

SYA4930 – Sociology of Youth & Emerging Adulthood
Wed. 4 April 2007
Out-of-class Activity

Tying together the chapters on Education & Work, lets look at something that is going on in Florida.

First, make sure to read the assigned readings in your text, reader, and E-reserves for this unit.

As of Fall 2007 Ninth graders at public schools in Florida will be required to declare a “major” (these are 13-15 year old adolescents).

Listen to this NPR online story:

Florida Bill Requires High-Schoolers to Declare a Major

<http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=5336796>

Read: http://www.fldoe.org/news/2006/2006_12_11.asp

Read: Questions & Answers #3-24, especially #21

<http://www.fldoe.org/APlusPlus/pdf/MAJORSplusplusQA.pdf>

Checkout this table: High School Major Areas of Interest: Majors Selected by District

<http://www.fldoe.org/HSMajors/ListSchoolMajors.aspx>

Look up majors at the High School you went to (if you went to HS in Florida), compare it to other schools near your home. Then look up:

District: Alachua

School 1: F.W. Buccholz

School 2: Newberry

School 3: District: Levy County: Cedar Key High School

Notice the vast differences of options available at different schools.

Also notice how inadequate the resources are for students, in terms of guidance and advice...

“Parents and students are invited to explore the CHOICES Web site for information and career guidance resources at www.florida.access.bridges.com and on FACTS.org ePEP to select academic courses related to student’s interests.”

My guess is that unless you went to a private school, it is likely that you only saw your Guidance Counselor once, for perhaps 10 minutes, to check in that you were on track for college admission because they're so busy with scheduling and other issues. Most schools do not have a Career Counselor (only one of the schools in Alachua County did, but her position was cut two years ago). Given that there is not money in the state budget for more Guidance Counselors (much less Career Counselors), where will these rising-ninth grade students get help in choosing a major? Oh yes! The CHOICES website and the FACTS website! Check them out for yourself and see how deficient they are in offering helpful information (for an audience of rising ninth graders).

Here are some issues to reflect on-- you do not have to respond to all of them, just respond to at least two that are of interest to you:

-How does a system like this perpetuate inequalities, given that different schools offer different options (and that schools in wealthier areas have more options-- and options that result in higher paying future careers)?

-According to Steele, how might this system further stereotypes, especially on the part of the Guidance Counselors who may not know the students they are advising and may make recommendations for their choices based on assumptions?

-Given that most of you are juniors and seniors who have probably struggled somewhat with

determining your college major, what do you think about a system requiring rising-ninth graders (many of whom are 13) to choose a major. What are some of the advantages and disadvantages of this new system (from your personal perspective, not from the spin provided by the Dept of Education readings)? Pretend that the state had not yet finalized their decision on this new system, how would you advise the politicians as to whether or not this is a good idea?

-What advice were you given as a high school student about your future career? from whom did this advice come (the internet, teachers, guidance counselors, parents, coaches, friends...)? What advice were you given as a college student about your future career? from whom did this advice come (the internet, professors, advisors, parents, mentors, friends...)? What was the best advice or help you received? From who did it come?

-What advice might you offer a student who will begin ninth grade next year about how to navigate this new system? What do you wish you had known? What help do you wish had been available to you that was not?

-Choose any of the issues mentioned in the readings and connect it with the new "high school majors" system and discuss.

ICA #10

Type up your responses to two of the questions above and turn it in during class on Wed. 4/11.

We will have a discussion of your responses as we transition into our unit on Problems next week.

Note that we may have more than 10 ICAs, I will only count your 8 highest scores, which is to your advantage. We may also have extra credit opportunities next week and the week after.

If you have questions, don't hesitate to come to office hours or email me at kjoos@soc.ufl.edu.