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As an adjunct instructor and recent graduate of an EdD program, it is hard not to read Carey's *The End of College* defensively. The disturbing history of college involving the elite and money-grabbing universities to the overzealous buildings found on campuses all over the nation is enough to make any college graduate doubt the education that he or she spent thousands of dollars pursuing. However, once the pain subsides, the book offers suggestions for change to improve education and make it available for all, not just the elite, via online learning. By the end, even the most devoted fan of traditional higher education is singing Kevin Carey's tune of an online education.

Carey begins the book with his own journey in online education with taking a MIT course, *The Secret of Life*, an introductory biology course. He marveled at the sheer capability to take a course from the prestigious MIT and stay current with lectures, assignments, and tasks through an online-only environment. The course was challenging, but thought provoking, and he walked away with not
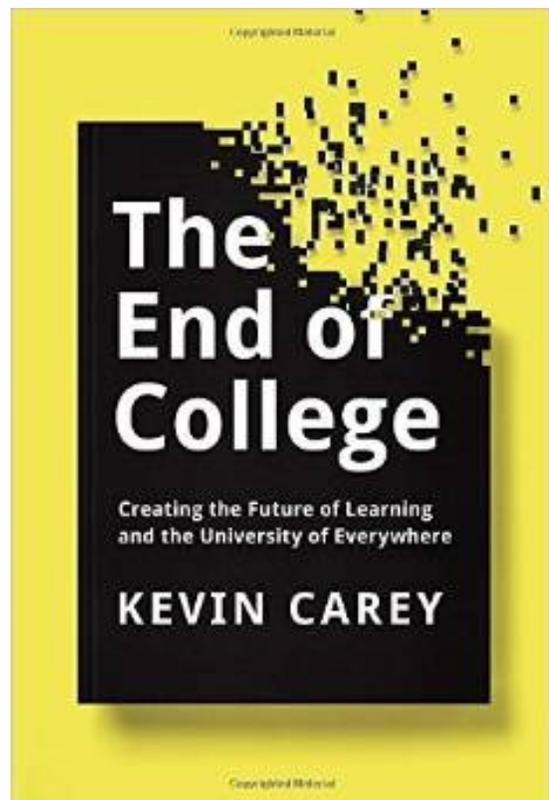
only new knowledge, but a certificate of completion for taking the class. Carey boasted it was a well-earned certificate, and even though it took all his effort to earn a B, he described it as one of the most engaging educational experiences of his life. Experiential research such as this brings insight into the world of online education, which seems to be relatively untested by those that promote or diminish its usefulness. For the reader of this book it serves as a hands-on experience to take with him or her as it debates whether or not online education is a true way to learn or just a passing phase. Carey certainly gives it merit based on this one course, but it leaves the reader wondering-what about the degree? A certificate of course completion is something, but it is not a certificate of extensive knowledge in one area. As a bachelor's degree in English should tell a prospective employer or a colleague what the graduate's specialty area is, a certificate of completion for one course does not make anyone an expert in that field. Furthermore, completing one course at MIT may be free, but can this type of economic model last? Carey addresses these questions throughout the book, but it seems that the clear answers are still debatable.

The End of College then gives an overview of the history of college since 1088. Carey claimed that universities were established for the elite and by the elite, and it was not until the president of Harvard, Charles William Eliot, questioned the type of education that was in store for his child, did a liberal arts education for all start to enter the American education landscape. From there came electives and many more choices for students, leading to higher price tags and more types of degrees, such as the EdD and the PhD. Here Carey voices strong disapproval of the idea that degrees certify individuals with a higher level of knowledge than individuals without degrees. He asks, if a professor teaching history does not have his doctorate, does that mean he is not knowledgeable of the subject matter? Carey argues that this is not the case. Simply having the degree does not make someone an expert more than the educated person without the PhD. However, as Carey continues, universities still demand professors have terminal

degrees and endure evaluations based on statistics by state departments of education. Clarifying how many professors are full-time with terminal degrees is one criteria of evaluation, which has often led universities to hire adjunct faculty, with or without terminal degrees, at alarmingly high rates.

One of the crucial points of this book addressed the issue of university practices that are leading to the decay of the educational institution. Carey argues that the entire structure of universities has become a mirage. We see the degree-holding faculty, state of the art buildings, innovative student facilities, and picturesque undergraduates walking the campus with backpacks in toe, but it is not real. What is happening behind the picture is the reality: most of the instructors are underpaid adjuncts, the buildings and facilities have caused tuition rates to rise exponentially, and the catalog photographed co-eds will be hundreds of thousands of dollars in debt with nothing to show for it. For Carey, this system of educating students is a non-effective tradition, and it will only change once those they are educating say "enough."

