The American Adolescent

Student Affairs Professional Development
Friday, April 24, 2015

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Agenda

- General understanding of the cohort
- Specific understanding of data points
- Examination of behavioral trend lines
- Given this, how do we support learning?
We need to understand who our students are and how they learn...

- “Adolescents are in a constant state of constructing their lives” (Nakkula and Toshalis, 2010)

- “Adolescence to be a period of heightened “plasticity” during which the brain is highly influenced by experience” (Steinberg, 2014)

- “Emails, text messages, blog postings and comments, phone calls, tweets, feeds, photos, and songs pour in every evening, and if kid’s don’t respond, they fall behind” (Bauerlein, 2009)
The **Ambitious** Generation

- Schneider & Stevenson (1999) call the current generation of adolescents “America’s most ambitious teenage adolescents ever”
- In fact, more than 90% of current high school students plan on attending some form of higher education (Schneider & Stevenson, 1999).
Unrealistic expectations…
56% of the authors’ sample has unaligned ambitions, where educational and professional plans are not complementary. Many are not willing to make the educational commitment necessary to be awarded with the professional position they desire.
The *Ambitious* Generation

- Students with unaligned ambitions are less able to make direct life plans, less able to make productive use of spare time, less able to organize themselves and in general have a difficult time staying motivated (Schnieder & Stevenson, 1999). Also, the number of professional jobs required by these students will be unavailable to them when they are ready to enter the workforce.
HSU Health Center Data, 2011 to 2015
Other characteristics?

WOW, YOU'RE WORKING ON YOUR REPORT ALREADY? IT'S NOT DUE UNTIL THURSDAY!

YEAH, I KNOW... MOM SAYS THE PILLS I'M TAKING ARE STARTING TO WORK.

I THOUGHT WE COULD GO OUTSIDE AND PLAY... IT'S SNOWING... CALVIN?

WHAT? OH, SORRY, I WASN'T LISTENING. LOOK, I REALLY HAVE TO FINISH THIS
The Dumbest Generation

- They don't read books -- and don't want to, either
- They can't spell--Lack of capitalization and IM codes dominate online writing
- Thousands of public school graduates are ending up in remedial reading and writing classes in college (28% of Frosh, US Dept Ed, 2013)
- They don't store the information—they retrieve it and pass it along
- Kids are drowning in teen stuff delivered 24/7 by the tools, and adult realities can't penetrate
  – Source: Bauerlein, 2009
Delayed adolescence

• ONE of the most notable demographic trends of the last two decades has been the delayed entry of young people into adulthood. According to a large-scale national study conducted since the late 1970s, it has taken longer for each successive generation to finish school, establish financial independence, marry and have children. Today’s 25-year-olds, compared with their parents’ generation at the same age, are twice as likely to still be students, only half as likely to be married and 50 percent more likely to be receiving financial assistance from their parents.

Lawrence Steinberg, NY Times, August 2014 and author of “Age of Opportunity: Lessons From the New Science of Adolescence.”
Delayed adolescence
Delayed Adolescence

• Financial dependence on parents lasts longer
• Twenty-five is the new 15
• “even when not displaying obvious psychological symptoms, we see a generation emerge that is increasingly slow to launch and appears helpless in the face of modest challenges” p. 15
• “The one big unintended consequence of all these changes was a dramatic shift in the roles of adolescents: from contributors to their families to beneficiaries of others’ efforts” p. 79
• The number of youth who get licenses at age 16 has dropped by almost 50 percent in 10 years (Federal Highway Administration)

From “Escaping the Endless Adolescence” by Allen and Allen
Multitasking and the death of America...

• “For multitasking is essentially the juggling of interruptions, the moment when we choose to or are driven to switch from one task to another” (Jackson, 2009, p. 84 in Distracted…The erosion of attention and the coming dark age)

• “The more complex the task, the greater the switch costs” (Jackson, 2009, p. 80)

• “We are a society that has stopped reading, and a society that has stopped reading is one that has stopped self educating” (Chiarot, 2012)
Multitasking...
Lets look at the data

- 1/3 of adolescents juggle 5-8 media while doing homework (Jackson, 2009)
- 90% of high school students study less than 5 hours per week (2006 survey of high school student engagement)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>U.S. Illiteracy Statistics</th>
<th>Data</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Percent of U.S. adults who can’t read</td>
<td>14 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of U.S. adults who can’t read</td>
<td>32 Million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent of U.S. adults who read below a 5th grade level</td>
<td>21 %</td>
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<tr>
<td>Percent of prison inmates who can’t read</td>
<td>63 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent of high school graduates who can’t read</td>
<td>19 %</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Institute of Literacy
Research Date: 4.28.2013
Reading and Comprehension (lack of)
Let's stop for a minute…

- In your small groups (tables)
  - What is the role of parents/family as we address the characteristics of the American Adolescent?
  - What is the role of the nation’s high schools?
  - What is our role?

