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Love and Work: The Legacy of Early University Entrance

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Abstract

This is the second follow-up study of the Early Entrance Program at the University of Washington. Ninety-five individuals (45%) participated. Respondents overwhelmingly chose early university entrance because they were excited to learn; many also praised the peer group, intellectual stimulation, and faculty and staff support. Some reported feeling too young to make important academic, career, and social decisions, with more males regretting the lack of dating partners due to age differences. As the program has matured, so have students' positive experiences in it. Significant differences were found among three groups of students who entered at different points, reflecting this maturation. A wealth of open-ended comments indicated that the program continues to exert a profound and positive influence on graduates' lives.

Putting the Research to Use

There is no argument about the need for a variety of ways to help gifted adolescents work to their intellectual potential. Early entrance to college or university after seventh or eighth grade is an option that we strongly encourage more colleges and universities to implement. However, the results of this study clearly indicate that for young scholars to succeed in this type of program, they will need: a period of intellectual preparation in a supportive and rigorous environment; a peer group that is large enough for them to find same-age friends; and a faculty who enjoy teaching, advising, and mentoring them. Equally important, early entrants need a welcoming college or university environment.

This study opens up a variety of new avenues for research. We found significant gender differences in respondents' satisfaction with platonic and romantic relationships, suggesting that age might affect males' experience of radical acceleration more negatively than females'. We wonder whether this is true in early entrance programs that admit older, less accelerated students. Much of the extant literature about early entrance focuses on accelerants' self-concepts and academic achievement; this study demonstrates the value of focusing as well on long-term effects of early university entrance on their personal and professional lives.

Cultivating promising young scholars is one of the best investments that any society can make in its future. The Halbert and Nancy Robinson Center for Young Scholars (Robinson Center) at the University of Washington (UW) has been actively making that investment for almost thirty years through innovative programs and services that nurture young scholars' intellectual, social, and emotional development, inspire them to achieve personal and professional excellence, and encourage them to become active members of their communities. Each year, the Center serves several thousand families and youth throughout the State of Washington in a variety of ways. These include the Washington Search for Young Scholars, a regional academic talent search for students in fourth through eighth grade; Summer Stretch and Summer Challenge, accelerated courses for students in fifth through ninth grade; the Transition School (TS) and Early Entrance Program (EEP) for students who enter the UW after Grades 7 or 8; the UW Academy for Young Scholars (UW Academy) for students who enter the UW after Grade 10; and a Diagnostic and Counseling Service. Faculty, staff, and students are involved in ongoing research about the short and long term effects of educational acceleration on young scholars in the EEP and UW Academy, and they use that research to refine existing programs and inform the Center's new directions.

History of the Early Entrance Program

Since 1977, the EEP has been the gateway through which some of the brightest young scholars in Washington State enter the UW, the premier research university in the Pacific Northwestern region of the United States. Each year 16 students (ages 12-14) are admitted to the preparatory TS on campus, which compresses most of secondary school into three academic quarters. Students graduate to the EEP at the end of the year and become fully matriculated UW undergraduates. At the time of this writing, 331 students have participated in the EEP. Of these, 15 students are currently enrolled in TS and 57 in the EEP; 226 have graduated from UW and 21 transferred to and graduated from other colleges and universities. Only 12 students who proceeded to EEP later left school altogether, and their educational status is unknown.

The EEP was created in 1977 by the late Dr. Halbert Robinson, a professor of developmental psychology at the UW. His goal was to enable a small and carefully selected group of academically advanced middle school students to accelerate into postsecondary education at a pace equal to their intellectual development. At its inception, EEP students could be dually enrolled in middle school and the UW, but it quickly became apparent that this divided their loyalties and diluted their satisfaction with their university experiences. By the third year of the program, dual enrollment was abandoned and students became full time UW students upon admission to the EEP. Initially, there was no formal TS; students participated in an informal “transition component” of weekly group meetings led by the program’s psychologist, and could avail themselves of mentoring, academic advising, and personal counseling as needed from the faculty and staff. At Dr. Hal Robinson’s death in 1981, Dr. Nancy Robinson, a professor of psychiatry and behavioral sciences at UW, assumed directorship and made a major programmatic change. She recognized that many EEP students were struggling with the rigor demanded by their university courses, particularly in mathematics and the sciences, and that they needed more than high intelligence to succeed at the university. Specifically, many needed more rigorous preparation in particular content areas and study skills, such as time management, organization, critical analysis, and scholarly writing. Thus, TS was born. Since 1981, all Early Entrance students spend their first academic year in TS, graduating at the end of three quarters to the UW as “EEPers.”

The academic structure of TS has stayed much the same since 1981 although significant changes in faculty have occurred and some new courses have been added. TS follows the quarter-based academic calendar of the UW. During their first year in the program, students take five courses: English (writing and literature), history (medieval and modern western civilization, and US history), physics, pre-calculus, and ethics. During the third TS quarter, physics and ethics are replaced with a university course so that students can take their first university course while still under the protective umbrella of TS faculty and staff. At one time TS students undertook one quarter of language training in German, but this course was

dropped in favor of a second quarter of physics after research revealed that students needed better preparation in science. In 1990 a one-quarter seminar that prepares TS students for their entry into UW was added to the curriculum, as were a one-quarter service learning component to the English course in 1998, and a two-quarter Ethics seminar in 2002.

Some changes in personnel have, of course, occurred over the years. The majority of faculty members are doctoral trained experts in their academic fields; many are also UW professors. Faculty turnover is remarkably low. The English instructor, who also serves as Principal of TS, joined the faculty in 1996, and the history instructor, who also serves as Principal of Summer Programs, joined in 1990. Although the current math instructor was appointed in 2004, her predecessor was a member of the TS faculty for 15 years. A licensed psychologist has been available for academic and personal advising since the onset of the program; the current psychologist joined the Robinson Center in 1989 and became the Director of the Robinson Center upon Dr. Nancy Robinson's retirement in 2000. This continuity of faculty has provided students with a great deal of academic and emotional stability both during and after their participation in TS and the EEP, and has enabled the Robinson Center to continuously refine its programs and policies as circumstances warranted.

