UnCollege

UnCollege isn't just an idea or a website. It's a movement. It's a lifestyle. We believe that college isn't the only path to success.

UnCollege is a social movement changing the notion that going to college is the only path to success.

We empower students to hack their education through <u>resources</u>, <u>writing</u>, and <u>workshops</u>. We believe that everyone can live an UnCollege life by hacking their education.

We are *not* against college. We do not want to end university, raze classrooms, burn books, or fire professors. We are not boycotting college. We simply challenge the notion that college is the only path to success.

Hacking your education means deciding how, where, and what you want to learn. Hacking your education means bending institutions to your reality. Hacking your education means making the most of the best years of your life.

Hacking your education does not require dropping out of college.

We believe that whether or not you attend college, success in the 21st century requires passion, hustle, and contrarianism.

It's false to say there are only three doors in life:

- 1. go to college and get an office job
- 2. become the next Mark Zuckerberg
- 3. drop out and do jello shots in your basement

You can lead a happy, productive life and contribute to society without having a college degree. You can create your own door.

About

"I have never let my schooling interfere with my education." — Mark Twain

UnCollege is a social movement changing the notion that going to college is the only path to success.

Fifty percent of the world's population is <u>under thirty</u>: you must differentiate yourself to succeed. With <u>70.1%</u> of high school graduates going to college, a college degree no longer guarantees success.

Why should you join the UnCollege movement?

- College lacks academic rigor.
- 22% of college grads under 25 are working jobs that do not require a degree
- A college degree ≠ success.
- Creativity is the No. 1 "leadership competency."
- 70% of learning comes from real-world experiences.
- Self-directed learners outperform traditional students (86th percentile to 50th).

Mission:

To change the notion that university is the only path to success and to help people to thrive in an ever changing world in which it is virtually impossible for educational institutions to adapt.

We believe that:

- Many people pay too much for university and learn too little.
- You can get an amazing education anywhere—but you'll have to stop writing papers and start doing things.
- You need an excellent education to survive in a world where 50% of the population is under 30.
- Subjects taught in traditional universities are often contrived, theoretical, and irrelevant, promoting conformity and regurgitation rather than innovation and learning.
- You don't have to decide what to do with your life at age 18.
- You can contribute to society without necessarily having a university degree.
- You cannot rely on university to give you a complete and relevant education when professors are often more interested in researching than teaching.
- If you want to gain the skills requisite for success, you must hack your education.

UnCollege helps people create their own education in the real world.

UnCollege connects a network of independent learners to mentors to support learning from real-world experiences and self-designed projects to complement traditional higher education.

School no longer requires analytical thinking or independent thought. In a traditional college setting the joy of learning is easily lost. Self-directed learning is a viable alternative to classical education. Schools emphasize following orders over critical thinking while self-directed learning forces creativity and innovation. UnCollege allows you to design your own education, supported by a community of like-minded peers and mentors.

Why should you join UnCollege?

- -A recent IBM poll identified creativity as the No. 1 "leadership competency"
- -Autodidacticism preserves the joy of learning
- -Unschoolers outperform traditional students (86th percentile to 50th)
- -Self-directed learning forces you to function as student and teacher
- -College lacks academic rigor

Need

Why do we need to educate self-directed individuals?

- -50% of world's population is under 30 and competition is steep
- -Unschoolers outperform traditionally-educated students academically (86th percentile to 50th)
- -Everyone has a different learning style
- -China is ranked #1 in math, reading and Science. America? 25, 14, 27, respectively
- -Self-direction is conducive to creativity and innovation
- -Higher education is no longer a differentiator: 70.1% of high school graduates go to college
- -School has become test-focused and no longer encourages critical, independent, or analytical thinking
- -Autodidacticism preserves the joy of learning
- -Schools don't teach anything except how to obey orders
- -Self-directed learning is the ultimate leadership experience—you are both teacher and student UnCollege is a self-directed learning experience for driven individuals to complement (or provide an alternative to) traditional higher education.

Are you an adventurer, swashbuckler, autodidact, entrepreneur, explorer, sojourner, or polymath?

