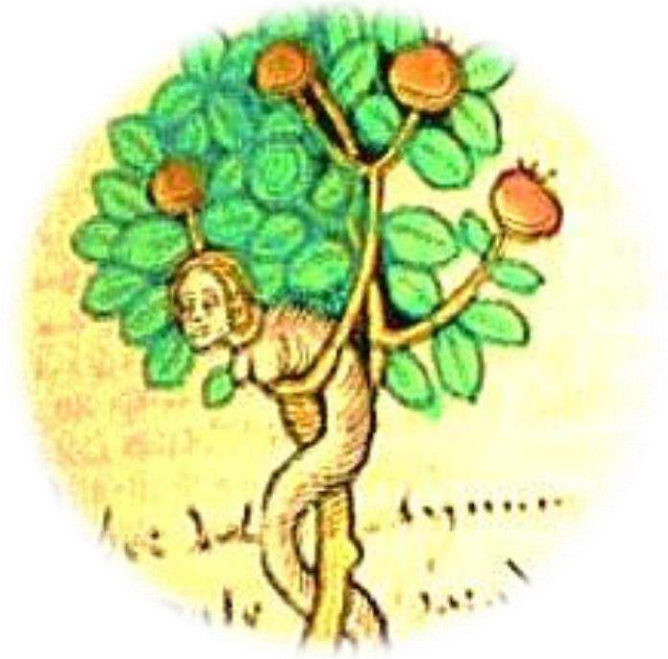


What is College For?



An exploration
of the current state
of higher education,
with thoughts
on its future.

By Ben Hatch,
Dylan Clark,
Graham Sparks,
Matt Biondo,
Matt Stockmal,
Melissa Bour,
Natalie Chapin,
Michael Ostling,
Sean Kolder,
Tyler Thompson,
and Victoria Hernandez

What is College For?

American higher education, in the eyes of many, is struggling. How much students learn and how well prepared they are for adulthood and beyond varies drastically between race, socioeconomic class, and even geographic location. Many experts believe that compared to other developed nations, educational institutions in the United States are failing us. According to Fareed Zakaria in his book *In Defense of a Liberal Education*,

The most recent addition of the test called the Programme for international student assessment (PISA) was conducted in 2012, and it found that out of OCED 34 member, the United States ranked 27th, 20th, and 17th respectively in math, science, and reading. If ranking across the 3 subjects was averaged the United States come in 21st trailing nations like Czech Republic, Poland, Slovenia, and Estonia. (Zakaria, 91)

Furthermore, Arum and Roksa's findings based on the Collegiate Learning Assessment show that

At least 45% of undergraduates demonstrated no improvement in critical thinking, complex reasoning, and writing skills in the first two years of college, and 36% showed no progress in four years. (Arum and Roksa, 36)

This concern for the future of college is the basis for this class, in which we read, learn, and discuss the state of college and what it could or should be like. *HON 394: What is College For?* focuses on the problems facing higher education, specifically undergraduate education, and what actions could solve these problems. To begin the conversation, different models of college were defined by our instructor, Michael Ostling. Those models framed our discussions throughout the course. The models include the **Filter**, the **Ticket**, the **Mall**, the **Cruise**, the **Monastery**, the **Museum**, the **Revival**, the **Commune**, and the **Polis** (each model is described briefly in the Appendix at the end of this pamphlet). From this framework, our class read and discussed a variety of texts that both identified issues in U.S. higher education and proposed different policies and ideas to address the problems. Executive summaries of these texts are provided in this book.

We have chosen to group the models of higher education into three categories. The first group, of what we here call the **Socio-Economic Empowerment** models, centers around the expectation that by attending and completing higher education, students will receive an economic return on investment. The Ticket, Filter, and Cruise models fall under the Socio-Economic Empowerment group. These models represent the idea that college is a place where the winners are separated from the losers, and those who make it to the end are granted entrance into the higher-paying job market. Many colleges have responded to the idea of a higher education as an economic value-added process by increasing their focus on higher

education as a stepping stone to hopefully lucrative and fulfilling careers and actively advertise this facet of education. “In 1971, 73% of incoming freshman said that it is essential or very important to ‘develop a meaningful philosophy of life,’ 37% to be ‘very well-off financially’. By 2011 the numbers were almost reversed 47% and 80% respectively.” (Deresiewicz, pg 79)

Another group of models make higher education akin to a **Consumer Product**. This group consists of the Cruise, the Mall and the Museum models. Americans undoubtedly spend a lot of money on college, so some feel that students, like paying customers of any product, should have power to shape that product into what they want. Colleges that operate under the consumer-based model are very individualized. Each student tailors his or her experiences by choosing from a diverse pool of classes, engaging in a variety of clubs, and choosing from an array of expansive facilities. The key to this model is that the student is a paying customer and that higher education is a marketplace that should cater to their needs. This model has both positive and negative results. It has increasingly made college and universities more prone to investment in elaborate amenities to compete with other colleges driving up cost of attendance. It also affects the relationship between students and professors, insofar as students can pressure professors to reduce requirements. “The curriculum populated by electives and required courses competing for the lowest expectations- is driven increasingly by students demands rather than by what a community of scholars believes undergraduates should know.” (Benton, “Perfect Storm,” pg 2)

The final group of models we titled **Democratic Education** and it includes the Monastery, the Revival, the Commune, and the Polis. In democratic institutions, college is treated as a formative period for students like primary and secondary education. Here, students are shaped into democratic citizens capable of debate, critical thinking, and collaboration. It is the role of the professor to inspire the student to participate in his or her community and to help guide them to live a meaningful life. In the democratic model, the student is meant to become an individual. The career after college is valued less than the self-reflection, self-discovery, and “loafing” (Delbanco) that defines the college experience. In these models, students have less agency over what they learn and rather are asked to participate in the experience.

So, which model *should* college most resemble? Which model *does* college most resemble? The readings summarized in this pamphlet show that the undergraduate experience embodies these models in different concentrations at different institutions and ASU is no exception. ASU provides aspects of a democratic education in the small, student led discussions of the Barrett classroom. It joins in and proliferates the amenities rat race with the Barrett Vista pool and Barrett-exclusive gym. It offers career-based major paths that embody the ‘Ticket’ mindset and show the starting salaries of relevant careers on the first day of class. One can regurgitate mindlessly for a computer science midterm in a large lecture hall and on the same day profess your own opinion about the state of higher education and the role of the student within it. College is influenced by every model and it was our role in this class to decipher how they affect our college experience as undergraduates and how we can change what we value in our future education. The works summarized below are a sample of what has helped us push back the curtain on these driving forces in higher education.

We hope you will get some answers in the pages that follow. But more importantly, we hope you’ll be moved to ask your own questions.

—The members of HON 394, “What is College For?”, Spring 2017

College: What it Was, Is, and Should Be

Delbanco, Andrew. *College: What it Was, Is, and Should Be*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006
Reviewed by Matt Biondo, Natalie Chapin, Benjamin Hatch, Victoria Hernandez

Overview: Delbanco devotes *College* to a discussion about the purpose of undergraduate education. He does this by delving into the history of American higher education and how older collegiate values translate to the present day. Delbanco evaluates the cost of college, the concept of merit and how those two factors dictate who receives a college education. Ultimately, Delbanco feels that college should be an **instrument of democracy that transforms students into democratic citizens**.

Key Claims:

- **Delbanco lists the qualities he feels students should get from higher education.**
 - In paraphrase, Delbanco feels students should learn to be skeptical of the present based on information from the past, to draw connections between seemingly different phenomena, to appreciate the natural world, to empathize, and to maintain ethical responsibility (Delbanco, pg 3). Delbanco later states that college should be “an aid to reflection, a place and process whereby young people take stock of their talents and passions and begin to sort out their lives in a way that is true to themselves and responsible to others” (Delbanco, pg 16).
- **Delbanco is critical of present-day meritocracy and merit based scholarships, and believes that these factors contribute to college being out of reach for many Americans.**
 - The idea of a meritocracy is that intelligence plus effort is equal to merit, and that those with higher merit should be rewarded in society (Delbanco, pg 125). The idea of merit has become increasingly important as a loss of public funds has caused tuition rates to rise, and scholarships issued have been based less on need and more on merit (Delbanco, pg 114 - 115). Delbanco claims that “scholarships have been going increasingly to high-achieving students who come disproportionately from high-income families” (Delbanco, pg 115). One reason for this is likely that a determinate for merit scholarships, standardized test scores, “correlate closely with socio-economic standing” because students from higher income families have more access to better schools and test preparation (Delbanco, pg 118).
- **Higher education should be directed to educating students for their mental, moral and economic health so they can become democratic citizens for the betterment of society as a whole.**
 - By incorporating ideas of “lateral learning” Delbanco notes the importance of educating the whole individual to accomplish these means (Delbanco, pg 55). This kind of education allows us to improve the quality and prowess of education since “We owe it to posterity to preserve and protect this institution. Democracy depends on it.” (Delbanco, pg 177).

Questions and Quibbles:

- **How does a college teach you “what's worth wanting?”**
 - Delbanco spends a good amount of time talking about how colleges should be a place where one finds what's worth wanting. But since this idea is so nebulous and unclear it becomes something easy to say but difficult to actually work towards. How does one actively assure that a student is able to have this experience especially when the fact that

each student is markedly different in thought process can create drastically different effects from the same content (Delbanco, pg 48 - 49).

- **What really are the solutions?**

- Delbanco addresses many problems in higher education and offers some solutions in a broader sense. However, he often speaks in the abstract and focuses on more general goals for higher education rather than concrete solutions that can actually be implemented. He also proposes larger changes while simultaneously saying that “big solutions - whether initiated from within or from without - are unlikely.” (Delbanco, pg 162).

Recommendations:

- **Delbanco believes that “college is only true if it opens its doors to all” (Delbanco, pg 35).**
 - Just as in a true democracy, every voice should be heard, and every student should be given the opportunity to develop their own voice and become more prepared to enter a democratic society. According to Delbanco, instead of being open to everyone, college has become a place for only the lucky few. One way to alleviate this problem, Delbanco writes, is by offering more remedial programs and forming partnerships between colleges and high schools (Delbanco, pg 161).
- **Produce more teachers who care about teaching**
 - Delbanco acknowledges that most professors are not trained to teach, but are instead trained to conduct research. He states that “The problem is not that universities are centers of research, but rather it’s the way they use college teaching to subsidize the training of researchers” (Delbanco, pg 167). Delbanco suggests that the problem can be alleviated if institutions can bridge the gap between teaching and research.

Connections:

- **Delbanco’s opinion of what college should be for is similar to the views of Palmer and Zajonc as described in *The Heart of Higher Education*.**
 - Palmer and Zajonc believe that higher education should be a time of transformation for students. They argue that the “cognitive, affective, moral, and spiritual development” of students during college are most important and that higher education should be a time for the “whole” student to grow (Palmer and Zajonc, pg 102). These ideals align with Delbanco’s view that “American college has always been about more than the transmission of information or the inculcation of skills; it has been, at its best, about helping young people prepare for lives of meaning and purpose” (pg xiv).
- **Zakaria’s *In Defense of a Liberal Education* also advocates for lateral learning and using higher education as a way to help students become democratic citizens.**
 - Zakaria argues that by teaching students how to write, speak, and learn, higher education instills deeper, core values like free expression, critical thinking, and intellectual curiosity.
- **Delbanco prefers the Polis and Commune models of higher education.**
 - Delbanco advocates for students learning from each other, or lateral learning. This idea of collaborative learning is at the heart of the Commune model. Delbanco also states that the college classroom should be a “rehearsal space for democracy” (pg xiv) where students can voice and listen to different perspectives and debate their ideas to promote learning. This idea matches the Polis model.

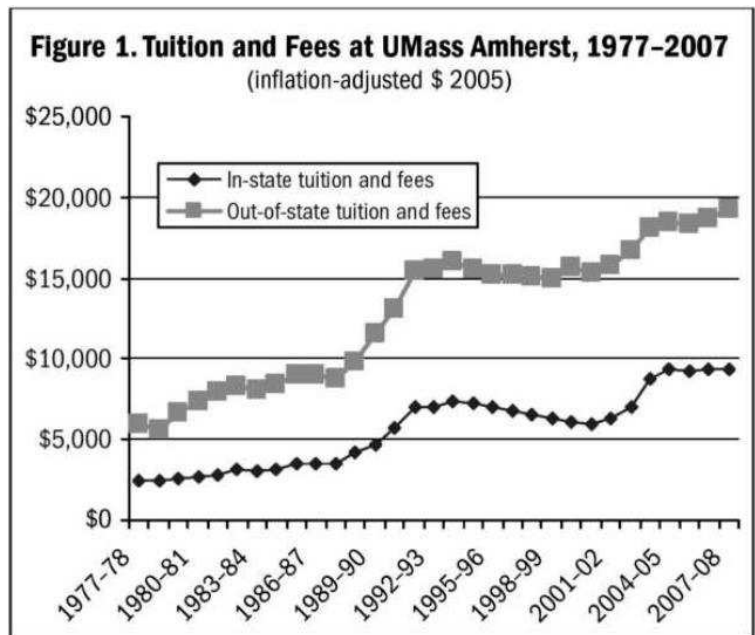
Saving State U

Nancy Folbre's *Saving State U: Fixing Public Higher Education*. New York: The New Press, 2010.

Report by **Graham Sparks**

Overview

The author, a professor of economics at UMass Amherst, recommends providing free public higher education in the United States as a way of providing upward social mobility and social insurance. She believes that since college has increased in cost significantly since the 1970s, which she describes as a golden age of higher education in the US, and lack of a college degree largely keeps individuals out of the middle class, our social contract compels us to provide tuition-free higher education.



Source: University of Massachusetts Amherst, Office of Academic Planning and Assessment

Central Findings

- **Folbre refers to the social contract as the “Big Deal”**, in which older citizens subsidize education for young people, who then use their education to contribute to the public good, mainly through tax revenue from their higher earnings. She compares higher education to institutions like Social Security and Medicare (Ch. 1).
- Public institutions of higher education, such as land-grant universities, were a large component of a 20th century boom of investment in “human capital”, the term the author uses to refer to an educated citizenry. **State universities offered much cheaper alternatives to private colleges, enabling many Americans to experience upward economic mobility** like never before: “In 1933, average tuition and fees at a public university came to \$61-the equivalent of about \$916 in 2005 dollars. By contrast, the average tuition and fees at a private institution in 1933 amounted to \$265-the equivalent of \$3,981 in 2005”(Ch. 2).
- Following the 1970s, the phenomenon of “Tax Revolt” began to choke funding for state universities. **Public funding for higher education was caught in the crosshairs of enthusiasm for cutting taxes and spending**; at the time of the book’s publishing, Massachusetts taxpayers spent more per person on prisons and the Iraq war than on higher education. Federal financial aid has filled the gap partially, but have not been able to keep pace with increasing tuition. Merit-based scholarship primarily benefits wealthy students, further degrading the engine of upward mobility that supported the Big Deal in the first half of the 20th century (Ch. 3)
- **Attending college has become an increasingly risky venture for the financially vulnerable**: “less than 50 percent of students entering four-year public school, on average, get their diplomas at that school. Average completion rates are higher in privates than in publics.” (Ch. 4) **The broader social benefits of higher education are very difficult to quantify**, confounding efforts by education advocates to claw back some of the lost public funding. “Less than a third of the total budget of state universities today actually comes out of state tax revenues” (Ch. 3).
- Most gains in labor productivity have gone to the top 1%, while even college graduates have seen their earnings stagnate or decrease: **“High levels of inequality undermine social solidarity, making it difficult to address problems that can't be solved by simply charging items to your credit card.”** (Ch. 5).
- **The author advocates a return to the use of higher education as a vehicle of economic equity** and an underpinning of the social contract. For-profit schools have taken advantage of federally backed loans and grants by targeting poorer students, but the lack of accreditation and respect for the graduates of these institutions causes higher default rates and greater stress on taxpayers.