Policy refinements have largely involved admissions and retention. On several occasions during earlier years of TS and the EEP, some students revealed that they had entered the program because their parents wished them to but that they had been ambivalent or had wished they had attended high school. Thus, in 1998 the faculty decided to pay more attention to whom was making the choice to come to TS and the admissions interviews were restructured so that all applicants would have an opportunity to talk with the admissions committee without their parents present. This enabled the committee to ascertain whether the student was making the independent decision to apply to TS and not simply acquiescing to parental desires. Although TS used to have a rolling admissions procedure, in 1997 the decision was made to interview all the candidates before selecting the final class to ensure fairness for those who applied later in

the admissions cycle. Another important refinement was a clearly defined policy for dismissal. Although earlier in TS' history students were occasionally counseled out of the program, they were not dropped for poor grades. This is no longer the case. At entry TS students now sign a written contract stating that they can be dismissed for poor academic performance or for rendering the classroom environment emotionally unsafe for other students if they do not comply with the terms of a probationary period.

Once students graduate from TS and become EEPers, our involvement with them continues in a variety of ways. The UW is an academic home to approximately 35,000 undergraduate and graduate students, and it would be all too easy for young scholars to feel lost on the Seattle campus. Thus, a number of support services are available to them through the EEP. Perhaps most importantly, students have access to a lounge at the Robinson Center where they can meet friends, study, play games, visit with faculty, and consult with advisors. A seminar on developing their particular talents and academic interests is offered for all first year EEPers to encourage them to take advantage of the vast resources available at UW. Students are mentored at various stages of their undergraduate careers by Robinson Center faculty, and many students have served as undergraduate research assistants for studies undertaken at the Robinson Center and received co-authorship on the resulting publications. Others have served as teaching assistants for TS and other Robinson Center academic programs. EEPers are encouraged but not required to meet with program staff after they graduate from TS, and their academic performance is monitored on a quarterly basis so that staff can help students if their GPAs fall below a certain level, typically 3.3 on a 4 point scale. EEP students created a highly successful drama society in 1990, and every year produce, direct, design the sets for, and act in a play that is open to the public at large. There is also a faculty-led hiking club, an overnight orientation for entering TS students and first year EEPers at the beginning of each academic year, and an end-of-the year overnight celebration for the entire community at a camp on the Puget Sound.

Currently there are 17 early entrance programs in the US, including two at the UW, that differ in significant ways. Ten are residential; seven, including the EEP and UW Academy for Young Scholars, are for commuters. Some programs expect students to transfer to another college or university after a period of two years; others admit students only in 12th grade. One admits only women (Grades 9-12), and two are accelerated high schools. One program was loosely modeled on the UW EEP but does not offer students the formal academic preparation provided by TS. The UW is the only university in the US and abroad to offer two unique early entrance options for academically talented students: TS/EEP for students after the seventh or eighth grade and the UW Academy for students after Grade 10. (See Brody, Muratori, & Stanley, 2004 for all program descriptions.)

There is little debate about the positive effects that early entrance to college or university can have on gifted students' academic and intellectual development (Brody & Stanley, 1991; Brody et al., 2004); Janos, Robinson, & Lunneborg, 1989; Noble & Drummond, 1992; Noble, Robinson, & Gunderson, 1993; Olszewski-Kubilius, 1995). Indeed, our own experience indicates that the academic performance of many young scholars is stellar. As previously noted, 226 EEPers have graduated thus far from the UW and 21 transferred to and graduated from another college or university. Early entrants have majored in fields as diverse as Music, Classics, Biochemistry, Computer Science, and Dance, and many have completed two or three majors. Two have been Rhodes Scholars (and a third, a Rhodes Finalist), five were Goldwater Scholars, three students have been UW Senior, Junior, or Sophomore Medalists (the students with the highest scholastic standing in their respective classes), three were NASA Space Grant Scholars, and many have won prestigious UW scholarships and grants for foreign study, undergraduate research, music performance, and various academic endeavors. Each quarter, a majority of EEPers earn places on the Dean's List for high academic performance.

Because radical acceleration from middle school to university in a cohort of peers is an extremely rare educational option, understandably little research has addressed its social and emotional effects. A

variety of studies conducted at the Robinson Center (Noble & Drummond, 1992; Noble, Robinson, & Gunderson, 1993; Noble & Smyth, 1995; Noble, Arndt, Nicholson, Sletten, & Zamora, 1999) have shown that radical acceleration benefits not only students' intellectual growth but, just as importantly, their social and emotional development. Participants in these studies specifically cited experiences such as the acceptance of individual differences, the encouragement of academic excellence and personal responsibility, the solidarity and sense of belonging they felt within the program, friendships with peers, faculty, and staff, and the support of caring adults as growth factors. The findings from these studies are congruent with the research of Olszewski-Kubilius (1995), Brody, Assouline, and Stanley (1990), Brody et al. (2004), and Cornell, Callahan, & Lloyd (1991).

How early university entrants fare after graduation from college or university is a great concern to both parents and prospective students. Richardson and Benbow (1990) found that participants in the longitudinal Study of Mathematically Precocious Youth (SMPY) reported generally high self-esteem and few if any social or emotional difficulties. Brody and Stanley (1991) also found that the overall effects of radical acceleration are beneficial for most accelerants, particularly in terms of undergraduate academic achievement, rates of graduation, attendance at graduate or professional school, higher educational and vocational aspirations, and "greater perceived use of educational opportunities" (p. 112).

The first follow-up study of graduates of the EEP reported similar findings (Noble, Robinson, & Gunderson, 1993). Noble et al. compared the experiences of former EEP students who had entered the program between 1977 and 1986 and two comparison groups who had taken part in previous research efforts: non-accelerated National Merit Scholarship finalists (NATS), and students who had qualified for the EEP but had proceeded to high school instead (QUALS). Their data indicated that although most respondents were satisfied with their decision to accelerate or not accelerate their secondary education, EEPers had entered graduate school in significantly greater numbers than had either NATS or QUALS. In attitudes, interests, and values, group similarities far outweighed differences; where significant differences

occurred, however, EEPers tended to resemble NATS more than QUALS. Noble et al. concluded that “(a)ccelerating one’s secondary education is as healthy a decision for many highly capable students as remaining with age mates. Despite fears about psycho-social ramifications expressed by many well-meaning adults, the social and emotional development of most highly qualified students has been neither compromised nor harmed by acceleration” (p. 130). This second follow-up study, conducted during the 2003-2004 academic year, focused exclusively on graduates of the EEP and was designed to enhance our understanding of patterns of work, education, and social affiliation that characterize this population of radically accelerated individuals.

