Careers and More as Outcomes: Personal Reflection

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HIED: 846

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November 15, 2020

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One of the most important findings in the College Board’s report for educators to consider is the growth in individuals attaining a Bachelor’s degree between 1940 to 2018. “The percentage of young adults in the U.S. between the ages of 25 and 34 with at least a bachelor’s degree grew from 11% in 1960 to 24% in 1980. In 2018, 39% of adults in this age group had earned at least a bachelor’s degree” (Ma et al., 2019, p. 14). This reflects a positive trend in individuals who pursue higher education programs and indicates an increasing demand for higher education in the future. The most interesting finding regarding educational attainment is the stark decrease in individuals age 25 to 34 with less than a high school diploma with 42% of individuals in 1960 and only 6% of individuals in 2018 attaining less than a high school diploma. This qualifies a huge amount of the U.S. population to attend higher education and could reflect a market of potential students that have not yet been fully tapped.

Another interesting finding is the gender gap seen within educational attainment by race/ethnicity and gender that emerged in the 1960s and is exaggerated in 2018 (Ma et al., 2019, p. 15). In 2018, 5% more Black, Non-Hispanic Females have completed a Bachelor’s Degree than Black, Non-Hispanic Males. This gap is apparent in Hispanic (5% more females) and White, Non-Hispanic (8% more females) students as well. This gender gap indicates that higher education faculty and staff should be trained in providing a more tailored educational experience for women. This should include sexual harassment training, communication training, and diversity training. Harper and Quaye suggest that the increasing gender gap within students attaining higher education degrees could be due to women succeeding in college in spite of inequalities rather than succeeding because they are supported and encouraged to engage meaningfully within their environment (Harper & Quaye, 2015). Educators should view this emerging gender gap as an opportunity to further tailor the students’ higher education environment to support the positive outcome of females attaining Bachelor’s degrees.

References

Harper, S. R., & Quaye, S. J. (2015). Student engagement in higher education: theoretical perspectives and practical approaches for diverse populations. Routledge.

Ma, J., Pender, M., &amp; Welch, M. (2019). Education Pays. College Board. https://research.collegeboard.org/pdf/education-pays-2019-full-report.pdf.