



Emerging Adulthood

Instructor Manual

Editors: Dr. Regan A. R. Gurung and Dr. Aaron Richmond

Contributing Authors: Dawn Albertson, Bethany Fleck, Travis Heath, Phil Kreniske, Linda Lockwood, Kristy Lyons, Aliza Panjwani, Janet Peters, Kasey Powers, Amanda Richmond, Anna Ropp, Jeremy Sawyer, Raechel Soicher, Sunda Friedman TeBockhorst, Courtney Rocheleau

The purpose of this instructor resource module is to help students gain a basic understanding of a new life stage called emerging adulthood (EA). The content focuses on understanding how EA has developed as well as the five major characteristics that make it distinct from other stages in life. The variations of EA are discussed between industrialized and non-industrialized countries. The instructor's manual provides recommendations to help you structure a lesson about EA with activities, discussion questions, and an accompanying PowerPoint slide show. There are additional outside resources and suggested readings that can be used to further build your lesson.

Learning Objectives

Content Specific Learning Objectives:

- Explain where, when, and why a new life stage of emerging adulthood appeared over the past half-century.
- Identify the five features that distinguish emerging adulthood from other life stages.
- Describe the variations in emerging adulthood in countries around the world.

Relevant APA Learning Objectives (Version 2.0)

- Describe key concepts, principles and overarching themes in psychology (1.1)
- Describe applications of psychology (1.3)

- Incorporate sociocultural factors into scientific inquiry (2.5)
- Interact effectively with others (4.3)

Abstract

Emerging adulthood has been proposed as a new life stage between adolescence and young adulthood, lasting roughly from ages 18 to 25. Five features make emerging adulthood distinctive: identity explorations, instability, self-focus, feeling in-between adolescence and adulthood, and a sense of broad possibilities for the future. Emerging adulthood is found mainly in industrialized countries, where most young people obtain tertiary education and median ages of entering marriage and parenthood are around 30. There are variations in emerging adulthood within industrialized countries. It lasts longest in Europe, and in Asian industrialized countries, the self-focused freedom of emerging adulthood is balanced by obligations to parents and by conservative views of sexuality. In non-industrialized countries, although today emerging adulthood exists only among the middle-class elite, it can be expected to grow in the 21st century as these countries become more affluent.

Class Design Recommendations

This instructor's manual module is presented in one 90-minute class but could also be taught in two 50-60-minute classes. If teaching it in two classes, we recommend assigning the last activity "Current Trends in EA" to be done at home rather than during class. Please also refer to the Noba PowerPoint slides that accompany this outline.

Topic Outline

- Introduction
 - Emerging adulthood (EA)
- The Five Features of EA
 - The age of identity explorations
 - The age of instability

- The self-focused age
- The age of feeling in-between
- The age of possibilities
- International variations
 - EA in OECD countries: The advantages of affluence
 - EA in non-industrialized countries: low but rising
- Conclusion

Module Outline

- **Introduction:** The 18 to 29-year-old age period has dramatically shifted within the past 50 years. In the 1960's young men and women were married, having children, and in the workforce in their early 20's. Currently, these adult-like milestones are occurring in the late 20's. Many are pursuing education and training beyond secondary school and are facing greater job instability.
 - Emerging adulthood (EA) is a new stage of the life span, roughly between the ages of 18 to 25 that has arisen over the past half-century in industrialized countries.
- **The Five Features of EA:** There are five distinguishing characteristics of EA that separate it from other developmental periods.
 - **The age of identity explorations:** similar to Erik Erikson's adolescent identity development, individuals in emerging adulthood are working to figure out who they are, what their strengths and weaknesses are, what they believe and value and how they fit into society.
 - **The age of instability:** marked by frequent changes in residence, education, work, and romantic relationships.
 - **The self-focused age:** individuals are establishing a more independent lifestyle, not relying on parents or embarking in marriage. Their focus is on themselves and they

