

ABSTRACT

BENTON, RICHARD ANDERSON-HUGHES. Institutionalizing Cultural Capital Advantage: How Background and Training Influence Teacher Evaluations. (Under the direction of Martha Crowley.)

Scholars have long recognized how cultural capital, defined as differently valued skills, behaviors, and orientations, influences educational achievement. Researchers have also established that stocks of cultural capital resources are unequally distributed amongst students across lines of race, ethnicity, and social class. Comparatively little attention, however, has focused on teachers' evaluations of student cultural capital. The assumption that teachers are homogeneous in their evaluations should be examined. In this paper I present and test a model of student-teacher racial matching which bases teacher evaluations of student cultural capital on both teacher ascribed characteristics and teacher professional training. Findings from the nationally representative Early Childhood Longitudinal Study-Kindergarten Cohort suggest that teachers rely heavily on their own background in evaluating the behavioral skills component of cultural capital; however, they rely heavily on their professional training in evaluating the academic skills component of cultural capital.

Institutionalizing Cultural Capital Advantage:
How Background and Training Influence
Teacher Evaluations

by
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Introduction

Schools are contemporary U.S. society's "sorting machine" (Spring 1976). Unfortunately, these sorting processes function inequitably for black and white students. Why do black and white students exhibit such unequal outcomes in achievement and attainment in schools? Why are black students consistently over represented among lower track placements and remedial classes? Despite ever increasing rationalization of student evaluations through standardized testing, teachers' evaluations of students remain an integral part of the sorting processes embedded in the education institution. Teachers are powerful gatekeepers within schools and their evaluations matter for what students can expect their schooling to provide. Yet, these evaluations are themselves unintentionally prejudiced as teachers imperfectly account for the social background characteristics of their students (Condron 2007). In other words, teachers' views of their students are colored by their own unreflected perceptions and biases. This paper explores the sources, in both teachers' background and training, of these unintended biases in student evaluation.

Cultural capital is a useful concept for analyzing these processes of sorting and evaluation within schools (Bourdieu and Passeron 1977). According to this theory, institutional agents (e.g. teachers, administrators and counselors) differently value the skills, behaviors and orientations different students display. Consequently, these same institutional gatekeepers confer privileges and advantages on those students carrying more highly valued cultural capital. For example, students with more highly valued styles

and behavioral skills, such as favored work habits and low degrees of disruptiveness, are likely to be placed in higher reading groups or academic tracks and receive more favorable grades, holding constant their academic performance (Condrón 2007, Farkas 1996).

While a good deal of research has established that groups of students possess unequal stocks of cultural capital and has demonstrated that these in turn influence educational achievement, relatively little is known about how institutional gatekeepers develop the reflected evaluative criteria for students' cultural capital (Kingston 2001). By default, prior research assumes that teachers are relatively homogeneous in their cultural capital evaluative criteria. I propose and test a model for teachers' cultural capital evaluation based on both teacher background and professional training and certification. Findings suggest that teacher-student racial matching, teachers and students who belong to same or different racial groups, is not a uniform predictor of teacher evaluations of their students. Rather, teacher training as well as teacher racial categorization remain consequential in predicting teacher perceptions of student cultural capital. This study extends prior research on student/teacher matching effects (Downey and Pribesh 2004; Alexander, Entwisle and Thompson 1987) by showing how racial privilege becomes institutionalized in teacher certification by giving certified teachers, regardless of their race, a similar view of their students' cultural capital: the cultural capital of white students is favorable to that of black students. I refer to this as the "homogenizing" effect of teacher certification.

I begin by discussing the research on cultural capital, race in education and the influence of teachers in educational sorting. Generally, this section distinguishes two forms of cultural capital: academic skills and behavioral skills. I then introduce specific hypotheses derived from this theoretical and empirical background that incorporate the influence of teacher training and teacher racial background. Next, I test these hypotheses using a nationally representative data set of kindergarten students and their teachers. Results show that white teachers evaluate African American students' behavioral skills less favorably than their white students. On the other hand teacher certification appears to homogenize teacher evaluations of student academic skills. That is, teacher training leads to black and white teachers developing similar evaluations of students' academic skills. I conclude with a discussion of the findings and discuss theoretical and practical implications for these results.

Cultural Capital: Conceptualization and Measurement

Cultural capital refers to one's familiarity with and exhibition of cultural styles and skills valued in a given institutional context (Bourdieu 1986; DiMaggio 1982; Lamont and Lareau 1988).^a Bourdieu developed his conceptualization of cultural capital

^a Although I favor an interpretation of cultural capital emphasizing mundane skills and styles others have emphasized the role of "high brow" cultural consumption or participation in elite status cultures (DiMaggio 1982; Roscigno and Ainsworth-Darnell 1999; Dumais 2006). I find this interpretation less useful for my concern with racial how inequality is reproduced through individual student-teacher interactions.

in the context of the French education system where he observed that cultural resources were unequally distributed between social classes and that this inequality in patterns of cultural consumption led to inequalities in educational attainment (Swartz 1997).

However, Bourdieu combined modes of cultural consumption with notions of “bourgeois language” (Bourdieu and Passeron 1977:116) which reflects the somewhat intangible and mundane nature of cultural capital. Bernstein (1977) also argues that these different linguistic patterns become codified as they are differently valued within the educational institution, thus conferring value on the predominant language codes carried by children of privileged backgrounds. Similarly, Swidler develops the concept of a “cultural toolkit” (1986:273), including beliefs, rituals, language and symbols, which provide resources for action.

Schools’ language codes and other cultural symbols become mundane carriers of social privilege as they elicit favorable evaluations from teachers. Thus, favorable evaluations derive from the language skills and broader cultural competencies students actually display and which teachers witness and evaluate. Cultural capital, as a mechanism for the transmission of social privilege, is not directly related to individual productivity or productive capacity. Rather, cultural capital signals to institutional gatekeepers one’s ability to conform to culturally defined expectations of behavior, taste, and comportment. Consequently, teacher evaluations of student achievements are the result not only of meritocratic inputs but nonmeritocratic features as well (Leiter and Brown 1985).

