



Education Disruption Podcast / 11.22.2022

[Episode 36: Overcoming Self-Doubt and Getting Back on Track](#)

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Nick: Welcome back to *Education Disruption*. Over the course of this season, we're talking to students – or more specifically, soon to be graduates – of Map Academy, a school that does things differently. Part of doing things differently means that even graduating looks different at Map Academy. Each student, as a part of their capstone graduation project, was asked to reflect on what brought them to this moment of high school graduation. Today we're hearing Doug's story.

Doug: My name is Douglas McDonald Geter III and my age is 19 years **[00:00:30]** old.

Nick: We'll hear Doug's written account of his journey towards high school graduation, and we'll also ask him some questions about that journey. Doug opens his capstone project by talking about how hard it was in the 2019 school year, coming to school at a time where things were very different than they were before.

Doug: When I was coming back to Map for the 2019 school year, I started to believe I couldn't graduate. It was a strange time. We had to wear a mask every day, I couldn't see my friends like before, and there were people that coming to school that I didn't really get along with. I already wasn't enjoying school pretty much at **[00:01:00]** all. This combination of things, however, made school unbearable.

I was new here. I didn't really know anybody like that, only the people that I already previously knew before I came here. Also, it was a completely new system. I didn't like school already, like coming into school. I didn't like waking up early, none of that. Just a new system, new teachers, that really made it just a strange time.

Nick: We asked Doug what drew him to Map in the first place.

Doug: The freedom aspect. I really enjoyed that. It made **[00:01:30]** things easier and it also allowed me to grow as a person. Like I could come here and sit here all day if I really wanted to, but that's not what you want to do.

Nick: Doug explained that with all that newfound freedom, he did have to take some time to adjust.

Doug: It takes a lot of self-control, it really does, in order to succeed in a place like this. You can come here and shit around every day, but you don't want to do that because you're going to be stuck here.

After a week into this new school year, I stopped coming in. I just didn't think I would graduate on time and that made me feel **[00:02:00]** stupid. I was going to see a lot of my friends graduate while I was left behind. That made me not want to come in. But in the back of my mind, I knew I would need my high school diploma.

After I stopped coming to school, I was trying to find some work to keep me busy and make some money. I helped out this guy who did a little demo work and landscaping. He taught me some pretty helpful things, but in the back of my mind, I knew I would need a high school diploma in order to start a real career. Not only did I stop coming to school, I stopped talking to most of my friends from Map. I wasn't really sure why I stopped talking to them, but I guess I **[00:02:30]** was embarrassed to be the friend who couldn't graduate in time.

Nick: We wanted to know – what was Doug's mindset at this time?

Doug: It was like some inner dialogue telling me just to stop, like, "Give up because you can't do it" pretty much. "There's no point in going to school or anything." I just had to overcome that. Just realizing that's just your anxiety or just the negativeness keeping you down. You got to even build yourself up, not break yourself down. Everybody's a little bit nervous, everybody thinks they're **[00:03:00]** behind, but in reality, nobody's paying attention to what anybody else is doing. Everybody's just doing their own thing. You just got to pay attention to what you're doing. Keep yourself on track.

Eventually, once the '22 school year came around, I decided to come back. I needed my high school diploma in order to do many things. I was told about different certificate programs and trades I can get into, but they all required a high school diploma.

Working and doing these trades and stuff, it's nice to do work like that, but if you want to become like a **[00:03:30]** foreman or anything, you're going to need a high school diploma, or if you want to get into a certificate program, you're going to need a high school diploma. It was really just like trying to find something to do. The next step, the actual next step.

Nick: Doug says that Shiobhan Sylvia, a Humanities Teacher at Map, was helpful in keeping him on track and pushing him to get that diploma he realized he needed.

Doug: I had a conversation with Shiobhan about how I really couldn't do this anymore. I didn't think I was going to be able to succeed. I **[00:04:00]** was just telling her I was going to drop out, but she was like, "No, you can do it." Just seeing other people succeed and seeing them move on with their lives and going on to bigger and better things, it was pretty eye-opening. I kind of stopped believing that I couldn't do it because anything's possible, really. If I really want to do something, I have to be able to believe that I can do it.

When I came back, I got a ton of work done and also got in touch with my friends again. It was a bittersweet feeling to be back in the mix. I felt guilty not being **[00:04:30]** around my friends for so long, I couldn't even give them the real reason why I was gone.

Overall, though, school gave me a feeling of accomplishment. Even if I didn't get to graduate on time, I thought at least that I did it. Now that I'm almost done, I'm grateful that I came back and had the opportunity to get my diploma. It's a rewarding feeling to be back and get the education I need.

I recently applied for a program called Year Up. I heard a lot about this program from my brother and his friends. It seemed like something I would love to do as a career. It's a program that has a bunch of fields of computer work **[00:05:00]** that you can get into.

Nick: We asked Doug how he feels about reaching this milestone, getting his diploma.

Doug: It's good, it's rewarding. It's a little nerve-wracking because, you know, it's real life now, but I'm prepared. I feel like I'm ready to get an education in the field that I'm desiring, which is probably IT, or maybe finances. I don't know yet.

From this experience, I've learned about not giving up on yourself and others who believe in you. I went from feeling hopeless to actually seeing a future for myself. **[00:05:30]**

Nick: We want to thank Doug for taking the time to share his journey with us on this episode of *Education Disruption*. If you want to find out more about Map Academy, head to themapacademy.org and for more resources, student stories, and articles, you can head to educationdisruption.org. Of course, be sure to subscribe to this podcast if you're interested in hearing more stories like Doug's. My name is Nick Tetrault, our editor is Susie Blair, our executive producer is Kristen Hughes, and this is a Hairpin Production. **[00:06:00]**