



Identifying the Biopsychosocial Factors Promoting Healthy, Productive, and Fulfilling Transitions from High School: A Seven-Year Longitudinal Study

The Institute for Positive Psychology and Education (Australian Catholic University), in collaboration with George Mason University, is leading a large, multi-state, longitudinal project following adolescents through the post high-school transition. This project is funded by the Australian Research Council and endorsed by the Catholic Education Office of Wollongong and Cairns.

Leaving school is associated with numerous stressful challenges. Young people's success in dealing effectively with these challenges has important implications for later life development. The post high-school transition represents the confluence of a number of developmental tasks. While there is considerable research on individuals after this transition, little research has examined adolescent development to identify early indicators of transition success.

This project extends the multi-state Australian Character Study (ACS), a large group of Australian youth comprehensively surveyed through high-school, at the critical period when the ACS cohort will be transitioning out of school and entering young adulthood.

Thus, this study will be one of the first in the world to place this transition in the context of ongoing developmental trajectories across every important aspect of well-being and positive functioning.

This research aims to understand what factors determine positive development, and to identify how young people's character and social context contributes to their well-being as they leave school and begin to enter adulthood. Using a biopsychosocial approach, employing questionnaires and physiological measures, the research will explore the degree to which character strengths, contextual factors, and their interaction lead to positive transition experiences across a wide variety of domains, including social, spiritual, physical, and educational and occupational attainment.



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