A number of empirical studies make use of this cultural capital approach as they combine broader educational orientations with an appreciation for the importance of skill and ability (Lareau 1987; Condrón 2007; 2009). For example, Lareau (2003) highlights the role of language use in the home as well as the dispositions that children learn in an effort to disentangle those orientations and skills which are differently valued in micro-interactions with teachers. Similarly, Farkas, Grobe, Sheehan and Shuan (1990) examine those habits which positively affect course grades. Here, good “citizenship” (1990:140), operationalized as teacher perceptions of work habits and disruptiveness, is shown to be positively associated with favorable course grades beyond simply mastery of course material. Similarly, Condrón (2007) empirically distinguishes between academic skills on the one hand and social/behavioral skills on the other, showing each to partially mediate the relationship between student’s background characteristics and reading group placement in kindergarten.

This concern with language skills also illustrates the issues of operationalizing mundane culture styles by recognizing “skills” and “abilities” themselves as forms of cultural capital (Lamont and Lareau 1988; Lareau and Weininger 2003). For example, Condrón (2009) measures cultural capital as the teacher’s evaluation of a child’s approach to learning in a measure that addresses both the student’s orientations as well as academic skills. Elsewhere, Condrón (2007) has measured this form of cultural capital as the teacher’s evaluation of the student’s literacy abilities. Similarly, Lareau and Horvat

(1999) assess cultural capital as parents' large vocabulary and the confidence and entitlement necessary to interact with teachers as equals.

Following Condrón (2007), I distinguish between *behavioral skills* and *academic skills* as manifestations of cultural capital. This two pronged definition of cultural capital will be especially useful in investigating racial disparities in cultural capital because mundane cultural skills and abilities act as salient carriers of racial privilege. Further, this formulation directly addresses how teachers evaluate students' skills and abilities, making the approach suitable for understanding the role of teacher social background and professional training/certification in cultural capital evaluation. The first question is how cultural capital reinforces racial privilege in the schooling context (more on this in the next section). A second question is how teachers evaluate student behavioral and academic skills (more in the following section).

Cultural Capital and Race

American sociology has often addressed the role of cultural capital in racial disparities of educational achievement and attainment. For example, Rosigno and Ainsworth-Darnell (1999) find evidence that black and white students possess unequal cultural resources; however, they attribute much of this inequality to socio-economic disparity and find the discrepancy in cultural resources to have limited explanatory power in addressing the black-white achievement gap. Conversely, Condrón (2007) found that

teachers evaluated the cultural resources of black and white students differently.

Teachers' evaluation of student behavioral and academic skills explained much of the racial and social class inequality in kindergarten reading group placement.^b

Carter (2003) takes a different approach to the problem of racial inequality in cultural capital by arguing that cultural capital valuation is context specific. Basing her analysis on 44 in depth interviews of low income African American students, Carter distinguishes between "dominant" and "non-dominant" cultural capital, arguing that dominant cultural capital corresponds to that of the institutional gatekeepers while non-dominant forms allow one to "navigate the terrain of ethnic authenticity" (2003: 138). Thus, white students derive privilege from their ability to conform to the cultural capital expectations of teachers.

Carter's emphasis on context and who is doing the evaluating prompts my emphasis on teachers' characteristics (both ascribed and professional training) and a conceptualization of cultural capital which specifically addresses the context of its evaluation. Consequently, I draw on these studies in emphasizing teacher's unequal evaluations of African-American and white students' behavioral and academic skills. These studies also provide the framework for exploring the role of the teacher's own cultural capital and social background in evaluating student cultural capital. In other

^b Although the use of ability grouping in kindergarten may facilitate early literacy gains for students (McCoach, O'Connell, and Levitt 2006), some researchers have criticized the practice as elitist and destructive in the classroom community reinforcing lower expectations for students confined to lower group placement (Oakes 1985).

words, teachers are institutional gatekeepers for whom cultural capital matters in their evaluations. However, the question remains, how does the teacher's race and training matter in developing the evaluative criteria of student cultural capital?

As previous research suggests, we would expect African American students to possess less highly valued stocks of cultural capital than their white counterparts. This may be due in part to socioeconomic discrepancies but also due to the marginal position of African Americans in mainstream institutions. Further, as a result of these differential stocks of cultural capital and institutional marginality we would expect teacher's evaluations of African American cultural capital to be less favorable than their evaluations of white student's cultural capital. Also, as argued by Lareau and Weininger (2003) as well as Condron (2007) cultural capital includes *behavioral* skills, operationalized here as the teacher's evaluations of the student's externalizing problem behaviors, as well as *academic* skills, which I operationalize as the teacher's evaluation of student approaches to learning.^c

*Hypothesis 1a: Teachers will hold unfavorable evaluations of black student's **behavioral** skills relative to white students.*

*Hypothesis 1b: Teachers will hold unfavorable evaluations of black student's **academic** skills relative to white students.*

^c By discussing academic skills I am not referring to meritocratic displays but rather to mundane orientations toward schooling itself. For example, here academic skills may refer to a student's task persistence, organization, or eagerness to learn. Thus academic skills are conceptually distinct from one's academic knowledge.

The Teacher Effect

Surprisingly, we know very little about how teachers evaluate students' cultural capital or about how the cultural capital of teachers themselves affects their evaluations of students (Kingston 2001). Some research has examined how teacher ascribed characteristics (specifically race, class and ethnicity) affect their evaluations of students' behaviors and their perceptions of student performance (Downey and Pribesh 2004; Alexander, Entwisle and Thompson 1987; Dee 2005). These studies have tended to focus on student-teacher matching effects (Downey and Pribesh 2004) or have investigated the influence of teacher expectations based on class markers (Rist 1970). Others have explored oppositional culture explanations of student-teacher matching effects, the matched or mismatched racial background of student and teacher, or of experiences of African-American students in white institutions (Ogbu 1991; Downey 2008).

