

# Academically Adrift: Limited Learning on College Campuses

In their groundbreaking book, "Academically Adrift: Limited Learning on College Campuses," Richard Arum and Josipa Roksa paint a sobering picture of the state of undergraduate education in America. Based on a comprehensive study of more than 2,300 students at 24 colleges and universities, the authors found that a significant number of students are not learning what they should be in college.

## Key Findings

- **Only 36% of students showed significant improvement in critical thinking skills over their first two years of college.**
- **Only 45% of students showed significant improvement in complex reasoning skills over their first two years of college.**
- **Less than half of students (43%) were able to write a coherent and persuasive essay at the end of their sophomore year.**
- **Only 23% of students said they had ever discussed ideas from their readings or classes with faculty members outside of class.**

## Causes of the Problem

Arum and Roksa identify a number of factors that contribute to the limited learning on college campuses, including:

**Academically Adrift: Limited Learning on College**

**Campuses** by Richard Arum

★★★★☆ 4 out of 5



Language	: English
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Text-to-Speech	: Enabled
Screen Reader	: Supported
Enhanced typesetting	: Enabled
Word Wise	: Enabled
Print length	: 341 pages
Lending	: Enabled



- **The proliferation of "easy A" courses:** Colleges and universities are increasingly offering courses that are designed to be easy to pass, which allows students to earn high grades without putting in much effort.
- **The lack of academic rigor:** Many college courses are not challenging enough, and students are not required to think critically or solve complex problems.
- **The focus on entertainment:** Colleges and universities are often more concerned with providing students with a fun and entertaining experience than with educating them.
- **The lack of student engagement:** Many students are not actively engaged in their learning, and they do not participate in class discussions or complete their assignments.

## Consequences of the Problem

The limited learning on college campuses has a number of serious consequences for students, including:

- **Reduced job prospects:** Students who do not learn the skills they need in college will be at a disadvantage in the job market.
- **Lower earning potential:** Students who do not learn the skills they need in college will earn less money over their lifetime.
- **Reduced civic engagement:** Students who do not learn the skills they need in college will be less likely to participate in civic activities and make informed decisions about public policy.

## Solutions to the Problem

Arum and Roksa offer a number of solutions to the problem of limited learning on college campuses, including:

- **Increase the academic rigor of college courses:** Colleges and universities should make their courses more challenging, and they should require students to think critically and solve complex problems.
- **Reduce the number of "easy A" courses:** Colleges and universities should reduce the number of courses that are designed to be easy to pass, and they should make sure that all courses are of high quality.
- **Increase student engagement:** Colleges and universities should find ways to make students more actively engaged in their learning, such as by requiring them to participate in class discussions and complete their assignments.
- **Provide more support for students:** Colleges and universities should provide more support for students who are struggling academically, such as by offering tutoring and writing centers.

The problem of limited learning on college campuses is a serious one, but it is one that can be solved. By taking steps to increase the academic rigor of college courses, reduce the number of "easy A" courses, increase student engagement, and provide more support for students, colleges and universities can help students learn the skills they need to succeed in college and beyond.



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