

The common belief is that education is beneficial both for individuals and society. This idea is so accepted that even contradicting it almost impossible. But what if the importance of education is overrated? Do we consider differently -what if the years we spent at school can drain our savings and result in a bad investment? Also, apart from its damages on individuals, what if further education is more detrimental to society? Would you still be thinking as same?

What could make education something detrimental? It broadens our horizons, brings us new opportunities, and usually provide us with profitable occupations.

This summary detailly sketches the anti-thesis of the ideas that claim the benefits of education. They'll make you face the other side of the medallion; in the end, you'll realize that the disadvantage of education is much more than you'd imagine.

Chapter 1 - The things that US students were taught in schools don't have correspondence to their real lives.

The school life of a typical American student passes by looking out of the window when waiting to listen to another topic that has no connection with the life you live.

We could encounter a few students who are interested in the sonnets of Shakespeare, or geometry, Spanish. However, the majority don't understand the point of learning such topics. Do all these subjects serve the students in their future lives?

The answer is simply no. The remarkable majority of people think that the topics they learn at schools aren't suitable for the requirements of modern life.

Consider foreign language learning in the US. How many students who are native in English can become fluent in French, Spanish, or Mandarin at school? There are only a few rare examples of it. In the US, most bilingual people learned their second languages at home, not by spending years in a classroom.

Furthermore, because the focus of the education system is only on irrelevant topics, students can't be trained with more profitable subjects like statistics. Statistical thinking supports us when we are taking significant decisions. However, the percentage of American high school students who enroll in a statistics class is only 8.

Nevertheless, educators often oppose these criticisms. According to them, studying new topics is more than observing what they teach, it's to become more capable to properly think. Teachers claim that students learn critical thinking by writing English essays, and they discover the codes of logic by studying geometry. Briefly, teachers believe that education offers us more than we can realize in the first place.

But can these arguments endure criticism? Not actually. Some researchers have examined whether we can apply our formation got from school to real-life experiences. Finally, they discovered that such a transfer claimed by the teachers doesn't happen.

For instance, even if essay writing booster critical thinking, this happens only in the classroom atmosphere. When they leave the exam hall, students forget all of those reasoning methods and take their decisions as mistakenly as their less-educated fellows do.

As these investigations point out, irrelevant education isn't limited only to high school. Seemingly, university students also can't receive appropriate education that would prepare them for the conditions of business life.

So, for what account the college graduates gain higher salaries than their co-workers who left studying after high school? We'll examine in the following pages the two possible reasons for that.

Chapter 2 - Signaling makes clear the reason for college graduates' higher salaries.

One of the main motivations why people go to college is to become financially comfortable in their future lives because that would be possible only with receiving a bachelor's degree. In some regards, it's understandable; because their years spent in classrooms pay them with higher payments in return. After all, a few years of extra education seem a relatively insignificant sacrifice for a long-term financial bonus.

But acting by aiming for this bonus can be deceitful. Also, economists put the assumptions related o the human capital theory at the center of their explanations.

According to this theory, college graduates ate paid more because their degrees make them more qualified and productive employees. Since their productivity is higher, their salaries are higher as well. Doesn't it seem so simple when considering like that?

It might sound that easy, however, things don't work like that in real life. The human capital theory assumes that the education system allows the students to learn beneficial skills that prepare them for real-life experiences. As you can guess that theory is defective.

Fortunately, we have a signaling theory that sheds light more clearly on the reasons why a university degree provides more wages.

So, what does this theory argue? Briefly, signaling theory claims that companies value college degrees and educational improvement because it "signals" some pleasant features like intelligence, submission, and meticulousness.

Contradicting the human capital theory that claims that education is only a process of obtaining skills, signaling theory suggests that people considered education important

because it “certifies” certain features. In another saying, a college degree finished with good grades makes employers assured about the required qualities for the business as well.

Besides all, this theory is practical to understand why even the unconnected abilities can increase college grads’ wages.

Human capital theory can’t explain why a degree holder, let’s say in English, receives a wage increase, even if he ended up employed as a business consultant. But according to the signaling theory, an English graduate might not have been trained any skills that the business consultancy requires – but still, a diploma with a high GPA signals his intelligence, dedication, and obedience to the potential bosses.