Generally, these studies show that black students tend to elicit less favorable evaluations from white teachers than from black teachers. For example, Downey and Pribesh (2004) observe the matching effects of teacher race and student race in predicting teacher's evaluations of student behavior in kindergarten and eighth grade. Again, these researchers downplay the oppositional culture argument, which suggests that African American students may simply act worse for white teachers. Instead they emphasize teacher expectancy effects implying that white teachers will expect less from African American students (Downey and Pribesh 2004:268). Ehrenberg, Goldhaber and Brewer

(1995) find further support for teacher-student matching effects in teacher's subjective evaluations (expectancy effects) of their students but argue that these matching effects have little association with what students actually learn. Similarly, Alexander, Entwisle and Thompson (1987) show that a teacher's own social origins may influence how they are likely to react to the status attributes their students display. For example, low status students are particularly vulnerable to unfavorable evaluations by teacher's of high status background.

The present study builds on the work of these scholars by developing a model for teacher evaluations of student cultural capital which includes both teacher race and teacher training. In evaluating student social and behavioral skills, I argue, teachers are likely to rely on their own social background (Alexander, Entwisle and Thompson 1987; Downey and Pribesh 2004), addressed here by focusing on teacher race. Thus, when student race and teacher race match one another, teachers will likely hold more favorable evaluations of student behavioral skills (Downey and Pribesh 2004). The argument here is that one's behavioral skills are largely a function of social background; consequently, teachers will draw on their own social background in evaluating the behavioral skills of their students. As a result, students with same race teachers benefit from the matched backgrounds.

However, given that white students hold dominant forms of cultural capital, highly valued everywhere (Carter 2003), I expect white students to be evaluated relatively favorably by both white and black teachers due to their privileged status as

majority group members. Meanwhile, I argue, black students will be evaluated less favorably by white teachers than by black teachers. In other words, white and black teachers will each rely on their own social background in evaluating student behavior. Yet, white students possess more highly valued cultural capital than their black peers. Therefore, white students will not be disadvantaged when a black teacher evaluates them. Rather, white and black students will be evaluated similarly by black teachers. Thus, generally, I expect that teacher's evaluations of student's behavioral/social skills (externalizing problem behaviors) to be contingent on the race of the teacher. Additionally, if I am correct that teachers rely heavily on their own social background in evaluating student behavioral skills, I expect this relationship to remain prominent whether or not the teacher holds professional early childhood education certification. Figure 1 illustrates a conceptual schema for understanding the predicted effects for each combination of student-teacher racial matching.

- Figure 1 about here -

Hypothesis 2a: White teachers will evaluate black students' behavioral skills less favorably than white students'.

Hypothesis 2b: Black teachers will give relatively similar evaluations of black students' and white students' behavioral skills.

Researchers have yet to investigate the roles of teacher training/certification or to distinguish between teacher training and teacher social experiences, instead focusing on teacher ascribed characteristics. In evaluating student *academic* skills as cultural capital (following the conceptualization of Lareau and Weininger 2003) I expect teachers to rely more on their professional training than on their own social background. In other words, teacher certification overrides the effects of social background in evaluating student academic skills. Generally, I can speculate that this is due to teacher training programs' tendency to focus on pedagogical practice and academic achievement rather than illuminating social inequality or issues of student diversity for prospective teachers. For example, Schöne (1987) has described teacher education as following a "technical-rationality model" designed to convey pedagogy and teaching methods to pre-service teachers. Similarly, Bullough and Gitlin (1994) suggest that long standing trends in teacher education tend to emphasize conformity to models of good teaching and the technical aspects of instruction separated from broader educational aims. Unfortunately, these trends undermine any chance for pre-service teachers to critically engage the social inequalities they will likely face in the classroom.

Thus, because teacher training primarily attends to the technical aspects of teaching, I expect teachers who hold professional early childhood education certification to be relatively *homogenous* in their evaluations of a student's academic cultural capital, operationalized here as the teacher's evaluation of the student's approaches to learning (Condrón 2007). However, I argue this professional training is likely to favor dominant

cultural capital exhibitions due to the hegemonic nature of mainstream pedagogical practice. Consequently, teacher professional training and certification functions to institutionalize the privileges associated with dominant cultural capital. Therefore certified black and white teachers should be similar in their evaluations of student's academic skills, holding more favorable evaluations of white students than black students. I term this the "homogenizing" effects of teacher certification.

Conversely, those kindergarten teachers who do not hold professional early childhood certification will have to rely on their own social background in evaluating students' academic skills, having not experienced the homogenizing effects of technical teacher training. Thus, among teachers who do not hold certification I expect student-teacher matching effects in teachers' evaluations: teachers' evaluations of black and white students' academic cultural capital will be partially contingent on whether or not the teacher is black or white. This pattern will likely appear similar to that of teachers evaluating students' behavioral skills. White students, because they possess dominant forms of cultural capital, will be evaluated relatively similarly by black and white teachers alike. However, black students will be more favorably evaluated by black teachers than by white teachers (among those without certification) as teachers will rely on their social background in evaluating the non-dominant cultural capital African American students carry (Carter 2003).

Hypothesis 3a: Teachers with professional early childhood education certification, regardless of their race, will hold more favorable evaluations of white students' academic skills over those of black students.

Hypothesis 3b: White teachers without professional early childhood education certification will hold less favorable evaluations of black students' academic skills than those of white students.

Hypothesis 3c: Black teachers without professional early childhood education certification will hold relatively similar evaluations of black and white students' academic skills.

