Youth in the 21st Century: How will they meet the challenges?

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- Jesuit perspective on whole person (curae personalis)

- Holistic view of human development

Overview

- What are some of the changes and challenges to which youth must adapt?

- How prepared are youth to meet these challenges?

- How does contemporary developmental theory frame an understanding of the competencies needed by youth and the best ways to prepare youth for success?

- What types of interventions and programs serve to promote these competencies?

Development as time of challenge and opportunity

- Adolescent development and family relationships

- Social and emotional development

- Academic and career development

Growing up in a changing world: External challenges and opportunities

- Technological change

- Globalization

- Economic change

- Demographic change

Adolescence today

- About 25% of the world's population is between the ages of 10 and 24; 15% of US population.

- The poorest, least developed nations, have the largest shares of adolescents (88%); About 60% in Asia alone

- Worldwide, over 500 million adolescents live on less than $2 per day

- In US: 21% of 18 to 24 year olds living in poverty in 2010

- 22% of school age population in US speaks a language other than English at home

Changing world of work

- Types of workers needed changing rapidly

- Young people change jobs an average of 10 times between ages 16 and 36

- One fourth of workers in US have been with their current employer less than one year

Employment

- Young people 18 to 34 compose 45% of all unemployed Americans

- Economy will need 4.1 million jobs for young adults to return to prerecession levels

- Unemployment and underemployment are most severe among African American and Hispanic workers: One in four African Americans between 18 and 24 who is looking for a job cannot find one

- Unemployment rate for young people without a college degree (only high school) is twice as high

Annual Unemployment by age and education, 2012

		ALL AGES	18-24	25-34
Less than High school		16.5%	27.4%	15.4%
High school		10.0%	19.7%	11.2%
Some college		7.7%	10.3%	8.7%
Bachelor's or more		4.2%	7.7%	4.1%

What skills are needed in a global and technological world: 21st Century Skills

- Core academic and technical/STEM skills

- Critical thinking and problem solving in real world settings

- Skilled Communication

- Collaboration and team work

- Creativity and innovation

- Self-regulation

- Global and cultural awareness

How are we doing? Workforce preparation

- Employers in the U.S. maintain that half of high school graduates lack the experience and skills needed for entry-level employment

- Corporate senior executives and human resources manager view new workers as underprepared in 21st century skills (only 25% of college graduates and are described as having excellent skills)

How are we doing? Academic preparation

- Only 66% of high school students meet college readiness benchmarks on ACT

- Academic achievement for all groups in US has increased since 1990s

- Percentage of students taking Algebra II increased from 40% in 1982 to 76% in 2009

- Gaps between White and Asian students and Blacks, Latinos, and recent immigrants have decreased

- Future expectations of adolescents have increased: The percent of high school seniors who expected to earn graduate or professional degrees increased from 13% in 1972 to 38% in 2004 (increase greater for girls: females 45% vs. males 32%)

- High school and college completion rates continue to differ by race, ethnicity, and income levels

- International comparison (2009 PISA) data reveal US at middle of grouping (7 of 34 in reading;18th in mathematics, 13th in science)

- Participation in afterschool activities and volunteerism between 1999 and 2009 has been flat, but some decrease in male participation other than sports

- Increased screen time: A greater percentage of males (10%) than females (6%) reported playing video or computer games for 2, 3, 4, or 5 or more hours per day in 2009

- Obesity: In 2008, about 53 percent of young adults between the ages of 18 and 24 were at a healthy weight, 26 percent were overweight, 16 percent were obese, and 4 percent were underweight.

Theoretical Lens for viewing world and effecting change

- Bronfenbrenner's ecological model and Lerner's Developmental contextual model

- Individuals are nested in multiple contexts that impact development in reciprocal ways

- Cognitive, biological, social and psychological domains of functioning are interrelated

- Risk and protective factors are prevalent at individual and contextual levels

- Bidirectional changes between person and environment permit change or plasticity across the life span

Positive Youth Development

- All youth and all contexts have strengths and potential for healthy and successful development vs. adolescence as time of inevitable risk

- Focus on building strengths versus reducing deficits; assist all youth to thrive, not just be absent of problems

- Do this by building developmental assets at the individual and context levels

- Assets are the "social nutrients" needed for healthy development.

