
A CAPABILITIES BASED CRITIQUE OF GUTMANN'S DEMOCRATIC INTERPRETATION OF EQUAL EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY

Tony DeCesare
St. Louis University

One of Amy Gutmann's important achievements in *Democratic Education* is her development of a "democratic interpretation of equal educational opportunity."¹ This standard of equality demands that "all educable children learn enough to participate effectively in the democratic process."² In other words, Gutmann demands that all children attain essential democratic learning *outcomes up to a specified threshold*. This interpretation of equal educational opportunity was immediately (and has continued to be) a source of both influence and debate among philosophers of education.³ The majority of commentaries have focused on the value or limitations of Gutmann's use of an outcomes-based approach to equal educational opportunity and of her use of a threshold as the standard for determining equal opportunity.

Often, however, these commentaries—whether sympathetic or critical—treat Gutmann's thinking about equality separately from its specific development within her theory of *democratic* education. They attempt, instead, to assimilate her insights into more general arguments about educational equality and justice. But there are, in fact, aspects of Gutmann's thinking that are tailored explicitly to the political aspects of primary education. For instance, her threshold principle applies specifically to *democratic* learning, which she defines "in terms of the knowledge, skills, and dispositions people need to participate effectively in a deliberative context."⁴ There are non-political aspects of primary education—for example, "fine arts, athletics, vocational education"—that Gutmann does not "subject to a threshold outcome."⁵ Furthermore, her emphasis on equalizing *outcomes* up to this threshold reflects her commitment to primary

¹ Amy Gutmann, *Democratic Education* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999), 170.

² *Ibid.*

³ See, for instance, Nicholas C. Burbules, "Equal Opportunity or Equal Education?" *Educational Theory* 40, no. 2 (1990): 221–226; and Kenneth R. Howe, "Equal Opportunity Is Equal Education (within Limits)," *Educational Theory* 40, no. 2 (1990): 227–230. See also Kenneth R. Howe, *Understanding Equal Educational Opportunity* (New York: Teachers College Press, 1997).

⁴ Kenneth R. Howe and David E. Meens, *Democracy Left Behind: How Recent Education Reforms Undermine Local School Governance and Democratic Education* (Boulder, CO: National Education Policy Center, 2012): 2, <http://nepc.colorado.edu/publication/democracy-left-behind>.

⁵ Kenneth R. Howe, "In Defense of Outcomes-based Conceptions of Equal Educational Opportunity," *Educational Theory* 39, no. 4 (1989): 330.

education’s role in promoting *political* equality. Indeed, for Gutmann “‘equality’ means political equality.”⁶ And her democratic interpretation of equal educational opportunity is specifically meant to ensure that all children, as future citizens, are prepared for *political participation*.

This is not to suggest that Gutmann’s thinking about equality cannot be—or has not been—usefully extended to the non-political aspects of education. But in light of recent and increasing concern over political inequality in the United States and new proposals for how civic or democratic education can help to reduce such inequality,⁷ it seems like a particularly relevant time for revisiting Gutmann’s interpretation of equality in its original context. This paper attempts to do so by offering a critique of Gutmann’s thinking about equality in democratic education. I argue that she focuses too intently on democratic learning *outcomes* and does not consider carefully enough children’s *opportunities* (more precisely, their *effective opportunities* or *real freedoms*, that is, their “capabilities”) to be educated for democracy. Being attentive to children’s *capabilities to be educated for democracy* helps us to identify significant inequalities in children’s educational experiences, inequalities that are often missed by evaluations of learning outcomes or formal learning opportunities.

As the term “capabilities” suggests, the theoretical basis for the critical discussion of Gutmann that follows is Amartya Sen’s capabilities approach (CA). The CA has been increasingly influential in education over the last fifteen years and can offer further valuable insights for our thinking about democratic education, an area of research and inquiry to which CA has not yet been thoroughly and systematically applied.

