Education

⋮ 1/5/2009

The education cluster of posts starts with the goals of general education, then focuses on needed high school curriculum changes to encourage education through graduation, and completes with data showing the relationship between final education, financial well-being, and social relationships.

Primary school students with their teacher

Education K-12 Goals As education increases, Might Makes Right becomes eclipsed by reasoning in solving disputes.

Two Methods of Understanding Both deduction (academics) and induction (creativity) are essential to learning.

Handful of High School Curriculum Changes Two goals, Individual Development and Citizenship, are not as well met as preparing for employment is.

High School Graduation Rate Closely related to future financial success and social adjustment.

High School and Success Types of jobs by final education with average salaries necessary information for understanding one's likely future depending on the stopping point of education.

Unemployment Rate by Schooling The hard fact: fewer years in school, fewer employment opportunities available at lower salaries.

Social Contract If a person has no opportunity, is it a surprise they resort to crime?

Education K-12 Minimum Goals

: 1/6/2009

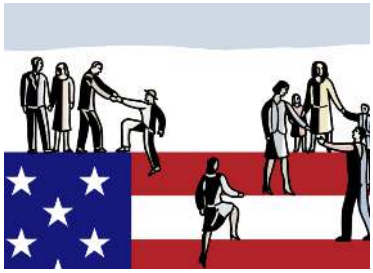
Kindergarten through 12th grade education is immensely important. Of all children, 88% are in public and 9% in private schools. Many parents (with more than a million school-age children) have opted for home schooling (3%).

Now, with the pandemic, millions of children cannot go safely to schools. Parents need to fill in for teachers in a manner that hasn't happened in several generations.

Beyond reading, 'riting, and 'rithmetic, what do parents need to be teaching their children?

General education—kindergarten through 12th grade—should develop students in three broad areas.


Individual Capability


Common good


Graduate's Next Step

The equal goals of individual development, citizenship, and preparation for student's next step should guide our offerings to students.

Individual Development. All you can be

- Develop students to the level of their capability and desire
- Teach individual responsibility and accepting consequences
- Include household management and balancing a personal budget
- Practice discussion skills that allow students to express opinions as well as listen to other's opinions when they disagree

Citizenship. An asset to the community

- Understand the rights of others. Free speech, freedom of religion

- Master conflict resolution, through practice of compromise
- Learn our Constitution and laws that govern our civil activities

Preparation for Student's Next Step

Although some students want preparation for college, others look toward starting their full-time employment. K-12 schooling prepares students fairly well for college, but not so well for a wide range of occupations where employers are looking to hire them. Polls and surveys show that more than half of all graduates lack the skills their employers expect.

Employable Skills. Capable of supporting self

- Read and write basic English
- Add, subtract, multiply, and divide
- Follow step-by-step instructions

In the next post I will go into some changes needed for the high school curriculum. If not at home, then in primary school, students must learn that Might Makes Right is not an acceptable way to solve arguments. If this is not learned early, it may never be learned. Crime becomes a mere choice.

Dropouts

In primary and middle school almost every child is exposed to our society's ideals. However, in high school after age 16, too many students (20%) quit and do not complete high school with their peers. Those young adults are released into the public sphere without adequate skills. Yes, it was their decision to leave school, but the entire society suffers from their leaving. They can become parents who don't know how to raise the next generation, or become criminals (robbery, violence) or work poorly in dead-end jobs.

We, as a society, need to adapt school to better prepare those who leave at sixteen, while retaining the solid foundation that college-bound students receive, and improving the life skills of those who are done with schooling after twelve years.

Other posts supporting portions of this post
Handful of High School Curriculum Changes More class time for personal development, citizenship, and work skills
Creativity and Academics Inductive and deductive aspects of needed education
High School and Success Lifestyle is greatly affected by high school actions
School Choice in the United States. Published 2019 (external web site)

Two Methods of Learning

⋮ 1/8/2009

The other night I woke at 3 AM, turned on PBS, and watched a program on creativity. It was a good program, but it didn't discuss what creativity was—just how creativity shows itself, how to use it, how it's more than just a means to enhance traditional math and English skills. Its theme was *creativity is important in its own right.*

The program had a not-so-hidden agenda—to encourage schools to continue to support arts (which the program used as a surrogate for creativity). Under tight budget pressure, school districts have felt forced to trim their arts programs. The school's primary goal was academic, not artistic development.