You should become an UnCollege student if you are: currently attending university but want to complement your experience, contemplating enrolling in college, past your college years but want to give higher education a second chance, are intrigued by the concept

UnCollege is founded on three principles:

1. Experience outweighs education

You learn more from real-world accomplishments than from classrooms

2. Introspection is essential

Knowing yourself is necessary before pursuing higher education

3. Self-motivation is requisite for success

Initiative is more valuable than homework assignments

Story

Hi! I'm Dale.

I was unschooled from 6th until 12th grade and am currently matriculated at Hendrix College in Conway, Arkansas. I've been frustrated with some aspects of my college experience and spent much of my first semester thinking and writing about what could be done to address my concerns.

Over winter break, some unschooled friends and I — namely Rebecca Goldman (attending Dartmouth) and Demetri Sampas (attending Pacific Lutheran) — were conversing about our frustrations with higher education. We found that we had precisely the same frustrations about college, even though we attend different institutions. We threw around some ideas via email, with Rebecca suggesting "we should just start our own college a la the movie 'Accepted."

I loved the idea, but thought it to be a long-term goal rather than an actionable plan. After pondering the concept for a bit, I came to the conclusion that our frustrations with higher education stem not from the specific institutions we attend but rather from what we had in common: unschooling.

Unschooling provided an excellent (and in some ways) superior education. As unschoolers, we were free to learn whenever and wherever we pleased — which meant constantly. We took our knowledge from theory to practice, starting organizations and creating internships. We learned for learning's sake — not to pass a test. We found innovative ways to apply what we learned. We were forced to think independently and analytically. We learned how to interact with our peers and function in a classroom setting by auditing college courses. By serving as both teacher (planning our courses) and student (doing the coursework) we created the ultimate leadership experience.

One Sunday morning I was browsing education startups and stumbled upon Blake Boles' ZT College. I decided that as a former unschooler, I could improve upon Boles' concept and make Rebecca's "homeschooler college" a reality.

I launched UnCollege.org on January 25th, 2011.

Vision

The mission of UnCollege is to support individuals on self-directed odysseys of learning and introspection by creating a community of like-minded peers and mentors.

UnCollege is not an accredited, degree-granting institution. UnCollege rather provides students with a framework to pursue their own journey of learning and self-discovery.

Upon completion of the UnCollege program, students will create experience transcripts to demonstrate their learning from real-world accomplishments.

The long-term goal of UnCollege is to revolutionize higher education, providing an example of College 2.0. In the future, UnCollege will become a fully-accredited, degree-granting institution.

However, there will be no campus and no professors.

What? A college with no professors?

No, UnCollege won't actually teach any classes. UnCollege's role is not to teach you, but rather to guide you on your journey of self-discovery and learning.

In order to earn a degree from UnCollege, you must prove mastery of the equivalent subject material one would learn at a traditional university. UnCollege will contract with professors from around the world to assess your mastery of subject material required for graduation and determine whether or not you have satisfactorily completed degree requirements. These assessments could take the form of tests, papers, or oral examinations.

If you satisfactorily pass these assessments, you will be awarded a degree that recognizes you meet the same standards as a traditional university graduate.

A Letter to Parents

Dear Parent,

Welcome to a new adventure! You may be feeling both excitement and trepidation right now. After all, regardless of how old our children get, we as parents always wonder if we and they are doing the right thing.

That is the way Dale's father and I felt when we opted out of the traditional educational system in 2004. We were worried that unschooling and doing something different from the norm would hinder Dale's learning and his options later in life. What we found was that the more we stepped away from the established paper-and-pencil path, the deeper and wider he explored in the real world, the more he learned, the more he loved learning, and the more he discovered opportunities.

I do not know all the questions you may have, but I would like to share a little about our experience. I hope that some of what we found will be useful to you and your child as you embark on the UnCollege journey.

First, here are some of the challenges:

- 1. Self-directed learning is not easier than school. It is more work to determine who you are, what you want to learn, and the best way to go about it. Your child will have to research, create, connect, plan, manage, and self-evaluate. However, it is incredibly valuable to be able to do these things, and these skills will serve your child well in life.
- 2. You will have to explain, defend, describe, and strongly support your child over and over again. Be proud that you have a child who dares to be different. Trust that they will figure out what needs to be done. Unfortunately, many people feel threatened by someone taking a different path in life. These people will feel a great need to tell you why you and your child are wrong, making a huge mistake, and so on. Be strong, be open, and find a statement you feel comfortable with that will inform critics without prolonging arguments.
- 3. Your child will have to be determined, persistent, resilient, and confident. Having you listen and ask thoughtful questions may be very useful to them, perhaps in different ways than it would be to a student following a standard, classroom-based curriculum. Some of the things they try may not work the first time. Some people may say no or not answer calls or emails. Your child may need to rethink a situation and try a different approach. Again, these challenges are worthwhile and develop essential problem-solving skills.

