

The Ethics of Differential Learning

Introduction

- Same fees, same resources and differential learning.
- Debate: should we accept the “same fees, same resources” principle.
- A further constraint: equality of opportunity.

Same fees, same resources (SFSR)

Against SFSR

For SFSR

The service model

- Encouraged into HE to improve their fitness for employment.
- They will benefit, therefore, they should contribute.
- Fees are a payment for a service or at least the opportunity for advancement/improved fitness.
- Then up to them what they make of the opportunity.

Continued

- The fitness instructor analogy – equal payment then equal resources/time should be devoted to you. The more you pay the more you get.
- Not entitled to any particular outcome – level of fitness.
- HE – meritocratic, equal opportunity for fitness or equal resources devoted.

A Final Constraint

Streaming

- Equal resources compatible with differential teaching.
- Fit the content of teaching to ability of student.
- Stream to ensure students get the most from the opportunity – a good service.
- 11+ problem – undermines the good service.

Summary

- The “same fees, same resources” principle is consistent with differential learning.
- But if we accept this principle, it will impose limits on what forms of differential learning are acceptable.
- Rob then presented arguments against the “same fees, same resources” principle and I presented arguments in its favour.

Summary

- Finally, we argued that, regardless of whether or not you accept the “same fees, same resources” principle, there is a further constraint on the forms of differential learning that could be permissible, based on considerations of fairness and equality of opportunity.