

Education the Founding Fathers' Way: An Educational Shift in Paradigms

Bottom Line

In today's age-segregated, grade-based systems where children are placed on a "conveyor belt" and forcefully crammed information in an assembly line manner, would students like George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, and John Quincy Adams even stand a chance? Mentors, classics, and narratives—each category is present as the building blocks of our Founding Fathers' education. In this session we sought to expose the many pitfalls inherent with the Darwinian grade-based approach. Then we discussed a time-tested leadership model of education that is fully integrated with Christian homeschooling, both in purpose and application. Prepare your child to be the next "George Washington" of America!

Overview

- History of American Education
- The Three Types of Education
- Three Keys to How the Founding Fathers Were Trained
- Combining High School and College

The Need...as we look at today's student.

Are we raising Children or Adults?

- More adults 18-49, watch the Cartoon Network than watch CNN.
- The average video gamer was 18 in 1990; now he's going on 30.
- The National Academy of Sciences has redefined adolescence as the period extending from the onset of puberty, around 12, to age 30.
- In Italy, 1 in 3 "30-somethings" have still not yet left or launched from home.
- From the Story of Peter Pan and Wendy
The call of the world beckons our young people much like Peter,
"Forget them, Wendy. Forget them all. Come with me where you'll never, never have to worry about grown up things again."



As a first generation homeschool graduate, Woody Robertson has been where most students are now and desires to help them wisely answer some of life's biggest questions concerning their future. A frequent motivational speaker at conferences nationwide, Woody thrives in rallying and organizing teams, families, and students for greater efficiency and impact in our culture today. In 2006, he earned his accredited BSBA in General Management in 18 months and now resides in San Antonio, Texas with his wife Gina: the girl of his dreams!

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Millennials (Gen Y)

- Born between: 1980 – 2000 and characterized as the “normal” student of today
- Short-term minded
- Want things to happen fast
- They want rewards, relationships and benefits without commitment
- They are not used to responsibility while being coddled, idealistic and clueless
- They focus on entertainment and there is extreme apathy toward education. Speaking of college, this is an unrealistic picture/ perspective of real life as well as an inefficient use of funds! If that’s not enough, businesses say that it’s extremely difficult to work/ motivate these individuals.

Founding Fathers

Men of leadership and influence...for them, education started at a young age and was drastically different from what we view as “normal” today.

- Alexander Hamilton: Hamilton applied to the College of New Jersey (now Princeton University) asking to be allowed to study at a quicker pace and complete his studies in a shorter time. (Sound familiar?) The College’s Board of Trustees refused his request; however, he made a similar request to King’s College in New York City (now Columbia University), where he was accepted. He graduated at age 18. By 20, Hamilton was in the thick of his military career, leading in the retreat from NY. Later he turned down two opportunities in hopes of joining Washington’s staff. This dream was made a reality when he became an Aid to Washington at age 20 and a Lt. Col at age 22. For Alexander Hamilton, becoming 1st United States Secretary of the Treasury was only the beginning.
- Aaron Burr: Grandson of Jonathan Edwards. At 13, Aaron Burr was admitted to the College of New Jersey in Princeton. He received his Bachelor of Arts degree but changed his career path two years later and began the study of law. By 1775, news reached Burr of the clashes with British troops at Lexington and Concord; he put his studies on hold and joined the Continental Army. Burr saved an entire brigade (including Alexander Hamilton, who was one of the officers)

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from capture after the British landing on Manhattan. Later his career ended in what is known as the Burr–Hamilton duel.

- “Light-Horse” Harry Lee III: Graduated from Princeton in 1773 at 17 and returned home to prepare for war. By 22, the Continental Congress presented Maj. Lee with a gold medal—a reward given to no other officer below a general’s rank! At 30, Lee was a delegate to the Continental Congress. He’s also known as the father of Confederate general Robert E. Lee.
- Thomas Jefferson: At the age of nine, Jefferson began studying Latin, Greek, and French. He attended college at age 16 and graduated with highest honors. When he drafted the Declaration of Independence, Jefferson was 33 years old.
- John Q Adams: For nearly three years, at 14, he accompanied Francis Dana as a secretary on a mission to St. Petersburg, Russia, to obtain recognition of the new United States. He spent time in Finland, Sweden, and Denmark and, in 1804, published a travel report of Silesia. John Q Adams was a “late bloomer” because he didn’t go to Harvard College until age 20! However, he went to College speaking fluent French and Dutch and was familiar with German and other European languages not to mention his extensive political experiences!

