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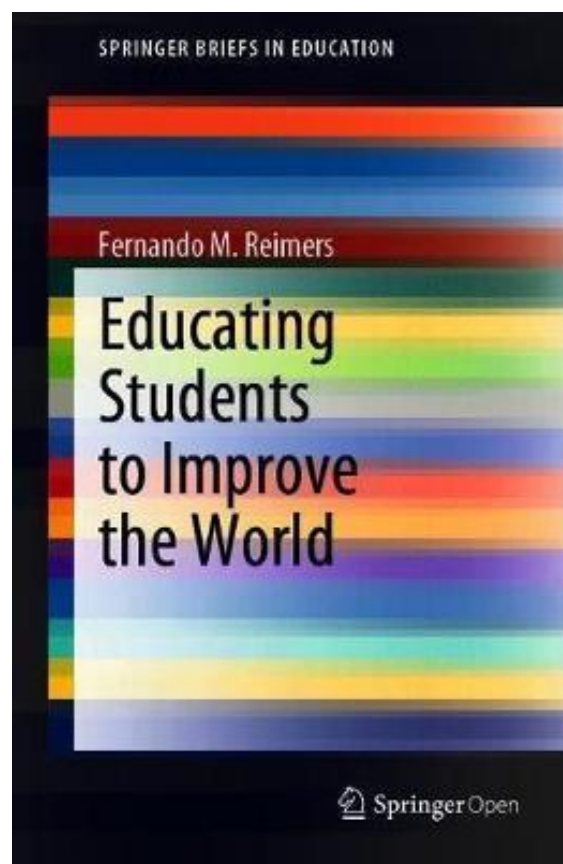
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For those of us who work in the broad field of global education, every event that happens at a global scale, from the COVID-19 pandemic to the systemic racism that triggered the latest Black Lives Matter protests, represents another opportunity to defend an education that helps children build a better future for all humanity. Unfortunately, however, school logic is rarely geared towards what is called global education. What we can do to connect schools with our current real-world challenges is precisely the purpose of this book written by Fernando M. Reimers, one of the most recognized experts in the field of global education.

From the vantage point of a professorship at the Harvard Graduate School of Education and with a long history of collaborating with international organizations such as UNESCO, Reimers writes *Educating Students to Improve the World* with the intention of bridging the gap between educational research and school practice to face the challenge of educating global citizens. His extensive experience in the design of global education programs and his vast knowledge of empirical research in this



field allow him to outline an implementation model and framework that takes into account many dimensions of educational change: cultural, psychological, professional, institutional and political. These dimensions constitute the main pillars of his proposal to *educate students to improve the world*.

This multidimensional model aims to integrate what is known by specialized literature about how schools change and how students learn to address global education. The cultural dimension focuses on how social expectations, norms, and values define educational goals and practices. The psychological dimension provides an overview of how the theories of learning can inform global education curricula and instruction. The professional dimension illustrates the importance of expertise to advance global education teaching and learning. The institutional dimension focuses on the structures, norms, and organization elements which can support global education. Finally, the political dimension illustrates the need of aligning the interest of different stakeholders. This framework represents a laudable effort to provide a comprehensive vision of school reform and global education that does not solely hold teachers accountable for effective implementation of policies developed without their input, nor does it consider them as mere transmitters of a given program.

Another undoubted merit of this multidimensional model is the compendium of contributions from different scientific and professional perspectives towards an educational practice for global citizenship. Reimers pertinently critiques the innumerable academic debates on the purposes of global education, which are often unable to articulate concrete pedagogical proposals. This critique justifies, to a certain extent, his emphasis on the usefulness of scientific-professional knowledge. However, this preoccupation with pragmatism ends up overlooking the importance of positioning oneself in these debates.

Throughout the book, the author uses non-neutral concepts such ‘global citizenship’ or ‘globalization’ without defining them and, often, seems to be using interchangeably UNESCO’s idea of global citizenship education and OECD’s concept of global competence. Although much effort (perhaps too much) has been devoted to defining what global citizenship education is and very little to how to make it effective in classroom, it does not mean that these debates are completely sterile, since the different ways of understanding this concept have inevitable practical consequences (see Oxley & Morris, 2013; Shultz, 2007). By not problematizing the concept of global education, the author seems to accept the language of international economic organizations such as the OECD or the World Economic Forum as if they were shielded in consensus and neutrality, ignoring the numerous criticisms of Western and neoliberal bias (Engel et al., 2019; Grotlüschen, 2018; Rizvi & Lingard, 2006).

In any case, although Reimers avoids political and axiological debates, the historical journey that he portrays on the origins of global education reveals a perspective based on Enlightenment principles of cosmopolitanism, science, reason and schooling. Thus, global education is for him an extension of the Enlightenment universal schooling project to educate citizens who can govern themselves and improve the world through the cultivation of reason and access to scientific knowledge (p. 33). The progress of humanity is, therefore, the highest aspiration of this project that must transcend the provincialisms of the nation and embrace cosmopolitanism. The problem is that the promises that underlie these projects of social progress and liberation of individuals from ignorance, barbarism, and provincialism involve, at the same time, fears of anything that threatens such progress (the barbarian/uncivilized; Popkewitz, 2008). For this reason, Reimers refers to new forms of ‘tribalism’ (variants of intolerant and

xenophobic nationalism) as one of the great challenges of global education (p. 40), as if anti-democratic ‘tribalism’ was not also part of the dream of reason and Enlightenment (Todorov, 2012).

In addition, the role of school acquires a salvation character in Reimers’ discourse –part of a broader cross-cultural consensus (Cuesta & Estellés, 2020)– that hides its darkest history of production and reproduction of social inequalities and its role in the development of capitalism and nation-states (Cuesta, 2005). This explains the author’s voluntarist explanations of why school walls have remained so impenetrable to any global citizenship education proposal and his lax criticism of the grammar of schooling and school subjects.

Despite this, Reimers proposes several key points, such as professional development and the creation of opportunities to learn from teachers’ knowledge, which are essential to any attempt to penetrate school walls. The professional and institutional dimensions of his proposal are particularly relevant, as they offer rich opportunities for teacher education and interesting proposals for school organization. Reimers’ model offers guidelines and resources that can be inspirational and useful for those interested in organizing the school curriculum around real-world challenges. Yet, for the writer of this review, a more critical perspective towards school reform and global citizenship education is needed to avoid it becoming a mere addition to an already crowded curriculum or a reproducer of a Western hegemonic tradition.

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About the Reviewer

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