**The Dropout Degree**

**Presented By: Xplor**

Why ‘Higher Education’ is not education at all, and how you can get a better education by dropping out.

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“Education means the ability to think independently and creatively.”

~ Oliver DeMille

**The Problem**

 Kids

Parents

For most of my life, I had no idea what I wanted to do when I grew up. The only goal that was *realistic* enough was getting into a good college.

Despite my general knowledge in subjects like math, history, and biology, I had this looming feeling that what I was “learning” in school wasn’t actually preparing me for the real world.

*College will be different,* I told myself.

…

……

Nope.

The only difference is $60,000 in student debt.

You and I were coddled through the same system. Go to school. Sit still. Study hard. Get good grades. Raise your hand before you speak. Go to college. Get the degree. Get the job. Retire.

You are told so many times what you’re *supposed* to do that you forget what you actually *want* to do.

And before you know it, you’re stuck in a job you hate. But you can’t quit, because you need to pay off the loans you borrowed to get the ‘certificate’ required to lock yourself in this system in the first place!

Kids see their parents working through the system and naturally follow suit.

They have become perfect sheep under the spell of a herd mentality.

**The Core Problem:**

**College is the default.**

According to the National Center for Education Statistics (2013), **80% of students** in the US change their major at least once.

Instead of going to college just because it seems like the next thing to do, think about WHY you are going. Is the value worth the cost? Realize that there are other options to prepare yourself for a career.

“Dropping out” has such a negative connotation, but all it means is that you’ve escaped the system. Dropouts are thinking for themselves and organically educating themselves.

Kids

Here’s a list of people who have done it already:

[www.collegedropoutshalloffame.com](http://www.collegedropoutshalloffame.com/index.htm)

College is too structured to inspire students ***who don’t know what they are passionate about*** to be open and figure it out.

Because of this,

**College should not be the default.**

**We all must understand 3 truths:**

1. ***Education is not the same as School.***

Education is the process of *learning*. Schools have attempted to package and sell this process. In doing so, they have squeezed the organic process of learning out of the system by implementing grades, tests, and diplomas.

1. ***Degrees aren’t worth much anymore.***

According to Washington Post, **only 27%** of college graduates have a job that directly requires a degree in their major. Too many people have 4-year degrees. The supply is too high, which means demand and value is low. Don’t be surprised if you have trouble landing a job out of school.

1. ***The Student Loan bubble is about to pop.***

Student Loans are the easiest to receive but the hardest to forgive. At $1.2 Trillion, the frail infrastructure behind this system is on the verge of collapsing.

These institutions know they foster an unsustainable system.

So they offer endless financial aid programs to get the *sheeple* to turn a blind eye and continue falling into the system, unknowingly, like dominos, one-by-one.

We have valued the credibility attached to a “college degree” over the actual process of learning for too long. We have forgotten that exploration and experimentation are keys to organic growth & development.

True learning is simply doing something that you haven’t tried before.

“We are shut up in schools and college recitation rooms for ten or fifteen years, and come out at last with a bellyful of words and do not know a thing.”

~ Ralph Waldo Emerson

**The Solution**

This problem is becoming more and more apparent. Organizations and programs that empower college dropouts to take charge of their education are popping up all over the place. It’s no wonder dropout rates are beginning to increase.

The solution is simple:

**Self-Education**

If people took it upon themselves to direct their education, there would be no laziness and misuse of talents.

Divergent thinking is closely related to thinking about self-education. It is the ability to see many possible outcomes of a scenario rather than thinking linearly. Break Point and Beyond, by George Land and Beth Jarman, has a very in depth study on creative and divergent thinking.

In that study, people of all ages were asked to list how many uses they could think of for a paper clip. The idea is that people who are better at divergent thinking will be able to come up with many more uses because they are able to question everything about the paperclip: *What if the paperclip isn’t a normal paperclip? Can it be 200ft tall? Made out of foam?* These questions open up another range of potential uses.

The results showed that kindergarden-age students scored significantly higher than any other age group. It seemed as the subjects got older, they could think of fewer

and fewer uses for a paperclip.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Age Group | % scored genius |
| 4-6 | 98% |
| 8-10 | 50% |
| 13-15 | 32% |

This study revealed two major findings:

1. That we are all born with a strong ability for divergent thinking
2. That it mostly deteriorates with time

But it doesn’t have to. And it shouldn’t, because creativity is what drives innovation, leading humankind to new discoveries and possibilities. Divergent thinking is what allows us to grow in the most genuine way.

Educating yourself is simple. Instead of waiting for the questions to be asked, start asking questions yourself. “Why?” is the most important question in the world. Asking why allows you to ignite your inner childlike curiosity. The deep sense of wonder that drove you to figure out how the world works.

**Here are some programs that use exploration and experimentation to help people direct their own learning:**

1. **Program** – Uncollege Gap Year

**Description** - Founded by Dale Stephens in 2012. 1 year long gap year program broken into 3 parts: Voyage (travel), Launch (personal branding), and Internship (professional experience). The focus is getting students to take control of their own education.

**Cost** - $16,000

Target – 18-25 who want to find their passion. The cost is similar to the cost of tuition; Uncollege is meant to be a replacement for college.

**How to apply** – [www.uncollege.org](http://www.uncollege.org)

1. **Program** – General Assembly

**Description** – General Assembly offers full and part time in-person or online programming courses. A wide variety of subjects and courses from web development to data analytics and digital marketing. They also connect students with employers.

**Cost** – Ranging from $1,250 to $16,000

**Target** – Anybody who wants to earn experience and a real education in programming, web dev, user experience, etc.

**How to apply** – [www.generalassemb.ly](http://www.generalassemb.ly)

1. **Program** – The Thiel Fellowship

**Description** – Every year, Peter Thiel selects 20-30 applicants for his program. It grants $100,000 to college students under one condition: They have to drop out of school and use the money to start a business.

**Cost** – Free (Highly selective)

**Target** – 16-21. Already have an idea and passion to create it instead of going to school.

**How to apply** – [www.thielfellowship.org](http://www.thielfellowship.org)

Those are just some of the programs that we recommend.

Other alternatives include starting a business, vocational schools, travel and travel programs, and apprenticeships.

If none of those work, you can learn almost anything from a YouTube video.

**Recommended Books**

1. The 4-Hour Workweek by Tim Ferriss
2. The Alchemist by Paulo Coehlo
3. Hacking You Education by Dale Stephens
4. Ready, Fire, Aim by Michael Masterson

And of course our favorite,

1. Undecided by Simon Fraser

**Your Dropout Degree**

After reading this, we feel confident that you have adopted the mentality of the self-educator.

The next page is your dropout degree. 🡪

Rip it out. Frame it. Present it at your next interview.

Or, crumple it up and throw it away. Quite honestly, we really don’t care what happens with it… It doesn’t mean anything. It’s just a piece of paper. It can only attempt to represent the value you hold inside you.

Xplor is launching a mentorship program in 2016 – visit [www.xplorflow.com/apply](http://www.xplorflow.com/apply) to learn more.

Remember to Visit [www.dropoutdegree.com](http://www.dropoutdegree.com) to follow the tourand keep up with where the Dropout Mobile is headed next!

Never stop Xploring.

~Simon & Ben

Xplor

The trustees on the board of education at Xplor present

(your name)

With

The Dropout Degree



This degree is official proof that the recipient has dropped out of college and is finally earning a real education.

Simon Fraser **Ben Cummings**

Doctor of Learning Doctor of Education