Education for deliberative democracy: Mapping the field

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The notion of deliberative democracy has been widely discussed in political theory the last twenty years. Deliberative democracy has also made an impression in educational research. Many who are interested in democratic education have started to ask how the skills and values characteristic of deliberative democracy can be taught and learned in the classroom. This work, however, is being done in different parts of the academic universe, and consequently the field of education for deliberative democracy can seem fragmented, which makes it difficult to achieve genuine progress. Building on a review of the literature, this article tries to structure the work in this field, by pointing out main lines of disagreement and differences in emphasis, as well as suggesting where work is needed to fruitfully translate the idea of deliberative democracy into an educational setting. Our main claim will be that there is a need for research on education for deliberative democracy that more thoroughly integrates the philosophical literature with empirical studies.

Keywords: education for democracy, deliberative democracy, deliberative pedagogy, literature review.

Introduction

Within political philosophy, deliberative democracy has been widely discussed during the last decades, even to the point that several authors now talk about a deliberative turn in democratic theory (Dryzek 2002, p. 1). Although ideas characteristic of deliberative democracy can be traced throughout the history of democratic thought, it is now most commonly associated with the work of contemporary authors like Jürgen Habermas, James Fishkin, Joshua Cohen, Amy Gutmann, and

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Dennis Thompson. Deliberative democracy has also made an impression in the field of democratic education, where writers have started to ask how the skills, knowledge, attitudes, and values required by deliberative democracy can be taught and learned in the classroom. However, it may seem as though these two bodies of literature, deliberative democratic theory and deliberative democratic education, tend to talk past each other, to the detriment of both. The aim of this article is to investigate how and why this is so.

Deliberative democracy and education

Deliberative democracy can be seen as a response to some of the challenges facing both contemporary democracies and conceptions of democracy. How do societies deal with growing and deepening pluralism? How can citizens become more actively involved in the governing of their communities? How may democracies live up to the ideals of democratic legitimacy so that decisions really do represent the will of the people and not just the will of an elite? Supporters of deliberative democracy see public reasoning as a crucial part of the answer to these questions, and accordingly they place public deliberation at the heart of democratic theory and practice.

According to the ideal of deliberative democracy, citizens and their representatives should strive to justify their positions and decisions through public reasoning, in which they seek mutually justifiable reasons for the laws they impose on one another (Gutmann & Thompson 2004). In this way, deliberative democracy can usefully be characterised as opposed to voting-centred views of democracy. Whereas the latter see democracy as an arena where fixed preferences and interests compete via (hopefully) fair mechanisms of aggregation, deliberative democracy instead emphasises the communicative process of will-formation that precedes voting. In the deliberative view, a legitimate political order is one that can be justified to all those living under its law (Chambers 2003). It is thus legitimised not by majority rule *per se*, but by the process of giving defensible reasons, explanations, and accounts for public decisions (Held 2006). Voting will still be needed, since even deliberation can lead to stand-offs, but deliberation takes the place of voting as the guiding idea of democracy.

Deliberative democracy lends itself nicely to educational treatment. Democracy in general "cannot thrive without a well-educated citizenry", but that applies even more so to deliberative democracy (Gutmann & Thompson 2004, p. 35). The ability to give reasons for one's views is not inborn, but has to be learned. This is especially so if it is held that

the reasons to be given in deliberation should be publicly acceptable, appealing to the common good instead of self-interest. Furthermore, the ability to listen carefully to others and to engage respectfully with views different from one's own seems to be a capacity perfectly suited for development in the classroom. In short, deliberative democracy seems to require what Paul Weithman (2005) calls a deliberative character, a cluster of skills, attitudes, and values that both can and should be cultivated in the classroom. Hence, it is no surprise that the last decade has seen the appearance of a considerable body of literature which addresses education for deliberative democracy. It is perhaps no accident that one of the leading theorists of deliberative democracy, Amy Gutmann, is also a leading educational theorist. As Gutmann and Thompson (2004, p. 35) say, "an important part of democratic education is learning how to deliberate well." It is plausible to assume that schools, as microcosms of society, are the best arena for children to learn this.

Yet just as there are conflicting conceptions of democracy, there are conflicting conceptions of democratic education. One's view of democratic education will depend on one's view of democracy (as well as of education), since different conceptions of democracy have different ideas of how citizens should participate in democratic society. And just as there are different ways to understand democracy, there are different ways to understand deliberative democracy, and this might lead to different ideas about what an education for deliberative democracy should look like, and which skills and values it should cultivate. In this article, we aim to highlight the main ideas and assumptions, as well as the main differences and disagreements characterising the field of education for deliberative democracy.

