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Trends Among Young Adults Over Three Decades, 1974–2006

ies NATIONAL CENTER FOR EDUCATION STATISTICS
Institute of Education Sciences

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JULY 2012

Steven J. Ingels
Elizabeth Glennie
Erich Lauff
RTI International

John G. Wirt
National Center for Education Statistics

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Content Contact
Elise Christopher
(202) 502-7899
elise.christopher@ed.gov

Executive Summary

This report describes patterns of continuity and change over time in four areas of the transition to adulthood among young adults as measured 2 years after their senior year of high school. The four areas are postsecondary enrollment, labor force roles, family formation, and civic engagement through voting or military service. The analysis population is spring-term high school seniors in 1972, 1980, 1992, and 2004. Analyses of these four cohorts of young adults represent their experiences in these four areas at four points in time 2 years after high school over a period of 32 years from 1974 to 2006.

The data come from four separate studies: the National Longitudinal Study of the High School Class of 1972 (NLS:72), High School and Beyond (HS&B), the National Education Longitudinal Study of 1988 (NELS:88), and the Education Longitudinal Study of 2002 (ELS:2002).[1] Each study was sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education's National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) to help fulfill a major purpose of NCES national educational longitudinal studies, which is to provide comparative data at different points in time that are germane to education policy and permit examination of patterns relative to education, career development, and societal roles.

These studies provide cross-sectional and longitudinal cohort data that can be used to examine the experiences, attitudes, and achievement of high school students and their transition to young adulthood, postsecondary education, and work. As part of the time series design, the four studies have collected a stable core of information each decade to document the demographic composition of each cohort and to capture essential features of their high school and post-high school experiences in a comparable way.

All differences discussed in the text of this report are statistically significant. For establishing statistical significance, *t* tests taking into account the effects of sampling error were performed, and the 0.05 level of significance was used as a criterion. Comparisons were tested across years for all seniors and by subgroup (e.g., males in 1974 versus males in 2006), within years across subgroups (e.g., females in 1974 versus males in 1974), and across subgroup gaps across years (e.g., female-male gap in 1974 versus the same gap in 2006). These analyses of trends in the measures of status as a young adult include the consideration of when the most change occurred with respect to three subperiods—1974 to 1982, 1982 to 1994, and 1994 to 2006—within this overall time period. Because even very small differences can be statistically significant with the large sample sizes involved in these analyses, not all statistically significant differences are discussed in the text. Appendix A—Technical Notes and Glossary provides more information about the statistical tests used, and Appendix B—Standard Error Tables provides the

[1] NELS:88 used in this report began as a cohort of 8th-grade students in 1988, the HS&B data as a cohort of 1980 seniors, and the ELS:2002 data as a cohort of 10th-grade students in 2002, but because of sample freshening, the high school senior waves used in each of these surveys are nationally representative. Appendix A provides more information about these samples. The four specific analysis cohorts on which this report is based only include young adults who were enrolled in high school in the spring of their senior year. All except very small numbers of them completed high school (i.e., earned a diploma or equivalency certificate).

standard errors of the table estimates. Readers can use these two sources to calculate *t* statistics for independent sample comparisons.

The next sections provide highlights of the report. In all instances, these results pertain to spring-term high school seniors 2 years later. Data reflect either (1) status at the time of the interview (e.g., current postsecondary enrollment); (2) data that are retrospective from the time of interview to the senior year interview (e.g., ever worked within the past 2 years); or (3) data anchored to a specific date (e.g., marital status as of the first week of February 1982). Readers are cautioned that while the findings compare different years, there is no available indication of what was happening in intervening years and whether these additional time points, were they available, would or would not support or qualify the trends presented in this report.

In being nationally representative of the four cohorts of spring high school seniors since 1974, students who dropped out of school earlier than the spring of their senior year of high school and did not return by that time are not included. If they returned by the spring of their senior year of high school, they are included, even if they did not complete high school until the following fall or later.

Statuses of Young Adults Two Years After High School

- Overall, the percentage of young adults enrolled in postsecondary courses 2 years after senior year of high school was higher in 2006 (62 percent) than it was in 1974 (40 percent).
- Correspondingly, the percentages of young adults currently working for pay and not enrolled was lower in 2006 (28 percent) than it was in 1974 (48 percent).[2]
- Much of this change in enrollment and employment between 1974 and 2006—as for many of the other variables reported here—occurred in the first and second of three time periods over which change is reported in this report (that is, between the years 1974 and 1982, and then between 1982 and 1994) rather than in the third one, which extends from 1994 and 2006.
- In 1974, more females than males were neither enrolled in postsecondary education nor working (18 percent versus 6 percent). By 2006, however, there were no detectable differences between the percentage of females and males who were neither enrolled nor working (10 percent versus 9 percent).
- In comparing the four time points, all four major race/ethnicity groups saw increases in postsecondary enrollment 2 years after high school. Comparing 1974 with 2006, enrollment went from 69 percent to 78 percent for Asians,[3] from 34 percent to 53 percent for Blacks, from 32 percent to 50 percent for Hispanics, and from 41 percent to 67 percent for Whites.

[2] Those who reported both being enrolled in a postsecondary institution and working for pay were counted as being enrolled in a postsecondary institution only.
[3] In this report, the race category Asian includes Pacific Islanders. The Pacific Islander category was not explicitly used in NLS:72; however, Pacific Islanders are likely to have opted for the Asian category as the closest fit.

- In all four cohorts, the percentages of those who were neither working for pay nor in school were higher among those whose 12th-grade educational expectations were for a high school diploma or less than all other expectation groups. Of those whose 12th-grade expectations were for a high school diploma or less, 23 percent in 1974, 22 percent in 1982, and 28 percent in both 1994 and 2006 were neither working for pay nor in school.

Postsecondary Enrollment

- When comparing the postsecondary experiences of high school seniors in spring 1972 with those in spring 2004, the percentage of those who had ever enrolled in a postsecondary institution within 2 years of their scheduled high school graduation was 63 percent in 1974 and 78 percent in 2006.
- When comparing 1974 with 2006, the rates of ever attending any postsecondary institution within 2 years of high school graduation were not measurably different for Asians, but increased for Blacks (61 percent to 72 percent), Hispanics (60 percent to 68 percent), and Whites (65 percent to 81 percent).
- Among those who had ever attended a postsecondary institution, the rates of delaying entry into postsecondary education were 12 percent in 1974, compared with 15 percent in 1982, 16 percent in 1994, and 13 percent in 2006. Delayed enrollment was associated with parents' education and students' educational expectations in the 12th grade: smaller percentages of students whose parents had higher levels of education and who expected to attain higher education delayed their postsecondary entrance. In 2006, for example, 9 percent of young adults whose parents had a bachelor's degree delayed entry into postsecondary education compared to 20 percent of those whose parent's education was high school or less.
- Of those who had attended any postsecondary institution within 2 years of scheduled high school graduation, the percentage attending more than one institution was higher (23 percent) in 2006 than in 1974 (19 percent).
- Between 1974 and 2006, the percentages of young adults attending 2- and 4-year postsecondary institutions within 2 years of leaving high school both increased, but the increase was larger among those attending 2-year than 4-year colleges. This shift in the rates of enrollment occurred primarily in the first two time periods (from 1974 to 1982 and from 1982 to 1994) rather than in the third (from 1994 to 2006).

Employment

- The vast majority of young adults have participated in paid employment at some point during the first 2 years after scheduled high school graduation. In each cohort, more than 90 percent of young adults reported having worked for pay for some portion of the 2 years.
- Among young adults who ever attended a postsecondary institution, the percentage who worked for pay while enrolled was higher in 2006 (78 percent) than in 1974 (63 percent).
- Among those who did not enroll in a postsecondary institution, the number of weekly hours worked was higher in 1974 (39 hours) than in 2006 (36 hours).

- Among those who did not enroll in a postsecondary institution, relatively fewer had first jobs as clerical and skilled operatives in 2006 than in 1974. Twenty-eight percent worked in clerical jobs as their first job in 1974, and 13 percent did so in 2006. The corresponding figures were, respectively, 21 percent and 10 percent for skilled operatives. The percentage working in service/sales as first jobs rose from 24 percent in 1974 to 44 percent in 2006.

Home and Family Life

- Across the four cohorts, the most common living arrangement for young adults approximately 2 years out of high school was to live with their parents. The percentage of young adults living with their parents was 39 percent in 1974, 50 percent in 1982, 51 percent in 1994, and 46 percent in 2006.
- The percentage of young adults living with roommates approximately 2 years out of high school was 27 percent in 1974 and 41 percent in 2006.
- At all four of the time points, the percentage of young adults living with parents was lower among young adults whose parents had attained a bachelor's degree or more than among their peers whose parents had attained some college or less. For example, among those in 2006 whose parents had obtained a bachelor's degree or a graduate or professional degree, 39 percent and 29 percent respectively lived with their parents, compared with 50 percent of those whose parents attained some college and 57 percent of those whose parents had completed high school or less. In 1974, these percentages were 30 percent (for those whose parents had achieved bachelor's degrees as well as those whose parents had obtained graduate or professional degrees), versus 39 percent and 43 percent, respectively.
- With respect to marriage, a smaller percentage of young adults in 2006 than in 1974 reported ever being married. Twenty-six percent of young adults reported in 1974 that they had ever been married, compared to 4 percent in 2006.
- At all four time points studied (1974, 1982, 1994, and 2006), a higher percentage of females reported being married than males did. For females, the percentages were 34 percent, 16 percent, 10 percent, and 6 percent, respectively, while the comparable percentages for males were 18 percent, 7 percent, 5 percent, and 2 percent, respectively.
- There was no measurable difference in the percentage of young adults who reported that they had biological children in 1982 compared to 2006. Six percent of young adults reported in 1982 that they ever had biological children, compared to 7 percent in 2006.
- At all three time points with comparable child data (1982, 1994, and 2006), a higher percentage of females reported having children than did males. For females, the percentages were 8 percent, 12 percent, and 10 percent, respectively, while the comparable percentages for males were 3 percent, 5 percent, and 4 percent, respectively.

Civic Engagement

- Overall, the percentage of young adults who reported that they had ever voted ranged from a high of 62 percent in 1974 to a low of 51 percent in 1982. The two more recent

cohorts were intermediate between the two extremes (56 percent voter participation for 1994 young adults, and 58 percent for 2006 young adults).

- Within each of the four cohorts, there was a positive association between expected levels of educational attainment and reported rates of voting. In each cohort, the percentages of those who had ever voted were higher among those who expected to attain a bachelor's degree or some higher level of education than among those who only expected to graduate from high school or less. For example, in 1974, 50 percent of those who expected to attain a high school diploma or less voted, compared with 72 percent of those who expected to be college graduates and 77 percent who expected to complete a graduate or professional degree. In 2006, the comparable figures were 35 percent, 61 percent, and 66 percent, respectively.
- Overall, the percentage of young adults who had served in the military was smaller in 2006 than in 1974 and 1982—3 percent for young adults in 2006, but 7 percent for young adults in 1974, and 6 percent for young adults in 1982.

Foreword

This report supplies information on the transition to adulthood in the 2 years immediately after high school for four cohorts of young adults over a 32-year period. It focuses on postsecondary educational entry, labor force roles, family formation, and civic engagement through voting or military service. This report complements an earlier National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) publication, *Trends Among High School Seniors, 1972–2004* (Ingels and Dalton 2008) by extending the timeline for the four NCES high school cohorts to 2 years after the spring of 12th grade. The senior year report may profitably be read in conjunction with this report. Of course, not all youth reach spring of the senior year; cross-cohort analyses of high school dropouts identified in the NCES high school cohort studies are reported in Dalton, Glennie, and Ingels (2009). Other NCES trend reports summarize high school coursetaking from 1978 forward (Dalton et al. 2007) and the high school experience of 10th-graders from 1980 to 2002 (Cahalan et al. 2006).

We hope that the information provided in this report will be useful to a wide range of interested readers, including policymakers and educators. We further hope that the results reported here will encourage other researchers to use the four datasets, as well as their longitudinal follow-ups.

Jeffrey A. Owings
Associate Commissioner
Elementary/Secondary & Libraries Studies

Jack Buckley
Commissioner
National Center for Education Statistics

Acknowledgments

This report, drawing on data from four studies spanning 32 years, builds on the work of many people, including many thousands of respondents, data collectors, contractor staff, and various technical review panels. We wish to acknowledge the contribution of these many people, as well as the helpful comments of two external reviewers.

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Chapter 1. Introduction: Trends Among Young Adults Over Three Decades, 1974–2006

1.1 Plan of the Report

This report describes patterns of continuity and change among young adults 2 years after their senior year of high school. Four cohorts of young adults are studied. Their experiences represent those of young adults at four points in time over a period of 32 years, from 1974 to 2006. The U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) has sponsored a series of longitudinal studies to help fulfill a major purpose of NCES, which is to provide comparative data at different points in time that are germane to education policy and permit examination of patterns relative to education, career development, and societal roles. This report uses data from these four studies:

- The National Longitudinal Study of the High School Class of 1972 (NLS:72) spring 1972 interview and the 1973 and 1974 follow-up interviews;
- High School and Beyond (HS&B) spring 1980 interview and the 1982 follow-up interview;
- The National Education Longitudinal Study of 1988 (NELS:88) spring 1992 interview and the 1994 follow-up interview; and
- The Education Longitudinal Study of 2002 (ELS:2002) spring 2004 interview and the 2006 follow-up interview.

All four of these studies were longitudinal in design; however, each also provides nationally representative cross-sectional profiles of American high school students both in their senior year and thereafter.[1] The analysis populations for this report are spring-term 1972, 1980, 1992, and 2004 high school seniors 2 years later.[2]

This report describes the transitions of young adults to postsecondary education, the labor force, and adult roles such as spouse and parent. Of special interest is the degree to which this transition has been experienced differently by each cohort—young adults in 1974, 1982, 1994, and 2006. Trends are examined overall, by demographic subgroups (i.e., race/ethnicity, sex, and parents' education), and by level of expectations for future educational attainment—both within and across cohorts.

As part of a time series design, the four studies have collected a stable core of information each decade to document the demographic composition of each cohort and to

[1] For a comparison of the four cohorts in the spring term of high school senior year—cataloguing demographic changes across the cohorts, extracurricular activities, plans for the next year, and expectations for future educational and occupational attainment—see the NCES report *Trends Among High School Seniors, 1972–2004* (Ingels and Dalton 2008).

[2] NELS:88 began as a cohort of 8th-grade students in 1988, and ELS:2002 began as a cohort of 10th-grade students in 2002, but because of sample freshening, all samples are representative of high school seniors. Appendix A provides more information about these samples.

capture essential features of the high school experience in a comparable way. In the years after high school, the questionnaires have collected information concerning key aspects of young adulthood, such as postsecondary educational enrollment, employment, home and family life, and civic engagement. These four areas form the basis for the present report.

We refer to these four cohorts as "young adults" but not all young adults are included, as they would be in a birth cohort or, for the most part, in 4th-grade or 8th-grade cohorts. Rather, the cohorts in this report include young adults who were spring-term high school seniors in the year of their selection into the survey. This means, for example, that all those who dropped out of school at any time before the spring of their senior year and did not return by the spring of their senior year are not included in the populations of young adults included in this report. Those who dropped out before the spring of their senior year and returned by the spring of their senior year are included. This makes the four cohorts of young adults somewhat more selective, compared to a birth cohort, an age cohort, or earlier grade cohort.[3,4]

There are also some small differences in the data collected from samples across cohorts, as described in section 7 of appendix A. For example, the NLS:72, HS&B, and NELS:88 respondents were asked to mark one race only. As a result of new guidelines issued by the Office of Management and Budget, a new race category, "Two or more races," was added in ELS:2002. As a result, the tables provided in this report include four race categories for 1974, 1982, and 1994, and five for 2006.

A full account of the design and content of all four studies, including information about sampling, weighting, response rates, and quality of estimates, can be found in appendix A of this report. The appendix also references further sources of information about NLS:72, HS&B, NELS:88, and ELS:2002.

1.2 Research Questions and Related Research

The enrollment of young adults in postsecondary education after leaving high school has increased substantially over the past 35 years (Furstenberg, Rumbaut, and Settersten 2005; U.S. Department of Education 2009). In part, this growth was fueled by the passage of federal legislation, including the Higher Education Act of 1965, which for the first time extended need-based financial assistance to the general student population, and by the expansion of 2-year and other programs in the community college system (Brock 2010).

This growth of 2-year programs has coincided with growth in the number of students enrolled part-time in either 2- or 4-year institutions, who may also work either part- or full-time to earn at least part of their livelihood, or who may alternate periods of enrollment with working full- or part-time.

[3] In the ELS:2002 data, 95 percent of the cohort of spring 2004 high school seniors included in this report graduated by the end of summer, less than 1 percent earned an equivalency certificate, and another 2 percent graduated by the fall of 2004 or later. In the NELS:88 data, 96 percent of the 1992 spring high school seniors graduated by the end of summer and another 1 percent by the end of fall. The percentages are similar for the HS&B and NLS:72 cohorts.

[4] In addition, some schools were excluded from the sampling frame of the four longitudinal surveys on which this report is based: Bureau of Indian Affairs schools, special education schools for the severely disabled, and schools for dependents of U.S. personnel overseas. Seniors attending these schools are not included in the sample. Area vocational *schools* that do not directly enroll students were excluded from the school level sampling frame, but most of the students who attend these schools are included in the sample through their regular school of primary enrollment.

In this report, three primary measures of college enrollment and work among many different possible such combinations will be reported for the four cohorts of young adults included in the longitudinal studies. These three measures are the percentages of young adults who at the time of interview (2 years after high school) were either (1) enrolled in postsecondary education or enrolled in postsecondary education and working, (2) working but not enrolled, or (3) neither working nor enrolled. The resulting patterns of work and postsecondary education for young adults 2 years after their senior year in high school are shown in chapter 2.

The patterns of these three variables are intended to represent the "connectedness" of young adults to schooling alone—or to work and schooling, to work alone, or to neither—when they are 2 years out of high school.[5] Those in the third category (neither enrolled nor employed) are "disconnected" from education and employment as young adults and therefore from the potential benefits of engagement, learning, and development that school and/or work can provide (Brown and Emig 1999; Fernandes and Gabe 2009).

The question addressed in chapter 2 of this report is how these patterns of engagement in work and postsecondary schooling have unfolded for young adult men and women of different races and ethnicities, as measured when they were 2 years after high school at four points in time: 1974, 1982, 1994, and 2006.

Previous estimates of these trends show the general increase in rates of college enrollment over the past three decades. Findings from the U.S. Bureau of the Census's October Current Population Survey indicate that the level of college enrollment among 20- to 21-year-olds (in 2-year and 4-year colleges) increased from 35 percent in 1974 to 39 percent in 1982, and 51 percent in 1994, but remained at 51 percent in 2003 (Fitzpatrick and Turner 2007, figure 5-1). This age range of 20- to 21-year-olds corresponds with the ages of those in the high school senior class longitudinal cohorts on which this report is based. In contrast, trends in the employment for a similar group of 20- to 22-year-olds from the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth show relatively constant or somewhat higher employment in 2002 compared to 1984, as measured by hourly wages and total hours worked (Hill and Holzer 2007, table 6-1). The increases in hourly wages and total hours worked were largest for those enrolled in either a 2-year or 4-year college and for those not enrolled but with some college experience (Hill and Holzer 2007, p. 146).

The trends shown in this report are broken out separately by sex, race/ethnicity, parents' education, and 12th-grade educational expectations. This same set of four comparisons—differences by sex, race/ethnicity, parents' education, and 12th-grade educational expectations—is provided throughout the report.

Beyond these overall patterns of engagement in work and postsecondary education, more detailed examinations of specific patterns of postsecondary enrollment are shown in chapter 3. The tables in chapter 3 depict postsecondary enrollment as measured by the proportion of those in each cohort of young adults who had ever enrolled in postsecondary education within 2 years of the spring when they were seniors in high school, the proportion who delayed initial enrollment in postsecondary education at least one semester beyond their senior year in high

[5] Those in the military are included as employed if they are in the military in the United States. Those in prison or in the military overseas are not included either in the numerator or denominator of the measure because they are not included in the population samples of the high school longitudinal studies.

school, and the number of postsecondary institutions attended within 2 years after high school. Also shown are the proportions of young adults attending 4-year, 2-year, and less-than-2-year postsecondary institutions, and part-time versus full-time enrollment, 2 years after high school.

Detailed examinations of specific patterns of employment are shown in chapter 4. Employment is measured by the percentage of young adults who have ever worked for pay, whether or not they were concurrently enrolled in postsecondary education. For those who never have enrolled in postsecondary education, the tables present characteristics of their first job in terms of basic occupation (e.g., clerical or skilled operative) and weekly hours worked.

A larger question is how the population of young adults in our society is making the transition not just from high school to postsecondary education and employment, but also to other aspects of adulthood compared to three decades ago. Considerable evidence indicates that both the sequence of steps in their life course that individuals typically go through in making these transitions and the time between the steps is changing. Ultimately, even the meaning of the term *adulthood*, and especially *young adulthood*, may be changing (Arnett 2004; Settersten, Furstenberg, and Rumbaut 2005).

Arnett (2004) concludes that a new stage of development has emerged between adolescence and adulthood that he calls *emerging adulthood*, which for most young people, he argues, lasts from the late teens through the twenties. Settersten, Furstenberg, and Rumbaut (2005) see many of the same kinds of changes occurring in key markers of the transition to adulthood but decline to conclude that the lengthening transition amounts to a new stage of human development. What is clear is that key markers in the life course of transition to adulthood are changing, as confirmed in this report.

Beyond the changes in patterns of education and employment described, one key marker of the life course transition is living arrangements—whether young adults are living with one or both parents, a spouse, one or more roommates, or alone.[6]

Another key marker is getting married, and the median age for doing so has risen over the last 35 years. For example, in 1974, the median age of first marriage was 23 for men and 21 for women. In 2005, it was 27 for men and 25 for women (U.S. Bureau of the Census 1999). This report provides the percentages of young adults (females and males) who were married at their time of interview in 1974, 1982, 1994, and 2006.

A third marker of the transition to adulthood is childbearing. In this report, childbearing is measured by the percentage of young adults (male and female) with any biological children. Previous research has shown that the average age of mothers when their first child is born has risen over time. For example, as reported by Matthews and Hamilton (2009), the average age has risen from 21.4 years old in 1970 to 25.0 in 2006.

Patterns of change in all three of these aspects of home and family life (living arrangements, marital status, and the birth of children) are shown in chapter 5.

Two additional aspects of the transition to adulthood are civic participation and military service, which can be viewed as aspects of the social capital acquired by young adults through

[6] In the longitudinal studies on which this report is based, living with a spouse includes cohabitation with a partner only in the 1994 data; in the data for 1974, 1984, and 2006, living with a spouse includes only living with a married partner.

the various social networks and processes they participate in, as well as the norms and trust they acquire in the process, that enables them "to act together more effectively and to pursue shared objectives" (Putnam 1995). Two particular markers of social capital that are considered in this report are voting behavior (whether the young adult voted in the most recent national election as determined 2 years after his or her senior year of high school) and military service (whether the young adult has ever served in the military). Both are discussed in chapter 6.

In summary, the following chapters present four different facets of the transition to adulthood for each cohort of young adults. Chapter 2 presents snapshots of the young adults "connectedness" with work and employment 2 years after the spring of their senior year in high school. Chapter 3 examines their postsecondary education in more detail. Specifically, it describes whether they had ever enrolled. If they had enrolled, it describes whether they delayed starting school and the number of postsecondary institutions they attended. For those enrolled 2 years out of high school, this report describes the characteristics of the institution type of their current school and their enrollment intensity. Chapter 4 presents their employment experiences including percentages of those who ever worked for pay, and those who worked for pay while attending a postsecondary institution. Then, among nonenrollees, it shows average hours worked per week at first job and type of first job. Chapter 5 reports on their home and family life, including their living arrangements, their transition to marriage, and their transition to parenthood. Chapter 6 presents patterns of civic engagement, including voting behavior and military service. The main findings from each chapter are summarized in chapter 7.

1.3 Statistical Methodology

In this and subsequent chapters, all differences reported in the text have been found statistically significant using students' t tests at a level of $p < 0.05$. Comparisons were tested across years for all young adult sample members and by subgroup, within years across subgroups, and across subgroup differences across years (e.g., Black-White differences in 1974 versus Black-White differences in 2006). In testing for changes across the multiple periods, such as increases in rates of postsecondary enrollment between 1974 and 1982, as compared to 1982 and 1994, and 1994 and 2006, the t tests employed were adjusted for multiple comparisons using the Bonferroni adjustment. Because even very small differences can be statistically significant with large sample sizes such as those used in these analyses, not all statistically significant differences are discussed in the text. Appendix A—Technical Notes and Glossary—provides more information about the statistical tests used, and Appendix B—Standard Error Tables—provides the standard errors of the table estimates presented in the main body text. Readers can use these two sources to calculate t statistics for independent sample comparisons.

Readers are cautioned that the data on which this report is based are available for only four distinct years—1974, 1982, 1994, and 2006—when the four distinct longitudinal cohorts of high school students on which this report is based were 2 years out of high school.

While authors selected the variables for this report based on high quality and cross-cohort comparability, sometimes there are differences in item wording or response options across the four studies. If so, caution is advised in interpreting the data in selected instances. These differences in items are documented and discussed in the text as well as in the glossary of items

in appendix A.[7] However, caveats concerning two variables in particular must be discussed from the outset.

The first caveat pertains to race/ethnicity. In NLS:72, HS&B, and NELS:88, respondents were constrained to choose one race to identify themselves; in ELS:2002, respondents were allowed to select multiple races. Thus, while the race/ethnicity categories support consistent trend comparisons from 1974 to 1982 to 1994, these comparisons can only qualifiedly extend to 2006, because in 2006 about 4 percent of the ELS:2002 sample indicated that their racial identities encompass two or more races, which necessarily limits the percentages that can be reported in the single race categories. The second caveat pertains to the variable that records senior-year expectations for future educational attainment. When this question was asked in NLS:72 and HS&B, it did not include a "Don't know" option; however, the expectations question did include a "Don't know" option in the subsequent studies, NELS:88 and ELS:2002. Consequently, change on this dimension can unequivocally be measured between NLS:72 and HS&B and between NELS:88 and ELS:2002, but only at best qualifiedly and with caution can comparisons be made across all four cohorts. Further information on the construction of these two variables may be found in appendix A.

Several additional caveats pertain to cross-cohort comparability. While nonresponse adjustments in the weights serve to compensate for nonresponse, no adjustment procedure can do so perfectly. Item response rates differ as well, and, in general, missing data have not been imputed. The accuracy of intercohort comparisons may also be influenced by differences in context and question order for trend items in the various questionnaires. A further threat to comparability is the presence of differences in temporal reference period. In particular, NLS:72 and HS&B typically used an anchor date, but NELS:88 and ELS:2002 typically asked for information only as of the time of interview. The broader temporal reference period in NELS:88 and ELS:2002 may somewhat inflate estimates of change in status for some variables (e.g., marriage and family formation). Further information on the comparability of data across cohorts is provided in section 7 of appendix A.

Finally, this report is descriptive in nature, and no attempts are made to explore complex interactions between the social and/or economic climate of the times and the outcomes experienced by cohort members.

[7] Appendix A discusses other possible threats to cross-cohort comparability.

Chapter 2. Statuses of Young Adults Two Years After High School

Chapter 2 presents a snapshot of what young adults are doing 2 years after the spring of their senior year in high school. More specifically, it addresses status "2 years later" in terms of the following questions:

- What percentage is currently enrolled in postsecondary courses?
- How many are, instead, currently working for pay?[8]
- What percentage is neither enrolled in a postsecondary institution nor working?

This snapshot sets the stage for the next four chapters, which examine change over time in how young adults pursue postsecondary education or employment, and engage in other key aspects or markers of their development in home and family life, citizenship (voting), and military service.

2.1 Trends Overall

In table 1, postsecondary enrollment takes precedence over work so that categories are mutually exclusive. For example, youth who were identified as enrolled in postsecondary courses and identified as working were classified as enrolled (rather than working). Postsecondary educational enrollment and work status are more deeply investigated in subsequent chapters.

Table 1 shows that, overall, the percentage of young adults enrolled in postsecondary courses 2 years after their senior year of high school was higher in 2006 (62 percent) than it was in 1974 (40 percent). However, much of this growth occurred in a "threshold pattern," with enrollments increasing more in each of the first two of three time periods (from 1974 to 1982 and from 1982 to 1994) than in the third (from 1994 to 2006). For example, during the first of these time periods, the enrollment rate increased from 40 percent in 1974 to 49 percent in 1982 (for a net increase of 9 percent). During the second time period, the enrollment rate increased from 49 percent in 1982 to 60 percent in 1994 (for a net increase of 12 percentage points). In the third time period, however, the increase in the enrollment rate was from 60 percent to 62 percent, which is not statistically significant.

