

RESEARCH You May Have Missed

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RESEARCH YOU MAY HAVE MISSED . . . provides brief summaries of recent research relevant to youth development practice. It is designed to help youth development professionals keep up-to-date with contemporary research.

- Birkeland, S., Murphy-Graham, E., & Weiss, C. (2005). **Good reasons for ignoring good evaluation: The case of the Drug Abuse Resistance Education (D.A.R.E.) program.** *Evaluation and Program Planning*, 28(3), 247-256.

This article attempts to understand why evaluations in general, and of D.A.R.E. in particular, do not always result in changes on the part of those who run the programs that were evaluated. D.A.R.E. is the most frequently used school-based substance abuse prevention program in the United States; more than 80 percent of US school districts were using D.A.R.E. in 2001. However, several evaluations in a variety of contexts have shown that students who go through D.A.R.E. are not any less likely to use drugs than students who have not been through the program. Some evaluations have showed positive effects on substance-related knowledge and attitudes, but no evidence shows a reduction in substance use. The authors examine why the evaluation findings seem to have been ignored by school districts. Previous research shows that “decision makers do not usually put evaluation findings directly into use.” This study focused on 16 communities in four states (Colorado, Massachusetts, Kentucky, and Illinois). They interviewed school administrators responsible for prevention and other school district personnel. Six of the eight districts that had D.A.R.E. in 2001 continued to use it despite the evaluation results. Where D.A.R.E. was no longer being used, respondents reported that ending the program was unpopular;

respondents were skeptical of the evaluation results. Interviewees, including school and police officials, stated that the evaluations measured unrealistic goals; they did not believe that the intervention, just 17 hours of in-class time, would prevent drug use. In addition, they believed that the value of D.A.R.E. was the relationships it builds between students and the police, rather than its ability to prevent drug use. Police officials felt that D.A.R.E. improved their image, and that the program facilitated interactions that could not be measured through drug use statistics. School relationships with police were also reported to have benefited from the program. Respondents also expressed skepticism about the research findings. Since the implementation of the program varies from place to place, they felt that just because the program had not worked elsewhere didn’t mean it wasn’t working in their community. The authors state that the reasons people ignore evaluation evidence “appear to be a combination of rationality and rationalization.” Anecdotal reasons for continuing the program were given. However, the respondents also consistently discounted scientific evaluation evidence. The authors conclude that evaluators should consider including outcomes that local people value, such as the relationship building outcomes noted here, as one component of evaluations. **-KEH**

- Faircloth, B.S., & Hamm, J.V. (2005).
Sense of belonging among high school students representing 4 ethnic groups.
Journal of Youth and Adolescence, 34(4), 293-309.

Positive school experiences have been linked to school motivation, engagement, and achievement for students in general and particularly for the majority population. However, findings about the importance of these connections for non-white populations have been inconsistent. This study examined several dimensions of school experiences for students – valuing of the school experience, self-efficacy, bonding with teachers, social integration (number of friends), time in extracurricular activities, perceived treatment and feelings of belonging related to their ethnic group, and academic success, using structural equation modeling (SEM). Data for this study were drawn from a larger sample of 9th to 12th graders in seven schools, six of which were in the Bay Area (with the other being in Wisconsin). A total of 580 African American, 948 Asian American, 860 Latino, and 3142 white students responded to the study. Each school in the study had between 500 and 1000 students who responded to the survey. In all four ethnic groups, feelings of efficacy

and valuing of the school influenced feelings of belonging, and feelings of belonging subsequently influenced academic success. The relation between belonging and academic success was significant for each group, but was most powerful for Latino students and least powerful for African Americans. Feelings of belonging appeared to have different dimensions in differing ethnic groups. For example, for African American and Asian American students, feelings of belonging were related to their relationships with teachers, involvement in school activities, and perceived discrimination, but were not related to their number of friends. Friend involvement was related to belonging for white and Latino students, as were the other three predictors of belonging. This study sheds more light on the value of specific school-related developmental assets among non-white high school students. Feelings of belonging are important in academic achievement for all four ethnic groups examined here, but relationships with peers may not influence feelings in an equivalent manner among all students. **-KEH**

- Hart, D., & Carlo, G. (2005).
Moral development in adolescence.
Journal of Research on Adolescence, 15(3), 223-233.