- learn to make independent decisions.
- **The age of feeling in-between:** there is a feeling of being neither an adolescent nor an adult. Many feel a sense of transition.
 - **The age of possibilities:** individuals are very optimistic about the various futures that are possible to them. They have high hopes and great expectations.
- **International Variations:** distinctions are made between non-industrialized countries and industrialized countries that are part of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).
 - **EA in OECD Countries: The Advantages of Affluence:** OECD countries (including Canada, western Europe, Japan, South Korea, Australia, and New Zealand) show similar trends to the United States in participation of postsecondary education, median ages for entering marriage, and parenthood. EA is the longest in European countries where individuals take advantage of free tertiary education, job location assistance, unemployment benefits and housing support. Asian countries also have generous social welfare systems that provide support to people within EA allowing them ample transition time. However, differences exist. Europe's history of individualism reinforces the focus on the self and financial independence while Asian cultures value collectivism and emphasize family obligations such as the capability to support parents financially. Thus, parents in Asian countries have a more influential say in EA's studies, job selection and living arrangements. Another striking difference is in sexuality. Premarital sex and cohabitation are common among western EA's, which are both rare and forbidden throughout Asia.
 - **EA in Non-Industrialized Countries: Low But Rising:** Within non-industrialized countries only a minority of individuals, mainly from the urban middle class, are experiencing EA. The majority still marries in the early 20's and do not pursue tertiary education. As globalization and economic development proceeds so too with the number of individuals who experience EA.
 - **Conclusion:** the negative impact of EA is the increased reliance on parents and the delay it takes individuals to become contributing members of society. Advantages include ample time to obtain the education needed to meet the demands of today's information and technology-based economy as well as more mature judgment making in regard to life and love. To support EA countries should expand opportunities for tertiary education and reduce its costs.

Difficult Terms

Collectivism

Emerging Adulthood

Globalization

Industrialized countries

OECD Countries

Tertiary education

Lecture Frameworks

Overview: Begin the class period with a structured reflection and discussion about how life as a 20-year old in the US has changed in the past 50 years. Next define AE and then have the students take the IDEA-8, an inventory used in research to assess the dimensions of EA. Describe to the students the five features of EA and as you do so elicit discussion from them using their scores from the IDEA-8. Following some additional direct instruction on the international variations students will participate in one more activity that has them research a counties current trends in EA. Positive and negative aspects of EA are discussed and a classroom assessment technique, the muddies point, is utilized to conclude the lesson (Angelo & Cross, 1993).

- **Introduction and warm up activity:** Think, Pair, Share. "Imagining Possible Selves." Before diving into the content of the module, allow students to reflect on who they are/were at 20 years old compared to who might have been if the year was 1960. Use the think-pair-share activity described in the Activities and Demonstrations section to guide this warm up.
- **Direct Instruction:** Refer to PowerPoint slides to provide a clear definition of EA for the students.
- **IDEA-8 Activity:** Have the students complete the Short Form of the Inventory of Dimensions of Emerging Adulthood (IDEA-8; Baggio et al., 2015). Students will reflect on their answers as the five features of EA are covered using direct instruction (see #4 below). Use the IDEA-8 activity described in the Activities and Demonstrations section to guide you.
- **Direct Instruction and Discussion:** Refer to PowerPoint slides to cover the five features of EA. On the PowerPoint slides students are instructed to score their responses on the IDEA-8 activity and discussion questions are asked to further reflect on the material.
- **Direct Instruction:** Refer to PowerPoint slides to introduce the international variations that exist between industrialized and non-industrialized countries in regard to EA.

- **Current Trends in EA Activity:** For this activity students will research a country to obtain current trends for tertiary education, age of marriage, age of having children and number of career changes. Students are asked to share the information they have gathered with the rest of the class.
- **Direct Instruction:** Refer to PowerPoint slides conclude the module covering the negative and positive aspects of EA.
- **CAT:** Use the Classroom Assessment Technique “Student Generated Test Questions” to assess students understanding of the material covered in this lesson. Students are asked to write 1 to 3 multiple-choice questions (Angelo & Cross, 1993). Decided the number of questions based on how much time you have available at the end of the class. Students should then answer the question and provide a rational for the answer. A variation could be to have students write short answer or essay questions. They can also take the questions home to answer them, or trade with a partner and answer the partner’s question. All or some of the questions can be used on the next quiz or exam.