[8] This initial snapshot of status 2 years out of high school somewhat oversimplifies the complex relationship between postsecondary education and employment. Students may, in short compass, enter, leave, and reenter higher education or the workforce, and may work and go to school at the same time—sometimes as part-time students and sometimes as part-time wage earners. Some features of these complex transition paths are to a degree captured in this report (e.g., working for pay while enrolled in college), while others, especially as they pertain to persistence and eventual attainment, must draw on a more extended postsecondary longitudinal timeline.

Table 1. Percentage of young adults engaged in postsecondary education and/or employment, by sex, race/ethnicity, parents' education, and educational expectations in 12th grade: 1974, 1982, 1994, and 2006

Young adult characteristics	1974	1982	1994	2006
Total				
Currently enrolled in postsecondary courses	39.6	48.5	60.2	62.3
Currently working for pay and not enrolled	48.2	40.0	29.4	28.1
Currently not enrolled and not working for pay	12.2	11.5	10.4	9.6
Sex				
Females				
Currently enrolled in postsecondary courses	36.9	48.9	63.5	67.1
Currently working for pay and not enrolled	44.9	37.5	26.3	22.9
Currently not enrolled and not working for pay	18.2	13.6	10.2	10.0
Males				
Currently enrolled in postsecondary courses	42.3	48.0	56.8	57.3
Currently working for pay and not enrolled	51.4	42.6	32.5	33.6
Currently not enrolled and not working for pay	6.3	9.4	10.7	9.1
Race/ethnicity				
Asian				
Currently enrolled in postsecondary courses	68.8	74.1	73.4	77.9
Currently working for pay and not enrolled	21.7	17.5	18.6	13.2
Currently not enrolled and not working for pay	9.5!	8.4	8.0	8.9
Black				
Currently enrolled in postsecondary courses	34.3	43.5	53.7	53.2
Currently working for pay and not enrolled	47.2	34.7	28.1	30.6
Currently not enrolled and not working for pay	18.4	21.9	18.1	16.2
Hispanic				
Currently enrolled in postsecondary courses	31.7	36.5	49.8	50.0
Currently working for pay and not enrolled	50.7	45.4	36.2	36.0
Currently not enrolled and not working for pay	17.6	18.1	14.0	14.0
White				
Currently enrolled in postsecondary courses	40.7	50.3	62.0	66.8
Currently working for pay and not enrolled	48.2	40.5	29.3	26.5
Currently not enrolled and not working for pay	11.1	9.2	8.7	6.6
Two or more races				
Currently enrolled in postsecondary courses	—	—	—	53.7
Currently working for pay and not enrolled	—	—	—	31.6
Currently not enrolled and not working for pay	—	—	—	14.7
Race/ethnicity by sex				
Asian				
Female				
Currently enrolled in postsecondary courses	67.4	71.4	78.6	82.6
Currently working for pay and not enrolled	18.4	18.7	15.1	11.5
Currently not enrolled and not working for pay	14.2	10.0	6.2	6.6
Male				
Currently enrolled in postsecondary courses	70.1	77.7	68.3	74.3
Currently working for pay and not enrolled	24.7	16.0	21.9	14.6
Currently not enrolled and not working for pay	5.2!	6.3	9.8	11.1

See notes at end of table.

Table 1. Percentage of young adults engaged in postsecondary education and/or employment, by sex, race/ethnicity, parents' education, and educational expectations in 12th grade: 1974, 1982, 1994, and 2006—Continued

Young adult characteristics	1974	1982	1994	2006
Race/ethnicity by sex—Continued				
Black				
Female				
Currently enrolled in postsecondary courses	34.2	46.7	58.4	58.0
Currently working for pay and not enrolled	41.7	28.9	23.6	26.1
Currently not enrolled and not working for pay	24.0	24.4	18.0	15.9
Male				
Currently enrolled in postsecondary courses	34.4	39.6	48.5	48.0
Currently working for pay and not enrolled	54.8	41.5	33.5	35.5
Currently not enrolled and not working for pay	10.8	18.9	18.2	16.5
Hispanic				
Female				
Currently enrolled in postsecondary courses	30.9	37.0	48.5	55.6
Currently working for pay and not enrolled	43.8	39.7	36.3	29.1
Currently not enrolled and not working for pay	25.3	23.4	15.3	15.3
Male				
Currently enrolled in postsecondary courses	32.5	36.0	51.2	44.0
Currently working for pay and not enrolled	57.4	51.4	36.2	43.6
Currently not enrolled and not working for pay	10.1	12.6	12.6	12.4
White				
Female				
Currently enrolled in postsecondary courses	37.7	50.3	65.8	71.7
Currently working for pay and not enrolled	45.8	38.9	26.1	21.4
Currently not enrolled and not working for pay	16.6	10.7	8.1	6.9
Male				
Currently enrolled in postsecondary courses	43.7	50.2	58.2	61.8
Currently working for pay and not enrolled	50.6	42.1	32.5	31.9
Currently not enrolled and not working for pay	5.7	7.7	9.3	6.3
Parents' education				
High school or less				
Currently enrolled in postsecondary courses	27.6	36.6	41.9	46.1
Currently working for pay and not enrolled	57.5	50.1	42.9	40.4
Currently not enrolled and not working for pay	15.0	13.4	15.2	13.5
Some college				
Currently enrolled in postsecondary courses	46.7	55.4	57.2	56.0
Currently working for pay and not enrolled	43.0	36.2	31.0	33.1
Currently not enrolled and not working for pay	10.3	8.4	11.7	11.0
Bachelor's degree				
Currently enrolled in postsecondary courses	61.1	72.1	79.6	72.8
Currently working for pay and not enrolled	31.3	18.9	15.8	19.9
Currently not enrolled and not working for pay	7.6	9.1	4.6	7.2
Graduate or professional degree				
Currently enrolled in postsecondary courses	65.6	72.5	83.2	83.9
Currently working for pay and not enrolled	27.8	20.9	12.0	11.6
Currently not enrolled and not working for pay	6.6	6.5	4.9	4.4

See notes at end of table.

Table 1. Percentage of young adults engaged in postsecondary education and/or employment, by sex, race/ethnicity, parents' education, and educational expectations in 12th grade: 1974, 1982, 1994, and 2006—Continued

Young adult characteristics	1974	1982	1994	2006
12th-grade educational expectations				
High school diploma or less				
Currently enrolled in postsecondary courses	8.5	8.5	10.6	11.9
Currently working for pay and not enrolled	68.1	70.0	61.7	60.3
Currently not enrolled and not working for pay	23.3	21.6	27.8	27.9
Some college				
Currently enrolled in postsecondary courses	23.3	35.4	34.7	31.1
Currently working for pay and not enrolled	63.2	52.4	51.3	52.3
Currently not enrolled and not working for pay	13.5	12.2	14.0	16.6
College graduate				
Currently enrolled in postsecondary courses	69.4	71.5	72.1	70.5
Currently working for pay and not enrolled	25.7	21.3	19.6	22.5
Currently not enrolled and not working for pay	4.9	7.2	8.4	7.1
Graduate or professional degree				
Currently enrolled in postsecondary courses	77.9	80.9	78.9	82.5
Currently working for pay and not enrolled	18.1	13.8	14.7	13.1
Currently not enrolled and not working for pay	4.0	5.3	6.4	4.4
Don't know				
Currently enrolled in postsecondary courses	—	—	38.0	36.0
Currently not enrolled and not working for pay	—	—	47.7	46.3
Currently not enrolled and not working for pay	—	—	14.3	17.4

— Not available.

! Interpret data with caution.

NOTE: Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding. Black includes African American. Hispanic includes Latino. Respondents who identified themselves as being of Hispanic origin are classified as Hispanic, regardless of their race. Pacific Islanders were not a race category in NLS:72 but presumably would have opted for the Asian category as the closest fit. For the other studies, Asian scheduled high school graduation. Young adults who were identified as both enrolled in a postsecondary institution and working were classified as enrolled rather than working.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, National Longitudinal Study of the High School Class of 1972 (NLS:72), "Second Follow-up, 1974"; High School and Beyond Longitudinal Study of 1980 Seniors (HS&B), "First Follow-up, 1982"; National Education Longitudinal Study of 1988 (NELS:88/94), "Third Follow-up, 1994"; Education Longitudinal Study of 2002 (ELS:2002/2006), "Second Follow-up, 2006."

The percentage of young adults currently working for pay and not enrolled in postsecondary education followed a complementary pattern in which the overall rate was lower in 2006 (28 percent) than it was in 1974 (48 percent) with larger decreases occurring in the first two periods than in the third. The decreases in the first two periods were 8 and 10 percentage points respectively, while the change in the third was not statistically significant.

2.2 Trends by Sex

In 1974, relatively more males than females were enrolled in postsecondary courses (42 percent versus 37 percent). By 1994 and 2006, the relationship had reversed: 57 percent of males were enrolled in each of these years, compared with 64 percent of females in 1994 and 67 percent in 2006.

The percentages of both males and females who were currently working for pay and not enrolled both declined from 1974 to 2006 (from 51 percent to 34 percent for males and from 45 percent to 23 percent for females).

In 1974, a lower percentage of males than females (6 percent versus 18 percent) reported being neither enrolled in postsecondary education nor working. By 1994, however, there were no detectable differences between the percentages of females and males who were neither enrolled nor working (11 percent versus 10 percent).

2.3 Trends by Race/Ethnicity

In comparing 1974 to 2006, all four major race/ethnicity groups[9] had higher rates of postsecondary enrollment 2 years after high school in 2006 than in 1974. In this period of time, enrollment went from 69 percent to 78 percent for Asians,[10] from 34 percent to 53 percent for Blacks, from 32 percent to 50 percent for Hispanics, and from 41 percent to 67 percent for Whites.

For Asians, Blacks and Hispanics, there were no observable differences between rates of postsecondary enrollment 2 years of out of high school in 1994 and 2006. For Asians, enrollment was 73 percent in 1994 and 78 percent in 2006; for Blacks, the corresponding enrollment rates were 54 percent and 53 percent; for Hispanics, the corresponding enrollment rates were 50 percent in each year. For Whites, a higher percentage was enrolled in 2006 (67 percent), compared with 1994 (62 percent). Note that the 2006 results may have been somewhat affected by responses from the "two or more races" category (comprising 4 percent of the sample) to some unknown extent. Consequently, this finding should be interpreted cautiously.

The patterns of change in postsecondary enrollments differed for these four populations. For Asians, there were no threshold effects—that is, there were no statistically significant differences in the enrollment growth that occurred in the first period (from 1974 to 1982) compared to the second (from 1982 to 1994) or between the second period and the third period (1994 to 2006). For Blacks, the increases in postsecondary enrollments that occurred in the first and second periods were not significantly different from each other, but those increases were larger than in the third period, when no change was detected. For Hispanics, the increase in postsecondary enrollments was larger in the first two periods than in the third. For Whites, the increases in postsecondary enrollments that occurred in all three periods were statistically significant but were larger in the first two periods than in the third.

Between 1974 and 2006, the rates of young adults working for pay but not enrolled 2 years after high school declined for all four major race/ethnicity groups. For Blacks, the rates declined in the first two periods (from 1974 to 1982 and from 1982 to 1994) but were not significantly different for the third period (1994 to 2006). For Hispanics, the rates declined in the second period, but were not significantly different in the first or third. For Whites, the rates declined in all three periods. Although the rates of working for pay were lower for Asians in

[9] Owing to their small sample size and associated high standard errors, estimates for American Indians and Alaska Natives are not included in tables in this report.

[10] The category Asians includes Pacific Islanders in HS&B, NELS:88, and ELS:2002; the Pacific Islander category was not explicitly used in NLS:72; however, Pacific Islanders presumably would have opted for the Asian category as the closest fit. In the text of this report, "Asian" is consistently used for the Asian/Pacific Islander category.

2006 than in 1974, none of the changes that occurred within each of the three periods were statistically significant.

2.4 Trends by Race/Ethnicity by Sex

There are also differences in the trends of postsecondary enrollment rates within the four race/ethnicity groups by sex between 1974 and 2006. For Asians, the rates of enrollment were not significantly different for males and females in 1974 (70 percent for males and 67 percent for females) but by 2006 the rate was higher for females (83 percent) than for males (74 percent). For Blacks, the rates of enrollment were also not significantly different for males and females in 1974 (33 percent for males and 31 percent for females), but increased to 48 percent for males and 58 percent for females in 2006. The pattern was similar for Hispanics: in 1974 the rates of enrollment were not significantly different for males and females (33 percent of males and 31 percent of females), but by 2006 had increased to 44 percent for males and 56 percent for females. Among Whites, in 1974, fewer females (38 percent) than males (44 percent) were enrolled. By 2006, more females (72 percent) than males (62 percent) were enrolled.

2.5 Trends by Parents' Education

Family characteristics such as parental educational attainment are thought to relate longitudinally to young adult educational and career outcomes (Bell et al. 1996). In 1974, as the level of parental higher education increased, a higher percentage of students enrolled in a postsecondary institution (28 percent of those whose parents attained a high school diploma or less compared with 47 percent of those whose parents attended some college, 61 percent of those whose parents held bachelor's degrees, and 66 percent of those whose parents held graduate or professional degrees). In 2006, this pattern persisted, with 46 percent of those whose parents attained a high school diploma or less enrolled in college compared to 56 percent of those whose parents attended some college, 73 percent of those whose parents held bachelor's degrees, and 84 percent of those whose parents held graduate or professional degrees.

Table 1 also shows that postsecondary enrollment rates 2 years out of high school for all parental education groups were higher in 2006 relative to their 1974 rates: 28 percent versus 46 percent for those whose parents' highest level of education was high school or less; 47 percent versus 56 percent for those whose parents had some college education; 61 percent versus 73 percent for those whose parents had a bachelor's degree; and 66 percent versus 84 percent for those whose parents had a graduate or professional degree.

Comparing the beginning to the end of the most recent period—1994 to 2006—the patterns of change in the enrollment of young adults in postsecondary courses among parental education subgroups were mixed. Between NELS:88 and ELS:2002, the postsecondary enrollment rates of those whose parents' highest level of education was high school or less changed from 42 percent to 46 percent. However, there were no detectable differences in postsecondary enrollment rates among those whose parents had some college (57 percent versus 56 percent) and among those whose parents had a graduate or professional degree (83 percent versus 84 percent). Among those whose parents earned a bachelor's degree, enrollment rates decreased from 80 percent to 73 percent.

2.6 Trends by Senior Year Educational Expectations

Postsecondary expectations and educational plans are the first component of a trajectory of decisions leading to eventual educational attainment and occupational placement in adulthood (Shanahan 2000). At all four time points the percentages of those who were neither working for pay nor in school were higher among those whose 12th-grade expectations were for a high school diploma or less than all other expectation groups: 23 percent in 1974, 22 percent in 1982, and 28 percent in 1994 and 2006. Those with high-school-or-less expectations also had the highest percentage of those working for pay and not enrolled, in all years—68 percent in 1974, 70 percent in 1982, 62 percent in 1994, and 60 percent in 2006. In contrast, those whose expectations were to complete a graduate or professional program had the highest rates of current postsecondary educational enrollment 2 years out of high school, at all four time points—78 percent in 1974, 81 percent in 1982, 79 percent in 1994, and 83 percent in 2006. The second highest group, again consistently across all four cohorts, in current postsecondary enrollment, were young adults who had in the 12th grade expected a bachelor's degree (but did not expect a graduate or professional degree). For this group, enrollment was 69 percent in 1974, 72 percent in 1982, 72 percent in 1994, and 71 percent in 2006.

Chapter 3. Postsecondary Enrollment

Chapter 2 presented the educational and employment statuses of young adults 2 years after their senior year in high school and showed that over time, a higher percentage of young adults reported that they were enrolled in some kind of postsecondary education 2 years after high school. This chapter examines postsecondary enrollment in the young adult years in more depth by exploring, first, whether young adults had ever enrolled, and next, for those who had enrolled, whether they delayed starting school; the number of postsecondary institutions enrollees attended; and characteristics of their current school (enrollment intensity and institution type).

3.1 Ever Enrolled in Postsecondary Education

Table 2 reports the percentage of those in 1974, 1982, 1994, and 2006 who had ever enrolled in a postsecondary institution, by sex, race/ethnicity, parents' education, and 12th-grade educational expectations. All respondents were high school seniors 2 years earlier, and those who ever enrolled in any vocational or technical school, 2-year college, or 4-year college are included regardless of whether they were currently enrolled 2 years after their senior year.

Overall, the percentage of those who had ever attended any postsecondary institution was higher in 2006 (78 percent) than in 1974 (63 percent). However, this shift appears to have occurred primarily between 1982[11] and 1994, when enrollment went from 64 percent in HS&B to 75 percent in NELS:88. In 1974, the rates of attending any postsecondary institution were 65 percent for males and 62 percent for females.[12] By 2006, the percentages had reversed and a higher percentage of females (82 percent) than males (73 percent) had attended some type of postsecondary institution within 2 years of leaving high school.

In comparing enrollment rates in 1974 with those in 2006, the rates of Asians were not measurably different (86 percent versus 88 percent). For other groups, the enrollment rates were higher in 2006 than 1974, including Blacks (61 percent versus 72 percent), Whites (65 percent versus 81 percent), and Hispanics (60 percent versus 68 percent). In 2006, the highest rates of ever enrolling were reported by Asians (88 percent) and Whites (81 percent). The lowest rates were reported by Blacks (72 percent) and Hispanics (68 percent). However, 2006 marked the first time that respondents could report two or more races. Among those who reported being multiracial, 73 percent had enrolled in college.

[11] It should be noted that the early 1980s were a period of serious economic recession, which appears to have been associated with differential college enrollments by race or ethnicity (e.g., Whites were seemingly less affected than Blacks or Hispanics—see Kane 1994 and Planty et al. 2008, indicator 24).

[12] Rates of enrollment in postsecondary education may have been elevated somewhat for males during the early years of the Vietnam War when a draft lottery and policies of deferral were implemented. By 1973, however, neither draft calls nor deferrals were issued (Angrist and Chen 2011).

Table 2. Percentage of young adults who ever attended a postsecondary institution, by sex, race/ethnicity, parents' education, and educational expectations in 12th grade: 1974, 1982, 1994, and 2006

Young adult characteristics	1974	1982	1994	2006
Total	63.4	63.9	74.6	77.6
Sex				
Females	62.0	66.8	77.6	81.7
Males	64.9	60.8	71.6	73.4
Race/ethnicity				
Asian	85.5	85.8	84.4	87.6
Black	60.7	60.9	68.2	72.4
Hispanic	59.7	54.0	70.1	67.5
White	64.5	65.3	75.9	81.0
Two or more races	—	—	—	72.6
Parents' education				
High school or less	51.4	52.4	57.3	62.9
Some college	73.3	72.6	73.5	75.2
Bachelor's degree	83.9	82.8	89.9	87.0
Graduate or professional degree	84.8	85.7	94.8	91.3
12th-grade educational expectations				
High school diploma or less	18.6	15.1	14.3	21.6
Some college	60.2	57.4	54.1	55.7
College graduate	91.1	88.6	86.6	87.0
Graduate or professional degree	94.1	91.2	90.7	92.9
Don't know	—	—	56.8	49.8

— Not available.

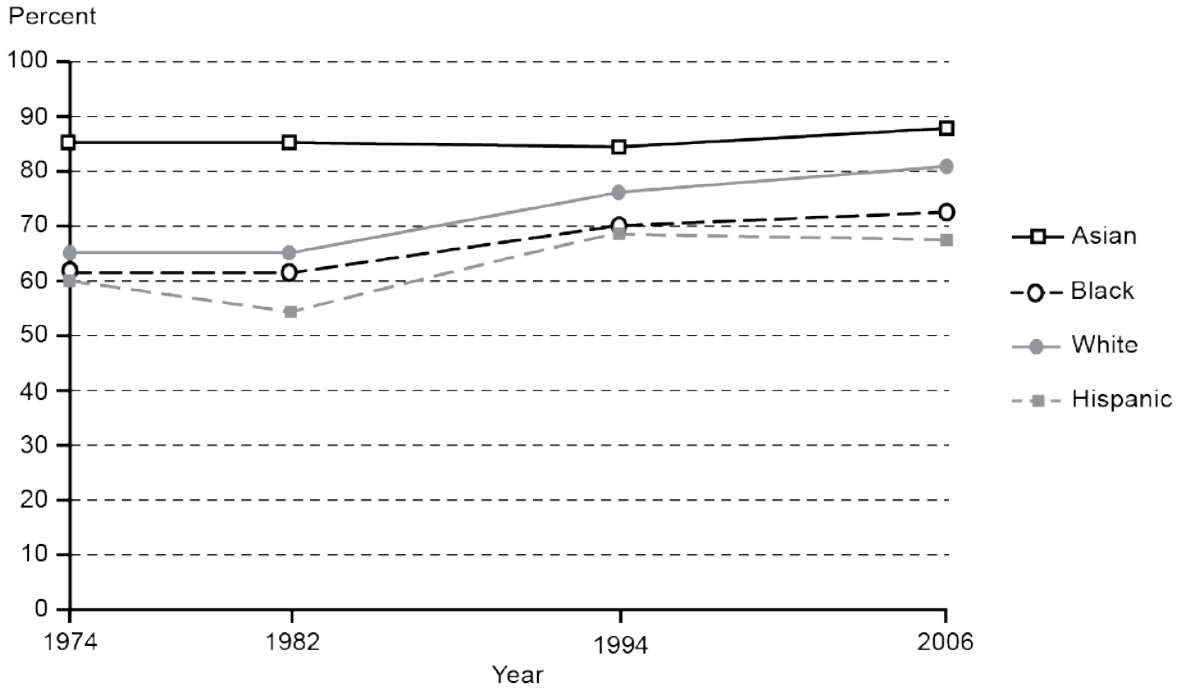
NOTE: Black includes African American. Hispanic includes Latino. Respondents who identified themselves as being of Hispanic origin are classified as Hispanic, regardless of their race. Pacific Islanders were not a race category in NLS:72 but presumably would have opted for the Asian category as the closest fit. For the other studies, Asian explicitly includes Pacific Islanders. Young adults are defined as high school spring senior cohort members 2 years after scheduled high school graduation.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, National Longitudinal Study of the High School Class of 1972 (NLS:72), "Second Follow-up, 1974"; High School and Beyond Longitudinal Study of 1980 Seniors (HS&B), "First Follow-up, 1982"; National Education Longitudinal Study of 1988 (NELS:88/94), "Third Follow-up, 1994"; Education Longitudinal Study of 2002 (ELS:2002/2006), "Second Follow-up, 2006."

Although enrollment rates for Blacks, Hispanics, and Whites were higher in 2006 relative to 1974, Black-White and Hispanic-White differences increased over time; that is, the postsecondary enrollment gaps in favor of Whites were higher in 2006 than in 1974. For example, in 1974 the difference in enrollment between Blacks and Whites was 4 percentage points. By 2006, this difference was 9 percent. Similarly, the Hispanic-White difference in 2006 was 14 percentage points, up from 5 percentage points in 1974 (figure 1).

In each cohort, those whose parents had a high school diploma or less had lower rates of ever attending postsecondary institutions than every other parental education group. However, their rates of ever attending postsecondary institutions were higher in 2006 than in 1974. In 2006, 63 percent had done so, up from 51 percent in 1974. Those whose parents had obtained a graduate or professional degree had the highest rates of enrollment in 1994 and in 2006. Their enrollment rates were 85 percent in 1974, 95 percent in 1994, and 91 percent in 2006.

Figure 1. Percentage of young adults who ever attended a postsecondary institution, by race/ethnicity: 1974, 1982, 1994, and 2006



NOTE: Black includes African American. Hispanic includes Latino. Respondents who identified themselves as being of Hispanic origin are classified as Hispanic, regardless of their race. Pacific Islanders were not a race category in NLS:72 but presumably would have opted for the Asian category as the closest fit. For the other studies, Asian explicitly includes Pacific Islanders. Young adults are defined as high school spring senior cohort members 2 years after scheduled high school graduation.
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, National Longitudinal Study of the High School Class of 1972 (NLS:72), "Second Follow-up, 1974"; High School and Beyond Longitudinal Study of 1980 Seniors (HS&B), "First Follow-up, 1982"; National Education Longitudinal Study of 1988 (NELS:88/94), "Third Follow-up, 1994"; Education Longitudinal Study of 2002 (ELS:2002/2006), "Second Follow-up, 2006."

In each cohort, those who had higher educational expectations in 12th grade had higher rates of attending some type of postsecondary institution within their first 2 years after high school than did those with lower expectations. For example, in 1982, 89 percent of those who expected a bachelor's degree when they were seniors had attended college, compared with 57 percent of those who expected to attend college but not earn a bachelor's degree. Despite the addition of the "Don't Know" category in NELS:88 and ELS:2002, the differences based on educational expectations persist. In 1994, 87 percent of those who expected a bachelor's degree when they were seniors had attended college, compared with 54 percent of those who expected to attend college but not graduate. The corresponding figures in 2006 were 87 percent and 56 percent, respectively.

3.2 Delayed Enrollment

Although section 3.1 showed the percentage of all high school seniors who had ever enrolled in postsecondary institutions 2 years later, the remaining analyses in this chapter include only those students who had ever enrolled in postsecondary institutions. Table 3 shows the percentage of those who delayed enrollment in a postsecondary institution among those young

adults who had ever enrolled at some point during their first 2 years out of high school.[13] Delayed enrollment in this report is defined as beginning postsecondary education at least one semester later than the semester following the senior year of high school. For example, for high school seniors in spring 1980, delayed entry would be starting postsecondary education in or after January 1981.

The rates of delaying entry into postsecondary education were 12 percent in 1974, 15 percent in 1982, 16 percent in 1994, and 13 percent in 2006. Rates of delaying entry into postsecondary education were not measurably different between 1982 and 1994. In all four cohorts, a higher percentage of males reported delaying their enrollment than females did.

Rates of delayed entry into higher education in 1982, 1994, and 2006 were higher for Blacks compared with Whites and Asians, and for Hispanics compared with Whites and Asians. For Blacks and Hispanics, the rates of delayed entry were higher in 1982 than they were in 1974 and then were not measurably different afterward. The rates for Black young adults were 15 percent in 1974, 20 percent in 1982, 19 percent in 1994, and 20 percent in 2006, while the corresponding rates for Hispanic young adults were 12 percent, 22 percent, 21 percent, and 22 percent. In contrast, Whites and Asians evidenced declines in delayed enrollment between 1994 and 2006. More specifically, Asians declined from 12 percent in 1994 to 7 percent in 2006, and Whites declined from 15 percent in 1994 to 10 percent in 2006.

In 1994 and 2006, those whose parents had higher levels of educational attainment had lower rates of delayed entry into postsecondary education than their peers whose parents had lower levels of education. For example, in 2006, 7 percent of those whose parents held a graduate or professional degree delayed entry into postsecondary education, compared with 20 percent of those whose parents had a high school diploma or less.

For young adults whose parents had a high school diploma or less, the rates of delaying entry into postsecondary education were 14 percent in 1974, 19 percent in 1982, 23 percent in 1994, and 20 percent in 2006. The corresponding figures for those whose parents had some college education were 11 percent, 13 percent, 16 percent, and 16 percent.

In addition to having the highest rates of postsecondary enrollment, those who expected a graduate degree while in the 12th grade exhibited the lowest rates of delayed enrollment in three of the four years (1982, 1994, and 2006). For example, in 2006, 7 percent of those who expected a graduate degree had delayed their enrollment, compared with 24 percent of those who expected some college education, and 13 percent of those who expected a college degree.

[13] The 2-year span may be abbreviated for some sample members. Readers are reminded that the analysis population for this report is spring-term high school seniors 2 years later, not the high school graduating class 2 years later—in other words, a very small proportion of spring-term seniors fails to graduate on the expected schedule (and may not graduate until summer, fall, thereafter, or not at all).

Table 3. Percentage of young adults who delayed postsecondary enrollment among those who ever attended a postsecondary institution, by sex, race/ethnicity, parents' education, and educational expectations in 12th grade: 1974, 1982, 1994, and 2006

Young adult characteristics	1974	1982	1994	2006
Total	11.6	15.0	15.7	13.2
Sex				
Males	12.5	16.8	17.4	14.5
Females	10.6	13.4	14.1	12.0
Race/ethnicity				
Asian	6.2!	10.7	12.4	6.7
Black	14.7	20.4	19.3	19.7
Hispanic	11.6	21.7	21.3	22.3
White	11.0	13.6	14.7	10.4
Two or more races	—	—	—	11.4
Parents' education				
High school or less	14.2	18.9	23.1	20.2
Some college	10.5	12.9	16.3	15.5
Bachelor's degree	8.9	12.8	12.7	9.3
Graduate or professional degree	8.4	11.5	7.6	7.0
12th-grade educational expectations				
High school diploma or less	40.5	52.9	58.1	37.3
Some college	17.7	23.6	27.5	23.9
College graduate	5.1	9.4	12.6	12.5
Graduate or professional degree	4.7	6.4	8.6	7.1
Don't know	—	—	28.3	28.6

— Not available.

! Interpret data with caution.