Methods

Participants

All program alumni who graduated from the UW or another college or university in or before June 2003 were invited to participate anonymously in this study. A letter describing the study and requesting participation was sent to these 211 individuals, of whom 95 (45%) returned completed questionnaires. This response rate was achieved by three subsequent mailings over a three-month period of time. Given the anonymous nature of this study, more direct methods of recruiting participants were not possible.

Instrument

The authors designed an eight-page, 100-item questionnaire that focused on participants’ assessments of their educational and work experiences, friendships, and love relationships. Participants were asked a variety of open-ended and Likert-scaled questions; the latter used a four point scale to discourage neutral responses. Sample questions included: What aspects of your EEP experience do you feel were especially unique and beneficial to you, personally and professionally? Did you experience an uncomfortable level of pressure to succeed academically and/or professionally by parents, friends, EEP faculty/staff, UW faculty/staff, and/or yourself? What are the three most important traits that you look for in a romantic partner? Have you had any difficulties finding suitable friends and/or partners? What are the three

most important values that you seek in employment? Have you significantly changed your career path in your lifetime? Overall, how well do you feel you have lived up to your own and your parents' expectations in the following areas: financial, work, intellectual, friendships, family, romantic relationships? Although a questionnaire and self-addressed, stamped envelope were sent to all prospective participants, a secure, anonymous, electronic version was also made available via the Internet.

Data Analysis

Qualitative data were content analyzed by the research team for themes. Quantitative data were summarized using descriptive statistics; cross-tabulations and Pearson Chi-Square tests of significance were used to determine the presence of differences among groups based on gender and on point of entry into the program. An analysis of the EEP history revealed three distinct programmatic periods: Pre-TS (1977-1980), Early EEP (1981-1989), and Mature EEP (1990-present). The separation of groups into Pre-TS and Early EEP was based on the radical shift in the program that occurred with the inception of TS in 1981. The separation between Early and Mature EEP was based on major personnel changes that emphasized advising, orientation seminars, and admissions policies designed to accept self-motivated, rather than parent-motivated, students. Only significant differences are reported below.

Results

After presenting demographic information and data about respondents' enrollment eras, we organize the results around four principal categories of inquiry:

1. Why did students choose to participate in the EEP? What aspects of the EEP experience did students find especially beneficial and/or detrimental, personally and professionally?
2. What are participants' perceptions of the effects of the EEP on their social development over time, specifically in regard to friendships and romantic relationships?
3. What are participants choosing to do with their lives? Do they feel they are living up to their own and their parents' expectations?

4. What are the most important traits that respondents look for when choosing romantic partners and, friends? What are the most important values that they seek in employment? What gives them a sense of meaning and purpose in life?

Demographic Information

Ninety-five graduates of the Early Entrance Program participated in this study, of whom 49 (52%) were female and 46 (48%) were male. Respondents ranged in age from 16 to 40; the mean age was 28 (S.D. = 6.1). Forty-one individuals (43%) reported that they are currently single, 35 (37%) are married, 18 (19%) are in long-term, committed relationships, and one is divorced. Twenty respondents (21%) have children, and 61 (64%) plan to become parents in the future. No significant differences were found between respondents and non-respondents in terms of either gender (Chi-square (1, N = 211) = 1.506, $p = .22$) or enrollment era (Chi-square (2, N = 210) = 3.749, $p = .153$).

Insert Table 1 about Here

Principal Questions

1: Why did students choose to participate in EEP? What aspects of the EEP experience did students find especially beneficial and/or detrimental, personally and professionally?

Insert Table 2 about Here

The majority of respondents (95%) said they entered the EEP because they were excited to learn; this was a “very important” reason for 59%, and an “important” reason for 36%. “Disappointment with previous schooling” was another impetus to attend, with 37% of respondents citing this factor as very important and 39% citing it as important. Approximately one-third of respondents said that they came to the program in part because they were unhappy socially (14% ranked this variable as “very important,” and 17% said it was “important”), and slightly more than half (56%) reported that liking the EEP peer group was important or very important to their decision-making.

Insert Table 3 about Here

When compared by sub-group membership, only one significant difference emerged: respondents' perceptions of the importance of the EEP peer group to their decision to enroll in the EEP [Chi-Square (6, N=95) = 13.792, $p < .033$]. Respondents who entered the program Pre-TS were less likely to have done so because they were drawn to the EEP peer group, whereas over time, "liking the EEP peer group" became a significantly more important factor. Among the mature EEP sub-group, 69% (n=34) cited this factor as "important" or "very important."

Benefits.

An open-ended question asked respondents to reflect on "What aspects of the EEP were especially unique or beneficial, personally and professionally?" The peer group was the most oft mentioned benefit (n=44), with many individuals reporting that they had a newfound sense of social acceptance and no longer felt ostracized. The second most important benefit was Intellectual challenge and stimulation (n=34). Respondents said that the EEP gave them a sense of independence and greater confidence (n=15), developed their life skills and maturation (n=15), gave them a new sense of freedom and responsibility (n=14), and allowed them greater opportunities for exploration (n=6). Third on their list of benefits was the gift of time (n=28). Eleven respondents were relieved to have escaped high school and 11 reported that the EEP gave them an early start on their careers. A fourth benefit was program support (n=20). Sixteen respondents cited closeness to faculty and "access to faculty who cared about me." Three respondents said that the support of the staff had "literally saved their lives." The comments of several individuals illustrate respondents' positive perceptions of their EEP experience.

Finding a lot of people with whom I could talk and carry on long conversations and 'geek out' with was a huge benefit to me from EEP.

I struggled through liking myself and figuring out who I was and liking who

I was throughout college, and my friends from EEP and the opportunities

I had through the UW (like foreign study) helped me get through a lot of tough times. Everyone around was different and awkward and geeky and beautiful and interesting and talented in their own way. We had many similar experiences, but also many different ones. EEP was and still is sometimes the only thing that I had in common with some of my peers, but not in a bad way.

Because I entered college early, I was able to take extra time to pursue an additional major. I also took a year off after graduating to do research before entering graduate school. These experiences have given me an advantage over other students in my current program. Having a support system at the program, specifically Dr. Noble and like-minded peers, allowed me to feel like I had a place on campus where I belonged. It also allowed me to feel like I was in an environment where I could get help, personally or professionally, if I needed it. Also, prior to entering EEP, I think that I defined myself based on being the 'smart one' in school. Being among so many intelligent peers forced me to grow as a person and discover what made me unique instead of hiding behind the label of "gifted".

