The Emperor Has No Clothes: Hacking the Education System Series
CopyLeft 2021
"Fifty years from now, society will look back at the absurd violence of factory schooling and wonder, with a deep sense of shame, how could we have done this to millions of innocent children."

Is more formal education the solution to all of our problems? Or is part of the problem?

This is a collection of some of our favorite memes and campaigns that were created by two cohorts of the Emperor Has No Clothes Fellowship in 2016 and 2017. We tried to invite playfulness, humor and satire and have been inspired by groups like the YESMen and Adbusters. Before them, Gandhi was a master of creating memes to inspire and mobilize the public discourse on the freedom struggle.
Many years ago there lived a wicked and greedy Emperor who cared only about his designer-labelled clothes and about showing them off. One day he heard from two swindlers that they could make the finest suit of clothes from the most beautiful cloth. This cloth, they said, also had the special capability that it was invisible to anyone who was either stupid or not fit for his position. The Emperor allowed himself to be dressed in the clothes for a procession through town, never admitting that he was too unfit and stupid to see what he was wearing. Of course, all the townspeople wildly praised the magnificent clothes of the emperor, afraid to admit that they could not see them, until a small child said: "But he has nothing on"! This was whispered from person to person until everyone in the crowd was shouting that the emperor had nothing on.

We are in this same situation today. It is time to take inspiration from the child and tell the well-intentioned emperors of education that the system is not only naked, it is toxic and destructive. **We must strip away the moral legitimacy that factory schooling stands on and dismantle its monopoly over knowledge and learning.** We hope you join us in hacking the education system.
A meme is a concept, question or behavior that spreads from person to person and creates a cultural worldview. Examples of memes include beliefs, fashions, stories, brands and phrases. Memes can be considered as cultural equivalents of a virus that spreads via contact in a society. Memes are built upon pop culture and current affairs, which means they play a large part in terms of shaping our social perceptions, aspirations and cultural codes. They often use humor or satire to go viral.
#EXAMSKILL
NEWS RELEASE: On July 3, 2016, 15 people held a 2-hour Funeral Procession on Fatehsagar Lake in Udaipur to mourn the loss of more than 9000 precious young lives over the past 1 year in India due to exam-related stress and depression as well as the millions who are ruthlessly branded as 'failures'. They silently walked and asked, "Was this suicide or murder? and "Who is responsible for this?" They also tried to remind hundreds of young and old alike that "Exams and marks can not define who we really are." They invited passerbys who have lost someone to exam-related deaths to join them to raise fundamental questions about the examination pressure-cooker.
EXAMS DON'T MEASURE WHO I AM!

#Suicide #ExamsKill
I WAS YOUNG AND FREE
UNTIL YOU DECIDED TO EXAMINE ME
#examskill
#suicide
“A person is forced to run a race with their hands and feet chained. Well-wishers realise that the race is not really fair so they start thinking of all kinds of training workshops, technologies and schemes to help this person in the name of social justice. Many well-intentioned foundations and social entrepreneurs rise to the occasion and start funding all kind of programs to somehow make the person compete better in this game and to fit a few more people into this game. All kinds of new industries start to emerge for cleaning up (and profiting from) all the messes that are created by continually running this game. Everyone knows that the person can never really win the race; they will always be two steps behind because somebody else makes the rules. But no one really wants to really question: why are the person’s hands and feet tied in the first place?, why is the person being forced to compete against others in the race?, where does the race take you and what really happens to those who win the race?, or why do we have to even run this stupid race? Isn’t it time to stop running and make our own game?”

– Manish Jain, Shikshantar Andolan
STOP COMPARING US TO EACH OTHER. IT MAKES NO SENSE

EACH OF US IS A GIFTED SOUL

THE PURPOSE OF EDUCATION IS TO BRING OUT OUR TALENTS, NOT TO MEASURE, JUDGE AND LABEL.

WE DON’T NEED AN EXAM TO TELL US HOW GOOD WE ARE.

AN EXAM IS AN UNFAIR GAME

WHY CAN’T EVERYONE WIN AT THEIR OWN GAMES?

