

cal work to theories and research in child development to play studies about modernity, leisure, and games. There is focus on where the author has taken us during this chapter's and book's journey, about play as a "pathway of experience."

In the interview between *AJP* and Henricks appearing at the close of this book, many more nuances and layers of play studies, ideas, and insights are added, along with suggestions for future growth in the field. Henricks says: "The world of real play is moving ahead briskly. The challenge for play studies is to keep abreast of this movement" (p. 267). We accept the challenge as we appreciate Thomas Henricks's work and personhood very much and want to say simply, "Encore. Encore."

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—James E. Johnson, *Pennsylvania State University, University Park, PA*

### **Play and Curriculum, Play & Culture Studies, Vol. 15**

*Myae Han and James E. Johnson, eds.*  
Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishing Group, 2020. List of tables and figures, preface, acknowledgments, introduction, and index. 214 pp. \$36.99 paperback. ISBN: 9780761871767

For someone like me, struggling to make sense of play from an educational perspective (in my case due to initially having been trained from a "play purist" perspective), this volume about play and curriculum opened my eyes to new ways of exploring the tension between play and learning and specifically how teachers can create spaces for play.

The three sections in this volume

about play and curriculum use the headings culture, STEM, and higher education. The first section proves less cohesive than the others, yet all three chapters have in common their discussing how teachers or care givers can facilitate children's play and what structures it needs for support. The last chapter in the section highlights one of the dilemmas that occur when writing play into a curriculum. Clearly, the quality standards provided to home carers in this study may in fact limit children's play rather than extend it.

The second section about STEM has a chapter each on math, science, and nature. I found the math chapter—and to some extent the science chapter—rigorous in terms of upholding play as a freely chosen activity controlled by children. The question that comes to the fore involves the relationship between space, materials, time, and play. The chapters are also challenging teachers to recognize that child-initiated and child-controlled play may provide the deepest learning.

The third section contains two chapters focusing on play as a content of early-childhood teacher training and one about using games with college students. Interestingly, some of the questions cross over this division. Is it, for example, possible to open up space for teenagers or adults to play in class? And if so, what enables this? Not only chapters but also sections cross over each other. The first chapter in the first section, for example, about how to facilitate play in preschool in an indigenous community, crosses over from the first section to the last by ending with a suggestion about how to develop teacher training to sensitize for local cultural ways of knowing in play.

It was interesting to track how the different authors wrote themselves into play. Different forms of play are mentioned, for example: educational, recreational, naturalistic, and hybrid play. Some chapters start with arguing, based on previous research, why play is good for learning. Some lack a discussion about or definition of play. Those who do discuss play often end up using terms similar to those in article 31 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child concerning a youngster's right to rest, leisure, play, recreational activities, cultural life, and the arts as a "process initiated, controlled, and structured by children themselves." I was surprised to find that even though this definition is based on Stuart Lester and Wendy Russell's 2010 "Children's Right to Play: An Examination of the Importance of Play in the Lives of Children Worldwide," no one referred to it.

Most chapters in the volume are written from an educational perspective, and yet there is a variety of perspectives in the volume, meaning that it will contribute to understanding across disciplines for those who decide to read it in its entirety. The volume includes chapters written by scholars mostly from education but also from human development and from media studies. The theoretical perspectives or foundations of the chapters range from constructivism to brain development and research methods, from ethnography to pretesting and posttesting in experiments. A couple of chapters use Elizabeth Wood's modes of educational play, child-initiated, adult-guided, and technician, to analyze their empirical material. (See "The Play-Pedagogy Interface in Contemporary Debates," in *The Sage Handbook of Play*

and *Learning in Early Childhood*, edited by Liz Brooker, Minda Blaise, and Susan Edwards and published in 2014.) The first she calls "play as education" and the other two "play in education". In chapter 7 of *Play and Curriculum*, about play and higher education, Marleah Blom and Miranda D'Amico draw the conclusion that it may be possible for teachers to provide a "loose structure" during class (play in education) in which students could play freely (play as education).

It becomes clear throughout the volume that, in the climate of outcome-driven education, it is very difficult to argue for the importance of a process not controlled and driven by the teachers. But as Beth Ferholt asserts in chapter 2 about a case study in a New York City elementary school, some children also need chaos to learn. After I read this volume, I found myself thinking about the relationship between play and playfulness. Can a behavior or process be play if it is not playful? Is playfulness just a "term used to justify play for adults"?

Volume editors Johnson and Han suggest in their introduction that maybe oil and water—play and curriculum—do mix. Having read the volume, I suggest that they do not, but they make wonderful patterns when they meet. In the end, I tend to agree with the conclusions of Suddha Swaminathan and Jeffrey Trawick-Smith when they argue in their chapter about math in preschool play that only if children control their playing will they learn from it. If this is the case, then adults need to resist adulterating children's play and instead develop their ability to tune in to it.

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—Eva Kane, *Stockholm University, Sweden*