I can't imagine what adolescence would've been like for me had I not gone through the early entrance program. Looking back, I can see how much I flourished in an environment where it really was OK to just be myself – and for me, the intellectual and social will always be intertwined. After years of being only just marginally accepted by my peers, it was

quite a new experience to be someplace where – amazing! – people liked me! Nancy (Robinson) once made some comment along those lines to my mom, and when it was repeated back to me, I was astonished. But looking back, I can see why. EEPers (at least the group I was acquainted with) are not only some of the more interesting, but also the most accepting people I've encountered in my academic career. (In grad school, I've been disappointed to find my peers much more interested in departmental politics and theoretical posturing than in really grappling with the “big issues” of life or entering into dialogue with those who hold different views.) It has made me realize what a unique experience and group of people I enjoyed during my years at the UW. It was such an open environment – “any kind of ideas are OK as a starting point, now let's have a vigorous debate, and still be friends afterwards even though we still disagree.” I hear a lot of talk about tolerance in the “real world,” but seldom find that kind of healthy experience of relationships within diversity.

EEP allowed me to develop my communication skills, with regard to establishing profound relationships with other intelligent individuals, no matter their field of interest. In short, it helped me, I believe, develop a common language with which I could address the best and the brightest in almost any profession.

Participants were also asked whether they would consider sending their child to the EEP based on their experiences. Fifty-four (57%) said “definitely,” whereas only 10 (11%) said “no.” Eighteen (19%) said

that they would if their children wanted to do this. Interestingly, no member of the Mature EEP sub-group said “no” to this question.

Detriments.

Another open-ended question asked respondents “What aspects (of the EEP) were detrimental to you, personally or professionally?” These comments were more idiosyncratic and difficult to categorize. Twenty-five respondents felt that their young age had been detrimental to them in some way. Some in this group (n=9) said they had been too young to take full advantage of being at the university or to make career decisions, and others (n=8) felt they had been too young socially as undergraduate or graduate/professional students. Seventeen respondents cited the slow development or lack of social skills, and three regretted limited opportunities for dating. Seven students had felt a sense of alienation from others, three of whom attributed this to their entry prior to TS. Five respondents had felt too much pressure to “fulfill their potential,” and three regretted that they had had too much freedom. Two respondents had felt pressured to study science rather than humanities. The following comments demonstrate the complexity of respondents’ assessment of the detriments of the EEP.

I feel very positive about my experience with the EEP, so I’m not sure what I can say here, with two possible exceptions: 1) Real life is much less stimulating, as are most of the people I spend my time with unfortunately. Sometimes I find that depressing but that doesn’t mean I think there’s something wrong with the EEP. 2) I do have some educational deficits (e.g., chemistry, calculus) that occasionally make me feel pretty inadequate...but if I were motivated enough to address them, I could.

The only problem for me was that I was not really ready at 14 or 15 to know

what career direction I wanted to pursue. I had no thought for career when I started – TS was just a wonderful alternative to middle school! – and it didn't really become an important factor for several years. At first, I was just out to “explore the university.” As a result, I didn't get everything out of my college years that I might have, in terms of thorough preparation for grad school in a particular field, or anything of that sort. Like a lot of gifted individuals, I really had trouble coming to a decision, because I find that I can do well at, and even enjoy, all kinds of diverse fields. I would say it has taken me a good 5 years since I graduated from UW to have a strong sense of what I want to do, with several shifts of direction along the way. This occasionally frustrates me because, while it wasn't a big consideration at the time, now I look back and fume that I've “lost” all the career-development time I saved by going through EEP. For instance, it could have been easier for me to have most of my education out of the way and not deal as much with the issues of “get started in a career vs. have children while I'm at my physical/reproductive peak” that so many women face.

2: What are participants' perceptions of the effects of the EEP experience on their social development over time, specifically in regard to their friendships and romantic relationships?

Seventy respondents (73%) reported that during their undergraduate days, most of their friends were other EEPers, whereas 37 (40%) cited UW undergraduates and 36 (38%) cited students in their majors. A small number (n = 15) maintained their closest friendships with students from their previous secondary schools. Males reported fewer friends among the general undergraduate population than did females [Chi-Square (1, N = 94) = 5.330, p < .022], a difference that did not appear in their friendships with other EEPers.

Respondents were asked whether they had ever had difficulties finding suitable friends and/or partners and, if so, to describe them. Although the majority (54%) said “no,” more males than females answered “yes” to this question [Chi-Square (1, N=94) = 5.036, $p < .025$]. Of the 44 individuals who reported having such difficulties, no major theme emerged. Seven described EEP as an environment where they were able to find highly intelligent, like-minded peers and easily make friends, something that was more difficult to do outside the EEP. Six people said that EEP had helped them to minimize on-going social problems, although three others stated that because of the sheltering nature of EEP, they didn’t develop the social skills they would have learned in high school. The most cited negative effect was age. Eight respondents stated that due to their age they felt perceived as different from others.

Difficulties with finding suitable friends decreased dramatically as an undergraduate, where I had my first really successful social life.

I must admit I blame EEP (or more accurately, the way I chose to depend on EEP) for my struggles in later life in social arenas. It is still hard for me to make new friends because I never really developed those kinds of skills. In TS you couldn’t help but make friends, but later on it is more difficult to make new friends given that I’m not locked up with the same set of people for 4 hours a day, doing homework together etc. “What about the Prom?” is BS but one should ask “What about after my TS friends scatter to the four winds?” EEPers should be strongly encouraged, though not forced (of course) to develop friendships in their departments, the dorms, etc.

As a male EEPer it is a bit more difficult finding women to date because

my peers are almost always several years older than me.

Insert Table 4 about Here

Insert Table 5 about Here

A number of significant gender differences were observed pertaining to happiness and fulfillment within romantic and platonic relationships. Fewer males than females (62% vs. 82%) reported having had romantic involvements during their undergraduate years [Chi-Square (1, N = 94) = 4.417, p, .037] and, as indicated above, more males than females (58% vs. 35%) had experienced difficulties finding suitable friends and romantic partners. As seen in Table 4, males were significantly more likely to report that EEP had detrimental effects on their romantic relationships both during and after EEP [Chi-Square (1, N = 76) = 8.355, p < .005; Chi-Square (1, N = 80) = 5.210, p < .023, respectively). Table 5 indicates that males also feel significantly less happiness in their present friendships and romantic relationships (Chi-Square (2, N = 94) = 6.781, p < .035; Chi-Square (3, N = 91) = 8.487, p < .038, respectively). Fewer males than females (41% vs. 69%) reported being married or in committed relationships at the time of this survey.

