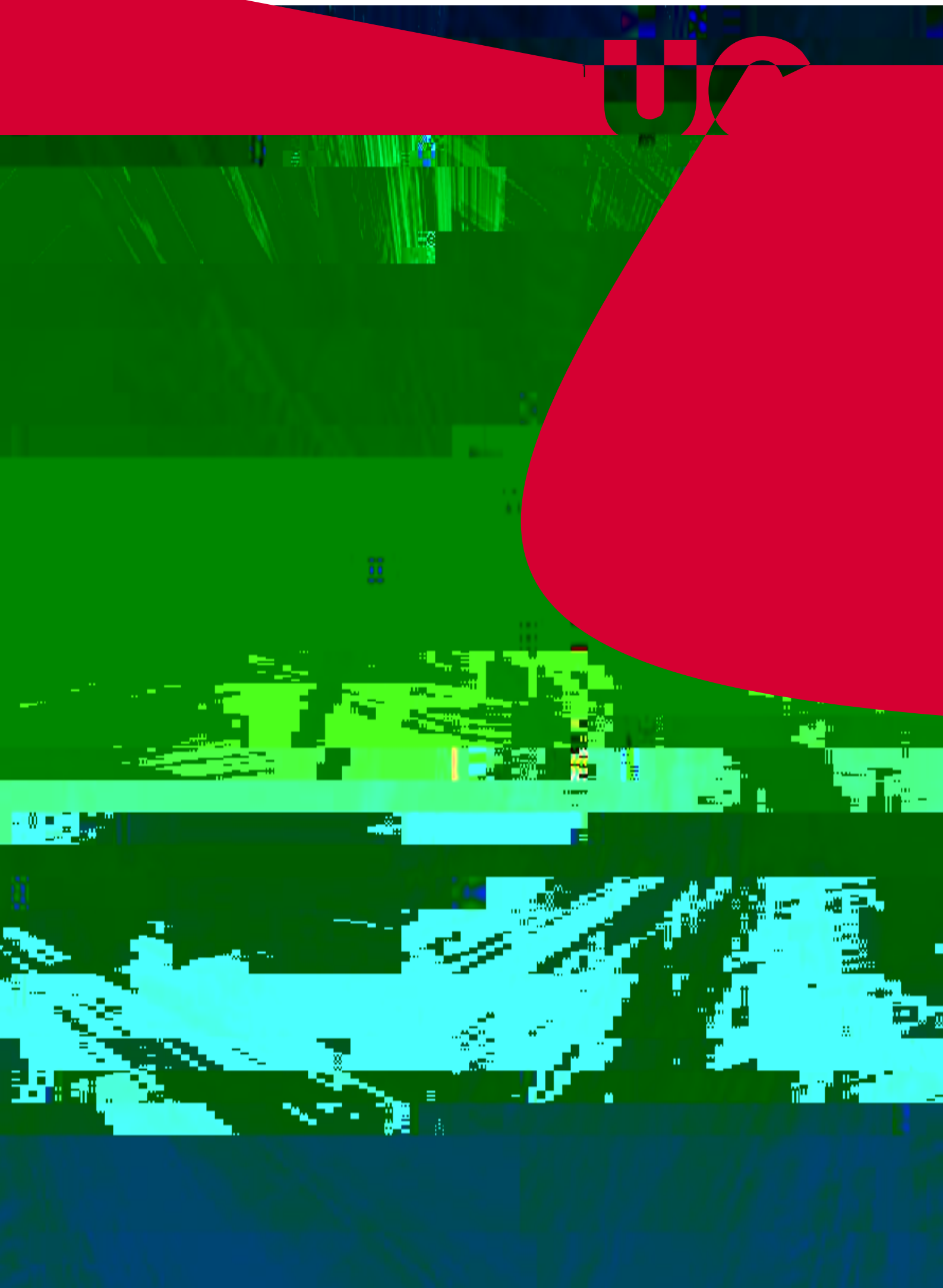

Introduction

This is a question we put to 28 teenagers aged 14 to 18 this summer. On the 28th of June 2018, a group of teenagers and researchers came together at a workshop at UCL to share their views and opinions about what adolescence means to them.

Adolescence is commonly viewed as a time of pivotal development, when individuals go through a number of important physical and social transitions. But adolescence as a life stage can also be ambiguous and unclear, which has led to academic debate around the meaning of adolescence. Some have suggested the ages of 10 to 24,[1] coinciding with the physical, behavioural, and social changes that happen to us during this time. But social scientists have also shown mainly through cross-cultural comparisons that the cut-off point between childhood and adulthood is not always so easily defined by age.[2]

Although this interest in defining and understanding adolescence has existed for decades[3], very rarely have adolescents themselves been included in these debates. So, we set out to address this gap by asking teenagers

[1] Sawyer, S. M. *et al.*
The Lancet Child & Adolescent Health, 2 (3).
[2] Schlegel, A. & Barry, H. (1991) Adolescence: An anthropological inquiry. New York, NY, US: Free Press.

Communicating Adolescence

Teenagers in our workshop came up with a range of ideas on how to communicate research about adolescence. They agreed that there is a need for research findings to be communicated to both young and older people. Engaging adults in conversations about younger experiences was seen as helpful to fight stereotypes of teens being lazy or selfish.

Social media naturally came up as one of the preferred ways of accessing information, with Snapchat and Twitter on top of the list. Participants also expressed preference for infographics:

Keeping information entertaining and simple

We also explored if the words used by researchers to categorise life stages and adolescence were meaningful for teenagers. Together, young people discussed the different age ra

Lessons L

F. Vaghi & E. H. Emmott (2018) *Teen Views on Adolescence.* University College London, London, UK.

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