GUTMANN’S DEMOCRATIC INTERPRETATION OF EQUAL EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY

Gutmann’s democratic interpretation of equal educational opportunity follows from the political purpose she ascribes to primary education, namely, equipping all children with a sufficient store of “the virtues, knowledge, and skills necessary for political participation.”⁸ According to Gutmann, children’s achievement of these learning outcomes should be the basis for a democratic society’s judgments about how to distribute education “inputs,” inclusive of both state and school resources, services, and formal learning opportunities. Such “inputs,” she argues, need not be distributed equally among children; rather, they are to be distributed in such a way as to ensure that all children achieve essential democratic learning outcomes.⁹ Furthermore, these outcomes themselves do not

⁶ *Ibid.*, emphasis added.

⁷ The most prominent example is Meira Levinson, *No Citizen Left Behind* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2012).

⁸ Gutmann, *Democratic Education*, 287.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 170.

need to be equalized in the strict sense. Gutmann demands, instead, that every educable child acquires “enough” of the knowledge, skills, and values necessary to participate in democratic processes.¹⁰ Thus, equality in democratic education, according to Gutmann, means that *all* educable children receive *sufficient* education inputs to enable their achievement of democratic learning outcomes up to a specified *threshold*.

She explores two cases of disadvantaged children to demonstrate the demands of this democratic interpretation of equal educational opportunity. One involves a six year old girl, Rebecca, who has an IQ of 115 but is “socially . . . handicapped.” She is dealing with poverty, divorced parents, her brother’s drug addiction, and other external factors that have led to her becoming a “discipline problem” and having difficulty “keeping up with her class.” The second case involves another six year old girl, Amy, who has a similarly high IQ of 122 and “is highly motivated to learn” but suffers from being “biologically handicapped”; like her parents, she is deaf.¹¹

Gutmann recognizes that each child will require special resources and assistance—both from the schools they attend and from the state—in order to reach the threshold of democratic learning outcomes. Amy’s school installed a “teletype phone” in order to communicate more easily with her parents at home; Amy herself was provided with “an FM wireless hearing aid,” a “certified teacher of the deaf” and a “speech therapist”; and her teachers were trained in sign language.¹² Given Amy’s learning challenges, Gutmann concludes that her school is obligated to provide these additional resources so that Amy can reach the threshold of democratic learning outcomes. And, indeed, she did attain the threshold. For instance, we are told that the speech therapist helped to make “it possible for Amy to acquire the basic skill of normal speech.”¹³ Given the deliberative skills that Gutmann takes to be important to children’s future engagement in the democratic process, this skill of normal speech is presumably an essential democratic learning outcome for a girl of Amy’s age. Since she is attaining this outcome up to the specified threshold and, in general, since she is “learning as much and as quickly as the average child in her class,” there is no problem, according to Gutmann, in saying that Amy’s education is both adequate by democratic standards and sufficiently equal to that of her non-disadvantaged peers.¹⁴

In Rebecca’s case, the school was not providing any special services to address her learning challenges and to enable her attainment of democratic learning outcomes up to the specified threshold. Thus, Gutmann concludes that, unlike Amy, Rebecca is not receiving an education that is “adequate by

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid., 148–49.

¹² Ibid., 149.

¹³ Ibid., 150.

¹⁴ Ibid.

democratic standards.”¹⁵ And, since she is not reaching the threshold of learning outcomes, her education is unjustifiably unequal to that of her non-disadvantaged peers. To correct this inadequacy and inequality, Gutmann suggests that the school—though somewhat limited in the direct assistance it can provide in cases like Rebecca’s—“can help by diagnosing learning problems, developing better teaching techniques for coping with these problems, hiring and training better teachers, and referring parents to people outside the school who can provide additional help.”¹⁶ In other words, the school can expand Rebecca’s learning opportunities—that is, provide further and different educational resources and services—in order to help her reach the threshold. Furthermore, Gutmann suggests that the need for state-provided resources and assistance is particularly pressing in Rebecca’s case because access to “a wide range of other goods and services—decent housing, job training and employment for parents, family counselling, day care and after-school programs for children”—would support the school’s efforts to help her deal with her challenging circumstances and, one hopes, reach the minimum threshold of democratic learning.¹⁷

