

The image shows the cover of a spiral-bound notebook. The cover is a light beige or tan color with a fine, woven fabric texture. On the left side, there is a silver metal spiral binding. The text is centered on the cover.

Problems: Higher Education

By Dr. Frank Elwell

Higher Education

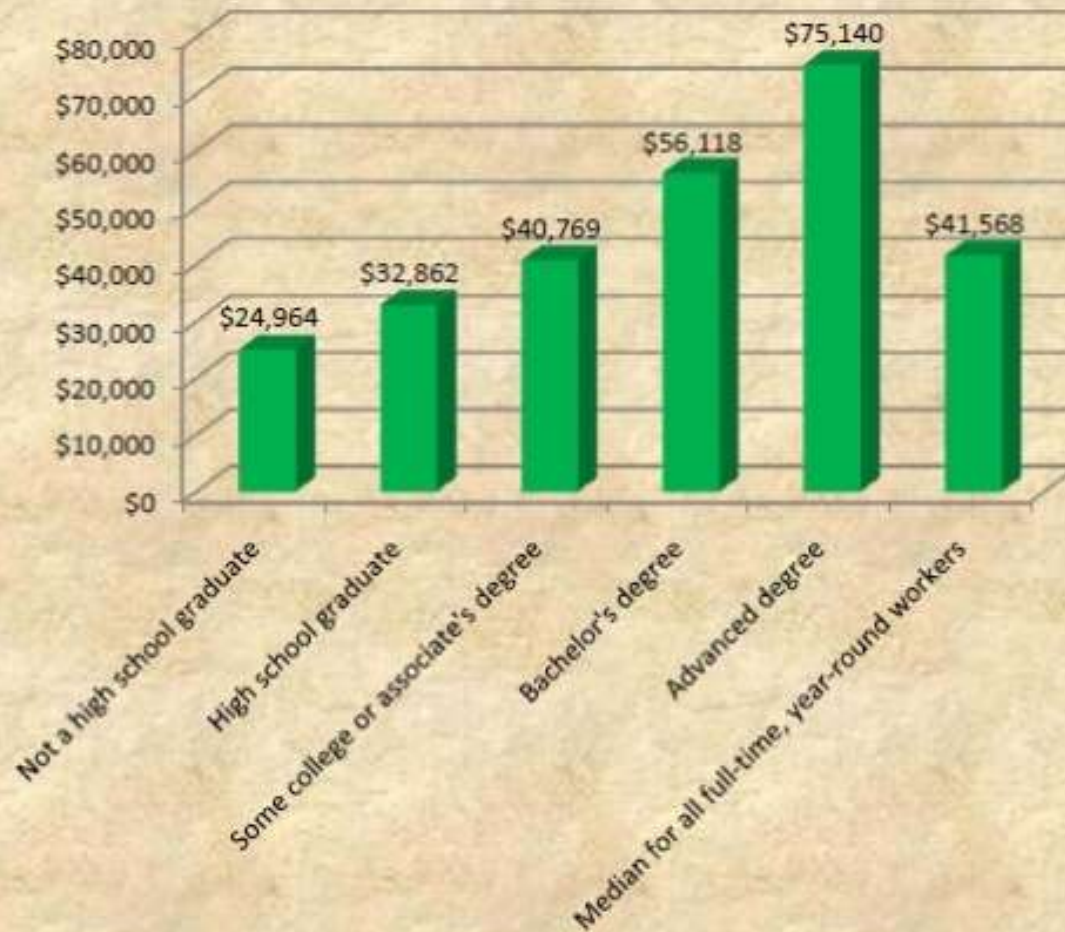
The experience of the U.S. in the last 100 years suggests that education provides one of the principle foundations of economic development.



Higher Education

There is little doubt that higher education has contributed to economic progress. An educated workforce (at least in terms of specialized skills) is essential for an advanced industrial society.

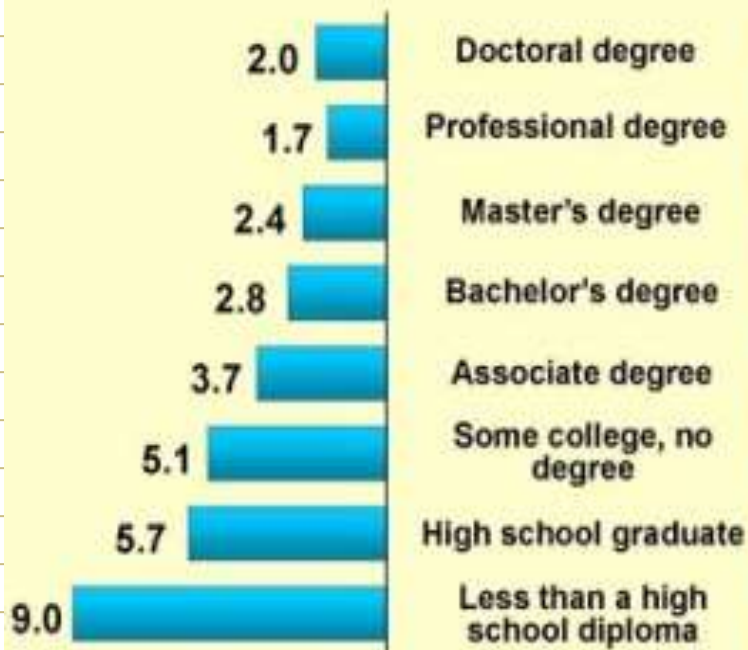
Median Earnings for Full-Time, Year-Round Workers Aged 25 and Over by Educational Attainment (2007)



