Losing Their Religion – or Not - ‘Learning How to Doubt’ May Help Teens Transition to College And Avoid Risky Behaviors

TITLE:
Spirituality, Religiosity, and Risk Behaviors in High School Seniors Transitioning to College
by Krista M. Kubiak Crotty, PsyD

Sex, drugs, and alcohol – all parents worry at least a little bit that their child, once he or she leaves home for college, will be tempted away from religious and spiritual values and engage in risky behaviors with these three dangerous elements.

And they are right to be concerned. Research bears out that the temptations are there and that students do find the transition from home to college hard. Some do end up struggling, getting involved in risky behavior, and even losing their faith.

What helps them? Krista Crotty (PsyD, 2009) studied that question and found some interesting answers.

What hurts many students transitioning to college was “not knowing how to doubt,” she said. Students who were spoon-fed or even forced into faith practices at home often did not know how to face the challenges to their faith once they reached college.

But those students who did the best were often those whose parents “didn’t make them attend church or participate in faith practices, but rather encouraged them in indirect ways, such as being involved themselves in church activities, doing personal daily devotions, and regularly talking about and integrating their faith into their daily lives.”

Students also did better if they still felt connected to their parents and to other support relationships at home, and if they found new support communities at college. This support often helped them successfully resist risky behaviors, and that in turn preserved and strengthened their faith.

In her study, Crotty said, students who struggled the most were those who reported that they did not know what to do or where to go when things got hard and those who felt they had not been told how hard the transition might be.

Crotty is now working on curriculum for colleges and high schools to help better prepare students for the often difficult transition to college.

Study Shows First Language Patient Education Empowers Immigrants with Diabetes for Better Disease Control

TITLE:
The Impact of Diabetes Self-management Education on Glucose Management in Ethnic Armenians with Type 2 Diabetes
by Zarmine Naccashian, PhD, Nursing

More than 23 million Americans have diabetes, nearly eight percent of the population. According to the Centers for Disease Control, studies in the United States and abroad have found that improved glucose management benefits people with either type 1 or type 2 diabetes. In general, every percentage point drop in A1C blood test results—for example, from 8 to 7 percent—can reduce the risk of microvascular complications—eye, kidney,
and nerve diseases—by 40 percent. A1C is the blood test that measures the average of blood sugars in the past three months.

Effective self-management is crucial in achieving glucose control and avoiding the devastating consequences of uncontrolled diabetes. The healthcare industry spends scores of millions on patient education resources.

However, for the more than 33 million living in the United States who do not speak English as their first language, this can be problematic since patient education resources are overwhelmingly in English.

Zarmine Naccashian (PhD, Nursing, 2009) studied a small group of 75 first generation Armenian-Americans with diabetes who completed nine hours of diabetes self-management education over six weeks. She found that when patient education classes were conducted in their Armenian language, A1C blood tests results dropped and DES (Diabetes Empowerment Scale) scores increased.

“An educator with the same ethnicity and who speaks the same language and who is familiar with the same culture [as patients being educated] can make an impact on empowering patients, thus improving behavior,” concluded Naccashian. She became interested in this work in her job as coordinator of the Diabetes Care Center at Glendale Adventist Medical Center. She was conducting her classes in English and wondered if the education could be more effective if conducted in the patients’ first language. For this first study, the results were promising. A new question to ask now, she said, is whether such education is influential on a long-term basis.

She hopes to publish the results of her study.

Community College Students Engaged in Intercultural Activities outside the Classroom Gain ‘Multicultural Competence’ and Clearer Career Goals

TITLE: Student Success in Community Colleges: The Effect of Intercultural Leadership and Relationships
by Michael Johnson, EdD, Higher Education

Studies have shown that involvement in student organizations have a positive effect on student success at four-year colleges and universities. Does the same hold true for community colleges where students often have other responsibilities off campus and are perceived as being less committed to their campus?

Michael Johnson (EdD, Higher Education) looked at 239 community college students in southern California to see if their involvement in multicultural organizations – even if it wasn’t in leadership – helped them focus and develop their career goals.

From his study, Johnson concluded that “community college students who participate in organizations that are multicultural...are more likely to be clearer in the careers they sought and were also more likely to take on activities that were related to their career goals.”

