



Article: [Trading Shakespeare for Sheet Metal](#)

Classroom Discussion Questions College Level

Redefining Success and Education: The author argues that success doesn't have to come from a four-year degree. How has the cultural narrative around higher education shaped perceptions of trade work, and what are the social or economic consequences of that bias?

Economic and Social Value of Skilled Labor: In an era of automation and labor shortages, how should society re-evaluate the economic and social importance of skilled trades? What policies or cultural shifts might help restore balance between academic and vocational pathways?

Equity and Access in Career Pathways: Trade careers are often promoted as alternatives to college, particularly for certain demographics. How can institutions ensure that promoting the trades expands opportunity rather than reinforcing class divisions or limiting upward mobility?

Classroom Discussion Questions Grades 9-12

Perception of Skilled Trades: The author challenges the idea that success always means earning a college degree. Do you agree that schools and society place too much emphasis on four-year colleges and not enough on trade careers? Why or why not?

Value of Hands-On Work: The piece highlights pride and purpose in working with one's hands. What do you think makes hands-on or technical work valuable in today's world, and how does it compare to more traditional "office" careers?

Career Pathways and Respect: The writer argues that skilled trades deserve the same respect as professional careers. What would it take for trade jobs—like electricians, mechanics, or welders—to be viewed as equally important career options in your community?

Classroom Discussion Questions Grades 6-8

Different Kinds of Success: The author says you don't have to go to a four-year college to be successful. Do you agree? What are some other ways people can build good careers?

Working with Your Hands: The article talks about jobs where people build, fix, or create things. What kinds of hands-on jobs do you think would be interesting or fun to do?

Respect for All Jobs: Why do you think some jobs, like construction or plumbing, don't always get as much respect as others? What can we do to show that all kinds of work are important?

Classroom Discussion Questions Grades 1-5

All Kinds of Jobs: People have many different kinds of jobs. What are some jobs where people build or fix things?

Helping Others: How do workers like plumbers, builders, or mechanics help their communities?

Respect for Work: Why is it important to respect everyone's job, no matter what kind of work they do?