

Constant cussing shows lack of intelligence

JORDAN LEE
Opinion Writer
THE OAKS

I do not think it possible to make it through an entire day without hearing at least one filthy word, not to mention dialogues entirely composed of said filth.

Sometimes as I walk down the street, I imagine myself back in the sixties surrounded by champions of the "Filthy Speech Movement" as they exercise their right to free speech by screaming random and meaningless obscenities through amped-up megaphones, as they did across college campuses.

But then I remember. I am only downtown, and I am not surrounded by zealous college students, rather by other teenagers.

I thought that swear words were like bottles of fine wine, that they were things to be used sparingly, to be

pulled out on special occasions, such as those times one experiences heightened negative emotions that cannot be done justice by ordinary words.

But this principle of temperance seems lost on all those people with cuss words stemming out of their noses.

Those people are perpetually drunk on such speech.

Cuss words have moved beyond the purpose as ornaments to dramatic situations.

Now they are conversational staples, spewed out without a second thought, and the conversations they dominate are those of young adults.

It comes down to a harsh yet unavoidable truth.

Youth whose speech is dominated by profanities only broadcast their dismal knowledge of the English language.

Habitual cussing exposes that one's vocabulary is as dry as a well in a

drought.

Now perhaps you enjoy cursing up a blue streak, yet are convinced of your vocabulary's merit.

If so, I would not dispute your claim to knowing some fancy words; I would simply doubt your tendency to use those fancy words over your more familiar cuss words.

Language is beautiful, and the lack of consideration it receives from teenagers is almost criminal.

You see, a habit like swearing becomes so ingrained that if you decide to try and cast it off at your convenience, you discover that your attempts are absolutely futile.

Habits like swearing stay with you, they haunt you in that way.

The root cause of the degeneration

of youth's speech is no mystery.

Most certainly the cause of our generation's diminishing communication skills is directly related to the dominion of the Internet.

Instead of reading books, a teenager is more likely to be surfing the net. It is convenient and much less taxing than plodding through the pages of an entire book.

But it is a compromise: the demise of language for convenience's sake.

Language is beautiful, and the lack of consideration it receives from teenagers is almost criminal.

When I meet people with colorful, expanded vocabularies, I am drawn to their conversation. It is refreshing and pleasurable to be in such company, but it is company rarely filled by fellow teenagers.

This is what I fear for my generation. I fear that their utter disregard - and in some cases contempt - for the

importance of language and the skill of communication will prove devastating.

It is not only the mindless cursing that threatens to cripple our generation, but it is also the vocabularies composed of "likes," "cools," "uhs" and other such drivel.

Teenagers do not realize it, but their inability to express themselves with meaningful words will result in no one wanting to listen to them.

Their opinions will certainly not hold much sway for want of eloquence, and in many cases, coherence.

Crass, juvenile speech may not hinder you now, but if it is all you practice, it will be a rude awakening when you finally realize that you cannot attain the heights you had set for yourself.

Do you want to influence and shape the worlds of business, politics, or culture?

Then do not make the mistake of valuing your speech so cheaply.

Running start is the way to go



MARIA NACCARATO
Central Valley

It is the time of year when students are looking ahead to the end of the school year, summer vacation and their course scheduling for next year. The usual dilemmas of deciding between pottery and jewelry, team sports and weight lifting, and trying to cram in as many graduation requirements as possible are always considered. Another choice to be contemplated by sophomores and juniors is Running Start.

Running Start has its advantages and disadvantages, but as soon to be alumni of the program I can say that the benefits outnumber anything that might keep someone from the program.

By taking both high school and college credits at the same time you are saving years of your life. Yes, I do mean years. This means that you could potentially graduate with a four year bachelor degree at age 20. Or you could get an AA and enter the workforce with a degree

right out of high school.

Another major benefit is that Running Start classes are free. Even paying for books and the gas to get to school, which you would have to pay for as a traditional student anyway, you still save thousands of dollars. Two years of college for free: who could say no to that?

What I enjoy most about Running Start is being out of high school and only being in class three hours a day. The independence of college without the burden of living on your own: definitely the best of both worlds.

The very best thing about a college campus is the absence of loud annoying bells. It is a wonderful feeling to change classes without a loud mechanized system to announce that it is okay to get out of your seat. I also like the numerous coffee stands strategically placed around the campus. Caffeine is never more than a short walk away.

