

Instructor: Rochelle Gold
Writing 150
Education & Intellectual Development
Writing Project #3

Writing Project #3: The Economics of Education

Purpose: Moving from a focus on academics and diversity in previous writing projects, we will, in this third assignment, explore the economics of education. In particular, we will consider how debates around money, technology, labor, and infrastructure shape education. Rhetorically, we will work on writing effective conclusions, transitioning between paragraphs, and addressing counterarguments. We will also develop strategies for effectively researching an issue in order to develop a nuanced argument.

Readings:

“The Future of College?” by Graeme Wood

“College Students Are Not Customers” by Rebecca Schuman

Premise: Is education a product? Are students customers? In the last several decades, educational institutions seem to be increasingly influenced by the ideas and practices of business. Some examples of this include the proliferation of charter schools and online degrees, the ubiquity of for-profit colleges and educational start-ups, the widespread emphasis on quantifying student achievement through standardized testing, and the attempt to make academic labor more flexible by decreasing access to tenure. While some critics suggest that innovations borrowed from business will help educational institutions evolve and flourish in the twenty-first century, others suggest that business models threaten to destroy education as we know it. The two required readings, which offer different views on the value of business paradigms in higher education, epitomize some of these debates. Carefully weighing their ideas, we will ask ourselves how these debates are reshaping the educational landscape.

Writing Task: For this writing project, you will choose a specific issue to explore, i.e. for-profit colleges, online education, technology in the classroom, educational start-ups, charter schools, school voucher programs, standardized testing, tenure/adjunctification, or student debt. You will need to find three argumentative essays about your issue, and, drawing upon this research, respond to the following prompt in a 5-7 page thesis-driven essay:

To what extent, if at all, can business paradigms help us to reform educational practices or institutions? Why?

You must cite at least three sources. Two of the three sources must be peer-reviewed sources that you find on your own.