Activities & Demonstrations

- **Think-Pair-Share: Imagining possible selves:** This activity can be completed during class. For this activity students imagine their possible self as a 20-year-old in the year 1960. The student then compares this to who they were, or might be, in their real life at 20 years old. After personal reflection students pair with a partner in class to discuss what they have discovered. The activity concludes with a large class discussion.
 - Time: 10 minutes
 - Materials: Pen and paper for students. PowerPoint slide with activity questions
 - Directions:
 - Have students imagine that they are 20 years old in the year 1960. Some students may not know much about the 1960’s. You can use the following web links to cover some quick fun facts about history or pop culture (or you can find your own). After looking at the links have students answer the questions on the PowerPoint slide.
 - https://www.census.gov/history/www/through_the_dec...

- <http://www.thepeoplehistory.com/1960.html>

Additional Activities

Hershey, D. A., & Jacobs-Lawson, J. M. (2001). Developmental differences in quality of life: A classroom teaching exercise. *Teaching of Psychology*, 28, 114-117. doi:10.1207/S153228023TOP2802)10

- This exercise has students think about their perceptions of normative development across the adult lifespan. They will think critically about what constitutes someone's "prime." While different points of adulthood are considered focus can be placed on the emerging or young adulthood period.

Lefkowitz, E. (2010). HDFS 433, Paper assignment guide. *Society for the Study of Emerging Adulthood Webpage*. Retrieved from: http://www.ssea.org/resources/Paper_guidelines_433...

- This link provides a sample term paper assignment used in an Emerging Adulthood course. There are a variety of writing prompts that students can choose from ranging in topic from identity development to romantic relationships.

Discussion Points

- What economical changes have influenced the rise of EA as a developmental period?
 - The discussion here is aimed to get students to think specifically about changes in the job market and economics that exist today, or recently, and how those changes might have increased the rise of EA. Students might mention the recession and how it drove many individuals to stay in school or go back to school for continued and different job training.
- How is EA different from adolescents?

- Students can talk here about the increased maturity of EA compared to adolescents in aspects such as brain development (the prefrontal lobe in particular), reasoning, sexual maturity, and decision-making. The discussion could also move towards the similarities of these age periods such as the importance of peers, reliance on family support, and identity exploration.
- Weight the pros and cons of EA presented in the conclusion of the module. Based on those ideas, should non-industrialized countries be striving to support this new developmental period or does it make more sense to encourage adolescents to move directly into adulthood?
 - Allow students to talk about the negative impact of EA such as the increased reliance on parents and the delay it takes individuals to become contributing members of society. Also discuss the advantages including ample time to obtain the education needed to meet the demands of today's information and technology-based economy as well as more mature judgment making in regard to life and love. The discussion can then become more option based and students can describe why they think EA should be encouraged or not in non-industrialized countries.

Outside Resources

Article: "Average Age of First-Time Moms Keeps Climbing In The U.S" - This NPR story was released in January of 2016 and discusses the rising age of first time pregnancies in US women. The rising average age is reflective of emerging adulthood.

<http://www.npr.org/sections/health-shots/2016/01/14/462816458/average-age-of-first-time-moms-keeps-climbing-in-the-u-s>

Article: "Emerging Adulthood: A Theory of Development from the Late Teens Through the Early Twenties." - The author of the module, Dr. Arnett wrote this American Psychologist article. It summarizes the theory of Emerging Adulthood.

http://jeffreyarnett.com/articles/ARNETT_Emerging_Adulthood_theory.pdf

Article: "Why are so many people in their 20s taking so long to grow up?" - This article presents an interesting perspective that discusses the changing lifestyle of US individuals in their 20's.

http://www.nytimes.com/2010/08/22/magazine/22Adulthood-t.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0

Video: “Jeffrey Jensen Arnett: Emerging Adulthood” - This video shows an interview with the author of the module, Jeffrey Jensen Arnett. Dr. Arnett talks about his book “Emerging Adulthood” as well as emerging adulthood as a lifespan.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y_f8DmU-gQQ

Web: Jeffrey Jensen Arnett website

<http://www.jeffreyarnett.com>

Web: Society for the Study of Emerging Adulthood. SSEA is “a multidisciplinary, international organization with a focus on theory and research related to emerging adulthood, which includes the age range of approximately 18 through 29 years. The website includes information on topics, events, and publications pertaining to emerging adults from diverse backgrounds, cultures, and countries.”