Method

It is difficult to get an overview of the field of education for deliberative democracy. It is located where many academic disciplines converge. Relevant work is being produced within fields such as philosophy, pedagogy, sociology, psychology, and others, and articles are being published in many different journals in different areas. Consequently, the various publications build on each other only to a limited extent. We therefore thought it necessary to perform a review of the literature, in order to take stock of where the field is now, and where it is headed. This article is thus based on what is called in the methodology of literature reviews a *conceptual* review. Unlike a systematic review, a conceptual review does not attempt to answer particular research questions by

summarizing the results of the existing literature, but instead strives to synthesize a particular field of knowledge in a less formalized way (Petticrew & Roberts 2006). The aim is to give a map of the field in question, its main ideas, assumptions, and controversies, in order to understand it better, rather than to summarize (all) its results. Yet our conceptual review also has aspects of what Petticrew and Roberts (2006, p. 41) call a "critical review", in that we critically examine this literature, trying to point out its main shortages and challenges.

In our work with the literature, we limited the search process to articles detected with ERIC (Educational Resources Information Center). Articles in languages other than English are thus not included, nor are books and book sections. The reason for leaving out books and book sections is, beside pragmatic concerns, that the thoughts presented within these sources have usually been published in articles before being printed as books (Fernández & Sundström 2011). There may be articles of relevance not detected with ERIC, but it is the most comprehensive database available to educational researchers. The case can thus be made that it will yield a sufficiently comprehensive selection to satisfy the aim of a conceptual review: to present the main ideas and controversies in a field.

The searches were carried out in February of 2013. In the search process, the search term deliberati* was set as a necessary criterion: all the articles in this review have deliberati* either in the abstract, the title, or as a keyword. This term was combined with other relevant words and phrases, such as education, school, democra*, classroom, dialogue, and discussion. This gave us 1200 peer-reviewed articles that seemed pertinent to the review. Many of these were not concerned with deliberative democracy, however, so after reading the abstracts, the number was narrowed down, first from 1200 to 99; and then, after reading the full articles, to 67; all explicitly about education for democracy with deliberation as a central aspect. Thus, the findings presented in this article are built upon the review of 67 articles, marked with an asterisk in the reference list. Most of these articles were published in the last ten years, indicating the relative recentness of the field. As mentioned, they were also spread out over a large number of different journals, thus demonstrating the need for a comprehensive map of the field.

General points of agreement

The field of education for deliberative democracy can be structured around two overarching points of agreement and three main lines of

difference and disagreement. We will focus on the lines of disagreement, since these are the most consequential, but we will nevertheless start out by stating the two general points on which the reviewed articles concur.

First, there is an underlying agreement in the literature that deliberative skills, knowledge and values are learned through *practice*. This amounts to a shared pedagogical assumption: it is by partaking in deliberative situations that students/future citizens learn the skills, knowledge and values necessary for participation in deliberative democracy. Technically expressed, there is an assumption of parallelism between the object of learning (what is to be learned) and the method of learning (how to learn it). Even though this assumption seems eminently plausible ("to learn something you have to practice it") and may to some even sound like a tautology ("deliberation is learned through deliberation"), it is not necessarily true in all areas. James Murphy (2004), for instance, refers to studies that seem to show that democratic skills and virtues are not learned, or at least are not best learned, by democratic education as it is typically conceived by theorists, but by the acquisition of traditional knowledge embedded in subjects like history and the social sciences. Hence, one should not dismiss out of hand the possibility that deliberative skills and values are best learned not by practicing deliberation, but by imparting historical and social scientific knowledge. Still, this possibility is not considered in the existing literature on education for deliberative democracy.

Second, there is a general agreement about what a deliberative situation is: a dialogue where different voices and perspectives can be heard and expressed, and in which the participants listen to and treat each other with respect. This is the common core of deliberation shared by major theorists like Habermas, Fishkin, and Gutmann and Thompson. A deliberative democratic process is one where everyone can participate equally, and where the participants listen carefully and respectfully to each other. It is also a process in which the participants articulate reasons that they think others can understand and accept, thus directing it towards some form of collective will-formation.