Flexible class times also make Running Start a great option for someone who wants to get more hours in at work. You can schedule early morning classes and be out of school before noon. Or if you prefer to sleep

in, later morning and afternoon classes make sleeping in every morning a possibility.

The disadvantages of Running Start include not seeing your friends every day, somewhat harder classes and the pressure to do well on exams. You also have to be independent enough in your study practices that you can get your homework done by the due date without any reminders.

There are also so many more choices that are not available to high school students. One of the main ones is the choice of whether or not to go to class. Not going to class is one of the main reasons people are unsuccessful in college. Attending class even though no one else really cares you are there is what makes or breaks the college experience.

By practicing independence and learning what it takes to succeed in college before you leave home, you are drastically increasing your chances of success. Running Start is not for everyone, but for those independent learners who want to get ahead in life it is a great option.

Will our generation be defined by reality television?



RACHEL MILHEM
Gonzaga Prep

The teenage population - those born in the late eighties and early nineties - have been labeled Gen Y - or the Internet generation - because our reliance on the World Wide Web.

In a recent English discussion, I heard many labels for the generation such as the medicated generation or the over-scheduled generation.

I think all these labels apply to our age group, but another prevailing characteristic came to mind: a general interest in trashy television.

While this label might be insignificant and severely general, it may contribute to a downfall of our generation in the future.

Think of the television programs that are marketed to our demographic. One example is Flavor of Love, where Flavor Flav, an aging rapper who enjoys wearing clocks around his neck, attempts to pick his "true love" out of a group of women, all of whom have questionable mental health. You know it is a quality show when a sequel is made so he can find his true love again.

Teenage viewers flock to the drama of women fighting over a man - who is arguably not worth fighting for - and other conflict-based shows such as Laguna Beach, The Hills and other "reality" shows. Something about girls getting mad at each other, being deceptive, partying and spending large sums of money to increase their collection of designer apparel

attracts our generation.

I have often fallen victim to the enticing competition of America's Next Top Model. Every season has one distinctly odd girl who creates conflicts in the house and blames the other girls for being jealous. This adds a certain humor to the show that draws me in every time.

Pleading immaturity, teenagers can watch these trashy shows, but this obsession with drama and the unrealistic lives of these reality TV characters could derail our generation as we work towards the future.

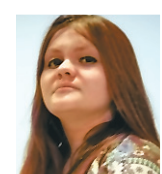
Next fall, when some high school seniors and most college freshman can vote, I hope that the president will not be chosen based on good looks (Barack Obama) or a dramatic past (Bill and Hillary Clinton).

What if John McCain is the best candidate, but we are so concerned with irrelevant factors he is over-looked? Of course, all the candidates have more important qualities than favorable physical appearance and ability to cause a scandal, but with the way our generation is headed, the important qualities may not matter.

Twenty or so years from now, when we are old enough to be running the country, I fear we will be waging war or starting disputes with world leaders just for the entertainment of conflict.

Of course, many people make an exception to this generalization, but as a whole, our generation has gotten out of touch with reality, ironically by watching massive amounts of reality TV.

Senior year is the golden year



SAMANTHA ULIANO
Gonzaga Prep

Ah, senior year. Golden, Elysium days, my friends.

For those of you lying in wait of these glorious days (ahem, underclassmen) or those of you basking in your remaining sunshine (ahem, seniors). Senior year rocks hard. Here are ten reasons why!

Food: I swear, the only thing I've done all year is eat. We find ridiculous reasons to eat in my classes - Cake Monday, Bake-Off Tuesday, Someone-Was-Tardy-And-Opted-to-Bring-Doughnuts-Instead-of-Having-Detention Wednesday, We're Seniors Thursday, and the classic Snack Friday.

Being Top Dog: Dude, seriously? I am sure you all know that feeling. It happened in fifth grade before going to middle school, it happened in eighth grade before going to high school. You are the kings and respective queens of the school! Woohoo! Enjoy it. But remember your underlings, for you were once an underling too.

Senior Project: Being that I go to a private school, I am not required to make a senior project. But from what I have gathered from the senior project website, you lucky sons-of-guns can basically do anything. Which is sweet. So, get in there and spend your time doing something you actually like, instead of the silly busy work classes usually hand out.

