

[Published: 05 December 2019](#)

Accountability from a social justice perspective: Criticism and proposals

[María Teresa Flórez Petour](#)  & [Tamara Rozas Assael](#)

Journal of Educational Change **21**, 157–182 (2020) | [Cite this article](#)

945 Accesses | **6** Citations | **3** Altmetric | [Metrics](#)

Abstract

When seen in a positive light, accountability systems are understood as a means for promoting transparency, improvement, responsibility and commitment to valuable goals, thus ensuring that State funding is invested in initiatives that are beneficial to all citizens. However, in education, there is extensive evidence about the negative effects of predominant accountability systems, which call their expected positive impacts into question. Some of the detrimental effects of these systems involve unequal distribution of knowledge as well as discrimination and stigmatisation of vulnerable students, minorities and powerless groups, and of the schools that serve them. This evidence, along with emerging demands for social justice in terms of participation and recognition, highlights the need to analyse the shortcomings of current accountability systems in connection to ideals of social justice in education. On the basis of a review of relevant literature that connects the areas of social justice, education and assessment and accountability systems, this paper aims at illustrating some of the significant challenges and potential new avenues for the development of more just and, therefore, more intelligent accountability systems.