

# Speakers' Presentations (‘Oxford Debates’)



## Perceptions of Higher Education: Quality, Equality, Equitability within a Globalised World

**John W. A. Netting**  
Near East University, November 2017

My initial proposition is that, in its current form, higher education through the ‘university structure’ is no longer fit for purpose. The author H.G. Wells commented, ‘We are living in 1937, and our universities, I suggest, are not half-way out of the fifteenth century. We have made hardly any changes in our conception of university organisation, education, graduation, for a century – in fact, for several centuries.’ Eighty years on from H.G. Wells comment, the situation remains largely the same; in fact, in recent years we have probably, whilst retaining a largely fifteenth century administrative structure within our universities, exacerbated the increasingly uncomfortable life within universities by subjecting them to unmitigated new stresses. I will come to some of those stresses later in the lecture.

Although it is early in the lecture to become involved in semantics, I think it important to define my understanding of some specific terminology; such interpretations to be based on UK usage:

**Higher Education:** all forms of formal tertiary education beyond high school, i.e. generally that formal education received beyond the age of 18 years.

**University:** within the UK the word ‘university’ is one protected by the UK government and can only be granted through Royal Charter or an Act of Parliament

**Degree:** is a certificate issued by a university on completion of an approved course of study. An undergraduate degree, for instance, will normally represent a three year programme of study.

A few moments ago, I suggested that higher education was not fit for purpose and that, of course, raises the question what is the purpose of higher education and who should benefit from it, and in what form? In the UK we can discern much of the original purpose of higher education from the Robbins Report of 1963 that contained the guiding principle that university places ‘should be available to all who were qualified for them by ability and attainment.’ The report also contained four, so called, essential objectives to any properly balanced system:

- Instruction in skills
- The promotion of the general powers of the mind so as to produce not mere specialists but rather cultivated men and women
- To maintain research in balance with teaching
- To transmit a common culture and common standards of citizenship

A sound, even fairly simple set of principles and objectives that, perhaps, served as sound guidance during the second-half of the twentieth century. The immediate effect of Robbins was to widen the definition of the word ‘university’ to include for Colleges of Advanced Technology – previously centres of excellence for ‘applied knowledge’ throughout the sciences, both physical and human. It also granted those institutions with degree conferment powers. The implementation of Robbins brought fresh thinking to higher education whilst keeping it the domain of intellectually gifted individuals.

By 1996, however, a tired conservative government under constant critique for supporting elitism commissioned a new report under the chairmanship of Sir Ron Dearing, the then Vice-Chancellor of Nottingham University, to recommend a pathway and strategy for higher education for the next 20 years. I would like to spend some time in looking at the details of Dearing’s report, delivered in the summer of 1997 as, in my opinion, it has a lot to answer for respective to the perceived sorry state that, not only the UK’s higher education sector is in, but also those other countries that have followed the UK lead in this sector.

It is worth noting that, although the report was commissioned by a conservative government it was implemented by a socialist one under the leadership of Tony Blair. The report had five main sections as follows:

- Funding for Higher Education
- Expansion within the term ‘Higher Education’
- Teaching practices

- Standards
- The Future

Let's now look at each of these one-by-one:

**Funding for Higher Education** – the Inquiry recommended to Government that it shift the balance of funding away from block grants, from the Government, towards a system of funding which follows the student, with a target of distributing at least 60% of total public funding to institution according to student choice by 2003. The Inquiry favoured a combination of student tuition fees (on a loan basis) as the best way to seek contributions from higher income families and graduates once they are in work.

**Expansion** – the Inquiry recommended that the Government should allow for the expansion of higher education by lifting the cap on full-time sub-degree and full-time undergraduate places. Furthermore, in order to address the underrepresentation of certain groups, the Inquiry recommended giving priority in the allocation of funds to those institutions who are committed to widening participation, particularly those institutions who enrol students from disadvantaged areas.

**Teaching practices** – The Inquiry recommended the setting up of a professional Institute for Learning and Teaching in Higher Education and that all new full-time academic staff with teaching responsibilities be required to achieve at least associate membership of the Institute for Learning and Teaching in Higher Education.

**Standards** – the Inquiry recommends that institutions develop a programme specification for each course they offer to outline the intended outcomes of the course. The Quality Assurance Agency to be responsible for quality assurance and public information, standards verification, maintenance of the qualifications framework, and arrangements for institutions to adopt code of practice by 2001/02.