BEYOND INPUTS AND OUTCOMES:
THE CAPABILITY TO BE EDUCATED FOR DEMOCRACY

These cases help to demonstrate Gutmann’s recognition that schools and the state must work together to provide the right kind and amount of resources to enable all children, regardless of their personal and social circumstances, to reach the threshold of democratic learning outcomes prescribed at each stage of their schooling. They also demonstrate Gutmann’s important recognition that simply equalizing inputs (formal opportunities and resources) is not an appropriate standard of equality for her scheme of democratic education; attention must be paid to the effects of these inputs, that is, to the democratic learning *outcomes* to which they do or do not lead. This way of thinking about resources is generally consistent with the *conversion principle* that informs Amartya Sen’s capabilities approach. The idea is that evaluations of equality must account for personal and external circumstances that enable or restrict individuals’ ability to “convert” what they have (here, their educational resources) into valued achievements (here, democratic learning outcomes).¹⁸ In other words, both Gutmann and Sen are aware that equal resources do not necessarily lead to equal outcomes and that the allocation of additional or different resources to some individuals is often necessary—if not always sufficient—to help them achieve the same outcomes as other, differently-situated individuals.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 149.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 151.

¹⁸ Amartya Sen, *Development as Freedom* (New York: Anchor Books, 1999).

Gutmann's application of this idea to questions of equality in democratic education is laudable. But a closer look from the perspective of Sen's CA reveals some limitations in her thinking. Surely she is right to reject strict resource egalitarianism as a basis for equal educational opportunity. Such a "passive" view of equal educational opportunity has traditionally included equal access to schools, equal exposure to a common curriculum, and equality of other general "input factors."¹⁹ Once these are provided in equal measure, the traditional thinking went, "both the short- and long-term effects of schooling" are considered to be a product of the students' abilities and efforts; the school, in other words, has "little responsibility" for any resulting inequalities.²⁰ The limitations of this conception of equal educational opportunity were recognized as early as the 1950s, following the Supreme Court's ruling in the case of *Brown v. The Board of Education*. Among other things, this ruling revealed that even when racially separated schools were equal in what were considered essential ways (e.g., "identical facilities and identical teacher salaries") it was still clear that "'equality of educational opportunity' in some sense did not exist."²¹ Once this initially vague "sense" of the remaining inequality "began to take a more precise form," it became evident that "equality of opportunity depends in some fashion upon the effects of schooling."²² Few since have disputed the importance of including some notion of equality of outcomes in conceptions of equal educational opportunity.

But a conception of equal educational opportunity that focuses too narrowly on outcomes at the expense of more careful and sustained thinking about opportunities—as I think Gutmann's does—is also potentially problematic. Recall that Gutmann's democratic interpretation of equal educational opportunity demands that all educable children attain a threshold of democratic learning outcomes. Also recall that educational inputs, according to Gutmann, need not be equal among children; they only need to be adequate to enable each child's attainment of the threshold. The attainment of democratic learning outcomes, then, is the standard by which the adequacy of educational opportunities is determined. Once a child has attained the threshold, we can justifiably conclude that the child's educational opportunities are adequate and, therefore, no further analysis of those opportunities would seem to be necessary.

The problem is that nothing in Gutmann's outcomes-focused approach to equality would, in principle, prevent or even raise concerns about a situation where two children attain the threshold of democratic learning but do so against

¹⁹ Donald M. Levine and Mary Jo Bane, "Introduction," in *The "Inequality" Controversy*, eds. Donald M. Levine and Mary Jo Bane (New York: Basic Books, 1975), 9.

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ James A. Coleman, "The Concept of Equality in Educational Opportunity," in *The "Inequality" Controversy*, eds. Donald M. Levine and Mary Jo Bane (New York: Basic Books, 1975), 14, emphasis added.

²² *Ibid.*, emphasis added.

a backdrop of grossly unequal educational opportunities or, more to the point, despite one child facing a set of personal and external conditions that make it significantly more difficult (if not impossible) for her to *convert* educational resources into outcomes and otherwise to *make effective use* of learning opportunities. In other words, a child’s attainment of the threshold of outcomes—regardless of how it comes about—seems to satisfy Gutmann’s concern about conversion factors and, more generally, about the conditions under which children work to achieve democratic learning outcomes.

