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"Unless schools effectively develop tolerance, cosmopolitanism, deep knowledge of global affairs and a commitment to peace, the likelihood of the civilizational clashes predicted by Samuel Huntington will increase."

Educating for Global Competency

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Excerpt I. Introduction

When it comes to education, to paraphrase computer scientist Alan Kay, the best way to prepare students for the future is to equip them to invent it. The educational paradox of the beginning of the twenty-first century lies in the disconnect between the superb institutional capacity of schools and their underperformance in preparing students to invent a future that appropriately addresses the global challenges and opportunities shared with their fellow world citizens. Whether these are the challenges of collectively improving the living conditions of the global poor and destitute, of achieving sustainable forms of human environmental interaction, of finding fair and sustainable forms of global trade, of addressing health epidemics, or of creating the conditions for lasting peace and security, few schools

around the world today are equipping students with the skills and habits of mind necessary to collaborate with others, across national boundaries, in inventing and implementing lasting solutions to these challenges. These are, without a doubt, complex issues, and their resolution can involve multiple options, some of which are controversial. Preparing students to deal with such complexity and controversies is at the heart of global education. Such preparation is absent today in most schools around the world.

This is paradoxical, because we live at a time of extraordinary educational institutional capacity. The vast majority of the world's children today have the opportunity to begin an education and to complete several years in these relatively recent inventions we call schools. For much of the world, that is for the developing world, this transformation from societies where most people were unschooled to effective mass education was achieved over the last century, and accelerated since the approval of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, with its focus on education as a fundamental human right, and the creation of the United Nations more than sixty years ago.

When I describe schools as effective I refer to the fact that all nations have created a legal framework and a set of institutions that ensure that most children begin school and spend in them several years in the early stages of their lives. The extraordinary organizational capacity refers to this goal of including the intended beneficiaries of education. With regard to the goal of teaching students what schools intend to teach them, there is much greater heterogeneity in the effectiveness of schools within nations and among nations. But the real paradox comes from focusing on the effectiveness of schools on yet a third goal: the goal of preparing students for the social and economic contexts in which they will have to invent their lives. With regard to this goal of relevance, particularly relevance to live in a world ever more integrated, most schools fail. Addressing this paradox requires repurposing mass education.

Making global education a serious priority for schools around the world, with a focus on the development of global competency, necessitates a narrative that describes this purpose, conceptualizes it, and suggests how to achieve it, so that different social actors can collaborate in the improvement of the global efficacy of schools. This chapter offers such

conceptualization.

Excerpt II. The Tri-dimensional Nature of Global Competency

I define global competency as the knowledge and skills to help people understand the flat world in which they live, integrate across disciplinary domains to comprehend global affairs and events, and create possibilities to address them. Global competencies are also the attitudinal and ethical dispositions that make it possible to interact peacefully, respectfully and productively with fellow human beings from diverse geographies.

This definition of global competency includes three interdependent dimensions:

1. A positive disposition toward cultural difference and a framework of global values to engage in difference. This requires a sense of identity and self-esteem but also empathy toward others with different identities. An interest and understanding of different civilizational streams and the ability to see those differences as opportunities for constructive, respectful and peaceful transactions among people. This ethical dimension of global competency includes also a commitment to basic equality and rights of all persons and a disposition to act to uphold those rights (Gutmann, 1999 and Reimers, 2006).
2. An ability to speak, understand and think in languages in addition to the dominant language in the country in which people are born. As Joel Cohen explains in Chapter 10 in this volume, foreign language skills are analogous to stereoscopic vision to the global mind (the skill dimension).
3. Deep knowledge and understanding of world history, geography, the global dimensions of topics such as health, climate and economics and of the process of globalization itself (the disciplinary and interdisciplinary dimension) and a capacity to think critically and creatively about the complexity of current global challenges.

We could call these dimensions the three A's of globalization: the affective dimension, the action dimension and the academic dimension. These dimensions for a "teaching space" are defined by three orthogonal vectors: a vector focused on the development of character, affect, and values; a vector focused on skills and the development of the motivation to act and the competency to act; and a vector focused on the development of cognition, academic knowledge, and the ability to draw on distinct knowledge domains to understand global

issues. Global education is multidimensional, suggesting that quality global education must attend to each of these dimensions. Some contemporary debates about education quality are limited because they focus on one or the other of these vectors. Excellence in this domain, and perhaps in many others, is about teaching a specialized body of knowledge about global affairs (academic) and the ability to use their knowledge for ethical global purposes (affect).

In the rest of this chapter I explain why this tri-dimensional global competency is a necessity for all people, and I discuss some of the challenges and opportunities for making progress in the near future.

Excerpt III. Why Global Competency for All?

Globalization has led to an increase in the frequency and type of interactions among people of different cultural origins. In some countries this results from immigration. In most, it results also from the increasing use of telecommunication technologies and from the transformed production and trade of goods and services. Immigration, trade and communications present unprecedented opportunities and challenges to most people. These enhanced interactions among people with different worldviews and cultural values affect social expectations and notions of identity. Individuals' or groups' responses to the changes around them depend in part on how they are prepared to understand cultural differences, and to think about globalization and its attendant processes.

Unless schools effectively develop tolerance, cosmopolitanism, deep knowledge of global affairs and a commitment to peace, the likelihood of the civilizational clashes predicted by Samuel Huntington will increase (Huntington, 1993, p. 28).

