

# Caught between traditions?

Three framings for ALL practice  
within the context of the neoliberal university

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# Historical traditions....

Deborah Brandt, 2015, *The Rise of Mass Writing: Redefining Mass Literacy*

Explores the different cultural heritage of reading and writing, over time..

- Reading: deep seated connections between liberty and democracy, the informed citizen
- Writing: connected to work, vocation, practical living. Captured for trade and private enterprise

# 3 heritage traditions (framings) For HE & their implications for ALL.

- USA – you can do it!
- English – the system knows best
- Continental Europe – we're here to help

# Tradition 1: USA

“You know they tell you in this country that you have to pull yourself up by your boot straps”

*Al Franken, US Senator (July 2017).*



56:50



# Tradition 2 - English

- Elite university model?

The opportunity to be 'sorted'



if elitism means seeking out the best students; then yes, many universities are deserving of this label (<http://www.impactnottingham.com/2014/09/are-universities-fundamentally-elitist/>)

# Tradition 3 – Continental Europe

Vocational – we're here to help

Social democratic model

Everyone has something to offer,  
we'll help you find it,  
everyone benefits

## How Germany managed to abolish university tuition fees

October 13, 2014 4:24pm AEDT



Should others follow the lead of the country with one of the oldest universities in Europe? Jan Beckendorf, CC BY-SA

# Implications for ALL (academic literacy)?

England: 'suspicion' of rhetoric

Royal Society 17C motto:  
*nullius in verba (nothing in words)*

*'rhetoric capable of eliciting 'raving': 'Raving can be characterised as the predisposition of the active mind to take off on spurious flights of spurious fancy' (p.234).*



USA: embracing of rhetoric

'rhetoric is an essential part of the education system' (Frenkel 2014)

- Show and Tell
- First Year Composition courses

# Rhetoric

USA – embracing of

‘rhetoric is an essential part of the education system’ (Frenkel 2014)

- Show and Tell
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# Australia – mix of paradigmatic conditions

Heritage: English – elite system (rhetoric not taught explicitly)

Post WWII: social democratic system

Past 20 years: neoliberal system (US model)...

But without the traditions (sense of what the deal is)?

# Paradigmatic conditions...

Mediate and frame other considerations, eg.

- Participation agenda from Bradley Review (2008)
- Transition Pedagogy –developmental philosophy/normalising assistance seeking/craft-building
- Overcoming the deficit model
- Study skills vs Literacies approach (Lea & Street)
- Academic literacy as a threshold concept?
- Positioning students as consumers – *who is the onus on, the institution, or the student, and in what way?*

# Implications for student 'engagement'

Who is the onus on? – where does the ontological push come from?

G8 institutions? – the 'brand' speaks?

Young universities? – double jeopardy rule? And what does this mean for ALL within these institutions?

# Positioning of ALL?

Neoliberalism tends to favour 'ahistorical' approaches...

Can a consideration of different heritage framings of academic Language and Learning benefit ALL practitioners in making their case within the neoliberal university?



# References

Brandt, D. (2015) *The Rise of Mass Writing: Redefining Mass Literacy*, CUP, Cambridge.

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