



## Stanford eCorner

### The Future of a University Education

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In response to an audience question, Khan Academy Founder and Executive Director Sal Khan shares his thoughts on the future of a university education. Besides earning a college degree, Khan envisions universities requiring students to come away with a portfolio of work and a reputation for actively contributing to a community.



#### Transcript

How will this translate into the university setting and Khan Academy is kind of focused on you said education, I will say education is made up of learning, credentialing and socialization and right now most of what we're doing is the learning side of things, while university is kind of all three of those things. And I think there is a bunch of it in my book, *The One World Schoolhouse*, the last third of it there is a chapter on like what would a university, the idealized university of the future look like? And in my mind so when I think about it from - we're always hiring, we look at some of y'all's resumes and what always impresses us, if I see Stanford on your resume, that's impressive because I know how hard it is to get into Stanford. If you went to someplace else you said I got into Stanford and you actually showed evidence of that, it's pretty close. I mean it's like a great experience and everything, but beyond that I then care about now what you've done? What is your and it's hard for me to decipher a GPA or A or B in this class or that. I want to see a portfolio of creative works. I want to see hey have you written an app, have you written a book, have you have a painting or sculpture whatever it might be, that is a huge signal to us. And what I would also love to know what do your peers think of you? Are you someone who contributes to a community who people want to work with, that's the person that I want to work with. And so I imagine the ideal credential of the future is that. It has kind of a baseline, these are your skills, your competencies and frankly I think pretty much everyone who walks in, who gets admitted to Stanford is kind of already there, I mean that can get improved and they can learn more specialized things or broaden their knowledge, but they have already - their critical thinking skills are already quite quite good. But then on top of that, I want to see what you have made and I want to see kind of how you fit into a community.

And so the university of the future I think would be very focused on that. It would be you come and I was just at Carnegie Mellon last week and I told them the same thing: Carnegie Mellon or Stanford or MIT I told the folks at MIT this, especially with this caliber of student, they should come and you have the community you have all the great things the dorms, the clubs everything else, but your day to day is not in a lecture hall taking notes, trying to prepare for the next exam. Your day to day is making things. Your day to day is making things on campus, doing research, collaborating, starting businesses, doing art installations, using the community around and you are in Silicon Valley, leveraging this, doing internships at every firm here, it could be in tech, it could be in design, it could be in anything. And so when you come out you have this amazing community, this amazing connections with all of your peers, but you also have this incredible experience base and this incredible portfolio that would carry way more weight than any GPA. So I hope that - and I've heard even Don Hennessy say things to the effect of - yeah, he doesn't see why there are 300 person lecture halls in universities anymore and whatever else. And so, and I have heard other university presidents say the same thing. So the hope is - what's interesting about this whole MOOC thing that's happening, I think the single biggest thing is as soon as the MOOCs came out, you had a bunch of people going how do we know they work? And then, how do we know we work. They immediately said, wait we have never really had to address that question; we have never done a double blind, like: here are the students who took physics in 1998; here are the students who did not take physics in 1998. Now that it's 2008, let's randomly find them and give them a physics test and let's see if there is

any discernible difference between the scores on the two.

So it actually started making higher ed and I'd say outside the ivory tower especially, the Harvards, the Stanfords, the MITs start to really reflect on - we've been kind of getting a free pass for several 100 years. Maybe it's time that we introspect on ways that we can up our game and that's I think overall been a very healthy thing. But yes I see the - I think in five or - I think definitely 10 years you're not going to have the 300 person lecture hall anymore.