

Mortimer

Working and Growing Up in America

Should teenagers have jobs while they're in high school? Doesn't working distract them from schoolwork, cause long-term problem behaviors, and precipitate a "precocious" transition to adulthood? This report from a remarkable longitudinal study of 1,000 students, followed from the beginning of high school through their mid-twenties, answers, resoundingly, no. Examining a broad range of teenagers, Jeylan Mortimer concludes that high school students who work even as much as half-time are in fact better off in many ways than students who don't have jobs at all. Having part-time jobs can increase confidence and time management skills, promote vocational exploration, and enhance subsequent academic success. The wider social circle of adults they meet through their jobs can also buffer strains at home, and some of what young people learn on the job—not least, responsibility and confidence—gives them an advantage in later work life.

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