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Emerging themes, reflections and the future of HE

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Additional Comments

- Persisting inequalities
- Private providers
- University staff
- Research
- Misrecognition, denigration and derision

Problematizing the discourse of social mobility

Apart from enabling the elite to justify being what it is, the ideology of giftedness, the cornerstone of the whole educational and social system, helps to enclose the underprivileged classes in the roles which society has given them by making them see as natural inability things which are only a result of inferior social status, and by persuading them that they owe their social fate (which is increasingly tied to their educational fate as society becomes more rationalized) to their individual nature and their lack of gifts. The exceptional success of those few individuals who escape the collective fate of their class apparently justify educational selection and give credence to the myth of the school as a liberating force among those who have been eliminated, by giving the impression that success is exclusively a matter of gifts and work.

(Bourdieu, 1974)

Doing Higher Education Differently

- Cooperative universities. See, e.g., Tom Woodin (2014) *Co-operation, Learning and Co-operative Values*, Routledge - chapter by Stephen Yeo, 'The co-operative university? Transforming higher education'.
- Comprehensive universities – Selina Todd's article for the Times Higher (2015, September 22) 'Let's turn Oxford into a comprehensive'.
- The free university movement – see <http://freeuniversitybrighton.org/>, or <https://www.theguardian.com/education/2013/jan/28/free-university-movement-excluded-learners>
- Alternative Academic Network - <http://driftmine.org/author/heather-mendick/>

Working towards a socially just future of higher education for all

- Recognising that HE is a public good, not only a private or individual one
- Arguing for it to be funded through progressive taxation, not individual debt
- Challenging the inequalities in funding and prestige within the sector
- Naming/challenging 'dumbing down', racist, sexist, classed discourses/practices
- It is about high academic standards – fitting of the 'higher' in higher education
- Fostering collaboration rather than competition – within the sector and universities, and in our relationships with our partners and communities
- A staff profile that reflects wider society – including minority ethnic and women staff reaching senior levels
- We need universities where the respect, value and care of others, students and staff, is central – and that care is not allocated to, or assumed to be the responsibility of women
- It is about recognising that research is an essential aspect of a university
- And it is about a curriculum designed not only to develop students' knowledge, skills and understanding, but one that also encourages students to think differently and engage critically with their subject and the wider world.

Freire's insight that education either functions to conform people to the logic of the present system, or else it enables them to deal critically and creatively with their world in order to change it, remains a useful reminder about the tension between 'really useful knowledge' and 'merely useful knowledge' in the history - and the future - of educational struggle.

(Thompson 2000)