



New Perspectives on Young Children's Moral Education: Developing Character through a Virtue Ethics Approach

By Tony Eaude

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New Perspectives on Young Children's Moral Education explores how to approach young children's moral education in a world of uncertainty and change.

What is moral education? How do young children learn to act and interact appropriately? How do we enable children to recognise that how they act and interact matters? How can character, virtues and value help young children internalise qualities associated with living 'a good life'?

Challenging many current assumptions about ethics and education, Tony Eaude suggests that a moral dimension runs through every aspect of life and that ethics involves learning to act and interact appropriately, based on an 'ethic of care' and enduring qualities and attributes, to equip children to resist strong external pressures. Drawing accessibly on research in neuroscience and psychology, he discusses how young children learn, highlighting the role of emotion, culture, example, habituation and feedback. Small actions can help to develop agency, empathy and thoughtfulness and a sense of moral identity, with an increasing emphasis on self-regulation, a vocabulary of ethics and intrinsic motivation. Eaude explores how character, virtues and values can help young children and adults to recognize and internalize qualities associated with living 'a good life'. He identifies how adults and learning environments can support these processes and shows why an inclusive approach is needed, rather than focusing on these topics only in particular settings, programmes or lessons. Recognising pitfalls and dilemmas, Eaude argues that an approach based on virtue ethics and an apprenticeship model is suitable in school and other settings, both religious and otherwise, internationally.

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Editorial Review

Review

“Tony Eaude has written not just a book here but a tapestry. He skilfully weaves research from child development, neuroscience and education together in a way that leaves the reader truly well informed about the topic and its complexity. Moral development and its promotion is at the core of a child's education journey and Tony addresses the subject's deep questions head on but in a writing style that is immediately accessible to the reader. His knowledge is impressive and he communicates it beautifully. The book is comprehensive, informative and engrossing. A read for all educators.” ?*Jonathan Doherty, Head of Primary Education, Leeds Trinity University, UK*

“Moral education is probably the most neglected area of the curriculum, and teachers often receive little training to support confident engagement with the topic. This book presents a strong case for prioritising moral education and guides the reader through a number of practical approaches that will help to develop children's moral understanding and imagination. It should be essential reading for all teachers in primary schools.” ?*J. Mark Halstead, Emeritus Professor of Education, University of Huddersfield, UK*

“How do we encourage children to live 'a good life'? Eaude offers an approach based on intrinsic motivation and character development rather than external pressure and shaming. His critical assessment of the goals and challenges of moral education, coupled with twelve principles for teachers and parents/carers, make this book an essential read.” ?*Rev. Karen-Marie Yust, Josiah P. and Anne Wilson Rowe Professor of Christian Education, Union Presbyterian Seminary, USA*

“Eaude's work is thorough and comprehensive, calling for an inclusive approach to moral education that permeates the whole of children's lives. His focus on agency, habituation and feedback in the context of caring relationships is refreshing. Grounded in accessible research, this is a highly recommended resource for early childhood educators.” ?*Brendan Hyde, Honorary Fellow of Australian Catholic University, Australia*

“Tony Eaude has achieved something which no other writer on moral education has achieved, namely, the integration, on the one hand, of a sound analysis of what is meant by moral education in different philosophical traditions with, on the other, the experiential knowledge of a sensitive teacher and head teacher. The account of moral education draws widely on relevant philosophical literature as well as empirical work from psychology and sociology. Yet he manages to do this in a language which makes the book accessible to teachers and parents ... Given the importance now attached to personal and social education, this book should be a major text in the professional development and initial training of teachers.” ?*Richard Pring, Professor of Education, University of Oxford, UK, and University of Winchester, UK*

About the Author

Tony Eaude is a Norham Fellow in the Department of Education, University of Oxford, UK, and an independent research consultant. Tony was the headteacher of a primary school for nine years and has authored several successful books, including *Children's Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development – Primary and Early Years* (2008), *Thinking Through Pedagogy for Primary and Early Years* (2011) and *How do Expert Primary Class Teachers Really Work?* (2012).

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