent in YouthBuild's success in explicitly teaching dispositions and behaviors that are often implicitly expected in our schools.⁸ If we are to create lasting change in students and if schools are to be sites of transformation, more holistic approaches that both meet students' needs and address their fundamental beliefs are required.

Declaration of Conflicting Interests

The authors declared that they had no conflicts of interests with respect to their authorship or the publication of this article.

Funding

The authors declared that they received no financial support for their research and/or authorship of this article.

Notes

1. The quantitative companion study of YouthBuild (Hahn, Leavitt, Horvat, & Davis, 2004) found that 54% of graduates had attended any type of school after completing YouthBuild.
2. We deliberately alternate between the terms African American and Black, consistent with how these terms were used by study participants.
3. This gender balance reflects the demographics of the sites we visited as well as YouthBuild programs nationwide. Nationally YouthBuild enrolls 71% males and 29% females. Our sample was 72% male and 28% female.
4. Graduation standards vary by program. Typically students earn either a GED or high school diploma. In some cases students complete the program without earning either. Of the 57 students we interviewed, 20 received a high school diploma, 23 earned a GED, and 7 completed the program without earning a GED or high school diploma. In many cases, those students who complete the program without a GED or diploma are second language learners.
5. The first author is a board member of a YouthBuild program in her city. Through this position, she became acquainted with staff at the national level who were working with a foundation to design a study to evaluate the program's effectiveness

by following up with graduates from the first 10 years of the program. The first author took a leave of absence from her position on the local board to work on this national-level study and asked the second author to join her in this effort.

6. The quantitative companion study of YouthBuild (Hahn, Leavitt, Horvat, & Davis, 2004) found that significant changes in lifestyle and in rates of incarceration were widespread among this population. The quantitative study surveyed all 3,922 program graduates and received 882 responses, for a response rate of 22.5%. The low response rate is typical of surveys of this often transient and hard to reach population. In this sample, 71.6% of graduates had used marijuana, 29.7% had used hard drugs, and 32.4% had sold hard drugs prior to entering YouthBuild. After completing YouthBuild, the percentage of graduates who reported engaging in these activities fell to 6.4%, 8.6%, and 7.8%, respectively. Graduates also reported staying out of the criminal justice system; there was a 59% drop in those reporting a misdemeanor conviction and a 66% drop in felony convictions post YouthBuild. These results demonstrate a change in the actions of graduates. There is also evidence of positive changes in their material conditions. For instance, 54% of YouthBuild graduates reported having attended some type of school after the program and about 25% attended college. Furthermore, 87% of graduates were employed, making an average wage of US\$11 per hour. Quantitative data also reveal increased levels of civic engagement for program alums. Nearly 70% of YouthBuild graduates were registered voters and 48% had participated in some form of community service or volunteer work. Our qualitative study confirmed the picture painted by these numbers.
7. All study participants' names that appear in this article are pseudonyms.
8. The Knowledge Is Power Program (KIPP) is another example of explicit teaching of similar dispositions. KIPP is a national network of public, open-enrollment, college-preparatory schools with a track record of preparing students in underserved communities for success in college and life.

References

- Adams, M. (2006). Hybridizing habitus and reflexivity: Toward an understanding of continuing identity? *Sociology*, *40*, 511-528.
- Aries, E. & Seider, M. (2005). The interactive relationship between class identity and the college experience: The case of low-income students. *Qualitative Sociology*, *28*, 419-443.
- Barton P. E. (2005). *One third of a nation: Rising dropout rates and declining opportunities*. Princeton NJ: Policy Information Center, Educational Testing Service.
- Bourdieu, P. (1977). *Outline of a theory of practice* (R. Nice, Trans.). London: Cambridge University Press.
- Bourdieu, P. (1993). *Sociology in question*. Thousand Oaks CA: Sage.

