Selection into higher education

The university benefits even more from this exchange relationship than is the case for Foreign Languages. For Fijian Languages, the benefits are of particular value to the student and the university. The educationally rooted and moral security, the provision of intellectual, ethical and aesthetic training in a socially significant setting. The Fijian university receives a flow of students of high quality into its undergraduate studies with a minimal drawdown from the rest of the school population, the basis of the university's relative prestige and of its authority over student selection.

The Foreign Languages example involves curriculum specialization on a narrow social base. If Foreign Languages are studied by 4% of Year 11 students, many of these language-literate students are not conversant in the other languages conversed by the universities as truly socially relevant. On the contrary, only 4% of students take French and 1% of students German. However, the exchange relationships between secondary and private universities can be illustrated equally well from specialization in other fields.

Physics and Economics are subjects which much larger numbers of students take in Years 10 and 11. Thus, there is an opportunity for a curriculum on literary or verbal accomplishment, as the learning criteria can be met by the students who make up a very different group both in the general level of curriculum and the general level of sophistication of the students who make up that group. These exchange relationships allow students to pursue their academic interests in a broader range of subject matter than would be expected of students who are required to take a prescribed curriculum.

The impact of these exchange relationships is that these students are able to pursue a broader range of academic interests than would be expected of students who are required to take a prescribed curriculum. These exchanges also allow students to pursue their academic interests in a broader range of subject matter than would be expected of students who are required to take a prescribed curriculum.
The introduction of the Disadvantaged Schools Program, some programs for special groups of students who had traditionally been unsuccessful in the regular educational system, and the introduction of economic reforms unable to produce a much more radical social mix in higher education.

Our second response has been to point to the fact that the new education is more effective in the new market, the abolition of teacher scholars, the decline in the value and quality of the academic credentials of the best students in terms of educational attainment, and the schools were no longer based on the idea that they were highly undesirable when seen as an educational service to place practical limits on a student's selection.

The third is that students internalize the message of selection scores and thereby place limits on their own potential. The pressure of lifetime and immigrant students in middle sec- ondary education at least partly owns itself to the persistent use of normative testing and ability groupings in many primary schools produces large-scale failure automatically.

3. Hence our most common technique of selection is also profoundly pessimistic. It is the case that some students can't be educated to a high level. We tend to believe that education produces the outcome. The assumption is that education is a tool that can only be used to bring people who are not native to the value of being able to generate new opportunities. People who are not influential to students.

1. It is pseudo-scientific. The notion that a complex construct such as educational achievement - let alone educational potential - can be reduced to a single measure is quite preposterous, a scientific fiction of the modern age. It is to the material conditions under which something so complex (such as education but the present system of com- petition for entry was not fair and cannot be improved.

Thirdly, then, it is left the system of competition and selection into higher education - which depressesreturn rates in upper secondary schools and what we mean by "the way back to the beginning of primary school - totally intact and unreformed. The social and economic imperatives (from the powerful social groups) are able to continue;

In general, examinations do not measure a fixed quantity of ability or merit, but artificially ‘freeze’ a moving target. For this reason, the student who has reached 70 per cent today that tells us little about his ability to achieve tomorrow. If one HSC student has scored from 50 per cent to 75 per cent in six months, it is impossible to say the same thing, it is at least arguable that the abolition of the tenure and the institu- tion of competitiveness for graduation, the same benefits as the argument, competition for salariaries is amounting to a form of ‘good quality work’. It does not apply to special entry mature age students, who often come from a background. The argument that the selection is only a market-oriented strategy is not necessarily true.

In the face of the current selection system, it is clear that the current education system is likely to result in an even higher level of inequality.

Reliance on competitive selection methods reduces the educational stan- dards of Islamic schools produces quite specifically by narrowing the social curriculum only to what is to be examined and encouraging role learning of which is actually in the interests of the student in the post-commercial sector.

In summary, the system of selection, competition, and achievement in Islamic education is not only a failure, but should not be allowed to continue.

5. Finally, our methods of selection violate the institutional structure of pre-existing systems. The issue of higher education on the basis of their position in a rank order, rather than their capacity and desire to do the work required, the patterning of institutions tends to be in a hierarchy of status rather than as it should be. The end product of this trend would be the destruction of the entire public school system to welfare functions such as child- minding and the minimization of youth activities.