Questions and Quibbles

- Folbre acknowledges the increasing cost of college and the need for a college degree as institutions that keep the lower class poor, but **never seriously challenges the underlying issues**, instead opting for the Bernie Sanders solution of paying for everyone's college outright, a hugely expensive venture, which, as she notes in Ch. 5 and 1, may result in the devaluation of a college degree in the job marketplace, making it effectively "the new high school" (Ch. 5). Also, cost disease in higher education is a serious issue on its own, with costs increasing much more quickly than inflation, independently of decreasing public funding and without a corresponding increase in measurable educational quality. I was disappointed that an economics professor did not look more carefully into the core issues that oppress the poor: the need to have a college degree in the job market. I think it's safe to say that most people attend college for career reasons, but in many fields, the work is only tenuously related to the things they learn in college. With the job market value of a high school diploma and an undergraduate degree converging, there needs to be an alternative for people headed directly to industry, unless we're willing to pay for everyone to attend 6+ years of increasingly expensive college.
- How effective can free higher education be if secondary education is failing to produce prepared students?

Recommended Solutions

- **"State universities need to move away from the old business model based on minimizing costs and maximizing revenues toward a renewed commitment to the common good."** (Ch. 8) The author recommends increasing state-level funding for public higher education and marketing this policy to taxpayers as a form of social insurance and risk-pooling, much like the popular Social Security program. The end goal would be complete tuition-free public higher education, as provided by Germany, Denmark, etc. (Ch. 8)
- **She praises the G.I. Bill, as originally conceived**, for its clear guidelines and generous provisions, which helped many soldiers enter the middle class.
- **Folbre also praises the HOPE scholarship program implemented by Georgia** and some other states in various forms, which allows students to attend in-state public universities tuition-free, provided they meet realistic, achievable benchmarks (B average grades in high school).
- **Stop relying on adjunct faculty** to do the lion's share of teaching in public universities, which is much more common than in private institutions.

Responses to be Avoided

- **Folbre argues against further corporatization of universities**, which lead to excessive cost-cutting and worsened educational quality. She also decries the use of test scores in admissions and the **prevalence of merit-based scholarships**, which both help enforce the existing hierarchies of class and race.
- **The lottery system should not be used**, which currently provides billions of dollars to many states for educational funding. Lottery tickets are more likely to be purchased by low-income groups, and their windfall is more likely to be used to subsidize college for high-income groups, effectively making it an anti-progressive tax.

Connections

- Like Guinier, Folbre consistently decries the meritocracy as an obstacle for underprivileged groups.
- **Folbre mostly sees higher education as the "Ticket" model**, usually referencing its potential to help people escape the economic underclass. She does mention the intrinsic value of higher education, but, as she also notes, this value is difficult to define and market to the taxpayer.

AIMLESS AND ADRIFT

Arum, Richard, and Josipa Roksa. *Academically Adrift: Limited Learning on College Campuses*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011.

REVIEWED BY MICHAEL OSTLING

OVERVIEW:

Academically Adrift provides strong quantitative corroboration for what many of us have long suspected: **many students aren't learning much in college**. The book looks into the sources of this "limited learning," and makes policy suggestions about transforming colleges into places of deep effective learning.

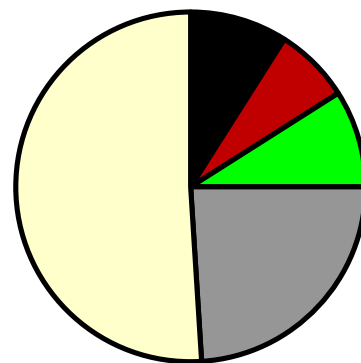
CENTRAL FINDINGS AND CLAIMS:

Arum and Roksa use two sets of data: a detailed survey of 2,322 students at 24 four-year institutions, and the performance of these students in their 1st and 4th semesters on the Collegiate Learning Assessment (CLA, a written test measuring competencies in critical thinking, complex reasoning, and writing). They find that:

- **Many students take a credentialist, instrumental attitude toward college**, attempting to "acquire the greatest exchange value [good grades and a degree] for the smallest investment of time and energy" (p. 16). Cultural, economic, and institutional factors—for example competition for enrollments between colleges, between departments, and even between instructors—tend to encourage students' credentialist approach.
- College policies, teaching practices, and differences between institutions **preserve or even exacerbate inequalities** between academically disadvantaged students and their more privileged peers (p. 40).
- **Students report spending less than 12 hours per week studying on average** (35% study less than 5 hours / week). "Studying" includes group work, homework, projects, and reading for class (see figure at right). Nevertheless, 85% of students have a GPA of B- or better (pp. 69, 88). "Given that students are spending very little time studying or attending classes, ... we should not be surprised that they are not learning much." (p. 98).
- **50% of 4th-semester sophomores had not taken a course requiring 20 pages of writing over the semester, and 1/3 had not had to read 40 pages per week**. "If students are not asked ... to read and write on a regular basis ..., it is hard to imagine how they will improve their capacity to master ... tasks" dependent on critical reading and careful writing (p. 71).
- Arum and Roksa "observed **no statistically significant gains in critical thinking, complex reasoning, and writing skills for at least 45% of the student in our study**" (p. 36) after two years of college.
- There is a strong positive correlation between hours studying alone and increased CLA scores. However, the more time spent studying in groups with peers, the smaller the improvement in CLA scores (p. 100). **Group study, the book suggests, is bad for learning**.
- Students majoring in **science/math and in humanities/social sciences saw far higher gains in CLA scores** after two years than did students majoring in other fields. Business and Education saw the lowest gains. This variance is largely explained by the higher reading and writing requirements of the successful fields.
- **Institutions can adopt practices to counteract limited learning in college**. "Students in some institutions experience larger gains [in CLA scores] ... than others" (p. 115). After adjusting for socio-demographic, academic-preparation, and institutional selectivity factors, "top-performing institutions" emerge, and their salient characteristics can be described. Thus:
- At successful institutions, **62% of 4th-semester sophomores report having taken at least one course requiring at least 40 pages of reading per week and at least 20 pages of writing per semester** (as compared to 39% at other institutions).
- At successful institutions, **4th-semester sophomores report studying alone 12 hours per week on average** (compared to 9 hours / week at other institutions).

Student Time Use
after Arum and Roksa Fig. 4.2

- Attending Class or Lab
- Studying
- Working, Volunteering, Greek Life, Student Clubs
- Sleeping
- Socializing, Recreation, Other



IN OTHER WORDS:

Student behaviors, especially "time on task" spent reading, writing, and studying alone, are crucial to the development of the critical thinking, complex reasoning, and writing skills that college higher education is intended to inculcate. Moreover, these behaviors are strongly correlated with faculty expectation. This isn't rocket science: "When faculty have high expectations and expect students to read and write reasonable amounts, students learn more" (p. 119).

QUESTIONS AND QUIBBLES:

- **Is a faculty culture of “publish or perish” to blame?** Arum and Roksa suggest this at several points (e.g. p. 134). This may be true of tenured and tenure-track faculty. However, most undergraduate teaching is not done by research faculty, but by TAs, Gas, non-tenure-track lecturers, and contingent faculty (adjuncts). So long as tenure-track faculty are promoted primarily on the basis of research or external grants, and contingent faculty are rehired primarily on the basis of student opinion surveys, neither group will have an incentive to teach with rigor and depth.
- **Do Arum and Roksa discuss “learning” or “growth in CLA scores”?** Arguably the latter. Many courses might impart a great deal of knowledge without inculcating skills measured by the CLA. Nevertheless, faculty in all departments “overwhelmingly agree that critical thinking, complex reasoning, or writing are key skills to be taught in higher education (p. 108).
- **Is group study really so bad?** The CLA measures individual thinking, alone, so it makes sense that students who habitually study in groups would perform poorly on it. But they might do well at other tests or tasks dependent on team-work, diplomacy, consensus-building, and other group-oriented skills.
- **Are skills and capacities not measured by the CLA worthless?** Arum and Roksa display little regard for many college outcomes not measured by the CLA— independence, self-awareness, exposure to cultural, ethnic, gender and conceptual diversity, and so on. These outcomes are arguably as important as the CLA-measured skills of critical thinking, complex reasoning, and and writing.

SOME PRACTICAL SOLUTIONS:

- **Avoid the temptation to focus energies on the best and brightest students,** especially in introductory classes. Faculty have a moral obligation to go the extra mile to help first-generation and socio-economically disadvantaged students succeed. With carefully structured assignments and good will, such students can advance rapidly.
- **Require students to come to office hours.** Disadvantaged or unengaged students—the students most in need of the faculty engagement which Arum and Roksa show to be predictive of academic achievement and persistence—are the least likely to seek our help. Make such engagement non-threatening but obligatory. (See pp. 62-67)
- **Discourage students from studying in groups.** “There is a positive association between learning and time spent studying alone, but a negative association between learning and time spent studying with peers” (p. 100). With the exception of carefully designed group endeavors (which Arum and Roksa suggest are rarely the norm), group-study does not foster critical thinking, complex reasoning, or writing.
- **Encourage students to attend academically relevant social activities.** Peer groups have a strong influence on the growth of good academic habits, and “some schools did a much better job of promoting academically oriented peer cultures than others” (p. 60).

- **Use successful institutions as models to help change the collegiate culture.** Arum and Roksa make clear that some colleges do some things right. Take these colleges as a model. Talk to friends in other departments or at other institutions; find out what is working for them (and what isn't).
- **Start or join a club.** Reading a book doesn't change the world. You can't fix college on your own. Seek out or create a group of like-minded colleagues to spearhead the transformation of higher education in your local institution.

TWO IMPRACTICAL NON-SOLUTIONS:

- **Blame the Faculty.** Teachers can all always teach better than they do. But increasing academic standards in a few classes is not enough—unmotivated students will simply avoid those classes. While individual faculty can do a lot to improve the learning of their students, sustained improvement requires departmental, administrative, and ultimately inter-institutional support—a change in the culture (see pp. 125-144).
- **Blame the Students.** Laments about “kids these days” go back at least to the original groves of Akademeia (Plato attributes an early such complaint to Socrates). It may be true that K-12 education is not adequately preparing our students for college, or that the “Millennial” generation of internet-addled students has a harder time with sustained concentration than have previous generations, but such generalizations can quickly degenerate into stereotypes about “the dumbest generation.” The point is to educate the “kids these days,” whatever their personal, socioeconomic, or generational shortcomings.

CONNECTIONS:

- Arum and Roksa find that most students follow both the **Filter** and the **Ticket** models of college (p. 92): they think college sorts smart people, and they try to “get sorted” with minimal effort so as to reap the economic rewards of college.
- Their own model is probably closest to the **Monastery**. They want students to submit to a difficult but self-transformative discipline, guided by stern experts (instructors) themselves primarily measured not by popularity but by their success in instilling this discipline.
- Arum and Roksa share with **Zakaria** and **Delbanco** an appreciation for liberal education—though they would disapprove of Delbanco's praise of “loafing.” They share the critique of higher-education institutional culture described by **Rhode** and **Tuchman**, and might agree with **Aronowitz** concerning a return to core curriculum.
- Although *Academically Adrift* advocates, like Guinier, for the importance of higher education in democracy, it neglects the student-empowering, spiritual, liberatory teaching discussed by **Guinier**, **hooks**, **Freire**, and **Palmer**.

Note: this review is based on a hand-out prepared by Michael Ostling, Cristen Vernon and Clint Burhans III for a presentation sponsored by the Central Michigan University Teaching and Learning Collective at the Great Lakes Conference on Teaching and Learning, Michigan, 2011.

The Tyranny of the Meritocracy

Guinier, Lani. *The Tyranny of the Meritocracy: Democratizing Higher Education in America*. Boston: Beacon, 2016. Print.

Reviewed by Melissa Bour, Tyler Thompson, and Graham Sparks

Overview:

The author, Lani Guinier, is a professor of law at Harvard Law School and a civil rights theorist. *The Tyranny of Meritocracy* is divided into two sections: The Problem and The Solutions. The first three chapters discuss how secondary education has become a system based on “meritocracy”, test scores, and self-entitlement of the “new elites”. Chapters four through eight offer solutions based on education experiments that have shown improvements over traditional education.

Central Findings:

- **Testocracy-** The SAT and other admissions testing is a faulty system that cannot possibly measure how well a student will perform in college, which is its purpose; instead **it more accurately measures wealth**, suggesting that access to test-prep and other forms of assistance that can be purchased are the main drivers of test performance. “The elite dominate the entry to higher education...they simply come from families that have...money to pay people to prepare them...” (pg.21).
- **New elite is worse than old elite-** Whereas the college-going upper class intellectuals of previous generations felt a **sense of responsibility to give back to society through public service**, the new elite believe that they have earned their success through their own merit, and are less likely to recognize the privileges that helped them succeed. “The top career choices of many male Harvard students...are severely lacking in any element of service...We are credentializing a new elite by legitimizing people with inflated sense of their own merit...” (pg. 25).
- **Don’t teach to the test-** The “thinking curriculum” used by **University Park Campus School** has shown that interactive learning and developing the mind to tackle complex problems benefits students in their general studies, as well as in tests. While these students did not perform as well on the multiple-choice, they exceeded on the “open-ended” portion of the test (pg. 54). This way of teaching “...creates a generation of problem solvers and innovators...”