History of American Education

1600’s – 1800’s | Leadership Model of Education

- Schools were few and far between, thus parents took ownership of the education of the next generation. Educational basics like reading, writing, and arithmetic took place at home or through mentors and tutors.
- We had a few colleges, primarily colleges of Divinity (Harvard, Yale, Princeton)

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1800’s – 1900 | Public Model of Education

- One room schoolhouse (ages 6-16), one teacher, older students teaching younger students.
- Parents would group resources to hire a teacher.
- After time, came the development of curriculum with 9 subjects back in 1890 (now we have over 2100 subjects and extracurricular activities).

1900 – Present | “Conveyor Belt” Model of Education

- Grade based learning, teaching and age segregation was introduced through an undercover movement that would change history forever. It was more of an “idea” within German education (under the influence of John Dewey and the Darwinian thinking), thought to be a competitive threat to American business and society at the time.
- Educational standards within America began to decline which continues today.
- Students are no longer taught “how” to think but rather to simply regurgitate information. Personalization was stifled with an emphasis on cramming facts and figures.

Architects of Modern Education

There were three factors pulling together:

1. Teachers longed for more a systematized processes to validate their efforts
 2. Government felt the need to make education compulsory
 3. Industrial Tycoons: Andrew Carnegie. JP Morgan. Henry Ford. J.D. Rockefeller Sr.
- These four men were behind much more than the Industrial Revolution. They spent more money on forced schooling than the entire Government combined.
 - In 1933, the President of the Rockefeller Foundation, Max Mason said, “a comprehensive educational experiment is underway to control human behavior.”

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- This “educational experiment” was pioneered in Gary, IN best known for its large steel mills but later, known for crime.

Understand that this system is NOT accidental. It was engineered by some very powerful people for some very powerful reasons. The goal was conformity and uniformity so that at the end of 12 years, we spit out “human resource units.”

These individuals were behind the instigation of an extra four years of schooling now known as “high school.” The first two years of college are generally a review of high school studies due to the duplication of information. The purpose of high school was ultimately to train a workforce as evident with Andrew Carnegie’s request for “school bells” to be installed in the factories.

The Problem:

We are no longer in the Industrial Age and the system is broken. The grade based “experiment” is completely antiquated and only dumbs down our students to the lowest common denominator. We are producing a whole generation of frustrated, exasperated, discouraged students. In the words of Gov. Jeb Bush, “It’s not my son... it’s your system.”

“It is nothing short of a miracle that modern methods of instruction have not yet entirely strangled the holy curiosity of inquiry.” - Albert Einstein (1879–1955)

“. . . America’s high schools are obsolete. By obsolete, I don’t just mean that our high schools are broken, flawed, and under-funded--though a case could be made for every one of those points. By obsolete, I mean that our high schools--even when they’re working exactly as designed--cannot teach our kids what they need to know today.” - Bill Gates (currently piloting a new method of education)

Challenge the system

A Possible Solution: Challenge the System

Three Keys to How the Founding Fathers Were Trained

1. Great Books: Identify and read the books that shaped the lives of your heroes.
2. Narration and Writing: Dialog and discuss world-changing ideas.
3. Internships/Mentors: Get hands-on, personalized experience from the experts through “real life” training.

Combine High School and College

The majority of our Founding Fathers graduated from college at 16–18 years old. Today, students can do the same and here are some ways to get there:

- Encourage students to take full ownership of their education by allowing personalization and customization. Investigate a college major based on life purpose and life direction.
- Take a modular approach to study and don't stress about grades. Tear the spines off of the textbooks and by-pass the system. Avoid putting students in a box and prepare students to learn... for life. Master the basic skills of reading, writing and communication so that students have a base from which to increase their knowledge. Some subjects require rote memory and need to be constantly reviewed.
- Spend the morning hours reviewing and studying math and English. Instead of studying multiple courses and bits of random information from a wide variety of subjects simultaneously, students can focus on mastering one subject before moving on to the next.
- With this in mind, spend the afternoon immersing yourself in one subject area at a time for 4 plus weeks and then take a college-level exam (CLEP/DANTES) to prove that you know the information and can skip the college class.

In summary, the average college student spends less than 3 hours a day in study within an environment failing to inspire and produce great leaders. We want to help students pursue something extraordinary through the leadership based model of education. Getting off the conveyor belt system requires thinking outside the educational box and

promoting innovative thinkers who will change the course of history within their homes, communities, churches and world.

For More Information:

- The Underground History of American Education, John Taylor Gatto
- The Thomas Jefferson Education: Teaching a Generation of Leaders for the Twenty-First Century, Oliver DeMille
- Disrupting Class: How Disruptive Innovation Will Change the Way the World Learns, Clayton M Christensen
- Real Education, Charles Murray
- Connecting, Paul Stanley

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