The exit of certain families from the public school system into the private sector, the government funding policies. Economist Professor Ross Williams showed last year that while the public has some support for the cost of public education, there has been a clear trend towards private schools. This is a trend that is likely to continue, since these advantages are probably illusory, in that they relate largely to the socio- economic functions the students are motivated to engage with, with the public schools. To the extent that these advantages are understood (albeit regrettably) that some parents seek to seize the apparent advantage.

4. Public and private schools

The strongest defenders of a social structure are usually those who benefit and cannot afford. The statement from certain social groups are best placed to exploit the competitive selection system, for economic reasons (income, occupation, and even education). On the other hand, political reasons (language, home cultural environ- ment) and historical reasons (such as a history of assimilation) are less strong.

In the face of the current selection system, it is clear that the current education system is likely to result in an even higher level of inequality.
Notes


3. In preparing this section of the paper the following readings were of particular help:


\* This paper was first presented as an address to the Annual General Meeting of the Federation of College Academics in Sydney on August 22, 1983.

Introduction

The central purpose of this paper is to set the research into the performance of entrants into the University of Adelaide Law School. The paper's underlying premise is that the selection of students should, to the greatest extent possible, be fair and equitable in the sense of ensuing objective upon academic criteria. This is particularly necessary in a field of study, law, into which is intensely competitive, with over 1,000 first preference applicants competing for 120 places in 1986.

The problem of selection has, historically, been a site of contestation between competing academic institutions. In the first instance selection was largely a matter of choosing between competing matriculants. Subsequently, it became primarily concerned with selecting between and within two competing categories, viz. matriculants and applicants. More recently, the research undertaken into the performance of law schools has both intensified and facilitated a move to select only from competing applicants having tertiary experience.

The paper concentrates upon a major research effort in 1984-85. Some research was undertaken, however, from 1981. It should be said that as a result of the general interest in these matters which existed until recently the work was selected by concerned persons within the law school and reviewed against student records and from records of the Law Selection Committee. The research was undertaken with the benefit of the computer and statistical resources which the present climate will, hopefully, permit for the future.

The selection of matriculant applicants

Entry into the Law School before 1967 was available to any person who had matriculated. The huge intake in 1966 gave rise to the imposition of a quota in 1968. This resulted in a list of those who could not enter. The quota was simplified, however, by the University's policy of minimum aggregate matriculation mark as the academic basis for entry.

3. Matriculation results of matriculant and transfer applicants compared

The attempt to compare the performance of matriculant and transfer entrants involved calculating the mean matriculation mark for six groups of Adelaide University first-year Arts and Economics students having one, two and three credits and no fails respectively. This embraced the majority of transfer applicants and provided a basis for comparison with matriculant applicants in matriculation mark terms.

This work showed that entrants in their four first-year subject who obtained two or more credits had a higher matriculation mark compared to the matriculation cut-off mark for Law and were, therefore, on a par with the marginal matriculation entrants. Those with more credits had a higher mean matriculation mark. This work was taken to mean that transfer entrants were generally better students than entrants having two or more credits and no fails were selected. The results were not only a budge guide, however, particularly given a disparity between the mean matriculation mark for the respective groups in the final year, the former being given the smaller numbers in some of the groups.

4. Law School performance of matriculant and transfer applicants compared

Subsequently, the performance of matriculant and transfer entrants to the Law School was compared in terms of exam, examinations, credits, passes and fails. This work, which covered entrants in 1981-83, appeared again in broad terms, to support the half credits rule. In 1981 and 1982 the transfer entrants performed slightly better. But in 1983, with a reduced quota and a higher matriculation entry mark, the results of the matriculants were slightly, better than those of the transfer entrants.

This comparison dealt only with first year results. It did not, therefore, take into account the part-time students which transfer entrants might have had in their first year as a result of previous tertiary experience.

5. Law School performance of transfer entrants compared

In order to compare the performance of transfer entrants via-via other groups they were broken into three groups. Most entrants had completed at least one year at a tertiary level or were graduates. This third group consisted of entrants filling some particular courses who had completed at least two prior years of tertiary education. This worked indicated that the policy of ranking all transfer students, including graduates, according to the quality, not quantity, of their pre law tertiary results was justified.

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