

ing in childhood-studies courses. In the meantime, historians will find it a bracing introduction to a period—the 1970s and 1980s—rarely addressed in the literature. Its overt engagement with current policy and culture—Fass urges Americans “to reconnect with their own historical experiences and their cultural legacy and begin once again to trust their children and allow them to grow into their own futures” (p. 18)—helps it stand out in the flourishing historiographies of children and youth.

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Curriculum in Early Childhood Education: Re-examined, Rediscovered, Renewed

Nancy File, Jennifer J. Mueller, and Debora Basler Wisneski, eds.

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In their book, *Curriculum in Early Childhood Education: Re-examined, Rediscovered, Renewed*, coeditors Nancy File, Jennifer Mueller, and Debora Wisneski offer an engaging array of essays that examine philosophical, historical, cultural, and political influences on early-childhood curriculum. Their volume invites readers to consider alternate views of early-childhood curriculum and to reflect more deeply on some of the major issues in the field. This book will appeal to educators, graduate students, classroom teachers, researchers, and school

leaders who wish to pursue an inclusive process of curriculum development and retain a responsive, child-centered focus in their work.

The editors open the book with two essays—one focusing on the underappreciated role of teachers in curriculum development and the other on the role of research in informing curriculum practices. Debora Wisneski draws attention to the missing voices of teachers in the literature on curriculum development and innovation. Nancy File, in turn, questions how curriculum research can most effectively inform classroom practice. She argues that more attention needs to be paid to qualitative curriculum research because it can be more inclusive of children from diverse cultural backgrounds and low-income families.

Part 2 examines some of the major theoretical influences on the development of early childhood curriculum and offers examples of how various theories have been applied. In chapters 3 and 4, Nancy File and J. Amos Hatch discuss developmental theory and why its applications in ECE curriculum have been problematic. File concludes that we need to acknowledge the limits of our knowledge about child development, to engage in dialogue about how child-development knowledge translates to practice, and to involve families and communities in questions of what should be included in the curriculum. Hatch argues that child-development theory has more to say about instruction than about curriculum, that is, more about how to teach than about what to teach. Although both of these curriculum perspectives expand our thinking, readers might wonder if or how the authors

think that knowledge of child development—particularly sociocultural perspectives—can be applied to curriculum development.

In chapters 5 and 6, Jennifer Mueller examines how the broader field of curriculum studies can inform early-childhood curriculum development, and Judy Helm reviews the application of curriculum theory to the project approach. Both authors deepen our understanding of how theory clarifies curriculum practices. Mueller reviews how early developmentalist perspectives led to a product view of curriculum and then how the reconceptualists changed the focus to curriculum as a sociological process involving issues of power and interpretation. She contends that curriculum theory helps us maintain a questioning and reflective stance toward practice, children's needs, and the context of teaching and learning. As examples of this, she points to discussions of theory and practice at Dewey's Laboratory School and the professional development work of pedagogistas and preschool teachers in Reggio Emilia. In chapter 6, Helm connects the Project Approach to Dewey's theories of education—discussing educational aims, the nature of the young learner, the role of the teacher, topic selection, visits to field sites and with experts, and use of authentic artifacts.

Chapters 7 and 8 address the recent role of critical theory in questioning assumptions about curriculum, children's meaning making, what counts as important knowledge, and power relations in the classroom and community. According to Mindy Blaise and Sharon Ryan, using critical theory often leads to cur-

riculum transformations and the development of flexible practices that respond to local conditions and diverse learners. Inspired by Foucault's concepts of power and knowledge, Betsy Cahill and Tammy Gibson question the ideas of curriculum as a written plan, universal curriculum goals, and goals as knowledge, skills, and dispositions. Instead, they see curriculum as growing within a community in the service of social justice and equity.

In part 3, contributors examine and critique the origins, key components, and contributions of particular curriculum approaches, including diversity. Although some of these authors offer excellent critical analyses, others tend to take on a textbook tone. Across the analyses, several recommendations for curriculum development emerge: invest in professional development and support teachers in building child-centered curricula that reflect children's cultural contexts and communities; engage community members in discussions of the purposes of education in a democracy; and clarify what constitutes credible research documentation of curriculum development and enactment.

In chapter 9, Diane M. Horm, Carla B. Goble, and Kathryn R. Branscomb compare and contrast well-known infant-toddler curricula including Resources for Infant Educators (RIE), Program for Infant/Toddler Care, and Creative Curriculum for Infants and Toddlers. In Chapter 10, Sara Michael-Luna and Lucinda G. Heimer compare and contrast the Creative Curriculum and the HighScope Curriculum. In the next chapter, Andrew J. Stremmel offers an insightful examination of the Reggio Emilia curriculum perspective. In

chapter 12, Jenny R. Ritchie and Cary A. Buzzelli describe another intriguing curriculum framework—the Te Whariki early-childhood curriculum of Aotearoa in New Zealand. This bicultural, bilingual framework emphasizes indigenous cultures and spirituality as a dimension of learning. In chapter 13, Mariana Souto-Manning tells the classroom story of how the Accelerated Reader Program, a federally funded early-reading program, corrupted the intrinsic motivation of her second-grade students and overrode her professional judgment.

In part 4, Debora Wisneski and Stuart Reifel describe how alternate ways of viewing play serve as a curriculum development tool, and Katherine Delaney and Elizabeth Graue reexamine the history of kindergarten curriculum. In the final chapter, the editors synthesize the contributions of the authors and distill new directions for curriculum development in early-childhood education. They assert that some literature on curriculum development sets unrealistic expectations for teachers by asking them to integrate in-depth knowledge of child development, content, and learning outcomes as well as practical expertise. The editors, instead, advise teachers to examine their taken-for-granted assumptions about children's learning, teaching, and curriculum processes and to focus on children's backgrounds, funds of knowledge, and questions as the starting point for developing curriculum. The editors see an important role for teacher educators and their students in this curriculum-development process, but they also might recognize how school leaders, parents, and community members contribute. Never-

theless, as the editors suggest, we do need to create spaces for discussion and performance of multiple curriculum possibilities where “teachers and *all* children . . . explore their own ways of becoming, engaging, and learning together.” (p. 204).

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Group Play Interventions for Children: Strategies for Teaching Prosocial Skills

Linda A. Reddy

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As a school-counselor educator who regularly teaches courses in child and adolescent counseling, as well as play therapy, I read with interest Linda Reddy's book, *Group Play Interventions for Children: Strategies for Teaching Prosocial Skills*. Following a brief introduction, the book includes four user-friendly sections, each of which can serve as a well-written, stand-alone essay. While the author successfully synthesizes the vast theoretical and research literature, she deserves praise for developing pragmatic interventions immediately applicable to the work of educational and counseling professionals. This text offers a great deal for practitioners, and it also complements the bookshelves of anyone interested in the study and development of play.