This little essay takes the creativity program as a launching point for discussion. It's not attempting to be a review of the program.

Academics and Arts in School

To start, the dichotomy is not as stark as *academic learning and creativity proceed by separate mechanisms.* In fact, as you may have already thought to yourself, there is **creativity** in math, science, history, and most **academic subjects**, as much as there is the need for **memorization** of facts in the **artistic creation**.

The modes of learning differ by more than by emphasis. There is often a qualitative distinction. Academic studies are word-oriented and use defined first principles from which organized results are developed. Students are rewarded for memorization while often discouraged from adding their own theories, at least until they get to college. In such fields as painting, dance, and even story writing, training relies on the study of excellent examples that the student attempts to replicate. Although the teacher may attempt to describe the reason for the example, the illustrative example is the final arbiter of what is good, what is to be learned, what is to be mastered.

Socrates instructing Pericles in the facts of ancient civilization

In K-12 school, the main teaching method is geared to the academic subjects. The teacher presents facts in an organized fashion. The student memorizes them.

Art and creative subjects have a different paradigm. The teacher guides the students by examining superior artistic creations, leading them to their individual wells of creativity. In both methods, the student is learning. In the first, the facts are assembled in a meaningful pattern by books, the school, and the teacher. In the second, the student creates an idiosyncratic work. In the first, the intent is to learn and share a common knowledge base. In the second, the student develops an individual method of artistic expression.

Impact on Education

When students are exclusively taught subjects in an academic style, their powers of rational, deductive thought are amplified. At the same time, their creative and inductive powers weaken through disuse.

With the immense complexity of our daily world, we cannot know all the facts we need to draw logical conclusions. We must intelligently guess (that is, creatively, inductively) the premises which then underlie our deductions.

Students need to be trained to use their inductive reasoning as they are trained in deductive reasoning. That happens when they experience inductive reasoning in action in their various subjects. For instance, science is not all deductive. The selection of hypothesis is an inductive process.

Rules versus Examples

It is important to note this distinction: academic learning requires learning rules that constrain interpretations of facts, but artistic expression thrives when the fewest rules possible constrain the student's creative effort. In fact, artistic students often have to be told to let their imaginations go wild. The final result is best when students find their own rules that meets their own artistic needs.

What cross-learning takes place? In academic settings, students need to discover how to let some of the rules (interpretations) go â€¦ and then see if new interpretations give better meaning to the facts.

In art, music, creative writing, students need to realize that some rules are necessary for the creation of beauty, but those rules are up to each one of us to weigh. There is no absolute right or wrong in aesthetics.

In art, students are often told that there are no mistakes. A somewhat similar statement in science is we only learn from our failures. It's not a mistake for a creation to fail to be beautiful. It is a learning experience. It's not a failure for a theory to be proven wrong. It is a learning experience.

Problem-Solving

One significant purpose of learning is to help us with problem-solving. Academic schooling does this by ensuring students have many facts and ideas at their fingertips. Creativity helps us shuffle the elements of the problem until a stable and workable pattern that you can work with emerges. Both academic and creative modes of thinking are necessary.

Immediate versus Long-Term

An important aspect of problem-solving is one's individualistic tendency to search for either immediate satisfaction or long-term goals. The academic method rewards students more for goals that aren't satisfied in one class, maybe not even in one semester. Its tools often require waiting for gratification. Creativity often rewards students with immediate satisfaction.