Protective Factors

Community
-attachment to prosocial community organizations
-participation in appropriate service organizations
-awareness of community supports & resources
-mentor relationships (e.g., Big Brother, tutors)

School
-sense of safety at school
-positive relationships with teachers
-positive school climate
-youth development opportunities
-involvement in extracurricular activities

Family
-family involvement in school
-positive parental monitoring
-positive relationships with parents
-social support for families
-economic stability
-parental value on education

Peers
-social acceptance
-relationships with prosocial peers

Student
-school engagement
-social competence
-social self-efficacy
-positive academic performance
-academic self-efficacy
-health knowledge
-positive health attitudes & behaviors

Community   School   Family   Peers   Student
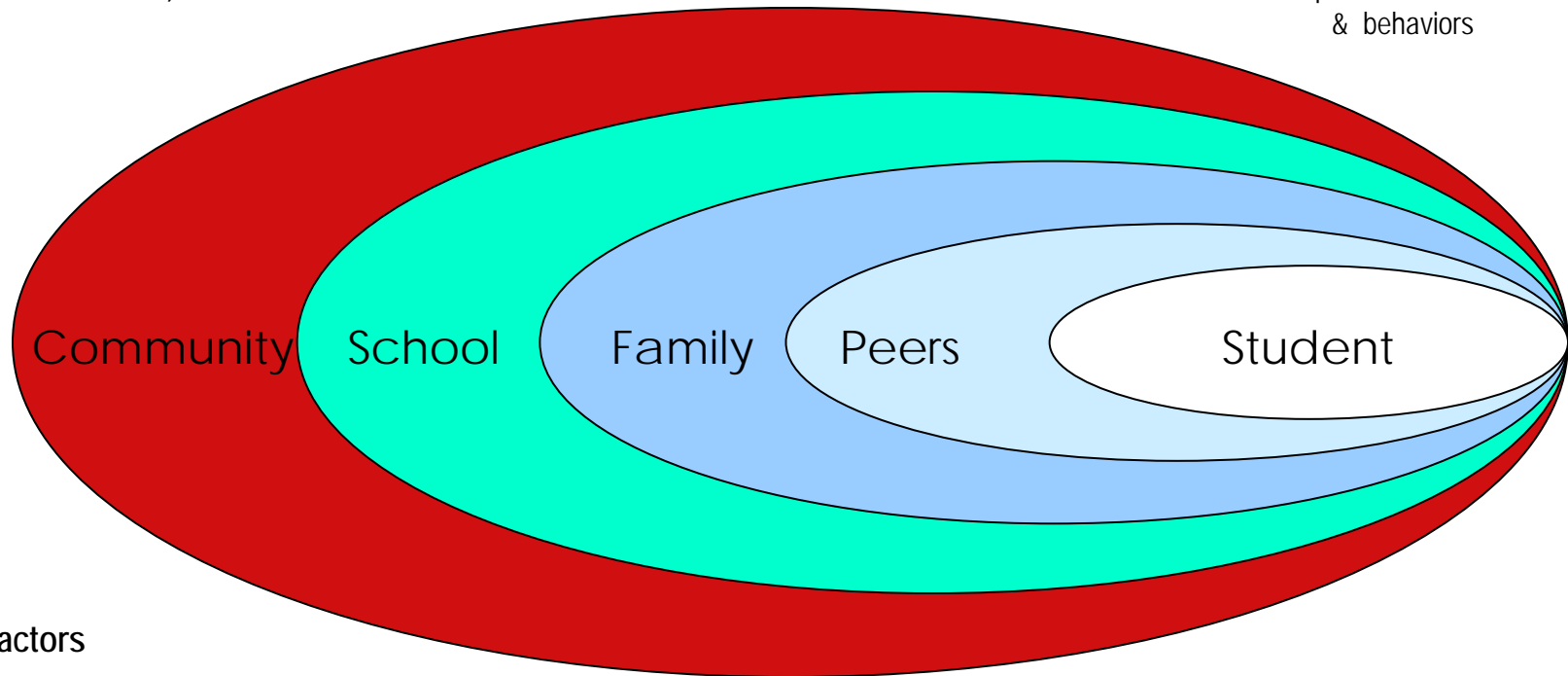
Risk Factors