Data, Measures and Analytic Strategy

In testing the above stated hypotheses I use the public use data file from the 1998-99 base year sample of the Early Childhood Longitudinal Survey – Kindergarten cohort (ECLS-K). The ECLS-K is a nationwide study conducted by the US Department of Education focusing on children's early school experiences (U.S. Department of Education 2001). The ECLS-K employs a multi-stage probability sampling design with the primary sampling units as geographic areas consisting of counties or groups of counties, the second stage units as schools within the selected geographic area, the third stage units as students within these schools. The study includes a nationally representative sample of students who began kindergarten in the fall of 1998. Data were collected from parents, child direct assessment, teachers, and school administrators using a combination of paper questionnaires, computer assisted interview and child direct assessment procedures (U.S. Department of Education 2001: Chapter 2). The ECLS-K

received a 68.8 school response rate. The public use data file I employ includes 17,212 responding students.

I analyze results from only those students who are white or African-American and have a white or African American teacher from the kindergarten cross-section. Constraining the sample to only these students left a sample of 10,317 students. Next, I constrained my sample to only those cases without missing data for my variables of interest leaving a final working sample of N=7782. Although, the ECLS-K employs a longitudinal panel design, here I use only the kindergarten cross-section because a single student's teacher is likely to be different between waves.

- Table 1 about here -

Table 1 presents summary statistics for all variables included in this study. For dependent variables I include two separate measures to address the two sides of cultural capital: academic skills and behavioral skills (Condrón 2007, Lareau and Weininger 2003, Downey and Pribesh 2004). The teacher's evaluation of academic skills dependent variable is operationalized by asking teachers to evaluate students' approaches to learning. This composite measure is based on teachers' assessment of six student characteristics: "attentiveness, task persistence, eagerness to learn, learning

independence, flexibility, and organization”^d (U.S. Department of Education 2001, chap 2:3.2). Conversely, the teacher’s evaluation of students’ behavioral skills is measured by asking teachers about the frequency of the student’s externalizing problem behaviors. This measure asks teachers to evaluate five student characteristics: “the frequency with which a child argues, fights, gets angry, acts impulsively, and disturbs ongoing activities” (U.S. Department of Education 2001, chap. 2.3.2).

Each of these measures is based on the ECLS-K’s social rating scale (SRS), a composite measure created by the department of education from a series of related questions asking teachers to assess the frequency of a given behavior. Responses for individual items range from 1 (all “never”) to 4 (all “very often”) as does each of the composite measures I employ here. The ELCS-K used split-half reliability tests to ensure the teacher’s SRS measures have high reliability (US Dept of Education 2001: Chapter 3). I recoded the dependent variables such that high scores represent more favorable evaluations while low scores represent less favorable evaluations.

For independent variables I recoded teacher and student race categories into sets of dummy coded categories (0=White 1=Black) for both students and teachers. Interaction variables were coded by creating a product term of the student black and teacher black dummy variables. For control variables I include a variety of characteristics of the student, teacher and school. First, I include dichotomous measure of student sex

^d Note that these characteristics of student academic skills are not the same as actual academic achievement or meritocratic displays. Rather, they represent teacher evaluations of student orientations toward school more in line with Farkas et al.’s (1990) concept of classroom citizenship.

coding boys as 1 and girls as 0. Next, I assess student socio-economic status using the ECLS-K's measure based on parents' education, occupational prestige, and income (U.S. Department of Education 2001, chap.7:11) as previous research has found significant effects on teacher evaluations of cultural capital (Condron 2007, Downey and Pribesh 2004). Next I include an indicator of student age on entering kindergarten (measured in months). Soodak, Podell and Lehman (1998) have shown that the presence of students with disabilities in general education classrooms may elicit anxiety and hostility from teachers. Thus, I include a dichotomous variable indicating whether or not the student has a disability in order to control for any effects of student disability status on teacher perceptions. Next, Lareau (1987) has argued that schools have a standardized view of the appropriate role for parents and the family in their children's education. Consequently, we would expect family structure to have consequences for teacher evaluations of student cultural capital. Thus, I include dummy variables for single parent families and other family arrangements using those with both biological parents as the reference category.

Finally, I include several control variables for teacher and school characteristics. First, I include a measure for the number of years the teacher has taught kindergarten to control for any effects of teacher experience. Next, I control for the percent of minorities in the classroom to tease out any contextual effects of the classroom. Although my models demonstrate little effect for this control variable, some research has suggested that whites' perceptions of group threat, and associated negative attitudes, increase as percent African-American increases in a given setting (Taylor 1998). Finally, I include a

dummy indicator for whether or not the student attends a public school. Here, I code public schools as 1 and private schools as 0. Previous research on cultural capital in the classroom includes such a statistical control to limit the effects of advantage based on school context (Downey and Pribesh 2004). For example, we might expect teachers in private schools to view their students more favorably due to biased perceptions of the student body.

Analytic Strategy

I use a series of OLS regression models with a student-teacher race matching interaction term to investigate the effects of teacher race and certification on the teacher's evaluations of the student's academic and behavioral skills. The analysis proceeds in 4 steps. First, I investigate the effects of student race, teacher race, and student/teacher matching effects on the teacher's evaluation of the student's behavioral skills (externalizing problem behaviors). Second, to investigate the role of teacher certification in evaluations of student behavioral skills I run regression models on split samples, focusing in turn on teachers holding early childhood education certification and those who do not. Third, I address the student race, teacher race, and student/teacher matching effects on teacher's evaluations of student's academic skills (approaches to learning). Finally, to address the effects of teacher certification on teachers' evaluations of students' approaches to learning, I split the sample into those teachers who have early childhood

education certification and those who do not. Here, I again look at the effects of student race, teacher race and student teacher matching on teachers' evaluations of students' academic skills across each subsample of the teachers using t-tests to determine statistical significance. This method of splitting the sample on the moderating variable is particularly useful for this type of analysis because it may be more sensitive to interaction effects than traditional product term analysis when the relationship is not uniform across categories of the moderator variable (Jaccard, Turrisi and Wan 1990). Here, the relationship between student race and teacher race may not be uniform across categories of teacher certification. Models are presented regressing each dependent variable on the independent variables for the full sample, the sample of students with teachers holding early childhood education certification and those without certification.

