

Marcia Hughes

Title Presentation: “The impact of parental involvement and support on adolescent adjustment within the context of an intervention program”

The study evaluates the effects of parenting on students' (N=49) academic adjustment, and response to an intervention project. The project, funded by the US Department of Education, started in 1999, was designed to help adolescents from disadvantaged backgrounds succeed in school and continue on to post-secondary education. The project is school-based but family-oriented: it is assumed that the adolescent's success in school is closely connected to the adolescent's functioning and circumstances at home (Harkness, Hughes, Muller, & super, 2004). Differences in parent and family involvement, support, and stress were related to (1) differences in adolescents' adjustment status and (2) differences in adolescents' response to the intervention project. Results demonstrate that within high risk communities there is great diversity in family functioning and student needs. Students with supportive and stable family homes had the interest and wherewithal to seek out academic support that would advance their circumstances. Students with less support from parents, and less stable family circumstances, sought out social and emotional support, based on need. Where family circumstances were particularly problematic, students were the least likely to seek support either academically, socially, or emotionally. Identifying different typologies of student needs – and family support/circumstances – have important implications for intervention efforts.