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Educating Students to Improve the World

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Preface

The shared nature of many of the current concerns and opportunities of humanity, from climate change to trade, pandemics to security, and governance to advancing science, require that people across the world are educated to understand them, care about them, and have the skills to address them collaboratively, from their respective spheres of influence. Global education is the domain of scholarship and of practice which focuses on developing such competencies. This field has a long history, albeit one that comprises more small-scale successes than accounts of large-scale educational transformations of educational institutions that succeed at educating global citizens. A review of the theoretical scholarship, and of the literature on practice, suggests that there have not been sufficiently productive interactions between those two domains.

At times when the nature of our global challenges underscores the urgency of more effective skills for global understanding and collaboration, this book is an attempt to bring closer together the worlds of scholarship and practice in global education, proposing a conceptual approach to advancing it that addresses five core dimensions of the process: cultural, psychological, professional, institutional, and political. Relying on this theory, I then discuss an extensive body of research and practice-oriented literature on global education, drawing out the implications to lead global education programs.

My own involvement with the field of global education began serendipitously. My early career involved me in carrying out research and policy analysis to advise governments around the world on education policy. This interest in policy reform then took me to the World Bank where I worked in the design of large-scale programs of educational improvement.

From this work on policy reform, I transitioned to teaching graduate students at the Harvard Graduate School of Education in the areas of education policy and international development. As schools of education, in the United States at least, are somewhat provincial in their foci, more adept at studying matters of domestic import than at engaging in comparative analysis to advance the field of education, I soon found myself making the case for a comparative perspective, first to my students and colleagues, and subsequently to other education leaders. As I advocated for greater

reliance on comparative approaches in education, my scholarly interests evolved from the study of the educational conditions which supported access and learning for low income and otherwise marginalized students in the developing world to the field of civic education. I began to see civic competencies as essential to the empowerment of students to become architects of their own lives, and civic education as the logical pathway to that empowerment.

The convergence of both interests, civics and comparative education, led me to think of global education as a ‘new civics’ of the twenty-first century, an indispensable dimension of civic education and empowerment in a world ever more integrated and interdependent. What began as work on a conceptual level, writing some chapters and journal articles conceptualizing and making the case for this new civics, eventually took me to developing curriculum materials to support teachers interested in advancing intentional efforts to educating students to be globally aware and to organizing programs of professional development to support them in that undertaking. In this way, I came to see global education as a way to bring challenges of the real world to the school, in the form of challenging, rigorous and high-quality curriculum which would help students develop the capacity to understand and participate in a world ever more globally interdependent, and in the form of the essential professional development teachers would need if they were going to deliver on that aspiration.

I created an approach of curriculum development which aligned instruction with capacious visions of an inclusive world, as articulated in the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals and in the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The interest that some of those materials generated among teachers and others deepened my involvement with efforts of educators advancing a practice of global education. These efforts in global education became integrated into other research I was working on to understand how to transform public education systems, the focus of the Global Education Innovation Initiative, a cross-national effort I lead at Harvard University.

This book is the result of the fusion of both such interests in global education and in the comparative study of large-scale change to make education relevant. For one of the studies carried out as part of the Global Education Innovation Initiative, a large comparative study of education reform examining how various nations had transformed the goals of education, I developed a conceptual framework to explain how those various reforms had been approached. I wrote that theoretical framework, which served as the introductory chapter of another book, as I was concluding three years of work synthesizing research on global education and theorizing the work I had engaged in for over a decade supporting global educators through curriculum materials and professional development. Inevitably, these two efforts reinforced one another, and the framework I sketched to account for the comparative analysis of reforms quickly shaped the intellectual architecture of this book on global education.

Many people have educated me on the topics I discuss in this book and, in ways big and small, influenced the development of the ideas I present in this book. First and foremost my graduate students at Harvard, who as my most reliable interlocutors have provided continuous and significant intellectual stimulus for the ideas developed in this book. Then, my colleagues who advance efforts of global

education practice in schools around the world and who, in inviting me to share ideas with them, have taught me more than I have taught them. They include Luis Enrique Garcia de Brigard, founder of Envoys, Chris Whittle, Tyler Tingley, and their colleagues as they founded the Avenues School and invited me to design the World Course, Nieves Segovia, and her colleagues at the SEK Schools, Kate Berseth, vice-president of EF, Anthony Jackson at the Asia Society, Gabriela Ramos and Andreas Schleicher at the OECD, Vikas Pota at the Varkey Education Foundation, Giovanna Barzano and Rete Dialogues, Marjorie Tiven at the Global Cities Program at Bloomberg Philanthropies, Ross Weissman at Knovva, Joseph Carvin at One World, Jennifer Manise at the Longview Foundation, Veronica Boix-Mansilla at Project Zero, Robert Adams at the National Education Education Foundation, Jennifer Boyle, and her colleagues at Primary Source. To them and all others who trusted me to engage with their efforts, my deepest gratitude for what I learned from them and from our collaborations.