Findings

Table 2 presents the parameter estimates from regressing each of my dependent variables on the set of predictors for the full sample of teachers (with and without early childhood education certification).

- Table 2 about Here -

Model 1 for both dependent variables shows that African-American students receive less favorable evaluations of their behavioral and academic skills than their white peers. These parameter estimates support hypotheses 1a and 1b: teachers give less favorable evaluations of African-American students' behavioral and academic skills than their white peers. Model 2, for each dependent variable adds the effect of teacher race. Under "externalizing problem behaviors" we see that, holding student race constant, African-American teachers give more favorable evaluations of student behavioral skills than do white teachers. However, model 2 for "approaches to learning" indicates no significant difference between African-American and white teachers in their evaluations of student academic skills.

Next, model 3 includes the first teacher-student racial matching effect, a product term of the dummy variables for student Black and teacher Black. Under "externalizing problem behaviors" we find the presence of a significant moderating effect of teacher race on their evaluation of student behavioral skills. However, model 3 under "approaches to learning" displays no parallel interaction effect. This result demonstrates that the teacher's evaluation of white or African-American students' behavioral skills is contingent on the teacher's race while teachers' evaluations of their students' academic skills are not necessarily contingent on their own race. Figure 2 illustrates predicted evaluations of student behavioral skills for paired matches of student and teacher race combinations. As the figure shows, black students are at a demonstrable disadvantage when it is a white teacher evaluating their behavioral skills.

- Figure 2 about Here -

Model 4 further illustrates this point for both academic and behavioral skills: black students receive less favorable evaluations from white teachers compared to other teacher-student racial matches. Figure 2 as well as models 3 and 4 provide support for hypotheses 2a and 2b. White teachers evaluate black students' behavioral and academic skills less favorably than white students. However, black teachers give relatively similar evaluations to both black and white students.

Next, Table 3 presents parameter estimates for teacher evaluations of student behavioral and academic skills among only those teachers *with* early childhood education certification.

- Table 3 about here -

Model 1 for each dependent variable shows that black students elicit less favorable evaluations of their behavioral and academic skills than white students, here by teachers *with* early childhood education certification. However, model 2 illustrates a discrepancy between the two dependent variables. Holding student race constant, black teachers give more favorable evaluations of student behavioral skills. Yet, certified black teachers display no significant difference from certified white teachers in their evaluations of student academic skills. Next, turning to model 3, we find the interaction

term for student-teacher racial matching to be statistically significant for “externalizing problem behaviors” but not for “approaches to learning.” Model 4 highlights the breakdown: white teachers give less favorable evaluations of black students’ behavioral skills while other student-teacher matches display no significant difference from reference category, white teacher – white student. These results parallel those of the full sample: black students are disadvantaged when a white teacher evaluates their behavioral skills. However, turning to model 4 under “approaches to learning” we find a significant negative effect for black students who are evaluated by white teachers or black teachers with certification, providing support for hypothesis 3a. In other words, when certified teachers, black or white, evaluate the academic skills of black students they tend to give less favorable evaluations than to white students. I term this the “homogenizing” effect of teacher certification and I will return to it later in the discussion section.

Finally, Table 4 presents parameter estimates for teacher evaluations of student behavioral and academic skills among only teachers *without* early childhood education certification.

- Table 4 about here -

Model 1 for each dependent variable again illustrates that black students receive less favorable evaluations for their behavioral and academic skills. Turning to model 2 we see that holding student race constant, uncertified black teachers give more favorable

evaluations of students' behavioral and academic skills. Next, model 3 introduces the teacher race-student race product term. The statistically significant interaction for each dependent variable indicates the presence of a moderating effect for teacher race. Furthermore, a t-test confirms the statistical significance ($p < .05$) of the difference between the coefficient for the product term in model 3 under "approaches to learning" (in table 4) and the coefficient for the same product term in Table 3. Results support the difference between teachers with and without certification in student-teacher racial matching for evaluations of student academic skills. Model 4 presents the break down for each student-race paired matches: white teachers give less favorable evaluations of black students' behavioral and academic skills than their peers again indicating that black students are disadvantaged when a white teacher without early childhood education certification evaluates them.

Figure 3 illustrates predicted evaluations of student academic skills for student-teacher racially matched pairs among teachers *without* early childhood education certification. These matching effects parallel those of teachers evaluating student behavioral skills: black students face notable disadvantages when white teachers evaluate their academic skills.

- Figure 3 about here -

Generally, models 4 in table 3 and figure 3 provide support for hypothesis 3b and 3c. White teachers without early childhood education certification give less favorable evaluations of black students' academic skills. However, black teachers without certification give similar evaluations of black and white student academic skills. These results suggest that teacher who *do not* hold early childhood education certification draw on their own social background in evaluating student academic skills while those teachers who *do* hold certification are more homogenous in their evaluation. In other words, certification training appears to override social background in teachers' evaluations of student academic skills, or as I argue, homogenize their evaluations of these skills. I present further interpretation and discussion of these results below.

Discussion

The purpose of this study is to examine the extent to which teachers are relatively homogeneous in their evaluations of student cultural capital. I have attempted to address the roles of teacher background and teacher training in their effects on how teachers evaluate white and black students' cultural capital as both behavioral skills and academic skills. Generally, teachers give less favorable evaluations of black students' cultural capital than they do to white students. Yet there is more to the story of how these influential institutional gatekeepers develop the unintentionally biased criteria they use in evaluating student cultural capital. In extending cultural capital theory I have

problematized its core assumptions and attended to the processes by which cultural capital becomes a powerful carrier of social privilege.