3: What are participants choosing to do with their lives? Are participants living up to their own and their parents' expectations?

Insert Table 6 about Here

Overall, graduates have pursued higher education in large numbers. Fifty-one respondents (53%) have earned graduate and/or professional degrees whereas 30 (32%) are currently enrolled in graduate or professional training. Fifty-seven respondents said they are planning to continue their formal education in the future, and two are currently pursuing second bachelor's degrees in new fields. Because some academically advanced students feel pressured by parents and teachers to accelerate their education, we asked respondents whether they had experienced an uncomfortable level of pressure from a variety of

sources to achieve academically. Almost half (n = 44, 46%) said that they had felt such pressure only from themselves, whereas only 13 cited their parents, 12 cited EEP personnel, and eight cited friends.

The majority of respondents (70%) reported that they are currently employed full-time (n=52) or part-time (n=14) in their career fields, a situation that eight (8%) expect to change within two years. Fourteen respondents said they were working in non-career related fields, and 5 were employed in part-time, temporary jobs. Four said they were full-time homemakers. Thirty-six individuals (40%) reported feeling “extremely satisfied” with their current jobs and 37 (41%) said they were “satisfied.” Sixty-five respondents (72%) stated that their current jobs were appropriate for their level of education and training. Only seven respondents said that they were definitely working beneath their level, and only two felt that their jobs were too advanced. We asked respondents whether they had experienced an uncomfortable level of pressure to achieve professionally from parents, EEP faculty and staff, friends, or themselves. Eleven cited EEP faculty and staff, ten cited parents, and seven cited friends, whereas 36 (38%) had felt such pressure coming from themselves.

Those respondents who are currently employed outside the home reported a wide variety of occupations, including: physician; ballet and modern dance teacher; clinical psychologist; consulting actuary; software engineer; university professor; field artillery officer in the US Marine Corps; mathematics teacher; social science analyst; massage therapist; judicial clerk; real estate developer; librarian; venture capitalist; and technical writer. One respondent’s comments reflected the complexity of many EEP graduates’ professional lives.

This is a non-trivial question. I was employed as a software engineer for seven years, and am currently semi-retired. I am currently both studying and teaching martial arts (in part an attempt to rehab my work related spine injuries, but it’s taken on a life of its own). I’ve also been publishing regularly, primarily

articles on the subjects of food, gardening, and wilderness lore for the past three years, and am hoping to take my writing career further as my schedule allows. And I still do a bit of computer consulting from time to time.

An open-ended question asked whether respondents felt that gender had affected their professional achievements in any way. Forty respondents (28 female, 12 male) said that it had, with more males than females citing their gender as positively affecting their achievements (71% vs. 28%). Thirty respondents (23 females, 7 males) took the opportunity to explain how gender influenced their lives. Their comments included the following:

It is true that being male gives me access to an “old-boy’s network” in science that others do not have. While I am not happy about it, I would be lying if I said that this had not been beneficial to me. (Male)

It is harder to find merit-based scholarships for males. (Male)

It is still not easy being a woman in science, especially the physical sciences. Not only is there still a lot of misogyny, but I also feel a distinct lack of respect. There are still a lot of men out there that just cannot handle women in positions of authority. (Female)

People in the software field like to hire women if possible. [My gender] has helped me get jobs. (Female)

While there has been no external pressure, I have sometimes felt a particular internal pressure to do well when I am one of only a few women in a job or in a class. (Female)

Certainly I am aware of being one of the relatively few females in my field. At times this is a source of strength (I work harder to prove myself) at times a hindrance (occasional active discouragement). (Female)

Although no respondent mentioned salary in his or her reflections on gender, the data revealed a highly significant disparity in monthly income. More than half the females (57%) earn less than \$2500 monthly, whereas 48% of males earn \$5000 or more [Chi-Square (2, N = 91) = 12.692, $p < .003$].

Insert Table 7 about Here

Our data indicate that most respondents feel satisfied with their lives. For example, 70% (n=65) said that they had lived up to all or most of their financial expectations, 68% to all or most of their work expectations, and 69% to all or most of their intellectual expectations. Respondents' assessments of whether they had lived up to all or most of their expectations in regard to friendship, family, and romance were similarly sanguine: 70%, 78%, and 63%, respectively. However, 15 respondents (16%) said they had lived up to none of their romantic expectations, and a small number failed to meet their own expectations in regard to each of the other categories surveyed. The data also suggest that more respondents felt they had lived up to their parents' intellectual expectations of them than to their own (90% vs. 69%).

4: What are the most important traits that respondents look for when choosing romantic partners and, friends? What are the most important values that they seek in employment? What gives them a sense of meaning and purpose in life?

Insert Table 8 about Here

Insert Table 9 about Here

Not surprisingly, intelligence was the trait most highly and equally valued in both romantic partners and friends (87%). A sense of humor was ranked second in importance for friends (80%), but third for romantic partners (46%). Similarity in moral values was ranked second for romantic partners (48%), and third for friends (51%). Intellectual challenge was the highest priority sought in work (63%), followed by enjoyment and fun (40%), and passion (33%).

An open-ended question asked respondents to consider “What gives your life a sense of meaning and purpose?” Eighty-six respondents answered this question, and their answers fell into six nonexclusive categories: Relationships (n = 50); contribution to community/society (n = 34); work (n = 24); intellectual challenge (n = 20); faith/spirituality (n = 15); and other (n = 20). Only three people said that they did not know. The following comments are representative of this group.

Like a lot of people, I derive a sense of purpose from helping other people, even in smaller ways; if I know that I’ve made someone’s day better, even if they forget about it tomorrow, then I’ve done something worthwhile for the afternoon. I also get a sense of meaning, in a way, from planning my own life in a way. Not so much in the strict “I will do this, then this” sort of way, but in choosing what commitments I want to make and what I want to do before I snuff it...

I feel that meaning and purpose come from enjoying life. Part of enjoying life is having a satisfying career that keeps me interested, but my greatest purpose is doing the recreational activities I enjoy the most with the people

I love.

My work within the enterprise software sector has allowed countless businesses to operate more efficiently and increase overall economic productivity. This in part allows our society to continue its economic growth, bringing benefits to all strata of society. This is what I enjoy doing, and this is what gives my work meaning.