Lateralization Favors Learning Differences

These two last assertions may seem ad hoc and not sufficiently established, so here is some background on how these two methods differ. The idea of right-left brain differences is well established, although it is

possible to overstate the differences by neglecting, in a normal functioning brain, that the two hemispheres work closely with each other, sharing information. They are not diametrically opposed. They work in a complementary fashion. This quick summary explains:

The **dominant** hemisphere (usually the left) supports speech. It's **verbal**. It's logical. It's **rational**, able to see possibilities and derive conclusions, and is aware of **time**. It works slowly through the manifold possibilities current facts present to it. This is the portion of the brain that is trained, rewarded, and encouraged by the **academic** method. Logical planning allows us to make decisions not just on the current conditions, but on potential future conditions set up by our current decisions. It naturally supports delayed gratification.

The **non-dominant** hemisphere (usually the right) sees **patterns** in external reality. It compares patterns now with patterns it's seen before, en masse. That is, not logically, not piece by piece, but more like 95 of 100 facial features match, I recognize my friend. It **categorizes**. It is **in the moment**, always. It has no internal clock, ticking away time. This is the portion of the brain that is trained, rewarded, and encouraged by the **artistic** method. Things are always in the present to the right brain, the intuitive brain. Of course, the right brain is setup to seek immediate gratification.

One final point before closing. Have you ever noticed academic teachers fall into two camps, one large and one small?

Teaching Styles

Those in the largest group teach in an axiomatic progression. You must learn some base facts, then some fundamental conclusions, and finally more advanced conclusions. This plays to the strength of the left, the logical and verbal brain.

The much smaller group teach in a gestalt fashion. They present examples of advanced conclusions. They talk about them, ask you to describe the examples in your own words. When asked by students to explain the advanced conclusions, they can only repeat what they have already said and give additional examples. Those teachers work with the discovery assumption—that after sufficient examples of a concept the mind will recognize the salient points. This plays to the strength of the right, the intuitive, pattern-matching brain, which explains why this teacher group is much smaller. Their method is contrary to the overall word orientation of academic education.

Summarizing, typical humans can learn in two ways—verbal and academic as well as pattern-matching and creative. Our current educational system is heavily weighted to verbal and academic.

Synthesize Facts and Creativity

Civilizations always face problems. We need to do in society what the brain does internally—shuttle creative ideas and logical results between the hemispheres. We need to ensure that we **meld academic**

conclusions with creative hypotheses. That requires us to ensure both methods are encouraged in schools.

Other posts related to this post

Lateralization in the Brain Thought is the summary of deduction and induction, not just one or the other.

Citations

Painting of Socrates Teaching Pericles by Nicolas Guibal / CC BY-SA 2.0 FR (https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/2.0/fr/deed.en)
Young students painting on a wall. Anonymous, public domain, Wikimedia Commons

Handful of High School Curriculum Changes

⋮ 1/7/2009

	Goal Achievment		
School Endpoint	*Individual Finances, Rights*	*Society Contract, Resolution*	*Work Force Instructions, 3 R's*
Dropouts 20%	Poor	Poor	Poor
HS Graduates 47%	Fair	Fair	Fair
College Degrees 33%	Fair	Good	Good

As discussed in Education K-12 Requirements, the three goals of schooling for students are:

1. Develop their capabilities as completely as possible
2. Teach the rights and responsibilities of adulthood and citizenship
3. Develop skills sufficient for their next stage, whether it's immediate entry into the work force or further education in preparation for their employment

Core Changes

Schooling changes are needed to accomplish all three goals. The basic adjustment is a shift toward personal development and citizenship. The three goals are mandatory for the entire student body. Also, we must ensure that dropouts are presented with more life and work skills before they drop out.

- Individual Development
  - Financial skills and budget management for adult life. Not optional, but mandatory.
  - Practice expressing one's opinions as well as listening and comprehending disagreement.
  - Appreciation of advancements in medicine, material goods creation, and environment.
  - Relation between their prospective employment and lifestyle.
- Individual and Society
  - Citizenry course. Social contract. The roles, rights, and responsibilities of individuals, social groups, and governments.

