

Part I: Young Adolescents

A. Developmental Aspects

Group Members

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Definition of Research Area and Terms

For the purpose of our review, we considered young adolescents as youth between the ages of 10-14 years old. We included all developmental aspects in our review, including the broad categories of physical, biological, cognitive, socio-emotional, and behavioral.

Literature Review Process

For the initial literature search, we assigned each team member one aspect of development based on Caskey and Anfar's (2014) research summary: physical, intellectual, moral, spiritual, psychological, and socio-emotional. Team members added their literature reviews to a shared summary document. Team members also added questions and on-going considerations to be discussed in upcoming group meetings.

When we reconvened we discovered several issues regarding the study of this topic. First, these categories are not necessarily separate nor are they mutually exclusive. So, we began to examine research investigating the ways in which different aspects of development

interacted with one another and how they informed typical or atypical student behavior. Second, we were unsure of whether to focus on students or teachers. We resolved that both were important to the task. Third, because development is a vast topic covered across many disciplines, we decided to narrow our focus to the intersection between young adolescent development and middle grades education. Finally, we recognize the possibility that our efforts to conceptualize "developmental responsiveness" may, inadvertently, lead to restrictive perceptions of young people. We now see our role in this initiative as raising questions and encouraging dialogue, as well as presenting information.

After many discussions, we created a shared annotated bibliography that we used to create a summary response. This document details our wonderings and insights about this developmental stage and how it interacts with middle grades students and professionals. We identified a set of recommended research questions we believe to be most important on which to focus research efforts during the next three to five years.

Research Questions

Areas of Development

1. What are the key areas of development for young adolescents?
 - a. In what ways is early adolescence a critical time for aspects of development?
 - b. What areas are "make or break" at this stage?

Brain Development

2. In what ways does brain development impact early adolescence?
 - a. What is the impact on physical health?
 - b. What is the impact on physiological development?
 - c. What is the impact on executive functions?
 - d. What is the impact on social cognition?
 - e. What is the impact on emotional health and development?

Educator Practices

3. What teaching, counseling, and leadership practices have a positive impact on young adolescent development?
 - a. In what ways do successful middle grades educators address physical, socio-emotional, and intellectual development through their instructional decision making?
 - b. In what ways do successful middle grades educators discourage gender/sexuality stereotypes (research emphasizes that gender/sexual identity becomes very influential in the middle grades)?
 - c. In what ways do middle grades educators discourage other stereotypes (e.g., socio-economic status, race/ethnicity, gender orientation, sexual orientation)?
 - d. In what ways do successful middle grades educators encourage students to develop stronger growth-oriented mindsets?
 - e. In what ways do successful middle grades educators encourage stronger mastery orientations toward learning (intrinsic motivation)?

Influential Readings

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