Hart and Carlo introduce this special issue of the *Journal of Research on Adolescence*. The papers included present a wide range of issues relevant to moral development in adolescence. Topics include the distinctive qualities of moral life in adolescence, a description of the various connotations of what is ‘moral’, the methodology typically used in moral development research, and the influences that shape

adolescent moral development. Also discussed is the intersection of moral development research with policy concerns. The articles represent a concern for ‘practical morality’– charity to others, caring for the next generation, delinquency, civic engagement – topics that are relevant to the general public and policy makers. Two of the journal articles are reviewed in this issue of *Research You May Have Missed*. **-RC**

- Lawford, H., Pratt, M.W., Hunsberger, B., & Pancer, S.M. (2005).
Adolescent generativity: A longitudinal study of two possible contexts for learning concern for future generations.
Journal of Research on Adolescence, 15(3), 261-273.

Generativity is defined as care and concern for the next generation. It is also Erikson’s seventh of eight psychosocial stages across the life course. In the present study, in order to gain a deeper understanding of how to better promote the development of an

important personality strength, the authors examine how and where individuals learn to care for succeeding generations. Participants included 896 adolescents (average age: 17.5 years) at first wave of questionnaires; 337 youth responded at the second round of data

collection two years later; and 287 respondents participated at the third round of data collection, six years from the beginning. The average age of the respondents at the third round of data collection was 23. Of the original 896 adolescents, 198 participants responded to all three data collection requests. The measures included questions about personal adjustment (including self-esteem, depression and sources of support), parenting, and community involvement. The principal component of generativity examined in the present paper was *generative concern*, which refers to an individual's felt sense of caring about the next generation, as well as a wish to leave a legacy of the self through such investment in the future. The authors investigated the roles that

community and parental involvement may play in the development of generative concern in late adolescence and emerging adulthood. Results indicated that, controlling for gender and financial status, authoritative parenting and community involvement at age 17 each contributed to generative concern at age 23. Early community involvement appeared to be a stronger predictor to subsequent generativity than did family parenting. Generative concern in late adolescence was also significantly related to measures of positive adjustment. The results suggest directions for fostering the growth of generativity in adolescence, focusing on the quality of family interactions and strengthening experiences of early community involvement, and broaden the view of prosocial moral development in adolescence. -RC

- Nitzberg, J. (2005). (Ed.) **Putting youth at the center of community building.** (Special issue). *New Directions in Youth Development, No. 106, Summer 2005.*

The articles in this special issue outline the theory and practice of positioning youth in the center of community building. The first article by Nitzberg starts with an explanation of what community building has come to mean. Community building goes beyond community organizing to emphasize community renewal and change, with the focus on building relationships and structures that support people's investment in this effort for renewal. Positioning youth at the center of community building means engaging youth at the community level with a wide spectrum of people and resources. The outcomes of community building efforts are an improved "social capacity" to effect change, not necessarily the actual accomplishment of goals. This means successful community building efforts result in an improvement in people being able to work together in concert. Cahn & Grey talk about youth development programs in practice that have impacted the community as a whole. The experiences of the Time Dollar Institute in their various youth programs create interesting examples as community building initiatives. Included here are the experiences of a grand youth jury in creating meaningful change in youth recidivism in the community. An article by Mary Fusoni also addresses