First and foremost, I think, the things I create. I see meaning as something entirely subjective, but I'm very interested in meaning as something we actively create rather than passively observe. So, my writing, my technical projects, but also the organizations I've created and led and so forth. Teaching has always been very satisfying to me. And for all that I don't put connections with people first, and such connections are not the primary motivator for me, I am aware that a lot of the other things that give meaning would pale without them. I live for the dialectic.

My family (husband and child), teaching, scientific research, my friends.

Spiritual connection – art – music – trees – light – festivities – appreciation
– water – yoga – writing – love – writing – love – writing – love.

One final, open-ended question asked respondents if there was anything else they wanted to tell us. Fifty-five respondents used this opportunity to thank the EEP, critique the EEP, or sum up their experiences before and after participating in the program. Sixteen individuals directly thanked the EEP for their positive experiences and encouraged the program to expand for the benefit of other students. Five individuals complained that their EEP experience made them miss a needed maturation period in high school. Four respondents felt that their lives had not measured up to the expectations they had developed during their time in the EEP, and stated further that they had difficulty finding a peer group that was as stimulating as EEPers had been. Six respondents believed the EEP needed to provide better methods to help students develop lifelong learning skills; some in this group said they had difficulty deciding on a career path and integrating into the adult world after the EEP. Nine students criticized the survey itself, stating the need for a “neutral” option in the Likert-scaled questions. A few students stated that they missed their EEPer friends and wanted a reunion or the chance to work with younger EEPers. Some quotes are particularly instructive.

I think a possible drawback of EEP is that some students can end up missing out socially on both high school and college. I recall chatting to one guy in my TS class when we were both close to graduating from UW, and him commenting that he had not really dated during his time at UW. While different people seek different things from the program, for me it was very important to have a “normal” college experience. Finally, while I think I did experience a high degree of pressure to succeed, I feel that this was almost entirely self-produced. The EEP teachers and staff and my family were always extremely supportive.

I'm not sure how exactly to express this, but I think I've become more and more mediocre since I left the EEP. Not to say that I was extraordinary while I was there...but I had real hopes and dreams of becoming extraordinary and doing something incredible with my life. Today – 15 years after starting Transition School – I often feel like just getting by is all I can do. I don't work in a stimulating environment. I've practically given up ever working for somebody whose mind and abilities I admire. I don't often find people with whom I share common values and interests outside my immediate family...all of which makes me feel sometimes like I just want to drop out of society and do my own thing with my husband and my son...hopefully something in the service of greater humanity....I just recently turned 30 and I do believe (although I realize there are some exceptions) that if you're going to do something extraordinary with your life, there are going to be clear signs of greatness by 30...and for me, that isn't the case. I try to console myself by finding pleasure in little things, lowering my expectations, and putting less and less emotional energy into my work – but I feel kind of like I've got a dead limb of sorts...I no longer have to put effort into sustaining it, but I still do have to carry it around. It gets in the way and there's always a reminder that I wanted something more.

I firmly believe that I could've been successful academically without EEP, but that my life wouldn't have had the perspective, personality, or character it does. I can't imagine life without my EEP experiences and I wouldn't trade

them for anything.

Discussion

The EEP has undergone a number of changes over time in policies, procedures, and personnel that have significantly improved students' perceptions of their early entrance experience. The most important change was the 1981 creation of TS to better prepare young scholars for the rigor of university coursework and to provide a stronger sense of belonging and community for students. The results of this study clearly support the wisdom of that decision and identify the emergence of several trends over the maturation of the program: the increased importance of the EEP peer group, the decreased influence of parental pressure to enroll, and increased intellectual readiness to succeed at the university. As mentioned earlier, EEPers have won a disproportionately large number of prestigious scholarships and research opportunities at UW and the majority regularly appear on the Dean's List. The average EEP GPA is consistently about 3.7 while the average UW GPA is about 3.0. The number of respondents who reported that the EEP "nurtured [them] intellectually" increased from 62% in the pre-TS group to 75% in the Early EEP group to 88% in the Mature EEP group. Indeed, of the 95 respondents only one individual felt that EEP negatively influenced her intellectual development, and she was a member of the Pre-TS cohort.

Prior to 1981 students enrolled directly into the EEP without any special preparation or coordinated program that would create a supportive peer group. Not surprisingly, respondents from this sub-group (Pre-TS) were much less likely to cite "liking the EEP peer group" as a reason they chose for entering the program. It may be that these respondents, who were the oldest in the sample population and the program's pioneers, have forgotten their main impetus to join the program. However, upon the introduction of TS, 50% of respondents in the Early EEP sub-group cited the EEP peer group as important or very important in their decision to join the program; in the Mature EEP sub-group, this number grew to 75%. Clearly, the presence of a cohesive peer group was extremely important to most respondents' willingness

to enter the UW as young scholars. Our data indicate that EEP proved to be a social boon to most respondents. As an EEP community has developed over time, not only has it become a more important factor in students' decision to enroll in EEP, but it has also become a source of close friendships for many EEPers and spouses for others.

Our data also revealed a difference in respondents' perceptions of the effects of gender on their achievement, and significant gender differences in satisfaction with platonic and romantic relationships. Despite comprising a special population, EEP graduates are not isolated from social and cultural forces. This is apparent in respondents' awareness of the effects of gender on their academic and professional achievements. It is perhaps not surprising that significantly more males than females reported their gender as contributing only positively to their professional achievement, and that females were more aware of the complexity of gender effects. Two women mentioned struggling with internalized gender norms, three experienced their gender simultaneously as a hindrance and a benefit, and five articulated the various ways in which their choices, opportunities, and interpersonal interactions in academia and in the workforce were influenced by their gender. Our data do not suggest that females alone experience their gender in complex ways, but rather that gender continues to be a more salient factor for females in conceptualizing and explaining professional achievement than it is for males.

