**Relating Schooled to Real Life**

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Schooled, by Gordon Korman, is a book relating a boy’s struggles to get in terms with modern day society. Cap, short for Capricorn has grown up in Garland farms with a grandmother who believes that modern society, with its computers and telephones, has gone bizarre. To Rain, his grandmother, only the hippie age made any sense, and she wants to not only instill that within Cap by teaching him a standard hippie curriculum, but also bits and pieces of her belief in Buddhism.

                This story outlines how the ultimate nerd of the year, Capricorn Anderson, uses his position as school president to make heads and tails of modern society. He learns to get along with kids of his age, and even while facing opposition from Zach Powers, the “boss” of the school, gains popularity, donates to charities, and eventually rises up to change the lives and perspective of many children at his school about what popularity and success really means.

                One aspect of this book is bullying and the constant urge to “fit in”. Even though I was born in this country, for most of my early life, I lived in India. When I moved here in third grade, I did not know any of the customs of America. Over time, I had to struggle through different challenges and run over obstacles in order to achieve my goals. For example, I was completely oblivious of the coinage system in the US and had trouble learning what tally marks were. Cap is bullied repeatedly by Zach Powers and Hugh Winkleman because he is out of tune with today’s world. At Claverage Middle school, Cap’s hippie attitude and his vegetarian Buddhism practice earn him the title of “biggest geek.” Although I was not very different than the others in my school, I did have to adjust a lot to properly fit in. For example, I was used to speaking in Bengali in my school, while now I had to speak English. Also, the student to teacher ratio in America was half of what it was back in India. I wasn’t used to so much personal attention from the teacher and used to be frightened in class. Just like Cap, I slowly began to fit in and eventually became part of the school. Every year, immigrants come in to our school and are treated with disrespect because they do not “fit in”. However, with a little self-motivation and kindness, they easily slip into the student population and gain back their respect, sometimes even going on to become popular. Cap goes farther than that- he helps the school and changes the lives of many who are attending Claverage Middle. A small, unnoticed bud can sometimes make a huge difference in a mighty forest. For example, immigrants from China and Mexico have often taught us what it is like in their home country, making us appreciate America more. New children or people in an environment have potential for rapid change. They come in pure and unbiased, and for the first few days, learn the pros and cons of the environment as an insider through an outsider’s eyes.

Cap has showed us exactly that.