



Yes, we are indoctrinating your kids...

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A criticism frequently directed at educators in general – and especially those who work at the postsecondary level – is that we are “indoctrinating” the youth of America with some kind of liberal ideology.

As evidence of this supposedly subversive practice, some point to the fact that more faculty tend to lean to the left than to the right in their political persuasion.

But this is to be expected as colleges and universities tend to be where innovation occurs and nothing significant has ever been accomplished by those preoccupied with coloring within the lines and maintaining the status quo.

If you’re one of the folks who has bought into this indoctrination theory, this is your lucky day. In the next few paragraphs, I am going to fill you in on what’s really going on at a campus near you.

By-the-way, you are absolutely correct if you think we are indoctrinating your kids. We are. Any attempt to deny it would be dishonest. But before you start jumping around the room shouting, “I knew it!” you might want to read on - because it’s not what you think.

Here’s what’s really going on. And although some institutions are more dedicated to the process than others, the basic indoctrination plan usually has about twelve elements.

First, we are indoctrinating your kids with the idea that they have free will and, as such, always have a choice in deciding the parameters by which they live their lives. We encourage them to question everything and decide for themselves what is true and what is bogus.

Second, we are indoctrinating your kids with the idea that critical thinking is vastly superior to going through life blindly following what they’ve been told by their parents, religious figures, coaches, or any other so-called role models. We tell them credible ideas can withstand scrutiny.

Third, we are indoctrinating your kids with the idea that they should never take what anyone says as being true unless the person making the claim backs it up with concrete evidence. We tell them people who make assertions without offering proof can be summarily ignored.

Fourth, we are indoctrinating your kids with the idea that there are multiple value systems they can use to determine whether an act is right or wrong, and they should be wary of anyone who tries to impose their value system on them. We tell them ultimately, they get to decide.

Fifth, we are indoctrinating your kids with the idea that religion is a highly personal aspect of their lives, and no one has the legitimate right to tell them they must worship, who or what to worship, or how to worship. We tell them belief must be voluntary, and faith must be uncoerced to be meaningful.

Sixth, we are indoctrinating your kids with the idea that they should never confuse a credential with an education, equate status with competence, or value loyalty over doing the right thing. We tell them they will be tested on all these things throughout their entire lives.

Seventh, we are indoctrinating your kids with the idea that they should trust science over other methods of inquiry. Anyone who trusts their instincts, intuition, and gut feelings more than they do rigorous systematic research should probably not be around babies or sharp objects.

Eighth, we are indoctrinating your kids with the idea that they should trust experts instead of amateurs. Someone who has spent their entire life studying or practicing in a discipline is an expert. Someone who simply has access to the internet is an amateur. We tell them if they need brain surgery, they should consult a neurosurgeon.

Ninth, we are indoctrinating your kids with the idea that a democratic form of government, like we have in this country at the moment, is vastly superior to authoritarian regimes where power is consolidated in the hands of a very few. We tell them history has repeatedly shown this to be true.

Tenth, we are indoctrinating your kids with the idea that a society which benefits the rich more than the poor is inherently corrupt, and they should work tirelessly to alleviate disparities between the haves and the have nots.

Eleventh, we are indoctrinating your kids with the idea that one race or ethnicity is no better than any other race or ethnicity - and anyone who argues otherwise is a racist. We tell them racism continues to permeate our culture at all levels.

Finally, we are indoctrinating your kids with the idea that you reap what you sow. You only get out of anything what you are willing to put into it. We tell them there are no shortcuts to living a fulfilling and successful life.

Keep in mind we don't consider them kids, I just used that term for your benefit. When they set foot on a college campus, we see them as adults fully capable of making their own decisions and determining their own destiny.

So there you have it. The game plan for indoctrinating your kids when they come to college. Now you know.



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