



@Dawn\_Watling  
@SocDevLabRHUL  
@HiveRhul



# Workshop

Coping with adolescents: The challenge for schools

Workshop leaders:

Dr Dawn Watling & Mr Matthew Abbott



ROYAL  
HOLLOWAY  
UNIVERSITY  
OF LONDON

# What do we know about adolescence?



## Adolescence redefined: 10-24 years

(Sawyer, Azzopardi,  
Wickremarathne, Patton, 2018)

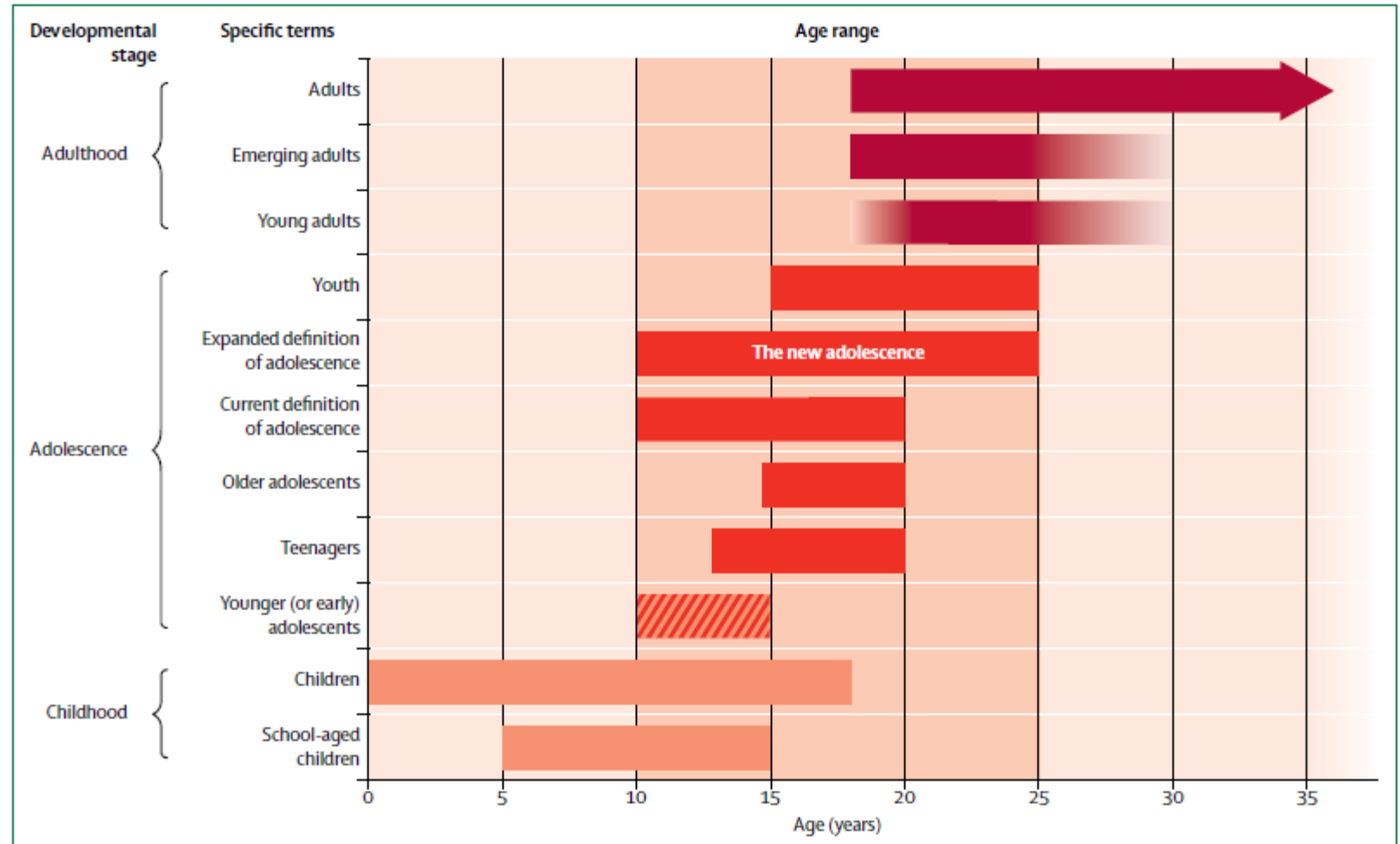


Figure 1: Commonly used age definitions of specific terms of relevance for adolescence that span or overlap with the developmental periods of childhood, adolescence, and adulthood