- **Growth mindset vs. Fixed mindset-** Instilling students with a “Growth mindset”, in which they believe that diligence and work can help them gain understanding and intelligence, helps them achieve superior results to a “Fixed mindset”, in which students believe that their intelligence remains the same throughout their life. **Guinier believes that the Testocracy encourages a Fixed mindset**, causing them to be discouraged when they encounter challenges that are not easily or quickly surmounted (pg. 98-101)
- **Collaborative learning and democratic merit-** Teaching students from an early age to work with others in and out of the classroom and form community and bonds of mutual support will enable them to use these skills after education. More collaboration is the foundation of democratic merit, which “will better serve the challenges of a twenty-first century world” (pg. 123)

Questions and Quibbles:

- Is the “service” that Guinier criticises in her writing as bad as she portrays it to be? Yes, much of the service students perform is in an effort to boost resumes but this does not take away from the impact this service makes. Guinier talks about ongoing involvement as opposed to, “dropping into a homeless shelter for an hour or two” (pg. 55), but these hour or two visits still make an impact. Often times these hour or two visits even transform into the ongoing involvement Guinier praises.
- Guinier criticizes the use of test scores as an instrument of college admissions, but does not propose a replacement that is not subject to some of the same wealth-biased problems. If schools rely on community service as a form of democratic merit, then wealthier students will be able to spend more time volunteering than their peers who have to work. Likewise, if they use some tests of collaborative ability, like the Bial-Dale Adaptability Index (p. 79), then wealthier students will hire coaches to help them game this test as well.

Connections:

- The concept of democratic merit reminds one of the “**Polis**” model of college, which emphasizes constructive debate and collaboration. Also, the intimate sense of community cultivated by the Posse Foundation brings to mind the “**Commune**”, and the inspiration of Father Brooks’ black students resembles the “**Revival**” model.

The Knowledge Factory

A REVIEW OF:

ARONOWITZ, STANLEY. *THE KNOWLEDGE FACTORY: DISMANTLING THE CORPORATE UNIVERSITY AND CREATING TRUE HIGHER LEARNING*. BOSTON: BEACON PRESS, 2000.

REVIEWED BY TYLER THOMPSON

OVERVIEW:

Stanley Aronowitz is a sociology professor at the City University of New York. Professor Aronowitz has experience in both the labor movement and education reform and this can be seen throughout his writing. In this book Aronowitz discusses the overall “intellectual decline” of universities and how many (if not all) of them have become nothing more than “Knowledge Factories”.

CENTRAL FINDINGS AND CLAIMS:

This book explores what exactly contributed to the recent decline in the quality of education and tries to explain what led to the creation of “knowledge factories”. Aronowitz draws on his experience from working within the labor movement and education reform and also analyses the historical development of the universities and education programs we have today.

- **Higher learning is no longer occurring on college campuses.** College campuses are no longer providing the higher-level liberal arts educations that once were the standard during the 1950s and 60s. In the very first page Aronowitz states how “It is becoming harder to find a place where learning, as opposed to “education” and “training” is the main goal” (p. 1). There appears to be very little higher learning going on in many universities and instead much more transmitting of knowledge that is ultimately regurgitated by the student.
- If Higher learning is not occurring on college campuses one must ask what has taken its place. According to Aronowitz, currently “The main task of public four year and community colleges would be to transmit technical knowledge to future employees of the U.S. labor market” (p. 39). Simply put this has resulted in **universities becoming knowledge factories**. Universities have become enamored with the idea that Clark Kerr, president of The University of California at Berkley, formulated. This being that if, “Universities fail to produce socially and economically useful new knowledge, they are not true universities.” (p. 30) This has led to many universities becoming nothing more than glorified trade schools.
- Throughout this book Aronowitz discusses university funding but nothing gets quite as much attention as his criticism for **universities and how intertwined they have become with “Corporate America”**. This has led to the creation of what Aronowitz refers to as “Corporate Universities”. Many colleges have become dependent on corporate support (financial) and thus education has shifted so that universities are, “more compatible with corporate needs” (p. 47). The effect of this has been corporations being able to influence college curriculum and have control of much research within institutions.
- **An additional major contributor to the decline in the quality of educations received at universities is “Academic Planning”**. This is variation of value engineering within the education sector where, “academic planning has been used to remove authority over curricular decisions from the local campus community to the central administration.” (p.62) This planning makes it easier for institutions to become a “corporate university” and often results in entire departments being defunded and professors being fired.
- Throughout the books analysis of institutions of higher learning it brings to light the fact that there are many universities that have **flawed curriculum that does not cultivate critical thinking or challenge students**. Aronowitz speaks of the curriculum reform that occurred in 1960’s that provided students with “curricular liberty” (p. 127). This curricular liberty was beneficial but unfortunately it appears that universities have cycled back to their previous practices of mandating curriculum and reinstituting required courses. It is apparent that once again, “major revisions of curriculum and pedagogy are needed” (p. 108).

In Summary: As education quality dwindles with each passing day and knowledge factories become more prominent, universities are essentially becoming trade schools that prepare students for corporations (corporations that engineered their education). As a result, “what we can expect in the next several decades is that advanced degrees will replace the B.A.” (p. 118)

QUESTIONS AND QUIBBLES:

- **Are Kerr's views of universities really that bad?** Is it wrong for people to want their universities to be producing new and useful knowledge that can assist economic growth? This appears to be quite a fitting application of higher education in all areas besides that of liberal arts and humanities?
- Yes corporate influence on universities has its negatives but one can not deny the amazing growth and research that has stemmed from corporate contribution. **If these relationships with corporations are ended will this not slow down the rate of discovery and research, and how do you replace such funding?**

SOLUTION:

- In the last chapter of this book Aronowitz proposes a solution to fix this education mess. This solution appears to be relatively simple (perhaps an oversimplification) and is composed of a new focus on improving pedagogy and a reformed curriculum that shadows that of an older traditional (more liberal) one. His solution revolves around the idea of a “core curriculum” that students spend their first years in university studying before they begin down the path of specialization. This core curriculum would consist of four key components: history, literature, science, and philosophy and would be divided into 6 main courses. (Ch. 7)

CONNECTIONS:

- The idea that corporate influence on universities prevents collaboration was a direct link to Guinier's book and the discussion that revolved around the Mayo Clinic. In the Aronowitz's book it was stated that, “private agreements between research scientists and corporations usually entail holding knowledge as property that might not be easily available to colleagues in the scientific community” (p. 48). This appears to be the exact opposite of what the Mayo Clinic does where it shares information in order to create an overall greater good.
- *Saving State U* touches on the phenomenon of the “tax revolt” and the result being the cutting of education funding. This connects directly to Aronowitz's discussion of academic planning, as this planning is ultimately a result of reduced funds.
- There were many connections present between Aronowitz's book and *Wannabe U* the main one being universities sacrificing traditional educational values for the ability to please the market and provide it what it needs (trained students).
- Aronowitz's points regarding knowledge factories generally coincide with the ideas of “The Ticket” model of college. In “The Ticket” a university's main purpose is to provide students a gateway to success. In Aronowitz's book this takes the form of obtaining employment.

THE GREAT MISTAKE

**A Review of Christopher Newfield's *The Great Mistake: How We Wrecked Public Universities and How We Can Fix Them*.
Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 2016
Summary by Matt Stockmal**

In Christopher Newfield's newest contribution to critical university studies, *The Great Mistake*, he tries to explain why our public colleges are seemingly providing less education for more money. Though this book looks at the answer through a negative feedback loop of different circumstances, his answer is this: "The great mistake is to have relinquished the power of the public sector as a society. The great mistake is to have given up on the full democratization of intelligence" (p. 308). Our public institutions are failing because we don't see them as public goods, and the financial result of moral indifference to education is a broken and defunded system.

Stage 1 : University Retreat from Public Goods

Newfield references the previous era of college education as a "mid century consensus...that primary, secondary and now tertiary education were public goods... most efficiently funded with public monies" (p. 37). He defines a public good is something "whose benefits continue to increase as it approaches universal access." (64). But this perception has disappeared from public dialogue. Newfield says universities only advertise their ability to return private benefits to the individual (which financial analysts have placed at \$31,174 as of 2007), but do not include a full-cost accounting of public benefits (which add up to \$31,180) (p. 71). Because of this lack of full-cost accounting, public perception of universities declined to an inefficient private business.

Stage 2: Subsidizing Outside Sponsors

A decline in public funds and a perception that the university should be focused on recruiting outside funding through extramural research and business partnerships deters the university from its educational core and causes the university to lose millions of dollars each year. In short, each grant received by the university includes direct costs which go to paying for faculty and critical supplies and indirect costs which are meant to help that project with basic supplies and support. However, the indirect costs almost never cover the fair cost of maintaining the labs, the university, and the staff. These costs have to be paid by the university's own funds. For example, University of California's gross income of \$3.5 billion resulted in \$750 million loss that needed to be funded by the university somehow (p. 89). ASU has to come up with \$150 million each year for research support (p. 96). Where do these "university funds" come from? Largely from "the undergraduate student, paying in the form of their state funds and tuition" (p. 101).

Stage 3: Large, Regular Tuition Hikes

The increase in unfunded research cuts and other factors led to large tuition hikes as "universities began to compare their tuition by the level set by private universities" (p. 42). To reach this private status, universities even increased their tuition when state funding increased. "Universities raised tuition... another 38 percent in the 1990s when real state funding increased slightly" (p. 42). So why are universities continuously jacking the tuition when they appear to not need so? The answer lies in quality competition. Newfield says "universities are already engaged in competition on multiple fronts...which can easily can increase costs through its many modes - imitation, duplication, overbuilding" (p. 143). In short, "Costs are driven by a rising standard of quality in a competitive environment" (p. 151). But politicians perceive this as an independence from need of state finance. California assembly Speaker John Perez simply put it: "you university officials raise tuition, we legislators cut your funding" (p.171)

Stage 4: Cuts to Public Funding

As alluded to in the previous stage, the rise in tuition and the perception of a lack of need for public support leads to massive declines in state funding. 36 states have cut their funding for higher education by more than 20 percent, and Arizona is the worst state (cutting 47% of per student funding over the past 8 years) (p. 168-169). Legislators were ok with these massive cuts because they learned over the course of three decades that regardless of what they did, tuition would increase. Educators also failed to correlate the rise in tuition with the rise in quality of education. Instead, it became associated with the rise of administrative bloat. In a study of University of California's growth in employment since 1991, management positions grew 308% in comparison with the standard 68% growth of other positions (p. 179). Another reason Newfield attributed to the decline in public funding was in administrative silencing of professors and students who felt the effect of the cuts. He cited an example in which UC professors were blocked from protest about budget cuts (pg. 183)



Stage 5: Increased Student Debt

This divestment in higher education loops into extremely high tuition, and this extremely high tuition, in the current system, promotes massive amounts of debt. Newfield attributes this to a massive shift from grants to loans. Grants, which do not have to be paid back, have been steadily declining since the 1990s. In 1992, the ratio of grants to loan dollars was 2 :1. Now, the ratio is 1:1 (pg. 199). This puts more burden on the students and their families to pay back. Colleges always emphasize the low tuition associated with attending due to financial aid, but “students are focused on the total cost of attendance” (pg. 211) like food, shelter, books, and fees which are not covered by the college. This gap between what the colleges are willing to provide in aid, and what it actually costs to go college needs to be paid by the student. For example, regardless of the student’s financial need, students who attend UC Berkley estimates students must pay \$9,200 out of pocket or take out loans. This takes time out of the student’s day to study and “lead to reduced human capital and reduced social benefits” (pg. 219).



Stage 6: Private Vendors Leverage Public Funds

Not easily tied into the cycle, Newfield discredits the use of MOOCs in college courses. He states that the MOOCs “put educational quality at risk, even as they were subsidizing private businesses” (pg. 45). He goes on to say MOOCs were “the most pretentious corporate intervention into higher education in recent history” (pg. 227). I honestly think he just included this stage to throw fire at them. He says that they do not provide a cheaper education, do not effectively improve graduation, and do not access more students in a meaningful way than before. He also disputes a claim in a Department of Education’s meta analysis of MOOCs in which they claimed “students in online learning conditions performed modestly better than those receiving face-to-face instruction” (pg. 243). He uses different parts of the analysis to conclude “The meta-analysis findings...do support redesigning instruction to incorporate additional learning opportunities online” (pg. 245). MOOCs help classroom preparation much like a new textbook, but do not replace the classroom as a whole. MOOCs also disproportionately fail minority students. A study from the Community College Research Center concluded “Black students, and students with lower levels of academic preparation experienced significantly stronger negative coefficients for online learning” (pg. 248).



Stage 7: Unequal Funding Cuts Attainment

These large cuts in public funding disproportionately hurt the success rate of minority students and students of lower socioeconomic status. He ponders why 45 percent of college students do not show “any significant improvement in learning” over the four years of college according to the College Learning Assessment. (pg. 260). He claimed “Adrift identified behaviors like fewer hours of studying for the same or higher overall grades and traced them to failures in moral engagement”, but they should have, “traced them to years of teaching and learning conditions that have been degraded by years of underinvestment” (pg 268). A study by Michael McPherson proves that school selectivity does not improve graduation rates, but that a school that spends more money per student (selective schools) are strongly correlated with improved college success rates across the board (pg. 277). Unfortunately, minority students primarily attend less selective schools, and therefore have lower attainment rates due to the lesser funding.



Stage 8: Post-Productivity Capitalism

Because of a university’s failure to market the social and public good of a college degree, students thought that their degree would increase their skill and that this increase in skill “would be recognized with rising wages” (pg. 46). However Newfield says that this marketing tag line is becoming less and less true as the economy shifts from a “low-skill, low wage” economy to a globalized “high-skill, low-wage” economy. He ties this back to neoliberal thinking that educational attainment of a society will advance it economically in a knowledge based economy. He claims that state universities simply do not teach creative thinking and project management needed to advance economically. Instead, its massive class sizes and lack of personal attention lead to a “large middle group [of students] who finish with limited learning and decent skills”, but who “will not enjoy job security, high wage, and solid retirements” (pg. 299). While the few elites who were given the chance to attend small liberal arts college “graduate with high levels of skill that will continue to evolve... for top tier pay” (pg. 298)

Knowledge vs. Status; Practice vs. Principle

Rhode, Deborah L. *In Pursuit of Knowledge: Scholars, Status, and Academic Culture*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006.
Reviewed by Victoria Hernandez

Overview:

In her book, *In Pursuit of Knowledge*, Rhode investigates issues with higher education from a professor's perspective. She concludes that both the students and faculty's experience is hindered because the **search for high status and prestige interferes with the quality education**. Throughout the book, Rhode proposes reforms that aim to transform what higher education is into what we think it should be.

Key Arguments and Findings:

Rhode, a law professor at Stanford Law School, analyzes higher education in research universities. She focuses on problems within academia and university governance and how those problems impact teaching and scholarship. Furthermore, evaluates the common goals of education and whether those goals are achieved.

1. Universities are rewarded for their better reputation, which does not always indicate greater educational value.

Universities use prestige to attract students, faculty, and funding. However, prestige is largely measured through rankings. Organizations like *U.S. News and World Report* rank universities based on entering students' test scores, alumni donations, graduation rates, and full-time faculty to student ratio, which experts believe do not necessarily lead to a better education (p. 7 and 67). Few universities track the measures that really matter, such as "small participatory classes, multiple written assignments, and frequent interaction with faculty" (p. 67 and 83).

