



12 REASONS WHY STUDENTS DROPOUT

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John enrolled in an external study program and was very excited and motivated to complete the academic challenge. He was pleased that he didn't have to quit his job and relocate his family in order to achieve his goal. He had been a model student in all the resident programs, from high school to college, he had attended. So when he was accepted in the distant learning program he felt confident in his possibilities to succeed. However, six months later John dropped out of the program. Why?

According to The Education Trust, a Washington-based nonprofit group, only 63 percent of students enrolled in a four-year university will earn a degree, and it will take them an average of six years to do so. The other 37 percent will either drop out of college before finishing or else flunk out of their program of study (USA Today, 2005). Why?

While the dropout rate is high in resident programs, it is much higher in correspondence, online, external, in-ministry and distant learning programs. Why? My research reveals numerous reasons why students drop out of these academic programs.

1. They weren't academically prepared to do the work. Their previous skills and knowledge were weak and failed to help them fulfill assignments.
2. They didn't fully check out the requirements and challenges of the program. Thought it would be easy.
3. They enrolled for the wrong reasons. Thought it would be an easy road to a degree or certificate. The gaining of knowledge and ministry skills wasn't a priority.
4. Poor organizational and study skills contributed to discouragement and falling behind in deadlines. No goals.
5. Too many outside interests, pressures and issues that kept them from doing work in a timely manner; overly committed.
6. Not able to function in isolation as a self-starter; a sense of disconnectedness discouraged them.
7. A lack of support from family, friends and employers.



8. Reluctance or failure to ask for help in a timely manner. This may relate to an ego problem.
9. Previous learning habits and experiences don't match new demands of external program.
10. A tendency to be lazy or procrastination: "I'll do it later." "I have time."
11. Some drop out for financial reasons. Didn't have a positive stewardship plan when they started the program.
12. Some have to drop out because of health issues, both physical and mental.

These 12 reasons are only a few of the reasons why students drop out of correspondence, external, distant learning and in-ministry study programs. The opposite of these reasons form a list of reasons and ways to successfully complete these programs.

Academic success, whether in resident, private or external studies, requires commitment and self-discipline. No one can motivate a person but the person; all motivation is controlled internally. Here are a few biblical principles that may contribute to self-motivation for finishing an academic program:

1. **There is a virtue in finishing what you start:** *"Better is the end of a thing than the beginning thereof: and the patient in spirit is better than proud in spirit" (Eccl. 7:8).*
2. **There is danger in taking your eyes off the goal:** *"And Jesus said unto him, 'No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God'" (Lk. 9:62).*
3. **Don't surrender to weariness:** *"And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not" (Gal. 6:9).*
4. **Patience is essential to finishing:** *"...and let us run with patience the race that is set before us" (Heb. 12:1).*
5. **If it worth doing, it is worth doing well:** *"Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with all thy might..." Eccl. 9:10).*

Today is a great time to recommit to finishing your external studies, or any other studies.. It is a great day to start your studies if you haven't.