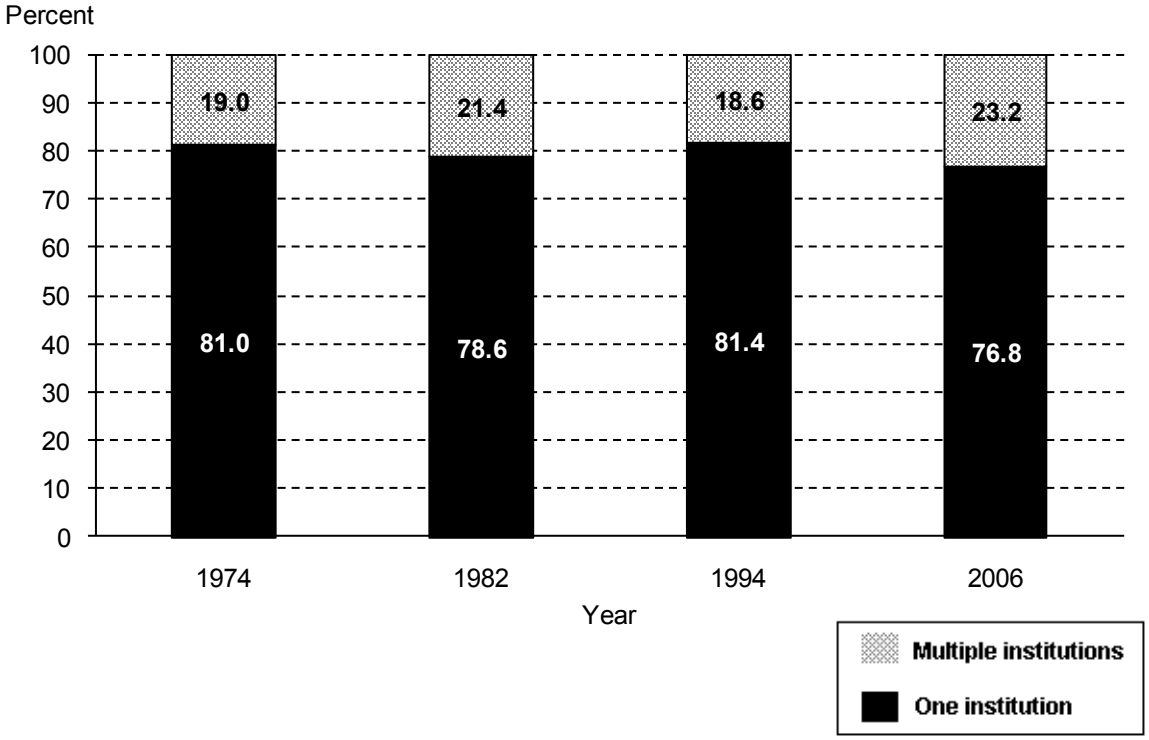
NOTE: Black includes African American. Hispanic includes Latino. Respondents who identified themselves as being of Hispanic origin are classified as Hispanic, regardless of their race. Pacific Islanders were not a race category in NLS:72 but presumably would have opted for the Asian category as the closest fit. For the other studies, Asian explicitly includes Pacific Islanders. Young adults are defined as high school spring senior cohort members 2 years after scheduled high school graduation.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, National Longitudinal Study of the High School Class of 1972 (NLS:72), "Second Follow-up, 1974"; High School and Beyond Longitudinal Study of 1980 Seniors (HS&B), "First Follow-up, 1982"; National Education Longitudinal Study of 1988 (NELS:88/94), "Third Follow-up, 1994"; Education Longitudinal Study of 2002 (ELS:2002/2006), "Second Follow-up, 2006."

3.3 Number of Postsecondary Institutions Attended

Students may transfer from one postsecondary institution to another for any number of reasons. Figure 2 shows the percentage who had attended more than one postsecondary institution among those who had enrolled in any postsecondary institution within 2 years of their senior year in high school. The percentage attending more than one institution during the 2 years since leaving high school was higher in 2006 (23 percent) than in 1974 (19 percent).

Figure 2. Percentage distribution of young adults attending one or multiple postsecondary institutions among young adults who ever enrolled in a postsecondary institution: 1974, 1982, 1994, and 2006



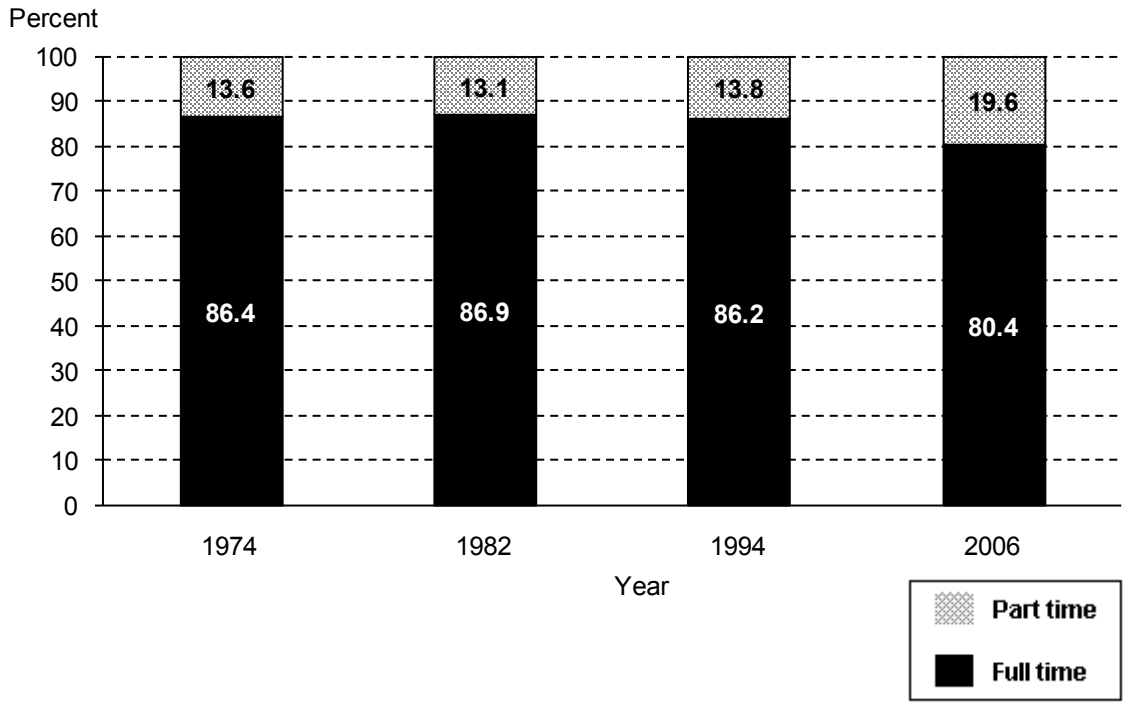
NOTE: Young adults are defined as high school spring senior cohort members 2 years after scheduled high school graduation.
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, National Longitudinal Study of the High School Class of 1972 (NLS:72), "Second Follow-up, 1974"; High School and Beyond Longitudinal Study of 1980 Seniors (HS&B), "First Follow-up, 1982"; National Education Longitudinal Study of 1988 (NELS:88/94), "Third Follow-up, 1994"; Education Longitudinal Study of 2002 (ELS:2002/2006), "Second Follow-up, 2006."

3.4 Postsecondary Educational Enrollment: Intensity and Type

Figure 3 shows the percentage distribution of full- and part-time enrollment in postsecondary institutions among cohort members who reported they were currently enrolled 2 years after their senior year of high school. In each survey, young adults were asked to report whether they were currently enrolled full time or less than full time. In each cohort, most students who reported being currently enrolled in some type of postsecondary institution 2 years after their senior year were enrolled full time. There were no measurable differences in rates of full-time enrollment in 1974 (86 percent), 1982 (87 percent), and 1994 (86 percent). However, rates of full-time enrollment were lower in 2006 (80 percent) than in any of the earlier years in this analysis.

Table 4 depicts the type of postsecondary institution in which cohort members who reported they were currently enrolled or not enrolled 2 years after their senior year of high school. In each survey, young adults had the option of reporting enrollment in a less-than-2-year school such as a vocational, technical, or trade school; a 2-year school; a 4-year school; or no such enrollment. In each cohort, the highest percentage of respondents reported current enrollment in a 4-year school, followed by a 2-year school, and then by enrollment in a less-than-

Figure 3. Percentage distribution of full- and part-time enrollment in postsecondary institutions among young adults currently enrolled: 1974, 1982, 1994, and 2006



NOTE: Young adults are defined as high school spring senior cohort members 2 years after scheduled high school graduation.
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, National Longitudinal Study of the High School Class of 1972 (NLS:72), "Second Follow-up, 1974"; High School and Beyond Longitudinal Study of 1980 Seniors (HS&B), "First Follow-up, 1982"; National Education Longitudinal Study of 1988 (NELS:88/94), "Third Follow-up, 1994"; Education Longitudinal Study of 2002 (ELS:2002/2006), "Second Follow-up, 2006."

2-year school. The percentage who were not enrolled in postsecondary education fell steadily from 61 percent in 1974 to 44 percent in 1982, 32 percent in 1994, and 23 percent in 2006.

In each cohort, higher percentages of young adults 2 years after high school reported being enrolled in a 4-year school than in a 2-year school, and higher percentages reported being in a 2-year school than a less-than-2-year school, as shown in table 4. The percentages of young adults enrolled in 4-year schools increased in the first two time periods (1974 to 1982 and 1982 to 1994), but leveled off in the third (1994 to 2006). Likewise, the percentages of young adults enrolled in 2-year schools increased in the first two time periods and leveled off in the third, but the net increase in the percentages of young adults enrolled in 2-year schools was greater than in 4-year schools. The percentage enrolled in 2-year schools increased from 7 percent to 32 percent, for a net increase of 25 percent; the percentage enrolled in 4-year schools increased from 28 percent to 43 percent, for a net increase of 15 percent. Overall, the percentage of young adults enrolled in 2-year schools more than quadrupled from 1974 to 2006, while the percentage enrolled in 4-year schools increased by about 50 percent. In the same period, no detectable change occurred in the percentage of young adults enrolled (2 years after high school) in less-than-2-year schools.

Table 4. Percentage of young adults currently enrolled in different types of postsecondary institutions or not enrolled, by sex, race/ethnicity, parents' education, and educational expectations in 12th grade: 1974, 1982, 1994, and 2006

Young adult characteristics	1974	1982	1994	2006
Total				
4-year institution	28.3	34.6	43.9	42.5
2-year institution	7.2	17.3	22.7	32.0
Less-than-2-year institution	3.8	3.6	1.9	2.7
Not enrolled	60.7	44.4	31.5	22.8
Sex				
Female				
4-year institution	26.7	36.5	46.5	44.7
2-year institution	6.5	17.3	23.6	33.5
Less-than-2-year institution	3.4	4.4	2.1	3.3
Not enrolled	63.4	41.8	27.8	18.6
Male				
4-year institution	29.9	32.6	41.3	40.3
2-year institution	7.9	17.4	21.7	30.4
Less-than-2-year institution	4.1	2.8	1.6	2.1
Not enrolled	58.1	47.2	35.3	27.2
Race/ethnicity				
Asian				
4-year institution	51.5	50.9	54.1	52.5
2-year institution	15.7	28.5	25.4	32.7
Less-than-2-year institution	1.2!	3.8	1.4!	1.7
Not enrolled	31.6	16.8	19.0	13.0
Black				
4-year institution	23.8	31.1	30.1	35.2
2-year institution	6.3	15.2	25.5	32.6
Less-than-2-year institution	3.9	3.3	3.9	3.9
Not enrolled	66.0	50.3	40.5	28.3
Hispanic				
4-year institution	15.2	36.9	40.2	24.4
2-year institution	14.2	17.0	17.9	37.7
Less-than-2-year institution	2.2	3.6	1.8!	5.0
Not enrolled	66.4	42.4	40.0	32.9
White				
4-year institution	29.8	36.5	45.7	47.8
2-year institution	6.8	17.3	22.9	30.8
Less-than-2-year institution	3.8	4.4	1.7	2.0!
Not enrolled	59.6	41.8	29.6	19.3
Two or more races				
4-year institution	—	—	—	43.4
2-year institution	—	—	—	26.2
Less-than-2-year institution	—	—	—	2.1
Not enrolled	—	—	—	28.3

See notes at end of table.

Table 4. Percentage of young adults currently enrolled in different types of postsecondary institutions or not enrolled, by sex, race/ethnicity, parents' education, and educational expectations in 12th grade: 1974, 1982, 1994, and 2006—Continued

Young adult characteristics	1974	1982	1994	2006
Parents' education				
High school or less				
4-year institution	17.0	22.0	21.7	24.9
2-year institution	6.1	16.3	22.0	33.4
Less-than-2-year institution	4.1	3.4!	2.3!	3.9
Not enrolled	72.9	58.2	53.9	37.8
Some college				
4-year institution	33.7	41.5	39.0	34.8
2-year institution	9.2	19.8	25.3	33.4
Less-than-2-year institution	3.7	4.0!	2.0!	3.2
Not enrolled	53.5	34.6	33.7	25.4
Bachelor's degree				
4-year institution	49.8	54.6	65.7	54.0
2-year institution	8.3	20.5	20.4	30.9
Less-than-2-year institution	3.8!	4.1!	1.8!	1.8!
Not enrolled	39.2	20.8	12.1	13.2
Graduate or professional degree				
4-year institution	54.4	66.0	75.8	67.8
2-year institution	7.7	12.7	17.3	30.9
Less-than-2-year institution	3.4!	3.8!	0.7!	1.8
Not enrolled	34.5	17.6	6.2	13.2
12th-grade educational expectations				
High school or less				
4-year institution	2.4	2.3	8.6	4.3
2-year institution	2.9	4.9	24.9	23.4
Less-than-2-year institution	2.7	1.2!	4.6	3.9
Not enrolled	91.9	92.6	61.8	79.3
Some college				
4-year institution	7.3	14.8	8.6	9.6
2-year institution	9.7	23.5	24.9	39.8
Less-than-2-year institution	5.7	5.1	4.6	5.6!
Not enrolled	77.3	56.6	61.8	45.1
Bachelor's degree				
4-year institution	59.3	61.0	54.1	48.5
2-year institution	7.2	20.7	28.0	35.8
Less-than-2-year institution	2.8!	3.7!	1.4!	2.4!
Not enrolled	30.7	24.6	16.6	13.4
Graduate or professional degree				
4-year institution	69.8	68.3	68..9	64.8
2-year institution	6.1	17.5	19.3	28.8
Less-than-2-year institution	1.8!	3.8!	0.7!	1.2!
Not enrolled	22.2	10.4	11.1	7.2

See notes at end of table.

Table 4. Percentage of young adults currently enrolled in different types of postsecondary institutions or not enrolled, by sex, race/ethnicity, parents' education, and educational expectations in 12th grade: 1974, 1982, 1994, and 2006—Continued

Young adult characteristics	1974	1982	1994	2006
12th-grade educational expectations—Continued				
Don't know				
4-year institution	—	—	—	13.6
2-year institution	—	—	—	32.5
Less-than-2-year institution	—	—	—	3.3!
Not enrolled	—	—	—	50.5

— Not available.

! Interpret data with caution.

NOTE: Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding. Black includes African American. Hispanic includes Latino. Respondents who identified themselves as being of Hispanic origin are classified as Hispanic, regardless of their race. Pacific Islanders were not a race category in NLS:72 but presumably would have opted for the Asian category as the closest fit. For the other studies, Asian explicitly includes Pacific Islanders. Young adults are defined as high school spring senior cohort members 2 years after scheduled high school graduation.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, National Longitudinal Study of the High School Class of 1972 (NLS:72), "Second Follow-up, 1974"; High School and Beyond Longitudinal Study of 1980 Seniors (HS&B), "First Follow-up, 1982"; National Education Longitudinal Study of 1988 (NELS:88/94), "Third Follow-up, 1994"; Education Longitudinal Study of 2002 (ELS:2002/2006), "Second Follow-up, 2006."

Furthermore, as shown in table 4, the percentage of young adults 2 years after high school who were not enrolled in postsecondary education steadily declined from 61 percent in 1974, to 44 percent in 1982, 32 percent in 1994, and 23 percent in 2006.

With respect to parent's education, in almost all years, a higher percentage of those whose parents had earned a bachelor's degree or higher attended a 4-year school than those whose parents had some college or less. Additionally, trends regarding educational expectations largely mirrored those of parent's education: in almost all years, a higher percentage of those expecting to earn a bachelor's degree or higher attended a 4-year school than those who expected to earn some college credit or less.

As a result of these shifts in rates of postsecondary enrollment, the distribution of enrollments in postsecondary education by the type of institution in which the students were enrolled changed dramatically between 1974 and 2006. As shown in table 5, among the young adults who enrolled in postsecondary institutions, the proportion that enrolled in 4-year institutions fell from 72 percent in 1974 to 55 percent in 2006, while the proportion that enrolled in 2-year institutions increased from 18 percent in 1974 to 41 percent in 2006. In addition, the percentage enrolled in less-than-two-year institutions fell from 10 percent in 1974 to 4 percent in 2006.

Table 5. Percentage of young adults currently enrolled in a postsecondary institution by the type of institution, sex, and race/ethnicity: 1974, 1982, 1994, and 2006

Young adult characteristics	1974	1982	1994	2006
Total				
4-year institution	72.2	62.2	64.2	55.1
2-year institution	18.3	31.1	33.1	41.4
Less-than-2-year institution	9.6	6.7	2.7	3.5
Sex				
Male				
4-year institution	71.4	61.8	63.9	55.3
2-year institution	18.8	32.6	33.6	41.8
Less-than-2-year institution	9.9	5.6	2.5	2.9
Female				
4-year institution	73.1	62.6	64.4	54.9
2-year institution	17.7	29.7	32.7	41.1
Less-than-2-year institution	9.2	7.8	2.9	4.0
Race/ethnicity				
Asian				
4-year institution	75.3	60.5	66.9	60.4
2-year institution	22.9	35.1	31.3	37.6
Less-than-2-year institution	1.8!	4.4	1.8!	2.0!
Black				
4-year institution	70.1	62.8	67.1	49.1
2-year institution	18.5	29.9	29.9	45.5
Less-than-2-year institution	11.4	7.3	3.1	5.4
Hispanic				
4-year institution	48.1	42.1	50.6	36.4
2-year institution	45.0	47.9	42.8	56.2
Less-than-2-year institution	7.0	10.1	6.6	7.4
White				
4-year institution	73.7	64.1	65.0	59.3
2-year institution	16.9	29.5	32.6	38.2
Less-than-2-year institution	9.5	6.3	2.4	2.5
Two or more races				
4-year institution	—	—	—	60.5
2-year institution	—	—	—	36.5
Less-than-2-year institution	—	—	—	3.0!

— Not available.

! Interpret data with caution.

NOTE: Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding. Black includes African American. Hispanic includes Latino. Respondents who identified themselves as being of Hispanic origin are classified as Hispanic, regardless of their race. Pacific Islanders were not a race category in NLS:72 but presumably would have opted for the Asian category as the closest fit. For the other studies, Asian explicitly includes Pacific Islanders. Young adults are defined as high school spring senior cohort members 2 years after scheduled high school graduation.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, National Longitudinal Study of the High School Class of 1972 (NLS:72), “Second Follow-up, 1974”; High School and Beyond Longitudinal Study of 1980 Seniors (HS&B), “First Follow-up, 1982”; National Education Longitudinal Study of 1988 (NELS:88/94), “Third Follow-up, 1994”; Education Longitudinal Study of 2002 (ELS:2002/2006), “Second Follow-up, 2006.”

Chapter 4. Employment

As shown in chapter 1, over time relatively more young adults are enrolled in a postsecondary institution, and relatively fewer young adults are working for pay and not enrolled in school. This chapter of the report examines the employment experiences of youth in the years immediately following high school in more depth by exploring whether youth ever worked for pay; whether those who enrolled in postsecondary institutions worked concurrently; and for those who did not attend college, the characteristics of their first job: weekly hours worked and type of job.

4.1 Ever Worked Within Two Years After High School

Each of the four surveys used in this report asked all respondents whether they had worked for pay at some point during the first 2 years after their senior year of high school. Respondents are counted as having worked for pay (full or part time) if they have ever done so regardless of whether they also attended school. Trends for the entire sample as well as for subgroups are shown in table 6. Regardless of the specific pathway taken out of high school, it appears the vast majority of young adults have at some point participated in paid employment. In each cohort, over 90 percent of young adults reported having ever worked for pay. After dropping from 97 percent in 1974 to 92 percent in 1982, this rate did not change measurably in 1994 or 2006. Initial workforce participation rates have also remained at or above 90 percent for both males and females. There were no detectable differences in the rates of employment between males and females by 2006.

All racial/ethnic subgroups had lower rates of employment in 1982 than in 1974. However, the difference for Whites (about 3 percentage points) was half that of other racial subgroups (8 to 9 percentage points for Asians, Blacks, and Hispanics). Comparing employment rates in 1982 with 2006 shows that workforce participation rates were higher in 1982 than in 2006 for Asians (88 percent versus 79 percent) but lower for Blacks (85 percent versus 91 percent) and Whites (94 percent versus 96 percent), while there was no detectable difference in the 1982 and 2006 rates for Hispanics (87 percent versus 88 percent).

Table 6. Percentage of young adults who have ever worked for pay, by sex, race/ethnicity, parents' education, and educational expectations in 12th grade: 1974, 1982, 1994, and 2006

Young adult characteristics	1974	1982	1994	2006
Total	97.0	92.3	92.9	92.9
Sex				
Males	98.8	94.4	93.8	93.2
Females	95.1	90.4	92.0	92.5
Race/ethnicity				
Asian	96.4	87.8	86.4	79.2
Black	93.6	84.9	87.3	90.7
Hispanic	95.5	87.4	92.8	88.4
White	97.5	94.1	94.2	95.6
Two or more races	—	—	—	89.3
Parents' education				
High school or less	96.8	92.6	92.5	91.9
Some college	97.4	94.3	94.0	93.5
Bachelor's degree	97.5	91.8	91.0	93.7
Graduate or professional degree	96.8	89.2	91.5	91.9
12th-grade educational expectations				
High school diploma or less	95.8	91.4	91.9	90.1
Some college	97.9	93.5	94.2	93.6
College graduate	97.3	91.5	92.8	93.4
Graduate or professional degree	95.6	93.0	92.1	93.2
Don't know	—	—	93.4	89.0

— Not available.

NOTE: Black includes African American. Hispanic includes Latino. Respondents who identified themselves as being of Hispanic origin are classified as Hispanic, regardless of their race. Pacific Islanders were not a race category in NLS:72 but presumably would have opted for the Asian category as the closest fit. For the other studies, Asian explicitly includes Pacific Islanders. Young adults are defined as high school spring senior cohort members 2 years after scheduled high school graduation.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, National Longitudinal Study of the High School Class of 1972 (NLS:72), "Second Follow-up, 1974"; High School and Beyond Longitudinal Study of 1980 Seniors (HS&B), "First Follow-up, 1982"; National Education Longitudinal Study of 1988 (NELS:88/94), "Third Follow-up, 1994"; Education Longitudinal Study of 2002 (ELS:2002/2006), "Second Follow-up, 2006."

4.2 Ever Worked While Enrolled

This section of the report focuses on the percentage of young adults working for pay among those enrolled in postsecondary institutions. The NLS:72, HS&B, and NELS:88 datasets each include two sets of composite "status" variables: one set indicating the sample member's employment status at various points in time and another indicating his or her postsecondary enrollment status at those same points in time. By comparing these two sets of snapshot status variables, it is possible to determine the prevalence of young adults working for pay while enrolled in a postsecondary institution in 1974, 1982, and 1994 (table 7). "Working while enrolled" data are also available from ELS:2002; however, unlike the three predecessor studies, ELS:2002 respondents were only asked if they had *ever* worked while enrolled in a postsecondary institution during the first 2 years after high school. Estimates for each cohort are presented in table 7. Overall rates of young adults who had ever worked while enrolled were nearly 20 percentage points higher in 1994 (82 percent) than in 1974 (63 percent) but declined to 78 percent by 2006. The patterns of having worked for pay while enrolled for males and females were similar to this (the rates for both were higher in 1994 than in 1974) but the percentage of

females who had ever worked for pay while enrolled was not lower in 2006 than in 1994, while the rate for males was.

Table 7. Among those who ever attended a postsecondary institution, percentage of young adults who worked for pay while enrolled, by sex, race/ethnicity, parents' education, and educational expectations in 12th grade: 1974, 1982, 1994, and 2006

Young adult characteristics	1974	1982	1994	2006
Total	63.0	75.4	81.6	78.0
Sex				
Male	65.9	74.1	80.5	74.9
Female	60.0	76.6	82.6	80.8
Race/ethnicity				
Asian	71.3	77.0	76.7	67.3
Black	55.3	62.8	74.4	75.3
Hispanic	64.7	78.7	78.9	77.0
White	63.7	76.7	83.3	79.9
Two or more races	—	—	—	74.6
Parents' education				
High school or less	65.1	77.8	79.1	79.8
Some college	65.8	77.1	82.7	80.8
Bachelor's degree	59.7	72.9	81.9	76.9
Graduate or professional degree	55.0	67.1	79.6	73.1
12th-grade educational expectations				
High school diploma or less	66.9	83.4	84.9	74.0
Some college	68.2	84.3	77.5	80.2
College graduate	61.0	71.8	82.7	78.4
Graduate or professional degree	58.4	70.7	82.7	78.1
Don't know	—	—	78.6	89.0

— Not available.

NOTES: Black includes African American. Hispanic includes Latino. Respondents who identified themselves as being of Hispanic origin are classified as Hispanic, regardless of their race. Pacific Islanders were not a race category in NLS:72 but presumably would have opted for the Asian category as the closest fit. For the other studies, Asian explicitly includes Pacific Islanders. Young adults are defined as high school spring senior cohort members 2 years after scheduled high school graduation.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, National Longitudinal Study of the High School Class of 1972 (NLS:72), "Second Follow-up, 1974"; High School and Beyond Longitudinal Study of 1980 Seniors (HS&B), "First Follow-up, 1982"; National Education Longitudinal Study of 1988 (NELS:88/94), "Third Follow-up, 1994"; Education Longitudinal Study of 2002 (ELS:2002/2006), "Second Follow-up, 2006."

In addition to the aforementioned data differences between ELS:2002 and the three earlier surveys (i.e., survey questions directly asking about working while enrolled, versus inferring working while enrolled based on snapshot status variables), there are also differences between NLS:72, HS&B, and NELS:88. Namely, the *number* of snapshot status variables included in each dataset increased with each subsequent survey, from NLS:72, which includes information on employment and enrollment in October 1972, 1973, and 1974; to HS&B, which includes information on employment and enrollment in October 1980, February and October 1981, and February 1982; to NELS:88, which includes information on employment and enrollment for each month from June 1992 through August 1994. Therefore, it is likely that as the number of available snapshot statuses increased over time, the odds of identifying sample members who have ever worked while enrolled also has increased. Appendix A provides more

information about these measures, and readers should note that these differences may influence the observed increase from 1974 to 1994.

In 1974, males reported having ever worked while enrolled at greater rates than did females (66 percent versus 60 percent). By 2006, however, females reported having worked while enrolled at greater rates than males (81 percent versus 75 percent).

In 1974, Blacks reported having worked while enrolled less frequently than any other group (55 percent, compared with 64 percent of Whites, 65 percent of Hispanics, and 71 percent of Asians). However, by 2006, Asians reported having worked while enrolled less frequently than any other group (67 percent, compared with 75 percent of Blacks, 77 percent of Hispanics, and 80 percent of Whites).

With the exception of 1994, young adults whose parents' highest level of education was "some college" or "high school diploma or less" reported working while enrolled at higher rates than young adults whose parents had earned a graduate or professional degree.