Our brains are being filled with useless facts rather than questions, wonderment and curiosity

Every student who fails is a failure of schools and teachers

QUESTION EVERYTHING

EXAMS ARE CRUSHING OUR ABILITY TO LEARN IN OUR OWN WAYS

TRUE LEARNING REFLECTS IN YOUR WAY OF BEING. IT DOES NOT NEED A PIECE OF PAPER AS A PROOF.

The purpose of studying is not marks

YOU ONLY LIVE ONCE

#examskill #educationmurder #hackschooling #hackeducation #hackeducationindia #hackexams #shikshantai
#EXAMSKILL
SOCIAL MEDIA CAMPAIGN

EXAMS KILL
CREATIVITY
EXAMS KILL SELF-ESTEEM
CONVERSATIONS WHICH EMERGED FROM THE CAMPAIGN:
"I am 22 year old undergraduate. I failed to pass my B.sc exams. I felt so anxious and depressed. As per my parents suggestion, I got enrolled in BA. Now, my exams are near. Though I have studied enough to pass, I feel the same anxiety, the depression all again. Its affecting me mentally and physically. Sometimes, I just want to give up and finish this life but my mother's love has restrained me till now. It's not that I don't love learning. I love knowing about new things, the world. I love learning different languages. I can draw very well and wanted to pursue animation but our financial condition forbade me to do so. I can sing very well too. I want to pursue a career in music. Please help...these exams would kill me..."
EXAMS

KILL OUR INNATE SPIRIT AND WISDOM
#EXAMSKILL
Exams bring out feelings of despair and hopelessness.

Share your exam faces with us!
"I would prefer not to take your test."
Students are being urged by the Bartleby Project to simply write this statement on the front page of their standardized tests as a form of civil disobedience.

The Bartleby Project, initiated by John Taylor Gatto and inspired by the story of Bartleby the Scrivener, began by inviting 60,000,000 American students, one by one, to peacefully refuse to take standardized tests or to participate in any preparation for these tests; it asks them to act because adults chained to institutions and corporations are unable to; because these tests pervert education, are disgracefully inaccurate, impose brutal stresses without reason, and actively encourage a class system which is poisoning the future of the nation. This project has nothing to do with test reform. It is about sabotaging and destroying the standardized testing industry. Even 5% of the students would be enough to make a huge impact. To quote the introductory video: "students are the only ones who can stop these tests."
#OPENCHEATINGINSTITUTE
NEW COURSE ANNOUNCEMENT
How to Cheat on the Class XII Exams

Come learn proven world-class techniques for cheating on the Class XII exams... so you don’t have to waste the best years of your life studying for exams and can spend your time on real-world learning projects that you care about. Your parents are guaranteed to be happy when they get to share your ‘results’ with the neighbors.

SPECIAL FEATURES...
- THE OPEN CHEATING INSTITUTE IS THE ‘MOTHER’ OF COACHING INSTITUTES OF INDIA.
- GUEST LECTURES BY RUBY RAI, BIHAR TOPPER
- TRAINED INSTRUCTORS WHO HAVE WORKED IN KOTA (RAJASTHAN) AND ATTENDED IITs, IIM, HARVARD. THEY WILL SHARE THEIR SECRETS OF HOW NOT TO GET CAUGHT.
- STATE OF THE ART TECHNOLOGIES TO BEAT CCTV’s.

WHY?
- Exams don’t measure real learning or talent.
- Exams discriminate against those who are not fast at writing/spelling or good at memorizing.
- Exams create unnecessary anxiety, stress and depression in learners. They kill the joy of learning.
- BECAUSE EXAMS ARE JUST STUPID (AND MAKE US STUPID)!!!

Join today and stop letting exams dictate your life.
TECHNIQUES OF SATIRE
Exaggeration involves distorting how you depict something and hyper-inflating its size to a point where its extremity becomes irrational or grotesquely obvious to the reader.

Incongruity is all about inserting things into out-of-place environments, juxtaposing them if you will, in a way which makes them appear absurd.

Reversal involves an artist subverting a situation to present an inversion of how things really are back to the reader.