Consider again the case of Rebecca. She has not, Gutmann tells us, been provided with sufficient resources to combat her learning challenges and to enable her attainment of the threshold. Thus, her education is neither adequate by democratic standards nor equal to that of her peers who are attaining the threshold. The school and, in this case, the state, have therefore failed to meet their responsibility to Rebecca. But what if Rebecca somehow *was* achieving the threshold level of outcomes under these *same* conditions (i.e., without “adequate” help from the school or state)? Would we then conclude that the school and the state—having done nothing more to enhance Rebecca’s educational opportunities—have now fulfilled their responsibility to Rebecca? And would we also, therefore, have to conclude that the same educational opportunities are now both adequate and equal to those of her peers? It seems that Gutmann’s answer would have to be “yes” to both questions. If Rebecca was somehow attaining the threshold, then whatever challenges she endured in doing so are, according to Gutmann’s thinking, irrelevant to our evaluation of equal educational opportunity. Indeed, it would seem that the conditions under which Rebecca’s learning takes place are relevant to our accounting of equal educational opportunity when she is failing to reach the threshold but are all of a sudden irrelevant—and, perhaps worse, are justifiably ignored—if she somehow manages to reach the threshold. Thus, Gutmann’s democratic interpretation of equal opportunity, with its primary emphasis on equal outcomes up to a threshold, forces us into an odd situation. We are forced to consider the same personal, social, and other factors as *relevant* to a child’s education and to equal educational opportunity one minute and *irrelevant* the next simply because the disadvantaged student manages—in spite of her circumstances and, perhaps, at a great cost to other, non-political aspects of her education²³—to attain the threshold of learning outcomes.

This odd conclusion follows, in part, from the absence of any standard for assessing the quality and equality of children’s opportunities to achieve outcomes that is *independent* from their attainment of the outcomes themselves. After all, it is entirely possible that opportunities “sufficient” to enable children’s attainment of outcomes might be insufficient and even objectionable by a measure that operates independently of outcomes. For instance, imagine a futuristic society where children who fail to meet the specified threshold of

²³ cf. Barry L. Bull, *Social Justice in Education* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008).

learning outcomes can simply be injected with some kind of serum that automatically brings them to the threshold. In this way, all children would be assured of reaching the threshold of learning and, therefore, of possessing the ability to participate in democratic processes in the future, thus satisfying Gutmann’s standard of equal educational opportunity. But we are likely to balk at the idea that any means by which (or conditions under which) children attain desired learning outcomes—including being injected with a serum—are acceptable as long as (or as soon as) they actually attain the desired outcomes. And such an idea is likely to meet particularly strong objections in the case of *democratic* education, an aspect of education about which we have typically heeded (at least in theory) Dewey’s reminder that “democratic ends demand democratic methods for their realization.”²⁴ This objection suggests that we both desire and need some method for conducting careful and sustained analyses of the processes by which and the conditions under which children work to achieve democratic learning outcomes—specifically, a method that 1) operates at least partially independently from children’s attainment of the outcomes themselves and 2) is consistent with the values of a democratic society.

The argument here is that Sen’s CA can be useful toward the development of such a method. Specifically, it would have us evaluate democratic educational equality in terms of children’s *capabilities to be educated for democracy*.²⁵ This means paying careful and sustained attention to those conditions and factors that enable or restrict children’s *effective exercise* of democratic learning opportunities (taking account of their *conversion* of educational resources into outcomes) and their *real freedom* to strive for democratic learning outcomes. Such an evaluation can help to reveal inequities that traditional measures of equal educational opportunity—especially those that focus too narrowly on outcomes and do not think deeply enough about children’s overall educational experiences *independently* of specific outcomes—often overlook.

To make the point clearer, consider the 2013 school closings in Chicago. These closings affected the educational experiences of nearly 12,000 children in various ways,²⁶ some of which can best—and, perhaps, only—be captured by a capabilities-based evaluation of equal educational opportunity. Some of these children wound up in equally- or better-resourced schools, and many maintained (and some even exceeded) their previous levels of school achievement. But one consequence of the closings was that the vast majority of

²⁴ John Dewey, “Democratic Ends Need Democratic Methods for Their Realization,” in *John Dewey: The Later Works, 1925–1953*, ed. Jo Ann Boydston, vol. 14, 1939–1941 (Carbondale, Southern Illinois University Press, 1981), 367–68.

²⁵ I use the term “democratic educational equality” to denote equal opportunity to achieve *democratic* learning outcomes.