A significant and disturbing finding that emerged from this study is the gender disparity in social satisfaction. As compared to females, male respondents reported finding less satisfaction in past and current friendships and romantic relationships (22% vs. 54%), with 21 males citing the EEP as a specific and negative factor. There are several possible explanations for this. Males tend to experience puberty later than females, and thus tend to reach psychological, emotional, and physical maturity later. This decreased maturity, coupled with the significant age difference (average of 3-4 years) between EEPers and regular-aged college students, could make male EEPers less attractive to females in the EEP and in the larger university population. Female EEPers are less likely to experience the negative effects of their young

age on their romantic possibilities due to their earlier development and social norms that do not discourage women from dating older men. Male EEPers, on the other hand, are the youngest of all males on campus, and, in a society that does not encourage women to date younger men, are thus at a disadvantage when it comes to finding romantic partners in the EEP and general university population. EEP males' young age, physically and psychologically, may lie at the heart of their romantic dissatisfaction during their college years. It would seem that time would mitigate EEP males' dissatisfaction in romantic and platonic relationships but our data suggest otherwise. Relative to females, males report a significantly lower level of satisfaction in finding current relationships and in finding happiness within relationships. There is no way of knowing if this dilemma is unique to this population of gifted and accomplished men, or if the male respondents are experiencing social forces operating on all men.

Income was another arena in which a significant gender difference appeared. Females reported earning much less than did males, although it is difficult to know how much this difference is due to the number of female respondents who are still enrolled in graduate or professional school. The difference might also stem from the differences in majors pursued by male and female EEPers. Although in the interest of preserving anonymity our questionnaire did not request respondents' academic majors, an analysis of the entire population of EEP graduates reveals that males are far more likely than females to have majored in scientific or mathematical disciplines, thereby putting themselves on a path in our society toward higher income potential.

Limitations

A number of limitations affect the degree to which these data can be generalized. Because the EEP is an extremely rare educational option, there are currently no comparison groups available against which to measure our findings about the intellectual and social effects of radical acceleration from middle school to college or university. We hope that this study will help to inspire the creation of similar early

entrance programs at other colleges and universities, and that such programs might generate suitable comparison groups for future research. Although the creation of sub-groups within the full sample to explore gender and EEP era differences allowed us some degree of comparison, it did not allow for the robust data that comparisons with other programs would yield. Another limitation is a lower than hoped for response rate. Despite the best efforts of the research team, this study achieved a response rate of only 45%, and thus our sample may not be representative of the entire population of EEP graduates. The anonymous nature of the study did not allow for telephone contact with potential participants, which might have yielded more respondents. Response fatigue might have been a factor in reducing the response rate because some potential respondents may have been discouraged by the length of the questionnaire. Finally, interpretation of results may have been biased by the composition of the research team, most of whose members have been intimately involved with the Robinson Center's programs for many years. Future research studies will be designed with these issues in mind.

Conclusions

The importance of attending to early entrants' intellectual *and* social-emotional needs cannot be overstated. It is clear from this study that creating TS was extremely important to the intellectual and social development of respondents who chose to enter the EEP as young scholars. After the implementation of TS, a more complex social and intellectual milieu emerged, resulting in a richer and more positive experience for students in the program. Unexpected gender differences emerged from this study, suggesting that early entrance may be a riskier business for gifted males than for gifted females because of its implications for finding satisfying friendships and romantic relationships as EEPers and as adults.

As a result of this study, a number of programmatic changes are being implemented. Robinson Center faculty and staff have organized a one-quarter seminar for first year EEPers and students from the UW Academy to help them explore their personal identities, consider meaningful career options, and develop their particular talents and interests at UW. A series of seminars called "Wellness Week" teaches

students about a variety of issues related to their physical, social, and emotional well-being. Career seminars are also being held throughout the academic year in which current EEPers can talk with EEP graduates about the professions they have entered and the life choices they have made. We will also continue to explore programmatic changes that may lead to a more positive experience for EEPers, both before and after graduation.

Future studies will examine whether current EEPers (both male and female) show similar gender disparities in their experiences of friendship and love. We will also examine how the intellectual, social, and emotional complexities of giftedness express themselves over time, particularly when graduates enter their peak career performance years or middle age.

Perhaps the most important conclusion to be drawn from this study is that early university entrants do not fit the stereotype of the socially isolated, unhappy “nerd.” Yes, the respondents in this study value intelligence highly. Yes, they seek a high degree of intellectual satisfaction and challenge in all aspects of their lives, both personal and professional. Yet overall the participants in this study revealed themselves to be well-rounded, balanced individuals on whom the EEP continues to exert a profound and overwhelmingly positive influence.

The EEP experience is more lasting than I expected in terms of removing from one’s peer group. I continue to find myself always “the youngest” in most situations. When I was younger (i.e., still a student) this sometimes led to a sense of social insecurity. This feeling has passed for me, but I still find it amazing what a lasting impact being an EEPer has had on my life.

If I could go back with the knowledge and attitudes I have now to age 13

to choose whether or not I would do TS and EEP, I would definitely make the same decision. There aren't a whole lot of things I can say that about.

It is difficult to convey the essence of one's self in little boxes. Much of my identity in terms of my overall sense of spirituality, social commitment, acceptance of others, and my work ethic have come from participating in EEP. On the other hand, the experience was bewildering, isolating, and alienated me from my parents. Many of those things may have occurred if I had stayed in a conventional track, but that is impossible to know now. In retrospect I just didn't have a strong sense of who I was at the time to really guide me into a course of study/career track at that age, and my academic performance reflected that I was not self motivated/directed enough. On the other hand, I had a very unique life experience and it is hard to place a value on that. I would be very ambivalent about recommending someone else to go into the EEP, but I would not necessarily discourage them either.

I'm very grateful that the Early Entrance Program was available for me. I believe that I have benefited enormously from the program, particularly academically and professionally. Interestingly, I found that the program uniquely prepared me for the MD/PHD program (and my interviews for the program). Students in this program are not really part of any one class in medical school, and are not fully part of a class in graduate school. Some interviewers emphasized that students in this program need to be comfortable being between, and not belonging to, several groups. By

maintaining friendships with high schoolers and developing friendships with older undergraduates and EEPers, I became comfortable pursuing my own academic goals without being part of the academic majority.

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Author Note

Authors are listed in alphabetical order, with the exception of the first two authors. We gratefully acknowledge the Mary Gates Undergraduate Research Training Grant Program at the University of Washington for support of Sean Hughes' participation on the research team.