The above findings suggest that teachers are likely to rely on their own social background in developing interpretations and evaluations of students' behavioral skills. In other words, when teachers go to evaluate the behavioral skills of their students their perceptions will be colored by their own expectations of appropriate behavior. Black students with white teachers are particularly disadvantaged in this evaluation process as they are unable to conform to the cultural capital expectations of their dominant group teachers (Carter 2003). Consequently, white teachers misunderstand and devalue the cultural capital displays of their black students. On the other hand, black students do not face a similar disadvantage when it is a black teacher evaluating their behavioral skills. Although the student is likely to present institutionally devalued cultural capital, the racial background of the teacher broadens his or her expectations and understanding of acceptable cultural capital displays. White students are able to present the institutionally highly valued cultural capital behavioral skills more so than black students. Thus, white students' cultural capital acts as a carrier of racial privilege irrespective of the teacher's race. Generally, these findings extend prior research on the role of teacher race in evaluating student behaviors (Downey and Pribesh 2004).

I also explored the role of teacher training, in conjunction with teacher background, as a simultaneous influence in teacher's evaluations of student cultural capital. While my findings suggest that teachers rely on their own social background in

evaluating students behavioral skills, teachers' training influences their assessments of students' academic skills. As I described above, to test this assertion I split my sample into two groups: teachers with an early childhood education certification and those without. Consistent with predictions from hypothesis 3A, teachers *with* the early childhood education certification are relatively homogenous in how they assess students' academic skills. Certified teachers hold less favorable evaluations of black students' academic skills than their white peers. However, these teachers do not appear to differ significantly in their evaluations on the basis of their own race nor do there appear to be student-teacher matching effects.

These findings suggest that early childhood education certification plays a *homogenizing* role in how teachers develop their cultural capital evaluative criteria. In other words, teachers possessing early childhood education certification do not appear to rely primarily on their own social background in evaluating student academic skills, rather they may develop similar evaluations based on their professional training and socialization. Teacher professional training tends to emphasize the rational and technical aspects of teaching (Schöne 1987) rather than social aspects. Consequently, teachers' views of desirable academic skills are likely to be heavily influenced by this training, leaving less room for individual idiosyncrasy or individual background. However, these teachers are homogenized in so far as they evaluate the cultural capital of white students more favorably than that of their black peers.

Uncertified white teachers rely on their social background (in the absence of certification) in developing evaluations of black and white students academic skills, leading white teachers to devalue the subordinate cultural capital black students carry. The findings presented above appear to support this assertion: white teachers without the early childhood education certification evaluate black students less favorably than white students. Conversely, as hypothesis 3c suggests, black teachers without the certification evaluate white students and black students relatively similarly. This may be because black teachers without early childhood education certification rely more on their own social background in developing cultural capital evaluations, not devaluing the skills of black students relative to white students.

Conclusion

Generally, these findings suggest that not all cultural capital is created equally nor held in equal regard depending on who the evaluator is. The dominant forms of cultural capital white students carry (Carter 2003) are held in relatively high regard across categories of teacher race and teacher training. Conversely, the black students who possess subordinate forms of cultural capital are assessed differently depending on who is doing the evaluation. When teachers rely on their own social background in producing an evaluation, black students fare better with black teachers than with white teachers. Interestingly, these findings suggest that when teachers possess early childhood education

certification they become more homogenous across racial categories in their evaluations of student's academic skills. In other words, they devalue the academic skills of black students relative to white students. It may be that early childhood education certification training institutionalizes the privilege of carrying dominant forms of cultural capital (Carter 2003), which explains why black teachers and white teachers alike hold more favorable evaluations of white student's academic skills.

This study extends prior research on student/teacher matching effects (Downey and Pribesh 2004; Alexander, Entwisle and Thompson 1987) by exploring how racial privilege becomes institutionalized in teacher training and certification. This study contributes a novel model for assessing heterogeneity in teacher evaluations of student's academic and behavioral cultural capital skills. Generally, these findings suggest that a teacher's background and training constitute a joint production in how they evaluate their students. White students, privileged with dominant cultural capital, elicit favorable evaluations from black and white teachers, relative to their black peers. Further, this privileged dominant cultural capital becomes institutionalized through teacher professional training and certification, in effect homogenizing teacher's evaluations of student's academic skills. Conversely, black students, possessing subordinate forms of cultural capital, elicit more favorable evaluations from black teachers who rely on their own social background in producing these evaluations.

Future research should attempt to tease out the processes through which privilege becomes institutionalized. An extensive analysis of teacher training programs,

mainstream pedagogical practice, teacher professional communities, and teacher recruitment may produce substantial insight into how privilege is institutionalized. Lortie has described how the teaching profession includes its own recruiting mechanism; “a mass system of public schooling means that millions of young people move through the schools; it is hardly surprising that some develop lasting affiliations” (2002:29).

Consequently, we might expect many teachers to reflect the biases of institutionalized privilege inherent in the school system by virtue of this recruitment mechanism alone.

One notable limitation of this study is the assumption that teacher race signifies back ground experience. In my analysis and discussion I argue that the teacher’s background, as measured here by ascribed characteristics, plays a role in predicting the kinds of cultural capital they are likely to value. Though unverified, this assumption is not without precedent (Dee 2005). Still, more sophisticated measures of teacher’s lived experiences would be useful in unpacking the notion that teacher’s bring a set of social experiences to the classroom which will end up as evaluative frameworks for their students. Additionally, future analyses should include a greater diversity of students and teachers as well as measures to account for language proficiency and immigrant status in an effort to expand these findings beyond black and white students and teachers.

Some researchers have suggested that black students may form an oppositional subculture which encourages them to “act worse” for white teachers than for black teachers (Ogbu 1991). If this were the case it would confound my interpretation by suggesting that teacher-student matching effects has less to do with the role of teacher

background in producing behavioral expectations and is more related to the student's actual behavior in a white teacher's classroom. However, as Downey and Pribesh (2004) have suggested it is hard to imagine the possibility that kindergarteners have developed an oppositional subculture this early in their school career. Ogbu's (1991) argument asserts that African American students develop an oppositional subculture in response to their marginal status in schools, developing over time in response to subordination. Because the participants in this study were kindergarteners, only having had the most recent interactions with education institutions it seems unlikely that they could develop an oppositional subculture.