However, when this shared core of deliberation is transported into educational research, the agreement disappears. Different ways of talking about deliberation and education emerge, giving rise to multiple conceptions of deliberative democracy, as well as multiple ideas about the role of deliberation in education for democracy. What Dennis Thompson says about empirical studies of deliberative democracy within political science also applies to parallel studies within educational research:

> While claiming (correctly) that deliberative theories share a common core of values, the empirical studies actually adopt diverse concepts of deliberation and examine different consequences under a range of conditions. The variations make it difficult to compare the findings of the studies and relate them to the theories (Thompson 2008, p. 501)

In other words, beneath the agreement there lurks a confusing disagreement, to which we now turn.

Dimensions of disagreement/difference

The overarching difference in the field, and the most substantive one, is that between theoretically driven articles and practically/empirically driven articles. The theoretical articles are primarily concerned with deliberation as a political concept, while the practical articles are primarily concerned with deliberation as a pedagogical concept. There are also disagreements within the different camps. In the theoretical camp, there is a disagreement concerning the scope of deliberative democratic ideals. Here, articles range from what we have called "political conceptions" on the one hand and "way-of-life conceptions" on the other hand. Within the practical camp there is a wider range of differences than in the theoretical camp. The various articles have different assumptions about what a deliberative process is supposed to teach students, such as decision-making skills, explorative skills, and general democratic skills. All of them, however, describe these skills as democratic skills fostered by participation in a deliberative process.

We shall now explain the differences in the field in greater detail, starting with the overarching one, followed by a more detailed description of the variations within the main camps. Of course, it is not the case that all articles fall neatly into the categories we have constructed, but we still find it a useful and adequate map of the field, giving us what Wittgenstein (2001) famously called a "perspicuous representation".

Theoretical vs. practical

The main division in the literature is between what we might call theoretical and practical approaches. The first body of work starts from a theoretical conception of deliberative democracy and reasons from there towards the skills and values future citizens should develop. The second set of articles starts from a pedagogical conception of deliberation,

that is, deliberation as a (classroom) practice, and moves from there towards the skills and values that participation in such practices is expected to generate. These latter articles are either qualitative investigations of deliberative pedagogy or quantitative empirical articles focusing on measuring the effects of such pedagogy. Based on these results, researchers in the practical camp are trying to answer whether deliberative pedagogy "works" or not, and which challenges and opportunities it opens up.

This might at first seem a perfect fit: the theoretical and the practical articles meet halfway in a shared view of the skills and values essential to the practice of deliberative democracy, the theoretical articles justifying the necessity of cultivating these skills and values by grounding them in philosophical ideals of deliberative democracy; and the practical articles showing how these skills and values are best cultivated in the classroom. Yet even though the literature appears at first glance cohesive, beneath the surface it is considerably more fragmented and disjointed. The two sets of articles operate with seemingly similar words, concepts, and assumptions, but these are given different meanings within each set.

The main reason for this discontinuity is that within education, deliberation has become a conception in its own right, in the form of deliberative *pedagogy*, which is not necessarily connected to deliberative *democracy*. In other words, a gap has opened up between deliberation as a democratic concept and deliberation as a pedagogical concept. This distinction runs parallel to one formulated by Tomas Englund in relation to his concept of **deliberative communication**:

> [There] is an important difference between deliberative communication and deliberative democracy. In the latter constellation, a close relationship to one or other formal democratic decision-making process is central, whereas deliberative communication does not presuppose this closeness (Englund 2006, pp. 506–507)

According to Englund, deliberative communication may be connected to a deliberative democratic ideal, but it can also be connected to other educational aims, such as the formation and transmission of values and knowledge more generally. Deliberative communication can thus be seen as contributing to either deliberative democratic aims or more general educational aims.

The distinction between deliberative democracy and deliberative pedagogy is not a problem in itself, but it becomes a problem when "deliberation" is used in both senses as though there were no distinction.

Hence, when the concept of deliberation is placed within a pedagogical context, one operates with a general idea of deliberation that can fit into almost any conception of democracy. So when it is argued that the pedagogical method of deliberation fosters such-and-such skills or values, it is an open question what makes these skills and values relevant for deliberative *democracy*. We shall return to this overarching disagreement, which is our main concern, later in the paper, but first we shall go into greater detail about the differences within the two camps.

Differences within the theoretical approach: political vs. way of life

There are significant variations within the two main approaches. As mentioned, the more theoretical articles start from normative ideals of deliberative democracy. However, the ideals employed differ, and thereby also their accounts of the skills and values that ought to be cultivated in education. The main dividing line is between those that see deliberative democracy as a *political* ideal, and those that see it as an entire *way of life*.