**The Future** – The Inquiry proposes allowing institutions to opt out of the Research Assessment Exercise in order to seek a lower level of non-competitive funding to support research and scholarship which underpins teaching. The report also recommended that higher education governing bodies should review their own effectiveness and performance at least every five years.

So much, at this point in time, for the UK but, one may ask, what of the globalised world of education that the UK system has to both amalgamate with and compete with? First-off, let's deal with the word 'globalisation' that has different meanings to different peoples. The definition that I favour for this paper is one constructed by the Swiss economist Hans Gersbach in 2002 defining globalisation at the industry level as being the impact of a productivity leader from one country on a productivity follower in another country. In my opinion, we need to bear in mind this environmental influence and the international flow of students that results from it when assessing the position of any individual institution within the global education marketplace,

Having now opened the international 'can of worms', it would be unseemly to move on without reference to the Bologna Accord. In June 1999, 29 European countries (now numbering 47 countries) signed a document called the Bologna Declaration, agreeing to reform higher education to achieve the following aims:

- Create a system of comparable and understandable degrees throughout the European Union
- Establish a clear and standard division between undergraduate and graduate studies
- Promote student mobility among different fields of study, institutions, and nations
- Develop a quality assurance process and governing body to ensure standard qualification and quality throughout participating countries

- Define a European focus for higher education.

Following the brief overview of some of the key legislative frameworks within which the education industry conducts its business, let's now move to gaining an understanding of how well those frameworks work in practice and the degree to which they support quality practices.

The earliest report that I have referred to, so far, is the Robbins Report of 1963. A report designed to wake-up a tired and staid higher education sector through a significant widening of its brief and underpinned by four lofty ideals. To what extent have those ideals been met? The ideal of skills instruction, a departure in itself from traditional university values, would seem to have been well met, largely driven by rapid technology advances to the extent that even archaeology and history of art academics draw heavily on contemporary technologies.

However, in terms of some of the other ideals Robbins appears very dated or even totally unrealised. For example, the recently appointed head of London School of Economics, Dame Minouche Shafik, sees as one of her main priorities a need to instil in undergraduates 'an appreciation for rigour and a commitment to engage with public debate as experts and as citizens'. She further stresses the need for universities to 'engage with views that are different, even if they are uncomfortable'. Similar sentiments are echoed from the other side of the Atlantic; Jay Schalin in a 2016 publication titled 'Academic Freedom in the Age of Political Correctness' suggests that academic freedom is an enigmatic concept in the modern American university. He suggests that contentious new issues include the limiting of free speech through campus speech codes, the right of religious students to form campus organisations that exclude according to belief, and the right of students to be not indoctrinated in class. Many instances of a similar nature have been observed in a number of leading UK universities with the number of incidents rising exponentially. It is clear that the move toward increasing liberalism in societies is also spawning fundamental illiberalisms, particularly among those privileged members of society who are or have benefited from higher education.

With regard to 'maintaining research in balance with teaching', we seem to have lost sight of the fact that academics are relatively normal human beings with an absorbing interest in specifically focused areas of interest, so why are they so abused today by students and university management alike? A recent report in the Times Higher Education journal dated August 2017, suggests that the majority of people working at universities find their job stressful, and academics are more prone to developing common mental health disorders than those working in other professions. A lack of job security, limited support from management and the weight of work-related demands on their time were among the factors listed as affecting the health of those who work in higher education. A simple analogy here may be, if you want to train high performing horses to win big event races, then you don't have them working in the fields all day pulling heavy equipment. A quick statistical guide to the seriousness of the problem here is that about 37% of academics have common mental disorders, whilst more than 40% of postgraduate students report emotional or stress-related problems.

Although I have made these observations within the context of the Robbins Report, much of them have been a creeping illness that recommendations contained in Dearing (1997) appear to have to exacerbate and we shall come to that next. But before we go there, by means of light relief, let's look at some comparable issues from over the Atlantic. In this instance, I am particularly inspired by Noam Chomsky's 2014 work, 'Death of American Universities', in which he argues that the adoption of business techniques into universities has had many profound and adverse effects and even hints that there may be elements of government sponsored

social engineering associated with such initiatives. These come in the form of introducing high levels of insecurity into the academic workplace and creating unstable environments in which people are increasingly employed on temporary contracts rather than full tenure, making them grateful for whatever employment can be gained – and at whatever compensation level. As Alan Greenspan testifying before the USA Congress said in 1997, 'if workers are more insecure, that's very 'healthy' for the society, because if workers are insecure they won't ask for wages, they won't go on strike, they won't call for benefits; they'll serve the masters gladly and passively. And that's optimal for corporations' economic health'. So, dystopian images from across the Atlantic, let's now see how they chime in a post-Dearing world.