    - Conflict resolution, including role playing. Not Julius Caesar and Brutus in a Roman forum, but Beth and Sammy at the food court or Justin and Deandre on the playground.
    - Reasoning. Learning the differences between facts, opinions, and theories on current issues.
- Individual and Work Force
    - Reading and following instructions.
    - Study of prospective work content.
    - Income range for intended occupation. Consumption patterns for that income.

High school curricula have diverse forces acting on them. What are the minimum alterations to the curriculum that would satisfy K-12 core goals? Focus more course work on improving personal skills, a person's role in the society, and providing work skills appropriate for jobs available to graduates.

Current School Evaluation

	Goal Achievment		
School Endpoint	*Individual Finances, Rights*	*Society Contract, Resolution*	*Work Force Instructions, 3 R's*
Dropouts 20%	Poor	Poor	Poor
HS Graduates 47%	Poor	Poor	Fair
College Degrees 33%	Poor	Fair	Good

Figure 1. Goal Achievement

The three major types of student and three school goals yield nine results in Figure 1. Only one is good and two are fair. Seehigh school success for more on schooling, jobs, income, and employment.

Dropouts fare poorly. They leave high school with their potential unfulfilled. Society experiences a high crime rate among dropouts. We are not served well by them. Also, dropouts find it hard to find satisfactory jobs in the work force, resulting in a higher unemployment rate.

Overall, high school graduates get only a poor chance to develop their potential—intellectual, creative, athletic, and social. They understand some basics of the social contract, but the society's obligation is given short shrift. Many non college-bound students learn skills sufficient to gain employment leading to a satisfactory lifestyle, but a considerable number never realize their expectations in the workplace and home. They did not get a chance to develop their individual skills as much as they would like. Conflict resolution, essential in a competitive society, is not well covered. Also, many employers complain that significant numbers of high school graduates bring a sketchy grasp of fundamentals (such as reading, writing, arithmetic, and following instructions) to the workplace.

College-bound graduates, although prepared academically for further schooling, can easily develop burdensome student debt. Often, the cost of their educational choice does not result in the salary they need to support the lifestyle they want. These students need a better preparation in high school to grapple with these issues realistically.

In the real world beyond school, highly successful individuals can come to believe their success is wholly due to their effort. They overlook the support society gives them, as well as the contributions of other employees who magnify their efforts. That mistaken hubris has caused much pain to society. It should be addressed in high school, when the link between individual and society needs to be taught. That mistaken hubris has caused much pain to society. It should be addressed in high school, when the link between individual and society needs to be taught.

Every student, at a minimum, must be given an introductory survey of science, replacing the requirement for a specific subject. The course would start with the technological progress that has been made and the scientific method. In the overviews of the major branches of science, it reveals the fact-based methodology of science. The goal is appreciation of progress, not mastery of minutiae. Specifically the course should be required before the junior year, so that drop out students are exposed to the material.

More Curriculum Changes

For those students who will not finish high school with their peers, replacement of academic course with those that develop practical skills they can use immediately has a better chance of sticking.

For those high school students whose goal is a diploma to start in the work force, substituting work preparation courses for academic preparation would benefit the student, society, and the work force.

A high school diploma would indicate completion of its three goals. College-bound preparation would be a separate certification. This splitting allows a separate grading scheme for three goals courses—fail, basic rule, with one condition, and all aspects of rule. This grading would control the high school diploma. The separate college-bound certification would be determined as currently with numeric or alphabetic grades.

In this post, students are expressing their desired occupation, career path, or educational goal. The school and counselors are providing relevant scholastic requirements, expected salaries, and how the student's performance melds with those desires. It is not the school's role to slot the students into an occupational slot, but to warn them when they are off-course, help them achieve, and assist them in making adjustments.

Individual

Once the school is sure potential dropouts are covered, students under sixteen must declare (with parental approval) an educational path—occupational or college-bound. Some occupations might lend themselves to substituting specialized work-related courses, discussions, or experiences in place of an academic course. Some occupations might lend themselves to substituting specialized work-related courses, discussions, or experiences in place of an academic course.