Political conceptions of deliberative democracy see it primarily as a way for citizens to make political decisions together. These conceptions are those that will be most familiar for people coming from the philosophical debate about deliberative democracy. Articles in this vein commonly take the works of Jürgen Habermas and/or Amy Gutmann as their points of departure. Reasoning skills, critical thinking, and the ability to listen to others are skills often emphasised, as well as values such as reciprocity, tolerance, and respect in the deliberative process (see for example Costa 2006, Englund 2006, Fitzpatrick 2009, Hanson & Howe 2011).

Now it should be mentioned that although most articles in this camp are supportive of deliberative democracy, there are also critical voices. The most common point of criticism in the educational literature on deliberative democracy concerns the role of emotions (see for example Ruitenberg 2009, Peterson 2009, Griffin 2012). Both Habermas' and Gutmann's views on the deliberative process are castigated for being overly rationalistic and for not taking sufficient account of the role that emotions could and should play within deliberation. This kind of criticism is succinctly put by Martyn Griffin (2012):

> Deliberative democracy … is built upon an assumption that citizens will be capable of constructing and defending reasons for their moral and political beliefs. However, critics of deliberative democracy suggest that citizens' emotions are not

properly considered in this process and, if left unconsidered, present a serious problem for this political framework… There has been little consideration of how these capacities might be educated in children so that emotionally competent deliberative citizens can be created. In this paper, emotional intelligence is presented as an essential capacity that can fulfil this role for the deliberative citizen and deliberative democracy more generally (Griffin 2012, p. 517).

This kind of criticism is usually grounded in the thoughts of Chantal Mouffe and radical democracy, which seems to have been quite influential in the educational literature. As a response, some authors try to modify and incorporate the role of emotions into the deliberative conception, while others instead argue for the ideas of radical democracy as the educational aim. It is not our aim here to defend deliberative democracy, but it should be noted that a prominent deliberative theorist like Thompson (2008, p. 505) claims that this criticism is based on a caricature of deliberative democracy: no major deliberative theorist has ever held that deliberators should rely on pure reason alone and avoid all appeals to emotion. Still, this type of criticism is frequently met with in the field of education.

Whereas political conceptions of deliberative democracy attend more narrowly to decision-making, what we have called way-of-life conceptions see deliberation and its attendant skills and values as constituents of a comprehensive *moral* ideal, a way people should behave towards each other *in general* (see for example Parker 1997, Yeager & Silva 2002, Laguardia & Pearl 2009). The important difference between the two types is thus one of scope. In the former, deliberation is seen as a process of political decision-making, whereas in the latter it is seen as a mode of communication that should ideally suffuse our ways of being and living together. In their exploration of how "children can learn to deliberate democratically", Yeager and Silva (2002, p. 18) emphasise that although "an understanding of political democracy is important… we believe that there are broader meanings of democracy that stem partly from John Dewey's notion of democracy… a form of active community life – a way of being and living together". As should be clear from the preceding quote, way-of-life conceptions are usually influenced by the work of John Dewey.

The difference in scope between the two could have different educational implications. The same core skills and values are emphasised in both: verbal reasoning skills, the ability to listen to others, to reflect upon their statements and arguments, attitudes of tolerance and respect, and so on. Yet the difference in scope means that these skills and values

have different meanings in the different conceptions. In the first, they are primarily issue-centred, and in the second they are more relation-centred. In the political conception, deliberative skills and values are justified instrumentally as strategies for (good) political decision-making. Reasoning skills, for instance, are seen as important for exploring different alternatives and different solutions in order to make the understanding of the problem and the subsequent decision as good as possible. Furthermore, values of tolerance and respect are connected with the idea that one should not have predetermined views about which solution, decision, or perspective best fits the situation one is in. In contrast, in the way-of-life conception these abilities are connected to the idea of deliberation as a way for people to interact and live together. Deliberative skills and values are thus not employed merely to explore different alternatives in order to come to the best possible solution, but are justified as manifesting a kinder and morally better way to treat one's fellow citizens.

