Engaging disadvantaged students in preparing for their future: A new form of counseling.

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Outline

1. Introduction: social and cultural capital and the college enrollment process

2. The College Coach program in Chicago Public Schools (CPS)
   a. Does the coach program improve college enrollment? Through what processes? For whom?
   b. What do coaches do? How do they do it?
Nearly all graduating seniors plan college but fewer low-income students enroll

Source: ELS
Among students who enroll, low-income students more likely to enroll in 2-yr colleges

Source: ELS
Social and cultural capital barriers

- College cost and differences in academic achievement: important but incomplete explanations of socioeconomic differences in college enrollment

- Examples of social and cultural capital barriers in the enrollment process

  - Believing one must have 4 years of tuition saved before enrolling (Naffziger & Rosenbaum, 2009; Stephan et al., 2008)
  - Not considering colleges because of “sticker price” (Naffziger & Rosenbaum, 2009; Stephan et al., 2008)
  - Believing a parent must be unemployed to receive financial aid (Stephan et al., 2008)
  - Believing FAFSA is a loan application (Stephan et al., 2008)
  - Assuming one must choose a major or career before deciding on a college (Roderick et al., 2008; Stephan et al., 2008)
  - Assuming all colleges are the same (Rosenbaum et al, 2009)
  - Assuming test scores are immutable fact (McDonough, 1997; Walpole et al., 2005)

- Middle-SES families more often provide specific help in the enrollment process (Lareau & Weininger, 2008)
Typical school counselors face many constraints

- Student: counselor = 475:1 nationally (Sable & Noel, 2008)
- In 57% of public high schools, counselors spend less than 20% of their time on college counseling (Parsad et al., 2003)
College Coach Program

- A new college advising model
- Began in 2004-2005, one coach per school in 12 non-selective CPS high schools
- A “social capital reform” no academic or financial resources
- To improve college enrollment for all students but often focus on more disadvantaged
- College room (computers, space for students, coach’s office)
- Informal interactions and formal programming
Data

- Quantitative data (from Consortium on Chicago School Research)
  - 4 cohorts of CPS graduating seniors (2004 – 2007)
  - Excludes magnet, charter, and restructured schools (n=44,627 students; 58 schools)
  - Demographics, transcripts, ACT scores, responses to senior exit survey, fall college enrollment, Barron’s rankings of college selectivity

- Interview data
  - Coaches (Spring 2006)
    - 9 coaches from 8 coach schools
    - 2 postsecondary specialists
  - Students (2006-2007)
    - 30 seniors (Fall 2006) from 2 coach high schools, 26 seniors followed-up (Spring 2007)
    - Stratified random sample of English class track

- Ethnographic observation over 2 ½ years at coach schools
## Coaches versus typical counselors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>College Coach</th>
<th>Typical Counselor</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Job tasks</strong></td>
<td>College counseling</td>
<td>Administrative, personal and some college counseling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reporting structure</strong></td>
<td>Report to school district</td>
<td>Report to principal</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Background</strong></td>
<td>Experience in youth organizations</td>
<td>MA in counseling</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Students served</strong></td>
<td>Proactively reach out</td>
<td>React to requests for help</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Establish trust</strong></td>
<td>Build trusting relationships with “reluctant” students</td>
<td>Limited</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Use of students’ peers</strong></td>
<td>Use existing and build new student networks</td>
<td>Minimal</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Delivery format</strong></td>
<td>Groups</td>
<td>One-on-one</td>
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Methods

1. Difference-in-differences approach

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Coach School</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>B</td>
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<tr>
<td>Non-Coach School</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>D</td>
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Difference-in-differences estimate of coach effect = (B-A) – (D-C)

2. Controls for changes in student composition over time: race/ethnicity, gender, neighborhood poverty and SES, GPA, ACT score, number of vocational and AP classes, participation in college prep programs

3. Controls for pre-program trend in college enrollment for each school
College selectivity

- 3 outcomes: enrolled vs. not, less selective 4-yr vs. 2-yr college, more vs. less selective 4-yr college

- Institutional graduation rates for colleges attended by CPS students:
  25% at 2-yr colleges (10% at City Colleges)
  45% at less selective 4-yr colleges
  74% at more selective 4-yr colleges