Parody relies upon the art of imitation to ape another author’s style or lampoon aspects of an already-existing story.
NEW COURSE ANNOUNCEMENT:
How to Cheat on the Nursery and LKG Entrance Exams

Come learn proven world-class techniques for cheating on the Nursery and LKG entrance exams... so you don’t have to waste the best years of your life studying for exams and can spend your time on real-world learning projects that you care about. Your parents are guaranteed to be happy when they get to share your ‘results’ with the neighbors.

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Ahha! Now I can easily get through the Entrance exams...
#CENTRALBOREDOFSECONDARYEDUCATION
CENTRAL BOARD OF SECONDARY EDUCATION
(An Autonomous Organisation under the Union Ministry of Parrot Resource Development Govt. of Parrotindia)
PS 1-2, INSTITUTIONAL AREA, PADHPADHGANJ, DELHI-110092
PUBLIC NOTICE

In the larger interest of stakeholders, educational institutes and recruitment agencies, the Central Board of Secondary Education conducted surveys across India to understand the effect of examinations on the minds and emotions of students. We engaged a diverse group of stakeholders from all demographic strata in a discussion about examinations so that we could have a representative sample of opinions on this hot topic. Circulars with more detailed data will follow.

A survey sent around more than 1,000 schools and 10,000 participants across India found that exams are the most hated aspect about the curriculum, getting an average rating of 1.3/5. A related study considered many aspects of examinations such as stress, validity of questions, reliability of results, impact on creativity and social pressure.

The study completed last month also demonstrates that student suicides increase after the declaration of examination results, compiled from reports from the past five years. Last year there were around 9,000 recorded suicides due to examination stress, pressure and failure. We know the real figures are much greater and we accept the claim that these are not ‘suicides’ but rather murder. All our recent studies have illustrated that the current system of examinations is detracting from the freedom and happiness of our society and children.

Based on these studies it has become clear that exams kill the real learning potential of many students, as students only study to cram for the tests. Furthermore, they promote discrimination against many students who have different learning styles, multiple intelligences, and cultural backgrounds.

Thus, this circular is to inform all stakeholders, students, and responsible citizens that the existing curriculum and examination system are hereby discontinued and abolished.

In light of this announcement, we advise schools to sit with teachers, parents, and students to co-create a curriculum and assessment system that is of better value and helps create a sustainable, just and healthy society. The Central Board of Secondary Education invites proposals for the same.
The Yes Men operate under the mission statement that lies can expose truth. They deploy a mocking satirical approach -- a sense of humor, exaggeration and shock value is usually employed to make social issues more palatable to the general public and to invite greater media attention. They have created and maintained fake websites similar to ones they intend to spoof such as the World Trade Organization, which have led to numerous interview, conference, and TV talk show invitations. They then pose as a powerful entity (typically a corporate executive or government representative) and make ridiculous and shocking comments that caricature the ideological position of the organization.
#SchooledMinds
“I did not teach my grandson that our local language is uncivilized and inferior to English and Hindi... his schooling did.”

#theschooledmind
#hackschoolingindia
#hackeducationindia
“I did not teach my granddaughter that the secret to true happiness lies in getting a job with a big fat financial ‘package’...

her schooling did.”
"My daughter did not buy that processed and packaged (fake) milk from the supermarket... her schooling did."

#theschooledmind
#hackschoolingindia
#hackeducationindia
"My son did not sell our ancestral commons forest to the mining company... his schooling did."

#theschooledmind
#hackschoolingindia
#hackeducationindia
My son and his wife didn’t throw me out of the house, their schooling did.

#hackeducationindia
#hackschoolingindia
"I did not teach my granddaughter that women’s liberation comes from getting a corporate (slave) job... her schooling did."

