

Katrina Groeller

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### Scholarly Identity Snapshot

I would say that my scholarly identity is one grounded in justice and teamwork. This is partly why I gravitate toward participatory action research (youth participatory action research in particular) because although I am comfortable being a “leader”, I find much more value working with others. When I was a college adviser, sure, I was “the college adviser”, but I worked with teachers, the counseling staff, administrators, other advisers (in my area and outside), and other networks to best serve my students. I do recognize and reflect upon my time there quite often, especially because that college access work strongly informs my research trajectory as it was (and still is) so siloed and “top-down” rather than community-oriented.

My research trajectory thus seeks to make college access programs more “grassroots”, more community-oriented, and have more of a family and student voice in its creation. I believe in my gut that this would help even more students in a more sustainable fashion because the program is therefore rooted in community, rather than a “third-party” organization. Advisers can be lost if there is no funding from the third-party for them! The national corps I was involved in shouted its statistics from the treetops, that students who met with their college adviser were X% more likely to get accepted to college and X% got X more dollars in financial aid. But at a more local level, how does switching out new advisers every one to two years make long-term change? Near-peer advisers are great, but having an outsider come in to “fix” a community’s lacking postsecondary attainment just doesn’t sit right with me, and I WAS one of those “outsiders”!

Maybe I'm spending too much time in the past for this piece, after all, this is a class about teaching in postsecondary education, and that is my future (at least I hope so, we all know how the academic job market is). I absolutely love teaching students about sociology; whether it be making assignments, generating content for them to explore, answering questions, et cetera. When I had that lightbulb moment of "the sociological imagination", everything changed, and I hope to foster that for others as well, especially for those first generation, underrepresented, marginalized students. To me at least, it was liberating. Keep in mind I'm white and grew up in a single parent, working-class household – so take the "liberating" piece with a grain of salt. If you had asked me a year ago where I wanted to teach, I would have said a "research one" university where I can reach the most undergraduates. But now, I would be happy to teach and research with students at a smaller college or even community college. That might be where I could make the most difference.