Before launching too deeply into the ramifications of Dearing, I need to return to the issue of semantics outlined above and try to differentiate between 'vocational' and 'higher education'. An OECD report, published in 2015 suggests that attempts to measure what students learn at different universities around the world are being thwarted by the 'established oligopoly' of institutions seeking to 'prevent new information about education coming to light'. This would particularly seem to be the case within UK higher education where the 'established oligopoly' of accredited universities has assumed responsibility for vocational education in addition to the more previously regarded academic programmes. It is also worth, at this point, introducing the so-called Russell Group of universities in the UK. This is a perceived 'elite club' of universities founded in 1994 in an attempt to force a differentiation between long-established, traditional institutions and the rapid influx of newly chartered institutions – this differentiation will be important later in my analysis.

Let me now try to shed light on this through an examination of the implementation of the Dearing Report, the first element of which concerns funding for higher education. Through this mechanism, the onus for funding higher education is largely shifted from the government to the student with a legislated annual fee for all courses at undergraduate level set at £9,000. This, in theoretical economics terms, makes for an interesting scenario in that it creates a perfectly level playing-field in terms of student expenditure. Viewed from this perspective, students should be able to make a decision on where they want to study based on some fairly specific criteria such as, relevance of the course to their individual need, quality of teaching on that course, employability of students on completion of the programme, etc. The implied inequality here, however, is that universities within the Russell Group would cream-off all the best students based on their 'A' level results, leaving the remaining 100 institutions to fight over the rest. This reinforces the natural assumption that quality of input dictates the quality of output and that careful student selection by the university is guaranteed to perpetuate a 'high quality' reputation. From a student perspective, this should also act as some guarantee of a sound pay-back on the investment of up to a total of £50,000 by way of obtaining higher than average employability and wage earning potential. A study undertaken by the Economist (12 October, 2017) would seem to refute this line of thinking. In a study of value added by a population of 125 universities, the median ranking of Russell Group members was 59th, with the highest at 6th place and the lowest at 114th.

Further impacts of the shift in funding emphasis and the lifting on student number restrictions has seen a lemming-like rush by universities to attract as many students as possible. Confidence for this type of strategy was built pre-2010, when student fees were introduced by burgeoning numbers of overseas students, particularly from Asiatic countries, wishing to study at UK universities. New facilities were built, new courses introduced, resources reinforced, marketing programmes launched to harvest this new bumper-crop of students. University courses were being sold like pizza with whatever flavour the market could be persuaded

to swallow. Sadly, the introduction of fees, (alongside, it must be said, stricter student visa requirements), soon had a major impact on the inflow of overseas students, leaving most universities with overcapacity. There is abundant evidence to suggest that budget 'black-holes' are being compensated for in a number of ways, amongst which we can identify, reduction in fulltime teaching staff numbers, the requirement on academic staff to simultaneously engage in teaching, research, publication and administration duties.

Running parallel to cost cutting we also see evidence of the increased need to draw-in student fee revenues to the extent that entry requirements are being relaxed year-on-year. Furthermore, once the institution has secured the student, there is great pressure to retain the student throughout the three-year programme. There's an 'everyone must pass' attitude, which is compounded by the 'sick note' epidemic. The student who is currently suing Oxford University because it allegedly 'didn't take her anxiety seriously enough' isn't an unusual figure. A recent study, reported in The Daily Telegraph newspaper of 8th September 2017, suggested that almost 25% of undergraduate essays submitted has a cover sheet pleading extenuating circumstances, be it Asperger's autism, anxiety, depression, ADHD, OCD, dyslexia, dyspraxia. Reliance on such issues may see students complete their degree programmes and assure the university of its fee revenue, but it is not the type of behaviour that can be carried forward into a competitive world.