#theschooledmind
#hackschoolingindia
#hackeducationindia
“My grandson did not reject natural farming and partnering with the land as ‘dirty’, ‘hard work’, ‘non-skilled labor’ and ‘drudgery’...

his schooling did.”
TODAY'S POP QUIZ

The factory schooling system was designed to:

a) destroy creativity and diversity;
b) break community and connections to the 'local';
c) convert us into economic slaves and stupid consumers;
d) all of the above.
#SECONDHANDDEGREES
THE RACE IS OVER

INDIA'S FIRST E-BAZAAR FOR BUYING/SELLING DEGREE'S FROM PROMINENT UNIVERSITIES

second-hand-degrees.com

LAUNCHING AUGUST '15
1) Be like a king on your social media accounts be it LinkedIn or Facebook....;)
5 REASONS TO BUY DEGREE FROM SECONDHANDDEGREES.COM

2) Impress your girlfriend or somebody you want to impress ;)

CARLY'S BABY SHOWER
5 REASONS TO BUY DEGREE FROM SECONDHANDEGREES.COM

4) BE SMART! SAVE YOUR PRECIOUS TIME AND MONEY!
5) CURE YOURSELF FROM DEGREE/DIPLOMA DISEASE
You are just a click away from your dream degree

WWW.SECOND-HAND-DEGREES.COM
3) Go get your dream job.....
Healing from the Diploma Degree Disease
Degree ≠ Ability
Education ≠ Schooling
Victim of Hidden Curriculum
WHO CARES ABOUT REAL KNOWLEDGE AND PRACTICAL EXPERIENCES?

IT'S ALL ABOUT THE PAPER
SECONDHANDEGREES.COM
WHO CARES ABOUT CURIOSITY AND CREATIVITY?

IT'S ALL ABOUT THE PAPER

SECONDHANDDEGREES.COM
WHO CARES ABOUT LEARNING AND LIVING FREELY?

IT'S ALL ABOUT THE PAPER

SECONDHANDDEGREES.COM
WHO CARES ABOUT WISDOM?

IT'S ALL ABOUT THE PAPER

SECONDHANDDEGREES.COM
WHO CARES ABOUT EMPATHY AND COMPASSION?

IT'S ALL ABOUT THE PAPER

SECONDHANDDEGREES.COM
PRACTICAL KNOWLEDGE VS. DEGREE?
#hackeducationindia #hackschoolingindia

SAVE THE TAJ MAHAL

ALL BUILDINGS BUILT BY UN-DEGREE ARCHITECTS, DESIGNERS AND ENGINEERS ARE GOING TO BE DEMOLISHED BY GOVERNMENT ORDERS. SAVE THOUSANDS OF BEAUTIFUL MONUMENTS BUILT BY ILLITERATE AND UNEDUCATED PERSONS.
PRACTICAL KNOWLEDGE VS. DEGREE?
#hackeducationindia #hackschoolingindia

SAVE THE HAWA MAHAL

ALL BUILDINGS BUILT BY UN-DECREED ARCHITECTS, DESIGNERS AND ENGINEERS ARE GOING TO BE DEMOLISHED BY GOVERNMENT ORDERS. SAVE THOUSANDS OF BEAUTIFUL MONUMENTS BUILT BY ILLITERATE AND UNEDUCATED PERSONS.
Adbusters describes itself as anti-advertising: it blames advertising for playing a central role in creating and maintaining consumer culture. This argument is based on the premise that the advertising industry goes to great effort and expense to associate desire and identity with commodities. Adbusters believes that advertising has unjustly "colonized" public, discursive and psychic spaces, by appearing in movies, sports and even schools, so as to permeate modern culture. Culture jamming is the primary means through which Adbusters challenges consumerism and empowers people to regain control of culture and the mental environment. The goal is to interrupt the normal consumerist experience in order to reveal the underlying ideology of an advertisement, media message, or consumer artifact. Their concept of détournement involves the "turning around" of received messages so that they communicate meanings at variance with their original intention.
PRACTICAL KNOWLEDGE VS. DEGREE?
#hackeducationindia #hackschoolingindia