Johnson also studied the role of faculty outside the classroom with student organizations. He found that “faculty advisors’ leadership qualities are crucial to enhancing the students’ extent of multicultural awareness, knowledge and skills.”

Additionally, his study confirmed that the students’ involvement in these extracurricular activities “increases academic performance and the retention of under-represented college students.”

Johnson hope that the information gained from his study can help colleges and universities “design and incorporate these types of student organizations as an important part of the community college mission.” He hopes to share this information through publishing and at conferences.

Johnson is an academic advisor at Moorpark College and continues his research in diversity and community college education.

Predicting Vocational Calling: How Do Students Decide What They Want To Be When They Grow Up? It depends (Partly) On Their Gender

TITLE: Predictors of Vocational Calling in Christian College Students: A Structural Equation Model
by Sheri Phillips, PhD, Higher Education

How do you know what you want to be when you grow up? Certainly for a Christian student, the process for determining one’s vocational calling involves prayer and one’s own considerations of personal talents and interests.

But one’s sense of vocational calling is also significantly influenced by one’s gender, according
to a study by Sheri Phillips (PhD, Higher Education, 2009).

In the study men and women conceptualized vocational calling in distinctive ways, explained Phillips. Both genders perceived vocational calling from spiritual and purposeful perspectives. However, the men put more emphasis on practical concerns and how their callings affect their daily lives, while women valued a sense of calling more by how it affected their self-esteem and their overall emotional feelings.

Because men and women conceptualize vocational calling differently as well as pursue its development in different ways, Phillips explained, “An understanding of these differences has ramifications for college student personnel in curricular and co-curricular activities.”

In developing a sense of calling, men may be helped more by service activities that provide specific opportunities for them to gain confidence in their career making decisions, whereas women may benefit more by classroom environments that enable them to build relational and goal-directed thinking skills.

Phillips is director of career development at Evangel University in Springfield, Missouri. Her work there “led me to thinking about what we were doing in the Christian college environment that actually affected students’ sense of vocational calling. Inherent in our mission is that students will have a greater sense of calling when they graduate so I wanted to know what we were doing that helped students better understand their callings.”

Teachers of English Language Learners Benefit from Coaching to Increase Self-Efficacy – Which Helps Their Students Achieve at Higher Levels

TITLE: The Effects of Cognitive and Instructional Coaching on the Perceived Sense of Self-efficacy of Middle School Teachers of English Language Learners by Sylvia Kane, EdD

In California public schools, the population of English language learners reached almost 1.6 million in 2005-2006, according to Education Data Partnership. The number of public school students in need of additional language instruction, as well as qualified teachers with knowledge of these needs, has shot up dramatically in recent years, according to the Bureau of U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services. When students enter the public school system with little or no knowledge of the English language, they encounter great difficulties in learning from English-language-based instruction and their achievement lags considerably.

Providing professional development is essential if teachers of English language learners are going to meet the needs of a more racially, ethnically, and linguistically diverse student population. Research has shown that raising teachers’ sense of self-efficacy for teaching this challenging group directly influences their students’ learning, and that one way to raise that self-efficacy is through a coaching model.

Sylvia Kane (EdD, 2009) examined the effects of the coaching process on 177 middle school teachers of English language learners and compared this group to 97 teachers who were not coached. She found that teachers reported that coaching gave them a greater sense of self-efficacy and that, quantitatively, coached teachers demonstrated a slight increase in perceived self-efficacy over uncoached teachers.

In addition, experienced teachers who were not coached reported a number of barriers to working with a coach. For example, they expressed a fear of being stigmatized as a poorer teacher if they had to work with a coach. These barriers, Kane said, need to be addressed in order for coaching to be more widely implemented.

New teachers more than experienced teachers seemed to thrive on the coaching process and reported higher levels of self-efficacy, Kane said, possibly because being new, they have a greater need for the feedback and encouragement that coaching provides.

“With the increase of English language learners in California’s schools and the need for teachers to become experts in instructional methods for this population, coaching is one viable resource to enhance instruction for these students,” Kane said. “Instructing students who do not speak the same language as the teacher can be a daunting task. However, through the coaching process, teachers’ sense of self-efficacy as an EL teacher can be enhanced, as was suggested through this study.”

For additional information, contact:
Janice Baskin, Director, Graduate Publications
Ahmanson 331, West Campus
626-815-6000, ext. 5266
jbaskin@apu.edu