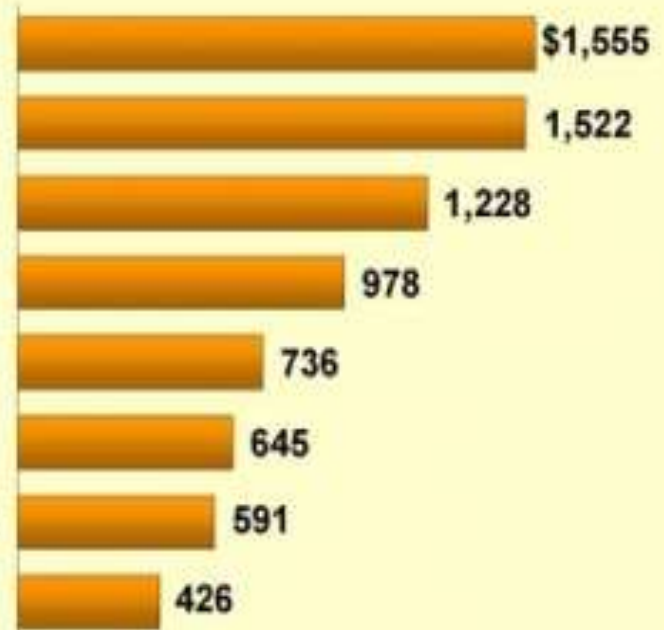
Source: Educational Attainment in the United States: 2007
<http://www.census.gov/prod/2009pubs/p20-560.pdf>

Education pays

Unemployment rate in 2008



Median weekly earnings in 2008



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey

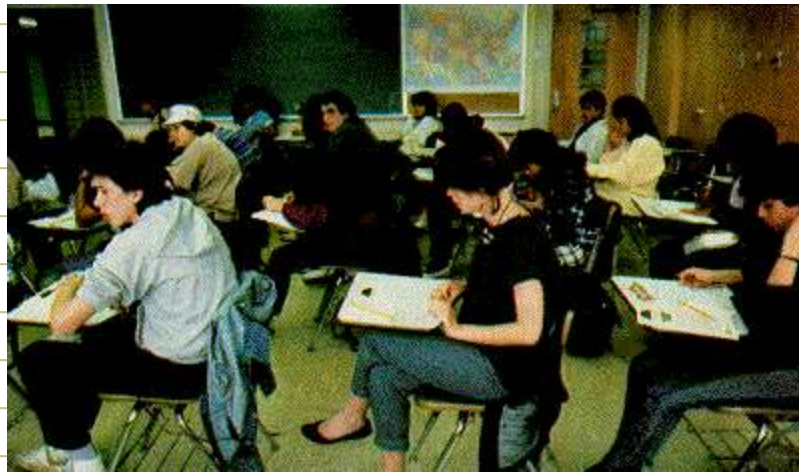
Higher Education

Yet, other than economic progress and personal advancement, higher education has accomplished very little to justify the faith.



Higher Education

Reports from various task forces, declining SATs and ACTs, reveal a deterioration of intellectual competence among college students over the last 20 years.



Higher Education

Standards are deteriorating even in the ivy league:

- At Columbia, according to a study of general undergraduate education: "A class of 25 had never heard of the Oedipus complex--or of Oedipus."



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Higher Education

- Only one student in a class of 15 could date the Russian Revolution within a decade."
- A faculty committee at Harvard reports: The Harvard Faculty does not care about teaching. Teachers have lost their sense of what kinds of ignorance are unacceptable."

Higher Education

Today's college students are responding to some very real social and economic conditions.

They come after the largest birth cohort in U.S. history, they come at a time of slowing economic growth, the slimming down of American corporations.

Higher Education

Schools in modern society serve largely to train people for work. Many available jobs, even those in the higher economic range, require specialized knowledge or skills.



Higher Education

Most jobs consist largely of routine labor, and depend little on enterprise and resourcefulness, little on critical intelligence, general knowledge, curiosity, or intellectual flexibility.