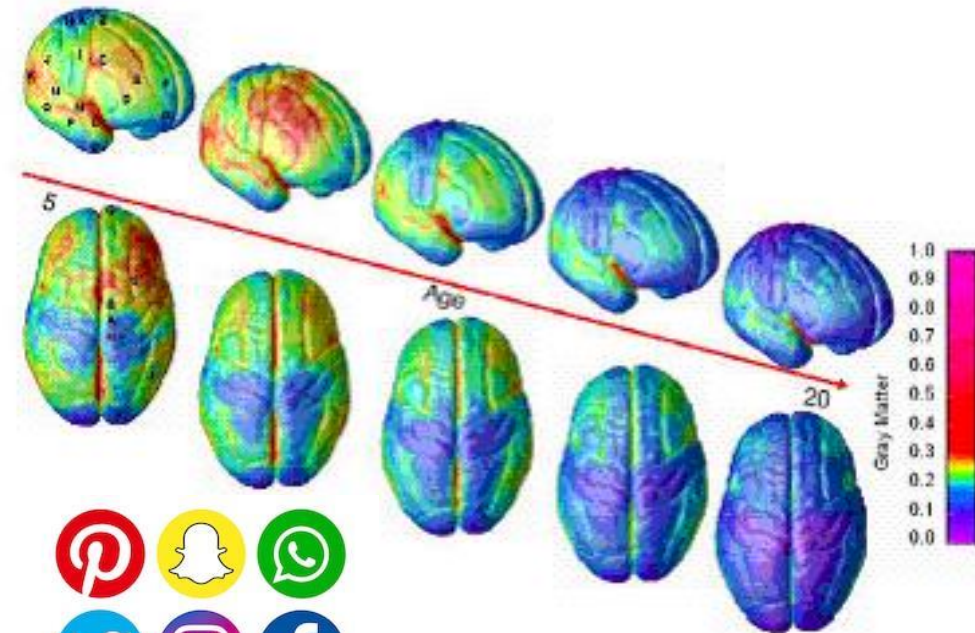
Colour shading highlights variation in the lower and upper age limits of the term. Stripes denote a term that sits within more than one developmental stage.

# What do we know about adolescence?



- Research tends to focus on...

- Physical development
- Sexual development
- Thinking and reasoning
- Self and identity
- Family
- Friends and peer group
- Anti-social behaviour / Risk taking
- Health – physical and mental
- Risk, resilience and coping in adolescence
- Social media
- Role of education



# Adolescence and education



ROYAL  
HOLLOWAY  
UNIVERSITY  
OF LONDON

# The Curious Case of Paris Brown

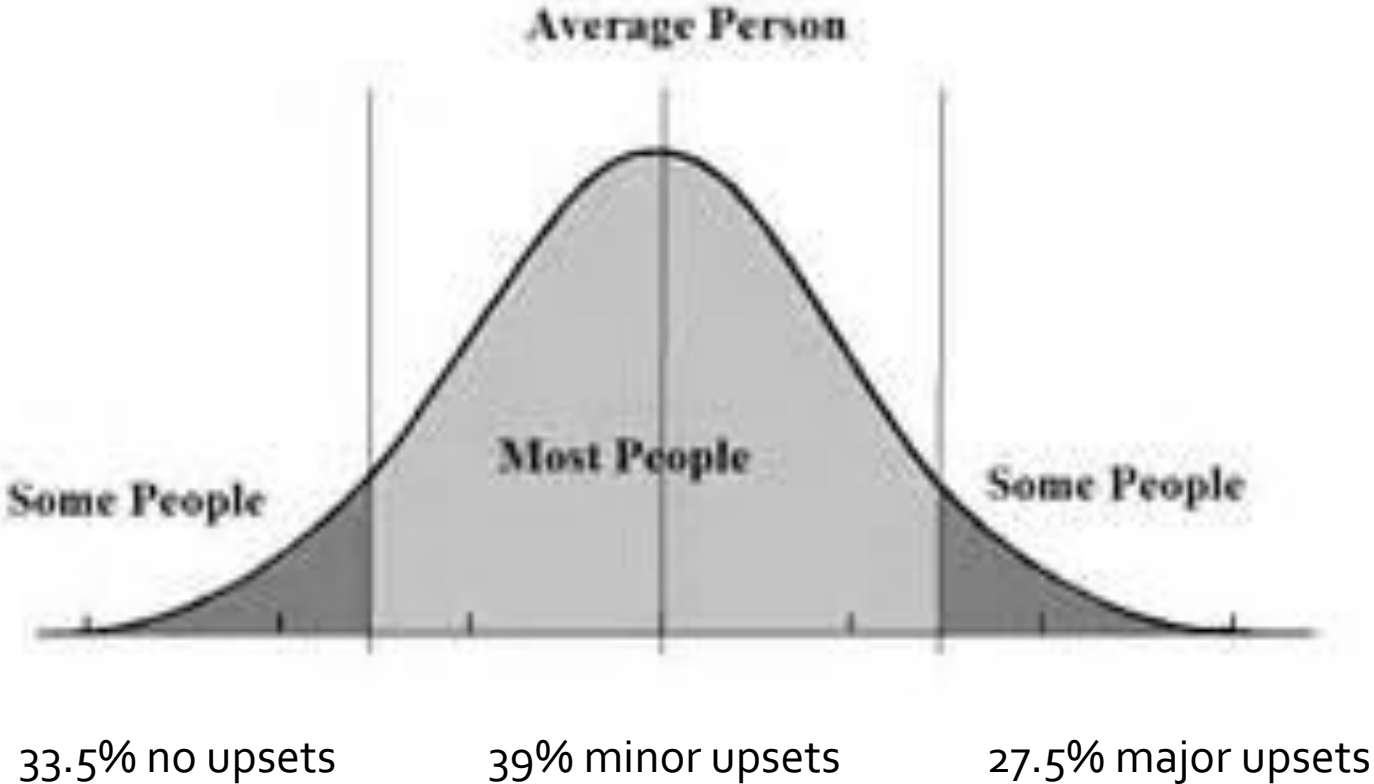
Watch this interview with Paris Brown...