Of course, it doesn’t mean that college education leaves you with no skills, that would be an extreme exaggeration. The thing signaling theory tries to explain is the mistaken assumptions of the human capital theory.

Chapter 3 - Going to college isn’t always the best choice.

It’s considered that you can’t oppose the “Go to college” advice, its benefit sounds unquestionable. Education brings new opportunities, broadens the horizons, also provides you with extra earning. So, what’s to oppose?

There are a few points. Firstly, the advantage of education is often overstated by critics, mostly because they mistakenly consider that the people who have a college degree are more intelligent and more conscious than the ones who don’t have higher education.

Most specialists who examine the disparity between the wages of high school and university grads, mistakenly claim education as the only reason for the difference. It seems that the mentioned researchers couldn’t notice the different qualities of the groups, so third level education appears as a substantially valuable factor according to their examination.

Think basically, going to university isn’t a wise decision for the majority of the students. Most of them don’t complete it. The rest of them would be more advantageous if they saved their tuition money to invest in the business, at the end of the day, they’d gain more than the scenario in which they went to school.

However, some should still go to college. So, how can we decide who should get a college degree and who should not? There’s a simple way, by using our calculators. We should consider carefully the different ways of education that have an impact on our lives differently, then we can discover to what extent college can serve the students with different characteristics.

You can handle this process yourself. Let’s jump right into the math and see the results. Going to college isn’t a wise investment for most students. Students who have a good or even excellent academic success should go to college, it might worth it. However, the ones with a lower academic standing had better spend their money to make another investment.

Even if you feel you have good academic success, it's critical to make sure your degree will end up a profitable investment. What's the way of doing it? First, decide on an employable, practical subject to study. For example, choose science, technology, engineering, or mathematics- the STEM majors. Or study the business of economics. Second, study in a prestigious public school. There, students generally pay only a small portion of the tuition and, even if you have to cover full tuition, public schools are generally inexpensive.

Finally, find a full-time position after you graduate. Remember, you won't profit from your educational investment if you don't use your diploma to obtain practical returns.

Going to college is occasionally a good choice. However, it is worth doing it only for some students whose numbers are less than we think.

Chapter 4 - More education doesn't always bring more welfare to the society.

So far, we've put it clear that education isn't always beneficial for individuals. But what's the impact of education on society? Does higher education level necessarily bring social achievements and a greater economy? Are the benefits of education worth what it takes from us?

The most common answer would be yes. The assumptions the society becomes more creative, more productive, and therefore wealthier by education sounds very logical in the first place – if you don't consider the irrelevant topics taught at schools.

But what we would say, if we thought deeply? Is spending more years at schools a good idea? Do the benefits of education eventually compensate for the costs?

The answer is simply no. Generally speaking, the money spent on education serves little society.

Signaling, the theory limits the benefits of education with verifying preferable features for the employers, clarifies why education often turns out a bad investment. To figure out how bad your investment is, you can assess the role you ascribe to signaling in education- the more critical it is, the more damaging the investment.

Why then? Let's analyze it. As we've issued so far, signaling proves that people with education have the necessary features to be successful in business.

For instance, a candidate with a college degree has respectfully prove to demonstrate her intelligence and strength while a high school dropout candidate doesn't have enough to prove her capacity. Although their qualifications were found equal, at the end of the assessment, the employers would prefer the college grad -even if she had majored in an irrelevant subject.

The thing is that since more people go to college, day by day refusing to get a higher education is getting more difficult. It's similar to the currency, this situation might entail a kind of inflation that reduces the value of the diplomas but at the same time increase the requirements for jobs. Soon, people should have a bachelor's degree to be employed to the jobs which once they could get acceptance only with a high school diploma; and an MA where once only a BA was required.

When we invest in education, that means we make this diploma inflation worse. Even though more education sometimes brings more qualified employees, a huge amount of money is spent on a pointless and expensive prestige race where the risks are endlessly increased.

So, the advantage of society? Simply nothing. Several studies made on it couldn't find a compelling clue that education helps to improve living standards.

Roughly speaking, pursuing higher education might sound attractive. However, it's pointless to spend taxpayer's money that was earned with difficulties.