SAVE THE KONARK SUN TEMPLE

ALL BUILDINGS BUILT BY UN-DEGREE ARCHITECTS, DESIGNERS AND ENGINEERS ARE GOING TO BE DEMOLISHED BY GOVERNMENT ORDERS. SAVE THOUSANDS OF BEAUTIFUL MONUMENTS BUILT BY ILLITERATE AND UNEDUCATED PERSONS.
#SCHOOLSAREPRISONS
Fluorescent lighting,
Posted rules, unscalable walls, posted guards,
a bell to change shifts and a ton of authority.
"School reformers need to understand the 'hidden curriculum' -- the design elements, rules and structures that drive factory-schooling. Sitting in lines produces linear and stagnant thinking. Fragmented disciplines produce fragmented understanding and the breakdown of wisdom. Flat textbooks and black and white exams produce lack of ability to engage with complex emotions, diverse opinions and 'gray' situations. Locking children up in concrete classrooms and in front of screens produces nature deficit disorder. Ranking and competition produce new social hierarchies, arrogance and sense of scarcity. Compulsion and motivation through rewards and punishments produce a loss of purpose and self-esteem, fear of making mistakes, and disconnect with your inner voice. Who says school doesn't teach you any values?"

– Manish Jain, Shikshantar Andolan
#SCHOOLTRAUMAS
Sitting on the bench
With dreams that got shattered
Looking at the blackboard
I remember my childhood
Sitting in a corner bench alone
Hiding my tears
GOT DRESSED TO GO SOMEWHERE WHERE I WAS UNWILLING TO GO
What if
The sky was green & trees blue
We never questioned it
"I don't know which is more unbearable - the deafening silence about the everyday acts of violence that the education system inflicts on children or the blatant propaganda and lies that factory schooling can somehow be fixed or reformed?"

- Manish Jain

Shikshantar Andolan
I was shushed
When I questioned back to my teacher
And I never spoke again
When Jonathan Swift published "A Modest Proposal" in 1729, he called attention to the problems accompanying poverty in Ireland. Presented in the guise of an economic treatise, the satirical essay absurdly proposes that the country ameliorate hunger and overpopulation in Ireland by butchering the children of the Irish poor and selling them as food to wealthy English landlords. Swift uses hyperbole to make a strong social commentary on England's legal and economic exploitation of Ireland.
#TEACHERAPOLOGIES
#TEACHERAPOLOGIES

We invited teachers to apologize to their students and ask them for forgiveness.
#THEGDPTRAP
Children shouldn’t play freely outdoors. Their connection with nature can harm the GDP.
"There is only one policy in India and, that is, 9% economic growth. The global financial system, based on compound interest, demands its pound of flesh every second we are alive. To fulfill this means ever-increasing levels of extraction, war, production, pollution, and consumerism. The 9% growth narrative not only trumps all other policies, it drives the factory schooling agenda. It needs to convert us into homo economicus in order to succeed."

- Manish Jain
Shikshantar Andolan
Children shouldn’t develop self-awareness and confidence. Their connection to their inner voice can harm GDP growth.
#YEARON
If you had a year
without classrooms,
without exams,
without pressure,
without competition...

what would you do?

we invite you to take a year on... swapathgami network

www.shikshantar.in
Does your life inspire you?

How about taking a gap year?

swapathgami network

www.shikshantar.in
"Deschooling is not really about school or no school. That is a dead-end debate. It is essentially about opening up questions like: who should decide what is the purpose of my life and how should I spend my time?; who should decide how I live and learn; who should decide what 'i' or 'we' even means?"

- Manish Jain
Shikshantar Andolan
THIS WAY TO SUCCESS, SECURITY & A SETTLED LIFE
PUSH YOUR WAY TO THE TOP BEFORE OTHERS!!

Stop cutting the line! Always first!

Dear God! Please help me to be No. 1.

Can't base my life on fear. I'm outta here! I'm taking a gap year!

Hey! Wait! Are you crazy? Where are you going? You'll be left out!