The next issue concerns expansion within the term 'Higher Education' and here I come back to my earlier differentiation between vocational programmes and the more academic courses of study, and my suggestion that oligopolistic pressures from elitist, Russell Group-type institutions have attempted to detrimentally influence the scope and style of higher education. One model of education does not fit with all learning requirements. I accept that some professions have significantly changed in nature over the recent past, take, for example, Nursing. Progress in medical technologies has necessitated nurses gaining a new set of skills relative to those they might have needed 25 or more years ago, beyond the ability to understand new technologies, there is now a far higher need for analytical and critical thinking skills aligned with enhanced communication and advocacy abilities. These are certainly enhanced abilities that demand a high level of vocational training, but should not be achieved through the same learning-mill as, say archaeology or theoretical mathematics, nor subjected to the same budgetary restrictions as Chinese literature or business studies.

We are suffering from a modern malaise of 'big is beautiful' within which general objectives can only be achieved through senseless standardisation. During the 1980s and 1990s we witnessed attempts at driving growth through acquisition and merger, driven by the hubris of 'if we can successfully manage one business, then we can manage any business'. As early as 1982, Peters and Waterman in their bestselling management text 'In search of Excellence' advised organisations 'to stick to the knitting', i.e. to concentrate on doing better that which they already do well. The expansion of a standard set of rules to embrace a range of different cultural environments simply does not work. The Bologna Accord suffers from just such a malaise of this nature.

If we are to meaningfully carry forward expansion within the broad meaning of higher education we need to attend more to the particular than the universal, heeding the valuable work undertaken by Fons Trompenaars in the latter part of the 20th Century, demonstrating the need for people from different environments both organisationally and nationally to be treated differently. Perhaps here I am advocating a move back to a 21st Century form of the old craft guilds and professional institutes that have so well served the development of engineering, construction, finance, legal and medical professions throughout the past 100 years.



Teaching practices was the next concern of Dearing and, soon after publication of the report, the majority of higher education establishments focused on the need for those new to teaching to undergo some teacher training. This initiative slowly led to the 2012 'Teaching Excellence Framework' being introduced, coinciding with introduction of the £9,000 fee. Currently, to raise fees in line with inflation, institutions need to make a TEF submission. Institutions that opted into the TEF this year were examined on three sets of metrics: students' views of teaching, assessment and academic support from the National Student Survey; student dropout rates; and the rates of employment. It is notable that none of these metrics directly measure the quality of teaching – rather, the metrics focus on examining the assumed effects of teaching. To cut a long, sad story short, this is the best that can be offered as evidence of attempts to improve teaching quality 20 years after Dearing. Perhaps, in this respect, we are addressing the wrong issue and the quality of teaching has little to do with the quality of output. In the new world of widening participation, maybe quality of student input into higher education and more appropriate guidance as to choice of subject area and mode of learning may be more appropriate?

Let's now move on to the question of standards, earlier I said that, 'the Inquiry recommends that institutions develop a programme specification for each course they offer to outline the intended outcomes of the course. The Quality Assurance Agency to be responsible for quality assurance and public information, standards verification, maintenance of the qualifications framework, and arrangements for institutions to adopt code of practice by 2001/02' How sensible that all sounds, but, in my opinion, the intent is at odds with the implementation. You can submit any old course for validation under current QAA methodology – a giant box-ticking exercise – and arrive at perfect approval.

I could, for instance, gain excellent rating for a degree programme in Sophistry (there are enough student submissions on a daily basis made in this vein to make it a very popular choice).

What we don't have is sound methodology for approving the course in the first place (other than, maybe, perceived market acceptance for it). There is no strict requirement for specifying the need for any given programme, minimum entry requirements, two-way obligations between the teaching institution and the student, defined minimum output standards. As a result, poorly qualified, unsuitable, unmotivated students are put through courses of study that they have little or no aptitude for.

As for the future, what future other than more of the same? More of the same, within the globalised world that I outlined earlier, can only result in newer, more focused economies with clearer ideas of what they want from a higher education system, winning the 'productivity-race' not only in terms of delivering within education systems but also in terms of feeding into their respective economies the outputs from such systems.

I'm not even going to comment on the Bologna Accord. North Cyprus, although qualifying in all respects for membership, is currently still excluded – lucky North Cyprus!

At the beginning of this paper I declared that I was, by discipline, a behavioural scientist, and I would now like to frame the final section of this paper by invoking some fairly basic behavioural theories and using them to help me draw some conclusions against what I have said so far.

As backdrop to this analysis I am going to use a news item from the BBC dated September, 2017 claiming that within the UK there are 48.3% of working age people with a degree-level qualification, up from 26% in 2000. As a statistic, I can neither prove nor disprove this figure, but I can ask 'so what'? We have nearly double the number of graduates within our economy but as the below graph indicates, it is not having a comparable effect on productivity

The question then can be, Why?