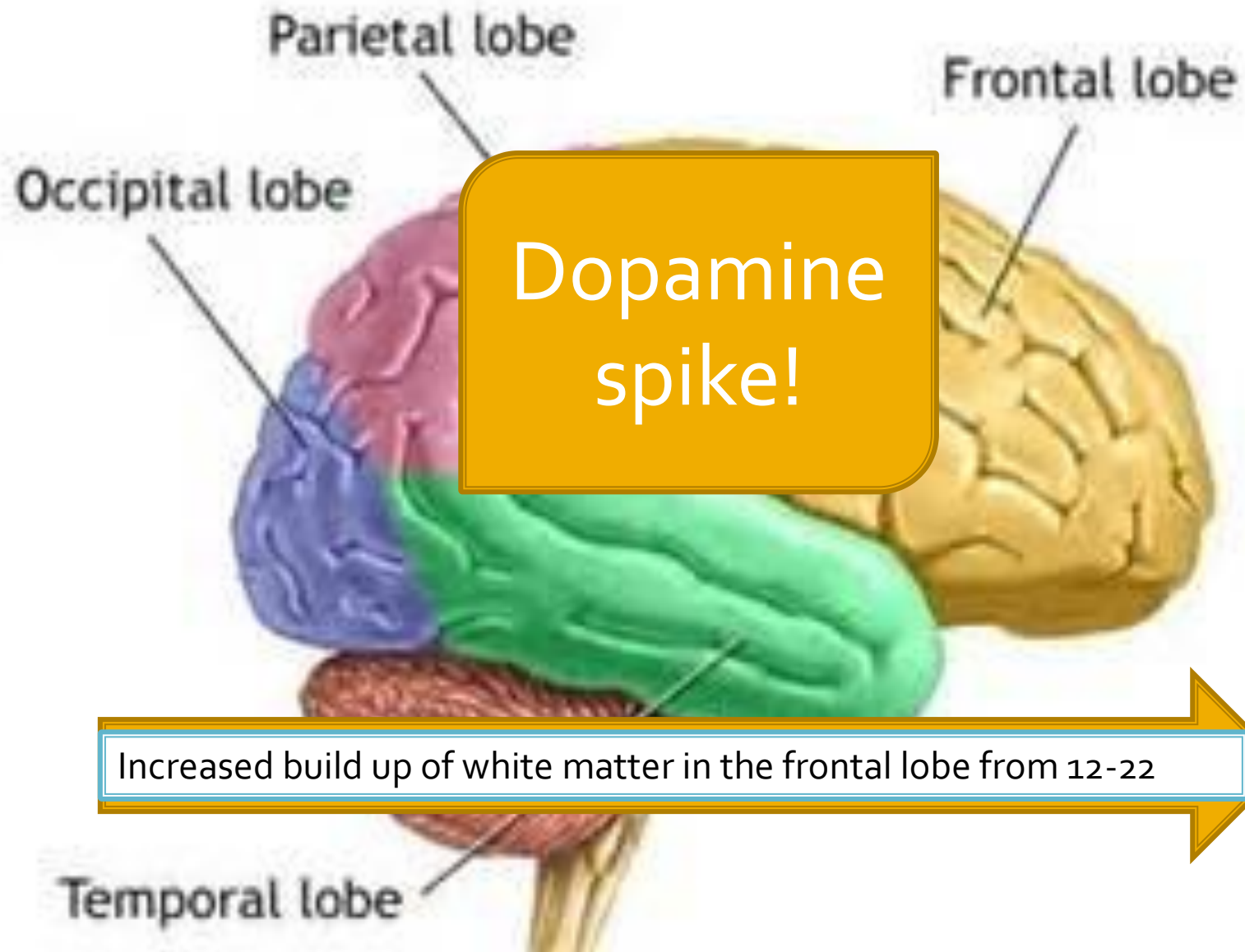
<http://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=paris+brown+interview&FORM=VIRE5#view=detail&mid=52420E4FA318A73A4C9352420E4FA318A73A4C93>