Community Service: Get out there and help people! Nothing brings a smile to a face quicker than taking time out of your day to go about and just help - both to your face and theirs. Most

schools in Spokane require their students to take at least a quarter of community service, so make the most of it.

College Apps: Yes, they are annoying. Yes, they take forever. Yes, your parents/guidance counselor will probably insist you apply to every college in the country (you need a back up school! And what if you don't get into that one? You need a back up for your back up!) But the cool thing-- the essays! Now is your chance to write 5,000 words about yourself! Gloat it up; it isn't likely you will get the chance to be this vain again. Repeat this mantra as you type: "I am AWESOME."

Standardized Testing (or lack thereof): Most colleges don't want you taking the SATs or ACT or the WTFs after the beginning of second semester because most applications are due prior to then. So, for you future seniors, plan ahead! Take them during your junior year. That way, you can sit back and relax instead of stressing about major tests.

Fourth Quarter: Never before will you have been so proud of receiving a 65 percent in your AP class. Why? Because it's an improvement. And your teacher is just going to pass you anyway. Why? Because they don't want to see your sun-shiny face again next year. Who wants to put a damper on eleven other quarters of stellar grades, really?

Senioritis: I would type something here but, uh... I'm just so lazy.

Senior Pranks: It seems about April, senior classes around the nation get desperately antsy and decide to break every rule their school has ever come up with. Not

because they think the rules are unfair, but just because they need something to do. Remember, should you decide to partake in the fun, make your pranks harmless. That way everyone can get in on the fun.

Graduation: The big finale; the final huzzah! You have worked your toes off for twelve years to get this far, so enjoy it. Cry during the boatloads of speeches and slide shows if you need to. I won't tell. Plus-- silken grad gowns? Comfy!

Class of '08-- I wish you best of luck in all your endeavors. Classes of '09, '10, and '11 good luck to you too. Your days of glory are just around the corner.

Senior year is overrated



JENNA CUMMINGS
Gonzaga Prep

I have senioritis so bad I barely managed to write this column. It is a very crippling disease.

After three long years, I am finally a senior. Though all of my classmates and I are glad that the end is in sight, this year is maybe the worst yet.

Freshman year, you are at the bottom of the ladder. Let's face it, everyone hates freshmen. They are small and get in the way. At least four times this year I have confused a freshman with a visiting grade-schooler.

Sophomore year is not much better. Sophomores have a superiority complex now that they can pick on freshman. Horrible attitude problems, sophomores.

Juniors are okay. As a junior, you are an upper-classman, you are starting to mature a little bit, but you are frustrated to have another year left when your senior friends leave.

However, seniors have it absolutely the worst.

Every rule, regulation and piece of red tape that gets in your way now that you are a senior seems ten times more ridiculous and absurd. Not to mention, every time you are reminded of foolish restrictions, your eyes roll twice as much.

The administration may be a nuisance, but the classroom is worse.

As a senior, academics go one of two ways. Either every single class you take is an absolute cakewalk, or you take so many unbelievably hard classes you can barely think straight.

Whichever of those best describes you, you are in trouble either way.

If you took classes like underwater basket weaving, history of beekeeping and the like, college is going to be a nasty shock. Home Ec. doesn't really leave you well prepared for a business major, you know.

A lot of people have the AP strategy. They think taking lots of classes that can potentially earn college credit will give you a head start come next fall. Those same people will be having nervous breakdowns the first two weeks of May.

Speaking of college, good luck getting through that process alive your senior year.

Juniors have it hard: SATs and ACTs and figuring out where you're going to apply is no fun at all, and quite draining. Senior year makes all that look like a cakewalk.

Now that you've decided where you're actually going to apply, it's time to play the excruciating waiting game.

A year's worth of research has led you to your number one dream school, the place you think is absolutely perfect for you. And you have now applied. Congratulations, it's time to wait five whole months for a little piece of paper. Your mailbox never got so much love in its entire life.

And once you do get in, then what? Those poor unfortunate souls without a number one choice get the unenviable task of choosing between many glossy brochures and campuses with lots of promises.

Picking a college is one thing, and then comes paying for it. Prepare yourself for a nasty job this summer to make ends meet and so you don't have to eat Ramen for the rest of your born days.

All of this before that one wonderful day, graduation.

How absolutely wonderful! You get to dress up, wear a funny hat, and trip walking across the stage in front of your entire class and their parents. Well done, you (almost) made it through the year.