A further implication could be the treatment of controversial issues in the classroom. A discussion framed with the aim of educating students to "be sensitive to each other's feelings" (James 2010, pp. 620–621) will typically be guided in a direction where the discussion is characterised by these values, whereas a discussion framed with the aim of teaching students to "challenge ideas" will typically be guided in a different direction, and allow for a more confrontational form of communication. This can be extended to the discussion of a safe classroom climate, which is a prominent topic of interest in the literature (see for example Minnici & Hill 2007, James 2010). A discussion framed by a political conception will be more likely to allow a confrontational discussion without interpreting it as an "unsafe classroom climate", whereas someone viewing the very same discussion from a way-of-life conception might interpret it as "unsafe". The point is that different conceptions of deliberative democracy would guide classroom practices in different directions, and give deliberative skills and values different meanings.

Differences within the practical approach

The difference in scope noted in the former section was within the more theoretical articles. We now turn to the articles within the practical camp. These start with a pedagogical conception of deliberation and move from there towards the skills and values participation is expected to generate. This part of the literature is difficult to structure, given the variation as to which aspects of deliberation are seen as most important, and thus which skills and values it ought to cultivate. In this section we

look at different ideas about deliberation as a pedagogical method, that is, diverging views both about what to emphasise in the deliberation itself and about the educational benefits of that deliberation. We also intend to show how and why this is a contributing factor to the gap existing in the field.

Within the practical camp, there are both qualitative and quantitative articles. The articles using qualitative methods are usually most interested in how to make deliberative discussions "work", what possibilities and strategies exist for conducting them, and what the obstacles and difficulties are. A recurring challenge is that classroom discussions too often become confrontational, resulting in an unpleasant atmosphere (Minnici & Hill 2007, p. 202). These challenges are often linked to the question of how to maintain a "safe" classroom climate, a major topic of discussion in this part of the literature (see for example Minnici & Hill 2007, James 2010). Other challenges include how to get everyone involved and how to handle varying class sizes (see for example Parker 2001, Beck 2005). Another topic of discussion is the role and potential of the Internet as an arena in which to conduct deliberative discussions, with several articles expressing enthusiasm for this possibility (see for example Holt et al. 1998, Hall 2008, Jackson & Wallin 2009), while others concentrate on the classroom (see for example Brice 2002, Beck 2005, Reich 2007, Thornberg 2010).

A desired outcome of deliberation is decision-making skills. By participating in deliberation students are assumed to learn skills necessary for making decisions together, essential skills in a competent democratic citizen (see for example Parker 2001, Beck 2003, Beck 2005, Camicia 2010). A closely related desired outcome is explorative skills. According to this view, deliberation should teach students how to discuss and explore different issues together (see for example Parker 2001, Brice 2002, Jerome & Algarra 2005, Camicia 2010). By exploring difficult topics together students are assumed to acquire democratic capacities such as being able to think logically, to argue coherently and fairly, and to consider relevant alternatives before making judgment (Brice 2002, pp. 67–68). Now, there are noticeable similarities between the skills and values emphasised in the qualitative part of the practical camp on one side, and the skills and values emphasised by the political conception described in the theoretical camp on the other. An important difference, however, is that within the pedagogically driven articles the description of deliberative democracy is often quite broad and vague, as is the description of deliberation as an educative process. An example is found in Beck (2003):

> While the tools of deliberation are many, Parker and Zumeta (1999) reduce the eight steps of professional policy analysis to three steps that citizens should know. Their steps can be described as civic tools. They are: (1) problem findings – identifying and understanding public problems; (2) solutions generation and analysis – developing and analyzing policy options together; and (3) decision making – making policy decisions together" (Beck 2003, pp. 328–329).

This description of a deliberative process is so broad that the connection to deliberative democracy becomes unclear. When the argument about which desired skills and values participation in deliberation can be expected to generate is based upon such a vague definition, the immediate relevance to deliberative democracy becomes unclear.

The unclear connection to deliberative democracy is perhaps even more apparent in the quantitative literature. These articles are first and foremost interested in measuring the effect of participation in deliberations. However, deliberation is here understood as a pedagogical method designed to teach students general political skills, knowledge and values: "deliberation about policy and politics in the classroom increases students' knowledge, efficacy, interest, and opinion arrangement" (Luskin et al. in: Latimer & Hempson 2012, p. 374). Deliberative conversational skills are at times mentioned, but the effect of deliberation is measured against general political skills, knowledge and values (see for example Gastil & Dillard 1999, Feldman et al. 2007, Gershtenson et al. 2010). Again, the results are interesting, but they are not of immediate relevance to deliberative democracy in particular.