2. Students are not learning what experts think they should be learning, such as critical thinking, basic reading, basic math, or service learning.

While most professors believe that improved critical thinking is the most important takeaway from college, most undergraduates do not improve their critical thinking. Instead, Educational Testing Service data states that "over three-quarters of students are 'not proficient' in critical thinking" (p. 66). The principles of higher education are not put into practice.

"A majority of individuals with college degrees were unable to perform tasks such as calculating the change from \$3 after buying a \$0.60 bowl of soup and a \$1.95 sandwich" (p. 66).

"It's not about pampering,' one dean of students attempted to explain with a straight face: 'It's about community building'" (p. 25).

3. Celebrity faculty and excelling students boost a university's status, but at a cost.

Well-known faculty and talented students are expensive to recruit (p. 24–25). Faculty are often persuaded with high salaries and reduced teaching responsibility, while students are lured with grand facilities and luxury meal plans. To cover the cost, universities offer fewer need based scholarships and more "merit" based scholarships (p. 26). That change has caused the U.S. to fall from first to thirteenth place in college participation among developed nations.

4. The relationship between faculty research and student learning is complex.

- Universities, and transitively faculty, are **rewarded by the better reputation academic research, or scholarship, provides** (p. 32). Number of publications is one of the measures *U.S. News* uses to rank universities. Consequently, research professors are encouraged to make research a priority over teaching. For doing so, faculty are rewarded with "job offers, promotions, grants, invitations, awards, compensation, and reputation" (p. 33).
- Despite the conflicting priorities, Rhode claims that **whether research helps or hinders teaching is debatable**. Some studies found that "the overall quality of teaching suffers at universities that most heavily emphasize research" (p. 51). However, many studies found some positive correlation between professor's research and teaching (p. 50), though no causation can be drawn from those findings. Most studies found no relationship.
- Yet, even if there is no relationship between faculty research and teaching, **some university faculty rarely teach at all**. To allow faculty to conduct more research, adjunct faculty and graduate students teach instead (p. 74–75).

5. University professors who do teach are not taught how to teach, nor are they evaluated in ways that promote better teaching.

Rhode states that "only about a third of surveyed graduate students felt that they were prepared by their program to teach a lecture course" (p. 75–76). While well-designed student evaluations correlate with objective learning measures, few are well-designed and more difficult courses are at a disadvantage (p. 69). Professors, though rarely those with tenure, are evaluated by peers, but many reviewers are biased and cannot determine how much a student has learned.

"The role of snap judgements based on nonsubstantive factors is also of concern. One study found that students' ratings of three, five-second silent videotapes of a teacher were essentially the same as ratings after a full semester of classes" (p. 69)

Questions and Quibbles:

Q. How does teacher tenure alleviate or exacerbate issues with higher education?

- A. Tenure has attracted faculty for its promise of job security and academic freedom (p. 159). The latter allows faculty to “challenge received views without fear of retaliation” (p. 131). However, Rhode argues that tenure has become less about academic freedom and more about status and self-esteem (p. 162). Employing tenured faculty is expensive (p. 163), and tenured faculty are harder to hold accountable (p. 158). Regardless of whether tenure is a good system or not, a potentially greater problem is the treatment of non-tenured faculty, who have greater course loads and lower salaries, leading to poorer teaching performance (p. 161). As the number of tenured faculty declines, the benefits of tenure have become exclusive to the elite few (p. 156).

Rhode on tenure: “This division of the profession into the haves and have nots devalues teaching and breeds resentment” (p. 161).

Q. Who’s to blame? The faculty, the universities, or the overall system?

A. For problems related to tenure, evaluation, and teaching style, faculty can sometimes be resistant to change (p. 73, 83, 163). Nevertheless, change is not always encouraged. As previously mentioned, universities push publications, which makes research a priority over teaching. Faculty are also rewarded for lowering course standards by inflating grades and lessening course rigor (p. 72). Many of the problems boil down to rankings and prestige – students do not attend universities for the quality of education, but instead for the quality of reputation (p. 73).

How do we fix the problems with...

Tenure?

- **Offer non-tenured faculty more options.** Rhode believes universities should offer teaching contracts that vary in job security, responsibilities, and salaries to attract a wider range of talent (p. 162). For example, some candidates may opt out of long-term job security for a higher salary (p. 163). Rhode feels that the risk of losing academic freedom is minimal based on findings from universities that have abolished tenure (p. 159).

Quality of Education?

- **Design better accountability controls.** Current measures of higher education quality, such as those reported by *U.S. News*, do not indicate how much students learn (p. 165). Rhode suggests considering multiple factors, both qualitative and quantitative, when measuring student growth and success (p. 167). Examples include “qualifications of instructors; the coherence and comprehensiveness of course materials; the adequacy of support services; and the test performance, engagement, and satisfaction of students” (p. 167).

The Cost of Status?

- **Increase transparency and inform the public.** Nothing is going to change the fact that we love rankings, but ranking quality can better reflect education quality (p. 169). Rhode calls for institutions and associations to publish more information about student performance information without rankings. Lastly, Rhode argues that people should be more informed about how much money universities need, and where that money goes once it’s in the university’s hands (p. 179).

What we *shouldn’t* do:

1. Avoid accountability oversight because the measures are flawed.

Faculty and institutions sometimes resist greater oversight for accountability, especially since many of the current measures of student performance are flawed. However, Rhode claims that “the answer to flawed or incomplete information is better information, not less” (p. 166). Academic institutions have a responsibility to the public to ensure that college is a good investment.

2. Assume everything is a black-and-white issue.

Throughout her book, Rhode often includes both sides of the argument before stating her opinion. This practice reveals that many of the seemingly one-sided issues are not actually one-sided. Research may impact a professor’s ability to teach, but the findings about the nature of those effects are inconclusive (p. 51). Universities may be running low on financial resources, but the U.S. devotes a greater proportion of its gross national product to education than any other nation (p. 154).

“If we cannot reduce competitive pressures, we can at least rethink what is worth competing for, and how we might change the terms of the competition” (p. 169).

Connections:

• The Ticket model encourages the pursuit of prestige.

Students who look at degrees as tickets for entry into careers tend to value quality of learning less (p. 10). Instead, they value competitive credentials to qualify them for jobs. Many of these credentials ride on the reputation of the university from where they were obtained. The more prestigious the university, the more valuable the ticket is at the end of four years.

• Rhode and Delbanco feel that college should develop “students’ capacity for responsible citizenship and commitment to community service...moral character, self-understanding, and a sense of meaning and purpose in life” (p. 80–81).

Unfortunately, few professors agree. According to survey results from the Higher Education Research Institute, fewer than a third of faculty viewed teaching citizenship and community service as important, and only a quarter valued developing the latter qualities.

• Tuchman’s “wannabe universities” suffer from the same status issues Rhode describes.

In “Wannabe U,” Tuchman discusses how universities desire for national recognition drives them into corporatization, which ultimately hurts students and faculty.

Wannabe U – Inside the Corporate University

Tuchman, Gaye. *wannabe u: inside the corporate university*. Chicago: U of Chicago Press, 2009. Print.

Reviewed by Matt Biondo

Overview:

Gaye Tuchman tracks the dispiriting consequences of trading in traditional educational values for loyalty to the market. This provocative expose of the modern university portrays a candid look at the **corporatization of higher education and its impact on students and faculty**. Tuchman provides us with a witty observation of the power dynamics and faculty politics that explain how higher education's misguided pursuit of success fails us all.

Central Findings and Claims of *Wannabe U*:

This book is about how being “business-like” affects public research universities. Tuchman’s book reads as academic study meets investigative journalism. The research for this book is based around her years of study of the “transformation” of Wannabe University – a real public university that she began conducting research on in 2003. The actual name of the public university has been changed, and personal details of all those involved has also been changed or left out to protect the identities of those interviewed. The central motive of the book is to understand what happens when a university adopts values that are oriented towards business rather than toward core academic values, a phenomena Tuchman describes as “market ethos”. Tuchman argues that a university’s obsession with topping the annual college rankings put out by publications like *U.S. News & World Report* only leads to the development of “corporate managerialism” and what she calls an *accountability regime*.

- **Universities “in transformation” are universities that are undergoing “institutional transformation”.** Such institutional transformation: “1 – Alters the culture of the institution by changing select underlying assumptions and institutional behaviors, processes and products; 2 – is deep and pervasive, affecting the whole institution; 3 – is intentional; and 4 – occurs over time” (p. 3). Thus, universities in transformation are universities that are purposefully altering the university’s “culture, assumptions, behaviors, processes, and products” (p. 3).
- **External rankings like *U.S. News & World Report* hold tremendous weight for universities and contribute to stratification amongst universities.** “Although those rankings have neither a solid theoretical or methodological basis, administrators care about those rankings, because potential students and their parents consult them to plan college applications. Improvement in those rankings influences the flow of applications” (p.2).
- **Universities that attempt to transform themselves are “wannabe universities”.** “...a wannabe university yearning for recognition and approvals 1 – wants to ‘translate a strong regional presence into national recognition and respect’; 2 – ‘push[es]... to spend hundreds of millions of dollars on new construction, while hiring well-known faculty members and recruiting top students’; 3 – develops ‘a slick advertising campaign... [that] portray[s] the institution... as being on the cusp of greatness’; 4 – speaks of aspirations ‘into the top [rankings] of the National Research Council [and] *U.S. News and World Report*’; and 5 – explains that “becoming a national research university [is] vital to... [its] mission,’ since its region needs more research universities that act as engings for state economies” (p. 15).
- **The development of an “audit society” leads to an accountability regime.** “Just as once could hold departments accountable for their activities, so too one could mandate that professors become responsible for their own actions – or for their lack of them. At research universities around the country, central administrators also introduced more *individual accountability*. They transformed what had once been a system of requesting a merit raise into a system of proving that one had fulfilled one’s *professional responsibilities*” (p. 182).
- **Administrations are increasingly turning to the “new managerialism” of business.** Administrations that adopt business ideals tend to bring in corporate administrators, “...who concentrate on individual advancement [and] may work to increase the worth of their stock options rather than introducing changes that fundamentally affect a corporation’s long-range profits or improve the lot of workers or communities...Corporate managers may ‘milk’ their job and move on to the next promotion before their mistakes have become evident” (p. 79).
- **Bureaucratization leads to important decisions being made under the radar from the top down.** Major changes made to the university are implemented gradually, usually under the guise that they aren’t important. “Sometimes the faculty don’t even notice [that there’s been a meaningful change]. Because professors who don’t notice (or don’t care) are ignoring educational initiatives or are engaging in ritual compliance, even Wannabe’s middle managers understand that the central administration has an opportunity to step in and to change the structure of undergraduate education” (p. 119).
- **Commodification of a university’s departments and services hurt students and faculty** “By stressing the commodification of research, the literature stresses the directions in which research universities are *trying* to move, for few research universities are earning a *significant* portion of their budget from patented faculty inventions” (p. 174). This business of knowledge creation leads to a corporatized strategy of doing research that pushes research in specific directions.

In other words: Wannabe Universities undergo a process of transformative change that shifts their values away from “traditional educational values” towards the “market ethos” of increased revenue streams, prestigious rankings and economic drivers. This prompts us to ask the question – should universities act more like businesses?

Questions and Quibbles:

- **Are there benefits to adopting market values to educational institutions?**
Can a university benefit from the efficient processes that regulate corporations? Does adding an administration layer to higher education allow the dynamics of the university to run more efficiently while allowing professors to focus more on their own research and teaching?
- **Is there a reasonable amount of auditing and accountability to impose on professors that benefits everyone?**
Are mandatory student feedback surveys good for professors and the education process? Having an open dialogue between students and professors is helpful for nurturing the spirit of education. However, the clout that feedback forms hold must be understood within reasons from the perspective of all those affected.

Some Practical Solutions:

- **Clearly identify the requirements of professors for research and teaching at universities.**
Professors should be allowed to conduct research and teach in tandem, but the split between both must be clearly defined. Professors should not be expected to be “generating revenue” so to speak while simultaneously teaching students. Rather, they should have clear distinctions of how much research is necessary.
- **Do not let college ratings from sources like *U.S. News and World Report* dictate which schools to apply to.**
As an incoming college student, do not apply solely to “top schools” based on brand name or rankings. Many schools offer very respectable educations for lower costs that get overlooked simply because their names do not appear in the top 25 of school rankings. College is what you make of it, and any reputable educational institution has something to offer a student who is willing to put in the effort to get something out of their education.
- **Offer incentives for professors and graduates to serve on administration boards to diversify the groups of people who run universities.**
Professors should be allowed to take breaks from their work to serve the institutions that they work at. This will help curb the problems created by “corporate administrators” simply focused on their own advancement. When a professor or graduate student is dedicated to the prolonged success of the educational values of their school, they will serve their institutions well as members of administration. Incentive programs for easier access to tenure should be offered to professors who serve as members of their school’s administration.
- **Professors need to organize together to take back power that they have willingly or unwillingly given up.**
University professors must unionize to protect their worker’s rights, which are increasingly being abused

by the institutions that they work at. Having a system of support dedicated to the rights of professors and graduate students in higher education is paramount to giving power back to the professors and graduates who do the “dirty work” of actually teaching and conducting research in higher education.

- **Understand the true costs of college to make an informed decision about where to go.**
Incoming students to universities must understand the true costs of the schools that they attend. If a student has to take out a tremendous amount of money in high interest loans, they are probably looking at the wrong schools to begin with. Tying in to the point about ignoring college rankings, understand that every institution has something of value to offer. Attending a school that may be a much better fit for a student could also have much lower costs.

Impractical Non-Solutions:

- **Do nothing and allow “business as usual” to take place.**
By simply going with the flow, we are allowing higher education costs to dramatically increase at an increasing rate. The “market ethos” adopted by more and more Wannabe Universities provides short-term gains for long-term losses. Stay as informed as possible about the state of higher education and do not simply follow the trends that are turning higher education into business.

Connections:

- **Wannabe Universities follow the Mall Model.**
When a university adopts business values, they are seeking to mimic businesses. It follows that students are the primary “consumers” of the “product” that universities are “selling”. The hierarchical nature of the administration allows the university to respond to the needs of the students – all with the goal of providing excellent “customer service” to the students. Internal performance metrics that drive business processes are synonymous with the auditing and accountability measures implemented by Wannabe Universities.
- **Arizona State University as a case study – is ASU a Wannabe University?**
The simple answer here is yes, absolutely. Arizona State University fulfills every criterion and then some regarding what a Wannabe University is. Think about the accolades and statistics that ASU prides itself on (#1 in innovation – what does that even mean?), the rising costs of tuition, the exorbitant salaries of our administration (Michael Crow’s salary is in the millions). Arizona State University was not always like this. However, it is important for students to be informed about how the “market ethos” values that ASU has adopted in recent years has affected the university and the educational quality as a whole.