Another limitation of this study involves the selection biases of teachers who complete training. It may be the case that black teachers who complete training will be more likely to hold less favorable evaluations of black students due to some third variable. For example, it might be the case that black teachers with access to certification are generally more privileged and thus hold conventional views of cultural capital displays. Future research should account for the social class background of the teachers when assessing the role of race and certification. Unfortunately, the ELCS-K does not provide data on teachers' class background, yet qualitative approaches may be useful in teasing out the specific mechanisms at play in teachers evaluative frameworks.

Practically, the findings presented here suggest that those who design teacher education curricula need to take a hard look at the values and cultural capital they institutionalize. It may be productive to include more extensive sensitivity training in

teacher certification programs. This training should include evaluative frameworks of both academic and behavioral skills with special effort toward more understanding for the cultural capital black students carry. Further, we must not overlook the extent to which cultural capital devaluation, both in the micro-political interactions in the class (Roscigno and Ainsworth-Darnell 1999) and in the institutional reproduction in teacher training, has a cumulative effect for reproducing inequality within schools. Further, these findings suggest education institutions would benefit from more actively recruiting teachers from underrepresented groups to increase the legitimacy of marginalized cultural capital. Bringing in more representation of these teacher's lived experiences may have benefits beyond their evaluative capacity for individual student's cultural capital. Additionally, the presence of these teachers in professional teaching communities and school faculties could affect white teacher's unequal evaluation of white and African-American students' cultural capital. Although this assertion is purely speculative, it seems reasonable that a more diverse teaching faculty would tend toward greater evaluative equity.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A - TABLES

Table 1 - Descriptive Statistics

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Definition</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Dependent Variables			
Behavioral Skills Evaluation	Teacher evaluates student's externalizing problem behaviors. (reverse coded)	3.38	.63
Academic Skills Evaluation	Teacher evaluates student's approaches to learning.	3.03	.67
Student Characteristics			
Student's Race	0=White, 1=Black	.16	.37
Student's Sex	1=Male, 0=Female	.51	.5
Student's SES	Student's Socio-Economic Status (-4.75-2.75)	.14	.76
Student's Age	Student's Age on entering kindergarten in months	66.06	4.20
Student Not Disabled	Student does not exhibit a learning disability. 1=no disability, 0=disability	.85	.36
Single Parent (vs. Both Biological Parents)	Student lives in a single parent household. 1=single parent, 0=both biological parents	.20	.39
Other Parent (vs. Both Biological Parents)	Student lives in an "other parent" arranged household. Includes step parents, foster parents etc. 1=other parent, 0=both biological parents	.11	.32
Teacher/School Characteristics			
Teacher's Race	0=White, 1=Black	.05	.23
Years Teacher Taught	Number of years the teacher taught kindergarten	9.59	7.76
Teacher Has Certification	Teacher holds an early childhood education certification 1=yes,0=no	.55	.49
Percent Minority in Class	Percent minority in the student class.	24.28	28.77
Public School(vs. Private)	1=public school, 0=private school	.77	.42

Table 2

OLS Regression Estimates of Teacher's Evaluations of Student's Behavioral and Academic Skills – Full Sample (n=7782)

	Behavioral Skill Evaluations				Academic Skill Evaluations			
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Student/Teacher Variables								
Student Black	-.142***	-.151***	-.170***		-.170***	-.175***	-.184***	
Teacher Black		.135***	.005			.065	-.004	
Student Black*Teacher Black			.207**				.109	
White Student – White Teacher				-	-			-
White Student – Black Teacher				.005				-.004
Black Student – White Teacher				-.170***				-.184***
Black Student – Black Teacher				.005				-.079
Student Characteristics								
Male	-.259***	-.259***	-.259***	-.259***	-.279***	-.279***	-.279***	-.279***
SES	.052***	.053***	.054***	.054***	.133***	.022***	.134***	.134***
Age on Entering Kindergarten	.007***	.007***	.007***	.007***	.023***	.023***	.023***	.023***
Child Not Disabled (vs. Disability)	.116***	.114***	.114***	.114***	.224***	.223***	.223***	.223***
Family Characteristics								
Single Parent (vs. Both Biological)	-.131***	-.134***	-.135***	-.135***	-.127***	-.129***	-.129***	-.129***
Other Parent (vs. Both Biological)	-.223***	-.221***	-.222***	-.222***	-.168***	-.168***	-.168***	-.168***
Controls								
Years Teacher Taught	.004***	.004***	.004***	.004***	-.002*	-.002*	-.002*	-.002*
Teacher Certified in Early Ed.	-.006	-.006	-.004	-.004	-.005	-.005	-.004	-.004
Percent Minority in Class	.000	.000	.000	.000	.001	.000	.000	.000
Public School	.041*	.043*	.046**	.046**	.033	.034	.036*	.036*
Intercept	2.964	2.973	2.969	2.969	1.523	1.527	1.525	1.525
Adjusted R-Square	.089	.091	.092	.092	.137	.137	.138	.138
F-Statistic	69.90***	65.57***	61.33***	61.33***	113.47***	104.35***	96.54***	96.53***

*p<0.05, **p<0.01, ***p<0.001

Table 3

OLS Regression Estimates of Teacher's Evaluations of Student's Behavioral and Academic Skills – Teachers *with* Certification (n=4308)

