Connecting Opportunity Youth to Education and Employment

Dr. Harry Holzer, Georgetown University

Farhana Hossain, MDRC

Nick Mathern, Gateway to College National Network

Venessa Marks, Moderator, SSRC

Thursday, February 25, 2016
3:00PM EST
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Research on the relationship between education and training and pathways into employment for individuals and families frequently discusses adult basic education, career pathways, the importance of transitions to adulthood, and the role of vocational education. See the phrases below to view selected research and resources relevant to each topic:

- Adult Basic Education
- Career Pathways
- Transitions to Adulthood
- Vocational Education

- Asset-Building, Tax Policies, and Subsidies
- Child Care
- Child Support
- Community Development and Housing
- Education and Training
- Employment
- Family Formation and Family Structure
- Food Assistance
- General Research on Income and Poverty
- Health
- TANF Policy, Services, and Benefits
- Transportation
Agenda

1. Introduction: who are ‘opportunity youth’ and how do they become disconnected?

2. Panel presentations:
   - Dr. Harry Holzer, Georgetown University
   - Nick Mathern, Gateway to College National Network
   - Farhana Hossain, MDRC

3. Q&A
Speakers

Harry Holzer
Georgetown University

Nick Mathern
Gateway to College National Network

Farhana Hossain
MDRC
• Submit questions any time through the Question and Answer feature (bottom right of screen).

• Questions will be answered:
  – after the presentation; or
  – if we run out of time, via responses posted on the SSRC with other Webinar materials after the event.
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Who are opportunity youth?

20% of 16-24 year olds are out of school and out of work
(Approx 6.7 million youth)

Bryant, Harris, & Byrd, 2013
Opportunity youth are a heterogeneous group.

3.4 million chronically disconnected youth

3.3 million under-attached youth

6.7 million Opportunity Youth

Belfeld et al., 2012
Bryant, Harris, & Byrd, 2013
Wimer, 2014
Under-attached Youth

Employment of 20–24 year olds stands at its lowest levels in over 60 years.

The Great Recession disproportionately hit young men, particularly young men of color.
Chronically-disconnected youth often have a confluence of risk factors.
How do youth become disconnected?

Developmental factors  Sociological factors

- Early childhood
- Childhood
- Adolescence
- Young adulthood
1 in 10 children are polyvictims of abuse and violence

Trauma and other adverse childhood experiences can elicit a toxic stress response

Listenbee et al, 2012
Toxic stress can impair the development of executive functioning skills...

- Process verbal information
- Calm down
- Follow directions
- Remember what is being said

...which can directly impact school behavior & employment success
Racial disparities further compound challenges for youth of color.

**FIGURE 22**

**FIGURE 10**
Arrest Rates for Marijuana Possession by Race (2001-2010)

Policing and justice involvement

ACLU, 2013
Racial disparities further compound challenges for youth of color

Black students are suspended or expelled at a rate 3x greater than white students.

When students are suspended or expelled even once their risk of dropping out of high school more than doubles.

School discipline

Murphy, 2015
U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights, 2014
Racial disparities further compound challenges for youth of color

The probability of getting a callback from an employer fell by nearly \( \frac{2}{3} \) if a young black man had a criminal record.

Young white men with criminal records received a higher rate of callbacks than young black men with no records.

Hiring discrimination

Pager et al., 2010
The science behind resilience

The adolescent brain is a wonderful thing.
The young adult brain isn’t bad either

Executive Function Skills Build Into the Early Adult Years

Source: Weintraub et al. (Submitted for Publication)
CONNECTING OPPORTUNITY YOUTH TO EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT

HARRY J. HOLZER
GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY
FEBRUARY 2016
• Barriers to Education and Employment
• Key Concepts and Distinctions
• Policies and Evidence
BARRIERS TO EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT

- Poor Educational Achievement – Limits Educational Attainment but Also Training, Jobs
- High Schools: Lack of Hi-Quality CTE or Other Positive Offerings; “Dropout Factories”
- Low Early Labor Market Experience – Weak Connections to Market; Low Work Readiness, Bad Signals to Employers
KEY CONCEPTS AND DISTINCTIONS