Many of the education organizations on whose boards I have served advanced global education in several ways, and I have learned from that work, from their staff, and from my fellow board members. My long-standing collaborations with colleagues in UNESCO, from the time when the organization published my first book, three decades ago, to my participation on some of the consultations for the preparation of the Delors Report, to my most recent engagement as member of the commission on the Futures of Education, have been a source of intellectual stimulation and inspiration to advance my understanding of the topics discussed in this book. I am grateful to Stefania Giannini, Director of Education at UNESCO and to Irina Bokova, former Director General at UNESCO, and to their colleagues for our collaborations to advance global education. In WorldTeach, my colleagues on the board, our CEO Mitra Shavarini and our staff, taught me much about high-quality global education programming, and about the challenges of sustaining such programs. I have learned a great deal about civic education from Roger Brooks, President of Facing History and Ourselves, and from my colleagues on the board and from the excellent staff in the organization. Teach for All, an organization depending on a remarkable network of global citizens advancing educational opportunity in more than fifty countries is an ongoing source of learning for me, from collaborations with the CEO and founder Wendy Kopp, with my fellow members on the board and from our staff.

At Harvard, serving on the University Committee of International Projects for over a decade, and on the faculty boards of the Centers for African Studies, Asian Studies, Latin American Studies, and China Fund has educated me on the many ways in which a research university can educate global citizens. My graduate students are a continuous source of inspiration and learning with their cosmopolitanism and global citizenship. Between 2010 and 2016, collaborations with seventy-five of my graduate students on the development of three curriculum resources aligned with the UN Sustainable Development Goals helped translate many of my ideas on global education into usable resources which could be tested in practice. In addition, the translation of these books into multiple languages, and their use by thousands of

educators across the world, provided me a very rich laboratory of practice from which many of the ideas presented in this book stemmed.

I have learned much from the thousands of global educators who participated in an annual think tank on global education I led at Harvard over the last decade, and from my colleague Mitalene Fletcher, who co-led the think tank with me. Other colleagues at the Harvard Graduate School of Education have provided, over many years, an energizing intellectual community, and I have benefited from conversations with Howard Gardner, Jal Mehta, Felipe Barrera-Osorio, Sarah Dryden-Peterson, Paola Uccelli, Richard Light, Paul Harris, Patricia Graham, Jerome Murphy, Paul Reville, Chris Dede, Jim Honan, Meira Levinson, Julie Reuben, Monica Higgins, Matt Miller, Mary Grassa O'Neill, Karen Mapp, Richard Elmore, Catherine Snow, Pamela Mason, Nonie Lesaux, Richard Murnane, and others. My current and past Teaching Fellows and Research Assistants have taught me a great deal about global education, I am especially indebted to Nell O'Donnell-Weber, Ana Teresa Toro, Paul Moch Islas, Uche Amaeche, Tatiana Shevchenko, Vanessa Beary, Isabelle Byusa and Vidur Chopra. I have benefited from the support of various deans of the Harvard Graduate School of Education including Jerome Murphy, Ellen Lagemann, Katherine McCartney, Jim Ryan and Bridget Terry-Long.

My colleagues in the Global Education Innovation Initiative have considerably helped me better understand the process of educational change, and our many conversations and collaborations over seven years, and discussions with our board members and with the many colleagues who invited us to share our research, provided a nourishing intellectual context for the development of the ideas presented in this book.

Andy Hall, the coordinator of the International Education Policy Program I have directed at Harvard for the last two decades, my assistant Lee Marmor and my former assistant Kristin Foster have been essential collaborators in my practice as an educator of global citizens, on which much of the thinking in this book is based. Working with these three global citizens who do so much themselves to help educate others as global citizens is a source of daily inspiration.

I am also grateful to Nick Melchior and Lay Peng Ang, and to their colleagues at Springer, for their support and good care of this publication.

As with all of my projects, big and small, my biggest debt is to my wife and colleague, Professor Eleonora Villegas-Reimers, for everything I have learned with her and with her help, since we met at Harvard as graduate students in 1983. My hope is that the approach to global education I present here will be valuable not just to scholars in the field of global education, and of educational change, but that it will provide theoretical grounding to practitioners in the field of global education and allow more fruitful dialogue between the communities of academics and practitioners. I look forward to continuing to learn from those who try out the ideas offered here, make them their own, and transform them through their practice.

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