



# **Educating Hearts and Minds: Reflections on Japanese Preschool and Elementary Education**

Catherine C. Lewis

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The question of how children become eager, motivated learners and caring, responsible citizens has perplexed educators around the world. Educating Hearts and Minds, a portrait of Japanese preschool and early elementary education, offers a fresh perspective on these questions. Its thesis--which will surprise many Americans--is that Japanese schools are successful because they meet children's needs for friendship, belonging, and contribution. This book brings to life what actually happens inside Japanese classrooms. In a sharp departure from most previous accounts, this book suggests that Japanese education succeeds because all children--not just the brightest or best-behaved--somehow come to feel like valued members of the school community. Ironically, Japanese teachers credit John Dewey and other progressive Western educators for many of the techniques that make Japanese schools both caring and challenging, but that never caught on in this country. This book brings to Americans the voices of Japanese classroom teachers--voices that are at once deeply consonant with American aspirations and deeply provocative.



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