

## ***BOOK REVIEW***

***Education for a Caring Society, by D. Kay Johnston (2006). New York: Teacher's College Press***

***Educating Citizens for Moral Awareness, edited by Nel Noddings (2005). New York: Teacher's College Press***

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Recent volumes by D. Kay Johnston and Nel Noddings continue Teacher's College Press's tradition of offering high quality summaries of moral education research and theory in formats easily accessible to practitioners in the field. Each author frames her text as a response to troubling trends influencing both the process and content of children's schooling. Johnston, a professor of educational studies and women's studies at Colgate University, argues that public conversations about the "purpose of education as a vehicle for social justice, for transformation of society, and as a way to learn to think critically" have been silenced by public policies "framed by economic interests and measured by high stakes tests" (p. xi). Noddings, Lee L. Jacks Professor of child education Emerita at Stanford University, cautions that in our post 9/11 context of fear and threat,

"educating for peace and global citizenship, always a fragile enterprise, is again at risk" (pp. 17–18)." Both authors argue for the possibility of making a difference in the classroom—with Johnston promoting the power of teacher's attention to building relationships, and Noddings advocating teachers' engagement with their students in issues of global citizenship.

Johnston's short book (81 pages) can be read as an extended essay stressing the centrality of developing students' ability to think of themselves as beings in relationships. The goal of education should be to produce participatory citizens able to think critically about a complex world whose rate of change challenges teachers and learners alike. To achieve that goal, children need to be taught how to navigate the multiplicity of relationships in

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their lives and Johnston suggests that there is no better place to do so than in the classroom. She proposes that teachers use day-to-day classroom assignments and discussions to teach children how to listen to, and pay attention to, others. Learning the language of relationships in the classroom provides a foundation for students to understand the connections and responsibilities necessary for healthy communities. Ideally, she hopes that learning this language has the potential to help children develop a sense of responsibility to those without privilege in the world. When children are taught to see themselves in relation to others in the classroom and to attend to the moral consequences of their actions, they can move into the larger world with the moral habit of thinking about how their actions impact others. Johnson believes that it is essential that teachers resist the “politicized and narrowly focused” emphasis on test content and instead teach children “to think deeply, to be open to ideas and people, and to see ourselves in relationship to others—both those we know and those we can only imagine” (p. 81).

Noddings’ edited volume brings together seven thought-provoking essays on teaching for global citizenship. Topics range from her own chapter on place-based education to Peggy McIntosh’s examination of gender perspectives on educating for global citizenship. Other chapters include Robert Nash’s letter on teaching about religious pluralism in the public schools, and Stacie Nicole Smith’s and David Farman’s description of integrating Workable Peace, a global conflict resolution program, into a high school curriculum. In her summary

chapter, “What Have We Learned?,” Noddings identifies the most important recommendation of the book’s authors as “to recognize the power of the local in building a global perspective” (p. 122). Echoing Johnson’s key theme, Noddings notes how classroom learning about respect and friendship for diverse peers can provide a foundational attitude for global citizenship. Relatedly, study and care about issues in their own neighborhoods prepares students to study concepts such as peace or ecology on a global scale. Many authors in the book suggest practical ways to incorporate material on global topics into existing courses. Teachers, especially secondary social studies teachers, will find *Educating Citizens for Global Awareness* a valuable resource both for concrete practical ideas and for a compelling rationale for global education itself.

Counselor educator and moral development scholar Norm Sprinthall is known for reminding colleagues and students to remember to “keep a place at the table” for moral education during times when it is out of favor with educational trends; and, even more importantly, for morality itself during dark political times. In a similar vein, Johnston’s and Noddings’ texts call their readers to keep a place at the table of educational discourse and practice for caring relationships at the microlevel of the classroom which may eventually extend to the macrolevel of global connections and care for the earth itself.