The empirical studies, both qualitative and quantitative, do not for the most part address the concerns that are central in the theoretical work on deliberative democracy. The practical field's use of broad and vague definitions of deliberation leads to multifarious notions of what the desired skills and values are, and thus, what deliberation ought to cultivate. The problem is that these vague definitions lead to reinterpretations of deliberative skills and values to the extent that it is possible to question what their connection to deliberative democracy is all together. It is though a gap threatens to open up within the literature, between a more specific political idea of deliberation and a more general idea of deliberation.

An extreme example of how the very broad definitions of deliberation employed in the practical field makes it possible to reinterpret the desired "deliberative" skills and values, is displayed in Dahlstedt et al. (2011). Here various educational programmes, such as Aggression

Replacement Training (ART), are described as educative in a deliberative democratic sense:

> Lately, a deliberative conception of democracy has gained influence in policy debates throughout Europe. Individuals are here seen to be fostered into responsible, mature – democratic – citizens by being involved in dialogue... This article analyses two pedagogical models... Social and Emotional Training and Aggression Replacement Training, both teaching students the art of democratic deliberation … The programmes, through the use of dialogue, aim at educating the pupils in one way or another to become deliberative subjects, characterized by a well-developed 'social competence' (Dahlstedt et al. 2011, pp. 399–400).

Like Bergh and Englund (2014) we wonder what this has to do with deliberative democracy as conceived of by political theorists. This article is an extreme example of a general problem in the field: when deliberation is seen as a way to teach students different skills, as in this example social skills, like taking responsibility for the consequences of one's actions, or emotional skills, like anger management (Dahlstedt et al. 2011, p. 408), what makes these skills and values deliberative-democratic? Are the students learning specifically deliberative-democratic skills or just general skills, placed within a framework of deliberative democracy to earn legitimacy?

Our main conclusion, and our main concern, about the state of deliberative education echoes the one made by Dennis Thompson (2008) in his survey of the relation between deliberative democratic theory and empirical political science: normative theorists and empirical researchers tend to "talk past each other" – the empirical studies often fail to engage with the theoretical ones, and vice versa. The empirical work would be more productive if it had a clearer idea of the distinctive nature of deliberative democracy, in contrast to general democratic ideas. Something similar goes for educational research on deliberative democracy. The empirical studies employ diverse conception of deliberation, and moreover, conceptions that are so general that the connection between practical, pedagogical research and theoretical, philosophical research is lost. A tighter integration of pedagogical and philosophical work on deliberation would yield more fruitful research.

Conclusion

Our survey of the field of education for deliberative democracy has shown that it is characterised by some consequential disagreements and differences in emphasis. Despite the underlying agreement that deliberative skills and values are learned through practicing deliberation, and that the core of deliberation is a respectful dialogue where various voices are heard, there are also extensive disagreements. The most significant of these is the one between studies that are concerned with deliberation as primarily a political concept and studies that start from deliberation as a pedagogical concept. Within the first camp, articles range from what we have called "political conceptions" on the one hand to "way-of-life-conceptions" on the other hand. Within the second camp, there is a wider range of differences and articles have various ideas about what a deliberative process is supposed to teach students such as decision-making skills, explorative skills, and general democratic skills.

All of these disagreements contribute to the impression of a disjointed field. On the surface they all seem to talk about the same thing, but different articles intend different things when using the same concepts. Different conceptions of deliberative democracy guide education in different directions, and the empirical articles are not investigating quite the same thing as what the theoretical field is arguing for. Particularly problematic is the divergence between a narrow, political ideal of deliberation and a wider, pedagogical idea, and the way articles often slide from one use to the other, without seemingly noticing the difference, which makes the various authors talk past each other. The result is a field of literature in which it is difficult to compare the different articles, and difficult to evaluate, discuss and use the results and thoughts presented. As a consequence, work within this field fails to be cumulative: articles do not build on each other, and little progress is being made. In order to make the field more cohesive, a clearer attention to the distinction between deliberative democracy and deliberative pedagogy might be productive. Obviously, abstract ideals like those found within the philosophical literature on deliberative democracy will have to be operationalised into more manageable methods and objectives in order to be applied educationally, but still, it would be helpful to connect these operationalisations back to the political ideals, so that the latter are not simply left behind. By thus tending carefully to the interplay between philosophical ideals and pedagogical reality, genuine progress, both in a theoretical and practical sense, might be achieved.

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