• High Variation Among the Disconnected in Basic Skills, Work-Readiness – Not All are “Hard to Serve” or “Hard to Employ”

• Prevention (At-Risk) v. Reconnection (Disconnected)

• Strategies: Promising v. Proven

• Among Proven: Challenge of Replicating and Scaling, Funding
PROGRAMS TO PREVENT DISCONNECTION: HIGH SCHOOL

- Raising Achievement: Success for All, etc.
- Mentoring, Intensive Services...Tyler and Lofstrom, 2009
- High-Quality CTE: Career Academies! High Schools that Work, Linked Learning, etc.
- Restructuring Dropout Factories: Small Schools of Choice (NYC)
PROGRAMS TO REMEDY DISCONNECTION: PREPARATION FOR/ATTENDING POSTSECONDARY

• For the Better Skilled: Gateway to College
• National Guard ChalleNGe
• Bridge Programs: LaGuardia
• Remediation: I-BEST, Quantway, Other Reforms
• ASAP at CUNY!
PROGRAMS TO PREVENT/REMEDY DISCONNECTION: EMPLOYMENT AND SUPPORT SERVICES

- For the Better Skilled: Year Up
- Summer Youth Employment Programs (Schwartz, 2014); Becoming a Man (BAM)
- Job Corps
- Transitional Jobs: CEO v. Others (TJRD)
- Pre-Apprenticeship
- Youth Opportunities
- Other Supportive Policies to “Make Work Pay” – Minimum Wage, EITC
CONCLUSION

• Nothing Works??? Inaccurate!
• Different Remedies for Different Populations at Different Stages of Disconnection Process
• Different Levels of Evaluation for Programs: Promising v. Proven
• Replication and Scale?
Youth Reengagement through College-Based High School Completion
A unique collaboration

A sustainable college-based model for out-of-school and off-track youth that connects K-12 school districts and colleges.
Meeting Multiple Needs

Communities recognize dual enrollment as a youth reengagement & high school completion strategy.

In addition, Gateway increases college access & readiness for struggling students.
Student Eligibility & Profile

- Between 16 and 21 years old
- Out of school or on the verge of dropping out
- Behind in high school credits (for age and grade level)
- GPA of 2.0 or below
- Lives in an eligible school district

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Profile at Entry</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Average Age</td>
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<tr>
<td>Average High School GPA</td>
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<tr>
<td>Average High School Credits</td>
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<tr>
<td>Students of Color</td>
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<tr>
<td>1st Gen College Students</td>
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<td>Low Income Students</td>
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Opportunity Youth Deserve Robust, Equitable Options

Essential Program Elements

- Significant Dual Credit
- Sustainable Partnerships
- Holistic Student Support
- Innovative Teaching & Learning
- Intentional Collaboration
Significant Dual Credit

- College opportunity is a powerful incentive and crucial for establishing new identity
- Model has evolved as a result of internal and external evaluation
- GtC programs seek optimal balance of K-12 & college instruction
Sustainable Partnerships

- Shared K-12 revenue allows more robust support than otherwise possible in a college setting
- College facilities are a critical in-kind contribution
- Shared institutional priorities are elusive but powerful
Holistic Student Support

- Relationships are absolutely crucial and youth have profound response to personalized attention
- Great care is taken to facilitate a strong sense of belonging
- Even while achieving success, students continue to face substantial external barriers
Gateway Student Experience

**Gateway to College Experience: Up to 3 Years**

**Gateway Foundation**
- One Quarter or Semester
- Developmental Ed Courses
- College Skills Course

**Gateway Continuation (comprehensive campus)**
- Multiple Quarters or Semesters
- College Coursework to Meet High School Diploma Requirements
- Advanced Coursework Toward Career Major

**Graduation & Further College**

**Academic and Personal Support**
Continues During the Entire Time Students are Enrolled
Direct Impact

At 41 colleges in 21 states...

