

Title

In School for After School: The Relationship Between Extracurricular Participation and School Engagement

Abstract:

School engagement is comprised of three distinct but mutually-reinforcing categories: behavioral, cognitive, and emotional. A large body of literature has established a positive relationship between behavioral engagement and academic outcomes, but little work has been done to detail the mechanisms linking them. Drawing on ethnographic observations and interviews with two debate teams in Chicago Public Schools, I demonstrate that behavioral engagement in the form of participation in interscholastic debate contributes to cognitive and emotional school engagement, which together promote academic achievement and attainment. Specifically, I document the ways in which debate team participation can strengthen peer relationships among students (emotional engagement), strengthen relationships between students and adults in school (emotional engagement), and influence participants' beliefs about the "student" role (cognitive engagement). I show how behavioral engagement can *produce* cognitive and affective/emotional engagement, which all work in concert to boost academic outcomes.

Bio:

Karlyn Gorski is an Institute of Education Sciences Pre-Doctoral Fellow in the Department of Sociology at the University of Chicago. Her research concerns the experiences of high school students in Chicago Public Schools. Karlyn uses qualitative and mixed-methods research to explore how the structures of schooling affect adolescents. She holds a BA in Public Policy Studies and an MA in Sociology from the University of Chicago.