A course on critical thinking, based on current issues, must be required. Issues the students raise can be used effectively to teach methods of straightforward reasoning. Straightforward reason implies an immediate rule of an event that causes a result. It does not concern itself with exceptions to the rule, except to mention they exist.

A second science course should be offered to those not intending a college path. This course would be in the technology of their intended employment. Surely professional educators can make better substitutions, but perhaps instead of an academic biology requirement for prospective restaurant workers, a laboratory course with food preparation, safety, and cleanliness is more practical.

Society

All high school students should be required to take a financial literacy course by the time they are sixteen. For most students this requirement will be no burden. For those who might drop out or choose a future without a bachelor's degree, financial literacy could substitute for advanced algebra without harm to the student's prospects. Instruction in budgeting would tie incomes and expenses to prospective jobs and lifestyles.

Similarly, an opportunity to take an English course focused on reading instructions and documenting procedures used in jobs available to high school graduates must be offered. This substitution for an English literature unit should be allowed early, so that potential dropouts could take it.

Instead of a second course on American history, exposure to the American social contract with the rights and responsibilities of citizens, society, and government must be mandatory.

Work Force

As mentioned earlier, an introductory exposure to the progress of science and lifestyle would teach future employees to appreciate the relationship between occupations and society.

Learning how to follow instructions not only benefits the individual, but it also increases the work force's productivity. The ability to improve a procedure and write one of your own is a valuable skill in any occupation, and often an aid to advancement.

Ten Years After

School Endpoint	School Endpoint
Class Graduation Year	Class Graduation Year plus 8 Years
Dropouts	*Dropouts*
20%	*3%*
HS Graduates	*HS Grad or GED*
47%	*64%*
College Degrees	*College Degrees*
33%	*33%*

Figure 2. Comparing education eight years after graduation class year

A remarkable 85% of high school dropouts either returned to high school to earn their diplomas or passed the GED (general education development) test. Whatever their reasons for dropping out, they learned that mastering high school skills had value in their lifes. So let's give them more useful skills for their gap years.

Of the 64% with high school diplomas or GEDs, 19% earned job certification or community college degrees. Many others took miscellaneous college courses in exploring how to reach their goals.

Although further information on those who went on to college degrees is available (see link below), that was not germane to this post.

In short, all students should be better exposed to course material that fits into a chosen life path. Currently many graduation requirements are overly academic and not well suited to those entering occupations immediately after high school. Replace a few academic requirements with pragmatic courses that develop personal relation skills, an appreciation of one's rights and responsibilities, and useful instruction competence. The college-bound students retain their right to take additional academic courses.

Additional Information

Education K-12 Goals
Creativity and Academics
High School and Success
Social Contract
School Choice in the United States. Published 2019. External web site

High School Graduation Rate

⋮ 5/15/2016

People regularly shake their heads and say only 80% of students graduate high school. From there a discussion of the decline of the United States often follows.

I searched for some facts that bear on the issue and found this longitudinal study (p.12) about 10th graders after ten years had passed.

Education Achievement

The highest levels of education completed by 2002 high school sophomores as of 2012 were as follows:

- bachelor's degree or higher (33 percent)
- associate's degree (9 percent)
- undergraduate certificate (10 percent)
- post-secondary attendance but no post-secondary credential (32 percent)
- high school diploma or equivalent (13 percent)
- less than high school completion (3 percent)

After 10 years, the high school completion rate is 97%.

Some people take more than four years to complete high school. Also many people get GEDs. Do I think everyone flourishes to the best of their ability? No, but many do. And of the many that don't, let's not forget the role of personal qualities and social problems in addition to the education factors.

