Book Series

Adolescence and Education

Series Editors
Ben Kirshner, University of Colorado School of Education

Adolescence and Education is a book series devoted to presenting quality research aimed at understanding and enhancing the education of adolescent students.

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- Power, Equity and (Re)Design
- The Changing Landscape of Youth Work
- #youthaction
- Peer Relationships and Adjustment at School
- The Ones We Remember
- Self-Efficacy Beliefs of Adolescents
- Educating Adolescents
- International Perspectives on Adolescence
- Academic Motivation of Adolescents
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IAP - Information Age Publishing, PO Box 79049, Charlotte, NC 28271
tel: 704-752-9125 fax: 704-752-9113 URL: www.infoagepub.com
This volume brings together design thinking, critical social theory, and learning sciences to describe promising learning innovations that foster rights, dignity, and social justice for youth. Each of the chapters provides a case study of a project and discusses underlying theories and behind-the-scenes accounts of implementation and lessons learned. The group of contributors represent emerging scholars who are leading voices working at the intersections of theory and practice for educational equity.

Chapters in this volume take up themes of power and equity in the design and redesign of learning opportunities for young people. The chapters show variation in the kinds of learning--from complex ecologies spanning multiple institutions and age groups to specific classroom or after-school spaces. Chapters also vary in the focal ages of participants. Although most discuss experiences of young people between the ages of 12-25, some also explore the learning of elementary age youth. All of the chapters make the authors--who were researchers, designers, teachers, and facilitators--part of the narrative and process of learning. We are especially thankful that the authors of these chapters invite the reader into their thinking process and the tensions and contradictions that emerged as they sought to catalyze transformative learning spaces.


The purpose of this book is to compile and publicize the best current thinking about training and professional development for youth workers. School age youth spend far more of their time outside of school than inside of school. The United States boasts a rich and vibrant ecosystem of Out-of-School Time programs and funders, ranging from grassroots neighborhood centers to national Boys and Girls Clubs. The research community, too, has produced some scientific consensus about defining features of high quality youth development settings and the importance of after-school and informal programs for youth. But we know far less about the people who provide support, guidance, and mentoring to youth in these settings. What do youth workers do? What kinds of training, certification, and job security do they have?

Unlike K-12 classroom teaching, a profession with longstanding – if contested – legitimacy and recognition, “youth work” does not call forth familiar imagery or cultural narratives. Ask someone what a youth worker does and they are just as likely to think you are talking about a young person working at her first job as they are to think you mean a young adult who works with youth. This absence of shared archetypes or mental models is matched by a shortage of policies or professional associations that clearly define youth work and assume responsibility for training and preparation. This is a problem because the functions performed by youth workers outside of school are critical for positive youth development,
especially in our current context governed by widening income inequality. The US has seen a decline in social mobility and an increase in income inequality and racial segregation. This places a greater premium on the role of OST programs in supporting access and equity to learning opportunities for children, particularly for those growing up in neighborhoods of concentrated poverty.

Fortunately, in the past decade there has been an emergence of research and policy arguments about the importance of naming, defining, and attending to the profession of youth work. A report released in 2013 by the DC Children and Youth Investment Corporation suggests employment opportunities for youth workers are growing faster than the national average; and as the workforce increases, so will efforts to professionalize it through specialized training and credentials. Our purpose in this volume is to build on that momentum by bringing together the best scholarship and policy ideas — coming from in and outside of higher education — about conceptions of youth work and optimal types of preparation and professional development.


#youthaction

Becoming Political in the Digital Age

Ben Kirshner, University of Colorado School of Education; Ellen Middaugh, Mills College


Social media and digital tools permeate the everyday lives of young people. In the early stages of commentary about the impact of the digital age on civic life, debates revolved around whether the Internet enhanced or discouraged civic and political action. Since then we have seen new media move to center stage in politics and activism—from the 2008 US election to the 2011 Arab Spring to the Occupy movement. We have also seen new patterns in how different sub-groups make use of digital media. These developments have pushed people to move beyond questions about whether new media are good or bad for civic life, to ask instead: how, under what conditions, and for whom, do new digital tools become resources for political critique and action by the young?

This book will provide a platform for a new wave of scholarship about young people’s political participation in the digital age. We define “youth” or “young people” as roughly between the ages of 12 and 25. We include perspectives from political science, education, cultural studies, learning sciences, and youth development. We draw on the framework developed by the MacArthur Research Network on Youth and Participatory Politics (Cohen, Kahne, Bowyer, Middaugh, & Rogowski, 2012), which defines participatory politics as, “interactive, peer-based acts through which individuals and groups seek to exert both voice and influence on issues of public concern.”

Peer Relationships and Adjustment at School
Allison M. Ryan, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor; Gary W. Ladd, Arizona State University

This volume brings together an impressive array of respected scholars to examine the varied and complex ways in which peers influence adolescents’ beliefs and behaviors in the school context. The breadth of peer influence on academic and social adjustment is evident in the wide variety of topics covered in the present volume. Throughout the chapters, scholars provide unique insights regarding the complex ways that the academic and social spheres of adolescents’ lives are interconnected. Collectively, the chapters in this volume expand current knowledge and theory in peer relations research by (a) exploring different types of peer relations (e.g., close friendships, peer groups) and different peer dynamics (e.g., popularity, bullying) that emerge in the school context, (b) examining different processes that explain why and how peers influence each other in school, (c) considering developmental issues during adolescence that may be critical to understanding peers and adjustment at school and (d) providing information about how teacher practices or programs influence peer relations and school adjustment. Peer Relationships and Adjustment in School is an important volume for researchers and practitioners interested in social development, peer relationships and youth engagement and achievement in school.