Then we can look at some of the specific data that describes the risky behaviors young people engage in
Behavioral Trends...Data Points

- Source: Center for Disease Control
- Youth Behavior Risk Survey
The data

- Violence
- Bullying
- Sex
- Sadness
- Alcohol
- Drugs
2013 High School Students

Carried a weapon (at least one day in the last 30 days)
17.9% of students carried a weapon (gun, knife or club)

Higher among Male (28.1%) and Highest among White Male (33.4%)

Carried a Gun
5.5% of students carried a gun
Higher among Male (9.4%) and Highest among White Male (10.7%)
2013 High School Students

Carried a Weapon on School Property
5.2% (at least one day in the last 30 days)

Threatened or Injured With a Weapon on School Property
6.9% one or more times in the 12 months before survey
2013 High School Students

Did Not Go to School Because of Safety Concerns
7.1% (at least one day in the last 30 days)

Electronically Bullied
14.8% (during the 12 months before the survey)

Bullied on School Property
19.6% (during the 12 months before the survey)
2013 High School Students

Forced to Have Sexual Intercourse
7.3 % (in their lifetime)

Physical Dating Violence
10.3% (during 12 months before survey)

Sexual Dating Violence
10.4% (during 12 months before survey)
2013 High School Students

Felt Sad or Hopeless
29.9 % (during 12 months before survey)

Seriously Considered Suicide
17 % (during 12 months before survey)

Made a Suicide Plan
13.6 % (during 12 months before survey)

Attempted Suicide
8.0 % (during 12 months before survey)
2013 High School Students

Consuming Alcohol
66.2% have had at least one drink

Drank Alcohol Before Age 13
8.6%

Current Alcohol Use
34.9% (at least one day in the last 30 days)

Five or More Drinks in a Row
20.8% (at least one day in the last 30 days)

10 or more Drinks in a Row
6.1% (at least one day in the last 30 days)
2013 High School Students

Ever Used Marijuana
40.7 % (at least once in their lives)

Tried Marijuana Before Age 13
8.6%

Current Marijuana Use
23.4% (at least one day in the last 30 days)

Offered, Sold, or Given an Illegal Drug on School Property
22.1% (during 12 months before survey)
2013 High School Students

Ever Had Sexual Intercourse
46.8 %

Had Sexual Intercourse Before Age 13
5.6 %

Had Sexual Intercourse with Four or More Persons
15.0 % (during lifetime)

Currently Sexually Active
34.0 % (sexual intercourse with at least one person during 3 months before survey)
Now, let's look at the data points

- Do you think things have gotten better or worse over the last 10 years?
- What categories do you think are most troubling when examining trend lines?
Youth Risk Behavior Trend Lines – Fighting and Weapons

Fighting and Weapons Trend Lines

- Carried weapon school property
- Did not go to school (felt unsafe)
- In a fight on school property
Trend Lines – Sexual Behaviors

Sexual Behaviors Trend Line

- Ever had sexual intercourse
- Had intercourse before age 13
- Had intercourse w/ four or more
- Currently sexually active
- Used a condom

Trend Lines – Mental Health

Mental Health Trend Lines

- Seriously considered att. Suicide
- Made a suicide plan
- Attempted suicide
Trend Lines - Alcohol

Ever had one drink of alcohol
Drank alcohol before age 13
Currently drinking alcohol
Have 5 or more drinks in a row
Trend Lines - Other Trends

- Play video/computer more than 3 hrs/day
- Played on at least one sports team
- Did not use any method to prevent pregn.
- Were obese
How does learning happen?

• Dialogue
• Interaction
• Perspective Taking

• In an *environment* that supports learning
Dilemma based dialogue

- Confront the dilemma directly (make it community based)
- State your position and reasoning
- Test reasoning-ask questions-’straw poll’
- Adopt a final position
Community is key

• Elements of a strong community
  – Trust
  – Caring
  – Integration
  – Participation
  – Open Communication
  – Collective Responsibility

• Taking from Lawrence Kohlberg’s Approach to Moral Education, 1989 describing the Just Community Approach
What do we know?

• Listening is important
• Challenge (of assumptions, social and cognitive) and support are both important, balanced
• Active engagement around learning
• Adult interaction is critical as students explore and learn
• Did I mention listening is important?
• The power of the peer group must be mitigated
• Reading and writing, and re-reading and re-writing
• Feedback and asking good, critical questions
• Integrating social and cognitive development
A model for supporting A learning (St. Onge, 2002)

**Academic Behaviors**
- Sharing leadership roles in projects
- Actively participating in discussions
- Rewriting papers with help of faculty and peers
- Sharing academic success

**Social Behaviors**
- Healthy residence hall activities
- Spending time with faculty especially outside of class
- Positive social experiences on campus (clubs, activities, etc.)
- Balance with socializing and studying
- Study groups, study with peers

Learning → persistence
Questions or Comments?