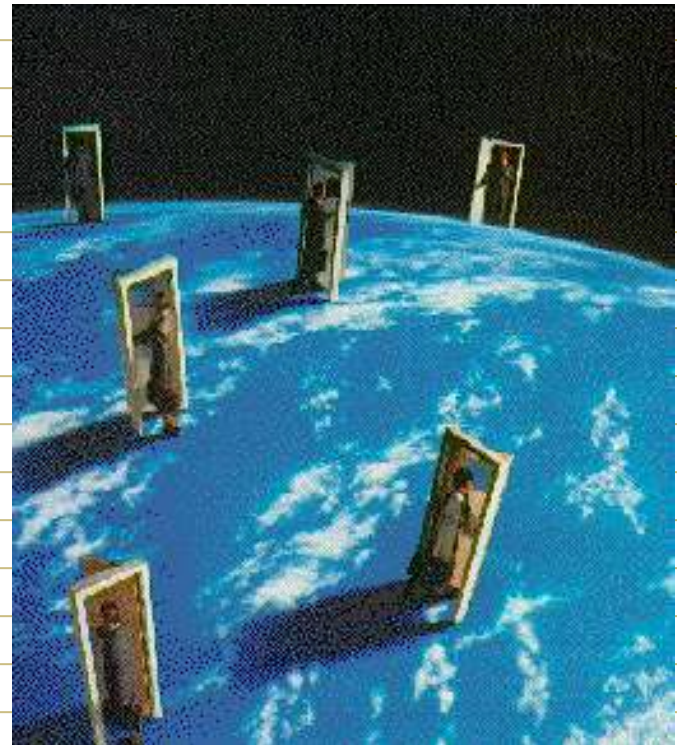
Higher Education

Hyper-industrial society depends on a population educated to take their role in a highly complex division of labor.

It requires a population, resigned to work that is trivial and boring, predisposed to seek their satisfaction in consumption and leisure.

Higher Education

Many occupations have recently undergone a "credentialization" process.



Higher Education

Employers are able to be more choosy, requiring ever increasing credentials and specialized training for jobs because the market is flooded.



Higher Education

Jobs that used to require a high school education are frequently seeking college graduates. Jobs that used to require a business major, now require an MBA.

Higher Education

Also, with the increasing division of labor many jobs have become more complex, more specialized, and thus require longer periods of educational preparation.



Competition for Jobs

The competition for middle level jobs (the type that institutions like Rogers State prepare students for) is tough and getting tougher.



Competition for Jobs

The job situation, according to most estimates, will improve slowly in the coming years.



Socialized Job Training

Colleges and universities have responded to market demands by becoming centers for job training, supplying corporate bureaucracies with college educated talent and skills at government (and personal) expense.

Socialized Job Training

We have shifted job training over to the educational system, thereby "socializing" much of the costs.



Tom Carroll, Phototake NYC

Traditional Education

But this narrow vocational focus, the need for certification and the emphasis on diploma and transcripts has changed the nature of a college education.



Traditional Education

Education has deteriorated into a tool for personal advancement and economic development. But there were other personal and social benefits to traditional education that are being lost.



Traditional Education

Classes in the humanities, the arts, and the social sciences are seen by many contemporary students as having little relevance for their future careers--and so are barely tolerated.

The most excellent
Historie of the *Merchant*
of Venice...

With the extreame crueltie of *Shyllock* the Iew
towards the sayd Merchant, in cutting a iust pound
of his flesh; and the obrayning of *Portia*
by the choyse of three
chests.

As it hath bene diuers times acted by the Lord
Chamberlaine his seruants.

Written by William Shakespeare.

Hulton-Deutsch Collection

Traditional Education

Students come into our classes because the university requires social science, art and humanities for general education, not out of intellectual curiosity. Given their motivation for coming, it is not wonder that they are usually bored or even hostile.

Social Consequences:

Teaching in the liberal arts is too often dispensed in an alienated and cerebral form. Professors in the humanities and social sciences are devalued by their students, the university, and society at large.



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Social Consequences:

The relevance of problems of philosophy, sociology, history, and anthropology to our personal life, and to the life of society, has largely been lost.



Social Consequences:

While students of this generation often see the disparity between what is and what ought to be, they are much more likely than the students of the past to accept the status-quo.



Social Consequences:

People find themselves unable to use language with precision, to recall the basic facts of their country's history, to make logical deductions, to understand any but the most basic written texts, or even to grasp their constitutional rights.

Social Consequences:

People's ability to use their own language, their reasoning power, their stock of historical information, and their knowledge of literary classics have all undergone a process of deterioration.



Joseph Nettis, Photo Researcher

Social Consequences:

In view of all the evidence, it should not surprise us that Americans are becoming increasingly ignorant about their rights as citizens.



According to a recent survey:

- 47% of 17 year olds did not know that each state elects 2 U.S. senators.
- Half of the students believed that the president appoints members of congress.
- One out of every eight believed the president does not have to obey the law.

Social Consequences:

If an educated electorate is the best defense against arbitrary government, if democracy truly depends on an educated and informed citizenry, the survival of political freedom appears somewhat uncertain.



Please see...

An Essay on Higher Education