

**Book Review:**  
**Educating Citizens for Global Awareness**  
**Nel Noddings, Editor**  
New York: Teachers College Press, 2005

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In an era of narrowed curriculum, can educators turn away from the notion of citizenship education as preparing students to succeed in a *competitive* world and prepare students, instead, for successful living in a *cooperative* world? The collection of essays in Nel Noddings' book investigates issues relevant to such an approach to citizenship education. Authors address issues of gender, conflict resolution, home places, cultural citizenship, international history, religious pluralism, and a vision for 21<sup>st</sup> century educators. They offer insights for refocusing citizenship education with an intentional care for both people and ideas. The collection of essays reflects a theme from the U.N. Women's conference in Beijing (1995) that is consistent with Noddings' own work in the areas of moral education, ethics of care, and gender perspectives. As Peggy McIntosh explains in her essay, at the Forum there was "a sense of a shared and global agenda." That sense is evident in *Educating Citizens for Global Awareness* as authors imagine communities of care at the local, national, and international levels.

Three particular issues in the collection sparked further consideration for me as a teacher educator to understand that shared and global agenda. One was engaging students in the discussion of history as an evolving story in global citizenship. A second issue used the concept of cultural citizenship to explore the complexity of multiple cultural and national identities. The third issue dealt with the shared environment in learning to care for physical places and remembered places. It also raised the question for thoughtful citizens: What is

the role of home places that connect people to the Earth and to their heritage?

First, Stephen Thornton's essay reminds us that world history is a shared and ongoing story. The end of the story is not yet written, but it does include people from many nations. So, he integrates international perspectives into the study of U. S. history by inviting students to participate in historical events as decision-makers and analysts. For example, he shows the events that precipitated World War I began as an international event in the Balkans long before U. S. troops entered the war. Then, following the war, what was seen as a peaceful solution, cost one group its homeland and re-emerged as ethnic conflicts in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century. The relationships among groups of people in the region continue to impact the global community. He explains that events have relevance to students when issues that affect nations on a global level are seen at a national and local level. His point is that history does not need to be taught as a completed event with details students absorb from an expert's interpretation. Rather, events in history can be taught through the lens of a shared, global agenda. Educating students for global awareness includes knowledge of events past and present as students seek solutions for justice and peace for multiple cultural groups. Thornton proposes that student content knowledge should lead to some kind of engaging educational activity, perhaps conflict resolution as Stacie Nicole Smith and David Fairman suggest in another of the essays. They give a classroom example of conflict resolution successfully infused into the curriculum.

A second issue concerned with a shared and global agenda is found in the essay by Gloria Ladsen-Billings, who asks, "Who does your school think you are?" Although school curriculum treats all students as if they were White, middle-class, and native-born, demographics show that is not true in many of the nation's public schools. Ladsen-Billings reminds us of our "cultural citizenship" whereby we identify ourselves individually and collectively as members of cultural groups that may overlap with multiple civic identities. Latina students are not just from Mexico but are also U. S. citizens, scholars, and valued friends. My identity as a teacher educator at a large university is set aside when I am a worker in an international construction project. I recognize the privilege associated with a U. S. passport as well as my second-class citizenship as a woman in some other places. Do we also recognize the multiple faces of our students as global citizens and how their cultural experiences shape learning about the local, national, and international environment? Do we have a moral obligation to respond when some students gain access to resources while

others are denied access because of unequal power relationships among groups?

Family friends share a humorous story about their overlapping cultural citizenship. As young adults they were responding to a census survey interview. They claimed Czechoslovakian heritage on their mother's side of the family, and traditional Chinese roots from their father's family who had migrated to Hawaii. The siblings had always lived in the central United States. In answer to ethnic heritage question, Keith replied, "We are Chinese Czechers." Now where did that fit on the reporting form?

Robert Nash further contributes to the discussion of cultural citizenship with his essay on religious pluralism. He noted that while religion is a fundamental part of human existence in cultures around the globe, conversations with students show that many are not even knowledgeable of the history of their own religion. Is it the U. S. commitment to separation of church and state in government structure that closes dialogue? Do we deny the mix of religion with politics, geography, and economics and then fail to recognize the importance of religion among peoples around the globe whose government is based on an integration of church and state, religion and politics?

A third issue in the essays concerns the shared, global environment and the places we choose to preserve. Noddings explains that places provoke strong memories of a family's history and culture. When people are forcibly displaced from their homes, the generational memory extends beyond the immediate family. It bonds those with common experiences and forges a strong national identity. In time, the home place memory may become a catalyst for national struggle that transcends political borders and physical boundaries. Educating for global awareness includes acquiring knowledge of political conflicts and developing interpersonal skills for listening to the stories of people who have lived in the midst of significant historical events.

In a concluding essay, Nancy Carlsson-Paige and Linda Lantieri ask, "What, then, is the role of schools in preparing young people to see themselves as part of this larger whole that includes not just their neighborhood, community, or country, but the world" (p. 110)? The narrowing of the curriculum means that teachers are the ones to take the responsibility to create windows to a larger world. The contributing authors raise questions that help teachers broaden the curriculum to greater awareness and invite us to imagine a gentler, caring community in which people listen to the issues affecting neighbors. When we foster in learners an attitude of interest in the array of beliefs and values found in cultural regions on the Earth, we plant sustainable seeds of global

awareness with young people. With the insights found in the collection of essays, educators can reshape understanding of citizenship in the 21<sup>st</sup> century into a cooperative, relational, and caring vision for a more peaceful global environment.