

## **The Effects of Neo-Liberalism and Managerialism on Disability Education in Australia**

### **Abstract**

The paper will discuss the effects of neo-liberalism and managerialism on disability education in Australia. Neo-liberalism is inimical to democratic ideals. Together, neo-liberalism and globalization, along with corporate managerialism on education, have created a more unequal society and less rational economy.

### **Introduction**

Stilwell (2000) has carefully distinguished between the neo-liberal ideas and policies, on the one hand, that have given Australia its current features of increased inequality and poor economic performance, and the tendency towards increased globalization, on the other. Neo-liberalism is inimical to democratic ideals. Neo-liberalism and globalization, along with corporate managerialism, have created a more unequal society and less rational economy. Globalisation has had inequalitarian effects on education because of the way it has been shaped by the neo-liberal and managerial process over the past two decades. To give in to the notion that globalization is an inevitable or inexorable process is not only to make a grave mistake of social analysis; it also lets the neo-liberals who have been driving it entirely off the hook.

In the last two decades, as a new managerial paradigm devoted to the pursuit of “excellence” has taken hold, there has been a gradual withering of collegial authority in the Australian universities. Readings (1996:36) argued that in the new university this “discourse of excellence” has replaced ideals of culture, particularly national culture. Readings (1996:38) mentions “excellence exposes the pre-modern traditions of the university to the market capitalism. Barriers to free trade are swept away.” What does this mean in practical terms? Readings (1996:38) argues that the meaning is found in the ascension of the marketplace, in this case the marketplace of ideas, where the “only criterion of excellence is performativity.” University presidents have become chief executive officers and universities increasingly mimic large-scale corporations. A specialization of administrative functions have occurred, the number of administrative officers has increased, and more of these officers are drawn from outside the university. Decision making is increasingly centralized, affecting the budget allocation process, as well as policies and practices affecting various aspects of academic life. In many universities, budget and finance have been divorced from academic functions. Formerly organic relations have become more bureaucratic and driven by concerns about greater efficiency. In this model of post-secondary education, university students are repositioned as consumers rather than learners. It is assumed that students will purchase their education wisely and efficiently, choosing the educational route most likely to lead to a future skills-based or technological occupation.

Melville Miranda

### **Conclusion**

The paper has argued that neo-liberalism and managerialism has introduced the market approach which creates a big divide between the rich and poor disabled students.

### **Bibliography**

Readings, B. (1996). *The University in Ruins*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Stilwel, F. (2000). *Changing Track: A new political economic direction for Australia*, Annandale: Pluto Press.

Melville Miranda

Date: 29-9-03