

# How a school museum visit helps create cultural equality

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This research was conducted by **Brian Kisida, Jay P. Greene and Daniel H. Bowen** at the **University of Arkansas** and the **University of Houston, USA**.

## Summary

Cultural capital comprises the set non-economic resources that are at one's disposal through life (things like language and accent, dress sense, etc) and that can, in certain conditions, be "exchanged" for social or economic privileges. This paper examined how children can acquire cultural capital through means other than their families. The research was conducted with school groups that visited a recently opened museum (treatment group) and groups that did not (control group). Surveys were conducted with both to evaluate how the school visit to a museum can impact the motivation to possess cultural capital. The study highlights that a small intervention such as a single museum school visit together with preparation classes can increase students' drive for consuming culture.

## After the study, both groups of students were given free tickets to museums for themselves and their families

The coupons had a unique code on them, so the researchers could then measure the impact that first museum visit had on any future ones. The results showed a higher probability than expected that students return to the museum after the school visit.

## On average, female and non-white students showed greater interest in engaging with museums

The study also suggests that the museum visit made a bigger change in students from smaller schools. In general, the data show that students from disadvantaged backgrounds gain cultural capital through this mechanism and that financially better off students would have inherited more cultural capital from their families.

## A minimal intervention produced positive and meaningful changes

From a policy perspective, it shows that schools can play an important role in providing disadvantaged students with important cultural experiences, although material inequalities remain an obstacle for their engagement to reach the same level as that of children from advantaged families.

This summary is by **David Kohan Marzagao, King's Knowledge Exchange Associate**

### Keywords

**experiment** **gallery** **school** **museum** **USA** **children**

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| Title            | Creating cultural consumers: The dynamics of cultural capital acquisition   |
| Author(s)        | Kisida, B., Greene, J. P., & Bowen, D. H.   |
| Publication date | 2014  |
| Source           | Sociology of Education, Vol 87, Iss 4, pp 281-295   |
| Link             | <a href="http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/0038040714549076">http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/0038040714549076</a> |
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By **Culture.Case** | 24 July 2017 | **Developing new audiences in arts and culture** |



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