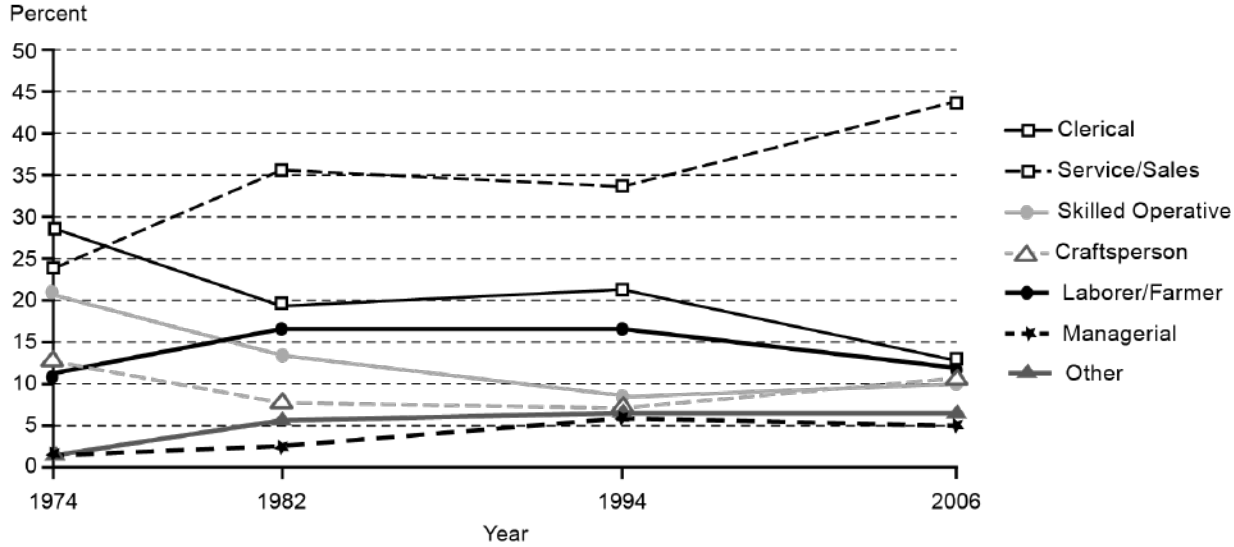
4.3 First Job Characteristics

This section of the report focuses on the employment experiences of those who had not attended postsecondary institutions 2 years after their senior year in high school. In NLS:72, 35 percent had worked but never attended a postsecondary institution. This was also the case for 33 percent of the respondents in HS&B, for 24 percent of the respondents in NELS:88, and for 21 percent of the respondents in ELS:2002 (data not shown). Respondents in each of the four surveys who had no postsecondary attendance in their first 2 years after high school answered a series of questions regarding their first post-high school job.[14] As part of these "first job" questions, respondents were asked to report the type of job they first held after high school and the average number of hours worked per week at that job. Trends in the type of job appear in figure 4 and trends in the number of hours worked appear in figure 5.

Changes over time in the types of jobs young adults are entering upon leaving high school may reflect a broad-based change in the United States from a manufacturing-based to a service-based economy. The percentage of nonenrolled young adults who worked as skilled operatives was 21 percent in 1974, compared with 10 percent in 2006, while those percentages working in sales/service had the opposite relationship—24 percent in 1974, as compared with 44 percent in 2006. The most common first job reported by nonenrolled young adults in 1974 was clerical work (28 percent); but by 2006, 13 percent reported clerical work as a first job. In 1982, 1994, and 2006, service/sales was the most common type of first job, undertaken by 35 percent, 34 percent, and 44 percent, respectively. With the exception of 1994, the least populated jobs in each cohort were managerial and those classified as other (table 8 and figure 4). With respect to weekly hours worked, among working young adults who never attended a postsecondary institution, the average number of hours they worked in 1974 was nearly 40 hours a week, compared to 36 hours a week in 2006 (figure 5).

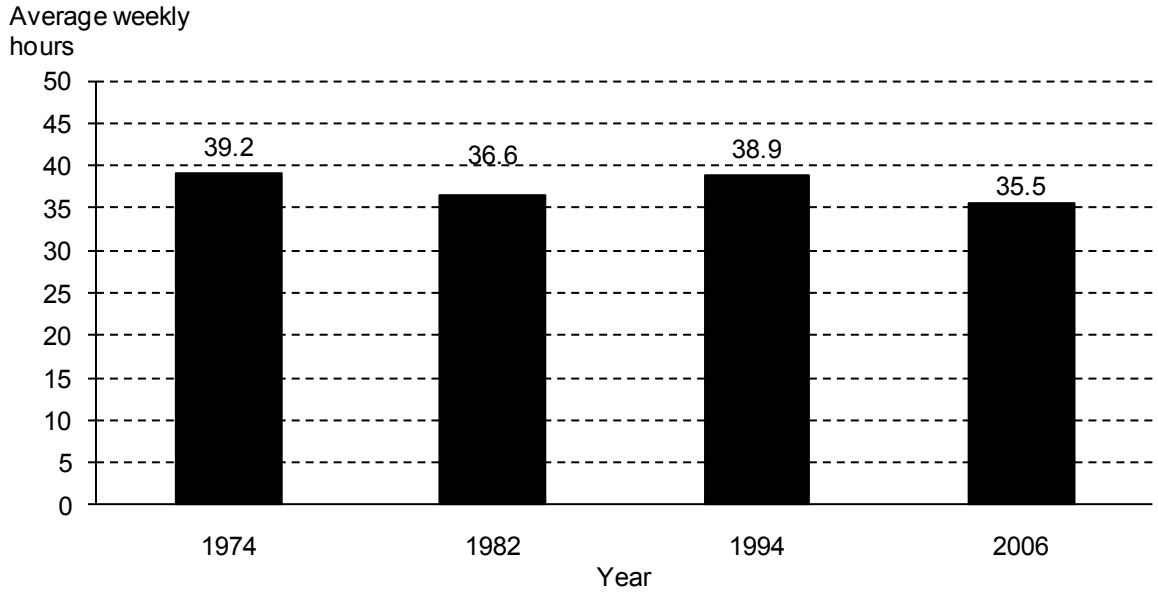
[14] In each cohort, relatively few students had neither enrolled in postsecondary education nor worked. That was the case for 1 percent of the NLS:72 sample, 3 percent for HS&B, and 2 percent for both NELS:88 and ELS:2002.

Figure 4. Percentage distribution of first jobs among young adults who did not enroll in a postsecondary institution, by job type: 1974, 1982, 1994, and 2006



NOTE: Young adults are defined as high school spring senior cohort members 2 years after scheduled high school graduation.
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, National Longitudinal Study of the High School Class of 1972 (NLS:72), "Second Follow-up, 1974"; High School and Beyond Longitudinal Study of 1980 Seniors (HS&B), "First Follow-up, 1982"; National Education Longitudinal Study of 1988 (NELS:88/94), "Third Follow-up, 1994"; Education Longitudinal Study of 2002 (ELS:2002/2006), "Second Follow-up, 2006."

Figure 5. Weekly hours worked among young adults who did not enroll in a postsecondary institution: 1974, 1982, 1994, and 2006



NOTE: Young adults are defined as high school spring senior cohort members 2 years after scheduled high school graduation.
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, National Longitudinal Study of the High School Class of 1972 (NLS:72), "Second Follow-up, 1974"; High School and Beyond Longitudinal Study of 1980 Seniors (HS&B), "First Follow-up, 1982"; National Education Longitudinal Study of 1988 (NELS:88/94), "Third Follow-up, 1994"; Education Longitudinal Study of 2002 (ELS:2002/2006), "Second Follow-up, 2006."

Table 8. Percentage distribution of first jobs among young adults who did not enroll in a postsecondary institution, by job type: 1974, 1982, 1994, and 2006

Type of job	1974	1982	1994	2006
Clerical	27.9	19.4	21.6	12.9
Service/sales	24.1	35.4	34.0	43.7
Skilled operative	20.5	13.2	8.6	9.8
Craftsperson	13.1	7.7	6.7	10.1
Laborer/farmer	11.4	16.6	16.5	12.0
Managerial	1.3	2.4	5.7	5.0
Other	1.6	5.3	6.9	6.4

NOTE: Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding. Young adults are defined as high school spring senior cohort members 2 years after scheduled high school graduation.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, National Longitudinal Study of the High School Class of 1972 (NLS:72), “Second Follow-up, 1974”; High School and Beyond Longitudinal Study of 1980 Seniors (HS&B), “First Follow-up, 1982”; National Education Longitudinal Study of 1988 (NELS:88/94), “Third Follow-up, 1994”; Education Longitudinal Study of 2002 (ELS:2002/2006), “Second Follow-up, 2006.”

Chapter 5.
Home and Family Life

This chapter documents how changes in the home and family life of young adults relate to student background and educational expectations over time. When they were approximately 2 years out of high school, respondents in each of the four cohorts were asked questions about their current living arrangements, their marital histories, and their childbearing histories.

5.1 Living Arrangements

Before discussing trends and patterns, it is important to note three differences in the way questions about living arrangements were administered across each of the studies. First, although all four studies asked respondents to report with whom they were currently living, the reference periods were different: NLS:72 referred to the first week of October 1974, HS&B referred to the first week of February 1982, NELS:88 referred to the first week of February 1994, and ELS:2002 used the spring of 2006. Seasonal differences in school enrollment may affect whether the respondent was living in a dormitory with roommates or at home with his or her family. However, most postsecondary calendars, be they quarters or semesters, include February and October, and while spring covers a range of months, the ELS:2002 question was structured such that those enrolled in a postsecondary institution were asked to report where they were living in the spring academic term of 2006 when they were enrolled at their last enrolled school. The second difference pertains to the relationships of those living with the respondent. NLS:72 only allowed respondents to choose one option for a question about with whom the respondent lived, whereas the other three allowed respondents to mark all relationships that apply (e.g., both parent and spouse). As a consequence, the NLS:72 data may underestimate other persons who were living with the respondent during the reference period. Lastly, the option for roommates was not available in NELS:88, precluding the inclusion of this option for NELS:88 in this analysis.

Additionally, readers should note that the response options were slightly different in NELS:88, potentially affecting the estimates reported for young adults in 1994. During the NELS:88 1994 interview, the option for spouse included husband, wife, or partner. The other three studies did not include partners when collecting spousal information. Therefore, the "living with spouse" estimates for NELS:88 in table 9 may be higher than for other years due to differences in the question.

Table 9 documents changes in living arrangements of young adults between 1974 and 2006. Across the four cohorts, the most common living arrangement for young adults approximately 2 years out of high school was to live with their parents. The percentage of young adults living with their parents was 46 percent in 2006, up from 39 percent in 1974.

Most of this increase occurred between 1974 and 1982, when the percentage of young adults living with their parents increased from 39 percent to 50 percent, or 11 percent, as compared to an increase of 1 percent between 1982 and 1994, and a decrease of 6 percent between 1994 and 2006.

Table 9. Household composition of young adults, by sex, race/ethnicity, parents' education, and educational expectations in 12th grade: 1974, 1982, 1994, and 2006

Young adult characteristics	1974	1982	1994	2006
Total				
Household composition for all young adults				
Alone	8.6	7.5	8.0	10.0
Parents/guardians	39.1	49.9	51.2	45.5
Roommate (nonrelative)	27.2	28.6	—	40.8
Spouse	22.3	10.5	10.2	3.3
Sex				
Male				
Alone	9.8	9.0	9.4	11.7
Parents/guardians	42.9	52.5	53.3	48.6
Roommate (nonrelative)	29.3	28.5	—	37.3
Spouse	15.2	6.2	6.2	2.0
Female				
Alone	7.4	6.2	6.6	8.3
Parents/guardians	35.3	47.5	49.2	42.5
Roommate (nonrelative)	25.1	28.8	—	44.2
Spouse	29.2	14.4	14.0	4.6
Race/ethnicity				
Asian				
Alone	7.3!	7.7	6.6	7.2
Parents/guardians	51.9	56.2	56.4	49.6
Roommate (nonrelative)	29.2	26.0	—	41.6
Spouse	8.5	5.3!	5.4	1.6
Black				
Alone	11.4	8.1	7.3	10.7
Parents/guardians	45.9	56.6	59.3	52.9
Roommate (nonrelative)	19.6	21.4	—	31.3
Spouse	15.7	5.3	5.5	1.5
Hispanic				
Alone	6.2	5.5	5.4	6.4
Parents/guardians	50.3	59.5	59.9	64.3
Roommate (nonrelative)	13.5	15.1	—	22.9
Spouse	25.8	13.7	15.4	5.3
White				
Alone	8.4	7.7	8.4	10.9
Parents/guardians	37.5	47.7	48.7	39.2
Roommate (nonrelative)	29.0	31.5	—	47.1
Spouse	22.9	10.9	10.3	3.3
Two or more races				
Alone	—	—	—	7.7
Parents/guardians	—	—	—	42.8
Roommate (nonrelative)	—	—	—	42.9
Spouse	—	—	—	3.0!

See notes at end of table.

Table 9. Household composition of young adults, by sex, race/ethnicity, parents' education, and educational expectations in 12th grade: 1974, 1982, 1994, and 2006—Continued

Young adult characteristics	1974	1982	1994	2006
Parents' education				
High school or less				
Alone	7.8	7.7	5.8	8.8
Parents/guardians	42.9	54.4	58.0	56.9
Roommate (nonrelative)	19.1	21.2	—	28.4
Spouse	26.9	12.7	15.7	5.3
Some college				
Alone	8.5	7.0	6.9	9.5
Parents/guardians	38.7	48.6	55.1	50.2
Roommate (nonrelative)	30.0	32.6	—	35.7
Spouse	20.3	9.0	10.7	4.3
Bachelor's degree				
Alone	10.0	10.0	10.5	10.4
Parents/guardians	29.6	38.8	43.1	38.5
Roommate (nonrelative)	44.0	42.2	—	49.2
Spouse	14.1	6.5	5.1	1.4
Graduate or professional degree				
Alone	11.3	12.3	11.8	12.1
Parents/guardians	30.0	37.7	36.2	29.3
Roommate (nonrelative)	45.7	46.3	—	57.5
Spouse	11.0	2.6!	3.3	1.1
12th-grade educational expectations				
High school or less				
Alone	6.5	5.2	9.1	11.3
Parents/guardians	38.7	54.4	47.2	59.2
Roommate (nonrelative)	12.4	14.6	—	20.2
Spouse	39.2	20.1	25.2	7.4
Some college				
Alone	7.5	6.1	5.2	10.3
Parents/guardians	44.5	57.2	59.1	59.7
Roommate (nonrelative)	17.0	19.2	—	22.6
Spouse	28.1	14.1	17.7	6.4
Bachelor's degree				
Alone	9.8	8.2	7.2	9.4
Parents/guardians	33.5	45.4	53.6	45.8
Roommate (nonrelative)	43.1	39.4	—	42.4
Spouse	11.5	4.5	7.0	2.3
Graduate or professional degree				
Alone	11.7	11.0	10.4	10.4
Parents/guardians	27.9	37.8	42.3	32.3
Roommate (nonrelative)	50.3	45.7	—	54.2
Spouse	8.3	3.1	5.6	2.2

See notes at end of table.

Table 9. Household composition of young adults, by sex, race/ethnicity, parents' education, and educational expectations in 12th grade: 1974, 1982, 1994, and 2006—Continued

Young adult characteristics	1974	1982	1994	2006
12th-grade educational expectations—Continued				
Don't know				
Alone	—	—	10.6	9.3
Parents/guardians	—	—	55.7	63.3
Roommate (nonrelative)	—	—	—	26.3
Spouse	—	—	10.0	3.7

— Not available.
! Interpret data with caution.
NOTE: Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding. Black includes African American. Hispanic includes Latino. Respondents who identified themselves as being of Hispanic origin are classified as Hispanic, regardless of their race. Pacific Islanders were not a race category in NLS:72 but presumably would have opted for the Asian category as the closest fit. For the other studies, Asian explicitly includes Pacific Islanders. Young adults are defined as high school spring senior cohort members 2 years after scheduled high school graduation.
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, National Longitudinal Study of the High School Class of 1972 (NLS:72), "Second Follow-up, 1974"; High School and Beyond Longitudinal Study of 1980 Seniors (HS&B) ,"First Follow-up, 1982"; National Education Longitudinal Study of 1988 (NELS:88/94), "Third Follow-up, 1994"; Education Longitudinal Study of 2002 (ELS:2002/2006), "Second Follow-up, 2006."

Living with roommates was more common in 2006 (41 percent) than in 1974 (27 percent). In contrast, young adults living with spouses became less common. In 1974, 22 percent of young adults were living with a spouse, compared with 10 percent in 1994 and with 3 percent in 2006.

At all four time points, a higher percentage of females reported living with a spouse than males did. The percentage of both males and females living with spouses was lower in 2006 than in 1974. However, this decline was more pronounced for females than for males. In 1974, 29 percent of females were living with a spouse, compared with 15 percent of males, and in 2006, these figures were 5 percent and 2 percent, respectively. While living with roommates became more prevalent for all youth, the pattern changed by sex. In 1974, a smaller percentage of females than males reported living with roommates (25 percent versus 29 percent), but by 2006, a larger percentage of females than males reported living with roommates (44 percent versus 37 percent).

With respect to race/ethnicity, there were both changes and continuity in the pattern of young adults living with their parents. Among Whites, the percentage of young adults living with their parents was higher in 1982 than in 1974 but lower in 2006 than in 1982. When comparing 1974 with 2006, however, there were no detectable differences (38 percent versus 39 percent). On the other hand, the percentages of Blacks and Hispanics living with their parents were higher in 2006 than in 1974. In 1974, 46 percent of Black young adults and 50 percent of Hispanic young adults were living with their parents. By 2006, these figures were 53 percent and 64 percent, respectively.

Although at all time points the most common living arrangement of these young adults as a group was to live with parents, this was not the case for those whose parents' highest level of education was a bachelor's degree or higher. In 1974 and in 2006, living with roommates was the most common living arrangement for those whose parents' highest level of education was a bachelor's degree or higher. Further, at all time points, a smaller percentage of those whose parents had attained at least a bachelor's degree lived with their parents than those whose parents

had completed less than a bachelor's degree (that is, some college or less). In 1974, 43 percent of young adults whose parents' level of education was a high school degree or less were living with their parents, and 30 percent of young adults whose parents' level of education was the completion of a bachelor's degree or more were living with their parents—a difference of about 13 percentage points. Each of these differences was larger in 2006 than in 1974. In 2006, 57 percent of young adults whose parents' highest level of education was a high school degree or less were living with their parents, while 39 percent of young adults were whose parents had earned a bachelor's degree, which is a difference of 18 percentage points. Only 29 percent of young adults whose parents' highest level of education was a graduate or professional degree were living with their parents, which is a difference of 28 percentage points.

The patterns were similar for educational expectations. In general, a smaller percentage of youth who expected a bachelor's degree or a graduate degree lived with their parents than their peers who expected to attain some college or less. For example, in 2006, 59 percent of young adults who had expected a high school diploma or less were living with their parents, compared with 32 percent of young adults who had expected a graduate or professional degree. Conversely, a larger percentage of youth who expected eventually to earn a bachelor's degree or a graduate degree lived with roommates than their peers who expected to attain some college or less. For example, in 2006, 20 percent of young adults who had expected a high school diploma or less were living with roommates, compared with 54 percent of young adults who had expected a graduate or professional degree.

5.2 Marriage

In all four studies, respondents were asked to report whether they are currently single and never married, married, separated, divorced, or widowed. NLS:72 asked respondents to report their marital status as of October 1974; HS&B asked respondents to report their marital status as of the first week of February 1982; and both NELS:88 and ELS:2002 asked respondents to report their current (time-of-interview) marital status. This information provides a basis for identifying those in each of the cohorts who had married by the time they were approximately 2 years out of high school, shown in table 10. These estimates of those who have ever been married include those currently married and those who have subsequently separated, divorced, or become widowed.

Across the four cohorts, marriage in young adulthood has become less prevalent. In 2006, 4 percent of young adults had gotten married, down from 26 percent in 1974. This decline occurred for both sexes and members of all racial/ethnic groups. At all four time points, women had higher rates of marriage than men did. These differences, however, attenuated. In 1974, the female-male difference in marriage was 16 percent. By 2006, the difference was 3 percent. Also at all four time points, Hispanics had higher rates of marriage than the other racial/ethnic groups.

More of this decline in the overall rate of marriage occurred in the first period, between 1974 and 1982, than in the second or third periods together, which were between 1982 and 1994, and 1994 and 2006, respectively. The declines were 13 percentage points in the first period, 4 percentage points in the second period, and 4 percentage points in the third period.

For the most part, young adults whose parents completed some college or earned a bachelor's degree had lower rates of marriage 2 years after their senior year of high school than their peers who did not attend college. For example, in 1982, 7 percent of those whose parents

held a 4-year degree had married, compared with 14 percent of those whose parents held a high school diploma or less, but there was no measurable difference between those whose parents held a 4-year degree and those whose parents completed some college (10 percent).

Similarly, among those who expected eventually to graduate from college when they were high school seniors, the rates of marriage were lower than those who did not expect to graduate from college. For example, in 1982, 5 percent of those who expected a 4-year degree had married compared with 23 percent of those who expected a high school degree or less.

Table 10. Percentage of young adults ever married, by sex, race/ethnicity, parents' education, and educational expectations in 12th grade: 1974, 1982, 1994, and 2006

Young adult characteristics	1974	1982	1994	2006
Total	25.9	11.6	7.5	4.0
Sex				
Male	17.8	7.1	4.7	2.4
Female	33.9	15.8	10.1	5.6
Race/ethnicity				
Asian	11.6	4.8!	4.2	1.8
Black	23.3	7.1	3.7	2.0
Hispanic	31.3	15.6	10.9	6.4
White	26.0	11.9	7.6	4.0
Two or more races	—	—	—	3.6
Parents' education				
High school or less	31.6	14.1	11.4	6.1
Some college	23.0	9.8	7.9	5.0
Bachelor's degree	15.7	7.2	3.7	2.0
Graduate or professional degree	13.3	3.4	2.1	1.5
12th-grade educational expectations				
High school diploma or less	44.9	22.7	21.6	8.3
Some college	31.8	15.2	12.6	7.3
College graduate	13.0	5.4	4.9	2.7
Graduate or professional degree	10.3	3.5	3.9	3.0
Don't know	—	—	8.5	4.7

— Not available.
! Interpret data with caution.
NOTE: Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding. Black includes African American. Hispanic includes Latino. Respondents who identified themselves as being of Hispanic origin are classified as Hispanic, regardless of their race. Pacific Islanders were not a race category in NLS:72 but presumably would have opted for the Asian category as the closest fit. For the other studies, Asian explicitly includes Pacific Islanders. Young adults are defined as high school spring senior cohort members 2 years after scheduled high school graduation.
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5.3 Childbearing

Questions regarding childbearing were included in all four studies. In NLS:72, respondents were asked to report how many children they had as of the first week of October 1974 but not whether any of these children were biologically related to them; in HS&B, respondents were asked if they had any children as of the first week of February 1982, and

follow-up questions permit limiting results to biological children only; in NELS:88, respondents were only asked to report the number of children born to the respondent, and in ELS:2002, respondents were asked whether (at the time of the interview) they had any biological children. Based on this information, table 11 reports the percentage of young adults with biological children with the caveat that the number reported for 1974 is for all children and not just biological children.

Not including 1974, the percentage of young adults who reported having biological children was 6 percent in 1982, 9 percent in 1984, and 7 percent in 2006. In 1982, 1994, and 2006, more than twice as many women had children as men did. For example, in 1994, 12 percent of females had children, compared with 5 percent of males.

There was no measurable difference in the percentage of young adults who reported having biological children in 1982 (6 percent) and 2006 (7 percent). In 1982, 1994, and 2006, more than twice as many women had children as men did. For example, in 1994, 12 percent of females had children, compared with 5 percent of males.

There was no measurable difference in the percentage of young adults with children in 1982 and in 2006 for all racial/ethnic groups except Hispanics. Among Hispanics, 9 percent reported having children in 1982 and 12 percent reported having biological children in 2006. At each time point, Blacks and Hispanics had higher rates of childbearing than their Asian and White peers did. For example, in 2006, 15 percent of Blacks and 12 percent of Hispanics had children, compared with 2 percent of Asians and 5 percent of Whites.

For the most part, a higher percentage of those whose parents earned a high school diploma or less had children when compared with their peers. For example, in 2006, 12 percent of those whose parents earned a high school diploma or less had children, compared with 4 percent of those whose parents had earned a bachelor's degree. Similarly, this pattern held for educational expectations: those with the highest rates of childbearing were those who expected to earn a high school diploma or less. In 2006, 18 percent of those who expected to earn a high school diploma or less had children, compared with 6 percent of those who expected to earn a bachelor's degree.

Table 11. Percentage of young adults with any biological children, by sex, race/ethnicity, parents' education, and educational expectations in 12th grade: 1974, 1982, 1994, and 2006

Young adult characteristics	1974[1]	1982	1994	2006
Total	11.3	5.8	8.8	7.2
Sex				
Males	7.4	3.2	5.0	4.2
Females	15.1	8.2	12.4	10.0
Race/ethnicity				
Asian	6.2!	2.2!	4.9	2.3
Black	27.8	15.0	19.3	15.0
Hispanic	16.6	9.0	15.4	11.8
White	9.2	4.2	6.4	4.5
Two or more races	—	—	—	8.5
Parents' education				
High school or less	14.9	6.7	14.7	11.7
Some college	8.8	4.2	9.0	8.2
Bachelor's degree	4.6	4.5	3.7	4.2
Graduate or professional degree	4.8	1.2!	2.2	2.7
12th-grade educational expectations				
High school diploma or less	21.3	10.4	19.5	17.5
Some college	12.0	7.6	13.4	11.8
College graduate	4.2	2.8	5.8	5.5
Graduate or professional degree	3.2	2.9	5.4	3.9
Don't know	—	—	14.3	12.6

— Not available.

! Interpret data with caution.

[1] Since biological children were not distinguished from nonbiobogical children in NLS:72, these estimates may include foster, adopted, or step children and may not be strictly comparable to the other cohorts.

NOTE: Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding. Black includes African American. Hispanic includes Latino. Respondents who identified themselves as being of Hispanic origin are classified as Hispanic, regardless of their race. Pacific Islanders were not a race category in NLS:72 but presumably would have opted for the Asian category as the closest fit. For the other studies, Asian explicitly includes Pacific Islanders. Young adults are defined as high school spring senior cohort members 2 years after scheduled high school graduation.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, National Longitudinal Study of the High School Class of 1972 (NLS:72), "Second Follow-up, 1974"; High School and Beyond Longitudinal Study of 1980 Seniors (HS&B), "First Follow-up, 1982"; National Education Longitudinal Study of 1988 (NELS:88/94), "Third Follow-up, 1994"; Education Longitudinal Study of 2002 (ELS:2002/2006), "Second Follow-up, 2006."

Chapter 6. Civic Engagement

Beyond prompt entry into postsecondary schooling, family formation, or entrance into the workforce, youth also assume adult roles through such aspects of civic engagement as voting and military service. Indeed, in the matter of voting in federal, state, and local elections, the NLS:72 cohort effectively was part of the first generation that universally could exercise voting rights at age 18. Amendment XXVI of the U.S. Constitution was ratified in summer 1971, which standardized the voting age at 18 years (previously, most states had set it at age 21). Another major change witnessed by the NLS:72 cohort occurred in the year after the sample members' high school graduation: in July 1973, Congress abolished the military draft in favor of an all-volunteer military. This chapter describes the status of the four young adult cohorts vis-à-vis these two important voluntary dimensions of citizenship, voting and military service.[15]

6.1 Voting

In each cohort, young adults were asked to indicate whether they had voted in a local, state, or national election (for the specific questions that were posed—which differ slightly from study to study—see the glossary in appendix A). In each of the four instances, the first election in which sample members could vote occurred in November of their high school graduation year, at which time each of the cohorts was modally 18 years old and eligible to cast a ballot. While voter turnout is substantially higher in presidential election years than in midterm elections,[16] all the cohorts entered the universe of potential voters at the same time in the election cycle; that is, there was a presidential election in November of the year of each cohort's high school graduation (1972, 1980, 1992, and 2004). Hence, the difference in participation rate associated with midterm versus presidential elections should not affect comparability across the cohorts. Table 12 shows the percentage of young adults who had ever voted in a state, local, or national election, 2 years out of high school.

Overall, the percentage of young adults who reported that they had ever voted ranged from a high of 62 percent (1974 young adults) to a low of 51 percent (1982 young adults). The two more recent cohorts were intermediate between the two extremes (56 percent voter participation for 1994 young adults, and 58 percent for 2006 young adults).

A higher percentage of males than females reported voting in 1974; however, for 2006 young adults, this relationship was reversed. With respect to race/ethnicity, Whites had the highest level of reported voter participation at each of the four points in time: 65 percent for 1974 young adults, 54 percent for 1982, 60 percent for 1994, and 63 percent for 2006.

[15] The war in Vietnam may have had an influence on the civic activities, military, and voting, of the NLS:72 cohort relative to the HS&B, NELS:88, and ELS:2002 cohorts.

[16] Tabulations from Current Population Survey (CPS) data for the youngest group of voters characterized in the CPS—18- to 29-year-olds—starting in 1972 shows young voter turnout as typically around 50 percent for the presidential elections and approaching 30 percent for midterm elections (Marcelo, Lopez, and Kirby 2007).

Table 12. Percentage of young adults who ever voted in a state, local, or national election, by sex, race/ethnicity, parents' education, and educational expectations in 12th grade: 1974, 1982, 1994, and 2006

Young adult characteristics	1974	1982	1994	2006
Total	62.3	51.1	56.1	57.5
Sex				
Males	63.8	52.1	56.8	55.4
Females	60.8	50.1	55.4	59.5
Race/ethnicity				
Asian	50.8	27.8	35.2	37.9
Black	52.0	40.1	47.4	59.0
Hispanic	49.0	43.2	42.1	41.1
White	64.7	54.1	60.3	62.8
Two or more races	—	—	—	52.6
Parents' education				
High school or less	56.4	46.1	45.0	44.8
Some college	67.3	55.2	57.3	57.5
Bachelor's degree	71.8	61.1	64.7	63.1
Graduate or professional degree	73.1	56.3	66.0	68.1
12th-grade educational expectations				
High school diploma or less	50.2	40.0	38.2	34.6
Some college	60.7	47.3	47.0	45.5
College graduate	72.4	56.7	59.3	60.5
Graduate or professional degree	76.6	61.5	64.5	66.4
Don't know	—	—	46.4	44.2

— Not available.

