

## Book Review

**Clydesdale, T. (2015). *The purposeful graduate: Why colleges must talk to students about vocation*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.**

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Clydesdale hoped to accomplish several goals in writing this book. Firstly, the author was commissioned as a third-party reviewer for grant outcomes of colleges that received funding from the Lilly Endowment. This book was a collection of research conducted by Clydesdale. He studied 23 of 88 colleges that used grant funding through the Lilly Endowment to create purposeful or exploratory programs – terms that he often used interchangeably throughout the book. Purposeful programs were defined by Clydesdale as intentional programs offering space and time for students to exercise self-reflection, and to develop self-awareness during their time spent in college. Clydesdale believed that purposeful programs prepared graduates to become socially responsible citizens upon college completion. According to the author, the mission of higher education is to cultivate responsible and global citizens interested in contributing to their community and society in a more holistic way.

The author's second goal in writing this book was to encourage higher education institutions to initiate conversations about purposeful programs on their campuses due to the current environment surrounding higher education. Clydesdale believed purposeful or exploratory programs were relevant regardless of whether the institution was religious or secular. With American pragmatism, public scrutiny, scepticism on program relevancy, high tuition costs, and emphasis on credentialing for job placement rather than personal development of college students, Clydesdale believed this was an opportune time for higher education institutions to recalibrate and reassess programs. The author advocated for creation of purposeful programs as the missing link in higher education. Clydesdale was confident that such programs created resilient graduates that ultimately contribute to social benefit.

Lastly, based on successful program models shared within this book, the author provided readers (particularly educators) with detailed guideline on necessary resources to replicate purposeful or exploratory programs for both religious and secular college campuses. Clydesdale evidenced success models on college campuses through use of testimony and case studies; he shared information collected from interviews with faculty, staff, students, and administrators involved in purposeful programs.

In chapters 1 and 2, Clydesdale identified the benefit to college students who participated in purposeful programs. He indicated that purposeful programs promote self-exploration, self-awareness, and critical thinking which helped navigate students toward personal development and resiliency. Chapter 1 was an overview of the author's goals for the book. Clydesdale believed that creation of purposeful programs to facilitate student personal development is the true mission for higher education. In chapter 2, the author connected relevancy of individual student experience in purposeful programs to a larger network. In this chapter, Clydesdale informed the reader that successful student experiences at the individual level creates a holistic and resilient graduate, which brings social benefit for both local and global communities.

In chapters 3, 4, and 5, Clydesdale further outlined the benefits of purposeful programs on college campuses. The author presented his findings (and personal opinions) throughout the entire book by defining purposeful programs through use of individual case studies. On numerous occasion, the author emphasized that students participating in purposeful programs were more content with their college experiences in comparison to non-participating students. Student testimony was used as evidence to demonstrate that exploratory programs allow college students to have space and time for critical thinking. According to Clydesdale, these programs were beneficial because students interacted with other like-minded students to form cohorts. He also mentioned that students in purposeful programs often felt a sense of belonging to something greater than themselves, and that these students enjoyed mentorship provided by participating college faculty and staff. In summary, students had higher satisfaction levels with the supportive services they received because purposeful programs helped them prepare and plan for life.

In addition to student benefit, Clydesdale used chapters 4, 5, and 6 to speak about the benefits experienced by the faculty who were directly involved with purposeful programs. Interviews revealed that faculty who participated in purposeful programs found reaffirmation and a renewed love for teaching. The faculty reported feeling rewarded and believed that they were also fulfilling a larger purpose beyond themselves when working with students through intentionally created purposeful programs. Clydesdale emphasized on numerous occasions that faculty involvement was essential to institutionalise and sustain any purposeful or exploratory program.

In chapter 6 and appendix 5, Clydesdale presented a guideline on how purposeful programs can be successfully replicated at any institution of higher education. The 23 college campuses that the author researched were religious organizations. As a result, the author commonly referred to purposeful programs as a *calling*. However, Clydesdale was also cognisant that purposeful programs can (and should) be replicated at secular institutions where faculty and administrators defined exploratory programs as meaningful work, internship opportunity through work experience, and social justice for career-readiness in a global economy. Therefore, he offered guidelines for successful replication of purposeful programs defined as creation of personal development opportunities for students to grow towards resiliency and global citizenry. The guidelines presented for implementation of successful purposeful programs included: 1) formation of student-centered programs for clearly defined goals and outcomes (specifically targeting sophomore and junior level students); 2) faculty involvement for program sustainability; 3) adequate public relations for program promotion; 4) support from senior-level administration; and 5) full alignment with the institution's culture, vision, and mission.

I believe Clydesdale succeeded in convincing the reader that purposeful or exploratory programs are beneficial for participating students and college employees (both faculty and staff). He also mentioned that college graduates from purposeful or exploratory programs generated social benefit based on their contributions to the communities in which they lived, worked, and played.

In addition to the stakeholders already mentioned throughout the book, I believe it would be beneficial for the community if employers and industry partners were also invited to participate in purposeful program conversations alongside higher education institutions. With employers and industry partners involved in purposeful program conversations, higher education institutions could receive supplementary community support to implement and sustain these programs. Higher education institutions can then offer students an opportunity to explore diverse career fields and study various employer mission statements. From these activities, students have an opportunity to identify organisations aligned with their personal interests for continued development and career preparation. Meanwhile, employers that are involved with purposeful program conversations will help create a pipeline of college graduates whose personal belief, conviction, and life philosophies align with their organisation's mission and vision statements. By bringing industry partners and higher education institutions together for purposeful program conversations, I believe that companies would experience lower turnover rates due to better identification of "right fit" candidates from the college graduate pool. I agree with Clydesdale that starting a conversation about purposeful programs should include faculty, staff, students, and administration. However, I believe that industry partners should also be included in these conversations because employer organisations can help facilitate higher education's mission of developing socially responsible citizens.