Second, here are a few of the joys:

- 1. Being the parent of a happy, thriving, engaged, and courageous young adult;
- 2. Being amazed by all the practical life skills they are learning and applying that seem light-years ahead of many of their peers;
- 3. Watching doors open to your child;
- 4. Seeing the world become their oyster;
- 5. Seeing your child make new friends, new colleagues, and amazing new connections with mentors and people around the world. (Sometimes you get to enjoy these connections, as well.)

I could keep gushing.

I hope your family will have as positive an experience as we did when we left traditional schools and came to understand the world as our classroom. I hope that you and your child will develop a community of supporters to

share in the joys and trials of self-directed learning.

Yours,

Lisa Nalbone, Dale's Mom

Manifesto

Dear Fellow Educational Deviants,

Greetings from Franvillers, France. As promised, I present to you today a copy of the UnCollege manifesto entitled Your Guide to Academic Deviance.

-> Click here to open or download the PDF report

Creative Commons: I am licensing the report under a Creative Commons licence which means that you cannot sell it or steal it, but you are otherwise welcome (and encouraged) to share the report with the world as long as you link back here and don't edit the content.

Please link to the report using this URL: http://uncollege.org/blog/manifesto

A Few Things You'll Learn:

- -How to bust societal expectations about college
- -Why life and education are interrelated
- -The value (or lack thereof) in a college degree-Introspective exercises
- -What being a contrarian entails
- -Twelve steps to self-directed learning

Care to help?

If you're so inclined, head over to <u>StartSomeGood</u>, a crowdfunding site for social enterprises, and donate \$10 to help the **UnCollege** movement!

If you want to help others discover the UnCollege movement, please take a moment to share the report on

<u>Facebook</u>	, <u>Twitter</u> , or by o	ther means with y	our circle of in	ifluence.	•
I'd love to	hear vour com	ments!			

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Ciao, Dale

Getting Started

What is UnCollege?

UnCollege is a social movement changing the notion that college is the only path to success.

The movement has three parts:

- 1. Empowering students to take their education beyond the classroom;
- 2. Helping individuals replace the traditional four-year college experience with lifewide learning;
- 3. A forthcoming book to help youth hack their education.

We are *not* against college. We simply challenge the notion that college is the only path to success.

If not college, then what?

Educational deviance.

Educational deviance is deciding how, where, when, and what you want to learn. Before the 20th Century, most Americans directed their own education. While everyone is capable of being an educational deviant, it's easy to forget this because institutionalized education reigns.

Being an educational deviant requires neither outside authority nor tuition. You *do* need passion, dedication, and a healthy dose of contrarianism. Success in the 21st century requires that you develop these traits whether or not you attend college.

There are tons of educational deviants who find success without graduating from high school (they're called unschoolers), but UnCollege is a new concept. It's commonly believed that after high school there are two paths in life: the first follows a gleaming road to academia and the promise of potential earnings, while the other leads to a life of asking 'Would you like fries with that?''

UnCollege shows you a third option: how to make life and learning mutually inclusive.

If you're intrigued, check out <u>How it Works</u>, <u>Who Is UnCollege for?</u>, <u>Join the Movement</u>, and read the <u>UnCollege Manifesto</u>, check out the <u>blog</u>, and <u>subscribe</u> to the RSS feed.

Please email me with any questions, comments,	or concerns.
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Ciao,

Dale

How It Works

UnCollege.org shows you how to get a four-year college experience without paying a cent in tuition.

UnCollege isn't about being lazy. It's about hacking your education to gain the skills you'll need to succeed in today's globalized world.

It's about changing the notion that a college degree is required to change the world.

If you're attending college, you don't need to drop out! UnCollege can help you add street smarts to academic understanding and give you the real-world experience you'll need to succeed in the 21st century.