NOTE: Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding. Black includes African American. Hispanic includes Latino. Respondents who identified themselves as being of Hispanic origin are classified as Hispanic, regardless of their race. Pacific Islanders were not a race category in NLS:72 but presumably would have opted for the Asian category as the closest fit. For the other studies, Asian explicitly includes Pacific Islanders. Young adults are defined as high school spring senior cohort members 2 years after scheduled high school graduation.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, National Longitudinal Study of the High School Class of 1972 (NLS:72), "Second Follow-up, 1974"; High School and Beyond Longitudinal Study of 1980 Seniors (HS&B), "First Follow-up, 1982"; National Education Longitudinal Study of 1988 (NELS:88/94), "Third Follow-up, 1994"; Education Longitudinal Study of 2002 (ELS:2002/2006), "Second Follow-up, 2006."

With the exception of one time point (1982), young adults whose parents had higher educational attainment reported higher rates of ever voting in a national, state, or local election than their peers whose parents had less education. In each cohort except HS&B (there was no measurable difference in 1982 between those whose parents were graduate or professional degree holders and those with just some college education, nor a measurable difference between those with a bachelor's and a graduate degree), those whose parents had bachelor's degrees reported higher rates of voting than those whose parents had some college education, or high school or less. For example, in 1974, 72 percent of those whose parents had bachelor's degrees reported voting, compared with 67 percent of those whose parents had some college education and 56 percent of those whose parents had high school or less. The comparable voting rates in 2006 were 63 percent, 58 percent, and 45 percent, respectively.

Within each of the four cohorts, there was, without exception, a systematic relationship between higher educational attainment expectations and higher rates of voting. A higher

percentage of those who expected higher levels of education while in high school voted than their peers who did not.

6.2 Military Service

A questionnaire item captured military service for three of the cohorts only: young adults in 1974, 1982, and 2006. There is no questionnaire measure of military service for the cohort of young adults in 1994. At the time of NLS:72, the Vietnam War was still in progress. Overall, U.S. troop levels declined from 2.4 million in 1972 to 2.1 million in 1980 and to 1.4 million in 2004 (Kane 2004). As noted above, the military draft was replaced in 1973 by a commitment to build an all-volunteer military—an arrangement that has prevailed to this day. Table 13 shows the percentage of young adults from the four cohorts who had ever served in the military, 2 years after high school.

Overall, the percentage of young adults who had served in the military was smaller in 2006 than in 1974 and 1982—3 percent for young adults in 2006, but 7 percent for young adults in 1974, and 6 percent for young adults in 1982. This is unsurprising, given that the size of the armed forces declined substantially in the same period (see Kane 2004).

A higher percentage of males than females served in the military at all three points in time. For young adults in 1974, 12 percent of males served, as did 1 percent of females; for young adults in 1982, 11 percent of males served versus 2 percent of females; and for young adults in 2006, 5 percent of males served versus 1 percent of females. With respect to race/ethnicity, Blacks had the highest proportionate representation in military service in 1974 and 1982 for any racial/ethnic group—10 percent in both 1974 and 1982. In contrast, Asians had 4 percent in 1974 and 5 percent in 1982, Hispanics had 6 percent in both years, and Whites had 6 percent in both years. In 1982 and 2006, higher percentages of those who expected to attain a high school diploma or less served in the military than those with higher levels of education. In 1982, 10 percent of those who expected no education beyond high school served in the military, compared with 5 percent of those who expected some college, 6 percent of those who expected a bachelor's degree, and 5 percent of those who expected a graduate degree. The comparable rates in 2006 were 6 percent of those who expected no education beyond high school, compared with 3 percent, 3 percent, and 2 percent. Few patterns emerge when military service is viewed in connection with the highest level of parental education.

Table 13. Percentage of young adults who ever served in the military, by sex, race/ethnicity, parents' education, and educational expectations in 12th grade: 1974, 1982, 1994, and 2006

Young adult characteristics	1974	1982	1994	2006
Total	6.5	6.4	—	2.9
Sex				
Males	11.8	11.2	—	4.9
Females	1.3	2.0	—	1.1
Race/ethnicity				
Asian	4.2!	5.4	—	1.3!
Black	10.4	10.4	—	2.5
Hispanic	6.4	5.7	—	2.3
White	6.2	5.9	—	3.1
Two or more races	—	—	—	5.1
Parents' education				
High school or less	6.9	6.7	—	2.9
Some college	6.9	6.0	—	3.4
Bachelor's degree	4.6	6.1	—	2.9
Graduate or professional degree	6.1	4.4	—	2.1
12th-grade educational expectations				
High school diploma or less	6.4	9.8	—	6.0
Some college	7.0	5.4	—	2.9
College graduate	5.3	5.8	—	2.7
Graduate or professional degree	5.1	5.4	—	2.3
Don't know	—	—	—	4.9

— Not available.

! Interpret data with caution.

NOTE: Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding. Black includes African American. Hispanic includes Latino. Respondents who identified themselves as being of Hispanic origin are classified as Hispanic, regardless of their race. Pacific Islanders were not a race category in NLS:72 but presumably would have opted for the Asian category as the closest fit. For the other studies, Asian explicitly includes Pacific Islanders. Young adults are defined as high school spring senior cohort members 2 years after scheduled high school graduation. The variable for military service was not measured in 1994 in NELS:88.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, National Longitudinal Study of the High School Class of 1972 (NLS:72), "Second Follow-up, 1974"; High School and Beyond Longitudinal Study of 1980 Seniors (HS&B), "First Follow-up, 1982";Education Longitudinal Study of 2002 (ELS:2002/2006), "Second Follow-up, 2006."

Chapter 7. Conclusions

This report examined patterns between 1974 and 2006 in the following characteristics of young adults 2 years after scheduled high school graduation: postsecondary enrollment, employment, home and family life, and civic engagement. Focusing on young adulthood, this analysis found that experiences in the years immediately following high school have changed during this time period.

7.1 Statuses of Young Adults Two Years After High School

Overall, the percentage of young adults enrolled in postsecondary education 2 years after their senior year of high school was higher in 2006 (62 percent) than it was in 1974 (40 percent). Correspondingly, the percentage currently working for pay and not enrolled was lower in 2006 (28 percent) than it was in 1974 (48 percent). In 1974, relatively more males than females were enrolled in postsecondary courses (42 percent versus 37 percent). By 1994 and 2006, the relationship had reversed: 57 percent of males were enrolled in each of these years, compared with 64 percent of females in 1994 and 67 percent in 2006. In comparing 1974 with 2006, all four major race/ethnicity groups had lower rates of postsecondary enrollment 2 years after high school in 1974 than in 2006. Enrollment went from 69 percent to 78 percent for Asians, from 34 percent to 53 percent for Blacks, from 32 percent to 50 percent for Hispanics, and from 41 percent to 67 percent for Whites.

7.2 Postsecondary Enrollment

Since leaving high school, the percentage of young adults who had ever enrolled was higher in 2006 than it was in 1974. Across these cohorts, the rates of attending any postsecondary institution were not measurably different for Asians but increased over time for Blacks, Hispanics, and Whites. Among those who had ever enrolled, the rates of delaying entry into postsecondary education were lower in 1974 than in subsequent years. Delayed enrollment was associated with parents' education and students' educational expectations in the 12th grade: a smaller percentage of those whose parents had higher levels of education and of those who expected to attain higher levels of education delayed their postsecondary entrance. When comparing 1974 with 2006 among those currently enrolled, the percentage attending a 4-year school was lower in 2006 than in 1974, while the percentage attending a 2-year school was higher in 2006 than in 1974.

7.3 Employment

The vast majority of young adults have participated in paid employment. In each cohort, over 90 percent of young adults reported having ever worked for pay. In terms of the first jobs of those who did not enroll in postsecondary education, young adults reported working fewer hours each week in 2006 than in 1974. A smaller percentage of young adults worked in clerical and skilled operatives jobs in 2006 than in 1974, but a larger percentage of 2006 young adults worked in service/sales jobs. In 2006, 13 percent of those employed worked in clerical jobs, 10 percent worked as skilled operatives, and 44 percent worked in sales/service jobs. The comparable rates for 1974 were 28 percent, 21 percent, and 24 percent, respectively.

7.4 Home and Family Life

Across the four cohorts, the most common living arrangement of these young adults taken as a group approximately 2 years out of high school was to live with their parents. The percentage of young adults living with their parents was higher in 2006 than in 1974 but lower in 2006 than in 1994.

At all time points, a smaller percentage of young adults whose parents' highest level of education was a bachelor's degree or higher live with their parents than their peers whose parents did not attain a bachelor's degree. In 2006, 57 percent of those whose parents' highest level of education was a high school degree or less were living with their parents, compared with 29 percent of those whose parents' highest level of education was a graduate or professional degree. This difference was 28 percentage points. In 1974, the comparable difference was 13 percentage points.

With respect to marriage, a smaller percentage of young adults experienced this life course event in 2006 than in 1974. At all four time points studied, a higher percentage of females were married than males. Additionally, at all four time points, a smaller percentage of those whose parents had earned a graduate or professional degree and of those who expected to attain a graduate or professional degree were married.

At all three time points with comparable child data (1982, 1994, and 2006), a higher percentage of females reported having children than did males.

7.5 Civic Engagement

Overall, the percentage of young adults who had ever voted ranged from a high of 62 percent (1974 young adults) to a low of 51 percent (1982 young adults). Whites had the highest voting rates of all racial/ethnic subgroups. Additionally, those whose parents had earned a graduate or professional degree and those who expected to attain a graduate or professional degree had the highest rates of voting among parental education and 12th-grade educational expectation subgroups in each period except 1982. A lower percentage of young adults had enlisted in the military in 2006, compared with 1974. At each of the time points studied, enlistment rates for males were higher than for females.

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Appendix A.
Technical Notes and Glossary

A.1 Overview of the Technical Appendix

The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) of the U.S. Department of Education has collected longitudinal data for more than 35 years. Starting in 1972 with the National Longitudinal Study of the High School Class of 1972 (NLS:72) and continuing to the Education Longitudinal Study of 2002 (ELS:2002), NCES has provided longitudinal and trend data to education policymakers and researchers that link secondary school educational achievement, processes, and experiences with outcomes such as entry into the labor market and postsecondary educational access, choice, and attainment.

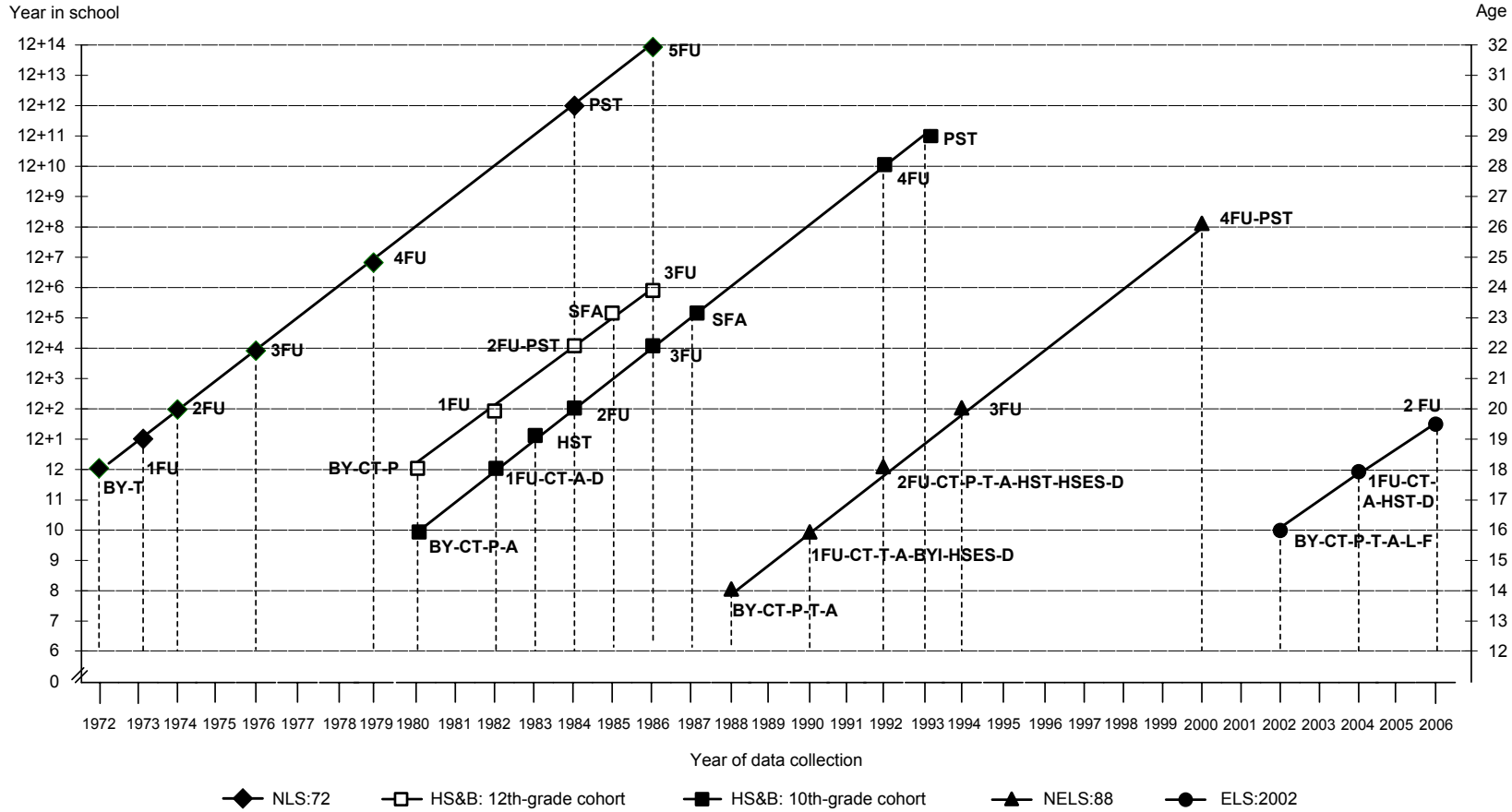
The first section of this appendix provides information about the design and content of the four studies whose data are drawn upon in this report: NLS:72, High School and Beyond (HS&B), the National Education Longitudinal Study of 1988 (NELS:88), and ELS:2002. This section is followed by discussions of sampling, weighting, response rates, quality of estimates, and standard errors. Next, an account is offered of the statistical procedures employed. In addition, this appendix catalogs the specific variables used in the analyses in this report and addresses questions of sample comparability.

A.2 NCES High School Longitudinal Studies Program

In response to its mandate to "collect and disseminate statistics and other data related to education in the United States" and the need for policy-relevant, nationally representative longitudinal samples of elementary and secondary students, NCES instituted a high school longitudinal studies program. The aim of this continuing program is to study the educational, vocational, and personal development of students at various stages in their educational careers and the personal, familial, social, institutional, and cultural factors that may affect that development.

The high school longitudinal studies program consists of three completed studies: NLS:72, HS&B, and NELS:88. In addition, base-year and first and second follow-up data for ELS:2002, the fourth longitudinal study in the series, are now available. (A fifth study, the High School Longitudinal Study of 2009 [HSLS:2009], has just been initiated.) Taken together, these studies describe the educational experiences of students from the 1970s, 1980s, 1990s, and 2000s and also provide bases for further understanding the correlates of educational success in the United States. Figure A-1 includes a temporal representation of these four longitudinal education studies, including completed waves of ELS:2002, and highlights their component and comparison points.

Figure A-1. Longitudinal design for the NCES high school cohorts: 1972–2006



NLS:72 = National Longitudinal Study of the High School Class of 1972
HS&B = High School and Beyond: 1980
NELS:88 = National Education Longitudinal Study of 1988
ELS:2002 = Education Longitudinal Study of 2002

BY = Base-year data collection
1FU = 1st follow-up data collection
2FU = 2nd follow-up data collection
3FU = 3rd follow-up data collection
4FU = 4th follow-up data collection
5FU = 5th follow-up data collection

CT = Cognitive Test
P = Parent Survey
T = Teacher Survey
A = Administrator Survey
L = Library/media Center Survey
F = Facilities Checklist

HST = High School Transcript
PST = Postsecondary Transcript
SFA = Student Financial Aid
BYI = Base Year Ineligible Study
HSES = High School Effectiveness Study
D = Dropout Survey

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, National Longitudinal Study of the High School Class of 1972 (NLS:72); High School and Beyond Longitudinal Study of 1980 (HS&B) Seniors (HS&B-Sr:80/86); High School and Beyond Longitudinal Study of 1980 (HS&B) Sophomores (HS&B-So:80/92); National Education Longitudinal Study of 1988 (NELS:88); and Education Longitudinal Study of 2002 (ELS:2002).

A.2.1 National Longitudinal Study of the High School Class of 1972 (NLS:72)

The Education Longitudinal Studies program began more than 35 years ago with the implementation of the NLS:72.[1] NLS:72 was launched with a survey of a national probability sample of 19,001 seniors from 1,061 public and private schools. The sample was designed to be representative of the approximately 3 million high school seniors enrolled in more than 17,000 schools in spring 1972. Each sample member was asked to complete a student questionnaire and a 69-minute test battery. School administrators were also asked to supply survey data on each student, as well as information about the school's programs, resources, and grading systems. Five follow-ups, conducted in 1973, 1974, 1976, 1979, and 1986, were completed. In the current report, classification and predictor variables are taken from the base-year (1972) survey, and outcome variables are taken from the first follow-up (1973) and second follow-up (1974) surveys.

A.2.2 High School and Beyond (HS&B)

HS&B—the second in the series of NCES longitudinal studies—was launched in 1980.[2] HS&B included one cohort of high school seniors comparable to the NLS:72 sample; however, the study also extended the age span and analytical range of NCES longitudinal studies by surveying a sample of high school sophomores. Base-year data collection took place in the spring term of the 1979–80 academic year with a two-stage probability sample. Some 1,015 schools served as the first-stage units, and 35,723 sophomores and 34,981 seniors within these schools were the second-stage units and eligible to participate (of whom about 58,000 total participated in the base year). Subsamples of both cohorts of HS&B were resurveyed in 1982, 1984, and 1986; the sophomore cohort also was surveyed in 1992. This report uses senior cohort questionnaire data collected in the HS&B base year (1980) for classification or predictor variables and the out-of-school first follow-up (1982) for outcome variables.

A.2.3 National Education Longitudinal Study of 1988 (NELS:88)

Data collection for NELS:88 was initiated with the 8th-grade class of 1988 in the spring term of the 1987–88 school year. The NELS:88 base year (1988) successfully surveyed 24,599 students, out of some 26,432 selected 8th-graders, across 1,052 public, Catholic, and other private schools. The first follow-up took place when most sample members were high school sophomores and the second follow-up when most were seniors. The spring 1990 sample was freshened to ensure that it represented the nation's high school sophomores, and the spring 1992 sample was freshened to represent the nation's high school seniors. The sample was also

[1] For documentation of NLS:72, see Riccobono et al. (1981) and Tourangeau et al. (1987). While recent NCES reports and user documentation may be found on the NCES website (http://nces.ed.gov), older documentation (e.g., from the 1970s and 1980s) is sometimes not available there. HS&B manuals may be downloaded from the International Archive of Education Data at the Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research (ICPSR) at the University of Michigan (http://www.icpsr.umich.edu)—for example, the HS&B first follow-up is documented as ICPSR study 8297. Materials may also be obtained in microfiche or photocopy format from the Education Resources Information Center (ERIC) database (http://www.eric.ed.gov).

[2] For more information on HS&B, see Jones et al. (1983) and the NCES website (http://www.nces.ed.gov/surveys/hsb/).

surveyed after scheduled high school graduation, in 1994 and 2000.[3] Classification and predictor variables used in this report are from seniors surveyed in the second follow-up, conducted in 1992; the outcome variables reflect the senior cohort 2 years later, in 1994.

A.2.4 Education Longitudinal Study of 2002 (ELS:2002)

ELS:2002 was designed to monitor the transition of a national sample of young people as they progress from 10th grade through high school and on to postsecondary education and/or the world of work. In the first year of data collection (the 2002 base year), ELS:2002 measured students' tested achievement in reading and mathematics. ELS:2002 also obtained information from students about their attitudes and experiences. These same students (including those who dropped out of school) were tested and surveyed again in 2004 (and the sample freshened to provide a nationally representative sample of high school seniors) and then reinterviewed in 2006. This report uses 2006 outcome data for the ELS:2002 spring 2004 seniors.

A.3 Measures of Survey Precision and Quality

A.3.1 Survey Standard Errors

Because the longitudinal studies' sample designs involved stratification, the disproportionate sampling of certain strata, and clustered (i.e., multistage) probability sampling, the resulting statistics are more variable than they would have been if they had been based on data from a simple random sample of the same size. Several procedures are available for calculating precise estimates of sampling errors for complex samples. Procedures such as Taylor Series approximations, Balanced Repeated Replication, and Jackknife Repeated Replication, which can be found in advanced statistical programs such as SUDAAN, AM, Stata, or WESVAR, produce similar results. The analyses included in this report used the Taylor Series procedure to calculate standard errors.

A.3.2 Sampling, Weighting, Response Rates, and Quality of Estimates

NLS:72. The base-year sample design called for a stratified national probability sample of 1,200 schools with 18 seniors per school, school size permitting. From a sample of 23,451, a total of 19,001 students from 1,061 high schools provided base-year data on up to three data collection forms: a Test Battery, a School Record Information Form, and a Student Questionnaire. The student questionnaire was completed by a subset of the student respondents, some 16,683 seniors (71 percent), and provides the source for the NLS:72 classification variables contained in this report, while the 1973 and 1974 follow-ups provide the source of this report's NLS:72 outcome data. Unweighted response rates were 92 percent in the 1973 first follow-up and 89 percent in the 1974 second follow-up (Riccobono et al. 1981, appendix H, table H-3). Case weights were adjusted for nonresponse at each level (i.e., school and student) and for each round.

[3] More detailed information about the 1992 senior year surveys of NELS:88 can be found in Ingels et al. (1994) and on the 1994 third follow-up in Haggerty et al. (1996). The quality of NELS:88 data in the in-school rounds is examined in McLaughlin and Cohen (1997). The sample design is documented in Spencer et al. (1990). Eligibility and exclusion issues are addressed in Ingels (1996). NCES maintains a NELS:88 bibliography on its website. The bibliography encompasses both project documentation and research articles and reports employing NELS:88 data (see http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/nels88/Bibliography.asp).

HS&B. The base-year survey was conducted in the spring term of 1980 using a national probability sample of 1,015 secondary schools as the first units of selection. In the second stage, up to 36 seniors and 36 sophomores were selected in each school. The HS&B sophomore and senior cohorts were followed in 1982, 1984, and 1986; the sophomore cohort was also surveyed in 1992. The unweighted response rate at the baseline school level was 70 percent and at the baseline student level was 81 percent for the senior cohort.[4] In the senior cohort first follow-up (1982), the unweighted response rate was 94 percent (11,227 completions from a total first follow-up subsample of 11,995) (Jones et al. 1983). Case weights were adjusted for nonresponse at each level and for each round.

NELS:88. NELS:88 differs from NLS:72, HS&B, and ELS:2002 in that the first data collection phase began in the 8th grade rather than the sophomore or senior year; nonetheless, through a sample freshening procedure, NELS:88 generated nationally representative sophomore and senior cohorts as well. The base-year (8th-grade) cohort was drawn from a stratified national probability sample of 1,052 public and private 8th-grade schools, from which about 25,000 students participated in the base-year study. Additional follow-ups were implemented in 1990, 1992, 1994, and 2000.

The unweighted response rate at the baseline 8th-grade school level was 70 percent for the initial school selections. Replacement schools were used to achieve a realized sample of 815 public and 237 private schools. The 8th-grade student questionnaire completion rate was 93 percent. 2 years later, most students had dispersed to new schools; 99 percent of these schools cooperated. The unweighted first follow-up (1990) student questionnaire completion rate was 94 percent (unweighted). Directly relevant to this report are the data collections in 1992 and 1994. The unweighted second follow-up (1992) student questionnaire response rate was 93 percent (Ingels et al. 1994), and for the 1994 third follow-up, 94 percent (Haggerty et al. 1996). Case weights were adjusted for nonresponse at each level and for each round.

ELS:2002. The ELS:2002 base-year study was carried out in a national probability sample of 752 public, Catholic, and other private schools in the spring term of the 2001–02 school year. Of 17,591 eligible selected sophomores, 15,362 completed a base-year questionnaire. The unweighted response rate at the school level was 62 percent, and at the sophomore baseline level, student questionnaire completion was 87 percent. In the first follow-up (2004), 16,252 students participated, for an unweighted completion rate of 95 percent. In the second follow-up (2006), some 89 percent of the sample (about 14,200) completed a questionnaire (Ingels et al. 2007). Case weights were adjusted for nonresponse at each level and for each round.

Additional information about the design of NLS:72, HS&B, NELS:88, and ELS:2002 questionnaire wording, data collection results, structure of the data files, specifications used in creating composite variables, universe coverage, sample selection procedures, weighting methodology, selected standard error estimates, estimates of design effects for categories of

[4] Weighted school response rates for NLS:72 and HS&B are not included in published documentation. For consistency's sake, response rates have therefore been reported for all four studies in unweighted form. Note that all four surveys have two-stage samples (the school is the primary sampling unit, and the student is the second-stage sampling unit). In such a sample, the true response rate is the product of the response rates for the two levels (e.g., for HS&B seniors, $0.70 \times 0.81 = 0.567$, or 57 percent) (Seastrom 2002). However, bias analyses have also been conducted for school nonresponse for each of the surveys to provide further information about possible bias in estimates (see, e.g., Ingels et al. 2005; Spencer et al. 1990; Tourangeau et al. 1983; Williams and Folsom 1977).

students, and results of nonresponse analyses is provided in each study's user manuals and technical reports. For questionnaire-based comparisons in this report, the most relevant documents are the following: Haggerty et al. (1996); Ingels et al. (1994, 2007); Jones et al. (1983); and Riccobono et al. (1981). For detailed reliability and validity information concerning the questionnaires, the various technical reports should also be consulted. For the senior year surveys that form the basis for the classification variables in this report, the following sources are particularly recommended: on data quality, see Echternacht (1973); Fetters, Stowe, and Owings (1984); Kaufman and Rasinski (1991); and McLaughlin and Cohen (1997). On sampling issues, see Frankel et al. (1981); Ingels et al. (2007); Spencer et al. (1990); and Williams and Folsom (1977). On eligibility and exclusion, see Ingels (1996).

A.4 Statistical Procedures

A.4.1 Student's *t* Statistic

Comparisons that have been drawn in the text of this report have been tested for statistical significance to ensure that the differences are larger than those that might be expected due to sampling variation. The statistical comparisons in this report were based on the *t* statistic. Whether the difference between two groups is considered significant or not is determined by calculating a *t* value for the difference between a pair of means or percentages and comparing this value to published tables of values, called critical values. The alpha level is an a priori statement of the probability that a difference exists in fact rather than by chance.

The *t* statistic between estimates from various subgroups presented in the tables can be computed by using the following formula:

$$t = \frac{x_1 - x_2}{\sqrt{\left(SE_1^2 + SE_2^2\right)}}$$

where x_1 and x_2 are the estimates to be compared (e.g., the means of sample members in two groups) and SE_1 and SE_2 are their corresponding standard errors. This formula is valid only for independent estimates. Analyses do not adjust for multiple comparisons.

A.5 Documentation for Variables Used

In section A.6, all variables used in this report are succinctly described. For more detailed information beyond section A.6, see the applicable user's guides for the four studies:

Ingels, S.J., Dowd, K.L., Baldridge, J.D., Stipe J.L., Bartot, V.H., and Frankel, M.R. (1994). *User's Manual: NELS:88 Second Follow-Up Student Component Data Files* (NCES 94-374). National Center for Education Statistics, U.S. Department of Education. Washington, DC.

Ingels, S.J., Pratt, D.J., Wilson, D., Burns, L.J., Currivan D., Rogers, J.E., and Hubbard-Bednasz, S. (2007). *Education Longitudinal Study of 2002: Base-Year to Second Follow-up Data File Documentation* (NCES 2008-347). National Center for Education Statistics, Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education. Washington, DC. Available: http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch.

Jones, C., Clarke, M., Mooney, G., McWilliams, H., Crawford, I., Stephenson, B., and Tourangeau, R. (1983). *High School and Beyond 1980 Senior Cohort First Follow-up (1982) Data File User's Manual* (NCES 83-212). U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.

Riccobono, J., Henderson, L.B., Burkheimer, G.J., Place, C., and Levinsohn, J.R. (1981). *National Longitudinal Study: Base Year (1972) through Fourth Follow-Up (1979) Data File User's Manual*. National Center for Education Statistics, U.S. Department of Education. Washington, DC.