Community
-community violence
-lack of community resources & services

School
-unsafe school conditions
-school norms for aggression

Family
-family discord

Peers
-peer rejection
-negative peer pressure
-bullying

Student
-conduct problems
-low academic performance

Figure adapted from Orpinas & Horne, 2006; Orpinas, Horne, Reeves, & Bandalos, 2005

PYD vs. Remedial approach

- Remedial: Goal is to teach young people about the dangers of drugs and the negative consequences of unsafe sex, teenage pregnancy, and interpersonal violence

- PYD: Goal is to involve young people in constructive activities where they learn new skills and connect with caring adults, so that they will become productive adults in their families, communities and civic society

Focus on fit between person and context: Eccles

- When youth develop in environments that respond to their changing needs, they are more likely to experience positive outcomes; youth in non-responsive contexts may experience difficulties and develop problems

Thriving occurs when the strengths of youth are matched with ecological developmental assets

- Behavioral indicators of thriving:
  - school success
  - leadership
  - helping others
  - maintenance of physical health
  - delay of gratification
  - valuing diversity
  - overcoming adversity

Lerner et al. (2005) identified five C's of PYD

- *Competence*: a positive view of one's action in domain-specific areas including the social and academic domains.

- *Confidence*: an internal sense of overall positive self-worth, identity, and feelings about one's physical appearance.

- *Character:* involves respect for societal and cultural rules, possession of standards for correct behaviors, a sense of right and wrong, and integrity.

- *Connection:* involves a positive bond with people and institutions that are reflected in healthy, bidirectional exchanges between the individual and peers, family, school, and community in which both parties contribute to the relationship.

- *Caring:* the degree of sympathy and empathy, or the degree to which participants feel sorry for the distress of others.
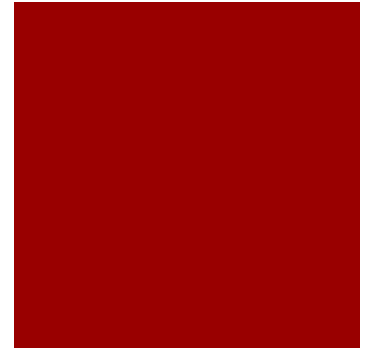
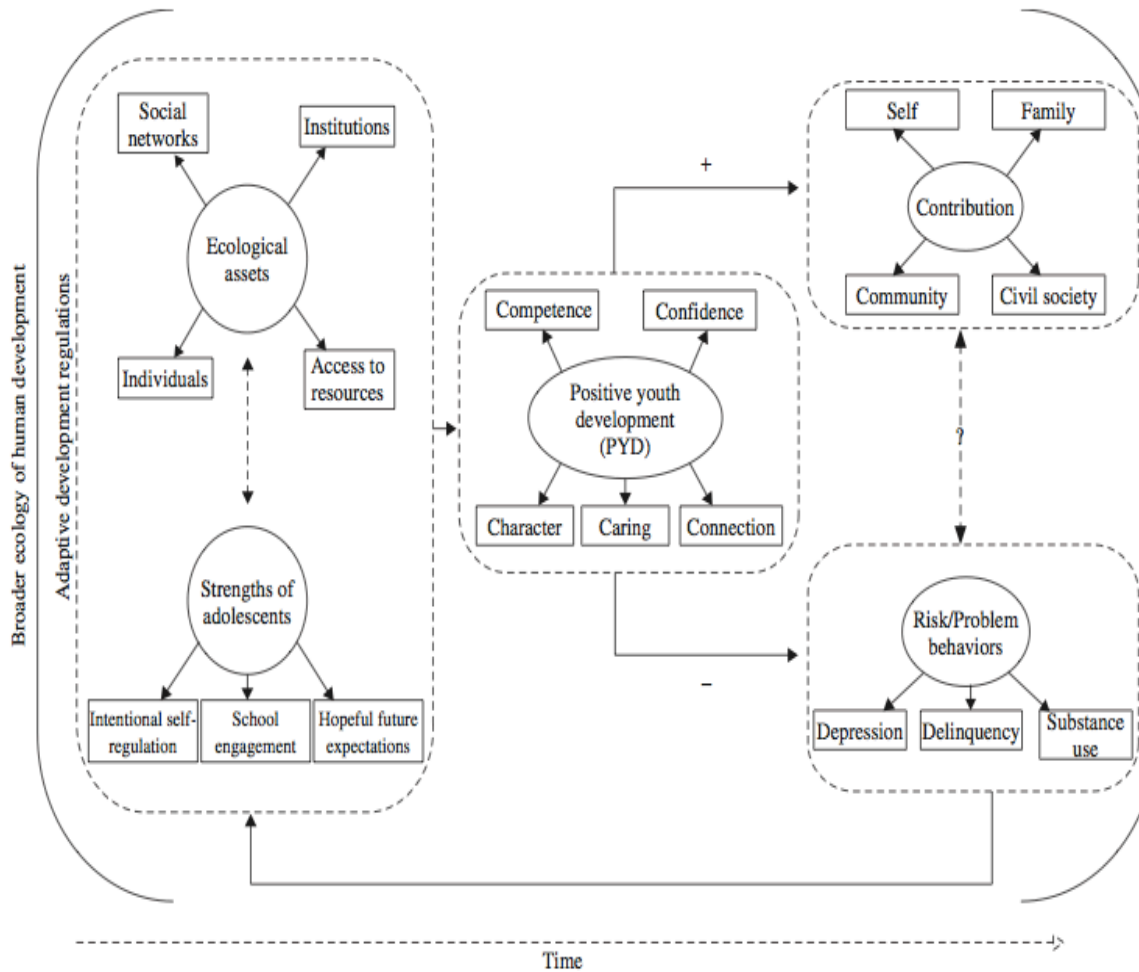# What developmental assets contribute to thriving

