



# Catching Up or Leading the Way: American Education in the Age of Globalization

*Yong Zhao*

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## **Catching Up or Leading the Way: American Education in the Age of Globalization** Yong Zhao

At a time when globalization and technology are dramatically altering the world we live in, is education reform in the United States headed down the right path? Are schools emphasizing the knowledge and skills that students need in a global society--or are they actually undermining their strengths by overemphasizing high-stakes testing and standardization? Are education systems in China and other countries really as superior as some people claim?

These and other questions are at the heart of author Yong Zhao's thoughtful and informative book. Born and raised in China and now a distinguished professor at Michigan State University, Zhao bases many of his observations on firsthand experience as a student in China and as a parent of children attending school in the United States. His unique perspective leads him to conclude that "American education is at a crossroads" and "we need to change course" to maintain leadership in a rapidly changing world. To make his case, Zhao explains

- \* What's right with American education;
- \* Why much of the criticism of schools in the United States has been misleading and misinformed;
- \* Why China and other nations in Asia are actually reforming their systems to be more like their American counterparts;
- \* How globalization and the "death of distance" are affecting jobs and everyday life; and
- \* How the virtual world is transforming the economic and social landscape in ways far more profound than many people realize.

Educators, policymakers, parents, and others interested in preparing students to be productive global citizens will gain a clear understanding of what kinds of knowledge and skills constitute "digital competence" and "global competence," and what schools can--and must--do to meet the challenges and opportunities brought about by globalization and technology.

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