Step 1: Realize that college isn't bad, but it has issues:

- Tuition is rising at *twice* the rate of inflation.
- Student loan debt outpaced credit card debt in 2010.
- Students aren't learning in college.
- College doesn't guarantee success.
- Increasing cost coupled with decreasing value creates a higher education bubble.

Step 2: Unpack the value of a college education:

A college degree serves three main purposes:

- 1. It proves your competency in a certain area.
- 2. It signals to society that you're ready to enter the workforce.
- 3. It shows that you can work with other people.

Step 3: Achieve the same outcomes in a non-traditional fashion:

In a traditional college setting, students lose the joy of learning amid lectures and theoretical perspectives. After years of this passivity, they begin their careers sapped of creative force.

UnCollegians see no separation between themselves and the world. Through self-designed projects and experiential learning, they truly engage in the world and learn from it—on their own terms.

You can use UnCollege to complement university experience, replace traditional education, or further your education—at any age! The learner defines her own higher education and won't flounder when she must direct her own life.

Self-directed learning ≠ **solitary learning**. We believe that individuals learn best when part of a community.

The UnCollege campus is the world: if you want to be a filmmaker, move to Los Angeles; if you want to build technology, move to Silicon Valley.

We're working on creating a framework to help you create your education from the world. In the meantime, here are some ideas for projects to help you get started on your UnCollege journey:

Introspection

- Write a "This I Believe" essay.
- Write a six word autobiography.

- Write about your mistakes.
- Write a bucket list.
- Read texts of major philosophers and world religions.
- Set and meet goals.

Experience

- Find a mentor.
- Become a mentor.
- Volunteer for 200+ hours.
- Learn how to work LinkedIn.
- Take traditional college classes.
- Live abroad for three months.
- Take a course online.
- Learn how to write well.
- Design courses and teach yourself.
- Gain a basic understanding of scientific disciplines.
- Learn a second, third, or fourth language.
- Become an Excel master.

Application

- Found a business.
- Found a non-profit.
- Learn about something and go teach it to someone else.
- Make cold calls.
- Attend a conference.
- Conduct a basic survey of random people on the street.
- Connect someone else with an opportunity or job.
- Interview working professionals.

Who's it for?

We are not anti-college. We believe there is value in structured learning.

We challenge the notion that a college degree is requisite for success.

UnCollege is not for everyone.

UnCollege is probably not for you if you wish to:

- -Have a brand name college degree
- -Enter traditional academia
- -Become a doctor (or other licensed professional)

For others, college might be questionable.

If instead you are:

- -a student who want take college beyond the classroom
- -not sure what you want to study
- -hoping to apply your knowledge in the real world
- -a person who loves hands-on things
- -questioning the value of college
- -pursing a degree to meet the status quo
- -an autodidact considering college
- -wanting to change careers
- -bored with school
- . . . we hope you'll consider UnCollege!

Reading List

Schools don't have a monopoly on knowledge: you can teach yourself everything you need to know to succeed in life. You can get a world-class education by reading the books listed below. However, don't forget that once you learn something you have to go out and apply it!

This page lists all UnCollege-recommended books for easy bookmarking and reference. Purchasing books through this site helps further the UnCollege mission.

Without further ado, here are the top books about education, communication, culture, neuroscience, business, and design.

Education:

How Children Fail

Dumbing us Down

The Teenage Liberation Handbook

Deschooling Society

Communication:

Start with Why

How to Win Friends and Influence People

Eats, Shoots, and Leaves

Made to Stick

Elements of Style

Culture:

Rework

Art of Non-Conformity

The Mesh

The Geography of Bliss

The New Global Student

Delivering Happiness

Neuroscience:

<u>Drive</u>
Cognitive Surplus
Business:
<u>Freakonomics</u>
Personal MBA
How to Lie with Statistics
The 80/20 Principle
Design:
Design.
Thinker Toys
Thinker Toys
Thinker Toys The Design of Everyday Things
Thinker Toys The Design of Everyday Things Making Ideas Happen

Brain Rules

How We Decide

Resources

Online Learning

- http://www.ted.com/
- http://www.academicearth.org/
- http://p2pu.org
- http://www.khanacademy.org/
- http://odesk.com
- http://www.apple.com/education/itunes-u/
- http://sophia.org
- http://alison.com/
- http://openstudy.com/
- http://ocw.mit.edu/index.htm
- http://www.khake.com/page67.html
- http://entheosacademy.com/
- http://jibly.me/
- http://mooc.ca/