Table 1

Participation by students from different EEP eras

| | <u>Era of Early Entrance Program</u> | | |
|------------------------|--------------------------------------|----------|----------|
| | Pre-TS | Early | Mature |
| | | EEP | EEP |
| Total N = 211 | 35 | 83 | 93 |
| Females | 16 (46%) | 37 (45%) | 45 (48%) |
| Males | 19 (54%) | 46 (55%) | 48 (52%) |
| Females Responding | 7 (44%) | 17 (46%) | 25 (56%) |
| Males Responding | 7 (37%) | 15 (33%) | 24 (50%) |
| Responses Returned | 14 (40%) | 32 (39%) | 49 (53%) |
| Responses Not Returned | 21 (60%) | 50 (61%) | 44 (47%) |

Table 2

Ranked-ordered reasons for joining EEP

| Reason | Very | | | Very |
|--------------------------------------|-----------|-----------|--------------|-------------|
| | Important | Important | Unimportant. | Unimportant |
| Excited to learn | 56 (59%) | 35 (36%) | 5 (5%) | 0 (0%) |
| Disappointed with previous schooling | 35 (37%) | 37 (39%) | 17 (18%) | 6 (6%) |
| Liked EEP peer group | 16 (17%) | 37 (39%) | 33 (35%) | 9 (10%) |
| Unhappy socially | 13 (14%) | 26 (17%) | 37 (39%) | 19 (20%) |
| Fast track to profession | 10 (11%) | 22 (23%) | 37 (29%) | 26 (27%) |
| Other (n = 37) | 12 (13%) | 12 (13%) | 9 (10%) | 4 (4%) |
| Parental pressure | 7 (7%) | 14 (15%) | 32 (34%) | 42 (44%) |

Table 3

Importance of the EEP peer group by cohort

| EEP Era | Very | | Very | |
|------------|-----------|-----------|-------------|-------------|
| | Important | Important | Unimportant | Unimportant |
| Pre – TS | 1 (7%) | 2 (14%) | 9 (64%) | 2 (14%) |
| Early EEP | 3 (9%) | 13 (41%) | 11 (34%) | 5 (16%) |
| Mature EEP | 12 (24%) | 22 (45%) | 13 (27%) | 2 (4%) |

Note. Chi-square (df = 6, n = 95) = 13.792, $p < .033$.

Table 4

Effects of EEP on romantic relationships

| During EEP* | | |
|-------------|------------|-------------|
| | Beneficial | Detrimental |
| Male | 18 (46%) | 21 (54%) |
| Female | 29 (78%) | 8 (22%) |
| After EEP** | | |
| Male | 18 (44%) | 23 (56%) |
| Female | 27 (69%) | 12 (31%) |

Note. * Chi-square (df = 1, n = 76) = 8.355, p < .005.

** Chi-square (df = 1, n = 80) = 5.210, p < .023.

Table 5

Happiness in current relationships

| | Very Happy | Fairly Happy | Somewhat Unhappy | Very Unhappy |
|----------------|---------------|-----------------|---------------------|-----------------|
| With Friends* | | | | |
| Male | 11 (24%) | 27 (60%) | 7 (16%) | 0 (0%) |
| Female | 24 (49%) | 22 (45%) | 3 (6%) | 0 (0%) |
| Romantically** | | | | |
| Male | 18 (41%) | 10 (23%) | 11 (25%) | 5 (11%) |
| Female | 30 (64%) | 7 (15%) | 10 (21%) | 0 (0%) |

Note. * Chi-square (df = 2, n = 94) = 6.781, p < .035.

** Chi-square (df = 3, n = 91) = 8.487, p < .038.

Table 6

Educational attainment of EEP graduates

| Degree | Attained (N=96) | In progress (N=37) |
|---------------|-----------------|--------------------|
| B.A./B.S. | 44 (46%) | 2 (5%) |
| Masters | 25 (26%) | 9 (24%) |
| Ph. D / Ed. D | 15 (16%) | 10 (27%) |
| M.D. | 8 (8%) | 8 (22%) |
| J.D. | 3 (3%) | 3 (8%) |
| Other | 1 (1%) | 5 (14%) |

Table 7

Extent to which respondents have lived up to their own and parental expectations

| Personal expectations | All | Many | Some | None |
|-----------------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| Financial | 30 (32%) | 35 (38%) | 21 (23%) | 7 (8%) |
| Work | 17 (19%) | 45 (49%) | 23 (25%) | 7 (8%) |
| Intellectual | 17 (18%) | 48 (51%) | 22 (23%) | 7 (7%) |
| Friendship | 20 (21%) | 46 (49%) | 23 (25%) | 5 (5%) |
| Family | 31 (34%) | 40 (44%) | 18 (20%) | 3 (3%) |
| Romantic | 36 (39%) | 22 (24%) | 19 (21%) | 15 (16%) |
| Parental expectations | All | Many | Some | None |
| Financial | 47 (52%) | 24 (27%) | 12 (13%) | 7 (8%) |
| Work | 45 (50%) | 26 (29%) | 12 (13%) | 7 (8%) |
| Intellectual | 58 (60%) | 28 (30%) | 4 (4%) | 2 (2%) |
| Friendship | 40 (44%) | 35 (39%) | 14 (15%) | 2 (2%) |
| Family | 40 (45%) | 29 (33%) | 14 (16%) | 6 (7%) |
| Romantic | 35 (40%) | 21 (24%) | 19 (22%) | 12 (14%) |

Table 8

Rank-ordered traits looked for in friends and romantic partners

| Trait | Romantic partner | Friend |
|-------------------------|------------------|----------|
| Intelligence | 83 (87%) | 83 (87%) |
| Sense of humor | 44 (46%) | 76 (80%) |
| Moral values | 46 (48%) | 48 (51%) |
| Emotional stability | 39 (41%) | 33 (35%) |
| Other | 14 (15%) | 22 (23%) |
| Physical attractiveness | 32 (34%) | 0 (0%) |
| Religion | 10 (11%) | 2 (2%) |
| Socioeconomic status | 1 (1%) | 5 (5%) |
| Age | 2 (2%) | 3 (3%) |
| Financial stability | 2 (2%) | 0 (0%) |
| Race or ethnicity | 0 (0%) | 0 (0%) |

Table 9

Rank-ordered values sought in employment

| Values | N (%) |
|-------------------------|----------|
| Intellectual challenge | 60 (63%) |
| Enjoyment and fun | 38 (40%) |
| Passion | 31 (33%) |
| Help others and society | 28 (30%) |
| Meaningfulness | 28 (30%) |
| Flexibility | 24 (25%) |
| Money | 22 (23%) |
| Community | 16 (17%) |
| Nearness to loved ones | 15 (16%) |
| Prestige within field | 9 (9%) |
| Something else | 3 (3%) |
| Travel opportunities | 3 (3%) |