The various questionnaires contain items in their question context, with complete stems and response options. The NLS:72 base-year and follow-up questionnaires are reprinted in Riccobono et al. (1981, appendix A). The HS&B senior cohort 1980 and 1982 questionnaires are reproduced in Jones et al. (1983). For NELS:88, both the 1992 and 1994 questionnaires appear in Ingels et al. (1994) as, respectively, appendix K and appendix Q; a CATI programming code version of the 1994 interview may be found in Haggerty et al. (1996). For ELS:2002, a facsimile of the 2006 interview appears in Ingels et al. (2007), while ELS:2002 base-year and first follow-up instruments are available on the NCES website (http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/els2002/index.asp). The cited user's guides also provide additional information about the various variables (including derived or composite variables) used in this report, if detail beyond that provided in section A.6 is desired.

A.6 Glossary of Variables

The glossary provides information about the following senior-year-of-high-school classification variables for this report: race/ethnicity, sex, parents' education, and educational expectations. It also provides information about the following 2-years-after-high-school outcomes: work/schooling status; postsecondary attendance, number of institutions attended, institution type, enrollment intensity; work for pay, hours worked and job type for those primarily in the labor market; household composition, marital status, and family formation; civic participation (voting) and military service.

A.6.1 Defining High School Senior Cohorts

The analysis population comprises spring-term seniors. This population is not identical to the high school graduating class because a small number of spring-term seniors fail to graduate with their peers.

NLS:72 and HS&B[5] were spring-term senior cohorts at their point of origin. There was therefore no need to update the sample through freshening or by reassessing the eligibility status of previously ineligible sample members who were now spring-term seniors. On the other hand, NELS:88 and ELS:2002 began at an earlier grade (8th grade for NELS:88 and 10th grade for ELS:2002). NELS:88 and ELS:2002 built spring-term senior cohorts from questionnaire and

[5] Although not used in this report, HS&B also had a sophomore cohort. When the 1980 sophomore cohort was resurveyed 2 years later, no sample freshening, or reassessment of ineligibles for status change, was conducted. As a consequence, the HS&B sophomore cohort, unlike the senior cohort, does not provide a representative and unbiased sample of spring high school seniors. Nevertheless, bias analyses suggest that when used as if it were a representative senior sample, the biases in the sophomore cohort 1982 data are relatively small (see Dalton et al. 2007, appendix A, section A.5).

school records–based enrollment status updates of originally earlier-grade cohorts as they progressed through high school. The samples were supplemented and made fully representative unbiased samples of seniors through (1) sample freshening,[6] and (2) for past ineligibles, monitoring eligibility change by senior year.[7] Freshening permitted 1992 spring seniors in NELS:88 and 2004 seniors in ELS:2002 who were not in the original sampling frame a chance of selection into the study. For example, a student who was not in 10th grade in spring 2002 but was in 12th grade in spring 2004—or a senior who was in the country in 2004 but out of the country in 2002—would be brought into the study via the freshening procedure. Seniors not in the frame 2 years before include dropouts who have returned to school, early graduates, and students who have been held back a grade.

Likewise, in both NELS:88 and ELS:2002, prior-round ineligibles whose eligibility status had changed at 12th grade were added to the eligible sample of seniors. For example, a student who was an 8th-grader in NELS:88 in 1988 who was then deemed ineligible to participate owing to, for example, a language barrier, who remained in modal grade progression sequence and therefore was a spring 1992 senior, and who had become sufficiently proficient in English would reenter the sample as a senior cohort member (while remaining ineligible in the prior rounds).

Across the four spring senior classes—1972, 1980, 1992, and 2004—there were some differences in the source information used to classify an individual as a high school senior. For NLS:72, spring-term 1972 seniors were identified from school-supplied rosters of 12th-graders. In HS&B as well, the spring-term 1980 senior cohort was identified from school rosters. In NELS:88 and ELS:2002, only the freshening sample was roster based, and questionnaire items were used to confirm grade and eligibility. In NELS:88, a special flag (G12COHRT) identifies spring-term 1992 seniors, based on a spring-term 1992 questionnaire item that directly asks, "What grade are you in?" (F2S6A). When the questionnaire response was missing, grade classification was based on school report (or, if still missing, based on imputation). For ELS:2002, a special flag (G12COHRT) was created to mark spring-term 2004 seniors; the flag is based on a spring-term 2004 questionnaire item that directly asks, "What grade are you in?" (F1S14); if the questionnaire item was missing, senior cohort status was based on school report (or, if still missing, imputation). The ELS:2002 G12COHRT flag was updated in the 2006 round, and the updated version is used in this report. All analyses in this report are based on spring-term seniors 2 years later, using each study's relevant panel weight (for NLS:72, W11; for HS&B, FU1WT; for NELS:88, F3F2PNWT; and for ELS:2002, F2F1PNWT). NLS:72 differs from the other studies in that it had annual rounds rather than biannual rounds in the 2 years after high school. NLS:72 therefore requires participation at three, rather than two, points in time. Specifically, the NLS:72 "young adult" analysis sample was selected in this way: * select cases for Youth Trend Report if PARTIC=1 and FFU_IND=1 and SFUIND=1 and W11 ne 0.

A.6.2 Row/Classification Variables

The basic organization of this report conforms to the following scheme: the row variables are student demographic and aspirational characteristics as of senior year in high school, cross-tabulated with selected outcomes 2 years later, with each of the four studies represented by a

[6] For a full account of the NELS:88 sample freshening procedures, see Ingels et al. (1994); for an account of sample freshening in ELS:2002, see Ingels et al. (2005).
[7] For an account of updating the senior-year status of NELS:88 8th- and 10th-grade cohort members, see Ingels (1996); for a similar account of ELS:2002, see Ingels et al. (2005).

column of estimates. Tables in this report employ four row or classification variables, providing subgroup breakdowns for (1) respondent sex, (2) race/ethnicity, (3) level of parental education, and (4) senior year expectations about level of future educational attainment.

Race/ethnicity. The race categories used in this report are Asian (includes Pacific Islander); Black (which includes African American); Hispanic (which includes Latino); and White. An additional category "two or more races" applies only to ELS:2002. While Pacific Islanders have been assimilated to the Asian category in this report, it should be noted that there was no race category for this group in NLS:72.[8] The NLS:72 Asian category was Oriental or Asian American. It is probable but not certain that Pacific Islander respondents in 1972 would have classified themselves as Asian. Also, note that current federal reporting standards include the new category Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander—this category is available only in ELS:2002, and once more, individuals invoking this category have been treated as Asian in the ELS:2002 data for this report. All in all, these differences across studies should not affect the accuracy of estimates in this report, except in the case of "two or more races."

Some caveats should also be entered concerning the "two or more races" category in ELS:2002. There is no way to determine how an individual in the multiracial category in ELS:2002 would have been placed in a race or ethnicity category in the prior studies. The race/ethnicity trend line therefore breaks between ELS:2002 and the three prior studies. However, given the small proportion of ELS:2002 sample members who chose the "two or more races" option (about 4 percent), its impact is correspondingly likely to be limited. In all four studies, race was self-reported and based on a response in the student questionnaire. Because of the small sample size, the category American Indian or Alaska Native was not included in tables.

NLS:72 (1972) Composite variable CRACE is used.

HS&B (1980) Composite variable RACE is used (derived from item BB089).

NELS:88 (1992) Composite variable F2RACE1 is used.

ELS:2002 (2004) Composite variable F1RACE is used. Note that this composite variable includes the category "two or more races"—a category not included in the prior studies.

Sex. Consistently across the four studies, respondents were asked whether their sex was female or male. In NELS:88 and ELS:2002, name was used to impute sex in the rare cases this information was not supplied by the respondent.

NLS:72 (1972) The composite CSEX is used.

HS&B (1980) The composite SEX is used (derived from BB083).

NELS:88 (1992) The composite F2SEX is used.

ELS:2002 (2004) The composite F1SEX is used.

Parents' Education**.** In this report, one of the classification variables is the highest level of educational attainment for either parent. From more fine-grained questionnaire items, the data have been collapsed to reflect four categories: high school or less, some college, bachelor's degree, or graduate or professional degree. In NLS:72, the higher of CFAED (father's education composite) and CMOED (mother's education composite) was used, and in HS&B, PAREDUC

[8] Pacific Islanders are an extremely rare population in the United States—for example, see Ingels et al. (1994), who show 74 Asian/Pacific Islanders in a NELS:88 sample of more than 21,188.

(parental education composite) was used. In NELS:88, the higher of F2N8A (How far in school did respondent's father go?) and F2N8B (How far in school did respondent's mother go?) was used. The NELS:88 variable is augmented with information from various sources (parent questionnaire, student questionnaire, new student supplement). In ELS:2002, F1PARED is equivalent to either F1MOTHED or F1FATHED, whichever (mother or father) has the higher level of education (based on parent and student reports). In ELS:2002—but not in the other three studies—missing parent education data were imputed.

In each of the four studies, respondents were asked to indicate the highest level of education students' parents had achieved. In NLS:72, composite variables for parents' education used student data because only student data were available. In HS&B, student responses were predominantly (but not exclusively) used to construct the education composite (parent-supplied data were available only for a modest subset of the sample). In NELS:88 and ELS:2002, parent responses were normally available, but student reports were substituted when parent information was missing.

In NLS:72, students reported the highest educational level completed by their mother or father. Response categories were none or grade school only; did not finish high school; finished high school; less than 2 years of vocational or trade school; 2 years or more of vocational or trade school; some college (including a 2-year degree); finished college (4- or 5-year degree); master's degree or equivalent; and Ph.D., M.D., or equivalent. In HS&B, students reported on their parent's highest achieved educational level. The nine response options were less than high school graduation; high school graduation only; less than 2 years of vocational or technical school; two or more years of vocational or technical school; less than 2 years of college; 2 years or more of college; finished college; finished Master's degree; or finished Ph.D. or M.D.

In NELS:88, parents were asked to indicate the highest level of education they and their spouse/partner had achieved. Parents' 11 response options were 8th grade or less; beyond 8th grade but less than high school graduation; obtained GED; completed high school; attended vocational, trade, or business school after high school for less than 2 years; attended vocational, trade, or business school after high school for 2 years or more; attended less than 2 years of college; attended two or more years of college; finished college (with 4- or 5-year degree); completed Master's degree or equivalent; or completed Ph.D., M.D., or other professional degree. In the NELS:88 second follow-up, students new to the study (freshened seniors or first-time respondents) were asked to indicate the highest level of education achieved by their father and mother. Response options were equivalent to the parent response options, except that the lowest three categories were replaced by "less than high school graduation" and "high school graduation only," "GED, or an equivalent" (for 10 response categories total).

In the ELS:2002 base year, parents were asked to indicate the highest level of education they and their spouse/partner had achieved. Students were asked for their mother's (or female guardian's) and father's (or male guardian's) highest achieved educational level. For both respondents, these were the eight response options: did not finish high school; graduated high school or obtained equivalent (GED); attended 2-year school but did not complete degree; graduated 2-year school; attended college but did not complete degree; graduated college; completed Master's degree or equivalent; or completed Ph.D., M.D., or other professional degree.

Educational Expectations in Senior Year: Future Attainment. All four studies asked (in slightly variant ways) about seniors' expectations for future educational attainment. For this report, the more extensive original categories were collapsed into four: high school or less, some college, attainment of a bachelor's degree, and attainment of a graduate or professional degree. In ELS:2002 (but not NLS:72, HS&B, or NELS:88), missing educational expectations data were statistically imputed.[9] In addition, in NELS:88 and in ELS:2002, this item had a "Don't know" response option, but no such option was supplied in NLS:72 or HS&B. About 8 percent of seniors in ELS:2002 and 6 percent of seniors in NELS:88 chose the "Don't know" option. To the extent that individuals who opted for "Don't know" in NELS:88 or ELS:2002 might have chosen a specific education level if not offered that choice, time series results between the first two studies and the last two can only be compared with some qualifications. The following variables were used to indicate the highest level of education expected by the respondent:

NLS:72 BQ29B (VAR0383), combining codes 1 and 2 (respectively, less than high school and high school only) into a single category indicating high school diploma only; and combining codes 3 and 4 (respectively, vocational or trade school, and some college [including 2-year degree]) into a single category indicating some college work, but less than a 4-year degree.

HS&B BB065, combining codes 1 and 2 (respectively, less than high school and high school graduation only) into a single category indicating a high school diploma or less; combining codes 3 through 6 (from less than 2 years of vocational school to two or more years of college but not completing a degree) into a single category indicating some college work, but less than a 4-year degree; and combining codes 8 and 9 (respectively, Master's degree or its equivalent, and Ph.D., M.D., or other professional degree) into a single category indicating a graduate/professional degree.

NELS:88 F2S43, combining codes 1 and 2 (respectively, less than high school and high school graduation only) into a single category indicating a high school diploma or less; combining codes 3 through 7 (indicating from less than 2 years at a 2-year school to more than 2 years at college but not completing a degree) into a single category indicating some college work, but less than a 4-year degree; and combining codes 9 and 10 (respectively, Master's degree or its equivalent, and Ph.D., M.D., or other professional degree) into a single category indicating a graduate/professional degree.

ELS:2002 F1S42, combining codes 1 through 3 (from less than high school graduation to high school graduation only) into a single category indicating a high school diploma or less; combining codes 4 and 5 (respectively, attend or complete 2-year school or college, and attend 4-year college but not complete degree) into a single category indicating some college work, but less than a 4-year degree; and combining codes 7 and 8 (respectively, Master's degree or its equivalent, and Ph.D., M.D., or other professional degree) into a single category indicating a graduate/professional degree.

A.6.3 Two Years After Senior Year: Outcome Variables

A number of variables were selected to explore outcomes 2 years after the senior year of high school. These variables are detailed, chapter by chapter.

[9] In NLS:72, eight percent had missing data for this measure. In HS&B and NELS:88, three percent had missing data for this measure.

CHAPTER 2: STATUSES OF YOUNG ADULTS TWO YEARS AFTER HIGH SCHOOL

Table 1: Current activity status (working/in school/other)**.** The category labels are "Currently enrolled in postsecondary courses," "Currently working for pay and not enrolled," and "Currently not enrolled and not working for pay." Note that, for assignment to a category, "enrolled" trumps "working" so that someone who is both working and enrolled appears only in the "currently enrolled" category.

NLS:72	Currently enrolled in postsecondary courses is composite variable ACT174.
	Currently working for pay and not enrolled is composite variable ACT474.
	Currently not enrolled and not working for pay is variable SQ1.
HS&B	Currently enrolled in postsecondary courses is composite variable PSESFE82 or, if missing, questionnaire items FE1B and FE1C.
	Currently working for pay and not enrolled is variable JOBSFE82 or, if missing, FEIA.
	Currently not enrolled and not working for pay is variables FEID–FEIJ.
NELS:88	Currently enrolled in postsecondary courses is ACTSTA2 and ACTSTA3
	Currently working for pay and not enrolled is variable ACTSTATA1.
	Currently not enrolled and not working for pay is variables ACTSTA4–ACTSTA9.
ELS:2002	Currently enrolled in postsecondary courses is variable F2RTYPE.
	Currently working for pay and not enrolled is variable F2C13.
	Currently not enrolled and not working for pay is variables F2C13 and F2RTYPE.

Note: In all surveys except ELS:2002, the raw questionnaire variables (not shown above) allow respondents to select more than one current status and to select from a range of "other" options. For example, in NELS:88, a person could report both being currently enrolled in postsecondary courses and working for pay. In ELS:2002, status categories are mutually exclusive, and "other" statuses are not defined. To make this measure consistent across surveys, in this analysis, respondents who reported they were both working and in school are classified as being in school, and either of those statuses take precedence over "other" statuses.

CHAPTER 3: POSTSECONDARY ENROLLMENT

Figure 1 and Table 2: Any postsecondary educational enrollment. All respondents in the four studies were asked whether they had had any postsecondary education enrollment in the 2-year period after the senior class's modal high school graduation. This series of items constitutes a critical filter for the questions that follow, which concern those who took a postsecondary path.

NLS:72 The *postsecondary enrollment* composites are variables ACT172, ACT173, and ACT174; or, if missing, questionnaire variables are FQ23 and SQ9.

HS&B The *postsecondary enrollment* composite variables are PSESOC80, PSESFE81, PSESOC81, and PSESFE82 or, if missing, questionnaire variable FE31.

NELS:88 The *postsecondary enrollment* variable is NUMINST.

ELS:2002 The *postsecondary enrollment* variable is F2EVRATT.

Figure 2: Number of postsecondary institutions attended. The number of postsecondary institutions attended carries two values (1, and more than 1) and is based on the following variables.

NLS:72 The number of postsecondary institutions attended variables are FQ30 and SQ26.

HS&B The number of postsecondary institutions attended variables are FE33B1–FE33B5.

NELS:88 The number of postsecondary institutions attended variable is NUMINST.

ELS:2002 The number of postsecondary institutions attended variable is F2B10.

Table 3: Delayed postsecondary enrollment**.** Data on timing of entry into postsecondary education in the 2-year period since the high school senior year are provided by the studies. In this report, students are counted as having delayed postsecondary educational entry when they begin postsecondary education at least one semester after the autumn of the year of the senior cohort's modal graduation (i.e., no adjustment was made for the spring-term high school seniors who failed to graduate with their class). Those who began in January of the following year or later are regarded as delayed.

NLS:72 The *timing of entry into a postsecondary education program* variables are ACT172, FQ27AB, FQ33AB, FQ40CB, SQ14B, and SQ35AB.

HS&B The *timing of entry into a postsecondary education program* variables are PSESOC80, FE33C1Y, FE33C2Y, FE33C3Y, FE33C4Y, and FE33C5Y.

NELS:88 The timing of entry into a postsecondary education program variables are ENRL0692–ENRL0894.

ELS:2002 The timing of entry into a postsecondary education program variable is F2ISTART.

Figure 3: Percentage distribution of full- or part-time enrollment in postsecondary institutions**.** Enrolled respondents were asked to report whether they were currently (approximately 2 years after spring of senior year) enrolled full time or less than full time.

NLS:72 The *enrollment intensity* (full-time versus less than full-time) variable is ACT374.

HS&B The *enrollment intensity* (full-time versus less than full-time) variable is PSESFE82 (or, if missing, FE33E1–FE33E5).

NELS:88 The *enrollment intensity* (full-time versus less than full-time) variable is PSELASST.

ELS:2002 The *enrollment intensity* (full-time versus less than full-time) variable is based on F2IFTPT from the ELS:2002 institution level file.

Table 4: Postsecondary institutional type**.** Those who are currently enrolled are asked about the type of institution they attend, that is, whether it is a 4-year, 2-year, or less-than-2-year school.

NLS:72 The *type of institution* (4- versus 2-year versus vocational, trade, business, or other career training school) variable is ACT274.

HS&B The *type of institution* (4- versus 2-year versus other) variables are PSESFE82 (or, if missing, FE33B1–FE33B5).

NELS:88 The *type of institution* (4- versus 2-year versus less than 2-year) variable is PSELASTY.

ELS:2002 The *type of institution* (4-year versus 2-year versus less than 2-year) is based on F2ILEVEL from the ELS:2002 institution level file.

Table 5: Postsecondary institutional type**.** Those who are currently enrolled are asked about the type of institution they attend, that is, whether it is a 4-year, 2-year, or less-than-2-year school.

The variable definitions for table 5 are the same as for table 4.

CHAPTER 4: EMPLOYMENT

Table 6: Ever worked for pay. In HS&B, NELS:88, and ELS:2002, respondents were asked if they had ever had a job since leaving high school. NLS:72 has a series of three snapshot variables tied to specific dates; respondents identified their work status as of October 1972, October 1973, and October 1974. An example of such a snapshot variable, taken from the first follow-up questionnaire of NLS:72, is the following: "Did you hold a job of any kind during the first week of October 1973?" There are also two questionnaire variables that ask if the respondent ever had a job between October 1972 and October 1973 and between October 1973 and October 1974. An example of the latter type question, FQ58, is as follows: "this question refers to the entire 52-week period from October 1972 to October 1973; about how many different weeks did you work altogether during this period?"

NLS:72 *Were you working the first week of October?* composite variables are ACT472, ACT473, and ACT474; also used: questionnaire variables SQ74 and FQ58.

HS&B The *ever-worked* composites are JOBSOC80, JOBSFE81, JOBSOC81, and JOBSFE82; the questionnaire variable is FE22.

NELS:88 The *ever-worked* variables are LABOR0692–LABOR0894.

ELS:2002 The *ever-worked* variable is F2EVRJOB.

Table 7: Worked while attending college**.** The data distinguish the working status of those who enrolled in college: those who enrolled in college and worked, and those who enrolled and did not work. ELS:2002 asked about having ever worked while attending college, and this

datum is deducible in NLS:72, HS&B, and NELS:88 from a series of snapshot questions that pinpoint both enrollment and employment status in time.

NLS:72 ACT172, ACT173, and ACT174 were compared with ACT472, ACT473, and ACT474.

HS&B JOBSOC80, JOBSFE81, JOBSOC81, and JOBSFE82 were compared with PSESOC80, PSESFE81, PSESOC81, and PSESFE82.

NELS:88 The *worked and attended college* variables are PRIMSTD1–PRIMSTD3 and are supplemented by comparing the month-by-month enrollment variables (ENRL0692–ENRL0894) with the month-by-month employment variables (LABR0692–LABR0894).

ELS:2002 The *worked and attended college* variables are F2C24 and F2C29.

Figure 4 and Table 8: First job. This variable indicates the type of first job worked out of high school among nonenrollees: clerical, craftsperson, laborer/farm laborer, skilled operative, service/sales, managerial, and other. In NLS:72, the job worked in October 1972 is used. The variables drawn on are as follows: NLS:72, FQ55A; HS&B, FE24A1; NELS:88, JOBFIROC; and ELS:2002, F21STOCC.

The occupation rubrics are based on 1970 Decennial Census categories, and examples of specific occupations assimilated to the broader occupational category are given below. In this report, the categories service and sales have been combined, and the "other" category includes protective services and proprietor/owner.

CLERICAL, such as bank teller, bookkeeper, secretary, typist, mail carrier, ticket agent;

CRAFTSPERSON, such as baker, automobile mechanic, machinist, painter, plumber, telephone installer, carpenter;

LABORER/FARMER, such as construction worker, car washer, sanitary worker, farm laborer;

MANAGERIAL, such as sales manager, office manager, school administrator, buyer, restaurant manager, government official.

PROTECTIVE SERVICES, such as detective, police officer or guard, sheriff, fire fighter;

PROPRIETOR/OWNER, such as owner of small business, contractor, restaurant owner;

SERVICE, such as barber, beautician, practical nurse, private household worker, janitor, waiter;

SALES, such as salesperson, advertising or insurance agent, real estate broker; and

SKILLED OPERATIVE, such as meat cutter, assembly worker, machine operator, welder, taxicab, bus or truck driver.

Figure 5: Weekly hours worked at first job. This variable captures the weekly number of hours worked among nonenrollees at their first job out of high school. In NLS:72, the job

worked in October 1972 is used. Specific variables drawn on across studies are as follows: NLS:72, FQ56a; HS&B, FE24A9; NELS:88, JOBFIRHR; and ELS:2002, F2C26R.

CHAPTER 5: HOME AND FAMILY LIFE

Table 9: Household living arrangements two years after high school**.** This variable indicates the composition of the respondent's household. Response options are as follows: alone, parents/guardians, siblings, spouse, roommate (nonrelative). While all four studies collected this information, they had somewhat different temporal reference points. In NLS:72, the first week of October 1974 was used. In HS&B, the temporal anchor was February 1982. In NELS:88, the first week of February 1994 was used. For ELS:2002, spring 2006 (or spring academic term 2006) was the reference point. Also, for NELS:88, the option for spouse included husband, wife, or partner, while the other three studies did not include partners when collecting spousal information. Finally, in NELS:88, living with roommates is not a separate option, but roommates are included in the other category.

NLS:72 The living arrangements/household composition variable is SQ3.

HS&B The living arrangements/household composition variables are FE3A–FE3K.

NELS:88 The *living arrangements/household composition* variables are PHHROS1-PHHROS7.

ELS:2002 The *living arrangements/household composition* variables are F2 and F3.

Table 10: Marital history two years after high school**.** Marital status (ever married) is a dichotomous variable that indicates the percentage ever married and includes those who have subsequently separated, divorced, or become widowed. Reference periods are not fully aligned. NLS:72 asked respondents to report their marital status as of October 1974; HS&B asked respondents to report their marital status as of the first week of February 1982; and both NELS:88 and ELS:2002 asked respondents to report the current (time-of-interview) marital status.

NLS:72 The *marital status* variable is SQ105.

HS&B The *marital status* variable is FE55.

NELS:88 The *marital status* variable is MARSTAT.

ELS:2002 The *marital status* variable is F2D01.

Table 11: Children—percentage with any**.** This variable records whether respondents have children. In NLS:72, respondents were asked to report how many children they had as of the first week of October 1974; in HS&B, respondents were asked if they had any children (including adopted, foster-care, and stepchildren) as of the first week of February 1982, and filter questions permit limiting responses to biological children; in NELS:88, respondents were asked to report the number of children born to the respondent at the time of the interview; and in ELS:2002, respondents were asked (again, at the time of interview) to report whether they had any biological children. Except in NLS:72, surveys permit identifying the number of biological children the respondents had at the time of the interview. NLS:72 estimates may include foster children or step children.

NLS:72 The *children* variable is SQ118.

HS&B The *children* variables are FE62A and FE63C1–FE63C5.

NELS:88 The *children* variable is NUMCHILD.

ELS:2002 The *children* variables are F2D03 and F2D04.

CHAPTER 6: CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

Table 12: Ever voted**.** In all four studies, respondents are asked if they have voted in a local, state, or national election. In NLS:72, sample members were asked in the second follow-up: "Prior to October 1974, did you ever vote in a local, state, or national election?" The HS&B 1980 senior cohort was asked in 1982: "At any time since age 18, did you vote?" In NELS:88 (and ELS:2002), this question is posed as two items that inquire into (1) having ever voted in the last year, 1993–94 (or 2005–06), or (2) having voted in the prior presidential election, in 1992 (or 2004). While the variables seem largely comparable across the studies, there is some possibility of underestimation of voting behaviors in NELS:88 and ELS:2002, insofar as an individual might have voted in a local election (but not the presidential election) in 1992 (NELS:88) or 2004 (ELS:2002).

NLS:72 The *ever voted* variable is SQ138.

HS&B The *ever voted* variable is FE82.

NELS:88 The *ever voted* variables are VOTEPRES and NATELEC.

ELS:2002 The *ever voted* variables are F2D13 and F2D12.

Table 13: Ever served in military**.** In three of the four studies, respondents are asked, in a comparable way, if they have served in the military since leaving high school. This variable is not available in NELS:88.

NLS:72 The *served in military* variables are FQ64 and SQ121.

HS&B The *served in military* variable is FE54.

NELS:88 A *served in military* variable is not available.

ELS:2002 The *served in military* variable is F2D14.

A.7 Comparability of Data Across Cohorts

A major question for cross-cohort comparisons such as are reported in this report is the comparability of the datasets to be used. Although the four studies have been designed to produce comparable results, there are also differences between them that may affect the comparability and precision of estimates.

A.7.1 Eligibility: Students Excluded for Disability or Language Reasons

Eligibility issues figure in two important ways. *First*, for the two studies that began before senior year (NELS:88 and ELS:2002), there is the issue of whether prior-round ineligibility was reassessed for purposes of defining the senior cohort—this is essentially a complement to freshening. This eligibility updating, in fact, was performed in both NELS:88 and

ELS:2002—students excluded owing to language barriers or disabilities were reassessed and included if their eligibility status had changed by the time of the senior cohort round.

Second, there is the issue of cross-cohort comparability of ineligibility definitions. The question here is whether eligibility is defined consistently across the four samples—and, if not, the implications for comparison.

If definitions of eligibility differ, they may affect comparisons by making one sample more "select" than another. For example, if 1 percent of one cohort sample was excluded but 10 percent of another cohort sample was excluded, given patterns in achievement as they apply to students with disabilities or limited English-language proficiency (which are the standard reasons for exclusion), the likelihood would be that the high-exclusion sample would have higher mean achievement (and other positive outcomes) than if its eligibility rules rendered it a low-exclusion sample.

In a two-stage sample, eligibility is important both at the first stage (school) and the second (student). Similar definitions were used in deciding issues of school eligibility across the studies. At the student level, however, the matter is more problematic. Although the target population is highly similar across the studies (either "all seniors who can validly be assessed" or, as in ELS:2002, "all seniors who can meaningfully respond to a questionnaire, either through self- or interviewer administration"), it is not identical. Exclusion rules and their implementation have varied somewhat, and exclusion rates are known to differ (where they are known at all).

It is unclear what, or whether, disability and language exclusions were made in NLS:72 (although students with a language barrier are fairly rare at 12th grade). NLS:72 did include at least some of the disability population, and school administrators were asked to provide information as to specific disability on the Student School Record Information form (SRFQ10). In HS&B, students who could not validly be assessed were excluded from the study, but HS&B did not document how many students were affected. Nor did HS&B follow up with ineligible students thereafter, although this fact is more relevant for the sophomore cohort study than for the senior cohort sample used in this report.