World-class University
Ranked 108.
Take The Road Less Travelled
Or Find Your Own Path
Be A Walk Out!

two roads diverged in a wood and i
took the one less travelled by
and that has made
all the difference...

swapathgami.net | www.shikshantar.in
Gap Year Summit
6th September, 2020
4:30 - 6 pm, On Zoom, Live on FB

Meet our speakers who took gap year during school

Unlock your year

Hosted By Indian Multiversities Alliance
www.multiversities.net/unlock_your_year
"Those who control the definitions, the dictionaries, the maps and the indicators control the game. The time has come for us to reclaim our right to re-define what notions of 'power', 'wealth', 'progress', 'happiness' and 'knowledge' mean to us."

– Manish Jain
Shikshantar Andolan
Choose a powerful name (preferably from your local context) and declare yourself an Ecoveristy.

Get together at least 5 friends who are excited to learn/unlearn together.

Identify at least 10 inspiring mentors who are willing to share their knowledge/skills.

Frame at least 3 action-research questions or focus areas which are important for you, your community, the world.

Find a convenient meeting rhythm and meeting space (such as a library, forest, cafe, farm, ashram, etc).

Invite 3 well-respected elders in your country to serve as trustee-guardians of core spirit and values.

HOW TO START YOUR OWN ECOVERSITY

Check out website for inspiration: www.ecoversities.org
Gandhi was a master of creating memes as part of the Indian Freedom struggle. He was so successful at it that he himself later became one the most famous memes in the world. The brilliance of Gandhi's memes was that they offered the seeds of resistance and regeneration in them. One of the best examples of this is the Charkha spinning wheel which he used as an important tool of political emancipation. The Charkha and the production of khadi cloth became a symbol of ancient work ethics, body wisdom and self-reliance as well as a means of economic and social rebellion to the British Raj. The spinning wheel, moreover, had the added benefit of providing the poor with supplementary income and connecting the elite to daily physical productive work. The Salt Satyagraha March was another powerful symbol that united the nation. After walking for 390 km, Gandhi consciously broke the salt laws by making salt as a form of civil disobedience. It was a direct action campaign of tax resistance and nonviolent protest against the British salt monopoly. “With this salt,” he announced, “I am declaring that we are free and shaking the foundations of the British Empire.”
Questions that matter
Start with an action-research question which is important for you and the world and experiment with a small hands-on prototype project.

Peer to Peer Learning
Create a learning circle of at least 3 ‘buddies’ to collaborate, reflect, motivate and share your learnings with on a regular basis.

Learning Journeys
Travel on an adventure and explore inspiring learning people and projects. Don’t be afraid to get lost.

KEY ELEMENTS OF SELF-DESIGNED LEARNING*
For more inspiration: www.multiversities.net

Apprenticeships
Spend time living with inspiring mentors who are willing to share their knowledge/skills/wisdom with you.

Unlearning Challenges
Identify some of your fears, habits and limiting beliefs which are holding you back and try to take them on.

Do Nothing
Sometimes we need time to chill, recharge, empty ourselves. Don’t feel guilty about it.

* Start anywhere and follow it everywhere.
#GRANDMOTHERSUNIVERSITY
I studied at Christ University, but my best professor was my village grandmother/mother.
MIS-EDUCATED PROFESSIONAL
RE-TRAINED by FARMER
I STUDIED AT HARVARD BUT MY BEST PROFESSOR WAS MY VILLAGE GRANDMOTHER.
#FELLOWS
#RECLAIMABUNDANCE
Fellows hack the game musical chairs and challenge the paradigm of scarcity.
Fellows tried to design a game to challenge the mindset of Monopoly.
SAYING NO IS AN ALTERNATIVE...

"Suppose a man is sucking a lump of arsenic and you warn him that the stuff is poisonous. Would he be considered sane if he countered by saying that he must first be given a cup of nectar; otherwise, he would not give up whatever he had?"

– Maulana Azad
First Education Minister of India
For Further Conversations

Which memes touched you deeply?

What are your personal horror stories with factory schooling?

How does the culture of schooling affect your mindset, personal life, relationships, community, work, neighborhood, city?

What do we need to unlearn from factory schooling?

What have been some of your most powerful learning experiences?
Did you enjoy this book of memes?

We invite you to make your own memes that mock and disrupt factory schooling and share them with us at <shikshantar@yahoo.com>. We would love to make another book of your favorite deschooling memes.