Offline Learning

- http://www.studentmentor.org/
- http://schoolofeverything.com
- http://www.skillshare.com
- http://hyperisland.se
- http://kaospilots.dk
- http://freeskool.org
- http://www.citizencircles.com/
- LeapNow
- http://swarajuniversity.org/
- http://www.berkana.org/
- http://www.tutorspree.com/
- http://leadershiplearning.org/
- http://www.designforamerica.com/
- http://www.sparkprogram.org/
- http://all.thepublicschool.org/
- http://www.generalassemb.ly/
- http://www.openinvo.com/openinvo-studio

College 2.0

- http://openlearn.open.ac.uk/
- http://www.uopeople.org/
- http://ztcollege.com

Writing

http://www.johntaylorgatto.com/

• http://chrisguillebeau.com

Mentorship

- http://studentmentor.org
- assetmap.com

Going Abroad

- http://www.rotary.org/en/studentsandyouth/youthprograms/rotaryyouthexchange/pages/ridefault.aspx
- http://www.thinkingbeyondborders.org/

Fellowships

- http://ventureforamerica.org/
- http://codeforamerica.org/

Online Proof

- http://proven.com/
- http://www.interviewstreet.com/

UnCollege

Academics

UnCollege, like reputable institutions of higher education, intends to become a non-profit organization. We, as former unschoolers, are founding UnCollege not with the intention of making profit, but rather in furtherance of autodidacticism.

As UnCollege is not an accredited institution of higher education, we cannot legally confer degrees. Instead, students will create portfolios of work to demonstrate their learning from real-world experiences.

Cost:

There is no cost associated with UnCollege, aside from costs students incur while completing projects.

There is no academic year or time frame, so students may work on UnCollege as long as they please, taking breaks when necessary. There is no time limit on how long one can be enrolled at UnCollege.

Location:

UnCollege has no campus; all interaction with UnCollege will happen through this website. However, it is recommended that you complete UnCollege from a location that is conducive to your interests that will enable you to be part of a community. If you want to go into film, move to Los Angeles, etc.... If you need help determining a suitable location or housing situation, UnCollege will be happy to assist.

Age:

There is no minimum or maximum age.

Curriculum:

The UnCollege curriculum will consist of self-directed projects that range from writing assignments to living in a foreign country.

At this time no formal evaluation on the part of UnCollege will take place.

Instead, students will evaluate their own work and solicit feedback from both peers and mentors. Students will complete assignments independently, but are expected to utilize real-world resources to complete the projects. Students will be encouraged to publish their work online to seek evaluative feedback from the world.

Students will tailor each project to fit his or her needs. Anyone may suggest alternative or additional projects. Each project shall be documented and the student must be able to articulate the learning outcomes from the experience. Upon completing UnCollege, students will compile an experience transcript with descriptions of each project and the learning outcomes.

Working with other UnCollege participants will be an integral part of the UnCollege experience.

Graduation:

There will be no graduation in the traditional sense. Completion of the program consists of successful completion of at least fifteen projects divided into three learning domains. Projects may be completed in any order. Sample projects appear below. Mandatory projects are marked with an star*.

Projects

Introspection

- -write about why you're participating in UnCollege*
- -write a "this I believe" essay
- -write a six word autobiography
- -write about your mistakes
- -write a bucket list*
- -set and meet expectations
- -write about where passion meets your skills

Experience

- -find a mentor*
- -become a mentor
- -find an accountability buddy
- -volunteer for 100+ hours
- -learn how to work LinkedIn
- -audit local college class
- -live abroad for three months*
- -take a univeristy course online
- -write a course and teach yourself

Application

- -found a business
- -found a non-profit
- -learn about something and then go an teach it to someone else*
- -make cold calls
- -attend a conference
- -conduct a basic survey on the street with random people
- -connect someone else with an opportunity or job*
- -interview working professionals
- -conduct research

Expectations will be given for assignments, but not detailed instructions. Part of the UnCollege program is figuring out how to complete the assignments. UnCollege staff will be available for assistance, but it is expected that successful UnCollege students will complete the vast majority of the assignments themselves, seeking only occasional guidance from others. Suggestions may be given as to the location of resources and aid, but students must show that they have the initiative to ask for help.



