



STUDENTS' MISCONCEPTIONS ABOUT PREPARING FOR AND ATTENDING COLLEGE

An excerpt from *Betraying the College Dream*, Andrea Venezia, Michael W. Kirst and Anthony L. Antonio

1. I can't afford college.

Students and parents regularly overestimate the cost of college.

2. I have to be a stellar athlete or student to get financial aid.

Most students receive some form of financial aid.

3. Meeting high school graduation requirements will prepare me for college.

Adequate preparation for college usually requires a more demanding curriculum than is reflected in minimum requirements for high school graduation, sometimes even if that curriculum is termed "college prep."

4. Getting into college is the hardest part.

For the majority of students, the hardest part is completing college.

5. Community colleges don't have academic standards.

Students usually must take placement tests at community colleges in order to qualify for college-level work.

6. It's better to take easier classes in high school and get better grades.

One of the best predictors of college success is taking rigorous high school classes. Getting good grades in lower-level classes will not prepare students for college-level work.

7. My senior year in high school doesn't matter.

The classes students take in their senior year will often determine the classes they are able to take in college and how well-prepared they are for those classes.

8. I don't have to worry about my grades, or the kind of classes I take, until my sophomore year.

Many colleges look at sophomore year grades, and, in order to enroll in college-level courses, students need to prepare well for college. This means taking a well-thought out series of courses starting no later than 9th or 10th grade.

9. I can't start thinking about financial aid until I know where I'm going to college.

Students need to file a federal aid form prior to when most college send out their acceptance letters. This applies to students who attend community colleges too, even though they can apply and enroll in the fall of the year they wish to attend.

10. I can take whatever classes I want when I get to college.

Most colleges and universities require entering students to take placement exams in core subject areas. Those tests will determine the classes students can take.