Undercover Professor

Rebekah Nathan. *My Freshman Year: What a Professor Learned by Becoming a Student*. New York: Penguin Books, 2005.
Reviewed by Sean Kolder

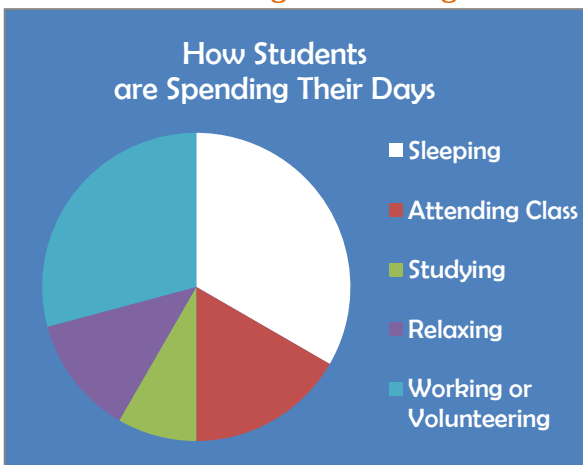


OVERVIEW:

Northern Arizona University (NAU), Anthropology Professor Cathy Small registered as a full time undergraduate student at NAU for the 2002-2003 academic year, where she attended fifteen credit hours a semester, while living in the freshman dorms. Under the pseudonym Rebekah Nathan, she wrote *My Freshman Year*, where she details her observations; that **students are spending more time working or volunteering, and less time in class or studying**, and notes that students have so many options to that they have lost a shared sense of community, and **inadvertently NAU has created a larger emphasis on individualism**.

CENTRAL FINDINGS:

 Nathan notes that NAU students are not spending as much time studying or in the classroom, and instead are working or volunteering their time in a professional setting. One of Nathan's surveys found that **65% of students believe that learning occurs outside the classroom**, with only 35% believing that learning occurs in the classroom (p. 101). At the same time another one of Nathan's surveys found that students are coming to NAU with many responsibilities, and she found that two-thirds of all students surveyed work while attending college (p.34). **A correlation exists between the number of students working in college, and where they believe true learning is occurring.**



 NAU has unintentionally fragmented the student body by offering a plethora of customized options for student life (p. 47). Everything from course loads to living arrangements can be tailored to individual tastes, wants, and needs. Nathan surmised that **despite the belief that college expands our social horizons and extends our experiences to include new and different types of people, students choose, whether intentionally and unintentionally, to interact mainly with others who are similar to themselves**. With the amount of options available to students it has become near impossible to build a community as **students are never in the same place at the same time, and has led to NAU students developing a narrow sense of the world they live in** (p. 52).

 NAU has created a large focuses on individualism, and lost a sense of shared community. Nathan notes that NAU periodically asks its faculty members, **“How can we give students a sense of community?” but at the same time offer them services that contradict this notion**. Nathan argues that recent trends in dormitory living are destroying NAU's community, where higher amenities are offered in lower densities. A student can now request a dorm room or apartment with no communal bathrooms, no shared lounge, no shared washing machines, or even a roommate/suitemate (p. 52). NAU courses are now offered on multiple campuses throughout the United States, students have the ability to access whole classes online from almost anywhere in the world, and traditional courses are now offered at multiple times, and days. **As these options expand, the likely hood of seeing the same people in a dormitory or class shirks considerably every year**. After the study Nathan visited the same dormitory she lived in and found that out of all eighty students living there for the 2002-2003 academic year, only two came back to live their during the 2003-2004 academic year (p. 121).

“It is hard to create a community when the sheer number of options in college life generates a system in which no one is in the same place at the same time.” p. 38

QUESTIONS AND QUIBBLES:

Is it the responsibility of a college to create a sense of community for their students?

- Nathan wrote that NAU constantly asks its faculty, “How can we give students a sense of community,” but when NAU implements plans to help build a student’s community they usually fail. Nathan discusses her experience attending an NAU planned Super Bowl Party for over 100 students, but only four students attended, including Nathan herself (p. 54). Surprisingly, Nathan notes that many students were having their own smaller Super Bowl Parties in their dorm rooms, with many of them having about ten people crowded in one dorm room (p. 54). Showing that students are building their own small communities on their own. If college students are able to create their own communities, does a college need to invest resources and be as involved in a student’s community building process?

Is it really bad for colleges to offer individualized services?

- The mall model we discuss in class states that students are paying a premium for their college education, and as a result students should have a say in the types of services they would like colleges to offer. This student as a consumer model has led to the creation of many options in housing and dormitory living, types of meal plans, extracurricular activities, college experiences, and course topics a student has access to. Shouldn’t a student paying for their education be entitled to options that best fit their individual needs or wants?

Do Nathan’s claims align with national college trends?

- All of Nathan’s findings are from interviews, surveys, and observations she made from a very small sample of NAU students. One could argue that her claims could only be local to NAU, Arizona, or the specific dorm she resided in. If similar interviews, surveys, and observations are made to a larger student population, at a different college or university; would Nathan’s claims support a real significant trend in what colleges and their populations are currently going through, or will her data differ significantly?

CONNECTIONS:

The Mall:

- Nathan notes multiple times throughout her book, that NAU students have a plethora of options available to them. This idea is reminiscent of the marketplace model of college developed by Arizona State University Professor Michael Ostling, which emphasizes that students are paying for the experience of going to college, so that they should be able to pay for the experience which best fits their needs and wants. This is seen in student dormitory options, class offerings, clubs on campus, among other items. While many colleges are embracing this model of education, Nathan critiques this model. Nathan advocates that the vast amount of options has decreased a student’s social horizons and a sense of community, because a student is most likely to be interacting with other who have similar needs, wants, and interests, and less likely to interact with people who are dissimilar to themselves.

The Cruise:

- In one of the surveys that Nathan conducted, she notes that students are more excited about the prospect of college life, such as living in the dorms, going to games, making friends, and prolonging real life, over the prospect of gaining an education at college (p. 102). This is similar to the cruise model of education also developed by Professor Ostling, where college is viewed by students as a departure from real life and its many responsibilities for short period of time.

We’re Losing our Minds, students have too many options:

- Richard P. Keeling and Richard H. Hersh’s book *We’re Losing our Minds*, describes students as having many options at college. Keeling and Hersh, claim that students have access to so much at their college that they can build the exact experience they want. This mirrors Nathan’s observations and findings where students have so many options in college, and have already started to generate the experience they want.

Higher Education? : How Colleges Are Wasting Our Money and Failing Our Kids - and What We Can Do About It

Hacker, Andrew, and Claudia Dreifus. *Higher education?: how colleges are wasting our money and failing our kids--and what we can do about it*. New York: St. Martin's Griffin, 2011.

Reviewed by Natalie Chapin

Overview

Andrew Hacker and Claudia Dreifus put forth a scathing review of the American higher education system. They do not believe that it is living up to the expectations for what it means to educate and the administrations of universities have skewed perspectives of their job descriptions. The cost of college is rising exponentially with no end in sight and students are not graduating with better educations to show for it. Overpaid and underworked tenured faculty and administrators, underpaid and overworked adjunct faculty and undergrads, priorities focused on ratings not education, and research-directed decisions are only some of the problems they reference in their book. Not all hope is lost and not all colleges are doomed. No single college encapsulates their dream for American higher education but they note many that rise above the rest.

Central Findings and Claims

- The authors believe that higher education has lost its way and what is being offered through American universities cannot “**reasonably be called education.**” (pg 3) There are so many facets to universities that should “**justify why they exist on campus at all**” (pg 239) based on their usefulness and measure in educating students.
- Universities have become sanctuaries for some professors once they reach the holy grail of teaching, tenure. Undergraduates join underpaid adjunct faculty in the bulk of teaching and some of the university’s research ventures while those with tenure teach very little and dedicate most of their time and intelligence to research. The authors question whether “**...tenure what is needed to ensure its estimable and necessary blessing, or whether there might be better and more effective ways-[or] at least some with fewer downsides.**” (pg 133-134) Tenure and the corrupting role it plays in academia has become a growing concern not only in the eyes of those who write books on American colleges but also for students and their parents.
 - Full professors and tenured faculty are found few and far between in most college classrooms as “**In most of our colleges and universities, it is the assistant professors, adjuncts, lecturers, and graduate assistants who do the bulk of the teaching and at least a share of the research.**” (pg 142) The prestige of publications, research grants and celebrity faculty are the gold stars’ university administrations truly value to bring more customers not to enhance classes..
- For the cost and prestige that universities like the Ivy Leagues and their top tier competitors plaster on posters, they do not always follow through. “**The American way of higher education puts a premium on prestige, making a fetish of brand names and using price as a guarantor of quality.**” (pg 126) The authors show however that “**The Golden Dozen**” (pg 64) are not always worth paying for the prestige when many government funded state universities do just as good a job if not better in some cases.
- Administrations at larger universities have become something like small businesses or governments in themselves prioritizing money and ranking over educating students. Members of many administrations are paid staggeringly large salaries and “**For a lot of presidents, it’s a badge of honor to announce they are the highest paid.**” (pg 43) The authors argue that the purpose of administrations is to construct the best learning environments for students filled with qualified teachers and the engaging programs but many prioritize lining their pockets.
- There is a plethora of courses offered at large universities and that is part of the big school appeal. Since professors with tenure can get by teaching only one or two classes a year at some universities and they have complete job security they have control of the course they want to teach and can make it as specialized as they like. Most of the time “**courses [are not] designed for...students. Rather, they make life easier for the professor**” (pg 83), another way in which meaningful education comes second.
- The authors choose to end on a positive note and applaud certain universities for their redeeming qualities. The final chapter, “Schools We Like”, lists 10 different schools which, from the authors’ perspectives, are doing an adequate job of educating the next generation and adhering to what they consider to be the direction higher education needs to go. There is no single university that stands out from the others as the leader in higher education, however these schools have more redeeming qualities which are listed with their names such as “**Copper Union-Greatest for Free**” (pg 224-225) “**Arizona State University-Big and Exciting**” (pg 226-228) “**University of Maryland, Baltimore County-Mending Teaching and Research**” (pg 229) and “**Massachusetts Institute of Technology-Dignity and Dollars to Part-timer**” (pg 230)

“I have tenure, so I can teach you or not teach you, you’re the ones who have to take the tests.” (pg 149)

“Did you know that MIT has a football team” (pg 155)

The Golden Dozen

Harvard
Yale
Princeton
Dartmouth
Brown
Columbia
Cornel
Penn
Stanford
Duke
Amherst
Williams

“Worthy colleges”:

Ole Miss, Raritan Valley, Northeastern University, Hofstra University, The Cooper Union, Berea College, Arizona State University, University of Maryland, Baltimore County, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Western Oregon University, Evergreen State College, The New College of Florida, St. Mary’s College of Maryland, Quest University Canada, The City University of New York

Questions and Quibbles

-:- What should be done with the tenure system if it is abolished? Professors who already carry the protection of tenure will not, in most cases, willingly give up their “**ironclad assurance of lifetime employment**” (pg 132) so what will be introduced in its place? Since the final goal of becoming a tenured faculty member is so important to many who choose a career in academia, they tend to be biased when those who are really teaching the classes are not getting the recognition they always deserve, the standard of teaching and learning drops in the classroom. The authors were not specific about a system they would like to replace tenure and what they did propose was complex and not easily understood so there should be another.

-:- The problem of athletics is one that the authors seem to have the least faith in being resolved because of the massive impact they play not only on college's bank accounts but also on the moral and sense of community in the students and creating a “**more diverse campus.**” (pg 161) With how pervasive athletics has become on college campuses and in American society, it is hard to see where lines will be drawn and where any compromises will be made. The authors also focus primarily on athletics from a participant point of view and not from any other which makes finding a solution difficult.

-:- A standard of what is expected for colleges to provide that includes so much more than just a quality education has become the norm and it is bankrupting students and their families. Paying for college has become the second largest expense in a person's life second only to the “**home mortgage**” (pg 2) which individuals can live in and use the rest of their lives. College graduates are entering the workforce with “**six figures' worth of debts**” (pg 2) and that number does not look like it will lower soon.

Solutions

The authors end the text with a “Coda” where they list their views on how to improve the American higher education system to create what they believe should be the ideal place to learn. They are generally segregated into the main areas the authors seem to believe are the root of problems that corrupt higher education: loss of purpose, money, and lack of instructor standards in tenure.

Loss of purpose: The authors see the American education system as having lost sight of its true purpose which is to educate students and prepare them for life, not just their careers. “**The purpose of higher education is education**” (pg 239) and that must be maintained in all classrooms, dorms and on all campuses. Professors should work to “**Engage all students**” (pg 240) and “**Make students use their minds**” (pg 241) which seems to be a lost art not only on campuses but in the workforce as well. The authors also note that there is no substitute for small class sizes and teachers who are passionate.

Money: Money is a problem that faces more than just college students but the kinds of numbers that have come to represent a college education are staggering when education, or what the authors deem real education, has if anything declined as prices went up. They “**Demand that the Golden Dozen deliver**” (pg 243) because their price tags show no representation of the high standards they advertise to uphold shown by average graduates. College students should also “**Stop relying on loans**” (pg 240) to pay their way through and they call on parents to help support their children to decrease the rising amounts of debt students graduate with. The authors call to action for the colleges is for “**Fewer sabbaticals, less research**” (pg 242) and less importance placed on “**Spin off medical schools and research centers**” (pg

244). The money that students pay in tuition should be going directly to benefit their minds and education, not to a professor's paid sabbatical or to a graduate research project they will never see and probably never hear of. Another call to administration is for “**Presidents [to serve] as public servants**” (pg 243) and make decisions for the good of the university and its students not just contributing to their immense salaries. Their true calling as a leader of a university is to guide the students, faculty and administration in the ways of education and expanding oneself and mind not their own wallets. Lastly the authors call to graduates is one that seems counterintuitive, to “**Spread donations around**” (pg 245) so all forms of education are benefited and not just the select few.

Standards: The standard of true education seems to have gone down and this cannot simply be blamed on disinterested or lazy students. Some of that blame must be focused on faculty and the authors attribute most of these problems to tenure. They believe that “**Tenure serves no useful purpose**” (pg 241) in modern education and only protects professors who have lost sight of what it means to teach and educate. To help remedy this and to take away some importance tenure in academia, the authors say we should “**End exploitation of adjuncts**” (pg 242) and demand that professors do what they are paid to do, teach. In addition, the authors believe there should be a remedy to unsubstantial pay for those who would now be considered untenured faculty making the hours and time proportional to pay.