²⁶ Pauline Lipman and Kelley Vaughan, *Root Shock: Parents’ Perspectives on School Closings in Chicago* (Chicago: University of Illinois at Chicago Collaborative for Equity & Justice in Education, June 2014).

the children had to travel greater distances—and, therefore, spend more time and energy traveling each day—to and from their replacement schools. Such children face not just increased travel time but also, and importantly, additional “safety concerns” as they travel to schools outside their neighborhoods and sometimes “through unsafe areas.”²⁷ These concerns have likely contributed to what many parents identified as increased “anxiety” and “stress” among their children as they transition to their replacement schools.²⁸

To be sure, these school closings do not restrict the formal learning opportunities that children have. They are still being provided with adequate public schooling, educational resources, and formal learning opportunities. And, as noted, at least some of the children maintained or exceeded their previous levels of achievement. In terms of simple inputs and outcomes measures, then, we might be tempted to conclude that there is no issue of educational inequality here. But these closings have created or contributed to circumstances that make it more difficult for some children—predominantly Black and Hispanic children—to convert their educational resources into outcomes and otherwise to make effective use of their formal learning opportunities. And, furthermore, they limit the real freedom these children have to be educated, particularly their freedom from the burden of disproportionate travel time and from the stress and anxiety of increased safety risks. Indeed, we can also point to the decreased levels of safety, comfort, and community that many children felt in their replacement schools, where they often found fewer friendly faces among the faculty, staff, and student body. All of these factors, whether experienced inside or outside schools, restrict children’s capabilities to be educated. And the importance of such restrictive factors to our evaluations of equal educational opportunity is not diminished by children’s achievement of learning outcomes. A capabilities based evaluation helps us to recognize this important point and, thereby, to deepen our understanding of equal educational opportunity.

And this same point holds for democratic education. Indeed, it seems particularly important that we evaluate various obstacles to children’s enjoyment of the capability to be educated *for democracy*—that we evaluate equality in this particular aspect of education in ways that go beyond formal opportunities and the attainment of democratic learning outcomes. After all, children’s democratic education—the development of their democratic identities—is significantly influenced not just by what happens in their schools but also by what they experience in their wider communities. There is, as Sen puts it, a kind of “wider political education” that happens outside of schools.²⁹

Thus, to modify an example used by Unterhalter, we might expect girls’ capabilities to be educated *for democracy* to “shrink” in communities where

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Jean Dreze and Amartya Sen, *India: Development and Participation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 363. In fairness, Gutmann, too, clearly recognizes this point.

“social customs and the prevailing ethos” discourage women’s participation in political life.³⁰ Indeed, we might expect this consequence for all children who grow up in communities that devalue or marginalize the democratic participation of certain groups with which they identify, whether it be a gender, racial, ethnic, or class group. It is in part for these reasons that McCowan and Unterhalter remind us—specifically in the context of democratic citizenship education—of the need to be attentive to “disparities” in children’s “formative experiences *outside the school* in terms of inequalities on the basis of gender, social class and race/ethnicity.”³¹ Such experiences might not jeopardize children’s formal opportunities to be educated for democracy or make their attainment of democratic learning outcomes impossible. But they can still have a significant and inequitable effect on children’s “expectations of political influence, access to sources of information and experiences of democratic engagement,” all of which can potentially restrict or expand their *capability to be educated for democracy*.³²

On the whole, then, a capabilities perspective can also help us develop deeper insights into *democratic* educational equality in particular—insights that take us beyond simple inputs and outcomes measures. In particular, it demands “a range of more searching questions” about the conditions and circumstances under which children work to achieve democratic learning outcomes.³³ It demands, in other words, a deeper analysis of all (and just) those conditions and circumstances—personal and external—that *restrict* children’s conversion of educational resources, that create *obstacles* to their effective use of opportunities for democratic education, and that *limit* their freedom to pursue democratic learning. The idea is that the obstacles some children face in their striving to achieve such learning—obstacles that often result from various inequities in the background conditions and circumstances under which they strive to learn—must be included in our thinking about democratic educational equality.