The Director of Education for the OECD comments that, 'on the one hand you can say that qualification levels have risen enormously, lots more people are getting tertiary qualifications, university degrees, but not all of that is visible in better skills. Quality and degrees do not always align.' Here, I think, we have evidence of political target setting having a negative impact on the interests of universities, students and related stakeholders. There has been a blatant devaluing of what university education should be about – the 'pile it high, sell it cheap' mentality has set in.

You may say to yourselves, what a luddite stand to take, move-on from what used to be and come to terms with the modern day. I, on the other hand, would say to you, look at the graduate unemployment figures, look at the starting salaries being commanded, look at the number of graduates continuing onto master programmes because their undergraduate degree did not secure them employment and, finally, look at the number of those students who still fail to get worthwhile employment that generates significant enough income to represent a sensible return on the considerable investment made in their education. Think of the significant impact that all this has on motivation, a topic that we are going to look at next within the context of what we have covered so far. But first, it's time to dip into allegory.

The Irish play dramatist and author George Bernard Shaw in his play of 1903, titled 'Man and Superman', suggested that there were two types of person; the first he referred to as 'reasonable man', who adapts himself (or herself) to the changing world around them, the second he referred to as 'unreasonable man' who changes the world around him and adapts it to his own purpose, therefore, Shaw concludes, all progress depends on the unreasonable man. In my opinion there is incredible depth of insight in this statement. To give a very pertinent example, I have long pondered over the real purpose of management within any organisation and have now concluded that Shaw hands me the answer. The purpose of management is to clear the path for the development of 'unreasonable' people within their organisations because these people create the future, they are the adders of value upon which the organisation depends for its future.

The legislations that I have referred to are basically designed as interventions introduced by liberal-minded bodies to introduce and legislate for a more level playing field within our societies and, as such, must be applauded. However, the danger of them is that they rely on us all being reasonable persons in order for them to be implemented in a smooth manner. The problem here is that reasonable people largely fall into the categories of followers rather than leaders and, within what academics may identify as the five distinct categories of follower, only the, so called 'effective follower' truly adds value. The effective follower has a nature that is proactive, independent and able to think critically, they are also lifelong learners who assume responsibility, are committed and seek feedback to continuously improve their performance. I like to think of effective followers as apprentice unreasonable people. You may ask what the other four types of follower comprise, well, these are entirely reasonable people and are classified as one of the following: alienated follower, sheep/passive follower, conformist follower, or, survivor.

Moving on into the issue of motivation I am going to employ a theory coming down to us from 1964, devised by Frederick Herzberg and referred to as 'Herzberg's Two Factor theory'. This is very basic, early thinking in the area of motivation studies and I like it because of its simplicity and its foundation in common sense rather than any pretence to be based on empirical study. The theory suggests that factors referred to as 'hygiene factors' influence the level of dissatisfaction that we experience in our lives – these would include: working conditions, pay and security,

company policies, supervisors, interpersonal relationships, among other basic needs. On the other hand, the theory includes, so called, motivators that influence our levels of satisfaction and make life more tolerable; motivators include things like: achievement, recognition, responsibility, the nature of work itself, and personal growth. Any enlightened organisation will first attend to the basics of organisational and personal life by ensuring that the hygiene factors ensure a state of 'fit for purpose' before concentrating on the motivators to ensure efficient and effective achievement of objectives. It's not rocket science but it does provide a useful framework.

First of all, let's look at some of the motivators and detractors within Higher Education from an academic staff perspective. I am going to start with identifying what, in my opinion, motivates academics. They live in the realm of achievement and recognition each of which draws upon both the immediate and long term perspectives to provide sustainable motivation. The immediate motivation, I suggest, comes from student interface and what I refer to as the alchemy of education, namely, turning base materials into gold. This is a tremendous motivator and stands the test of time in that I find that students, who I may have positively influenced more than 20 years ago, still keep in touch. The positive influence would have come in the form of imparting knowledge or experience that added value to their lives. The long-term perspective motivator for an academic is to be recognised, through achievements, as being an expert authority in their field, someone who others look to for guidance and inspiration. This also sustainably adds real value, not only for the individual but also for the institution that individual works within and represents. It is the responsibility of management to ensure that these value-adding activities be allowed to flourish. There is no magic formula here, one size will never fit all, management is not about administering it is about the careful nurturing and development of talent and mentoring its direction to achieve the optimum payback for all, in whatever form that payback may represent to those concerned. Here is the simple formula for creating an organisation that is capable of producing outputs of the highest quality whilst demonstrating high levels of productivity.