- Individual
  - Self-regulation
  - School engagement
  - Hopeful future expectations

External (or contextual) assets

- Support
- Empowerment
- Boundaries and expectations
- Constructive use of time

THE PYD Model: Lerner et al.

Create asset rich settings and build individual assets through in-school and out-of- school programs

Programs that focus on rote learning and narrow academic goals may undermine motivation and ignore development of other non-cognitive factors
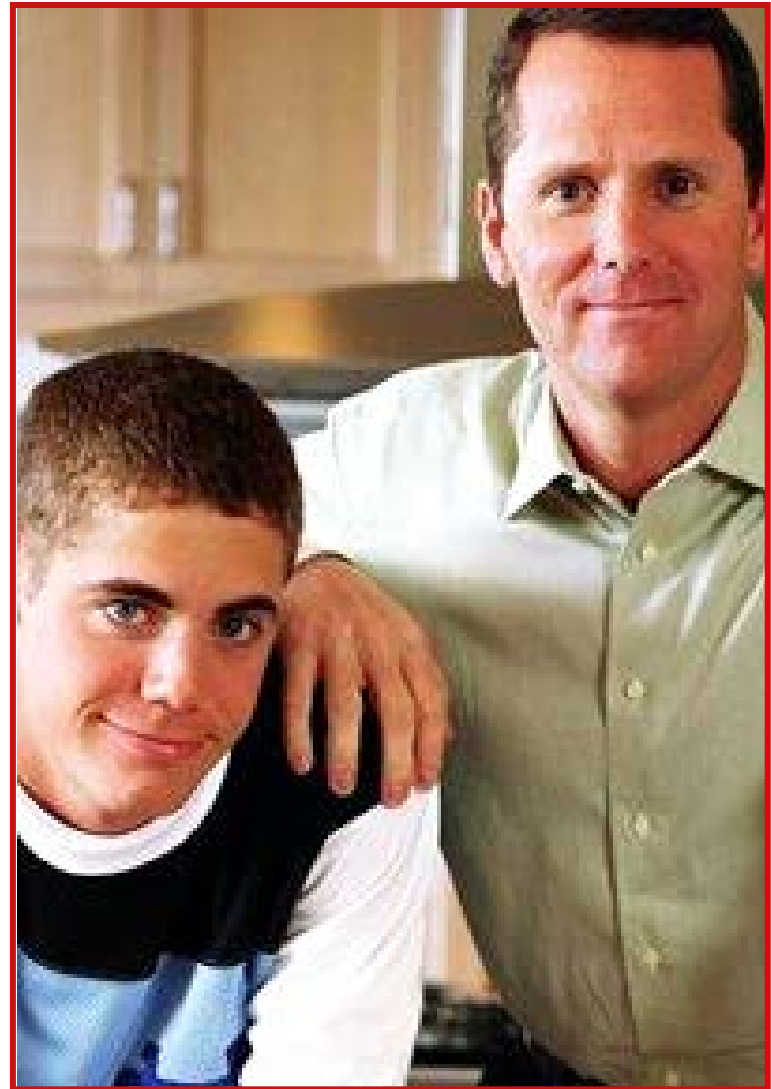
Importance of noncognitive skills

