



## Book Review

# Developing Globally Competent Students

Rajvi Trivedi\*

**Reimers, M. F. (2020).** *Educating students to improve the world.* Springer Briefs in Education. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-15-3887-2>

This e-book with Creative Commons license comprises v to viii pages of Preface; pages ix-x of the Table of Contents; and a total of 131 pages.

Fernando Reimers is the Ford Foundation Professor of the Practice of International Education at Harvard Graduate School of Education. He is interested in large-scale reform in native education and global education. In *Educating students to improve the world*, he offers a multidimensional and comprehensive model for understanding and implementing global education. While addressing the gap between theory and practice, he underscores the importance of making educational systems around the globe relevant, in order to develop citizens who are equipped with the necessary knowledge, skills, and attitudes to deal with the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The author reasons out why educational institutions have not yet successfully developed global competence among students, though an intention to impart global education has prevailed for a considerable time.

There are eight chapters in the book. Chapter one introduces the readers to global education and its significance in the current scenario. The five perspectives to educational change or the “five eyes” (Reimers, 1) namely, cultural, psychological, professional,

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\* PhD Scholar, School of Education, CHRIST (Deemed to be University), Bengaluru, India; [rajvi.trivedi@res.christuniversity.in](mailto:rajvi.trivedi@res.christuniversity.in)

institutional, and political, reveal the multidimensionality of the process in reforming the educational system. Chapter two presents the meaning and significance of global education and highlights the need for developing globally competent youth. Amid many contentions and debates about defining global education, Reimers puts forth the idea in unambiguous, practical, and straightforward terms:

Global education is both practices guided by a set of purposes and approaches intentionally created to provide opportunities for students to develop global competencies, and the theories that explain and inform those practices and their effects. Global competencies encompass the knowledge, skills, and dispositions that help students develop, understand, and function in communities which are increasingly interdependent with other communities around the world...(p. 25)

In chapters, three to seven, each of the five perspectives – cultural, psychological, professional, institutional, and political – are described in detail. The varying goals of society have always reflected the changing purposes of education. The author discusses the cultural roots and the upcoming demands of society. He also deals with the broader conversation about what the role of schools should be. “A core aspect of the cultural perspective on education is understanding the expected balance between the conserving and transforming role of schools” (Reimers, 2020, p. 25). Reimers throws light on the “cultural imperatives” (p. 45) in terms of the risks and challenges humanity faces today and hence the necessity for addressing these by developing globally competent citizens. Chapter four explores the significance of the psychological perspective in designing a global education curriculum, “The knowledge generated by the science of how people learn and develop can inform the design of global education curricula and instruction” (p. 53). The fifth chapter informs the readers about the place of professional perspective in implementing global education. The need for significant changes in teacher preparation to execute the global education curriculum is emphasized. What would be the characteristics of an effective professional development program? How can educators play a role in converting tacit knowledge to

public knowledge? How must research and practice be aligned for better outcomes? Teachers, principals, and school-level actors ought to take on active roles.

In chapter six, Reimers draws attention to the institutional perspective and points out how the essential elements, including instructional resources, assessments, school organization, staff and development, and governance, support global education. This perspective is in congruence with the research conducted on major educational reforms. “A curriculum fostering breadth of skills will do little to change the instructional core if it is not accompanied by adequate professional development and by student assessment systems.” (Reimers, 2020, p. 36). Chapter seven focuses on the political perspective wherein several political aspects, including, diverging interests of different groups and stakeholders, views of the ruling government, the role of civil society organizations and NGOs, are explained with particular reference to implementing global education.

In chapter eight, the author shows how all the five perspectives work in tandem to bring about educational change. He comments that researchers and scholars have focused a great deal on global education and the different conceptual interpretations. However, these debates have not led to design and action. He presents an evidence-based plan for global education.

Reimers describes the course on “World” and other curricula in a detailed manner and provides useful guidelines for developing a global education curriculum. Might a historical view of the impact and outcomes of global education strengthen the description? Were any past attempts successful in developing global competence among the students? Global education is gradually emerging and growing in the larger educational context, and knowing about the past outcomes of a global education program could be of interest to some.

This book provides a comprehensive model for implementing a new global education curriculum that would reform educational systems to be relevant and transform students into global citizens – all in clear, simple, engaging language and organization. Neither a compendium on the barriers to a new curriculum nor a chock full

of theories, this rich resource presents a combination of challenges along with appropriate solutions and has ideas for practical applications. The author inspires a broad array of audiences who can benefit: teachers, curriculum designers, school leaders and principals, teacher educators, policymakers, educational researchers, and those who are passionate about reforming the education system – via global education to make the world a better place.

## **References**

Reimers, F. M. (2020). *Audacious education purposes: How governments transform the goals of education systems*. Springer Nature.