- 4,482 students were enrolled in 2014-15
- Students graduate high school with an average of 20 college credits
- K-12 revenue annually provides more than $6.8M in scholarships for Gateway students (in addition to personnel, books, transportation, and meals)
- A 2012 third-party study showed that 73% of graduates continued to enroll in post-secondary education
Community A

95% of students live in a zip code where high school diploma attainment is below the national average

97% of students live in a zip code where bachelor’s degree attainment is below the national average
Community B

99% of all students served are non-white

89% of students live in high-poverty communities
Community C

GPAs represent three-year average of all students from 2012 – 2015 cohorts.

Community C

D Average 1.14

Network Average

C- Average 1.59

On average, Community C students’ GPA at entry is on the 7th percentile of all GPAs nationally.
Three-Year Cohort Graduation Rate
2012 - 2013 Cohort

Community A: 67.6%
Community B: 83.3%
Community C: 61.2%
Community D: 72.0%
Community E: 57.1%

GPS Benchmark: 50%
Average College Credits Earned by Graduates
2014 - 2015 Graduates

National Average: 20

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Community</th>
<th>Credits Earned</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Community A</td>
<td>13.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community B</td>
<td>3.9</td>
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<tr>
<td>Community C</td>
<td>5.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community D</td>
<td>17.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community E</td>
<td>15.5</td>
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We Support a Network of Providers

- Training
- Technical Assistance and Planning
- Data collection and analysis
- Program evaluation and continuous improvement
- Stakeholder engagement
- Recruitment & enrollment services
- Professional Development
Improving Employment Outcomes For Disadvantaged Youth

“What Works”

Farhana Hossain
SSRC Webinar | February 25, 2016
Overview

- “What Works?” Features of successful programs
- Upcoming research on promising work models
- Engaging employers in youth employment
What Works? Lessons from Evaluations

- Opportunities for paid work and financial incentives
- Strong link between education/training and employer
- Addressing developmental needs of youth
- Support services to mitigate life challenges
- Post-program engagement, continuation of support
Paid Work + Financial Incentives

- Exposure to world of work
- New networks, role models
- Provide income for basic needs
- Promote motivation, retention
Link between Training and Job Market

- Connect training to identifiable opportunities and demand in the local labor market
- Design education and training curricula with employer input
- On-the-job training with employers
Address developmental needs of youth

- Opportunities to develop positive relationships with adults and peers
- Staff with similar socioeconomic background and shared experiences
- Opportunities to develop autonomy and leadership
- Training in life skills and workplace behavior
- Setting and managing short- and long-term goals
Support Services to Address Barriers

- Heterogeneous population = individualized approach to addressing barriers

- Common barriers:
  - Transportation
  - Child care
  - Basic needs: food, shelter
  - Physical and mental health needs

- Set clear and consistent expectations while allowing flexibility to address challenges
Post-Program Support

- Help adapt to new job
- Help address personal or situational problems
- Identify opportunities to advance at work
- Identify opportunities for more education or training
Upcoming Research on a Continuum of Work Models

- Basic work experience
  - NYC Summer Youth Employment Program
- Models that combine work with education/training
  - Apprenticeships; YouthBuild
- Career pathway approaches
  - Pathways for Advancing Careers and Education
- Models that combine work with interventions to promote behavior change, non-cognitive skills
  - Cognitive Behavioral Therapy + Subsidized Job
Engaging Employers in Youth Employment

Employers are a heterogeneous group with diverse needs and motivations to participate.

Employers are more likely to engage if it is easy for them to do so and if they believe it is a positive opportunity for their businesses.

Evolving recruitment and employment practices have implications for how youth connect and progress in the world of work.
Engaging Employers in Youth Employment

- Put resources and staff into job development
- Work with intermediaries
- Consider the “messaging”
- Educate employers in effective youth development and supervision practices
- Consider the changing nature of work and employer hiring practices in this country

For more on “what works” for disadvantaged youth, please visit [www.MDRC.org](http://www.MDRC.org)
Join the Conversation!

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