Besides the structure of college education, Carey also discusses the way we learn and how this is not conducive to the 100-year old higher education model. For example, he reviewed how people learn differently: some in a quiet room, others with music. Differentiated learning may seem like an age-old point, but it is one that colleges do not confer to since lecture halls remain and classes are held at the exact same times during the week. Online education may benefit all learners, as students can log in and work when they are ready to work, whether in the morning or the evening or while working with the television on in the next room or in dead silence. The idea is that the student chooses, and choice is not consistently present on college campuses. Furthermore he discussed the importance of actively engaging in education and the theories of Vygotsky and Piaget who validated scaffolding learning. Carey argues that his MIT course made this type of learning possible. He was not an expert in biology before taking the course, so he had to "build those patterns, piece by piece, in [his] mind" (p. 85). He then explains that this type

of learning is not easy to construct as an online professor, but this type of education gives the teacher the ability to build the type of course that he or she wants. In contrast, traditional university professors are often held back in their teaching to focus on research and publishing. Carey claims that it is not that the professors do not want to push their students; oftentimes they are not allowed to do so.

As Carey continues his "online education for all" argument, he describes a new world of education that is much different from the one we know of today: an online education which uses the Internet platform model. He explains the business of the Internet and how companies like Netflix, Facebook, and Craigslist create platforms to generate business. For example, Facebook created a platform where people can connect with others as "friends," but the business comes from advertising seen while "friends" peruse various newsfeeds. He proposes educational institutions do the same by creating their own platforms. Such an idea is certainly economically friendly, as the cost of creating the platform can be relatively minor.

> The beautiful thing about owning an Internet platform is that other people pay for the expensive parts of your business. The hardware and software are developed by Apple, Intel, Apace, Samsung, and Microsoft…Pez makes the Pez dispensers, Pixar makes the cute cartoons…The key is getting there first, because a platform's value increases exponentially as the number of buyers and sellers grows. (p. 146)

The platform concept makes sense, but at the same time, it makes one question the faculty, staff, adjuncts, and other members of universities that make the institution run. When examining Carey's example we think of the hundreds of thousands that are currently being laid off by Microsoft or all of the other jobs that have been lost to Internet companies. Of course change should not come because jobs will be lost, but this is a major factor that is not clearly addressed. Carey argues that a college does not need 100 professors, but just one

great professor that can teach online. However, it is difficult not to sympathize with the other 99 professors, many of whom are qualified to teach and might be quite good at their profession; for it is the human contact of teacher to student, student to teacher that can truly make education inspiring and simply firing 90% of the teaching staff at a university seems to be more alarming than an inspiring new way to look at education. However, Carey is certainly arguing for a better education for all, not just the wealthy, and if truly great teachers can play a role in this type of education, it can be a new frontier in learning, as long as it can work on multiple levels. Far from changing to 100% online education, offering some classes via the Internet platform is sensible as long as education is the top priority.

According to Carey, one way education improves via this online medium is through technology. Digital learning platforms can offer different mediums to processing information, thus giving students different types of context in which to consider ideas. For example, students may watch a video of the lecture at a time of convenience instead of going to a lecture hall for the live version at 7:40 in the morning. A varied learning environment is the most inspiring part of Carey's argument since it is focused on improving the education of the student. When Carey promoted online education at one university and some faculty members seemed alarmed, the online advocate responded by stating, "If you're not better than students reading the textbook, you shouldn't be teaching. If you're not better than the video, you shouldn't be teaching" (p. 180). This point certainly has merit and rings true in this technological age. Further, it led to support for Carey's discussion of one teacher serving as the expert in an online environment.

Carey argues a further benefit of online education is the necessity of supplying students the best education regardless of their income. He compares higher education to that of getting on a yacht: "you have to know the right people" (p. 199). He clarifies by stating the sad truths of what we already know:

for a potential student to get into a college, he or she needs to know the right people, have the right amount of money, know how to use the right tricks to get ahead, and already have had a top notch education in order to finish the education in his or her future. To him, this is just jumping through the elitist hoops set forth by, well, the elite. Online education is a way to bring the education to the masses. It can bring experts in the field to the world at a low cost. It is hard to argue against the brilliant simplicity of this formula. A better educated world will lead to an improved future, and as we witness this nation changing at a rapid rate, it seems that even universities may be ready for this greatest change of all.

About the Reviewer

Robyne Elder is a recent graduate of the doctoral program in education at Lindenwood University. She serves as an adjunct professor teaching writing courses for education specialist and doctoral students at Lindenwood University and is an English Instructor at the Collegiate School of Medicine and Bioscience, a magnet school in the city of St. Louis.

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