Employment

Highest Education Required	Portion of Students	Portion of All Jobs	Average Offered
No High School diploma required	20%, falls to 3% with time	27%	$20,000
HS diploma or GED	45%, one-third have post-HS courses, without degree	39%	$35,500
Associate's Degree	9%	4%	$58,000
Post HS-certification	10%	NA	NA
Bachelor's Degree	33%	18%	$68,000

Figure 1. Chart of student final schooling and job opportunities

Approximately 10 years after their 10th-grade year, 2002 high school sophomores reported their current activities in terms of paid employment and postsecondary course-taking as follows:

- 19 percent reported they were both working for pay and taking postsecondary courses
- 63 percent reported they were working for pay only
- 5 percent reported they were taking postsecondary courses only
- 13 percent reported they were neither working for pay nor taking post secondary courses.

High School and Success

⋮ 1/9/2009

High school should provide something different for each of the three distinct groups who attend it—targeting for high school diploma, college-bound, and dropouts.

In certain ways, students, society, and employers are all short-changed. A few outstanding issues with today's system contribute to this dilemma.

Students and Job Opportunities

Figure 3 compares job opportunities with rewards. The top row shows that 20% of all high school students who do not graduate with their peers can compete for 27% of all jobs offered with an average full-time starting salary of $20,000. The data is from 2013, and the portion of students who lack a high school diploma or equivalent falls to 3% by ten years after their class graduates.

Job Opportunities and Rewards

Highest Education Required	Portion of Students	Portion of All Jobs	Average Offered
No High School diploma required	20%, falls to 3% with time	27%	$20,000
HS diploma or GED	45%, rises to 48% with time	39%	$35,500
Associate's Degree	9%	4%	$58,000
Post HS-certification	10%	NA	NA
Bachelor's Degree	33%	18%	$68,000

Surprisingly, more than a quarter of all jobs (27%) do not require a high school diploma. Unsurprisingly, the wages are quite low. Twenty thousand dollars per year. Also, it's important to realize that many graduates or GED holders occupy jobs that don't fully use or pay them for their learned skills.

Another takeaway from the chart is that 97% of all students realize the value of the high school diploma ($35,000 annual starting salary versus $20,000 for dropouts). Unfortunately, it takes a number of years before some students grasp this. Another problem is that the marketplace doesn't supply enough jobs requiring a high school diploma to satisfy all graduates.

The missing job and salary values for Post High School certification is lamentable. These include skilled workers like carpenters, plumbers, electricians who progress through apprenticeships as well as medical office workers, among others. Nonetheless, it is generally known these are well-paying jobs with benefit to the employees, the employers, and to society.

The fact that a third of students eventually earn a bachelor's degree, yet only 18% of jobs require the degree, is curious. A partial explanation is that earning a degree allows you to advance after being hired in an occupation.

From the work skills goal of high school, there is a fair amount of success, although employer sentiment that 40% of applying diploma holders are weak in reading or writing highlight the need for improvement.

Umemployment

It's interesting to consider the unemployment rate by schooling level completed (National Center for Education Statistics study p 23). This table shows the situation of the entire 2002 high school sophomore class with respect to work status in 2012. *Unemployed* was 11% for the whole class. Although the national unemployment rate stood at 8.2%, more recent entrants to the job market suffer more than established workers.

Schooling and Unemployment

Schooling level, 8 years after sch'd graduation	% Class	% Unemployed
Less than HS completion	3.0%	25.9%
HS diploma or equivalent	13.0%	15.0%
Postsecondary attendance but no credential	32.0%	14.1%
Occupation certification	10.0%	11.8%
Associate	9.0%	9.6%
Bachelor or higher	33.0%	5.2%
Total 2002 sophomore cohort	100.0%	11.0%

Chart of education and unemployment by sophomores 10 years earlier. 2012 data

The decline in unemployment as education level increases is striking. **Not only do the more educated get higher paying jobs, they are laid off less frequently.**

The benefits to society of decreasing unemployment are several. Most prominent is a decline in the number of people dissatisfied with society, which is expressed through crime, drugs, and chaos in their personal sphere.

Posts related to this post

Education K-12 Goals

Handful of High School Curriculum Changes

Creativity and Academics

External Citations

Jobs available by Education Level. Although this source is from 2013, the general takeaways remain the same.