Connections

-:- This book draws many connections to the thoughts Deresiwicz brings up in *Excellent Sheep*. Deresiwicz speaks at length about vocational training in higher education where individuals seem to be groomed for the positions they will fill after graduation, not allowing for the true merit of education to shine through. These authors agree in that this “**vocational training**” (pg 101) is detrimental to students being able to discover themselves through higher education and grow because, when entering college and deciding on a major, it is impossible for them to know “**what the world of adult careers is actually like.**” (pg 101)

-:- Similar to what Deborah Rhode says in her book, the cost of college is extravagantly overpriced. “**Colleges should be helping to build the next generation's future, not mortgaging it.**” (pg 131) The amenities and high salaries of those in administrations are not what students should be subsidizing when the reason they are attending an institution in the first place is to better their minds and gain knowledge.

Models of College

The ways in which the model of college proposed by the authors fits into the 9 models of college used in this course are:

The ticket- individuals pay large sums of money for their educations and are supposed to be learning valuable things about critical thinking or themselves, yet, like purchasing a ticket, all that seems to happen is the exchange of money for a piece of paper with fancy writing. Causing us to “**wonder if this high-priced interlude is worth the cost.**” (pg 129)

The mall- colleges now flash the amenities in an “**amenities arm race**” (pg 33) they have at any chance as proof they are the best option for students to attend when that facade does not represent the quality of learning students will receive. Like a mall, the students shop for what they think will allow them the most enjoyment or perpetration for the field they choose and colleges work to tailor themselves to this mold.

REVISING AMERICAN HIGHER EDUCATION FOR THE MIND

Richard P. Keeling and Richard H. Hersh. *We're Losing Our Minds: Rethinking American Higher Education*. New York PALGRAVE MACMILLAN. 2011.

Reviewed by Ben Hatch

OVERVIEW

In *We're Losing Our Minds* authors Richard Keeling and Richard Hersh attempt to outline a path forward for higher education after it “abandoned higher learning.” (p. 1). Keeling and Hersh tackle the problem in a practical manner, first defining it, then outlining what they see as the optimal solution transforming colleges to put priority on undergraduate higher learning.

Keeling and Hersh’s argument is split into two main arguments distributed across seven essay like sections, each a complete thought in and of itself. First is the problem, which is thoroughly explored in two essays then rehashed and explored in the context of the remaining essays which work through a solution to the problem.

THE PROBLEM

The situation Keeling and Hersh outline is simple, students are not learning while in college and no one seems to be willing, or able to do anything about it. As a business man notes in the book “It seems that no one expected much of them in university. It’s not just that they weren’t challenged. **No one looked to see if they were learning anything.** So they have a degree but what does that tell me?” (p. 2). This concern outlines the two main problems that Keeling and Hersh address:

What and how students are learning from higher education?

Currently, students are learning what they need to pass exams and very little else. The current system is described as “a conveyor belt in some manufacturing plant ... empty heads being progressively filled up with knowledge ...” (p. 44). This is a problem, as it does not properly consider students as the humans they are and ultimately misses out on any real learning, instead opting for recitation of facts. This came about by simply assuming that learning and teaching are one and the same and thus if teachers are teaching that means that students must be learning. This however, is mistaking a means for an end; as Keeling and Hersh put it “They are related but not identical; either one can occur without the other.” (p 18). Similarly the classes that students encounter are unbalanced and unrelated, there are very few core classes that everyone must take and as such core values such as critical thinking, writing, problem solving, etc. are left undeveloped if ever taught at all.

1. How are colleges and higher learning assessed?

Not only are students not learning anything while at college, but most signs of this failure do not come from the college themselves but from the people who interact with college graduates but finding them not exceptionally different from their high school counterparts. Colleges instead attempt to hide this using “... a sequence of claims about high retention and graduation rates, high levels of student satisfaction ...” (p. 26) to convince prospective parents and students that their college is functioning properly. While colleges avoid assessment by hiding behind metrics that make up a ranking, students are also never checked for success but rather are tested on fact retention and assumed to be learning. As Keeling and Hersh point out testing is not some unobtainable goal, it happens where it counts with military leaders and pilots and surgeons. We make sure they are properly tested before we let them perform, so why should students who will be put out into society and expected to act as responsible citizens be left untested. (p. 89)?

WHAT COLLEGES SHOULD BE DOING

Keeling and Hersh spend much of the rest of the book exploring the ways that the problem could be solved. They outline a need for education to develop the student rather than just increase the student’s knowledge and they outline a need to focus on student learning as the number one goal of higher education.

1. How and what students should learn from higher education?

Keeling and Hersh are very adamant that rather than just increasing the knowledge that a student has it should transform them (p. 52-56). This transformation should be achieved by recognizing that the student’s development as a person and learning from college need not be separated but rather should be combined. This is achieved by having a strict core curriculum that every student regardless of major goes through and that is decided by every department

together to assure that students are properly developing critical thinking, problem solving and other such skills. This core curriculum will take up the student's initial interaction with college before entering their major (p. 138-147). The goal of this type of college is to get students more directly involved with their learning; rather than just receiving the knowledge, they now should be cumulating various ideas and viewpoints and discussing them in and out of class culminating in the full transformation of the student. "The student who graduates will not be, and should not be, the same person who started college." (p. 6).

2. How do we assess that the above mentioned growth is happening?

Keeling and Hersh suggest that this once again must be decided by each individual college as to exactly how students are assessed, but it must be part of the learning experience and never should just be another test (p. 90-92). Because learning should be the only goal, the issue of evaluating colleges and evaluating students becomes the same problem, properly evaluating students also evaluates the college. To properly create assessment of students, a clear set of standards must be developed, probably at the same time as the core curriculum to make clear to the students what is expected of them. For example, if a goal of the class is writing ability then standards that the student are expected to live up to should be given, such as how good is the argument, or how effective is the structure and then some "know it when you see it" examples should be given. Then in the example of writing, assessment will be done by making the students write in the way that follows the example taught. Then students are not only showing that they have learned, but also are still learning in the process (p. 93-100). This combination of stronger standards, and a clear curriculum creates a clear college package to sell as well. Rather than taking the words of a representative you can see what is going to be taught and have a clear measurement from previous students of how well this is actually going.

The ideal college that Keeling and Hersh imagine involves students going through expecting to be changed in a very real way. They enter expecting to have their views shifted and teachers have designed the experience as a whole to make that happen.

QUESTIONS AND QUIBBLES

- **If we focus entirely on learning what happens to research?** Keeling and Hersh only briefly address this, but seem to imply that research should somehow be integrated into the learning of the students and that, even if this is not immediately solvable, the potential lack of minds able to do research needs to be addressed first and foremost (p. 159).
- **Do non-learning goals have any place in education?** It seems that anything outside of the strict goal of learning is completely removed from their ideal college. The line between extracurricular activities that enrich the student and ones that are extraneous is never defined.

increasing student learning the problem would be eventually solved. This focus must become the priority of all colleges such that on a fundamental level colleges become institutions of learning first not just at the teaching level (p. 156-161).

- **Do – start the conversation.** The only way this huge and drastic change will happen is if enough people start talking then eventually it becomes agreed that the current state of things is unacceptable (p. 164-165). Ultimately what needs to happen is a cultural change in universities and this is unlikely to happen on a small scale level and will only be brought about by a cultural shift in colleges everywhere (p. 175-176).

CONNECTIONS

- **The Monastery Model.**
The place of higher learning described in this book follows very closely to the monastery model with very strong emphasis on a guided enlightenment with teachers and faculty as the heads of the church.
- **Almost a moderate version of Delbanco**
This book shares many of the same concerns as brought up by Delbanco but stays purely practical rather than attempting a full reimagining. (I could not see Keeling and Hersh recommending loafing as Delbanco does).

DOS AND DON'TS – THE PATH FORWARD

- **Don't - make an incremental change or attempt a band aid fix.** One of the key dangers that is outlined is the tendency to want to just make college more valuable by cutting tuition or otherwise increasing efficiency (p. 109- 110). Similarly incremental changes are to slow the entire system needs an immediate overhaul. The title *We're Losing Our Minds* implies the danger is immediate.
- **Do - make immediate changes to decision making with learning as the central focus.** If the people who currently are making decisions based on increasing rankings or increasing enrollment instead swap to making decisions based off of

College (Un)Bound

Jeffrey J. Selingo. *College (Un)bound: The future of Higher Education and What it Means for Students*. Las Vegas, NV: Amazon Publishing, 2013. Print.

Reviewed by Melissa Bour

OVERVIEW:

Jeffrey J. Selingo, editor at large for the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, gathered information on a variety of aspects of higher education and evaluated their meanings in *College (Un)Bound*. The book is divided into three sections: How We Got Here, The Disruption, and The Future. Essentially, Selingo goes through an analysis of what has led to the current issues universities are facing and then offers solutions that he believes will eventually occur in the higher education system since it cannot continue down the current path.

CENTRAL FINDINGS:

- **As career fields become increasingly more specialized, so do bachelor's degrees.** Selingo says, "The bachelor degree...has slowly become the new high school diploma," (pg.7). To meet the demand of specialization in the career field, colleges have added more and more majors than there has ever been. In response to the increase of bachelor's degrees, students now see the master's degree as the next step to gain a competitive edge on their peers. However, employers continue to say that they find graduates lacking "soft skills" and prefer liberal arts degrees.

"Too few students are going to college, not enough are graduating, and the whole thing costs too much" (Pg. xix).

- **"Build it and they will come."** (pg. 33). Colleges are increasingly taking on debt to attract more students with the mentality that eventually enough students will come to pay off all the upgrades they have made to attain a prestigious reputation. This vicious cycle is sure to fail as college begins to evolve from traditional in-person courses to cheaper hybrid and online classes. An unintended consequence of the new attractions they have built is that it encourages students to spend less time on school work and more time enjoying what the school has to offer.
- **"Bubble U."** Colleges offer loans to students without any stake in the payback. "Two-thirds of bachelor's degree recipients take out loans to attend school" (pg. 38). On top of that, families are taking out multiple loans such as the Parent-Plus loan and private loans to attend colleges that they know are not realistically affordable. This "excessive borrowing" has led to more than doubling in the amount of money loaned out to pay for college since 2000 (pg. 41). The Bennet Hypothesis states that, 'increases in financial aid...enabled colleges and universities blithely to raise their tuitions' (Bennet pg. 41). Students should attend community colleges for the first two years or schools that they know are financially affordable.
- **"The online revolution."** From Khan Academy and TED talks to MOOCS, education has been revolutionized by online resources. Online academics allows a wider reach of education to students for a cheaper price than traditional education. Colleges spend large amounts of money on remedial courses for freshmen students because they come in with different levels of preparation; online classes offer a solution to this issue and ensure that all student will be on the same level once the courses are completed.

"Research from the Federal Reserve Bank of New York shows that Americans age fifty and over still owe \$139 billion in student loans" (pg.51).

QUESTIONS AND QUIBBLES:

- **Do selective colleges really make a difference if everyone is falling short of real learning?** Selingo says “students benefit from going to the most selective college they can” (pg. 132), but if the majority of graduates are lacking critical thinking skills regardless of the institution does it matter what college they attend?
- **Are majors outdated?** “In forty-year working life we may have ten jobs, and...half as many different careers” (pg. 144). Why are college students still picking specialized majors instead of broad categories of study if they tend to switch jobs every four years?
- **Which is it, college degree or apprenticeship?** Selingo contradicts himself by saying we need to encourage other career routes than higher education, such as “on the job learning” and apprenticeships, but then he talks about how college graduates have a “healthier and longer” life.
- **Praise For Arizona State University-** Selingo praises ASU for its innovative approach to education and diverse population, but is there evidence that these changes are making a positive difference for true learning? And his criticism for “resort campuses” seems to somehow skip this institution.
- **Believes in personalization but not “students...gaining the upper hand”-** The overall message can be confusing at times because one second he is advocating for extremely personalized education and the next he is stating part of the problem of the current system is that students control so much of the curriculum’s rigorosity

PRACTICAL SOLUTIONS:

- **Personalized education-** education personalized for each individual student “down to the next question”; use computer programs to guide students’ future

- **Hybrid classes-** cuts costs, good for working students, “Students learned just as much in the hybrid format...took about three quarters the time...” (pg. 178)
- **Unbundling the Degree-** colleges need to work together to make sure credits transfer, stop forcing freshmen to buy living packages
- **Fluid timelines-** year-round calendar, start college earlier, encourage gap year, use technology to pace courses
- **College moneywise-** “tuition prices and financial aid... based on potential earnings” (pg. 181), repay loans as a percentage of income (like taxes)

CONNECTIONS:

- **The Mall/The Commune-** Selingo’s ideal higher education model is a mix of the mall and the commune. He believes students should be able to pick and choose options for their education much like the mall. However, he thinks students need to have more engaged learning, like the commune model, where they can develop critical thinking.
- **Keeling & Hersh’s higher education model-** Selingo suggests a similar college curriculum to Keeling & Hersh; two years of critical thinking development and two years of major courses

“...policy encourages excessive borrowing and permits some students to cash out at low-cost institutions where they borrow well above the price of tuition” (pg.181).

In Defense of a Liberal Education

Zakaria, Fareed *In Defense of a Liberal Education*. New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 2015.

Reviewed by Dylan Clark

Overview:

In *In Defense of a Liberal Education*, Zakaria argues that a liberal education is essential in a democratic society to create the skills necessary for citizens to properly run their own society. He believes that [genuine intellectual curiosity](#) should guide students through their studies and that a liberal education surrounds students in a rigorous community where they learn from great teachers but also laterally from each other. He also believes that a liberal education is an American tradition stemming from our founding fathers' ideals. He references Thomas Jefferson's belief in a "natural aristocracy" based strictly on merit and refreshed constantly by poor and rich alike in order to prevent our country from falling to tyranny. The value of a liberal education to Zakaria is that it teaches free people [how to express themselves](#) and how to answer the deep questions of life.