NELS:88 followed the same eligibility policy as HS&B—students who could not validly be assessed using the NELS:88 cognitive test battery were excluded from the target population and the consequent sample. However, NELS:88 documented exclusion (including the reason), maintained a sample of ineligibles, reassessed eligibility with each round through the senior year, and those whose eligibility status changed reentered the NELS:88 sample starting in 1990 or 1992, depending on when their status changed.

ELS:2002 employed a different definition of eligibility. In ELS:2002, no students were classified as ineligible as such,[10] although some were exempted from completing the questionnaire (and others also were exempted from finishing a test); still others were tested under circumstances in which they were provided with special accommodations. The overall rate of instrument-exempted sophomores (sometimes called "questionnaire-ineligibles" in the ELS:2002 documentation) is quite low, below 1 percent in the ELS:2002 base year and follow-ups. (In contrast, by senior year, owing to reclassification of some ineligibles [per Ingels 1996, fifty-

[10] Note that in ELS:2002, contextual data were collected for questionnaire-ineligible students whenever possible—parent, school, and teacher surveys, and transcripts. In NELS:88 only limited enrollment status and basic demographic information was collected for ineligibles, which can be used only in conjunction with the expanded sample weight.

seven percent of the base-year ineligibles in NELS:88 had been reclassified as eligible for the second follow-up 4 years later] and failure of others to progress in sequence to 12th grade, less than two percent of the NELS:88 senior cohort was ineligible.) ELS:2002 base-year students incapable of completing a questionnaire were reevaluated in the first follow-up. Of course, while exclusion rates in NELS:88 and ELS:2002 are known to be low, the exclusion rate in HS&B and NLS:72 is uncertain.[11]

For more information on eligibility and exclusion in HS&B and NELS:88, see Ingels (1996). For further information on these issues in ELS:2002, see Ingels et al. (2005, 2007).

A.7.2 Sample Design Differences

Differences in sampling rates, sample sizes, and design effects across the studies also affect precision of estimation and comparability of findings. Asian students, for example, were oversampled in NELS:88 and ELS:2002 but not in NLS:72 or HS&B, where their numbers were quite small. Also, although Catholic schools were oversampled in three of the four studies, HS&B had few (only 38) private non-Catholic schools, and NLS:72 had few nonpublic schools. While sampling weights adjust for the effects of oversampling on estimation, rare populations that had no oversampling will tend to have higher standard errors. The base-year (1980) participating sample in HS&B numbered 30,030 sophomores (and 28,240 seniors in 1980). In contrast, 15,362 sophomores participated in the base year of ELS:2002 (and 13,420 seniors in 2004). Cluster sizes within base-year schools were much larger for HS&B (on average, 30 participating sophomores and 28 participating seniors per school) than for NLS:72 (17 seniors) or ELS:2002 (just over 20 participating sophomores per base-year school)—larger cluster sizes are better for school effects research but carry a penalty of greater sample inefficiency. Mean design effect (a measure of sample efficiency)[12] also is quite variable across the studies: for example, for the modal 12th-grade year, 3.6 for HS&B and 3.7 for NELS:88 with the most favorable design effect, 2.3, for the ELS:2002 first follow-up. Other possible sources of difference between the cohorts that may impair change measurement are different levels of sample attrition over time and changes in the characteristics of the population of nonrespondents.

A.7.3 Participation Rates

Response rates also differ somewhat across the studies (and even between rounds of the same study), although nonresponse-adjusted weights were generated for each of the cohorts. In HS&B, NELS:88, and ELS:2002, student-level participation was defined in terms of completion of the student questionnaire (thus, e.g., a student who completed only a test was classified as a nonparticipant). In NLS:72, students were counted as participants if they completed a test or completed a questionnaire, or if their school provided an information form for them. However, in this report, NLS:72 participation is constrained to the "questionnaire completer" definition, both

[11] For the sophomore cohort of HS&B, it is possible to say, from examination of the transcript file, that 2.6 percent of students were identified as in a special education program at some point in high school (Hoachlander 1992). Such sample exclusion statistics may at least set some parameters on how many disabled students were excluded. However, there was no high school transcript study for the senior cohort.

[12] Effective sample size can be quite different from the nominal sample size; effective sample size is more meaningful than raw sample size in terms of statistical analysis—for example, the sampling variance of a mean standard score is equal to the reciprocal of the effective sample size, not the reciprocal of the raw sample size. Effective sample size may be defined as the raw sample size divided by the design effect.

for consistency with the other studies and because this report is based solely on questionnaire data.

At the school participation level, response rates were somewhat higher in HS&B and NELS:88 (unweighted, around 70 percent) than in ELS:2002 (unweighted, 62 percent).[13] School nonresponse bias analyses were performed for each study and may be found in the study documentation.

At the student level, there is even more variation in unweighted response rates. In NLS:72, the student response rate was 71 percent (1972 base year), 92 percent (1973), and 89 percent (1974). In HS&B, 81 percent of 1980 senior cohort members completed a base-year questionnaire, and 94 percent completed a follow-up questionnaire 2 years later (Jones et al. 1983). In the NELS:88 second follow-up, 93 percent of students (in-school sample[14]) participated (Ingels et al. 1994), and in the third follow-up (1994), 94 percent (Haggerty et al. 1996). In ELS:2002, 95 percent of the in-school sample completed the student questionnaire in the first follow-up (2004), and 89 percent completed an interview in the second follow-up (2006) (Ingels et al. 2007).

A.7.4 Changing Dropout Rates and Other Cohort Compositional Differences

Another issue for cross-cohort comparison is the effect of changes in dropout rates on the high school 12th-grade population. Changes in dropout rates over time might affect observed differences in the characteristics of the senior class that are examined in this report. This issue is especially salient because we know that the sophomore cohort dropout rate in HS&B was substantially higher than in NELS:88 or ELS:2002. For example, we know that dropout rates declined by more than 5 full percentage points between 1982 and 1992 (from 11 percent to 6 percent) and that while dropout rate declines were widespread, there were also subgroup differences in the rate of decline (Kaufman, McMillen, and Sweet 1996). (Taking ELS:2002 into account as well, the cohort dropout rate was 7 percent in 2004, 6 percent in 1992, and 11 percent in 1982 [Dalton, Glennie, and Ingels 2009].) Other compositional changes across the cohorts include higher educational attainment expectations and changes in racial/ethnic makeup (Ingels and Dalton 2008) and increased levels of parental education (Wang, Schiller, and Plank 1997).

The fact of dropouts also qualifies the population definition of young adults as viewed from a senior cohort perspective. Dropouts who return to high school and eventually become

[13] Owing to its complexities, it is somewhat difficult to compute an unequivocal response rate (or even a sample realization total) for the NLS:72 school sample, especially given the fact that base-year school nonresponse was compensated for in the first follow-up. The target sample was 1,200 schools. At the close of the base year, only 1,061 of the targeted 1,200 schools had participated; in the course of the first follow-up, the school sample grew to 1,318 schools. More specifically, in the base year, some 948 schools participated along with 95 substitute schools and 26 "extra" schools (i.e., redundant substitutions since the stratum was already populated; only 18 of the 26 were retained in the database). Hence there was a total base-year participating school sample of 1,061 schools (948 + 95 + 18). In the first follow-up, efforts were made to enlist further base-year schools (e.g., by converting refusals, by obtaining further replacement schools, and by enlisting an augmentation sample)—thus, in the first follow-up, 205 schools from the primary frame, 36 backup schools, and 16 augmentation schools were added. A special form was developed for the first follow-up questionnaire, so that some base-year student information could be obtained retrospectively (Riccobono et al. 1981, appendix H).

[14] The in-school sample in NELS:88 and ELS:2002—in other words, without dropouts—is used for response rate statistics to maintain some comparability with NLS:72 and HS&B senior cohort, which had only an in-school 12th-grade population in their base years.

spring-term seniors have a statistical chance of being selected and are thus represented in each of the four senior cohorts. Dropouts who do not return to school and reach spring of their senior years are not represented, and generalizations in this report concerning the young adult population perforce exclude them.[15]

A.7.5 Changing Race Definitions

In some cases, federal race definitions or preferences for the means by which ethnicity and race data are to be collected have changed. In NLS:72, HS&B, and NELS:88, students were asked to mark one race only. Based on revised race-reporting guidelines issued by the Office of Management and Budget, ELS:2002 added a new race category, and, more important, students are now allowed to mark all that apply, thus generating a further category, two or more races.

The new race category is Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander. For purposes of cross-cohort comparisons, cases identified in ELS:2002 as Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander were combined with the Asian category to achieve comparability with earlier studies.

For students who considered themselves to be multiracial and marked two or more races, there is no ready means to map them back into a one-race scheme. However, since only about 4 percent have indicated that their racial identities encompass two or more races, an upward limit is set on the maximum possible impact that is theoretically possible.

With five race categories and with values based on a single race reported, none reported, the 10 possible combinations of two races, the 10 possible combinations of three races, the 5 possible combinations of four races, and the possibility of a combination of all five races, there are 32 separate race categories in ELS:2002. When race is crossed by ethnicity (race by Hispanic or not Hispanic), there are 64 possible race/Hispanic ethnicity combinations. It is impossible to know whether a student who marked White and Black in ELS:2002 would have marked White or Black in NELS:88 (or NLS:72 or HS&B), in which only one race was allowed. There are more than 700 non-Hispanic multiracial sophomores recorded in the ELS:2002 base-year dataset, but the distorting effect on cross-cohort estimation is likely to be greatest for small population subgroups with many claimants to multiple race, such as the American Indian/Alaska Native category (which is not used in the tables in this report). While the two or more races category is not included in any of the explicit comparisons that are reported, estimates are shown for the category. The rates for this group are presented alongside the rates for the other groups, allowing readers to consider what the possible effects on the 2006 data may be. About 4 percent of the ELS:2002 spring senior cohort sample reported itself as two or more races.

A.7.6 Imputation of Missing Data for ELS:2002 Key Classification Variables

One difference between the standard classification variables in ELS:2002 and in prior studies arises from the use of imputation in ELS:2002. Missing data for key variables generally were not statistically imputed in NLS:72, HS&B, or NELS:88. For ELS:2002, however, all four of the row variables used in this report take advantage of statistical imputation. However, in the cases of sex and race/ethnicity, the amount of missing data imputed was quite small (less than 1

[15] Likewise, the four studies do not represent the young adult experiences of certain classes of individuals whose schools were excluded from the sampling frame, for example, those in Bureau of Indian Affairs schools, those in Department of Defense Dependents Schools overseas, and those in special schools for students with severe disabilities.

percent). For student postsecondary expectations, the amount of missing data was about 2 percent; for mother's education level, 4 percent; and for father's education level, 10 percent. (Note that for both NELS:88 and ELS:2002, preference is given to parent reports of educational attainment over student reports; imputation was effected only when both parent and student reports were missing.)

The availability of imputed variables (including both key classification variables and achievement test scores) poses a novel question for analysts interested in intercohort comparisons. Because imputed values are flagged, it is the analyst's choice whether to employ them. If the imputed variables are used, they should have the effect of improving cross-sectional estimation. On the other hand, because imputation was not used in the prior studies, it is also possible that use of ELS:2002 imputed values might decrease comparability of results across studies. To explore the issue of the magnitude of the effect of imputation on comparative bivariate and multivariate analysis, Ingels et al. (2005, appendix C) compare imputed and unimputed ELS:2002 estimates. Differences are generally found to be quite small.

A.7.7 Differences of Questionnaire Content

Despite the intention to preserve a core of comparable items, for many reasons, some questions have changed, while others have been added or dropped. Across the cohorts, questions may be identical in content and format or may differ in one or more ways: the question, item, or response wording; the order in which response options were presented; the manner in which the data were collected (e.g., categorical response option versus open-ended response fields, instructions to mark one versus mark all that apply); and the population to which the question applies. For this report, items thought to be comparable have been selected, although sometimes with caveats and qualifications. This report's glossary discusses such comparability issues at the level of the individual item.

A.7.8 Mode of Administration Differences

A major difference between the four studies may be seen in the data capture method for the post–high school follow-ups. Respondents in NLS:72 used paper-and-pencil methods to complete mail questionnaires. In the HS&B senior cohort first follow-up, paper-and-pencil methods were also used, with a mail questionnaire as the initial vehicle for response. In NELS:88 third follow-up, the dominant form of data collection was one-on-one administration in the form of computer-assisted telephone interviewing (CATI), supplemented by a limited number of in-person interviews for hard-to-locate, no-telephone, or refusal conversion cases. In ELS:2002, the primary mode of data collection was web self-administration, supplemented by CATI. While mode effects in survey responding based on self- versus interviewer administration are sometimes a source of differences (see, e.g., Dillman 2000; Groves 1989)—especially for sensitive items or questions with strong social desirability implications—items analyzed in this report are not especially prone to such biases. Nonetheless, the different modes do differentially support different presentations (e.g., visually dependent formats are better supported by paper-and-pencil or web self-administration than by telephone administrations), and there are also differences in the amount of information that can be readily collected. (In these studies, telephone interviews have generally been limited so that they take no more than half an hour, while paper questionnaires have typically been much longer.) Mode differences, then, may have had some impact on quantity and quality of data collected across the four cohorts.

A.7.9 Temporal Reference and Field Period Length

Another threat to comparability is difference in temporal reference period. Sometimes the studies ask comparable status questions with, however, a difference in temporal anchor. NLS:72, for example, typically tied status to a specific date (e.g., "With whom did you live, as of the first week of October 1973?" "With whom did you live, as of the first week of October 1974?"). HS&B typically anchored status to February 1982 (the beginning of the field period for data collection) and collected employment and education event histories. On the other hand, NELS:88 and ELS:2002 typically asked for information only as of the time of interview. The latter tack enlarges the status window, so that the respondent's report may refer to any date in the multimonth field period. NELS:88 collected data from mid-February to mid-August 1994; ELS:2002 collected data from mid-January to early September 2006.

A.7.10 Possible Artifactual Effects of Restricted Time Points

Some caution is also in order from the point of view that just four data points or years are used over a 32-year period. The data suffer from decade-long gaps, and we have no evidence as to what might have happened in the intervening years. Apart from not being able to measure change in a more fine-grained way (e.g., through 32 annual surveys), it is possible that some of the years for which there are data are in some sense anomalous—for example, the deep economic recession of 1982 may render the HS&B data atypical, even compared with data for the same cohort in 1980 or 1984. This limitation should be kept in mind in interpreting results reported here.

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Appendix B.
Standard Error Tables

Table B-1. Standard errors for table 1 estimates: Percentage of young adults engaged in postsecondary education and/or employment, by sex, race/ethnicity, parents' education, and educational expectations in 12th grade: 1974, 1982, 1994, and 2006

Young adult characteristics	1974	1982	1994	2006
Total				
Currently enrolled in postsecondary courses	0.62	0.79	0.77	0.76
Currently not enrolled and not working for pay	0.35	0.44	0.46	0.37
Currently enrolled in postsecondary courses	0.62	0.79	0.77	0.76
Sex				
Males				
Currently enrolled in postsecondary courses	0.85	1.12	0.99	0.97
Currently working for pay and not enrolled	0.82	1.08	0.88	0.90
Currently not enrolled and not working for pay	0.36	0.56	0.61	0.52
Females				
Currently enrolled in postsecondary courses	0.75	1.03	1.00	0.93
Currently working for pay and not enrolled	0.71	1.00	0.83	0.82
Currently not enrolled and not working for pay	0.56	0.66	0.63	0.49
Race/ethnicity				
Asian				
Currently enrolled in postsecondary courses	3.92	3.26	2.99	1.75
Currently working for pay and not enrolled	3.32	2.39	2.45	1.35
Currently not enrolled and not working for pay	3.21	2.06	1.37	1.05
Black				
Currently enrolled in postsecondary courses	1.37	1.34	2.21	1.53
Currently working for pay and not enrolled	1.41	1.20	1.86	1.50
Currently not enrolled and not working for pay	1.08	1.05	1.90	1.19
Hispanic				
Currently enrolled in postsecondary courses	2.04	1.52	1.63	1.64
Currently working for pay and not enrolled	2.32	1.60	1.70	1.63
Currently not enrolled and not working for pay	1.77	1.28	1.53	1.10
White				
Currently enrolled in postsecondary courses	0.69	0.94	0.87	0.90
Currently working for pay and not enrolled	0.63	0.89	0.75	0.78
Currently not enrolled and not working for pay	0.37	0.49	0.47	0.37
Two or more races				
Currently enrolled in postsecondary courses	—	—	—	2.82
Currently working for pay and not enrolled	—	—	—	2.86
Currently not enrolled and not working for pay	—	—	—	2.20
Race/ethnicity by sex				
Asian				
Females				
Currently enrolled in postsecondary courses	5.83	4.45	3.55	1.91
Currently working for pay and not enrolled	4.30	3.16	2.78	1.69
Currently not enrolled and not working for pay	5.41	3.26	1.71	1.18
Males				
Currently enrolled in postsecondary courses	5.22	3.99	3.76	2.41
Currently working for pay and not enrolled	4.63	3.57	3.51	1.66
Currently not enrolled and not working for pay	3.24	2.02	2.18	1.63

See notes at end of table.

Table B-1. Standard errors for table 1 estimates: Percentage of young adults engaged in postsecondary education and/or employment, by sex, race/ethnicity, parents' education, and educational expectations in 12th grade: 1974, 1982, 1994, and 2006—Continued

Young adult characteristics	1974	1982	1994	2006
Race/ethnicity by sex—Continued				
Black				
Females				
Currently enrolled in postsecondary courses	1.64	1.63	2.82	2.00
Currently working for pay and not enrolled	1.91	1.42	2.24	1.90
Currently not enrolled and not working for pay	1.60	1.37	2.64	1.49
Males				
Currently enrolled in postsecondary courses	2.02	1.94	3.28	2.13
Currently working for pay and not enrolled	2.10	2.09	2.83	2.16
Currently not enrolled and not working for pay	1.22	1.46	2.51	1.75
Hispanic				
Females				
Currently enrolled in postsecondary courses	3.06	2.08	2.22	2.17
Currently working for pay and not enrolled	2.92	2.23	1.28	1.92
Currently not enrolled and not working for pay	2.75	2.05	2.44	1.40
Males				
Currently enrolled in postsecondary courses	2.91	2.22	2.84	2.32
Currently working for pay and not enrolled	3.12	2.27	2.74	2.33
Currently not enrolled and not working for pay	1.96	1.32	1.94	1.71
White				
Females				
Currently enrolled in postsecondary courses	0.86	1.26	1.14	1.12
Currently working for pay and not enrolled	0.81	1.22	0.97	1.00
Currently not enrolled and not working for pay	0.60	0.74	0.59	0.51
Males				
Currently enrolled in postsecondary courses	0.94	1.32	1.13	1.18
Currently working for pay and not enrolled	0.91	1.28	1.02	1.07
Currently not enrolled and not working for pay	0.39	0.66	0.67	0.52
Parents' education				
High school or less				
Currently enrolled in postsecondary courses	0.60	1.15	1.35	1.23
Currently working for pay and not enrolled	0.65	1.19	1.28	1.21
Currently not enrolled and not working for pay	0.46	0.78	0.84	0.76
Some college				
Currently enrolled in postsecondary courses	1.04	1.16	1.04	0.98
Currently working for pay and not enrolled	1.04	1.11	0.92	0.97
Currently not enrolled and not working for pay	0.63	0.58	0.80	0.62
Bachelor's degree				
Currently enrolled in postsecondary courses	1.33	2.02	1.19	1.16
Currently working for pay and not enrolled	1.27	1.77	1.07	1.12
Currently not enrolled and not working for pay	0.74	1.36	0.55	0.64
Graduate or professional degree				
Currently enrolled in postsecondary courses	1.47	2.63	1.71	1.05
Currently working for pay and not enrolled	1.33	2.38	1.58	0.87
Currently not enrolled and not working for pay	0.73	1.43	0.84	0.60

See notes at end of table.

Table B-1. Standard errors for table 1 estimates: Percentage of young adults engaged in postsecondary education and/or employment, by sex, race/ethnicity, parents' education, and educational expectations in 12th grade: 1974, 1982, 1994, and 2006—Continued

Young adult characteristics	1974	1982	1994	2006
12th-grade educational expectations				
High school diploma or less				
Currently enrolled in postsecondary courses	0.73	0.89	2.07	1.84
Currently working for pay and not enrolled	1.11	1.49	2.71	2.71
Currently not enrolled and not working for pay	1.00	1.30	2.47	2.45
Some college				
Currently enrolled in postsecondary courses	0.79	1.18	1.20	1.30
Currently working for pay and not enrolled	0.89	1.22	1.21	1.39
Currently not enrolled and not working for pay	0.63	0.73	0.87	1.02
College graduate				
Currently enrolled in postsecondary courses	0.86	1.28	1.03	0.98
Currently working for pay and not enrolled	0.80	1.16	0.86	0.85
Currently not enrolled and not working for pay	0.36	0.67	0.69	0.51
Graduate or professional degree				
Currently enrolled in postsecondary courses	1.27	1.19	1.10	0.82
Currently working for pay and not enrolled	1.16	1.06	0.93	0.73
Currently not enrolled and not working for pay	0.54	0.60	0.71	0.38
Don't know				
Currently enrolled in postsecondary courses	—	—	2.56	1.81
Currently working for pay and not enrolled	—	—	2.71	1.95
Currently not enrolled and not working for pay	—	—	1.85	1.45

— Not available.

NOTE: Black includes African American. Hispanic includes Latino. Respondents who identified themselves as being of Hispanic origin are classified as Hispanic, regardless of their race. Pacific Islanders were not a race category in NLS:72 but presumably would have opted for the Asian category as the closest fit. For the other studies, Asian explicitly includes Pacific Islanders. Young adults are defined as high school spring senior cohort members 2 years after scheduled high school graduation.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, National Longitudinal Study of the High School Class of 1972 (NLS:72), "Second Follow-up, 1974"; High School and Beyond Longitudinal Study of 1980 Seniors (HS&B), "First Follow-up, 1982"; National Education Longitudinal Study of 1988 (NELS:88/94), "Third Follow-up, 1994"; Education Longitudinal Study of 2002 (ELS:2002/2006), "Second Follow-up, 2006."

Table B-2. Standard errors for table 2 estimates: Percentage of young adults who ever attended a postsecondary institution, by sex, race/ethnicity, parents' education, and educational expectations in 12th grade: 1974, 1982, 1994, and 2006

Young adult characteristics	1974	1982	1994	2006
Total	0.63	0.77	0.65	0.59
Sex				
Males	0.86	1.08	0.90	0.80
Females	0.75	0.97	0.80	0.71
Race/ethnicity				
Asian	3.58	2.53	1.90	1.37
Black	1.41	1.24	1.99	1.46
Hispanic	2.31	1.72	1.68	1.58
White	0.70	0.91	0.74	0.67
Two or more races	—	—	—	2.56
Parents' education				
High school or less	0.70	1.26	1.27	1.09
Some college	0.93	1.07	0.95	0.85
Bachelor's degree	1.06	1.78	0.87	0.85
Graduate or professional degree	1.13	2.10	0.82	0.87
12th-grade educational expectations				
High school diploma or less	0.97	1.16	2.09	2.15
Some college	0.95	1.21	1.26	1.34
College graduate	0.52	0.85	0.74	0.68
Graduate or professional degree	0.68	0.86	0.82	0.52
Don't know	—	—	2.72	1.92

— Not available.

NOTE: Black includes African American. Hispanic includes Latino. Respondents who identified themselves as being of Hispanic origin are classified as Hispanic, regardless of their race. Pacific Islanders were not a race category in NLS:72 but presumably would have opted for the Asian category as the closest fit. For the other studies, Asian explicitly includes Pacific Islanders. Young adults are defined as high school spring senior cohort members 2 years after scheduled high school graduation.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, National Longitudinal Study of the High School Class of 1972 (NLS:72), "Second Follow-up, 1974"; High School and Beyond Longitudinal Study of 1980 Seniors (HS&B), "First Follow-up, 1982"; National Education Longitudinal Study of 1988 (NELS:88/94), "Third Follow-up, 1994"; Education Longitudinal Study of 2002 (ELS:2002/2006), "Second Follow-up, 2006."

Table B-3. Standard errors for table 3 estimates: Percentage of young adults who delayed postsecondary enrollment among those who ever attended a postsecondary institution, by sex, race/ethnicity, parents' education, and educational expectations in 12th grade: 1974, 1982, 1994, and 2006

Young adult characteristics	1974	1982	1994	2006
Total	0.40	0.68	0.56	0.46
Sex				
Males	0.57	1.07	0.88	0.71
Females	0.51	0.83	0.71	0.59
Race/ethnicity				
Asian	2.15	2.86	1.60	0.97
Black	1.23	1.34	1.93	1.37
Hispanic	1.85	1.88	2.07	1.56
White	0.44	0.80	0.63	0.49
Two or more races	—	—	—	1.95
Parents' education				
High school or less	0.63	1.37	1.42	1.11
Some college	0.74	0.94	0.84	0.81
Bachelor's degree	0.89	1.85	1.49	0.75
Graduate or professional degree	0.84	1.98	1.04	0.85
12th-grade educational expectations				
High school diploma or less	2.87	4.35	6.83	4.24
Some college	0.96	1.41	1.73	1.49
College graduate	0.39	0.90	0.77	0.69
Graduate or professional degree	0.66	0.79	0.62	0.50
Don't know	—	—	3.11	2.57

— Not available.

NOTE: Black includes African American. Hispanic includes Latino. Respondents who identified themselves as being of Hispanic origin are classified as Hispanic, regardless of their race. Pacific Islanders were not a race category in NLS:72 but presumably would have opted for the Asian category as the closest fit. For the other studies, Asian explicitly includes Pacific Islanders. Young adults are defined as high school spring senior cohort members two years2 years after scheduled high school graduation.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, National Longitudinal Study of the High School Class of 1972 (NLS:72), "Second Follow-up, 1974"; High School and Beyond Longitudinal Study of 1980 Seniors (HS&B), "First Follow-up, 1982"; National Education Longitudinal Study of 1988 (NELS:88/94), "Third Follow-up, 1994"; Education Longitudinal Study of 2002 (ELS:2002/2006), "Second Follow-up, 2006."

Table B-4. Standard errors for table 4 estimates: Percentage of young adults currently enrolled in different types of postsecondary institutions or not enrolled, by sex, race/ethnicity, parents' education, and educational expectations in 12th grade: 1974, 1982, 1994, and 2006

Young adult characteristics	1974	1982	1994	2006
Total				
4-year institution	0.60	0.88	0.93	0.85
2-year institution	0.31	0.66	0.77	0.68
Less-than-2-year institution	0.19	0.29	0.22	0.18
Not enrolled	0.62	0.87	0.80	0.60
Sex				
Female				
4-year institution	0.71	1.12	1.21	1.06
2-year institution	0.36	0.86	0.99	0.84
Less-than-2-year institution	0.25	0.47	0.26	0.27
Not enrolled	0.76	1.15	0.98	0.71
Male				
4-year institution	0.82	1.17	1.18	0.99
2-year institution	0.42	0.89	1.06	0.87
Less-than-2-year institution	0.28	0.47	0.35	0.26
Not enrolled	0.86	1.15	1.07	0.80
Race/ethnicity				
Asian				
4-year institution	4.45	4.37	3.07	2.33
2-year institution	3.00	3.21	2.30	2.15
Less-than-2-year institution	0.96	1.00	0.47	0.49
Not enrolled	3.95	2.97	2.37	1.41
Black				
4-year institution	1.30	1.31	2.36	1.50
2-year institution	0.61	1.08	2.17	1.53
Less-than-2-year institution	0.50	0.46	0.42	0.61
Not enrolled	1.36	1.45	2.33	1.47
Hispanic				
4-year institution	1.62	1.28	2.05	1.68
2-year institution	1.76	1.51	1.89	2.02
Less-than-2-year institution	0.60	0.80	0.85	0.65
Not enrolled	2.05	1.83	1.96	1.59
White				
4-year institution	0.67	1.05	1.08	1.02
2-year institution	0.31	0.78	0.91	0.79
Less-than-2-year institution	0.22	0.36	0.27	0.20
Not enrolled	0.69	1.02	0.89	0.60
Two or more races				
4-year institution	—	—	—	2.93
2-year institution	—	—	—	2.49
Less-than-2-year institution	—	—	—	0.80
Not enrolled	—	—	—	2.63

See notes at end of table.

