The Next Generation: Why We Are Overworked

Across the United States, the next generation strives to do well in school, exceed expectations in athletics, have a vocation, and partake in extracurricular activities. Between school work, a job, and attempting to pursue any outside interests, young people have no vacation. There is a lot on students' plates. Teenagers are no strangers to late nights. In fact, they are expected when it comes to doing well in school. Many teenagers are up until midnight, if not later, on a daily basis. Clearly unbeneficial for the well-being of the up and coming generation. The youth of America is clearly being overworked and in dire need of change.

Emerging science about brain development suggests that most people don't reach full maturity until the age of 25. Infancy and adolescence are the most vital, in terms of human development, for the human brain to continue to mature through its lifetime as expected. Within the teenage years, there are several obstacles young adults must face that ultimately have lasting effects mentally well into adulthood. According to Piaget's notion of distinct stages of mental development in children was enormously influential in both psychology and education.

Standing apart will help with acceptance into schools with exceptionally focused acceptance rates. Numerous young people endeavoring to get into esteemed schools occupy their time with extracurricular activities and it usually has negative health effects. In an article by Jenny Anderson, a writer for Quartz, looking at extracurricular activities, she explains the negative health effects, "Those include more emotional problems, less sleep, and higher stress levels than those doing fewer activities" (This Is How Long Your Kids Should Be Spending on Extracurricular Activities).

Alongside jam-packed evenings, students have early mornings. Numerous students get up from 5:30 AM to 6 AM, so as to prepare for school and have breakfast. That adds up to an incredible 18 hour day! For certain students in elevated level classes and numerous extracurricular activities, the day is considerably longer. It should be noted that lack of sleep over long spans of time disrupts the production of serotonin, a shortage of serotonin leads to having a sad depressed mood, low energy, negative thoughts, and irritability. Therefore, not only does an extensive workload cause sleep deprivation that slows the brain down, compromising our mental performance. Less robust brain-cell activity isn't the only way poor sleep hampers the brain, and our ability to think. In an article written by Craig Canapari MD, he cites a colleague's work, "Lauren Daisley had a great video on CBS Sunday Morning several weeks ago discussing early school start times. Sleepiness in teenagers is a major public health issue and early school start times contribute to this" (Too Much Homework, Too Little Sleep: Structural Sleep Deprivation in Teens).

Time is something that we simply do not have enough of. Feelings of anxiety and lack of sleep are not all adolescents have to put up with. Pursuing a more substantial future is all at the expense of sleepless nights and long tedious work hours that are conclusively making everyday jobs at school harder because the body has no time to reset sufficiently. The answer to this issue is simple.

Works Cited

1. Anderson, Jenny. “This Is How Long Your Kids Should Be Spending on Extracurricular Activities.” Quartz, Quartz, 17 Sept. 2015, https://qz.com/503560/this-is-how-long-your-kids-should-be-spending-on-extra-curricular-activities/.
2. Breus, Michael. “Here's Why You Can't Think Straight When You're Sleep Deprived.” Your Guide to Better Sleep, 17 Apr. 2018, https://thesleepdoctor.com/2018/04/17/heres-why-you-cant-think-straight-when-youre-sleep-deprived/.
3. “Too Much Homework, Too Little Sleep: Structural Sleep Deprivation in Teens.” Craig Canapari, MD, 11 Oct. 2012, https://drcraigcanapari.com/too-much-homework-too-little-sleep-structural-sleep-deprivation-in-teens/.
4. Weeks, Marcus. Heads up Psychology. DK Publishing, 2014.