Mission:
To promote innovative, interdisciplinary, comparative research on Productive Youth Development

London, 7-9 December 2009
Comparative Research

• Aims to identify, analyse and explain similarities and differences across societies.
• Takes account variations of socio-cultural settings and context
• Tries to establish whether shared phenomena can be explained by the same causes
Comparative Research

• Challenges
  – Gaining access to comparable datasets
  – Managing and funding cross-national projects
  – Definition of concepts might vary
  – Lack of comparative measures
  – Different samples
  – Different time points and ages
  – Different contexts and settings
Comparative Research

• Remedies
  – Agree common definition
  – Comparison of concepts
  – Matched samples and time points
  – Comparison of time frames/historical periods
  – Critical mass of evidence
  – Active dissemination
Comparative Research on Productive Youth Development

• Challenges
  – Definition of key concepts
  – Identify comparative measures
  – Match samples
    • Similar ages
    • Similar time points
  – Define contexts and settings
Key concepts

- Developmental transitions
  - Education transitions (school context)
  - Transition to adulthood (employment, independent living, family formation)
  - Life projects
Key concepts: Task for next meeting

- Identify comparative measures
  - Family background (parental education, occupation, income, family structure)
  - Gender, age, ethnicity, religion
  - Socio-historical context (boom, bust, civil unrest, ..)
  - Matched samples (e.g. similar age/ stage)
  - Academic attainment (e.g. Exam score, test scores on math, reading, drop-out, truanting)
  - School motivation
  - Aspirations, values
  - Burn out
  - Life satisfaction, etc.
Key concepts

• Task for next meeting: Compare social context
  – Family background (parental education, occupation, income, family structure)
  – Gender, age, ethnicity, religion
  – Social relationships (peers, friends, colleagues, important others)
  – Wider social context (neighbourhoods, school, work)
  – Socio-historical context (boom, bust, civil unrest, ..)
Integrative Model: The Individual in Context

Schoon et al., 2009
Developmental Contextual Model of Pathways to Adulthood

Schoon et al., 2009
Example: School Readiness & Later Achievement (Duncan et al., 2007)

• Research Questions:
• How important are academic vs. behavioral skills acquired by the point of kindergarten entry in the development of children’s later achievement?
• Are there differences based on gender, SES, race/ethnicity, or skill levels?
Overview of data

- 6 major longitudinal developmental studies:
  - 1970 British Cohort Study;
  - NICHD Study of Early Child Care and Youth Development;
  - Early Childhood Longitudinal Study – Kindergarten Cohort;
  - Infant Health and Development Project;
  - National Longitudinal Survey of Youth - Child Study
  - Montreal Longitudinal-Experimental Preschool Study
Study design and time frames

• Measures of school readiness cover the period from 1975 (BCS) to early 2000 (MLEPS)
• Comparing 3 different countries with varying educational systems
• Different contexts and different settings vs. replication studies and critical mass of evidence
• Nature of the research question
  – Relative importance of children’s early capabilities and of increments in those skills on later school success
‘Matched’ samples and time points

- All longitudinal studies with assessments at at least 3 time points (standardised measures)
- Exact timing of assessments varies across each of the studies
- However, each meet conceptual definition

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<th>BCS</th>
<th>NICHD</th>
<th>ECLS-K</th>
<th>IHDP</th>
<th>NLSY</th>
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<td>Age 10</td>
<td>Grade 5</td>
<td>Grade 3</td>
<td>Age 8</td>
<td>Age 13/14</td>
<td>Grade 3</td>
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<td>School entry skills</td>
<td>Age 5</td>
<td>Age 4 1/2</td>
<td>Fall of KG</td>
<td>Age 5</td>
<td>Age 5/6</td>
<td>Jnr &amp; Snr KG</td>
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<td>Prior child controls</td>
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Thank You

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