Paulo Freire wrote that “sometimes a simple, almost insignificant gesture on the part of a teacher can have a profound formative effect on the life of a student.” Sometimes, of course, this formative effect is not the result of a simple, isolated gesture but rather of a proactive and sustained series of gestures on the part of a teacher. Many of us have been deeply influenced by one or more teachers who have exercised a formative effect in our development as students and individuals. We remember these teachers with fondness, tell their stories to our own children, think of them with affection, respect, gratitude, even reverence. Sometimes, we recognized this influence as it was happening, and we grew close to these remarkable individuals, keeping them in our lives even after we graduated from their classes. Often, however, they themselves were unaware of the influence they exercised over us, for it was not until years passed that we realized their effect. If time and distance did not prevent it, perhaps we found our way back to these educators and shared with them our appreciation and gratitude.

In this volume, outstanding scholars in the fields of adolescence and education provide short stories describing their most memorable teacher. Some provide the story on its own; other follow it with a brief analysis drawn from theory and research in education, psychology, and human development to identify key concepts and principles that apply in explaining why the selected teacher was so effective and memorable. Some write about one specific teacher; others write about the qualities that they believe contribute to teaching excellence, including anecdotes from various teachers to support the qualities they identified. Each tells the story with an eye toward being accessible to a wide audience of readers. One need not be an academic, or an expert in education or psychology, to understand and find meaning in these stories. In essence, these are stories and analyses that capture just what it is that makes a particular teacher, as our title describes, unforgettable. This book would be excellent for teacher preparation courses, educational psychology courses, and for anyone who is interested in the art and science of teaching.


The introduction of the psychological construct of self-efficacy is widely acknowledged as one of the most important
developments in the history of psychology. Today, it is simply not possible to explain phenomena such as human motivation, learning, self-regulation, and accomplishment without discussing the role played by self-efficacy beliefs. In this, the fifth volume of our series on adolescence and education, we focus on the self-efficacy beliefs of adolescents. We are proud and fortunate to be able to bring together the most prominent voices in the study of self-efficacy, including that of the Father of Social Cognitive Theory and of self-efficacy, Professor Albert Bandura. It is our hope, and our expectation, that this volume will become required reading for all students and scholars in the areas of adolescence and of motivation and, of course, for all who play a pivotal role in the education and care of youth.


Educating Adolescents
Challenges and Strategies

Frank Pajares, Emory University; Tim Urdan, Santa Clara University


This volume of Adolescence and Education is devoted to an exploration of the challenges facing adolescents and their teachers as well as some of the strategies that have been adopted to address these challenges. Although it is true that most adolescents survive this period of development with few enduring academic or psychological problems, it is also true that a substantial proportion experience depression, bullying and violence in school, sexual harassment, and a widening gap between their personal and academic needs. Many of these problems emerge for the first time during adolescence.

International Perspectives on Adolescence
Frank Pajares, Emory University; Tim Urdan, Santa Clara University


Academic Motivation of Adolescents
Frank Pajares, Emory University; Tim Urdan, Santa Clara University

Few academic issues are of greater concern to teachers, parents, and school administrators than the academic motivation of the adolescents in their care. There are good reasons for this concern. Students who are academically motivated perform better in school, value their schooling, are future-oriented in their academic pursuits, and possess the academic confidence and positive feelings of self-worth so necessary to increasing academic achievement. Because academically motivated students engage their schoolwork with confidence and interest, they are less likely to drop out of school, suffer fewer disciplinary problems, and prove resilient in the face of setbacks and obstacles. It is precisely because academic motivation is so essential to academic achievement that motivation has taken a place along with cognition as one of the most followed lines of inquiry in educational psychology. In this volume, we are fortunate to gather together some of the most eminent scholars who have written extensively about the academic motivation of adolescents. We are fortunate also in that they represent the varied theories and lines of inquiry that currently dominate research in this area.

In all, we believe that in the dozen chapters that comprise this volume, the authors provide elegant insights regarding the academic and social motivation of adolescents that will prove of interest to researchers, students, teachers, school administrators, parents, policymakers, and all others who play a pivotal role or are otherwise invested in the lives of adolescents in today’s society. It is our hope that these insights will not only further the conversation on adolescence and education, but will serve as the impetus for further research capable of generating the creative ideas, programs, and structures so necessary to better the lives of the young people in our care.

CONTENTS: Foreword, Frank Pajares and Tim Urdan. Achieving Self-Regulation: The Trial and Triumph of Adolescence, Barry J. Zimmerman. Self-Efficacy and Adolescents’ Motivation, Dale H. Schunk and Samuel D. Miller. Adolescents’ Expectancies for Success and Achievement Task Values during the Middle and High School Years, Allan Wigfield and...

Adolescence and Education
General Issues in the Education of Adolescents
Frank Pajares, Emory University; Tim Urdan, Santa Clara University


In this inaugural volume, we solicited chapters from leading scholars in a variety of fields related to education. Our aim was to provide a broad overview of several of the most pressing concerns regarding the education of adolescent students. The volume begins with an historical perspective from Barbara Finklestein, who provides background regarding America’s changing perceptions of adolescence as a developmental period and how American society has approached the task of educating this age group over time. This is followed by chapters from Carol Midgley and from Sanford Dornbusch and Jeanne Kaufman regarding the organization, purpose, and function of schools designed to serve early and late adolescents. Midgley uses an achievement goal theory lens to analyze middle level schools; Dornbusch and Kaufman consider senior high schools, adopting a more sociological perspective.

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