

Education

• Educator
• Journalist
• Consultant
• Counselor



HILTON

**Degree Mill vs.
Accredited Colleges
(PART TWO)**



KEITH O. HILTON

Accreditation is a validation, a statement by a group of persons who are impartial in higher education, that a given school, or department within a school, has been thoroughly investigated and found worthy of approval.

Not to be confused with the aforementioned categories, is the group of "colleges" that are clearly fraudulent and most commonly referred to as degree mills.

Degree mills have been around for hundreds of years, and they are still flourishing all over the world.

According to *Bear's Guide to Earning Non-traditional College Degrees*, one of the main reasons that such places continue to exist is that it is difficult to define legally exactly what is meant by the term "diploma mill" or "degree mill."

One man's degree mill is another man's alternative university. And nobody seems to want the government stepping in to evaluate doctoral dissertations before permitting schools to grant degrees.

Another large gray area, according to *Bear*, is the one dealing with religious schools.

Because of constitutional safeguards in the U.S. guaranteeing separation of church and state, most states have been reluctant to pass any laws restricting the activities of churches, including the right to grant degrees to all who make an appropriately large donation.

In many states, religious schools are not regulated, but are restricted to granting religious degrees.

But in some, like Missouri, if you establish your own one person church yesterday, you could start your university today, and award a Ph.D. in nuclear physics tomorrow.

Three common reasons emerge as to why degree mills are able to operate: 1) Any law that tries to define something that is subjective, whether it is obscenity, pornography, threatening behavior, or the quality of a school is (considered) controversial. 2) Degree mills that do not muddy their own waters, but sell their products only in other states or other countries, are more likely to get away with it longer. 3) The third reason for the proliferation of degree mills in the past is that "the wheels of justice" ground very slowly.

By in large, the main reason for the success of degree mills is that people keep buying their product. People want degrees and believe that they can get away with them.

It is quite common to read in the classified section of many highly respected business or consumer oriented publications ads that read "University Degrees By Mail" or "Economical home study for Bachelor's Master's Ph.D."

Today, a number of degree mills operate from England, selling their product only to people in other countries (primarily the USA, Africa and Asia).

It should be noted that not all of those schools running ads are degree mills and that many highly respected accredited and unaccredited schools offer correspondence and home study courses.

HILTON: HIGHER EDUCATION is designed to dialogue with college and world readers. Education is ongoing and certainly not limited to classroom study. Let's talk. (714)899-0650.

School District Growth Moderate This Year

Preliminary figures for 1991-92 show that the Clark County School District is continuing to grow, close to projections, but at a more moderate pace than the explosion of the past few years. Figures submitted Friday and compiled over the weekend show that enrollment stands unofficially at 128,000 only slightly less than the 129,500 students projected to enroll this year, but more than the 122,000 students who were enrolled during 1990-91. That amounts to about a 5% increase in enrollment, or 6,042 students.

District officials stress that the 1991-92 figures are only preliminary. All district schools were required to submit their enrollment figures as of 4 p.m. Friday so that staff could be reapportioned as necessary, a

normal procedure a few weeks into the school year. Although enrollment is down slightly from projections, "as a result of not filling vacancies and new positions, we will be able to accommodate teachers now under contract," said Superintendent Brian Cram.

The official count will not be taken until Sept. 20, and those figures must be audited before being submitted to the state by Nov. 1. The Sept. 20 enrollment is used to determine the amount of state aid the district receives. District officials believe the final enrollment will be closed to projections.

Enrollment is expected to continue to increase between last Friday and the official count day, although probably not as ((See School District, Page 9)

NNPA FEATURE

Child Watch

by Marian Wright Edelman



BEGIN EARLY AND KEEP GOING

I've never asked a four-year-old what he or she wants to be when they grow up and been told they want to become a statistic. Yet we know that for every 100 African Americans who complete high school, 25 — or one in four — drop out. Becoming a dropout is not a young child's dream, nor is it what parents dream for their children. As our schools increasingly are ill-equipped to keep a young child's dream alive, however, the burden on caring parents becomes heavier.

In too many communities this fall, school budget cuts have resulted in teacher layoffs and a shortage of supplies and facilities. The enthusiasm of too many teachers spending their days in overcrowded classrooms using old and outdated textbooks is not as high as it should be. Therefore, children's enthusiasm for learning has to be encouraged at home beginning at an early age.

One child development expert notes that hands-on activities are especially important between the ages of two and five. Children learn through connections with everyday experienced. Reading to our children, helping them count, and helping them draw pictures can be tremendously beneficial in preparing them for that all-important first day of their school life.

Marianne Modica, a New Jersey elementary school teacher, explains how important the early-years "basics" are in helping children learn, and how the activities parents can enjoy with their children are doing more good than some parents might realize. For example, before children can learn math, they must develop the basic skill of counting through practice. Have your child set the table — one plate for each person at the table. They'll learn to associate one-on-one, logical relationships which leads to understanding math. Children must grasp the basics before they can — or will — learn the complex.

Very young children don't have to be pushed to learn reading as hard as some people might think. Ms. Modica explains that simply reading them a book can prepare them for learning later. Even the youngest children can understand that the words on each page of a book mean something different from the background pictures. They also grasp the act of "reading" from left to right.

Developing decent motor skills and hand/eye coordination also provide a good base when they're ready to learn writing skills. Ms. Modica suggests giving your child cutting and pasting or painting projects. While it's a fun activity, it also is preparation for handling a pencil.

Simple activities like these will help your children make a better transition to the formal, in-school learning experience. But it's equally important that parents involve themselves with their children's school. Get to know, or at least make it a point to meet personally, your child's teachers, principal, school superintendent and as many school board members as possible.

Go to these teachers and administrators if you're unhappy with the job they're doing. Attend parent/teacher meetings and know what's going on. Ask questions. How well does your school compare to others in the school system? What is your school doing to improve the graduation rate? Ultimately, your child's success depends to a great extent on the success of other students in the school. Your support and encouragement sends your children, the school, and other parents the signal that you believe school is very important. Tell them you didn't bring a child into this world, as tough as it sometimes seems, to become a statistic.

Marian Wright Edelman is president of the Children's Defense Fund, a national voice for children.

**NEED HELP
WITH READING,
WRITING, MATH,
& GED—AGE: 16+**

**CONTACT
A.O.I.P
647-2117
1-4 P.M.**

**Kids R Smart
LEARNING CENTER**

1001 N. TONOPAH

PH: 647-5712

"A MIND IS A MARVELOUS
THING TO DEVELOP"