



Blacked Out: Dilemmas of Race, Identity, and Success at Capital High

Signithia Fordham

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This innovative portrait of student life in an urban high school focuses on the academic success of African-American students, exploring the symbolic role of academic achievement within the Black community and investigating the price students pay for attaining it. Signithia Fordham's richly detailed ethnography reveals a deeply rooted cultural system that favors egalitarianism and group cohesion over the individualistic, competitive demands of academic success and sheds new light on the sources of academic performance. She also details the ways in which the achievements of successful African-Americans are "blacked out" of the public imagination and negative images are reflected onto black adolescents. A self-proclaimed "native" anthropologist, she chronicles the struggle of African-American students to construct an identity suitable to themselves, their peers, and their families within an arena of colliding ideals. This long-overdue contribution is of crucial importance to educators, policymakers, and ethnographers.

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