We live in a rapidly shifting era in which economic opportunities and challenges abound. The increase in the intensity and frequency of interactions among people in different geographies that characterizes globalization impacts job prospects, health, physical security, public policy, communications, investment opportunities, immigration, and community relations. In short, globalization is deeply transforming the context of the lives of many people around the world. Those who are educated to understand those transformations and how to turn them into sources of comparative advantage are likely to benefit from globalization; but those who

are not will face real and growing challenges. The preparation to develop these understandings, knowledge and skills must begin early in order to develop high levels of competence as well as help youth recognize the relevance of their education to the world in which they live in.

While the economic advantages that accrue to global competency have received more attention than the civic advantages, global competency is helpful not only from an economic standpoint but as a cornerstone of democratic leadership and citizenship.

Because the boundaries between international and domestic problems have become increasingly porous, the demands of government and citizenship now require knowledge of international topics. Elected representatives and voters will be able to make informed decisions about issues such as trade, health epidemics, environmental conservation, energy use, immigration, and especially global stability only if they are educated to understand the global determinants and consequences of those issues and decisions.

Global competencies have been rewarded in years past, and because of this some families, schools and universities have for many years helped a select group of students acquire the ability to speak foreign languages, an interest in global affairs and deep knowledge of global topics. What is changing as a result of globalization is that these skills are necessary for the majority of the world's population, not just for a few. Therefore, global competency should now be a purpose of mass education, not just of elite education.

Excerpt IV. Global Citizenship Education and Human Rights Education

The development of global values (the first, ethical, dimension of global competency) can be achieved drawing on the well-established knowledge base in human rights education, teaching students not just knowledge of the rights and their history, but to appreciate and value these rights, to discern how they are upheld in the various communities of which students are a part, and to act toward the work in progress which is the achievement of these rights. Teaching to understand the importance of human rights and to act on this understanding is the cornerstone of global civility and of peace. As the first sentence of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states, "recognition of the inherent dignity and of the

equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice, and peace in the world." Human Rights education provides a framework to examine the multiple ways in which intolerance violates human rights and to recognize and face extreme forms of intolerance and human rights violations such as sexism, racism, ethnocentrism, islamophobia, anti-semitism, aggressive nationalism, fascism, xenophobia, imperialism, exploitation, religious fanaticism and political repression (Reardon, 1997).

To educate for global civility it is imperative to use a common framework that informs the enterprise. This notion has been well developed by philosopher Sissela Bok in her book *Common Values* (1995). Bok explains that common values are essential to the survival of every society and that they are recognizable across societies. She further explains that these values are essential to human coexistence at all levels of interaction, from personal to national and international relations. These common values are necessary to support cross-cultural dialogue and to address military, environmental and other common challenges of humanity (Bok, 1995, p. 13).

The best approximation we have at present to this common framework of values is the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Those who drafted the declaration struggled mightily with the challenges of drawing from different cultural and philosophical traditions. Though it may be possible to see the Declaration as a work in progress, in the sense that additional rights could be defined or operationalized, the Declaration is a starting point. The work of schools globally could be aligned to teach all children to experience, honor and uphold these rights (not just to know them), and to appreciate that others have the same rights. This would be a sufficient framework for much greater global civility than many schools promote at present.

Beyond direct instruction, the context of education is a fundamental component of global citizenship education. This context includes the opportunities students have to get to know and collaborate with others of diverse cultural, racial, and socioeconomic backgrounds; the climate in the school surrounding relationships among school staff and students as well as among school staff and parents and other members of the community; and the social norms that govern those interactions. These multiple opportunities to develop citizenship

competencies are embedded in a community and larger cultural and social context that influences how students interpret what they experience in school and the choices they make about the roles they want to play outside the school. Students have to live their human rights; their schools have to provide authentic experiences in the practice of tolerance. Students need to experience in schools respect for human dignity, equal rights and appreciation of difference and tolerance. In addition to helping develop knowledge about human rights it is necessary that students develop intrapersonal and interpersonal competences to resolve conflicts peacefully, to confront violence (Reimers and Villegas-Reimers, 2006).

More than direct instruction about human rights and respectful and tolerant education are needed. It is important to gain knowledge and the capacity to act in ways that engage the students' moral reasoning skills and in ways that motivate them to act and to assume personal responsibility for their actions in the global realm. Opportunities to help students to develop and practice skills in real-life settings and to connect abstract knowledge to action are potentially important. Global service learning projects are examples of activities that can bridge the acquisition of knowledge with a disposition to assume personal responsibility for community needs.

Excerpt V. Conclusions

The most important educational questions are, today as in the past, questions about purpose. Societies and communities need to have clear purposes for the schools they sustain, just as teachers and principals need purposes to align their efforts in teaching students, and students need to see that the purpose of their education is to help them develop and achieve their goals and broader social goals in life. Paradoxically we don't think sufficiently often about purpose, at any of these levels. As a result, schools, teachers and students spend great efforts in ways that are dissociated from the purposes they value.

Globalization presents a new and very important context for all of us. Responding to this context is of course a process, a space of possibility, rather than a destination. Preparing students with the skills and the ethical dispositions to invent a future that enhances human well-being in this space of possibility is the most critical challenge for schools in our time.

Global education is the new purpose for these wonderful recent inventions of humanity we call schools. To do this we need to focus on three objectives and on three avenues for action. The objectives are to develop global values, foreign language skills, and foreign area and globalization expertise. The avenues are to develop global competence as a policy priority for mass education systems; to develop a scientific knowledge base that helps discern what works well, with what effects and at what costs; and to continue developing rigorous curricula, instructional materials and opportunities for teacher education. The path is clear and within reach, and the potential rewards much greater than some of the costly and complicated approaches we still use to try to achieve global peace and stability.

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