youth and the legal system, with youth creating partnerships with the police and other adults in the neighborhood. Alexander Lynn showcases the work of the University high school – an alternative school for youth who have dropped out of Boston schools, in their efforts to promote relevant, meaningful and socially conscious learning. The school uses "community action project-based learning" as their mode of teaching. The author describes several community projects that the students took on with the common thread that they were all personally meaningful to them. The article shows how liberation pedagogy using community action as a tool can be used in the context of formal education for social justice, community change as well as personal healing. The other articles in this volume are no less inspiring. Lisa Fiegel and Nathan Stone talk about art and music as community building tools. Stone specifically talks about the value of hand-drumming as being an accessible and easy way to build a community of youth. The last article in this volume by Owadokum & Aviele describes the impact of the Somerville Youth Council in Massachusetts on community building efforts. The articles in this volume provide a range of ideas for youth development practitioners to co-create with youth, empowering roles as agents for community action and change. -AS

- Pederson, S., Seidman, E., Yoshikawa, H., Rivera, A., Allen, L., & Aber, J.L. (2005)
Contextual competence: Multiple manifestations among urban adolescents.
American Journal of Community Psychology, 35(1/2), 65-82.

The authors introduce the construct of “contextual competence” to emphasize the importance of examining competence as it unfolds in the daily transactions in multiple social contexts in which youth are engaged. In this study, the authors sought to uncover different patterns of contextual competence in a sample of low-income urban adolescents and how this related to adjustment outcomes of self-esteem, depressive symptoms and self-reported delinquency. Youth, who averaged 16 years of age, were assessed on three dimensions of self-reported engagement (i.e., involvement, relationship quality, and performance) in peer, academic, athletic, employment, religious and cultural contexts. In order to create profiles of contextual competence, cluster analysis was used. Three main profiles emerged that consisted of youth engaged in more than one context: “engaged non-worker,” which consisted of youth who reported moderate to high engagement in all contexts except employment, “engaged worker,” which consisted of youth who were engaged in all contexts, especially work, and “engaged non-athlete,” consisting of youth who reported high engagement in the self-in-context and peer contexts, but low levels of engagement in athletics. Other profiles marking a strong connection with one context were “strong religious connection,” “culturally disengaged athlete,” “academically disengaged athlete,” “worker,” and “low efficacy aca-

demical” profiles. The final profile with less connection with any context was labeled “disconnected.” African American youth were more likely to belong to the “engaged non-worker” profile and less likely in the “worker” profile. European-Americans were over-represented in the “engaged worker” profile. Asian American youth were more likely to belong to the “low efficacy academic” and “disconnected” profiles. There were gender and age effects as well. A multivariate analysis revealed that the profiles of contextual competence and gender predicted self-esteem and depression. Race/ethnicity and age did not account for an effect. Specifically, members of profiles that marked competence in multiple domains reported significantly higher self-esteem and lower depression than those identified with profiles representing high engagement in one or fewer domains. Youth in the “disconnected” profile reported greater depression and lower self-esteem than youth in profiles reflecting high engagement in a single context. The authors suggest that the results demonstrate the existence of multiple profiles of contextual competence among low-income urban adolescents, contrary to dominant stereotypes about these youth. The results also indicate that high engagement in multiple contexts of adolescent development is associated with more adaptive psychosocial outcomes. This study lends theoretical support for those involved in creating quality programs that provide avenues for youth engagement. -AS

- Phan, T. (2005).
Interdependent self: Self-perceptions of Vietnamese-American youths.
Adolescence, 40, 425-441.

The purpose of this study was to examine how adolescent male and female Vietnamese-American youth perceive self in relation to their family. All the participants in this study (total of 10) were from low-income neighborhoods in Southern California and had gained scholarships to go to four year colleges. The youth were interviewed about parental interactions, family climate, and parental control as well as peer relationships, parental input, and their academic achievement orientation. The author used a grounded theory approach which means the concepts that came up as significant from the data were investigated and

analyzed further. The author describes youth’s narratives about self as showing “social individuality.” Youth expressed having strong family ties. They spoke of their mothers with great love, respect and sympathy. Young Vietnamese males seemed to have a concept of self that was more communal and relational than European-American youth. Both boys and girls were motivated by their parent’s hard work and felt that the warmth of their home environment compensated for their lack of material wealth. There was also a sense of pride that the youth articulated about Vietnam’s long rich history and ethnic identity. The sense of obligation and responsibility to

family, community and nation gave inspiration for these students to work hard and complete school, in order to “repay the obligations of love and sacrifice.” Education was seen by the parents as empowerment and liberation for the entire family, providing hope for

the future. The author discusses the different themes that give insight into these youths’ identities and sense of self. This article gives a strengths-based perspective on minority youth ethnic identity and how this relates to their values and aspirations. **-AS**