<http://www.ssea.org>

Evidence-Based Teaching

McManus, J. L. (1986). Student composed case study in adolescent psychology.

Teaching of Psychology, 13, 92-93, doi:10.1207/s15328023top1302_14

- This article describes an activity that is intended to be completed when studying adolescent development however it can easily be made applicable to EA. Students create hypothetical case studies that present a common dilemma in adolescence. Out of class, students interview people from the target group and share their findings with one another during a subsequent class meeting. Data regarding student motivation is presented.

Yanowitz, K. L. (2001). Looking to the future: Students’ evaluations of generating lifelines. *Teaching of Psychology*, 28, 209-210.

- In this activity students generate a lifeline indicating important events in their past as well as events they believe will happen in their future. This can be used to facilitate a discussion about developmental psychology in general and the period of EA. Students rated the lifelines activity favorably and it encouraged them to personalize the classroom material.

Links to ToPIX Materials

Books and Films: An example of a great book in this section is “Reviving Ophelia: Saving the Selves of Adolescent Girls” by Mary Pipher and Ruth Ross (2005). The book is reviewed in the post and might be an extremely interesting read for many students. Another interesting read is from Don Tapscott (2009), “Grown Up Digital: How the Net Generation is Changing Your World.”

<http://topix.teachpsych.org/w/page/39234155/Development>

Developmental Activities, Demonstrations, or Handouts: Many of the activities in this section are for development in general however some can be used for EA. For example, the link “99 ways you should be using Facebook in your classroom” suggests using Facebook for research. This could be a neat way to first hand investigate what EA’s are posting, feeling and doing. In addition, an identity crisis article is linked which could also be very applicable.

<http://topix.teachpsych.org/w/page/19980987/Development%20in%20the%20Classroom>

Developmental Videos: Videos are posted on topics related to development. The maturing and ageing video is applicable to this EA.

<http://topix.teachpsych.org/w/page/19980986/Development%20Video>

In the News: There is just one NPR article posted here about the teenage brain which can be used to prime students thinking about the next stage of EA.

<http://topix.teachpsych.org/w/page/19980985/Development%20In%20the%20News>

Teaching Topics

Teaching The Most Important Course

https://nobaproject.com/documents/1_Teaching_The_Most_Important_Course.pdf

Content Coverage

https://nobaproject.com/documents/2_Content_Coverage.pdf

Motivating Students

https://nobaproject.com/documents/3_Motivating_Students_Tips.pdf

Engaging Large Classes

https://nobaproject.com/documents/4_Engaging_Large_Classes.pdf

Assessment Learning

https://nobaproject.com/documents/5_Assessment_Learning.pdf

Teaching Biological Psychology

https://nobaproject.com/documents/6_Teaching_Bio_Psych.pdf

PowerPoint Presentation

This module has an associated PowerPoint presentation. Download it at https://nobaproject.com//images/shared/supplement_editions/000/000/328/Emerging%20Adulthood.pptx?1591720505.

About Noba

The Diener Education Fund (DEF) is a non-profit organization founded with the mission of re-inventing higher education to serve the changing needs of students and professors. The initial focus of the DEF is on making information, especially of the type found in textbooks, widely available to people of all backgrounds. This mission is embodied in the Noba project.

Noba is an open and free online platform that provides high-quality, flexibly structured textbooks and educational materials. The goals of Noba are three-fold:

- To reduce financial burden on students by providing access to free educational content
- To provide instructors with a platform to customize educational content to better suit their curriculum
- To present material written by a collection of experts and authorities in the field

The Diener Education Fund is co-founded by Drs. Ed and Carol Diener. Ed is the Joseph Smiley Distinguished Professor of Psychology (Emeritus) at the University of Illinois. Carol Diener is the former director of the Mental Health Worker and the Juvenile Justice Programs at the University of Illinois. Both Ed and Carol are award-winning university teachers.

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Contact Information:

Noba Project
www.nobaproject.com
info@nobaproject.com