Government Study on Education Achievement. Wealth of good information in this longitudinal study.
Summary of Unemployment by Schooling. Another aspect of schooling 2016.

Unemployment Rate by Schooling

⋮ 5/15/2016

It's also interesting to see the unemployment rate by schooling completed (p.23 of the National Center for Education Statistics study).

The total 2002 high school sophomore class was surveyed for employment status in 2012. Unemployed was 11% for the whole class, with this unemployment breakdown by educational level (Figure 1. High School and Unemployment). Surprising is that after 10 years only 3% of the 2012 sophomore class did not have a high school or GED, yet they contributed one-quarter of all the unemployed from their school class. Also one-third had earned bachelor degrees, yet they accounted for only 5.2% of the unemployed.

High School and Unemployment

Schooling level, 8 years after class graduation	% Class	% that is Unemployed
Less than HS completion	3.0%	25.9%
HS diploma or equivalent	13.0%	15.0%
Post HS classes but no credential	32.0%	14.1%
Occupation certification	10.0%	11.8%
Associate	9.0%	9.6%
Bachelor or higher	33.0%	5.2%
Total 2002 cohort	100.0%	11.0%

Figure 1. High School and Unemployment

Note: in June 2012, the overall unemployment rate was 8.2%

Employment prospects rise with increased education. Although many sample post-high school education, for nearly half of the population, Kindergarten through Grade 12 is the predominant way they enter the work force with.

Job Opportunities and Rewards

Highest Education Required	Portion of Students	Portion of All Jobs	Average Offered
No High School diploma required	20%, falls to 3% with time	27%	$20,000
HS diploma or GED	45%, one-third have some post-HS courses	39%	$35,500
Associate's Degree	9%	4%	$58,000
Post HS-certification	10%	NA	NA
Bachelor's Degree	33%	18%	$68,000

Figure 2. Job Opportunities and Rewards

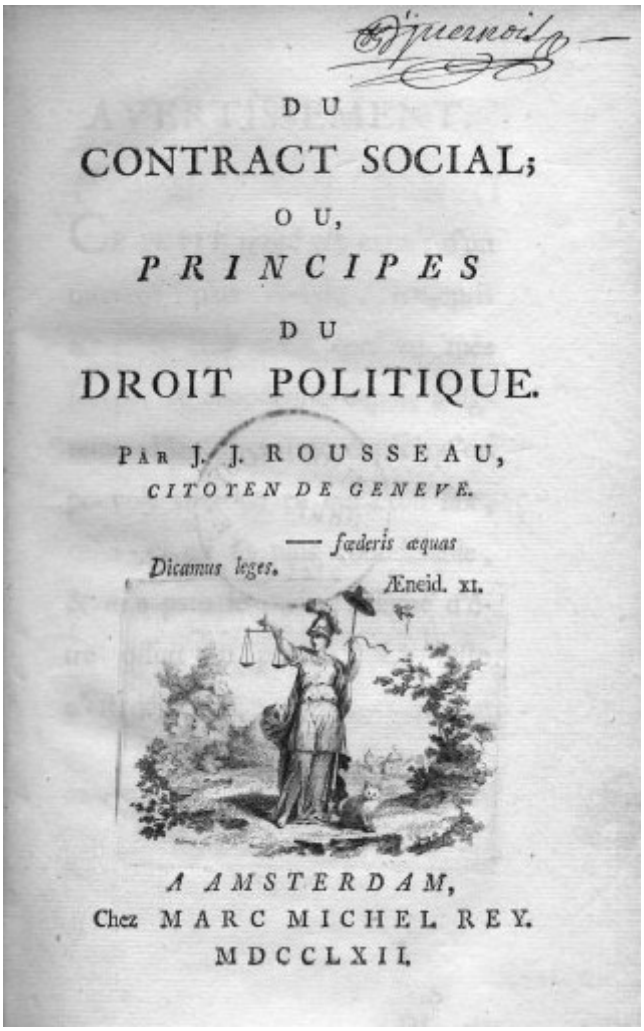
Consider Figure 2, a chart of jobs available by education level, students at that level, portion of all available jobs, and salary. Nearly 40% of all jobs offered require a high school degree or less yet those jobs were chased by 45% of the work force. This significant numbers cannot be sloughed off by saying everyone should get more education to get a better job.