Table B-4. Standard errors for table 4 estimates: Percentage of young adults currently enrolled in different types of postsecondary institutions or not enrolled, by sex, race/ethnicity, parents' education, and educational expectations in 12th grade: 1974, 1982, 1994, and 2006—Continued

Young adult characteristics	1974	1982	1994	2006
Parents' education				
High school or less				
4-year institution	0.50	1.08	1.08	1.07
2-year institution	0.35	1.00	1.53	1.15
Less-than-2-year institution	0.26	0.45	0.37	.045
Not enrolled	0.60	1.32	1.53	1.11
Some college				
4-year institution	1.01	1.36	1.20	0.99
2-year institution	0.62	1.06	1.08	1.05
Less-than-2-year institution	0.38	0.54	0.32	0.32
Not enrolled	1.04	1.27	1.14	0.86
Bachelor's degree				
4-year institution	1.39	2.44	1.79	1.25
2-year institution	0.80	2.09	1.39	1.11
Less-than-2-year institution	0.44	1.03	0.99	0.34
Not enrolled	1.34	2.08	1.04	0.85
Graduate or professional degree				
4-year institution	1.54	3.25	1.82	1.40
2-year institution	0.82	2.32	1.74	1.15
Less-than-2-year institution	0.52	1.29	0.26	0.25
Not enrolled	1.47	2.52	0.95	0.87
12th-grade educational expectations				
High school or less				
4-year institution	0.37	0.47	0.97	0.87
2-year institution	0.46	0.75	0.82	0.71
Less-than-2-year institution	0.39	0.36	0.24	0.18
Not enrolled	0.70	0.93	0.77	0.56
Some college				
4-year institution	0.49	0.97	0.86	0.81
2-year institution	0.61	1.25	1.37	1.36
Less-than-2-year institution	0.45	0.60	0.86	0.59
Not enrolled	0.79	1.39	1.43	1.34
Bachelor's degree				
4-year institution	0.90	1.60	1.41	1.18
2-year institution	0.52	1.35	1.37	1.15
Less-than-2-year institution	0.29	0.60	0.60	0.30
Not enrolled	0.86	1.08	1.08	0.70
Graduate or professional degree				
4-year institution	1.45	1.60	1.43	1.09
2-year institution	0.72	1.29	1.29	0.95
Less-than-2-year institution	0.36	0.62	0.16	0.21
Not enrolled	1.28	1.01	0.97	0.53

See notes at end of table.

Table B-4. Standard errors for table 4 estimates: Percentage of young adults currently enrolled in different types of postsecondary institutions or not enrolled, by sex, race/ethnicity, parents' education, and educational expectations in 12th grade: 1974, 1982, 1994, and 2006—Continued

Young adult characteristics	1974	1982	1994	2006
12th-grade educational expectations—Continued				
Don't know				
4-year institution	—	—	—	1.35
2-year institution	—	—	—	1.85
Less-than-2-year institution	—	—	—	0.64
Not enrolled	—	—	—	1.92

— Not available.

NOTE: Black includes African American. Hispanic includes Latino. Respondents who identified themselves as being of Hispanic origin are classified as Hispanic, regardless of their race. Pacific Islanders were not a race category in NLS:72 but presumably would have opted for the Asian category as the closest fit. For the other studies, Asian explicitly includes Pacific Islanders. Young adults are defined as high school spring senior cohort members 2 years after scheduled high school graduation.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, National Longitudinal Study of the High School Class of 1972 (NLS:72), "Second Follow-up, 1974"; High School and Beyond Longitudinal Study of 1980 Seniors (HS&B), "First Follow-up, 1982"; National Education Longitudinal Study of 1988 (NELS:88/94), "Third Follow-up, 1994"; Education Longitudinal Study of 2002 (ELS:2002/2006), "Second Follow-up, 2006."

Table B-5. Standard errors for table 5 estimates: Percentage of young adults currently enrolled in a postsecondary institution by the type of institution, sex, and race/ethnicity: 1974, 1982, 1994, and 2006

Young adult characteristics	1974	1982	1994	2006
Total				
4-year institution	0.85	1.14	1.08	0.91
2-year institution	0.76	1.09	1.06	0.88
Less-than-2-year institution	0.49	0.52	0.33	0.24
Sex				
Male				
4-year institution	1.11	1.56	1.54	1.14
2-year institution	0.95	1.51	1.51	1.13
Less-than-2-year institution	0.67	0.66	0.55	0.36
Female				
4-year institution	1.08	1.41	1.35	1.12
2-year institution	0.96	1.35	1.33	1.05
Less-than-2-year institution	0.66	0.79	0.36	0.34
Race/ethnicity				
Asian				
4-year institution	4.19	4.08	2.98	2.43
2-year institution	4.39	3.84	2.86	2.41
Less-than-2-year institution	1.39	1.19	0.58	1.98
Black				
4-year institution	2.32	1.94	3.25	1.90
2-year institution	1.71	1.80	3.27	1.86
Less-than-2-year institution	1.41	0.89	0.69	0.84
Hispanic				
4-year institution	4.29	2.62	3.02	2.45
2-year institution	4.39	2.70	2.87	2.49
Less-than-2-year institution	1.90	1.76	1.40	0.98
White				
4-year institution	0.90	1.32	1.26	1.04
2-year institution	0.79	1.25	1.23	0.99
Less-than-2-year institution	0.54	0.61	0.38	0.25
Two or more races				
4-year institution	—	—	—	3.28
2-year institution	—	—	—	3.25
Less-than-2-year institution	—	—	—	1.12

— Not available.

NOTE: Black includes African American. Hispanic includes Latino. Respondents who identified themselves as being of Hispanic origin are classified as Hispanic, regardless of their race. Pacific Islanders were not a race category in NLS:72 but presumably would have opted for the Asian category as the closest fit. For the other studies, Asian explicitly includes Pacific Islanders. Young adults are defined as high school spring senior cohort members 2 years after scheduled high school graduation.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, National Longitudinal Study of the High School Class of 1972 (NLS:72), “Second Follow-up, 1974”; High School and Beyond Longitudinal Study of 1980 Seniors (HS&B), “First Follow-up, 1982”; National Education Longitudinal Study of 1988 (NELS:88/94), “Third Follow-up, 1994”; Education Longitudinal Study of 2002 (ELS:2002/2006), “Second Follow-up, 2006.”

Table B-6. Standard errors for table 6 estimates: Percentage of young adults who have ever worked for pay, by sex, race/ethnicity, parents' education, and educational expectations in 12th grade: 1974, 1982, 1994, and 2006

Young adult characteristics	1974	1982	1994	2006
Total	0.16	0.35	0.37	0.29
Sex				
Males	0.13	0.44	0.48	0.38
Females	0.27	0.56	0.54	0.41
Race/ethnicity				
Asian	1.26	1.91	1.39	1.33
Black	0.69	0.84	1.51	0.84
Hispanic	0.84	1.04	0.77	1.01
White	0.16	0.39	0.42	0.29
Two or more races	—	—	—	1.76
Parents' education				
High school or less	0.21	0.57	0.61	0.62
Some college	0.34	0.47	0.59	0.49
Bachelor's degree	0.38	1.25	1.20	0.54
Graduate or professional degree	0.49	1.69	0.87	0.64
12th-grade educational expectations				
High school diploma or less	0.48	0.88	1.47	1.53
Some college	0.26	0.54	0.70	0.66
College graduate	0.26	0.71	0.74	0.46
Graduate or professional degree	0.59	0.68	0.64	0.44
Don't know	—	—	1.07	1.18

— Not available.

NOTE: Black includes African American. Hispanic includes Latino. Respondents who identified themselves as being of Hispanic origin are classified as Hispanic, regardless of their race. Pacific Islanders were not a race category in NLS:72 but presumably would have opted for the Asian category as the closest fit. For the other studies, Asian explicitly includes Pacific Islanders. Young adults are defined as high school spring senior cohort members 2 years after scheduled high school graduation.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, National Longitudinal Study of the High School Class of 1972 (NLS:72), "Second Follow-up, 1974"; High School and Beyond Longitudinal Study of 1980 Seniors (HS&B), "First Follow-up, 1982"; National Education Longitudinal Study of 1988 (NELS:88/94), "Third Follow-up, 1994"; Education Longitudinal Study of 2002 (ELS:2002/2006), "Second Follow-up, 2006."

Table B-7. Standard errors for table 7 estimates: Among those who ever attended a postsecondary institution, percentage of young adults who worked for pay while enrolled, by sex, race/ethnicity, parents' education, and educational expectations in 12th grade: 1974, 1982, 1994, and 2006

Young adult characteristics	1974	1982	1994	2006
Total	0.63	0.82	0.59	0.53
Sex				
Male	0.83	1.24	0.86	0.81
Female	0.85	1.10	0.78	0.68
Race/ethnicity				
Asian	4.03	3.14	2.00	1.66
Black	1.81	1.65	2.06	1.53
Hispanic	2.53	1.78	1.85	1.42
White	0.69	0.96	0.68	0.64
Two or more races	—	—	—	2.99
Parents' education				
High school or less	0.86	1.44	1.24	1.05
Some college	1.08	1.17	0.96	0.80
Bachelor's degree	1.48	2.39	1.49	1.11
Graduate or professional degree	1.57	3.14	1.46	1.16
12th-grade educational expectations				
High school diploma or less	2.70	3.39	4.36	4.25
Some college	1.22	1.25	1.50	1.46
College graduate	0.98	1.38	1.01	0.88
Graduate or professional degree	1.50	1.54	0.88	0.74
Don't know	—	—	2.65	2.31

— Not available.

NOTE: Black includes African American. Hispanic includes Latino. Respondents who identified themselves as being of Hispanic origin are classified as Hispanic, regardless of their race. Pacific Islanders were not a race category in NLS:72 but presumably would have opted for the Asian category as the closest fit. For the other studies, Asian explicitly includes Pacific Islanders. Young adults are defined as high school spring senior cohort members 2 years after scheduled high school graduation.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, National Longitudinal Study of the High School Class of 1972 (NLS:72), "Second Follow-up, 1974"; High School and Beyond Longitudinal Study of 1980 Seniors (HS&B), "First Follow-up, 1982"; National Education Longitudinal Study of 1988 (NELS:88/94), "Third Follow-up, 1994"; Education Longitudinal Study of 2002 (ELS:2002/2006), "Second Follow-up, 2006."

Table B-8. Standard errors for table 8 estimates: Percentage distribution of first jobs among young adults who did not enroll in a postsecondary institution, by job type: 1974, 1982, 1994, and 2006

Type of job	1974	1982	1994	2006
Clerical	0.93	1.01	1.01	0.89
Service/sales	0.83	1.26	1.29	1.23
Skilled operative	0.81	0.87	0.73	0.79
Craftsperson	0.71	0.71	0.56	0.81
Laborer/farmer	0.57	0.93	0.94	0.86
Managerial	0.21	0.38	0.54	0.53
Other	0.23	0.53	0.71	0.64

NOTE: Young adults are defined as high school spring senior cohort members 2 years after scheduled high school graduation.
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, National Longitudinal Study of the High School Class of 1972 (NLS:72), “Second Follow-up, 1974”; High School and Beyond Longitudinal Study of 1980 Seniors (HS&B), “First Follow-up, 1982”; National Education Longitudinal Study of 1988 (NELS:88/94), “Third Follow-up, 1994”; Education Longitudinal Study of 2002 (ELS:2002/2006), “Second Follow-up, 2006.”

Table B-9. Standard errors for table 9 estimates: Household composition of young adults, by sex, race/ethnicity, parents' education, and educational expectations in 12th grade: 1974, 1982, 1994, and 2006

Young adult characteristics	1974	1982	1994	2006
Total				
Household composition for all young adults				
Alone	0.27	0.39	0.39	0.37
Parents/guardians	0.58	0.80	0.80	0.73
Roommate (nonrelative)	0.54	0.71	—	0.71
Spouse	0.47	0.50	0.41	0.22
Sex				
Male				
Alone	0.40	0.58	0.62	0.56
Parents/guardians	0.77	1.10	1.03	0.96
Roommate (nonrelative)	0.71	0.96	—	0.91
Spouse	0.53	0.53	0.38	0.22
Female				
Alone	0.34	0.47	0.45	0.42
Parents/guardians	0.78	1.04	1.06	0.91
Roommate (nonrelative)	0.68	0.93	—	0.94
Spouse	0.69	0.75	0.65	0.35
Race/ethnicity				
Asian				
Alone	2.52	1.87	0.98	0.79
Parents/guardians	5.54	4.16	2.71	2.20
Roommate (nonrelative)	4.58	2.97	—	1.96
Spouse	2.41	1.96	1.26	0.43
Black				
Alone	0.93	0.61	1.29	1.04
Parents/guardians	1.27	1.27	2.22	1.55
Roommate (nonrelative)	1.11	0.97	—	1.58
Spouse	1.06	0.52	0.82	0.34
Hispanic				
Alone	0.97	0.69	1.31	0.71
Parents/guardians	2.38	1.62	2.05	1.49
Roommate (nonrelative)	1.40	1.10	—	1.27
Spouse	1.99	1.23	1.59	0.63
White				
Alone	0.29	0.48	0.44	0.48
Parents/guardians	0.66	0.97	0.95	0.87
Roommate (nonrelative)	0.60	0.87	—	0.87
Spouse	0.52	0.60	0.46	0.29
Two or more races				
Alone	—	—	—	1.49
Parents/guardians	—	—	—	2.85
Roommate (nonrelative)	—	—	—	2.95
Spouse	—	—	—	0.93

See notes at end of table.

Table B-9. Standard errors for table 9 estimates: Household composition of young adults, by sex, race/ethnicity, parents' education, and educational expectations in 12th grade: 1974, 1982, 1994, and 2006—Continued

Young adult characteristics	1974	1982	1994	2006
Parents' education				
High school or less				
Alone	0.36	0.66	0.54	0.67
Parents/guardians	0.71	1.27	1.30	1.26
Roommate (nonrelative)	0.53	0.95	—	1.08
Spouse	0.60	0.87	0.92	0.51
Some college				
Alone	0.54	0.58	0.58	0.60
Parents/guardians	0.99	1.16	1.06	1.04
Roommate (nonrelative)	0.98	1.12	—	0.96
Spouse	0.82	0.71	0.62	0.42
Bachelor's degree				
Alone	0.80	1.44	1.17	0.75
Parents/guardians	1.27	2.23	1.75	1.26
Roommate (nonrelative)	1.40	2.30	—	1.19
Spouse	1.06	1.16	0.62	0.27
Graduate or professional degree				
Alone	0.92	1.97	1.11	0.83
Parents/guardians	1.33	3.09	1.94	1.28
Roommate (nonrelative)	1.46	2.99	—	1.33
Spouse	0.95	0.88	0.66	0.28
12th-grade educational expectations				
High school or less				
Alone	0.62	0.75	1.54	1.72
Parents/guardians	1.27	1.64	2.66	2.56
Roommate (nonrelative)	0.85	1.16	—	2.08
Spouse	1.26	1.32	2.07	1.37
Some college				
Alone	0.51	0.54	0.58	0.92
Parents/guardians	1.00	1.24	1.32	1.40
Roommate (nonrelative)	0.76	0.98	—	1.15
Spouse	0.90	0.90	0.90	0.69
Bachelor's degree				
Alone	0.52	0.77	0.57	0.62
Parents/guardians	0.99	1.45	1.28	1.12
Roommate (nonrelative)	0.99	1.44	—	1.04
Spouse	0.60	0.61	0.57	0.28
Graduate or professional degree				
Alone	0.96	1.09	0.82	0.61
Parents/guardians	1.47	1.54	1.37	0.88
Roommate (nonrelative)	1.54	1.56	—	0.99
Spouse	0.79	0.48	0.50	0.31

See notes at end of table.

Table B-9. Standard errors for table 9 estimates: Household composition of young adults, by sex, race/ethnicity, parents' education, and educational expectations in 12th grade: 1974, 1982, 1994, and 2006—Continued

Young adult characteristics	1974	1982	1994	2006
12th-grade educational expectations—Continued				
Don't know				
Alone	—	—	2.16	1.33
Parents/guardians	—	—	2.69	1.97
Roommate (nonrelative)	—	—	—	2.00
Spouse	—	—	1.54	0.67

— Not available.

NOTE: Black includes African American. Hispanic includes Latino. Respondents who identified themselves as being of Hispanic origin are classified as Hispanic, regardless of their race. Pacific Islanders were not a race category in NLS:72 but presumably would have opted for the Asian category as the closest fit. For the other studies, Asian explicitly includes Pacific Islanders. Young adults are defined as high school spring senior cohort members 2 years after scheduled high school graduation.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, National Longitudinal Study of the High School Class of 1972 (NLS:72), "Second Follow-up, 1974"; High School and Beyond Longitudinal Study of 1980 Seniors (HS&B), "First Follow-up, 1982"; National Education Longitudinal Study of 1988 (NELS:88/94), "Third Follow-up, 1994"; Education Longitudinal Study of 2002 (ELS:2002/2006), "Second Follow-up, 2006."

Table B-10. Standard errors for table 10 estimates: Percentage of young adults ever married, by sex, race/ethnicity, parents' education, and educational expectations in 12th grade: 1974, 1982, 1994, and 2006

Young adult characteristics	1974	1982	1994	2006
Total	0.51	0.52	0.35	0.26
Sex				
Male	0.57	0.54	0.34	0.25
Female	0.76	0.78	0.56	0.40
Race/ethnicity				
Asian	3.19	1.59	1.10	0.44
Black	1.26	0.56	0.64	0.43
Hispanic	2.13	1.29	1.39	0.69
White	0.57	0.62	0.39	0.34
Two or more races	—	—	—	0.99
Parents' education				
High school or less	0.64	0.89	0.79	0.54
Some college	0.90	0.71	0.53	0.46
Bachelor's degree	1.11	1.22	0.54	0.33
Graduate or professional degree	1.07	1.04	0.60	0.32
12th-grade educational expectations				
High school diploma or less	1.34	1.43	1.95	1.39
Some college	0.95	0.91	0.82	0.72
College graduate	0.65	0.69	0.48	0.31
Graduate or professional degree	0.91	0.50	0.45	0.35
Don't know	—	—	1.55	0.78

— Not available.

NOTE: Black includes African American. Hispanic includes Latino. Respondents who identified themselves as being of Hispanic origin are classified as Hispanic, regardless of their race. Pacific Islanders were not a race category in NLS:72 but presumably would have opted for the Asian category as the closest fit. Pacific Islanders were not a race category in NLS:72. For the other studies, Asian explicitly includes Pacific Islanders. Young adults are defined as high school spring senior cohort members 2 years after scheduled high school graduation.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, National Longitudinal Study of the High School Class of 1972 (NLS:72), "Second Follow-up, 1974"; High School and Beyond Longitudinal Study of 1980 Seniors (HS&B), "First Follow-up, 1982"; National Education Longitudinal Study of 1988 (NELS:88/94), "Third Follow-up, 1994"; Education Longitudinal Study of 2002 (ELS:2002/2006), "Second Follow-up, 2006."

Table B-11. Standard errors for table 11 estimates: Percentage of young adults with any biological children, by sex, race/ethnicity, parents' education, and educational expectations in 12th grade: 1974, 1982, 1994, and 2006

Young adult characteristics	1974	1982	1994	2006
Total	0.34	0.33	0.40	0.36
Sex				
Males	0.36	0.33	0.38	0.40
Females	0.52	0.53	0.63	0.53
Race/ethnicity				
Asian	2.69	1.20	1.13	0.57
Black	1.26	0.95	1.71	1.21
Hispanic	1.91	1.00	1.70	0.94
White	0.34	0.37	0.37	0.36
Two or more races	—	—	—	1.72
Parents' education				
High school or less	0.47	0.59	0.90	0.77
Some college	0.61	0.41	0.62	0.59
Bachelor's degree	0.57	0.98	0.57	0.47
Graduate or professional degree	0.64	0.50	0.55	0.43
12th-grade educational expectations				
High school diploma or less	1.06	1.00	2.02	1.91
Some college	0.64	0.59	0.79	0.93
College graduate	0.36	0.38	0.59	0.45
Graduate or professional degree	0.50	0.44	0.58	0.38
Don't know	—	—	2.03	1.35

— Not available.

NOTE: Black includes African American. Hispanic includes Latino. Respondents who identified themselves as being of Hispanic origin are classified as Hispanic, regardless of their race. Pacific Islanders were not a race category in NLS:72 but presumably would have opted for the Asian category as the closest fit. For the other studies, Asian explicitly includes Pacific Islanders. Young adults are defined as high school spring senior cohort members 2 years after scheduled high school graduation. NLS:72 does not permit distinguishing biological children from other children, and these estimates may include foster, adopted, or step children and not be strictly comparable to the other cohorts.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, National Longitudinal Study of the High School Class of 1972 (NLS:72), "Second Follow-up, 1974"; High School and Beyond Longitudinal Study of 1980 Seniors (HS&B), "First Follow-up, 1982"; National Education Longitudinal Study of 1988 (NELS:88/94), "Third Follow-up, 1994"; Education Longitudinal Study of 2002 (ELS:2002/2006), "Second Follow-up, 2006."

Table B-12. Standard errors for table 12 estimates: Percentage of young adults who ever voted in a state, local, or national election, by sex, race/ethnicity, parents' education, and educational expectations in 12th grade: 1974, 1982, 1994, and 2006

Young adult characteristics	1974	1982	1994	2006
Total	0.61	0.80	0.72	0.67
Sex				
Males	0.79	1.12	0.95	0.87
Females	0.74	1.01	0.99	0.90
Race/ethnicity				
Asian	4.23	3.21	2.32	1.89
Black	1.69	1.40	2.06	1.68
Hispanic	2.69	1.64	2.09	1.41
White	0.66	0.95	0.81	0.83
Two or more races	—	—	—	2.85
Parents' education				
High school or less	0.77	1.24	1.32	1.13
Some college	0.99	1.17	1.10	0.96
Bachelor's degree	1.28	2.27	1.53	1.17
Graduate or professional degree	1.35	2.84	2.04	1.17
12th-grade educational expectations				
High school diploma or less	1.34	1.69	2.68	2.61
Some college	1.07	1.34	1.26	1.42
College graduate	0.87	1.45	1.19	0.99
Graduate or professional degree	1.23	1.54	1.19	0.95
Don't know	—	—	3.05	2.13

— Not available.

NOTE: Black includes African American. Hispanic includes Latino. Respondents who identified themselves as being of Hispanic origin are classified as Hispanic, regardless of their race. Pacific Islanders were not a race category in NLS:72 but presumably would have opted for the Asian category as the closest fit. For the other studies, Asian explicitly includes Pacific Islanders. Young adults are defined as high school spring senior cohort members 2 years after scheduled high school graduation.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, National Longitudinal Study of the High School Class of 1972 (NLS:72), "Second Follow-up, 1974"; High School and Beyond Longitudinal Study of 1980 Seniors (HS&B), "First Follow-up, 1982"; National Education Longitudinal Study of 1988 (NELS:88/94), "Third Follow-up, 1994"; Education Longitudinal Study of 2002 (ELS:2002/2006), "Second Follow-up, 2006."

Table B-13. Standard errors for table 13 estimates: Percentage of young adults who ever served in the military, by sex, race/ethnicity, parents' education, and educational expectations in 12th grade: 1974, 1982, 1994, and 2006

Young adult characteristics	1974	1982	1994	2006
Total	0.24	0.34	—	0.20
Sex				
Males	0.44	0.65	—	0.36
Females	0.15	0.24	—	0.16
Race/ethnicity				
Asian	1.63	1.36	—	0.41
Black	0.91	0.66	—	0.50
Hispanic	1.01	0.60	—	0.42
White	0.26	0.41	—	0.27
Two or more races	—	—	—	1.22
Parents' education				
High school or less	0.33	0.59	—	0.40
Some college	0.54	0.51	—	0.39
Bachelor's degree	0.57	1.17	—	0.40
Graduate or professional degree	0.69	1.22	—	0.38
12th-grade educational expectations				
High school diploma or less	0.64	0.98	—	1.28
Some college	0.48	0.51	—	0.44
College graduate	0.39	0.63	—	0.29
Graduate or professional degree	0.61	0.68	—	0.30
Don't know	—	—	—	0.91

— Not available.

NOTE: Black includes African American. Hispanic includes Latino. Respondents who identified themselves as being of Hispanic origin are classified as Hispanic, regardless of their race. Pacific Islanders were not a race category in NLS:72 but presumably would have opted for the Asian category as the closest fit. For the other studies, Asian explicitly includes Pacific Islanders. Young adults are defined as high school spring senior cohort members 2 years after scheduled high school graduation.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, National Longitudinal Study of the High School Class of 1972 (NLS:72), "Second Follow-up, 1974"; High School and Beyond Longitudinal Study of 1980 Seniors (HS&B), "First Follow-up, 1982"; Education Longitudinal Study of 2002 (ELS:2002/2006), "Second Follow-up, 2006."

Table B-14. Standard errors for figure 1 estimates: Percentage of young adults who ever attended a postsecondary institution, by race/ethnicity: 1974, 1982, 1994, and 2006

Race/ethnicity	1974	1982	1994	2006
Asian	3.58	2.53	1.90	1.37
Black	1.41	1.24	1.99	1.46
Hispanic	2.31	1.72	1.68	1.58
White	0.70	0.91	0.74	0.67
Two or more races	—	—	—	2.56

— Not available.

NOTE: Young adults are defined as high school spring senior cohort members 2 years after scheduled high school graduation.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, National Longitudinal Study of the High School Class of 1972 (NLS:72), "Second Follow-up, 1974"; High School and Beyond Longitudinal Study of 1980 Seniors (HS&B), "First Follow-up, 1982"; National Education Longitudinal Study of 1988 (NELS:88/94), "Third Follow-up, 1994"; Education Longitudinal Study of 2002 (ELS:2002/2006), "Second Follow-up, 2006."

Table B-15. Standard errors for figure 2 estimates: Percentage distribution of young adults attending one or multiple postsecondary institutions among young adults who ever enrolled in a postsecondary institution: 1974, 1982, 1994, and 2006

Number of postsecondary institutions attended	1974	1982	1994	2006
Percentage attending one postsecondary institution	0.45	0.73	0.65	0.50
Percentage attending more than one postsecondary institution	0.45	0.73	0.65	0.50

NOTE: Young adults are defined as high school spring senior cohort members 2 years after scheduled high school graduation.
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, National Longitudinal Study of the High School Class of 1972 (NLS:72), "Second Follow-up, 1974"; High School and Beyond Longitudinal Study of 1980 Seniors (HS&B), "First Follow-up, 1982"; National Education Longitudinal Study of 1988 (NELS:88/94), "Third Follow-up, 1994"; Education Longitudinal Study of 2002 (ELS:2002/2006), "Second Follow-up, 2006."

Table B-16. Standard errors for figure 3 estimates: Percentage distribution of full- and part-time enrollment in postsecondary institutions among young adults currently enrolled: 1974, 1982, 1994, and 2006

Postsecondary enrollment status	1974	1982	1994	2006
Percentage enrolled full time	0.53	0.69	0.61	0.52
Percentage enrolled less than full time	0.53	0.69	0.61	0.52

NOTE: Young adults are defined as high school spring senior cohort members 2 years after scheduled high school graduation.
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, National Longitudinal Study of the High School Class of 1972 (NLS:72), "Second Follow-up, 1974"; High School and Beyond Longitudinal Study of 1980 Seniors (HS&B), "First Follow-up, 1982"; National Education Longitudinal Study of 1988 (NELS:88/94), "Third Follow-up, 1994"; Education Longitudinal Study of 2002 (ELS:2002/2006), "Second Follow-up, 2006."

Table B-17. Standard errors for figure 4 estimates: Percentage distribution of first jobs among young adults who did not enroll in a postsecondary institution, by job type: 1974, 1982, 1994, and 2006

Year	Clerical	Craftsperson	Laborer/Farmer	Skilled operative	Service/Sales	Managerial	Other
1974	0.93	0.71	0.57	0.81	0.83	0.21	0.23
1982	1.01	0.71	0.93	0.87	1.26	0.38	0.53
1994	1.01	0.56	0.94	0.73	1.29	0.54	0.71
2006	0.89	0.81	0.86	0.79	1.23	0.53	0.64

NOTE: Young adults are defined as high school spring senior cohort members 2 years after scheduled high school graduation.
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, National Longitudinal Study of the High School Class of 1972 (NLS:72), "Second Follow-up, 1974"; High School and Beyond Longitudinal Study of 1980 Seniors (HS&B), "First Follow-up, 1982"; National Education Longitudinal Study of 1988 (NELS:88/94), "Third Follow-up, 1994"; Education Longitudinal Study of 2002 (ELS:2002/2006), "Second Follow-up, 2006."

Table B-18. Standard errors for figure 5 estimates: Weekly hours worked among young adults who did not enroll in a postsecondary institution: 1974, 1982, 1994, and 2006

Not enrolled in postsecondary education	1974	1982	1994	2006
Average hours worked per week	0.19	0.32	0.47	0.36

NOTE: Young adults are defined as high school spring senior cohort members 2 years after scheduled high school graduation.
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, National Longitudinal Study of the High School Class of 1972 (NLS:72), "Second Follow-up, 1974"; High School and Beyond Longitudinal Study of 1980 Seniors (HS&B), "First Follow-up, 1982"; National Education Longitudinal Study of 1988 (NELS:88/94), "Third Follow-up, 1994"; Education Longitudinal Study of 2002 (ELS:2002/2006), "Second Follow-up, 2006."