- Sieverding, J. A., Adler, N., Witt, S., & Ellen, J. (2005).

The influence of parental monitoring on adolescent sexual initiation.

Archives of Pediatric and Adolescent Medicine, 159(8), 724-729.

The goal of this study was to examine the effects of parental monitoring on adolescent sexual initiation. This study involved 307 adolescents ages 14 to 18 who were recruited from an HMO-based teen clinic in San Francisco. The sample was highly ethnically diverse and was 58 percent male. At the time of the study, none of the adolescents had had sexual intercourse (which was one of the criteria for participation in the study); at the 6-month follow-up, 23 of the study subjects reported having had intercourse, and at the 12-month follow-up, 24 more reported having had intercourse. The researchers asked about sexual behavior, intentions to engage in sex and attitudes toward sex, peer pressure (whether people important to them think they should have sex), peer sexual behavior, and parental monitoring. Parental monitoring was asked as an eight-item scale on parental strictness and supervision, such as parental

awareness of where they spend free time after school and in the evenings; respondents were asked both how much parents try to know, and how much they actually know. Results indicated that, as expected, age was a strong predictor of attitudes toward and intents to engage in sexual intercourse. Males were also more likely than females to report attitudes favoring sex and intents to engage in sex. Successful parental monitoring was correlated with less favorable attitudes toward intercourse. However, in a multivariable model, successful parental monitoring was not significantly correlated with initiation of sexual intercourse. The youths’ intention to initiate intercourse was a significant predictor of sexual initiation for both males and females after adjustment for age. This study helps to elucidate the relationships among adolescent beliefs and attitudes, parental monitoring, and the onset of sexual intercourse. **-KEH**

- Smetana, J.G., & Metzger, A. (2005).

Family and religious antecedents of civic involvement in middle class African American late adolescents.

Journal of Research on Adolescence, 15(3), 325-352.

Little research has examined different routes to civic involvement, or identified the processes through which parental influence is effective in promoting civic involvement in their children. Different forms of civic engagement include political, church and community involvement. Each is seen as promoting the development of social responsibility, moral commitment, tolerance, and compassion for others. The aim of the present study was to examine family, religious, and spiritual correlates of civic involvement for 76 middle-class African American late adolescents (median age: 18.43 years) and their parents (76 mothers, 44 fathers). These youth and parents had been longitudinally followed for five years, although the results from this reported study cover the final three years. Results indicated that higher income is associated with greater opportunities to participate in community organizations, and that females rated

themselves as more involved, both currently and in terms of future civic involvement, than boys. The influence of parenting varied for current and intended civic involvement. Mothers’ involvement appeared to be more influential than father’s involvement. This result could be an effect of the small number of fathers in the sample. Mothers’ and fathers’ more positive communication, observed three years earlier in separate interaction tasks, predicted adolescents’ intended involvement in different types of future activities. The results also indicated that middle class African American adolescents’ spirituality had a significant longitudinal influence on current community involvement, as rated three years later in late adolescence, while religiosity and spirituality were concurrently associated with church involvement. This study provides valuable information about the influences promoting civic involvement in this group of middle class African American youth. **-RC**



Book Reviews ...

on topics relevant to youth development will be periodically published. We encourage submissions for future editions. Reviews may be sent to Ramona Carlos (rmcarlos@ucdavis.edu).

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Reprints of articles reviewed may be obtained by contacting the 4-H Center for Youth Development at (530) 754-8433.



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