Key Arguments:

1. [A liberal education teaches you how to write.](#)
By learning how to write you are also forced to think "Being forced to write clearly means, first, you have to think clearly"(pg73). By having to think and write clearly in order to present a logical argument you have to take unorganized random thoughts and make critical decisions in order to bring clarity and strength to your writing. This ability to articulate thoughts and information effectively and efficiently is an invaluable skill that can be applied to any career.
2. [A liberal education teaches you how to speak.](#)
Similar to writing verbal communication and presentation is also developed in a liberal education through the filtering out of underdeveloped ideas and the expression of logically ordered thoughts through dialogue. These skills are honed through intellectual conversations with peers and through oral presentations and grading on how well you present your ideas orally. The power of learning how to speak is that it helps you express yourself in conversation.
3. [A liberal education teaches you to how to learn.](#) By learning how to write and communicate you are learning the process of articulating your thoughts. This process gives students the skills and more importantly the methodology for how to approach problems. This is achieved by learning how to acquire knowledge on your own. Learning how to read an essay closely, searching for sources, finding data to prove or disprove a hypothesis, and becoming able to detect authors' prejudice are all skills needed to learn and be successful in a liberal education. Modes of thinking in a liberal education are not kept to silos instead they are strengthened by academic cross training of different subjects and ways of thinking. "Academic cross training develops a student's ability to collect and organize facts and opinions, to analyze them and weigh their value, and to articulate an argument" (pg 80)

"One of the stronger correlations with advancement through the management ranks was the ability of an individual to express clearly his or her thoughts in writing."
Norman Augustine CEO of Lockheed Martin (pg 73)

"In order to be successful in life, you often have to gain your peers' attention and convince them of your cause sometimes in a five minute elevator pitch."
(pg 76)

"74% of employers would recommend a good liberal education to students as the best way to prepare for today's global economy."
American Association of Colleges and Universities 2013(pg 87)

In Other Words:

Zakaria believes that currently there are problems in our higher education system due to loose structures, diminishing work, and lower standards. He references multiple studies but the problem is essentially that we are seeing the efforts of wealth, research, and grade inflation weaken the core of what is a liberal education. His solution is to return to a more of a liberal education in all fields, and to strength the core values of what a liberal education teaches you.

Questions and Quibbles?

Q: How would a liberal education's focus on searching for knowledge, debate, and collaboration between multiple fields of study perspectives become integrated within non-humanities courses such as accounting and chemistry?

This is the key question because we know it's possible to use debates to analyze written arguments through different perspectives many humanity courses such as history and English already do this. It would seem far more untraditional in a subject more accustomed to memorization and falling by a standardized set of rules such as the learning the procedures for the GAPP rules in Accounting. To suddenly become a course were scientific method of analysis, debate and critical learning become integral would be a dramatic change. However I believe that with the right effort and approach non-humanity courses can be taught through this method of inquiry. The unclear answer however is are professors and students willing to accept such new forms of liberal education in what are typically not seen as liberal arts subjects?

Q: Zakaria believes that an essential aspect of a liberal education is the social element (the experience of classroom lectures, late night discussions, and extracurricular activities); however are these realistic aspects of modern higher education and are they essential?

Zakaria believes that by taking common core classes essential deep discussions occur within and outside of the classroom. As students become engaged in thought provoking questions raised inside the classroom they become inspired and carry on the conversations and learn laterally through their interactions with other students. However as Zakaria himself admits he went to college during the turbulent 1970's where there was an entire society engaged in debate over capitalism and communism, minority rights, the Vietnam war etc. Currently most of the debates are in the context of practicality of study, Return on Investment, and insecurity about whether students will graduate with a job or not. So it begs the questions our late night discussions of deep intellectual thought an ideal of the past or do they still hold value in the modern increasingly unsecure job market?

Connections:

The Polis Model

The Polis model of education approached education as if it were a political debate where different perspectives weigh argument in search of truth to serve the public good. The model is most similar to the model of a liberal education presented by Zakaria. He believes that education should instill in students the value of learning from a truly multicultural perspective, "in studying other societies, students learn much more about their own. It is only by having some point of comparison that one can understand the distinctive qualities of Western or Chinese or Indian culture." (pg 70) In the same spirit of academic cross training a liberal education's purpose is to expose students to different fields of study and perspectives so that they can learn and express themselves effectively in our newly increasingly globalized multicultural world.

Education for a critical consciousness by Paulo Freire

There are many correlations between a liberal education and an education for critical consciousness. Firstly both fundamental believe in the idea that education is liberty. And this liberty of education is taught through an empathetic flow of dialogue between teacher and students where there is always the understanding that the student is capable of learning and expressing themselves. The massification of education and the dehumanization of exaggerated specialization is rejected and instead an education of intellectual inquiry is supported. In this model students are educated to wonder, think for themselves, and come up with their own solutions instead of merely doing what they are told.

Excellent Sheep

A Review of:

Deresiewicz, William. *Excellent Sheep: The Miseducation of the American Elite and the Way to a Meaningful Life*. New York: Free, 2015. Print.

Executive Summary by: Sean Kolder, Dylan Clark, Matt Stockmal

Overview:

In William Deresiewicz's most recent work of critical education, *Excellent Sheep* explores how the current higher ed standards, curriculum, and culture promote mindless regurgitation of information, actions, extracurriculars, and even future desires. Those who thrive in the current system have "a passion only for success" (11) instead of finding meaning and satisfaction in life. Students are taught "to value yourself in terms of the measures of success that marks your progress into and through the elite: the grades, the scores, the trophies" (15). Deresiewicz attributes this lack of direction and purpose to combination of meritocratic and noble ideals in the development of prestigious university admissions standards. These standards dictate entire childhoods through to admission into the university causing many elite students to become 'glorified hoop jumpers'. He attributes this behavior to parental concern about not getting into selective schools and the pressure for their children to outperform their peers as well as university admission standards that reward mindless discipleship. In the following three parts, Deresiewicz argues for the value of a humanities based liberal arts education in an environment that promotes finding a purpose and answering, individually, not only what you want in life, but why you want it.

Key Arguments:



Elite students are becoming robots:

Deresiewicz became increasingly concerned with the lack of individuality in his students. In his classes "very few saw college as part of a larger project of intellectual discovery and development" (13). He also noticed a pattern that a majority of the students had a "narrow conception of what constitutes a valid life: affluence credentials, and prestige" (20). This need to be stereotypically successful in the eyes of peers and family members led them to a prestigious institution like Yale where to be admitted you "by definition, never experienced anything but success." (22). These students are emotionally fragile, "unwilling to submit to doing something they can't feel passionate about" (23), and yet lacking any passion or even an idea of how to find one. This leads almost all of them (over a third of Yale's graduating class each year) to go into finance or other prestigious occupations without consideration of any other option.



Students spend their entire childhoods in a rat race for admissions

The American elite university admissions is a combination of two standards. One is the 'old boys' club status in which students must have "artistic ability", be a "sportsmen", and be personable enough to pass through interviews and letters of recommendations (32). This is in combination with a meritocratic system of standardized testing meant to debase the latter standards. Now students must not only be 'old boys', but also have the "SAT, AP, GPA, and National Merit" of the "modern technocrat" (33)

Parents, stressed about admission into these competitive institutions, adversely affects their children emotionally

Deresiewicz speaks from personal experience, interviews with other Yale graduates, and Amy Chua's *Battle Hymn of the Tiger Mother* to discuss how development of passion by students is rejected by tiger parents and replaced with a form of conditional love. Love and rewards are only given for desired results achieved in the measurable forms of awards, grades, and tests. Quoting David Foster Wallace, Deresiewicz describes the elite family as "a little bit like a for-profit company...you were only as good as your last sales quarter" (45). This conditional love structure defines "their sense of who they are.... on the tokens of approval [parent's and authority] distribute" (56). The student's entire life is a game of rewards and punishments in which the student jumps through the hoop their authority figure most desires..

College education should help build your soul and your own identity

A person's identity according to Deresiewicz is malleable and influenced by those around you where you grow up, and what messages are stressed to you in youth. The soul of the identity is made up of a series of ideas. He believes it is the role of higher education to challenge those ideas so that one may reject or consciously choose to live by them. Ideas should be "instruments of salvation, driven by a need to work things through for yourself. so that that you won't be damned to go through life at second hand. Thinking other people's thoughts and dreaming other people's dreams" (86).

The role of the teacher is to guide them on how to act and who to become

In books like *Academically Adrift*, it is shown that students have formed non-aggression pacts with their teachers in which the students don't care about their classes, and in turn, the teachers will not challenge them in grade or substance. But Deresiewicz believes that students "really want their teachers to challenge them and...for them to care about them...they want the real thing" (177). It is the job of the teacher "to give them what their parents won't or can't: the permission to go their own way and the reassurance that their path is valid" (178). Teachers must give the student the courage to follow their own passions and must become emotionally invested in them as a consequence.

Connections

The Museum and "The Human Event":

Education in the museum models is seen as an "experience that you have to give yourself over to" (69) where the student is not an all powerful consumer, as in the mall, instead they are participating in an experiment of self discovery that is guided by higher education. There is also the idea that the students does not simply want the easy A, instead they want their teachers to challenge them and to let them know that they care. As is the case with the Human Event at Barrett many freshmen students initially resist and instead want to explore their majors. However Human Event is performed with the understanding that it is important for students to be exposed to a broader horizon of information and theories about economics, society, and life. Even if the students may not initially want this exposure Barrett and Deresiewicz understands that fostering growth of knowledge in a challenging curriculum is essential to higher education. Additionally, William Deresiewicz and Paulo Freire share the views that college is a place where students grow their own identity and soul. In *Education for Critical Consciousness*, Freire argues that college becomes a liberating experience to students, where they develop critical consciousness allowing them to look objectively at their own lives and influence their lives based off of this truth.

Occupy Your Mind

Paulo Freire. *Education for Critical Consciousness*. New York: Seabury Press, 1973.
Reviewed by Dlyan Clark, Sean Kolder, and Matthew Stockmal



Overview:

In *Education for Critical Consciousness*, Paulo Freire elaborates on education of the oppressed and more specifically on the idea of critical consciousness taught to those in poverty or in lower classes. **Education is a means of liberating the individual from the prescribed chains of action from society.** To be educated with a critical consciousness, you must not only be able to adapt to changing times and circumstances, but **“the critical capacity to make choices and transform that reality”** (4). Through Freire’s educational system, workers become subjects in a democratic society and have a say in how they influence reality and how reality influences them.

Key Arguments:

Education is liberty if the student is a Subject instead of an Object:

Freire makes a firm distinction between two types of education. One form tries to release the student “imprisoned with a permanent “today”...[they are] temporalized” (1). **When the student learns from the past, predicts and changes the future, and understands himself as a temporal being, he becomes the Subject of his own life.** If a student can “perceive the epochal themes and above all, how they act upon reality within these themes....will largely determine their humanization [Subjects]” (5). This second form of education treats the teacher as a great holder of universal knowledge and the student as a *tabula rasa* to be filled with this truth. Because all of his knowledge and truth “come from anonymous authorities”, the student “adopts a self which is not his” (6). **When the student obeys a truth outside of his reality which he has not reflected on, he becomes an object of the teacher’s knowledge.**

Mastery of technical processes leads to massification and dehumanization:

Freire believes that there are two great influencers in the massification and dehumanization of citizens: mass media, and mass production. **Mass media has**

proliferated the minds of citizens so much that most citizens have” only the illusion of choice...to the point where he believes nothing he has not heard on the radio, seen on television, or read in the newspapers.” This separation of the individual’s reality and what is perceived as the truth totally eliminates the ability for the individual to be critical. Freire also believes that mass production “reduc[es] man’s critical capacity through exaggerated specialization” (31). **Because men are separated from the purpose and outcome of their actions, it makes it almost impossible to reflect on the consequences and change their future reality accordingly.**

Teachers must always perform true dialogue through education as opposed to Anti-dialogue:

Freire believes that education should work with local communities and individuals in order to empower themselves to create solution for their own communities. For he says “the inauthenticity of superimposed solution doom them to failure” (pg25) implying that **the individual themselves are capable of solving social and economic problems.** The key belief is that every person has the ability to learn and to interact with nature and society and

make changes to that world. This is only accomplished when **education reinforces these beliefs of equality and empowerment through dialogue**. This dialogue between teachers and students is done with faith and an equal flow of back and forth communication carried with love and empathy. Because local communities and individuals through education are the true sources of solutions to the economic and social issues affecting them.

The ideal student develops a ‘critically transitive consciousness’:

As hinted at by the title of the book, Freire believes that all who are oppressed should be educated with a critical, individual consciousness. Those who lack this ability “remain at the level of myth and half-truths and attributes absolute value to the purely relative” (9). And those who believes these myths lack the ability to connect causality to their reality, hence, much of their worldview comes from ‘magic’ which has been told to them by outside authorities. They have no idea how to look at their experiences reflectively and to develop truth from them. **The critical thinker “is characterized by depth in the interpretation of problems...by the testing of one’s ‘findings’ and by openness to revision.”** These students also “practice dialogue rather than polemics” (15). Critical consciousness allows one to look objectively at their own lives and truth and then influence their lives based off of this truth.

Questions and Quibbles:

Is the educational models presented by Freire scalable?

Freire discusses a model of learning language that stresses the importance of incorporating local cultures and vocabulary into his education. These are effectively helping to associate common sayings and activities with their weighted vocabulary for critical learning. These methods are effective however they require interviews with local communities and an understanding of local cultures that will all be taught by empathic and loving teachers. These are high expectations is it realistic for large numbers of teacher to put in this effort or is it idealistic?

A reliance on “High Sounding Phrases” in this book, limits its access to the common man.

Freire says that poor education revolves around “dependence on high-sounding phrases” and “a tendency towards abstractness” which “increases our naivete” (33). However, this book almost seems to place itself above the common reader with its extremely abstract and unnecessarily complicated phrases. For example, to describe a flashcard with a picture and the word to describe that picture, he said: “the codified situation is projected, together with the first generative word, which graphically represents the oral expression of the object perceived” (48). This may be due to the translation to English, but it could be viewed as almost pretentiously abstract. If we were to teach education the way Freire describes, it should be grounded in concrete examples and explained to the common man.

Connections:

Paulo Freire, and bell hooks:

Freire and hooks share views on colleges need to foster “true dialogue.” In *Teaching to Transgress*, bell hooks argues that college is a place for conflict and free thought, and that educational institutions should create a space for this dialogue to exist. Without this dialogue students will lose grasp of the different issues that affect them in their daily lives, and may become ignorant to do anything to change their circumstances.

Paulo Freire and Fareed Zakaria:

Freire and Zakaria, share the fundamental idea that students are always capable of learning and expressing themselves critically both orally and through written communication. Both authors stress “an education of I wonder instead of merely I do”(33). The focus on education of “I wonder” opens people’s possibilities, leading to new life prospects.

Teaching to Transgress: Education as the Practice of Freedom

hooks, bell. *Teaching to Transgress: Education as the Practice of Freedom*. New York: Routledge, 1994. Print.

Reviewed by Matt Biondo, Natalie Chapin, Benjamin Hatch, Victoria Hernandez

Overview: In *Teaching to Transgress: Education as the Practice of Freedom*, hooks uses an untraditional format to make bold claims about education reform. Through a series of individual essays, dialogues, and stories, hooks address the need to break down teacher dominance and “safe spaces” in the classroom. She feels that educators must address complex, volatile issues such as class, race, and feminism in the classroom if all students are to truly have their voices heard.