	Behavioral Skill Evaluations				Academic Skill Evaluations			
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Student/Teacher Variables								
Student Black	-.136***	-.144***	-.159***		-.177***	-.177***	-.179***	
Teacher Black		.124***	.010			-.004	-.015	
Student Black*Teacher Black			.184*				.018	
White Student – White Teacher				-				-
White Student – Black Teacher				.010				-.015
Black Student – White Teacher				-.159***				-.179***
Black Student – Black Teacher				.034				-.176**
Student Characteristics								
Male	-.264***	-.264***	-.264***	-.264***	-.281***	-.281***	-.281***	-.281***
SES	.061***	.060***	.061***	.061***	.136***	.136***	.136***	.136***
Age on Entering Kindergarten	.010***	.010***	.010***	.010***	.024***	.024***	.024***	.024***
Child Not Disabled (vs. Disability)	.118***	.116***	.116***	.116***	.223***	.223***	.223***	.223***
Family Characteristics								
Single Parent (vs. Both Biological)	-.122***	-.124***	-.125***	-.125***	-.131***	-.131***	-.131***	-.131***
Other Parent (vs. Both Biological)	-.218***	-.216***	-.218***	-.218***	-.172***	-.172***	-.172***	-.172***
Controls								
Years Teacher Taught	.005***	.005***	.005***	.005***	-.002	-.002	-.002	-.002
Percent Minority in Class	.000	.000	.000	.000	.001*	.001*	.001*	.001*
Public School	.052*	.054*	.057***	.057**	.019	.019	.019	.019
Intercept	2.751	2.755	2.753	2.753	1.430	1.430	1.430	1.430
Adjusted R-Square	.094	.096	.097	.097	.141	.141	.141	.139
F-Statistic	45.75***	42.47***	39.37***	39.37***	70.75***	64.30***	58.93***	58.93***

*p<0.05, **p<0.01, ***p<0.001

Table 4

OLS Regression Estimates of Teacher's Evaluations of Student's Behavioral and Academic Skills – Teachers *without* Certification (n=3474)

	Behavioral Skill Evaluations				Academic Skill Evaluations			
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Student/Teacher Variables								
Student Black	-.150***	-.163***	-.186***		-.159***	-.176***	-.201***	
Teacher Black		.153**	-.011			.201***	.024	
Student Black*Teacher Black			.250**				.270*	
White Student – White Teacher				-	-			-
White Student – Black Teacher				-.011				.024
Black Student – White Teacher				-.186***				-.201***
Black Student – Black Teacher				.053				.093
Student Characteristics								
Male	-.254***	-.254***	-.253***	-.253***	-.275***	-.275***	-.274***	-.274***
SES	.040**	.042**	.044**	.044***	.130***	.133***	.134***	.134***
Age on Entering Kindergarten	.003	.003	.003	.003	.021***	.021***	.021***	.021***
Child Not Disabled (vs. Disability)	.114***	.113***	.113***	.113***	.225***	.224***	.224***	.224***
Family Characteristics								
Single Parent (vs. Both Biological)	-.145***	-.147***	-.148***	-.148***	-.121***	-.124***	-.125***	-.125***
Other Parent (vs. Both Biological)	-.228***	-.227***	-.225***	-.225***	-.163***	-.162***	-.160***	-.160***
Controls								
Years Teacher Taught	.003*	.003*	.003*	.003*	-.002	-.002	-.002	-.002
Percent Minority in Class	.001	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
Public School	.027	.029	.033	.033	.048	.050*	.055*	.055**
Intercept	3.208	3.225	3.221	3.221	1.627	1.650	1.646	1.646
Adjusted R-Square	.081	.082	.083	.083	.135	.138	.139	.136
F-Statistic	31.54***	29.38***	27.36***	27.36***	53.82***	50.19***	46.51***	46.51***

*p<0.05, **p<0.01, ***p<0.001

APPENDIX B - FIGURES

Figure 1. Conceptual Scheme For Student-Teacher Racial Matching

		Student Race	
		White	Black
Teacher Race	White	<i>Favorable Evaluation</i> – White students possess highly valued cultural capital conforming to the expectations of their white teachers.	<i>Unfavorable Evaluation</i> – Black students are unable to conform to the cultural capital expectations of their white teachers. White teachers misunderstand and devalue black students' cultural capital
	Black	<i>Favorable Evaluation</i> – White students possess highly valued cultural capital and this racial privilege remains salient regardless of the background of the gatekeeper	<i>Favorable Evaluation</i> – Black students possess devalued cultural capital yet the racial matching of student and teacher broadens teacher expectations and understanding of acceptable cultural capital displays.

Figure 2. Student/Teacher Matching and Student Behavioral Skills

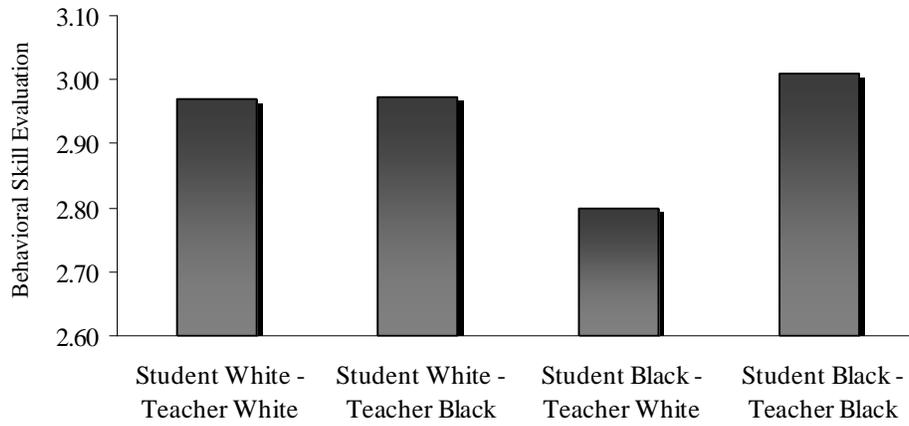


Figure 3. Student/Teacher Matching and Student Academic Skills (Teachers without Early Ed Certification)