Perseverance, grit, self-discipline, social and interpersonal skills

Interrelated with academic achievement

Important for life success across multiple domains
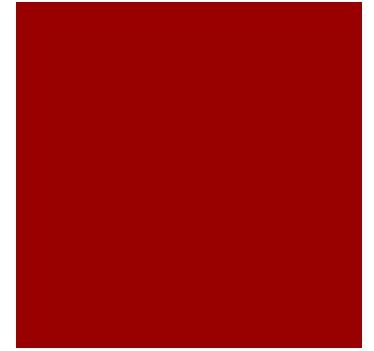
Design programs to develop:

- Self-Regulation skills
- School Engagement
- Hopeful Future Expectations

Through:

Youth Leadership roles

Sustained, positive interactions with adults

Skill-Building; social-emotional learning

Effective school and community programs seek to foster these outcomes (Eccles & Gottman)

- Bonding
- Resilience
- Social and emotional competence
- Cognitive competence
- Behavioral competence
- Moral competence
- Self-determination
- Spirituality
- Self-efficacy
- Clear and positive identity
- Belief in the future
- Recognition for positive behavior
- Opportunities for prosocial involvement

Examples of programs that build positive youth outcomes- Service Learning

- Integrates community service with academic learning and structured reflection

- Positive impact on personal, social and civic learning and engagement

- Positive impact on relationships with adults and adults views and expectations of youth

- Can empower youth and give them voice

Teaching to Change LA

- Urban youth enroll in seminar to develop academic skills, while also learning about the struggle for educational justice

- Review relevant research, conduct a community survey

- Present findings and recommendations to mayor and broader public; wrote news editorials; developed voice and sense of self-efficacy

College Bound, Urban Outreach and STEM (Barnett, Blustein, & Wong)

- Barnett and colleagues are implementing and studying the impact of a hydroponic farming project, using solar panels and windmills to help power the indoor gardens at Boston's Salvation Army Kroc Center, in order to discover what draws and engages urban high school and first-generation college students to STEM study

Work-based learning (Kenny & Blustein)

- Work placements provide a bridge between what is learned at school and applications in the workplace

- Enhances academic motivation by observing benefits of higher education and relevance of school to future

- Enhances psychosocial maturity through development of work habits, perseverance, and ability to relate effectively with adults across cultural groups; workplace adults as mentors

City Connects (Dr. Mary Walsh)

- Student support model for elementary, secondary and now higher education; reduces nonacademic barriers to learning and expands opportunity

- Attends to whole child needs through careful assessment and accessing of community resources (strengths-based) to benefit child and family; includes health and social-emotional learning

- In 2012–13 alone, City Connects linked approximately 9,500 public school students to more than 60,000 enrichment activities and services ranging from tutoring to athletic programs—up from 8,900 students and 44,500 activities and services the previous year

Walsh et al. findings

- At middle school, students from City Connects schools outperform their peers

- Achieve close to state proficiency levels in both English language arts and math on the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System test.

- Had significantly lower rates of chronic absenteeism, even though they started out with spottier attendance rates on average.

- In high school, former City Connects students were 46 percent less likely to drop out than their Boston peers.

Conclusion

- Importance of educating and nurturing the whole child and the contexts that support development

- Attend to building relational capital, as well as cognitive skills and pathways to opportunity

- Success across groups in our country and worldwide is interconnected in global society (examples from high performing nations: Hargreaves and Shirley)