The goal, therefore, is to determine those factors that shrink children’s capabilities to be educated for democracy and to take steps to address such factors. Toward this end, Ingrid Robeyns has developed what she calls a “capability inputs and obstacles mapping tool” that can help communities to “take stock” of the relationship between a valued capability and the “inputs and obstacles” that promote or restrict its enjoyment by some or all members of the

³⁰ Elaine Unterhalter, “Education, Capabilities and Social Justice,” paper commissioned for the *EFA Global Monitoring Report 2003/4: The Leap to Equality* (2003), 4.

³¹ Tristan McCowan and Elaine Unterhalter, “Education, Citizenship and Deliberative Democracy: Sen’s Capability Perspective,” in *Education for Civic and Political Participation: A Critical Approach*, eds. Reinhold Hedtke and Tatjana Zimenkova (New York: Routledge, 2013), 143–44, emphasis added.

³² *Ibid.*, 144.

³³ Elaine Unterhalter, Rosie Vaughn, and Melanie Walker, “The Capability Approach and Education,” *Prospero* 13, no. 3 (2007): 14.

community.³⁴ Using the capability to be educated (in general) as her primary example, Robeyns suggests that the mapping tool be used, first, to determine the “agents who are able to provide these inputs, or to remove the obstacles.”³⁵ Importantly, Robeyns notes that “depending on the social structures and characteristics of the relevant community, very different agents of change will be relevant.”³⁶ But it is likely that among the potentially relevant “agents of change” will be national, state, and local governments as well as individual households—all of which can contribute to the kinds of conditions and circumstances that promote or shrink children’s capabilities to be educated. The key point is that this mapping tool seeks, first, to identify various agents (institutions and individuals) that can contribute to the expansion of children’s capabilities to be educated.

Second, the mapping tool can be used to “distinguish between the different inputs and obstacles in terms of their importance in contributing to the capability.”³⁷ Robeyns suggests that communities work to develop a weighted list of the kinds of capability inputs that different agents can provide and of the capability obstacles that different agents can help to eliminate. This list, too, will likely be context-dependent, but there would seem to be some “obvious capability inputs that will hold for most if not all situations.”³⁸ For instance, Robeyns points to inputs like an adequate schooling infrastructure, well-trained teachers, and adequate nutrition to support children’s concentration and learning. Beyond these, she notes that in those contexts where safe passage to school (and, in extreme cases, even safety *in* schools) is a problem for certain children, additional capability inputs (or additional work to remove capability obstacles) will be necessary to promote the capability to be educated for those children. Furthermore, this way of thinking helps us to account for various discriminations within communities or households that create obstacles to children’s capabilities to be educated, including gender-based discriminations like those mentioned earlier.

As Robeyns herself notes, this capability inputs and obstacles mapping tool is not “very sophisticated.”³⁹ But this lack of sophistication is at least partly intentional. Particularly relevant here is that its open-endedness allows for the affected community itself to engage in a democratic process through which it can develop the tool further for its specific purposes. Thus, the tool creates a situation in which “the community itself may feel more empowered to change something

³⁴ Ingrid Robeyns, “How Can the Capability Approach be Used to Serve Marginalized Communities?” in *Interrogating Development: Insights from the Margins*, eds. Frédérique Apffel-Marglin and Sanjay Kumar (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2010), 251.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 252.

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 253.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 254.

about the situation, or to start or intensify political activism to move the relevant sections of the government and civil society to do their part.”⁴⁰ On the whole, then, Robeyns’s mapping tool offers one potentially fruitful way of organizing the processes through which communities work to identify the various factors that either promote (in the case of “capability inputs”) or shrink (in the case of “capability obstacles”) children’s capabilities to be educated. And a similar process can be conducted specifically with regard to the capability to be educated for democracy. The goal, again, would be to determine the relevant agents of change that can help to promote this capability and, relatedly, to identify key capability inputs and obstacles that educational and social policy should aim to provide or remove as part of the effort to achieve greater democratic educational equality.

CONCLUSION

The foregoing (Senian) analysis of Gutmann’s thinking about equality suggests that we can enhance and deepen our evaluation of democratic educational equality by looking not just at children’s achievement of democratic learning outcomes (or their formal learning opportunities), but also (and primarily) at the *capabilities* they have to be educated for democracy— independently of the outcomes they manage to achieve. Adjusting our thinking in this way can help us to develop more equitable educational policies and practices and to combat more effectively political inequality through democratic education.

⁴⁰ Ibid.