- Examples

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>More Selective 4-yr College</th>
<th>Less Selective 4-yr College</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>University of Illinois--Urbana-Champaign</td>
<td>University of Illinois at Chicago</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loyola University</td>
<td>Northern Illinois University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northwestern University</td>
<td>Northeastern Illinois University</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Coach effects on enrollment among students who plan to attend college in the fall

Odds ratios above 1 indicate positive effect. †p<.10, *p<.05, **p<.01
Coaches likely affect enrollment through college actions

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Among students planning college in the fall

Additional controls: specific plans, applied to 1+ scholarships, received 1+ scholarships
Coaches likely affect enrollment through college actions

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Among students planning college in the fall
Additional controls: specific plans, applied to 1+ scholarships, received 1+ scholarships
Universal reforms often benefit most advantaged

- “Matthew Effect” or cumulative advantage hypothesis (DiPrete & Eirich, 2006; Merton, 1968; Pallas, 2003)

Examples

- *Sesame Street* (Cook et al., 1975; Cook & Conner, 1976)
- AP classes (Furry & Hesch, 2001)
- Technology intervention in schools (Rockman, 1995)
- Adult education (Pallas, 2003)
- Reading interventions (Stanovich, 1986; Shippen et al., 2005)
- Early childhood interventions on the home environment (Bakermans-Kranenburg, 2005)

- Coach program?
Coach effects by neighborhood SES

*\(p<.05\), **\(p<.01\), ***\(p<.001\)

- Enrolled
  - Lower SES: 1.7%
  - Higher SES: 2.5%
- Less Selective 4-yr vs. 2-yr
  - Lower SES: 9.7%
  - Higher SES: -0.9%
- More vs. Less Selective 4-yr
  - Lower SES: -2.6%
  - Higher SES: -4.6%

\(*p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001\)
Coach effects by high school level of college plans

*Coach effects are significant at p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001

Bar chart showing predicted change in college enrollment:
- Enrolled: 2.1% (high schools with few college planners), 4.2% (high schools with many college planners)
- Less Selective 4-yr vs. 2-yr: 7.9% (high schools with few college planners), 2.7% (high schools with many college planners)
- More vs. Less Selective 4-yr: 1.7% (high schools with few college planners), -4.5% (high schools with many college planners)

*p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001
Coach effects by student race/ethnicity

*p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001
Part II: What Coaches Do and How they Do it: Findings from Coach Observations

Methods

- Ethnographic Observation, 4 original coach high schools
- 125 + hours of participant observation
- 2 ½ academic years
- Fieldnotes written, coded for patterns
Coaches help students learn subtle cultural knowledge and skills

- Coaches help students complete key college actions
- Coaches help make EXPLICIT the knowledge that is IMPLICITLY known by many middle class families and students, i.e. “cultural capital”
- Coaches help students see college as possible and realistic
Coaches help students organize and complete a complex process

- Coaches help students through:
  - Regular Progress Checks
  - Setting Deadlines and Prioritizing
  - Parent-like Nagging

- Providing and helping *interpret* information
  - “Sticker prices” aren’t actual prices
  - Best way to get aid is to apply to schools
  - FAFSA is free money that doesn’t have to be earned
Coaches help students consider pros and cons of various options

- Considering new kinds of colleges
  - More than “Saturday Afternoon [for-profit] Schools”
  - More than colleges where students know someone

  - Evaluating colleges using new criteria
    - Going to a school outside of Chicago is not just about spending more gas money

- Considering new majors and careers
Coaches help students see what colleges value

Student: “But I didn’t do anything [for my selection as an IL state Scholar!”]

Coach: “Sure you did. You had good grades and a good ACT score...[You're in the] top 10% out of ... high school seniors in Illinois. ... You can write about how you feel to be one of the best students in the state. About how you felt when you told your mom.”
Coaches help students market themselves, identify personal strengths

- In person: At the College Fair
  - How to dress
  - Who to Talk to
  - What to Say

- On Applications
  - Neat handwriting
  - GANGNAME_Mike@gmail.com vs/ Mike_Smith@gmail.com

- On Facebook
Summary

- Coaches improve some college outcomes (enrollment, and less selective 4-yr vs. 2-yr enrollment)
- College actions may mediate improvement in enrollment outcomes
- Coaches reduce more selective 4-yr college enrollments for African Americans
- Coaches benefit students with bigger gaps in the enrollment process (Latino, lower SES, and those attending schools with few college planners)
- Coaches help students complete college actions, form and act on specific plans and provide the cultural and social capital required to do so