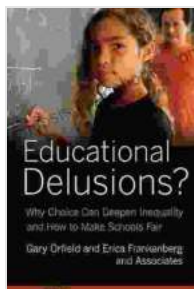


Why Choice Can Deepen Inequality and How To Make Schools Fair

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In the tapestry of education, choice has long been hailed as a panacea for inequity. The belief that empowering parents with the freedom to select the school that best suits their child's needs would level the playing field and create a more just and equitable system. However, a growing body of research paints a more sobering picture, revealing that school choice, if not carefully implemented, can actually exacerbate the very disparities it seeks to address.



Educational Delusions?: Why Choice Can Deepen Inequality and How to Make Schools Fair by Erica Frankenberg

★★★★★ 5 out of 5

Language	: English
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Text-to-Speech	: Enabled
Screen Reader	: Supported
Enhanced typesetting	: Enabled
Word Wise	: Enabled
Print length	: 332 pages
Lending	: Enabled



The Illusion of Equality:

The allure of school choice stems from the assumption that all parents have equal access to information and resources to make informed

decisions about their children's education. However, this assumption is often flawed. Parents from disadvantaged backgrounds may lack the knowledge, time, or support networks to navigate the complex school choice process. They may also be inadequately informed about the quality and effectiveness of different schools, rendering their choices less meaningful.

Furthermore, the availability of school choice can create a false sense of equality. Parents who have the economic means or social capital to access higher-performing schools may see their children receiving a better education, while those who lack these advantages may be left behind. This disparity can widen the achievement gap between students from different socioeconomic backgrounds, perpetuating inequality rather than diminishing it.

The Problem with Competition:

School choice proponents often argue that competition among schools will drive up standards and foster innovation. While this may be true in some cases, it can also lead to a dangerous game of musical chairs. As schools compete for students, they may resort to questionable practices to attract and retain the most promising pupils. This can include cherry-picking students with high academic potential, excluding those with special needs or behavioral difficulties, and narrowing the curriculum to focus on subjects that are easily tested.

The result can be a system where schools cater to the needs of the most advantaged students, while those who face challenges are left without adequate support or resources. This competitive atmosphere also

undermines collaboration and the sharing of best practices among schools, further exacerbating inequity.

Rethinking School Choice:

Recognizing the limitations of school choice does not mean abandoning it altogether. Rather, it calls for a more nuanced approach that prioritizes equity and fairness. Here are some key principles to consider:

- **Universal access:** Ensure that all parents have equal access to information, resources, and support to make informed school choices.
- **Quality over choice:** Focus on improving the quality of all schools, particularly those serving disadvantaged students, rather than simply increasing the number of options.
- **Diversity and inclusion:** Promote policies that encourage diversity and inclusion in schools, preventing the creation of segregated or elite institutions.
- **Targeted interventions:** Provide targeted support to students from marginalized backgrounds to help them overcome barriers to educational success.
- **Collaboration and accountability:** Foster collaboration among schools and hold them accountable for achieving equitable outcomes for all students.

Creating a More Just and Equitable System:

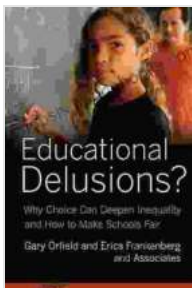
By embracing these principles, we can create a school system that truly serves all students, regardless of their background or circumstances.

Choice, when implemented with equity at its core, can be a valuable tool for empowering parents and students. However, it must not be seen as a panacea for the complex challenges facing our education system. Only through a comprehensive approach that addresses the root causes of inequality can we achieve a truly fair and just school system for all.

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The debate over school choice is far from over. However, it is imperative that we move beyond simplistic solutions and engage in a thoughtful discussion about how to create a more just and equitable system. By acknowledging the limitations of school choice and embracing a comprehensive approach that prioritizes quality, diversity, and support, we can ensure that all students have the opportunity to succeed, regardless of their zip code or socioeconomic status.

Alt attribute for image: Photo of diverse students sitting in a classroom, representing the importance of equity and inclusion in education.



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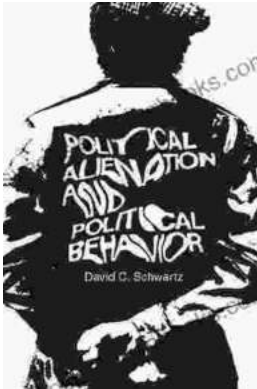
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