- Bourdieu, P. & Passeron, C. (1977). *Reproduction in education, society and culture*. Newbury Park CA: Sage.
- Bundy, A. (2005, Fall). Aligning systems to create full service schools” The Boston experience, so far. *New Directions for Youth Development*, 107, 73-80.
- Croninger, R. G. & Lee, V. E. (2001). Social capital and dropping out of high school: Benefits to at-risk students of teachers’ support and guidance. *Teachers College Record*, 103, 548-581.
- DiMaggio, P. (1979). Review essay on Pierre Bourdieu. *American Journal of Sociology*, 84, 1460-1474.
- Dryfoos, J. G. (1994). *Full service schools: A revolution in health and social services for children, youth and families*. San Francisco: Jossey Bass.
- Freire, P. (1970). *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. New York: Continuum.
- Hahn, A., Thomas, D. L., Erin, M. H., & James, E. D. (2004, June). *Life after YouthBuild: 900 YouthBuild graduates reflect on their lives, dreams, and experiences*. Somerville, MA: YouthBuild. Available at www.youthbuild.org
- Haney, W., Madaus, G., Abrams, L., Wheelock, A., Miao J., & Gruia, I. (2004). *The education pipeline in the United States, 1970-2000*. Chestnut Hill, MA: National Board on Educational Testing and Public Policy, Boston College.
- King, A. (2000). Thin with Bourdieu against Bourdieu: A “practical” critique of the habitus. *Sociological Theory*, 18, 417-433.
- MacLeod, J. (1987). *Ain’t no makin’ it: Level aspirations in a low-income neighborhood*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.
- Mehan, H., Villanueva, I., Hubbard, L., & Lintz, A. (1996). *Constructing school to success: The consequences of untracking low achieving students*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Mishel, L., Bernstein, J. & Schmitt, J. 1999. *The state of working America, 1998-1999. An Economic Policy Institute book*. Ithaca, NY: ILR Press, an imprint of Cornell University Press.
- Oakes, J. (1995). *Two cities tracking and within school segregation*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Orfield, G. (Ed.). (2004). *Dropouts in America: Confronting the graduation rates crisis*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Education Press.
- Reay, D. (2004). It’s all becoming habitus: Beyond the habitual use of habitus in educational research. *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 25, 431-444.
- Stanton-Salazar, R. D. (2001). *Manufacturing hope and despair: The school and kin support networks of US-Mexican youth*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Swanson, C. B. (2008). *Cities in crisis: A special analytic report on high school graduation*. Bethesda, MD: Editorial Projects in Education Research Center.
- Swartz, D. (1997). *Culture and power: The sociology of Pierre Bourdieu*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

- Tilleczek, K. (Ed.). (2008). *Why do students drop out of high school? Narrative studies and social critiques*. New York: Edwin Mellen Press.
- Warren, J. R., & Halpern-Manners, A. (2007). Is the glass emptying or filling up? Reconciling divergent trends in high school completion and dropout. *Educational Researcher*, 36, 335-343.
- Western, B. (2007). *Punishment and inequality in America*. New York: Russell Sage.
- Willis, P. (1997). *Learning to labor: How working class kids get working class jobs*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Witte, A. D. (1997). Crime. In J. R. Behrman & N. Stacey (Eds.), *Social benefits of education* (pp. 219-246). Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.
- Young, A. (1999). The (non)accumulation of capital: Explaining the Relationship of structure and agency in the lives of poor black men. *Sociological Theory*, 17, 201-227.

Bios

Erin McNamara Horvat, PhD, is associate professor of education at Temple University. Her research agenda has explored how race and class shape access throughout the educational pipeline focusing especially on the role of social and cultural capital in shaping families' interactions with schools, often drawing on Bourdieu's theoretical framework. Professor Horvat has been motivated by a desire to understand how interactions between individual and structural forces shape educational outcomes and life chances, including explorations of how race and class affect school and college experiences, college access, and high school dropout and reentry.

James Earl Davis, PhD, professor of education at Temple University and holds affiliate faculty appointments in African American studies and women studies. His research interests center on social stratification and inequality, educational policy, and urban school reform. His work has explored the ways race and gender identities shape educational achievement and attainment, particularly how masculinity influences the schooling experiences and outcomes of Black boys and young men.