

Trade vs. University Education

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The report found that only 18 out of 100 high school freshman will go on to graduate on time and receive a two year degree within three years or a four year degree within six years. Dismal findings, to be sure, but Bloomberg misuses the study to argue for a wholesale revamp of the educational system away from technical and trade education and toward traditional university education.

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"It used to be that those without college degrees could count on well-paying jobs in manual labor; those days are long gone," Bloomberg wrote. But he's wrong. The real problem isn't a lack of well-paying manual labor jobs, it's a lack of qualified workers to fill those jobs.

Positions in the skilled trades — welding, plumbing, home building, road construction and masonry just to name a few — are plentiful, do pay living wages and usually include respectable benefits as well. Identifying and recruiting students into the skilled trades, instead of allowing them to drift into a cycle of low-paying, unskilled positions, will yield a better overall "return on our investment," as Mayor Bloomberg puts it.

What's your take? Is there any hope left for those entering the skilled trades? Are high schools providing enough resources for students interested in pursuing skilled trades? Please weigh in on this subject by leaving a comment below.

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