The K-12 curriculum should have a prime goal of developing the academic and craft work skills necessary to succeed for the 40% jobs that 45% of students are aiming at.

Education K-12 Minimum Goals Development of employment skills, with maximal personal growth, and awareness of societal rights and responsibilities.
High School Graduation Rate focuses on information in the National Center for Education Statistics study

The Social Contract, Crime and Opportunity

⋮ 1/18/2009


DU
CONTRACT SOCIAL;
OU,
PRINCIPES
DU
DROIT POLITIQUE.
PAR J. J. ROUSSEAU,
CITOYEN DE GENEVE.
— fœderis æquas
Dicamus leges.
Æneid. XI.
A AMSTERDAM,
Chez MARC MICHEL REY.
MDCCLXII.

Social Contract by Jean-Jacques Rousseau

The basic United States social contract is work hard, obey the law, and you can succeed. That the social contract is not fully achieved can be seen in two facts. We have a crime rate that is too high and we have too much poverty.

The people who **break the law** do so for two general reasons—because they can and because they can't get what they want in any other way. **Because they can** is a form of "Might Makes Right" on an individual scale. If the criminal is bigger, stronger, more brutal, or smarter than his target (and everyone has an edge over some people), he will take advantage of the situation.

Thermometer of Socialization

When I was growing up, I saw that the amount of education was an inverse indicator of a person's reliance on Might Makes Right. If the guy stopped school before the 8th grade, that person would see taking directly from another the solution to their wants. If the person left school during high school, the person, if criminally inclined, would still take what they wanted, but it would be indirect, a nighttime break-in rather than a street robbery. As one goes further in education, if one craves more than one can earn legitimately, we enter the world of white-collar crime.

As the prior argument makes clear, there are two components that lead a person to using Might Makes Right. First is the lack of acceptance of the social convention—follow the law. The other is a self-image as unable to succeed within the society's environment.

Self-Image

A person's self-image with respect to their success is formed by familial experience and by interaction with society. With so many familial possibilities and with some clearly dysfunctional, we can unfortunately be sure that a level of damaged self-image and criminality will continue, no matter the improvements we make to the wider society.

Social Contract Delivery

What societal improvements am I talking about and how do they relate to the crime rate? We need to live up to the promise initiated in the Declaration of Independence:

"â€¦ all Men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness"

and developed further in the American Dream as stated by James Truslow Adams in 1931 (bolding by me),

"â€¦ life should be better and richer and fuller for everyone, with **opportunity for each** according to ability or achievement regardless of social class or circumstances of birth."

Opportunity and Crime

How does opportunity relate to crime? For that population that is not allowed an opportunity to achieve, some portion will not be socialized to reject Might Makes Right, yet will retain their desires for what others have. They will be the criminals of tomorrow.

The social contract, more formally, according to Merriam-Webster is

"an actual or hypothetical agreement among the members of an organized society or between a community and its ruler that defines and limits the rights and duties of each."

The ruler in the US is the ruling class—the government, leaders of social organizations, lobbyists, and opinion makers. They are responsible for creating a society that provides opportunities for each. That is their

duty according to the social contract, which in turn promises a population in compliance with law.

Range of Outcomes

I am not a person who believes equal opportunity means equal outcomes. People have different levels of skills, meaning that equal opportunity will deliver a range of outcomes.

That being said, society has not provided a normal range of outcomes in the recent past. Since the 1970s the ratio of CEO-to-full-time-worker pay has exploded in favor of CEOs. The rulers have taken 95% of all income gains since 2008 for themselves. That is far beyond the normal range of outcomes resulting from different level of skills.

Failure to Provide Opportunity

If our leaders fail to address the lack of opportunity for the poor, they must accept blame for a crime rate that they find intolerable.

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