In this instance, management must therefore guard against a long list of detractors from motivation that we have surfaced during today's lecture, these to include:

- Attempted homogenisation of education across multiple cultures – both professional and national
- Lowering of academic freedom
- Multitasking work environment within which all outputs suffer
- QAA approach of 'box ticking' as standards assurance
- Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) ranking system and its reliance on student assessments
- Dangers associated with part-time staffing
- Threat of populist politicians who peddle prejudice, paranoia and false promises
- Rise in social media within which people with deep knowledge of issues are overshadowed in public debate in favour of those with a large following
- Growing unwillingness of many to enter into any form of debate – particularly one that may have political correctness connotations
- Stress levels
- Drop in student education level entry requirements
- Growth of commercial 'essay mills'
- The rise in workplace institutional bullying caused by confused management initiatives.

Moving on now to the student side of the equation, let's go through a similar exercise, during which I will be borrowing from the thoughts of another behaviourist, a contemporary of Herzberg, by the name of Victor Vroom who believed that a key element of motivation rests in the anticipation of expected rewards coming from the satisfactory completion of a task. In the case of students, I believe the expected rewards to be associated with securing an advantage over peers,

who have not followed a course of higher education, in securing suitable employment and a head-start advantage on the career ladder. Other motivation may include achieving parental approval through completion of a suitable programme of higher education studies.

All, of course is not straight forward in this respect. Widening participation may have enabled easier access to higher education facilities but it has brought with it a number of attendant problems, some of which are as follows:

- Devaluation of earning power – statistical evidence indicates that the rapid expansion of higher education is affecting the earning power of graduates. According to a Bank of England study, wage premium for graduates has been reduced from 45% in 1995 to 34% in 2015. Furthermore, the Office of National Statistics suggests that 25% of all graduates earn lower than non-graduate employees who have completed an apprenticeship and that 40% of graduates are more likely to work in part-time employment than non-graduates with an apprenticeship. Now, I recognise that, as mentioned earlier in the lecture, there is some confusion in terminology here as many, if not most apprentices will have completed a programme of higher education as part of their apprenticeship, but not necessarily in a university.
- Tuition fees – the introduction of student fees, as recommended in the Dearing Report, saddles students with significant debts of £50,000 or more at the start of their careers and makes it even more difficult for them to afford their own housing throughout their lives. Many students try to offset the impact of this huge debt-load by engaging in part-time working throughout the study period, the impact of this can only be a lower level of academic performance.
- The student is now king – in an adaptation of the old marketing slogan 'the customer is king', so, as fee paying customers, we must accept that 'he who pays the fiddler calls the tune'. The problem here is, as with so many issues in our complex contemporary world, you don't know what you don't know – and that's a real problem in determining what should be studied and how to study it.
- The nature of widening participation – results in cohorts of very mixed ability students being 'processed' together. This is likely to demotivate weaker students whilst holding back those more able ones, it is a lose-lose scenario, particularly with universities currently reducing entry qualifications in an attempt to fill places.
- Any degree is better than no degree mentality – this is a kind of Gadarene Swine Fallacy as elucidated in R.D. Laing's (1967), 'Politics of Experience', within which the accepted paradigm suggests that everyone should have a degree (at least for the sake of perceived equality). This line of arguing, as Laing suggests, is at best a 'Logical Fallacy'. I would suggest that it is those students that have been encouraged, in one way or another, to engage in an inappropriate programme of study that represent the bulk of un-employed or under employed graduates in the job market.
- Demotivated academic staff – the reasons for this we have already addressed above.

There are undoubtedly many more issues that could be addressed here, the list is, probably, endless.

However, what we can conclude that only a few practices and procedures which are currently in use in the higher education sector form the basis for a sustainable, quality driven educational system. This is a great shame because, in the end, it is only quality of service and market recognition achieved that will differentiate one supplier from the other. Again, as the Times Higher Education study on graduate employability and salary expectations suggests, in this new world where the student is the paying customer, past reputation does not guarantee future success. In light of this, I conclude that currently the majority of higher education offered in the burgeoning education marketplace is not fit for purpose.