Join the Movement!

Please join the UnCollege <u>email</u> list, subscribe to our <u>RSS</u> updates, and fill out the form below to join the movement and change the notion that college is the only path to success!

As members of the UnCollege movement you'll get first access to the UnCollege curriculum we're building to help you find real world experiences that match your academic interests. This uncurriculum, if you will, serves as a framework to help you hack your education and learn beyond the classroom.

<u>Volunteers</u> run UnCollege — and we'd love you to join us. UnCollege is growing faster than we can keep up, so we appreciate any and all help. If you want to help change the notion that college is the only path to success, please email <u>Priscilla Sanstead</u>.

You should get started by reading **Your Guide to Academic Deviance**.

If your child is an educational deviant, please read the <u>Letter to Parents</u>.

Enroll

UnCollege will "enroll" its first class in Fall 2011. If you are interested in becoming an UnCollege "student," read on.

A retreat weekend for UnCollege students, mentors, and associates will be held in August 2011 to launch the program.

If you would like to become a mentor, contribute financially, or offer assistance, <u>please get in touch</u>. We would love your help!

The goal of the UnCollege program is to support a small group of highly-motivated individuals in self-directed learning outside a traditional institution of higher education.

You will be part of creating College 2.0.

We are seeking students of all ages who wish to direct their own education through real-world experiences.

If you are not interested in participating in UnCollege as a student, please consider participating in the UnCollege program as a mentor. Mentors — with all types of expertise — will support students in their UnCollege journey.

You should become an UnCollege student if you are:

- a) currently attending university but want to complement your experience
- b) contemplating enrolling in college
- c) want to give higher education a second chance
- d) are intrigued by the concept

You can participate in the UnCollege program whilst still enrolled at a traditional college or university. UnCollege can complement a traditional education without replacing your college or university experience.

How to Apply:

There is no formal application and UnCollege is free. If you are an interested in joining the UnCollege program, write us an email.

Tell us about yourself and why you wish to participate!

Please join the <u>UnCollege Facebook Group</u> and the <u>UnCollege Student Google Group</u>.

Volunteer

UnCollege is run by volunteers and we'd love your help. The organization has grown faster than we ever imagined.

We don't have any full-time volunteer positions open at the moment. If you have a suggestion, please email us!

If you are passionate about UnCollege and would like to join the <u>UnCollege Network</u>, email our Community Manager Priscilla Sanstead at <u>priscilla@uncollege.org</u>

Community members support UnCollege, regularly share links about the coming changes in higher education, and actively talk to their social networks about UnCollege and the future of learning.

Mentors

Mentorship is an integral aspect of the UnCollege experience. We connect you to a robust network of mentors from around the world. Some of the institutions UnCollege mentors have attended (and in some cases worked for) are listed at below. This sample is non-comprehensive: UnCollege can help you find a mentor at any institution.

Johns Hopkins

Harvard Business School

Oracle

UCSF

Amherst

Yale

Cornell

Boston University

Dartmouth

Lufthansa

Southwest Airlines

Federal Reserve

Orange

Google

Cisco

Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory

Stanford

UC Davis

American Academy of Family Physicians

If you wish to become a mentor:

- -write us an email and introduce yourself
- -join the <u>UnCollege LinkedIn group</u>

If you wish to help in some other capacity:

-introduce yourself via email or give us a call!

Any and all assistance is appreciated.



Write a Guest Piece for UnCollege

Do you have an idea for writing a guest post? We'd love to hear it! Just come up with a title and a 1-sentence description for your piece, and email it to jean@uncollege.org. Make the subject line "GUEST POST: Insert Title You Came Up With Here."

If it sounds promising, she'll give you the go-ahead to write it. Guest posts are generally 500-800 words long, but we're flexible with good content. *Our only real criteria is that your piece is tailored towards our audience of hackademics*.

Although we unfortunately can't publish all guest pieces, we thank everyone for their submissions!

Contact

Feel free to get in touch with any questions, comments, concerns, or suggestions.

dale@uncollege.org

347 338 8742

http://dalejstephens.com