Main Points:

- **Education is a political practice of freedom**
 - Creating an educational setting that encourages participation from students and professors encourages freedom. When students feel empowered to take risks, be vulnerable, and share their ideas in the classroom, they will also feel empowered to do so in their individual lives.
 - “There is such a fear of letting go in the classroom, of taking risks. When professors let go it is not only the student voice that must speak freely but also the professor’s voice. Teachers need to practice freedom, to speak, just as much as students do” (hooks, pg 152)
- **Education is a means to self-actualization and realizing our destiny**
 - The normal education system of today encourages book smarts without drawing real connections to people’s life experiences. Education is about encouraging critical thinking as a means of self-actualization.
 - “These students are often fearful, as I was, that there are no spaces in the academy where the will to be self-actualized can be affirmed” (hooks, pg 18)
 - “[Students] do not want an education that is healing to the uninformed, unknowing spirit. They do want knowledge that is meaningful. They rightfully expect that my colleagues and I will not offer them information without addressing the connection between what they are learning and their overall life experiences” (hooks, pg 19)
- **Democratic participation in the classroom through dialogue**
 - Professors must be willing to allow students to speak in a way that invites criticism but not dismissal. This is essentially what a “safe space” is - not a place that shields students from challenging ideas but a place that allows people to freely share and engage in ideas that could be difficult.
 - “Making the classroom a democratic setting where everyone feels a responsibility to contribute is a central goal of the transformative pedagogy” (hooks, pg 39)
- **Understanding power dynamics present in the classroom**
 - Classrooms are a part of society, and in society there are people who have more power than others. The dynamics of gender, race, sexual orientation, class, etc. all play into the distribution of power in society. In the context of the classroom, unequal power dynamics are an impediment to creating a democratic and liberating educational experience.
 - “As the classroom becomes more diverse, teachers are faced with the way the politics of domination are often reproduced in the educational setting. For example, white male students continue to be the most vocal in our classes. Students of color and some white women express fear that they will be judged as intellectually inadequate by these peers” (hooks, pg 39)

Recommendations:

- Professors should be completely committed to engaging in critical pedagogy. This requires tremendous work from professors, but it also gives them tremendous power in playing an active role in shaping positive educational experiences.
- Create safe spaces where students and professors can question and challenge each other’s ideas in a manner that encourages growth and participation. Remember, a “safe space” is meant to encourage people to share ideas that are sometimes difficult, so respect and awareness are key to fostering the right kind of educational environment.
- Understand the political implications of education, especially for students who are from lower socioeconomic classes. Power dynamics are present in every aspect of society, including the classroom. However, education is a means to break down traditional power structures and empower people to grow and change.

Questions and Quibbles:

- Can hooks' critical pedagogy be applied to educational topics other than gender/racial/political studies?
 - While being self-actualized and feeling free is nice, are there instances in a classroom that do not require students to be? How can critical pedagogy be incorporated into topics like accounting or chemical engineering?
 - "Teaching in a traditional discipline from the perspective of critical pedagogy means that I often encounter students who make complaints like, 'I thought this was supposed to be an English class, why are we talking so much about feminism?' (Or, the might add, race or class.) In the transformed classroom, there is often a much greater need to explain philosophy, strategy, intent than in the 'norm' setting. I have found through the years that many of my students who bitch endlessly while they are taking my classes contact me at a later date to talk about how much that experience meant to them, how much they learned" (hooks, pg 42)
- Is encouraging students to speak in their native languages and translating their work inefficient in a multicultural classroom setting?
 - Is there ever a time when it is acceptable to have unequal power dynamics (for example, teaching a class in only English even if students are from various parts of the world)?
 - "Multiculturalism compels educators to recognize the narrow boundaries that have shaped the way knowledge is shared in the classroom. It forces us all to recognize our complicity in accepting and perpetuating biases of any kind... When we, as educators, allow our pedagogy to be radically changed by our recognition of a multicultural world, we can give students the education they desire and deserve" (hooks, pg 44)

Connections:

- Paulo Freire
 - bell hooks builds upon Paulo Freire's concepts by adding her own experience as a black woman from a lower socio-economic class. This creates a feminist and racially aware version of the concepts that Freire explores in his work.
 - She uses Freire as an example of how one would go about engaging this critical pedagogy when she describes her first encounter with him at a workshop where hooks wished to ask questions contrary to popular opinion.
 - Freire's work is a direct influence on hooks who spends a large amount of time discussing his ideas on critical pedagogy.
 - "Deeply committed to feminist pedagogy, I find that, much like weaving a tapestry, I have taken threads of Paulo's work and woven it into that version of feminist pedagogy I believe my work as a writer and teacher embodies" (hooks, pg 52)
 - "Years before I met Paulo Freire, I had learned so much from his work, learned new ways of thinking about social reality that were liberatory" (hooks, pg 45)
 - "Paulo intervened to say that these questions were crucial and he addressed them. Truthfully, I loved him at this moment for exemplifying by his actions the principles of his work." (hooks, pg 55)
- Ticket Model
 - The ticket model is in one way the ultimate goal of what hooks desires from colleges. But rather than simple economic empowerment it should be raise minorities to better levels of thought.
 - "But students in public institutions, mostly from working-class backgrounds, come to college assuming that professors see them as having nothing of value to say, no valuable contribution to make to a dialectical exchange of ideas." (hooks, pg 149)
- Polis Model
 - The entire concept of engaged pedagogy is very much reminiscent of the polis model where everyone is there to openly engage. This could also be construed as the commune model but rather than being communal the engagement that hooks describes is much closer to the adversarial polis where people can be safe to be hurt.
 - "...radical pedagogy must insist that everyone's presence is acknowledged" (hooks, pg 8)
 - "This gives them both the opportunity to know that difficult experiences may be common and practice at integrating theory and practice: ways of knowing with habits of being. ... Through this process we build community." (hooks, pg 43)

The Heart of Higher Education: A Call to Renewal

Palmer, Parker J., Arthur Zajonc, Megan Scribner, and Mark Nepo. *The Heart of Higher Education: A Call to Renewal: Transforming the Academy through Collegial Conversations*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2010, Print.

Reviewed by Melissa Bour, Tyler Thompson, and Graham Sparks

Overview:

The two authors are an unlikely pair; Arthur Zajonc is a physics professor at Amherst College and Parker Palmer is a sociologist of the Quaker faith. However, both authors share a passion for Integrative Learning and restoring education to its original goal-to help students and society be the best versions of themselves.

Central Findings:

- **Education does not benefit from the illusion of objectivity-** The world is a “communal reality” and humans are communal beings, therefore, true learning and education is achieved when students acknowledge subjectivity and “... the social relationships and institutional arrangements that constitute our...worlds” (pg. 27). The impression of objectivity in “hard sciences” is held in doubt by Zajonc, who believes that the emphasis on objectivity holds students back from recognizing the interconnectedness of them and the observed world (pg. 67)
- **Spirituality is wanted and needed in higher education-** A study shows that between 69% and 48% of college students want college to grow their self-understanding, values, and spirituality (pg. 117). An individual is not truly educated unless their whole being is being explored in relation to education and society around them. However, the important place of “contemplative spirituality” in higher education is undermined by the common view that spirituality and religion are the same thing, and that science is opposed to religion (pg. 118).
- **Integrative education** - In the beginning of this book the authors recognize the need for a more integrative education. The authors believe that higher education needs to engage the “whole” person and draw from interaction with one’s community, emotions, and conflict. The goal of this being to, “help students pursue learning in more intentional, connected ways” (pg. 8).

Questions and Quibbles:

- Where is the line between spirituality and religion drawn and what is acceptable within a place of higher learning? Throughout this book the idea of implementing a method of teaching that is more spiritual and engages the “whole person” is brought up. While the intent of this idea seems positive, it appears at times very religious. Bringing religion into a classroom is a highly sensitive issue and it must be clear as to what the difference between spirituality and religion is as to not appear to encroach on students’ beliefs.
- Is it possible to enlighten students on issues such as life’s purpose and direction in a classroom? In some settings such as a sociology, psychology, or a theory course this seems possible, but how is one to implement this into an everyday science classroom or a mathematics course. This book seems to portray that this institutional change is possible but actual implementation of these more spiritual issues into areas dominated by the “hard sciences” may be more difficult than the authors want us to believe.

Recommendations:

- Practice “**contemplative inquiry**”, a form of collaborative learning, as a complement to “analytical methods now practiced in many fields” (p. 94-96).
- Practice open and honest exchange in the classroom, and welcome the “whole student” into the classroom with open-mindedness and recognition of the spirituality and unique experience of the individual.

Connections:

- Palmer and Zajonc also reference the **education of the “whole person” and democratic merit**; their conception of “integrative learning” shares many aspects with the “collaborative learning” espoused by Guinier and others. “Integrative education honors communal as well as individual values” (p.152).
- The authors’ idea of an ideal college overlaps significantly with the **Revival**, where teachers should “animate and give purpose to the lives of students” (p. 152), the **Commune** (see quote above), and the **Polis**, as exemplified by the emphasis on “participation” in Zajonc’s model of “contemplative inquiry” on page 95.

Appendix: Nine Models of College

Michael Ostling

The critical literature on higher education is vast, diverse and unrelenting. Nearly everyone agrees that American higher education needs fixing — though there is far from any agreement as to how to fix it. To put these critiques and solutions into a framework, it helps to consider possible **models of college**: metaphors through which to think the question “what is college for?” As Robert Birnbaum argues, without such models to provide meaning and purpose to the academic endeavor, the university falls prey to technocratic evaluations centering around cost-effectiveness or graduation rates (Birnbaum 2001: 226). Keeping costs down and graduation rates up is important, but graduating cheaply and quickly without getting an education is probably not what students really want out of college. So what *is* an education? What is college for?

In all the models here described, “college” means the four-year undergraduate experience consisting of classes and other learning activities, plus various social, athletic, and civil traditions and practices (fraternity and sorority life, student government, inter-collegiate and intra-collegiate sport, spring break, protests and activism, cheerleading and band, extra-curricular lectures and poetry readings and films, and so on). Excluded from the definition of “college” are the research activities of faculty, institutional staff, and graduate students — except insofar as such research intersects with undergraduate life.

Model 1. The Filter

According to this model, students arrive at college with innate abilities and predispositions. School acts to detect these abilities through filtering mechanisms such as assignments and exams. College thereby sorts the sheep from the goats, the smart from the dumb, the capable from the incompetent. Students who pass muster are rewarded with a credential — a diploma — which entitles them to high-paying and prestigious careers. **The point is to pass, not to learn**: at all costs, one must get through the filter.

Model 2: The Ticket

In many ways, this model is like the **Filter**. It shares an instrumentalist, credentialist perspective with a focus

on college as a gateway to VIP status: a good job with good pay. As in the Filter model, **education is subordinated to the material or social rewards of education**: accordingly, if a student can reap these rewards without learning, that is fine. Students following this model will be motivated to choose easy classes and in general to “acquire the greatest exchange value [a degree] for the smallest investment of time and energy” (Arum & Roksa 2011: 16).

Model 3: The Mall

In the **Mall**, students conceive of themselves as customers, and faculty are service providers (Brint 2009). Customers pay for services (classes, gym-membership, career placement, entertainment, spectator sport, pretty buildings), and expect satisfaction: “the customer is always right.” Students shape the college experience through consumer choice as measured through course selection or RateMyProfessors reviews. But the student-customers’ power is only the power of the market: they don’t actively participate in the government of the college, as they would in the Commune or the Polis models below.

Model 4: The Cruise

This model is like the **Mall**, with some differences. In the **Cruise** college is seen as a departure from “real life,” a voyage “at sea” away from the onshore realities of employment or family to which students intend eventually to return. Unlike the Mall, **the Cruise is a package deal** — therefore considerable authority flows back to teachers and other college staff, who are expected to have formulated a series of structured experiences for student-customers to enjoy. The “outcomes” of college, like the outcomes of a cruise, are good memories — parties and sports and some embarrassing Facebook posts rather than knowledge or self-formation.

Model 5: The Monastery

This model, like the **Cruise**, emphasizes college as refuge or break from “the real world.” But in the Monastery this refuge is a means toward self-discipline, self-exploration, and self-realization.

Entertainment is not the point. One gives up or curtails “real world” distractions—employment, romance, partying, social media—so as to have more time and energy to focus on disciplines of critical thinking, careful reading, and problem solving (Cowan 2011). Teachers (like abbots or spiritual advisors in real monasteries) demand and are accorded respect, and student choice is given very low priority.

Model 6: The Museum

This model combines features of the Mall and the **Monastery**. Like the **Mall**, the **Museum** provides a paid-for experience. Like the **Monastery**, what one pays for is **the expertise of the authorities: their trained ability to know, better than you do yourself, what is good for you**. A Museum experience is *curated*: it is expertly constructed to provide one with experiences one didn’t know one wanted (or needed)—including experiences one might find difficult or disturbing. This might be a class you didn’t want to take and didn’t enjoy while taking it, but which turns out to be transformative or liberatory—The Human Event, for example.

Model 7: The Revival

The **Museum** is a curated experience, a place where one looks, listens, and learns. In the Revival, one expects not just to learn but to be inspired: as saying of W.B. Yeats says, “**Education is not the filling of a pail, but the lighting of a fire**.” College is a place that changes your life less through the painstaking, slow-and-steady work characteristic of the Monastery than through brief and powerful moments: a professor’s empowering “last lecture,” a Take Back the Night march, a radicalizing class about racial oppression or climate change. Whereas the **Ticket** produces employees, the **Revival** produces “change-makers”—arguably at the expense of some depth of understanding.

Model 8: The Commune

In the Commune, students understand themselves not as consumers or apprentices but as co-creators of the college experience: they look back to the original medieval colleges—co-leagues, places where one practiced collegiality—as models for egalitarian, cooperative “lateral learning” (Delbanco 2012: 56). There are still teachers, but their task is to help

students find (and be responsible for) their own authority. There are still students, but they focus less on self-improvement, self-education, than on learning together. **Process is as important as goal: content less important than the path walked together**. The Human Event seminar discussion, at its best, arguably exemplifies this model (but see below).

Model 9: The Polis

Like the Commune, the **Polis** (Greek for “city,” hence our word “politics”) focusses on egalitarian, interactive learning. As in the original ancient Socratic seminars, this egalitarianism is adversarial: **everyone tries their best to disprove everyone else on the assumption that truth will emerge from conflict**. So where the Commune emphasizes collaboration (sometimes *too* collegial, *too* sensitive, *too* polite), the **Polis** is more like the practice of reciprocal peer critique on which the sciences are founded. From the perspective of an adherent of the **Polis** model, someone interested only in their own education or their own self-betterment (as in the Ticket and Filter, but also the **Museum** and **Monastery**) is literally an idiot—an *idiotes*—a private or self-centered person unwilling to share their skill and knowledge for the public, democratic good.

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The members of this course worked hard both individually and collaboratively to distill the lessons of our course discussion into a form that would be useful to others. We offer this booklet to the Barrett community of faculty, students, and staff, in the hopes that readers will be moved to think carefully about the purpose and meaning of college.