Chapter 5 - Education has the power to enhance the soul – but it happens so rarely that it isn't worth mentioning.

Educators often claim that economic objections towards education ignore the main point. They certainly know that education is beyond financial concerns. Teaching has its high costs and it's difficult, that's what exactly it is.

But education cares about something nobler than the budgets and diplomas. It also ignores what's practical. In this respect, education is about what enriches the souls.

This thesis that presents education as a soul-nourishing process can be easily dismissed. It can be argued that that idea has been so exaggerated. But still, it reflects a bit of reality in it; education gives the desire to learn more, and interest in art and culture. However, in our modern lives, this rarely happens, so no need to take it into account.

The current education system is usually lacking two major elements that could make this soul enrichment process real: competent teaching and motivated students.

Teachers should be skillful and passionate to be able to inspire the students with a keenness for learning and culture. However, they usually don't care which topic they would teach next, their enthusiasm isn't much more than the care of the students.

So, the outcomes? Teachers and students similarly just do it automatically, and in the end, none of them benefit much.

Student apathy is another point we've stated. Try to remember how students become perplexed and start humming when they're asked to read Shakespeare aloud? If you recall,

now you can calculate how much excitement the young students can have for high culture products: They have almost no interest.

Some people argue that the apathy of the students can be weakened by education. So, this means through “force-feeding” we can teach them to appreciate high culture products and following the common line. That’s it?

Well, think of the adults around you. They were once sitting in the classrooms where they were forcibly fed by educators to learn recognized products of art and revolutionary ideas. Do you think education succeeded to give them the love for learning and culture? Simply no.

The Internet helps us to understand at which level the people are interested in the high culture that once they listened to school. Make an experiment, type Kim Kardashian in your search machine, you’ll see twenty times more content than the ones written for the famous composer Richard Wagner.

Briefly, education has something precious about the idea that it enriches the soul. However, it often can’t go further from being just an idea that has no root in reality.

Chapter 6 - A few easy actions could amazingly keep education from being a waste.

So, education isn’t the only way, the reality is far from it. As mentioned so far, it usually a waste that uses taxpayers’ earnings. Just for the 2010-2011 school year, \$1.1 trillion was spent on education in the United States. Aside from its material damage, think separately about its emotional damage to the students who spent billions of hours to be exposed to irrelevant topics.

So, there’s no hope? Can nothing be done to reduce this wastefulness and tremendous expenditure on education?

The answer is both yes and no. We have some simple tips to get rid of this huge waste of education. However, as long as the idea that accepts “education matters at all costs” is embraced, we can certainly assure that there’s no desire to transform them into practical good.

So, which actions should we take? Firstly, we could exclude non-practical topics from the curriculum. Considering that the great majority of the students don’t remember the things they learned about Shakespeare and History soon after their graduation, it wouldn’t make us lose many things.

Furthermore, for college education, we could stop funding education with taxpayers’ money. By doing this, education costs would increase and only a few students would go to college and graduate. So, in this way, we can prevent diploma inflation.

However, more reforms should be done to reduce education's wastefulness. We should transform it into a more efficient system. Vocational training is just what we need at this point.

Vocational training is a version of practical education that trains students to operate specific jobs. Its curriculum consists of lessons that aim for teaching practical skills, instead of irrelevant topics that are quickly forgotten after school. Briefly, vocational training's position in the educational methods is learning-by-doing.

Well, what's the best version of vocational training? It's normal working. The author claims that we should encourage young people to find a job at an early age and the governments should regulate child-labor laws on the behalf of it.

This last argument might surprise people. Don't child labor laws protect keep children from exploitation? Isn't it on the behalf of the young people? Not actually. Allowing them to get ready for real life by training them with practical subjects is better than wasting their energy in the classroom and after putting them into the job market without experience.

If we want to recover from the damages that the current education system, we should keep that in mind: the idea that more education is better makes us stuck in a muddle.

The Case Against Education: Why the Education System Is a Waste of Time and Money by Bryan Caplan Book Review

The so-called benefits of education are often exaggerated. Most of the topics we are imposed in school are irrelevant, and the tremendous expenses we made for education only provide us with success in a pointless status game. Although we could overcome these problems with some easy actions, today's political mind doesn't want this transformation.

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