What does it make you think about? Was her behaviour delinquent or normal or neither?

How was Paris Brown's behaviour viewed by the adult world?

# The majority of adolescents pass through their teens years relatively happily





Dopamine  
spike!

Increased build up of white matter in the frontal lobe from 12-22

Temporal lobe

Parietal lobe

Frontal lobe

Occipital lobe

# Brain development

What  
implications do  
these things  
have for your  
teaching?

Teenagers are socially motivated because of the way the emotional centres work in their brains.

Teenagers need boundaries.

Teenagers need space.

Teenagers need time to practise.

Teenagers respond to rewards.



# Learning with Adolescents?



Teaching methods that give autonomy/agency

Relevant “real world” curriculum

Utilising the social brain

Thinking hard about authentic praise and the dopamine hit

Learning from other teachers who relate well with adolescents

Peer-to-peer teaching (across ages)

Involving students in the organisation of the school

# Conclusion – the adolescent aware teacher



Understanding adolescent development is important for education

Many schools are not constructed to enhance young people's needs, especially the need for increasing autonomy – how can you incorporate this in the classroom?

Knowing about why an adolescent might behave in a certain way will enable you to see that it isn't personal!

Understanding about the adolescent's social brain and love of rewards can help with lesson design

# Discussion of the issues, from your perspectives



ROYAL  
HOLLOWAY  
UNIVERSITY  
OF LONDON

## Discussion point 1

**How can what schools know  
about adolescents' development  
improve engagement?**

## Discussion point 2

**How do you work with  
adolescents in your school?**

## Discussion point 3

**How might schools account for developmental age trends?**

## Discussion point 4

**What do you perceive as the main challenges to engage adolescents?**

# Summary

How do you work with adolescents in your school?

How might schools account for developmental age trends?

How can what schools know about adolescents' development improve engagement?

What do you perceive as the main challenges to engage adolescents?



Importance of schools...



ROYAL  
HOLLOWAY  
UNIVERSITY  
OF LONDON

# Resiliency and wellbeing



- Research project investigating how changes in resiliency may related to changes in wellbeing and behaviour.

- 254 year 6 children
- 653 year 7 children



**Table 1: Predicting Resiliency from change in feelings and behaviours between pre and post Kidscreen (KS) and Strengths & Difficulties (SDQ) measures**

	Resiliency <sub>T2</sub> (N = 825)	Resiliency <sub>T3</sub> (N = 243)
Controlling for Resiliency time 1 score	+ve	+ve
Year group (6 or 7)	ns	ns
Sex of child (male or female)	Males higher	Males higher
KS <sub>change T2-T1</sub> : Physical activity & Health		
KS <sub>change T2-T1</sub> : General mood & Feelings about self		
KS <sub>change T2-T1</sub> : Family & free time		
KS <sub>change T2-T1</sub> : Friends		
KS <sub>change T2-T1</sub> : School & learning		
SDQ <sub>change T2-T1</sub> : Externalising (conduct problems & hyperactivity)		
SDQ <sub>change T2-T1</sub> : Internalising (emotional & peer problems)		
SDQ <sub>change T2-T1</sub> : Prosocial		

**I can usually think of lots of ways to solve a problem.**

**I try to stay positive.**

**I am a very determined person.**

**I really believe in myself.**

**I am good at solving problems in my life.**

**Notes:**

ns = not a significant predictor after considering all other factors

# References and reading



Blakemore, S-J. (2019). *Inventing ourselves: The secret life of the teenage brain*. Penguin Books.

Coleman, J (2011) *The nature of adolescence: 4<sup>th</sup> Edition*. Routledge.

Graham, P (2004) *The end of adolescence*. Oxford University Press.

Steinberg, L. (2014). *Age of opportunity: Lessons from the new science of adolescence*. Boston, MA, : Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.

